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a cura di
GIAMPIERO BRUNELLI



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Vienna, Monumento equestre al Principe Eugenio di Savoia, particolare.
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OLIVIER ARANDA, JULIEN GUINAND, CAROLINE LE MAO EDS.,

*Atlas des guerres à l'époque moderne,
XVI^e - XVII^e - XVIII^e siècles*

Paris, Autrement, 2023



Military history is one of the historical perspectives in which the use of maps, with their choices of scale and projection, is absolutely central to understanding processes and events. Cartography allows the integration of essential spatial logic. Yet, as Jeremy Black reminded readers in the first issue of this journal, devoted to military cartography, the history of mapping war should not be read teleologically: maps have to be understood in relation to needs, uses, theatres and levels of command¹. For this reason, the military atlas

¹ The first issue of this journal (2020) was entirely devoted to *Cartografia militare*, and opened with Jeremy BLACK, «War and Cartography», *Nuova Antologia Militare*, n. 1 (2020), f. 1, pp. 7-18. This article is a programmatic reflection on the role of maps as historical instruments of war. Black is also cited as a direct cartographic source by the authors of the atlas under review, and has deeply reflected on the topic, as in ID, *Maps of war: Mapping conflict through the centuries*, Oxford, Osprey, 2018.

as a scholarly genre has a longer and more complex genealogy than is often acknowledged. It cannot be traced directly to a single origin, whether in the composite atlases of the sixteenth century, in the siege plans of Vauban's engineers or in the institutional cartography of the *Dépôt général de la Guerre*, but rather to the convergence of these and other traditions. This journal and SISM have already devoted significant attention to these topics².

Although this review appears some time after the volume's publication, it is – to my knowledge – among the first English-language discussions of the atlas in a specialist military-history venue. It may therefore help widen the discussion, since its reception has so far remained largely within the French-speaking public sphere. Against this background, the *Atlas des guerres à l'époque moderne*, published by Autrement in 2023 as part of the publisher's long-running *Atlas* series³, represents a significant and welcome contribution. The volume (192 pages, more than 230 maps and documents) is organized chronologically into three parts, each devoted to a century of early modern warfare. Within each part, the content is articulated into short thematic chapters of two to four pages, alternating between event-based entries (battles, campaigns and sieges) and analytical ones focused on specific phenomena (fortification, recruitment, naval economics and logistics). The result is an instrument that can be read sequentially or consulted selectively, reflecting the structural openness that the historiographical ambition declares in the introduction.

The volume is the work of three historians with complementary expertise. Julien Guinand, specialist in the Italian Wars, edited the 16th-century section⁴. Caroline Le Mao, a senior scholar at the Université Bordeaux-Montaigne and a leading specialist in French maritime and naval history, covers the 17th and, together with Olivier Aranda, the 18th⁵. Aranda, brings particular depth to the

2 As also shown, for example, in Simonetta CONTI (Acd), *Storia militare della Geografia*, Roma, Società Italiana di Storia Militare-Nadir Media, 2020.

3 The closest precedent in the same series is Thomas F. ARNOLD, *Les Guerres de la Renaissance, XVe–XVIIe siècles*, Paris, Autrement, 2002, which covers the period immediately preceding this volume. Jeremy Black, *La Guerre au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, Autrement, 2003, overlaps with the third part. Both are cited in the bibliography.

4 See Julien GUINAND, *La Guerre du roi aux portes de l'Italie, 1515–1559*, Rennes, PUR, 2020, which serves as a direct cartographic source for several chapters in Part I.

5 See Caroline LE MAO, *Fournisseurs de Marine. Les fournisseurs de la Marine française au temps de la guerre de la Ligue d'Augsbourg (1688-1697)*, La Crèche, La Geste, 2021 ; EAD (Dir.), *Les arsenaux de la Marine : du XVIe siècle à nos jours*, Paris, Sorbonne Université Presses, 2021.

Revolutionary period⁶. The cartographic work was executed by Mélanie Marie, who has produced cartography for other atlases in the same Autrement series.

The scope of the atlas is genuinely global in a way that distinguishes it from many comparable works. To be sure, France and the European context remain central, but its framework clearly presents the early modern period not as a European story with colonial footnotes, but as a set of interconnected military systems. Thus the volume includes, among others, the Ottoman-Habsburg confrontation, the Safavid and Mughal empires, Ming and Qing China, Sengoku Japan, the *Estado da Índia*, the wars of North America and the conflicts on the African continent. The cartographic scales shift accordingly between operational, tactical and strategic scenarios, and are supplemented in several chapters by quantitative diagrams of troop numbers and financial flows. Some chapters are particularly instructive, such as those on Alpine crossing routes (p. 30), the comparative *Fortifier partout dans le monde* (p. 90), and the financial architecture of the French navy (p. 118), bringing logistics and fiscal organisation to the fore in a way that most atlases of the period do not.

The most distinctive and original feature of the volume is its sustained attention to naval warfare and maritime problems. This structural commitment is visible across all three parts: from the Ottoman-Venetian confrontations and Lepanto in Part 1, through the Anglo-Dutch wars, the *guerre de course*, and the economics of the French navy in Part 2, to the transformation of European fleets and the global reach of naval conflict in Part 3. Naval warfare receives here an attention that the genre rarely affords it, running as a continuous thread across all three parts rather than appearing as an occasional supplement to the land campaigns. The chapter *Deux batailles et un siècle d'évolutions militaires* (p. 66), which closes Part 1 with a comparative analytical reflection, is also emblematic, using two battles to think through a century of military change.

Among comparable works in the anglophone tradition, the most direct point of reference is Jeremy Black's *Cambridge Illustrated Atlas of Warfare: Renaissance to Revolution, 1492–1792* (1996), cited by the authors as a cartographic source (p. 45)⁷. Such a comparison is less useful for establishing a hierarchy than

6 He recently published Olivier ARANDA, *La marine de la Révolution. L'étrange victoire*, Paris, Passés composés-Ministère des Armées, 2026.

7 For a broader comparison see also David G. CHANDLER, *Atlas of Military Strategy: The Art, Theory and Practice of War 1618–1878*, London, Arms & Armour Press, 1980, which overlaps chronologically but is largely centered on European land warfare and lacks both

for marking a historiographical shift: the Autrement atlas reflects the more recent developments in military history concerning global theatres and fiscal structures, logistics and a more sustained engagement with the naval dimension.

One minor critical observation concerns the introduction. Its four sections (on the military revolution, on war and state formation, on the globalization of conflict, and on historiographical trends from *histoire-bataille* to the ‘Western way of war’) are individually competent but collectively risk enclosing the volume within debates it ultimately transcends. The narrative of state formation, which moves from mercenary armies to the *loi Jourdan-Delbrel* of 1798 as the ‘terme du processus’, has a teleological inflection that sits uneasily with the comparative complexity the atlas itself demonstrates⁸. The authors themselves partly express this concern, as the programmatic statement at its close, the commitment to «multiplier les points de vue», to cover land and sea, France and the world, conflict and its economic and logistical conditions, reads as a corrective, and as the truer description of what follows. A similar, although minor, reservation concerns the documentation of individual maps. In a work of this kind, where the cartographic argument often carries much of the interpretation, the reader would sometimes benefit from a more explicit discussion of the choices behind the maps, especially where the evidence is uncertain or where older studies still appear to be the basis for the cartographic synthesis (e.g. p. 21).

The *Atlas des guerres à l'époque moderne* succeeds in making the early modern period's military complexity visible across its full range of scales, with cartographic rigour, thematic breadth, and a commitment to the plurality of approaches that military history has been learning to embrace. For the readers of NAM, it will serve as both a reference tool and a reminder of what the cartographic imagination, properly exercised, can add to historical understanding.

LUCA DOMIZIO

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the global scope and the naval depth of the volume reviewed here.

- 8 The concept of the fiscal-military state invoked here (at p. 8) is the one formulated by John BREWER, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1990. Its invocation alongside Tilly (*la guerre a fait l'État et l'État a fait la guerre*) is theoretically coherent, but the linear progression toward conscription risks flattening a comparative complexity and a more open historical process. On this topic see also the review, in this issue, of the edited volume Jaakko BJÖRKLUND, Sebastian SCHIAVONE, Steve MURDOCH, Anu LAHTINEN (eds.), *The Business of War in the Early Modern Baltic Sea Region, 1530–1765*, Helsinki, Helsinki University Press, 2026.



Johann Georg Ziesenis (1716-1776). Portrait of Friedrich the Great (1763).
Sans-Souci Palace. Wikimedia Commons

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