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Loyalty to the Monarchy in Late Medieval and Early Modern Britain, c.1400-1688

Matthew Ward and Matthew Hefferan (eds.)

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The period from the end of the Wars of the Roses to the so-called Glorious Revolution was one of political, religious, and cultural conflict in Britain, culminating in civil war, the execution of a king, and the later restoration of his son. *Loyalty to the Monarchy*, edited by Matthew Ward and Matthew Hefferan, explores "how the concept of loyalty to the monarchy in England and Scotland was encouraged, expressed and challenged in such a turbulent period" (2). The strengths of the collection show clearly from the beginning; it covers an impressive range of topics, localities, and chronology on the theme of loyalty and how it is expressed.

Sovereigns expected loyalty from their subjects, but in times of war, when rulers changed their alliances or when the rulers themselves were changed, that loyalty could prove disastrous to their subjects. Each of the sections addresses the wars that the English (or Scottish) fought over the course of about two centuries. The rhetoric of loyalty and the performance thereof were key to survival in these years. The chapters explore performances of loyalty by subjects as well as how the sovereign extracted that loyalty.

Beginning in the fifteenth century, Emma Levitt's chapter on Edward IV's skilled use of the Order of the Garter to bind his nobility to him aptly demonstrates how medieval chivalric standards could be used as rhetorical weapons. Wesley Corrêa analyses the underlying rhetoric of political performances. These performances were used as a tool to manage public opinion and to control the imagined dialogue, inherent which within Yorkist and early Tudor propaganda, that a king had with his subjects. The rhetoric of loyalty, not to an individual (namely James III of Scotland), but to the monarchy as an institution, is the subject of Callum Watson's chapter, where he analyses Blind Hary's *The Wallace*. Building on the idea of how subjects could demonstrate loyalty not to an individual ruler but to the crown instead, Simon Lambe incorporates the history of the Paulet family into the wider discussion in the volume. The Paulets prized flexibility as a key family virtue, which allowed them to bend religious performances to suit the ever-changing Henrician Church, rather than break (their necks) in observance of conservative principles. As Lambe argues, this flexibility allowed them to rise steadily at court. Some individuals, less pragmatic than the Paulets, counselled their sovereign using book dedications, as Valerie Schutte explores. The volatile political climate of the 1530s comes through in her chapter as she demonstrates how authors changed their dedication practices over the course of Henry VIII's reign. Initially, authors used dedications to elicit Henry's patronage or favour, but "after the break with Rome, book dedicators shifted their strategies from being loyal to themselves, to being more overtly loyal to either their religious position or to the crown so as not to be suspected of hostility towards Henry and his new policies" (118).

The next section of the collection treats the reign of Elizabeth I through to the beginnings of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. Thematically, while rhetoric and performance are still important, the chapters in this section analyse the legal obligations of

a subject to their sovereign, from whence those laws came, and the actions that a subject should take to adequately perform their loyalty. Loyalty owed by birth—codified into law and unwritten social codes—is discussed in the second section, but there is also the continued exploration of how to show disagreement with a sovereign's choices while still appearing loyal (so aptly begun in Schutte's chapter). Michael A. Heimos's chapter sets up section two with the legal definitions of loyalty, through analysis of *Storie's Case* and *Calvin's Case*—one is born an Englishman and so remains until the end of his days, regardless of any other oaths that he may take. Complicating that definition, Janet Dickinson's chapter on chivalric codes demonstrates that loyalty was bound up in "a whole set of beliefs and cultural practices" that marked the elite nobility and defined how they performed "service, reward and faithfulness to the monarch" (150). She discusses the plight of the noble Catholics who balanced expressions of loyalty to their faith and loyalty to their monarch. While Dickinson's nobles fought to prove their loyalty to Elizabeth through military action, Jamie Gianoutsos' puritans of the 1630s, namely Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, sought to publish criticisms of Charles I as a means of providing counsel to the King, whose reign they saw as tyrannical and in need of reform. Closely tied to the tyrannical actions of the Stuart kings were the local sheriffs whose responsibilities shifted after Elizabeth's reign, when they were "by and large, simply carrying out ancient duties in their locality ... they became, under the Stuarts, more closely and intensely focused on the raising of revenues by the implementation and protection of the royal prerogative in their county" (192).

The final section is the widest in geographic scope, including England, Scotland, and the Virginia Colony. Covering the Wars of the Three Kingdoms through to the end of James II & VII's reign, the section ties the themes of the first two into the context of civil war and its aftermath. Largely dealing with the reign of Charles II, the section explores dissention, and the actions counties and individuals took to appear sufficiently loyal to king and country. Andrew Lind starts the section with an examination of how, for the Scottish Royalists, "the Covenanters' transgressions represented a red line for many in Scotland, and Royalists were willing to take up arms in defence of that line" (228). Just as Lind's chapter reminds us that the realities of Royalist experience were far more complex than has been traditionally assessed, so too does Edward Legon, whose analysis of Charles II's coronation celebrations asserts that expressions of loyalty and disloyalty were highly contextual. The coronation, Legon shows, was a focal point for dissenters who "may not have been connected ideologically," but were "connected by the prevailing view that the coronation was not 'theirs'" (247). Charles II's reign was rife with opportunities for his subjects to harbour grievances, as the Virginia colony residents did over the Plantation Duties Act of 1673, which was part of a wider series of Acts which led to "widespread dissatisfaction over a host of issues: heavy and unfair taxes; cronyism; corruption" among many other issues (255–256). When a royal commission investigated the rebellion, the colonists "learned that the crown regarded them as second-class Englishmen and strongly discouraged the use of petitions as a way of criticizing imperial policies" (264). The final chapter analyses protestations of loyalty in Wales and Cornwall, both areas that fought for Charles I in the war against Parliament. Bringing readers to James II & VII's reign, James

Harris shows that, much like the other chapters in this section, that loyalty is contextual: "Loyalty to the monarch became an unstable concept which was often bound up in political ideologies" (290).

This volume is a necessary addition to the growing conversation in early modern studies examining concepts of loyalty. Ward, Hefferan, and all the contributors are hopefully quite proud of this diverse and well-put-together collection of chapters, which is a great primer for the subject at hand and opens further conversations and research.

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