



Declaring War in Early Modern Europe

Frederic J. Baumgartner

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This book examines the history of declaring war from the early modern era up to the drafting of the U.S. Constitution. In the late middle ages, formal declarations of war were highly ritualistic acts, but by the early seventeenth century, they had changed into a practice whereby an ambassador presented a printed declaration to an enemy king. Key issues covered here include determining how and when the medieval practices of declaring war gave way to the more modern ones, and the extent to which American framers accepted or rejected the practices of their era. While the debate over recent congressional resolutions authorizing use of the armed forces overseas has generated many publications, the wider history of declaring war has been far less a topic of study, and the early modern era has been all but ignored. This book's primary sources include ambassadorial reports, especially those from Venetian ambassadors, declarations of war, published works by noted contemporary thinkers, and several early modern literary works that depict the high drama of declaring war.

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