

## Review

Benjamin van der Linde, *Das Leibregiment der friesischen Statthalter. Kriegsgeschichte, Offizierslaufbahnen und militärische Lebenswelten in den Garnisonsstädten Leeuwarden, Groningen und Emden, 1666-1752* (Historische Forschungen Band 113), Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 2016, 580 pp. ISBN 978-3-428-14899-8.



This work, focussing on the *Lijffregiment* of infantry of the Frisian stadholders, originally was a PhD-dissertation from the Christian-Albrechts-University in Kiel, defended in 2014. It was completed under the supervision of Olaf Mörke and Volker Seresse. Van der Linde's central questions concern the nature of the relations between civilians and soldiers and how these were given shape in Early Modern Frisia in the decades around 1700. Van der Linde first examines degrees of friendship and fellowship versus conflicts and violence and to which extent the actors were aware of the difference. Next, the author looks at the differences between the civil and military domains on a more abstract level by investigating the inner workings of institutions, offices and the ways in which they were interwoven. Both topics are regarded from the perspective of the army. Additionally, the author aims to chart the development and structure of the Early

Modern Frisian army and to provide general knowledge on the military history of the Netherlands.

Van der Linde explicitly avows his allegiance to the so-called New Military History. Hence his indebtedness to social, cultural and gender history. More specifically his method is, in his own words, based on historical anthropology with influence of cultural history. The first three chapters provide an introduction, including a description of the history of the regiment and its garrison towns (Leeuwarden, Groningen and Emden). The analysis

of the matters outlined above follows in three thematic chapters. The first of these is legal history and deals with military law and its institutions, notably the position and role of the courts martial in the garrison towns. The second is a collective biography of the regiment's officers, investigating their role in the regiment and how they moved between military and civil spheres. The final chapter is microhistory and deals with the common soldiers and their life with the civilians in the garrison towns.

Van der Linde shows that the courts martial struggled with other legal authorities with regard to the jurisdiction over soldiers. He suggests the existence of a strong desire in the eighteenth century to separate the civil and military legal domains by professionalization. In the end, military personnel resorted only under military law. At the same time very few civil cases were heard in courts martial from the second half of seventeenth century. Yet, according to the author, soldiers and civilians did not live in separate worlds. The chapter on the officers focusses on the captains. Van der Linde makes clear that money, descent, being Frisian and above all being noble were of supreme importance. Officers resided high on the social ladder and had close ties with the stadholder. The final chapter argues that common soldiers and civilians generally lived together without antagonism. Conflicts were occasional and occurred mostly when the fulfilment of basic needs was disturbed. Both sides knew how to solve conflicts informally, or bring them to civil- or military courts. None of this however, applied to life outside the garrison towns.

Van der Linde's book is a thorough and meticulous study. The author is a fine scholar and his conclusions are clear, valid and well argued. He is well aware of the possibilities and pitfalls of his sources. There is, however, room for some critical remarks. This work contains a wealth of details. The author, as noted above, has stated that charting the development and structure of the Early Modern Frisian army and providing general knowledge on the military history of the Netherlands, is an additional aim of his work. Occasionally it seems that this allows him to include almost anything he has unearthed touching on his subject. And so the work contains details on uniforms, fortifications, descriptions of the guard and guard duty. The reader even learns that one of the gates at Emden contained a 'Klappe', a flap in the gate allowing communication without opening the gate itself. However, these matters have no bearing on the central argument and tend to make the book over complete.

Another issue concerns the positioning of Van der Linde's own research within the existing historiography, or rather the lack thereof. He justifies this by making the point that a European comparison of his subject is partly hampered for want of similar research, and partly because existing studies of Early Modern German territories are not per se relevant for the Netherlands. Here and there Van der Linde does engage other research. When dealing with the billeting of soldiers for instance, he aims to test Ralf Pröve's thesis, mainly outlined in his 1999 article 'Dimension und Reichweite der Paradigmen "Sozialdisziplinierung" und "Militarisierung" im Heiligen Römischen Reich', that this was a means of the authorities, through which civilians and soldiers disciplined each other. In the chapter on the officers there is some comparison with Prussia. Still, this reviewer was left with the sense that the broader frame of Van der Linde's research, creating ties with existing historiography, could have been more complete. It is not until the final three pages of his work, almost as an afterthought, that Van der Linde summarily attempts to relate his findings to some wider debates. Here he refers to Jonathan Israel, Pröve again, and Maarten Prak. To the latter's notion of

the Dutch Republic as a 'bourgeois society' Van der Linde adds the valid observation that it was also 'eine militärisch geprägte Gesellschaft.' Israel's handbook on the Dutch Republic is employed to refer to the debate on the Military Revolution. Surely there are more relevant and up-to-date publications on this topic.

None of this, however, should detract from the value of this meticulous study. It is a significant contribution to our understanding of the relations between soldiers and civilians in Early Modern Europe.

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