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Review of *England and the Thirty Years' War* by Adam Marks

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**Adam Marks, *England and the Thirty Years' War*. Leiden: Brill, 2022. xii + 218 pp. ISBN: 978-9004518766 (hardback). Price €110.00.**

Between 1618 and 1648, Europe was plunged into one of its costliest and deadliest wars prior to the twentieth century. What began as a revolt over the succession of Frederick V and Elizabeth Stuart, Elector and Electress of the Palatinate, to the throne of Bohemia, would lead to their exile in the Dutch Republic and the occupation of the Palatinate by Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. It has long been acknowledged that military intervention against the Habsburgs came from the Dutch, Danes, Swedes, and French. But Elizabeth, as her surname suggests, was the daughter of James VI & I and the sister of Charles I of Scotland, England, and Ireland. So where were the Brits?

Traditionally, historians have painted a picture of English military stagnation or peaceful 'halcyon days' in the lead up to Britain and Ireland's civil wars (1638-1660). While Scotland's role in the Thirty Years' War has undergone significant treatment in recent decades no one, until now, has published a full-length survey of England's role in the conflict. Adam Marks has filled this void with *England and the Thirty Years' War*: a pioneering study of prime importance in the historiography of Britain's military and foreign policy.

*England and the Thirty Years' War* follows an essentially geographical structure, with one thematic chapter on motivations to serve followed by chapters outlining English military service in the Dutch Republic, in the Palatinate, in Denmark, and in Sweden. This survey of English military service, based on Marks' PhD thesis, is underpinned by significant archival research undertaken in local and national archives across Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany. As a result, the conclusions which Marks reaches are wholly original, illuminating, and often shocking.

In addition to the 50,000 Scots who served on the Protestant side, Marks demonstrates there were over 50,000 Englishmen levied for the Palatine, Dutch, Danish, and Swedish armies. If that number alone was not staggering enough, Marks' frequent and effective use of charts and tables shows the numerical importance of the English in individual armies. In 1624, for example, no less than 45% of the Dutch army was English (p. 50), while just under 50% of those killed or wounded at the siege of Maastricht in 1632 were English (p. 71). Perhaps Marks' most provocative argument is that the pool of soldiers who served in the Dutch Republic in the Anglo-Dutch Brigade were, in effect, England's standing army. This reviewer wholeheartedly agrees. Sir Horace Vere's and Sir John Borough's stand in the Palatinate (1621-1623), Sir Charles Morgan's redeployment to Northern Germany (1625-1629), and William, Lord Craven's transfer from Swedish to Dutch service in the early 1640s are proof positive

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that the Anglo-Dutch Brigade was the centrifugal force around which all other English military commitment on the Continent moved and were a direct arm of the Stuart-British foreign agenda.

Less-than-generous readers may feel inclined to dismiss these soldiers outright by claiming they were simply either coerced men or mindless mercenaries, willing to fight for the highest bidder. However, the first chapter provides an overview of the motivations of Englishmen to serve: whether it was by coercion, latent feelings of Hispanophobia dormant since 1604, militant pan-Protestantism, or loyalty to the House of Stuart and to the ousted Elizabeth of Bohemia. Marks carefully avoids overstatement and contends that this represented a spectrum of potential motivations.

Most impressive is Marks' analysis of the war in the Palatinate in chapter three. Marks emphatically argues for the primacy of the Palatinate's recovery to the Stuart-British diplomatic agenda. In this regard, James VI & I was hardly the cowardly *Rex Pacificus* he has often been made out to be. In fact, Marks demonstrates that in 1621 both Parliament and the King were hoping to raise a 30,000-strong Royal Army to be deployed to the Palatinate (p. 97), but neither side could agree on the best methods to manage or finance it. Nonetheless, the 2,500 men under Vere were a royal force and were absolutely essential to the campaign and the defense of Heidelberg, Mannheim, and Frankenthal. This reviewer also thoroughly enjoyed the narrative of Colonel George Fleetwood's regiment in Sweden in chapter five. The archival work which outlines the strength and personnel in the regiment is nothing short of forensic and Marks deftly places the regiment's service within the wider political and military developments of the 1630s.

If there is a criticism to be made, it is that the book's narrative essentially ends in 1638 and 1639, with the destruction of William, Lord Craven's regiment at Vlotho Bridge, and the withdrawal of Fleetwood's regiment in Swedish service (pp. 166-169). Although Marks concedes that Englishmen did remain on the Continent after 1642, it appears that he is mostly convinced that the beginning of the English Civil War was largely the end of English service in the Thirty Years' War. The last ten years of the conflict were certainly not devoid of British military service on the Continent, which Marks does acknowledge (p. 180). However, the lack of any substantive discussion of those who remained in the Dutch Republic or Sweden is something of a missed opportunity.

Furthermore, though the author alludes to the veteran officer corps which returned to Britain to fight in the Civil Wars - no fewer than seven of the general staff on both sides at Edgehill were veterans of the Thirty Years' War (p. 179) - there is little discussion of the impact of these veterans on either the Royalist or Parliamentarian

war effort. This is a surprising omission, given that it was a not insubstantial feature of the author's PhD thesis. Again, the opportunity for a provocative argument that the Civil Wars were, perhaps, the 'British theatre' of the Thirty Years' War is missed. However, Marks cannot really be faulted for this. Such argument and investigation would certainly worthy of its own book-length study, and we can only hope that Marks is planning to return to these themes in future publications.

These small disagreements should not detract from what the book has provided: a vital, foundational overview of a crucial, and hitherto ignored, moment in Britain's military history. It completely and utterly dismantles any notion that England and Englishmen had no military education in the lead up to the Civil Wars or that the Thirty Years' War was a conflict which happened 'over there,' only to be ignored by those 'over here.' Adam Marks' *England and the Thirty Years' War* simply cannot be ignored by those working on Britain in the early modern world or on early modern military history. It will hopefully capture the imagination of a generation of historians to come.

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**Huw J. Davies, *The Wandering Army: The Campaigns that Transformed the British Way of War, 1750-1850*. London, Yale University Press, 2022. xix + 500 pp, 32 illustrations, 14 maps. ISBN 978-0300217162 (hardback). Price £25.00.**

In the period between 1745 and 1815, which has been labelled the 'Seventy Years War', British troops saw service on all continents of the globe. Each campaign brought with it different challenges deriving from the terrain, environment and enemy faced. In his highly detailed and thought-provoking new book, Huw Davies tracks how British officers responded to these varied and unexpected challenges as they deployed new approaches to fighting war.

*The Wandering Army* opens with the losses at the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745 and Monongahela in 1755, which subsequently inspired a 'military enlightenment' among British officers. From this point forward, Davies argues, British commanders gradually acquired a greater appreciation for meticulous planning, the avoidance of frontal assaults and the value of light infantry. As the British Army 'wandered' through North