

by Eftimiu whether she did not regret that she was not a man, Elisabeth gave a witty Shavian answer: “Sir! I like men too much not to be satisfied with my gender!” (16). Mihail Sebastian used to be a frequent visitor of the Bibescos. His photo is accompanied by a portrait of Elisabeth who dared to express “her love of the Jews” (15). This was during the fascist regime of Ion Antonescu.

Until 1989 Elisabeth Bibesco and her ties to Romania were not to be mentioned for political reasons. From the narrow ideological perspective of those times, Bibesco was a *persona non grata*. It is high time for this woman writer be taken into consideration and for Romanian English Studies specialists to pay attention to her work. Romanian culture owes Bibesco at least the translation of her work into Romanian. Lia Brad-Chisacof’s book is the beginning of a long overdue Romanian reception.



MIHAELA MUDURE

Notes

1. The main character of Guillaume Apollinaire’s erotic novel *Les onze mille verges ou les amours d’un hospodar* (1907) is most probably Antoine Bibesco.
2. Information about this episode can be found in Katherine Mansfield’s correspondence. Katherine Mansfield wrote to Elisabeth Bibesco warning her that she would not give up Murry.
3. Édouard Vuillard (1868–1940) painted one of the most beautiful portraits of Elisabeth Bibesco.

AARON PEGRAM

Surviving the Great War: Australian Prisoners of War on the Western Front, 1916–18

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019

AMONG THE important contributions dedicated to the First World War and published in recent years by Cambridge University Press we also find Aaron Pegram’s book about the Australian prisoners of war on the Western Front. Its author is a senior historian in the Military History Section at the Australian War Memorial and has contributed to the understanding of the aforementioned conflagration and its memory through exhibitions, studies, articles and books.

Segmented into seven big chapters and accompanied by two appendices (pp. 171–211), the book starts with an introductory chapter (pp. 1–17) that provides an overview of the general situation of the Australian lands during the investigated period. The author emphasizes the fact that:

The First World War casts a long shadow over Australian history. In four years, the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) suffered more than 215,000 casualties, of whom around 60,000 died, and countless others and their families lived with the war’s physical and psychological consequences for decades after. Among them were 4,044 Australians who become prisoners of war. Some 200 were taken prisoner by the Ottomans in Mesopotamia, Gallipoli and the Middle East, while 3,848, were lost to German forces in the fighting on the Western Front in France and Belgium. (p. 1)

Then, the historical reconstruction based on documents and testimonies continues with a chapter entitled “Raising the White Flag: The Capture of Australian Troops on the Western Front” (pp. 18–39). Here he presents the defeats suffered by the Australian soldiers during the conflagration and the situations in which they became prisoners, but also notes, based on the previous research dedicated to the topic, the fact that:

Capture defined the beginning of the Australian prisoner-of-war experience, but is not an aspect of the wartime experience that features prominently in studies on the First World War. Roger Noble recognised that Australian soldiers were not immune to fear and panic, and at times became demoralised, lost the will to continue fighting and surrendered to the enemy. In examining the causes of surrender he ruled out the possibility that the number of casualties sustained during an engagement were in some way proportionate to the number lost as prisoners, nor was surrender found to be a product of the number of troops involved or a particular phase of the war. (p. 18)

Later, the investigation continues with the wartime agreements (pp. 40–65) and their observance or abrogation, but also with the presentation of aspects regarding the daily life of Australian prisoners and the way in which their intelligence was used by the ones who brought them in this situation or by themselves (pp. 66–85). The fourth chapter, entitled “Saving Lives: Patriotic Women, Prisoners of War and the Australian Red Cross Society” (pp. 86–106), provides an overview of the manner in which Australians used their skills and abilities in order to help others and to

mitigate the effects of the war. The presentation of the humanitarian initiatives taken by the women from the aforementioned territory is followed by a more dynamical chapter. Here, based on the investigated sources, Aaron Pegram focuses on the notion of POW escapes and investigates some attempts in this regard (in the chapter entitled “Challenging the Holzminden Illusion: The Myth and Reality of Escape,” pp. 107–128).

The investigation of the period of imprisonment also includes an attempt to understand the actual situation of the POWs. Aspects related to daily life, such as the food, the correspondence, or other elements that reminded prisoners of their previous lives are investigated in the sixth chapter, where the author focuses on the diet as well as on the “autonomy” and “independence” of Australian soldiers in German captivity (pp. 129–176).

As expected, the investigation ends with a thematic unit (pp. 151–173) dedicated to the repatriation of prisoners, their reintegration in the local context of their homeland, but also to the image left by the experience of war and imprisonment in their later life. The most important aspects are summarized in the conclusion (pp. 174–176), where the author underlines the fact that the experience of the war was, despite of its multiple negative accents, an important one that must be recovered by the local historiography.

Wishing to offer a holistic approach to the investigated topic, the author also provides two interesting and useful appendixes, the first one containing a list of the Australians who died in German captivity (pp. 178–206), and the second one listing those who escaped from German captivity (pp. 207–211).

Well-written and containing useful information regarding an aspect of the First World War that has not been investigated until now by historians, the book by Aaron Pegram is not only interesting for historical researchers, but it is also a contribution of significant sociological value that will surely help researchers understand both the complexity of the war and its influence on people, contributing to the investigation of the psychological and sociological structure of the human being in moments of crisis.



IULIU-MARIUS MORARIU

JUSTIN FANTAUZZO

The Other Wars: The Experience and Memory of the First World War in the Middle East and Macedonia

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020

DRAWING ON a comprehensive range of visual and documentary sources, the book by Justin Fantauzzo, assistant professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada, presents the experience of British and Dominion soldiers who fought in the Middle East and Macedonia during the First World War.

Segmented into two big parts, namely “Experience” (pp. 17–165) and “Memory” (pp. 167–220), the investigation is also divided into smaller units, structured in keeping with keywords such as “soldiering” (pp. 17–49), “touring” (pp. 50–92), “meaning” (pp. 93–138) or “forgotten” (pp. 139–165), or into important sections like “public” (pp. 167–204) or “private” memory (pp. 205–209).

Following a clear methodological approach, the book brings to attention a problem that has been insufficiently investigated by the contemporary historiographical research. Moreover, it also presents, starting from a kind of a “case study” (p. 1), the history of an important part of the battlefield. Therefore, as the author underlines in the introductory part (pp. 1–16). “This book is about the experience and memory of the nearly two million British and Dominion soldiers, men like Ammons, primarily from Britain, Australia and New Zealand, who spent most of all of their war outside the Western Front. They fought in the Middle East, in Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, and in south-eastern Europe, in Macedonia; the ‘side-shows’ of the war, as Lloyd George had called them” (p. 2).

When speaking about the methods behind his approach and the sources used, the author indicates that his investigation is based on autobiographical texts (pp. 14–19). Important not only for their testimonial value, but also for the fact that in many situations they contain uncensored information about the conflagration and its meaning, this category of documents represents one of the main sources of the book and turns it into an attempt not only at understanding the war and its complexity, but also at offering a voyage through the past moments of European history. As the author himself underlines: “In comparing both the experience and memory of the British Empire’s wars in the Middle East and Macedonia, this book uses a range of sources, almost all of which were written by soldiers themselves, from archives in Britain, Austria, New Zealand, and Canada. It makes use of wartime diaries, correspondence, poems, songs, soldier-

produced newspapers, articles penned by soldiers in popular journals, periodicals, and the press, as well as unpublished and published memoirs” (p. 9).

Interesting is not only the complexity of the work of Justin Fantauzzo, deepening the history of the first conflagration, but also his efforts to clarify even small aspects that, like in a puzzle, are very useful in the process of understanding the subtle causes of a certain event. Thus, he even speaks about aspects like “climate and environment” (pp. 20–25), highlighting the differences created by local particularities or different situations, or about “insects and disease” (pp. 25–33) and their influence on the evolution of some battles. The research ends with some well written conclusions (pp. 220–225), where the author also offers a general evaluation of the situation, arguing that “From the beginning of the First World War to the end of the interwar period, soldiers who had fought outside the Western Front—against the Ottoman Empire in Sinai, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, and against Bulgaria in Macedonia—were locked into a somewhat hopeless struggle, a struggle to persuade those at home that their campaigns were worth-while contributions to the war effort. Today, it seems, the worst fears of the nearly two million men who fought in the Middle East and Macedonia have been realised” (p. 224).

Rich in historical information and bringing to attention an aspect of the war that has been insufficiently investigated so far, the book by Justin Fantauzzo is an important contribution to the understanding of the First World War and of the way in which British soldiers, from the empire and its dominions, understood and accepted the realities that they were confronted with, also showing how the local popula-

tions, supposedly liberated from their oppressors, saw and accepted the role played by them. Drawing on a sizable amount of bibliographical sources (pp. 226–243), the author ensures the great scientific value of his approach, and by reconstructing interesting life stories and the universe of the combatants in a way that is easy and pleasant to read and understand, he invites the reader to a useful and enriching lecture about a topic that is still debated today. □

IULIU-MARIUS MORARIU

ALEXANDRU A. PĂCURAR

**Lucrările Institutului de Geografie
al Universității din Cluj/
Travaux de l’Institut de Géographie
de l’Université de Cluj (Roumanie)
(1922–1947)**

(Papers of the Geographical Institute of
Cluj University, Romania, 1922–1947)
Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2019

IN THE city located on the Someșul Mic River, the 2019–2020 academic year marked a century of Romanian higher education, since the last reestablishment of the Alma Mater Napocensis.

To celebrate the centenary of the Romanian University of Cluj, the Faculty of Geography organized an anniversary scientific conference on 3–6 October 2019 under the name “Geographia Napocensis 100.” On 3 October 2019, the first day of the event, in the Aula Magna of the university, an anniversary volume was presented, entitled *Lucrările Institutului de Geografie al Universității din Cluj/Travaux de l’Institut de Géographie de l’Université de Cluj (Roumanie) (1922–1947)*, authored by Professor Alexandru A. Păcurar.