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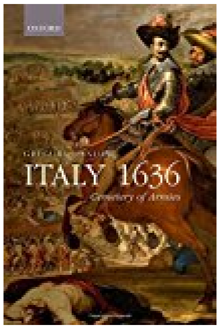
Gregory Hanlon. *Italy 1636: Cemetery of Armies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Illustrations, maps. 256 pp. $110.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-873824-4.



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In the past, historians of the Thirty Years' War have concentrated on uncovering and evaluating the social, political, and economic effects of this war on the German states, where the majority of the campaigns took place. Italy, if treated at all, has been treated as a sideshow. Yet the Italian struggles between the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs and the French Valois/Bourbon dynasties had begun well before 1618, and continued to the French revolutionary period. During the past twenty years of scholarship, Gregory Hanlon has been on a mission to correct this oversight, a mission that began with his *The Twilight of a Military Tradition: Italian Aristocrats and European Conflicts, 1560-1800* (1998). In the present work, he brings the full weight of his expertise to the analysis of what he calls a "minor battle in a secondary theatre" (p. 5), but one that was nevertheless crucial to our understanding of how campaigns and battles were fought by the combatants and others during this period. The book seeks to uncover and expose some long-held myths about the military revolution and the decline of Spain as a continental power.

However, Hanlon also wants this book to be another valuable addition to the expanding literature on the sociology of warfare. Right from the beginning, the author makes it clear that the aversion to studies of war and battle by the last few generations of mainstream historians and anthropologists has caused a deterioration of our understanding of what motivates men to go to war as well as into battle, a purposeful act that entails much risk. As Hanlon states, "given the universality of war, rooted in the competition and bonding of men, we must study it squarely as a value-free phenomenon" (p. 3). While this adverse tide has been somewhat reversed through the efforts of André Corvisier and others, Hanlon clearly desires to return directly to an analysis of the sociology of armies and soldiers.

The work succeeds quite effectively in this endeavor, and does so by tracing the campaign of 1636 in northern Italy, starting with the invasion of Lombardy by French and Savoyard armies, and then centering on the battle of Tornavento, June 22, 1636. Despite the fact that the campaign, and the battle, were both small in scope, Hanlon makes it clear that the political repercussions were nevertheless important not only to the northern Italian states but also to the wider conflict. However, the significance of a campaign for us rests on the lessons with respect to army operations, cohesiveness, and evolving battle tactics. His analysis is mixed through with ethology, the study of biological aspects of behavior and social organization, which he utilizes to explore motivation, social behavior, and endurance in war. The use of fire tactics was gaining favor as against hand-to-hand *mêlées*, the prevalent mode of fighting in this decade.

Hanlon does not, however, restrict the action to the maneuvering and the fighting. He addresses some of the finer points of campaign logistics and administration, subjects that rarely get the depth of treatment they deserve. The behind-the-scenes administration of the military, especially relevant because of the military revolution, was one of the crucial factors in the evolution of armies from seasonal mercenary forces into standing armies. Civilian administrators in particular were vital to managing the information needed to ensure that supplies, food, ammunition, fodder, and equipment ended up in the right place at the right time.

The early modern period was also a time when ministers attempted to direct strategy more closely. Chapter 1 focuses our attention on how leaders conducted campaigns, and the limitations of a developing "cabinet de guerre" strategic oversight by France's Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu, first minister under king Louis XIII (r. 1610-43). After briefly setting the framework of the broader cross-border conflicts in Europe, Hanlon describes how France entered the wars cautiously but at a propitious time for the beleaguered Protestant states, with French money enabling Protestant princes to retool their armies. In the event, by 1635 France was once again drawn into direct conflict with the Habsburgs—Austria and Spain—as reasons of state triumphed over religious solidarity. The competing designs of Richelieu and his Spanish counterpart, Don Gaspar de Guzman, Count Duke of Olivares, usefully illustrate the fluid and risky nature of early modern conflict.

In this chapter, Hanlon only briefly positions the centuries-old conflict between the ruling Habsburgs and the Valois and then Bourbon kings of France, an omission that will leave some readers with the impression that Italy was a new dynastic theater of conflict. The rivalry was of course much older, as from the 1480s France, Spain, and Austria all sought to politically dominate northern Italian city-states while exploiting their relative wealth. The campaigns of the 1630s, while different in focus, were the same in character. Richelieu's primary motives in inciting French participation in the Thirty Years' War was precisely because of France's need to assert itself once and for all and smash the Habsburg territorial "encirclement." Indeed, Richelieu advocated war because he "intended to push France's borders outward in all directions" but his aims were more specific (p. 20). He sought to reclaim France's rights to control certain states, such as the Duchy of Milan, which it had briefly held two hundred years before. Thus, the reader unfamiliar with this history is left with lots of questions as to the nature of this historic rivalry and why Italy was such an important factor.

In this theater, Olivares and Richelieu set up systems of tenuous but interlocking alliances of both reluctant friends and persistent foes. These shifting alliances are well illustrated in the actions of the respective rulers of the Duchy of Parma and Duchy of Modena. The powerful Duke of Savoy, Victor Amadeus, found himself caught between the two opposing forces. While a shrewd politician, by siding with France (his wife was a French princess), he found himself outmaneuvered. Olivares and the Spanish king Philip IV were able to reward loyal Italian nobles who were then willing to inform them of French developments, a detail that illustrates the power of information ecosystems in early modern warfare but that Hanlon does not fully explore. Spanish money also allowed the recruiting of experienced German veterans for the campaign, although these troops could also become a detriment because of their propensity for plundering even friendly territory for pay. The Spanish commander, Diego Mejia de Guzmán, Marquis de Leganés, was a competent commander and faced a divided Franco-Savoyard army under the mediocre but well-connected general Charles de Blanchefort, Marquis de Créquy, and King Victor Amadeus.

Because of the challenges of distance, Richelieu was unable to effectively coordinate French strategy with his commanders during the campaign, yet on the ground both the French and the Spanish also suffered intense logistics shortfalls. In chapter 2, Hanlon addresses these problems, as well as the vital roles played by private military entrepreneurs for supplying armies as they grew larger and larger during the seventeenth century.[1] The challenges associated with the consumption of food by armies operating in foreign territory meant that they often had to live off the land. The effects of doing so on civilians is seen in clear detail in chapter 4, but from a strategic sense Richelieu had not yet figured out how to reconcile the "ideal" of adequate campaign supplies with the reality of monetary shortfalls and the inability of entrepreneurs to provide for the daily needs of an army (p. 56). Recruitment as well suffered challenges such as inadequate supplies of manpower. However, Hanlon also dispels some myths about the recruits; these men were not "beardless youths" (p. 57). Indeed, the average age of soldiers in these armies is estimated to be twenty-seven.

He also uses recruitment data to return to his theme of motivation: men volunteered for army service for many reasons, but also deserted when they found a soldier's life to be in need of escape.

Stylistically this chapter illustrates a small frustration for the reader: overly long paragraphs such as the one that starts at the top of page 60 and extends to the middle of page 62. In this extensive paragraph, he presents brief backgrounds of a number of young officers being groomed by Olivares for higher things. The cases are valuable in seeing how a young and enthusiastic person could, through a combination of hard work and luck, rise to command battalions and then armies, but the author might have organized the information a bit better by incorporating themes on which to build the cases. This is a small issue, however, and Hanlon more than makes up for it with the illustrations liberally provided at appropriate places. He explains that armies during the time period often conscripted civilians, without pay, to drive wagons, to dig trenches, or even to provide animals for work or for food. In addition, armies had to move and encamp slowly and methodically, always ready for action, and even taking their ovens with them. This section contains a number of beautifully rendered pieces of art by Stefano della Bella and Jacques Callot to illustrate his points about army movement and forage. Effective logistics called for a delicate balance between the negotiated surrender of various towns and the deliberate destruction of the enemy's countryside. In particular, mills could be used to feed the army but also represented strategic enemy assets that had to be destroyed.

With the stage set through his explanations of campaign maneuvers, Hanlon examines battle tactics in detail in chapter 3 with the accounts of the battle of Tornavento, the centerpiece of the book. The unfolding of the battle is presented as thoroughly as possible, but the author explains how each of the sources was problematic for rendering an exact chronology. He leans heavily on the written descriptions of Galeazzo Gualdo Priorato (1606-78), who had an illustrious and unprecedented career in many of the combatants' armies during the Thirty Years' War and who also relied on interviews with eyewitnesses to describe the events. However, chapter 3 uses the battle less to set the exact sequence than to illustrate developments relative to the military revolution. Spanish armies of this time period are often considered to be in decline, with generals holding stubbornly to worn and obsolete tactics. This book seeks to show that Spanish tactics could be resilient and their armies could still win battles, despite their defeat at Rocroi (1643) by the French under the Duke d'Enghien, the Grande Condé. Using data extrapolated from "two company-level tallies of the Spanish army" as well as other sources, he builds a picture not of uniformity but of cohesive small groups (p. 62).

Part of the myth of Spanish ineffectiveness was based on contemporary drill books, which wrote off Spanish tactics and formations as outmoded. These books were written for popular consumption and were in the event generally wrong. Armies and other large organizations were fluid in size, based on availability and need. They could be used quite effectively to put muscle behind an assault or to stand firm in defense. Many times, the size of a unit was related to the size of an officer's fortune, as their personal finances often affected quantity of men and quality of equipment. The author uses the battle to evaluate some of the instinctual and psychological motivations to fight, although he apparently has left out much of the literature on nobles and noble warrior culture.[2] The author also appropriately takes Michel Foucault to task on page 121, making a point that we should see soldiers as human beings molded by but not controlled by their training. Men and officers maintained important personal relationships in their units. Officers depended on what Hanlon terms the "risk contract" to serve effectively and to not desert or flee during battle (p. 122). After a battle, determining actual casualty rates has always been problematic for early modern historians, and Tornavento is no different. Casualty claims were inflated by self-serving nobles, and while commanders and other frequently reported officer casualties, this reporting did not occur for the ordinary rank-and-file soldiers. In any case, he argues that inaccurate musket fire caused a generally low rate of casualties because men were not always willing to take aim directly at their enemies. He states that cannon fire from a distance was deliberately aimed, while muskets often were not, as "distance from our enemy reduces the inhibitions we have to kill them" (p. 142). However, if that is true, why were so many soldiers willing to use bayonets on enemy soldiers at close quarters? Hanlon does not explain this inconsistency.

Nevertheless, Hanlon's scholarship is deep and well executed. He shows his expertise through the judicious use of various archival sources to reconstruct the issues despite a dearth of reliable sources. Few of these soldiers wrote of their experiences in battle but the sources available all present a generally consistent picture of the fighting and subsequent events. In chapter 4, the author examines the aftermath of the viciously fought battle, and discusses in great detail the effects of disease and the behavior of the victorious and losing soldiers. Despite the growing permanence of armies and the rise of civilian administration, during the Thirty Years' War administration, including regular pay, were ideals more than actual practices. John A. Lynn coined a phrase, the "tax of violence," to represent this idea with respect to soldiers who looted from their fellow subjects within friendly territory to receive their pay. Hanlon demonstrates that the "tax" applied to both victorious and losing armies as well as to friend and foe.[3] Medical treatment of the wounded also presents a mini-case study in discrepancies: Spanish and other Habsburg wounded generally received medical treatment at a first-class hospital in Milan, while the hospital facilities at Casale Monferrato were too far away for the suffering Franco-Savoyard soldiers.

The inability of the French and Victor Amadeus's Savoyards to follow up their "victory" with a quick move on Milan meant that their soldiers remained in the vicinity of Tornavento, exposed to increasingly unsanitary conditions, a lack of hygiene as well as unburied corpses, and food shortages due to the countryside being stripped of foodstuffs and other supplies. The Franco-Savoyard soldiers engaged in sometimes wanton, sometimes purposeful destruction, such as cutting down fruit and mulberry trees (vital to silkworm industry), from which the region took years to recover. The chapter is again beautifully supplemented with the works of Jacques Callot. Personal toileting, lack of decent clothing, disease, and morale all took their toll on the army as the Franco-Savoyard generals delayed in deciding their next moves. From these many aspects, Hanlon's technique of using the campaign, and the battle, as an example of the changing nature of warfare during this time period is quite effective.

This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the evolution of army management, strategy, and battle tactics of the early modern period. However, it will also be of interest to those readers seeking to explore the psychological aspects of battle so well explored originally by John Keegan (in *The Face of Battle* [1976]), as well as for those interested in Italy as a strategic theater of war in the early modern period. Despite Olivares's eventual victory in the campaign, the resilience of Spanish power in Italy was due as much to circumstances outside the Italian theater of war as much as due to Leganés's ability to chase off the Franco-Savoyard army. But Spain did not gain hegemony. In the event, the victorious Italian policy of 1636 was broken by 1640 because of Richelieu's unwillingness to acquiesce to Spanish demands for the fortress of Pinerolo and the civil wars that broke out in Catalonia and Portugal. But the decline of Spain and the inattention of France afterward allowed a new hegemon, the Austrians, to enter a period of dominance of northern Italian affairs. While Napoleon temporarily broke Austrian power in 1800 and 1805, it would take Italian independence in 1859 before Habsburg hegemony in the peninsula was finally and formally destroyed.

Notes

[1]. David Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 71-136. Parrott has built effectively on the work of Fritz Redlich.

[2]. For the French case, see Michael Wolfe, ed., *Changing Identities in Early Modern France* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); Jay M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); and Brian Sandberg, *Warrior Pursuits: Noble Culture and Civil Conflict in Early Modern France* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

[3]. John A. Lynn, "How War Fed War: The Tax of Violence and Contributions during the Grand Siècle," *The Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 2 (1993): 286–310.

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