

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF  
POLITICAL THOUGHT

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CATHARINE MACAULAY  
*Political Writings*

The writings of republican historian and political pamphleteer Catharine Macaulay (1731–91) played a central role in debates about political reform in the Age of Enlightenment and Revolution. A critical reader of Hume’s bestselling *History of England*, she broke new ground in historiography by defending the regicide of Charles I and became an inspiration for many luminaries of the American and French revolutions. While her historical and political works engaged with thinkers from Hobbes and Locke to Bolingbroke and Burke, she also wrote about religion, philosophy, education and animal rights. Influencing Wollstonecraft and proto-feminism, she argued that there were no moral differences between men and women and that boys and girls should receive the same education. This book is the first scholarly edition of Catharine Macaulay’s published writings and includes all her known pamphlets along with extensive selections from her longer historical and political works.

MAX SKJÖNSBERG is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Cambridge and a College Research Associate at Emmanuel College. He has previously been a lecturer in history and politics at the University of St Andrews and the University of York, and held post-doctoral positions at the University of Liverpool and the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, Edinburgh. He is the author of *The Persistence of Party: Ideas of Harmonious Discord in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2021). His research has also been published in leading journals, including the *Historical Journal*, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *History of Political Thought* and *Modern Intellectual History*.

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CATHARINE MACAULAY

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*Political  
Writings*

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MAX SKJÖNSBERG  
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UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-009-30748-2 — Catharine Macaulay: Political Writings  
Catharine Macaulay, Edited by Max Skjönsberg  
Frontmatter  
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Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781009307482](http://www.cambridge.org/9781009307482)

DOI: 10.1017/9781009307451

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First published 2023

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.*

ISBN 978-1-009-30748-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-30744-4 Paperback

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*To my mother*

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## Acknowledgements

Like all scholars who publish in this series, I am deeply grateful to Quentin Skinner, and my debt is all the greater since he has given me such stellar advice on my editorial materials. I am also thankful to Julia-Anne Costet, Caroline Ashcroft, Janet Chan, Hannah Dawson, Robin Douglass, Karen Green, Signy Gutnick-Allen, Lucy Moynihan, Johan Olsthoorn and Tim Stuart-Buttle, who read earlier drafts of the manuscript, either in part or in full, and provided me with invaluable feedback and suggestions. I am also thankful to Joseph Hone, Adam Lebovitz, Blair Worden and Samuel Zeitlin for their help with specific references, to Sylvana Tomaselli for her advice and scholarship, and to Richard Bourke for enlightening conversations about the eighteenth century in general. My final thanks are due to Liz Friend-Smith, Natasha Whelan and Hilary Hammond at Cambridge University Press and the anonymous reviewers of my proposal. All the usual caveats apply.

## Abbreviations

<i>Correspondence</i>	<i>The Correspondence of Catharine Macaulay</i> , ed. Karen Green (Oxford, 2019)
<i>History</i>	Catharine Macaulay, <i>The History of England from the Accession of James I to the Revolution</i> (6 vols., London, 1763–83) (vols. I–V were originally entitled <i>The History of England from the Accession of James I to That of the Brunswick Line</i> )
<i>History since the Revolution</i>	Catharine Macaulay, <i>The History of England, from the Revolution to the Present Time, in a Series of Letters to the Reverend Doctor Wilson</i> (Bath, 1778)
<i>Hume's History</i>	David Hume, <i>The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688</i> (1754–61; 6 vols., Indianapolis, 1983, based on the 1778 ed.)
<i>Letters on Education</i>	Catharine Macaulay, <i>Letters on Education. With Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects</i> (London, 1790)
<i>Reflections</i>	Edmund Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to That Event. In a Letter Intended to Have Been Sent to a Gentleman in Paris</i> (London, 1790)
<i>Works</i>	<i>The Works of the Late Right Honourable Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke</i> , ed. David Mallet (5 vols., London, 1754)

## Introduction

There was a Macaulay's History of England long before Lord Macaulay's was heard of; and in its day a famous history it was.

Robert Chambers, *The Book of Days* (2 vols., 1863–4)

Catharine Macaulay (1731–91) was a remarkably influential writer in the second half of the eighteenth century. Her fame rested mainly on her *History of England* (8 vols., 1763–83). As a historian, Macaulay was a moralist who sought to educate and inspire her contemporaries by retelling the great deeds of the English revolutionaries, and reminding them of the republican political thought of the previous century. In justifying the regicide of Charles I, she broke new ground in historiography, and presented a sharp contrast not only to David Hume's sceptical *History of England* but also to establishment Whig history. While her writings are today mainly known by specialists, they were widely read and discussed in her day. For the political reformer James Burgh, her *History* was simply 'incomparable'.<sup>1</sup> The French Revolutionaries Mirabeau and Brissot viewed her *History* as the best in its genre. American Revolutionary luminaries such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams paid her ample compliments. As Macaulay's reputation in her native Britain declined in the final decades of the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft hoped that posterity would pay her greater respect.<sup>2</sup> In the nineteenth century, however, the name Macaulay in historiography became synonymous with Thomas

<sup>1</sup> James Burgh, *Political Disquisitions* (3 vols., London, 1774–5), II, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London, 1792), p. 235.

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Babington Macaulay. Even if she was not entirely forgotten in the nineteenth century, with W. E. H. Lecky dubbing her ‘the ablest writer of the New Radical School’,<sup>3</sup> scholarly interest in Macaulay was not renewed until the second half of the twentieth century. This was largely due to the republican revival among historians such as Caroline Robbins and J. G. A. Pocock on the one hand, and the history of women and feminism on the other.

Macaulay did not write a single systematic treatise on politics but a variety of texts in different genres, including history, educational and religious writings, and pamphlets. Her many writings are unified by her opposition to modern scepticism – historical, political, religious and philosophical – and her championing of the natural rights and liberties of all human beings as well as animals. Along with her advanced ideas about animal rights, her views on women, set out most fully in her *Letters on Education* (1790), may be her most significant contribution to political thought. As her writings on women and education inspired Wollstonecraft, Macaulay played a central role in the history of women’s rights and feminism.

This edition aims to do justice to the range and depth of Macaulay’s political writings by bringing together all her known publications on politics and history, either in part or in full. It begins with selections from her *History of England*, followed by her political pamphlets, and culminates in her writings on education and the French Revolution published in the penultimate year of her life. Macaulay’s final texts brought together, accentuated and clarified many of her long-held views on what she thought was wrong with eighteenth-century society: a society that defended hierarchies of birth in the form of monarchy, aristocracy and patriarchy, while levelling all human beings by holding everyone to be equally passionate and corruptible. For the deeply religious Macaulay, the latter drift risked normalising and exonerating corruption and vice instead of inspiring honesty and virtue, and ultimately prevented human beings from achieving happiness in this life and perfection in the next. This process was further retarded by the general exclusion of animals from human considerations of justice and the mistaken notion that men and women were morally and intellectually distinct. The French Revolution, however, like the English revolution in

<sup>3</sup> W. E. H. Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1878; 8 vols., London, 1917), III, p. 414.

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the seventeenth century, was a providential sign embodying what she regarded as the core teaching of Jesus Christ: the equal rights of all human beings.

The remainder of this introduction provides a sketch of Macaulay's life – including its familial and social settings, and her political networks – as well as an outline of some of her most important political and philosophical commitments, and their contexts. Additionally, each text is given its own individual introduction, which briefly sets out its specific historical and intellectual significance.

#### *Catharine Macaulay's Life and Works*

On 23 March 1731,<sup>4</sup> Catharine Macaulay was born as Catharine Sawbridge into a gentry family with strong mercantile and political links. She grew up on an estate in Wye, Kent, bought by her grandfather Jacob Sawbridge (1665–1748) in 1717, when he was one of the original directors of the then still successful South Sea Company. Elected as a Member of Parliament for Crickdale in 1715, Jacob Sawbridge was an opposition Whig who voted to repeal the Tory party's Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts. He was also one of only thirty-three Whigs who voted against the Septennial Act of 1716, which extended the maximum life of Parliament from three to seven years. After the South Sea Bubble in 1720 – and the fraud and corruption that accompanied the company's collapse – he was arrested and expelled from Parliament. Allowed to keep only £5,000 out of a fortune of £77,000 (equivalent to approximately £600,000 and £9 million respectively in 2017), Sawbridge was classed by the House of Commons as among the more culpable of the directors. He was allowed to keep the family home by giving it as a wedding gift to his son John, Macaulay's father. Jacob Sawbridge's experience certainly contributed to his granddaughter's loathing of modern finance. She would later seek to vindicate him in her historical writings.<sup>5</sup>

The first marriage of John Sawbridge (1699–1762) did not produce any children, as his wife Elizabeth (née Turner) died shortly after they were wedded in July 1727. Just over a year later he married Dorothy – heiress of wealthy London banker George Wanley – with whom he had

<sup>4</sup> 23 March 1730, old style.    <sup>5</sup> *History since the Revolution*, pp. 306–7.

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two sons, John and Wanley, and two daughters, Dorothy and Catharine. Macaulay's father was an admirer of the opposition Whig William Pulteney, but this admiration turned into disgust when Pulteney became a courtier upon the fall of Sir Robert Walpole in 1742.<sup>6</sup> Macaulay's mother died in childbirth in 1733 at the age of twenty-two. When John Sawbridge (senior) passed away nearly thirty years later, his son John inherited a fortune and the family estate, Wanley received £3,000 (along with a further £5,000 gifted to him by his brother), while Dorothy and Catharine inherited £50 each.

With no extant memoirs or diary entries, Macaulay's earliest known correspondence dates from 1762, when she was in her early thirties. Because of the lack of evidence, we do not know exactly when she began her studies. While she was inspired by the ancients, she later admitted to being not particularly well versed in classical works. This made her all the more convinced of the importance of female education. 'It is under a full sense of the many inconveniences that I have my self struggled with that I recommend a learned education to Women,' she wrote to the editor of the *Monthly Review* after the appearance of her *Letters on Education* in 1790.<sup>7</sup> It is clear, however, that despite their financial setback, the Sawbridges amassed an impressive library, which is likely to have formed the basis of Macaulay's early education. From a recorded conversation she had with the classicist Elizabeth Carter (1717–1806) in 1757, we learn about Macaulay's 'interest in the Spartan laws [and] the Roman politics'. Early sources of these interests were the English translations of the *Ancient History* and *History of Rome* by the Jansenist Charles Rollin (1661–1741) and Jean Crevier (1693–1765). These popular pedagogical works analysed the mixed and balanced governments of Sparta and Rome, Sparta's equal distribution of land and its aversion to luxury, and Rome's embrace of patriotism – themes that would have a lasting influence on Macaulay's political thought.

In 1760 Catharine Sawbridge married the Scottish widower Dr George Macaulay, educated at Edinburgh and Padua. George Macaulay was related to several prominent thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment via his sister Anne's marriage to David Gregorie, a grandson of David Gregory (1625–1720), many of whose descendants became prominent scholars at Aberdeen. George Macaulay was also a

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 422.

<sup>7</sup> Macaulay to Ralph Griffiths, November 1790, in *Correspondence*, p. 290.

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distant cousin of the Scottish man of letters Tobias Smollett (1721–71). More important for his wife's political journey was his connection with Thomas Hollis (1720–74). Hollis was one of the early publishers of the commonwealth canon as well as a collector of tracts and paraphernalia relating to the English republicans of the seventeenth century. He continued the publishing enterprise of John Toland (1677–1720) at the turn of the century, reprinting and disseminating works by Algernon Sidney, Edmund Ludlow, Marchamont Nedham, Henry Neville and John Locke, and Toland's *Life of Milton* – the bread and butter of Macaulay's political thought. Hollis designed a frontispiece to the third volume of Macaulay's *History of England* in 1767, which depicted Macaulay as the goddess of liberty.

George Macaulay was supportive of his wife's literary aspirations. By the mid eighteenth century many women had distinguished themselves in literature. Nevertheless, it was unusual for a woman to write history, which was one of the most widely read and politicised genres of the time, as the *Monthly Review* remarked on the appearance of the first volume of the *History* in 1763. Mary Astell's *Impartial Enquiry into the Causes of the Rebellion and Civil War* (1704) was a partial exception, but it was a pamphlet rather than a multivolume work of narrative history. A notable and more recent predecessor was her acquaintance Sarah Scott (1720–95), who published *The History of Gustavus Ericson, King of Sweden* and *The History of Mecklenburgh* in 1761 and 1762 respectively. The appearance of the first volume of Macaulay's *History of England* became a literary sensation thanks to its explosive content as well as the sex of the author.

In 1765 Macaulay gave birth to her only child, Catharine Sophia. A year later, George Macaulay died after a period of bad health, leaving all his property to his widow. As a relatively wealthy widow, she held weekly meetings with political and literary friends at her home in Berners Street, London. In the early 1770s her own health became more precarious, leading to a hiatus of ten years between the publication of the fifth and sixth volumes of the *History*, which appeared in 1771 and 1781. In the interval Macaulay published a series of pamphlets on British politics and a work of contemporary history. Macaulay and her daughter moved to Bath in 1774, to reside with widower and retired rector the Reverend Thomas Wilson (1703–84), who belonged to similar political circles. Wilson was a friend of the Presbyterian minister John Leland (1691–1766) and the addressee of Leland's two-volume *View of the*

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*Principal Deistical Writers* (1754–5), which defended Christianity from the infamous onslaught of Henry St John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751). While she approved of many of Bolingbroke's political and historical writings, Macaulay would present similar criticisms of his religious writings in her own works on religion and philosophy.

Macaulay addressed her *History of England from the Revolution to the Present Time in a Series of Letters to a Friend* (1778) to Wilson. Their relationship ended abruptly that same year, however, when Macaulay married for the second time. Her new husband was the 21-year-old Scottish ship steward William Graham (1757–1845). At this stage, Macaulay was a literary celebrity, and the fact that she was more than twice her new husband's age predictably attracted critical remarks from both male and female commentators in the public sphere. It may even have affected the sales of her works, as the *New Annual Register* pointed out in 1781 in a review of the sixth and seventh volumes of the *History*.

In any event, Macaulay's second marriage had, if anything, a positive impact on her productivity. In 1783 she published her first philosophical work, *A Treatise on the Immutability of Moral Truth*, in favour of rational religion – that is, the conviction that everyone is able to comprehend their moral and religious duties and achieve salvation – and in opposition to philosophical and religious scepticism. In the same year the eighth and final volume of her *History* also appeared. After a trip to the newly independent United States of America in 1784, where she was a guest of George Washington and other luminaries, and a second visit to France in 1785–6, Macaulay retired to Berkshire and turned her attention to writing a treatise on education. The third part of *Letters on Education* (1790) also repackaged and to an extent revised her philosophical views set out in the *Treatise*, which had been rather unkindly received. Later that same year she published her final work, a rapidly put together but well-crafted reply to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Though well-received, her *Observations* was quickly overshadowed by Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791). Macaulay died in June 1791, and only a year later Wollstonecraft lamented in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) that Macaulay's reputation was waning.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, p. 235.



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### *Macaulay's Political Circle*

Members of Macaulay's circle are frequently called 'radicals', and sometimes 'radical Whigs' (or 'Real Whigs'), but there are reasons for avoiding these terms. 'Radical' only gained political traction in the nineteenth century as a term for the followers of Jeremy Bentham (John Stuart Mill's philosophical radicals). 'Whig' was a crucial contemporary term, but its ubiquity makes it less helpful. Many parliamentary groupings sought to claim the Whig label, and the most organised connection which called itself Whig was an aristocratic one led by Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham (1730–82). The Rockingham party often co-operated with elements of Macaulay's political circle, but while they sometimes made common cause and shared some traditions, they were distinct and generally of different temperaments. Macaulay differed fundamentally with the Rockingham party and its chief publicist, Burke, on key questions, including parliamentary reform. Like Paine, moreover, she had no attachment to the Whig label, and had no qualms about citing and celebrating Tories and even Jacobites in her works.<sup>9</sup>

The members of her circle are sometimes labelled as republicans and commonwealthmen, which were terms in use at the time, and especially appropriate in relation to Hollis's publishing activities. They are in some ways pertinent for Macaulay too, since they look back to the seventeenth century and the writers and events which shaped her politics. But republicanism had a loose meaning in the eighteenth century, and it was often used humorously, as an accusation or an insult. When used affirmatively, it rarely entailed hostility to monarchy as such, at least before the American and French revolutions. While Macaulay at times seems to have taken pleasure in her reputation as 'a hater of kings',<sup>10</sup> it does not apply to many others in her circle, and in her more serious moments Macaulay accepted the institution of monarchy, though reluctantly. According to her friend Horace Walpole, Macaulay and her brother were two chiefs of 'an avowed though very small Republican party' in the late 1760s and early 1770s.<sup>11</sup> We will return to the nature of Macaulay's republicanism and her views on liberty below.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *History since the Revolution*, pp. 33, 59.

<sup>10</sup> Macaulay to George Simon, 17 January 1778, in *Correspondence*, p. 80.

<sup>11</sup> Horace Walpole, *Memoirs and Portraits*, ed. Matthew Hodgart (rev. ed., London, 1963), p. 209.

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Macaulay's broader circle could simply be identified as reformist, a term with political and religious connotations that often but not always went together. Since the accession of George III and the onset of the American crisis in the 1760s, the Protestant Dissenters had become increasingly dissatisfied with the limitations of the Toleration Act 1689 and the fact that they remained formally barred from holding political office under the Test and Corporation Acts. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Dissenters and their allies took the lead in calling for the reform of Britain's unequal and irregular system of parliamentary representation. There were, however, different kinds of reformers at the time. The Rockingham Whigs, under Burke's guidance, were distrustful of constitutional reform. They wanted Parliament to limit the power of the crown, but they believed that this could be most effectively done through party solidarity and later by 'economical reform' to curtail and supervise the crown's budget. This approach was insufficient for Macaulay and her circle, who usually referred to themselves as 'the Friends of Liberty', and often Patriots. The Patriot programme was effectively summarised by John Adams (1735–1826) in a letter to Macaulay describing her brother John Sawbridge's political principles: 'Shorter parliaments, a more equitable Representation, the abolition of Taxes and the Payment of the Debt, the Reduction of Placemen and Pensioners, the annihilation of Corruption, the Reformation of Luxury, Dissipation & Effeminacy, the Disbanding of the Army'.<sup>12</sup>

The most important person in Macaulay's political circle was her brother Sawbridge, a prominent politician in London as well as a Member of Parliament for Hythe in 1768–74 and for London between 1774 and his death in 1795. He was known for annually (and unsuccessfully) introducing a motion to repeal the Septennial Act. Macaulay repeatedly praised and promoted her brother's political conduct in her correspondence. She viewed him and herself as united and involved in 'the glorious cause of liberty and man', as she wrote after his election to Parliament in 1768.<sup>13</sup> By not retiring after dinner with the ladies when dining in his company, Macaulay enraged other female writers such as Elizabeth Montagu (1718–1800).

<sup>12</sup> John Adams to Macaulay, 28 December 1774, in *Correspondence*, p. 123.

<sup>13</sup> Macaulay to William Harris, [July 1769?], in *Correspondence*, p. 63.

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In the 1760s John Wilkes (1725–97) emerged as a political figure of critical importance. Arrested for seditious libel after criticising the king's speech in 1763 in *North Briton*, and declared an outlaw in the following year, Wilkes fled to France to avoid imprisonment on these grounds and for the publication of his scandalous *Essay on Woman*, a satire of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*. In 1768 he was compelled to return to England due to his dire financial situation and sought election to Parliament to obtain legal immunity. The Grafton ministry expelled him from Parliament, but Wilkes was repeatedly re-elected and ejected as MP for Middlesex in a series of by-elections, all the while himself being locked up in the King's Bench prison. The whole episode led to significant unrest in London, as Wilkes's cause mustered popular support. The question of whether the House of Commons could rightfully disqualify a representative elected by the people raised constitutional questions, and commentators from many corners, from Samuel Johnson to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, voiced their opinions.

Macaulay (and her first husband) did not approve of Wilkes's womanising and his anti-Scottish propaganda (directed at the king's Scottish favourite, John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute), but they defended his cause. This position was similar to that of their acquaintance William Pitt the Elder (the Earl of Chatham after 1766), who is reported to have praised her *History* in Parliament. In fact, the Macaulays were close not only to Wilkes's intellectual antagonist Smollett, author of *The Briton*, but also to Charles Townshend, who served in the Bute administration. Macaulay and her brother Sawbridge were caught up in Wilkes's campaign to be reinstated as the representative of Middlesex in 1768–70. She even lent money to Wilkes to help him pay his debts when he was imprisoned, although it is apparent that she resented his profligacy. In the early 1770s Sawbridge along with the reformers John Horne Tooke and Richard Oliver separated from the Wilkeite Society of the Gentlemen Supporters of the Bill of Rights and established the rival Constitutional Society. Many of the Protestant Dissenters in the reformist camp were deeply religious and disapproved of Wilkes's philandering and indebtedness. In the general election of 1774, however, Sawbridge and Wilkes were reunited.

Macaulay inspired founding members of the Society for Constitutional Information (SCI) – perhaps especially Capel Lofft – which was set up in April 1780 and joined by her brother. This society

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campaigning for parliamentary reform and universal male suffrage, following John Cartwright's *Take Your Choice!* (1776). Macaulay does not seem to have been involved with the SCI and appears to have become somewhat more marginalised in the 1780s than she had been in London politics in the late 1760s and early 1770s. At the same time, Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville, later one of the leaders of the Girondins during the French Revolution, was in London between 1782 and 1784, and he befriended Macaulay, whose *History* he admired and would later cite in defence of the right to have Louis XVI tried. As we shall see, the outbreak of the French Revolution threw her back into contemporary political debates.

### *Macaulay's History and David Hume*

Macaulay's historical enterprise was explicitly written in opposition to Hume's bestselling but highly controversial history. In terms of method, she used manuscript sources to a far greater extent than Hume, one of which Hume in fact quoted in later editions of his *History of England* (6 vols., 1754–61).<sup>14</sup> More importantly, Macaulay's alleged strict political approach to history has sometimes been called old-fashioned in comparison with Hume's more philosophical and social approach.<sup>15</sup> Notably, her historical works do not engage with contemporary discussions of the historical 'progress of women', the feminisation of manners, or the economic and intellectual advantages of a mixed-gender public culture.<sup>16</sup> We should note, however, that Macaulay, like Hume in his *History*, paid attention to the economic and social circumstances of political changes and ideas. Her citations of Hume's *History* are many and they are not all hostile. Like Hume, she stressed the importance of accident and contingency in the development of the spirit of liberty, which had been stumbled upon before it had been theorised. 'Liberty, in an enlarged sense, was never a general principle of action among the English,' she wrote in a Humean spirit.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, her analysis of the state of politics, and its absolutist

<sup>14</sup> *Hume's History*, v, p. 575.

<sup>15</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, 'Catharine Macaulay: Patriot Historian', in *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition*, ed. H. Smith (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 243–58.

<sup>16</sup> Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 154.

<sup>17</sup> *History*, iv, p. 160 (note).

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nature, at the accession of James I in 1603 was highly reliant on Hume, as she happily acknowledged. Nevertheless, the differences between Macaulay and Hume are key to understanding her intentions.

Hume's *History* was not intended to favour any specific party, either in his own day or in the past. However, he certainly attempted to exonerate the Stuart monarchs, villainised by Whigs, from constitutional misconduct, and he was predictably accused of Toryism and Jacobitism, in other words, of being a supporter of the exiled Stuart court. Much of the criticism of Hume's *History* had an anti-Scottish dimension, as Scotland was the native land of the Stuart dynasty and had frequently been the nerve centre of Jacobitism. Macaulay, unlike Wilkes, can hardly be accused of anti-Scottish xenophobia since both her husbands were Scottish. She also had many Scottish friends and admirers, one of them writing to her in 1769: 'I must do Scotland the justice to say that I have heard several people in it claim you . . . & that some few have even a very high opinion not only of the Stile but the Candor & Spirit of your History.'<sup>18</sup>

Despite a degree of mutual respect, Macaulay and Hume both acknowledged in their only known exchange of letters that they differed in 'original principles'. According to Hume, political arrangements were grounded in the acceptance of useful conventions. Any established authority that could uphold useful and indeed necessary conventions such as property rights was therefore lawful, he believed. He wrote in his letter to Macaulay that he viewed 'all kinds of subdivisions of power, from the monarchy of France to the free democracy of some Swiss Cantons, to be equally legal, if established by custom and authority'. In his letter to Macaulay, Hume repeated the notorious argument from his *History* that the first Stuart monarchs of England simply supported the strong royal government which had been left to them by Elizabeth I, and they were therefore largely blameless. Instead, it was the partisans of the cause of liberty who had disgraced their cause, noble and generous in itself, 'by their violence, and also by their cant, hypocrisy, and bigotry'.<sup>19</sup> Macaulay countered that even if all kinds of government were legal, they were surely 'not equally expedient'. Moreover, Hume's position made reform impossible 'since opposition to established error must needs

<sup>18</sup> David Stuart Erskine to Macaulay, 25 June 1769, in *Correspondence*, p. 48.

<sup>19</sup> Hume to Macaulay, 29 March 1764, in *Correspondence*, p. 38.

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be opposition to authority'. She concluded her riposte by comparing the Stuart line to Caesar, recounting its cruel treatment of the Puritan Alexander Leighton (1570–1649), who had been whipped, had one of his ears cut off, his nose slit and was branded on the forehead with S. S. for 'sower of sedition'.<sup>20</sup>

Macaulay and Hume not only differed politically but also philosophically and religiously. Macaulay's belief in the afterlife, divine providence and immutable moral truths discoverable through reason was diametrically opposite to Hume's scepticism. By drawing attention to the religious extremism of the Parliamentarians and the monarchical bias of England's constitution, even some of Macaulay's friends such as David Steuart Erskine, 11th Earl of Buchan, believed that Hume's account of the seventeenth century was closer to the truth than Macaulay's. Indeed, she can be suspected of having shared some of the religious enthusiasm of the seventeenth-century republicans, writing that '[t]he matchless Milton has observed that no government comes nearer to this precept of Christ [of the equal rights of men] than a free Commonwealth'.<sup>21</sup> For Macaulay, as for many Dissenters in her wider circle, rational religion, morality and political legitimacy coincided and were mutually supportive. As she wrote about the rise of scepticism and voluntarism during the Restoration: 'in contradiction to that great oracle of history, Mr. Hume, we cannot help thinking that the cure of fanaticism, by the prevalence of licentiousness, debauchery, and irreligion, was a very great evil rather than a benefit to the kingdom'.<sup>22</sup>

In one key sense, Hume and Macaulay spoke past each other rather than in dialogue since Hume in his historical writings first and foremost sought to explode the Whig myth of an ancient constitution. But Macaulay had little time for this form of Whiggism. Although she sometimes spoke of the 'ancient constitution', and even of the Anglo-Saxon constitution having been corrupted by the Normans, she consistently argued for the universal rights of men – rights that were abstract rather than historical. Crucially, she was convinced that the regicide of Charles I had to be justified by Lockean natural law – that is to say, the king had to be punished as a tyrant in the name of natural justice – rather than on constitutional grounds. This frame of mind

<sup>20</sup> Macaulay to Hume, [April] 1764, in *Correspondence*, p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> *History*, III, p. 345 (note). <sup>22</sup> *History*, VIII, pp. 70–1.

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would put her on a collision course with one of the most famous Whigs of the second half of the eighteenth century, the Irish man of letters and parliamentarian Burke, whom she attacked directly in two pamphlets in 1770 and 1790.

### *Macaulay on Religion*

Macaulay's belief in natural rights was intimately linked with her religious persuasion. She assumed the existence of a benevolent God in her philosophical works, in which she wrestled with the existence of evil. In short, she believed that evil and sin in the experienced world produced greater good in the afterlife in which virtue would be rewarded and wickedness punished. She regarded earthly life as a trial in which reason and experience directed human beings towards meritorious virtue and away from the passions and appetites. In this way she sought to make the existence of evil consistent with the omnipotence and infinite benevolence of God, in opposition to Bolingbroke's deism. Bolingbroke accepted the existence of God, but held that we have no reason to think that he is good or just in human terms. According to Macaulay, accepting the existence of God while doubting his traditional attributes – omnipotence, goodness and wisdom – was no better than atheism, and undercut morality. Since life could be conceived as a trial in virtue, education was necessary; habits of virtue and self-control needed to be taught and encouraged, which is what she sought to do in her *Letters on Education* (1790).

According to Bolingbroke, the example of China demonstrated that a country could be governed justly without any notion of a supreme being, as justice was based on useful conventions. Macaulay retorted that women and children had never been treated justly in China. As in her response to Hume, she argued that existing conventions could lead to abuses of power in the name of rational self-interest. Justice in its abstract or general sense was thus indispensable, and was supported by an understanding of the true nature of God. Macaulay was convinced that the rise of irreligion and scepticism threatened moral motivation, arguing that Hobbes's and Hume's undermining of the notion that human beings are morally motivated creatures who participate in God's goodness weakened beliefs that are necessary for promoting peace and prosperity, as well as salvation.

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Macaulay wrote that ‘the empire of religious sentiment, and the empire of reason, are the same’.<sup>23</sup> In a biographical sketch, Erskine speculated that it was her frequent contacts with Protestant Dissenters which made her ‘prepossessed against the Principle of Monarchy’.<sup>24</sup> Several members of her wider circle were Unitarian ministers: Richard Price, Joseph Priestley, Theophilus Lindsay and Andrew Kippis. Hollis and her friend the Scottish reformer James Burgh, author of *Political Disquisitions* (1774–5), were also Dissenters. Though she never left the Church of England, in private correspondence she admitted her belief in Unitarianism, which was strictly speaking illegal according to England’s Toleration Act as it only accepted trinitarian dissent.<sup>25</sup>

Too much can be made of the fact that Macaulay remained with the established church. Already in 1767, she applauded a pamphlet against the Church of England by the Presbyterian historian William Harris.<sup>26</sup> The same pamphlet criticised Catholicism for having ‘recommended and authorized croisades, the drains of *Europe*, and the disgrace of human nature!’<sup>27</sup> Even though Harris viewed Protestant established churches as superior to ‘Popish’ ones, they were more inconsistent with the principles of Protestantism.<sup>28</sup> Macaulay shared this hostility to Catholicism, as was common in her circle of reformist Protestants, and indeed as in eighteenth-century Britain at large. By contrast, her antagonist Burke, with multiple familial ties with Catholics, was known as one of the foremost champions of Catholics of the time. The reformers and Dissenters at the time were not all irredeemably anti-Catholic. Priestley, for instance, included Catholics in his call for complete religious liberty, as one of Macaulay’s correspondents complained.<sup>29</sup> Macaulay seems to have thought that this criticism of Priestley was ‘very judicious’.<sup>30</sup> In the third volume of the *History*, she wrote damningly about the Irish massacre of 1641, on which Hume had also taken a hard

<sup>23</sup> Macaulay, *A Treatise on the Immutability of Moral Truth* (London, 1783), p. 283; *Letters on Education*, p. 265.

<sup>24</sup> Edinburgh University Library La. II. 588, cited in *Correspondence*, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> Macaulay to Capel Lofft, 12 November 1789, in *Correspondence*, p. 285.

<sup>26</sup> Macaulay to William Harris, 16 December 1767, in *Correspondence*, p. 58.

<sup>27</sup> William Harris, *Observations on National Establishments in Religion in General* (London, 1767), pp. 28, 33–4.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35. <sup>29</sup> Erskine to Macaulay, 12 February 1769, in *Correspondence*, p. 46.

<sup>30</sup> Macaulay to Erskine, 9 June 1769, in *Correspondence*, p. 47.



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line and clashed with Burke. In Hume's narrative of the late seventeenth century, Macaulay believed that he was too favourable to the 'Papists', and she was not as dismissive as he was of the reality of the Popish Plot. Indeed, she believed that it was fully rational for people to believe in such a plot given Charles II's 'conspiracy to re-establish Popery as the national religion'.<sup>31</sup> She also offered a partial defence of Shaftesbury and those involved in the Rye House Plot to assassinate the king, which she called the 'Protestant Plot'. Yet, elsewhere in her historical account, she was critical of the Presbyterians for not allowing a more general toleration, and she also wrote sympathetically about the sincerity of James II's Catholic faith. On balance, then, her position on Catholics may be located somewhere between Harris's and Priestley's respective views.

### *Liberty, Rights and Equality*

J. G. A. Pocock and others have placed Macaulay in the civic humanist tradition, which valued the independence of the citizen soldier. This context can be misleading for Macaulay, however, since liberty for her was deeply connected with religion, and more specifically with freedom of conscience and moral autonomy. Pocock's description of Macaulay as 'an eighteenth-century Hannah Arendt, a woman wholly committed to the ancient ideal of active citizenship and wholly undeterred by its hyper-intense masculinity'<sup>32</sup> thus becomes problematic. For her, political liberty was a prerequisite for securing rights and individual liberty in the sense of moral self-determination, and not an end in itself. Importantly, Macaulay's religious views were fundamental for her views on women, as she was convinced that God had created women and men as equally sociable and moral, who can and ought to perfect themselves as moral beings. Singling out one sex for preferential treatment would thus be inconsistent with divine justice. 'Manly' and 'masculine' are terms of approbation and 'effeminacy' is linked with corruption in her *History*. For a Latinist culture, however, 'manly' and 'masculine' often implied little more than a direct translation of *virtù* – the qualities of the *vir*, the masculine man. 'Effeminacy' could afflict women and men alike,

<sup>31</sup> *History*, vii, p. 288.

<sup>32</sup> Pocock, 'Catharine Macaulay: Patriot Historian', p. 251.

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and it was not always linked with femininity.<sup>33</sup> For Macaulay, it was more frequently associated with aristocracy and servitude. There would be loud echoes of Macaulay's views on women in the more famous writings of Wollstonecraft, who was an avid reader of Macaulay's writings and reviewed her *Letters on Education* favourably in the *Analytical Review*.

Macaulay followed Locke in believing that free individuals are governed by reason, and to be politically free was to be governed by laws conformable to reason and natural law. Laws that prevented the operation of reason, for instance those governing religious worship or impeding the freedom of thought and expression, were pernicious. The purpose of civil laws was to protect the basic natural rights of men and women. For Macaulay and many members of her circle, liberty and rights were often intimately linked and even conflated. Benjamin Rush, a signatory of the Declaration of Independence, called Macaulay 'a patroness of Liberty and a defendant of the rights of Mankind'.<sup>34</sup>

Macaulay also persistently championed the rights of animals. Though lacking in reason, animals were created by God for happiness and not for misery, and since happiness was not always attained in the earthly life, the consistency of God's benevolence meant that there must be an afterlife for animals. The capacity for reasoning implied a hierarchy of beings, and the superiority of humans was accompanied by their responsibility to care for the welfare of animals. In her *Letters on Education*, Macaulay argued that children's benevolence and sympathy would be developed if they were trained to refrain from animal cruelty, which she wanted to see punished. While she promoted vegetarianism for adults, she believed that children should eat a small amount of meat when growing, underlining the implied hierarchy of God's creatures.

The liberty Macaulay favoured was an ordered one and routinely contrasted with licentiousness. Such an ordered liberty was underpinned by equality, she argued, writing in the third volume of the *History* '[t]hat

<sup>33</sup> Samuel Johnson presented two distinct definitions in his *Dictionary* (1755): '1. Having the qualities of a woman; womanish; soft to an unmanly degree; mean submission . . . 2. Lasciviousness; loose pleasure.'

<sup>34</sup> Rush to Macaulay, 25 November 1769, in *Correspondence*, p. 69.

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invidious distinctions and privileges are so far from being instrumental to the laws, or the order, regularity, and decency of society that they must necessarily act contrary to these purposes'.<sup>35</sup> She complained that the 'levelling' doctrine had been misunderstood and stressed that it only threatened aristocratic privilege and not the security of property. While aware of the danger of excessive economic inequality, she certainly accepted a degree of difference in wealth, and the importance of property rights, which she thought had been infringed by the Stuart monarchs in the seventeenth century. Yet Macaulay was concerned that Englishmen had a tendency to put too much emphasis on private property, which must be subordinated to the superior value of the common good.<sup>36</sup>

Macaulay favoured free trade and wrote that 'there cannot be a truer political maxim than that a free commerce is the only source of opulence to a state, and that every tax laid upon trade is a very pernicious and a very heavy burthen on society'.<sup>37</sup> This made her a critic of key elements in Britain's economic order, not only its high taxes but also its debt financing, which she believed created both instability and inequality. She was also deeply worried about the corrupting effects of the wrong kinds of luxury. Many in Macaulay's circle were from commercial backgrounds, notably Hollis, who took an active interest in the management of his inherited fortune through the buying and selling of stocks, and who supported the Society for Promotion of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. In her mature views in *Letters on Education*, Macaulay stressed that the benefits that derive from the progress of civilisation, such as hygiene, are luxuries that should be promoted. There was thus a balance to be struck between puritan austerity and licentious consumption that satisfied vanity. This approach is also notable in her attitude to culture: rather than banning theatres, like Rousseau had prescribed for Geneva, she sought to promote *day-time* theatre to avoid vice. Moreover, she thought that painting and music should be directed towards improving the beauty of churches rather than private spaces.

<sup>35</sup> *History*, III, p. 116.

<sup>36</sup> *History*, VI, p. 211. Karen Green has shown that Macaulay's conception of property is similar to Richard Cumberland's and John Locke's; see *Catharine Macaulay's Republican Enlightenment* (New York, 2020), p. 71.

<sup>37</sup> *History since the Revolution*, p. 264.

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### *The American and French Revolutions*

Macaulay was well connected with revolutionaries in both France and America, having travelled to France in the 1770s and to both countries in the 1780s. She was a celebrity in America long before her visit in 1784. Having written about the imposition of ship money in the seventeenth century, her *History* became topical as a result of the American crisis, which escalated after the Stamp Act in 1765. In the 1760s Hollis and the publisher John Almon began a campaign of printing and disseminating pro-American tracts. American pamphlets such as James Otis's *Vindication of the British Colonies* (1765) supported both British reformers at home and the American cause against taxation without representation. In a similar vein, Macaulay's writings formed part of the intellectual and political skirmishes fought on both sides of the Atlantic.

Macaulay's many correspondents in America encouraged her to visit the colonies before the American War of Independence, but her health did not allow it. Her correspondence with Rush shows, however, that she was eager for her writings to be disseminated among his friends in America. She wrote to him that the 'general principles of the rights of mankind inculcated in my great work [her *History*]' were more advantageous to 'the cause of the Americans' than the pamphlet literature.<sup>38</sup> This interest was certainly mutual. As the standoff between Britain and the Thirteen Colonies intensified, the Italian newspaper *Notizie del mondo* wrote in December 1769: 'The American-English inhabitants of the northern part of that hemisphere have prohibited entry of all English books to their parts, except the history of Mrs. Macaulay, which is written in a very free style, and they call it the foundation of liberty.'<sup>39</sup>

Macaulay admired America for its simplicity. She wrote to the Quaker John Dickinson that she hoped the Americans would 'emulate that meritorious simplicity and moderation which was to be found in the happy and virtuous periods of the Greek and Roman States than the vices and Luxuries which afterwards prevailed in those illustrious Republicks to their entire ruin and which mistaken moderns miscall [*sic*] civilisation'.<sup>40</sup> Like Dickinson, she was not in favour of American

<sup>38</sup> Macaulay to Rush, 20 January 1769, in *Correspondence*, p. 69.

<sup>39</sup> Cited in Franco Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1768–1776: The First Crisis* (Princeton, 1989), p. 413.

<sup>40</sup> Macaulay to Dickinson, 18 July 1771, in *Correspondence*, pp. 126–7.

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independence, at least not immediately. Her hope was rather that the Americans would be ‘the Saviours of the Liberties of the whole British Empire’, as she wrote to Mercy Otis Warren.<sup>41</sup> But like many British reformers and oppositional figures, she is likely to have realised that separation was inevitable, at least after France formally entered the war on the American side in February 1778. Otis Warren continuously implored Macaulay to write a history of the American revolution, but this was a vain hope, and instead Otis Warren undertook the enterprise herself, as Macaulay had encouraged her to do.<sup>42</sup>

Although her visit to the newly independent United States of America in 1784 left Macaulay optimistic about its prospects, this would quickly change. Her closest American friends were Anti-Federalists such as Mercy Otis Warren and her husband James Warren, and along with them she expressed her uneasiness with the monarchical tendencies of the Federal Constitution, created in 1787 and gradually adopted by the states. They all regretted the Federalist proclivities of their friend John Adams. Macaulay expressed these worries in her correspondence with Washington and other American friends. According to Macaulay, the key issue for America after the revolution was the spectre of European luxury. America needed to avoid foreign dependence and should therefore prioritise domestic manufacturers producing the necessities for the comforts of life. She was convinced that ‘[w]hilst Agriculture continues the prime object of American industry and her riches as a Society are moderate she will enjoy domestic liberty’. As the Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton, were aiming to turn America into ‘a large commercial State’, Macaulay feared that ‘[America’s] security will be rendered precarious’. A large revenue would increase ‘the power and pageantry of government’, and the people would be left ‘robbed and deluded’, and ready to receive the ‘invidious distinctions of Aristocracy’.<sup>43</sup>

In the introduction to the first volume of the *History*, Macaulay had complained about the fashion of travelling abroad and the risk of becoming seduced by foreign things. But when she visited France in the late

<sup>41</sup> Macaulay to Otis Warren, 11 September 1774, in *Correspondence*, p. 152.

<sup>42</sup> Macaulay to Otis Warren, April 1790, in *Correspondence*, p. 171. Warren published *A History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution* in three volumes in 1805.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

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1770s, she, like Hume, benefited from the high regard paid by the French to literary merit. She socialised with the physiocrat Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, France's first minister in 1774–6, among others, but due to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act she had to decline the opportunity of meeting Benjamin Franklin, who was in Paris at the time as commissioner for America.<sup>44</sup> Macaulay was so enthused by French society that she complained that war between Britain and France in 1778 would delay the opportunity for her to return to the country.

Macaulay was also interested in having her *History* translated into French.<sup>45</sup> Her friend Brissot argued for a French translation in the *Journal du Lycée de Londres*. Mirabeau the Younger (1749–91) took it upon himself to translate it and took credit for some of the work, which eventually appeared in 1791, with Brissot doubting that Mirabeau had actually completed any of the translation himself. Its introduction pointed out that there were so many parallels between the English and the French revolutions that Macaulay's work could serve as a history of both. In the preface to the third volume, Mirabeau gave Macaulay's *History* a monarchical slant, as he was concerned about the extreme direction of the French Revolution.

In 1778, after Macaulay had visited Paris for a few weeks, she claimed that 'sentiments of liberty which are . . . lost in these united Kingdoms never flourished in a larger extent or with more vigorous animating force than they do at present in France'.<sup>46</sup> Already at this point, she stated that '[a]ll the enlightened French wish ardently to see a large empire established on a republican basis to keep the monarchies of the world in order'.<sup>47</sup> When the French Revolution eventually broke out, Macaulay viewed the two revolutions as connected, as she made clear in a letter to Washington.<sup>48</sup> She reflected that the French as well as the Americans looked to the British constitution for example. However, the closeness of France to Britain meant that the French were able to see 'the deformities of our government in their full extent <due magnitude> and they have

<sup>44</sup> Macaulay to Benjamin Franklin, 8 December 1777, in *Correspondence*, p. 206.

<sup>45</sup> Guy-Claude, Count of Sarsfield, to Macaulay, 16 December 1777 and 2 May 1779, in *Correspondence*, pp. 208–9.

<sup>46</sup> Macaulay to Erskine, 23 February 1778, in *Correspondence*, p. 54.

<sup>47</sup> Macaulay to Simon, 17 January 1778, in *Correspondence*, p. 80.

<sup>48</sup> Macaulay to Washington, 30 October 1789, in *Correspondence*, p. 274.

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carefully avoided the adopting any part of the english system but the only part which is worth having vis[.] the mode of trial by jury'.<sup>49</sup> This meant that the French Revolution quickly became superior to the American one. She wrote to Samuel Adams that 'we look upon its [the French Revolution's] firm establishment, as an event which will necessarily bring after it the final emancipation of every other society in Europe, from those Monarchic and Aristocratic chains imposed by the violence of arms and rivetted on mankind by ignorance[,] credulity, and priestcraft'.<sup>50</sup> One society she believed needed to be emancipated was eighteenth-century Britain.

*Macaulay and Britain*

One of the most conspicuous elements of Macaulay's political writings is her criticism of Britain, which was consistent with her views on political reform, yet almost uniquely bold when she first expressed it. The theoretical merits of the British constitution and the salutary peculiarities of English society were noted by many political writers in the eighteenth century, including Montesquieu and Voltaire. Many were pessimistic, however, about the sustainability of Britain's debt-fuelled politics, notably Hume and Price, and its imperial ambitions and monopolistic companies, a line of criticism most famously formulated by Adam Smith under the heading of the 'mercantile system'. Many voices lamented parliamentary corruption in a more traditional Bolingbrokean fashion, or the decline of manners, following John Brown's bestselling *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (2 vols., 1757–8). During the American crisis, Britain was accused of not extending its benefits to its subjects in America. But few were as exhaustive and unrelenting in their critique of Britain as Macaulay, who combined all these lines of criticism. Notably, few if any non-Jacobites targeted the Revolution Settlement before her. The *Political Register* wrote in 1770 that Macaulay 'attacks the principles and system of government of the revolution, in so strange and unaccountable manner that her best friends are astonished at it'.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Macaulay to Otis Warren, April 1790, in *Correspondence*, p. 172.

<sup>50</sup> Macaulay to Samuel Adams, 1 March 1791, in *Correspondence*, p. 296.

<sup>51</sup> *Political Register, and Impartial Review for 1770* (London, 1770), p. 363.

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Even Price – who was worried about Britain’s debt and wanted comprehensive religious and political reform – held Britain to be a more positive model, at least publicly. Indeed, he said that he was ‘sharing in the benefits of one Revolution’, with reference to 1688–9.<sup>52</sup> Unlike Price, Macaulay was unwilling to pay lip service to the Glorious Revolution and its legacy. Across her political writings, Macaulay boldly presented the Glorious Revolution as a revolt by the nobility, creating ‘a monarchy supported by aristocracy’, which was the ‘very worst species of government’.<sup>53</sup> This was a momentous move which set the stage for bolder ideas of political reform. Macaulay emphasised that she supported universal rather than historically grounded rights, in opposition to Burke’s brand of Whiggism. The ‘boasted birthright of an Englishman’ was ‘an *arrogant* pretension’, because it excluded the rest of humanity.<sup>54</sup> In other words, even though Macaulay wrote primarily about her country of birth and its history, her concerns and ambitions were cosmopolitan, embracing all God’s creatures, even including animals, whose rights she championed in her *Treatise on the Immutability of Moral Truth* and *Letters on Education* (1790).

Eight months before her death in June 1791, Macaulay defended the French Revolution in her final publication, *Observations on the Reflections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke on the Revolution in France* (1790). Unlike Burke, who died in 1797, she did not live to see the extremely violent phase of the French Revolution, which Burke had accurately predicted in the *Reflections*. Her earlier death meant that she did not witness the executions of her friend Brissot, her admirer Jeanne-Marie Roland, who wanted to become ‘the Macaulay of [her] country’,<sup>55</sup> and the publisher of her works in French, François-Charles Gattey, during the Reign of Terror. The bloody development of the French Revolution, and the crackdown on reformist politics which followed in its wake in Britain, may indeed go some way towards explaining the relative eclipse of Macaulay in the nineteenth century.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Price, *A Discourse on the Love of our Country, Delivered on Nov. 4, 1789, at the Meeting-House in the Old Jewry, to the Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain* (London, 1790), p. 41.

<sup>53</sup> *History since the Revolution*, p. 311.

<sup>54</sup> Macaulay, *Observations on the Reflections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke on the Revolution in France* (1790), p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> *An Appeal to Impartial Posterity, by Madame Roland, Wife of the Minister of the Interior* (2nd ed., 2 vols., London, 1796), II, p. 81.



## Chronology

- 1720 South Sea Bubble; Jacob Sawbridge indicted and nearly bankrupted.
- 1731 Catharine Sawbridge born.
- 1756–63 Seven Years War.
- 1760 Catharine Sawbridge marries Dr George Macaulay.
- 1763 First volume of Catharine Macaulay's *History* published; Wilkes publishes *North Briton no. 45*.
- 1765 Second volume of Macaulay's *History* published; Macaulay's daughter Sophia born; the Stamp Act passed and later repealed.
- 1766 Dr George Macaulay dies.
- 1767 Macaulay's first pamphlet, *Loose Remarks on Certain Positions to be Found in Mr. Hobbes's 'Philosophical Rudiments of Government and Society', with a Short Sketch of a Democratical Form of Government, in a Letter to Signor Paoli*, published, along with the third volume of the *History*.
- 1768 Fourth volume of Macaulay's *History* published; John Sawbridge elected a Member of Parliament. Wilkes elected member for Middlesex, but expelled by Parliament.
- 1770 *Observations on a Pamphlet entitled 'Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents'* published.
- 1771 Fifth volume of Macaulay's *History* published.
- 1774 *A Modest Plea for the Property of Copy Right* published; Catharine Macaulay moves to Bath to live with Thomas Wilson.

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- 1775 *An Address to the People of England, Scotland and Ireland on the Present Important Crisis of Affairs* published.
- 1775–83 American War of Independence.
- 1777 Macaulay visits France.
- 1778 *History since the Revolution* published; Catharine Macaulay marries William Graham.
- 1781 Sixth and seventh volumes of the *History* published.
- 1783 Eighth and final volume of the *History* and *A Treatise on the Immutability of Moral Truth* published.
- 1784 Macaulay visits America.
- 1785–6 Macaulay visits France.
- 1789 Outbreak of the French Revolution; Richard Price praises it in London on 4 November.
- 1790 *Letters on Education, with Observations on Religious and Metaphysical Subjects* and *Observations on the Reflections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke on the Revolution in France* published.
- 1791 Catharine Macaulay dies.

## Further Reading

### *Macaulay's Life and Writings*

Students of Catharine Macaulay are especially indebted to two modern scholars: Bridget Hill and Karen Green. Bridget Hill's biography, *The Republican Virago: The Life and Times of Catharine Macaulay, Historian* (Oxford, 1992), is the starting point for anyone interested in her life. See also Bridget Hill, 'Daughter and Mother: Some New Light on Catharine Macaulay and Her Family', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 22 (1999), pp. 35–49, and other essays by Hill cited below. Earlier biographical studies include L. M. Donnelly, 'The Celebrated Mrs. Macaulay', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 7 (1949), pp. 173–207. Karen Green has edited *The Correspondence of Catharine Macaulay* (Oxford, 2019) and written an essential intellectual biography, *Catharine Macaulay's Republican Enlightenment* (New York, 2020). In addition, Green has written about Macaulay in several path-breaking essays and chapters; see especially chapter eight in *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1700–1800* (Cambridge, 2014), and her entry for Macaulay in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Macaulay's historical writings are treated in the following: Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2009), ch. 4; Karen O'Brien, 'Catharine Macaulay's Histories of England: A Female Perspective on the History of Liberty', in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (Basingstoke, 2005); Philip Hicks, 'Catharine Macaulay's Civil War: Gender, History, and Republicanism in Georgian Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 41 (2002), pp. 170–99; Susan Wiseman, 'Catharine

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Macaulay: History, Republicanism and the Public Sphere’, in *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700–1830*, ed. E. Eger, C. Grant, C. O Gallchoir and P. Warburton (Cambridge, 2001); Devoney Looser, *British Women Writers and the Writing of History, 1670–1820* (Baltimore, 2000), ch. 5; J. G. A. Pocock, ‘Catharine Macaulay: Patriot Historian’, in *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition*, ed. H. Smith (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 243–58; Bridget Hill and Christopher Hill, ‘Catharine Macaulay’s History and Her Catalogue of Tracts’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 8 (1993), pp. 269–85; Rolando Minuti, ‘Il problema storico della libertà inglese nella cultura radicale dell’età di George III. Catharine Macaulay e la Rivoluzione puritana’, *Revista storica italiana*, 98 (1986), pp. 793–860; Lynne E. Withey, ‘Catharine Macaulay and the Uses of History: Ancient Rights, Perfectionism and Propaganda’, *Journal of British Studies*, 16 (1976), pp. 59–83; Vera Nünning, *A Revolution in Sentiments, Manners, and Moral Opinions: Catharine Macaulay und die politische Kultur des englischen Radikalismus* (Heidelberg, 1998). The reception of Macaulay is treated in Susan Staves, ‘“The Liberty of a She-Subject of England”: Rights, Rhetoric and the Female Thucydides’, *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature*, 1 (1989), pp. 161–83.

Sarah Hutton has written about Macaulay’s religious thought; see ‘Liberty, Equality and God: The Religious Roots of Catharine Macaulay’s Feminism’, in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. S. Knott and B. Taylor (Basingstoke, 2005). See also Karen Green, ‘Catharine Macaulay’s Enlightenment Faith and Radical Politics’, *History of European Ideas*, 44 (2018), pp. 35–48. For Macaulay’s philosophical writings see Karen Green, ‘Liberty and Virtue in Catharine Macaulay’s Enlightenment Philosophy’, *Intellectual History Review*, 22 (2012), pp. 411–26; Karen Green, ‘Catharine Macaulay and the Concept of “Radical Enlightenment”’, *Intellectual History Review*, 31 (2021), pp. 165–80; Wendy Gunther-Canada, ‘Catharine Macaulay on the Paradox of Paternal Authority in Hobbesian Politics’, *Hypatia*, 21 (2006), pp. 150–73; and Karen Green and Shannon Weekes, ‘Catharine Macaulay on the Will’, *History of European Ideas*, 39 (2013), pp. 409–25.

For Macaulay’s connections with the American Revolution and American Revolutionaries, see Kate Davies, *Catharine Macaulay and Mercy Otis Warren: The Revolutionary Atlantic and the Politics of Gender* (Oxford, 2005); Kate Davies, ‘Revolutionary Correspondence:

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Reading Catharine Macaulay and Mercy Otis Warren', *Women's Writing*, 13 (2006), pp. 73–97; and Carla H. Hay, 'Catharine Macaulay and the American Revolution', *The Historian*, 56 (1994), pp. 301–16. For Macaulay's reputation in eighteenth-century France, see Laurence Bongie, *David Hume: Prophet of the Counter-Revolution* (1965; Indianapolis, 1998). For her critical interpretation of the Glorious Revolution, see Bridget Hill, 'Reinterpreting the "Glorious Revolution": Catharine Macaulay and Radical Response', in *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration: Literature, Drama, History*, ed. Gerald MacLean (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 267–85.

The relationship between Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft is treated in Bridget Hill, 'The Links between Mary Wollstonecraft and Catharine Macaulay: New Evidence', *Women's History Review*, 4 (1995), pp. 177–92; Martina Reuter, 'Catharine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft on the Will', in *Virtue, Liberty and Toleration: Political Ideas of European Women 1400–1800*, ed. Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green (Dordrecht, 2007); Elizabeth Frazer, 'Mary Wollstonecraft and Catharine Macaulay on Education', *Oxford Review of Education*, 37 (2011), pp. 603–17; Alan Coffee, 'Catharine Macaulay', in *The Wollstonecraftian Mind*, ed. Sandrine Bergès, Eileen Hunt Botting and Alan Coffee (Abingdon, 2019); and Karen Green, 'Catharine Macaulay's Influence on Mary Wollstonecraft', in *The Routledge Handbook of Women and Early Modern European Philosophy*, ed. Karen Detlefsen and Lisa Shapiro (Abingdon, 2020).

Connie Titone has written about Macaulay's contribution to educational theory in *Gender Equality in the Philosophy of Education: Catharine Macaulay's Forgotten Contribution* (New York, 2004) and 'Virtue, Reason, and the False Public Voice: Catharine Macaulay's Philosophy of Moral Education', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41 (2009), pp. 91–108. Macaulay's contribution to republican theory has been treated in Alan Coffee, 'Catharine Macaulay's Republican Conception of Social and Political Liberty', *Political Studies*, 65 (2017), pp. 844–59.

### *Intellectual and Political Contexts*

For eighteenth-century republicanism and the commonwealth tradition, see Rachel Hammersley, *Republicanism: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2020), esp. chs. 4–8; Rachel Hammersley, *The English Republican Tradition and Eighteenth-Century France: Between the Ancients and the*

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*Moderns* (Manchester, 2010) – esp. ch. 11; Gaby Mahlberg, *The English Republican Exiles in Europe during the Restoration* (Cambridge, 2020); Blair Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England: John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Marchamont Nedham* (Oxford, 2007); J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975); and Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transmission, Development and Circumstances of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies* (Cambridge, MA, 1959). Robbins's classic *Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* is still useful, perhaps especially for the history of political networks. Its last chapter discusses Macaulay and her network, on which see also Caroline Robbins, 'The Strenuous Whig: Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 7 (1950), pp. 406–53.

For studies on women in the Enlightenment and the eighteenth-century public sphere, many of which have material on Macaulay, see Sarah Hutton, 'The Persona of the Woman Philosopher in Eighteenth-Century England: Catharine Macaulay, Mary Hays, and Elizabeth Hamilton', *Intellectual History Review*, 18 (2009), pp. 403–12; Devoney Looser, *Women Writers and Old Age in Great Britain, 1750–1850* (Baltimore, 2008) – ch. 2 on Macaulay; Devoney Looser, "'Those Historical Laurels Which Once Graced My Brow Are Now in Their Wane": Catharine Macaulay's Last Years and Legacy', *Studies in Romanticism*, 42 (2003), pp. 203–25; Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds.), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2005); Philip Hicks, 'The Roman Matron in Britain: Female Political Influence and Republican Response, ca. 1750–1800', *Journal of Modern History*, 77 (2005), pp. 35–69; Elaine Chalus and Hannah Barker (eds.), *Women's History, Britain 1700–1850: An Introduction* (London and New York, 2004); Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750–1810* (Chicago, 2000); Elaine Chalus and Hannah Barker (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London, 1997); and Sylvia Harcstark-Myers, *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1990).

For Macaulay's wide circle, its politics and key events and contexts, see Peter N. Miller, *Defining the Common Good: Empire, Religion and Philosophy in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 1994); W. H. Bond, *Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn: A Whig and His Books*

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(Cambridge, 1990); John Sainsbury, *Disaffected Patriots: London Supporters of Revolutionary America, 1769–1782* (Montreal, 1987); Colin Bonwick, *English Radicals and the American Revolution* (1977); Carl Cone, *The English Jacobins: Reformers in Late 18th Century England* (1968; Abingdon, 2017); Verner W. Crane, ‘The Club of Honest Whigs: Friends of Science and Liberty’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 23 (1966), pp. 210–33; Ian R. Christie, *Wilkes, Wyrill and Reform: The Parliamentary Reform Movement in Britain, 1760–1785* (London, 1962); George Rudé, *Wilkes and Liberty: A Social Study of 1763 to 1774* (Oxford, 1962); and Lucy Sutherland, *The City of London and the Opposition to Government, 1768–1774* (London, 1959).

Many of the preconceptions about English ‘radicalism’, the connection between the American and the French revolutions, and the Enlightenment are critically examined and forcefully challenged by J. C. D. Clark in *Thomas Paine: Britain, America, and France in the Age of Enlightenment and Revolution* (Oxford, 2018) and ‘How Did the American Revolution Relate to the French? Richard Price, the Age of Revolutions, and the Enlightenment’, *Modern Intellectual History*, 19 (2022), pp. 105–27. Clark’s *English Society, 1660–1832* (1985; Cambridge, 2000) and *The Language of Liberty* (Cambridge, 1994) are also valuable reading for the religious politics of the period and its relation to the questions of reform and revolution. For religious thought see also Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780* (Cambridge, 2 vols., 1991–2000); Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 1996); and Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696–1722* (Manchester, 2003).

For the financial revolution and political economy, see especially P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688–1756* (London, 1967); J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge, 1983); John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688–1783* (London, 1989); Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2005); Carl Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit: The English Financial Revolution, 1620–1720* (Cambridge, MA, 2011); and Helen J. Paul, *The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of Its Origins and Consequences* (New York, 2011).

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I treat Bolingbroke's political thought, Hume's *History of England* and Burke's writings on politics and party, including Macaulay's 1770 response to Burke, in *The Persistence of Party: Ideas of Harmonious Discord in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2021). For Bolingbroke (and other important writers for Macaulay such as Swift), see Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (1968; Ithaca, 1992). See Richard Bourke, *Empire and Revolution: The Political Life of Edmund Burke* (Princeton, 2015) for the best treatment of Burke's political thought and its contexts. For Hume see James Harris, *Hume: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge, 2015) and Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge, 1975), both of which also provide useful introductions to eighteenth-century historiography. For this topic see also Ben Dew, *Commerce, Finance and Statecraft: Histories of England, 1600–1780* (Manchester, 2018); Karen O'Brien, *Narratives of Enlightenment: Cosmopolitan History from Voltaire to Gibbon* (Oxford, 1997); Philip Hicks, *Neoclassical History and English Culture: From Clarendon to Hume* (Basingstoke, 1996); and Mark Towsey, *Reading History in Britain and America, c. 1750 – c. 1840* (Cambridge, 2019).



## Editorial Conventions

Eighteenth-century spelling in the texts has been kept in general, as have inconsistencies in spelling. However, blatant typos, misprints and a small number of grammatical errors have been corrected. All additions to the text have been marked by square brackets, including original pagination and errata provided by Macaulay. Macaulay's own footnotes are indicated by Roman numerals and editorial footnotes in Arabic numerals. I have formatted book titles in italics in Macaulay's footnotes for clarity. Quotation marks have been standardised when appropriate. Marginal text which only reproduces material in the text or repeats dates has been removed, but references to sources and authors in the margins have been kept, as have dates when needed, and enclosed by interpolation marks: i.e. ^interpolated text^.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-009-30748-2 — Catharine Macaulay: Political Writings  
Catharine Macaulay, Edited by Max Skjönsberg  
Frontmatter  
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