

Italy and the European Powers The Impact of War, 1500-1530, ed. Christine Shaw (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2006), xx + 317 pp., illustrations, index, ISBN 900415163X, \$142.00

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As the editor, Christine Shaw, observes the book is an “assessment of the impact of the wars” (p. ix) on Italy between 1500 and 1530. It is an international scholarly endeavor with Italian, British, American and Israeli academics producing the volumes fifteen articles. Their efforts exemplify the explosion of scholarship on the subject in the past twenty years. The book largely accomplishes its task of integrating military, political and cultural history. (The glaring exception is William Prizer’s piece on Roman music and courtesans, which fails to provide any link between warfare and its subject.) The articles are based on significant and imaginative research in the primary and secondary sources. Appropriate illustrations accompany a number of the articles. The book would have benefited from a general map of Italy. Unfortunately, only six of the fifteen articles discuss activity at sea at any length.

How are naval or maritime aspects portrayed? Rarely, if at all is the answer. Michael Mallet (on the transformation of warfare) concludes with one page of twenty on naval warfare citing Spanish military transport, galley predominance and the growing Spanish naval ascendancy. Atis Antonovics, analyzing the French defeat at Naples in 1503-4, tangentially discusses the importance of maritime transport of artillery and supplies. The article on sieges by Simon Pepper observes the value of naval forces in besieging coastal cities through the transportation of supplies and the isolation of a target city by naval blockade. Eva Renzulli’s essay on the papal fortification of Loreta ascribes

the papal motivation to fears of Turkish seaborne raids on the rich pilgrimage church on the west coast of the Adriatic. David Abulafia's chapter on Ferdinand of Aragon and the acquisition of the kingdom of Naples has few references to naval/maritime affairs. That is unfortunate, because tantalizing tidbits (such as the Spanish destruction of Francese Torella's pirate fleet, and mentions of Ferdinand's vision of reviving an Aragonese trading network in the western Mediterranean, as well as the assertion that New World precious metals paid for the Italian wars) indicate that the king had a maritime vision. George Gorse's article on France and Genoa (1494-1528) has scattered references to overseas trade, the city's fleet, its harbor, and brief references Admiral Andrea Doria shifting the city's allegiance to the emperor, but he writes more about the political symbolism of French and Genoese acts. Intriguingly, he observes that the French saw the republic as another walled city, while the Genoese considered it a maritime gateway; some of the images accompanying Gorse's piece aptly illustrate those differing perspectives. (And who could resist an article that includes the passage on a French king personified as a porcupine preserving his country from an attack by a three-headed Italian monster?) All in all the discussion of nautical affairs appears as diversion from the main preoccupations of the authors. While that is understandable for Shaw's article on the Papal States and Letizia Arcangeli's on Milan, it seems mysterious for Mallet, Abulafia and Gorse to adopt that perspective.

The book provides the reader with some of the latest scholarship on the Italian wars of 1500-30. Yet readers lacking a firm grounding in the period will find themselves lost. D. Abulafia's *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy* and M. Mallet's *Mercenaries and their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy* would prove useful

prerequisites to this volume. Naval historians will continue to find J. Guilmartin's *Gunpowder and Galleys* the definitive work on the Italian wars. On the other hand students and academics researching military, political, and cultural aspects of the wars will find the work stimulating.

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