

supported the rebellion, but no one, apart from three officers from Srirangapatna, was even charged with wrongdoing, and of those three, one was cashiered, one got an honorable discharge, and the third was acquitted. At the heart of their defense was the old saw that only white officers experienced at commanding sepoy could stop the latter from mutinying and destroying everything the British had built in India—and that any and all reform threatened this delicate dynamic. So powerful had this argument become that it could be successfully deployed to redefine outright mutiny by whites as a heroic defense of empire.

The end was both sudden and decisive. The rebellions of 1857 thoroughly discredited European officers' claims to be the bulwark that stood between successful imperial order and chaos. The power and influence of what Welsch calls “stratocracy” (rule by officers) collapsed like a house of cards. Soon after, in 1858, the Government of India Act replaced the Company with direct rule and the Company's armed forces were forcibly incorporated into the regular army—precisely what the white officers had so long resisted. In the event, the majority of them resigned their commissions and returned to Britain in disgust.

This is an exhaustively researched study, notable for its use of sources from the relatively underutilized Tamil Nadu State Archives (Chennai) including unique material on the sepoy troops and on the Madras Army's relationships with Indian rulers. Particularly effective use is made of Persian-language sources including letters, chronicles, and even military poetry. One slight disappointment is the fact that Welsch has so little to say about the decades between roughly 1810 and 1857: we are left to assume that not much changed after the white officers got away, literally, with murder and mutiny in 1809. That may be so, but it would have been useful to hear more about the intersection of “stratocracy” and broader Company governance during those critical decades. This is, however, a minor caveat. This is an excellent and highly readable book that offers a significant new interpretation of the travails of the East India Company and its armies in the century or so leading up to the end of Company rule in South Asia.

Margaret R. Hunt   
 Uppsala University  
[margaret.hunt@hist.uu.se](mailto:margaret.hunt@hist.uu.se)

NEIL YOUNGER. *Religion and Politics in Elizabethan England: The Life of Sir Christopher Hatton*. Politics, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022. Pp. 288. \$130.00 (cloth).  
 doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.216

This book is not a traditional biography—as Younger explains, three old biographies of Sir Christopher Hatton already exist—but rather a focused study of the man's political career and patronage networks. At its core is a reconsideration of Hatton's religious beliefs. Many of his contemporaries believed he was a crypto-Catholic, an idea that some historians have dismissed out of hand. Younger shows persuasively that Hatton was, at the very least, among the most conservative members of the Elizabethan regime, though his easy-going personality smoothed his relations with hot Protestant councilors. He exercised influence from around 1572 as the queen's favorite courtier, acting as principal gatekeeper for access to the royal person, and he was appointed to the Privy Council in 1577. His influence at court may help to explain why the regime remained relatively tolerant of Catholics prior to the 1580s—or perhaps it was the other way around. Perhaps, given the climate of anti-Catholic hysteria prevailing from 1569 to 1572, the queen set Hatton up as a deliberate counterweight to Cecil and Leicester, putting into practice her well-documented love of equipoise. This would suggest that the traditional story, that Elizabeth promoted Hatton after taking a fancy to his looks,

is not quite the whole truth. After his appointment as Lord Chancellor in 1587, which his enemies may have arranged in the mistaken hope that he would flounder, Hatton allied with conservative bishops to turn up the heat against puritans, finding this crusade easier after the death of Leicester in 1588.

One of the most interesting ideas in Younger's book is that councilors recognized English Catholics' need for political representation, and that this may have been provided informally and discreetly through kinship and clientage networks such as Hatton's. This strategy would have helped prevent Catholics from becoming disaffected, while also allowing the government to stay abreast of their attitudes and feelings. Though Hatton conformed to the religious settlement and encouraged Catholics to do the same, he clearly empathized with members of the old faith and may himself have been Catholic at heart—as Younger suggests, he may have been inclined to a sort of Henrician Catholicism. His ambiguous position allowed him to promote and protect Catholics, but it could also involve him in compromising situations, especially after he became a councilor. For instance, his position required him to sit in judgement on Catholics and to give speeches condemning popery. Hatton worked in harmony with his peers at the council table and did not tend to promote distinctly conservative domestic or foreign policies. Some historians believe that Hatton became a committed Protestant later in life; though Younger does not try to disprove this definitively, he seems to find it doubtful.

Younger exercises balance, nuance, and good judgement throughout this smartly written book. He demonstrates a lightly worn mastery of the existing scholarship on Elizabethan politics and religion, though some recent work which could have been used was not. Without suggesting that Younger should have written in the Peter Lake mode, he does not always convey the sense of excitement which his findings merit. After all, some of the details are in themselves explosive, such as the fact that some of Hatton's men were implicated in the Babington Plot. The analysis does come to life at times, for instance with a story about a priest disguised as a gardener who allegedly smuggled Catholic books into England by hiding them inside shipments of plants and trees. There is also an element of murder mystery, as Younger weighs the evidence of Hatton's alleged involvement in the strange death of the 8th Earl of Northumberland, which was officially ruled as suicide.

Younger has undertaken incredibly detailed research in identifying the often-obscure men and women in Hatton's social networks, proving that a great proportion of his family members, clients, and associates were Catholics and conservatives. While this means the book will be a biographical treasure-trove for scholars working on Elizabeth's reign, it does make the long second chapter rather repetitive, as Younger introduces name after name and pieces together fragments of information about their lives. Younger claims that Hatton had more extensive relations with Catholics "than any other significant political figure of the reign" (62), and while this is probably true, it would have been helpful to have an indication as to how this could possibly be proved, given the partial state of the evidence.

The use of endnotes in this series is unfortunate. Endnotes were an economical expedient for publishers in the days of phototypesetting, but their only advantage nowadays is to stash information away at the back of a book or chapter to avoid troubling casual readers. There can be few readers of specialist historical monographs who do not wish to regularly consult the notes, so they ought to appear on each page. However, this complaint must not detract from Younger's achievement in bringing out the intricate reality of the Elizabethan religious landscape, furnishing further proof that confessional labels are not altogether helpful in explaining personal religious attitudes and beliefs in the post-Reformation period.

*Jonathan McGovern*   
Nanjing University  
[jonathan.mcgovern@nju.edu.cn](mailto:jonathan.mcgovern@nju.edu.cn)