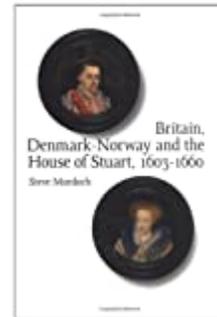


**Steve Murdoch.** *Britain, Denmark-Norway and the House of Stuart, 1603-1660: A Diplomatic and Military Analysis.* East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2003. xii + 318 pp. \$31.98 (paper), ISBN 978-1-86232-182-3.



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## Scots in Denmark

The regal union of the Three Kingdoms upon the accession of James VI and I to the thrones of England and Ireland was complicated by the fact that the kingdom of Scotland had entered into a strong personal, although unofficial alliance with the kingdom of Denmark and Norway when James married Anne, sister to Christian IV. Drawing upon the database of Scots who migrated to the Scandinavian kingdoms between 1580 and 1707, which has been exhaustively researched and compiled by Steve Murdoch and his partner in marriage and historical studies, Alexia Grosjean, the author of the volume under review has produced a valuable study of the contributions of Scots soldiers and diplomats in the service of Denmark and Norway, which, like the Stuart kingdoms of the British Isles, was a composite monarchy.[1] Murdoch is very much concerned with the national identities of both James VI and I and Charles I, and argues that much of the unhappiness with early Stuart foreign policy in England arose from the fact that these two rulers were Scottish kings of England, pursuing Scottish interests which found more support among their Scottish subjects than those of England. Although James attempted to promote the concept of a British state, his English subjects re-

sented it, while foreigners were confused by the term "Great Britain," and the Scots, anticipating the grievances that led to the Bishops' Wars, rejected it at the death of King James.

The many English and Scottish diplomats who served James VI and I in the Scandinavian kingdoms saw themselves as representing the Stuart monarchy and a British state, but as the Scots began to replace the English in this service, Scottish interests often prevailed over English interests. At the same time, many of the Scots abroad, in true mercenary fashion, also undertook diplomatic and military missions on behalf of the Scandinavian and Muscovite governments. Although the Stuart-Oldenburg alliance remained strong before the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, it was, at the same time, a troubled relationship—especially after the regal union of England and Scotland in 1603. James VI and I was much blamed by the English Parliament and English public opinion for not doing more to aid the elector palatine, Frederick V, in his attempt to recover the Rhenish Palatinate from the conquest by the Imperial Austrian troops. In all fairness, however, it must be said that the Stuart kingdoms

together contributed more than 20,000 soldiers to that cause—a total greater than the contributions of Christian IV and Gustavus Adolphus combined. For all the English rhetoric about defending Protestant interests in mainland Europe, the Scots did more to help the Palatines. Charles I continued to try to build a northern alliance with the Scandinavian monarchs, but Gustavus Adolphus refused to join because he distrusted Christian IV and doubted his ability to make good use of military resources. Although Charles I was unable to raise sufficient money for this purpose from the English Parliament, he was more successful in his Scottish kingdom, and the military manpower that he levied for intervention on behalf of the Protestant cause far exceeded his treaty commitments. Of course, this does not gainsay the damage done to Stuart foreign policy by the incompetence of the duke of Buckingham and the consequent lack of confidence in Charles's judgment for persisting in his support of Buckingham, who diverted military resources from the Palatinate to Cadiz and the Isle of Rhé, while King Christian wanted to use British troops in the Baltic as well as in the Danish campaigns of the Thirty Years War.

Charles I had strong ties of kinship to Christian IV, but he found the Danish king to be untrustworthy. Indeed, Christian surpassed Charles in his store of deviousness, and aided the Scots Covenanters during the civil wars despite his promise not to allow Scots in Scandinavian armies and munitions to pass through the Danish Sound or leave Danish and Norwegian ports. At the same time, it is questionable whether Christian could completely control the situation since many of the high-ranking naval officers of Sweden and Denmark-Norway were Scots or of Scottish descent. The Covenanters would not have been able to continue their war against Charles without access to Baltic exports, and Christian appears to have collected exorbitant Danish Sound tolls from all parties to the Wars of the Three Kingdoms without discrimination. In his diplomatic dealings he also treated all parties to the Wars of the Three Kingdoms with equal contempt, and was moved only by a desire to reap a profit selling arms rather than by any family loyalty to the house of Stuart.

Christian IV's son, Frederick III, was more supportive of Charles II and provided material assistance to the expedition of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose. Montrose's efforts to rally the Scottish Royalists, however, were undercut by Charles II's opportunistic negotiations with the Scots Covenanters, the Marquis of Argyll, and the Scottish Estates, which most northern European governments found distasteful. A number of

Charles II's Royalist supporters deserted his cause as a consequence. Even Charles's new subjects, the Covenanters, did not trust him. Eventually, Charles II managed to alienate most of his Scottish subjects, including the Royalists, the Covenanters and the exiles in the Scandinavian kingdoms. This contributed to the demise of the Stuart-Oldenburg diplomatic alliance. Although this alliance was renewed at the Restoration, it failed to stand the test of the Second Anglo-Dutch War when Frederick III aligned himself with the Dutch Republic and Charles II found himself at war with Denmark-Norway as well as the Dutch. Charles II placed little value on his Scottish kingdom, and Stuart foreign policy became driven by English rather than Scottish interests, and the Stuart-Oldenburg alliance died.

The Stuart-Oldenburg alliance had led to a significant migration of British military manpower to Denmark-Norway, and, as a result of James VI and I's patronage, it was the Scots rather than the English and the Irish who mostly benefitted from this. The Scots were the largest single foreign element in the army of Christian IV (unless one considers the several hundred German states to be a single entity), and their dominance in the senior naval ranks of Denmark-Norway was even more striking. Although the soldiers who were recruited in Scotland undoubtedly included a few jailbirds and reivers, Murdoch insists that most of the officers and other ranks would have denied that they were soldiers of fortune, and fought because of their personal loyalty to the house of Stuart and the Protestant religion. This can be seen in their superb fighting qualities on the battlefield where they took a heavy toll on the Imperial forces and deserted less frequently than the English or German troops in the army of Denmark-Norway.

Murdoch's book makes a valuable contribution to the military and diplomatic relations of the Three Kingdoms with the kingdom of Denmark-Norway and the Scandinavian world. We have gained a better appreciation of how this relationship impacted the British civil wars by supplying experienced soldiers who returned home to fight in those wars, and how Christian IV's failure to honor his promise not to permit arms and munitions to go to the Parliamentary and Covenanting armies tipped the balance in favor of those forces. Unfortunately, the author was not well served by the copyediting of his publisher, and many typographical errors have escaped correction.

Note

[1]. S. Murdoch and A. Grosjean, "Scotland,

Scandinavia and Northern Europe Database, 1580-1707," <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne/>. This praiseworthy prosopographical project, which contains more than 5000 biographies of Scots and English soldiers, naval officers, diplomats, students and women who migrated to northern Europe, is based upon extensive research in Scandinavian archives.

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