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Review of *The Disparity of Sacrifice: Irish Recruitment to the British Armed Forces, 1914-1918* by Timothy Bowman, William Butler and Michael Wheatley

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## BOOK REVIEWS

monolith. It is in this chapter that we see how complicated internal processes were made more complex by 'private considerations' that 'intruded on appointment, advancement, and reward' (p.109). The inclusion of the importance of officers' wives in this chapter was a welcome addition to our understanding of both military careers and the Army itself, complimenting Verity McInnis' recent work in this area (*Women of Empire: Nineteenth-Century Army Officers' Wives in India and the US West*, 2017).

*A British Profession of Arms* is the product of decades of thorough, painstaking research. Beckett deploys this wealth of knowledge with skill to illustrate the considerable complexity of the inner workings of the late Victorian army. Yet it must be noted that the sheer volume of information contained in this book may make it challenging to readers coming to the topic afresh. The prominence of the central figures of the period, such as Cambridge, Roberts, and Wolseley, provides a narrative spine to the work. However, the deluge of other officers' names, ranks, and appointments occasionally make the argument difficult to follow. In this respect the inclusion of a 'dramatis personae' may have been helpful as a handrail for the general reader in particular. Similarly, the second half of the book may be confusing to readers who lack a good working knowledge of the three campaign case studies which is required in order to understand those campaigns through the lens of the politics of high command.

This book represents a lifetime's scholarship and research on the British army. Its encyclopaedic coverage of the ins and outs of the military careers of many of Britain's imperial officers means it will become a 'go to' work for students and scholars working on Late Victorian military history.

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**Timothy Bowman, William Butler and Michael Wheatley, *The Disparity of Sacrifice: Irish Recruitment to the British Armed Forces, 1914-1918*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020. Xiv + 298 pp. (hardback). ISBN: 978-1789621853. Price £85.00.**

In the interests of transparency, this reviewer should declare that he peer reviewed the initial proposal and final manuscript of this title, and on the basis of comments made then, was asked to write some words for the book's back cover. So this book

is not being viewed afresh for this review, but – and this might be an advantage – has been engaged with over a significant period of its development.

The words provided for the cover are worth repeating because they sum up the thrust of this review: ‘This is a tremendously important and academically rigorous book, which will come to be seen as a seminal text in the study of Ireland’s First World War. It punctures a number of myths about recruitment, and also has significant relevance to wider studies of the Irish Revolution.’

The book is divided into six chapters in addition to its introduction and conclusion, plus a wealth of detailed appendices. Chapter One looks at patterns of pre-war recruitment, before two chapters examine recruitment on a regional basis, one covering the South and West of Ireland, the other being on Ulster. The mechanics of recruitment (how it was organised along with propaganda and the conscription crisis) form a fourth chapter. The two remaining chapters consider officer appointments and comparisons between Britain and Ireland.

A strength of the work is that it does not solely deal with 1914-18 but (in Chapter One) examines the significant pre-history of wartime recruitment by going back to the South African War. Such a starting place is increasingly common in studies of this period and illustrates that the work is informed by trends in research which broaden the context of First World War studies (and can contribute towards those broad debates). Meanwhile, the work is alive to different regional patterns on the island of Ireland and as such, it can (perhaps unexpectedly) also contribute to debates emerging within studies of the Irish revolutionary period about differences between counties and provinces as regards attitudes to the war.

As regards propaganda, Chapter Four offers an appropriate mix of analysis of broad approaches to recruitment alongside consideration of specific local impacts, and general readers will find much to engage them in the case studies included here. Chapter Five deals thoughtfully with the complicated issue of recruitment of officers and its main contribution will probably be seen as its consideration of those with a background in the Ulster Volunteer Force or the Irish National Volunteers.

The book’s key departure from previous thinking about recruitment is best situated in relation to the much-revered late David Fitzpatrick’s argument about ‘the logic of collective sacrifice’, set out most clearly in his 1995 *Historical Journal* article. In so doing, it makes a persuasive case for rethinking, for example, the impact of propaganda and the relatively limited extent of incidents of ‘collective sacrifice’. This is achieved especially in the final substantive chapter comparing Ireland with Great Britain. This is a long overdue piece of work, in an area which has largely been left to Fitzpatrick and to some extent to Patrick Callan. Those authors pointed to significant similarities

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between Ireland and Great Britain, saw wartime recruitment as breaking the mould of pre-war recruitment, and down-played the importance of religion. In contrast, Bowman, Butler and Wheatley argue that, at least in nationalist Ireland, 'the mould of pre-war recruiting patterns was not broken' (p. 203), with wartime recruitment remaining mainly working-class, unskilled and urban. More widely, the authors point to Irish recruitment being 'materially lower than that of the rest of the UK' (p. 236), with a 'gulf' not only between Britain and Ireland, but also within Ireland along several fracture lines: Ulster and the south/west, urban and rural, Protestant and Catholic, and unionist and nationalist. In each comparison, the former had significantly higher levels of recruitment and both politics and religion were central to this 'disparity of sacrifice' (p. 236). Moreover, it is in this chapter that the book's reach beyond Irish history will be felt most strongly. Although its conclusions are primarily relevant to Ireland, by holding an Irish mirror to Britain, it has the potential to inform debates on UK recruitment as a whole.

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**Meysut Uyar, *The Ottoman Army and the First World War*. London: Routledge, 2021. Xviii + 499pp. + illustrations + maps. ISBN: 978-0367471774 (hardback). Price £120.00.**

*The Ottoman Army and the First World War* is a thorough analysis of the Ottoman Army on all fronts during the Great War. It describes its operational military history and military effectiveness during that war, and it is difficult to disagree with Uyar in his assessment that Western historiography has for too long ignored the so-called peripheral campaigns of the war.

He reminds us that in 1914 it was by no means a foregone conclusion that the Ottomans would join the Central Powers. Once committed, the author contends that the First World War exposed Ottoman unpreparedness, having taken no steps prior to the war to secure stocks of food, fuel or munitions. Another of the book's themes is the constant interference of Germany's High Command and Ottoman acquiescence to both its strategic vision and its demands.

Western scholars have long struggled with access to Turkey's war archives, let alone the translation of both old and modern Turkish. If only for this reason Uyar's book is