the controversy surrounding Haig’s funeral and national monument and, secondly, Haig and his character as a lieu de mémoire. A further chapter, ‘Bitterness and Satire’, looks at representations of the two men in visual and material culture, largely, but not exclusively, after the Second World War. Although Haig and Kitchener are familiar figures, the general reader will find much that is new. Further, the framework in which they are discussed throws light on the often complex ways in which the reputations of these men were reconstructed and reassessed over the course of the twentieth century. In this regard Heathorn’s conclusion that the discussions of Haig and Kitchener in the interwar years were ‘part of an ongoing cultural struggle over how the First World War and the values on which it were [sic] fought ought to be remembered’ (p. 235) reinforces a view that was advanced some years ago by historians such as Todman. Few would argue with the observation that Haig’s reputation was ‘a primary battleground on which the meaning of the Great War itself would be fought’, or that Kitchener’s ‘long-term legacy as a symbol of the missing and dead of the First World War was overshadowed by the establishment of more democratic commemorative national monuments’ such as the Cenotaph and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior (p. 234). However, this sits a little uneasily with the contention that there was a ‘powerful continuing need to understand events through heroes and anti-heroes, even in the age of industrialized warfare’ (p. 237).

The strength of this book lies in its detailed analysis of interwar debates about the significance of Haig and Kitchener. The discussion of visual and material culture (chapter 6) is less convincing. The ‘discrete case studies’ are interesting in their own right, but, as the author concedes, there is not a ‘singular narrative of changing representation’ (p. 191). Describing this as ‘an admittedly rather pointillist fashion’ (p. 229) does not disguise the fact that the whole is less than the sum of the parts. However, it would be churlish to finish on a negative note. There is much to recommend in this book for general reader and specialist alike.


**Reviewed by:** John Gooch, University of Leeds, UK

Giulio Douhet stands at the head of the list of thinkers on air power. Widely consumed – or at least widely noticed – in their day, his ideas apparently exercised some influence on both British and American airmen in the interwar years, though exactly how much remains one of scholarship’s many disagreements. By the summer of 1940 the events in France seemed to Americans to have proved his ideas about ‘command of the air’ and the coming predominance of bomber planes in battle wrong. Two years later, reviewing the first substantial translation of his works in English, Alexander de Seversky praised him as an ‘invaluable guide to future warfare’. In the early years of the Cold War his ideas about the commanding importance of an independent air force, the pre-eminence of the bomber, and the telling impact of what the nuclear theorists soon christened ‘first-strike capability’ were caviar to the generals of the newly created United States Air...
Force. Neither the arrival of SSBNs in the 1960s nor the critical turn that air power histories of the Second World War have taken since the 1980s did him and his theories much of a favour. Since then, anyone wishing to excavate his thought has had to rely chiefly on the 1942 translation of *The Command of the Air*, supplemented by a modest collection of articles and chapters. There is no fully fledged biography either in Italian or in English. All of this makes Thomas Hippler’s contribution to Douhetian studies especially welcome.

Using the many articles he wrote for professional journals and general periodicals, Hippler traces the development of Douhet’s thought from the pre-war years to his death in 1930, and examines its immediate ‘afterlife’. Giving a new twist to the long-established relationship between Douhet’s ‘Command of the Air’ and Mahan’s ‘Command of the Sea’, he demonstrates that the ‘city-busting’ most commonly associated with his subject took its cue in part from nineteenth-century French naval theory in the shape of the *guerre de course*. Paradoxically – the author is fond of paradoxes – the early Douhet showed an unexpectedly pacifist strain: in 1910 we find him declaring that ‘we must not even consider action against defenceless cities’. He soon changed his mind. Challenging Azar Gat, who situated Douhet’s thought firmly within Fascism and the then fashionable cultural tide of Futurism, Hippler shows both that many of the essentials of Douhet’s thought were in place before the First World War and that by 1915 events in Europe had convinced him that war had changed and that the past was no guide to the future. Hence another paradox – that ‘history is rejected in the name of history’ (p. 74). Douhet’s stress on the importance not only of high explosives but also of incendiaries and (especially) gas, and his argument that an all-out air war would be less costly in the long term than a landlocked slogging match, produces yet another paradox – his ‘anti-human humanism’ (p. 75).

Among the many perceptive insights here, one of the most interesting is what the author terms ‘the democratic paradox’, that is, the relationship between militarization and democracy. Douhet took it as axiomatic that war in the modern world was a contest not just between armed forces but between societies. Along with command of the air, his list of possible targets for air power included the shattering of civilian morale as well as paralysis of the enemy’s army and navy, and targeting ‘the directive organs of the enemy country’ (this last was omitted in the 1942 English translation – one of several useful corrections Hippler makes). Hippler explains the apparently inhumane idea of bombing civilians by means of the concept of ‘insurrectional popular sovereignty’ (pp. 130–1, 257), that is, the supposition that sooner or later a battered civilian population will rise up and force an end to the war. Douhet gave no real thought to how this would or could happen – and of course it never did.

Readers with some knowledge of the outlines of Douhetian thought will have that knowledge deepened by Hippler’s deft dissection of it. What they will probably not know much – or anything – about is the intellectual furore that ensued in Italy after the publication of the *Dominio dell’aria* in 1921. In the second part of his book Dr Hippler examines the various pro- and anti-Douhetian arguments that filled the pages of the journals in the years that followed. Douhet’s leading opponent, Amadeo Mecozzi, challenged the whole edifice and instead proposed a completely new mode of air warfare that he called *volo rasente* (low-level assault bombardment in indirect support of the other
organized forces). Mecozzi thought future wars would be coalition wars and also civil wars. Hippler’s likening of these ideas to current ‘hybrid warfare’ may be a mite too generous, and his judgement that Mecozzi is to Douhet as Corbett is to Mahan is not entirely convincing, but Mecozzi is certainly well worth knowing about.

There is a lot to enjoy in this book, and a lot to learn for those to whom the Italian sources are inaccessible. Occasionally the methodology, which reflects the author’s apparent fondness for postmodern theory, seems a little over-egged. The odd splash of political theory adds nothing to the story, and nor do the mercifully rare appearances of such neologisms as ‘organicist master-metaphors’ and ‘metonymical relationships’. Hippler is puzzled that Douhet never considered tanks and seems to have had little faith in civilian morale. The explanation for both shortcomings (and for many of Douhet’s strategic positions) lies in the fact that he wrote partly as an Italian seeking a solution to strategic dilemmas that were particularly Italian. Tanks were irrelevant on Italy’s land fronts, and neither the politicians who ruled Liberal Italy in peacetime nor the generals who led it during the world war ever really trusted their own population. While attempting the timeless, Douhet was also a child of his time and his place. Surveying the doctrinal controversies over air power to which the Dominio dell’aria gave rise, Dr Hippler concludes that the Italian air force was ‘perhaps the most intellectually productive air force in the world during the inter-war period’ (p. 249). He charitably refrains from adding that it did not do them a bit of good when war came in 1940.


Reviewed by: Tami Davis Biddle, US Army War College

From the 1980 publication of his book The Air War, 1939–1945, Richard Overy has been the leading scholar of air warfare and strategic bombing in the Second World War. He has contributed extensively to the specialized literature on this complex and most controversial topic, not only with additional books but with a long list of highly regarded articles and chapters in edited volumes. His new book, The Bombing War, offers an extensive examination of the nature and impact of aerial bombardment in the Second World War II: he casts a wide net (the volume is 642 pages, exclusive of preface and prologue), covering realms only rarely studied, including the German bombing of the Soviet Union and of Malta, and the Allied bombing of Italy. Each chapter is rich in detail based on extensive work in primary sources across Europe. The most original work is to be found in those chapters examining life under the fall of bombs – not just in Germany but across Europe. It is not too much to say that this material will transform our understanding of the Second World War. The book contains puzzles, though, and these have left many of us who know Overy’s previous work scratching our heads.

This book is more critical of Allied long-range bombing than the author’s past work. Scholars are surely entitled to shift ground over time; indeed, one would be