available the record of an erudite pre-technological chatroom whose contributors, as the editor notes, are members of a scholarly “community which was cherished for, and existed by virtue of, these reciprocal bonds of learned exchange” (29-30). Ideas and books were shared along often complicated routes involving intermediaries who joined in an ongoing and far-flung conversation. As we can discern from the earlier correspondence of figures like More and Erasmus, and as Peter Miller has shown in the case of Junius’s contemporary Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, humanist letter-writers constitute a community independent of, but also interconnecting, the spheres of the university, the court, and the church. Junius’s network of correspondents and their epistolary relations form such an institution, both social and material, that is the very medium of European intellectual life in the early modern period. It is worthy of study in itself, not as adjunct to the printed book but as the vital matrix in which the published products of humanist culture took shape.


This is a very broad book in conception and the author covers an enormous amount of ground in just over two hundred pages, ranging from North America, throughout Europe, to Siberia, and across 166 years of history. Jeremy Black seeks to build on his earlier work *European Warfare, 1660–1815*, and describes the aim of the work thusly: “The book combines operational history with an analysis of structures and long-term change, and with cultural, social, and political contexts” (x). Black includes chapters on “Cultural and political contexts,” “A military revolution?,” “European expansion and the global context 1490-1578,” “European warfare 1494–1559,” “European warfare 1560-1617,” “European warfare 1618-60,” “Naval developments,” and “European expansion and the global context 1578-1660.”
Unlike other works in a “war and society” vein, *European Warfare, 1494–1660* attempts to introduce operational matter, remembering the lesson of Keegan’s *The Face of Battle* that military organizations exist for one main purpose: combat—a topic too often neglected by academic historians. His operational accounts are extremely brief, however. This is not a campaign history, nor a book that features rousing tales of martial valor. Rather, Black’s examples are there to support the argument. It is hoped that other scholars may also take an interest in operational histories of early modern military engagements.

*European Warfare, 1494–1660* de-emphasizes the link between military activities and state formation and centralization. Black contends that, “for most Europeans, the state was more peripheral than the harvest or the conflict with disease. War, the damage it could create, and the need to support it, through finance, recruitment and supplies, were the most significant impact of politics and the state. . . In war, armies and navies were capable of considerable achievements. However, their organizational and technological capabilities were limited, particularly in terms of resource availability, mobility, and firepower. Nor was there any fundamental alteration in the nature of war. As a result, successful military powers did not need to alter their economic system or develop a sophisticated industrial capability” (31).

Black also takes another crack at the military revolution debate. While he states early on that he does not want this to dominate the book, the military revolution has its own chapter, and Black proceeds to return to it in every other subsequent chapter. This book is a call for an emphasis on continuity. Black presents no bold thesis on the order of Geoffrey Parker’s revised military revolution thesis, or Victor Davis Hanson’s *Western Way of Warfare*. He remains dubious about the idea of a military revolution, claiming: “the general conclusion is that the military realities were both too complex (geographically) and too much dependent on previous experiences (political, cultural and economic) to make the term ‘military revolution’ useful as a phrase to encapsulate military changes in the period. There were changes, in technologies,
organizations, and attitudes, but they were neither revolutionary, nor universal” (215).

This book is a systematic attempt to go after the basic points of the military revolution thesis and to present a model of military change based on continuity, rather than dynamic revolution. Black contends that the European nobility continued to exert a great deal of power throughout the period under consideration, and that the history of the period is not solely that of monarchies consolidating their power. In addition, he questions whether military changes in the period “deserve the description ‘revolutionary’” (47). Although, one might also speculate that getting academic historians to agree on a specific definition of “revolutionary” is task of extreme difficulty.

Indeed, Black also suggests that academics may cynically overuse the term revolution in order to gain more attention, arguing that “most authors seek to emphasize the importance of their subject, and for many decades it has been customary to do so by stressing its revolutionary character and consequences” (215). This is a well-taken point, for anything containing the word “revolution” sounds more dynamic than, for instance, a debate over early modern European army size. Young academics looking to publish an article in their particular subfield of history could do worse than to attempt to tie their research into a debate containing the word “revolution” or “crisis.”

Jeremy Black possesses an astonishing temporal and geographical range in this book. These qualities are of great help in commenting on early modern military history, although they can also leave readers wishing for more details in a book that is so short. For general readers not current on the twists and turns of academic controversies, some passages might prove confusing. For instance:

In recent decades, structure has dominated non-operational (i.e., non-campaign) accounts of war, particularly with the emphasis on technological analyses of development, that present an almost automatic corollary in military effectiveness, and also with the interest, in the ‘new military
history,' in social contexts. This structural emphasis has a number of weaknesses, not least its proneness to determinism and the extent to which it does not match the emphasis on agency seen in operational military history and in the studies of the international relations that helped determine military tasking. In the case of the Dutch Revolt, the range of Philip's options included different political strategies in the Low Countries, the choice of subordinates and the allocation of resources between different spheres. It is difficult to see how structural interpretations can be sustained. (117)

Those not familiar with the cut and thrust of recent academic debates might be unaware of Black's specific targets; those who are aware of such debates might wish that Black pressed his points home with more vigor and specificity. Despite Black's tendency to move from point to point too swiftly, students of early modern European military history overlook Jeremy Black at their peril.


This is the first analysis of the Stuart court in exile in France after 1689. It draws on an impressive array of primary sources, including documents which escaped the general destruction of manuscripts during the French Revolution. Thanks to the efforts of Edward Corp and his contributors, Edward Gregg, Howard Erskine-Hill and Geoffrey Scott, the court at Saint-Germain emerges as a center of artistic and literary production as well as a safe haven for James II, Mary of Modena and the young James III.

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