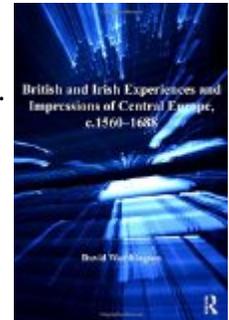


David Worthington. *British and Irish Experiences and Impressions of Central Europe, c. 1560–1688.* Politics and Culture in Europe, 1650-1750 Series. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012. 254 pp. \$124.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7546-6342-3.



Reviewed by Adam Marks

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Commissioned by Siobhan M. Talbott (Keele University)

David Worthington's latest research on the British and Irish abroad is in many ways a natural progression from his previous work, *Scots in Habsburg Service, 1618-1648* (2004), on the activities of the Scots within the various Habsburg powers during the Thirty Years' War. By expanding his interests to the whole of Britain, his work also fits into our ever-broadening understanding of the activities of the British, and specifically the Scottish and Irish, who departed from their homelands in this period. The volume seeks to be far more than simply an assessment of emigration, as the author aims to shed light on not just the emigrants themselves but also on what can be learned about their host nations from the actions and accounts of the migrants. Indeed, the author claims that he "seeks to offer a transnational perspective," and in doing so borrows terminology that is usually associated with the historiography of more recent events in eastern Europe (p. 2). It seems reasonable to claim that the study of the movement of numerous peoples across various kingdoms, duchies, and principalities constitutes something that is methodologi-

cally transnational. Unfortunately, the author does not explain with complete satisfaction whether he intends this to be a new approach directly informed by the work of historians of a more modern period, or in fact whether he simply adopts the term to describe the methodology that historians of the Scottish and British diaspora of this period have been using for some time. Such a quibble is not a major obstacle since his approach becomes clear as he effectively uses contemporary opinion from a variety of nations to enable him to recreate and analyze the political structures of central Europe. Alongside this he provides a number of examples of "transnational" activities that cross the individual nations and religions of the emigrants and host countries.

The book moves thematically through the primary components of the various British and Irish diasporas. The first successfully illustrates that travelers from Britain and Ireland did not confine themselves to western Europe and that the Grand Tour was far more than a visit to Italy. Indeed, the text brings to light a series of hitherto un-assessed

accounts of British and Irish activity in central and eastern Europe. Through the analysis of previously unexamined diaries and printed accounts, Worthington demonstrates that this area was a part of the British experience both in terms of awareness in printed accounts and as a part of the “Grand Tour.” By revealing the extent of awareness of this region in this period, Worthington is able to build a more detailed picture of British activity within the area through the remainder of the volume. The first of these subsequent chapters focuses on the diplomacy undertaken by both the Tudor and Stuart courts, and provides an example of the breadth of diplomacy conducted by the Stuart monarchy. As Worthington writes, these activities serve “as a symbol of the complexity of English and later British foreign policy” and should be a stark warning to those who still perceive Stuart policy exclusively in terms of an axis from Paris to Madrid (p. 82). Chapter 3 provides a useful account of the soldiers who fought on behalf of the Habsburgs and Poland before, during, and after the Thirty Years’ War. This chapter is perhaps the best example of Worthington’s ability to use contemporary British perspectives to explain central and east European events. Notably, he makes use of the accounts of various officers to shed light on a political narrative of Hungary, Austria, and the Ottoman Empire. The next chapter addresses the Protestant theologians in the area and makes a cursory overview of trade before moving to what is arguably the most effective chapter, dealing with the British and Irish Catholic colleges of the region. This effectively illustrates the crossover and divisions of the various Catholic orders. The interaction between the orders and the emigrants themselves is fascinating and was present even among figures who are traditionally seen in a different light, such as Count Walter Leslie, usually only mentioned in connection with the assassination of General Albrecht von Wallenstein.

This diverse range of chapter topics inevitably leads to some minor incidents of discon-

nection, but overall Worthington manages to analyze a hugely diverse set of subjects, peoples, and nationalities. It is worth emphasizing here that the role of the English abroad is still an area requiring significant future research, and the historiography that seeks to address this deficit remains limited. The very presence of such analysis here deserves significant praise, including an extended study of John Taylor’s activities, which is important in further shedding light on the cooperation between the English and Scots abroad. Worthington makes a contribution to the study of the English abroad, and he argues rather convincingly that in central Europe a focus on the Scots and the Irish is justifiable. However, without further research on the English this creates as many questions as it answers. Why did the largest of the kingdoms of Britain and Ireland provide the least number of immigrants to the region? Is it simply that the economics of England meant that fewer felt the need to leave their homeland, or were they moving to other areas, such as the Low Countries, France, Iberia, or Scandinavia? Such questions become particularly pertinent since it is clear from both contemporary sources and the work in this volume that many British and Irish emigrants (even those not covered within this volume) did not travel directly to eastern Europe but via other destinations. Whether the answer proves to be one of these or something different entirely, it has a significant impact on our understanding of not just the English abroad but also the Scots, Irish, and Welsh.

Understanding this is a question not simply for historians of migration but also for those working on early modern Britain more generally. As this author understands, British migrants continued to have a significant influence on their homelands through trade and politics, and in some cases by returning to their homelands to participate in open rebellion. Researching these men and women is an exercise in understanding foreign or domestic events, as well as the ongoing interaction and crossover between these nations.

These complaints are not the fault of the author, who could never be expected to cover all this territory in one volume, but they do illustrate that more research is needed by both Worthington and others. Indeed, Worthington states that he hopes that this volume will provoke further research and if he succeeds in this alone then he will deserve significant praise. Overall, this body of research and the resulting monograph make an excellent contribution to our understanding of early modern emigration. The author's thematic approach in combination with his detailed awareness of the politics of the area mean that each chapter does far more than simply analyze emigration patterns but provides a window onto central and eastern Europe. Finally, the author's emphasis on the cooperation that occurred between various nations that were ruled by the Stuarts from 1603 is important, and too often such evidence is drowned in English, Scottish, and Irish historiography which has usually emphasized difference and discord.

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