

(e.g., of the Hanseatic cities) were often abroad, Wuppertalers remained in the region, but nevertheless acted globally from the region. There was often a “unity of company and family” (263, 418). While double-entry bookkeeping was introduced in many parts of the world, the Wuppertalers stuck to single-entry bookkeeping but were still able to keep up with the world market. Overkamp also presents the special religiosity of Pietist merchants. Moreover, I was particularly convinced by the focus on women’s education in the commercial field of Wuppertal, which was tantamount to an “equal status of education” with men (220). Last but not least, the structural peculiarities in Wuppertal are intriguing, as elsewhere (e. g., in Hamburg). Burgher houses became the rule with access to the thatched canal – in Wuppertal, in turn, it was the Bergische burgher house which adapted to local conditions, e. g., through the typical slate cladding. At that time, as in most of Europe, furniture made of mahogany also found its place in these houses. Reading the latter information gave me, as someone who has worked on Hamburg merchants, the idea that it would be apt to publish an anthology of comparisons between merchant families in different regions of Europe. Several studies on similar firms in Amsterdam, Silesia, or Ostend are currently in the works. A cultural-historical comparison between these merchant groups would be a worthwhile undertaking. When books such as Anne Sophie Overkamp’s inspire outlines for new books, that is always a good indication of the high quality of the work at hand.

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Habsburg Sons: Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Army 1788–1918

By Peter C. Appelbaum. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2022. Pp. 366. Paperback \$25.95. ISBN: 978-1644696903.

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Over 300,000 Jewish soldiers from all corners of the Habsburg Empire served in the Austro-Hungarian Army in the First World War. Jewish chaplains (*Feldrabbiner*) accompanied them to provide for their spiritual needs, while tens of thousands of them became prisoners of war. Peter C. Appelbaum draws attention to this fascinating and understudied topic. Using war diaries, memoirs, and other writings, he provides detailed descriptions of soldiers’ experiences in their own words and paints a rich portrait of their diverse lives. His stated goal is “to put flesh on the bones of the long dead, allowing their voices to be heard” (18). Although the book’s scope is 1788-1918, it actually spends most pages on World War I with only one chapter on the pre-war period.

Drawing a contrast with Germany, Appelbaum emphasizes the favorable treatment accorded to Jews in the Habsburg Army. It was the first European army to allow Jews to serve (in 1788, even before France) and the only European army to address the religious needs of Orthodox Jewish soldiers. Overt antisemitism was rare. The author points out the irony that in the First World War, Eastern European Jews saw the Central Power armies as liberators, in contrast to Russian troops who committed murder, rape, and pillage, a situation that would be “turned on its head two decades later” (71).

Habsburg Jews reacted to the declaration of war with loyalty and calls for unity, embracing the war as an opportunity to liberate the Russian Jews from Tsarist oppression. The

initial Russian invasion of the eastern provinces of Galicia and Bukovina led to mass expulsions of Jews, the flight of Jewish refugees to other parts of the empire, and brutal treatment of those who remained. In chapter 4, Appelbaum uses writings of Jewish soldiers who served on the Eastern Front to show that “Orthodox and assimilated Jews fought bravely despite poor leadership” and that there were “no significant differences in the attitudes of Jews from the different Habsburg nationalities” (120) despite rumors of Czech disloyalty. Teofil Tobias Reiss’s war diary (2016) and Avigdor Feuerstein’s (Hameiri) Hebrew war novel, *The Great Madness* (1984) paint a vivid picture of the diversity of Habsburg Jewish soldiers. The experiences of Jewish soldiers on other fronts are described in chapter 5. The war diary of Egon Erwin Kisch (1930) “provides a blow-by-blow account of the failed Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia” (145). In the Balkans, many Jewish soldiers encountered Sephardic Jews for the first time. The Tyrol and Isonza, on the Italian front, were perhaps the most brutal terrains of the war.

The story of Jewish chaplains (*Feldrabbiner*) is told in chapter 6. Habsburg Jewish chaplains were provided with special uniforms, salaries, authorized kosher kitchens, and ritual prayer objects. Their duties included spiritual care, holding services, visiting the sick, burials, and care for Jewish prisoners of war. By the end of the war, 133 Jewish chaplains from all parts of the empire had served, a much larger number than in the German Army. “They were modest men, imbued with supranational loyalty to the empire, which made them count amongst the most loyal of the Kaiser’s subjects. They wrote little, but acted greatly” (228). Tragically, many would be murdered in the Holocaust.

Chapter 7 describes Jewish prisoner-of-war experiences. Habsburg Jewish soldiers in captivity encountered Jews from all over the Russian Empire and witnessed the Russian Revolution, which often delayed their repatriation. Hameiri’s book *Hell on Earth* (2017) sheds light on conditions in a variety of camps. Georg Breithaupt’s autobiography, *The Fight for Survival* (1919) gives an account of life as a prisoner physician in a Russian prisoner-of-war camp. Adolf Epstein (1935) provides a lengthy description of a Bukharan Passover seder, at which “their host explained that Bukharan men had the right to marry more than one wife, if the first one remained barren” (276). Kaspar Blond (n.d.) who served as a camp physician, witnessed the Armenian Genocide in Aleppo and reported on its victims.

Appelbaum concludes by looking at the aftermath of the war, the fate of Habsburg Jewish veterans, and their influence, drawing attention to the role of Jewish veterans in founding the ill-fated 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic and the rise of political antisemitism in Austria. The Austrian Army, for its part, resisted antisemitism, at least initially, and elaborate war memorials were erected for fallen Jewish soldiers. However, this tolerance was short-lived and ended with the rise of Nazism, Austro-fascism, and the *Anschluss*. Many highly decorated Jewish soldiers were sent to Theresienstadt, most of whom were then deported and murdered in Auschwitz.

It is not surprising that a book about Jews in the Austrian Army with the title *Habsburg Sons* focuses on the experiences of Jewish men. In two instances, Appelbaum explicitly states that his goal is to give “long-dead men” a voice (xxvi, 179). When women appear, they figure as prostitutes, victims, or annoying girlfriends desperate for attention. For example, we read at length of Reiss’s “escapades with ladies, who pop up everywhere during his service” (90). The only account by a woman cited, that of Lilian Bader, reports on her husband’s service. Accounts of Jewish women serving as nurses, reporters, and photographers at the front are notably absent.

Appelbaum sometimes seems surprised that “even the most Orthodox Jews served with bravery and honor” (42), and his descriptions of them as “fierce fighters, not averse to going into battle waving their *tallitot*, with phylacteries on their heads and left hands, shouting *Sh’ma Yisrael* (Hear O Israel)” (57), “fierce-looking, bearded soldiers storming into battle with tallit and tefillin yelling *Sh’ma Yisrael* (Hear, O Israel)” (71), and “religious Jews charging into battle yelling *Sh’ma Yisrael*” (112) come across as stilted. References to Jewish civilians on the Eastern Front as Orthodox *Peyes-* and *Kaftanjuden* (8) similarly seem peculiar. The book would benefit from more careful editing. Repetition and inconsistencies in spelling and

translation distract from its valuable content and insights. For example, the *Judenerzählung* (Jewish census) in Germany is referenced several times but not translated until page 173 and never fully explained; a *hagadah* is not “a seder prayerbook” (185) but rather a guidebook to the Passover meal.

Still, *Habsburg Sons* succeeds in what it sets out to accomplish. It draws attention to a frequently overlooked chapter of Habsburg Jewish history and gives a voice to Jewish soldiers whose stories have for so long been neglected.

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Finding Order in Diversity: Religious Toleration in the Habsburg Empire, 1792–1848

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In his monograph, Scott Berg provides an impressive new narrative of toleration in the Habsburg Empire. He focuses on the period between the aftermath of Joseph II's reforms and the year of revolutions, 1848. Berg shows that Joseph II's policies led to a non-confessional state with a large degree of religious toleration. Administrators, clerics, and rulers sought to keep the peace by acting in an even-handed way towards a range of confessional and religious groups. In other words, there was no alliance between throne and altar in the half-century before 1848.

The author draws largely on administrative and normative sources, supplemented with assessments of their implementation and subversion on the ground. Berg does an excellent job of providing a narrative of Austria and also pays close attention to the other Habsburg lands, including Lombardy, Hungary, Venetia, and the military borders with the Ottoman Empire. This wide view is one of the great strengths of this monograph.

In the introduction, Berg sketches out some historiographical trends, focusing on questions of toleration and confessionalism in previous centuries. While Berg provides a useful framework for the following chapters, his characterisation of the period before the eighteenth century as one of persecution has been disputed in a crop of recent studies. Berg argues that the Enlightenment was the key moment when thinkers left behind religious differences in pursuit of knowledge and toleration, while the nineteenth century saw a second age of confessionalism. In what follows, Berg challenges this view by arguing that in the Habsburg Empire, there was significant toleration in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The first two main chapters give a chronological analysis of Catholicism in the Habsburg lands, first in the period between 1792 and 1820, when clerics and politicians grappled with the legacies of Josephinism, and a second period, stretching from 1820 to 1848, that saw a Catholic revival in large parts of Europe. The Habsburg Empire formed an exception to this strengthening of Catholicism. Instead, efforts to form an alliance between state and church and turn the Habsburg Empire into a major Catholic force were haphazard and piecemeal, if they happened at all. This was a deliberate choice intended to keep the peace in the multi-religious Habsburg lands. For instance, during the *Kölner Wirren* (1837), a conflict pitting Prussia against Catholic powers, Habsburg policies wavered and clerics and rulers in