



# Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy, from 1453 to the Present

*Brendan Simms*

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If there is a fundamental truth of geopolitics, it is this: whoever controls the core of Europe controls the entire continent, and whoever controls all of Europe can dominate the world. Over the past five centuries, a rotating cast of kings and conquerors, presidents and dictators have set their sights on the European heartland, desperate to seize this pivotal area or at least prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. From Charles V and Napoleon to Bismarck and Cromwell, from Hitler and Stalin to Roosevelt and Gorbachev, nearly all the key power players of modern history have staked their titanic visions on this vital swath of land.

In *Europe*, prizewinning historian Brendan Simms presents an authoritative account of the past half-millennium of European history, demonstrating how the battle for mastery there has shaped the modern world. Beginning in 1453, when the collapse of the Byzantine Empire laid Europe open to Ottoman incursion and prompted the dramatic expansion of the Holy Roman Empire, Simms leads readers through the epic struggle for the heart of Europe. Stretching from the Low Countries through Germany and into the North Italian plain, this relatively compact zone has historically been the richest and most productive on earth. For hundreds of years, its crucial strategic importance stoked a seemingly unending series of conflicts, from the English Civil War to the French Revolution to the appalling world wars of the 20th century. But when Europe is in harmony, Simms shows, the entire world benefits—a lesson that current leaders would do well to remember.

A bold and compelling work by a renowned scholar, *Europe* integrates religion, politics, military strategy, and international relations to show how history—and Western civilization itself—was forged in the crucible of Europe.

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