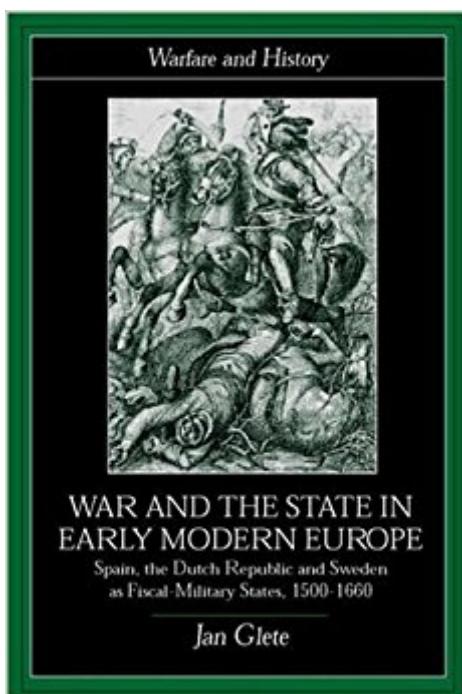


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War And The State In Early Modern Europe: Spain, The Dutch Republic And Sweden As Fiscal-Military States (Warfare And History)



Synopsis

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw many ambitious European rulers develop permanent armies and navies. War and the State in Early Modern Europe examines this military change as a central part of the political, social and economic transformation of early modern Europe. This important study exposes the economic structures necessary for supporting permanent military organisations across Europe. Large armed forces could not develop successfully without various interest groups who needed protection and were willing to pay for it. Arguing that early fiscal-military states were in fact protection-selling enterprises, the author focuses on:^{*} Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden^{*} the role of local elites^{*} the political and organisational aspects of this new military development

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Customer Reviews

That is what this book is about - how early modern European states were constructed, manufactured, bought, or cajoled into existence. Jan Glete writes an informative synthesis of old and new interpretations to examine state building in Spain, the Dutch Republic, and Sweden. It is

military history with a strong dose of economic and social theory to examine how central governments used the development of permanent military organizations to "sell" protection and to "extract" resources, and thereby enhance or enlarge the authority of that government. He calls the end product the "fiscal-military state." Overall, this thesis is not new (book first published in 2002), particularly as it relies heavily on Charles Tilly, Michael Roberts, Geoffrey Parker, John Elliott and other heavy hitters for the Early Modern historiographic review. Changes in warfare technology, tactics, ideas along with changes in bureaucracy coupled with population expansion gave centralizing rulers the means to gain more influence and power; warfare provided the opportunity. What is new and interesting is that Glete uses the idea of protection selling (could be equally usefully called imperialism) to explain how Spanish and Swedish monarchs and Dutch states could gain willing cooperation from domestic elites, cities, and foreign lands. Those governments most "efficient" (this word is used a lot) prospered and expanded - when the cost of protection became too high or "inefficient" then the state lost its ability to maintain itself (a very long discourse on the so-called decline of Spain illustrates this well). Structurally, the reader does have to wade through two chapters heavy on theory and historiography, but the background is essential to understand fully the historical narrative that uses economic and social history terms frequently to make the argument. Chapters on Spain, Dutch Republic and Sweden make good use of published sources and contrast each society well to show how the same ideas were compatible with various forms of early modern governments. The final chapter probably needs to be read first, as it most efficiently brings the author's ideas into focus. Finally, the author assumes a good deal of background knowledge of 1500-1700 of European history and of the basic historiography - excellent and comprehensive bibliography is a strong point of the book.

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