Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century

This original volume seeks to get behind the surface of political events and to identify the forces which shaped politics and culture from 1680 to 1840 in Germany, France and Great Britain. The contributors, all leading specialists in the field, explore critically how ‘culture’, defined in the widest sense, was exploited during the ‘long eighteenth century’ to buttress authority in all its forms and how politics infused culture. Individual essays explore topics ranging from the military culture of central Europe through the political culture of Germany, France and Great Britain, music, court intrigue and diplomatic practice, religious conflict and political ideas, the role of the Enlightenment, to the very new dispensations which prevailed during and after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic watershed. The book will be essential reading for all scholars of eighteenth-century European history.

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Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century

Edited by
Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms
For Tim Blanning
## Contents

**Preface**  
* page ix  

**List of contributors**  
* xi

1 Introduction: culture and power during the long eighteenth century  
  JAMES J. SHEEHAN  
  * 1

2 When culture meets power: the Prussian coronation of 1701  
  CHRISTOPHER CLARK  
  * 14

3 Military culture in the Reich, c. 1680–1806  
  PETER H. WILSON  
  * 36

4 Diplomatic culture in old regime Europe  
  HAMISH SCOTT  
  * 58

5 Early eighteenth-century Britain as a confessional state  
  ANDREW C. THOMPSON  
  * 86

6 ‘Ministers of Europe’: British strategic culture, 1714–1760  
  BRENDAH SIMMS  
  * 110

7 Confessional power and the power of confession: concealing and revealing the faith in Alpine Salzburg, 1730–1734  
  JAMES VAN HORN MELTON  
  * 133

8 The transformation of the *Aufklärung*: from the idea of power to the power of ideas  
  JOACHIM WHALEY  
  * 158

9 Culture and *Bürgerlichkeit* in eighteenth-century Germany  
  MAIKEN UMBACH  
  * 180
Contents

10 The politics of language and the languages of politics: Latin and the vernaculars in eighteenth-century Hungary
R. J. W. Evans 200

11 ‘Silence, respect obedience’: political culture in Louis XV’s France
Julian Swann 225

12 Joseph II, petitions and the public sphere
Derek Beales 249

13 The court nobility and the origins of the French Revolution
Munro Price 269

14 The French Revolution and the abolition of nobility
William Doyle 289

15 Foreign policy and political culture in later eighteenth-century France
Gary Savage 304

16 Power and patronage in Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito and Die Zauberflöte
Mark Berry 325

17 Between Louis and Ludwig: from the culture of French power to the power of German culture, c. 1789–1848
Emma L. Winter 348

Index 369
Preface

In April 2007, Professor T. C. W. Blanning – Tim to all his friends and now to the scholarly community as well – will celebrate his sixty-fifth birthday, improbable as this will seem. In order to mark this occasion, to celebrate his enormous contribution to the study of modern European history, and to convey a sense of the immense regard in which he is universally held, it was decided to publish a volume of essays dedicated to him and written by some of his many friends and admirers. It takes its cue and also its starting point from Tim’s celebrated *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660–1789* (Oxford University Press, 2002). Contributors were asked to extend the perspectives of that seminal book, and to explore critically how ‘culture’ (defined in the widest sense) was exploited during the ‘long eighteenth century’ to buttress authority in all its forms and how politics infused culture. Coherence was also sought by a decision to concentrate on the period – the long eighteenth century – which has been the principal focus of Tim’s own scholarship and on the areas which his work has particularly illuminated: the German-speaking lands, France and Britain. While this, together with the period selected for consideration, had the unfortunate effect of excluding some friends and colleagues who would have been obvious contributors, it was inevitable given the realities of present-day publishing. Tim’s renowned openness to all subjects and all approaches encouraged us to produce a volume which fully reflected the various uses to which the concept of ‘culture’ has been put.

The essays published in this volume were first given as papers at a highly enjoyable conference held in Cambridge in September 2005, and were revised for publication in the light of discussions and comments at this gathering. We are grateful to the contributors for their willingness to revise their essays in the interests of the volume’s overall coherence and for their remarkable ability to deliver their essays by the due date: a tribute, in many case, to the good habits inculcated by Tim’s doctoral supervision. The conference was funded by the German Historical Institute, London, and we are deeply indebted to its Director, Professor Hagen Schulze, for
this extraordinary generosity, which is only the latest example of the Institute’s remarkable support of scholarship in the British academic world. Its Deputy, Dr Benedikt Stuchtey, very kindly attended the Cambridge conference. The Trevelyan Fund of the University of Cambridge also made a generous grant to cover the travel expenses of the participants. At the Press we are indebted to Bill Davies who did much to get the project off the ground and to his successor Michael Watson who smoothed the passage to publication. Nancy Bailey has applied her electronic wizardry to the production of a finished manuscript, while Christopher Riches made the Index: we are grateful to them both. In the planning stages, Derek Beales provided important advice, while Nicky Blanning furnished decisive, if for a time covert, assistance, and Tom, Lucy and Molly kept us all enchanted. We owe most to Tim, however, both for providing the excuse for this academic stock-taking on Blanning’s eighteenth century, and for his scholarship and celebrated generosity, both professional and personal, from which all the contributors have frequently benefited. Celebration of his birthday is accompanied with our best wishes for many more years of personal happiness and scholarly productivity.

Hamish Scott
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List of contributors