

An Historical View of English Government (Natural Law Paper)

John Millar



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An Historical View of the English Government consists of three parts, concerned with the most substantive revolutions in English government and manners: from the Saxon settlement to the Norman Conquest, from the Norman Conquest to the accession of James I, and from James I to the Glorious Revolution. Through these three phases Millar traces the development of the "great outlines of the English constitution"—the history of institutions of English liberty from Saxon antiquity to the revolution settlement of 1689. Millar demonstrates serious concern for the maintenance of liberties achieved through revolution and maintains that the manners of a commercial nation, while particularly suited to personal and political liberty, are not such as to secure liberty forever.

The historical context that *An Historical View* provides makes it an excellent complement to Liberty Fund's *The Glasgow Edition of the Works of Adam Smith* and *The History of England by David Hume*.

John Millar (1735–1801) explored, through his works, the nature of English governance through a prism of the natural law tradition and Scottish philosophical history. Millar was a student of Adam Smith's at Glasgow University and his most important immediate intellectual heir. His works provide an essential linkage to Smith.

Mark Salber Phillips is Professor of History at Carleton University in Ottawa.

Dale R. Smith completed his doctorate in history at the University of British Columbia.

Knud Haakonssen is Professor of Intellectual History and Director of the Centre for Intellectual History at the University of Sussex, England.

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