

Frances Henderson editor, *The Clarke Papers Volume Five: further selections from the Papers of William Clarke*, Camden Fifth series, Volume 27, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, £45.00, ISBN 0-521-86267-1.

It has been a long wait. Sir Charles Firth's four volumes of the Clarke papers were published over a century ago. Now, a hundred years on Frances Henderson has done such an excellent job of work on this fifth volume that there is nothing really to quibble about. It would be churlish in any case to quibble about the product of almost twenty-year's work. The changes in our understanding of the process of editing are reflected in the work undertaken, and advances on Firth's work are shown by the inclusion of the identities of William Clarke's correspondent unidentified in Firth's volumes.

This volume of William Clarke's shorthand manuscripts covers the period May 1651 to February 1660, and places in easy reach important documents of the republic, which Henderson argues have been untranscribed since they were originally penned. Firth did not attempt the task and no one else it seems tried to either. Clarke served during this period as secretary to George Monck and other army commanders in Scotland during the republic. The book is ordered by the Notebooks that Clarke used a total of 12. There are two volumes, number 22 and 23 which have no extracts included in this selection as they contained no material in shorthand. The amount of shorthand material in each volume varies with the one covering the period of the Glencairn rebellion being in short hand throughout. Henderson does not publish all of the shorthand, this collection deals with the material usually sent to Scotland from England (sometimes vice-versa) dealing with English and European affairs. This we find papers such as Henry Walker's notebooks from Westminster providing commentary on Westminster and parliamentary business. Another newsletter writer for example gave details of John Lilburne's banishment and appearance at the old bailey to demand why he

had been banished, in August 1653. Issues of foreign affairs that were supplied to Scotland included details of the negotiations with the united Provinces over the ending of the war between the two republics. Most transcripts (about two thirds) come from the first four years (1651-1655), with very little being produced in 1657 and 1658. Nevertheless, this book contains a large amount of material useful to scholars of the republic. The filter of the mail between Westminster and Edinburgh allows us to see something of what is regarded important by the writers and readers, as well as the recorder of short hand versions. Although the entirety of the volumes are need to explore some issues, such as Cromwell and the crown, where of there are only fleeting mentions in this collection.

There is not doubt that the work that has gone into this volume has been immense. At first its size might belie the scholarly effort that has been made in bringing these papers to a wider audience, but the work is undoubtedly impressive and important. For the published work alone, Frances Henderson deserves our gratitude; for the act of transcription our admiration is thoroughly deserved too. This is an outstanding piece of work and one that will be useful to many of us for years to come.

Martyn Bennett

Nottingham Trent University