

observations on, for example, the parallels with English and German debaters on loan-words or the continuing importance of Latin in Renaissance Europe, as well as her literary-historical methodology and multilingual approach, deserve readership from those outside the field of Dutch and French literary studies. *The Golden Mean of Languages* shows that both literary scholars and historians could benefit from a better understanding of the multilingual situation in early modern Europe.

Cora van de Poppe, *Universiteit Utrecht*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.43

War, State and Society in Liège: How a Small State of the Holy Roman Empire Survived the Nine Years' War (1688–1697). Roeland Goorts.

Avisos de Flandes 17. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2019. 418 pp. €65.

The hundreds of autonomous states that constituted the Holy Roman Empire during the early modern era experienced more than their share of warfare, but studies of their experiences are relatively rare. Military historians have tended to focus on the larger states, which were normally the ones to start the wars and to provide the manpower and financial resources necessary to wage them on a large scale, while minimizing the participation of smaller states and generalizing about the impact of wars in the regions where they were fought. Such tendencies are understandable, since these smaller states had only a limited impact on the larger courses of the wars, and researching them can pose serious challenges in terms of source material and getting control of the political, social, cultural, and economic structures within each state. Roeland Goorts's new study of the Prince-Bishopric of Liège during the Nine Years' War succeeds in overcoming these obstacles and provides an excellent example of the value of scholarship focused on smaller states.

Located in a geographic crossroads between the Netherlands, Germany, and France, the Prince-Bishopric of Liège had seen countless armies pass through its territory in the centuries leading up to 1688, yet had managed to survive them largely intact. Goorts attributes this to the prince-bishops' long-standing policy of neutrality. The state was a major arms producer: it normally sold to all sides during major conflicts and negotiated agreements with belligerent powers and their armies that allowed free passage through Liègeois territory, often along with bribes of food and money, in exchange for maintaining its independence and being spared the worst effects of military occupation. That all changed during the Nine Years' War, when combined pressure from the empire and the Dutch Republic forced the prince-bishop, Jean Louis d'Elderen, to join their coalition against Louis XIV's France, a decision that required the state to raise, equip, and sustain an army for the first time in centuries, and exposed it to the demands of its allies and the depredations of invading French armies. Working carefully with sources gleaned from

Belgian, Dutch, British, French, and German archives, Goorts follows the experiences of the rulers and their people, and demonstrates the resilience of local institutions and traditions that enabled the state to emerge from the conflict relatively intact.

Goorts attributes the survival of Liège to a combination of factors. One was its multilayered political structure, which divided power between the prince-bishop; the canons of the Chapter of St. Lambert, who elected the bishops and often served as his advisors; the estates of the territory; local nobles; and community leaders. These individuals and groups between them possessed enough local influence, financial resources, and diplomatic connections to enable them to respond to multiple crises and misfortunes and adjust to changing circumstances. They managed to put together a modern army that seems to have performed on par with the forces raised by other small states, and supplied and paid it better than many of the other states, large or small. They built fortifications that slowed or frustrated invading French forces, and dealt with both friendly and hostile armies in ways that usually prevented large-scale destruction. Collectively, their efforts protected the autonomy of the principality and prevented the larger powers from swallowing it up.

The principal casualty of the conflict seems to have been the power of the prince-bishop himself. D'Elderen, a member of the local elite without important international connections, had been elected by the chapter as a compromise candidate, chosen instead of ones promoted by the pro-French and imperialist factions within the chapter. D'Elderen's lack of status made it difficult for him to resist pressure from the emperor to enter the alliance or to negotiate effectively with either the French or his allies to protect his principality. When he died in 1694, his replacement was Joseph Clemens von Wittelsbach, a member of the ruling house of Bavaria, an unpopular candidate who was forced upon the chapter by the Dutch and imperialists, but who personally leaned toward the French and wound up spending most of his reign elsewhere, leaving the locals to run the territory without him.

Much of the real value of Goorts's work lies in the amount of detail he is able to provide on the workings of the state, the network of local communities within the territory, and the economy, and on the impact of war on all three. He is able to trace the careers and fortunes of any number of minor characters who would normally never make it into more broadly focused works; he shows much of the human cost of war in individual localities. Taken as a whole, his work is a valuable addition to the scholarship on war and society in the early modern period.

James R. Smither, *Grand Valley State University*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.44