

This book of essays, which draws on the expertise of leading textile scholars in Britain and the United States, focuses on the problem of and responses to foreign competition in textiles from the late nineteenth century to the present day. A short introductory essay by the editor is followed by a survey of the debates surrounding the British cotton industry, foreign competition and competitive advantage. The other essays consider various aspects of that competition, including textile machine-making, Lancashire perceptions of the rise of Japan during the inter-war period and responses to foreign competition in the British cotton industry since 1945, whilst others deal with the decline and rise of merchanting in UK textiles and European competition in woollen yarn and cloth from 1870 to 1914. A recurring theme in a number of the essays is Japanese competitive advantage in textiles. The book is unique since although there are numerous books dealing with the problems of British staple industries, none focuses primarily on the issue of competition, its sources and responses, nor on textiles in general rather than a single industry. Moreover, since the scope is international rather than limited only to the UK, it follows recent trends in British business history away from single company case studies towards a more thematic, comparative approach. In addition, the international authorship of these papers gives this book, first published in 1991, a wide appeal.

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