that clearly departed from the stereotype of violence and destruction, and these themes inform the two-part structure of the remainder of the book.

Part I comprises chapters 2–4 and focuses on the laicization, secularization, and contested endurance of German nuns and convents from the decline of violent expulsions in the mid-1520s to the sectarian conflicts of the mid-1540s. A host of parties participated in these processes, including secular lords, urban officials, lay reformers, archbishops and bishops, priors, and vicars, as well as the abbesses and communities of nuns themselves. Their collective motivations were myriad. The independence, existence, or closure of any particular convent had political consequences, economic effects, a community impact, and obvious spiritual implications. Thus, each of the parties involved brought different priorities to the negotiations—which is effectively what these processes always were in practice. The results varied widely, and they did not always correspond to the "confessional" homogeneity of the host polity. The most striking aspect of these processes was the remarkable degree to which the abbesses and nuns exercised agency, even in the face of unprecedented opposition and repression (160–171).

Part II comprises chapters 5–7 and illuminates the development, characteristics, function, and range of "mixed-confessional" convents from the mid-1540s until the end of the sixteenth century. This section is where the vibrant "culture" of formal female devotional life shines forth, despite or at times because of internal confessional conflicts. This culture included generational and confessional disagreements between religious sisters, new realities affecting elections and office holding within religious communities, and of course the liturgy and devotional life itself. The latter included debates about which language in which to pray, sing, or worship, how to regulate the use of sacred spaces, what to do with devotional images and materials, how to relate to the clergy, and to what degree it was appropriate to associate with people living outside the convent. In most cases, the author communicates this culture's "ongoing confessional fluidity, devotional adaptability, and multilayered practices" (263).

Plummer's impressive text is accessibly structured, abundantly supported, and compellingly argued, all despite the incredible, heretofore-overlooked complexity of how reform was implemented in sixteenth-century German convents. Truly that complexity is a revelation, one that should lead historians to consider more closely any assumptions they have about the Reformations. Because of this, the book is invaluable. It should join the list of essential monographs in the field.

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Singerton, Jonathan. *The American Revolution and the Habsburg Monarchy*

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In *The American Revolution and the Habsburg Monarchy*, Jonathan Singerton repositions the Habsburg monarchy into the middle of the story of the American Revolution. This meticulously researched work pulls on the personal stories, political foibles, trade economics, and cultural detritus of the American Revolution as a global event that involved and affected the largest and arguably most important empire of the time. As Singerton expresses it, "this book is about the meaning of the American Revolution for the Habsburg Monarchy and, at the same time, the Habsburg moment in the American Revolution" (3). That moment ranged from the 1760s to the 1790s but also had direct connections to the 1848 Revolutions.

Singerton argues that "the Revolution was a diplomatic conundrum for Habsburg rulers, a commercial opportunity for some, and a cultural phenomenon for everyone" (2). For Americans in Congress, the Habsburg monarchy presented a potential source of money and soldiers and eventually political recognition. That potential was never realized because of British influence on the Habsburgs, the Habsburgs' personal hesitations, and America's lack of diplomatic experience. One of the reasons why the Habsburg influence on the American Revolution has not been more widely studied is because of its seeming failure: the Habsburgs were one of the last nations to recognize American independence and did not establish a trade agreement until well in the nineteenth century. The Habsburgs were initially enthusiastic about the American Revolution, especially what it might mean for economic opportunities, but they officially retained a neutral position, which became, after the French Revolution, tempered with concern over the consequences of violent revolution.

The nine main chapters of this work are loosely organized along chronologically, with the first three chapters on Habsburg views of America before the Revolution, their interest in the Revolution, and the Revolutionary influence on Habsburg elites. Similarly to many Europeans, the Habsburgs perceived America as exotic and a land of oddities in the colonial period. But the eighteenth century brought America into the commercial space and, "in turn, America became less a curious land and more a source of produce, industry, and exploitation for Habsburg inhabitants" (19). They viewed America, and the Revolution, as a generally positive development. This was helped by Benjamin Franklin's popularity in Europe—he received more letters from Habsburg residents than any other American, twenty-one of which offered military service.

The ensuing three chapters focus on the trials of diplomacy and the Habsburg Empire's need for neutrality during the Revolution. Obviously, the American Revolution disrupted maritime trade, but the war also brought economic opportunity. The Habsburgs used to their great benefit the garb of neutrality to trade with both America and Britain. Habsburg neutrality may have been profitable, but the Habsburg monarchy began to think that the end of the Revolution maybe even more profitable, especially if they could control the peace negotiations. Maria Theresa and then Joseph II both offered to mediate peace, set themselves up as the saviors, and manage the order to their liking. Military developments, however, halted that peace, and then Maria Theresa died on 29 November 1780 and the French did not trust Joseph II.

The last third of the book focuses on the few trade and diplomatic negotiations between America and the Habsburgs. As Singerton notes, "the rapidity and intensity of transatlantic trade with the United States in these postwar years ensured the United States remained one of the most valuable commercial routes outside of the Mediterranean for the imperial entrepot on the Adriatic" (164). As such, the Habsburgs sent Baron Frederick Eugene de Beelen-Bertholf as an on-the-ground observer for trade. Americans, for their part, "interpreted Beelen's mission as a de facto form of representation despite his best intentions (and instructions) to act in a non-diplomatic manner" (177). The trade never amounted to as much as the Habsburgs wanted, so in 1791, Beelen's contract was terminated. The Habsburgs would not get full diplomatic representation until October 1838.

This rollercoaster of events occurred across an ocean from the epicenter of the American Revolution, and yet Singerton makes it clear that they intimately connected, even if the participants barely interacted. For such a politically and economically oriented topic, *The American Revolution and the Habsburg Monarchy* focuses on the stories of the people involved and really brings them to life. Readers get to know Baron Beelen, Benjamin Franklin, Jan Ingenhousz, Wenzel Anton von Kauntiz-Rietberg, Joseph II, Sir Robert Murray Keith, William Lee, and Maria Theresa among others as they danced across the international stage. This was a story that centered on the economic and political decision-makers and therefore left out some of the women and people of color who also participated in these moments. And yet, Singerton skillfully takes a big topic and contextualizes the story through stories; the result is both informative and highly enjoyable.

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