

It is here that the text's only jarring detail appears, for it seems odd to describe any Englishman of that era as an Episcopalian, rather than a High Churchman. The fourth chapter, covering ca. 1850–ca. 1960, gives due weight to the publication of primary sources and their impact on historical scholarship, but is more valuable for its analysis of popular fiction and most useful for bringing to light details of historical pageants in Ipswich and Oxford in 1930 and 1907, respectively. In the wake of that, it should be obvious enough that the fifth chapter features the literary Wolseys of Robert Bolt and Hilary Mantel, and the screen depictions by Orson Welles, Sam Neill, and others.

Hornbeck explains that his interest in Wolsey dates back to his time as a senior scholar at Christ Church, but does not indicate how long he actively worked on the book, though it must have been annoying when Gavin Schwartz-Leeper's *From Princes to Pages: The Literary Lives of Cardinal Wolsey, Tudor England's "Other King"* was published in 2016, for there is an inevitable overlap with Hornbeck's first chapter. Memo to self: the next time I have a promising idea, I must remember to get a monograph out of it, before anyone else does.

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Thomas Cromwell: A Revolutionary Life. Diarmaid MacCulloch.
New York: Viking, 2018. xxiv + 728 pp. + 24 color pls. \$40.

Diarmaid MacCulloch writes beautifully with great archival depth. An expert on the mid-Tudor period, his 1996 *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* demonstrated his gift for detailed archival research and lively biographical writing. His magisterial *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (2009) proved the breadth of his grasp of church history, as did his history of the Reformation. Now he has returned to the tight world of the court of Henry VIII to write the biography of Thomas Cromwell. As he admits, it is not something that Sir Geoffrey Elton, his dissertation adviser, thought could be done. Elton, who knew Cromwell intimately, did not believe he was “biographable,” so MacCulloch tackles the project with appropriate recognition of Elton, dedicating the book to him, and then proves that a biography is possible. It teaches that Elton's *Tudor Revolution in Government* gave Cromwell too much credit, while giving us a man who is less sympathetic than Hilary Mantel's fictitious Cromwell.

MacCulloch confirms that Cromwell was a highly gifted networker whose talent took him, via Italy and the London Italian merchant community, into Cardinal Wolsey's service. The connections and loyalties he developed readied him for the king's service in the 1530s. His instinctual grasp of how Tudor politics worked helped him play the system adroitly until he overstepped himself in 1540. Where Elton saw a “great man” inventing a centralized, bureaucratized state, MacCulloch shows us a man

who knew how to use the existing machinery. Rather than invent a new form of the state, he imposed English-style rule on far-off places such as Wales and, less effectively, Ireland and Calais. Cromwell may not have caused a statist revolution, but he did unify and solidify the king's dominions. Contrary to Elton, MacCulloch argues that the permanent Privy Council was created in 1540 to prevent the occurrence of another great manipulator like Cromwell.

The evidence for this skilled management comes primarily from Cromwell's own inbox (his outgoing correspondence was deliberately destroyed), but MacCulloch has sought him in evidences of all kinds, most notably in land transactions. The bibliography and notes run to a densely packed 150 pages. Elton taught his students to devote themselves to the archives, and MacCulloch carries on the tradition. Henry VIII's capacious, vicious selfishness made working with him very dangerous. Once Cromwell had risen to be the king's chief man of business, he had to both manage and avoid Henry's mercurial moods. Henry's willingness to be swayed gave Cromwell power, but also encouraged court factions like the one that brought Cromwell down. Using them, Cromwell destroyed Anne Boleyn. As MacCulloch says, "the responsibility for Anne's destruction remains squarely with Cromwell, as he cheerfully admitted" (342). Notably, Cromwell did not scruple about it. Unsurprisingly, Cromwell's own pleas for mercy were ignored, he was executed, and then, typically, Henry repented and took care of Cromwell's family.

Thomas Cromwell as family man is a theme that runs through the book. MacCulloch shows Cromwell carefully constructing a dynasty, marrying his son Gregory to Elizabeth Seymour, Jane's younger sister. This made him an uncle to Edward VI and brother-in-law to the Duke of Somerset. Gregory and Elizabeth were adroit politicians, too, and the family prospered under the successive rulers. In religion Cromwell was an evangelical. In 1519 Cardinal Wolsey sent him to Rome to obtain a papal bull confirming the right of the Boston Guild to a monopoly over indulgences in England. He spent his journey reading Erasmus's Greek edition of the New Testament, beginning his conversion. Cromwell, knowing intimately more about English monasticism thanks to his work for Wolsey, had his evangelicalism fed by experience and exposure to Lollardy. Staffing Cardinal College, University of Oxford, with Cambridge evangelicals, Cromwell made producing the Bishops' Bible a personal project. However, the gradual end of monasticism under Vicegerent Cromwell was opportunistic. Serving Henry VIII, Cromwell was a religious opportunist rather than an ideologue. Nicodemism was Cromwell's "mature religious creed" (72).

This is a very good study of a very complex man. Well written, thoroughly researched, it is a major addition to the history of Tudor England.

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