The twelve essays in this excellent volume pay tribute to Professor Edmund King’s outstanding contribution. They also reflect broader trends in the modern historiography of medieval Europe that have come to see the world in which kings, princes, and aristocrats co-existed, and sometimes came into personal or collective conflict, as one in which relationships were multi-layered. It is salutary to think back to the articles that Edmund King published in the 1970s that squared up directly to the notion that the civil war of 1135–1153 was an »anarchy« and, in direct contrast, portrayed the great magnates of England as often trying to mitigate the consequences of civil war. In due course his picture became more nuanced. The article »Mountsorrel and its Region in King Stephen’s Reign«, published in 1980, was a brilliant analysis of the operation at a regional level of the national rivalries of two of the greatest magnates of the Anglo-Norman world. And by the time we reach his magisterial »King Stephen« in the Yale University Press English Monarchs series, for all its humanity in its approach to Stephen, he was ultimately critical of him. This was a world in which the capacity to impose oneself was a central aspect of rulership and therefore a deterrent to rebellion and, when the latter occurred, an important factor in bringing it to an end, sometimes by recognising grievances and setting out to remedy them, but sometimes by using force very brutally.

After an introductory »Appreciation« by Sandra Raban that does full justice to Edmund King’s career, the essays in the volume illuminate in various distinctive ways facets of the multi-faceted world of rulership and rebellion. One conclusion that strikes home immediately is the skill that Edmund King’s generation and the following ones have brought to the analysis of charters and records. If an observation later in this review on the barriers that still exist between national historiographies is ultimately inevitable, it is one that is positive and intended to be constructive. David Roffe’s contribution that uses a notice in the Gloucester »Historia« to analyse testimony that did not find its way into »Domesday Book« is another of his many contributions that continue to illuminate just how complex the composition of that text was.

Judith Green examines the entire corpus of charters written in the name of J. H. Round’s archetypal figure of the »Anarchy«, Geoffrey de Mandeville, and emphasises his »keen eye for business«, as well as fitting his life into the world that events after 1135 disrupted. David Crouch analyses how, in 1207, two sisters and their mother each tried to manipulate in their own interests the crisis that occurred
when their brother, Robert IV, earl of Leicester, one of the great magnates of the cross-Channel empire that had come to an end in 1204, died without male heirs. The article is an admirable commentary on how the royal interests of both Kings John and Philip Augustus could be manoeuvred and how the language and form of legality could be deployed to legitimate what was ultimately an act of power. Daniel Power’s study of Northamptonshire, a county to which Edmund King devoted much attention, shows how profoundly Philip Augustus’s conquest of Normandy affected the county’s society and had notable long-term consequences, a point that needs to be born in mind when the broader historical significance of the cross-Channel empire created in 1066 is analysed.

Kathleen Thompson’s and Nicholas Vincent’s essays separately show how ritual and the writings of St Augustine influenced major events, namely, Earl Robert of Gloucester’s 1138 *diffidatio* and Magna Carta. As Thompson most skilfully illustrates, the *diffidatio* does not have the formal place in inter-personal relations that is often assumed. It suggests a capacity for theatricality on Earl Robert’s part in the context of choices that must often have had to be made after 1087.

Paul Latimer supplies a fascinatingly detailed account of how rule functioned *in absentia* during the 1173–1174 rebellion. His article opens up issues of cross-Channel priorities and how loyalty operated that have broader implications; presumably calculations similar to Henry II’s underlay William the Conqueror’s decision to stay in Normandy in 1075. In a notable essay on how William the Conqueror built the development of peace-making networks in the immediate aftermath of the victory of Hastings into his progress around southern England, Paul Dalton tackles the balance of force and negotiation in the most fraught of times in a thought-provoking way. Even if I think that intimidation – a word that Dalton does use – was involved more than he does, he is absolutely right to emphasise that the English submission at Great Berkhamsted was not unconditional, something with absolutely central implications for England’s history.

Katharine Keats-Rohan, Kenji Yoshitake, and Graeme White – all in different ways – focus on the central 12th century period of England’s history, with the latter two ranging very profitably around aspects of the neglected theme of its broader historical significance. And, finally, there is David Luscombe’s essay on one of the great commentaries on a 12th-century ruler’s court and on the values required to sustain authority and virtue, John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus*; in this the complexities of the world are made clear, even if I suspect that John was articulating themes that had long been a feature of courtly politics. As a result, it is ultimately irresistible not to ask why there is no engagement between the volume and the debates that have followed the publication of Gerd Althoff’s *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt 1997) or with the writings of someone like Geoffrey Koziol; the potential for cross-fertilisation between them and the historiography exemplified by this volume is, however, very great. Paul Dalton and David Luscombe are to be congratulated on bringing to fruition a volume fully worthy of its honorand’s distinguished career.