

for Africa in particular, engendered at one and the same time an Othering process that fostered a feeling of European commonality in contrast, in particular, with the colonised peoples of Africa and Asia.

The last chapter, “The Once and Future Europe,” is one of the most interesting parts of this book. In it, Pagden touches upon a series of critical issues that directly pertain to ongoing debates about European identity as well as the EU and its future. So, the question of the need to rethink the idea of (national) sovereignty in today’s global economy; the issues arising from the functionalist approach to integration which, largely responsible for the integration process, has contributed to the current crisis of political legitimacy and has produced the democratic deficit; the need, in an increasingly multiethnic context, to rethink profoundly the very nature of political legitimacy and for EU member states to “detach their specific historic and ethnic cultures from the political, legal, and ethical project which now sustains them all” (311). These are some of the themes intelligently, if briefly, considered by Pagden, and it is delightful to see such a brilliant historian use his vast knowledge to rethink some of the main challenges that the Old Continent is facing today. In more than one way, the last pages of this book are a call to Europe to learn from its history the lessons that may enable it to forge a stronger unity – a unity built on precisely those values that, in this ever more chaotic and menacing world, are increasingly endangered.

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From the Holy Roman Empire to the Land of the Tsars: One Family’s Odyssey, 1768–1870

By Alexander M. Martin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xx + 393. Hardcover \$115.00. ISBN: 978-0192844378.

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This is largely a “life and times” biography of Johannes Rosenstrauch (1768-1835), whom author Alexander Martin himself describes as an “obscure individual person” (viii). Add to that a title which is more descriptive than dynamic, and one can imagine how prospective readers might early on decide to avoid this work. Yet those who pass it by will have missed a wonderfully engaging study, one that brims with insight.

Even a simple biographical overview of this “obscure individual” is not easily rendered. Rosenstrauch’s life stretched from the German provinces to the Russian empire, where he died. Even that overview conceals the life of a man who was born in the eastern borderlands of Breslau in Silesia and married in Westphalia in the northern Rhineland to a woman he met during his time in the Hessen city of Kassel. He had stints across the north in the late eighteenth century, during which he made it as far east as the Dutch Republic. In 1809, Rosenstrauch relocated to Moscow, which gave him a front-row seat during Napoleon’s invasion three years later. He survived that onslaught only to shift thereafter to St. Petersburg, though in 1820 he relocated yet again to the Black Sea region, known in the Imperial era as New Russia. Odessa and Kharkov figure prominently.

That is one layer of the story. Rosenstrauch also shifted occupationally from the role of barber-surgeon in his early adult years, to an actor in a largely travelling theatre, to a Moscow and St. Petersburg merchant to, finally, Lutheran pastor in the Black Sea steppe

in his later years. If one can permit one more layer, he appears to have shifted from the Catholicism of his youth, to an Enlightened Masonic faith by the time he reached Moscow, to a heavily pietistic Lutheranism by the 1820s.

That is a lot of movement, and it is to Martin's considerable credit that he tells us Rosenstrauch's story with clarity, dynamism, and pace. More than that, he lets us in on the process by which he reconstructs this wanderer's life. Rosenstrauch's marriage record of 1788 is an easy one, perhaps, but in a random sampling Martin also locates his subject in the *Theater Calendar* of 1790–1791, an article in the *Rhenish Muses* journal from October 1794, Rosenstrauch's own memoir, and correspondence from Alexander Golitsyn, a leading official in the Imperial Russian state of Alexander I. Martin is no less straightforward when he attempts to reconstruct Rosenstrauch's life for those stretches of time and activity for which sources do not exist, as with the latter's Masonic activities in Russia. Martin is transparent about places where he is compelled to surmise what may have happened and about his need to rely on "fragmentary clues" (167), yet none of this diminishes the power of his narrative or analysis.

It would already be enough for Martin to have gotten the story of Johannes Rosenstrauch straight, but that is never the endgame. Instead, Martin seeks to give the reader a microhistory which allows the reader to "peer inside the mind of the people of the past" (3–4). In other words, he wants to tell the history of Rosenstrauch's age as much as Rosenstrauch's own story. In fact, he lays out no fewer than five themes which informed his study, though they all hinge around the Age of Revolution, from Napoleon to (almost) 1848, and from the late Renaissance to early modernity.

Here, again, Martin delivers, and every chapter fascinates. Thus, we learn of marriage practices across confessional and regional lines in the first chapter, but also about the overlapping skillsets of the early modern period which allowed transient barbers to seek employment as surgeons. In the next several chapters, we are treated to excursions on the nature of theatre in the early modern era, on etiquette when a royal was in attendance, on the impact of the Napoleonic invasion on German theatres and Moscow merchants, the rise of Masonic theosophy, Moscow before and during the Napoleonic occupation, and much more.

Readers will appreciate the fifteenth chapter, in which Martin reflects on the ways in which Rosenstrauch's life entered the cultural memory of both Germans and Russians in the years after his death. A conclusion allows Martin an opportunity to make sense of the five themes, two empires, and countless shifts in Rosenstrauch's life, all set against the background of the Age of Revolution. Once again, he does not disappoint.

If anything seems somewhat out of place, it might be the chapter on Rosenstrauch's progeny, particularly his son Wilhelm, who became a robust entrepreneur within the Russian empire. It reads more like an extended appendix than an integral aspect of Martin's study and might have been treated as such.

Alexander Martin is to be commended for this strong study of one "obscure individual person" who found himself very much alive amid the Age of Revolution. His work deserves a broad readership among specialists and generalists alike.

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