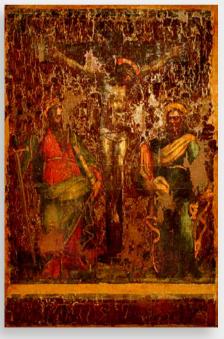


N. 6 2025

# Fascicolo 23. Luglio 2025 Storia Militare Moderna (6)





Società Italiana di Storia Militare

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Società Italiana di Storia Militare





Stendardo di Lepanto (1570), Lati A e B, Museo Diocesano di Gaeta. Wikimedia Commons. Lo stendardi fu dipinto a tempera su seta da Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta (1521-1575), su incarico del Cardinale Onorato Caetani. L'11 giugno 1570 fu benedetto da Papa Pio V nella Basilica di San Pietro e consegnato a Marcantonio II Colonna ponendolo al comando della flotta pontificia. Partito da Civitavecchia e giunto a Gaeta il 22 giugno 1571, Marcantonio Colonna, fece voto di consegnare lo stendardo al patrono della città qualora fosse tornato vincitore. Il 13 agosto Pio V fece consegnare un secondo stendardo della Lega a Don Giovanni d'Austria, comandante generale della flotta cristiana che, riunitasi a Messina, salpò il 24 agosto verso Lepanto. Durante la battaglia del 7 ottobre i due vessilli sventolarono rispettivamente sull'Ammiraglia e sulla Capitana pontificia e non furono mai centrati dal tiro nemico. Nelle stesse ore il papa ebbe la visione della vittoria e in ricordo rifinì l'Ave Maria nella forma attuale, aggiunse le Litanie lauretane alla recita del Rosario e l'appellativo mariano di Auxilium Christianorum e consacrò il 7 ottobre a Santa Maria delle Vittorie sull'Islam, celebrato con lo scampanio al mattino, a mezzogiorno e alla sera in ricordo della vittoria. Papa Gregorio XIII trasferì poi la festa alla prima domenica del mese di ottobre intitolandola alla Madonna del Rosario. Al ritorno da Lepanto, Marcantonio Colonna sciolse il voto consegnando lo stendardo al vescovo Pietro Lunello. Il vessillo fu poi conservato presso la cattedrale dei Santi Erasmo e Marciano.

## Logistics in Early Modern History

by Luca Domizio (University of Genoa)

'Amateurs talk tactics, professionals talk logistics'

'To carry out war, three things are necessary: money, money and yet more money' (attributed to Gian Giacomo Trivulzio)

### Rethinking Military History Through Logistics

s Martin van Creveld argued in his influential (if now partly outdated) study *Supplying War*, logistics has always been and clearly remains a central question in the conduct of warfare: «Before a commander can even start thinking of manoeuvring or giving battle, of marching this way and that, of penetrating, enveloping, encircling, of annihilating or wearing down, in short of putting into practice the whole rigmarole of strategy, he has — or ought — to make sure of his ability to supply his soldiers with those 3,000 calories a day without which they will very soon cease to be of any use as soldiers; that roads to carry them to the right place at the right time are available, and that movement along these roads will not be impeded by either a shortage or a superabundance of transport»<sup>1</sup>. In this insight, we aim to offer a historiographical reflection on mil-

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<sup>1</sup> With this brilliant opening, the author began his influential book: Martin Van Creveld, Supplying War. Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton, Cambridge, CUP 1977, p. 1. On the same page, he offers his definition of logistics and explains the purpose of studying it, from his perspective: « [...] an understanding of the problems involved in moving and supplying armies as affected through time by changes in technology, organization and other relevant factors; and, above all, to investigate the effect of logistics upon strategy during the last centuries».

itary logistics, particularly in the early modern period, as a way to open a broader discussions that may continue in future issues of this Journal and beyond. We begin by reviewing two significant recent contributions on logistics during the British Civil War: Glenn W. Price's *Soldiers and Civilians: Transport and Provisions* (2023), and Andrew Abram's *Supplying the New Model Army* (2024).

Their analysis serves both to highlight the richness of this emerging field and to reaffirm that *Nuova Antologia Militare* is committed not only to Italian scholarship, but also to engaging with the wider international military historiography and fostering open, interdisciplinary collaboration across academic communities. In what follows, we first offer a historiographical overview of early modern military logistics, then examine in detail two recent and complementary studies on the topic, before engaging in a comparative discussion and outlining key areas for future research.

The field of logistics has long been recognized as important, yet it has often received comparatively less attention than more visible aspects of military history. This relative neglect may be attributed not to a lack of relevance, but rather to the less dramatic dynamics of logistical operations. Important books and articles have long explained its fundamental role; many are not recent, and the significance of logistics was acknowledged by historians decades ago, as van Creveld's seminal work demonstrates. This importance was also evident to military professionals interested in history as a means of drawing lessons from the past. Indeed, many valuable studies on logistics have been produced by military historical offices<sup>2</sup>. Even today, logistics remains a crucial topic for military institutions, particularly because it continues to involve constant interaction with the civilian world — a point we will return to later — and it continues to inspire new

Among these practice-oriented publications, the offices of the United States produced several detailed studies: James A. Huston, *The sinews of war. Army logistics, 1775-1953*, Washington, Office of the Chief of Military History 1966; Robert W. Coakley, Richard M. Leighton (Eds.), *Global logistics and strategy, 1943-1945*, Washington, Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army 1968; Charles R. Shrader, *U.S. military logistics, 1607-1991*. *A research guide*, New York, Research Guides in Military Studies, Greenwood 1992; Center of Military History, *Logistics in World War II. Final report of the Army Service Forces*, Washington, U.S. Army 1993; Charles R. Shrader, *United States Army logistics, 1775-1992. An anthology*, Center of Military History, Washington D.C., U.S. Army 1997.

studies that offer important insights for military historians<sup>3</sup>.

Recent historical studies of logistics across various time periods have highlighted the richness of the field and the range of perspectives it offers<sup>4</sup>. These

<sup>3</sup> See, for example: Jonathan P. Klug, Steve Leonard (Eds.), *Professionals talk Logistics. Sustaining strategy and operations*, Havant-Hampshire, Howgate Publishing Limited 2025; Imoh Antai, Roland Hellberg, Per Skoglund, «Logistics growth in the armed forces: development of a theoretical framework and research propositions», *Defence Studies*, Vol. 24 (2024), No. 1, pp. 84-106. A recent literature review on military supply chain logistics highlights recent contributions: David Loska, Benjamin Hazen, Nicholas Rich, Stefan Genchev, Tegwen Malik, «Military Supply Chain Logistics and Dynamic Capabilities: A Literature Review and Synthesis», *Transportation Journal*, Vol. 64, Is. 2 (Spring 2025), pp. 1-30. See also: Aldemar Serrano, Dusko Kalenatic, Cesar López, Jairo R. Montoya-Torres, «Evolution of Military Logistics», *Logistics*, Vol. 7 (2023), Is. 2, pp. 1-24.

A recent overview should include the following, covering various aspects and scales of analysis: John Hyland, «The Achaemenid Military System and Its Campaign Logistics» in John Hyland, Khodadad Rezakhani (Eds.), Brill's Companion to War in the Ancient Iranian Empires, Leiden, Brill 2024, pp. 157–186; Julian ROMANE, Julius Caesar's Civil War. Tactics, Strategies and Logistics, Havertown, Pen & Sword Books Limited 2023; John F. Do-NAHUE, Lee L. BRICE (Eds.), Brill's Companion to Diet and Logistics in Greek and Roman Warfare, Leiden-Boston, Brill 2023; Gregory D. Bell, Logistics of the First Crusade. Acquiring Supplies Amid Chaos, London, Lexington Books 2020; Fabio ROMANONI, «Pane, vino e carri: logistica e vettovagliamento nello Stato visconteo trecentesco», Nuova Antologia Militare, N. 2 (2021), Is. 5, pp. 3-22; Simone PICCHIANTI, «Production and Logistics of Crossbow Bolts in the Early Renaissance. Florence and the War Against Lucca (1429-1433)», in Tadeusz Grabarczyk (Ed.), Tools of war, Narzędzia wojny, Oblicza wojny. vol. 9, Łódź, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego 2023, pp. 125-144; Marius Mutz, «Kontrolle und Logistik: die Verwaltungspraxis des bayerischen Hofkammerrats am Beispiel der Ingolstädter Festungsbaustelle, 1573–1576», in Regina Dauser, Dorothea DIEMER, Peter DIEMER, Marius MUTZ, Lothar SCHILLING (Hg.), Herzog Albrecht V. von Bayern: Wissenshorizonte eines europäischen Dynasten, Berlin, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, pp. 273-300; Astrid Ackermann, « Den Krieg organisieren. Die Kaufleute Georg Ayrmann und Marx Conrad von Rehlingen und die ernestinischen Herzöge», in EAD, Markus MEUMANN, Julia A. SCHMIDT-FUNKE, Siegrid WESTPHAL (Eds.), Mitten in Deutschland, mitten im Krieg. Bewältigungspraktiken und Handlungsoptionen im Dreißigjährigen Krieg, Leiden, Brill 2024, pp. 317-340; Colin Edward ZIMMERMAN, «Clinton's March: A Strategic and Logistical Study of the Crown Forces' March Through New Jersey in 1778», Doctoral Dissertations and Projects. 6452, Liberty University, 2025 (online); Kaushik Roy, «Logistics of British counterinsurgency during the Indian Rebellion: 1857-1859», Small Wars & Insurgencies, Vol. 36 (2025), Is. 2, pp. 402–435; Daniel F BANKS, «Ships, Guns and Money: The Logistics of Revolution and Garibaldi's Campaign of 1860», Past & Present, 2024, gtae044, https:// doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtae044; Mara Kozelsky, «Soldiers, civilians, and supply: lessons from Sevastopol», War & Society, Vol. 43 (2024), Is. 2, pp. 127-144; Jiří Нитеčка, «Wartime Provisioning, the People, and the State in Habsburg Central Europe during World War I», Střed. Časopis pro mezioborová studia Střední Evropy 19. a 20. Století, Vol. 16 (2024), Is. 1, pp. 80-97,

works have introduced valuable new approaches, some of which focus on specific dimensions within logistics itself<sup>5</sup>. However, further research with a *longue* durée perspective is still needed to fully capture the intricacy of the subject: a complexity that can be brought to light through temporal and geographical comparisons. Such comparisons should avoid presenting logistics as a linear or evolutionary progression, as seen in parts of van Creveld's interpretation, which has been surpassed both in its almost teleological framing and in its narrow focus on a few Western actors, providing instead precise studies<sup>6</sup>. For example, as Jeremy Black recently argued in a wide-ranging and coherent study, logistics should be examined with a neutral and comparative lens, incorporating land, maritime, and air domains, areas too often treated in isolation, and extending from antiquity to the present in global perspective<sup>7</sup>. One important point Black emphasizes is that logistics should be approached functionally: a method that may appear somewhat simplistic, but proves useful in focusing the analysis on the objectives that military logistics was designed to support, thus offering a clearer understanding of both operations and their outcomes. This approach is particularly valuable because the study of logistics inherently involves examining hybrid systems: it necessarily combines land and maritime dimensions, regular and irregular modes of campaigning, and, above all, military and civilian interactions. Beginning from a

<sup>5</sup> One of the most interesting emerging paths of research is the study of animals in logistics. See, for example, the recent comprehensive study on war and animals, which in many cases analyzes their role in logistical systems: Frank Jacob (Ed.), *War and Animals. Non-Human Actors in Human Made Conflict*, Leiden, Brill 2025. Among animal-related topics, the supply of horses has been the most extensively studied – and for quite some time – as demonstrated in the article: Rob A. Stradling, «Spain's Military Failure and the Supply of Horses, 1600-1660», *History*, Vol. 69, No. 226 (1984), pp. 208-221. Recently, however, the topic has been revisited from new perspectives, showing that the supply of horses had far-reaching implications: Fabrizio Ansani, *Il cavallo da guerra e lo Stato del Rinascimento. Una storia politica, economica e culturale*, Bologna, Il Mulino 2024. See also, Jeremy Black (Ed.), *Cavalry Warfare: From Ancient Times to Today*, SISM, Roma, Nadir Media 2024.

<sup>6</sup> See also, for example, the remarkable collective volume: John A. Lynn (Ed.), *Feeding Mars. Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present*, New York, Routledge 2018 (1st ed. 1993, Wesview Press).

As he stated at the beginning: «A Cindarella subject, logistics is more usually cited than discussed at length, and there is only limited theoretical discussion of logistics, compared in particular with that on strategy. Moreover, what is covered in the subject varies greatly». Jeremy Black, *Logistics. The Key to Victory*, Yorkshire, Pen & Sword Military 2021, p. XI. We also refer to this book as a key bibliographic reference for studies on logistics prior to 2021.

fixed or rigid interpretive framework can therefore be limiting, whereas a broader and more flexible perspective is essential to fully grasp the diversity and adaptability of logistical systems.

In particular, early modern history has, over the years, seen the publication of many valuable studies on logistics, beginning with Geoffrey Parker's foundational work on the Army of Flanders<sup>8</sup>, which effectively opened the field and encouraged many scholars to engage with logistical questions, or also the influential contribution of Géza Perjés's article<sup>9</sup>. Since then, research has expanded significantly, encompassing both broad thematic studies and focused investigations into specific aspects of military logistics. Providing a comprehensive overview of this scholarship would require an extensive bibliography, which lies beyond the scope of this article, but might well serve as the basis for a future contribution to this journal (perhaps even a dedicated special issue). More broadly, in recent decades, the study of logistics has been central to major historiographical debates, including those on the so-called Military Revolution and the Fiscal-Military State<sup>10</sup>, showing in particular how logistics functions as a key intersection between military demands and broader economic systems.

In this insight, we examine two recent books on logistics during the British Civil Wars, studies that are not only timely but also complementary in their differing perspectives. Through their focus on a specific conflict, these works offer valuable opportunities to reflect on broader questions in the study of military logistics. While earlier histories of the English (or British) Civil Wars tended to concentrate on generals, battles, and political or religious ideologies, more recent scholarship has shifted attention toward the material, administrative, and

<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey Parker, The Army of Flanders and the Spanish road, 1567-1659. The Logistics of Spanish victory and defeat in the Low Countries' Wars, Cambridge, CUP 1972.

<sup>9</sup> Géza Perjés, «Armies Provisioning, Logistics and Strategy in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century», *Acta Historica Academiae Scientarium Hungaricae*, Vol. 16 (1970), No. 1/2, pp. 1-52.

<sup>10</sup> For recent contributions to this debate, see: Rodrigo Da Costa Dominguez, «The Legacy of War: Ibero-Dutch Conflicts and the Road Toward a Limited Fiscal-Military State in Portugal, 1640–1703», in Silvia Z. MITCHELL, Erica Heinsen-Roach (Eds.), *Ibero-Dutch Imperial Entanglements in the Seventeenth Century. Geopolitical Shifts in Global Perspective*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan 2024, pp. 305–330; Robin Ganev, «Britain's fiscal-military state in the eighteenth century: Recent trends in historiography», *History Compass*, 2024, pp. 1-11. For more information and resources, see also the website of the project led by Peter Wilson at the University of Oxford: <a href="https://fiscalmilitary.history.ox.ac.uk/home">https://fiscalmilitary.history.ox.ac.uk/home</a>.

logistical dimensions of warfare. This turn is especially evident in studies that investigate how armies were moved, fed, clothed, and armed<sup>11</sup>, questions now recognized as central to understanding not only military outcomes but also wider processes of State transformations.

These two recent contributions, by Glenn W. Price and Andrew Abram, represent a significant step in this historiographical turn, addressing a long-standing gap in comprehensive studies on the materiality of logistics, understood here in the sense articulated by Antoine-Henri Jomini in his *Précis de la Guerre* (1838). Drawing on extensive archival sources, both works place logistics at the center of their analysis, though each with different emphases in terms of scope, methodology, and interpretive ambition. Their findings are valuable not only to historians of the British Civil Wars or, more broadly, the early modern period, but also to anyone interested in a deeper understanding of logistics in warfare: what elements it encompassed, how it functioned in the past, and how it might inform reflection on more recent military transformations (particularly the enduring relationship between military institutions and civilian societies).

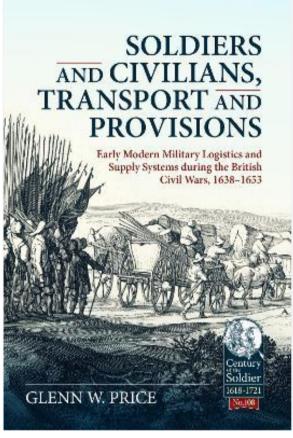
I

In *Soldiers and Civilians*, Glenn W. Price offers a compelling and deeply researched contribution to the military and administrative history of the British Civil Wars. He argues that logistics, often neglected in traditional narratives and recent studies, was central not only to the outcome of military campaigns but also to the broader processes of state formation, civilian-military relations, and the transformation of English society during the 1640s. Drawing from his doctoral thesis, Price sets out to reconstruct the material foundations of war — understanding it in depth — by tracing how armies moved, fed, and supplied themselves across a fragmented political landscape. Furthermore, the author affirms that understand-

<sup>11</sup> For example: Aryeh J. S. Nusbacher, «Civil Supply in the Civil War: Supply of Victuals to the New Model Army on the Naseby Campaign, 1-14 June 1645», English Historical Review, 115 (2000), pp. 145-60; Gavin Robinson, Horses, People, and Parliament in the English Civil War: Extracting Resources and Constructing Allegiance, Farnham, Ashgate 2012; Peter Edwards, Dealing in death. The arms trade and the British Civil Wars, 1638-52, Sutton, The History Press 2000.

ing the realities of supply helps clarify the development of military operations, allowing us to make sense of movements that had long remained unclear (such as why Prince Rupert chose to, or had to, fight at Gloucester).

The historiographical model, as explicitly stated, is the already mentioned groundbreaking work (though now somewhat dated) by van Creveld<sup>12</sup>. At the heart of Price's intervention is the claim that the historiography of the Civil Wars has long suffered from «a certain level of disinterest. or perhaps a lack of awareness of logistics and supply»<sup>13</sup>. He situates his work as part of a broader effort to revitalize military history by integrating it with social and institutional analysis, using logistics as a means to refresh the perspective of War



Glenn W. PRICE, Soldiers and civilians, transport and provisions. Early modern military logistics and supply systems during the British civil wars, 1638-1653, Warwick, Helion & Company Limited 2023, pp. 260, ISBN: 9781804513521.

& Society. This link to society is fundamental in the study of logistics, based on the definition he adopts: «[...] logistics and supply are the procurement and transportation of men, equipment, and provisions necessary to maintain an army in the

<sup>12</sup> Glenn W. PRICE, Soldiers and civilians, transport and provisions. Early modern military logistics and supply systems during the British civil wars, 1638-1653, Warwick, Helion & Company Limited 2023, p. XII.

<sup>13</sup> Ivi, p. X

field and the infrastructure to support this»<sup>14</sup>. This broad interest is reflected in his choice to utilize and integrate civilian sources to study the military (an external point of view), thereby expanding the documentary possibilities.

Covering the period from the Bishops' Wars of 1638 to the final years of the First Civil War, Price structures his book around key themes in supply: transport (by land, sea, and rivers), including requisitioning (and the challenges of returning vehicles); free quarter; civilian contributions; recruitment practices; and the emergence of contract-based provisioning systems. Interestingly, Price chooses not to examine the supply of weapons and mounts, asserting that good studies already exist on the topic and that the daily lives of soldiers were primarily shaped by other logistical needs<sup>15</sup>. His attention to both Parliamentarian and Royalist logistics allows for comparative insights, while also highlighting the unevenness and improvisation that characterized early modern military administration. One of the study's greatest strengths is its documentation of the profound impact of military logistics in linking military forces with civilian populations, particularly in light of the fact that the British Civil Wars broke out after a long period of relative peace. 'Relative', as the author specifies, does not mean that English armies had not fought, but that they had done so primarily on the Continent. This is significant, because, as he writes: «It should be noted that this lack of internal military infrastructure is separate from both military culture and military experience»<sup>16</sup>

Drawing on a vast range of sources, from Exchequer records and State Papers

<sup>14 «[...]</sup> we can arrive at a definition for logistics and supply systems suitable for this study, this being the acquisition and movement (the logistics) of the necessaries (the supplies) for an army's survival. These necessaries include the manpower needed to fill and replenish the army, the provision of food, shelter, clothing, and footwear to sustain them, the weapons, armour, and horses to equip them, and the creation and maintenance of the transport links necessary to provide these supplies where they needed to be». pp. X-XI. He also writes on the preceding pages: «Military officers in the early modern period were generally less clear on this division, referring to the procurement, transport, distribution, and the materials themselves by the same all-encompassing word of 'supply'. This was used by contemporaries when discussing all the necessaries of campaign, be it pay, food, ammunition, or other materials». *Ivi*, p. VIII.

<sup>15 «</sup>It may seem strange to not cover weapons or mounts, with the focus on this work being the operational realities of provision. However, the majority of a soldier's time was not spent fighting, and he still needed to be fed, clothed, and sheltered every day». *Ivi*, p. 179

<sup>16</sup> Ivi, p. 31.

to county petitions and warrant books, Price shows how armies depended on the resources, means, and expertise of local economies (both on land and at sea), and how they routinely strained or overwhelmed them. This was especially evident in the reliance on 'free quarter', whereby soldiers were distributed among civilian households to be fed and lodged, often with little prospect of reimbursement. In many counties, this led to violent resistance or prolonged negotiations between local officials and military commanders. Price is careful, however, not to romanticize either side. He shows that logistical breakdowns occurred across the board, but places particular emphasis on how the Parliamentarian war effort gradually shifted toward a more centralized, contractual, and cash-based system of supply. He notes, for instance, that the New Model Army came to be supplied increasingly «from London by commercial means»<sup>17</sup>, rather than relying solely on requisition from local communities.

Parliament's use of ready cash payments and the establishment of centralized magazines and transport routes created what Price calls a more efficient and, crucially, more legitimate system of warfare in the eyes of many civilians. However, there were clear limitations and contradictions within this system. Even the New Model Army (often idealized in later historiography) was not immune to supply failures, pay arrears, and logistical improvisation. Free quarter was officially discouraged, but when funds ran dry in 1646, it returned, albeit under new regulatory frameworks<sup>18</sup>. Price emphasizes the tension between ideals and realities, between what commanders intended their armies to do and what they were actually able to enforce in the field. Another important argument is that logistics functioned not only as a military necessity, but also as a form of political ideology: the ability to feed and clothe an army was a visible marker of governmental legitimacy, and Parliament's relative success in organizing supply enabled it to claim both the moral and practical high ground.

Soldiers and Civilians is also methodologically innovative in its attention to transport. Price devotes considerable space to the organization of road convoys, river and coastal shipping, and the administrative roles of waggonmasters and local carriers. This is not logistics in the abstract, but logistics as embodied, technical, and often chaotic. For example, he notes that there were three main forms of

<sup>17</sup> Ivi, p. XI.

<sup>18</sup> Ivi, p. 99.

land transportation: the wagon (four wheels), the cart (two wheels), and the packhorse, with the wagon being the largest and most efficient. However, the analysis also reminds us that supply systems were constrained by geography, weather, and road conditions; size alone was not the only determining factor, and human error often shaped logistical outcomes just as much as policy. Another area where the author takes a pragmatic approach is recruitment: rather than focusing on the soldier's personal experience or motivation, Price treats manpower as a logistical issue — a matter of filling ranks. He examines various recruitment methods used during the British Civil Wars (with impressment likely the most common), and emphasizes that no system was without flaws.

The book's extensive attention to physical geography and regional specificities stands out as one of its key strengths, offering grounded insights into how logistical practices varied across England and beyond. Particularly innovative are Price's considerations of water transportation, which was almost entirely external to the army and therefore relied heavily on civilian networks. He examines both coastal and river transport, which, in combination with roads, already formed a highly interconnected infrastructure for commerce and internal communication within the British Isles<sup>19</sup>. Price specifically highlights the lack of historical studies on the «operational use of rivers for logistics and supply, and the impact they may have had in determining wider military strategy»<sup>20</sup>.

Misunderstanding the importance of rivers for logistics, and thus for military campaigns, can lead to misreadings of operations, as in the case of Charles I's siege of Gloucester in August 1643, which few historians have connected to the strategic need to control the River Severn. In some sections, the density of archival detail (such as lists of local requisitions or transport arrangements) may feel demanding, especially for readers less familiar with administrative history. However, rather than diverting from the main argument, these passages illustrate

<sup>19</sup> *Ivi*, p. 75. The author highlights the importance of this transportation system in several passages, providing valuable data: «The amount of provisions shipped along the coast to support the army in Scotland are impressive, with surviving pay warrants stating that from September 1650 to July 1651 this coastal supply line shipped a total of over 2,500 tons of biscuit, over 3,300 tons of wheat, and at least 1,900 tons of cheese in addition to other provisions». *Ivi*, p. 97.

<sup>20</sup> *Ivi*, p. 79. A recent Italian historian has examined precisely this issue in the context of late medieval Northern Italy. See: Fabio ROMANONI, *La guerra d'acqua dolce navi e conflitti medievali nell'Italia settentrionale*, Bologna, Biblioteca Clueb 2023.

the immense complexity of coordinating war efforts across a fragmented political and geographical landscape. Far from being redundant, they underscore the author's central point: that logistics was not a uniform or purely top-down process, but one negotiated at every level of society. In this light, the illustrations accompanying the book, drawn from *Les Misères et Malheurs de la Guerre* by Jacques Callot (1633), are valuable for their vivid portrayal of the possible consequences of these interactions. However, these images are never meaningfully commented on within the text to deepen the analysis.

The book's comparative framing also deserves attention. By juxtaposing Parliament's changing supply system with Royalist problems, particularly the over-reliance on 'forced contributions', Price is able to draw broader conclusions about the nature of institutional resilience. His thesis that the Royalist logistical system 'broke down' under pressure from local resistance and weak bureaucratic capacity is persuasive, and it contributes meaningfully to longstanding debates about why Parliament ultimately prevailed.

In conclusion, Price's book is a landmark in the historiography of both logistics and the Civil Wars. It restores logistics from the margins to the center of analysis, and does so without losing sight of either the human interactions or the broader implications for the State and political authority. What emerges is the fundamental importance of the relationship between military and civilian spheres, with all its negotiations and necessary frictions: «this reliance on civilian methods, developed for civilian needs. In time of peace, [they] struggled to adapt to military needs, or perhaps it is more correct to say the military struggled to adapt the civilian methods to their specific military needs»<sup>21</sup>. Its combination of archival depth, thematic breadth, and historiographical ambition ensures that it will remain a reference point for future studies of military logistics in early modern Europe.

<sup>21</sup> Ivi, p. 230.

П

Andrew Abram's *Supplying the New Model Army* is a remarkably detailed and technically grounded study of logistics in the English Civil Wars, focusing on the material support of Sir Thomas Fairfax's army, created by Parliament through the New Model Ordinance and placed under his command on 21 January 1645, during its formative years (1645–1646). While many works on the New Model Army emphasize its ideological innovation, officer corps, or battlefield effectiveness, Abram directs attention to the enormous and often invisible machinery of provisioning: «the recruitment, victualling, ordnance, ammunition, clothing, arming, and logistics employed by the Committee of the Army in both the initial establishment of the army and its subsequent campaigns»<sup>22</sup>. This logistical infrastructure, he argues, made the army's operations, and arguably its success, possible. The study also contributes to reassessing Sir Thomas Fairfax's leadership, adding material elements to the understanding of a figure who has often been dismissed as lacking political and military ability.

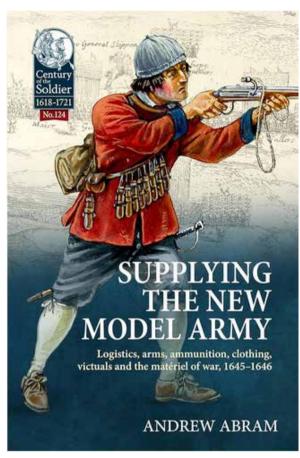
The book's strength lies in its precision and empirical density. It draws on a vast array of primary sources, many of which are underexplored or previously unused. Abram is upfront about the challenges posed by these sources: the logistical systems of the New Model Army are not documented in a single coherent archive, and historians cannot rely solely on supply contracts. As he explains, to construct an accurate picture, one must consult a variety of records: «It is never enough to simply quote supply contracts (the record of which is occasionally haphazard and incomplete) without considering Treasury Warrants and Receipts, which record what the army received from suppliers, either in full or in part of contracts, and when, and in what quantities, it received them»<sup>23</sup>.

Various types of manuscript sources are central to the inquiry, including receipts of supplies from contractors to the Ordnance Office, and warrants for deliveries of war materials to commissaries and armies in the field. This material includes documents from the Commonwealth Exchequer Papers (SP28) and the War Office (WO) series in The National Archives, as well as local archives such as the William Salt Library, where Abram discovered a largely unknown warrant

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Abram, Supplying the New Model Army. Logistics, Arms, Ammunition, Clothing, Victuals and the Matériel of War, 1645-1646, Warwick, Helion and Company 2024, p. XI.

<sup>23</sup> Ivi, p. VIII.

book (Ms Salt 463). Previously unused in research on logistics, this manuscript contains over 350 folios related to equipping the army. The clear and well-structured introduction explains where this mass of material is located and how it has been employed by the author. The result is a meticulous reconstruction of procurement chains, contracts, storage, and distribution systems, down to the names of merchants, smiths, and saddlers supplied everything who from artillery to stockings. This wealth of data is presented with precision in 47 detailed and comprehensive tables distributed throughout the chapters. Occasionally, Abram also inserts images of the original documents, bringing the reader directly into contact with the sources



Andrew Abram, Supplying the New Model Army. Logistics, Arms, Ammunition, Clothing, Victuals and the Matériel of War, 1645-1646, Warwick, Helion and Company, 2024, pp. 314, ISBN: 9781804515495.

and offering a glimpse into the research process itself.

It is important to note that Abram has already published widely on the British Civil Wars, and not only<sup>24</sup>. His experience and training within the military, not

<sup>24</sup> Andrew Abram, The Battle of Montgomery 18th September 1644, Bristol, Stuart Press1994; Id., More like Lions than Men. Sir William Brereton and the Cheshire army of Parliament, 1642-46, Warwick, Helion & Company Limited 2020; Id., For a Parliament Freely Chosen. The Rebellion of Sir George Booth, 1659, Warwick, Helion & Company Limited 2021; Id., The English garrison of Tangier. Charles II's colonial venture in the Mediterranean, 1661-1684,

just in the field of history, are reflected in the book's integrated use of modern military insights. This is explicitly referenced in the introduction, where the author briefly mentions both the Falklands War and Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine to underscore the enduring importance of logistics in determining military success or failure<sup>25</sup>. These comparisons do not distract from the historical analysis; rather, they help frame early modern supply systems within broader patterns of military planning and risk. This sustained attention to logistics as a perennial military challenge also explains one of the book's most original features: its close focus on the *materiality of war*. Abram, for example, discusses not only the quantities of gunpowder and match issued, but also their chemical composition, methods of manufacture, and delivery logistics<sup>26</sup>. Similarly, he examines the provenance and contractual arrangements for specific types of weapons (such as matchlocks and snaphaunces) and the respective advantages they offered<sup>27</sup>. This level of material specificity gives the study a unique precision, revealing how the practicalities of warfare were inseparable from industrial capacity and logistical coordination.

The first major strength of Abram's work lies in its technical depth and archival richness. This is a book grounded in extensive archival research, documenting not only what was supplied to the army, but also by whom, when, how, and at what cost. Abram details, for example, the wide range of contractors employed by Parliament, from major armaments manufacturers to «tradesmen and women combined either in their craft guild or in private groups»<sup>28</sup>, revealing a surprisingly diverse commercial ecosystem behind the war effort. Focusing on the New Model Army's logistical structure during the decisive period of its early operations, the study shows how Parliament transitioned from local requisitioning to a centralized system of supply. This transformation, however, also involved elements of continuity alongside disruption. According to Abram, it was driven by the sheer size of the army and its growing dependence on commercial provision, particularly from London. While some scholars have emphasized the persistence of free quarter and local procurement, Abram argues that the New Model Army

Warwick, Helion & Company Limited 2022; ID, Dragoons and Dragoon operations in the British Civil Wars, 1638-1653, Warwick, Helion & Company Limited 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Ivi, pp. XII-XIII.

<sup>26</sup> Ivi, pp. 56-60

<sup>27</sup> Ivi, pp. 158-175.

<sup>28</sup> Ivi, p. 30.

increasingly organized its supply through varied mechanisms based in London and relied on them consistently.

The book is organized thematically, with chapters devoted to arms and ammunition, clothing, victuals, horses, and equipment. Each chapter is supported by substantial documentary evidence, including transcriptions of contracts and receipts. This is especially important because different types of weapons, particularly artillery, required large quantities of specialized tools and technical equipment, which were procured from expert suppliers. The level of detail is consistently precise across different areas: for instance, the Committee for the Army's provisioning of 500 pickaxes by the master smith at the Tower on 18 June 1645<sup>29</sup>, or the delivery of 19,500 pairs of shoes from London suppliers between 1645 and 1646<sup>30</sup>. Rather than overwhelming the reader, this documentary density is presented with clarity and purpose, illustrating the extraordinary scale and coordination required to maintain a standing army in the 1640s.

A second major contribution of the book is its emphasis on infrastructure and transport. Abram does not treat supply in isolation but traces its flow from London to local magazines, for example, in Reading and Windsor, and from there to the front. This included the use of civilian carriers, rivers, coastal shipping, and road convoys. Understanding these systems allows for a deeper comprehension of the necessary movements of armies. As the author notes, the New Model Army was too large to live off the local economy, and its ability to move bulk supplies depended on a complex network of contractors and providers operating within established commercial routes. The logistical sophistication required was considerable, and Abram shows that by 1645, Parliament had established a centralized system «based upon prompt payment in cash»<sup>31</sup>, which ensured the reliable delivery of matériel. One aspect Abram only hypothesizes about is the possible presence of a market accompanying the New Model Army, in his view introduced during the Southwest campaign in June 1645 to prevent the same logistical failures that had led to Essex's defeat the previous year. Fairfax and Parliament, he suggests, encouraged traders and merchants to follow the army during its march, thereby maintaining a secure environment through strict discipline and prohibit-

<sup>29</sup> Ivi, p. 49.

<sup>30</sup> Ivi, p. 281.

<sup>31</sup> Ivi, p. XII.

ing plundering or threats against merchants<sup>32</sup>.

Abram is also attentive to how soldiers experienced supply. His treatment of clothing, tents, arms, and snapsacks offers a vivid sense of how provisioning intersected with everyday life<sup>33</sup>. The issuing of uniforms, shirts, stockings, and shoes was not merely a matter of warmth or protection: it also symbolized identity and had direct effects on health and *morale*, which also depended on the availability of efficient horses and animals more generally, making fodder a logistical and psychological concern. Abram further emphasizes that most newly supplied equipment was delivered to recruits, shedding light on Parliament's efforts to maintain military effectiveness while rapidly expanding its forces.

One aspect less explored is the theoretical reflection on the operational supply and resupply of the army. Abram's analysis is empirically rich but primarily descriptive; he does not engage deeply with broader historiographical debates or comparative models. The absence of a concluding chapter also reflects this approach. Readers seeking a more conceptual framework or a cross-European contextualization may be left with some unanswered questions. Yet that is not the book's aim. Its purpose is to document, reconstruct, and explain the functioning of one of the most important logistical systems of the 1640s, and in this it succeeds admirably, positioning itself within the specific historiographical debate (notably by also referencing Price's book).

In conclusion, *Supplying the New Model Army* is a foundational work for understanding the practical logistics of the English Civil Wars. Abram's mastery of archival material, attention to material detail, and organizational clarity make this an important reference for anyone studying early modern warfare, military administration, or the general history of armies. By bringing into focus the often-overlooked material foundations of Parliament's military success, Abram offers not only a clearer picture of how the New Model Army fought, but also of how it endured.

<sup>32</sup> Ivi, p. 112.

<sup>33</sup> Ivi, pp. 215-218.

#### Ш.

## Logistical Systems in the British Civil Wars: A Comparative Assessment

Having examined each work individually, we can now reflect on the insights that emerge from placing them in dialogue. As already suggested by the two syntheses above, a fuller understanding of logistics, particularly during the British Civil Wars, but not exclusively, emerges when the two books are considered together. Their combination is valuable not merely due to a difference in scale or approach (such as micro vs macro history, though neither work can be reduced to this distinction), but because of the points where their theses and hypotheses converge or diverge, and where they prioritize different elements of logistical reality. For instance, both authors highlight the significance of the adoption and diffusion of knapsacks in supporting soldiers' ability to transport food and clothing. Another example is their attention not only to the provisioning of food for soldiers (analyzing the roles of meat, cheese, bread, and especially biscuit) but also to the feeding of animals through fodder and other means, a topic both treat in noteworthy detail.

One central theme emphasized repeatedly in both works is the interaction between military forces and civilian society. Both historians stress that armies, in order to function, were deeply dependent on civilian infrastructure at multiple levels: from employing suppliers and establishing markets, to renting or requisitioning transport (by land and sea) and their crews, and, at a more strategic level, using established civilian routes and houses for quartering<sup>34</sup>. Both authors examine these interactions without romanticizing them, while clearly acknowledging the burden placed on local populations. From this perspective, Price focuses more on civilian negotiation and resistance, framing logistics as a necessary point of connection, but primarily as a site of tension and contestation. Abram, on the other hand, emphasizes the process of institutionalizing mechanisms under Fairfax to minimize the army's impact on civilians (such as cash payments, improved resupply, and the use of mobile markets accompanying the army) suggesting that the New Model Army was becoming more disciplined and thus less harmful.

<sup>34</sup> Parallel to the publication of Price's work, an interesting collective volume was published in Finland, exploring this topic across the entire early modern period: Petri TALVITIE, Juha-Matti Granquist (Eds.), *Civilians and Military Supply in Early Modern Finland*, Helsinki, Helsinki U.P. 2021.

Both authors study in detail the practice of quartering, particularly free quartering, not merely to document its negative effects on civilians, but to analyze why it was implemented and how it shaped the conduct and outcomes of war<sup>35</sup>.

Closely linked to the civil-military dynamic is another central historiographical problem in military history: the relationship between logistics and the political entities behind the war effort, in this case, the competing state structures during the English Civil Wars. This relationship manifested in varying degrees of centralization. Price examines logistical developments across both factions, tracing changes over a longer time span and analyzing what was centralized, what was delegated, and what was outsourced, particularly in the case of recruitment. This dual perspective enables him to explore how differing political regimes and conceptions of the state gave rise to distinct logistical models: not merely in terms of centralized control, but in the very ideas of service, obligation, and organization that underpinned them. Abram, by contrast, focuses on the creation and optimization of centrally managed offices during the formation of the New Model Army in 1645–1646. He documents with precision the elaboration of contracts, warrants, receipts, and the networks and consortiums of merchants and suppliers involved. His analysis demonstrates how, during these formative two years, logistical administration became more efficient, not because of ideological vision, but out of practical necessity, to support a newly unified army. What is certain, however, is that the conflict gave rise to two distinct systems (shaped by different, intentional or unintentional factors) and studying them offers valuable insight into how and why Parliament ultimately triumphed.

A point strongly emphasized by both scholars is the strategic importance of garrisons, a subject often overlooked<sup>36</sup>. Price provides a broad overview of their operational role, showing how garrisons were essential not only for collecting food and goods, but also for generating the transport infrastructure necessary to support supply systems. They functioned as key points of interaction between

<sup>35</sup> In Northern Italy, for example, this topic has been thoroughly studied: Alessandro Buono, *Esercito, istituzioni, territorio. Alloggiamenti militari e «case herme» nello Stato di Milano (secoli XVI e XVII)*, Firenze, Firenze U.P. 2009.

<sup>36</sup> On garrison warfare in the early modern period, see also: Rhoads Murphey, «The Garrison and its Hinterland in the Ottoman East, 1578-1605», in Andrew C.S. Peacock (Ed.), *The frontiers of the Ottoman World*, Oxford, OUP 2009, pp. 352-370.

military and civilian spheres<sup>37</sup>. Abram, in addition to this, stresses their role in controlling road networks, underlining their military significance, which was often inherent in their geographic placement. Garrisons served not only as logistical magazines but also as hubs for operational maneuvering. Notably, Abram is currently dedicating a whole new book to this topic, underlining its centrality to the development and outcome of the conflict<sup>38</sup>.

Finally, although both works are grounded in exhaustive archival research, they adopt distinct methodological approaches, differences that do not diminish their value, but instead yield complementary perspectives. This divergence is also reflected in their use of visual and supplementary material. Price enriches his book with a series of iconographic representations, primarily from Callot's series of images, though he does not substantially engage with their content, along with a few other illustrations. Abram, by contrast, includes fewer iconographic elements, limiting them mostly to reproductions of documents or practical items. Notably, both authors include in one case the same image, the Exodus of the Spanish army from Maastricht (1632), though in different contexts. As noted earlier in the individual analyses, Abram approaches logistics with the mindset of a practical analyst, working with precise, quantitative, and technical data organized into numerous tables. He is careful to highlight where sources may be problematic and reflects critically on potential biases or gaps: a method reminiscent of how a military practitioner might study contemporary military operations. Price, by contrast, approaches the subject as a historian of systems. His analysis is more interpretive and long-term in scope, focused less on individual campaigns or years and more on the interaction of two conflicting logistical models. As such, he is more deeply engaged with broader historiographical debates and the systemic implications of logistics in shaping the conduct and outcome of war<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>37 «</sup>Garrisons across the British Isles were more than strongholds that simply dominated the landscape to extort food, money, and other supplies from the locality. The garrisons often had a myriad of functions including, but not limited to, securing and controlling the local area (particularly major towns) tax collection, magazines, waystations, and recruitment hubs. A particularly good case study for garrisons and their role in land transportation is that of the Midlands during the period 1642-1646» PRICE, Soldiers and Civilians, p. 69.

<sup>38</sup> Andrew Abram, *Garrisons and Garrison Warfare in the British Civil Wars*, 1638-1653, Helion & Company, Not yet published, in Autumn 2025 list.

<sup>39</sup> As the author states at the outset, after reviewing the existing scholarship on the English Civil War and military logistics, he positions his work within the broader renewal of the

Future studies on logistics will need to engage with both authors, though for different reasons. Price provides an overarching framework that may serve as a paradigm for approaching the topic, emphasizing the systemic, political, and social dimensions of supply. Abram, on the other hand, will stand as a reference point for the technical precision and methodological rigor required in this field, especially in the organization and interpretation of complex data. His analysis demonstrates, for example, that it is not sufficient to track the provisioning of horses or saddles in general terms: rather one must examine the specific types required by each cavalry specialty. As Abram notes, Dragoon saddles were both lighter and significantly less expensive than standard cavalry saddles, a detail he traces through the Committee of the Army's contracts.

What clearly emerges from both works is that logistics was not simply about the movement of goods. It also moved people and their networks, services, power, and ideas. And perhaps most fundamentally, it reminds us that, in its earliest phases, it was always the military that had to adapt itself to civilian society and its resources, not the other way around.

#### IV

## Future Directions in the Study of Early Modern Logistics

The two books examined here offer significant contributions to the study of logistics in early modern warfare, but their very strengths also reveal how much more remains to be explored. Further research need thematic, methodological, and comparative assessments. Several of these directions align with perspectives already outlined by Jeremy Black, who has suggested fruitful avenues for expanding the study of logistics. These include: logistics as the art of raising and maintaining forces; its connection to the natural world, in terms of available resources and environmental pressures; its entanglement with economic systems; its role within broader processes of governance; and its interaction with military

*War & Society* field, explicitly connecting it to John Lynn's well-known article on the challenges facing military history in Universities. See John A. LYNN, «The Embattled Future of Academic Military History», *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 61 (1997), Is. 4, pp. 777-789.

thought. Black also emphasizes the importance of analyzing these dimensions at different levels of warfare (strategic, operational, and tactical) and across all domains, including land, sea, and (in later periods) air<sup>40</sup>. In the final part of this contribution, we propose therefore eight thematic directions that could guide future research on military logistics. These points are intended to stimulate further discussion and expand the scope of inquiry beyond the two books analyzed.

An obvious starting point for future research is the potential for comparative analysis, both across political systems and between different types of actors. These should not be limited to State entities: one might, for example, explore the logistical systems of the East India Company in its overseas military operations, and ask what happened when it had to negotiate provisioning and movement with diverse local collectivities. Such comparisons would allow historians to frame logistics not as a linear process of evolution (after all, would anyone claim that Roman logistics were less sophisticated than those that followed?) but as a field shaped in each case by distinct political, institutional, and strategic imperatives. Examining how non-State or hybrid actors organized logistical support may also help decenter the assumption that effective logistics are necessarily tied to the development of centralized nation-States. Instead, logistical systems should be studied in relation to the kinds of operations they supported and the outcomes they produced. Research might test how the same actor, whether State or non-State, conducted war in different geographic settings, or compare the logistical practices of various States facing similar strategic challenges<sup>41</sup>. This perspective reinforces a key insight emphasized by both Price and Abram: that the study of logistics is essential to understanding operational military history in its fullest sense<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Jeremy Black, Logistics, pp. XII-XIII.

<sup>41</sup> For example, Theobald has analyzed war expenditures, finance, and logistics in the Qing Empire's campaigns against the rebel forces of the Gyalrong chieftains: Ulrich Theobald, War Finance and Logistics in Late Imperial China. A Study of the Second Jinchuan Campaign (1771-1776), Leiden-Boston, Brill 2013. Or consider a classic study on weapons logistics in the Ottoman Empire, tracing their journey from manufacture to the battlefield: Gábor Ágoston, Guns for the Sultan. Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire, New York, CUP 2005.

<sup>42</sup> On this methodological approach, see also: Marcus Warnke, Logistik und friderizianische Kriegsführung. Eine Studie zur Verteilung, Mobilisierung und Wirkungsmächtigkeit militärisch relevanter Ressourcen, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot 2018.

Price, for example, briefly mentions the riverine strategy employed by Gustavus Adolphus during his 1630 campaign, in which the Swedish army advanced along major waterways such as the Oder, Spree, Havel, Elbe, and Saale. Could such cases serve as the basis for further comparative research? More broadly, as Price argues, maritime and riverine aspects of logistics remain underexplored<sup>43</sup>: «Fundamentally the study of water-based transport systems for the armies has been lost somewhere between land-based military histories and sea-based naval histories»<sup>44</sup>. This observation calls for greater attention to logistical systems that operated on water, and to the often-overlooked civilian and commercial infrastructures that made them possible.

Another vital area for comparison and study is the challenge of maintaining army strength through ongoing recruitment and resupply<sup>45</sup>. Price draws on David Parrott's evocative metaphor — originally applied to the French army — of attempting to keep a bathtub filled while the plug has been removed<sup>46</sup>. This vivid

<sup>43</sup> Ideally, this should be explored not only in relation to individual campaigns, but in a more systematic way, as shown by Jeremy Black, «Logistics and the Path to Military Modernity. Britain and the crucial advantage of naval strength,1793-1815», Nuova Antologia Militare, N. 1 (2020), Is. 3, pp. 3-15. More general: Roger Morriss, The Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy. Resources, Logistics and the State, 1755-1815, Cambridge, CUP 2011. Always focused on England, see: Craig L. Lambert, Shipping the Medieval Military. English Maritime Logistics in the Fourteenth Century, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press 2011.

<sup>44</sup> PRICE, *Soldiers and Civilians*, p. 78. A good example of the richness of this perspective, which also highlights a non-European logistical system, is Nan-Hsu Chen, «How Did China Project Military Resources Across the Taiwan Strait? Institutions, Agents and Knowledge During the Sino-French War of 1884–1885», *War in History*, Vol. 32 (2025), I. 1, pp. 3-23.

<sup>45</sup> As recent publications have shown, this also entails studying and reassessing military entrepreneurship, moving beyond the classic formulation by Fritz Redlich (1964-65). David Parrott has introduced important new perspectives in this field (David Parrott, *The Business of War. Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, CUP 2013). See also the recent collective book: Philippe Rogger, André Holenstein, «Introduction Mobilising Resources for War: Early Modern Military Entrepreneurs and Their Transnational Fields of Action», in Idd (Eds.), Officers, Entrepreneurs, Career Migrants, and Diplomats. Military Entrepreneurs in the Early Modern World, Leiden, Brill 2024, pp. 1-42; See also Jaakko Björklund, Masters of War. Military entrepreneurship and foreign soldiers in early seventeenth century Sweden, Helsinki, Dissertationes Universitatis Helsingiensis, 138/2025, online, Debated on 9 May 2025.

<sup>46 «</sup>A crude model of the French army in this period – indeed for all armies except for a few elite corps made up of quasi professional veterans where the process was slightly more attenuated – is of a bath half full of water, but without a plug, being intermittently refilled from a tap. The moment the tap is turned off – the moment that additional recruitment



Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625) Sebastiaen Vrancx (1573-1647), *Assault on a Convoy*, ca 1612, Kunsthistorisches Museum GG 1071. Wikimedia Commons

image captures the structural difficulty all early modern armies faced in sustaining operational effectiveness. How did commanders respond to such pressures? Did they rely on local recruitment or draw reinforcements from home regions? What logistical mechanisms made this possible, and how did these decisions affect the army's cohesion? These questions open paths into related issues, such as the coexistence of soldiers of different religious and cultural backgrounds within a single force, and how this diversity shaped both logistical practice and the conduct of war. Possibilities for future research are far from exhausted.

The study of logistics inherently involves the provisioning and transportation of food, matériel, and supplies to armies, processes that generated vast quantities of information, both about the suppliers and the supplied. This circulation of information deserves focused analysis, particularly regarding how knowledge about

stops for some reason – the existing water rapidly runs out of the bath». David Parrott, *Richelieu's Army. War, Government, and Society in France, 1624-1642*, Cambridge, CUP 2001, p. 178.

resources, needs, and supply capacities was transmitted, and who was responsible for producing and managing this information. One especially promising area is the role of garrisons, already emphasized by both Price and Abram, as information hubs. Garrisons functioned not only as logistical centers but also as points of contact where knowledge was exchanged between soldiers and civilians: knowledge about local resources, troop movements, the progress of the war, and the enemy. More broadly, the relationship between civilians and military forces in the context of logistics, particularly during campaigns, remains underexplored. This is especially true in non-Western contexts, where historical preconceptions about both soldiers and civilians, especially in pre-nineteenth-century societies, have often hindered deeper investigation. Addressing this gap could yield valuable insights into how different cultures structured logistical systems, and how these systems shaped civil-military interaction far beyond the battlefield<sup>47</sup>.

Another promising direction is to establish a closer dialogue between logistics and environmental history, particularly through a material perspective that can deepen our understanding of logistical systems. Some studies have already begun to explore this intersection<sup>48</sup>, demonstrating, at various levels, not only the relationship between climate, resource availability, and conflict, but also the impact of environmental conditions on operational warfare itself<sup>49</sup>. Starting from the evident influence of weather on transport and supply reliability, future research could examine more specific ecological factors: the types of water and wood available (both essential for cooking and for construction, especially naval infrastructure),

<sup>47</sup> An interesting example of such a study is: Kenneth M. Swope, «Civil-Military Coordination in the Bozhou Campaign of the Wanli Era», *War and Society*, Vol 18 (2000), Is. 2, pp. 49-70

<sup>48</sup> For example, by linking warfare and political change to climatic transformations: Geoffrey Parker, Global Crisis. War, Climate Change & Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century, New Haven-London, Yale U.P. 2013; More generally, and more directly related to logistics, Richard P. Tucker and J. R. McNeill, in their insightful chapters, also reflect on how: «By the 1700s, European navies began cutting the hardwood and white-pine stands of northeastern North America, the coastal hardwoods of Brazil, the mahogany and cedars of Cuba, and later the teak forests of monsoon Asia, to find substitutes for the depleted English oak and Scandinavian conifers». Richard P. Tucker, J. R. McNeill, «War and the Environment», J. R. McNeill (Ed.), A Companion to Global Environmental History, Hoboken, Blackwell Publishing 2025 (2nd ed.), p. 320.

<sup>49</sup> Pratyay NATH, Climate of conquest. War, Environment, and Empire in Mughal North India, New Delhi, OUP 2019.

the botanical and regional availability of grains, fodder, and edible plants, and their roles in sustaining both human and animal forces. Such studies would shed light on how logistical systems were shaped by their ecological context and, in turn, how military needs altered or depleted local environments.

An ecological perspective also invites attention to the role of disease: its spread, its environmental conditions, and its impact on military performance. In this light, there is a clear need for more research into campaign healthcare systems as integral components of logistics, particularly regarding the treatment and movement of the sick and wounded<sup>50</sup>. Medical provisioning, sanitation, and the spatial organization of care remain underdeveloped areas in the logistical history of early modern warfare. Moreover, the environment was not only something to exploit for supplies: it was also a target. Denying access to resources was a key element of operational planning. Price, for instance, interprets the Protestant expedition to Drogheda as a punitive action designed to deprive rebels of local supplies by destroying civilian infrastructure through burning, spoiling, and wasting. This form of scorched-earth policy connects to broader military practices across the early modern period. Jan Philipp Bothe, for example, has analyzed how the practice of ravaging the countryside was a recurring and accepted element of early modern military thought<sup>51</sup>. Yet more research is needed, especially on the actual practices, regional variations, and long-term consequences of such tactics. These forms of environmental violence were not simply strategic decisions, but also had lasting implications for civilian populations and the ecology of warfare.

The financial mechanisms underpinning logistics also represent a field ripe for further investigation. Abram's work demonstrates the richness of this area, offering detailed examples that suggest broader applications. Merchant networks that followed armies, for instance, are often overlooked, either because of their perceived marginality or due to limited surviving sources. Yet, as Abram speculates in the case of Fairfax's Southwest campaign, their presence may have been crucial

<sup>50</sup> For a recent overview, focused more on military institutions than on the practical workings of logistics, see Sabine Jesner, Matthew Neufeld (Eds.), *Military Healthcare and the Early Modern State*, 1660-1830. Management – Professionalisation – Shortcomings, Göttingen, V&R Unipress 2025.

<sup>51</sup> Jan Philipp Bothe, «How to "Ravage" a Country: Destruction, Conservation, and Assessment of Natural Environments in Early Modern Military Thought», *The Hungarian Historical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2018), pp. 510-540.

to logistical success. Further research could shed light on the forms and extent of these networks, especially when they operated under informal or semi-sanctioned arrangements<sup>52</sup>. Likewise, systems of credit established by military authorities (including delayed payments, interest-bearing debts, or promises of future compensation) reveal the extent to which wartime logistics rested on trust, coercion, and negotiation between collective and private actors. This financial perspective also contributes to the broader study of civil-military relations. One promising line of inquiry is how these relationships evolved over the course of a conflict. For example, the requisition of civilian carriages or the hiring of vessels and crews for naval or riverine transport could serve as indicators of changing administrative priorities or local compliance. Studying such developments could illuminate how logistical practices responded to military necessity, but also how or if they reshaped the civilian economy and societal expectations over time.

Closely linked to the financial and economic mechanisms of logistics is the field of labor within and around armies<sup>53</sup>. One promising avenue for further research is the variety of forms of work that supported logistical operations. To what extent were these roles militarized, and where did civilian and military labor overlap? Were there blurred boundaries between soldiers and civilians in supply activities: for example, in transport, provisioning, or equipment maintenance? A particularly understudied aspect is the role of women in these logistical systems. Abram briefly mentions tradeswomen and mixed-gender artisan partnerships, but this reference is isolated, and the topic deserves far more sustained attention. Recent scholarship has increasingly explored women's presence in early modern armies, revealing their contributions as camp followers, laborers, prostitutes, caregivers, and entrepreneurs<sup>54</sup>. Yet many questions remain. Were certain occu-

<sup>52</sup> See the chapter dedicated to regimental's finance and economy: Lucian STAIANO-DANIELS, *The War People. A Social History of Common Soldiers during the Era of the Thirty Years War*, Cambridge, CUP 2024, pp. 24-40.

<sup>53</sup> See Pratyay NATH, «What is military labour? War, logistics, and the Mughals in early modern South Asia», *War in History*, Vol. 28 (2021), Is. 4, pp. 736-754.

<sup>54</sup> For a general overview, see the insightful work: John A. Lynn, *Women, armies, and warfare in early modern Europe*, New York, CUP, 2008. A new comprehensive work is also eagerly awaited: Marion Trévisi, *Suiveuses de guerre. De l'Ancien Régime à l'Empire*, PUF, À paraître en octobre 2025. See also Peter Wilson, «German Women and War, 1500-1800», *War in History*, Vol. 3 (1996), no. 2, pp. 127-60; Mary Elizabeth Ailes, *Courage and Grief: Women and Sweden's Thirty Year's Wa*r, Lincoln, U.P. of Nebraska, 2018. Not limited to the early modern: Barton Hacker, Margaret Vining (Eds), *A Companion to Women's Military* 

pations within military logistics entirely gendered (such as sutlers, food vendors, cloth-makers, or medical attendants) or was the workforce more flexible due to wartime contingencies? If we adopt a broader definition of logistics, encompassing not only the provisioning of material and food but also of care, sex, and medical attention, then women's roles become even more central<sup>55</sup>. These functions were often fluid and performed interchangeably by women in campaign settings. Moreover, logistical involvement might also include women's participation in recruitment, whether through community pressure, persuasion, or institutional roles. These lines of inquiry could significantly enrich our understanding of the social history of logistics and expand the boundaries of who is seen as a participant in warfare.

Another valuable avenue for future research is the representation of logistics in both visual and textual sources. As noted earlier, the authors examined make limited use of images, yet paintings, woodcuts, engravings, and illustrations in contemporary texts can offer valuable insight into how logistical operations were perceived, remembered, and communicated. These visual sources can reveal details about equipment, camp life, transport, provisioning scenes, and civil-military encounters that might otherwise go undocumented. Similarly, narrative accounts and pamphlets, particularly those produced during or shortly after a conflict, can illuminate local experiences of supply practices and provide evidence of how communities perceived and responded to logistical demands. These representations are closely linked to broader questions of legitimacy and authority. One important dimension to explore is how military forces sought to justify their presence in a region by portraying their logistical needs as necessary, lawful, or even beneficial. When supply systems failed, the consequences were not always uniform: their social impact could be mitigated by discourses that sought to moralize or contain plunder, often framed as unfortunate but justified. These discourses, produced during wartime, were later replicated or revised in post-war narratives and memoirs; sources which can tell us much about how the

History, Leiden, Brill 2012.

<sup>55</sup> A recent and innovative article has examined this issue in depth within the context of the Spanish Army: Sandra Suárez García, «El Soldado Amancebado y su Amiga: Escándalo, Sexo y Amor en los ejércitos Españoles del siglo XVI», *Obradoiro De Historia Moderna*, Vol. 34 (2025), pp. 1-21. See also EAD, «Prostitution and the control of sexuality in the sixteenth century Spanish army», *War & Society*, Vol. 43 (2024), Is. 4, pp. 419-436.

wars were interpreted and remembered. Conversely, the effective management of logistics could serve as a key element in the legitimation of political power. The ability to supply an army efficiently, fairly, and with minimal disruption to civilians was not just a technical achievement: it was also a claim to administrative competence, moral authority, and the right to rule. Future research that examines these cultural and symbolic dimensions will help situate logistics not only as a practical system, but as a political language and a tool of narrative construction.

Taken together, the two books at the center of this analysis remind us that logistics was not a technical footnote to the Civil Wars, but a central arena of operational, political, and social challenges. Far from being a secondary concern, logistics shaped the conduct, outcomes, and lived experience of war. Much more remains to be explored: not only in the case of the English Civil Wars, but across conflicts and geographies. As emphasized in the introduction, logistics is a fundamental component of warfare in every period. Any serious history of war, therefore, must take logistics into account. Furthermore, a *longue durée* perspective remains essential for grasping both continuities and transformations in how societies have framed logistics across time.



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