

Introduction

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I

There is little question that Thomas Fairfax made a substantial contribution to a momentous period in the nation's history. Captain-General of the New Model Army he had (with assistance from Philip Skippon) created, and, from 1647, Commander-in-Chief of all parliamentary forces, he consistently defeated crown forces on civil war battlefields such as Wakefield, Nantwich, Marston Moor, Maidstone and – most pivotally – Naseby, earning him the soubriquet of England's Fortress, from which this book's title derives.¹ Despite this, he remains a curiously elusive and enigmatic figure. The comparatively modest volume of relevant scholarship both reflects and is partly responsible for this. Andrew Hopper's 2007 biography has illuminated important new aspects of his life, especially those of political allegiance, religious affiliation and concepts of honour.² However, the fact that only three other major studies exist, published in 1870, 1938 and 1985, comes as something of a surprise, particularly when contrasted with the near-industrial scale of research and publication on Oliver Cromwell.³

There are several potential reasons why Fairfax has failed to receive the sustained

¹ The name was coined by Edward Claver, in his poem, *Englands fortresse: exemplified in the most renowned and victorious, his Excellency, the Lord Fairfax, Commander in Chiefe of the Parl. Army. / Humbly presented unto his Excellency by E.C. lover of peace* (London: s.n., 1649).

² Andrew Hopper, *'Black Tom': Sir Thomas Fairfax and the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

³ Clements Markham, *The Life of the Great Lord Fairfax* (London: Macmillan, 1870); M. Gibb, *The Lord General: A Life of Thomas Fairfax* (London: Drummond, 1938); John Wilson, *Fairfax* (London: Murray, 1985).

critical examination his life and achievements warrant. The most persuasive of these is that he walked off the national stage – briskly and controversially – when the English Revolution had (as we now know) a further ten tumultuous years to run. Had he died a glorious death on the battlefield, say at Naseby, he would doubtless have been better remembered, if still largely by military rather than political or literary historians. But in a largely parliamentarian-dominated historiography of the English Revolution, the suspicion is that it was held against him, not only that he exited stage left, but in 1660 re-entered (stage right) to play a significant role (with General Monck) in effecting the Restoration of the monarchy. One suspects that for some politically motivated would-be scholars of Fairfax this was, and has remained, a discouraging coda to his life. In an irony Shakespeare's Richard II might have appreciated, Fairfax, the *bête noire* of royalist forces, supplies the horse upon which Charles II rides at his coronation. In this view, whatever awkward issues are raised by aspects of his Protectorates, at least Cromwell's revolutionary credentials (broadly conceived) remained impeccable to the last. Even without his apparent *volte-face* of 1660, however, contemporary disquiet at Fairfax's resignation, and the political attitudes informing it, had left its mark, and for this far-reaching consequence the event itself is worthy of close scrutiny.

II

Fairfax resigned his commission in a letter to Speaker Lenthall dated 25 June 1650. In it, he explained in typically sober terms that

Having lately received from the Parliament a new Commission as generall of these and so determining my former, I saw it was fitt for me seriously to consider how I might with good conscience take that trust, and imployment upon me; But finding debilities both in body and

minde, occasioned by former actions and businesses, hath caused mee not to be free to undertake this new chance, so as I cannot but humbly desire to be excused of it.⁴

Such reasons seemed wholly plausible. ‘Debilities both in body and minde’ appeared a credible explanation for a loyal, long-serving and war-worn General wishing to take permanent leave from the ravages of the battlefield, to slip honourably and seamlessly into a well-earned and dignified retirement. Long before bad health blighted his final years in the late 1660s and early 1670s, injuries suffered in the course of battle had all too literally left their mark on Fairfax. These included a serious sabre wound to the head sustained at Marston Moor, which scarred him for life. Infirmities of the ‘minde’ are necessarily more nebulous than physical ailments, though again these need not – taken at face value – have hinted at anything more than the extenuations of a war-weary commander.

In fact, there was far more to the resignation letter than met the eye. Considered in the specific context of June 1650, Fairfax’s words can more accurately be interpreted as the deliberately emollient, conciliatory courtesies of a still-loyal, but increasingly disenchanted, servant of parliament. Closer to the truth was that, while willing to lead the army in a defensive engagement with Scotland, he was unable in good conscience to lead a pre-emptive invasion of it (an undertaking central to the terms of his ‘new Commission’), citing as his chief objection the mutual ties between the two countries established by the Solemn League and Covenant.⁵ If the announcement of his retirement was sudden, Fairfax’s unease at the speed and direction of the Revolution had been building gradually. According to his memoir, the war with Scotland and the establishment of a Commonwealth ‘against the Kingly Power’ he had seen ‘saw with grief and sorrow’, to the extent that he saw fit, ‘so long as I continued

⁴ Rev. D. Parsons, *The Diary of Henry Slingsby* (London, 1836), p. 340.

⁵ For the view that the issue over Scotland was the pretext for a resignation long in gestation, see Hopper, pp. 112–114.

in the Army, [to] oppose all those Ways in their Councils, and when I could do no more, I declined their Actions.’⁶ Supporting evidence for this is adduced by his apparent failure to attend the parliament he had been elected to as an M.P. in early 1649, and his increasingly sporadic attendance at the Council of State.

In February 1650 he was reported as ‘melancholy mad’ concerning his unwillingness to sign the Engagement, because it was retrospective.⁷ This reluctance had stemmed from at least January 1649, when he had refused to serve as one of the judges in the king’s trial and was – like his formidable wife Anne, whose hostility towards the regicide was axiomatic – dismayed at the sentence passed on a man whose armies he had done more than anyone to vanquish. Indeed, his poem on Charles I’s execution, ‘On the Fatal day’, signals the beginning of Fairfax’s estrangement from the cause of parliament:

Oh lett that Day from time be blotted quitt
And lett beleefe of’t in next Age be waved
In deepest silence th’ Act Concealed might
Soe that the King-doms Credit might be saved
But if the Power divine permitted this
His Will’s the Law & ours must acquiesce.⁸

Markham’s claim that ‘All moderate politicians were in despair at the threatened resignation of Fairfax – the one absolutely unselfish public man in England’ is

⁶ *Short Memorials of Thomas, Lord Fairfax* (London, 1699), p. 127.

⁷ Cited in Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 224.

⁸ Edward Bliss Reed, *The Poems of Thomas Third Lord Fairfax* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1909), pp. 281–2.

characteristically extravagant, but more obviously in its second clause than first.⁹ For contemporary accounts point – not unnaturally – to a pervasive sense of trepidation within government at Fairfax’s decision. Not only would the country lose his considerable military acumen, but Fairfax, ever inclined towards uniting the Godly, also stood as a ‘symbol of conciliation’ between moderate Presbyterians and Independents, and his withdrawal was therefore ‘the severest blow’ which could be dealt to hopes of effecting such an alliance.¹⁰ In harsher tones, Lucy Hutchinson saw as clearly the real dangers which Fairfax’s resignation posed, claiming that, ‘persuaded by his wife and her Presbyterian chaplains, [Fairfax] threw up his commission at such a time, when it could not have been done more spitefully and ruinously to the whole Parliament interest.’¹¹ From a purely military perspective, meanwhile, Edmund Ludlow stated that the Council of State had set great store by Fairfax’s agreement to attack Scotland, to deal with ‘the storm which threatened us from the North...knowing that the satisfaction of their General was of great importance to that service’.¹² The reaction to Fairfax’s resignation of his former Yorkshire officers was one of particular sorrow and alarm: Colonel Thomas Rokeby was ‘very sorry for this business of my Ld Generall I could earnestly wish he might be ingaged if possible’, while Captain William Siddall considered the event as ‘estranged by most men.’¹³

For both military and political reasons, then, when Fairfax signalled his intention to resign the government made strenuous efforts to dissuade him. First, Colonel Hutchinson led a delegation of M.P.s to Fairfax’s house, but to no avail. Next, as Bulstrode Whitelock records, ‘The Council of State somewhat troubled at his excellency’s scruples appointed

⁹ Markham, p. 360.

¹⁰ S.R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, 4 vols (London: Longmans, 1903), i, pp. 261–2.

¹¹ Neil Keeble, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (London: Everyman, 1995), p. 240.

¹² C.H. Firth, *The Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), i, p. 242.

¹³ Cited in Hopper, p. 115.

Cromwell, Lambert, Harrison, St John and myself a Committee to confer hereupon with Fairfax; and to endeavour to satisfy him of the justice and lawfulness of this [Scottish] undertaking'.¹⁴ However, despite their best efforts throughout the night, Fairfax 'was unwilling to alter his resolution in consideration of any thing that could be said.'¹⁵ As far as Fairfax was concerned his qualms were (embarrassingly enough for a government which virtually defined itself by the moral elevation of the parliamentary-puritan nexus) a matter of conscience: 'What my conscience yields unto as just and lawful I shall follow; and what seems to me to be otherwise I will not do. My conscience is not satisfied, and therefore I must desire to be excused.'¹⁶

Once the frantic official and private efforts at persuasion had all come to nought, the machinery of government was fully deployed to ensure a seamless transition between the old and new Commander-in-Chief, to give the impression of business as usual. First, the combination of genuinely warm public and private sentiment, together with the exigencies of protocol, dictated that the towering contribution of the Lord General to the parliamentary war effort be publicly recognised. A committee of the House was appointed to express to Fairfax the gratitude of parliament for his former services, and an annual government gratuity of five thousand pounds was announced.¹⁷ Nor was this the last public demonstration of Parliament's indebtedness: in 1651 Fairfax was awarded the Lordship of the Isle of Man, a role examined in detail by John Callow in Chapter 1. Yet, while the protocols and felicities of government gratitude could assuage any sense of crisis, the more pressing question was that of the succession itself. With almost indecent haste – indeed, on the day after Fairfax's

¹⁴ Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of the English affairs from the beginning of the reign of Charles the First to the happy restoration of King Charles the Second*, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1853), p. 460.

¹⁵ Firth, p. 243.

¹⁶ Cited in Markham, p. 360.

¹⁷ ODNB.

resignation – an Act was passed which ‘repealed, annulled, and made void to all intents and purposes’ the authority vested in him for the past five years as Captain-General, constituting an initially reluctant Cromwell as his successor. With the country on a firm war footing, the direction of parliament on the issue of Scotland was not about to be changed by the principled retirement of one person, however estimable. Fairfax’s near-evisceration by Cromwell in the public memory of the English Revolution was underway.

The narrow stream which parliament now needed to navigate, between showing all due courtesy towards the old commander and unconditional support for the new, is partly reflected in the reaction of the puritan congregations. In a remarkable sermon preached on the day after the Act, the preacher Henry Walker offered what was effectively a public puritan explication and endorsement of what might otherwise have appeared both to the country, and more importantly the soon-to-be-mobilised army, as a precipitous development.¹⁸ Given that the sermon was published the following day, almost certainly with government approval, Walker’s journalistic popularity and political leanings are of relevance. Only Marchamont Nedham achieved greater prominence in newsbook editorship in the 1640s and 1650s, hence the readership for Walker’s sermon is likely to have been wide. Moreover, in the lively and innovative newsbook *Perfect Occurrences*, in which he had made his name, Walker had consistently shown political support for Cromwell. If ever parliament needed a convincing puritan mouthpiece at such a defining moment, this was their man.

Walker begins by reassuring his congregation that ‘though your old Lord Generall be not with you he is not against you...he hath promised to be faithful to you, you have his heart still in the Camp, though his Spouse hath persuaded his wearied body to take rest in her bosome.’ This is – initially, at least – an explicit attempt to underline Fairfax’s continued loyalty to the army and to the wider cause of parliament: the strong ties of respect and loyalty

¹⁸ Henry Walker, *A Sermon Preached in the Chappell at Somers House in the Strand* ... (London, 1650).

established between Fairfax and the army over the previous five years of his leadership cannot be broken. And the reference to ‘his wearied body’, usefully for all sides, takes his resignation letter to the Speaker at face value. Yet, in affirming that Fairfax is indeed the ‘*old* Lord Generall’ (in the sense of ‘former’), and in declaring that he has been swayed into retirement by his wife, Walker hints at a layer of ambiguity and irony in his narrative; this retirement is to be honoured, regretted even, but not necessarily lamented.

Tellingly, Walker wastes little time in introducing into his sermon Cromwell, the new Commander-in-Chief:

And you have his Excellency still with you, now General, who was before, under God, the *primum mobile* of your Motions, and is still the myrrour of Hoasts, the Metropolitan of Religion, and the glory of this Nation: And though your former Generall hath been perswaded to take a writ of Ease to himself, for his wife, and her friends sake: Yet do not ye divide but stand the more firme in your owne union, grounded upon God, as you love your own lives, the Parliament, and the English Nation.

Since before his recent appointment, Walker suggests, Cromwell has been the prime influence on the army’s successes. A sense of continuity with the recent past is thereby established, one which does not merely contain the impact of Fairfax’s departure but implicitly diminishes it. Correspondingly, the reference to Fairfax having resigned ‘for his wife, and her friends sake’ seems more akin to an insinuation than a glowing example of familial gallantry. And what is pejoratively portrayed as a domestically motivated decision by Fairfax is rendered all the more parochial and un-statesmanlike, placed as it is before a sentence in which the trinity of God, parliament and the nation is stirring invoked. If the official reasons for Fairfax’s resignation, those ‘debilities in body and minde’, receive less than sustained attention by Walker, the unofficial cause is tacitly repudiated. Next, in what

effectively constitutes a government-approved rallying cry to the army, the policy of pre-emptive invasion of Scotland is given unambiguous clerical backing, and by extension Fairfax's position is disavowed:

Yet now the Lording Taskmasters in Scotland, are desiring to lay burdens upon us, if they can surprise you to their Egyptian bondage, therefore look about you, and stand to your Armes...If they love blood, let them have it in their own Land; It is better to crush the Cockatrice in the Egge, then let him swell to a troublesome monster.

The central passage of the sermon, in which the coming separation of Cromwell from the retiring Fairfax is compared with that of Abraham from Lot, is of signal interest, not least for its more nuanced and exegetic tone. Walker's theme is the irrelevance of physical distance between loyal and pious companions:

Great men, that have eminently acted together in goodness, and prospered by the blessings of God, upon their indeavours, they may be personally separated, yet therein receive comfort from the Lord...Thus it was with Abraham and Lot, they were eminent in their actings together, for the glory Of God: they believed, trusted in God, and were holy in life and conversation, yet they separated heere: God had severall imployment for them, to glorifie his name.

The analogy seems to operate on two levels. Cromwell has been physically separated from Fairfax, as by association has the army, but neither party need be disquieted, for there is to this estrangement a divine purpose. Superficially this is an equitable stance towards the two men – God has as clear a plan for Fairfax in his retirement as he does for his successor, Cromwell, in his new role. Yet even here the conceit of privileging the new man over the old

is preserved: the sermon makes it clear that Cromwell is portrayed in the senior role of Abraham, the Hebrew patriarch, with Fairfax figured in the more minor role of his nephew Lot. It is not merely a matter of semantics to suggest that, while Walker for the most part recounts that Abraham and Lot suffered a parity of dislocation, separated *from each other*, he nevertheless provides a potentially significant twist when adding that ‘Lot was separated from Abraham’. The implication is that it is Lot/Fairfax who has departed from the mainstream and chosen to follow his own path, not Abraham/Cromwell.

Like Walker, in ‘A Second Defence’ (1654) Milton uses his official role as government propagandist to make all the right diplomatic noises about Fairfax’s retirement, at least initially. Comparing his withdrawal with that evergreen Renaissance exemplar of disinterested stoicism, Scipio Africanus, Milton declares that his subject has exhibited ‘the greatest modesty, the most exemplary sanctity of life, [and] the highest courage’ to conquer not merely the enemy, but ambition and glory. The former Commander-in-Chief is deservedly ‘enjoying, in the most delightful and glorious of retirements, [his] virtues and illustrious deeds, which is the end of all labours’¹⁹ The Lord General’s retreat, then, is a noble withdrawal which – outwardly – has the full sanction of the government he steadfastly served. Yet, despite this apparent vindication of Fairfax’s position, the next passage appears to betray Milton’s struggle to come to terms with what has happened. In now transforming his narrative into praise of Cromwell, he barely manages to toe the official party line over the reasons for the resignation, while implicitly admitting of another, more problematic explanation:

But whether you have withdrawn on account of your health, which I am most inclined to think, or whether from any other motive, of this I am fully persuaded, that nothing could have

¹⁹ *The Works of John Milton*, ed. Frank Patterson et al (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 217–18.

torn you from the service of the commonwealth, if you had not seen what a protector of liberty, what a firm and faithful pillar, what a rampart of England's prosperity you have left to your successor.

Without openly questioning the integrity of a much-vaunted public figure, the author intimates that there may be less palatable motives behind his withdrawal than poor health. Juxtaposing this with an extensive application of martial epithets to Cromwell finesses an otium/negotium dichotomy between the two men which – again – hardly seems designed to flatter the outgoing Commander.

If he is indeed obliquely questioning Fairfax it is tempting to view this as – in part – an expedient attempt by Milton to bolster the still-nascent image of Cromwell as Lord Protector, a position he had assumed in December 1653. Yet, related tremors of anxiety may be heard even in his paean of praise for Fairfax in 1648, which is counter-balanced by a warning from the poet that Fairfax's task is not yet complete:

O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand,
 (For what can war but endless war still breed?)
 Till truth and right from violence freed,
 And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
 Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,
 While Avarice and Rapine share the land.²⁰

Fairfax may, following his successful siege of Colchester, be on course to triumph in the second civil war, but ultimately, however glorious it is, victory on the battlefield will be insufficient. The indomitable commander is here charged by Milton with the additional

²⁰ See footnote 4 for reference.

responsibility of winning the peace, to bring the healing and settlement which the country desperately needs. Seen in this light, 'A Second Defence' implies that Fairfax may once have had the chance to effect national recovery in this way, but instead decided to retire; now it is a manifestly more political animal, Cromwell, who has begun completing the 'nobler task' and set about restoring 'England's prosperity'.²¹

The most celebrated, because finely calibrated, articulation of the country's ambiguous response to Fairfax's retirement is to be found in Andrew Marvell's poem 'Upon Appleton House. To my Lord Fairfax', composed probably in the summer of 1651. Tutor at the time to Fairfax's daughter Mary, Marvell perforce can offer only the most heavily veiled criticisms of his master. In stanza 44, after lavishing unequivocal praise on the house and gardens Fairfax has retired to, he signals a subtly wistful pang of disappointment and regret at Fairfax's decision to withdraw from public life:

And yet their walks one on the Sod
Who, had it pleased him and *God*,
Might once have made our Gardens spring
Fresh as his own and flourishing.
But he preferr'd to the *Cinque Ports*

²¹ Predictably, Fairfax's royalist opponents also emphasised his perceived inability to translate military success into political, though with more alacrity and less sympathy, witness his cousin Mildmay Fane's satirical poem 'To Sir Thomas Fairfax':

Though thy pretences may for fair stand
Black Tom the rest in Latine's fire brand
And soe I feare thou art who prict with fame
Embroylst thy native country in flame
In virtues schoole those doe not more excel
Who conquer; than who manedg Conquest well.

These five imaginary Forts:
 And, in those half-dry Trenches, spann'd
 Pow'r which the Ocean might command.²²

With 'Might once have made our Gardens spring/Fresh as his own and flourishing', the tension built up by the first two lines of the stanza finds, in the context of a country house poem, an appositely rural denouement. But more than that, brilliantly secreted within the deceptively delightful, flowery imagery, are some thorny and appropriately weighty issues for Fairfax to ponder. By retiring to Appleton House he has apparently squandered an opportunity of a lifetime – witness the aching finality of 'Might once' – to bring peace and prosperity to the nation following years of civil conflict.

In sum, then, the untimeliness of and controversial circumstances behind Fairfax's retirement and the alleged incompleteness of his godly mission, married to the political expediency surrounding Cromwell's promotion, have – from the outset – helped militate against his taking a more prominent place in the pantheon of English Revolution luminaries. And intertwined with this is his widely attested modesty. Despite the complicating presence of familial – though equally, without political – bias, his son-in-law George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, stands proxy for many contemporaries in noting, in the lapidary words which adorn Fairfax's simple tomb in Bilbrough Church, six miles southwest of York:

He might have been a king,
 But that he understood
 How much it is a meaner thing
 To be unjustly great than honorably good.

²² *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, ed. H.M. Margoliouth, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), i, p. 69.

But if his apparently innate modesty precluded him from attaining high political office, it did not prevent Fairfax in his retirement from assiduously fashioning a self-image – most conspicuously through the written word. Even more so than his overall contribution to the English Revolution, his copious writings have been done scant justice by seventeenth-century historiography. Part 2 of this volume seeks to fill some of this lacuna, to train belated attention on some of the divergent forms of literature which Fairfax composed and was drawn to. Indeed, such is Fairfax's prolificacy with the pen after 1650 that, along with his involvement on Man, it begins to shake the very foundations on which, as argued above, the dimensions of his reputation have long rested – that he *did* in fact retire.

III

As the first published collection of essays on Thomas Fairfax, this volume seeks to increase our knowledge and deepen our understanding of 'Black Tom', bringing together a range of established and emerging scholars to examine his military, political, religious, familial and literary preoccupations and accomplishments. The opening chapter, by John Callow, casts fresh light on Fairfax as 'Lord of Man', a position he held from 1651 to 1660. Recent scholarly attention has enlarged our vision to embrace the British and Irish, as opposed to the solely English, dimension to the civil wars. Within the maelstrom of those conflicts, and conflicting searches for identity, the Isle of Man – with its separate legal and constitutional structure, own Gaelic language and popular culture – occupied a unique position. Far more than 'a little Molehill moated about' by a great sea, as William Blundell styled it in 1656,²³ the island's sense of autonomy had been strengthened by its role as a royalist stronghold, under the Earl of Derby, between 1643 and 1651. The island's seizure by Commonwealth

²³ W. Blundell, *An Exact Chronological and Historical Discovery of the Hitherto Unknown Isle of Man*, ed. W. Harrison, (Douglas: The Manx Society, 1876), xxv, p. xxiii.

forces, in November 1651, was facilitated to a large extent by the final defeat of the Earl of Derby, during the Worcester campaign – which saw the surrender *en masse* of his Manx infantry at the Battle of Wigan Lane – and by the rising of the native Manx on the Isle itself. So effective was the rebellion that its acknowledged leader, William Christian – Iliam Dhone, ‘brown haired William’ in Gaelic – was able to secure favourable terms from the invasion force and to safeguard his employment at the heart of island’s administration, under Lord Fairfax, for the majority of the decade. The undertaking to revoke Derby’s attacks on traditional land tenure and to respect Manx ‘liberties’ committed the Commonwealth, on the one hand, to an essentially pragmatic and conservative policy towards the island; but also, on the other, provided a formidable popular base for Fairfax’s subsequent rule.

The total collapse of the royalist party on the island and the articles of surrender, primarily dictated by the indigenous elites, precluded direct rule from Whitehall while permitting Fairfax – as the new ‘Lord of Man’ – to assume the prerogatives and sweeping powers previously wielded by the Earls of Derby; and to parachute his own team of administrators into positions newly vacated by English royalists. As Callow shows, the most prominent of Fairfax’s appointees was his kinsman, James Chaloner (1603–1660) who was charged by Sir Thomas with auditing the governmental structures and discovering what was actually meant by the ‘existing’, customary ‘lands and liberties’ of the islanders. His resulting brief, written in 1652–3, and published with a dedication to Lord Fairfax in 1656, as *A Short Treatise on the Isle of Man*, provides the seminal account of Manx culture and governance during the mid-seventeenth century.

In the end, the alliances of the 1650s, we learn, fractured due to Chaloner’s attempt to extend his own powers by removing the native Christians from office; and collapsed due to entirely external factors, namely the split in the army between supporters of the rival generals Monck and Lambert. It was Lambert’s partisans who seized Chaloner prisoner, in

November/December 1659, and effectively dissolved Fairfax's rule. Though Chaloner would subsequently be released, by order of the English parliament, Fairfax's equivocal position regarding the island and his own lordship permitted the restoration of the house of Derby to parallel that of the king. Indeed, the unwillingness or inability of Fairfax to protect his own partisans on the Isle saw Chaloner caught up in the brutal settling of scores undertaken by the new Earl of Derby, Charles Stanley, between 1660 and 1663.²⁴ This said, Fairfax's eight-year rule as absentee landlord had consolidated the notion of Manx 'separateness' from the other British Isles, helped to codify its distinctive Norse-Gaelic legal machinery on Man and prevented the dissolution of the legislature, the House of Keys. Moreover, this chapter argues, Chaloner's *Treatise* brought an awareness of a distinctive Manx culture to an English public that knew little, or nothing, of this important strategic outpost in the middle of the Irish Sea, and, together with his keen antiquarian interest in the island's pre-history, contributed to the forging of a sense of nation that continues to this day.

Chapter 2 is the first of four chapters with a military focus. In this chapter, Robert Barcroft argues that military histories of the English civil wars have tended to concentrate on the set-piece battles to the exclusion of garrison and siege warfare, and that the same can be said when historians have turned their attentions to Sir Thomas Fairfax's role as a general. Where and when exactly Fairfax was on the battlefields of Marston Moor and Naseby has been endlessly debated in subsequent accounts and biographies, but this ignores the fact that Fairfax took part in just as many sieges as he did relatively large field actions; sieges that arguably were just as important to the course and outcome of the wars as the battles. This chapter seeks to redress this imbalance, through an examination of how Fairfax conducted siege warfare in the years 1642–8, and helps account for why he was generally successful at such undertakings. Such success is especially remarkable, Barcroft shows, given the erratic

²⁴ John Callow, 'The limits of indemnity: the earl of Derby, sovereignty and retribution at the trial of William Christian, 1660-63', *The Seventeenth Century*, 15:2 (2000), pp. 199–216.

nature of sieges in civil-war England, as commanders sought quickly to implement developments in siege technology that had taken centuries to evolve on the continent. In this context, Fairfax's strong personal preference for seeking military solutions through decisive battles and stormings, rather than through a prolonged period of investment of a particular fortified strongpoint, is explicated. Although there was a lack of innovation in the New Model Army at the time of its creation, through Fairfax's leadership and his restructuring of the army allowing for more efficient artillery and stricter discipline, the siege-making capacity of his forces became increasingly proficient. With these changes brought about by Fairfax, the parliamentary army went from essentially blundering its way through sieges, as was seen with the unnecessary casualties at York in 1644, to the construction of the most sophisticated set of siege works ever completed in England only four years later at Colchester, completely circumvallating the town and starving it into submission.

In Chapter 3, Mandy de Belin explains that recent accounts of the battle of Naseby have put the landscape at the centre of their interpretations. The topology and contemporary use of the land have rightly been given prominence in considering how the two armies deployed, how they engaged, and how the defeated royalists retreated. The theatre in which the battle was played out was shaped by the landscape history of Naseby, and the surrounding parishes. Understanding the forces driving the development of this area, and its condition in 1645, de Belin asserts, are vital to an appreciation of the battle, and of Fairfax's achievement in winning this most significant of victories. Perhaps not so obvious is the importance of the afterlife of the area. To enable a viewer of the battlefield to strip away its current furniture of hedgerows, coverts and copses, it is necessary to understand the development of the landscape over the intervening centuries. This chapter gives an account of the landscape context, both leading up to the battle and its subsequent trajectory. Naseby is situated in 'High Northamptonshire': a region of cold, intractable clay soils. At the beginning of the

eighteenth century, a full two-thirds of the village's open fields were put down to grass. This reflected a development common to this area over the preceding two centuries: a conversion of medieval open fields to pasture and an associated desertion of villages and replacement of human inhabitants with sheep. The process gathered pace with the coming of parliamentary enclosure, and cattle rearing came to dominate. In the twentieth century the tide turned again, as agricultural imperatives changed and mechanisation made clay soils more amenable to improvement. Arable farming expanded once more. These, de Belin shows, are the developments that shaped the landscape of Naseby, and of the surrounding parishes, both before the battle and in the intervening centuries.

In the next chapter, Ian Atherton makes the case that, though the ways in which the personal reputation of Fairfax have been recalled, and the man himself praised or vilified, have been analysed by Andrew Hopper, the processes by which the scenes of his triumphs (or defeats) have been remembered, or forgotten, have received much less attention. The monuments which currently grace Marston Moor and Naseby (and a host of other civil-war sites) are nineteenth-century or later, and commemorate Cromwell rather than Fairfax. One of the few historians to have considered how Marston Moor and other civil-war battle sites have been remembered, Maija Jansson, simply contended that in the seventeenth century the 'time was not right for the idea of memorializing' battlefields. By contrast, this chapter situates Fairfax's battles and sieges within long-term trends of commemoration of battlefields from the late Middle Ages to the modern era. It has recently been suggested that the Reformation ended medieval traditions of battlefield memorialization, which rested in the creation of battlefield chantries and the preservation of the memory of the fallen. In their place, Protestants shifted the focus from the dead to the survivors, from dead souls to wounded bodies, and from the soil of battlefields to ink and print as the sites of commemoration. Then, in the eighteenth century, battlefields were 'rediscovered' by antiquaries and once more

celebrated, though in providential terms that concentrated on survivors of conflict rather than the fallen. Focussing on the dead was a fashion that only re-emerged in the nineteenth century. These trends are investigated by Atherton through employing case studies of a number of battles and sieges connected to Fairfax, including Nantwich, Marston Moor, Naseby, and the relief of Taunton, to consider the life histories of Fairfax's battles.

In the final chapter of Part 1, Andrew Hopper takes readers on an informative and entertaining journey through Fairfax's posthumous popular reputation, addressing representations of Fairfax in literature, novels and film (including examination of salient film clips from 'Winstanley' and 'To Kill a King') from the Victorian period to the present. This chapter affords insight into the motivations of Fairfax's earlier biographers, and into the sometimes fanciful legends that grew up around Fairfax, particularly in the Yorkshire area. Hopper argues that the most thought-provoking and deeply historicized portrayals of Fairfax emerged from the British Left in the 1960s and 1970s in the shape of David Caute's novel, *Comrade Jacob*, and Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo's feature film, 'Winstanley'.

Part 2 opens with a chapter by Jacqueline Eales which examines Fairfax as a husband and family man, in particular by throwing new light on Thomas's formidable wife, Anne Vere. On 20 June 1637 Fairfax married the nineteen-year-old Anne. The marriage drew him into the ambit of the 'fighting Veres', famed for their military efforts in defence of the international Protestant cause. Anne's father was the renowned general Sir Horace Vere, who had fought in the Dutch wars against Spain. He was appointed governor of the garrison town of Brill in 1610 and of Utrecht in 1618. Between 1620 and 1622 he commanded the English volunteer force in the Palatinate and later commanded an English brigade in the Prince of Orange's army. Vere's status as a national hero had earned him burial in Westminster Abbey in 1635. Marriage to Anne Vere also brought Thomas into contact with the puritan women of the Vere family. Anne's mother was Mary Vere, who along with her husband was a staunch

patron of puritan ministers both in the Netherlands and in England. Mary Vere died at the age of 90 in 1671 having been honoured amongst puritans as ‘an ancient mother in our Israel’. Anne’s cousin was the redoubtable Brilliana Harley, who helped to orchestrate the parliamentary response to the outbreak of the civil war in Herefordshire.²⁵

As Eales demonstrates, Anne Fairfax herself was criticised by both royalists and parliamentarians for having too much influence over her husband. Clarendon records the famous story that when the absent Thomas’s name was called out in Westminster Hall, as one of the commissioners at the trial of Charles I, it was Anne who answered for him from the gallery by shouting out that ‘he had more wit than to be there’. Lucy Hutchinson believed that Anne favoured the Presbyterian cause and poisoned Thomas’s mind against his Independent chaplains. This chapter carefully considers the degree of influence Anne wielded over Thomas’s religious and political views, and whether the ‘Vere Connection’ enhanced or tarnished Thomas Fairfax’s reputation as a godly parliamentary leader.

The next chapter, by Philip Major, considers a range of writing produced by Fairfax upon his (ostensible) retirement from public life in 1650, and suggests that it often betrays a sense of dislocation as well as fashionable literary taste. Fairfax need not, Major concedes, be reclaimed as a ‘lost’ 17th-century poet; nevertheless his writing commands our respect and is worthy of much closer scrutiny. Particular pieces discussed included ‘Upon the New-built House at Appleton’, ‘The Solitude’, and ‘The Thoughts of Eternity’. In all of these, Fairfax’s celebrated modesty and sense of honour find literary voice in the beliefs he earnestly espouses as a member of the godly elect.

²⁵ Jacqueline Eales, “‘An ancient mother in our Israel’: Mary, Lady Vere”, in Joanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (eds), *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 84–95; Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1990).

In Chapter 8, Keith McDonald argues that Andrew Marvell has – surprisingly – featured little in biographies of Oliver Cromwell and Thomas Fairfax, despite his exclusive position as an important witness to both men at pivotal points in their lives. In the summer of 1650, Fairfax was probably the highest-profile of the ‘architects’ said to be running in fear in Marvell’s ‘Horatian Ode’. Both the Ode, presumably written near the time of Fairfax’s resignation, and the general himself, enact the seventeenth-century definition of ‘crisis’, a situation poised between death and recovery. While Barbara Donagan’s study of casuistry and private conscience in the English civil war has considered how English men and women legitimated taking action in support of their allegiance, Fairfax’s crisis of conscience, McDonald avers, was deepened by his inability to legitimise his own *inaction*.²⁶ The cynical Ode questions whether retirement could still be a virtue. Yet, just a few months later, Marvell had joined Fairfax at Nun Appleton as a tutor to his daughter. This chapter claims that Fairfax’s private family life presented the first opportunity for Marvell to reassess and reevaluate a troubled attitude towards privacy and withdrawal. Marvell’s vision of the private Fairfax develops not only through family and the turmoil of private conscience – vital though these are to the picture of privacy in the early 1650s – but also through alternative constructions of the individual and the self, inspired by the philosophy of Montaigne and informed by the social and intellectual development of private boundaries. Key to Marvell’s portrayal of the private general is the construction and reflection of the self through private property and its (often vitrified) representations across all three poems addressed to Fairfax.

In the penultimate chapter of the volume, Rory Tanner contends that the poetry of Thomas Fairfax has largely followed the destiny set by its author, being ‘designed’, as he claims, ‘for private use and then to oblivion’. Left to like obscurity – if not quite to ‘oblivion’

²⁶ Barbara Donagan, ‘Casuistry and allegiance in the English civil war’, in Derek Hirst and Richard Strier (eds), *Writing and Political Engagement in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 89–111.

– is the association between the poet Fairfax and Marvell, at least if the latter’s ‘bafflingly private’ verses (as John Wallace describes) ‘Upon Appleton House’ offer any indication. Centred on Fairfax’s translation of the Psalms, this chapter identifies characteristics in the work that grant greater access to the intimacies of Nun Appleton in the 1650s.

Collation of several early modern Psalters reveals the distinct patterns of variation in Fairfax’s own practices of translation and composition. Here, Tanner suggests, Fairfax’s rendering of biblical verse reflects many of his preoccupations during retirement, from the pleasant pursuits of natural philosophy to the uneasy realities of Cromwellian politics that loomed beyond the rural retreat at Nun Appleton. Such anxiety finds full expression in Fairfax’s Psalter, as the retired general’s assessment of public political life is performed and in some ways also permitted by his expansive translation project. Consideration also of the poetry written by Marvell during his employment in the Fairfax household connects the respective devotion of Appleton’s two poets, whether that owed more to patronage and to religious belief, or to contemplation and composition. In these terms, the writings of Marvell and Fairfax frame between them both a shared privacy and a shared lyric imagination. Those associations, the author argues, significantly support broader literary-critical interest in Fairfax’s poetry, and, more generally, in early-modern metrical psalmody.

Part 2, and the volume as a whole, is brought to a conclusion with a chapter by Richard Nash, which in great detail traces the lineages of famous racehorses from the seventeenth century onwards, interleaved with close scrutiny of Fairfax’s little-known treatise on horse breeding, the original of which is held at York Minster Library. Nash shows how, through a Restoration racehorse named ‘Spanker’, the lineage of today’s racing thoroughbreds can be traced back to Fairfax’s stud at Nun Appleton.

The original essays in this interdisciplinary volume provide more of the sustained modern critical attention that Fairfax’s life and work merit. They reflect key aspects of his

life and career which are, nevertheless, as interconnecting as they are discrete. Their fresh accounts of Fairfax's reputation and legacy question assumptions about neatly demarcated seventeenth-century chronological, geographic and cultural boundaries. Emerging from them is a man who confounds as often as he reinforces assumed characteristics of martial invincibility, political disengagement and literary dilettantism. Deriving from a conference marking the 400th anniversary of his birth,²⁷ it is hoped that this collection of essays will highlight new directions of scholarly enquiry into Fairfax's multiple roles as soldier, statesman, governor, husband, horseman and scholar.

²⁷ The 'Fairfax 400' anniversary conference was held at the Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester, on the weekend of 30 July – 1 July 2012. The editors wish to thank the Society of Renaissance Studies for its generous sponsorship of this event, and the Aurelius Trust for its very kind financial support of this volume.