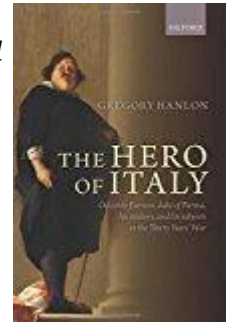


Gregory Hanlon. *The Hero of Italy: Odoardo Farnese, Duke of Parma, His Soldiers and His Subjects in the Thirty Years' War.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. xiii + 241 pp. \$99.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-968724-4.



Reviewed by Chad Denton

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Gregory Hanlon bemoans the lack of a synthetic history of the Thirty Years' War in Italy, especially one on a scale similar to what Peter H. Wilson's *The Thirty Years' War: Europe's Tragedy* (2009) provides for the war in Germany. This is especially an unfortunate gap in the historiography, because, Hanlon argues, the Thirty Years' War is "the most important event in Italian history between the Council of Trent and the French Revolution" (p. 3). Still, this is not that book, as Hanlon admits. Yet *The Hero of Italy* is a step toward that historiography by focusing on the involvement of one small duchy, Parma, in the war during the reign of Odoardo I.

The Hero of Italy is centered on a military and diplomatic narrative of how Parma joined France and Savoy in challenging the Spanish hegemony over Italy and the mobilization Odoardo organized for the war effort. It concludes with the invasion and catastrophic economic collapse of Parma that ultimately caused Odoardo's successor, Ranuccio II, to renounce Odoardo's anti-Spanish policy and signaled the start of an era when the

Italian polities essentially lost all initiative to powers outside Italy. Through this story of Odoardo's bold but disastrous role in the drama of the Thirty Years' War, Hanlon emphasizes the logistics of warfare and military mobilization in seventeenth-century Italy and the impact the Thirty Years' War had on civilians and the economy. For this approach that combines the traditional "grand narratives" of diplomacy, politics, and war with social history, Hanlon draws on a range of sources, including parish records, diplomatic correspondence, and army rosters, particularly from the Archivio di Stato in Parma, which Hanlon describes as "the most comprehensive collection of rosters anywhere in Europe before the eighteenth century" (p. 5).

The wisdom in Hanlon's choice of Odoardo and Parma is clear. Parma's position as a minor Italian power provides a unique window into the power struggle between Spain and France, and the dependence of Italian princes in the era on those powers for both foreign support and opportunities for military glory. Parma's relative lack of re-

sources is an interesting example of the struggles early modern polities had to endure in paying for war. Hanlon discusses in detail the measures employed in funding the army from currency manipulations to keeping soldiers living under subsistence levels. The centrality of Odoardo himself also reveals the historical role of individual personality. The book explores how Odoardo's militaristic desire for glory and absence of appreciation for Parma's economic needs would have tremendous consequences. *The Hero of Italy* is one more scholarly work that demonstrates that acknowledging the influence of personalities on history does not entail sacrificing the analysis of broad trends.

The complexity of being a polity at war allows Hanlon to approach a plethora of topics with implications for early modern Italy, if not early modern Europe as a whole. For example, Odoardo's mobilization effort shows how gaining the necessary cooperation of the nobility meant a complex negotiation of honors and privileges in exchange for service. The invasion of Parma also raises the matter of infanticide as a response to the hardships of war and famine.

One area, however, that asks for more elaboration is the question of ideology. Hanlon invokes the role honor and the desire for prestige played in Odoardo's and other nobles' motivations, as well as the concept of "liberty" for the Italian polities. However, it is unclear how honor might have operated as an ideological force for Odoardo and his nobles, and what exactly the goal of liberty entailed in the context of seventeenth-century Italy and on the eve of what Hanlon identifies as even greater foreign domination of the region. This quibble aside, it is impressive to see how many topics Hanlon does tap into within such a slim volume. *The Hero of Italy* will be of interest not only to scholars of the Thirty Years' War but also to students of early modern European warfare and its social, political, and logistical dimensions in general.

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