

cover the course of the Synod—the last of which is concerned with the divisions within the British delegation over the issue of the Atonement. Not only does Dr Milton, where necessary, preface the sections with useful summaries in English of any material in Latin, but, in his lengthy introduction, he handles both the political and theological issues with great skill. An impressive example is his finely nuanced discussion of the degree to which James, and the delegation for which he was largely responsible, were sincere in their protestations of eirenic intent. The remaining documents treat the conclusions of the Synod and its aftermath. The final section is of particular interest, covering as it does the later defence of the delegation against the attacks made on them by Richard Montagu, a leading representative of the rising tide of English Arminianism which was coming into its own with the accession of Charles I and the increasing influence of Laud. For both wings of English churchmen the Synod of Dort raised, to quote Milton, ‘the question that arguably is central to the whole identity of the Church of England: how close should its links be with continental Protestantism?’ (p. xxii). Not surprisingly, it became a bone of contention. Clearly there is much here for further investigation and Milton’s proposed work, *The Genesis of the Canons of Dort*, which will draw even more extensively from the Samuel Ward MSS., is a most welcome prospect.

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*Al hilo del tiempo: Controles y poderes de una España imperial*, by Damaso de Lario (València: U. de València P., 2004; pp. 336. £33).

The author of these nineteen essays is a career diplomat who describes himself as ‘a Sunday historian’; he is currently Spanish ambassador to Indonesia. Dr de Lario is too modest; he has a doctorate in Spanish seventeenth-century history, and these essays, written for senior Spanish historical journals over thirty years, strongly suggest that working on one day a week is not necessarily a disadvantage for a historian if the other days involve some imaginative thinking about the discipline. Certainly, essays on major historians, Rafael Altamira and Joan Reglà, provide powerful—and, indeed, moving—reflections by a man of affairs on the historian’s vocation and profession. The core of the book lies in six essays which deal with the Spanish parliaments (*cortes*) and nine which analyse the development and importance of the seven elite university colleges (*colegios mayores*). In a pioneering essay published in 1980 (*‘Monarquías y Parlamentos’*), de Lario ranged over the relationships between the Crown and the representative institutions of the kingdoms of Spain; this succinct and suggestive essay paved the way for the great advances that were made in the study of Spanish parliaments in the 1980s. Three specialised essays on the *cortes* of the kingdom of Valencia fill important gaps in reminding us of the tensions and fissures that were never far below the surface of Valencian life and which all but burst forth into disorder and even rebellion when Philip IV and Olivares demanded that the kingdom contribute to the ‘Union of Arms’. This is confirmed in a fascinating essay on Mosén Porcar, who provided the most informed account of the response of the city of Valencia to the crisis of 1625–6 and by a detailed chronology of the incidents that might so easily have led Valencia into a rebellion such as that

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made by Catalonia in 1640. Chief among the essays on the educational system of seventeenth-century Spain is an important piece on the networks of patronage (*‘Mecenazgos y burocracia’*) which demonstrated how the *colegios mayores* gained a stranglehold on advancement within the burgeoning bureaucracy of the Habsburg state. De Lario writes with particular authority about the *Colegio Mayor de San Clemente de los Españoles* which was established in Bologna in 1369 and which provided the template for the six Castilian *colegios mayores* which were founded in the years 1401–1525. The essays on the Bologna college make a substantial contribution to the development of educational structures and to the loss that Spain suffered when it prevented students from travelling abroad to study. The government of Philip IV brought the golden age of the *colegios mayores* to an end when it cynically took advantage of internal disorders in the *Colegio Mayor de San Clemente de los Españoles* to crush its independence and when it seized control of appointment to professorial chairs in the Castilian *colegios mayores*.

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*Revolutionary England and the National Covenant: State Oaths, Protestantism and the Political Nation, 1553–1682*, by Edward Vallance (Woodbridge: Boydell P., 2005; pp. 262. £55).

The focus of Edward Vallance’s book is the English civil wars of the mid-seventeenth century: their causes, their course, their legacy. In the idea of covenants between God and elect nations he finds a dynamic and revolutionary force that has been alternately underestimated and misunderstood. It has, he argues, been obscured and distorted by Perry Miller’s emphasis on God’s covenants with individual believers; belittled by social and economic interpretations of the civil war that have considered spiritual contracts only as analogies to commercial or political ones; and overlooked by historians to whom the religious causes of the wars are secondary to secular ones. Vallance’s work recalls the perspectives of J.R. Knott, John Hale and Timothy George, who have insisted on the militancy or belligerence of pre-war Puritan Biblicism. Not only must an elect nation purge its individual and communal sins; not only must it ally with others of its kind and fight God’s battles against popery abroad; it must also bring its own idolatrous rulers to account. That obligation enables Vallance to link his subject to vindications of political resistance to the magistrate which he traces back to the Marian exiles and which he believes to have persisted in the earlier seventeenth century. After examining sixteenth-century precursors (the Bond of Association of 1584 prominent among them), Vallance takes us through the national pledges of the 1640s: the Protestation of 1641, the Vow and Covenant of 1643, and then, in the same year, the document on which the book centres, the Solemn League and Covenant. He explores the challenges which it posed to its subscribers when conflicting demands were made on their allegiance, first by the ‘engagement’ imposed by the Rump, and then by the restored monarchy, whose identification of the Covenant with disloyalty coloured the politics not only of the early Restoration but of the exclusion crisis. Vallance challenges the supposition that the idea of national covenants was essentially a Presbyterian one. It appealed, he maintains, to

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