

the relationship between French military success, dictatorship under Napoleon and the creation of what might be termed the French military state with concepts of military power and glory central to its identity. Of course, such elements can be traced back to the *Ancien Régime* but were given greater freedom to develop by the dynamic change of the revolution leading to Napoleon embodying the role of head of state and commander in chief in a manner recognizable to Frederick the Great or, later, Adolf Hitler. The militarization of society, such as appointing military officers to diplomatic roles, meant that ambitions and, in consequence, bad strategic decision making, went unchecked. Moreover, asymmetric advantage, such as that held by the French over the Prussians in 1805–1806, often leads to symmetry (Prussian nationalism, administrative reform) and further development (the creation of a highly effective staff system). A further example of such long-term continuities which Black notes is the presence of warlords at the very start of his assessment back in 1450 and their appearance in the Ukraine in 2014–2015 – the link in both cases being the partial or complete collapse of state authority.

War in Europe is, after all, a text book, and it is highly commendable that Black has produced a work which crosses the academic divide between ‘early modern’ and ‘modern history’. Moreover, do not let the chronological structure fool you. This is not Whiggish determinism. The narrative that Black creates is far more complex, nuanced and interdisciplinary and will, therefore, benefit Law, Politics as well as History undergraduates. They, along with those actively engaged in research, will find much of thought-provoking interest here.

The Ashgate Research Companion to the Thirty Years’ War. Edited by Olaf Asbach and Peter Schröder. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014. xiv + 347 pp. £95.00 hbk. ISBN 978 1 409 40629 7

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Research Companions and Handbooks are now all the rage. The Ashgate series is ‘designed to offer scholars and graduate students a comprehensive and authoritative state-of-the-art review of current research in a particular area’, although the £95.00 price means that few among the target readership will buy it. Nevertheless, this example of the genre overall lives up to its mission statement. The editors have assembled a first-class team of scholars, the majority based in European universities, which gives anglophone readers a much-needed overview of work in European languages that has transformed understanding of the Thirty Years War in recent years.

Almost all authors rise to the challenge. Perhaps the only questionable editorial decision is to include a section of narrative essays that simply tell the story of the war. The authors – Asch, Osborne, and Helfferich – are excellent, but there are many decent narrative accounts of the war available elsewhere, and these essays do not change the picture much. The space might have been better used to explore other aspects of the war in more detail. Helfferich’s essay is the most useful, as the period after 1635 was woefully neglected in general accounts until very recently. It was, however, a good idea to include articles by van Nimwegen on the Dutch-Spanish War and Externbrink on Italy; the latter

is particularly useful, as it goes far beyond a consideration of the Mantuan War, usually the only aspect of Italian involvement covered in general works.

The international perspective continues with a good piece by Lockhart on Denmark, which ably summarizes his revisionist approach to Christian IV. Piirimäe approaches Sweden from an unusual angle, devoting particular attention to the careful way in which the Swedes sought to legitimate their intervention. Braun's essay on the papacy nicely complements Externbrink's piece, and an excellent article by Maria Baramova analyzes the unusual problem of the Ottoman Empire and the war. Lucien Bély's piece on France is solid, but does not suggest that French scholars are revising their approach to the war as comprehensively as their German colleagues.

For the greatest service provided by the *Companion* is the light it sheds on recent scholarship on the Holy Roman Empire, which has transformed views of the war. Thirty years ago the war was regarded as essentially a European phenomenon, and general books in English reflected an astonishing lack of interest in the Empire. Several robustly revisionist essays indicate how much has changed. Whaley contributes a crisp account of the Peace of Augsburg and its aftermath down to 1618, arguing that the peace was a success that completed the reform process begun in the 1490s, making it workable for the first time. He stresses – in stark contrast to traditional scholarship – the overwhelming desire to use the Empire's institutions to resolve conflicts. This approach is welcome, but Whaley does not really address the problem of growing religious militancy, both Catholic and Calvinist. The war may have started in the Habsburg patrimonial lands, but the problems posed by religion for imperial institutions after 1608 suggest that they were already under considerable strain.

Whaley's essay needs to be read in conjunction with Pohlig's excellent article on the Augsburg peace, which examines these strains, providing an exemplary critical analysis of recent literature. It is matched by Forster on the Edict of Restitution, and Fuchs, whose consideration of the debates over the contentious issue of setting a normative date for recognizing the secularization of Catholic church land is an unusual approach to an important problem. Fuchs reveals much about the Empire's problems, casting doubt on Whaley's positive account of the functioning of imperial institutions: so long as there was no clarity over title to land, private law suits often failed. The Edict was in part an attempt to address what was a real problem.

The best contributions are Wilson's careful consideration of military strategy, which challenges a number of comfortable assumptions; Theibault's demolition of those who challenged the 'disastrous war' school after 1945; and a corruscating piece by Gotthard on the Westphalian settlement and the Empire, which should be required reading for those political scientists who continue to peddle anachronistic nostrums concerning the epochal importance of 1648 with regard to national sovereignty. It is a sparkling contribution to a valuable collection in which there is little to criticize. English is not the first language of either of the editors, or of the majority of contributors; the *Companion* nevertheless reads well, though one or two stylistic infelicities in a couple of essays might have been picked up with closer copy-editing. There is one howler in Whaley's piece: the problem in 1583 was that Archbishop Gebhard Truchsess von Waldburg of Cologne had converted to Calvinism, not Catholicism. Graduate students and scholars in the field will know that, however.