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Thomas M. Truxes, ed., *Ireland, France, and the Atlantic in a Time of War: Reflections on the Bordeaux-Dublin Letters, 1757*. London and New York: Routledge, 2017, xx + 231 pp. Plates, maps, tables, graphs, notes, appendices, and index. \$155.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-1472468765.

Review by Matt J. Schumann, Bowling Green State University.

The story of this book began in March 1757, south of Ushant off the French coast, when the *Caesar* privateer of Bristol captured the *Two Sisters*, a trading snow from Dublin, on the latter's return voyage from Bordeaux. It also began in 2011, when Thomas Truxes found a trove of 125 letters from the captured ship in Britain's National Archives, among the High Court of Admiralty prize papers. He published the letters two years later, offering a unique window into the Seven Years' War—not a typical view of diplomacy, politics, and warfare, but rather the perspective of civilians in a small but notable corner of the Irish diaspora.[1] Truxes thus advanced a growing trend in Seven Years' War historiography, setting new perspectives on society and culture alongside more traditional political and strategic studies.[2] For this new volume, he invited scholars to continue the diversifying trend, using his earlier publication as inspiration and/or as a source of research material.

Like the volume as a whole, Truxes' introduction is concise and eminently readable, yet wide-ranging and thoroughly researched. Notwithstanding its formal function, it can stand as a scholarly contribution in its own right. All ten contributed chapters are shorter than the introduction, and while they all take the earlier *Bordeaux-Dublin Letters* volume as a launching point, they are remarkable for their eclecticism. Historians of Irish trade and the diasporic community in Bordeaux will find chapters one, two, and four of most interest. Chapters seven, eight, and nine perhaps form the most cogent segment, analyzing many of the letters in a literary-critical mode, while power politics appear most clearly in chapters three, five, six, and ten. An apt summary of the whole appears in the essay by Christian Crouch, noting that the history of the Seven Years' War goes beyond elite concerns and military movements and gains richness from the tapestry of relatable civilian experiences beyond the arenas of high politics and grand strategy (pp.167-68). Truxes and his contributors easily achieve their stated goal of giving diverse perspectives on the Bordeaux-Dublin letters, their authors, intended recipients, and the circumstances around them. In a sense, they offer a local history counterpart to an earlier edited volume on the global Seven Years' War.[3]

The first two chapters set a distinctive tone, with Nicholas Canny's latitudinal and L. M. Cullen's longitudinal studies of the Irish in Bordeaux. The latter reveals a long connection between the Irish and Bordeaux, particularly for a few families such as the Boyds and their relations by both

trade and blood. Canny presents these linkages in a more striking fashion: they clearly dominated the contents of the Bordeaux-Dublin letters while the ongoing war garnered relatively little mention. Both authors also establish the Irish in Bordeaux outside the communities of refugees and Jacobites dating back to the 1690s, noting instead a tangle of family, political, and especially commercial ties with London as well as Ireland. Perhaps without intending it, their chapters mark the Irish in Bordeaux as a European complement to Acadians and Iroquois negotiating neutralities on other edges of the British and French empires.[4] Canny also perceptively notes that despite obvious interests in the progress of what was then a newly-declared world war between the two great rivals, many of the Irish in Bordeaux just as clearly had no desire to join the fighting.

Turning from the Irish in France to those under British rule, James Kelly's chapter three and Thomas O'Connor's chapter ten showcase the continuing vulnerability of the Dublin establishment. Kelly rightly notes chronic concerns in London—and among British elites in Dublin—about foreign descents on Ireland, and a possible Jacobite rising as had happened in 1689. As in Canny's essay, Kelly notes that people in Ireland maintained a keen interest in the state of the Anglo-French rivalry, though distinctly less enthusiasm for taking part if they could help it. O'Connor meanwhile reveals a new dimension of Atlantic diplomacy between the mid-century wars. The period is typically noted for excellent Anglo-Spanish relations, following the earlier scholarship of Richard Lodge and Jean McLachlan [5], but O'Connor highlights the role of Spanish envoy Major-General Ricardo Wall and agents under his care in attempting to suborn British craft experts into Spanish service. His treatment of Spanish success among the Irish is especially noteworthy, neatly complementing Kelly's discussion of invasion scares. While British security concerns at several levels evidently extended to both islands, Ireland as a British dependency clearly lagged in juridical and administrative protections for its people, as well as in intelligence and defense resources.

David Dickson's chapter four and Marie-Louise Coolahan's chapter nine greatly complicate the pictures of Irish geographical unity and social relations. For Dickson, Dublin emerges from London's shadow as a center of population and trade, while Cork and Limerick appear as secondary hubs of no small account. Rounding out his "seven sisters," Waterford, Galway, and especially Derry and Belfast emerge with their own character, all with greater or lesser infrastructure connecting them—or yet to connect them—with the people and resources of distinct parts of the island's interior. Coolahan meanwhile notes the different characters of Mary Berry, Ann Nulty, and Mary Flynn, female servants writing in the literary shadow of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. For as much as all three women offer greater humanity and credibility to the character Richardson created, Coolahan's reading of their letters reveals each to be at once her own woman, navigating in terms clearly her own the problems of literacy and letter-writing for agency, privacy, class-status, and social relations vis-à-vis the families they served in Bordeaux.

The book's middle chapters, from Daniel Baugh and Jean-Pierre Poussou, approach most nearly the norms of military history. Baugh offers a view of British naval doctrine at odds with Robert Beatson's combat-studded classic history and Voltaire's lampooning of John Byng's execution.[6] No doubt the Admiralty wanted its officers attacking enemy warships, but Baugh's examination of the financial incentives for officers to engage in commerce raiding merits deeper consideration, not only as part of British doctrine, but also as a contributor to British victory in the war.[7] Taking the other side, Poussou scrutinizes the volume of wartime trade from

Bordeaux. He concedes some significant losses, but counters that the wine trade continued, and that the city's merchants strenuously opposed releasing their trade to foreign competitors (p. 137). His statistics do suggest that the city weathered the war in reasonable shape, and its postwar rebound lies beyond doubt, though one wonders how much Bordeaux profited from the suffering of others: La Rochelle bankrupted by its interest in the defunct Canada trade (noted in Baugh's chapter, pp. 118-19); Rochefort and St. Malo beset by British naval raids; and a transatlantic plague afflicting Brest and l'Orient.[8] As a stand-alone study, Poussou offers some fascinating insights on Bordeaux, but more may come with fuller comparison to the experience of other ports.

Questions of approach are central to the chapters from Crouch and Karen Kupperman, the most theory-laden of the volume, and the last for this review. Using a method of deep reading for the Bordeaux-Dublin letters not unlike that of Coolahan, Crouch moves up a level of abstraction in asking historians to consider carefully the writers' reasons for choosing or omitting specific turns of phrase, particularly for fear of their letters being read by someone other than their intended audience. In coaxing historians to imagine military officers concerned to protect sensitive intelligence or family members worried about their good name, Crouch's missive and consistency of practice are sophisticated and compelling. They are also salutary as a comment on historical methods. Our craft necessitates a certain voyeurism that if we think about it at all, we are often loath to admit (p. 165). Kupperman's chapter on trust inscribed in the Bordeaux-Dublin letters is also salutary, highlighting the complexity and geographic range of familial and commercial networks in the mid-eighteenth century. It is curious, however, that for correspondence so concerned with trade, terms such as *credit*, *interest*, *insurance*, and *speculation* remain unexplored. Her invocations of Shakespeare, moreover, while clearly erudite in a literary-critical context, seem out of proportion to the letter writers' allusions to the playwright. If she seeks warrant in literature of the era for trust as a component of functioning societies, why not refer to the well-circulated political tracts by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke?

Two oversights bear mention, neither critical on its own, but both highlighting the margins of this volume's scholarship. In an unusually lightly referenced section of his introduction, Truxes claims that the Anglo-Prussian neutrality concluded in January 1756 "stunned" Austrian *Staatskanzler* Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz. In fact, Kaunitz's diplomacy early in 1755 partly anticipated Anglo-Prussian rapprochement, and he tried for months to warn the French court. Versailles, however, was indeed shocked by the Prussian betrayal, and Truxes duly notes the energy and rage of the response: quick and ambitious diplomacy in Vienna, preparations by sea in the northern ports and a foray against Minorca, a ban on cross-Channel trade and tourism, and an active domestic propaganda campaign (p. 9).[9] Similarly, O'Connor may treat too casually the fact of British naval superiority, especially in shipbuilding (p. 194). Upon its capture in 1740, the Spanish *Princessa* inspired significant rethinking of British naval architecture, as did the French *Alcide*, taken in 1755.[10] For shipbuilding logistics, however, including manufactures of sail cloth, O'Connor correctly notes British superiority, and his argument certainly stands that more work needs to be done on military-industrial crafts and corporate espionage in the mid-eighteenth century.

In sum, this volume offers major contributions to Seven Years' War historiography, though not without some flaws. It greatly expands the history around the Bordeaux-Dublin letters, and of the Seven Years' War generally. Many chapters continue the project of humanizing the experience of early modern war, especially for civilians ensconced in the many familial and trade

networks of Europe's Atlantic littoral. The volume eminently succeeds in offering an eclectic, well-rounded regional history of Ireland, France, and the Atlantic in a time of war, as its title suggests. Ironically, it falters only when its authors exceed that scope, and then only slightly. Despite some criticism at the margins, the core scholarship merits this book a place in the collection of any serious historian of the mid-eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Thomas M. Truxes, "Introduction: A Connected Irish World"

Nicholas Canny, "The Irish colony in Bordeaux, 1757: A Representative Sample of Irish Communities Abroad?"

L. M. Cullen, "The Boyds in Bordeaux and Dublin"

James Kelly, "'Precarious and dangerous times': Ireland and France and the Spectre of Invasion, 1690-1760"

David Dickson, "Seven Sisters? The Seaport Cities of Mid-Eighteenth-Century Ireland"

Daniel Baugh, "Prize-Taking: Its role in Maritime Strategy and Ultimate Success in the Seven Years' War"

Jean-Pierre Poussou, "The Outset and Course of the Seven Years' War in Bordeaux, 1755-1763"

Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Fate, Providence, and Trust in the Atlantic"

Christian Ayne Crouch, "Between Lines: Language, Intimacy, and Voyeurism during Global War"

Marie-Louise Coolahan, "'It is with pleasure I lay hold of evry occasion of wrightin': Female Domestic Servants, *The Bordeaux-Dublin Letters*, and the Epistolary Novel"

Thomas O'Connor, "Spanish Subornment of English and Irish Textile Workers, 1749-1756"

NOTES

[1] Louis Cullen, John Shovlin, and Thomas Truxes, eds., *The Bordeaux-Dublin Letters, 1757: Correspondence of an Irish Community Abroad (Records of Social and Economic History)* (London: British Academy, 2014).

[2] Inter alia, see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (London: Faber and Faber, 2000); Stephen Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Franz A. J. Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe* (New York: Longman, 2007); Matt J. Schumann and Karl W. Schweizer, *The Seven Years' War: A Transatlantic Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2008); Daniel A. Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War* (New York: Longman, 2011); Sven Externbrink, ed., *Der Siebenjährige Krieg (1756-1763): Ein europäischer Weltkrieg im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*

(Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011); William R. Nester, *The French and Indian War and the Conquest of New France* (Norman, Ok.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

[3] Mark Danley and Patrick Speelman, eds., *The Seven Years' War: Global Views* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[4] John Parmenter and Mark Power Robison, "The Perils and Possibilities of Wartime Neutrality on the Edges of Empire: Iroquois and Acadians between the French and British in North America, 1744-60," *Diplomatic History* 31:2 (April 2007), 167-206.

[5] Cf., Richard Lodge, "Presidential Address: Sir Benjamin Keene, K.B.: A Study in Anglo-Spanish Relations in the Earlier Part of the Eighteenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 15 (1932): 1-43; Jean McLachlan, "The Seven Years' Peace, and the West Indian Policy of Carvajal and Wall," *The English Historical Review*, 53:211 (July 1938): 457-77.

[6] Robert Beatson, *Naval and Military Memoirs of Great Britain, 1727-1783*, 2nd edn., 6 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1804); Jean-Marie Arouet, a.k.a. Voltaire, *Candide, ou l'Optimisme* (Paris: Lambert, 1759), p. 172.

[7] For other discussions of this particular point, see Schumann and Schweizer, *Seven Years' War*, chs. 3 and 5.

[8] For the blockade and raids, see William Kent Hackmann, "English Military Expeditions to the Coast of France, 1757-1761" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1969); Richard Middleton, "British Naval Strategy, 1755-1762: The Western Squadron," *Mariner's Mirror*, 75:4 (November 1989): 349-67. For the plague, see James Pritchard, *Louis XV's Navy, 1748-1762: A Study of Organization and Administration* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1987), pp. 83-84; Dull, *The French Navy and the Seven Years' War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), pp. 80-81, 86.

[9] See also Abbé Seran de la Tour, *Parallèle de la conduite des Carthaginois, à l'Égard des Romains, dans la Seconde Guerre Punique, avec la Conduite de l'Angleterre, à l'Égard de la France, dans la Guerre Déclarée par ces Deux Puissances, en 1756* (Paris, 1757); R. N. Middleton, "French Policy and Prussia after the Peace of Aix la Chapelle, 1749-1753: A Study of the Prehistory of the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1968), pp. 321-27; Lothar Schilling, *Kaunitz und das Renversement des Alliances: Studien zur aussenpolitischen Konzeption Wenzel Antons von Kaunitz* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1994); Schumann and Schweizer, *Seven Years' War*, ch. 1.

[10] Beatson, *Military Memoirs*, vol. 1, pp. 75-76; Jeremy Black, *Britain as a Military Power, 1688-1815* (London: UCL Press, 1999), pp. 107-10.

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