

on the capabilities and achievement of regimental leaders produces a story line that successfully balances the diplomatic virtuosity of Otto von Bismarck and the tactical prowess of Helmut von Moltke with a broader argument about the intersection of planning, institutional structures, and individual agency. Showalter's multipronged narrative of the Franco-Prussian war is particularly impressive, for it illuminates not only the Prussian and German stages against an imperial and republican enemy but also the irregular partisan war of the French people in 1870/71. From naval blockades to campaigns in the Loire valley to balloon flights out of Paris, Showalter captures the breadth of military activity that turned the political kaleidoscope.

In sum, this book amounts to one of the best synoptic analyses of the wars of unification written in the past decades. Writing with brio and dry wit, Showalter showcases his formidable knowledge in European military history with an equally impressive grasp on political and diplomatic affairs. The literature consulted for this synthetic narrative is vast and amounts to a lifetime of reading. Among other achievements, it demonstrates that nineteenth-century politics, diplomacy, and state building is insufficiently understood without military history. The book's title suggests a narrowly conceived military account, yet its narrative sweep takes in so much more. In a spirited but misguided manifesto of 2014, David Armitage and Jo Guldi lamented that historical scholarship had fallen to the "Short Past": monographic myopia that offered "more and more about less and less" (*The History Manifesto* [Cambridge, 2014], 49). This work can act as a refutation of such claims, for it situates three short wars in the broader ambit of the long nineteenth century and, in doing so, validates the centrality of military history for interpreting the modern era.

JAMES M. BROPHY

University of Delaware

Franz Joseph I: Kaiser von Österreich und König von Ungarn, 1830–1916; Eine Biographie. By *Michaela Vocelka* and *Karl Vocelka*.
Munich: C. H. Beck, 2015. Pp. 458. €26.95.

For someone who has just visited a number of the several exhibitions going on in Vienna during the hundredth jubilee year of Franz Joseph's death in 1916, Michaela and Karl Vocelka's biography of the emperor reads like the official biography of the jubilee. In many of the themes addressed in the book, as well as in the generous picture material (both black and white interspersed with the text and a section of high-quality color reproductions in the center spread of the book), one feels transported back to the different locations in which Franz Joseph's life is currently (in 2016) exhibited in Vienna and its surroundings. In case anyone thinks that this should be taken as a point of criticism, I want to alleviate such fears by saying that this is a very high-quality scholarly biography that is also immensely readable.

When comparing it to recent attempts in the genre, a few biographies on the same topic spring to mind: Lothar Höbelt's *Franz Joseph I: Der Kaiser und sein Reich; Eine politische Geschichte* (Vienna, 2009), which loses its balance and ends up as a superficial political history of this period of the Habsburg Monarchy; Steven Beller's *Francis Joseph* (London, 1996), a more successfully balanced, strongly historiographically reflective and intellectual-historically oriented political biography of Franz Joseph as a ruler; and Jean-Paul Bled's *Franz Joseph* (Oxford, 1992, originally published in French in 1987 as *François-Joseph*), a judicious and broadly conceived "life and times" of Franz Joseph. The book under review follows the latter type of approach, with a stronger em-

phasis on the “life” part than is common in scholarly biographies of this monarch. Herein lies some of the strengths of this biography, insofar as the narrative of Joseph’s life is grounded in his upbringing and personal experiences, as well as in his family relations. From playing “Habsburgs vs. Ottomans” with his brothers in the park at Schönbrunn, to his early fascination with military matters and his education and upbringing at the Habsburg court, as well as to the close descriptions of his adult family life and relations with other significant persons, this book expands very successfully on the “life” part. The “thick description” (14) of how Franz Joseph’s personality was shaped in the strongly ritualized Habsburg court environment and of how his political education proceeded (and was interrupted at a sensitive stage in 1848) under the overbearing influence of the inheritance of his grandfather Emperor Franz I of Austria, as well as under the supervision of Metternich, and to some degree also of Felix von Schwarzenberg during the important years 1848–51, was for me the main benefit of reading this book. Franz Joseph’s conception of the turbulent times during which he later came to rule over the Habsburg Monarchy was decisively shaped in the prerevolutionary so-called Vormärz era (pre-March 1848), an insight that is productive not least for improving our understanding of the role he came to play during the last decades of the monarchy.

Among the weaknesses of the current book, I need to mention the sometimes perfunctory statements on the “times” aspect of the biography, particularly when it comes to the important political events of Franz Joseph’s reign. Dismissing the important scholarly discussion of the Kremsier Constitution, a document worked out in the popular, constituent parliament in the years 1848–49, by describing the constitution as a piece of paper that was of no great consequence (82) is one of the low points of the book in this regard. Occasionally “life” invades “times” in a way that I find less successful, for instance, when the explanation is offered (322) that the fall in 1898 of Kasimir Badeni, Prime Minister of Austria, was due to the machinations of Katharina Schratz (Franz Joseph’s mistress). The Badeni crisis was a very important juncture in the political development of Imperial Austria (the western part of the Dual Monarchy Austria-Hungary during 1867–1918), and even if it need not be recounted fully in a biography of Franz Joseph, it can do without this type of sensationalist gloss. However, for the most part, remarks on and discussions of political events during this emperor’s reign are judicious and informed; albeit brief, they are almost always up to date when it comes to the scholarly judgment of the events in question. All in all, the book under review is a very successful, state-of-the-art life of Franz Joseph, with some things left to be desired in the treatment of the times of Franz Joseph. I also think this is a fairly accurate description of the aims the authors have set themselves with this work (see 14).

If, in conclusion, I may indulge in a wish for a future biography of Franz Joseph, I would like to point to the strengths of the current work in focusing on the upbringing, education, and personal development of the emperor and wish to see it fused with the type of intellectual-historically conceived political biography of Franz Joseph the ruler that Steven Beller has attempted; a deepened view of Franz Joseph the person may just be able to inform a political biography of the ruler in critical ways. Franz Joseph was, after all, the executive head of a very large and complex political and military apparatus, the workings of which we still, in my opinion, do not understand well enough close to a hundred years after its demise.

FREDRIK LINDSTRÖM

Malmö University