

1750 and does so by extracting ideas of spatiality from within literature to set down a discourse about modern war. This in itself is incredibly exciting, unfortunately the delivery is undermined by awkward and often impenetrable reading. Entire paragraphs and sections are quite literally unreadable and in desperate need of translation. For many readers this might be a serious drawback and the reason not to open this book, but endeavour has its fruits except in the poorly drafted conclusions.

In reading the ideas Engberg-Pedersen presents, rather than struggling over the obstacles within his prose, one can extract several powerful themes from this book. The cultural impact of military obsolescence was obviously not just reflected in battles such as Leuthen and Austerlitz, but had a significant impact upon European society. Reading this book one begins to look beyond the French Revolution as the monumental event and recognise how societies were adjusting to a slow but grinding revolution in war. Engberg-Pedersen also brings to the forefront the power of war within literature often overlooked by the more conventional military history narratives. Clausewitz serves up the guns and thunder but it is Cervantes' cameo appearance that offers the more subtle and entertaining dish.

This is an exciting book but it's not pleasurable reading. The ideas the book presents outweigh its shortfalls. The author sometimes appears lofty but his lectures on YouTube contradict this impression. This is a book of the highest intellectual quality but the publisher has not risen to the challenge. I would recommend this book to all scholars, students, and those interested in this period of history.

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Peter Gaunt, *The English Civil War: a Military History*. I.B. Tauris and Co., Ltd: London and New York, 2014. xx + 219pp. ISBN: 978-1-84885-881-7. Price £19.99.

The author of a number of books on the English Civil War including an excellent biography of Oliver Cromwell, Peter Gaunt has long since established a name for himself as an expert in the conflict in so far as it was experienced and fought out in the area of Chester, North Wales and the northern Marches. In this new volume, however, he has produced a military study of a far broader nature that will be savoured by many different types of reader: the university specialist, the undergraduate and the honest buff will find much to ponder in its pages. In the actual details of the armies, the generals, the battles and the campaigns, there is probably not that much that can be described as new, but even those who are well versed in Edgehill, Marston Moor and the rest will be struck by such passages as Gaunt's discussion of what he terms the

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'ecology of conflict': as he points out, areas that were peripheral, thinly populated, reliant on pastoral farming or ill served by communications were not much touched by the conflict, while those that were central, thickly populated, characterised by arable farming and criss-crossed by highways and by-ways saw much action (it should be pointed out, however, that this argument can be pushed too far: in Scotland - an area which a notable absence in an otherwise admirable book - the armies of Montrose and the Covenanters did a lot of their fighting in areas beyond the better favoured central lowlands - whilst even in England relatively ill-favoured Lancashire saw its share of fighting).

From this it follows that the Civil War was not the all-engulfing cataclysm that sometimes emerges from the pages of other works. However, as Gaunt explains, it was not just England's geography that weighed heavily on the patterns of conflict. In the Lake District, certainly, most of the population would have lived out the war years without any direct experience of siege or battle, but the same was true of much more prosperous areas such as Surrey, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. Situated, as these were, a long way from areas dominated by the enemy, they, too, had a relatively quiet war, and with a few notable exceptions (above all, Colchester) escaped from the turmoil all but unscathed.

Unscathed, yes, but not untouched. To return to Gaunt's exposition of the war, we learn that, for all of England, the war meant heavy taxation, impressment, requisitioning and, to at least some extent, considerable disruption to trade and industry, the story of the Yorkshire ploughman confronted by a cavalry patrol on the eve of Marston Moor who expressed surprise at the news that King and Parliament had fallen out being just that - a story and one that probably originated in a soldierly dig at the ignorance of simple rustics. Very often, too, the reality was the constant presence of soldiers, men who might well be inclined (as in the instance of said Yorkshire ploughman) to 'other' civilians and in consequence to treat them with a greater or lesser degree of arrogance. And, if soldiers were a constant presence, they were there for a reason, this being in part military - the need to keep enemy forces away from valuable resources - and in part political - the need to enforce unwelcome demands on the part of causes that might well be disliked or even hated (given that such places as Bristol and Chester were vibrant ports of a sort that, given the chance, almost invariably tended to support Parliament, there were plenty of Parliamentarian sympathisers who found themselves contributing heavily to the coffers of King Charles).

Losses from the war, meanwhile, were enormous. Go to Chester today and the observant visitor will be struck by just how few buildings remain from the period prior to the seventeenth century and, indeed how the areas occupied in 1642 by thriving suburbs are devoid of them altogether. In this, however, Chester is an anomaly (as

witness, for example, nearby Shrewsbury), and, if that is so, it is because the suburbs were burned to the ground to give the beleaguered defenders clear fields of fire and much of the area within the walls devastated by prolonged bombardments designed to work upon the morale of the civilian population and induce it to put pressure on the governor to surrender. Mercifully, such deliberate attempts at terror tactics were few and far between, but, even so, as Gaunt shows, the human costs were enormous (though one might wish that he had been a little more cautious in citing the figures generated some twenty years ago by Charles Carlton: these are, indeed, both the most detailed and the most recent estimates that we have, but it is difficult not to regard them with more than a modicum of suspicion). Soldiers died in battle and civilians in fire and bombardment, but the real killer amongst all and sundry was disease with 'camp fever' (almost certainly typhus or typhoid), especially, laying thousands low.

Of all this Gaunt reminds us in prose that is as lucid as it is eloquent, and it is important that he should do so: with re-enactments of the fighting a common feature of the English summer courtesy of the Sealed Knot and the English Civil War Society, it is too easy to remember the war in terms of spectacle rather than sacrifice. To conclude, then, this is a splendid work and one that all those interested in the epoch of Charles I and Oliver Cromwell should have on their shelves.

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John Mullen, *The Show Must Go On! Popular Song in Britain During the First World War*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. 262pp. ISBN 978-1-47-244158-4. Hardback. Price £65.00.

Only a handful of books featuring academic research into music during the war have been published in the last 25 years. J.G.Fuller's *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, (1990) contained one chapter which highlighted the role of popular music for British soldiers, a theme which was modestly developed by Glen Watkins' *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War* (2003). Much of the work completed so far has concentrated on well-known classical composers so often connected with the war, for example Ralph Vaughan-Williams, George Butterworth and Arthur Bliss. However, instead of the elite's musical culture in the form of requiems and symphonies, the really interesting - and so far a relatively neglected area of study is the role of popular music in its detailed wartime context. Dr John Mullen's study of popular song in Britain during 1914-18 is therefore a timely and a much-needed contribution to the field of First World War studies.