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Michael Broers. *Europe under Napoleon 1799-1815.* New York: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1996. xii + 291 pp. $49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-340-66265-6.

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In *Europe Under Napoleon 1799-1815*, Michael Broers has produced a welcome contribution to Napoleonic scholarship. His principal achievement consists in his departure from the often Franco-centric approach to the Napoleonic era and the special attention he devotes to the non-French states, regions, and peoples under direct French rule or indirect influence. This European approach makes sense, since the policies of the Empire and its satellite states depended on the response of subjects throughout Europe to their rule, and these policies in turn affected the reception of the subjects. Yet it requires the ability to synthesize a vast body of sources in many languages–Broers cites scholarship in German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch, in addition to French and English–and a sensitivity to the widely differing social and political contexts of Europe's various regions. It is a daunting task, which historians have naturally been reluctant to take on, but Broers makes it look easy.

In the introduction Broers lays out his main thesis: namely, that Romantic historians have misled readers by characterizing Napoleon principally as a military commander and conqueror who ruled through the force of his personality. Napoleon's true achievement, according to the author, was the creation of the modern state through the application of rational and impersonal Enlightenment principles to law, administration, and the military. In Chapters One and Two Broers describes how Napoleon consolidated the French state between 1799 and 1807. He argues that the reforms of these years made it possible to raise, train, feed, and replace the armies which fought Napoleon's battles, and that they, more than any military prowess, contributed to France's hegemony over western Europe.

In Chapter Three Broers describes how various groups resisted Napoleonic rule, both by "actively" rebelling and "passively" shunning its institutions, as in the case of Catholics refusing the sacraments from priests chosen by state-nominated bishops. As to the "collaborators," Broers not surprisingly finds that bourgeois professionals were more likely to support the Napoleonic state– since it provided them with civil service jobs– than the landed aristocracy, which objected to a Civil Code that abolished their privileges. Chapter Four covers the complex period of 1808 to 1811. Broers gives a rich description and sophisticated analysis of such diverse phenomena as the peninsular war (with special attention to the crucial yet often neglected role of Portugal); the renewed war with Austria in 1809; the 1809 peasant revolts in Germany, the Tyrol, and Calabria; and the intra-dynastic struggle between Napoleon and his brother Louis over the administration of the Netherlands.

Chapters Five and Six take the reader up to 1814 with an examination of French conquest, administration, and successive loss of territory from Spain to the Balkans. Here Broers discusses the varied effects of Napoleon's economic policy on different territories, and concentrates not only on the Continental System, in which imperial states and allies (selectively) boycotted British imports, but on the protectionist policies which favored manufacturers in France and some German territories while ruining their competition in other parts of Europe. Finally, Broers concludes the book by reiterating his claim that Napoleon's chief achievements were not as a commander but as a state builder, and observes that his state-building measures were ironically adopted by the various restoration regimes of Europe.

Europe under Napoleon is an admirable achievement in a number of respects. Not only does Broers skillfully treat the complex diplomacy of the period and explain the motivations and interests of the major states in question. He analyzes the receptivity of regions to Napoleon in terms of their class structures, economic interests, ideological inclinations, and levels and types of religiosity, and reveals the conflicts between and within the regions which Napoleon affected directly or indirectly. He is equally at ease discussing the conflict between the rebellious Spanish estates and the guerrilla bands (partidas) on the front line, peasant revolts in the Tyrol and Calabria,

and the resistance of Croatian Catholics to Napoleonic rule. A student of Richard Cobb, he promises "to see the Napoleonic era through the eyes of those on the ground, those who endured it" (p. xii). He delivers on his promise, and in a sense does for the Napoleonic period what Cobb did for the Revolution by displaying an extreme sensitivity to the importance of personal rivalries and vendettas in the politics of the period.

Yet Broers is equally aware of the importance of ideology and religious belief in the formation of allegiances. Moreover, throughout the book he displays a talent for encapsulating complex struggles in vivid images. He epitomizes Dutch resistance to the Continental System, for example, in the image of the customs house burned by local merchants, and summarizes Catholic opposition to the Concordat in the image of an unauthorized procession in honor of an officially unrecognized saint. These depictions emphasize the importance of symbolism in the formation of political communities and have the added advantage of providing readers with mnemonic abbreviations of complex phenomena.

At the same time, there are shortcomings to *Europe under Napoleon*. Specifically, Broers repeatedly insists on Napoleon's "greatness" and "genius," terms adopted from a hagiography that he otherwise explicitly repudiates. He shows impatience with historians who have refused to "recognize" Napoleon as a "genius." This is not only small-minded; it is "dangerous," since, as Broers cryptically writes, "it denies the deep bond between genius and power, at the heart of greatness" (p. 5). The introduction especially is marred by this sort of language (the word "genius" appears twelve times in the first five pages). Broers diverges from Napoleon's hagiographers by attributing his "genius" to state-building rather than military matters and by insisting that it did not imply moral rectitude–he also refers to Napoleon as a "dark genius." Yet he could have done without this problematic language, which suggests more of a Great Man history than Broers has actually written.

A second shortcoming concerns the author's use of the terms "enlightened" and "Enlightenment." In language that clearly clashes with the Romantic notions of "genius" and "greatness," Broers is determined to make Napoleon a "man of the Enlightenment" (p. 2). Though he does not define this concept, he suggests throughout the book that "Enlightenment" is a movement which advocates the application of rational principles to law, administration, warfare, religion, etc. It is associated with the rise of an impersonal state and self-sustaining bureaucracy as opposed to regimes which depend on the personal aura or charisma of an individual leader (here Broers seems to have internalized sociologist Max Weber's view of bureaucracy as a defining characteristic of modernity and rationalization, though he does not cite Weber). Broers does not necessarily endorse "Enlightenment"; indeed, he acknowledges that historians can no longer maintain an uncritically optimistic view of it. Here he appears to have internalized the ideas of the cultural critics Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, whose *Dialectic of Enlightenment* stressed the instrumental aspects of Enlightenment, though the author does not cite them either. Broers further asserts that the "enlightened" character of Napoleonic rule was precisely what made it hateful to so much of Europe. This emphasis on Napoleon's "rational" and impersonal state-building is a welcome corrective to the notion of an emperor ruling by the force of his personality alone. Yet the extent to which Napoleon may be credited with (or blamed for) creating the modern state is debatable. More than a century ago Alexis de Tocqueville argued that centralization was a feature of the Old Regime, and though he might have been wrong in matters of fact or emphasis, his argument still needs to be addressed. Broers does praise Tocqueville's "inspired" historiography, which for him reveals "the survival and resurgence of a state of terrifying power" (p. 21). But this characterization suggests more of a long- term process than an "ingenious" invention of Napoleon.

Moreover, the attempt to make Napoleon into a "man of the Enlightenment" results in a discounting of the irrational, mythical, and Romantic qualities of his personality and reign. Revealingly, Broers sees Napoleon's admiration of Johann Wolfgang Goethe, and his particular liking of the German author's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, as evidence of his "enlightened" mentality. Yet he fails to mention that Werther, the hero of that novel, is a love-crazed, suicidal character who raves over the misty romantic poetry of the pseudo-Gaelic bard Ossian (as did Napoleon), finds no place in society and, significantly, detests his work as a bureaucrat. Broers asserts that Napoleon fabricated a romantic image of himself in exile on Saint-Helena for the benefit of the European reading public, but this claim fails to account for the romantic tendencies both of Napoleon himself and his fellow Europeans prior to the Revolution (when Werther and Ossian, along with countless other Romantic books, enjoyed immense popularity). It also fails to explain Napoleon's weakness for Romantic painting and pageantry. Much of the latter was undoubtedly instrumental and self-serving, if not cynical, yet it shows that Napoleon's rule depended not only on rational and impersonal institutions,

but "irrational," charismatic and cultic representations of sovereign power.

Yet the flaws discussed above are more than counterbalanced by cogent analysis, thought-provoking argumentation, and impressive coverage of neglected aspects of Napoleonic Europe. Overall, *Europe under Napoleon* is an excellent and important book, which both students and specialists will read with profit.

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