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Review of *The Household Knights of Edward III: Warfare, Politics and Kingship in Fourteenth-Century England* by Matthew Hefferan

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that up until the end of the Napoleonic period, warfare was largely constrained by state finance, animal power, and the need to go on the offensive because of logistical constraints in supplying stationary armies. Practical application of logistics was widely uneven between nations and even the great Napoleon had three campaigns that failed because of logistics.(p 96) As widely acknowledged by many military historians, Black discusses how the industrial revolution brought significant changes to the size of militaries, weapons development, speed of movement, range, and capacity, all of which generated new problems that required time for problem solving to overcome.(p 115) These problems manifest in the industrialised warfare of the First and Second World War in which manufacturing capacity and alliances played key roles.

Black's use of sources is quite broad and is primarily a review of the secondary English literature except for the two chapters that fall within his temporal specialty of the 1700s. Here he cites primary source documents to support his points. While Black references titles right up to 2021, he does however miss a few 20th century war sources including Martin van Creveld's *Hitler's Strategy 1940-1941: the Balkan Clue* (1973), Bob Carruther's *Panzer Rollen* (2019), Kenneth L Privatsky's *Logistics in the Falklands War* (2105), and van Creveld's expanded First World War section in the second edition of *Supplying War* (2004). The other weakness is that Black has a tendency of introducing more recent 20th century examples into previous centuries' discussions to show continuity or contrasts. This technique requires the reader to pay close attention to prevent getting lost in thinking about the more recent conflict. It appears Black is sometimes caught between wanting to discuss themes or subjects versus a temporal approach. These minor caveats aside, Black has done a great service to the military history field providing what will surely become a new classic on military logistics.

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**Matthew Hefferan, *The Household Knights of Edward III: Warfare, Politics and Kingship in Fourteenth-Century England*. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2021. xiv + 336 pp. 2 maps. ISBN: 978-1-783275649 (hardback). Price £75.**

The abundance of surviving records from fourteenth-century England continues to fuel a corresponding wealth of publications on England's military history during that period.

## REVIEWS

Boydell's estimable 'Warfare in History' series seems to have a near monopoly on them, with just one recent addition being Mollie Madden's *The Black Prince and the Grand Chevauchée* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2018; reviewed in *BJMH*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2019). Hefferan's *The Household Knights of Edward III* owes a special debt to Andrew Ayton's ground-breaking study, *Knights and Warhorses: Military Service and the English Aristocracy Under Edward III* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1994; incorrectly cited here as 1999).

Hefferan's monograph analyses Edward III's household military retinue. Part royal protection detail, part standing army, part royal political faction, his household knights were, as elsewhere in Europe before and afterwards, a loyal and mobile force ready to move into offensive and defensive action quickly and decisively on direct instructions of the king. An understanding of their roles is all the more important as Edward III was such a successful and renowned military monarch – one of the great warrior kings of England. Hefferan's meticulous study of Edward's knightly household is therefore to be greatly welcomed.

Hefferan clearly sets out in his introduction what the book addresses: 'How and why were household knights retained? Who was chosen to serve in such a capacity? What functions did they perform? And what rewards did they receive for their service?' (p. 1). The introduction offers both the historical context and a very useful critical historiography of the royal affinity in medieval England. Here, Hefferan makes the convincing case for Edward III being a canny political operator as well as an outstanding general, 'an extremely capable medieval monarch who was skilled at aligning the nobility's interests with his own, both at home and abroad, which allowed him to restore the reputation of the crown after the disastrous reign of Edward II' (p. 11). Of course, paramount in this restoration of monarchical prestige was the king's military victories, Hefferan arguing that this coincided with private military retinues becoming the central element in Edward's armies.

The book is in four parts. Part one – 'The Knightly Household' – examines the mechanics of Edward's military household with a clarification of the correct terminology to be applied (this is particularly helpful as this specialised area is quite a taxonomical minefield). Most interestingly here, we see how the knights viewed their collective identity – which Hefferan logically argues existed in 'a strong collective sentiment' (p. 30) – and how this developed, surviving 'a time of significant transition' (p. 45) for the household knights after 1360. He then explores prosopographically the identities of the household knights and what drew them into service; where possible lengths of individual service is determined. At least 284 men served in the household during Edward's reign, the highest number at any one time being ninety-four during the spectacularly successful Crécy campaign. This dropped to just twenty-two in 1353, serving as a political barometer (as garrisoning levels also did). Overall, 'stability was a

key characteristic of the knightly household' (p. 55) with many long-serving knights providing 'a core of seasoned household veterans' (p. 78).

Part two – 'Household Knights at War' – shows the household in its most vital and primary function of military activity. This entailed not only their dramatic involvement in direct combat, but the no-less important logistical elements: recruiting, supplying and financing field (and sea) forces. While all this has previously been covered in great depth for Edward's reign, Hefferan adds to our knowledge by here emphasising the roles of the household knights. He rightly notes that the fourteenth-century's military "'revolution" was a slow one' (p. 94), but still takes a decidedly late medieval view on the matter, eschewing plenty of earlier medieval evidence offering an alternative take. In all this, the household basically continued to serve up to 1360 much as it always had done in the previous two centuries.

Part three – 'Household Knights and Politics' – explores governmental aspects, Hefferan emphasising Edward's ability in this sphere and his household's considerable contribution to his success, despite unavoidable frictions with the political community beyond his affinity. Hefferan considers this aspect as being of central importance to a full evaluation of Edward's kingship; despite occasional 'inevitable miscalculations' (p. 202) (e.g., the parliamentary crisis of 1340-1341), the king displayed great sensitivity and skill in utilising the household knights toward his political ends.

Finally, part four covers the rewards of service in a solitary chapter. While these were obviously substantial in terms of land, marriage, gifts, wardships, annuities, official positions and the profits of war, the best years for household knights were earlier in the reign, when land grants were more plentifully distributed. Nonetheless, as one would expect and Hefferan confirms, 'Edward III's household knights were well rewarded for their time spent in service' (p. 257). No less important, as is stressed in this section, was the prestige and honour that accompanied royal service.

Hefferan delves exhaustively into the records of Edward's knightly household which exist for just a half of the king's fifty-year reign. This book therefore offers as comprehensive an overview of the topic as we are likely to see. It makes an extremely valuable contribution to our understanding of war and politics in late medieval England and Europe while simultaneously demonstrating Edward III's mastery of kingship.

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