

Linda Frey, Marsha Frey, eds.. *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession: An Historical and Critical Dictionary*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995. xxviii + 576 pp. \$125.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-313-27884-6.

The Treaties of the War
of the Spanish Succession
An Historical and Critical Dictionary
Edited by Linda Frey and Marsha Frey

Reviewed by Reed Browning

Published on HABSBURG (April, 1996)

The War of the Spanish Succession was triggered by Louis XIV's decision, taken late in 1700, to accept the testamentary proposal of the dying Spanish king Charles II that the entirety of the Spanish inheritance go to the French king's grandson, the Duke of Anjou. To leaders in Austria, Britain, and the Dutch Republic, this acceptance implied an intolerable enhancement of Bourbon power, and they soon challenged Louis's decision by force of arms. Before long, most of the states of western and central Europe entered the conflict, and all of the traditional theatres of warfare -- northern Italy, the Netherlands, central Germany, and the high seas -- again hosted belligerence. Even the Iberian peninsula was not spared, as two princely (and non-Spanish) claimants to the throne of Spain dispatched armies to conquer land and/or extort loyalty. The war ended over a decade after it had begun in a set of twenty-three treaties (the last of them signed as late as 1725), the most celebrated of which was concluded at Utrecht in 1713. Like all of the large and sprawling wars of early modern Europe, the War of the Spanish Succession was often messy, usually uncontrollable, ultimately enervating for the states

that participated, and generally disruptive for civilians across Europe.

Linda Frey and Marsha Frey have edited a volume that will be of wide utility to all scholars who are working in the era of early eighteenth-century Europe. Moreover, the title they have chosen for their book unnecessarily diminishes their achievement, for *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession: An Historical and Critical Dictionary* is much more akin to a modern encyclopedia than to a modern dictionary, and in addition to its information about the set of treaties that ended the war, it provides a wealth of information about the belligerence itself and the context that sustained it.

Among the valuable features of *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession* is the editors' introduction. Opening with the celebrated comparison of the peace of Utrecht to the peace of God (both lie "beyond human understanding"- p. xiii), it provides a concise overview of the issues involved in the war and the plans of pacification that resolved them. The Freys argue that in working to end the warfare, negotiators struggled to

mediate among the claims of three contending principles: 1) the various assertions of "legitimacy" that had emerged, 2) the need to reestablish a perceived "balance of power" in Europe, and 3) appeals from allies for "compensation" for losses incurred during the conflict (p. xvii). Not surprisingly, these three principles were frequently found to be irreconcilable. Further complicating the negotiators' task was the intrusion of confessional and economic quarrels that often bisected the lines of principle. As a consequence, the Freys argue, the overriding principle of settlement was often "expediency" (p. xxiv). Nevertheless, the editors believe the settlement to have been successful, and to dramatize that point they seize on the figure of Astraea, the star maiden who distributes peace, justice, and abundance, and whose image -- aptly and happily -- graces a medal struck to commemorate the peace of Utrecht.

The wealth of learning that undergirds the volume is another of its strengths. Forty-two scholars, representing six countries, have contributed signed articles. These authorities may not always agree -- the outcome of the battle of Malplaquet, for example, varies somewhat depending upon whether the reader consults the article on Prince Eugene, the piece on the Duke of Marlborough, or the paragraphs on the battle itself -- but shaded differences are a valued part of the soul of historical scholarship. Each article concludes with a short bibliography. The far larger bibliography located at the end of the volume cites works in a variety of languages, including Catalan and Hungarian, and ranges from pieces contemporaneous with the war to books published as recently as 1994. In short, the volume presents the findings and conclusions of a scholarship that is thorough, evolving, and diverse.

The book has other helpful features. A rich index guides the reader to subjects treated in more than one article or (more frequently) to those not the specific subject of any article at all. The appending of asterisks to names or terms anywhere

in the text signals that the volume contains an article on that subject. A chronology that begins with the secret Austro-French partition treaty of 1668 and ends with the Imperial-Spanish peace of 1725 provides a reminder of the sequence of events. A genealogical chart sets forth the lines of descent through female Habsburgs that generated the quarrel over the Spanish succession. Two maps help the reader to locate the sites that figure so prominently in the peace negotiations.

A reference work of this sort must be judged chiefly by the criterion of usefulness to its intended audience. Within the term "usefulness" I mean to incorporate five points: 1) the work should be accurate; 2) it should be easy to consult; 3) it should be comprehensive; 4) it should guide the reader to fuller sources of information, and 5) it should provide assessments of contextual and thematic concerns. The editors would probably agree. They state their purpose to be "to make accessible to the scholar as well as the student the recent scholarship on the treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession...." (p. xi) While there are problems under each heading, the book is quite good on all but the last (and admittedly the most difficult) of these five points.

It will surprise no one that inaccuracies occasionally appear. Some are typographical in origin: the battle of Almanza occurred in 1707, not 1702 (p.7); the Latin motto of 1713 reads "Spes [not Spec] Felicitatis Orbis" (p. xvii); the omission of lines on the genealogical chart leaves obscure both the parentage of Leopold I's first wife and the marital tie that brought a Wittelsbach into the partition picture of 1698 (p. 509). Some inaccuracies arise from an incongruence between a stated fact and a related judgment: for example, if Augustus II of Saxony "accompanied some 9,000 of his unemployed Saxon troops, leased to the United Provinces, to Brussels....," does it make sense to assert that he "was the only ...member of the German political elite not directly involved in the War of the Spanish Succession"? (p. 23). But in

general (and insofar as a reader who is far from expert in most of the areas the work treats can judge), this is a reliable volume, marked by attentive editorial oversight.

I am slightly less happy with its ease of usage. Scholars consider reference works helpful to the extent that their finding devices allow quick identification of the pages that will be useful. This volume contains almost 500 article headings, from "Acadia, see Canada" to "Wratislaw, Johann Wenzel, Graf von," but still in many instances readers will need to use the index to find the information they are curious about. And that is the problem, for the index is not complete. In some cases, there are discussions in the body of the book which are not picked up in the index (e.g., the mention of Louis, the Dauphin, in an article on page 353, and the discussion of the Dutch office of *greffier*, in an article on page 421). In other cases, there are gaps in cross-referencing (e.g., the index citations for "Lorraine" do not guide the reader to the important article on "Leopold I ... , Duke of Lorraine and Bar," even though this article is essential for understanding the role of Lorraine in the war). In instances where the name being sought may appear in different spellings in different languages, readers need to be persistent in the face of some editorial inconsistency: a search for "Palatine, Elector of" among the articles will lead to the useful advice to turn to "Pfalz-Neuburg,....," but a search for "Burgundy, duke of" among the articles yields no advice, and only the index directs the reader to "Bourgogne,"

Comprehensiveness of coverage is an elusive goal, usually defined in the mind of the beholder. To minimize the possibility that the range of their choices might be vulnerable to charges of scholarly eccentricity, the Freys wisely sought "the advice of experts from around the world" in making the hard decisions about which subjects should be treated -- and, of course, which could then be disregarded (p. xi). The first point to be made in this context is that *The Treaties of the War of the*

Spanish Succession does not contain the texts of the treaties themselves. Constraints of space prevented their inclusion, and so instead the book directs the reader to locations where printed versions of the documents in question can be found, ordinarily the *Consolidated Treaty Series*. This seems a reasonable compromise. The second point to be made is that, as in all areas where judgment must be exercised, each scholar is likely to have some quibble about the editors' choices. Among mine are the following. Why is there no article on the Pragmatic Sanction? Why no article on the Jacobites? Why none on the Aulic Council or Sir George Byng? Contrariwise, what is it in the careers of Thomas Nairne and Johann Willem Ripperda between 1700 and 1715 that raises them to the ranks of those meriting articles? Finally there is the matter of allotments of space. Why, to cite an example that seems to me to be notably puzzling, does the reader get less information on Marshal Villeroi than on Henry Sacheverell? The Freys certainly followed the correct course in seeking to eclipse any danger of idiosyncratic judgment by looking for a kind of consensus of authorities. The lesson for the reader, however, is that even a volume as spacious and scrupulous as this one will have omissions that might loom large.

Comprehensiveness is also a criterion by which to judge a bibliography. I found a perusal of the "Selected Bibliography" valuable and enlightening, alerting me to a number of works I had not previously known of. But I also missed seeing some works I had expected to meet, especially in a book published within the orbit of English-language scholarship. P. G. M. Dickson's masterly *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688-1756* (1967) analyzes the institutions that allowed Britain to discover that war could be waged with money as well as arms. Daniel Richter's vigorous *Ordeal of the Loghouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (1992) describes the diplomacy of the Five Nations as they

sought to protect their autonomy from encroachments by agents of the warring British and French crowns. John Stoye's richly textured *Marsigli's Europe 1680-1730: The Life and Times of Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, Soldier and Virtuoso* (1994) tells of Habsburg military activities early in the war. No bibliography can contain every relevant publication, and each scholar will have a personal list of neglected titles. But the lesson of the previous paragraph reasserts itself here: the reader needs to be aware that the bibliography may be inadequate for particular purposes.

Finally there is the matter of contextual or thematic concerns. I was modestly disappointed that *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession* does not readily lend itself to interrogation about broader questions arising from the belligerence. There is, for example, neither an article nor an index listing that directs the reader to discussions of "war aims" or "foreign policy." Nor will the curious reader find such matters explored under listings for the particular belligerent states, for national listings (for major participants) are also non-existent. Thus the volume resists efforts to find research conclusions about, for example, the extent to which financial exhaustion inclined belligerents to peace after a decade of warfare or how these belligerents were institutionally organized for reaching decisions about war-making and peace-making. Omissions of this sort are perhaps inevitable in a work organized as an alphabetic encyclopedia, but more than any other omissions they also assure that students of the war will need to keep other sources at hand if they hope to make sense of how the belligerence began, proceeded, and ended.

I fear I have sounded unduly critical, and I do not want to close on what readers may take to be a negative note. In fact, I do not want to leave the impression that I am anything less than deeply grateful for the appearance of this splendid work. *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession* is a very valuable contribution to historical schol-

arship; it excites admiration for its scope and reliability and for the editorial intelligence that oversaw its creation. Perhaps the easiest way to underline my respect is to hazard a prediction: fifty years from now, when almost all the monographs from the 1990s are gathering dust or worse, *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession* will still be extensively used by all scholars who want to understand the intricacies of the war it treats. The Freys may thus rest in the happy confidence that generations of scholars will acknowledge standing in their debt.

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Citation: Reed Browning. Review of Frey, Linda; Frey, Marsha, eds. *The Treaties of the War of the Spanish Succession: An Historical and Critical Dictionary*. HABSBURG, H-Net Reviews. April, 1996.

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