

were changes to the interior decoration of houses, as shown by surviving wall paintings and plasterwork. These often show biblical scenes, casting doubt on Patrick Collinson's argument that godly Protestants became iconophobic. The messages of paintings might be reinforced by inscriptions, sometimes in the black letter of popular print, providing a suitably godly environment for the morning assembly of all members of the household to hear a Bible reading.

This review has barely scratched the surface of this important book. There can be few historians of early modern Britain who will not find material relevant to them here. Most importantly, Hamling and Richardson achieve their goal of showing how behaviors shaped, and were shaped by, the material environment of the household.

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FRANCES HARRIS. *The General in Winter: The Marlborough-Godolphin Friendship and the Reign of Queen Anne*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 387. \$45.50 (cloth).
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This is a plum pudding of a book. A shell of chronology confines a mass of loose material. Yet lucky slices contain coin of the realm. See the earl of Sunderland's advice on coping with wayward kings: "if they would not take good advice there was no way of dealing with them, but by running into their measures till they had ruined themselves" (35). Such savories show Frances Harris's unsurpassed knowledge of the later Stuart period. Two well-regarded biographical studies based on Harris's cataloging of the Evelyn and Blenheim manuscripts in the British Library undergird *The General in Winter: Transformations of Love: The Friendship of John Evelyn and Margaret Godolphin* (2003), examined the platonic passion so marked among the ruling classes of this century.

That Harris loathes Sarah appeared in *A Passion for Government: The Life of Sarah, duchess of Marlborough* (1991). There Harris admits that Sarah had "a remarkable capacity for inspiring love and friendship," but both were weakened by the "passionate wrong-headedness of an arrogant, driven, opinionated woman ... damaging the very cause she wished to promote" (4). What lends historical importance to the paradox of Sarah's attraction and repulsion was that two ministers of state, Marlborough and Godolphin, had a "common love for Sarah [that] helped to cement their long political partnership and whose careers were built on her friendship with the Queen" (55).

Having laid down the themes of the present work twenty-six years ago, Harris now asks, "why 'The General in Winter'?" She asserts that "the age of Anne was an endgame: agony and failure" (9). The Stuart dynasty was dying out. War over the English (and Spanish) succession was being fought out, endlessly, so it seemed, on European battlefields in summer and in English parliamentary combats in "winter campaigns." This narrative of negativity reverts to 1660: to John Churchill's early career and his love affair with Sarah Jenyns. Together, they ascended at court, he in the service of James, duke of York, she in the household of James's younger daughter, the princess Anne. Both Lord and Lady Churchill were instrumental in the overthrow of King James. Indeed, "Churchill was so closely involved that it has since been called 'Lord Churchill's Coup'" (46).

The turgid politics of King William's reign are dealt with briefly before "the Sunshine Day" of Queen Anne's accession and the triumvirate's triumph: Sarah as the queen's favorite; "Marlborough" (as he now was) as captain general of the queen's army; and Godolphin at the head of her treasury. Queen Anne rejoiced in having "three such friends, a happiness I believe

nobody in my Sphere ever enjoy'd before" (108). Throughout the reign of Queen Anne, the triumvirate remained unbreakable. Harris admits that the private propulsions of the relationship remain a "mystery at the heart of success and failure" (xii). The best explanation she can offer is that, periodically, "Marlborough and his wife took Godolphin off to [their first home, Sarah's inheritance] St. Albans for ... one of those intervals of complete seclusion, altogether without record, by which their partnership was renewed" (180).

The partnership was strained to the uttermost when, in July 1706, Sarah refused to attend the queen and then, on 10 October, wrote her "an incredibly arrogant and offensive letter" (193). Sarah was immediately replaced in the queen's affections by Abigail Hill, the queen's dresser, Sarah's poor relation, now the tory conduit to the queen. Abigail's favor was the agency that enabled the queen to diminish Marlborough's military authority and that secured Abigail's brother, John ("five bottle Jack"), the command of the Quebec expedition. Its troops were withdrawn from Marlborough's command with the express intention of making it weaker than the French. All the while, Sarah still demanded her restoration to the royal favor.

At last Marlborough personally compelled his wife to resign as the queen's chief attendant. Sarah held a public ball to celebrate her dismissal and she remained the cynosure of her party. At last, something is said about the sexual source of Sarah's power, albeit in a backhanded way. An enemy of the duchess marveled that, although Sarah was "past her meridian, her bloom was succeeded by so graceful an air that youth itself could scarce make her more desirable" (339).

In 1711, Marlborough captured Bouchain in the face of a far larger French army. In Parliament, even an enemy admitted that, "'tis to this man's conduct that we owe our sitting here in peace, [and] that France is so reduced to a necessity of desiring peace" (347). At the moment of victory, fate intervened to truncate the triumvirate. Marlborough was forced into exile. Godolphin, faithfully nursed by Sarah, died at St. Albans. Then the duchess of Marlborough joined her husband on the Continent. After eighteen months spent plotting the Hanoverian succession, the duke and duchess returned to England in triumph. They welcomed the new, Hanoverian, king. Knowing what he owed the duke, King George restored Marlborough to all his offices. Sarah took up with the opposition.

Harris's afterword takes us to October 1744. Then the dying duchess had the Marlborough-Godolphin correspondence read to her. Here was the record of how, "over a decade ... they worked for the safety and prosperity of 'this island of Britain,' so that it could take its place as a European and a global power" (363). It seems that the reign of Queen Anne was not wintery after all! The duchess concluded that "never any two Men Deserved so well from their Country" as Marlborough and Godolphin (363). As always, Sarah had had the last word, an appropriate conclusion to a study that, despite its subtitle, is not so much about Marlborough and Godolphin per se (there is little detail about the military prowess of the one and less about the fiscal genius of the other) but that does address the greatest love triangle in British history.

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LEONIE JAMES. *"This Great Firebrand": William Laud and Scotland, 1617–1645*. Studies in Modern British Religious History 36. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017. Pp. 195. \$99.00 (cloth).
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"I think you have a plot to see whether I will be *universalis episcopus*, that you and your brethren may take occasion to call me Antichrist." William Laud's well-known effort at wit written to