

undersökningen framåt. Texten snuddar vid olika tillfällen vid Mariestads position inom riket, olika teorier om stadens läge och ekonomi, men dessa debatter hade kunnat fördjupas mer.

Publiken är dock först och främst de som bor i Mariestad. Möller uppger att han hoppas att de många arkivfynden inte stör läsningen. Referenser har placerats som slutnoter längst bak i boken och redovisar inte mer än källhänvisningar. Boken har på så sätt blivit mer än en välskriven berättelse om Mariestads historia. Den är utgiven i *coffee-table*-format, omsorgsfullt satt i två textkolumner per sida. Den innehåller många bilder på viktiga personer, kartor, källmaterial och arkeologiska föremål, som kompletterar och fördjupar innehållet och som författaren uppenbarligen med stor energi samlat för att göra berättelsen tillgänglig.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe skrev för drygt 200 år sedan att "Das Beste, was wir von der Geschichte haben, ist der Enthusiasmus, den sie erregt." (*Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* II, 1814) Han betonade den entusiasm som historien kan bidra med, en ofta förbisedd kvalitet. Möller vill inte bara berätta, han vill uppenbarligen engagera och funderar redan i inledningen om att skriva en fortsättning om stadens historia på 1600-talet; den var planerad från början. Från och med tidigt 1600-tal finns det dock så många källor att projektet lades åt sidan tills vidare.

Mariestadsborna får därför hoppas att Möller fortsätter på sin väg. Det gäller också att de stiftelser som möjliggjorde publikationen inser att den entusiasm som drev Möllers projekt kan påverka en hel stad. Som stadshistoriker har vi stor nytta av en väldigt gedigen genomgång av en stads långa förhistoria och av det intresse som Möller uppenbarligen skapade och förtjänar.

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Leos Müller, *Neutrality in World History* (New York: Routledge 2019). 177 p.

Writing a general history of neutrality is a huge challenge. The study of neutrality had been for a long time a field of investigation for legal historians, but during the last decade some historians devoted their works to the understanding of neutrality, Leos Müller is one of them.

Müller's book begins with a useful introductory chapter that allows him to present his fourfold line of argument. First, the importance of neutrality in the field of international relations throughout the centuries; second, the big part taken by neutrality in the emergence of free trade and freedom of the seas; third, the contribution of neutrality in the containment of the

impact of wars; four, the emergence of neutrality as a key notion in international law. If the fundamental principle of neutrality is well known, staying out of any war, there were many ways to practice neutrality. Müller insists on the difference between maritime neutrality and territorial neutrality. It is true that neutrality at sea raised some important bones of contention between neutrals and belligerents, such as the definition of a lawful commerce, but one must not underestimate the complexity of the commerce by land in wartime that raised similar questions.

After all these essential preliminary reflections, Leos Müller begins a chronological study of the history of neutrality, from the 16th century to the beginning of the 21st century. He starts in 1500, regretfully without devoting enough attention to the Ancient and Medieval roots of neutrality. Müller rightly insists on the growing importance of maritime neutrality between the middle of the 17th century and the end of the French Wars. For powers such as the United Provinces, Denmark, Sweden and some Italian states, the choice of neutrality led to commercial prosperity by taking in charge the belligerents' trade. Neutrality really became a legal concept in the 18th century related to the general trend of taming the consequences of warfare on non-belligerency. The notion also became an important issue in the field of diplomacy since the neutral countries had to get the acknowledgement of the warring parties to stay out of the war, but this aspect is here underestimated. The French Wars were a real turning point for the practice of neutrality, because they were considered as crusades for civilisation which had to be won by any means. This was why neutral rights were once more a real bone of contention between powers as illustrated by the case of the Swedish ship *Maria* presented in the book.

The 19th century is often considered as the "Golden age of neutrality" (chap. 4). There were no major wars until 1914, and none of them involved all the great powers at the same time. It was thus the interest of the belligerents to avoid new enemies by a too harsh attitude towards neutrals. Some other reasons are exposed such as the general inclination toward peace, the promotion of free trade, the growing influence of internationalism and humanitarianism, the legal positivism and the role of the "concert of nations" in the limitation of the spread of warfare. In 1856, the declaration of Paris settled the old controversial issue of the relation between neutral flag and enemy cargo. In some ways, as Müller's book clearly states it, the history of neutrality on the eve of World War One, is a history of change as much as of continuity. If the world in 1914 was very different from the world of 1815, from every point of view, the challenges of the definition and of the respect of neutral rights remained. The commitments of the Hague Peace Conference of 1907 dealt with old and recent issues of neutrality and built a legal framework of

neutrality accepted by European, American and Asiatic countries.

Contrary to the 19th century, the 20th century was a time of uncertainty and of splitting up for neutrality. The entry of the German army in Belgium and Luxemburg in the very first days of August 1914 was a terrific blow for all the fabric of neutrality which collapsed little by little. The League of Nations put Collective Security on the top of its agenda and neutrality was, at first, discredited before reemerging in the 1930s. Even if traditional neutrals such as the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries signed cooperation agreements, they were dismissed by the events of the Second World War. The 20th century wars showed how difficult it was to be not only non-belligerent, but also neutral in the true sense. Yet neutrality in the form of neutralism, as a position between West and East, was a choice for several countries in Europe and elsewhere and gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement. Since the attacks of September 11 2001, the very nature of wars between states and terrorist organizations make it difficult to keep a real neutral position especially as the United Nation charter promotes collective security.

Finally, it is, of course, possible to regret that some parts or aspects are not enough detailed in the book, but we can understand that the author had to make some choices. The only real regret is the change of historical approach between chapters 2 and 3 devoted to the maritime neutrality, and chapters 5 and 6 dealing with a history of neutrality in the context of international relations. This lack of continuity is a bit prejudicial for a general understanding of the fundamental issues and stakes of neutrality. Nevertheless, Leos Müller succeeds in showing that neutral countries were not in the shadow of a history written by powerful and belligerent states, but were really and fully actors on the world scene and thus deserved to be considered as a part of international history.

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Tobias E. Hämmerle, *Flugblatt-Propaganda zu Gustav Adolf von Schweden: Eine Auswertung zeitgenössischer Flugblätter der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Stockholm* (Marburg: Büchner-Verlag 2019). 577 s.

Att säga att Gustav II Adolf är bortglömd av svenska historiker vore att överdriva, men han är knappast ett ämne som får forskningsfinansiärernas morrhår att darra av andakt. En majoritet av de senare årens publikationer med anknytning till stormaktskungen har i stället varit populärhistoriska eller författade av utländska historiker.