Saaif Ahmed

Reading: Clifford Rogers, “The Military Revolution in History and Historiography,” in The Military

Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early-Modern Europe (Boulder:

Westview Press, 1995)

Analysis

This reading, was an introduction to Rogers’ work on studying “Military Revolution”. He begins this piece by acknowledging the severe lack of historical military analysis present in scholarly work. He claims that while “economic” forces were important, there are undeniable moments in history that were primarily militaristic in nature. Rogers claims that these events not only affected the past, but affected the study of our past causing a historical and a historiographical revolution.

Rogers’ leading argument in this section revolves around the developing study of the “Military Revolution”. It is known that most students when learning history, briefly cover any type of military conflict. The focus is driven towards political and socio-economical forces that altered the world we live in. Rogers’ brings up the point that in the mid-1980s, many scholarly works were published analyzing military history in the same way economic history was analyzed. Rogers’ then shows how this surge in scholarly work on military history was due to how military technology was studied as a causative factor for many events. This idea was new to me as I had not yet seen military technology affect much more than the battlefield in past readings. Rogers uses the example as to how in Spain, the need to gather military technology could politically influence a state to finance that operation.

The evidence in this portion of the reading was abundant and well utilized. As per most readings tend to go, every point had a sufficient amount of evidence to support it. Rogers made use of quoting a multitude of scholarly works, in addition to using statistical data to prove his argument. There does appear to be an issue with bias in this portion of the reading. There are a few instances in which the author lets his own opinion slip into his main argument. For example he utilizes his previous work’s argument to support his current one. While he does cross reference it with the work of John Lynn, it would have been better for Rogers to find an outside source.