Timothy Hampton. Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe.
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Source: *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 115, No. 5 (December 2010), pp. 1517-1518
Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the American Historical Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/ahr.115.5.1517
Accessed: 07/06/2011 14:45

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for the world to come was far beyond the resources of the vast majority of Scots who worked the soil and watched the skies; one wonders who looked after *their* spiritual interests in the next life. And what about the debased state of lay religious knowledge across Europe? Among medieval people, some did indeed believe, but historians have posed questions about the indifferent, the blasphemous, and even the atheistic. This perspective would, however, be the negation of Fitch's work, which takes a constructive approach. One place where she finds a strong lay role is in the founding (i.e., financing) of Masses on their own behalf or that of a departed husband or other family member. Here the Mass was understood as a meritorious work that would placate God and allow the soul a quicker passage from purgatory. Great care was taken to ensure regular celebration, and supervision might be established to guarantee performance of duties by upright priests—revealing an undercurrent of tension between clergy and laity and a perception of the need for reform.

Sadly, Fitch did not live to see her work through to completion, so one important issue escapes treatment, a foreseen but unwritten chapter on the cult of saints. But even without it, this is a valuable contribution and will provide students of the period with a new level of entry into the religious life of late medieval Scotland. Elizabeth Ewan has performed an important service in editing the manuscript for publication.

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EUROPE: EARLY MODERN AND MODERN

Timothy Hampton. *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 2009. Pp. xi, 235. $45.00.

This book explores the interplay of diplomatic practice and literary production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with particular attention to Western Europe. Beginning with Niccolò Machiavelli and other late Renaissance humanists and continuing through the works of such jurists as Alberico Gentili and Hugo Grotius, Timothy Hampton identifies an important corpus of writings on diplomacy and then explores the relation of these texts to works of imaginative literature.

The result is a book whose theoretical underpinning derives from what Hampton calls, in New Historicist tradition, "diplomatic poetics" (p. 2). From this vantage point the practice of diplomacy—or more precisely the representation of the practice of diplomacy—offered up a series of tropes about ambassadorial missions that imaginative writers then incorporated into their works not only on a thematic but also on a formal level. The most intriguing move Hampton makes derives from his insight that diplomatic language was inevitably and self-consciously problematic, and the issues it raised were of interest to authors who themselves were reflecting on the role of language in the making not only of social relations but also of literature. It was Machiavelli, Hampton asserts, who first described diplomacy as a kind of fiction making. Did the ambassador speak for his prince or for himself? Should the ambassador report everything to his prince or hold certain information back? What was the proper relationship between silence and loquacity?

After a first chapter that explores a number of humanist writers—Machiavelli, Francesco Guicciardini, François Rabelais, Thomas More, and Michel de Montaigne—the subsequent chapters are more focused, with particular attention given to Torquato Tasso, Luís Vaz de Camões, Pierre Corneille, William Shakespeare, and Jean Racine. Hampton is at his best when he is unpacking a particular work with attention to its incorporation of themes drawn directly or indirectly from early modern writings on diplomacy; his highly original reading of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is no less than startling and quite persuasive. At other points, he seems to stretch the material too far, as in his argument that Montaigne's notion of the mutable self was a response to this sixteenth-century author's attention to the story of a failed diplomatic mission. But the chapters on Tasso, Camões, Corneille, and Racine, like the chapter on Shakespeare, offer compelling examples of some of the advantages of fleshing out the historical context that shaped the production of imaginative literature; one suspects, as Hampton himself maintains, that such literature in turn affected the diplomatic world it described. Scholars of early modern literature, especially comparativists, will no doubt find much of interest in this book.

Yet there is a difficulty in the exposition. The author tends to accept the rather old-fashioned view of the early modern period as a time in which the nation-state emerged and, at least in the era after Westphalia, fairly clear definitions of sovereignty were widespread. The result is an overstatement of the "modernity" of early modern political systems. The large early modern states upon which Hampton focuses (Spain, France, England) were more dynastic than national. Spain and England were in the early seventeenth century "composite monarchies," and even many of the territorial states (the states of the Holy Roman Empire) existed within supranational or imperial frameworks.

This complexity would seem to bear on any "diplomatic poetics," since the very messiness of the political systems in Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and not only the representations of their diplomatic practices, were very much at the forefront of the consciousness of the writers whom Hampton explores. Also curious is the author's marginalization of violence. Not only does Hampton seem to have an idealized view of the diplomat as an emissary of peace (when often that was not the case), he also fails to recognize that diplomacy was not so much the substitution of fighting with writing as it was a form of writing that derived its power in no small part from the perceived military strength of the ruler it represented. In the end, the writers Hampton discusses—from Montaigne and Rabelais to Shakespeare and Racine—were

themselves keenly aware not only of the rituals of diplomacy but also of the violence—actual and potential—it almost always inevitably masked.

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Peter H. Wilson. *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2009. Pp. xxii, 996. $35.00.

Daunting by its length and encyclopedic in its scope, this book begins with a lively description of the defenestration of Prague, which inaugurated the Thirty Years' War, then abruptly breaks off the narrative for a commemoration of the war as a *lieu de mémoire*, after which the author presents his own "argument" (p. 8). The war, he asserts, was over the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire—which certainly is *one* of the things it was over; not primarily religious—which depends on what one means by religious; and not inevitable—which is a matter of metaphysics. Still straying from the narrative, the book then backtracks to a detailed description of Europe prior to the war, taking some 250 more pages before finally getting back to the defenestration.

The author makes many good and indisputable points, but as he bases his book almost entirely on secondary sources, he cannot free himself from their preoccupations, which he supplements with his own tendency to overreach. How could he know, for example, that when King Frederick permitted the desecration by his fellow Calvinists of the cathedral of Prague, "the Bohemians were deeply offended, *not so much for confessional reasons, but because the Cathedral symbolized their distinct identity*" (p. 287, emphasis added)? The narrative, periodically sprightly, is sometimes hard to follow. Wilson's description of how the rebels lost the battle of White Mountain seems to hinge on their infantry panicking at the retreat of their cavalry, which, when he last referred to it, had been advancing. After this explanation, however, he proceeds to attribute the cause of this defeat to a lack by the Bohemians of a "common political culture," as opposed to the English, Scots, or Dutch (pp. 309–310). The bulk of the population, the peasants, and the effect of the war on serfdom get extremely short or equivocal shrift, as does the interrelated problem of keeping the armies fed. Emperor Ferdinand II's controversial Edict of Restitution was "a grave error" (p. 446), but the best explanation we get of why this debonair fanatic would at the same time attempt a redistribution of property in Germany, fire his most effective general, and stonewall the French in Italy is that he thought he was within his rights. I am sure that he did, but, unless he was a perfect fool, I am also sure that he must have made some additional calculations. Equally frustrating is the treatment of Gustavus Adolphus. If the primary interest of Sweden was to control the Baltic, why did he surge down the Main and cross the Rhine? Here again there is something missing. And Cardinal Richelieu, who is more responsible than anyone for extending the war beyond the year 1635, "could not afford to let the Spanish defeat the Dutch any more than he could allow the emperor to crush Sweden" (p. 555). That is precisely what Richelieu did believe, but Wilson is presenting it as something we should accept at face value. The most fascinating question—how the participants ever managed to bring the persistent war to its end—he does not tackle at all. Instead, he concludes that the peace was not as much of a "turning point" as previously thought but was still "a significant marker" (p. 754).

Thucydides, with his speeches, was the first historian to enshrine a war in the topos of a tragedy, and the Thirty Years' War fits even better into this category, but Wilson, by saying either too much or too little, fails to deliver on his book's subtitle. Tragedy is a human drama; Wilson's is an academic book on the state of the question. Thucydides's characters speak for themselves as they pit their intelligence against the unpredictable. Wilson's speak in one liners extracted from monographs and are the playthings of haphazard troop movements that are no substitute for the dictates of fate. Wilson seems to lose sight of the two most tragic characteristics of the Thirty Years' War. One was the fatal impulse of so many of its prime movers to push their luck. Ferdinand II, Gustavus Adolphus, Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin: none of them was satisfied to leave well enough alone. The other tragic characteristic of the war was the convenient fusion by these same individuals of bellicosity with religion, which permitted them to anesthetize their consciences by an appeal to their juridical rights (for example, Ferdinand II) or to a law of necessity (for example, Richelieu). Wilson alludes to this characteristic in his last sentence, which would seem to undermine all three of his initial assertions about the war.

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Charles-Édouard Levillain. *Vaincre Louis XIV: Angleterre, Hollande, France; Histoire d'une relation triangulaire 1665–1688*. (Époques.) Seyssel: Champ Vallon. 2010. Pp. 451. €28.00.

On November 5, 1688 (Old Style), a Dutch armada of 500 ships sailed into Torbay on the southwest coast of England. On board was Prince William III of Orange, who claimed the English throne occupied by the Stuart King James II. Once ashore, William III and his invasion army met little resistance, as his rival's forces melted away. On December 18, William III entered London. Five days later James II fled to France. The Glorious Revolution not only transformed the British monarchy, it also revolutionized European international relations. Before 1688, England and the Dutch Republic had fought three naval wars. Afterward, these two states formed the core of a grand alliance aimed at curbing the expansionist ambitions of the superpower of late seventeenth-century Europe, Louis XIV's France.