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Barbara Donagan. *War in England, 1642-1649.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. xii + 443 pp. Plates. $110.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-928518-1.

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Men, Materiel, and Morals: The Anatomy of Civil War England

One almost cringes when a new title arrives bearing some combination of the words "civil," "war," and "England." After a quarter of a century of working on civil war issues, there is sometimes a dread when a book arrives on your desk. However, the last year or so has seen some excellent new titles, by Mike Braddick, Ian Gentles, Mark Stoyle and so on, and this new book by Barbara Donagan is no exception to this trend.[1] Donagan reckons, with some justification, that there is still much to be done on the course of the war, the military experience‘of soldiers, and the processes of militarizing a section of society and the concomitant effects on the fabric of society as a whole. Civil wars are notoriously different than international wars, for none of the combatants are in another country, they are all at home. The British and Irish civil wars were, of course, composites, part civil war and part international war, for soldiers from each of the four countries fought in a foreign country at some time or another, but, for much of the time, all combatants were âat homeâ in a broad sense, sharing common languages, perceptions and cultures with their enemies and the people amongst whom they lived. At the risk of slipping into clichÃ©, they were sometimes fighting their neighbors or members of their family.

It is very difficult to find some particularly new angle to the study of the war, but Donagan has done it. In some ways at first glance it bears comparison with Charles Carltonâs book from 1992, *Going to the Wars*. This book, in a similar fashion to Carltonâs, dissects the war in an imaginative way. The first section looks at the nature of war and the justification of war: how wars could be legitimized both in their cause and in their course. Naturally there were no single views on this. For some this was a Christian war necessary to defend an embattled godly way of life (usually this was a Presbyterian and âpuritanâ view). For others here was little but horror. Halcyon days were lost; peace was sacrificed to a bloody catastrophe like that witnessed on the Continent, from where allusions and comparisons (as well as expertise) were drawn. Donagan then looks at the supposed amateurish nature of the military command during the war and makes interesting points about the "arm (or sedan?) chair" manuals that were available to the would-be generals, and adds this to a melange of training sessions for the militia led by veterans, the private companies of soldiers like the Honourable Artillery Company, which Donagan suggests brought together the notion of citizenship and "soldiership," in a precursor of some of the ideals stress by the New Model Army as it developed its political programs.

The subsequent section looks at the mechanics of fighting the war: the types of troops involved, weaponry, battles, and skirmishes. Again one might think that the large numbers of texts on battles and fighting might have given us all we need, but Donagan sheds even more light on the process and experience. The chapter on intelligence works particularly well. The chapter on the development of military law is also very good and forms an excellent backdrop to studies of the brutality of some

aspects of the war in its later years: this is followed by an excellent chapter on how the law was put into practice and by an examination of those who were exposed to being "outside" the law on racial, religious, and moral grounds.

The book switches about halfway through to the protagonists themselves: armies, officers, and men, before concluding with an examination of two sieges, Boarstall House and Colchester, as a sort of workbench on which the foregoing chapters can be tested. The former siege, which involved Sir Thomas Fairfax personally, ended about two months after the kingâs surrender in 1646. The obstinacy of the governor, Sir William Campion, was based on honor, both personal and professional. The surrender was a public event witnessed by schoolboy Anthony Wood, given the day off to see it. The second siege, Colchester, concluded with the execution of two royalist generals accused of breaking the terms of their surrenders at the end of the first war. This siege was one of the incidents of the second civil war that so angered the men victorious in the first; a war they saw as an attempt to overturn Godâs victory. This second surrender was thus very different and the mutability of the concepts of honor and duty that the years of war had brought into the spotlight and questioned came into play. Royalist leaders were accused of betraying promises to the victorious parliament that overrode their loyalty to the king, which was no longer accepted as paramount.

This book is a very valuable addition to the corpus of knowledge on the civil war. It explores, as one might expect from Donaganâs earlier work, concepts of honor, obligation, duty, and loyalty and it does so in an engaging manner. Moreover, this book, an excellent read and a fascinating insight into the war, justifies Dr. Donaganâs claim that there is so much more to explore.

Note

[1]. Mike Braddick, *Godâs Fury, Englandâs Fire: A New History of the English Civil War* (New York: Penguin, 2008); Ian Gentles, *The English Revolution and the Wars in the Three Kingdoms* (Harlow: Pearson-Longman, 2007); Mark Stoyle, *Soldiers and Strangers: An Ethnic History of the English Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

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