

for war expenses (p. 288). Yet the special relationship with Britain after the Peace of Utrecht, and more particularly that with France, made exceptions necessary. Merchants exploited the quickly changing relations of alliance and enmity, declaring themselves to be a French citizen or Spanish resident, according to the most favourable legal status of the moment. The Revolution caused a shift in perceptions, as French refugees became symbols of subversive ideas (p. 289).

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The Ashgate Research Companion to The Thirty Years' War, ed. Olaf Asbach and Peter Schröder (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014; pp. 347. £90).

The Thirty Years War was a conflict of enormous scale, shifting alliances, interwoven causes and complex peace treaties which has made it a challenge for historians even to structure their work on the subject. This, in combination with the seemingly vast number of languages required adequately to cover the whole conflict, has meant that individuals have often struggled to write about the war in its entirety. Producing a single-volume account of the Thirty Years War has therefore often relied upon a number of viewpoints. Such an approach can work well, drawing together disparate strands of historiography and archival research, but carries the risk of lacking overall coherence. This is a pitfall thankfully avoided in the case of Olaf Asbach and Peter Schröder's collection, which brings together twenty-five historians whose contributions have been woven together to produce a volume that holds its coherence despite catering to a host of different historical approaches to the Thirty Years War.

The collection is divided into five sections, firstly addressing the state of the Holy Roman Empire and the German nation by providing a series of chapters focusing on the internal dynamics within the Empire. The second section assesses the contributions of the great powers such as Spain, Denmark, Sweden and France. This section is cleverly balanced by the subsequent set of chapters containing a narrative analysis of the various chronological stages of the war. These two sections could result in repetition from essentially addressing the topics twice, once from a set of geographic perspectives and once through a series of chronological assessments, but this never materialises. The contributors have not been constrained by the fear of omitting something due to this approach, because each knew that such issues would be covered elsewhere. This has given them a freedom to focus on their own areas of expertise, bringing clarity to their arguments without unnecessary details obscuring the picture. The skilful editing that holds the various strands of argumentation together deserves praise, and it would be difficult to disagree with the editors' own assessment that the two overlapping sections 'better allow the reader to disentangle the various threads of which this complex war is woven' (p. 5). The final two sections of the volume are topical, and cover religion, politics, the experience of war and the final peace treaty.

The detailed historiographical analysis in the volume will prove of particular use not only in drawing together recent research but also by bringing into

the English language a range of work by European historians. Some of the chapters are translated, leading to occasional awkward phraseology, —but this is easily forgiven because of the high quality of research and analysis. Specific chapters within the volume merit further praise. The work of Maria Baramova on the Ottoman Empire's 'non-splendid isolation' and Susan Richter's assessment of the impact of the Peace of Munster on the wider world beyond Europe effectively illustrate how far the Thirty Years War reached. Baramova not only convincingly illustrates the ongoing engagement of the Ottoman court with the conflict but also shows how, at various points of the Thirty Years War, events are only explicable if Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Court are taken into account. Peter Wilson contributes further to the debate on how the logistics of the various armies during the war influenced overall policy. Historians who attempt to study the military or political history of the Thirty Years War in isolation may reconsider, as a result of Wilson's convincing argument that the military and political expediency were closely bonded throughout the period. Olaf van Nimwegen and Sven Externbrin both forcefully argue that the Low Countries and Italy must be understood if the conflict in Germany is to be explained. Indeed, one of the lasting impressions of the volume is that, although it is impossible to explain this war as a purely international incident, a broader overview of European politics, in combination with a focused understanding of events inside the Empire, is required to understand the conflict fully.

There are, unfortunately, some perspectives missing that would clearly have enriched the volume. In particular, the lack of a chapter assessing the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth throughout the conflict seems curious. As one of the major Catholic powers of northern Europe, it played a key role in the 1620s by waging war against Sweden. (There is work available in English that provides an overview of this conflict, notably R.I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State, and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721* (2000).) There is also almost no assessment of the role of Stuart Kingdoms under James VI and I and his son Charles I. Passing comments refer to English soldiers, but there is little attempt seriously to explain the scale of their contribution, nor is it ever made clear what role the Stuart Crown played in their presence. The Scots and the Irish also receive scant comment outside their role in the assassination of Wallenstein. This is a shame, considering the excellent work of Alexia Grosjean, Steve Murdoch and David Worthington, which, over a decade ago, illustrated their significance, particularly in Sweden where between a fifth and a quarter of the officer corps were Scots.

The sheer scale of the Thirty Years War means that, even in twenty-five chapters and a little over three hundred pages, there will be omissions, but these do not detract from the successes of the collection. In using multiple historical methodologies to analyse the conflict, the contributors' chapters work together to provide a clear sense of how events were interlinked. This is no small feat and, although there is still much research to be done, this volume serves as a welcome reminder of how far our understanding of the conflict has progressed in the last twenty-five years.

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