

Benjamin West's paintings based on the epic and allegorical poetry of Edmund Spenser (ca. 1552–1599) are the focus of the Timken Museum of Art's exhibition catalog by Derrick R. Cartwright. The culmination of this interest in Spenserian subject matter, Cartwright argues, was *Fidelia and Speranza*, completed in the same year that the American colonists declared their independence from the British Crown (1776). Admitting the painting to be a complex allegory, Cartwright nonetheless ventures that it points to the divided political loyalties that tore West between allegiances to his native country and to his foremost patron, King George III, during this critical historical period. "Allegory provided West with safe, if coded, means to make controversial assertions against reigning authorities—both peers and monarchs—that otherwise might have inhibited his rising status" (2). By situating West's Spenserian subjects within the context of his most ambitious history paintings, such as the watershed *Death of General Wolfe* (1770), Cartwright demonstrates how national mythmaking and allegory became powerful tools for imparting multiple meanings to compositions—especially in the sensitive, divisive arena where transatlantic political and cultural issues met and clashed. To this end, Cartwright's intrepid investigation of key, enigmatic works in West's oeuvre is a thoughtful and welcome addition to scholarship in early American art.

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Thomas Jefferson's Military Academy: Founding West Point. Edited by Robert M. S. McDonald (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004. Pp. xix, 233. Cloth, \$35.00.)

Historians have long puzzled over Thomas Jefferson's many enigmas, but few have focused their attention on the role that the third president played in founding the United States Military Academy. As Robert McDonald points out in the introductory essay for *Thomas Jefferson's Mili-*

tary Academy: Founding West Point, as late as 1997, there had been as much scholarly work on Jefferson and prairie dogs as on Jefferson and the military academy (three entries each in Frank Shuffelton's annotated bibliography), and more on Jefferson and clocks (five entries) and wines (thirty-nine) than on Jefferson and West Point. This collection of essays does much to correct the profession's failure to investigate and to understand Jefferson's role in the academy's founding.

Peter Onuf's introductory essay lays out in clear terms the nature of the Jeffersonian enigma and places it in the context of the turbulent period immediately following the Revolution. Focusing on the conflicts between Federalists and Republicans over the locus and nature of federal power and on the ever more dangerous international situation resulting from the French Revolution, Onuf shows clearly that Jefferson's Republicans feared both a standing army and a military academy as threats to the nation's republican ideals, with Federalists finding each necessary to their defense. But, Onuf contends, "In his expansive, optimistic mode Jefferson could envision the development of an energetic, powerful central government. . . . [T]he caricature of Jefferson as an antistatist libertarian does not hold, either at the federal or state level" (16). Onuf's essay thus provides the backdrop for those that follow.

Don Higginbotham's "Military Education before West Point" addresses the transmission of military knowledge to and among Americans during and after the Revolution, and it outlines the various proposals regarding the establishment of a military academy that were discussed, debated, and eventually rejected in the republic's early years. Higginbotham makes clear that significant intellectual groundwork had been laid for the establishment of a military academy well before Jefferson had assumed the presidency. Jennings L. Wagoner and Christine Coalwell McDonald's contribution, "Mr. Jefferson's Academy: An Educational Interpretation," places Jefferson's establishment of the United States Military Academy (USMA) in a somewhat different light. Accepting that the academy clearly was meant to train military officers, they argue convincingly that it must also be seen as a function of Jefferson's desire to establish national educational institutions. Jefferson placed an enormous emphasis on education because "He was convinced that the future security of his 'country' . . . was tied much more directly to the general enlightenment of the population than to military strength" (121). Political stability in the new republic, Jefferson believed, was to be found in the education of the nation's citizenry. Few of Jefferson's ideas in this field,

including his much-desired national university, bore fruit in the 1780s or 1790s. But, once president, Jefferson could (with Congress's help) establish a military academy "that would be directed toward useful national and scientific as well as military ends" (131).

Theodore Crackel places Jefferson's actions in the larger framework of his presidency. Agreeing with Onuf that Jefferson was not opposed to an energetic government, Crackel points out that Jefferson used his executive power to remove Federalist appointees or to reduce their power, and he argues that Jefferson's establishment of a military academy must be viewed in the same vein. The officer corps was overwhelmingly Federalist in its sympathies, he contends, and thus viewed by Jefferson as a threat to republican government. A military academy whose cadets would be appointed by elected representatives from the now ascendant Republican Party would serve both to republicanize and to Republicanize the officer corps. In this and other actions Crackel finds "a carefully modulated program of reform . . . [that] had brought . . . Federalist instruments of government into consonance with the broad aspirations and goals of Jefferson's new Republican regime" (115).

Sam Watson's "Developing 'Republican Machines'" is a magnificent essay that picks up where Crackel's leaves off. In it he attributes many of the academy's early difficulties not to incompetence, but to an academy leadership that was sympathetic to, if not supportive of, the Federalists (and therefore hostile to Jefferson), and that was more committed to an arcane definition of honor than to duty to one's country. Although Sylvanus Thayer is famous at West Point today for many of the "nuts-and-bolts" reforms he instituted as superintendent, Watson contends that his most significant accomplishment was the change he wrought in the academy's culture that made its graduates servants of the republic, not of any political party and not of some overdrawn sense of personal honor.

Perhaps the volume's most interesting essay is by its editor, Robert McDonald. In "Jefferson Remembered, Forgotten, and Reconsidered," McDonald attempts to explain why Jefferson's role in creating the academy has receded from memory. Important to this process, he argues, was a feud between Jefferson and the Lee family; the North's rejection, in the aftermath of the Civil War, of southern ideas and institutions; and, by the turn of the century, the growing affinity of the officer corps for the modern Republican Party and its neo-Hamiltonian tendencies. These factors, McDonald argues, helped to obscure Jefferson's importance to

USMA and allowed Sylvanus Thayer to assume the mantle of Father of the Military Academy.

Two of the volume's essays are not up to the standard of those cited above. In "Necessary and Proper: West Point and Jefferson's Constitutionalism," David Mayer contends that Jefferson's efforts to establish a military academy during his presidency did not contradict his rejection in the 1790s of Alexander Hamilton's proposed military academy on constitutional grounds. Mayer insists that Jefferson's shift can be explained not by political expediency, as is often charged, but by an evolving understanding of the Constitution. Mayer tries mightily to support his argument, but this reviewer remains unconvinced, primarily due to the coincident nature of Jefferson's "evolution" with the "Revolution of 1800." And Jean Yarborough's "Afterword" makes a number of unsubstantiated assertions that appear to have little to do with the volume's agenda. For example, she contends that "Today . . . the great danger to the preservation of American republican institutions comes not from the military academies . . . but from the fashionable anti-Americanism that thrives in the rarified atmosphere of America's elite colleges and universities [?!]" (214–15). These essays notwithstanding, this volume is an excellent effort to assess Jefferson's motives and role in establishing the USMA. I recommend it highly.

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Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control Since the Sixteenth Century. By Michael A. Palmer. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. Pp. 377. Cloth, \$29.95.)

For thousands of years, military thinkers have pursued the key to successful battlefield leadership, but serious efforts to distill similar lessons for naval warfare have emerged only over the past four centuries. In *Command at Sea*, Michael A. Palmer provides an effective overview of the evolving command process, examining major fleet actions over the past four hundred years to discern leadership traits that made the differ-