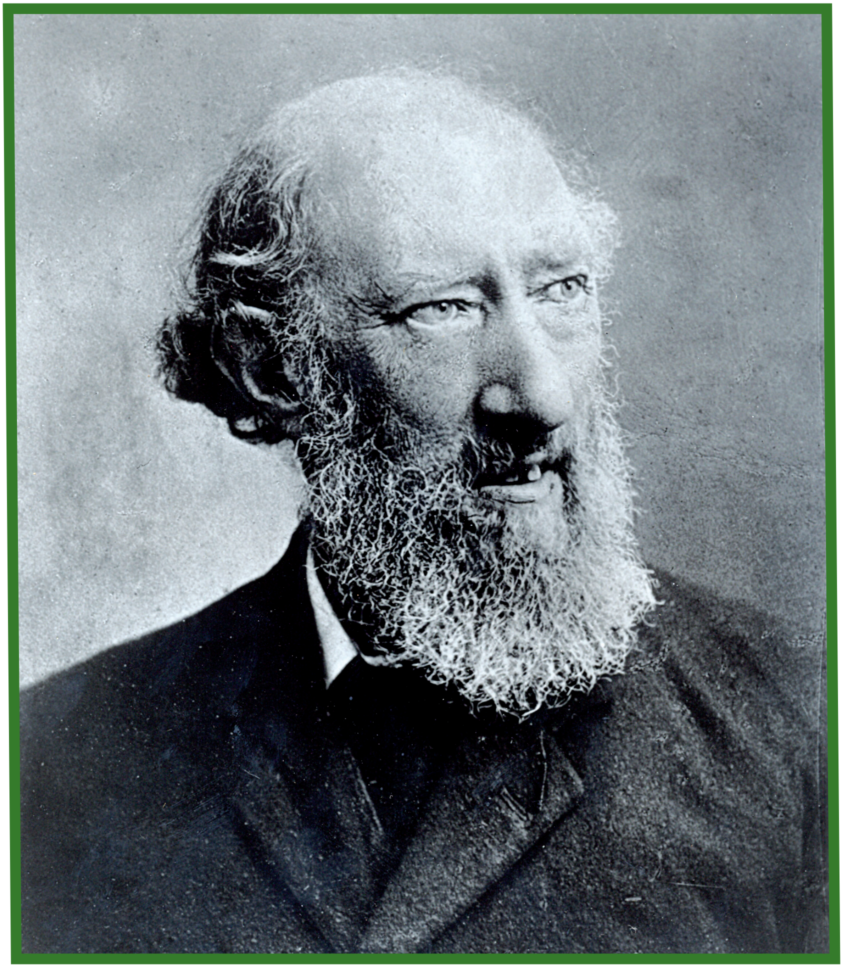
SAMUEL RAWSON GARDINER AND THE IDEA OF HISTORY



Mark Nixon

STUDIES IN HISTORY

ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STUDIES IN HISTORY

New Series

SAMUEL RAWSON GARDINER AND THE IDEA OF HISTORY

This series is supported by annual subventions from the
Economic History Society and from the Past and Present Society

SAMUEL RAWSON GARDINER AND THE IDEA OF HISTORY

Mark Nixon

THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
THE BOYDELL PRESS

First published 2010

A Royal Historical Society publication
Published by The Boydell Press
an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620, USA
website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

ISBN 978–0–86193–310–5

ISSN 0269–2244

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

Printed in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

FOR NANCY-MAY MATTHEWS

'life is short and Gardiner is long'

Guernsey Jones, 1901

Contents

Acknowledgements

It would not have been possible to carry out this research without the financial assistance of the Student Awards Agency for Scotland, the Arts and Humanities Research Board (as was), and the Faculty of Arts of Stirling University. St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, gave me two fellowships, each of one month's duration, in order to stay and conduct research there, for which I would like to thank the Warden and the Trustees. The Institute of Historical Research awarded me a Scouloudi History Research Fellowship for 2003–4, which was of inestimable assistance in the final stages.

The staff of the following libraries cannot be thanked enough: Stirling University Library, the National Library of Scotland, the Mitchell Library, St Deiniol's Library, the British Library, London University Library, Edinburgh University Library, Glasgow University Library, Newcastle University Library, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and Cambridge University Library. I must offer particular acknowledgement to Gordon Willis at Stirling University Library, for arranging for me to take out, on long-term loan, Gardiner's *History* on top of my standard borrowing allowance. The staff of that library do an excellent job, often in the face of difficult circumstances. Two other libraries should also receive special mention. Glasgow's Mitchell Library is perhaps Britain's finest public institution, as wonderful and unique as the city itself. St Deiniol's Library is Britain's best-kept academic secret, offering a combined working and social environment unparalleled in my experience. My fondest thanks go to the Librarian, Patsy Williams (and her assistant librarians of the past decade), Greg Morris, Karen Parry, and the Warden, Peter Francis. In addition to these libraries, I must also thank the staff of the relevant archives, special collections and manuscripts divisions of the following institutions: King's College, Cambridge; City University, London; King's College London; University College London; University of London Library; All Souls' College, Oxford; Christ Church, Oxford; Jesus College, Oxford; Merton College, Oxford; the University of Reading; the University of Calgary; the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA; and the University of Pennsylvania. Many thanks also to the Warden and Fellows of Merton College, Oxford, for permission to reproduce the portrait photograph (MCPh/A13/4) on the cover.

A number of individuals have helped with specific elements of my research, and I would like to thank the following for taking the time to respond to my various requests for information, suggested reading, and their thoughts on my ideas: Daniel Breazeale, John Drakakis, David Fahey, Tim Grass, David Killingray, Timothy Lang, John Morrill, Myron Noonkester and Adrian Streete. Fiona Chalamanda helped me with translating some

German passages, Stephen Penn with some Latin. Just because the material that Joe Bray helped me with has been excised (for reasons of space and balance only) does not mean that I do not appreciate his help – quite the opposite. Conversations with Jonathan Wild have been particularly inspirational and formative for my developing ideas. Helen Dingwall, Jane Garnett and Richard Whiting offered judicious comments on early drafts of this book, for which I am grateful. Finally, the two anonymous readers appointed by the RHS and Arthur Burns as editorial advisor offered extremely helpful comments and a great deal of support; without them, rather obviously, this book would never have come to fruition.

Early versions of parts of this book were given as papers on a number of occasions. In addition to offering my gratitude to those present who offered comments and questions, I would like to offer particular thanks to Peter Yeandle for the invitation to speak at Histfest VII, Lancaster, in the summer of 2003 and to James Knowles for the invitation to speak at the Caroline Drama Symposium organised by him on behalf of the Scottish Institute for Northern Renaissance Studies, held at Stirling in April 2004. The members of the Modern British History Seminar of the Institute of Historical Research have been an inspiration, and offered keen, yet kind, criticism when I spoke to them in February 2004. I must also express my heartfelt gratitude to those who have spoken at or attended the History of Ideas seminar series that it was my pleasure to co-ordinate at Stirling.

David Bebbington guided my early development as a researcher with more tolerance, critical acumen and liberal learning than anyone has any right to expect. For ten years I was, off and on, a student of the history department at Stirling University, and built up a series of debts – in particular to Jim Smyth, Emma Macleod, Bob McKean, George Peden and Mike Rapport, and, of course, to the office staff: Linda Bradley, Margaret Hendry and Annabelle Hopkins. The inhabitants of B19 were highly supportive; Neil Forsyth, Alison Kennedy and Ross Christie had their ears bent more than most. The environment at St Deiniol's is highly conducive to work, but the friendship of Anne Isba and Neslihan Senoçak has ensured that my visits have been extremely pleasurable as well as productive. Roland Quinault has been more helpful than he probably realises. Without the support of my parents, Ro and Allan Drowley, this book would never have been completed. I cannot even begin to give due recognition to the ways in which Bethan Benwell has supported me throughout this process. Nancy-May Matthews, one of a number of members of my family who have shared my fascination with the past, offered financial help with the building up of my personal Gardiner library. Unfortunately she passed away during the period in which the manuscript was being prepared and will never see the result; for this reason, I dedicate the book to her memory.

Mark Nixon
April 2010

Abbreviations

CR	*Contemporary Review*
DN	*Daily News*
DNB	*Dictionary of national biography*
EB	*Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th edn)
EHR	*English Historical Review*
ER	*Edinburgh Review*
FR	*Fortnightly Review*
HJ	*Historical Journal*
ILN	*Illustrated London News*
NBR	*North British Review*
NQ	*Notes and Queries*
PMG	*Pall Mall Gazette*
QR	*Quarterly Review*
RH	*Revue historique*
TLS	*Times Literary Supplement*

Editorial Note

The following abbreviations are used throughout for Gardiner's principal writings:

CD	*The constitutional documents of the puritan revolution, 1625–1660*, 3rd edn, Oxford 1906
C&P	*History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649–1660: with a supplementary chapter*, London 1902
CPH	*Cromwell's place in history: founded on six lectures delivered in the University of Oxford*, London 1898
GCW	*History of the Great Civil War, 1642–1649*, London 1893
HoE	*History of England, from the accession of James I to the outbreak of the Civil War*, London 1883–4
OC	*Oliver Cromwell*, London 1900

In the cases of the *History of England*, the *History of the Great Civil War*, and the *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, these are the octavo 'Cabinet editions' published by Longmans. In each case, they are revised editions of earlier works. They are, however, the editions which are most readily found in libraries and, indeed, were the editions which were most widely read. They have been chosen as the principal editions for study in this book for ease of reference for the reader, but also in recognition of the fact that it is with these editions that Gardiner reached his audience and influenced developing thought on seventeenth-century British history.

The appropriate section of the Gardiner bibliography provided as an appendix to this book may be consulted for the publication details of the different editions. Nevertheless, a short bibliographical explanation is required. The ten-volume *History of England* (1883–4) reprints five separate titles, each of which originally appeared as two-volume editions between 1863 and 1882. They were revised for the 'Cabinet edition', but to different degrees. The last set saw little more than the correction of printing errors; the first set, which had first appeared twenty years earlier, underwent significant revision, although the outline argument and the essential details are almost untouched. The opening chapter, for instance, in which Gardiner offered an 'Historical Retrospect' from 'England before the Conquest' to 'The last years of Elizabeth' was clearly considered by him to be in the main superfluous in 1883, although many of the later chapters are untouched by revision of any kind. Similarly, the *History of the Great Civil War* is more revised than the *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, although again neither is greatly changed and neither see any substantial changes to the structure or the argument. The main changes were in physical form. The *History of the Great Civil War* had originally appeared in three volumes; the 'Cabinet edition' appeared in four. The uncompleted *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate* had appeared in three volumes by the time of Gardiner's death in 1902, reaching 1656. After his death, the first chapter of the proposed fourth volume was published in a matching binding, and then incorporated into the fourth volume of the 'Cabinet edition'.

Although the 'Cabinet editions' are the principal editions chosen for this study, it is sometimes necessary to refer to the original editions, in which cases the full relevant reference is given.

As the eighteen volumes covering the period 1603 to 1656 were intended by Gardiner as a continuous narrative history, they have been treated throughout this book as a single entity, as indeed they have been by most scholars since their publication. On those occasions when the present author wishes to refer to the *History of England*, the *History of the Great Civil War* and the *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate* in this way, the phrase 'the *History*' is used. This applies only to the main text; footnotes will, of course, make it clear to which of these three titularly distinct works reference is being made.

For the volume of biography entitled *Oliver Cromwell*, the Longmans, Green & Company's 1900 octavo edition has been preferred to Goupil & Company's 1899 first edition in folio. Goupil's version was part of a series of lavishly illustrated biographies of British statesmen published in limited numbers (1,475 copies on standard-issue paper, and 350 on 'Japanese paper'). These volumes have become highly collectable and are rarely to be found in public or university libraries, unlike the Longmans edition. Aside from the deletion from the Longmans edition of the preface in which the owners of the originals of the images reproduced were thanked, the present author is unaware of any verbal difference between the two editions.

Similarly, the third edition of the *Constitutional documents* has been selected for ease of reference, being the edition which has rarely, if ever, been out of print since its first appearance in 1906 (Oxford/Clarendon kept it in print until the 1990s; it is currently available in a print-on-demand edition from Kessinger Publishing). As the second edition of 1899 had an enlarged compass (beginning in 1625 rather than 1628) and also saw the addition of a few more documents, Gardiner added a small amount of material to the introductory chapter and restructured its sections, whilst leaving unchanged its essentials and its conclusions (although a few further points of clarification were added and a few sentences removed). Only minor corrections were made in the text of the introduction for the third edition; however, the pagination is different, and it is for this reason that it is necessary to specify the edition.

To avoid repetition, Gardiner's name has been deleted from all references to his writings. All volume and page references for articles in the *Dictionary of national biography* refer to the 1921 Oxford University Press reprint. Act, scene and line numbers given for Shakespeare references are taken from the most recent relevant ‘Arden’ edition, currently published by International Thomson Publishing Services. Note also that, according to the former style, book titles and quotations use Thirty Years’ War, but that, according to modern style, the form Thirty Years War is used in the body of the text.

Introduction

During 2002 a major television series entitled 'The Civil War' was broadcast by the BBC. In the opening episode the presenter, Tristram Hunt, introduced the topic while sitting on a beach. Apparently playing with a couple of pieces of driftwood and a piece of string that he had found on his stage, Hunt began his narrative with the assertion that what has traditionally been called 'the English Civil War' was neither a single event nor a specifically English event, and should be thought of, rather, as 'the British Civil Wars'. Moreover, he opined, they should be recognised as a part of a wider European conflagration. And then, with a flourish, he dramatically stabbed the driftwood – now lashed together into the form of a crucifix – into the sand and declared that the wars in Britain and the wider European conflict were all about religion.[1] Visually, the image was striking, and the effect on the viewer was to suggest the newness of this vision of the events of the 1640s. Indeed, his introduction to the subject did present to the audience many elements of the current ruling orthodoxy in early Stuart studies – or, at least, set up the principal counter-argument to the previous prevailing orthodoxy, that of the Marxist historians of the 1960s and 1970s who, following Christopher Hill, talked of an 'English Revolution' caused by, and constitutive of, a particular social order.[2] Hunt's account, however, was not new – in a few short sentences, he had summarised the analysis provided by the first great historian of the period, the Victorian Samuel Rawson Gardiner.

Although he has not been the subject of any large-scale study, Gardiner, by dint of his reputation amongst his peers, his huge industry within historical studies and his magisterial works, has received the attention of a number of commentators on late nineteenth-century historiography and seventeenth-century studies. They offer a confusing number of different characterisations of the man and his work. Labels suggested by such work include nonconformist,[3]

1 'The Civil War', episode 1, 'The Breakdown', BBC2, 7 Jan. 2002.

2 The 'Revisionist' School is, of course, a complex, many-headed beast (as, indeed, was the Marxist School), and some scholars have questioned the centrality of religion to the conflict, stressing instead the actions, ambitions, squabbles and so on of high political actors at the Stuart court. However, all agree that the social theory of the 'Revolution' must be rejected, and that the conflict encapsulates a series of British wars: R. Cust and A. Hughes 'Introduction', to R. Cust and A. Hughes (eds), *The English Civil War*, London 1997.

3 M. G. Finlayson, *Historians, puritanism, and the English Revolution: the religious factor in English politics before and after the Interregnum*, Toronto 1983, 26; R. Howell, 'Who needs another Cromwell? Nineteenth-century images of Oliver Cromwell', in R. C. Richardson (ed.), *Images of Oliver Cromwell: essays for and by Roger Howell Jr*, Manchester 1993, 28.

positivist,[4] liberal nationalist,[5] crypto-imperialist,[6] partisan Gladstonian Liberal[7] or 'Victorian Liberal',[8] a non-partisan[9] and honest truth-teller,[10] a constitutional evolutionist,[11] an early part of the 'anti-Whig reaction',[12] Whig,[13] 'whiggish'[14] or 'broadly Whig',[15] chronicler,[16] anachronistic,[17] authoritative[18] and 'nearly infallible',[19] and hopelessly fallible.[20]

4 N. Tyacke, 'An unnoticed work of Samuel Rawson Gardiner', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* xlvii (1974), 244–5.

5 T. Lang, *The Victorians and the Stuart heritage: interpretations of a discordant past*, Cambridge 1995, 151–2, 155, 161, 163.

6 M. Noonkester, 'Liberalism in imperialism: S. R. Gardiner confronts English hegemony in Ireland', unpubl. paper, Southern Conference on British Studies, Fort Worth, Tx, 5 Nov. 1999, 7.

7 J. S. A. Adamson, 'Eminent Victorians: S. R. Gardiner and the Liberal as hero', *HJ* xxxiii (1990), 641–57.

8 R. C. Richardson, 'Cromwell and the inter-war European dictators', in Richardson, *Images of Oliver Cromwell*, 109.

9 J. R. Hale, *The evolution of British historiography: from Bacon to Namier*, London 1967, 60.

10 A. J. Grant, *English historians*, London 1906, p. lxxii.

11 C. Russell, 'Introduction', to C. Russell (ed.), *The origins of the English Civil War*, London 1973, 4–5.

12 P. M. B. Blaas, *Continuity and anachronism: parliamentary and constitutional development in Whig historiography and in the anti-Whig reaction between 1890 and 1930*, The Hague 1978, 41–3.

13 T. K. Rabb, 'Reflections on the comparison between historians and scientists', in H. Kozicki (ed.), *Developments in modern historiography*, New York 1993, 73. One very recent study of the historiography of the Civil War period has claimed that 'Gardiner produced the definitive Whig narrative of the period': A. MacLachlan, *The rise and fall of revolutionary England: an essay on the fabrication of seventeenth-century history*, Basingstoke 1996, 26. However, one must remain sceptical about the level of understanding of Gardiner attained in a text that throughout its pages calls him 'Samuel Ralston Gardiner'.

14 G. R. Elton, 'Lawrence Stone, The causes of the English Revolution' [review], repr in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart politics and government*, III: *Papers and reviews, 1973–1981*, Cambridge 1983, 475–6; B. H. G. Wormald, *Clarendon: politics, historiography and religion, 1640–1660*, Cambridge 1964, passim, but especially the introduction.

15 R. Cust, *The forced loan and English politics, 1626–1628*, Oxford 1987, 5.

16 H. A. L. Fisher, *Pages from the past*, Oxford 1939, 59.

17 R. G. Usher, *A critical study of the historical method of Samuel Rawson Gardiner with an excursus on the historical conception of the puritan revolution from Clarendon to Gardiner,* St Louis, Wa 1915, passim.

18 A. Fletcher, *The outbreak of the English Civil War*, London, 1985, p. viii. In a similar vein, to others he was 'authoritative … and confident' (W. H. Coates, 'An analysis of major conflicts in seventeenth-century England', in W. A. Aiken and B. D. Henning [eds], *Conflict in Stuart England*, London 1960, 18) and 'scholarly and authoritative' (R. Macgillivray, *Restoration historians and the English Civil War*, The Hague 1974, 48).

19 C. Hill, 'Introduction', to S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War*, repr. edn, London 1987, i, p. xxx. It is interesting to note that this is a 'late-Hill' perspective. In an earlier, more radically Marxist, phase, Hill complained of 'the tyranny of Gardiner', in an essay for *Modern Quarterly* i (1938), 91, cited in MacLachlan *Rise and fall*, 242.

20 The essential element in, for instance, the critique of the anonymous correspondent of the *TLS* who signed her/his letters as 'Historian': *TLS*, 25 Sept. 1919, 515; 23 Oct.

It seems almost incredible that such a diverse (and contradictory) set of opinions – and this presents only a selection of the views that have been expressed, by only a small selection of those that have commented on him – could be held with regard to one man. What is it about Gardiner that causes such confusion? One thing becomes clear when one takes the time to read Gardiner's work and analyse it, as is attempted in this book: his historical method in practice appears to bear little relationship to that described by most of the authors of the studies referenced above.

This apparent difficulty in pinning Gardiner down, or failure to evaluate properly the man and his work, is exemplified by Lytton Strachey. Although his series of essays on historians[21] did not include one on Gardiner, Strachey used a characterisation of Gardiner in expounding two of his subjects: Macaulay and Creighton. In the essay on Macaulay, who, Strachey wanted to argue, was a partial and colourful narrator, he wrote:

> What are the qualities that make a historian? Obviously, these three – a capacity for absorbing facts, a capacity for stating them, and a point of view. The two latter are connected, but not necessarily inseparable. The late Professor Samuel Gardiner, for instance, could absorb facts, and he could state them; but he had no point of view; and the result is that his book on the most exciting period of English history resembles nothing so much as a very large heap of sawdust.[22]

Conversely, in his essay on Creighton, who, Strachey wished to argue, was an impartial chronicler of the highest order (not that Strachey had any regard for Creighton's approach), he wrote:

> [Creighton] belonged to … the school of Oxford and Cambridge inquirers, who sought to reconstruct the past solidly and patiently, with nothing but facts to assist them – pure facts, untwisted by political or metaphysical bias and uncoloured by romance. In this attempt Creighton succeeded admirably. He was industrious, exact, clear-headed, and possessed a command over words that was quite sufficient for his purposes. He succeeded more completely than Professor Samuel Gardiner, whose history of the Early Stuarts and the Civil Wars was a contemporary work. Gardiner did his best, but he was not an absolute master of the method. Strive as he would, he could not prevent himself, now and then, from being a little sympathetic to one or other of his personages; sometimes he positively alluded to a physical circumstance; in short, humanity would come creeping in. A mistake! for Professor Gardiner's feelings about mankind are not illuminating; and the result is a slight blur.[23]

1919, 591; 20 Nov. 1919, 674–5; 4 Dec. 1919, 714. Perhaps the first discussion to take this line is H. Craik, *The life of Edward earl of Clarendon, lord high chancellor of England*, London 1911.

21 L. Strachey, *Portraits in miniature and other essays*, London 1931.

22 Ibid. 169–70.

23 Ibid. 208–9.

Although these two characterisations are not exact opposites (Strachey clearly considers Gardiner to be perennially dull), they still contain contradictions. Gardiner acts as the dry-as-dust counterbalance to the partial Macaulay, and as the partial counterbalance to the 'extremely scientific' Creighton. Thus, the historian that 'had no point of view' is also, it is implied, twisted by 'bias'. Unable or unwilling to settle on a final idea of Gardiner, Strachey merely invents new ones to serve each of his purposes.

Although Strachey did not take a final opinion on Gardiner, many have. What is noteworthy about these attempts to 'understand' Gardiner is that they are all based on details extracted from Gardiner's life – they ultimately refer to the context of Gardiner's writing. They have then become hypotheses, the evidence for which, or instances of which, can then be discovered retrospectively in his writings, whether or not they are obviously there. This is the 'contextualist' method of historiographical analysis.

The contextualist accounts of Gardiner revolve around two poles: his 'scientific' methodology and his religio-political connections. Indeed, these are the two issues which have informed most writing on late-Victorian historiography. Theorists of disciplinisation and professionalisation have posited that period as one of a new approach to the study of history, in which the university-based professional, with a suitable training in empirical historical method, took the role of the principal interpreter of the past away from the gentleman-scholar, the 'Man of Letters', whose literary modes were to be replaced by rational exposition.[24] Historians of religion and politics, however, have viewed history-writing as governed principally by religious or political concerns, just as they view the historical process as governed principally by religious or political concerns. This 'ideological' understanding of history-writing is the predominant model for all historians, not just historians of historiography, and certainly not limited to those interested in late nineteenth-century interpretations of the past. It provides a method that is easily understood and easily applied by those who have no special training in, or knowledge of, methods of historical study through the ages, but who need some kind of coverage of the subject in order to carry out the deconstruction of past interpretations of their chosen topic, period or individual that is considered necessary to an adequately discursive historiography. In short, it is the method favoured by historians of every historical phenomenon except History itself.

This in turn leads into another problem of much historiographical analysis – the emphasis on topic rather than historical theory or an individual historian. In addition to the understandable preoccupation of political historians with politics, there is a tendency for the political historian's period

[24] The best modern account of disciplinisation is to be found in D. Amigoni, *Victorian biography: intellectuals and the ordering of discourse*, Hemel Hempstead 1993.

of study to act as a focus as s/he studies historiography.[25] This results in a peculiarity of the study of the history of historiography: that most commentators on a given historian are themselves not historians of the period in which the historian under study lived. Rather, they are historians of the period which the earlier historian studied. Thus, virtually all the descriptions of Gardiner to be found have been written by historians of the early seventeenth century rather than of the late nineteenth century. They are preoccupied with what Gardiner got right and what Gardiner got wrong, and the concepts that they use to describe him are without exception treated as bias, that is as those elements of Gardiner's thought which are seen as destructive of a 'seventeenth-century real' – for which, read 'late twentieth- or early twenty-first-century "seventeenth-century real"'. The historian of historiography should be interested, however, in what is constitutive of a 'nineteenth-century "seventeenth-century real"'.

This approach to historiography – seeing its analysis from the point of view of topic rather than historiography or the historian – deepened during the course of the twentieth century under the shadow that has been cast over the study of British historiography by Herbert Butterfield. In *Man on his past* (1955), Butterfield called for an approach to the history of historiography which treated of a historical problem and the ways it has been understood. For him, 'the history of historiography' is potentially stuck in the 'marshy fields of intellectual and social history', those 'vague and indefinite subjects' that he always warned students against attempting.[26] To study historiography from these vantage points entails studying 'the history of the various concepts which the historian has to handle, and the concepts which govern his reconstruction of the past'.[27] To Butterfield that is a minefield, and by studying the treatment of a particular issue instead, he argued, it is possible 'to emancipate us from the tyranny of those superimposed concepts which so often control our historical reconstructions', thus advertising his belief that there is a 'real' against which the historiography can be compared in order to lay bare the ideological assumptions of the historian.[28]

Whether as a result of the calls for such work from Butterfield or from some other imperative, this approach to the history of historiography has become commonplace. Thus in the field of the study of the historiography of the seventeenth century there is, for example, William Lamont's *Puritanism and historical controversy* (1996), R. C. Richardson's *The debate on the English Revolution* (1977, 1988, 1998) and Alistair MacLachlan's *The rise and fall of revolutionary England* (1996). All are valuable studies, but all were written

25 Needless to say, this is not a problem solely of political history; here, historians of politics are acting as an exemplar.

26 H. Butterfield, *Man on his past: the study of the history of historical scholarship*, Cambridge 1955, p. xvi.

27 Ibid. 20.

28 Ibid. 21.

by historians of the seventeenth century rather than historians of historiography, or of the times which their ostensible subjects – the post-seventeenth-century historians – inhabited. However, studies in which historiography is more clearly the principal area of interest to the writer do exist, such as John Kenyon's *The history men* (1983) and Rosemary Jann's *The art and science of Victorian history* (1985). A hybrid of these two main approaches exists in the work of historians interested in how a particular generation sought to understand an aspect or specific period of the past; Timothy Lang's *The Victorians and the Stuart heritage* (1995) is a case in point. Unfortunately, the problems of contextualism noted in the work of historians not specialising in the history of historiography are present in these studies also.

In his book, Kenyon included a chapter section entitled 'The Stuarts: Gardiner to Trevelyan', in which he dedicated ten pages to a close discussion of Gardiner – or at least what at first appears to be a close discussion of Gardiner, but on closer inspection proves itself to be a close reading of Gardiner's critics. There are just five footnote references to Gardiner's own writing – and in each case it was to a passage in the short prefaces which Gardiner provided for each of the volumes of his *History of England*, rather than to the main body of text in those works. The large number of articles and reviews published in various journals were left out of the picture entirely, despite the fact that it is in those that Gardiner made his most explicit comments on the theory and method of history. The impression that the reader gets is that Kenyon's knowledge of Gardiner's work is very limited – and the impression is not dispelled by the analysis that he offers.

That analysis essentially rests on, indeed repeats, the accusations offered by the historian Roland G. Usher in his *A critical study of the historical method of Samuel Rawson Gardiner* (1915). Usher sought to destroy his subject's reputation and, despite the detailed refutation of his charges by Gardiner's widow, friends and other historians, many of his unsubstantiated claims have stuck.[29] The result of Kenyon's use of Usher is that he engages in an apparently comprehensive critical analysis of Gardiner, declaring that he was wrong in much of his detail, perhaps in all of his generalisations, and certainly in his entire conception of the seventeenth century and of historical method. However, he does not offer the reader anything by which to understand Gardiner's method and his selection of detail and construction of generalisations. Thus, Kenyon asserts that 'for all his protestations to the contrary Gardiner had approached the period with his mind made up, and tailored his narrative accordingly',[30] but quite what Gardiner's mind was is left unclear. Certainly Kenyon makes a few suggestions with regard to particular points, for example that Gardiner believed that Charles I was always wrong and

[29] Usher's book occasioned a lengthy debate in the letters pages of the *TLS*, in each issue from 25 Sept. to 18 Dec. 1919.

[30] J. Kenyon, *The history men: the historical profession in England since the Renaissance*, London 1983, 219.

that his enemies were always right (an inaccurate generalisation of Kenyon's own) but he refuses to offer his readers any insight into what he considers to be the origins of Gardiner's views on Charles and Cromwell.[31] He repeatedly refers to Whiggism or neo-Whiggism, but only in that way that, post-Butterfield, the phrase 'the Whig interpretation' has become an empty signifier and of dubious analytical use.[32] Kenyon also makes the claim that Gardiner eschewed his early Irvingism for Liberalism and Positivism,[33] which is so inaccurate a statement as to be worth nothing. However, even if it were true, he seems to have had no idea why Gardiner may have either eschewed Irvingism or taken up Liberalism or Positivism, or what the historian might have taken from any of them with regard to his understanding of the past or approach to historical theory and method. What Kenyon does offer his readers, however, is biographical detail. Thus, he mentions Gardiner's famed tricycling trips to the battlefields of England, Ireland and Europe, as part of his portrait-painting of the 'positivist'.[34] With little knowledge of Gardiner's texts, Kenyon resorts to what little is known about Gardiner's life in his attempt to understand the historian's work, or perhaps to illustrate what he wished to say about Gardiner's significance – which was that the great Victorian historian was one of the figures of a late nineteenth-century 'scientific' historiography which played an important part in the development of the profession but which failed to understand what their ideological preoccupations added to or subtracted from a 'true' historical account.

Rosemary Jann's *The art and science of Victorian history*, although a considerably more sophisticated work than Kenyon's, suffers from similar problems. Her understanding of Victorian historiography rests on the familiar trope of professionalisation, although she rightly complicates the somewhat simplistic accounts of that process that she had encountered elsewhere, by arguing that – particularly at Oxford and Cambridge – the amateur, literary mode and the professional, scientific mode of historical writing survived hand-in-hand for much longer than has been supposed.[35] However, Jann posits Gardiner as one of those who did come after (theoretically, if not chronologically) the historians in whom she was interested, that is as a more clearly 'scientific' historian. As with Kenyon, direct knowledge of Gardiner's work is not apparent in Jann's text – indeed, she only provides a single quotation from

31 Ibid. 220.

32 In Butterfield's original use of the term, in *The Whig interpretation of history* (1931), it is used in such a way as to incorporate the work of virtually every historian to have gone before Butterfield and certainly all historians interested in the history of the constitution; it has since become a term with an apparently inexhaustible applicability, being used to describe extremely diverse historians, whether Whig or Tory in their personal politics, or whether 'literary' or 'scientific' in their methodology.

33 Kenyon, *The history men*, 222.

34 Ibid. 214.

35 R. Jann, *The art and science of Victorian history*, Columbus, OH 1985, passim, but especially her 'Conclusion: desired presents and re-ordered pasts', 207–14.

Gardiner's work, and that by way of a citation in a quotation taken from the writings of his friend C. H. Firth. And, like Kenyon, she relies on Usher's earlier study. Her apparent failure to read any of Gardiner's work before writing about him may well have contributed to her failure to recognise that Gardiner deserved to stand alongside Maitland and Bury, her two examples from the so-called 'scientific' generation who prove, on closer examination, to be as literary as they are scientific. However, that insight, had she reached it, would also have been made alongside the traditional ideological reading that she provides for her main subjects. In her opening paragraph, Jann states that the 'Victorians plundered the past for the raw stuff of imagination and shaped what they found to their own political, social, and aesthetic ends'.[36] Later, she reminds her readers that she is 'primarily concerned with examining the ways certain nineteenth-century historians negotiated intellectual and moral dilemmas specific to their age',[37] and not how those historians negotiated the intellectual and moral dilemmas of the period that they were studying. For Jann, then, the study of historiography entails merely the tracing of the shaping of the past in the service of contemporary political concerns.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, a scan of the entries in the index to her book reveals precious few references to any theorists of history-writing or philosophers whose influence may be traced in British historiography, particularly foreign theorists: no Hegel, no Fichte, no Kant, no Schleiermacher, no Schelling, no Comte, a single mention of Vico in the main text, one to Herder in the introduction only, a couple of mentions of Schiller, and just two footnote references to Langlois and Seignobos. Philosophy plays little part in Jann's account of the art and science of Victorian historiography. For Gardiner, she provides a short biographical account that offers no analysis of his working methods, alongside a couple of serious misrepresentations. As a scientific historian, in her understanding of that genre, for example, Gardiner 'considered picturesque detail untrustworthy and, even if true, trivial'.[38] Such a conclusion could not be held by any reader of Gardiner's account of a pillow-fight between Fairfax and Cromwell. Moreover, he was willing to incorporate certain stories even when he did not believe them to be true, as long as they could be used to provide a window on a character, such as Cromwell's reported visit to see the corpse of Charles, and his famous line, 'trust in God, and keep your powder dry'.[39] These stories probably are not true, Gardiner wrote, in the sense of 'what really happened', but they were created and freely circulated because they expressed, for their author and the hearers, a truth not stated, because it cannot be adequately represented, in the formal histories. At these moments, Gardiner is a long

36 Ibid. p. xi.
37 Ibid. p. xii.
38 Ibid. 217.
39 See chapter 5 below for a discussion of Gardiner's use of these words.