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The Making of a Revolution?

1688: *The First Modern Revolution*. By Steve Pincus (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2009) 647 pp. \$40.00

Interpretations of England's Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689 fall into two categories, both of which originated in the attitudes of later seventeenth-century contemporaries. Traditionally, emphasis was placed on the domestic causes of the dramatic removal of James II (1685–1688) from the throne. Scholars have pointed to James' ill-judged domestic policies and, more recently, to the extent to which these actions had been anticipated during the final years of his brother Charles II's reign (1660–1685). James' determination to create what appeared to contemporaries as a Catholic and absolutist regime inspired resentment and, before long, open resistance. That was sufficient in 1688 to cause him to abandon his realm. This approach views the opposition to him as broadly based—and the Revolution as effectively a national movement—establishing English religious freedom and political liberty under the auspices of a parliamentary monarchy vastly different from the continental kingdoms in which absolutism held sway. This so-called Whig interpretation was dominant until the 1960s, receiving its classic exposition in Macaulay's *History of England* and its most important twentieth-century statement in *The English Revolution, 1688–89*, written by Trevelyan, Macaulay's great-nephew, to celebrate the 250-year anniversary.¹

The second line of interpretation, which has gained ground during recent decades, returns to an older Tory view. It challenges the Whig assumption of widespread support, arguing instead for

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1 Thomas B. Macaulay (ed. Charles Harding Firth), *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second* (London, 1913–1915), I–III; George M. Trevelyan, *The English Revolution, 1688–89* (New York, 1938).

an international conspiracy involving only a small minority of England's peerage and gentry and culminating in the invasion of William III, Dutch Stadtholder (1672–1702) and eventual English king (1689–1702), who wanted to deploy British resources in the struggle against French power but enjoyed surprisingly little support within England.

The two approaches are not mutually exclusive; scholars have recently combined them to form a composite interpretation. The Revolution itself has been variously described as “moderate,” “sensible,” “respectable,” “reasonable,” “godly” and “bloodless”—all curious adjectives to apply to a process that involved sudden political change. Indeed, the idea that the regime change of 1688–1689 amounted to a “revolution,” in the modern sense of the term, has often been questioned. Edmund Burke famously described it as “a revolution not made but prevented,” preferring instead to characterize the decisive events of November and December 1688 as “a just [and necessary] civil war.”²

Believing what he clearly views as a cosy consensus to be wrong, Pincus' bold, vigorous, and provocative new book sets out to overthrow almost every piece of the established picture and to substitute the interpretation emblazoned in his subtitle; 1688 was nothing less than “The First Modern Revolution.”

Pincus consulted a vast range of manuscript authorities and printed primary sources, as well as a voluminous secondary literature. The extent of his research is deeply impressive, though the work of other historians is usually cited only to express disagreement, often in strong and even querulous terms. The book is, by any standards, lengthy—the text alone approaching 250,000 words, and the footnotes at least another 70,000—but it is not subtle or nuanced; it is frequently repetitious and internally inconsistent. Throughout, Pincus displays a bluntness of argument that recalls the literary technique of Samuel Johnson, the eighteenth-century English man of letters who never employed a rapier if a bludgeon were to hand. Pincus often resorts to bald judgments that provoke skepticism and, at times, outright disagreement on first reading, only to qualify these hasty opinions ten pages or one

2 On this judgment and its implications, see John Greville Agard Pocock, “The Fourth English Civil War: Dissolution, Desertion, and Alternative Histories in the Glorious Revolution,” in Lois G. Schwoerer (ed.), *The Revolution of 1688–1689: Changing Perspectives* (New York, 1992), 52–64.

chapter later. The work would have benefited considerably from better copyediting, as well as a vigorous application of the pruning shears.

Two other important features stand out in Pincus' approach. The first is, in contrast to many recent accounts, a focus firmly on England after 1685. The important and influential suggestion, most persuasively advanced by Western, that James' policies were a continuation and extension of those adopted by Charles II (1660–1685) during his later, more autocratic, years and that James' reign was the climax of trends that went back at least to 1681, meet only with Pincus' silence.³ Even more remarkably, the "new British history" and its methodological potential leave Pincus unmoved; he devotes his attention to James as English king rather than British ruler. Scotland, Ireland, and the English colonies in North America receive mention only when they furnish support for the wider arguments advanced.⁴ Similarly, the international dimension highlighted by recent authors occupies a subordinate place in the story, despite Pincus' much-trumpeted intentions to the contrary.

Secondly, his is not a conventional narrative but an episodic series of essays that are historiographical as well as historical and appear in broadly chronological sequence. Each of them addresses a central dimension of the wider argument—the "Practice of Catholic Modernity," "Popular Revolution," and so on. In this way, Pincus assembles the individual building blocks in the overall interpretation consecutively. One consequence is that the detailed and important discussion of James II's thinking about foreign policy (Chapter 11) appears in Part IV, which examines post-1688 developments, not in Part II, which covers the opposition to royal policy before the Revolution. More generally, this book assumes a prior knowledge of events and trends; those readers in need of more background would do better to consult Harris' recent comprehensive survey and even the established accounts by Jones and Speck, together with Israel's impressive anniversary collection.⁵

3 John R. Western, *Monarchy and Revolution: The English State in the 1680s* (London, 1972); Grant Tapsell, *The Personal Rule of Charles II, 1681–85* (Woodbridge, 2007).

4 Pincus himself indicates, but does not fully explain, this decision, but see Tim Harris, *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685–1720* (London, 2006), xvi.

5 Harris, *Revolution*; James Rees Jones, *The Revolution of 1688 in England* (London, 1972); William Arthur Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: Englishmen and the Revolution of 1688* (New

Pincus' central arguments are not in doubt: 1688 indeed resulted from a clash between two diametrically opposed modernizing programs and constituted a genuine revolution. James II's aims were Catholic, absolutist, and mercantilist, seeking to acquire further colonial territory and exploit it through such chartered companies as the East India Company and the Royal African Company. By contrast, his Whig opponents sought religious co-existence, limited monarchy exercised through parliament, and enhanced prosperity through free trade and the development of manufacturing. Pincus writes, "Far from being aristocratic, peaceful and consensual, I show that the Revolution of 1688–89, like most modern revolutions, was popular, violent and extremely divisive" (29). This contention throws down the gauntlet to almost all previous historiography, which is overwhelmingly concerned with the relative importance of the internal and international dimensions and with the extent to which James was the author of his own misfortunes. In its place, Pincus offers a bold and sometimes strident thesis that highlights the truly revolutionary process underway during the later 1680s.

Pincus' unitary explanation for what was a complex series of events in itself challenges recent scholarship, which discovers several separate developments, operating on distinctive chronologies, which coalesced to produce the so-called "Revolution of 1688–89." The breakdown of the classic Whig interpretation since the 1960s has been accompanied by the recognition of at least four crucial changes that occurred during these months.⁶ First was the "Tory Anglican revolution," which forced James into an important series of concessions during the autumn and could have allowed him to remain on the throne, at the price of abandoning much of his program. William III's invasion destroyed this option.

The second change was the "dynastic revolution" that put an end to the principle of hereditary succession, accentuating the exclusion of James II and his direct descendants from the throne; it failed in 1680 during the "Exclusion Crisis" but succeeded in 1689. The "Whig revolution" took place during the weeks and

York, 1988); Jonathan I. Israel (ed.), *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and Its World Impact* (New York, 1991).

6 Robert Beddard, "The Unexpected Whig Revolution of 1688," in *idem* (ed.), *The Revolutions of 1688: The Andrew Browning Lectures for 1988* (Oxford, 1991), 11–101, contains much of interest for what follows.

months after James left England on December 23, shattering the fragile coalition with the Tories that had contributed to this flight and imposing a more radical settlement. Finally, historians have identified a financial and administrative revolution during the 1690s, which resulted in the British state's emergence as a continental power in the struggle against Louis XIV. Many recent scholars, seem to view it as the source of the most radical changes, institutionalizing Parliament's place in government and the constitution. Pincus, however, portrays all of these established dimensions as the consequence of a more fundamental process of modernization, which was political as much as social and economic.

MODERNIZATION AND REVOLUTION The adoption of such a one-dimensional framework at a time when many historians are skeptical about unitary explanations is surprising. Though indicating the boldness of Pincus' re-interpretation, the approach raises important questions about its intellectual origins. One principal foundation is the social-science theory of the 1960s and 1970s, specifically the writings of Huntington, Skocpol, and, to a lesser degree, Tilly.⁷ Another is the experience of revolution in France after 1789 and in twentieth-century Russia, China, Latin America, and Iran, which have clearly shaped his paradigm. The attempt to learn from both theory and subsequent history is as admirable as it is unusual; the second chapter, entitled "Rethinking Revolutions," offers much of interest in this regard.

The central premise of the book is that prior and, by implication, successful state modernization is the essential prerequisite for any revolution. In Pincus' words, "Modernizing states create an ideological opening" (39). Yet, he may press the analogy with Bourbon France too far. He argues that Louis XVI, the last *ancien régime* king, who came to the throne in 1774, provoked the outbreak of the French revolution through his efforts to modernize, exactly as James II had sought to do a century earlier. The impact of these efforts, however, as distinct from their intention, was much less dramatic than he assumes. Notably, the Bourbon mon-

7 Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, 1968); Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (New York, 1979); Charles Tilly, "Does Modernization Breed Revolution?" *Comparative Politics*, V (1973), 425-447.

archy disintegrated not because it attempted to modernize but because it proved unable to do so under financial duress.

Current scholarship about the French Revolution fails to support Pincus' standpoint in yet another way. Historians of the past generation clearly recognized that neither the political upheavals of the summer of 1789 nor their increasingly radical aftermath had much to do with the Bourbon regime's breakdown at the end of the 1780s.⁸ These scholars make an important distinction between the administrative and, less certainly, ideological demise of monarchical government and the social and political revolution that moved into the vacuum created by the collapse of the ancien régime. Unlike twentieth-century revolutions, in which protest movements could acquire genuine power, partly due to mass communications, and in which governing systems could succumb to factions both inside and outside the ruling elite, those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were usually created by administrative and political implosion rather than by modernizing changes.

James Harrington made this very point in the mid-seventeenth century with regard to England's revolution of the 1640s and 1650s: "The dissolution of this Government hath caused the [Civil] War, not the War the dissolution of this Government."⁹ The same point applies to late eighteenth-century France; the reasons for the fall of the French Bourbon monarchy are not to be confused with the causes of the radical direction subsequently taken by the government, particularly after the winter of 1791/92, which constituted the real French Revolution. The Bourbon monarchy failed because of financial disarray and the political impasse that accompanied it, which permitted the radical revolutionaries eventually to gain power. Regardless of the situation in twentieth-century China or Russia, the Bourbon government died a natural death; it was not brought down by its opponents. Likewise, according to the established interpretation, England's Revolution was contingent on the paralysis of James II's regime, and the erosion of James' support during the seven weeks between William III's landing at Tor Bay (November 5, 1688) and his sec-

8 The best guide on this point is William Doyle, *The Origins of the French Revolution* (New York, 1999; orig. pub. 1980).

9 Harrington's observation is widely quoted. See, for example, Lawrence Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution 1529–1642* (London, 1972), 42.

ond and successful flight abroad. Causes should not be confused with consequences.

A second and more important reason for hesitating about Pincus' new paradigm is its dependence upon a picture of English society, economy, and politics as having become modern by the later decades of the seventeenth century. Believing that a modern revolution can take place only within a modern society and economy, Pincus takes great pains to portray later Stuart England as such. Despite his persuasive pitch that England's surge in manufacturing and commerce, especially overseas commerce, during the late seventeenth century is a more important indicator of economic progress than internal trade, his notion that England had become a "modern" economy and society by the century's final decades remains open to doubt. The third chapter, in particular, exaggerates the pace, as well as the extent, of this transformation. Once again, Pincus seems to push the evidence further than it will go: "England in 1685 was not an agrarian capitalist society; it was a capitalist society" (59). Later on that very page, he describes England—much more persuasively—as merely "more urban, more commercial," exemplifying the kind of subsequent mollification to which he frequently he subjects his more outlandish pronouncements. Indeed, he makes a further significant adjustment to the description: "By most measures . . . England in 1685 was a modernising commercial society" (90).

Much of Pincus' evidence for the "modernity" of later Stuart England derives from its southern half, and even the southeast. Large areas—especially in the southwest and the northwest, but also parts of the Midlands—were much more traditional in their social structures and economic arrangements, and still relatively isolated due to poor internal communications. Pincus makes an intriguing case for the importance of coffee houses in the major urban centers (and even in some of the smaller communities) as sites for political mobilization (81), but he never systematically explores the constraints to their spread. Yet, opposition to James arose not merely in the capital and in certain provincial cities but also in the more traditional regions where the forces of modernity had less impact—above all, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Nottinghamshire, which heavily supported William III. In this connection, Pincus' disregard of the situation in Scotland and Ireland, which were even less "modern" than these regions, is especially

problematical, given that these parts of Britain were alienated by James' policies, too.

Pincus does not avoid the danger of turning people into the puppets of external forces, thus diminishing their individual agency. Even in a watered-down form, "modernization" can never be more than a single dimension in an explanatory framework. It may have been a precondition for important changes of the kind that took place in 1688–1689, but it cannot explain them completely. Pincus is ambiguous on this point, at the outset offering modernization as the key development but in the chapters that follow explicating, in a more conventional way, the role of personalities and the contingent interaction of events, without ever resolving the tension.

RELIGIOUS ABSOLUTISM The account of the growing opposition to James' regime and its actions is equally open to criticism. Its most troubling aspect is the outright rejection of a tenet central to scholarship at least since the nineteenth century—that resistance arose largely out of a fear of the king's Catholicizing policies, which at the time were ineradicably associated with Louis XIV's absolute monarchy in France, which English contemporaries styled "arbitrary government." Pincus rejects this interpretation presumably on the grounds that "modern" revolutions cannot proceed from such traditional sentiments as religion. As a case in point, he first labels the Monmouth rebellion, which had a strongly Protestant inspiration, as "conservative" only to deny it any religious motivation several pages later (110, 116)! Curiously, however, he provides abundant support for the very view that he wishes to consign to oblivion. Sometimes Pincus is his own best critic.

Pincus repeatedly emphasizes the success of James' initiatives, in both the religious and political fields, but he also demonstrates that Protestant Englishmen and Englishwomen were right to be concerned about the direction that his policies were taking. A succession of contentious issues during James II's short reign aroused suspicion, resentment, and, eventually, opposition: his disregard for the Test Act and his suspension of the Penal Laws, which discriminated against Roman Catholics; the insertion of Catholics into the officer corps of the enlarged royal army and into Oxford and Cambridge colleges; the remodeling of town corporations and

charters, and the dismissal of Anglican lords-lieutenant; and legal *causes célèbres*, like the case of Godden versus Hailes, trumped up by James to prove a legal point, and the trial of the Seven Bishops who opposed the king's Declaration of Indulgence. Religion was involved in each one, sometimes crucially.

Pincus' own study contains ample evidence to justify the fear that James intended to introduce Catholic absolutism. In Chapter 5, he demonstrates the extent to which French Gallican ideas influenced James' religious policies. James was deeply immersed in continental theological debates, reading the writings of Bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, Gallicanism's principal theologian, and both the Scottish and English Declarations of Indulgence in 1687 were strongly redolent of Gallican doctrines. Even more importantly, Pincus provides clear and compelling evidence, contra other recent scholarship, that James' pursuit of religious toleration was, in fact, a stalking horse and that his intention was to establish French-style Gallican Catholicism throughout his realms (138). As Pincus writes of James' attitude, "Liberty of conscience was a means to an end, not a deeply felt principle" (137). Pincus even quotes the king's hope that "'God would give me his grace to suffer death for the true Catholic religion,'" and he repeatedly stresses the centrality of religious aims to his policies (125).

A wider problem with this downplaying, and even outright rejection, of religious factors, is that, notwithstanding later Stuart England's putative rapid modernization, contemporaries still viewed the world through a religious lens. In Hill's words, "Religion was the idiom in which the men of the seventeenth century thought."¹⁰ Claydon, a subsequent scholar of the Revolution, similarly referred to "the persisting influence of the early modern protestant world view."¹¹ It is difficult, if not impossible, to view organized belief as outside the core of English social life during the final decades of the seventeenth century, however advanced was its much-vaunted "modernity" and its corollary, "secularization." Though Pincus rightly notes the later exclusion of Roman Catholics from William and Mary's Toleration Act (433), its implications for his arguments about the unimportance of religion are left unsaid. The very fact that Roman Catholics were excluded in this

10 Christopher Hill, "Recent Interpretations of the Civil War," in *idem*, *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century* (London, 1958), 29.

11 Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (New York, 1996), 229.

way hints at the persistence of confessional differences, and hence religion.

The abundant recent scholarship devoted to the political ideology of later Stuart England emphasizes that both Whig and Tory theory was firmly grounded in Christianity and a deeply religious worldview.¹² Most contemporaries did not make Pincus' distinction between civil and religious liberty (122), which is possible only within the political culture and society of later centuries. Seventeenth-century men and women saw political freedom as rooted in, and even dependent upon, religious freedom, and viewed politics from an explicitly confessional perspective. The more secular worldview characteristic of later societies—which Max Weber dubbed the “disenchantment of the world”—remained in its infancy, its realization still many decades in the future when James II abandoned his throne.¹³ Indeed, Pincus himself writes, “Europeans had not lost their profound religious beliefs in the seventeenth century,” an unexceptionable conclusion that calls into question a central plank of his own interpretation (348).

Pincus takes remarkably little account of the continental background against which James' religious policies evolved, despite his wholly admirable intention to establish a firm “European” perspective for the study (28). On the continent, the 1680s saw both a revival of religious conflict, after a generation of relative calm, and a notable Catholic advance. England's Protestants saw their faith everywhere forced onto the defensive.¹⁴ Gilbert Burnet, Williamite propagandist and future Bishop of Salisbury, as well as a noted chronicler of the dramatic events of this epoch, articulated this concern from his Dutch exile in 1686: “If God have yet any pleasure in the Reformation He will raise it up again, though I confess the deadness of those Churches that own it make me apprehend that it is to be quite laid in ashes.”¹⁵

In the previous year, the Catholic Neuburg branch of the rul-

12 *Ibid.*, 230, 90–147 (Chapters 3–4).

13 See the suggestive and subtle essay by Blair Worden, “The Question of Secularization,” in Alan Houston and Pincus (eds.), *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration* (New York, 2001), 20–40.

14 See, for example, John Miller, *Poperly and Politics in England 1660–1688* (New York, 1973), 255. For evidence of this point, see Mark Goldie (ed.), *Entering Book of Roger Morrice. III. The Reign of James II 1685–1687* (Woodbridge, 2007), xxvi, 35, 37, 39, 42.

15 Thomas Elliot Simpson Clarke and Helen Charlotte Foxcroft, *A Life of Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury* (New York, 1907), 220–221.

ing family had succeeded to the Electorate of the Palatinate, traditionally the leader of militant Protestantism within the Holy Roman Empire. In far-away Hungary, the Habsburg re-conquest of the kingdom's central parts facilitated the completion of a Catholic offensive (begun during the 1670s) against the Calvinist communities that had thrived during the Ottoman occupation of more than a century. In 1686, the duke of Savoy's army had invaded the Alpine valleys of the Vaudois (west of Turin) in his territory of Piedmont in an attempt to extirpate the Protestant communities—the descendants of the medieval Waldensians—killing or imprisoning many of them.

Louis XIV, who assisted Savoy's initiative, played a major role in arousing Protestant fears in England and elsewhere. He began an offensive against France's sizeable Huguenot minority immediately after the peace of Nijmegen in 1679, employing both persuasion and direct force, abetted by the celebrated *dragonnades*, to effect the forced emigration of 200,000 of his subjects. The Edict of Fontainebleau, issued in 1685, deprived French Protestants of the right to worship according to their own faith, which they had enjoyed since the Edict of Nantes at the close of the previous century.

Developments in France were a mirror in which Englishmen and Englishwomen viewed the actions of their own king.¹⁶ Their wariness about the growth of James' standing army, for example, proceeded partly from an awareness of the French mobilization in the onslaught against the Huguenots (183). News of the dramatic events on the other side of the English Channel, however, did not spread through the press. The *London Gazette*, the only newspaper published in England with any regularity, which was firmly under the control of James II's government, made no reference at all to the crusade against French Protestants. This very absence of a free press raises questions about the nature of the political mobilization that is fundamental to Pincus' thesis of a modern revolution. Nevertheless, news of the persecution of Huguenots traveled widely. Despite government censorship, pamphlets circulated, English merchants trading to France and to the Dutch Republic (where many Protestants also took refuge) spread the word, and the Hu-

16 See the pioneering article by Esmond de Beer, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and English Public Opinion," *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, XVIII (1947–1952), 292–310.

guenot propaganda machine was in full operation with newspapers and circulars.

The French Protestant diaspora was an even more effective conduit. The fact that England at the beginning of the 1680s contained between 8,000 and 10,000 French Protestants, the descendants of refugees from earlier persecutions, who lived primarily in London, southeast England, and East Anglia, encouraged many Huguenots to seek exile there, as well as in the Dutch Republic and Brandenburg-Prussia.¹⁷ Those who came to England during James II's reign told of the atrocities from which they had fled. During the 1680s, 8,000 refugees either joined established Protestant communities or created new settlements in the southwest and west of England. In 1687, when James II's Catholicizing policies were at their peak, 2,500 arrived. Their impact, moreover, was even greater than their numbers. In London during the seventeenth century, the French Protestant churches were located at the western edge of urban settlement, close to the areas inhabited by members of both houses of parliament and those who were otherwise part of the social and political elite. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was known in London within three weeks of its promulgation.

The *Gazette's* continuing silence concerning these events, in the midst of detailed reports from all over the continent, inspired disdain and fear.¹⁸ James II was hardly eager to emulate his French royal counterpart in brutality. On the contrary, he seems to have been opposed to violent persecution, considering it to be un-Christian. But believing the Huguenots to be heretics as well as antimonarchical and sympathetic with republicanism, he attempted to discourage their arrival in England.¹⁹ His Protestant English subjects, however, measured his aims and assessed his actions with one eye on events in France. Few could have been much in doubt about what Catholic absolutism would mean in practice, with the French example before their eyes. As Pincus repeatedly maintains, Louis XIV's regime was the inspiration for much of James' actions. Yet Pincus mentions the revocation of the

17 See Robin D. Gwynn, "The Arrival of Huguenot Refugees in England, 1680–1705," and "The Distribution of Huguenot Refugees in England," *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, XXI (1965–1970), 366–373 and 404–436, respectively.

18 See Pincus, 1688, 177–178, for the view of John Evelyn.

19 Robin D. Gwynn, "James II in the Light of His Treatment of Huguenot Refugees in England, 1685–1686," *English Historical Review*, XCII (1977), 820–833, clarifies James' views.

Edict of Nantes, which framed the politics of James' reign, a mere handful of times (131, 137, 176, 177–178).

Pincus supplies abundant evidence of the importance that James' subjects attached to religious belief. One particularly glaring example is Pincus' quotation of Ambrose Barnes, a Newcastle-upon-Tyne merchant, ostensibly to illustrate the English interest in European events: “The desolations of Bohemia and in the valleys of Piedmont lay very near [my] heart” (308). But the quotation also reveals awareness of, and concern for, the fate of seventeenth-century European Protestantism, since in both places mentioned, the forces of Catholicism were triumphant.

Specialists in later seventeenth-century ecclesiastical history will wish to examine other aspects of Pincus' book that appear suspect. His analysis of William III's appointments to the bench of bishops, presented in Chapter 13, is interesting and well-documented, but his challenge to the recent emphasis on the moderate Tory outlook of the hierarchy and thus the limited change after 1688–1689 once again seems to go beyond what the detailed evidence will bear (405). Moreover, the exclusion of Scotland and Ireland as examples of a concerted religious opposition to James amounts to a further distortion of contemporary reality. Indeed, Harris makes the compelling case that James intended his Scottish realm to be a laboratory to test pro-Catholic policies before applying them to England.²⁰ There, as in Ireland, the confessional battle lines were drawn much more sharply than in the southern kingdom. Parties motivated largely, and sometimes entirely, by their Protestantism played a larger role in the outcome of the political struggle.

THE SCOPE OF THE REVOLUTION Pincus scornfully dismisses the contention of recent scholarship that England's nobility and gentry provided leadership and assisted the Dutch invasion, advancing instead a modern-style revolution that involved much broader participation than just the political elite.²¹ However, whether the general suspicion, resentment, and fear in the air regarding James' policies ever translated into a decisive and active popular resistance is difficult to establish. Pincus' pages provide much more evidence

20 Harris, *Revolution*, 144–181.

21 For the opposing view, see John Philipps Kenyon, *The Nobility in the Revolution of 1688* (Hull, 1963); David Hosford, *Nottingham, Nobles and the North: Aspects of the Revolution of 1688* (Hamden, Conn., 1976).

for passive resistance than for direct opposition, at least before William III's army landed and advanced toward London. Despite Pincus' best arguments to the contrary, genuine activism, as opposed to the rumble of resentment, in the closing months of 1688 appears to have been slight. The established story of a rebellion orchestrated by members of the political nation, with some degree of wider support, is still preferable.

There is also a crucial question of chronology that needs to be settled. The resistance undoubtedly gained momentum after William III's landing; it became especially important in December 1688 and the early months of 1689. What Pincus calls "mass politics" was clearly instrumental in breaking the impasse between Whigs and Tories within the Convention (284–286), but decisive instances of widespread opposition before James II's regime began to crumble are much more difficult to find. Although Pincus' extensive research discovered a greater scale of violence than hitherto believed, its impact upon the outcome appears to have been less than he claims.

The connection of foreign policy with the opposition to the Stuart monarchy during the later 1680s is the subject of the longest and most valuable chapter. Pincus' first book, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, was an important, highly original, and, in some respects, controversial study of the first two Anglo-Dutch wars; echoes of numerous themes from it are in the book under review.²² Indeed, his study of 1688 can be seen as the logical conclusion to what he styled the "secularizing trend in political ideology" in the earlier book.²³ In the preface to *1688*, Pincus writes that he "began the project with modest aims [and] hoped to write an interpretative essay suggesting that the international dimension of the Revolution of 1688–89 was underappreciated" (xi). Though he emphasizes the European nature of this later study, his own interpretive framework is to redirect attention to the domestic dimension of these events, after its frequent eclipse by the international perspective for several decades.

Within the English domestic sphere, however, he makes a strong case for the importance of foreign affairs. He effectively displays James II's growing animosity toward the Dutch Republic as both an economic and colonial rival and the home of the hated re-

22 Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650–1668* (New York, 1996).

23 *Ibid.*, 447.

publicanism, suggesting that by the end of 1687, James wanted to launch a fourth Anglo-Dutch war. In keeping with his earlier study, Pincus demonstrates the extent of contemporary knowledge of, and interest in, European affairs, and argues cogently that James II's pro-French policies and the accompanying hostility toward the Dutch Republic were important causes of his regime's growing unpopularity. Though Pincus may exaggerate the significance of these factors, he establishes beyond any doubt that many contemporaries were moving from the more recent anti-Dutch diplomatic orientation toward an anti-French one long before William III's invading force landed on English soil. Pincus demonstrates that the enmity toward Louis XIV, even to the point of justifying war with France, was rapidly gaining ground among England's political class before the Dutch invasion; this hostility was not just the product of William's successful invasion and intentions, as is usually claimed. In other words, it was a cause, not a consequence, of the 1688 revolution.

Yet James' links with his French idol were undoubtedly close. Pincus even speculates that they might have had an alliance, or at least some kind of agreement, though no conclusive evidence appears to exist (321–322). One possible reason was to advance James' dreams of founding an English seaborne empire; Pincus makes the remarkable claim that James “hoped to divide up the world” with Louis XIV (319). The abundant material about attitudes to foreign policy in England (Chapter 11) reveals the extent to which James' inclinations and political opinion were pulling in different directions. Its conclusions will need to be incorporated into future accounts.

Pincus is aware that he must account for the sudden collapse of the Stuart regime after William's army landed at Tor Bay, given his claims about the success of James' administration and the strength of his modern army (30,000 soldiers), which somehow melted away in the first, and last, successful invasion of England since 1066. One well-placed contemporary observed that, by the time the royal army assembled at Salisbury, the rank and file were demoralized and alienated, believing that if James were victorious, “he intended to destroy the Protestant Religion and especially the Church of England.”²⁴ Whereas other scholars identified religion as a major political influence, Pincus suggests that

24 Francis Gwyn, cited by Beddard, “Unexpected Whig Revolution,” 12.

James' forces crumbled because of the withdrawal of popular support for the government and the military (226).

Once more, Pincus' belief in England's modernity appears to lead him astray: Hereditary monarchies did not stand or fall on the same conditions as modern governments do; approval and resistance took place on a different plane, with vastly different dynamics. In this regard, Pincus ignores the additional explanation, well established in previous accounts, that the easy defeat of the Stuart monarchy owed something to James' psychological state in late 1688, particularly after he joined the army at Salisbury on November 19.²⁵ Despite his three decades of military experience—including service with Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne—he panicked when confronted with a Dutch invasion force decidedly smaller than his own army. James' frequent nosebleeds confined him to his room for two days, and he needed opium to sleep. Unable to provide direction or leadership, he finally ordered a retreat. In Carlton's words, James was "rushing hither and thither like a demented corporal, ordering, counterordering, and disordering."²⁶ Before fleeing the country, he threw the Great Seal into the Thames, thereby easing William III's triumph. No doubt, the influence that generations of previous scholars conferred upon personal factors is old-fashioned; these days, historians tend toward more profound causal explanations. But in this case, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that James facilitated his own demise.

Pincus' study shows enormous energy and talent; the information is abundant, and often genuinely new. Yet, the frequently shrill rendition of his case, though comprehensible as a literary tactic, is not, in the end, defensible. Ultimately, his re-interpretation fails to convince on almost every count. Readers are likely to come away suspecting that England's "First Modern Revolution" was constructed not in England and The Hague but on Pincus' writing table.

25 See F. C. Turner, *James II* (London, 1948), 428–455; John Miller, *James II: A Study in Kingship* (Hove, 1977), 188–209.

26 Charles Carlton, "Three British Revolutions and the Personality of Kingship," in Pocock (ed.), *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776* (Princeton, 1980), 165–208 (quotation on 197).