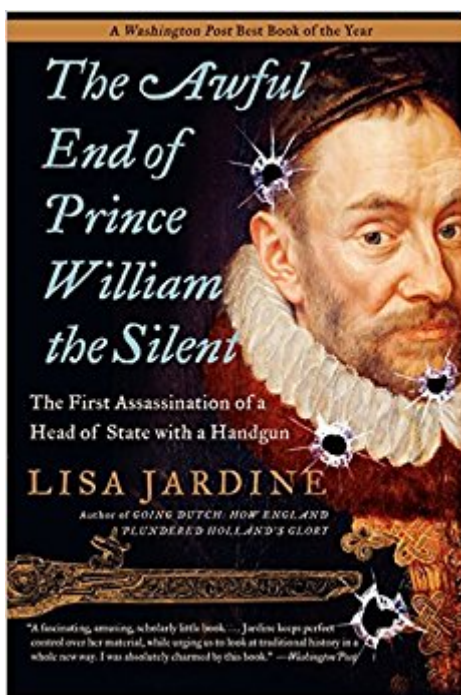


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The Awful End Of Prince William The Silent: The First Assassination Of A Head Of State With A Handgun (Making History)



Synopsis

The assassination of Prince William of Orange by a French Catholic in 1584 had immediate political consequences and a profound effect on the course of history. It was a serious setback for Protestants in the Netherlands, who were struggling for independence from the Catholic rule of the Hapsburg Empire. But the crime's ramifications were even more earth-shattering, for it heralded the arrival of a new threat to the safety of world leaders and the security of nations: a pistol that could easily be concealed on one's person and employed to lethal effect at point-blank range. In this provocative, fascinating, and enormously engaging work, noted author and historian Lisa Jardine brilliantly recounts the brazen act of religious terrorism that changed everything—and explores its long and bloody legacy, from the murder of Abraham Lincoln in 1865 to the slaying of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914, to the plague of terror and violent zealotry that infects our world today.

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Customer Reviews

William the Silent may be an obscure name for many readers, but his assassination in 1584, at close range with a handgun, is still remembered in the Netherlands as a key event in the long Dutch struggle for independence from Spain. Born to a German family, William inherited a French principality and was raised under the tutelage of the Catholic Emperor Charles V, yet became the "father" of Netherlands Protestant national identity. Jardine (*The Curious Life of Robert Hooke*) places the assassination within the era's religious turmoil and espionage systems, arguing for its deep repercussions for security, diplomacy and warfare. Her scholarship is broad, as she dissects

William's lasting reputation for tolerance as a product of the writings of his supporters and traces the technology, uses and symbolism of the wheel-lock pistol used to kill him. With modern references including 9/11, fatwahs and Tupac Shakur, Jardine demonstrates the pervasiveness of the issues raised both by this type of weapon and by responses to crimes of state. Some readers might wish for a more narrative approach to such a potentially riveting story, but they will enjoy this marvelous study of a single event and its numerous echoes. (Feb. 7) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In 1584, William of Orange, Stadholder of the Low Countries, was shot to death in his home in Delft by a French assassin, Balthasar Gérard, who used a wheel-lock pistol, then a fairly recent invention. Gérard, a Catholic fanatic, had responded to Philip II of Spain's offer of a twenty-five-thousand-crown reward to anyone who could kill the tolerant Protestant prince, who once remarked that Catholics and Protestants "in principle believed in the same truth, even if they expressed this belief in very different ways." The threat to security posed by the pistol, lethal and easily concealed, shocked Europe. In England, the possibility of a similar attack on Queen Elizabeth led to increased surveillance, arrests, and interrogations, which, in Jardine's view, provide a parallel with current reactions to religious terrorism. Copyright © 2006 The New Yorker --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This well-written little book is a real education in clarifying the relationship between England, Spain, and France during the Elizabethan period in England. It explains why Elizabeth finally lent reluctant English help to the Dutch and why the Spanish Armada planned to use what is now Holland to stage its attack on England. A lot of history was affected by this killing, which was the first time a ruling monarch had been killed by a hand gun.

I read this in one sitting -- and it was fascinating to discover the story behind the death of the Prince of Orange. I bought a 2nd copy for a friend who is a history professor as I intend to read it again and didn't want to give my copy away.

Lisa Jardine has another home run! Her histories are the most readable and clear and obviously very well researched. The wheel-lock pistol had a very great influence on warfare and weapons development. And the influence and interaction of French, Dutch, English, German and Spanish

interests is clearly depicted. If weapons history is of interest try "Of Arms and Men" by Robert L. O'Connell.

Could be better.

Well researched book, however good the story might be, the author makes it more convoluted than necessary. She jumps back and forth making it hard to follow at times. Interesting bit of unknown history, makes it a worthwhile read.

A small, but eloquently written study, dealing with the assassination of William of Nassau, Prince of Orange. Some will expect to read about the birth and evolution of the wheel-lock pistol here, others - extremely detailed information about the deed announced in the title. Don't want to spoil it for you, but on the evolution of the "dag" the information is not very detailed. There are a few paragraphs speaking about the pistoleers and the change of tactics, but its mostly about the diplomatic background and the diplomatic gains and losses of the potentates of the period. A large part of the book deals with the impact of the Prince's violent death on English society and diplomacy, and also gives an overview of the English intervention in the Netherlands. The account of the killing itself is not very extended, yet it doesn't seem to lack anything important to the common reader. A small part is dedicated to the assassin himself, but personally I would like to read a more detailed analysis of the man's character, psychology, ideology, of his connections, political, religious. The book remains silent on this, providing little information about any subsequent investigation, no depositions of the various witnesses, etc. The general impression is that this book is more about the diplomatic "game" around the the Prince's assassination and especially its aftermath and its results on the English policies in the Netherlands. Not a lot of information on the Spanish though, nor indeed on the French. The pistol (the wheel-lock "dag" specifically) is treated more as a revolutionary new tool of the potential assassin than a new weapon which played a part in the transformation of warfare. In all a pleasant read, generally educative, not boring, in some ways very informative. However it lacks some details which would be very useful and interesting. In two words: not bad. In another three: could be better.

Book of a very unusual title, the author Lisa Jardine make her case in her short but informative study of the assassination of Prince William the Silent of Orange, one of the moving leaders of the Dutch Protestant rebellion against Imperial Catholic Spain. The book covers both the major events

of William's life that led up to his death as well as the development of the wheel lock pistol which made such an assassination so easy. Influence of wheel lock pistol went beyond the military uses and civilians began to use themselves for protection as well as for other uses. It was interesting to note that this was the second effort on William's life by a pistol but considering how rare such an event was the first time, I don't think William took proper precaution against a second effort. In some way, this would make a great movie, a Spanish double agent worming his way into William's trust and confidence before blowing him away. Of course, the assassin's fate wasn't too pleasant but he seems to bear it well. The author states that now that one of the leaders of Europe can be assassinated by a pistol, this makes all leaders equally vulnerable. This was especially true for William's close ally, Queen Elizabeth of England which had her own Cold War with Spain going at that time and she herself, victim of many assassination plots. Book proves to be well researched and well written. It's a short book but it doesn't waste any pages. I did wish there was a good photo or a drawing of the type of wheel lock pistol that the assassin used to kill William as well as Spanish reaction to his murder which was strangely absent. You would think that no matter who the enemies may be, foreign heads of state would refrain from using assassins on other foreign heads of state since this will lead to copycat policies. But obviously, Hapsburg leadership weren't thinking that way. The book comes well recommended to anyone interested in the tidbit of history that had a long lasting impact. A new trend of assassination was born when William the Silent was murdered, it will be replayed in history as the author stated, in murders of Lincoln or Archduke Ferdinand (which launched the murderous World War I).

This is a very short book about a very obscure ruler whose death sent shock waves through the ruling class of Europe with his death with a handgun, and it took two tries by two different men to get the job done, you would think that after the first attempt he would have forbidden guns to be in his presence, but no and that was his downfall the second try did him in and ever since then assassination has plagued the famous and not so famous. Not a great way to go down in history as a trivia fact.

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