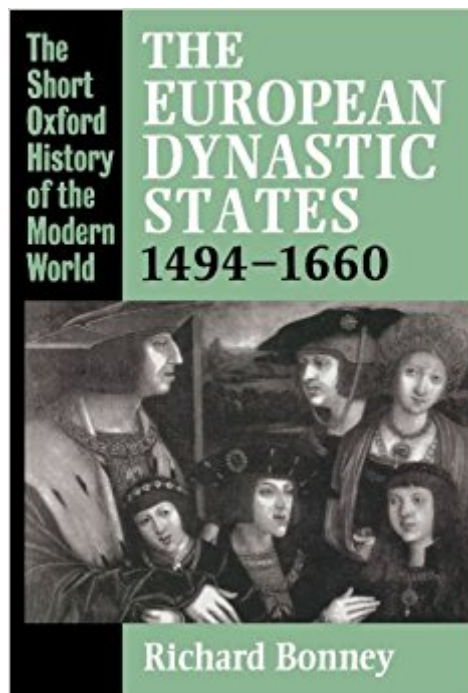




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The European Dynastic States, 1494-1660 (Short Oxford History Of The Modern World)



Synopsis

This is a study of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries--a period of economic and cultural upheaval, of dramatic changes in politics, society, and religion, and of constant warring among the emergent states. Based on extensive research, this book covers such diverse themes as the Reformation, witchcraft, diplomacy, population structure, the growth of capitalism, wars of religion, and wars of expansion. Bonney also examines the Scandinavian countries and Russia, areas frequently neglected by historians.

Book Information

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"For readers already familiar with the basic landscape, Bonney expertly points out usually overlooked features and offers many fresh perspectives."--History: Reviews of New Books
"This is a book which will be invaluable for student use and an authoritative guide for scholars in a wide variety of fields."--Renaissance Quarterly
"Richard Bonney's work is a remarkably successful survey and detailed introduction to early modern political history...The European Dynastic States is an informed and innovative addition to the historical literature on early modern Europe."--Sixteenth Century Journal
"This is a fine work of scholarship, giving an almost encyclopedic treatment of European political life in Early Modern Europe. The book has a wealth of useful information, including the chronology, list of rulers, and several good maps."--Brian Nance, University of South Carolina
"An excellent text for use in courses on the Reformation, or, more broadly, the Confessional Age (1500-1650). Fills a real need for a European-wide treatment of both political events and

related social/structural questions."--Edmund M. Kern, Lawrence University

Richard Bonney is at University of Leicester.

Richard Bonney was at the time of this publication of this work-1991) Professor of Modern History at the University of Leicester. He has written extensively on modern Europe and this work forms part of the Oxford Short History of the Modern World, one of the series that Oxford University Press has consistently put out, of high quality and consisting of usually of 7-8 volumes covering the relevant time periods. This volume is the 3rd volume of a 13 part set, covering roughly the period 1500-1660. The companion volume, the Old European Order 1660-1800, covers the breakdown and collapse of the European society under the strains of the political, economic, and religious crises that were to lead eventually in France to the French Revolution. Both volumes should be read together-the entire history period simply makes more sense and is more coherent. This work, *The European Dynastic States, 1494-1660*, is not only fun to read to read but a real achievement. It is one of the few works which gives a truly solid, clear and understandable account of this period. Part of the reason this is so is that most histories have chosen not to be so broad in scope- it is too difficult to marshal and research material, to account for the objectives and aims of participants, and to at the same time to integrate the long-term currents of thought that sprang from the Reformation and Renaissance. The choice of most historians has been to break the subject down into smaller units, less understandable (in a broad sense) but more manageable. Another reason is that few historians are well-enough equipped with the tools to critically understand broad periods of time in depth the way Bonney does, and write in an engaging manner about them. As specialization in each of the separate sub-fields increases, it is becoming harder to find well-written surveys of particular time periods. This is slowly changing, as historians learn to write more for audiences that are not specialists, and make clear to non-specialists complex and subtle issues. Bonney breaks his history down into four subsections: (1) the Reformation (1517 and after) and the reaction to it, generally known as the Counter-reformation (2) the development of the European dynastic states (France, Habsburg empire territories, Spanish lands in Europe, etc) (3) the 'outsiders' of Europe-Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, Muscovy (4) the structure of the European Dynastic states. Bonney is very good on the Reformation-showing the essential nature of the conflict-how it originated, and how it developed politically and religiously in the different countries that it touched. But he does not devote a great deal of time to it-roughly 100 pages out of 600+ book. But his discussion is very good nonetheless-particularly on the Counter-Reformation. Here I would suggest the reader consult a

new work by Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, 2 vols. (Oxford 2012) which is just outstanding for a more recent interpretation. There are also some new general histories of the Reformation in Europe that should be consulted- in particular Thomas Brady, *German Histories in the Age of the Reformation, 1400-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) that will supplement Bonney. Part 2 outlines the long and tangled histories of religious conflict in Europe- the French Wars of Religion between the Protestant Huguenot and Catholics, the entanglement of the French crown in the civil wars that made up that century. Bonney clearly illustrates how the divisions that were set then, lasted all the way through to the French Revolution, and how the mood of anticlericalism was nurtured by the wars between the parties. The struggle for the Dutch Republic- and the battle over who would control it is clearly outlined. Bonney is excellent in outlining how royal power was sapped by much these wars, and the immense financial cost they involved. It is a very sobering story, and one that gives the reader pause for thought. The last major section of the book is designed to deal with the structural aspects of European society- what it was like to live in it, work in it and govern it. Bonney has thoughtful chapters on the nature of Absolutism, the rise of parliaments, and the rise of the modern military machine- a topic now seen to be crucial in the financial collapse of many large nation-states (France and Spain in particular). The rest of the chapters are devoted to topics like population, food resources, social structure and money and banking. Bonney is thorough and clear in every area. A long discussion on Spain, the gold influx from the New World and the price revolution is intelligently discussed by Bonney. The work ends with two chapters on the European witch craze and court culture at the European capitals. The book has 40 -50 outstanding maps, and a bibliography that is a little old but still very useful. Both volumes are well worth reading.

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