

Elaine Murphy. *Ireland and the War at Sea: 1641-1653*. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2012. xiv + 253 pp. + 3 maps. \$90.00. Review by EDWARD M. FURGOL, MONTGOMERY COLLEGE.

Murphy has produced a solid work on an important aspect of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms (in Great Britain and Ireland, 1639-53). It will serve as the foundation for those wanting to learn more about the maritime struggle involving the Irish Confederates and English parliamentarians and their successor regimes.

The volume derives its value from a thorough survey of the primary and secondary sources covering Irish and English history. The author presents her findings in three parts. The first, a narrative history of the wars, takes up two-fifths of the book. It clearly depicts the intricacies of the maritime struggle involving the forces of the English parliament/Commonwealth, Irish Confederates and Royalists, and English Royalists (the fleet of Prince Rupert). To quickly mobilize a naval force that could hamper reinforcing and supplying their opponents, and to weaken them economically the Irish Confederates licensed privateers. They never developed a naval force rivaling that of the London governments, who also licensed privateers but more as an adjunct to summer and winter (warship) guards than as the foundation of their naval power. While the Irish privateers took between 450 and 1,900 prizes (Scots and Dutch vessels, as well as primarily English ones), their interest was profit first, followed by economically destabilizing their opponents. They avoided all involvement with military operations. In contrast the English warships, even when not sailing under specific orders from London to support land operations, recognized that their intervention could transform the situation ashore and hasten the defeat of their enemies. Furthermore, the state warships, their hired armed-merchant ship counterparts and allied privateers, not only interdicted Irish confederate commerce, but also blockaded ports, which the Irish Confederate privateers could not risk because that would have made them easy targets for the more powerful ships of the summer and winter guards. The second portion (61 pages) analyzes different topics, such as the value of maritime activity to the opposing powers, the types of ships involved, the results of commerce raiding on all sides, and the involvement of individuals as part or whole owners of leased

ships and privateers. As Murphy rightly observes the English ships benefitted from both the central and local leadership having the strategic goal of defeating their enemies in Ireland that would be achieved by the implementation of local activities (whether blockading ports, convoying supplies and men, cruising for prizes and privateers, and supporting campaigns ashore). The reliance on privateers prevented the Irish Confederacy from copying that approach. More mysterious was Prince Rupert's inaction, when he had a Royalist fleet in Kinsale in 1649. Perhaps the indiscipline and desertion noted by Murphy was more serious than she portrays given the prince's aggressive nature? The third section (72 pages) consists of six appendices providing details on opposing forces, prizes taken by both sides, losses and ownership of armed-merchantmen and privateers.

Murphy has followed the remit of detailing the war at sea around Ireland very well, but perhaps too literally. She rightly observes that mercantile losses did not destroy the economy of the Irish Confederacy. Since the Confederate government derived its revenue partially from customs, as well as from shares in prizes, is there any way to determine whether those rose or fell as a result of captured shipping? In light of the (perhaps widespread) avoidance of condemning prizes in Irish Confederate admiralty courts, did the government's share balance its presumed loss of custom revenues? While the numbers of their privateers' captures are specifically listed, with around 1,500 more speculated about, what impact did that have on English shipping and custom revenues? What percentage of English shipping fell victim to Irish Confederate privateers? Murphy cites concerns from London and the outports about the menace, but was it more perceived than actual? One does not have the sense that their depredations combined with Prince Rupert's ships came close to unraveling the financial basis of London. Furthermore (and especially given the Confederates close ties with the ports of Spanish-controlled Flanders), how successful were their privateers compared with the "Dunkirkers," who preyed on Dutch and French ships? Hopefully in the future, Murphy will place her findings in the context of commerce warfare in mid-seventeenth-century Europe. Finally, what legacy did the Irish operations have on the English navy, especially in the First Anglo-Dutch War? Officers may usually be traced, thus one should be able to find out

what proportion of the Commonwealth Navy officers had served in Ireland. Also how many of the ships that served there continued in the fleet? In addition, one of the differences between the English and Dutch in their first war was the avoidance of the former on armed-merchantmen, and the latter's reliance on them. Was that fundamental shift in centuries of English practice due to experience gained from the naval war in Irish waters?

Ireland and the War at Sea has several attractive features. These include three maps that allow one to easily follow the events. Likewise the works cited appear not only in footnotes, but also in a bibliography. Finally, there are general and ship indices, which allow those interested in individuals or specific ships to find them rapidly. The absence of illustrations, particularly of a Dunkirk frigate (which Murphy thoroughly defines), and the various types of warships and merchant ships is lamentable. *Ireland and the War at Sea* should attract readers and historians with diverse interests. Obviously, military historians and those with a desire to learn more about the wars in mid-seventeenth-century Ireland will find the book useful. It should also attract those with an interest in administrative history, Confederate and Parliamentary political networks, and the maritime history of England due to the details provided in the appendices. In other words it would be a mistake for those studying the period to dismiss the book as one solely for those examining armed conflict.

David Worthington. *British and Irish Experiences and Impressions of Central Europe, c. 1560-1688*. Ashgate, 2012. xxii + 232 pp. £65.00. Review by JAKUB JANIK, JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY, KRAKÓW, POLAND.

Though "Central Europe" remains relatively unexplored terrain for most western historians, in the recent years the history of Eastern and Central Europe is receiving increased attention. David Worthington's book introducing his readers to British and Irish experiences in Eastern Europe in the early modern period is a welcome contribution to this field. From this point of view it is noteworthy that a scholar from the University of the Highlands and Islands, in Dornoch, Scotland, is analyzing the links between the British archipelago and Central