



Cnut the Great

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1970s, he does not give these ideas much of a role in shaping Thatcher's political project. Instead, the biography implies that much of Thatcher's political project came from the virtues and beliefs she imbibed from her father—a Methodist-infused petty-bourgeois Liberal creed. Cannadine also suggests that much of her political project in the 1970s and 1980s can be directly traced back to the postwar Conservative concern with restoring British greatness, which many believed was being lost with the British Empire.

One issue with the book is that, at times, its author replicates Thatcherite arguments about the necessity of the new, Thatcherite approach to the economy without casting a critical eye on those claims. For example, Cannadine suggests that, in 1979, Thatcher and her chancellor of the exchequer, Geoffrey Howe, “were determined to subject the British economy to the much-needed and bracing discipline of the free market” (31). This is what Thatcher and Howe insisted; but it is unclear if this is a precis of their views, or if Cannadine himself is asserting that the “discipline of the free market” was, indeed, needed to get the British economy back on track. The latter would be a highly controversial claim. A variety of reasons can be adduced for the economic problems in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s, many having nothing to do with a supposed lack of free markets; there were also many ways in which the supposed economic miracle of the 1980s fell far short of Thatcher's hopes and claims.

As a short introduction to its subject, this book is excellent. For those readers wanting more detail, there are many other works to turn to. John Campbell's two-volume biography (*Margaret Thatcher, Volume One: The Grocer's Daughter*, and *Volume Two: The Iron Lady*, both published by Jonathan Cape in 2000) provides a far more extensive analysis of Thatcher's life and career, based on extensive archival research. Charles Moore's recent authorized biography (*Margaret Thatcher, The Authorized Biography, Volume One: Not for Turning*, published by Allen Lane in 2013 and *Volume Two: Everything She Wants*, published in 2015)

were written with the cooperation of Thatcher and her estate, offering an insider's perspective.

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Bolton, Timothy

Cnut the Great

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press
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Timothy Bolton is a talented historian and paleographer who knows his sources well, as his Yale Monarchs Series biography of Cnut the Great demonstrates. Building from his doctoral research and ensuing monograph *The Empire of Cnut the Great* (Brill 2009), Bolton here takes his subject to a new audience. Although the Anglophone sphere has tended to treat Cnut in an insular way, to its own detriment, more recent academic work on Cnut shuns an “England-only” approach to the “king of all England and Denmark and the Norwegians and part of the Swedes,” as Cnut presented himself in his famous letter to the English in 1027 (193). Bolton does the same here, as he did previously in *The Empire of Cnut*. The result is a richer understanding of the king and his time; this work rightly has no business being insular about a subject who seemed to recognize the usefulness of the flexibility of his cultural identity.

As a biography, the book naturally runs chronologically from birth to death, but it is segmented into reasonable portions. For example, the short section on Cnut's childhood and youth works with probabilities of his youth, as it is the area with the slimmest historical evidence. Other chapters examine in detail Cnut's rise in Scandinavia and his place in wider European politics. This is where Bolton sees the particular strength of Cnut's rule, in “plough[ing] a new and quite opportunistic furrow” and “embrac[ing] Europe” (1589) to an extent not seen by his Anglo-Saxon predecessors. For example, Bolton's analysis of the

events surrounding Cnut's famous attendance at the 1027 imperial coronation of Conrad II in Rome casts Cnut not as a passive attendee, but as a very active maneuverer and potential manipulator of pan-European politics in the mid-1020s. This is, in part, thanks to Bolton's engagement with and examination of Cnut's place in wider northern European kinship and political networks, demonstrating, again, the need to place this king on a much wider stage than Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian England. Bolton's deftness and ability to use sources from throughout Europe fruitfully enable a more nuanced and sophisticated discussion of Cnut's place in European politics.

A strange lacuna in an otherwise thorough biography is the only occasional nod to Cnut's wives, Ælfgifu of Northampton and, particularly, Emma of Normandy. Indeed, Cnut's world is, accurately or not, presented as a thoroughly masculine one. Cnut had various cultural identities that he could use to his advantages, but those of his partners were equally useful. Ælfgifu is treated in a discussion of her family and the legitimate nature of their marriage, but she is otherwise mostly absent, though she clearly remained active in her “dotage” (196), based on her ability to help place Harold Harefoot on the throne at Cnut's death. Emma has already been the subject of her own biography (Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, Wiley 2001) and does not need the same treatment here. However, as Stafford has shown, Emma's crucial involvement in the legitimation and consolidation of Cnut's rule was a key component to his successes in England. Intertwining aspects of her political acumen with Cnut's could only help present a better and more nuanced understanding of the nature of power in the early Middle Ages.

Another surprising feature is that, at times, historical narrative seems to take second place to source analysis. This is not wholly negative, as examination of sources is crucial, but, for a biography, these diversions sometimes distract from the plot, so to speak. Indeed, Bolton mentions that the sources from

1016 to 1028 reveal a “period . . . so densely packed with actions and decisions that it is exhausting just to read about” (209). Indeed it is, and that comes out in some of the central sections of the biography. The density of writing may, at times, discourage the casual or nonspecialist reader.

Overall, however, Bolton presents a Cnut for his time and ours, a king who embraced fluidity between his assumed Englishness and his Scandinavian origins. This biography may be a bit overwhelming for the general reader, but students and scholars alike will find much in the book, thanks particularly to the author’s thorough knowledge and use of primary materials. As a part of the Yale Monarchs Series, this will become a go-to source for Cnut, and, with its main strength in the author’s source work, it will remain a very useful book for years to come.

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Wheatley, Ben

British Intelligence and Hitler’s Empire in the Soviet Union, 1941–1945

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In *British Intelligence and Hitler’s Empire in the Soviet Union, 1941–1945*, Ben Wheatley explores the often overlooked and understudied value of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) as an alternative to covert intelligence gathering. The book focuses specifically on the Baltic states, which the British recognized as falling within the Soviet sphere of influence during World War II.

Wheatley, an honorary research fellow at the University of East Anglia, begins by providing the reader with an extensive history of the Baltic states, detailing their path to independence during the interwar period, their occupation and annexation by the Soviets following the Soviet invasion of Poland, and the German occupation after

Operation Barbarossa. That history is interwoven with a discussion of Britain’s relations with the Soviets, especially regarding Soviet interests in the Baltic states. The author makes it clear that the Soviets were determined to gain British recognition of their claims to the region, an objective that factored into most Anglo-Soviet negotiations prior to and during World War II.

After Operation Barbarossa opened the door to renewed Anglo-Soviet relations, the British pledged not to conduct covert operations in Soviet territory, based on its 1941 borders. Whereas the British relied heavily on the SIS and SOE in Western Europe, their covert practices were not an option in the German *Ostland*. The only viable option remaining was to make optimal use of open source materials, such as newspapers readily available or provided by Swedish sources. The author clearly demonstrates that the Foreign Research and Press Office (FRPS) Baltic States Section, under the astute leadership of Elisabeth Pares, and staffed with academics and highly trained researchers, provided valuable intelligence to the British Foreign Office. Wheatley makes clear that it was not a casual reading of enemy newspapers that rendered such useful intelligence, but the scientific reading by those trained in detecting significance and nuance.

Wheatley provides two particularly useful case studies that help to highlight the value of OSINT and the quality of the reports generated by the FRPS (which was absorbed into the Foreign Office in 1943 to become the Foreign Office Research Department, or FORD). The first addressed German economic measures in the Baltic States. This included a discussion of agricultural policies, infrastructural development, trade, fiscal policy, and more. The economic discussion is particularly rich in detail and demonstrates the depth of information that could be gleaned from OSINT. In fact, Wheatley states that three-fifths of all economic-related intelligence on wartime Germany came from open source materials. The second case study, a review of German population policy, revealed the Germans’ view of the

individual Baltic states. Lithuania was treated as inferior and selected for colonization, whereas Latvia and Estonia were given higher status as Nordic states. Wheatley discusses the Germans’ efforts to repopulate Lithuania with pure Germans, the “resettlement” (or slaughter) of the Jews, and even Lithuanian collaboration in the decimation of the local Jewish population. In his section on the Baltic states’ military collaboration with the Germans, he points out that the FRPS (FORD) was able to gain intelligence on German conscription practices at the exact time as cryptographers at Bletchley Park uncovered the same information.

In his final section, the author addresses the value of OSINT in helping the British formulate their postwar policy regarding the Soviet Union. FORD produced a largely accurate assessment of Soviet concerns and probable postwar approach to foreign relations. The report stated that the Soviets would be almost exclusively concerned with the status of Germany. They would want Germany to remain weak and would consider Western attempts to strengthen Germany as a threat. The report was well received in the Foreign Office and did influence the British to attempt a postwar policy of cooperation.

Wheatley’s work is meticulously researched, replete with examples, and abundant in detail. He provides excellent context and background information for his study. His argument is persuasive and successfully makes the case for the value of OSINT, especially in the absence of viable covert intelligence gathering. Scholars of Baltic and intelligence history will find this work informative, and intelligence specialists will not fail to recognize its applicability to current affairs and conflicts. The use of initials and acronyms throughout the book can be difficult to follow, but, aside from that trivial observation, this book is well worth the read and a valuable contribution to intelligence history.

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