*Politics, Religion and Ideas in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Britain: Essays in Honour of Mark Goldie.*

Edited by Justin Champion, John Coffey, Tim Harris and John Marshall. Pp. 363.

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This is a festschrift for Mark Goldie, a distinguished historian of the late Stuart period and John Locke. It is primarily as a writer of articles and as an editor that Goldie has made his name. Many of us who have read it regret that his PhD thesis – *Tory Political Thought, 1689-1714* (1978), supervised by Quentin Skinner – was never published as a book. We now eagerly await his biography of Locke in the post-Revolution period. Although Goldie has written primarily about England, he has published several pathbreaking essays on Scotland with focus on the Scottish Catholic Enlightenment.[[1]](#footnote-1) He has also supervised several doctorate students on Scottish history, including John Coffey, one of this book’s editors, and Clare Jackson, one of the contributors.

The festschrift is edited by four of Goldie’s many students who have now become eminent historians in their own right: Coffey, Justin Champion, Tim Harris and John Marshall. The introduction is divided into four sections. The first part, written by Harris, outlines Goldie’s career, spent at the University of Cambridge since 1973 – although we learn that he had earlier chosen to undertake his undergraduate degree at the University of Sussex since Cambridge was too ‘establishment’ (2). In the second part, Champion looks at Goldie’s contribution to the history of ideas. Goldie is here celebrated for effectively combining intellectual, political and religious history, and for bringing historians from these separate subdisciplines into conversation with one another. Credit is also given to Goldie’s approach of considering contexts in a broad sense. Much of his research has indeed consisted of reading thousands of lesser known pamphlets, a method which has greatly informed his work on the arch-canonical Locke, surveyed by Marshall in the third section. Goldie’s decades-long engagement with Locke has resulted in scholarly editions of Locke’s *Second Treatise, Letter Concerning Toleration, Correspondence, Political Essays*, the multi-volume *Reception of Locke’s Politics,* along with several highly significant essays. Coffey’s concluding section deals with Goldie as a mentor and teacher. We here learn much about Goldie’s ‘hinterland’ and his breadth as a teacher which among other things has included a course with the intriguing title ‘Maggie’s Philosophers: The Political Ideas of the New Right’ (13). One of the most useful parts of the book is the fifteen-page bibliography of Goldie’s publications, including his many book reviews and forthcoming pieces. Perhaps the only thing missing from the introduction is a section summarising the chapters in the volume.

Notwithstanding Goldie’s diversity as a teacher, his scholarship has been centred on the Restoration, the Williamite Revolution and its aftermath. This is also the period on which most of the fifteen essays in this volume are focused. Four chapters – by Marshall, S. J. Savonius-Wroth, Geoff Kemp and Delphine Soulard – concentrate on various aspects of Locke, including his career as a ‘censor’ in the different senses of the word, his writings on the Poor Laws, his service on the Board of Trade, and the Francophone reception of his writings. What they all have in common is that they carefully historicise the English political philosopher. In short, the engagement with Locke and his writings here is very different from the abstract and politicised readings common among some political theorists.

Three essays in the collection are about the history of Scotland: by Coffey, Jackson and Gabriel Glickman. Coffey writes about the notorious assassination in 1679 of James Sharp, archbishop of St Andrews, condemned by David Hume as an ‘atrocious action’ by fanatics despite Hume’s own lack of sympathy with Sharp (116). The essay confirms Goldie’s observation that Scotland in the Restoration period was marked by greater religious intolerance than England, even though the latter was a ‘persecuting society’ (102). Taking her cue from Goldie’s warning against the mistaken presumption that ‘great philosophers only reply to leviathans and other sea monsters, and not to shoals of smaller, but no less dangerous fish’, – Jackson considers the Scottish Lord Advocate and writer Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh (*c.* 1636-91) – ‘a large fish in a small pond [i.e. Scotland]’ (121). Mackenzie is often depicted as an uncomplicated apologist for the absolutism of Charles II and James II/VII, but in Jackson’s essay, which is more or less an overview of his entire career, Mackenzie emerges as a Scottish patriot, whose loyalty to the Stuarts drew on the dynasty’s ancient Scottish roots, and someone who resisted English attempts to give Scotland a subordinate status within the composite monarchy. Glickman is known for *The English Catholic Community 1688-1745: Politics, Culture and Ideology* (2009), which, despite its title, has plenty of content on Scottish Catholics *émigrés* such as Andrew Michael Ramsay. The Chevalier Ramsay also features prominently in Glickman’s essay in this volume, which explores Goldie’s ‘Scottish Catholic Enlightenment’ world of Thomas Innes and Alexander Geddes. Before 1745, this Scottish Catholic Enlightenment was closely bound up with the exiled Stuart dynasty and their cause. Ramsay served the Jacobite court briefly as tutor to the sons of James Francis Edward Stuart (the ‘Old Pretender’), but after his *Vie de Fénelon* (1723) was condemned by mainstream Catholic forces on account of its defence of Fénelon’s Quietism, he was dismissed from the court. In the 1730s, Ramsay became a spokesperson for Catholicism as the friend of reason as a freemason in France (270-1).

This collected volume does justice to Goldie as a historian of ideas, politics and religion, and as a scholar of Locke and his setting, of England as well as Scotland. There has not been space to summarise all fifteen essays in this review. I have paid extra attention to the Scottish material, but all British historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will find much of value within these pages. The editors have wisely opted to include essays by Goldie’s many students. The more usual suspects among historians of political thought associated with Cambridge and the so-called Cambridge School are conspicuous by their absence. Even for those of us who always enjoy reading them, this turns out to be no bad thing. Since most of the contributors write and think in the spirit of Goldie – or at least in interlocution with his work – this is an unusually even and coherent festschrift.

*University of Liverpool* MAX SKJÖNSBERG

1. Goldie, ‘The Scottish Catholic Enlightenment’, *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1991), pp. 20–62; *idem,* ‘Bishop Hay, Bishop Geddes and the Scottish Catholic Enlightenment’, *The Innes Review,* 45 (1994), pp. 82-6; *idem,* ‘Alexander Geddes at the Limits of the Catholic Enlightenment’, *Historical Journal* 53 (2010), pp. 61–86. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)