REVIEW

Brian Bonnyman, *The Third Duke of Buccleuch and Adam Smith: Estate Management and Improvement in Enlightenment Scotland*. Scottish Historical Review Monograph Series, vol. 23. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014. Pp. vi-x, 1-211. ISBN: 9780748642007. GBP £45.

This book is a welcome addition to the scholarship on both the Scottish Enlightenment and eighteenth-century Scottish studies. It makes a number of important contributions to our understanding of the period. The book's strength lies in its melding of biography, intellectual history, and social and economic history utilised to address a number of key issues in the field. Bonnyman's approach allows him to explore the life of one of the central aristocratic and political figures of the period, his close relationship with one of the great philosophers of the period, and the role that both had in the agricultural revolution; the advancement of the project of improvement; and the debate about defence and the militia which were dominant themes in the social and economic life of Enlightenment Scotland.

Bonnyman's contribution to the longstanding debate on the nature of agricultural improvement is based on scrupulous scholarship of the Buccleuch family records and a series of detailed case studies regarding the implementation of improvements to the vast Buccleuch estates stretching across the border country. Bonnyman views these improvements on the Buccleuch estates as a project directed from above, motivated by the Duke's economic interest, but more importantly, a commitment to a patriotic duty of improvement. Case studies focusing on the development of the Buccleuch estate's arable and sheep farms accentuate reforms made to tenure, the drive to abolish entail, to enclose and improve land and to provide roads, bridges and new settlements. All of these are familiar activities from studies of the general phenomenon by Smout, Devine and others. Bonnyman's account of improvement

from above, however, stresses the Duke's motivation and concern for those who would be affected by his reforms (p. 92).

Bonnyman's research on the Buccleuch archives also allows historians to understand how the various estate administrators of the time debated how best to improve the estate's management. The account of letters and arguments between William and Adam Ogilvie, John Davidson, and William Keir indicate the seriousness and care with which the projects were undertaken. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of this is how Bonnyman brings out Keir's scientific and evidence-based approach when assembling evidence over fifteen years to support the case for rent equalisation over the Duke's sheep farms (p. 124-9). This is an example, as Bonnyman says, of the Scottish Enlightenment having a direct impact on the society of rural Scotland (p. 8).

Buccleuch himself is a relatively under explored figure in Scottish history. The biographical study that accompanies Bonnyman's narrative on improvement creates a better picture of a figure who is often tangentially mentioned but rarely brought to life in any detail. Chapter 6 provides a stimulating discussion of the Duke's relationship with his neighbour Henry Dundas and the apparently symbiotic relationship that existed in the background of Dundas's long domination of Scottish politics. It has been a matter of some speculation as to why the Duke allowed Dundas to control the politics of the time, but Bonnyman provides a convincing account of Adam Smith's influence on the young Duke, which goes some way beyond the view that Buccleuch's retiring personality drove the apparent reversal of status. Over two chapters on the Duke's education and early maturity, the book examines the close relationship between Smith and his student. Bonnyman shows how Smith was carefully selected by Charles Townshend to provide Buccleuch with an education fit for a "grounded politician" (p. 43). Townshend no doubt believed that Buccleuch would, in time, take his place as a major statesman. As Bonnyman demonstrates by drawing on Smith's own writings about the nobility and the nature of eighteenth-century politics, Smith taught Buccleuch a particular style of politics that was dutiful, yet modest and local in its scope, and focussed on Scotland.

On a more specific level, Bonnyman also illustrates how Smith's activities on the Duke's behalf align with arguments that appear in the *Wealth of Nations*: both in spirit, in terms of the opposition to entail, and as evidence, in connection with Smith's advice to the Duke following the crash of the Ayr Bank. The passages on Buccleuch and Smith are generally excellent, and Bonnyman's comparison of Keir's Smithian theory of estate management and Smith's own theory of economic development (p.130) nicely indicate how deeply the writings of the Scottish Enlightenment permeated the actions of grassroots reformers.

Craig Smith
University of Glasgow