

Introduction

The ‘Dark Alliance’ between Religion and War*

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On the eve of the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–13) Daniel Defoe authored a pamphlet on the *Present Prospect of a Religious War in Europe* (1701).¹ It was devoted to the international threat to Protestantism. In spirited prose the polemicist warned against the rising tide of Catholic aggression:

We are allarm'd at every step made by our Powerful Neighbours ... We can see Dangers to our Trade and Shipping ... [we] commence Treaties, settle Alliances, and join in Confederacies and Guarranties, for the Preservation of the Ballance of Power and Trade ... But ... Where is the League or Alliance in Europe ... for the Preservation and Defence of the Protestant Religion? The Concern of Religion is not the meanest Article in the Peace of Europe.²

Looking back on the recent history of Europe, it was easy to see that ‘the Liberty the Protestants enjoy, has, next to God’s Goodness, been the Purchase of the Sword’.³ Defoe argued for a Protestant union in Europe to confront a popish coalition. A religious war was at hand and England had better arm herself well, for ‘If we re-examine the Present State of Europe, we shall find it, as to the Interest of Religion, in worse Circumstances on several Accounts, than it ever yet was since the Treaties of Munster and Westphalia’.⁴ Around the turn of the eighteenth century the memory of religious conflict was still vivid, and apparently the prospect of it real, and increasingly so.

* The phrase ‘Dark Alliance’ of war and religion was coined by Mark Juergesmeyer. I wish to thank Tony Claydon, David Trim and Charles-Edouard Levillain for commenting on this introduction, and Kate Delaney for proofreading the text. Any errors are, of course, entirely my own.

¹ [Daniel Defoe], *The Danger of the Protestant Religion Considered from the Present Prospect of a Religious War in Europe* (1701).

² Defoe, *Danger*, p. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

I

Defoe's argument that most European post-Reformation conflicts had been wars of religion and that these continued to occur long after 1648 may strike the modern reader as peculiar, as it is often argued that wars of religion came to an end with the Peace of Westphalia caesura of 1648. The religious settlement confirmed the *cuius regio, eius religio* concept as stipulated by the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which domesticated religion as a political factor and pushed it out of the international arena. Consequently, the question as to whether such religious wars were fought after 1648 has been largely ignored by historians.⁵ By the close of the seventeenth century, a new international system of collective guarantees determined by the desire to maintain the Balance of Power had emerged from the ashes of the failed post-Westphalian system. Foreign policy now operated under mechanical laws derived from the Newtonian world view, imbuing it with a distinctly secular flavour. Neither did the mercantilist wars that were fought between the Dutch and the English suggest that religion could have anything to do with foreign policy: quite the contrary, it seemed.

Such an interpretation makes a neat pattern: wars driven by great power interests succeeded religious conflicts after the spiritual stalemate of the Thirty Years War. The religious wars of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries gave way to the secular, commercial and Balance of Power conflicts of the late seventeenth century. In this view, there was a linear, inevitable decline of religion as a political factor in the international arena.

The model of an entirely secular post-Westphalian system has long been current among historians moulded in the realist school. Conflicts were essentially caused by the thirst for military, political or economic power. This interpretation of international relations, which hinged on the view that 1648 marked a turning point, has shaped the thinking of generations of historians and seems still dominant among political scientists today. Admittedly, a number of scholars have drawn attention to the continuing influence of religion in international relations, but with caveats.⁶

In this view, the Peace of Westphalia was therefore a watershed, dividing the more enlightened age of reason and interest of state from that of religious wars. These could be seen to have started with the Knights War (1522), initiated by the disgruntled baron Franz von Sickingen, and the much more serious Peasant War (1524–25), which drew inspiration from the ideas of the radical-Protestant Thomas Müntzer. Religious conflict in the Holy Roman Empire culminated in the First Schmalkaldic War (1546–47), pitting the Emperor's forces against a Protestant

⁵ But see e.g. Philip Benedict, 'Religion and Politics in Europe, 1500–1700', in Kaspar von Greyerz, Kim Siebenhüner et al. (eds), *Religion und Gewalt. Konflikte, Rituale, Deutungen (1500-1800)* (Göttingen, 2006), pp. 155–73.

⁶ E.g. J. McManners, 'Religion and the relations of church and state', in J.S. Bromley (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History VI* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 119 ff.

league led by John Frederick of Saxony. It was the Second Schmalkaldic War (1552–55) that ultimately led to the religious settlement of 1555. Meanwhile Switzerland did not escape conflict; in 1529 and 1531 the Zwinglian and Catholic cantons clashed in the Wars of Kappel. If these conflicts were mainly inspired by the emergence of Lutheran and Zwinglian polities, the rise of Calvinism around the mid-sixteenth century would result in a new wave of religious struggle, most notably during the prolonged French Wars of Religion between 1562 and 1598. Around the same time, in 1566, the Dutch Revolt was precipitated by the Calvinist Iconoclastic Fury and would result in the establishment of a Calvinist state breaking loose from the Spanish Empire. The third and last wave of religious conflict occurred during the first half of the seventeenth century. With the erosion of the settlement of Augsburg, the Holy Roman Empire slipped into renewed conflict in the Thirty Years War (1618–48). The intervention of foreign powers such as France, Denmark and Sweden, and its merging with the Eighty Years War between the Dutch Republic and Spain, made the last war of religion also the largest, plunging the European continent into disaster. The Peace of Westphalia coincided with the end of the English Civil War which could be viewed as a conflict between Arminians and Puritans.

Past historians have drained these classic wars of religion of their religious content. Instead, these conflicts have been mostly re-interpreted within frameworks of national historiography, as struggles for independence and the break-up of medieval empires into nation states. In this view, the very concept of a religious war is thrown into doubt, and it seems symptomatic that there is currently no satisfactory study available containing an overview of these wars of religion as a European phenomenon.⁷ To most historians, these struggles for power merely occurred 'under a cloak of religion'. This thoroughly realist view of international relations had its genesis back into the nineteenth century and is still dominant.⁸

However, during the 1970s and 1980s revisionist historians increasingly questioned this view, and there have been ongoing attempts to 'put religion back into the wars of religion', as Mack P. Holt has put it.⁹ These attempts were

⁷ Cf. Kaspar von Greyerz and Kim Siebenhüner, 'Introduction', in: Greyerz, Siebenhüner et al. (eds), *Religion und Gewalt*, pp. 9–10.

⁸ It is instructive to browse through J.H.M. Salmon (ed.), *The French Wars of Religion. How important were religious factors?* (Boston, 1967), and Theodore K. Rabb (ed.), *The Thirty Years' War: Problems of Motive, Extent, and Effect* (Boston, 1964), collections of excerpts of seminal texts on the wars of religion. The classic text of James Westfall Thompson, 'The Domination of Political Motives', in Salmon (ed.), *The French Wars of Religion*, for instance, is unequivocally clear about the origins of the French Civil War. For the persistence of this view, see for instance Robert J. Knecht, *The French Religious Wars 1562–1598* (Botley, 2002).

⁹ Mack P. Holt, 'Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion', *FHS*, 18/2 (1993): 524–51. See also: Normal Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400–1536* (Oxford, 2002).

spearheaded by Natalie Zemon Davis's seminal essay on the French Wars of Religion.¹⁰ Drawing inspiration from sociology and cultural studies, the so-called New Cultural Historians argued that the key to re-establishing religion as a factor lay in redefining religion. Taking their cue from Emile Durkheim, they interpreted religion as a sociocultural phenomenon rather than a set of dogmatic beliefs. Religion, in this interpretative framework, formed 'communities of believers', and religious conflict therefore constituted a clash between communities rather than a fight over specified beliefs.¹¹ In this way, the French civil wars could be reinterpreted as religious conflicts. This cultural approach was less successful in Dutch historiography. According to Judith Pollmann, for instance, the French New Cultural model cannot easily be applied to the Dutch Revolt.¹² In Britain and Germany the 'cultural turn' has also been influential.¹³

One of the issues historians have had to deal with is the conceptual fragmentation of the wars of religion. Dutch revisionism, for instance, has largely concentrated on differentiation, in deconstructing 'the' Dutch Revolt as a monolithic and monocausal event.¹⁴ Revisionist historians have also rejected the meta-narratives of Marxism and Whiggism and focused on short-term causes of the English Civil War.¹⁵ The same can be said for the Thirty Years War. In the view of some historians the war should rather be seen as a conglomerate of conflicts and interests, some of which were religious in nature, others not. This makes the question as to the religious nature of 'the' Thirty Years War irrelevant. Ronald Asch, however, believes that the Thirty Years War was indeed a coherent set of conflicts, in which 'Confessional tensions were a decisive factor linking internal and domestic disputes'.¹⁶ Of course, the French wars of religion were a disconnected series of

¹⁰ Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-century France', *Past and Present*, 59 (1973): 51–91.

¹¹ This historiographical development is well discussed in Holt, 'Putting religion'.

¹² Judith Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands. Clerical leadership and Catholic violence, 1560–1585', *Past and Present*, 190 (2006): 83–120.

¹³ E.g. David J.B. Trim and Peter J. Balderstone, *Cross, Crown & Community. Religion, Government and Culture in Modern England 1400–1800* (Bern, 2004); Von Greyerz, Siebenhüner et al. (eds), *Religion und Gewalt*.

¹⁴ Cf. Henk van Nierop's remarks in the introduction of his *Het verraad van het Noorderkwartier. Oorlog, terreur en recht in de Nederlandse Opstand* (Amsterdam, 1999).

¹⁵ E.g. Conrad Russell (ed.), *The Origins of the English Civil War* (London and Basingstoke, 1973).

¹⁶ Ronald G. Asch, 'Religion, Law and Politics in the Holy Roman Empire', in idem, *The Thirty Years War. The Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618–1648* (London, 1997), p. 6.

conflicts anyway, but Mack P. Holt emphasised the religious nature of these wars which in his view lasted from 1562 until 1629, which suggests unity.¹⁷

As a result of these tendencies to deconstruct and reconstruct the wars historians have made an effort to be more precise about locating the religious factor. Who were religiously motivated to go to war, and what was their precise role in the events? This is well illustrated in a fine piece by Guido Marnef, in which he has drawn attention to the kaleidoscopic complexity of religion as a factor during the Dutch Revolt, in particular emphasising the wide local and regional variety and change over time.¹⁸ Henk van Nierop concluded that although 'the' Dutch Revolt was about religion and liberty, it should be established how, for whom, and what we precisely mean by these terms.¹⁹ John Morrill analysed the political situation at the eve of the English Civil War in order to establish precisely if and how religious militants were a decisive factor in its outbreak. He concludes that the English Civil War was the 'last war of religion' rather than a constitutional conflict.²⁰ Robert Bireley studied Jesuit confessors at the Catholic courts and how they influenced the course of events and interpreted the Thirty Years War as a clash between the Emperor and the powers of heresy.²¹

An important development has been the increase of comparative and transnational studies of religious conflicts, which in themselves are testimony to the usefulness of 'war of religion' as a concept in historiography. The quartocentenary commemoration of the Edict of Nantes, for instance, coincided with a seminal comparative volume of essays on aspects of the Dutch Revolt and French wars of religion.²² The concept of a 'Calvinist International' has done much to support a transnational perspective, as has increasing attention to confessional mercenaries in the international wars of religion.²³

A major development has been a growing awareness of the importance of religious and political discourse. Patrick Collinson suggested a 'convergence of religious rhetoric and martial enthusiasm in post-reformation England, another

¹⁷ Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562–1629* (New York, 1995).

¹⁸ Marnef, 'The Dynamics of Reformed Religious Militancy'.

¹⁹ Henk van Nierop, 'De troon van Alva. Over de interpretatie van de Nederlandse Opstand', *BMGN*, 110 (1995): 205–23.

²⁰ John Morrill, 'The religious context of the English Civil War', in idem, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (Harlow, 1993), p. 68. Cf. Anthony Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (London, 1981), pp. 417–18.

²¹ Robert Bireley, *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years War. Kings, Courts and Confessors* (Cambridge, 2003).

²² Benedict, *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War*.

²³ E.g. D.J.B. Trim, "'Fighting Jacob's Wars": The Employment of English and Welsh Mercenaries in the European Wars of Religion: France and the Netherlands, 1562–1610' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 2003); Menna Prestwich, *International Calvinism 1541–1715* (Oxford, 1985).

age of militant Christianity and of Christian militancy'.²⁴ Martin Schafner spoke of the 'discursive connection between religion and violence or war'.²⁵ According to Philip Benedict,

The shifting balance of political languages that increasingly valorized the power and interests of the state rather than the purity of God's ordinances ... led to a progressive diminution of the frequency of religious violence both within and between states over the course of the seventeenth century, even as confessional attachment increased in force and the language and rituals of Christian kingship remained highly potent.²⁶

Tony Claydon, Pasi Ihalainen and Donald Haks have more strongly emphasised the persistence of Protestant rhetoric in the legitimisation of war in England, the United Provinces and Sweden until well into the eighteenth century.²⁷ Historians have also focused on popular usage of language; Andrew Pettegree, for instance, studied militant songs of Protestants during the Reformation era.²⁸ In Germany relatively much attention has been paid to the role of law and legal language, as an instrument to transcend the religious dichotomy in the Holy Roman Empire.²⁹

If no consensus has emerged from all this about the religious nature of these conflicts, what does seem obvious is that, without returning to a classic interpretation of these wars as essentially religious in nature, religion is being reintegrated into the narratives of these conflicts. The relationship between war and religion was much more subtle and complex than historians have believed in the past, and new avenues and new approaches can both enrich and enhance our understanding of religious conflict. It seems possible, therefore, to rethink the

²⁴ Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England. Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Basingstoke and London, 1988), p. 129.

²⁵ Martin Schafner, 'Religion und Gewalt. Historiographische Verknüpfungen', in Greyerz, Siebenhüner et al. (eds), *Religion und Gewalt*, p. 31. Transl. from German.

²⁶ Benedict, 'Religion and Politics in Europe, 1500–1700', p. 172.

²⁷ Claydon, *Revolution*; idem, *Europe and the Making of England, 1660–1760* (Cambridge, 2007); idem, 'Protestantism, Universal Monarchy and Christendom in William's War Propaganda, 1689–1697', in Esther Mijers and David Onnekink (eds), *Redefining William III: Politics and Culture in International context* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 129–47; Pasi Ihalainen, *Protestant Nations Redefined. Changing perceptions of national identity in the rhetoric of the English, Dutch and Swedish public churches, 1685–1722* (Leiden and Boston, 2005); Donald Haks, 'Propaganda from the pulpit?', in Jan A.F. de Jongste and Augustus J. Veenendaal, Jr. (eds), *Anthonie Heinsius and the Dutch Republic 1688–1720. Politics, War, and Finance* (The Hague, 2002), pp. 89–115.

²⁸ Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 40–75. Cf. Von Greyerz and Siebenhüner, 'Introduction', in Greyerz, Siebenhüner et al. (eds), *Religion und Gewalt*, pp. 14–15.

²⁹ E.g. Asch, *The Thirty Years War*, pp. 9–26.

nature of post-1648 conflict. Historians are now already beginning to do so. The Huguenots and the Williamite wars remain an interesting case and have received ample attention in recent years, most notably from Matthew Glozier.³⁰ There has also been renewed attention to later Stuart England. Steven Pincus, for instance, argued that Cromwell's war (1652–54) and, more surprisingly, Charles II's war (1665–67) against the United Provinces were partly motivated or legitimised by religion rather than mercantile interests.³¹ Tony Claydon and Andrew Thompson even tracked religion as a factor in English foreign policy into the eighteenth century.³²

II

Did religion cease to play a role in international relations after 1648? Once this realist axiom is rejected, it is easy to see that it did not. In fact, post-Westphalian Europe was flooded with conflicts at least partly driven by religious considerations. Large-scale Protestant rebellion broke out in the Cévennes (1702–10) and Hungary (1703–11).³³ Switzerland was plagued by religious conflict again during the Villmergen wars in 1656 and 1712. Less well-known is the Russian-Orthodox Khmelnytsky Uprising in Catholic Poland-Lithuania (1648–54). These conflicts may have been peripheral, but they had a propensity to merge with international wars.

These conflicts should be considered against the background of upsurges in domestic religious tension and intolerance, most notably in France, where they culminated in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. By 1713 the French Calvinist church was all but destroyed. From the 1690s the Savoyard Waldensians were persecuted as well. In Poland-Lithuania the Calvinist church had been vibrant until it was curtailed by the Tarnogród Confederation (1715–16). The increased persecution under hostile Catholic monarchies led to Protestant responses to aid co-religionists abroad, for instance, through the establishment of international

³⁰ Matthew Glozier, *The Huguenot soldiers of William of Orange and the Glorious Revolution of 1688: the lions of Judah* (Brighton, 2002). Idem, *Marshal Schomberg, 1615–1690: 'the ablest soldier of his age': international soldiering and the formation of state armies in seventeenth-century Europe* (Brighton, 2005). Idem and David Onnekink (eds), *War, religion and service: Huguenot soldiering, 1685–1713* (Aldershot, 2007).

³¹ Steven C.A. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism. Ideology and the making of English foreign policy 1650–1668* (Cambridge 1996).

³² Claydon, *Europe and the Making of England*; Andrew C. Thompson, *Britain, Hanover and the Protestant Interest, 1688–1756* (Woodbridge, 2006).

³³ P.L. van Enk, *De opstand kwam uit de bergen. Een episode uit de strijd der Hugenoten. De oorlog in De Cevennen (1702–1710)* (Soesterberg, 2002); G. Murdock, *Calvinism on the Frontier, 1600–1660: International Calvinism and the Reformed Church in Hungary and Transylvania* (Oxford, 2000).

organisations. As Sugiko Nishikawa has shown, for instance, the activities of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (1698) point to the increasing need felt by English Protestants to support their co-religionists in Central and Eastern Europe.³⁴

Even if no international wars of religion broke out after Westphalia, this did not mean that the international system was entirely secularised as historians have often supposed. Undoubtedly the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the Glorious Revolution and the subsequent Irish Campaign cannot be well understood without acknowledging the rise of religious polarisation all over Europe.³⁵ Nor indeed can the Nine Years War (1688–97) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–13). These two conflicts cannot even be regarded as the last upsurges of religious contention: some historians have it that the Seven Years War (1756–63), pitting Protestant England and Prussia against Catholic powers, had a clearly religious dimension.³⁶

As Defoe's pamphlet suggests, the expectation of a war of religion could still generate a debate which would gather impetus, rather than fade out, towards the end of the seventeenth century. The 'dark alliance' between religion and war therefore was still prevalent around the turn of the eighteenth century. In the wake of the ascendancy of France as a 'universal monarchy', English and Dutch pamphleteers redefined national interests in religious terms. A French invasion necessarily entailed 'universal religion' and the consequent demise of the Protestant churches. To many, 'confessional Armageddon' seemed only one step away.³⁷ The fact that such fears can in retrospect be said to be exaggerated is to miss the obvious point that the threat was perceived by many as real.

Empirical evidence about these conflicts defies the implications of the traditional Westphalian model. If the decades after 1648 did witness a temporary pause in confessional conflict, from the 1680s on religious strife was unequivocally on the rise throughout Europe, which renders the significance of Westphalia as a watershed unconvincing. The apparent upsurge of religious contention as from about the 1680s puts further in doubt the assumptions inspired by the 'modernity thesis' that religion as a factor was in inevitable decline after 1648. In his introduction to the recent and timely *Encyclopedia of Religion and War*, Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez observed that:

... in the 1960s and 1970s scholars of religion, politics, theologians and social scientists had predicted that the importance of religion in public life would

³⁴ Sugiko Nishikawa, 'The SPCK in Defence of Protestant Minorities in Early Eighteenth-Century Europe', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 56/4 (2005): 730–48.

³⁵ E.g. Glozier, *The Huguenot Soldiers of William of Orange*.

³⁶ Manfred Schlenke, *England und das friderizianische Preussen 1740–1763* (Freiburg and Munich, 1963).

³⁷ Term used by W.R. Ward, *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648–1789* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 8.

gradually decrease as societies modernized, until ultimately religion became a private matter without power in the public domain.

Instead, Palmer argued that 'the close relationship between religion and war (as well as other forms of political violence) is neither unique to [a] period of history nor limited to any particular religion or geographical region'.³⁸ Even if such an interpretation may be essentially ahistorical,³⁹ it does open up vistas for rethinking the upsurge of religious violence towards the end of the seventeenth century. This development ties in nicely with the findings of historians such as Benjamin Kaplan, who established that there was no such thing as the 'rise' of toleration in the later seventeenth century, and that 'tolerance and intolerance often went together'.⁴⁰

Part of the problem in identifying the religious content of conflict may be that the literature does not provide a clear-cut definition of what constitutes a 'religious war'. The term is often used in a rather casual way and employed interchangeably with terms like 'confessional war' or 'holy war'. It invokes images of mindless, irrational religious fanaticism and is quickly dismissed the moment evidence of more calculated motivation is discovered in the primary sources, or when apparent religious interests seem to be 'polluted' by more worldly considerations, such as the expansion of power, military glory or economic gain. One of the problems of defining a 'war of religion' is establishing the nature of religion, an 'extremely complex and nebulous thing', and subsequently analyse its relationship to violence.⁴¹ This is not the place to do so, but several suggestions can be made about the definition of 'war of religion'. Perhaps the most common can be defined by referring to the 'Bainton thesis'. In his standard work *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*, Roland Bainton implicitly suggested that religious wars were by nature irrational, total and fanatical. The crusades initiated a new phase in religious fanaticism in Christendom (indeed, Bainton spoke of the 'crusading idea' rather than religious war) which reached a peak in the Reformation Wars and English Civil war. It faded away in the wake of modernity, when wars became more rational and controlled. Needless to say this thesis is immersed in the 'modernity thesis' and implies a sharp contrast between religion and modernity, but

³⁸ Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez (ed.), *Encyclopedia of religion and war* (New York, 2004), pp. xi, xii. This is not necessarily the conclusion of the author himself, however, who still considers Westphalia a turning point, as nation-states were now the primary agents of war.

³⁹ I owe this observation to Maarten Prak.

⁴⁰ Benjamin J. Kaplan, 'Coexistence, conflict, and the practice of toleration', in R. Po-chia Hsia (ed.), *The Blackwell companion to the history of the Reformation world* (Oxford etc., 2003), p. 502.

⁴¹ Benedict, 'Religion and Politics in Europe, 1500–1700', p. 160.

it remains influential.⁴² Theorists such as John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson have suggested more subtle definitions of religious war. Kelsay openly rejects the Bainton thesis, especially with regard to its claims that religious conflicts are total by nature. In his *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions*, Johnson argues that (what he called) holy war is rather a variety within the ‘just war’ tradition, and should be accordingly studied as a calculated and rational conflict for religious purposes.⁴³

Konrad Reppen looks at this matter from a different angle. According to him, it is difficult to establish religious ‘motivation’ of a conflict, and the historian should rather focus on legitimisation in the form of war proclamations.⁴⁴ Not everyone agrees. Patrick Collinson suggested that religion can play a threefold role in connection to violence: it can precipitate violence, it can legitimate violence and it can unite otherwise divided ‘elements’.⁴⁵ Kaspar von Greyerz and Kim Siebenhüner added two categories by suggesting that religious ritual and meaning [*Deutung*] should also be studied in relationship to war.⁴⁶

This opens up another theme, one in which rhetoric and image are concerned with religious conflict. In the realist view, religion and ideology were regarded as quarries for rhetoric providing pretexts rather than sources of inspiration or even causes for conflict. In this view contemporaries, raised and living in a world in which the mental atmosphere was saturated with religion, used religious language to express themselves. However, this is to fundamentally misunderstand the function of language as now argued by scholars moulded in the ideas of the ‘Cambridge School’. John Pocock and Quentin Skinner have underlined the significance of political language and rhetorical strategies for the actual practice of politics.⁴⁷ Rather than focus on whether religious legitimisation of war is ‘true’ or ‘untrue’, we should focus on discursive strategies in which such legitimisation is employed, its intended effect and the way in which it could lead to a reformulation

⁴² Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace. A historical survey and critical re-evaluation* (Nashville, 1978).

⁴³ James T. Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions* (Pennsylvania, 2003); John Kelsay, *Islam and War. A Study in Comparative Ethics* (Louisville, 1993), pp. 43–55.

⁴⁴ Konrad Reppen, ‘What is a “Religious War”?’ in E.I. Kouri and Tom Scott (eds), *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe* (London, 1987), pp. 311–28.

⁴⁵ Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England*, p. 134.

⁴⁶ Von Greyerz and Siebenhüner, ‘Introduction’, in Greyerz, Siebenhüner et al. (eds), *Religion und Gewalt*.

⁴⁷ See for instance Quentin Skinner, ‘The principles and practice of opposition: the case of Bolingbroke versus Walpole’, in N. McKendrick (ed.), *Historical perspectives: studies in English thought and society in honour of J.H. Plumb* (London, 1974), pp. 93–128. I owe this reference to Julian Hoppit. John Pocock argued that ‘politics itself [is] a language-system and language itself [is] a political system’, in ‘Verbalizing a Political Act. Towards a Politics of Speech’, *Political Theory*, 1 (1973): 28.

of policy. Such an approach is well demonstrated, for instance, in Tony Claydon's book on Williamite propaganda.⁴⁸ He argued that for many pamphleteers English foreign policy came to be seen within a religious context, as the English nation sought to redefine its own identity as Protestant in the face of the Catholic threat from France.

Nor should we forget the importance of the representation and iconography of religious violence. Visual and textual propaganda can be grouped in a common interpretative framework through what one historian has described as the 'rhetoric of the image'.⁴⁹ Images of the persecutions of French Huguenots, for instance, evoked past memories of the cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition, part and parcel of the Black Legend. Both textual and visual sources could foster the perception of the 'otherness' of the confessional antagonist. Such sources form an integrated politico-religious polemic, which did not merely reflect political and social realities, but also reshaped them and therefore incited renewed religious conflict.

Historical self-perception was formulated (and reformulated) and led to a construction of national identities, rooted in a (perceived) national past, frequently formed around (perceived) religious values. The development of national identities occurred in tandem with the 'construction' of the enemy. During the later Middle Ages Poland-Lithuania and Hungary had identified themselves as an '*antemurale christianitas*', a bulwark of Christendom against paganism, Eastern orthodoxy and Islam.⁵⁰ This may account for the continuously militant religious rhetoric during the confessional period, in which Calvinists in both Hungary and Poland-Lithuania were seen as a threat to Catholicism. This led to conflict as late as the early eighteenth century in both states. Such religiously charged militancy had also been current in Spain ever since the conclusion of the *Reconquista*. The long struggle against the Ottomans by the Austrian and Spanish branches of the House of Habsburg may have also strengthened Catholic self-awareness.

⁴⁸ Claydon, *Revolution*.

⁴⁹ According to Bob Scribner, this is 'a structured system for conveying the intended meaning of visual propaganda'. Robert W. Scribner, *For the sake of simple folk: popular propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 244. According to Peter Burke, a 'visual turn' took place in the seventeenth century during which imagery came to be regarded as an authoritative source. Peter Burke, 'Images as evidence in seventeenth-century Europe', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 64/2 (2003), pp. 273–96. I owe this reference to Michiel van Groesen.

⁵⁰ Jakub Basista, 'The Idea of *Antemurale Christianitas* in Polish political thought in the second half of the seventeenth century', paper delivered at the conference *Foreign Policy, Religious Conflict and Public Discourse in post-Westphalian Europe (1648–1713)* held in Apeldoorn 7/8 January 2005; Nora Berend, *At the gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and 'pagans' in medieval Hungary, c. 1000–c. 1300* (Cambridge, 2001).

Narratives of past religious conflict cause memory to play a significant role in the perception of situations.⁵¹ The memory of the Spanish Inquisition, if only through the development of the Black Legend, was still strong. In England, this was conceptualised within the framework of popery. From within, Jesuits attempted to undermine the Protestant nation, as they had done during the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 and the Popish Plot in 1681. From the outside, the Catholic forces, such as the Armada, were gathering to destroy the English state. This paradigm is illustrated, for instance, by a beautiful embroidered cushion now preserved in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, showing the benign eye of Providence watching over the defeat of the Armada and the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot.⁵² William III crossed the Channel in 1688 thanks to the Protestant Wind, which had also demonstrated its providential quality in 1588. He landed in England on the anniversary of Gunpowder Day.⁵³ The paradigm thus reinforced itself, amplified, and events which had taken place decades or even centuries ago could still be construed as having an impact on current events, or as Michael Ignatieff has argued: unresolved conflicts from the past were locked in the ‘eternal present’.⁵⁴ Conflict in the later seventeenth century was then interpreted within this paradigm. The English and the Dutch relived their struggle against Catholic Spain in the wars against Catholic France.⁵⁵

III

The purpose of this volume is to problematise the current consensus and reconceptualise the relationship between war, foreign policy and religion after 1648. It is not the contention of this volume that a war *of* religion could or did occur after 1648. Rather the theme is war *and* religion, which leaves the contributors to redefine this relationship. Some chapters clearly challenge the idea that religion ceased to play a role in war and foreign policy. Others may confirm the view that religion could not play a dominant role after 1648, but will seek to re-evaluate its significance and thereby redefine religious influences on policy after 1648. In

⁵¹ For an interesting case of re-using the memory of religious violence, see A. Knobler, ‘Holy Wars, Empires, and the Portability of the Past: The Modern Uses of Medieval Crusades’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48/2 (2006): 293–325.

⁵² Reproduced as Image IDWGL 1028 by the Bridgeman Art Library, <http://www.bridgeman.co.uk>.

⁵³ J.I. Israel and G. Parker, ‘Of Providence and Protestant Winds: The Spanish Armada of 1588 and the Dutch Armada of 1688’, in J.I. Israel (ed.), *The Anglo-Dutch Moment. Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World Impact* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 335–63.

⁵⁴ Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior’s Honour* (London, 1999), p. 186.

⁵⁵ E.g. Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London, 1991), chs 2 and 4, *passim*.

line with the above, equal attention will be paid to actual warfare and politics, and discourse and rhetoric; implicitly, this volume contends that these cannot be understood separately but are intermingled in whatever complex way.

A theme of this magnitude cannot be comprehensively covered in a single volume, and this publication should be regarded as an attempt to rekindle the debate and broach some relevant issues. Nevertheless, focus and coherence is provided by (1) a clear central theme and argument which authors may adhere to, challenge, or problematise; (2) a limited period (1648–1713); (3) a geographical focus on Western Europe: France, Spain, Britain and the United Provinces.

Attention will be paid to both Catholic and Protestant states, and to popular views and discourse as well as the actual conduct of war. The cultural, political, military and religious historians who have contributed chapters to this volume were asked to engage directly with the central aim of gauging the importance of religious influences on and perceptions of foreign policy and war after the conclusion of Peace of Westphalia (1648).

The first four chapters deal with the formulation of national foreign policies in four countries: France, Spain, Britain and the United Provinces. Paul Sonnino analyses the foreign policy of Louis XIV during and after the Dutch War of 1672. Louis combined his religious convictions with more mundane and rationalistic considerations. Since religion itself was also part of reason of state, however, politics and religion cannot successfully be separated. Sonnino seeks to understand the complexities of their relationship in his case study. An analysis of Louis's policy needs to adopt an integrated approach to his attitude towards Jansenists, his relationship with the Papacy and his war in the Netherlands.

The nature of Spanish foreign policy is studied by Christopher Storrs, who shows that it was still influenced by religious factors after 1648, both in its formulation (theological advisory boards) and inspiration (the sustained influence of messianic and providential views). At the same time, other than the protection of Catholic minorities abroad, the new realities in Europe precluded overt religious conflict, since Catholic France was the most obvious antagonist. Remnants of Catholic influences are most likely to be found in Spanish foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the African Muslim states and the New World.

The Protestant content of British foreign policy during and after the Restoration Period is the subject of Andrew Thompson's chapter. He argues that the rise of Balance of Power thinking by no means implied a secularisation of international relations because 'Within British foreign policy discourse the balance of power was one of the main bulwarks through which the Protestant interest in Europe could be supported'. Following the complexities of British foreign policy during the Restoration, the dramatic shift of 1688 and the period leading up to the Georgian era, Thompson finds that the balance of power remained at least partially determined by concerns for the fate of Protestantism in Europe.

The chapters by David Onnekink focuses on the Dutch Republic. Whereas historians have often argued that its foreign policy was essentially determined by economic and pragmatic considerations, he argues that it was imbued with

religious considerations in the period leading up to the Nine Years War. Analysing the views of policymakers and diplomats in 1688, this chapter shows how the perceived international Catholic threat from England, France and even the Empire was constructed in such a way that the Dutch connected it to the dramatic events of 1672, and that a war of religion was generally feared and prepared for.

Moving from the formulation of foreign policy to the practice of diplomacy, Stephane Jettot discusses the intricacies of the activities of three British diplomats at Catholic courts. Their difficulties primarily arose from the fact that they were representing a monarch whose feelings toward Catholicism were suspect, but also from the fact that the diplomats themselves had different religious persuasions that could either benefit or complicate their activities. Jettot analyses the strategies the diplomats employed in these circumstances, finding that they were constantly aware and wary of the ‘explosive combination between religion and foreign policy’.

A third cluster of chapters focuses on actual warfare. K.A.J. McLay discusses the perception of the role of Providence in battle. Although Providence was often invoked and thanked for His intervention in armed struggle into the eighteenth century, McLay tracks a decline in the significance of such views. According to him, the growing professionalisation of soldiers led to an increasing reliance on human capacity and organisational skills. Victories and defeats were more often attributed to preparation and skill, rather than the favour of Providence.

One would expect Huguenot émigré soldiers and the ‘Protestant International’ to be least influenced by such a secularisation of warfare. Matthew Glozier, studying the motivation and actions of French Protestant soldiers engaged in invasions of France, finds that such generalisations cannot easily be made. In three case studies Glozier distinguishes the varieties of the religious attitudes of Huguenot soldiers. Whereas some soldiers were driven by spiritual zeal, others were simply doing their duty as professionals in mercenary armies.

A fourth cluster of chapters deals with legitimisation, popular perceptions and public discourse on religion and war. Donald Haks is concerned with the religious official legitimisation of war in the United Provinces. He examines religious rhetoric on three different levels: the personal convictions of policymakers, confidential policy documents and state-sponsored expressions of support for the war. Rather than dismissing religious language as irrelevant, Haks concludes that ‘Protestant religion played a crucial role in the defence of the Republic during the years 1672 to 1713 by creating a self-image of national unity, expressed in the concept of the fatherland’.

Stephen Taylor draws attention to English religious attitudes around the time of the Glorious Revolution. Using the exhaustive *Entring Book* of the dissenting minister Roger Morrice, an unusually well-informed observer, he discusses Morrice’s sources of information and his selection principles in order to reconstruct Protestant views on contemporary politics and European events. Although Morrice was among the last of a generation of Restoration Puritans,

Taylor argues that he also bridged a tradition of Protestant views that lasted until well into the Hanoverian period.

Jill Stern examines the polemic surrounding foreign policy in political pamphlets in the period between the Treaty of Münster and the disaster year of 1672. While some commentators welcomed the Peace of 1648, others saw the end of hostilities as deleterious to the interest of the True Reformed Religion and a threat to the unity established by the Union of Utrecht. Stern demonstrates that even as the Republic was embroiled in costly wars with England and the threat from the France of Louis XIV increased, a strand of political polemic continued to deplore the Treaty of Münster and its effect upon the well-being of the public church. She argues that this persistent theme was representative not of a realistic appraisal of contemporary international realities but rather reflected a sustained attack on the internal policy of John de Witt and his supporters.

Emma Bergin, lastly, also focuses on the United Provinces in a later period: the years before and after the Dutch intervention in English affairs in 1688. She argues that, rather than dismissing them as mere propaganda, William's declaration of 1688 and pamphlets expounding religious views on foreign policy should be taken seriously as an indicator of Dutch public opinion. Bergin's chapter shows 'the Dutch public's continuing preoccupation with religious matters, but also the sustained use of religious rhetoric, language and imagery of earlier periods'.

This volume aspires to serve as a stepping-stone for rethinking and redefining the role of religion in war and foreign policy after 1648. If the chapters that follow do succeed in generating a debate on these issues, then this volume has served its purpose.