

for the highest tier; “the spaces in which books are kept,” he insists, are “integral to any understanding of their history” (20). Purcell mines everything from letters and diaries to wills and bills of attainder—not to mention books themselves (marginalia, bindings, bookplates)—for evidence of how books were valued affectively and materially, how they were read, and how they dwelled, together with their readers, in country house libraries. The volume’s lavish illustrations highlight Purcell’s attention to detail and careful documentation.

Purcell, formerly libraries curator for the National Trust and currently a deputy director at Cambridge University Library, knows whereof he speaks. Many—though importantly, not all—of the libraries he surveys fall under the care of the National Trust, which superintends roughly 170 country house libraries and their nearly 300,000 books. Purcell makes the case that country house libraries should be preserved *in situ*, but also that those still in private hands be catalogued, that these catalogues be readily available to researchers online, and that owners be held to obligations regarding public access (the public has the right to see books, for example, that have been “conditionally exempted” from taxation). Purcell seems resigned, but also sanguine, about the future of Britain’s country house libraries. While those in private hands might flourish or falter together with their owners, those in public hands will benefit from recent scholarly developments in such fields as cultural and book history and the digital humanities. *The Country House Library* is meticulously researched and liberally illustrated, as intellectually satisfying as it is visually compelling; academic and amateur enthusiasts alike will find much to ponder and relish in these pages.

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ANDREAS ROSE. *Between Empire and Continent: British Foreign Policy before the First World War*. Translated by Rona Johnston. Studies in British and Imperial History 5. New York: Berghahn Books, 2017. Pp. 528. \$150.00 (cloth).  
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European diplomacy in the decades prior to the outbreak of the First World War is a well-served field of historical enquiry. The centenary of the conflict has witnessed the publication of several new landmark studies on the topic, notably Sir Christopher Clark’s *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (2012) and Thomas Otte’s *July Crisis: The World’s Descent into War, Summer 1914* (2014). The tendency of these works has been to challenge notions of German culpability for the outbreak of the conflict, or at least to nuance them, particularly in Clark’s case. Andreas Rose’s *Between Empire and Continent* seeks to contribute to this trend by stressing the agency of British diplomacy before 1914 and by qualifying the role Germany played in London’s calculations in that period.

Originally published in German in 2011, this book focuses upon British foreign and defense policy between the 1890s and 1910. Its core argument is that Germany’s behavior was not the primary factor that shaped British decision making during this period. Rather, Rose charges, imperial concerns and lingering rivalries with France and Russia continued to play a key role in the thinking of Britain’s policy-making elites. When Germany did factor into British policy making, he claims, it was largely due to the influence of bellicously anti-German elements in the press, or, as a form of subterfuge, perpetrated as part of the cut and thrust of party or of interservice politics.

*Between Empire and Continent* makes a number of potentially important contributions. First, it brings a large body of German-language scholarship on British politics and diplomacy in this period to an Anglophone audience, introducing significant points of emphasis that are less prominent in the literature in English. Second, it continues the methodological trend of seeking to incorporate the role of public opinion and domestic politics more closely with interpretations of diplomacy and international affairs. Works such as Jeremy Black's *Parliament and Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Century* (2007) and Daniel Brown's *Palmerston and the Politics of Foreign Policy, 1846–55* (2002) have made important strides in this regard already, but the relationship between politicians, the press, the armed services, and diplomacy is surely an area into which more study is required. Third, Rose seeks to place the armed services in general, and the Royal Navy in particular, at the heart of his analysis of British power in this period. Indeed, he pulls no punches in criticizing earlier scholars in the field of naval history for failing to reach beyond their subdisciplinary wheelhouse and to engage with broader debates in the diplomatic, political, and international scholarship on the period: "naval history ... still has a surprisingly long way to go if it is to move beyond bibliographies and take up the analytical reflection found in modern diplomatic histories" (5). Whether entirely fair to naval historians or not, Rose's broader point that the armed forces have for too long been at the periphery of accounts of the British state and of British diplomacy in this period is valid, and his attempts to remedy this situation are both appropriate and welcome.

*Between Empire and Continent* thus sets out an ambitious methodological stand, aligning itself with trends presently at the cutting edge of new scholarship in its field, and it claims to have broken significant new ground as a result. Unfortunately, its substance does not entirely live up to this billing. In purely practical terms, the book is extremely long, bearing many of the hallmarks of a work based upon a dissertation. Time and time again Rose piles up evidence in support of points that could have been made more simply, detracting from the force of his arguments in the process. The work is thus somewhat unwieldy (made worse by the use of endnotes) and difficult to read in places.

More damagingly, the book also contains significant conceptual and methodological shortcomings that raise fundamental questions about the thesis Rose propounds. The influence of public opinion on policy making is certainly an important and interesting topic; however, Anthony Morris's seminal *The Scaremongers* (1984) covers much the same ground as Rose and completes the task to far greater effect. Rose's claims to an entirely new approach are thus rather exaggerated. Furthermore, Rose makes virtually no effort to account for precisely what the nature of "public opinion" at this time *was*, or *how* it influenced (or did not) the decision makers he discusses. Who were the British public? How did contemporaries define its membership, or measure the weight of its opinions? As Thomas Otte's work on the role of foreign affairs in bye-elections in this period has shown, the relationship between foreign and domestic politics was complex and difficult to define with certainty. Rose's work would have benefited from a more thoroughgoing consideration of these methodological issues, which would surely have mollified some of the claims made in this book.

In a similar vein, it seems somewhat reckless to state specifically that a key strength of a book is that it incorporates a narrow subdiscipline (in this case naval history) into a broader narrative without mastering the content of said area. Naval affairs in Britain in this period are the topic of a complex and wide-ranging debate which it is not necessary to enter into here, but suffice it to say that Rose engages with only a fraction of the relevant secondary literature and almost completely eschews meaningful work in the relevant archives. The result is a muddled telling of the naval aspects of the story and a failure to achieve the laudable aim of incorporating the Royal Navy into a convincing wider picture.

*Between Empire and Continent* will appeal to those who wish to deemphasize Berlin's role in the currents of diplomacy which preceded the outbreak of the First World War, but it does little to strengthen their case.

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ROBERT K. SUTCLIFFE. *British Expeditionary Warfare and the Defeat of Napoleon, 1793–1815*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016. Pp. 272. \$120.00 (cloth).  
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Until its unfortunate rationalization, the Greenwich Maritime Institute, once part of the University of Greenwich, fostered research that dramatically advanced historical knowledge of Britain's maritime history. That research made outstanding contributions to our understanding of Britain's role in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars against France and of her governmental strengths in that period. Anyone who has read Roger Knight's *Britain Against Napoleon: the Organization of Victory* (2013), and now Robert Sutcliffe's *British Expeditionary Warfare and the Defeat of Napoleon* (2016), will no longer be in any doubt about why Britain was able to maintain her position as a major European military power, or about how at the same time Britain was able to maintain control of, indeed enlarge, her global empire. Generally, clarity of explanation for such grand achievements is lost within a multitude of factors, primacy within which remains a matter of debate. With Robert Sutcliffe's penetrating study, that can no longer be the case. For he shows how, despite her peripheral geographical situation, Britain exercised operational military power both within Europe and throughout the world. His explanation, prosaic though it may appear among powerful economic, financial, and diplomatic arguments, is utterly convincing. He has, so to speak, discovered the key element in modern Britain's DNA, without which Britain would not have the history she possesses.

Others before Sutcliffe have made studies of Britain's transport service. Paula Watson examined the first institution of a commission for transports during the War of Spanish Succession ("The Commission for Victualling the Navy, the Commission for Sick and Wounded Seamen and Prisoners of War, the Commission for Transports. 1702–14," unpublished PhD dissertation, University of London, 1965). Unfortunately, that organization with its expertise was dissolved at the end of that war, the consequences of which were recorded by David Syrett for the Seven Years' War, and most importantly for the American War of Independence (*Shipping and the American War 1775–83: A Study of British Transport Organisation*, 1979). Meanwhile, Syrett's contemporary, Mary Condon, studied the resurrection of transport commissioners for the French Revolutionary war, collectively then known as the Transport Board. Sutcliffe takes forward the work of that board to demonstrate the critical role it played during the Napoleonic Wars ("The Administration of the Transport Service during the War against Revolutionary France, 1793–1802," unpublished PhD dissertation, University of London, 1968).

Although regarded as one of the naval boards under the Admiralty, from 1794 the Transport Board was managed by the Treasury. Here to a large extent lay the secret of its success. For, along multifarious lines of communication through most departments of government and the armed forces, the demands of the Treasury were imperative. Necessarily, a small proportion of Sutcliffe's book is concerned with the terms upon which shipping was hired, the work that had to be done to make the transports ready to receive troops, ordnance, horses, and stores. But the main thrust of his book is to demonstrate the growth in the Transport Board's