

understandable to an extent; however, one might expect a similar treatment to be given to other key authors, notably Spencer Jones on 1914 or William Philpott for 1916. The effect of this slanting towards one side of the historiography is to present a particularly unflattering depiction of Sir Douglas Haig and some of his subordinate generals while also inadvertently sidelining the influence of the French army on the British during this period. It is, of course, the authors' prerogative to take this approach, but when the book purports to engage with the "breath of the historiography," it is reasonable to expect the case for the defense to be presented more frequently and openly. The exception to this imbalance is chapter 10, which covers 1918 and presents a nuanced view of one of the most complicated years on the Western Front. The source base is wide and synthesizes the state of modern scholarship expertly. Moreover, by dedicating significant space to the final year of the war, Beckett, Bowman, and Connelly sidestep the pitfall of over-focusing on the major battles of 1916 and 1917 to the detriment of the year of decision.

The largest failing of *The British Army and the First World War* is its summary treatment of the war beyond the Western Front. The authors justify this decision by correctly observing that France and Belgium remained the primary focus for most of the war; nonetheless, the fact remains that the British Army in its broadest sense was committed globally. Only 25 pages are given over to cover the Cameroons, German East Africa, Mesopotamia, the Dardanelles, Palestine, Salonika, Italy, and Ireland. Consequently, the narrative is cursory, and important events are not given due consideration. For instance, the August Offensive during the Dardanelles campaign is given only a few lines despite Rhys Crawley's excellent recent scholarship, while the section on German East Africa contains minor factual errors. Jacob van Deventer is given as Jan Smuts's successor in 1917 (393), whereas it was actually Major-General Reginald Hoskins, a British commander. Later, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck is supposed to have continued his campaign until 23 November 1918 (396), but in fact he was notified of the Armistice and ceased fighting on 13 November. Some perspective must be maintained: these are reasonably trivial errors and do not undercut the principal arguments of the book; nonetheless, they serve to demonstrate the more haphazard approach to the global context of the war.

Beckett, Bowman, and Connelly's work is an excellent, if inconsistent, account of the British Army during the First World War. At its best, it brings out the social character of the institution, the changes in wider society, and the contribution made by the British people. The later military sections provide a useful summary of major events and capture the difficulties posed by the Western Front but perhaps do not fully account for the debates in the existing literature. The lack of global focus is a problem, but given the breadth of this study it is one for which the authors can be forgiven.

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EUGENIO F. BIAGINI and MARY E. DALY, eds. *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 635. \$99.99 (cloth).
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The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland is a groundbreaking work—in its scope, in its range of contributors, and in its exploration of an area of Irish historiography that has long existed in the shadow of political and cultural studies.

It is not as though Ireland missed the "social turn": Conrad Arensberg's most influential works (1937's *The Irish Countryman* and 1940's *Family and Community in Ireland*) were

about County Clare, after all. But social history arrived in Ireland at just the wrong time. As historians in Britain, the United States, and Europe were starting to embrace the potential of this new approach, Irish historians were overwhelmed by the Troubles. Eugenio Biagini and Mary Daly, the editors of this new volume, are correct to assert that pioneering mid-century works by K. H. Connell and L. M. Cullen, among others, were never quite able to gain the “momentum” that similar works in other countries did in the 1960s and 1970s. In Ireland, the “concern for political history, with a focus on the national question,” dominated the discussion (1).

But if this volume is four or five decades late, it is no less welcome for it. Biagini and Daly have brought together nearly fifty scholars to produce a comprehensive survey of the social history of Ireland from the early 1700s to the present. The thirty-three essays that make up the majority of the book are organized into three sections: “Geography, Occupations and Social Classes,” “People, Culture and Communities,” and “Emigration, Immigration and the Wider Irish World.” Although the section divisions seem somewhat arbitrary—one might ask why “Catholic Ireland” falls into the first section rather than the second—the overall movement of the analysis from the general, to the personal, to the transnational makes a good deal of sense. At times, too, chapters that might seem somewhat redundant actually end up highlighting important distinctions: not all “Protestants” (chapter 6) belong in “The Big House” (chapter 10), for instance.

The essays’ diverse authors approach their topics differently, as one would expect. What unites them is the ability to survey their fields of expertise while also highlighting potentially fruitful areas of future research. This is true whether the author is treading a well-worn path or striking out on a new one. Daly’s chapter on famine is the one to give to an undergraduate interested in the Great Famine; it is also the one to recommend to a graduate student trying to identify new ways of approaching this heavily explored area. At the other end of the spectrum, Irial Glynn’s “Migration and Integration since 1991” is both a definitive summation of the research up to this point and a provocative exploration of what remains to be done, on topics ranging from the effect of immigrant “clustering” in Irish cities (580) to the idiosyncratic position of Sinn Féin in European politics as a populist and nationalist party that is also pro-immigrant (582). Sometimes collections on general topics such as this one narrowly target one demographic—undergraduates, for instance—to the exclusion of another. This collection serves students and professional academics alike.

Moreover, because the essays are clearly and engagingly written, this is also a collection that people in either group will actually want to read. It may sound strange, to twenty-first century British or American ears, to describe social history as a “new” field, but this collection—full of provocative, exploratory, and occasionally combative insights—certainly makes it feel like one. Twenty years ago, Paul Rouse’s quip that “patriotism is rarely more sharply displayed than when founded in acute self-interest” would have marked him as an “arch-revisionist”; today, thankfully, we can appreciate it as a useful insight into the land agitation of the early twentieth century (134). And Andrew R. Holmes’s and Biagini’s application of the sociologist Samuel Heilman’s concept of “cosmopolitan parochialism” to Elizabeth Bowen will, almost certainly, be a phrase that will launch a thousand conference papers (104).

In a work of this size and ambition, there are bound to be some flaws. First, although the editors have done the big things well, they seem to have overlooked some more mundane concerns. It is unclear, for instance, why one entry—Patricia Lysaght’s otherwise engrossing examination, “Old Age, Death and Mourning”—employs parenthetical citations rather than the footnotes common to the rest of the contributions. The index, too, is scattershot. Second, the largely empirical approach of most of the contributors might strike some readers as somewhat old-fashioned: those scholars who never use the word “social” without the definite article will feel, with some justification, that many of these essays are “under-theorized.” Enthusiasts expecting the obligatory nods to Stuart Hall, Mary Poovey, or Pierre Bourdieu will find them referenced only sparingly in the text (and not at all in the index).

Third, although in their introduction Biagini and Daly declare themselves opposed to the “insular, introspective paradigm of an Irish *Sonderweg*,” the evidence presented here confirms, as much as challenges, that paradigm (3). In his chapter, “Occupation, Poverty, and Social Class in Pre-Famine Ireland,” Peter M. Solar suggests that Ireland’s reliance on the potato really was unusual: it “had no counterpart in Europe” (34). Ciaran O’Neill, in his chapter, “Literacy and Education,” argues that “the topography of Irish education differs from much of western Europe owing to its persistent denominational division” (252). Even in the explicitly outward-focused part three, Kevin Kenny’s survey, “Irish Emigrations in a Comparative Perspective,” concludes that during the second half of the nineteenth century “the Irish case was anomalous” (413). Although this tone is by no means universal—several authors highlight similarities between Ireland and other European nations, particularly in the experiences of childhood, rituals and celebrations, and death—the volume would have benefited from a more explicit critique of Irish exceptionalism, such as that found in the work of D. H. Akenson.

Nonetheless, the editors and contributors should congratulate themselves on a work that fills an important gap in Irish historiography. Irish social history may have gotten off to a late start, but this volume suggests that the field has legs.

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JOHN BULL. *British Theatre Companies: 1965–1979*. British Theatre Companies: From the Fringe to the Mainstream. London: Methuen Drama, 2017. Pp. 320. \$29.95 (paper). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.59

Although chronologically the first in terms of the period covered, this is the last in a series of three books that seek to recover the histories and practices of some of the most innovative theater companies that flourished in Britain between 1965 and 2014 (and in some cases beyond). Arguably, the increased historical distance means this volume has the hardest and perhaps the most important task to fulfill. It offers a series of six chapters by individual authors, each focused on a different company, preceded by an extended introductory section that allows us to see those companies and their work within broader theatrical, political, cultural, and historical contexts. But the whole book is notably informed by the recently enabled access to the relevant and often revealing archives of the Arts Council of Great Britain. As we know, the late sixties and early seventies marked the beginning and rapid expansion of a burgeoning “alternative” (or “fringe” or “underground”) theater movement which was to a considerable extent funded with state money. Given that parts of this movement were actively seeking to challenge and undermine aspects of that state—or at least to offer alternative values and visions of art and society—the relationship between funders and funded were far from straightforward. Some companies were unwilling or unable to provide the detailed documentation of finances or record of performances that the Arts Council was bound to require—or even accurate information about where and when their performances could be witnessed and assessed. Yet, as this book demonstrates, they often had strong advocates within the council who championed their work and recognized its strengths and originality. Just occasionally, the authors’ eagerness to introduce material from this archive may seem to distract from rather than sharpen what is most important, but the show reports, the correspondence, the private memos, and the minutes of discussions offer rich pickings. They also remind us that important though the principles and visions and creative innovations were, they were not