

find it worth consulting; however the publication of such a book, by a press and by individuals so closely associated with the subject, should make all readers suspicious about the selection of these specific documents. The text lacks convincing evidence of impartiality, a necessity exacerbated by the close relationship between the publisher, authors, and the subject. While there are elements in these documents that add to broader concerns such as the Swiss government and religion, generally the book is so tightly focused that its broader historical application is rather narrow.

Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley, and D.W. Hayton, eds. *The House of Commons 1690-1715*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 5 volumes. \$400. Review by VICTOR STATER, LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY.

How does one review a monument to scholarship? Certainly no brief review can do justice to the work under consideration. A few statistics might help readers get a grip upon this latest installment of *The History of Parliament*. Five volumes. 5,051 pages. 1,982 biographical articles of members of Parliament. 314 constituency articles. Twenty-seven appendices. And all of these compiled by a team of fifteen dedicated and careful scholars. The first volumes of the *History*, focusing upon the years 1754-1790, appeared in 1964, under the editorship of Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke. In succeeding decades new installments have emerged, each more eagerly awaited than the last. This section of the *History* has gestated for more than thirty years, under the successive leadership of Eveline Cruickshanks, David Hayton, and Stuart Handley. These historians have built a scholarly edifice which will undoubtedly stand the test of time.

For students of Parliamentary history, these volumes, it might be argued, are the most interesting. The period it covers marks the emergence of Parliament—the House of Commons in particular—as the cornerstone of a new English (British, after 1707) constitution. Party strife, encouraged by triennial elections, a vigorous political press, and near-constant continental war, peaked during

these years, and Parliament's significance burgeoned. For the first time in its history, Parliament was indispensable: meeting annually, it raised the men and money needed to forestall Louis XIV's ambitions. For the first time in its history, Parliament (or the 'king-in-parliament,' at least) was recognized as sovereign by the majority of the political nation.

Hayton and his contributors provide a sure guide for students making sense of a complex period, when election succeeded election with unprecedented frequency. Volume One is Hayton's introductory survey, and in many ways it could stand alone as a history of the Commons. In it he does a masterful job of putting all that follows into context. Hayton first treats the constituencies and their elections. The focus here is upon change. He notes a rise in electoral contests—almost 40% of seats were contested during the period, a record. Every borough in the country experienced at least one contest between 1690 and 1715. Even Old Sarum, a notorious pocket borough with only ten voters, had a contest in 1705. In 1710, at the peak of partisan excitement, nearly 50% of seats were contested. Election expenses, Hayton shows, ballooned as candidates spent ever-increasing sums to woo voters. Some spent thousands treating voters—or buying them. Sir James Etheridge, for example, spent £18,000 nursing his constituency at Great Marlow from 1695-1715. Parliamentary acts forbidding electoral bribes did little to stop the open sale of votes in some places, though few went as far as one election agent who followed a bagpiper through the streets of Wotton Bassett, distributing fistfuls of half-crowns to an eager electorate. Yet even in the midst of highly charged partisan competition, continuities may be found. More than a few seats went uncontested for years—Truro, in Cornwall, for example, saw only one contest from 1690-1715. Many still clung to the notion that MPs ought to be chosen by consensus, although in the end very few could resist the pull of party loyalty.

The political loyalties of every MP cannot be known; party labels, in some cases, are very slippery. But Hayton shows that the overwhelming majority of members voted the party line, whether Whig or Tory—70% of those whose party is known voted with

their fellows 70% or more of the time. And general elections could bring significant shifts in membership of the Commons as the electorate made its will felt, from the decisive Whig victories of 1695 and 1708 to the Tory landslides of 1710 and 1713.

Although partisan divisions went deep, and affected politics in new ways during the later Stuart period, in one important regard things had changed very little. Hayton demonstrates that the House of Commons remained the preserve of the gentry, country fears of a rampant 'monied interest' notwithstanding. Most MPs were drawn from the upper ranks of the gentry; about half were descended within two generations from a titled family, and almost half were the sons or grandsons of MPs. By contrast, Hayton's team has identified only thirty-three members—of almost two thousand—of humble birth. 'Businessmen,' broadly defined, made up perhaps 20% of the Commons' membership, although here definitions are blurred. Viscount Fermanaugh (of Ireland) was a Levant merchant—but also the son of a prominent Buckinghamshire gentry family. Thomas Pitt, who ruthlessly squeezed a vast fortune out of India, was the son of a country rector, and so had his own claim to gentility.

Most MPs were at least nominal members of the Established Church. Excluding those with close ties to Dissent, but who conformed, over 90% of members were Anglicans, though some, like Sir Edward Seymour, Tory and scourge of Dissenters, rarely darkened the door of their parish church. Only a handful stand out for their refusal to conform, such as the Presbyterian Sir Robert Rich, Gregory Page, a Baptist, and Edmund Waller, a Quaker.

Hayton's coverage of the elections and membership of the Commons is further enriched by a detailed examination of the business of Parliament—which grew dramatically during this period—as well as the physical space within which members worked. Modern complaints about the legislative workload and inadequacies of the Palace of Westminster are nothing new. Late Stuart MPs toiled in cramped, uncomfortable quarters, hard by the stinking Thames.

Not least of Hayton's contribution might be found in his appendices, where he lists every member elected, defeated candidates,

and principal officers of state. He also offers lists of MPs known as men of letters and science (Newton, Christopher Wren, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele, among others). Perhaps the most fascinating appendix is number nineteen, "Rogues, madmen, bankrupts, and suicides." This category includes wifebeaters such as Sir Hopton Williams, the pious swindler Sir Humphrey Mackworth, and Goodwin Wharton, whose friends the fairies showed him where to find buried treasure. Or so Wharton said.

Volume One is accompanied by a searchable CD-ROM. Though not—for this reader at any rate—very intuitive, a thorough introduction explains its use. Researchers may mine the CD for details of all manner of subjects relating to the work of the Commons. Searches for personal names, subjects, places, or categories put what amounts to the contents of the Commons' Journals at one's fingertips. It is an invaluable aid for scholars, and the editors should be commended for including it.

Volume Two provides a detailed account of every constituency returning a member in every election or by-election from 1690 to 1715. A few boroughs dozed through the period with few moments of partisanship or controversy—often thanks to the iron grip of some powerful local figure. The three-score voters of West Looe, for example, rarely ventured to cross Sir Jonathan Trelawny, their neighbor and Bishop of Exeter. The bishop, said one disgruntled freeman, "kept us in captivity forty years...." (2: 86). At the other extreme were the larger counties, like Kent or Middlesex, where lively contests were routine, and some of the exceptionally large boroughs—such as Westminster—where electoral battles were constant. Westminster had some 14,000 voters and was impossible for a patron, however powerful, to control. The constituency articles reveal much about the stratagems of candidates and their backers—fraudulent election returns, hastily-called polls in obscure places, bribes, treats, and petitions to the Commons. The articles, taken as a whole, form a comprehensive picture of the great age of party from the bottom up. A minor irritation is that the volume follows its predecessors by organizing boroughs by county and lacks an index. The geographically-challenged—who might not

know, for example, that Chippenham is in Wiltshire or Milbourne Port in Somerset—must search a map of boroughs at the start of the volume, and then, perhaps, a map of the counties, to find where to look for an article. This information can be found in appendix twenty-two of Volume One, but it would be far more helpful in Volume Two.

As important as Volumes One and Two are, the scholarship represented by Volumes Three, Four, and Five is truly impressive. They contain nearly two thousand articles covering the parliamentary career of every MP serving for a generation. The careers they recount span a century or more—from Sir John Maynard, who first sat in the Short Parliament of 1640, to Sir Robert Walpole, whose service extended into the 1740s. Some members remain obscure. John ‘Vulture’ Hopkins, for instance, was known for his greed as a London money man, but no one knows where he was born or who his parents were. It seems very likely that if any information is available about any MP, the *History’s* diligent researchers have found it. Articles on major figures are significant monographs in themselves—Sir Robert Harley earns forty pages, and others, such as Paul Foley and Sir Edward Seymour, rate equally weighty essays. The focus remains upon a member’s career in the Commons—for example Isaac Newton and Christopher Wren were both MPs, but their articles are not essays on baroque science and architecture. Nor do the articles cover a subject’s earlier or later political careers in much detail, as with Sir John Maynard’s Short Parliament service or Walpole’s later dominance of the Commons.

The *History’s* virtues as a scholarly resource are almost matched by the sheer pleasure it affords a reader dipping in at random. Scattered throughout the biographies are gems such as the life of Sir Humphrey Mackworth, “ruthless, devious, hypocritical, self-seeking, and corrupt,” (4:732) or the tragic case of Stephen Evance, merchant, bankrupt, and suicide. But of course it is the coverage and the scholarship which makes the *History* worth its substantial price. At \$400 few individuals will place it on their own shelves—but anyone with an interest in late Stuart politics, culture, and

society, will do well to reserve for themselves the table nearest the *History of Parliament* at their favorite library.

Walter C. Utt and Brian Strayer. *The Bellicose Dove: Claude Brousson and Protestant Resistance to Louis XIV, 1647-1698*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2003. x + 220 pp. \$69.50. Review by THOMAS WORCESTER, COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS.

At his death in 1985, Walter Utt left an unfinished manuscript on the life and death of Huguenot Claude Brousson. As edited and completed by Brian Strayer, this work reveals both a Brousson utterly unyielding and indefatigable in his polemics against what he considered the idolatry and the multiplicity of errors of Catholicism, and a Brousson much more changeable and uncertain in his political strategies for responding to the French state as it strove to eliminate the Reformed Church. While invariably 'bellicose' in his preaching and publications against the Catholic clerics and their teachings, this Huguenot at times advocated armed resistance against the state, and at times promoted a dove's peaceful endurance of oppression and martyrdom at the hands of the king's agents.

A native of Nîmes, and a lawyer by profession, Brousson lived in an era that saw Louis XIV take away step by step even the limited toleration that had been granted Protestants by Henry IV in the Edict of Nantes. In revoking that Edict in 1685, Louis but completed a process already underway for decades. The state exerted much pressure on Protestants to convert to Catholicism; Brousson offers an example of one never tempted to give in to such pressure, no matter what the cost or consequences of resistance. When Brousson (along with all his co-religionists) was banned from exercising the legal profession, he turned to a myriad of ways of defending and aiding his fellows Huguenots. In 1683, Brousson played a central role, in Toulouse, in organizing a clandestine Committee of Resistance, devoted to upholding and exercising a right of resistance to royal edicts when they violated God's laws. When some members of the Committee were captured and executed,