research. Anyone interested in and curious about the challenges that boundaries and border politics posed in Europe during the early modern period will find reading this work rewarding.

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England's Islands in a Sea of Troubles. David Cressy.
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David Cressy is a prolific scholar of early modern England, and his work has often focused on the turbulent relationship between center and periphery. His latest book, *England's Islands in a Sea of Troubles*, returns to this theme with the periphery taken to its geographic extreme. This is the first comprehensive attempt to situate the English islands in the political, religious, economic, and socio-cultural history of the period, and argues that the Channels, the Isles of Scilly, Wight, Man, Anglesey, and Lundy had their own traditions and peculiarities separating them from the mainland. This isolation hindered Westminster's efforts to bring these problematic outliers into the early modern state and also sparked bitter disputes between governors and islanders, and among competing groups of islanders, over control of these dark corners of Britain.

The book is divided into three parts: "Island Conditions," offering an overview of the islands' political and economic histories; "Island Troubles," examining the role of the islands as fortresses defending the mainland and their complex histories during the English Revolution and Restoration; and "Island Confinement," weighing the use of the islands by successive regimes as dumping grounds for political prisoners. A concluding chapter brings the story to the present day, explaining how the islands have remained distinctly separate from the United Kingdom and how their "historical insular peculiarities" have turned some into tax havens for the wealthy (293).

The islands, Cressy suggests, are "rich in incident and episodes," and this must be understood to gain a complete picture of the Three Kingdoms problem from 1550 to 1700. While the English state was acutely aware of the islands' strategic importance, the Crown also recognized that common law, parliamentary statute, and Privy Council orders had little or no force in these remote locations. Cressy argues that the governors sent to maintain fortifications and shore up poor defenses often butted heads with proprietors like the Paulet, Carteret, and Stanley families, who lorded over their island possessions, often as petty tyrants. At the same time, Channel Islanders were allowed to trade with England's enemies in times of war and peace, and most inhabitants across the English archipelago were granted immunity from military service abroad. Piracy, smuggling, and wrecking provided illicit income and further reinforced islanders' detachment from the mainland's legal system. Though many offshore inhabitants relished their

separation, wars required troops be sent to support the islands' ill-trained militias and, in the end, though "degrees of insularity" existed, no island was truly self-sufficient or completely free from Westminster's influence or, on occasion, its heavy hand (18). Cressy emphasizes that even though the islands closest to the Continent were England's first line of defense, it was "the blessings of providence" and the "inactivity of aggressors" that saw no successful invasion or occupation before 1940 (144).

If successive governments had difficulty imposing their political will on the islands, the Established Church found influencing the religious life there equally troublesome. While the Isle of Wight was "fully integrated" into the English Church, Lundy was "generally unchurched" and the Channels' inhabitants had more in common with French rather than English Protestantism (100). Religious distinctions were further complicated by language, be it Cornish on the Scillies, Manx Gaelic on the Isle of Man, or French in the Channels. While the Reformation may not have touched every islander, the outbreak of the Civil Wars stirred the sea of troubles to boiling, with the conflict playing out on the islands as it did on the mainland. The Isle of Wight quickly fell to the roundheads, while the Scillies and Man became Royalist strongholds. On Guernsey the Royalists held Castle Cornet and rained cannonballs down on the parliamentary citizenry below. Though often overlooked, Cressy reminds us that Guernsey was the last refuge of a Royalist army, with the castle surrendering in 1651 after a 3,190-day siege.

The book fills another lacuna through its exploration of the carceral role of the islands from the 1630s to the 1690s. Though imprisonment was a costly undertaking, Cressy concludes that the Stuart monarchy and the Commonwealth governments happily footed the bill to house religious radicals, Royalists, regicides, and republicans in island gaols. Though some prisoners were treated well and had relatively short stays, others languished without the aid of habeas corpus, and died in lonely isolation. Cressy's description of the period's most famous prisoner, Charles I, held on the "Isle of Wait" for eighteen months, is especially entertaining—notably, the king's bungled attempts at escape during his stay in Carisbrooke Castle. Charles, Cressy notes, was something of an "escapologist," though sadly, "not a very good one" (240).

England's Islands in a Sea of Troubles is a fine work of scholarship and Cressy is to be commended for expertly knitting together the disparate histories of these "strange, separate and perversely independent" outposts (300) and neatly fitting the islands into the history of early modern England. The book is also a welcome addition to the burgeoning field of island studies and will be very useful to those investigating the origins of English prisons before the age of Howard.

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