natural history had enormous scientific import for the eighteenth century. Indeed, I would have liked to have read more about women, medicine, and art. To this end, references to Jacqueline Broad’s *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century* might have proved fruitful. But these are mostly quibbles. With about a hundred pages of detailed notes, bibliography, and index, the present book, *The English Virtuoso*, is a great deal more than another monograph. It is a very fine reference volume.


Roger North was a prominent jurist and politician in late-seventeenth-century England, but after his refusal to take the Oath of Allegiance to William III and Mary II resulted in his departure from public affairs at the early age of 39, he retired to the country and wrote compulsively, addressing such varied subjects as biography, law, musicology, architecture, the poor laws, and history, as well as fish ponds and “accompts.” Very few of North’s works were published during his lifetime, and those that were published appeared without his name. When a number of his manuscripts, most of which were privately held, were published posthumously, their texts were altered so that North’s anti-Whig stance became the most prominent characteristic of his intellectual legacy. Jamie Kassler points out that these alterations were not only a disservice to North, a man of integrity, conviction, and lively intelligence, whose historical reputation was damaged by flawed and unsystematic interpretation, but they also failed to reveal the depth of North’s personal inquiry into themes of human ethics, skepticism, and moral philosophy. It was not until the late twentieth century that more accurate editions of North’s works began to be published.

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Music in Britain, 1714-1830: A Catalogue of Writings, Lectures, and Inventions (1979); Roger North’s The Musickall Grammarian, 1728 (co-edited with Mary Chan 1990), and Music, Science, Philosophy: Models in the Universe of Thought (2001). Kassler, who holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University, is a fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and a recipient of the Centenary Medal awarded by the Australian government for her contributions to the humanities and society.

When the “Glorious Revolution” placed William and Mary on the throne of England in 1689, Roger North had been a King’s Counsel to Charles II; attorney general to James II’s queen, Mary of Modena; Treasurer of Middle Temple; legal advisor to the Archbishop of Canterbury; and Tory MP for Dunwich. He was also a younger brother of Francis North, first Baron Guilford, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal under Charles II, who was much involved in the legal wrangling over the Exclusion Crisis, as well as the trials after the Popish Plot and the Rye House Plot, and was, therefore, reviled by the Whig opposition. Roger North’s refusal to swear allegiance to the new rulers cost him his positions, and though he was quickly branded an entrenched royalist and Jacobite, Kassler points out that his non-juring stance had less to do with his commitment to Tory rule and more to do with his conviction that he could not, in good conscience, violate the oaths he had taken earlier to James II. By this time, however, North appears to have had quite enough of public life, having seen at close range the damage done to the English legal system on behalf of James Stuart by his Lord Chancellor, George Jeffreys (1645-1689), known as “the Hanging Judge” for his draconian rulings.

During his self-imposed exile to the countryside, North turned his hand to redressing the criticism of his late brother, Francis, writing a biography that overtly aimed at the exploration and description of Francis’s character traits but that also tested and expressed his own thoughts. Or, as Kassler puts it, Roger North was engaged in “the process of thinking about thinking” (57). He also wrote biographies of his brothers Sir Dudley North (1641-1691), who had been a sheriff of the City of London, and John North (1645-1683), who had been Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, as well as a critical analysis of his own characteristics in an autobiography, Notes of Me (circa 1693-1698).
In each case, the work went on for years, since North continued to revise his compositions, and as Kassler laments, almost never dated his work, making it nearly impossible to determine the chronological order of his revisions. Still, Kassler writes, North’s experimentation in writing and his interest in writing about human nature objectively and honestly are actually extensions of his ongoing exercise in learning “how to live” (77). His biographical undertakings are noteworthy for having focused upon the private lives of his subjects rather than just the importance of their public actions, and in doing so, North provided a significant amount of information about the times in which he lived and the issues of that era. Kassler points out that North’s interpretation of morality required that the individual choose to do good, rather than merely choosing to obey the rules. In this way, North refuted the idea that morality exists as a universal principle, seeing it rather as the individual’s choice of options in response to experience.

In the period 1710-1722, North wrote his history of Charles II’s reign, *Examen: or, An Enquiry into the Credit and Veracity of a Pretended Complete History … Tending to Vindicate the Honour of the Late King Charles the Second*, as a caustic refutation of White Kennett’s *History of England*, which he considered to be full of falsehoods about the Stuart kings and inaccuracies about common law. *Examen* was edited by his son, Montagu North, and was published in 1740, the first of Roger North’s publications to name him as author. The biographies of his brothers saw publication in 1742 and 1744, but as Kassler relates, Montagu North was responsible for many changes and omissions from the original versions.

Fortunately, Kassler writes, many of North’s works have become available since the late nineteenth century, with thousands of pages held by the British Library, alone, and other records in repositories in Australia, the UK, and the United States. Kassler includes a portion of North’s essay, “Of Etymology” (circa 1706-1715) as an example of his reasoning on language, translation, and the law. One of the most riveting sections of Kassler’s book is the appendices, in which she provides information on provenance and physical features of works she has divided into those published during North’s life and those published between his death and the year 1900. Kassler’s analysis of North’s evolving philosophy on “how to live” is not effortless read-
ing, but the present work will be a most useful contribution to the fund of resources on the tumultuous seventeenth century, as well as providing a new valuation of the very remarkable Roger North and his many pursuits.


Professor Wanklyn’s latest work builds on his previous research, which underlined the importance of logistical dominance and the art of writing about conflict in Parliament’s eventual victory in the Civil Wars. Here, though, Wanklyn aims to illustrate the centrality of the decision-making process to the short and long-term outcomes of battles. In this sense, the author has not drawn on recent historiographical developments on the experiential level of conflict, as recently encapsulated by Barbara Donegan’s monograph *War In England 1642-1649*. Furthermore, Wanklyn seems to have at least partly discarded his reservations about using the phrase “British Civil Wars,” with which, as recently as 2005, he “fundamentally” disagreed. However, by deliberately maintaining a focus on the strategic and higher-level decisions involved in conflict, Wanklyn is able to present a lucid chronological portrayal of the conflicts that engulfed Britain and Ireland in this period.

The criteria set for assessing military leadership is deceptively simple and masks the depth of research put into the work. The achievement of one side’s sovereign’s war aims (whether it be the Parliament, the Committee of Both Kingdoms, the Royal Council or the Estates General in Scotland) is defined as constituting success, whether by design or through the mistakes or ineptitude of other generals. Wanklyn charts a roughly chronological narrative to assess individual decisions and their relationship with higher war aims. To do so, he examines the fast-moving source material of personal correspondence and burgeoning numbers of newsbooks rather than accounts such as Clarendon, whom Wanklyn refuses to countenance as a fair source of assessments of Prince Rupert or other rivals.