



Review[Untitled] of Jane E.A. Dawson, The politics of religion in the age of Mary, queen of Scots: the earl of Argyll and the struggle for Britain and Ireland (Cambridge, 2002)

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Author(s)	Ellis, Steven G.
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understanding of the age. These essays serve to reorient our vision, to see the sixteenth-century world as the men and women of that time saw it.

CAMBRIDGE

WALLACE MACCAFFREY

The politics of religion in the age of Mary, queen of Scots. The earl of Argyll and the struggle for Britain and Ireland. By Jane E. A. Dawson. (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History.) Pp. xvii + 251 incl. 6 figs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. £45. 0 521 80996 7

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The political career of the fifth earl of Argyll (1558–73) here provides an illuminating case study of mid sixteenth-century British politics from the diplomatic *volte-face* to the end of the Scottish civil wars. The two opening, chiefly analytical, chapters probe Argyll's ambiguous position as chief of Clan Campbell and leading Lowland aristocrat, a semi-sovereign prince who was both king of the Gael and the most powerful British magnate of his day. Tudor specialists will read this with much profit: Dawson's portrayal of a marcher lord and Gaelic chief combined contests central assumptions in Tudor historiography about the relationship between aristocratic power and royal government. Each of the following four, broadly chronological, chapters is divided into parallel sections focusing on events in one of Argyll's political worlds: Scottish national affairs; the triangular relationships of the English, Irish and Scottish kingdoms; and the pan-Gaelic world of the North Channel region. These sections discuss from different angles the three British crises of the period. That of 1559–60 produced an Anglo-Scottish alliance between two Protestant regimes, and Argyll's further offer of support for the Tudors in Ulster in a triangular British policy. 1565 saw Argyll's abandonment of an integrated British policy, following disillusionment about English behaviour over the Chase-about Raid and the defeat of his Ulster dependants. And the years from Mary's abdication to the final collapse of the Queen's Party saw the reduction of Scotland from equal British partner to Tudor satellite state, with Argyll vainly offering to deploy his reconstructed Ulster affinity in return for English support for Mary's restoration. 1559–60 had briefly held out the vision of a united and Protestant British Isles to be achieved through partnership between Argyll and like-minded Englishmen, such as Cecil. What finally emerged was a Protestant mainland, but with Scottish politics manipulated to preserve English security and Argyll, in response, reshaping the Gaelic world to keep Ulster independent. In consequence, the Gaelic Reformation was crippled in Ireland and Ulster preserved as a base for Tyrone in the Nine Years War which almost cost Elizabeth the kingdom of Ireland. In a wide-ranging conclusion, Dawson deftly outlines the conflicting English, Scottish and Irish assumptions which underpinned these developments. This is a fine book, clearly written and well structured, which ably explores both the possibilities and limitations of the new British perspective in the period before the establishment of the British multiple monarchy.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND,
GALWAY

STEVEN G. ELLIS