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The Origins of the Modern European State System

M. S. Anderson inaugurates Longman's new *The Modern European State System* series in fine style with *The Origins of the Modern European State System, 1494-1618.* This introductory volume to the series is a good survey of early modern European diplomacy and politics. This book, and the new five-volume series, is intended as a revision of Longman's three-volume *Modern European State System* series by Derek McKay, H. M. Scott, Roy Bridge, Roger Bullen and Graham Ross. Much like its predecessor, it synthesizes much of the historiography on the subject and adds a few new points as well. Anderson starts off his study with three chapters on general themes: war, trade and finance, and diplomacy. Then he moves into a chronological narrative of the period, beginning with the French invasion of Italy in 1494 and ending with the start of the Thirty Years' War. He ends his book with two chapters on the impact of peripheral European powers, the Ottoman Empire and Russia, on early modern politics. Anderson's book is clear and precise and easily understood by both novices and experts in early modern European political history.

Anderson begins his study with an analysis of war in the early modern period. Building on the work of J. R. Hale, Frank Tallett and I. A. A. Thompson, he argues that early modern war was not a carefully defined concept; it was often entered into very lightly, on the basis of personal rivalries between rulers, disputed dynastic claims and early attempts at a balance of power. War, particularly war with religious overtones, was seen not only as a natural part of life, but also as part of a divine plan to stamp out impure elements in foreign countries and remove undesirable social elements at home. Chivalric ideas left over from the feudal period reinforced this view of war; war was an acceptable means of preserving royal or national honor. As the early modern period progressed, chivalry and war contributed to the growth of early ideas of state formation; the chivalric urge to defend Europe against non-Christians became refocused into the urge to defend and glorify one's country.

While war continued to dominate the early modern European political scene, commerce was gaining new importance in the area of international relations. Commerce and finance often determined the outcome of war, but were becoming important tools of international relations in their own right. Since domestic discontent was easily sparked by a rise in bread prices, economic pressure was a good way to influence other countries' behavior. While economic warfare was often an effective means of international pressure, it was difficult to enforce and control. Economic warfare was an alien concept to most early modern Europeans, and few countries had the bureaucratic force to undertake such measures or could withstand the shock of financial warfare on their own economies. At the end of the sixteenth century, financial warfare began to be more effective, as in Spain's attempts to pressure England during Elizabeth's reign. Anderson's discussion of early modern finance reflects the classical view established in Richard Ehrenberg's research on the Fuggers backed up by several more recent studies of individual countries.

The growth of the modern European state system was provoked and supported by the beginnings of the idea of the balance of power. Drawing on the work of Garrett Mattingly and D. E. Queller, as well as his own earlier *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy, 1450-1919*, Anderson argues that the balance of power gained popularity for several reasons. It was, to some extent, an outgrowth of the medieval concept of alliances, such as the Bavarian Guelph alliance against Philip Augustus. Italy provided the first example of an early modern balance of power, when the various states of the Italian peninsula all established diplomatic contacts (and spies) at each other's courts. The system slowly spread north from Italy as other powers saw its utility in keeping tabs on their rivals. Diplomats remained within Protestant or Catholic circles until the early seventeenth century, and perma-

nent embassies were not established in or by early modern eastern European countries. The nearer countries of eastern Europe seemed small and insignificant to most of western Europe, and Russia and the Ottoman Empire were too alien and far away to gain much attention. However, by the first decades of the seventeenth century, almost all western European countries saw the balance of power as the natural state of Europe.

After discussing these general elements of the early modern state system, Anderson moves into a chronological account of early modern international politics. His chronological account does not differ significantly from that of many standard histories, such as *The New Cambridge Modern History*. He begins with the French invasion of Italy in 1494, which created the rivalry for dominance in western Europe between the French and the Spanish. This invasion also exposed both the weakness Italy's inability to unite and form a nation-state had created within the peninsula and the growing inability of the divided Holy Roman Empire to affect European politics in any meaningful way. The more united states dominated the weaker, divided states. France, and later Spain, had the army and bureaucracy to exert their will on weaker, divided countries, who did not have the resources to defend themselves, and were often divided about whether they needed or wanted to defend themselves, as Italy was in the 1490s.

Charles V won the title of Holy Roman Emperor and took his place as the political leader of Christendom, an obligation he took seriously. The 1520s saw a menacing advance of the Ottoman Turks into Europe that Charles was determined to head off. Charles V's view of himself as protector of Catholic Christianity also heightened his animosity toward Francis I of France, who had formed a loose alliance with the Turks in order to damage Charles's holdings in eastern Europe, and Henry VIII of England, whom he viewed as an apostate after his conversion from Catholicism. Further, Charles's resources were drained by his attempts to defeat the Turks and their vassals, the Barbary corsairs in north Africa. The corsairs, famous for their piracy, were weaker but closer and took more of Charles's attention and resources than the Turks did. Francis I courted them both, angering Charles and making him more determined to stomp out Francis's potential Muslim allies. But Muslims were not his only religious opponents; Charles also, as the defender of Catholicism, attempted to stop the growth of Lutheranism in Germany. German Lutherans not only offended Charles's devout Catholicism, but also contributed to the growing divisions in Germany, further weakening the German heart of the Holy Roman Empire. The Habsburg-Valois struggle continued in Italy, in eastern Europe, and increasingly in Germany and the Netherlands, as France took advantage of the growing divisions in Germany to weaken Habsburg power there.

After the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis, Spain emerged the victor of the Habsburg-Valois rivalry. But Philip II, who had inherited after his father's abdication in 1555, had a new enemy to face as the leader of Catholic Europe: Calvinism. Lutheranism had become an accepted fact in Germany; the Calvinists were newer, more organized, and more determined to spread their religion. Philip II was almost fanatical in his orthodox Catholicism and determined to stamp out Calvinism and other forms of Protestantism. Following Mary Tudor's death, however, he showed his realism by courting Elizabeth I, first as a possible bride, then as an ally, despite her firm refusal to return England to Catholicism. Mary Queen of Scots was next in line, and despite her Catholicism, she was too closely linked to France for Philip's comfort. He preferred a Protestant ruler of England to a French-English alliance.

When the English forged an alliance with the Dutch rebels in the 1580s, Philip felt obliged to respond. Defeating England seemed the only way of forcing the Dutch into submission, and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587 removed the main barrier to a Spanish-English war. The defeat of the armada in 1588, however, provided the first main check to Spanish power. Henry IV's accession to the French throne, combined with his conversion to Catholicism which appeased his Catholic subjects, provided a second check: Philip invaded France to try to prevent Henry's consolidation of power, but the Spanish army proved ineffective. With France, England and the Netherlands all united in their opposition to Spain, Philipís place as leader of Europe was insecure. All four countries involved in this conflict faced severe financial strains, but Spain's were worst of all. The war ended in 1609 in a stalemate, when all sides compromised in order to alleviate the financial pressures of war.

Anderson devotes the final two chapters to the study of powers that seem peripheral to Europe at first glance: the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Neither power was centrally involved in European politics; both resisted involvement in the growing diplomacy of western and central Europe. As Robert Schwoebel argued, the Ottoman Empire was usually not active in European politics, but was always a potential source of concern. France, England, and the Netherlands all toyed with the idea of an alliance with the Ottomans against Spain, and the Ottoman Empire was quite involved in central European affairs.

Russia was beginning to develop into a great power at this time, too. Working from Robert Crummey's basic arguments, Anderson asserts that Ivan III and his heirs were busily extending Russian dominance over surrounding areas and creating a rudimentary state with diplomatic, economic and cultural contacts with the rest of Europe. However, Russia seemed distant, foreign and unimportant to most of western Europe. In the sixteenth century, Russian expansionism led to conflicts with Poland-Lithuania, Sweden, Livonia and the Crimea, which led to increased contact with western Europe and the Ottoman Empire. War had led Russia to seek out European military theory and technology. Trade between Russia and the rest of Europe increased dramatically as Russia grew in size and wealth. After Ivan IV's death, internal chaos led to Swedish and Polish interference in Russia. Thus, northern Europe was also drawn into the Thirty Years' War when it began.

The Origins of the Modern European State System is a truly useful synthesis of early modern European diplomatic history. Anderson's explanations of the twists and turns of early modern politics are clear and fully developed. Very rarely does he seem to be rushing through his topic, as so many general histories do, but he even more rarely goes into too much detail. This is an excellent introduction to early modern diplomatic history. However, this book is more than a general introduction. His first few thematic chapters on war, finance and diplomacy are an intriguing analysis of major themes in the period, and his final chapters on the Ottoman Empire and Russia help to place Europe in a more global context. The main chronological chapters explaining the period 1494-1618 give little new information, but are an excellent summary of what we know about the political history of the period. *The Origins of the Modern European State System* is a good source of information and analysis for both novices and more advanced scholars in this periodís political history.

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