

## Recent Studies on Oliver Cromwell: His Biography and the Political Culture

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The purpose of this paper is to consider the recent studies on Oliver Cromwell, especially his biography and a study on the political culture in the Cromwellian age.

This paper first examines J. Morrill, *Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford, 2007). His book traces the life of Cromwell (1599-1658), from his birth through the careers of the parliamentarian, the lieutenant general, the regicide, lord protector to his death. Cromwell's achievements as a soldier were great but unfashionable, as a religious libertarian were great but easily mis-stated. It concludes that "Cromwell was not a great thinker", but "he was to himself and to his God most true, if at great cost to himself and others". His book uses not only the evidence of his self-representation but also the testimony of contemporary tracts and of personal memoirs, and it has the significance of a balanced view.

Secondly this paper examines L. Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645-61* (Cambridge, 2000). Her book traces the complex and shifting popular images of Cromwell from his first appearance as a public figure through the period of his power to his death. The meaning and impact of this figure have long been debated in the context of 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis, but contemporary representations of Cromwell have largely been neglected. Cromwellian print transformed the courtly forms of Caloline ceremony, portraiture and in turn complicated and altered the cultural forms available to Charles II. Her book draws on extensive archival research, including manuscript sources and visual artifacts.