

primarily on individual or communal action, which in turn led the common people of the empire to experience a fundamental and earthshaking loss of faith in the ruling authorities. This is surely one of the most interesting and thought-provoking arguments in this book. Indeed, it seems clear that ordinary people, especially those in the countryside, were often left to their own devices, so that terrified and angry peasants frequently had no recourse but to find some way to save themselves, their families, and their possessions from hostile forces. On the other hand, it is always far easier to see when protective measures failed than when they succeeded, and it seems likely that governing and religious authorities were not nearly as useless as their contemporary critics may have claimed. Despite their many obvious shortcomings, authorities could and did raise troops, buy weapons, build up fortress walls, arm the peasantry (rarely), and enforce regulations to lessen problems of disease and poverty, and they also could and did engage in extensive (indeed almost unceasing) peace and alliance negotiations, work diplomatic channels, exploit personal and patronage ties, and appeal to God for aid. Especially after the early years of the war, moreover, it became standard practice for occupying or through-marching armies to negotiate terms for regulated war-taxation with local governmental authorities. This at least lessened whole-scale looting and plunder, and when combined with other interventions, surely saved thousands, maybe tens of thousands of lives throughout the empire, along with houses, barns, churches, mills, and other vital infrastructure.

The second half of Haude's argument, that the war's destructiveness led to a general embitterment and fundamental loss of faith in the authorities, is similarly difficult to assess, but perhaps even more intriguing. Her extensive evidence of popular disillusionment is of necessity anecdotal but quite convincing and utterly reasonable on its face. It also suggests the value of additional research and exploration of what would then seem to be a contradictory post-1648 tendency of European populations to rally around strong central authorities and state churches—something past scholars have often attributed to an overall yearning for law and order after the violence and chaos of the war.

In addition to raising some interesting questions about the relationship between governing authorities and their people in Central Europe (and, one hopes, spurring further investigation), this fine work is approachable, clear, and well-organized, with a useful subject index and a brief glossary. It is highly recommended reading for those interested in the war and in *Alltagsgeschichte* (history of everyday life) and is extremely successful in its principal goal of diverting our view of the war away from the European halls of power and diplomatic tables, and instead focusing our attention on the countryside and the life experiences of ordinary people who were living in, and coping with, extraordinary times.

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## **Modern Historiography in the Making: The German Sense of the Past, 1700–1900**

**By Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Pp. 200. Hardcover \$115.00. ISBN: 978-1350271470.**

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For some time, historians of early modern humanistic knowledge have been learning from and working with historians of science; one of the consequences has been a flowering of the fields, particularly as the result of deepened attention to the practices of knowledge-making.

It is this approach that Kaser Risbjerg Eskildsen brings to the history of German historiography, also defying conventions in 1) working across the *Sattelzeit*; 2) emphasizing the places and practices of scholarship; 3) writing a very short book. The other admirable feature of this book is that it confronts a huge, and often *Sonderweg*-tinged, literature on historicism with a defense of the uses of historical scholarship. At least since the eighteenth century, Eskildsen argues, historians have been “challenging universal and immutable viewpoints and questioning contemporary institutions, politics and moral standards” (121). We once chose, he writes, to put considerable time, money, and effort into practicing history and trying to give it an evidentiary basis. That was a choice, he concludes, that was hardly value-free, but was linked to scholars’ belief in improvement, of the self, of the students, of the world. “It survived religious persecution, philosophical relativism, disciplinary specialization, revolutionary ruptures and the ideals of objectivity, and scientific history. Only in the hostile environment of the modern university, with its bureaucratic routines, standardized formats of teaching and research, and institutional divisions of labour, did historians stop believing in this project” (118).

Unpacking this statement alone would require an entire issue of this journal but suffice it to say that Eskildsen is worried that historical research is under threat and that we might be returning to a period in which history merely serves philosophy or worse, ideologically-driven politics. I must admit that I share some of his concerns, and I think it is instructive and undoubtedly useful that we examine the history of historiography in ways that go beyond history’s self-serving claims to perfect objectivity or its utility in imperial conquest. We needed these critical inquiries, to be sure, but is there anything left to champion? Eskildsen thinks that there is and that we ought to appreciate the practices we have developed, albeit by particular people, in particular contexts. Our best service has been to insist on evidence, to make earnest and extensive attempts to find it and check it, and to try to teach our students to do the same.

The chapters of this short book, then, are explicitly devoted to the various sites of history-making: the lecture hall, the field, the princely archive, the art cabinet, the seminar. Each chapter, additionally, focuses on a single practitioner – many of whom were not exactly historians, as such a professional designation did not exist in the German lands until the nineteenth century. Some of the figures are well-known: Christian Thomasius, J. G. Herder, Leopold von Ranke; others mostly forgotten: Johann Peter von Ludewig, Christian Adolph Klotz, Georg Waitz. I am not sure that each case study ideally serves Eskildsen’s purposes; while the chapters on Thomasius and Ludewig do show their desire to improve their students by incorporating unorthodox religious voices, the chapter on Herder’s obsession with the libertine challenges of Klotz’s glyptography does not fully describe how historical practices were generated from the “art cabinet.” This chapter needed a bit less Klotz and more reflection on the claims of Arnaldo Momigliano (and many others since) that antiquarianism provided a hedge against enlightened philosophical history and a means of fact-checking dogmatic universal histories. But Eskildsen seems after something else in this chapter, namely Herder’s development of the claim that we cannot fully understand the cultures of the past or hope to revive them. They must be understood on their own terms, not simply used to justify our (in Klotz’s case, bad) behavior. Thinking this way is indeed a historical skill, one different from the earlier “*historia magistra vitae*” conceptions of the late Renaissance. Already partly embraced by Thomasius – for his own reasons – this historicist conception, Eskildsen wants to show, had a very precise origin in Herder’s rejection of Klotz’s lifestyle and claims. That Klotz was himself an outlier – whose open defenses of libertinism and homosexual love were shut down by the censors – makes this a bit of a muddy argument. But of course, historians have rarely been cultural radicals; their utility, I suppose this chapter is designed to show, lies in resisting presentisms of all kinds.

Eskildsen has previously written at length on Ranke, and this chapter (“The State Archive”) is perhaps the richest in the book. Underscoring the archive-lover’s penchant for cozying up to state officials who had the power to offer him access to the archival

material he sought, it does not paint Ranke in a flattering light. Given his purposes, Eskildsen might better have emphasized how many archives Ranke *did* get to make their files available and the knock-on effects of his getting in: surely it became harder for state officials to defend closed doors when Ranke's students and colleagues were singing the praises of open access? If Ranke made archival access a virtue states bureaucrats could not defy, he deserves even more credit among us than his purported pursuit of objectivity earned him in past decades.

As noted above, Eskildsen, happily, draws on the work of early modern historians Anthony Grafton, Hans Peter Reill, Lorraine Daston, Steven Shapin, and others; this is a real strength and makes this an innovative endeavor. But I wonder about some of Eskildsen's choices: why focus only on the German states, when the world of early modern Latinity was so cosmopolitan? Herder, too, consumed vast amounts of French and English materials; Winkelmann learned most of his connoisseurship in Rome. Why is there no chapter on the museum, where so much nineteenth-century knowledge about the past was made? Perhaps the academies of science deserve a look-in, or the editorial offices of journals? Why no discussion of ancient or biblical history, where so many were active and debates over sources were so fierce and so very long-winded? Why no Chladenius, Schlözer, Heeren, Gervinus, Droysen, Treitschke? Why no discussion of chronology or geography as vital skills? And why stop in 1900? We will have to hope that there is a sequel in the making.

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## **Subjektivierungen und Kriminalitätsdiskurse im 18. Jahrhundert. Preußische Soldaten zwischen Norm und Praxis**

**By Janine Rischke-Neß. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2021. Pp. 473. Hardcover €60.00. ISBN: 978-3847111641.**

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Janine Rischke-Neß's doctoral dissertation is an exploration of Prussian military justice in the early eighteenth century. After the lengthy introduction (65 pages), the book lays out the institutional framework of Prussian military justice (chapter 2), identifies typical areas of conflict (chapter 3), explores seven case studies (chapter 4), and then discusses various punishments and the "restoration of order" (chapter 5).

The introduction places this study in the context of earlier studies of cultural norms such as honor, group identity, deviance, discipline, criminality, etc. The author convincingly asserts that the legal testimonies and documents under study are ego-documents, and that the accused, their accusers, and various witnesses were aware of legal discourse and strategically shaped their statements to their own ends. (This reviewer expected a nod here to Natalie Zemon Davis's classic *Fiction in the Archives* [1990], but it is never mentioned.) The author extrapolates the well-established subjective nature of early modern justice to the military, pointing to familiar extenuating and exacerbating factors such as social standing, familial connections, physical appearance, everyday violence, drunkenness, and