

tional, if unstable, fantasy of reaffirmed loyalty to and (at the same time) escape from the traditions and authority attributed, out of filial-piety, to a venerated first generation of Puritan leaders.

The Captive's Position has been years in the making, with remarkable results. It meaningfully engages a wide range of pertinent prior scholarly work by others, and its uncommonly lucid sentences are crafted with care and skill. It is a book that takes the reader deeply into the investigative ruminations and convictions of its author but also, as in all good teaching, proceeds in a manner designed with an audience in mind.

Toulouse's opening question, implying a Newtonian world of simple cause and effect, gives way to a more subtle and complex encounter with hard-to-pin-down motives which necessarily remain as elusive as sub-atomic eventuation. The result, however, is a provocative psycho-cultural interpretation comprised of diverse particles—historical details, circumstantial associations and hypothetical propositions—strategically and imaginatively combined to convey a plausible cause-and-effect finale.

Grant Tapsell. *The Personal Rule of Charles II, 1681-85*. Woodbridge and Rochester: Boydell, 2007. \$90.00. Review by MOLLY MCCLAIN, UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO.

A more accurate title for this book would be “Whigs and Tories after the Exclusion Crisis.” Grant Tapsell does not deal with King Charles II as a historical figure nor does he pay much attention to “personal monarchy” as a concept. Instead, he provides a survey of political opinion in the early 1680s, relying heavily on the work of Tim Harris, Mark Knights, and Jonathan Scott. His most useful contribution is his wide-ranging archival research.

The Exclusion Crisis (1678-81) gets a good deal of attention from historians as it represents the first major political challenge to James, Duke of York, later James II. The second, in 1688, would lead to his abdication and the accession of William and Mary. The Exclusion Crisis also divided the British into the first recognizable political parties—Whig and Tory. For the past fifteen years, historians of the late Stuart period have been preoccupied with questions about partisanship and public opinion. Jonathan Scott fired the first salvo in what became a lengthy battle about the nature of political alliances

when he argued that organized parties did not exist before the changes brought about by the Revolution of 1688. Tapsell refrains from engaging in what became a “rebarbative” debate on the existence of parties (15). Still, his analysis is deeply affected by this body of work. The Exclusion Crisis ended with Charles II’s dissolution of parliament. The king did not call it again before his death, hence the description of the period 1681-85 as a “personal monarchy.” In fact, Charles II was so far from being “arbitrary” that he did not even try to proscribe the Whigs. When asked in 1682 “whether he had information or any apprehension of tumults and risings among the Whigs,” he replied “none that he believed,” and then went hawking (43). An earlier generation of historians assumed that, after 1681, political passions died down as the crown pursued an “absolutist” policy of purging local government and punishing dissent (32). The so-called “Tory Reaction” pushed the Whig party underground.

Tapsell, among others, provides evidence that the Whigs remained politicized, and politically organized, after the end of the Exclusion Crisis. Many expected parliament to be called again. Others took advantage of the disunity within the king’s government to promote their own ends. Newsletters, pamphlets, and tracts furthered partisan politics by blackening reputations and polarizing public opinion. Arguments in coffeehouses and alehouses continued to distance neighbors, relations, and friends. According to Tapsell, James II inherited a country divided between Whigs and Tories with relatively little “middle ground” (193). It would be useful to know if, and how, this interpretation changes our understanding of his reign.

The book is divided into six chapters: “The Shape of the Period,” “Political Partisanship and Government without Parliament,” “The Politics of Religious Persecution,” “News and Partisan Politics,” “Print and Polemical Politics,” and “Partisan Politics in the British Monarchies.” The last chapter focuses on partisan politics in Scotland and Ireland.

Tapsell is to be commended for his very clear and accessible writing style and his valuable footnotes. His work provides a useful summary of the most recent scholarship on the late Stuart period. It is also the only monograph to focus exclusively on the years following the Exclusion Crisis. One hopes that, in the future, the author will take a cue from late seventeenth-century partisans and refrain from exhibiting quite so much deference to authorities in the field.