Army of Roussillon

The War of the Grand Alliance in Spain 1689-1697

Commentary

In the words of Thomas Babington Macaulay,

"Whoever wishes to be well acquainted with the morbid anatomy of governments, whoever wishes to know how great states may be made feeble and wretched, should study the history of Spain. The empire of Philip the Second was undoubtedly one of the most powerful and splendid that ever existed in the world…

It is curious to consider with how much awe our ancestors in those times regarded a Spaniard. He was, in their apprehension, a kind of daemon, horribly malevolent, but withal most sagacious and powerful…

But how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst weaken the nations! If we overleap a hundred years, and look at Spain towards the close of the seventeenth century, what a change do we find! The contrast is as great as that which the Rome of Gallienus and Honorius presents to the Rome of Marius and Caesar. Foreign conquest had begun to eat into every part of that gigantic monarchy on which the sun never set. Holland was gone, and Portugal, and Artois, and Roussillon, and Franche Comte. In the East, the empire founded by the Dutch far surpassed in wealth and splendour that which their old tyrants still retained. In the West, England had seized, and still held, settlements in the midst of the Mexican sea.

The mere loss of territory was, however, of little moment… The Spanish Empire was still, in outward appearance, great and magnificent. The European dominions subject to the last feeble Prince of the House of Austria were far more extensive than those of Lewis the Fourteenth. The American dependencies of the Castilian Crown still extended far to the North of Cancer and far to the South of Capricorn. But within this immense body there was an incurable decay, an utter want of tone, an utter prostration of strength. An ingenious and diligent population, eminently skilled in arts and manufactures, had been driven into exile by stupid and remorseless bigots. The glory of the Spanish pencil had departed with Velasquez and Murillo. The splendid age of Spanish literature had closed with Solis and Calderon. During the seventeenth century many states had formed great military establishments. But the Spanish army, so formidable under the command of Alva and Farnese, had dwindled away to a few thousand men, ill paid and ill disciplined. England, Holland, and France had great navies. But the Spanish navy was scarcely equal to the tenth part of that mighty force which, in the time of Philip the Second, had been the terror of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The arsenals were deserted. The magazines were unprovided. The frontier fortresses were ungarrisoned. The police was utterly inefficient for the protection of the people. Murders were committed in the face of day with perfect impunity. Bravoes and discarded serving-men, with swords at their sides, swaggered every day through the most public streets and squares of the capital, disturbing the public peace, and setting at defiance the ministers of justice. The finances were in frightful disorder. The people paid much. The Government received little. The American viceroys and the farmers of the revenue became rich, while the merchants broke, while the peasantry starved, while the body-servants of the sovereign remained unpaid, while the soldiers of the royal guard repaired daily to the doors of convents, and battled there with the crowd of beggars for a porringer of broth and a morsel of bread. Every remedy which was tried aggravated the disease. The currency was altered; and this frantic measure produced its never-failing effects. It destroyed all credit, and increased the misery which it was intended to relieve. The American gold, to use the words of Ortiz, was to the necessities of the State but as a drop of water to the lips of a man raging with thirst. Heaps of unopened despatches accumulated in the offices, while the ministers were concerting with bedchamber-women and Jesuits the means of tripping up each other. Every foreign power could plunder and insult with impunity the heir of Charles the Fifth. Into such a state had the mighty kingdom of Spain fallen, while one of its smallest dependencies, a country not so large as the province of Estremadura or Andalusia, situated under an inclement sky, and preserved only by artificial means from the inroads of the ocean, had become a power of the first class, and treated on terms of equality with the Courts of London and Versailles. *[Macaulay is referring to Holland.]*

… All the causes of the decay of Spain resolve themselves into one cause, bad government. The valour, the intelligence, the energy which, at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, had made the Spaniards the first nation in the world, were the fruits of the old institutions of Castile and Arragon, institutions eminently favourable to public liberty. These institutions the first Princes of the House of Austria attacked and almost wholly destroyed. Their successors expiated the crime. The effects of a change from good government to bad government are not fully felt for some time after the change has taken place. The talents and the virtues which a good constitution generates may for a time survive that constitution. Thus the reigns of princes, who have established absolute monarchy on the ruins of popular forms of government often shine in history with a peculiar brilliancy. But when a generation or two has passed away, then comes signally to pass that which was written by Montesquieu, that despotic governments resemble those savages who cut down the tree in order to get at the fruit…

…The only effect which the Reformation had produced in Spain had been to make the Inquisition more vigilant and the commonalty more bigoted. The times of refreshing came to all neighbouring countries. One people alone remained, like the fleece of the Hebrew warrior, dry in the midst of that benignant and fertilising dew. While other

nations were putting away childish things, the Spaniard still thought as a child and understood as a child. Among the men of the seventeenth century, he was the man of the fifteenth century or of a still darker period, delighted to behold an *Auto da fe*, and ready to volunteer on a Crusade.

The evils produced by a bad government and a bad religion, seemed to have attained their greatest height during the last years of the seventeenth century. While the kingdom was in this deplorable state, the King, Charles, second of the name, was hastening to an early grave. His days had been few and evil. He had been unfortunate in all his wars, in every part of his internal administration, and in all his domestic relations. His first wife, whom he tenderly loved, died very young. His second wife exercised great influence over him, but seems to have been regarded by him rather with fear than with love. He was childless; and his constitution was so completely shattered that, at little more than thirty years of age, he had given up all hopes of posterity. His mind was even more distempered than his body. He was sometimes sunk in listless melancholy, and sometimes harassed by the wildest and most extravagant fancies. He was not, however, wholly destitute of the feelings which became his station. His sufferings were aggravated by the thought that his own dissolution might not improbably be followed by the dissolution of his empire…"

[Quoted from Macaulay's Critical and Historical Essays, War of the Succession in Spain. First published January 1833. Pages 238-243 in the present author's undated Collected Works of Macaulay published by Ballantyne, Hanson and Co. Edinburgh & London.]

This is the quintessential view of Spain under Carlos II. It helps to convey atmosphere, but the picture is overdrawn. If things had really been that bad, the war in Catalonia would not have lasted nine years. Unfortunately, the period has not been studied extensively, since most historians, from before Macaulay until the 20th Century, take a stance of "drawing a decent veil over Spain's senile decay".

Sources

For anyone wanting to grasp what it was like in Spain under Carlos II, Henry Kamen's book, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century,* is recommended. The section on the War of the Grand Alliance is short, but Kamen covers all elements of society.

For the war itself, five main sources were used in this commentary: *Las guerras de Cataluña: El teatro de Marte 1652 - 1714* and *El frente catalán en la Guerra de los Nueve Años, 1689-1697*, both by A. E. Lopez; *The Wars of Louis XIV 1667-1714* and *Giant of the Grand Siècle*, both by J. A. Lynn; and the memoirs of Marshal Noaïlles found in *Collection des Mémoires relatifs a l'Histoire de France, volume LXXI* beginning at p. 225 (*the volume also contains the memoirs of Marshal Villars*).

The first work by Lopez is filed online as a doctoral dissertation, but is also available as a published book. The second is a book, also available online. Lopez was also the source of many of the diagrams found in the Annex. He provides the most detail, but Noaïlles' memoirs (also available online) give the French view and contain additional information. Unfortunately the memoirs end in 1695, with only a sketchy outline of the later campaigns obtained from Noaïlles' son, who served in them.

Lynn's *Wars of Louis XIV* is a general military history and only provides an outline of events. HIs conclusion is interesting, however: he chooses the War of the Grand Alliance as the "archetype of the Sun King in arms." *Giant of the Grand Siècle* is a detailed examination of the French military machine during the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV.

Of use in describing the naval war was *Private and Original Correspondence of Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, with King William*, published by William Coxe in 1821. This collection is also available online. It includes the correspondence between Admiral Russell and Shrewsbury, who was at that time King William's Secretary of State. The letters cover the operations of the Allied Fleet in the Mediterranean from 1694 to 1695.

Background

Reasons for War

The War of the Grand Alliance is one of those conflicts whose prosaic genesis lies in a preceding war. Less prosaically, its germ lay in the soul of Louis XIV, King of France. Also called the Nine Years War, and less correctly the War of the League of Augsburg, this was the second of three great wars waged by the Sun King. The first, the Franco-Dutch War (1672-78), was one of naked aggression. The last, the War of the Spanish Succession, was essentially a defensive war. This middle war was one of transition from attack to defence, as France discovered her limits. The three wars can be seen as a single great conflict.

King Louis' character is key to the situation. Though famous as an Absolute Ruler, he was in fact constrained in a number of ways. First, despite his many faults he was a truly religious man and did regard himself as the mediator between the French people and God. Second, he was constrained by the three Estates of his realm, Nobility, Clergy, and Bourgeoisie (which does not mean 'common people', but urban elites). Of these the Nobility were most to be considered, as they were his peers. The Bourgeoisie, always playing an opposition role, could not be forgotten. The Church was in a state of atrophy at this time and was less relevant, whether as a political or social force – unless anyone tried to reduce its privileges.

In common with his Aristocracy, Louis believed in the pursuit of *La Gloire*, as an end in itself. And, the best way to acquire *gloire* was through war. This notion has been the bane of France throughout her history. Now, the reader must understand that *gloire* meant something more than 'personal glory'. The concept stemmed from the marriage of the old Germanic warrior culture with Christian ethics. The halo on the head of a saint is a manifestation of *gloire*; so is the aureole on the head of a Roman emperor. When a man did something worthy of acclaim, it got him talked about, which stroked his ego, but it also added lustre to his family, to his province, to the realm of France as a whole, and to his King in particular. Taking it one step farther, a glorious realm was an offering the King could present to God. This, by the way, is why they called Louis the Sun King – it was a direct allusion to the aureole of the emperors, the manifestation of France's *gloire* in the person of her King. (Remember also, that 'France' was a name often used by her kings to describe themselves – 'who is at the gate?… 'France!'.)

The above is not perhaps the most elegant explanation of *gloire*, but the concept is hard to describe. In practical terms, it meant that no one thought that fighting wars was inherently evil, or a 'necessary evil' that had to be borne. The identity of France was a martial one. Wars were a venue for the nobility to win *gloire* for themselves, and if the war were successful, lustre would also be added to the kingdom. Naturally, if the French kept on acquiring *gloire*, it clearly meant that God approved of their actions.

No doubt the reader can see numerous pitfalls in this sort of world view. But our generation has more experience of mass destruction. The bullying attitude adopted by the French in those decades was something that can be expected, if not excused, when a nation regards itself as especially blessed. The benefit for the French in this pursuit of war was that it allowed the King to direct the elements of his kingdom in a common endeavour. This tended to bind what had until only recently been a rather disunited polity into a single nation. This in turn helped to overcome the third constraint on Louis actions – the Material.

The Franco-Dutch War revealed France to be the new Great Power in Europe. In terms of population and resources, no one nation could beat her, and as the War of the Grand Alliance would demonstrate, even a coalition of opponents could do no more than match her.

Realising they were now at the top of the heap, Louis and his advisors had to consider how to improve their strategic position. A most natural way to justify war in pursuit of *gloire* was to assume it secured France from attack. It was a particular concern that the House of Habsburg, hereditary foes of the House of Bourbon, ruled lands or had proxies facing most of France's borders. (Ironically, though more powerful than their enemies, the French persisted in seeing themselves under siege by the Habsburgs!)

Louis' famous siege-master, Vauban, advocated 'rationalising' France's borders by annexing territories along the Rhine and the natural routes into and out of the nation, such as the Moselle. Most of the key positions already had fortifications; if they did not, fortifications were to be constructed. This strategy of 'aggressive defence' naturally threatened France's neighbours, because securing the gates to France meant that armies could pass out of the country, as well as in…

[The strategy of aggressive defence also led to a naval buildup, which affected English attitudes toward France in a similar manner.]

A classic example can be seen in the War of the Reunions, which took place in 1684-85. The 'Chambers of Reunion' were special land commissions set up by Louis to determine if his neighbours had truly ceded all the gains he had

chalked up so far. These French-sponsored commissions naturally ruled that France was owed certain additional lands, most of which then changed hands without issue. However, the vital fortress of Strasbourg, which both served to protect the newly acquire province of Alsace and acted as a bridgehead over the Rhine, and the Spanish-owned City of Luxembourg, which played a similar role *vis a vis* French gains in the Low Countries, were contested. Spain declared war in protest, aided by the Holy Roman Empire, but she fared badly. A truce (the Truce of Ratisbon) was soon put together as King Louis was persuaded that it would be Un-Christian to fight the Empire while the latter was engaged in a war with the Turks. The peace was supposed to last twenty years. It lasted three.

Something should also be said about the Huguenots, because their fate also illumines King Louis' thinking. Internally, Louis attempted to continue the process of unification by imposing religious conformity. The Edict of Nantes had granted toleration to French Protestants, but it was revoked in 1685. This was a severe misstep on the King's part. At a stroke, he lost something like 10% of France's population, who fled abroad; these were also some of the most productive members of society, and included a number of skilled military men. The move also hardened European opinion against France.

By 1687, the Empire's war against the Ottomans was going so well that the Emperor, Leopold I, began to spare some thought for the reclamation of the lands recently lost to France. Her opponents in Germany had formed the League of Augsburg in 1686 to contain French aggression. Though somewhat toothless, the League would form the basis for the eventual anti-French coalition.

Seeing the writing on the wall, Louis tried and failed to have the Truce of Ratisbon turned into a proper peace treaty. His response, which most historians regard as his second mistake, was to increase his demands. He then tried a familiar gamble. On September 24, 1688, the Sun King issued a *Mémoire de raisons* laying out his 'grievances' and immediately launched a surprise attack on the Rhineland – before the chancellories of Europe had even received their copies of his manifesto.

As always with this gambit, the object was to shock and intimidate the opposition, seize more ground than was needed so as to have something to bargain with, and then seek peace. Sometimes the strategy works. This time it did not. It says something for the preeminence of French arms that she was able to maintain a stalemate after nine years of war.

France's enemies feared Louis was aiming at world domination. The House of Bourbon had long claimed the mantle of Charlemagne, which implied a challenge to those 'usurpers' of the Empire, the Habsburgs. The persecution of the Huguenots also alienated many neighbouring states, who might otherwise have supported Bourbon against Habsburg. The English, of course, opposed the onion-sellers on principle, though the reader may be surprised to learn they were allied with France in the Dutch War. The anti-French forces were divided into two main blocs: the Protestant states, led by William of Orange, and the Imperials and Catholics, led by the Emperor Leopold I. To the former, Savoy could be added, and to the latter, Spain.

It was inevitable that Spain would become involved in the war. She was not a signatory to the League, and only joined the Alliance in 1690, but the Spanish Netherlands – Belgium minus Liège – would always be directly in the path of any French advance against Holland. Similarly, her holdings in Italy would be threatened any time the French opened a second front against the Empire by crossing the Maritime Alps. Besides, Louis had stolen Luxembourg and Franche-Comté from her.

For the benefit of the many in this most religious of countries who questioned an alliance with Protestant powers, the regime painted Louis XIV as a warmonger who sought universal monarchy and who would employ the basest of means to obtain it – witness the rape of the Palatinate in 1688 and the French policy of supporting the Infidel Turks against the Holy Roman Empire. His Most Christian King countered that His Most Catholic Majesty had never had any intention of remaining neutral, but sought any flimsy pretext to stab France in the back.

France Against Spain

Though her territory 'encircled' France, Spain was no longer a superpower. Perhaps the simplest way to describe the situation is to say that France's strengths were Spain's weaknesses. In some ways, the two nations shared the same path of development, but where France had achieved unity under Louis XIII and XIV and the powerful ministers Richelieu and Mazarin, Spain remained a collection of semi-autonomous kingdoms and provinces.

The personalty of Spain's rulers had something to do with it – Spain had no Richelieu, and the Habsburgs liked to govern by making bilateral agreements with each of their dependencies, rather than bringing everyone under one administrative roof. Spain's condition was not as complex as that of Germany, but it had similarities. Geography did the rest. Her external possessions, Flanders, Milán, Naples, the Americas, and the Philippines, were quite obviously isolated from one another. What the reader may find surprising is that within the Iberian Peninsula the same situation obtained. Spain is the second most mountainous country in Europe, after Switzerland, which meant that what would have been integrated provinces in another country were isolated states under the Spanish Crown.

Government was 'consular'. That is, the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragón, and their various subordinate principalities and provinces, such as Catalonia, were each governed by their own councils, had separate laws, separate economies, and even separate military establishments. France had had a similar structure – in the Middle Ages.

Society remained as fragmented as the country. A Spaniard's loyalties, in order, were: family, parish, lord's domain (or guild and town, for a burgher), district, province, and the King. As a matter of fact, one could eliminate most of the middlemen and just say Family and King. The only government official who could reasonably expect not to be murdered on a routine visit around the hinterland was the parish priest.

Administrative and social decentralisation had its advantages. The nobility, most of whom had by now been 'Castilianised', lacked the authority among their own people to mobilise independent armies. There could be no *Fronde* in Spain, neither could the Commons find leaders who identified with their regional aspirations. But, common action in the face of an external threat was also slow to happen. It would happen, but only after much argument and deliberation.

As the reader was probably taught in school, the massive influx of wealth from Spain's overseas possessions led to rampant inflation, increasing corruption and causing a collapse of native industry. The root cause most often given for Spanish impotence is an empty Treasury, which begs the question 'what happened to the money?' Lack of money certainly was the prime issue, but the situation was much more complex, too complex to properly describe here. The salient facts are these:

To achieve and then maintain her dominant position, Spain had waged an unending series of wars, to the detriment of her economy and her population. The mottos of her rulers bear witness to the course of events. Under Emperor Charles V it was *Plus oultre*, 'further beyond'. Under Philip II it was *Non sufficit orbis,* 'the world is not enough'. By the time of the current ruler, Carlos II, it was the much more modest (and pious) *Ad utrumque*. This is a reference to the old Roman image of the ox facing the plough and the altar – be prepared for either service or sacrifice.

Exacerbating matters were a series of natural disasters – famines, earthquakes, and outbreaks of plague – and a nasty civil war from the 1640s through the 1660s that saw Catalonia achieve a short lived independence and Portugal become a separate state.

A cure for the Economy was effected by the drastic means of altering the currency but it was only partially successful and in the short term caused even more misery. Spain's debts became so great that bullion from the New World was earmarked for foreign banks before it even left the mines. And, after being brought across the Atlantic in Spanish ships (many owned by foreigners) the gold, silver, and goods were often transferred to the ships of other nations at sea, bypassing the customs house.

Now, once the various changes to the currency began to be accepted, particularly the switch to a copper coinage, one would expect inflation to have less of an effect on the machinery of state, including the military – except that the establishments of Milán and Flanders still used silver as their medium of exchange. This is the real reason why Spain 'had no money'. She had plenty of currency, it was just not accepted outside of Iberia.

Most important of all for the coming narrative, Catalonia *also* continued to use silver instead of copper. Catalonia was a semi-autonomous principality within the Crown of Aragón. She had many political and economic privileges, and remained, with the Basque Country, one of the few prosperous regions of the peninsula. And, she baulked at taking payment in kind – particularly because at the outbreak of war she had experienced a succession of bad harvests, while later on, her lands were devastated.

The Catalans had their own military establishment, but it was very small. The true defence of the country lay with the Castilian, i.e., 'Spanish', military. The Castilians were regarded as foreign troops. At times, they could be regarded by the locals as an occupying force, such as the start of the war, when they were engaged in suppressing a peasant revolt that had been sparked by the quartering of Castilian troops near the frontier. At other times they could be regarded as liberators, as was the case later in the war, when the French were overrunning the Principality. But, they were always regarded as foreigners.

So, the bulk of Catalonia's defence had to be conducted by the poverty-stricken Castilian Army, which had to be maintained in the country by payments in silver. It becomes glaringly obvious why Madrid had such a hard time maintaining enough strength to hold off the French.

Now, the French were not exactly immune to economic disruption, and in 1693 and 1694 would suffer a severe famine that impacted their ability to fight. But, with a more-or-less unified realm, it was possible to shift resources from one spot to another if not with ease, then at least more efficiently than the Spanish.

The attitude of the Spanish people was different from that of France, too. Most of the populace lived in towns. In the case of the peasants, poverty, or the requisition of their land by their lord for sheep farming, might drive them there, but the lords themselves found town living much more desirable. The towns were where the action was. Madrid, of course, was a magnet for anyone seeking to advance themselves; like Versailles, it was a distinctly expensive and uncomfortable place to live, but no matter… This is the reason that the capture of Barcelona would essentially end the war in Spain. It was the economic, political, and social hub of Catalonia.

The national cult was not that of *La Gloire*, but *la fe* – The Faith. The Catholic religion permeated Spanish life at every level, much more so than in France, which was already beginning her process of 'Enlightenment'. Gravitas, not élan, was the mark of a Spaniard. Some people call Cervante's *Don Quixote* a comedy or a satire, others call it a tragedy, or pathos. The reader starts by laughing at the Don and ends by weeping for him. But, the genius of the tale is that it can be read either way. In his own perception of reality, Don Quixote was every bit the hero he thought himself to be. The novel is a caricature of a Spanish grandee, but it highlights his gravitas and sense of Romance, which might appear funny or futile to outsiders, but were the bedrock of his world view. The real sadness comes when one perceives how greatly such nobleness of character had become warped in the last years of the 17th Century.

Spaniards of rank pursued Honour and Wealth, the latter either through ownership of land or through ecclesiastical or government service. Honour was obtained through one's position in society. It was every man's goal to become a *caballero*, or 'knight'. One did not need much money to be a *caballero*. In some regions, even men who lived as peasants claimed to be *caballeros.* And, if knighthood was out of reach, there was always the rank of honorary citizen, the top of the tree for non-nobles. But unlike France, the Government made little attempt to harness these drives in the service of the Crown. Instead, advancement was almost exclusively for the benefit of one's own family. The King was God's representative, but the State… well, as already discussed, there was no real State to serve, only the King, and he lived a long way off. This justified an excessive indulgence in corruption in the competition for place and salaries. French tendencies this way were continually being suppressed by a powerful monarch and a succession of ruthless ministers. This was not the case in Spain.

Unlike the French, the Spanish found little appeal in a military career. For a French peasant, the military life was as least as viable as walking behind a plow all day, and the pay was better. For a Spanish peasant, there was little pay, no perquisites, and military service meant marching to foreign corners of Spain and rubbing shoulders with outlanders from provinces other than one's own. For a Frenchman of rank, the military was also a source of *gloire*, even if an accident of birth hindered his promotion, and a way to serve King and State honourably. For the Spaniard of rank, military service was often a nuisance, or a way to redeem oneself, akin to the way young Victorian Englishmen were 'sent to the colonies'.

Curiously, the Spanish looked down on Trade, despite the money to be made. Trade had traditionally been the profession of the Jews and Moors; once they had been driven out, no self-respecting Spaniard would think to take up the slack. Instead, Trade was left to foreigners. This might have been all right if the foreigners had been assimilated, but a) the xenophobic Spanish had no desire to assimilate foreigners, and b) most of the foreign traders were French, and the goal of any self-respecting French trader was to make lots of money fast, then buy a cottage in France and start a vineyard.

The War Machines

Lack of money may have been the underlying reason why Spain's war effort was crippled, but the most important practical issue was infrastructure. Spain had very little, France had a lot. In France, an administrative regime of military governors and financial intendants meant reasonably efficient collection and distribution of resources and men. True, the governors and intendants had overlapping jurisdictions to reduce the chance of collusion, either in fomenting rebellion or engaging in petty corruption, but the system was a vast improvement on what had gone before, and was far more advanced than the Spanish system, where a scanty road net infested with tollbooths ran through fiercely competing jurisdictions.

The state of Catalonia's fortifications is a case in point. Catalonia was the obvious invasion route for a French army. Her fortifications were critical. The last couple of wars between France and Spain had sparked a building craze on both sides of the border. And yet, only the French had put in the effort and spent the necessary resources. Out of roughly twenty significant edifices in Catalonia, only two were rated as 'modern' (both improved by the French during a period of occupation) and those two especially were singled out as 'pigsties', not fit for human habitation. The reason? The Catalan Government insisted the forts were Madrid's responsibility. Madrid, unable to pay for their maintenance, insisted they were the responsibility of the Catalans.

Similarly, the French had established a system of depôts on the frontiers, along with rear echelon infrastructure to keep them supplied. The Spanish recognised the advantage of such a system but their administrative fragmentation and poor infrastructure meant they could not compete.

Lack of money also meant that the Spanish were forced to dismiss most of their troops over the winter and raise them again in the spring. This meant that even veteran units functioned poorly. Moreover, soldiering was a despised career; the quality of recruits was lower than in most other armies and there was a high desertion rate. Also, much of the officer corps serving with the Army of Catalonia, from the Viceroy on down to the regimental commanders, was either insubordinate, incompetent, or both.

The French, in contrast, maintained their regulars over the winter. They could afford to pay them, and, if not, they were usually on the offensive and on foreign soil, where it was possible to extort money and goods. This was in fact policy, both for this economic reason and because the French at this time favoured using 'terror tactics'. The most famous example of this was the scorching of the Palatinate in 1688. The policy backfired politically, but it did cut costs.

In uniforms, equipment, and weaponry, the regiments of Spain and France were quite similar. In higher organisation they had significant differences.

The Spanish Army was separated into three virtually independent corps. The corps, or 'armies', were those of Iberia or Catalonia, Flanders, and Milán. Spain's remaining possessions were protected by garrison units supplemented by local militia. Some garrison units could be quite large, as in Italy, where Sicily and Naples each had one *tercio fijo* (fixed *tercio*), of 4,000 men. However, these forces were not intended to leave their domains. In the three main corps, troops were divided on national lines: Walloon (Flanders), Spanish (Catalonia), and Italian (Milán), supplemented by German regiments hired for the duration of the conflict. There were also small regiments of Irish, Scots, and English origin. Transferring troops from one theatre to another required a Royal Order, on recommendation by the War Council (*Consejo Supremo de la guerra*).

Each corps was commanded by a *capitán general*, who would also be either governor or viceroy (the latter in Catalonia). Under him was a *maestre de campo general* in administrative command of the infantry, assisted by *sargento general de batallas*, a matching *general de caballería* and *teniente generals de caballería*, a *gobernador general de las armas* (an administrative post), and a *general de la artillería*.

In contrast, the French Army was a unified whole. It had its regional fault lines, but after a succession of wars that had brought men from every corner of France to fight together, regional differences were merely badges of honour and points of friendly rivalry. In the Nine Years War King Louis' forces were split to cover the various theatres, but regiments were routinely shunted from one front to another as the need arose – the advantage of interior lines.

Overall command of the French Army's branches was in theory divided in the same manner as the Spanish, with *colonel générals* having administrative control of each branch and the army in a given theatre commanded by a *maréchal*, who would be one of the high nobility and in addition might be one of the *colonel générals*. In practice, King Louis had vested the authority of all the colonel generals in his own person. For political reasons he went so far as to abolish the position of colonel general of infantry. Louis' desire to have full control over his Army was married to War Minister Louvois' ruthless drive for efficiency, making for a terrifying weapon.

On any given front a French army would be commanded by a *maréchal* (though in Catalonia, the commander was actually a senior general, Noaïlles, who only received promotion in 1694) assisted by various *lieutenant généralS* in command of the infantry, cavalry, and artillery. They in turn were assisted by major generals known as *méstres de camp*, and under them the lieutenant colonels actually commanding the regiments. The rank of brigadier had recently been introduced as a reward for lieutenant colonels who demonstrated great ability but who lacked the social status to climb the traditional ladder to general.

[The méstres de camp *had a role similar to the* sargento general de batallas*, and were responsible to a* méstre de camp général *for administrative purposes. But on the battlefield they functioned as major generals, commanding brigades or wings of the army.]*

Both France and Spain employed infantry, 'horse' (mounted units that usually fought mounted), dragoons (mounted units that usually fought dismounted), and artillery, supplemented by bands of 'irregular warriors' and organisations of specialists, such as engineers.

The infantry on both sides wore similar clothes: the 'justacorps' or overcoat, waistcoat, trousers with stockings exposed, shoes, and hat. There were subtle differences. The Spanish trousers tended to be baggier and some units still wore their coat cuffs turned back above the elbow, or sported surplices instead of overcoats. Spanish hats were often wide brimmed, after the older fashion, rather than the familiar tricorne used by the French (which after all was just a floppy peasant hat with its brim turned up).

Equipment for both armies varied with the regiment and its particular mix of arms. Perhaps most obvious, though not universal difference, was the Spanish preference for suspending the sword by a shoulder belt; the French had recently switched to waist belts.

Weapons, disregarding the polearms used to mark rank distinctions, included pikes, muskets, arquebuses, and fusils, with swords as a backup. The Spanish had a tradition of fighting with dagger and sword, while the French were pioneering the use of the bayonet.

Primary weapons were of course musket and pike. Here, there were differences between the two armies. The French had progressed as far as primitive socket bayonets, and whole battalions could be equipped with musket and bayonet. However, many regiments still employed pikes and muskets, most typically at a ratio of 20% pikes to 80% muskets. The Spanish lagged behind in the use of the bayonet, although it was not unknown. Their ratio of pike to musket was usually higher, typically 1/3 pikes to 2/3 muskets. Spain had a decent armaments industry, so even militia units could be reasonably well equipped with muskets, provided any weapons were available at all. The Spanish also liked to mix their firearms, so that of the '2/3 muskets', about 25% would actually be arquebuses. The advantage of the latter was that, although a matchlock, it was lighter and could be fired without using a rest.

'Musket' is actually a generic term; what the men carried would either be matchlocks or fusils. Matchlocks were muzzle-loaded smoothbore weapons fired by touching the end of a piece of smouldering rope to a pan of gunpowder. They were heavy enough to require a forked stick, or rest, to support the barrel when firing. These weapons were gradually being phased out in favour of the safer fusil, which was an early version of the familiar flintlock musket. 'Fusil' is simply the French word for flintlock. Flintlocks were safer around gunpowder stores, so were often used by the guards to the artillery train, and aboard ship. They were also lighter, and did not require large coils of lighted match that might get entangled in a neighbour's gunpowder cartridges and set them off. The tradeoff was a lighter bore and less range and stopping power.

The French were by now employing fusils wherever they could (despite the fact that regulations stipulated the use of heavy bore matchlocks), but the economic demands of the war naturally led to many units continuing to use the older matchlocks. Ironically, militia and irregulars might well be armed with fusils while some line regiment was stuck with matchlocks, simply because of a particular unit's recruitment location or its colonel's 'contacts'. Even the 'backward' Spanish seem to have had a significant number of fusils in service by the time of the Nine Years War.

On the question of how pike-and-shot formations worked during this period of tactical transition, there is still much argument. The Spanish pioneered the tactic, first with their *colunellas* (from which comes the rank of colonel, the commander of a *colunella*), and then with the *tercio*. Originally, the *tercio* was an all-arms brigade group, but by the end of the 17th Century it had become a standard regiment by another name.

[The origin of the name tercio *is also debated. It means simply 'third'. The two most common solutions are a) it derived from the mix of soldiers used in the formation – pikemen, swordsmen, and arquebusiers – or b) it derived from the fact that there were originally three such brigades, all based in Italy. This seems the most likely, as the other solution ignores the fact that cavalry was assigned to these early* tercios*. Oddly, the Spanish did not use the term 'battalion' for their infantry. They used the archaic term 'esucadre' or 'squadrons'. The term '*batallones' *was reserved for cavalry!]*

Therefore, both the French battalion and the Spanish *tercio* fought in linear formation, usually in six ranks. A number of pike/musket combinations were possible. Traditionally, the pikes were clustered in the center and the musketeers stood on the either side. The unit would advance rank by rank, the musketeers firing volleys (they would retire in the same manner), and when the fighting came to close quarters, the musketeers would either drop back behind the pikes or draw swords. If charged by cavalry they could take cover under the pikes, which were a good 5 metres long, and continue firing. But the pikes could also be arranged in a line behind the musketeers, or placed on the wings for flank protection. As the number of pikes dropped, they tended to be used in this fashion more and more, since there were no longer enough of them for the musketeers either to shelter 'under their wings', or to press an assault.

Tercios did differ from battalions in subtle ways. A battalion was the tactical unit of a regiment, which might only be an administrative formation. French regiments usually had 1 battalion in peacetime, and 2 or sometimes 3 during war. The King's regiments, the *Vieux* and *Petite Vieux* regiments, and the Swiss and German mercenaries maintained 3-4 battalions at all times. A battalion was divided into companies, but in many armies, companies, though they might serve as detachments, could also be more administrative than tactical in nature. In the Spanish Army the *tercio* was the administrative unit and its companies the tactical unit, though a large *tercio*, particularly one serving in Flanders or Italy, would often deploy as multiple battalions. Spanish companies, which averaged from 10 to 16 per *tercio*, had greater autonomy than usual. On campaign this meant a good *tercio* could be quickly fleshed out with additional companies from weaker units.

A typical Spanish company could have from 30-200 men. The companies also had a high proportion of reformadoes, or spare officers, and gentlemen volunteers, allowing for rapid expansion and division. The French, by now usually had 13 companies per battalion, of which one was grenadiers. Their companies averaged 45-50 men. The Swiss were an exception, with 200 men per company, and fewer companies overall; the Swiss battalions were thus roughly the same size as all the others. In neither army were the musket and pike elements separated by company – this is why the company is deemed an administrative unit – instead, each company had some pikemen and some musketeers. Only on the battlefield were the men separated by job description.

Grenadier detachments were becoming a feature of most European armies, too. The French, as usual, led the way, and had a formidable body of them – in theory, one per battalion. The Spanish had recently formed four companies for use in Catalonia. It appears that these fought as independent companies, unlike the French grenadiers, who followed the more common path, either fighting in local support for their own regiments or being converging for a special assault.

Louvois tried and failed to come up with a standard format for naming regiments. Only the *Vieux* and *Petite Vieux* regiments and the Royal regiments had fixed names. The Royal regiments all had members of the royal family for colonels, and in fact the ownership of a regiment was one of the *apanages* allowed a member of the royal family. The majority, the Gentleman regiments, were named after their current colonel. Spanish practice was similar. Their *tercios* all had regional names, but were usually known by the name of their lieutenant colonel (*maestre de campo*). Many had a special moniker, such as the *tercio de* Madrid, the *de los colorados viejos*, or Old Reds, from the colour of their uniforms. The Old Reds had three *maestre de campo* during the war, so 'Old Reds' was a good way to keep track of the *tercio*.

The French cavalry had gone from being the best in Europe to a rather unreliable body, and had now climbed back to a position of preeminence, but the Spanish still had the reputation of being their superiors. During the war the honours were about equal. The practical differences between the French and Spanish cavalry were minimal. Both had regiments of Horse and Dragoons. From dress, to arms, to tactical employment, the Horse regiments (*caballería trozos* for the Spanish, *chevaux-légère* for the French) were equipped and fought in much the same style. Neither side made much use of cuirasses, though both were supposed to wear them. All were equipped with swords, pistols, and a smoothbore carbine.

Tactics were variable, and depended on the way the colonel wanted to equip and train his men. Mostly, the horse charged in line and clashed with the sword. A variation was to slow down to discharge pistols and then charge. Even the caracole was still employed, where the men would ride up rank by rank and pot at the enemy with pistols before turning away. There was fierce debate, especially in the French Army, of the best method to employ. Progressive colonels, however, disdained the caracole.

The Spanish *trozos*, like the infantry *tercios*, were composed of companies in a looser organisation than that of other armies, allowing them to expand or contract in size. In fact, in Flanders, the horse regiments were actually called *tercios*, while in Italy they were 'free' companies (about 30 in number) grouped under a single Milanese regiment. As a rule of thumb, a typical *trozo* in Catalonia would have 5-7 companies. The French horse regiments were also composed of companies, but in battle fought by squadrons, which comprised 2-3 companies each. Their regiments were divided into Royal and Gentlemen, plus a few foreign ones. As with the infantry, the Gentlemen regiments were

known by their colonel's name and the Royal regiments all had members of the royal family for colonels. Spanish regiments had regional names, because like the Foot, they were agglomerations of companies from those regions.

*[*Trozo *translates as 'sleeve', and probably refers to their original employment in the brigade group* tercio*, where they covered the intervals between the units.]*

For both sides, dragoons were a relatively new development. The French, convinced of their utility, had 15 or so regiments, while the Spanish had only a handful. In the Spanish Army they were used as mounted infantry, equipped with fusils rather than pistols and short-barrel carbines, and dressed like the Foot. Theoretically it was the same in the French Army, but the latter fought in a mounted role more often. Both sides used them in detachments, for security and foraging duties. The Spanish regiments, called *tercios* like the infantry, had the same loose formation of companies as the infantry, and were often dispersed to assist the various guerrilla forces.

The only 'guards' units to be employed in Spain were a couple of mounted units belonging to the Spanish. They had no guard infantry, and the French *Maison du Roi* with all its various appendages only served under the eye of the King. Spanish guard cavalry were just that: personal guards for the viceroys, governors, and lieutenant governors. Because the companies were oversized, they had the same strength as the line units.

On the French side, the Carabiniers might be considered a guard formation. They were certainly an elite unit. In 1679 the French added 2 carabiniers, equipped with rifled carbines, to every *chevaux-légère* company. They were to function as a security and scouting detail, and could be used as snipers. In 1690 these men were permanently grouped in their own company, and in 1693 all the companies were stripped from the regiments to form *les Carabiniers Royale*. This unit was composed of 100 companies, arranged in 5 brigades, each brigade being about the same size as a normal regiment. During the war, 3 brigades fought in Catalonia, and 2 on the Rhine and in Flanders.

The artillery arm was where the French had an overwhelming superiority, not just against the Spanish, but against most other armies as well. King Louis had recently ordered the formation of two complete regiments of gunners, one of field cannon and the other of heavy guns and mortars for siege work. The *Fusiliers du Roi* was a 6-battalion regiment that combined the roles of train guards and mechanics; as in other armies the actual gunners were specialists. In 1693 the unit became the *Régiment Royale de l'Artillerie*. The other regiment, the *Royal-Bombardiers*, was smaller, and as its name suggests, performed a similar role with the siege guns and mortars.

On the Catalonian front, the French artillery totally outclassed the Spanish. The latter did have a reputable corps of artillerists and engineers, but were severely deficient in transport. Though she had numerous guns languishing in her fortresses, Spain was able to field less than a dozen pieces. In contrast, the French routinely deployed over 20 field guns, used numerous mortars (as a 'terror weapon'), and thanks to the presence of *La Marine*, the French Navy, had access not only to large numbers of heavy siege pieces but could also use the fleet to bombard the coastal towns that were the principal Spanish strongholds. Spain's *Armada* was not insignificant, but it proved impossible to maintain. Only in the years when an Alliance fleet was present were the French hindered in their naval operations.

As a corollary to Spanish weakness in artillery, she was also very much inferior in the general art of siegecraft. Spain had a good engineering school, but the French were on the leading edge of the craft and had a vast pool of students to draw from. At the siege of Barcelona alone they had 64 engineers (of whom 56 were killed; being a siege engineer was a risky trade). Unskilled labour was never a problem for the Spanish, but they lacked equipment, even basic things such as shovels and wagons. On at least three occasions the French constructed artillery roads in record time. The Spanish could build roads, but slowly, and in wartime not at all. There is no mention of a Spanish bridging train, but the French built a couple of bridges in 1694. Fortunately, few Catalonian rivers were significant obstacles.

Both France and Spain had urban trained bands and various kinds of militia, mostly holdovers from earlier centuries, but unlike the French, the Spanish relied on them more, particularly in the Peninsula. There were only five regular infantry *tercios* in Spain, the Provincials. These received annual salaries. During the war the Spanish fielded an army in Catalonia that often matched or exceeded the French in raw numbers, but the men were mostly short service militia or peasant levies known as the *somatén*. The latter normally functioned as vigilante bands and in wartime could be classified as 'weaponised labour gangs'.

Some of these men, particularly those in the border zone, were capable guerrilla fighters, but they were not able to fight alongside regular units. They had no discipline. Their primary strength lay in numbers. On paper, Catalonia could summon about 30,000 *somatén*, which was certainly sufficient to choke the French supply lines. Unfortunately, the duration of their service was very short, sometimes only a few days at a time.

A more effective guerrilla force were the *migueletes*, or *fusiliers de montana*. Both sides used quantities of them. The French routinely deployed 18 official companies of 30-plus men. Counting only those enrolled by the Crown, the

Spanish had fewer companies, but many peasants organised themselves. Since the bands sometimes switched sides, it is hard to come up with accurate figures. These men could be stand in battle as well perform scouting and raiding activities, though if they felt they were being used as cannon fodder they might go on strike.

The French also regularly employed *milices provinciales* (provincial militia). These battalions were comparable with the *landwehr* employed by the Prussians and Austrians in the Napoleonic period. They were always a source of drafts for the line regiments, but starting in 1690 they began to fight as units, particularly in Catalonia and Italy, where the numbers of regulars were low. Their performance was usually quite good, for what they were. Typically, an understrength brigade would be given a militia battalion to round it off.

Troop Strengths

Overall, the French deployed an average of 7,000 line infantry to Catalonia each year until 1692. The cavalry was generally increased over this period, from 1,500 to 2,600, giving the French a total of between 8,500 and 10,000 men in the early war years. From 1692 these numbers jumped to 11,000, then 15,000 foot, and 5,000, then 6,000 horse and dragoons. In 1694, they deployed 21,000 men. The next year saw a decline to 14,000 (9,500 foot and 4,500 mounted troops), which along with other factors caused a bit of a crisis, because they were trying to garrison a large area. The numbers rose to 21,000 the following year, and for the final campaign against Barcelona the French had between 25,000 and 32,000 men, mostly infantry. These numbers, even the low values, include garrisons, but on the other hand they always had several thousand militia in Roussillon. Compared with the 450,000 men mustered by France for the war as a whole, it can be seen that Catalonia was always a minor front.

The Spanish never had less than 11,000 men, except at the very beginning of the war, and usually averaged 15,000; in 1695 they disposed of 22,000 against a French army half that number. But an average of 65% of these men were kept in garrisons, partly to defend against surprise naval descents, partly for internal security (at least in the early years) and to a great extent because they were untrained militia. Most mobile operations were sustained by the cavalry, which was normally outnumbered, with an average of only 3,000 troopers in the theatre. In support were the Provincial (i.e., regular) and the foreign *tercios*, occasionally beefed up by marines and, in the later war years, by actual foreign auxiliaries (English and Imperial).

It must also be kept in mind that the Spanish numbers constituted a much greater percentage of their war effort. Catalonia and Italy saw about an equal number of men under arms, while Flanders had fewer, due to difficulties with the finances; Spanish troops in Flanders were subsidised by the Allies. The Spanish also suffered heavily from desertion and sickness to a much greater extent than the French (who also suffered), simply because they had almost no infrastructure and no money to spend on building any. Losses among veteran units eventually led to the adoption of a purely defensive strategy until Madrid could be persuaded to requisition troops from Flanders and Italy, and then, the use of such expensive units was crippling.

The Best King Spain <er…Catalonia> Ever Had

"*Philip II was merely a king. Philip III and Philip IV were not kings, and Charles II was not a man.*"

Mignet.

King Carlos II was… well, they called him *El Hechizado*, The Bewitched. Ludicrously inbred, he was competent enough to be a king but not competent enough to be a good one. He had his moments, but was usually under the thumb of his womenfolk, his favourites, and his priests. There was an air of dreamy indolence at Madrid, punctuated by episodes of religious fervour. King Carlos was a morbid hypochondriac, obsessed with Death, and his malaise pervaded the Court.

El Hechizado, His Most Catholic Majesty, King Carlos II of Spain, was born on November 6, 1661, and would reign until November 1, 1700. He was the last of the Spanish Habsburgs. He earned his nickname late in his reign, when his always-limited faculties had entirely vanished and he became the puppet of Francophile agents, but it could have been applied to him at almost any time. He could have served as a poster boy for Dr. Frankenstein's life work.

Carlos' parents were uncle and niece, but that was not the full extent of the consanguinity. All eight of his great-grand parents were descendants of Philip I and Joanna 'The Mad'. He was more inbred than if his father and mother had been brother and sister. He could not speak until he was four, or walk until he was eight, and he was treated as an infant until he was ten. In him, the Habsburg lip took on monstrous proportions; his jaw was so distended that he could barely speak or chew. He was bald by thirty. Incapable of being schooled, he grew up in indolence, a prey to the grossest superstitions, and completely under the thumb of his mother, Mariana of Austria, who was appointed Regent on the death of her husband in 1665.

The Habsburg dynasty acquired the various regions that comprised Spain in 1504 and held them until 1700. During this period Spain should be referred to as 'the Spanish Monarchy' or 'Monarchy of Spain', though the name 'Kingdom of Spain' is allowed, as is the more accurate 'Kingdom of the Spains'.

Castile and Aragón were the two most powerful kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula. Under the joint rule of Queen Isabella I of Castile and her husband, King Ferdinand II of Aragón, the last Muslim kingdom in Spain, Granada, was wiped out, and Columbus sailed to America (both in the same year).

The royal marriage did not unite the kingdoms. In fact, as the *Reconquista* progressed, Castile and Aragón were allotted separate spheres of influence. They remained separate kingdoms under one monarch until 1716, just as the British monarchs of that day ruled Scotland, Ireland, and England as independent nations. Castile took the West, and Aragôn the East. This principle also applied to overseas possessions: thus, Castile acquired ALL the American colonies, while Aragôn had to be content with Mediterranean islands and Italian states. Initially, Aragôn was the more prosperous, until the flow of American precious metals became a flood.

Ironically, by the time of the War of the Grand Alliance the positions had reversed, Castile and the Southwest being relatively poor, while Aragón and the Northeast waxed rich. There were several reasons for this. Castile having *been* rich and populous, she provided most of the soldiers and money for Spain's wars, draining her manpower reserves. Additionally, she experienced several famines and a couple of extremely nasty epidemics – bubonic plague and typhus – plus devastation during the long war with Portugal. These events were so crippling that the economic disparity still holds today.

Isabella died in 1504 and Ferdinand united her kingdom to his. However, things were a little more complicated than that statement suggests. Isabella was one of the most dominant female statesmen Europe has ever seen. Ferdinand in contrast, got his way by fluidity of political morals. To use a simile that might have been expressed at the Court of Madrid, the Queen was diamond, the King, mercury. Castile was the dominant partner in the dual monarchy.

Because Castile dominated, the *Cortes General* of Castile (the leading lights of the Castilian court) decided to make Joanna, Isabella's daughter, Queen of Castile. She married Philip I, son of the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, whose wife was Mary of Burgundy. Philip died under mysterious circumstances, while Joanna soon became insane (for all political purposes, at least). Ferdinand was made Regent for his six-year-old grandson, Carlos I, and at last obtained his desire of ruling all Spain.

As *de facto* ruler of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragón, Ferdinand continued Spain's expansion in new directions, clashing with France over the buffer kingdom of Navarre, and in Italy. This was the time when the French kings were attempting to reestablish Charlemagne's empire; the army of Aragón was invited to aid the Italians as a counterweight to the French army wandering about those lands. In this way, Spain acquired Naples in southern Italy and Milán in northern Italy; not just the cities named, but the surrounding territories that were dependent on them. This was also the time of the Spanish Popes. The most famous of these, Alexander VI, a.k.a. Roderic Llançol i de Borja, was elected Pope in 1492.

With Ferdinand's death in 1516, Carlos I became the true King of Castile and Aragón, uniting the two kingdoms under his rule, but not fusing their institutions into one. Apart from the territories already mentioned, Burgundy (Franche-Comté) and the Spanish Netherlands (Belgium) were gained as bequests from his paternal grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian. On the latter's death in 1519, Charles V (to assign him a more international name) became Holy Roman Emperor and inherited the Habsburg German possessions *in toto*.

[Though he had become a Spanish monarch first, Charles did not live in Iberia; he based himself in Brussels and was known as Charles of Brussels.]

From Ferdinand and Isabella, through the Emperor Charles V, to Philip II, the Spanish Monarchy was on the rise, becoming the most powerful aggregation of states in the world. This was true even after Emperor Charles abdicated in 1556, dividing his possessions between his brother Ferdinand, who received the German lands and the Imperial title, and his son, Philip II, who received everything else.

Under Philip II, the Spanish Monarchy both reached its zenith and began its decline. Philip II was succeeded by Philip III in 1598, and Phillip III by Philip IV in 1621. The last Habsburg ruler of Spain, Carlos II, came to the throne in 1665.

Carlos inherited an empire long in decline. He, of course, was incapable of ruling even a stable empire, but his government made few attempts to repair the ship of state, preferring to indulge in a round-robin of 'stick the dagger in the favourite's back'. The Catalonians were happy with this state of affairs; their Principality was left to enjoy a period of prosperity and independence. Spain as a whole, however, suffered.

Carlos II fought three wars against Louis XIV before the War of the Grand Alliance, but in each case Spain was on the defensive. The short War of Devolution (1667-1668), the Dutch War (1672-1678), and the War of the Reunions (1683-1684) involved the Spanish protecting their interests in northern Europe; in the Dutch War they sided with their old enemy, Holland. Territorially, Burgundy and Luxembourg were the only major losses to the Monarchy, but each war only demonstrated the weakness of Spain in comparison with France.

Throughout most of this period, the Queen Mother exercised her influence by means of favourites – *validos*, as they were called. The word 'favourite' is not flattering, but the *validos* were usually men of some ability, and had a real role to play in government. They were the nearest thing to a prime minister that Spain had. The *valido* would be given a powerful post, from which he would dominate or manipulate (depending on his personality) the other high officers. The first *valido*, for example, was made Grand Inquisitor, which came with a seat on the Regency Council; he was also the Regent's Confessor.

This man, Juan Everado Nithard, recognised that Spain was in difficulties and attempted to stabilise the slide into chaos by reducing her military commitments to nil, granting independence to Portugal and making a disadvantageous peace with France. He was overthrown in a revolt led by the King's illegitimate half-brother, Don Juan José.

The next *valido*, Fernando de Valenzuela, was also driven from power by Juan José, but came back like a bad penny and was created a grandee of Spain. This insult to the Old Aristocracy led to a coup against the Queen Mother, in which Don Juan took over the reigns of power (1678) and both the Queen Mother and her *valido* were exiled from Madrid. King Carlos was technically old enough to rule in his own right, but no one expected him to do so.

The coup occurred during the Franco-Dutch War. On the losing side, Spain was forced to cede territory along the Rhine. The Queen Mother, as an Austrian, was naturally allied with the Holy Roman Empire, which was allied to Holland, and the coup had been undertaken partly in hopes of ending Spain's involvement in the war.

Unfortunately, the new administration did not last long, and in any case proved as ineffective as all the others. One exception was the *conde de* Oropresa. He was the man who stablised the currency. Oropresa was of the Queen's party, which favoured a Bavarian Succession (of which, more later).

Don Juan died in 1679. The Queen Mother returned to Court, but her influence was on the wane. The King now had a wife. She, Marie Louise of Orléans, would die much lamented, after ten years on the throne. Carlos was then forced to take a new wife – it was considered vital he produce an heir, though the hope was a slim one. This was Maria Anna, or Mariana, of Neuburg.

Marie Louise died in February of 1689, in suspicious circumstances, though poison was often attributed to court deaths when the culprit was merely an illness. The Queen Mother was implicated. If it truly was a case of poisoning, which is doubtful, it would not have been to give France an advantage or disadvantage in the coming war, but because the Queen Mother was a domineering old biddy who hated being put on the shelf. The official allegation, however, is that she was annoyed that no heir had been produced after ten years of marriage.

Mariana married Carlos by proxy in November of 1689 (turning up to be wed in person in 1690), and her marriage certainly had something to do with the current political climate. It also altered the direction of Spain's war effort, though not by much; the ship of state had too many barnacle accretions to turn quickly.

The Queen Mother died in May 1696, which gave the Queen even greater power. The older Mariana had desired Joseph Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias, Charles' nephew, to succeed to the throne, but he died three years later, in 1699. The King died the year after, and the succession passed to Philip, duc d'Anjou, grandson of King Louis XIV of France. Which, as the reader must surely be aware, led directly to the War of the Spanish Succession.

At the time of the War of the Grand Alliance the Court was divided into three main factions, which historians usually call the Austrian, the French, and the Bavarian. The Austrian party included Queen Mariana, the *conde de* Aguilar (Cardinal-Bishop of Cordoba), the *conde de* Melgar (Grand Admiral of Castile from 1691), and Cardinal Portocarreo. The Queen's party served the interests of the Imperial Habsburgs.

The Bavarian party included the King, the Queen Mother, her *validos* the *marqués de* Mancera, and the *conde de* Oropesa. The Dowager's party served the interests of the Bavarian Elector, who considered himself a candidate for the Succession.

Both these groups needed Spain to stay in the war, but they refused to cooperate with each other. Indeed, the 'Bavarians', following the Elector's lead, were open to French influence; the 'Imperials' were not.

The French party initially consisted of the *conde de* Monterrey. This faction should really be termed the anti-war party, and perhaps not even that, but the anti-Austro/Bavarians. Because, unlike the other factions, most of its members did

not formally support any dynastic claimant, it is technically incorrect to call them the 'French' faction before 1698, but they are often regarded as such, either because they saw France as a natural ally or because they admitted the *duc* d'Anjou, the presumptive French claimant to the throne, was the best solution to the question of the Succession. Many of the subordinate Spanish military officers held this view, which partly accounts for their insubordination to the various 'Bavarian' and 'Imperial' viceroys.

The factions remained fairly stable until 1693. Every year or two a new Viceroy was appointed to Catalonia to lead the Army there, and each time the man was designated by the faction that happened to be on top.

The Bavarians were in control at the start of the war. They wished to make war on France, but were greatly hampered by opposition from the other factions, an empty Treasury, and the ruinous state of the country. To put it simply, they were living in a dream world.

There were a number of appointments approved by the King which changed the balance of court power , beginning in 1692. These included the *duques de* Infantado and Montalto, the *marqués de* Vilafranca and Bourgomaine, and the *condes de* Melgar, Frigilana, and Granedo. These appointments strengthened the Austrians. Montalto was particularly powerful, as President of the Indies (a post equivalent to Colonial Secretary and Minister of the Navy combined). Melgar served a short stint as Viceroy of Catalonia just before the war broke out.

In 1693 there was a shakeup in which the Admiral and the Queen's Confessor were pitted against Montalto and Portocarreo in a battle for the office of Constable. This split the Austrian party, but the Bavarians had lost Oropesa, *valido* of the Queen Mother, while the Austrians gained Manuel de Lira, *valido* of the Queen. The Viceroy Gastañaga, who initially commanded the Spanish forces in Belgium and appears around this time in Catalonia, was a friend of Lira's.

In 1696 the Queen Mother died, Oropesa was banished from Madrid, while the prominent anti-war nobleman, Monterrey (a state councillor of Aragôn since 1693), was nobbled in a side battle over the Council of Aragón that boosted Montalto's influence. This placed the Austrians in the ascendancy, and, as will be recounted, led to a battle of personalities between the later Viceroys of Catalonia and George of Heßen-Damstadt, who arrived in that country in 1695 as part of an Allied relief effort and whose real mission was the promotion of the Emperor's cause – keeping Spain in the fight, whatever the cost.

Only in 1698 did a real pro-French party gel. Portocarreo, who had first joined Monterrey in 1693 after the clash over the Constable, reemerged as a member in 1696, when he and Oropesa, who had also reemerged from obscurity as a newly minted Austrian, clashed with the Admiral of Castile. Portocarreo backed the French Candidate to spite the Admiral. Oropesa rejoined the Bavarians. In 1699, however, Oropesa the Bavarian and the Austrian Admiral were both dumped, leaving the French Portocarreo as the only game in town.

It is often suggested that the French influenced the government policy of Spain through secret agents. In a minor way, perhaps this is true. Certainly they had spies and *agents provocateurs.* However, they did not buy enough nobles to form either a French Succession party or a Peace party. The drive for peace that ramped up from about 1692 was generated internally, since it was clear that prolonging the war beyond that point would be detrimental to Spain and only benefit the Maritime Powers and perhaps the Emperor. It was not a case of a foreign-backed Peace party hampering the war effort, but of a Hawk party – the Austrians, and to some extent the Bavarians – trying to pull the country into a war it did not want.

With respect to the Catalans, there *was* a pro-French element in the society, but mainly in the border regions, where French influence had always been strong and where French propaganda was able to play on the discontents of the peasantry. In other rural areas, sympathy was not so much pro-French as anti-Castilian, while in Barcelona, the principal city, sentiment favoured the Court, particularly the King and Queen.

Catalonia, Its Land and Peoples

In the 8th Century AD the Franks conquered Roussillon – the foothills and plains northeast of the Pyrenees. At the start of the 9th century the Franks drove into Catalonia, the matching region on the southern side of the mountains, as far as Barcelona. Under their rule Iberia immediately south of the mountains was divided into counties known as the Spanish March (Marca Hispanica), which served as a buffer zone against Muslim Spain. Andorra is the last vestige of this system. The region, and particularly Catalonia, thus acquired a Frankish rather than Visigothic colouring, though the name Catalonia is said to derive from 'Gothalania' (either 'Gothland', or 'Goth-Alan-ia' after the Goth-Alan confederation).

Allegiance to the Franks was eventually broken and Catalonia became a self-governing principality attached to the Crown of Aragón, the kingdom immediately to her west. It was from Catalonia that Aragón's power spread to Italy during the Middle Ages. Being self-governing, under the Counts of Barcelona, Medieval Catalonia developed its own distinct culture.

The unification of Spain that took place under Ferdinand, King of Aragón, and Isabella, Queen of Castile, naturally included Catalonia, but the Principality retained its unique laws right through the period of Habsburg rule, until the installation of the Bourbon kings.

Catalonia was one of the first lands to ban legislation unilaterally imposed by a monarch. Instead, there was, in political theory, a pact between the king and the three estates of the realm that agreed all laws were to be approved by the General Court of Catalonia. King and parliament approved the Constitutions, which codified the rights of the inhabitants. Taxes (and therefore the capacity to make war) were the responsibility of the Deputation of the General [Court] (*Diputacío de General*) or *Generalitat* – essentially a standing committee of the ruling council. However, overall authority was vested in a Castilian Viceroy, who also commanded the Army (an arrangement once common in many European border regions). This meant that the *Generalitat* might find itself in opposition to the Viceroy.

Another governmental body that the reader will find mentioned in the sources is the *Consell de Cent*, or Council of the Hundred. This was Barcelona's ruling council. Since Barcelona contained the bulk of the important people in Catalonia, and <naturally> had certain privileges written into its city charter, the *Consell* took on tremendous importance, meaning it could not be ignored when the Viceroy and the *Generalitat* were sharing a hissing fit.

And then, there were the various *Braç17ths*. These were representative bodies of the Estates who could be summoned by the *Generalitat* to give advice (while the latter had to be convoked by the King), and could be kept in being as standing committees when the *Generalitat* was not in session. The *Brac Militar* was yet another contentious body the Viceroy had to deal with; it was only loosely under his authority.

In general, the 17th Century was a bad time for Catalonia. Banditry and piracy became common. Madrid neglected the principality's infrastructure while overtaxing it and trying to impose Castilian language and culture. Only at the end of the century, under the weak Carlos II, did the economy recover.

Most of the important families lived in Barcelona, so power was concentrated there. Out in the countryside were the peasants, some of them freeholders, some of them farming communally, but many working for one or another of the great men in the City. There was more local industry than was common in the rest of Spain, and a good proportion of it was still Catalan-owned. Most industry was located in or near the coastal towns, which also engaged in fishing and trade. There was a healthy competition with the French province of Languedoc. Because the country was cut up into isolated valleys, inland regional centres such as Lleida, Vic, and Berga also developed along, hosting the local administration and markets. But, all these towns remained small. Barcelona itself only had a population of about 18,000.

The Catalan oligarchs in the City fought back against the central government, particularly when policies of 'unification' were announced. These fights were made in the courts and not on the battlefield. Very rarely did the Catalans seek overt French aid. Playing France off against Castile could be a strong tactic, but it was dangerous, not only because an army of occupation (from either side) might appear, but because it would increase French economic penetration.

It was only the peasants who took up arms in protest, not having any other means of voicing their grievances. Between 1640 and 1652 Catalonia was involved in the Reaper's War, a peasant uprising against forced billeting by Spanish troops, in which a number of royal functionaries were assassinated. This was uncommon, as the peasants usually made a point of not engaging in lethal violence, preferring vandalism and other acts of intimidation, only mobbing and then disarming any soldiers sent against them.

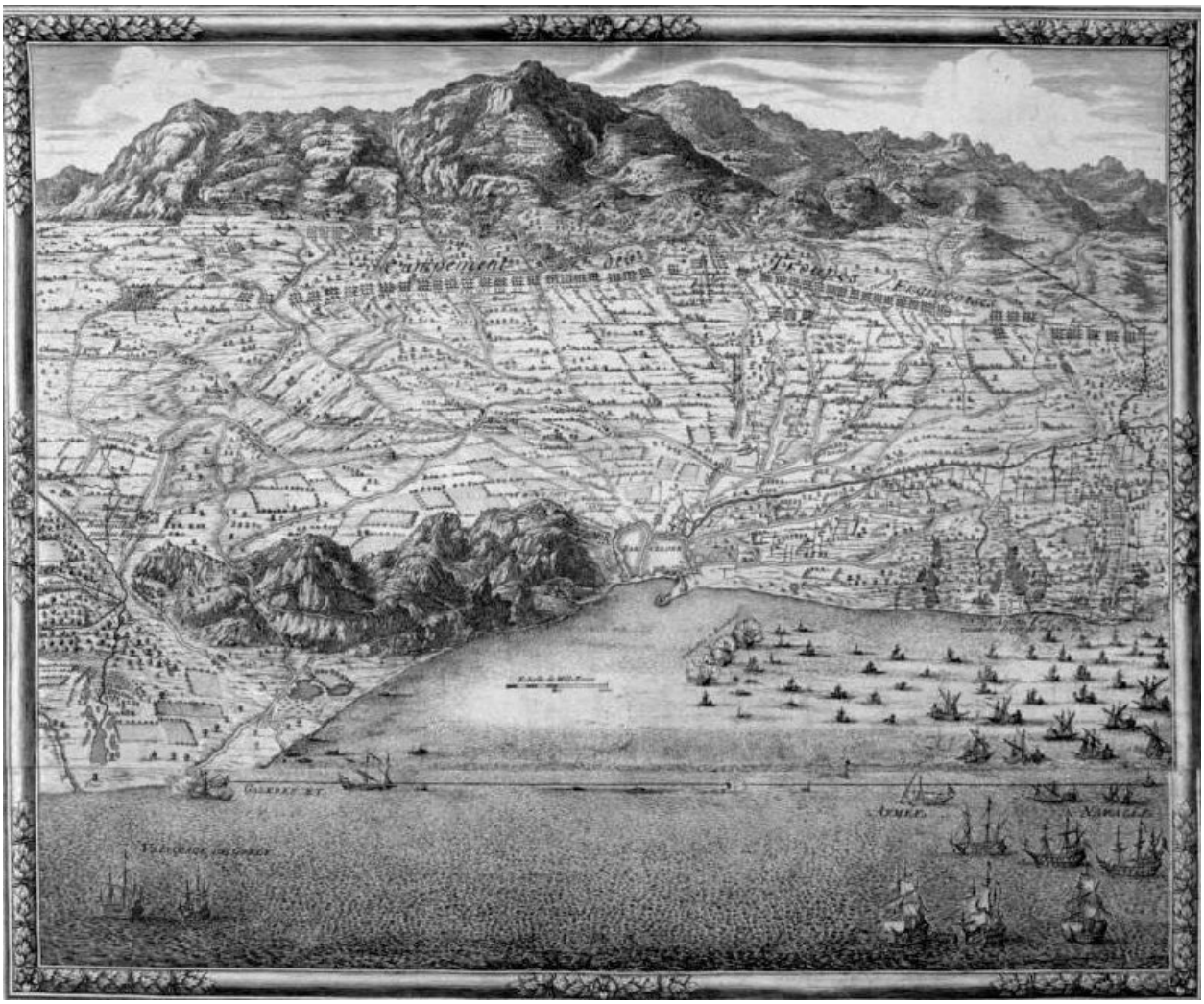
In the Reaper's War the Catalan elites harnessed the uprising to create a *Junta de Braços* (*Braços General*) or general advisory council, and a Council of Defence of the Principality. Ultimately, a Catalan Republic was declared

under the protection of King Louis XIII of France. The French occupied the Principality until 1652, when they were driven out and the republic was crushed. However, the Habsburgs recognised Catalan rights. In 1659, the Peace of the Pyrenees ceded Roussillon, the northern half of the province of Cerdanya, and a number of smaller sections of land lying north of the Pyrenees, to France. The people of these regions were Catalan-speaking. For them, the border did not exist and a man would think nothing of shipping goods from a French town to a Spanish town duty free (the central government called it 'smuggling') or of seeking work – even military employment – on either side of the mountains.

It is because the Habsburgs guaranteed their rights that the majority of Catalans, particularly those in the towns, remained loyal to the Crown during the War of the Grand Alliance, even though they opposed the Castilian bureaucracy. They frequently applied to the King for aid both against the French and against the king's viceroys, whom they accused of thwarting the King's true desire to help his Catalan subjects. They never realised that the Habsburgs were using their country as a battlefield to further their pan-European dynastic ambitions.

(This held true during the War of the Spanish Succession, when a Bourbon ruled from Madrid. The Bourbon regime tried to impose the French template on Spain, while the Habsburgs became a symbol of Catalonia's ancient rights. The new Bourbon king could not be trusted. His countrymen had tried to overthrow the Catalan elites in the *Revolta del Barretines*. Moreover, natural Catalan friendliness toward France was mitigated by trade rivalries; with a Frenchman on Spain's throne, Catalonia was sure to be cut out of the loop. And so, Catalonia served as the base for the Habsburg Candidate. It was because of this that after the war Philip V placed a ban on all Catalan governmental institutions and rights, except for the civil law code, making Catalonia a mere province of the Castilian crown.)

Since then Catalan fortunes have gone up and down. The region has always been rich. Sometimes it has enjoyed a degree of autonomy, and other times, not. The Catalan language, however, was only made official after the death of Franco.



Les Folies d'Espagne
The War of the Grand Alliance in Catalonia

The General Course of the War

The Catalonian theatre of the War of the Grand Alliance is generally dismissed with a sentence or two. War broke out on that front in 1689 and concluded with a siege of Barcelona in 1697. In between, only one formal field battle was fought, in 1694, which resulted in an inglorious Spanish rout. In the grand scheme of things, therefore, only a sentence or two is required. Even King Louis and his War Minister (at first Louvois and then the latter's son, Barbezieux) treated the front as a secondary concern for much of the war.

Nonetheless, the campaign is replete with lessons. An initial 'hearts and minds' approach was abandoned for one of outright conquest, which in turn was abandoned for a still-brutal 'surgical' operation. The advantages of guerrilla and 'regular' warfare were weighed and a different emphasis applied at different times. Both sides had problems funding the war, which led to short campaigning seasons, protracting the overall conflict. The French commander was hampered by the requirements of other theatres, while the Spanish suffered from domestic political problems. The campaign also reveals the secrets of '*petite guerre*' and compares the French 'professional' Army, still at the height of its power, to the semi-feudal Spanish Army, which in the Peninsula was composed primarily of short-service militia.

It might be assumed that the border on the Pyrenees was a dangerously long and fluid zone of conflict, but in fact most of it played no part in the war. Impenetrable to armies except at either end, access on the western side was impractical, mainly due to the lack of infrastructure, but also due to strong garrisons of local militia on both sides. This left the Mediterranean littoral, the traditional invasion route since before the days of Hannibal.

Roussillon was a legitimate target for a Spanish counter-invasion. It had a large Catalan population and was suffering from Huguenot agitation. In the event, such an invasion would not prove possible, but the French feared it, and that fear drove French strategy as much as the hope of gain.

During the first four years of conflict there were no major battles or significant sieges in Spain. However, there was a certain amount of activity. The French theatre commander, the *duc* de Noaïlles, was ordered to fight a defensive war, since resources could not be spared him. The War Minister, Louvois, thought they could dispose of Spain simply by forcing her to mobilise in the Peninsula, which would drain her Treasury.

But, because the Spanish had neglected Catalonia's defences, Noaïlles, seeking *gloire* like any good Frenchman, chose to fulfill his mission offensively, by sending large foraging raids into enemy country. 'Courses' such as these had as their primary objects the acquisition of supplies, the denial of same to the enemy, and intimidation. They took place on all fronts, and at all times, but most of those on France's eastern frontier were just an element in the greater campaigns against major fortifications and major armies. In Catalonia, they were sometimes the high point of the year's efforts. In Catalonia, too, they served an additional function, proving the impotence of Spain's central government to the locals.

There were political possibilities in Catalonia. Keeping in mind that the French were not particularly liked there, except in the border zone, it is a fact that the Catalans had in the past sought French aid against the Castilian regime at Madrid. Within the last year or two, an insurrection had broken out, the *Revolta del Barretines.* As insurrections go, it was pretty tame, yet serious enough for some segments of Catalan society to turn once again to France.

Roussillon, the French province to the north of Catalonia, had been annexed by France within living memory – a source of grievance but also a connection. It should also be noted that Noaïlles, who was also governor of Languedoc and Roussillon, was one of the principal grandees of the region, well respected on both sides of the border. Perhaps more importantly, the *Indendant* of Roussillon – the fiscal commissar who worked in tandem with the Governor – was Catalan by birth. His name was Ramón Trobat.

Initially, the goal was to foment unrest to keep the Spanish busy, but slowly Trobat's dream of annexation began to grow on Noaïlles. In 1640 both Catalonia and Portugal had gone into revolt. The war with Portugal lasted decades and resulted in formal independence for the state. A Catalan republic had only existed for a short time, but perhaps the event could be duplicated. And, now that France was no longer wracked herself by internal divisions, perhaps Catalonia could become a buffer state, or even France's newest province.

Ultimately, this was unlikely. For one thing, the Sun King was making war to secure stable borders, not engaging in conquest for its own sake. For another, only a fraction of the Catalans were in favour of Trobat's ideas. Their aristocracy, possibly for the first time in history, was actually loyal to Madrid, while the middle class burghers were in a fierce trade rivalry with Languedoc. The *Revolta del Barretines* was a peasant movement. But while many peasants

hoped for help from the French, it was only to provide protection from the Spanish Viceroy's reprisals, not to acquire French citizenship.

Still, for the first few years the French trod lightly, paying for what they broke, and expending a great deal of effort on propaganda. The Cerdanya, the mountainous border region, was occupied to prevent Spanish retaliation into Roussillon, but this occupation was almost notional, with the local authorities pledging themselves to King Louis.

In 1694, with King Louis himself now interested in conquest, Noaïlles was created Viceroy of Catalonia. Tellingly, the ceremony was held at the recently captured city of Girona, whose population by and large welcomed the French occupation. This was the closest the French came to winning over the Catalans, and almost immediately the situation changed for the worse.

Lack of money, a famine in France, and a military mindset that preferred glorious shortcuts to patient strategy, led to oppression and the irruption of a true guerrilla war against the French. Noaïlles, who usually had the prized ability of commanding obedience in adversity, became seriously ill in 1695 and had to resign in favour of the *duc* de Vendôme. Vendôme was to become one of France's greatest marshals, but his focus was purely military. It was he who laid siege to Barcelona.

With the geopolitical situation shifting drastically, Spain now took on greater importance in King Louis' mind. The enemies of France were actively seeking peace and no one wanted to be the last to the table. Spain was perceived as one of the weakest links in the chain.

On the Spanish side, the first goal was to stamp out the peasant revolt. Fortunately, it did not have the backing of the elites. Next, the aim was to create a forward defence. The intent was to protect the rich plains of La Empordà and Vic, the former lying just south of the border and on the direct invasion route, the second lying to the west of Girona on an alternate route to the capital. But, this goal did not correspond with the realities of the situation. It also proved impossible to invade Roussillon, or even to maintain a hold on the border fortifications. In reaction, Madrid decided to hunker down in the principal towns, but this left the initiative to the French.

The Catalonian guerrilla war, though fierce, was not as intense as the one waged against Napoleon, and Vendôme was quickly able to keep it in check. He was forced, however, to concentrate on essentials. The goal now was to knock Spain out of the war. Ideas of longterm conquest were shelved. A signal event, such as the capture of Barcelona (which had been on King Louis' 'bucket list' since 1693) would serve the purpose. Nothing could be done in 1696, as all eyes were on Italy. But, when Savoy signed a separate peace that year, Vendôme could finally ask for and receive whatever he needed.

Barcelona was always the Golden Apple. Heavily garrisoned and well fortified (even if the defenses were in disrepair) and at the far end of a long French supply chain, the city could not be taken without a massive expenditure of money, time, and manpower. This the French did not have until 1697. As would be the case in the War of the Spanish Succession, it was the last significant act of the war.

Actually, this last campaign only occurred because Spain had been kept in the fight by the Holy Roman Emperor, who did not want to make peace. England and Holland, however, did, and refused to support Spain with a fleet. This allowed the French to supply their Army at Barcelona without interference, while the release of troops from the Italian front gave Vendôme overwhelming force. Even so, the siege lasted 63 days and the order to surrender came from Madrid – and was heartily opposed by the garrison and populace, who felt they had been sold out.

The Theatre of Operations

The war in Catalonia took place along a front of perhaps 150 Km, from the Mediterranean Sea to Andorra, and extended south as far as Barcelona. The province of Roussillon was the French base of operations. Though the French were concerned for its defence and garrisoned it accordingly, the Spanish only made two minor penetrations during the course of the war.

South of the border, the French would campaign in the Catalonian provinces of Girona and Barcelona, and to a limited extent in Lleida province. It should be noted that these are modern territorial divisions. In the 1690s the Principality was divided into *vegueries* (feudal counties), but the reader will have difficulty picking them out on a modern map, therefore, the provinces will be spoken of here.

The border of Girona province leaves the coast near the town of Blanes, and runs inland along a line about halfway between the city of Girona and the city of Barcelona. It then heads north and west by turns. Near the border it extends a finger west; this is the Cerdanya. South and west of Girona province is Barcelona province. West again is Lleida province, which borders both Andorra and Aragón. South of the provinces of Barcelona and Lleida is the province of Tarragona, which saw no campaigning.

Each province has a principal city, of the same name. Though in the 1690s each *veguerie* also had its principal town, Girona, Lleida, and Barcelona were even then the most important ones. Barcelona was the largest, with a population of about 18,000. Girona city lies well inland, on the River Ter, about 85 Km northeast of Barcelona. Lleida city lies near the border of Aragón, about 130 Km WNW of Barcelona, on the Ségre River.

With regard to terrain, Catalonia can be roughly divided into four regions: the Pyrenees, the tableland of the western interior, the hill country extending south from the mountains into the central portion of the Principality, and the coastal zone.

Along the eastern Pyrenees there are three main avenues of approach into Catalonia, excluding the scenic coast road ('scenic' routes are never very good for armies and this one was more of a goat track). From east to west they are: 1) the straight road south from Perpignan; 2) the road southwest from that city along the Tech River, which leads to Camprodon and the central portion of the Catalonian province of Girona; 3) the road west along the Tét River, leading to the French fortress of Mont-Louis and the opposing town of Puigcerdà on the western edge of Girona province. By marching a little farther west, a fourth route, the pass through Andorra, could be taken down to La Seu d'Urgell in the valley of the Ségre River. Outside of the theatre of operations, a couple of other passes had to be monitored because they allowed the Spanish access to Foix and Gascony, but the French did not use them, except perhaps for small parties of reinforcements, as they were too far west.

The easternmost route crosses the Pyrenees at roughly 300 metres elevation. Between low peaks on either side lies a gap some 10 Km wide. This gap itself is hilly, and perhaps 10 Km in length, running northwest to southeast. The actual road runs through a narrow cleft in those hills called the Col de Perthus (Coll de Portell in Spanish, i.e., the 'Portal Pass'). It is 2-3 Km long, and dominated on the western side by a powerful hilltop fortress improved by the great Vauban – Fort de Bellegarde. Penetrating this gap allowed access to the Catalonian coastal plain – the Empordà, or Lampourdan in French. Bellegarde had changed hands several times but was under French control in 1689.

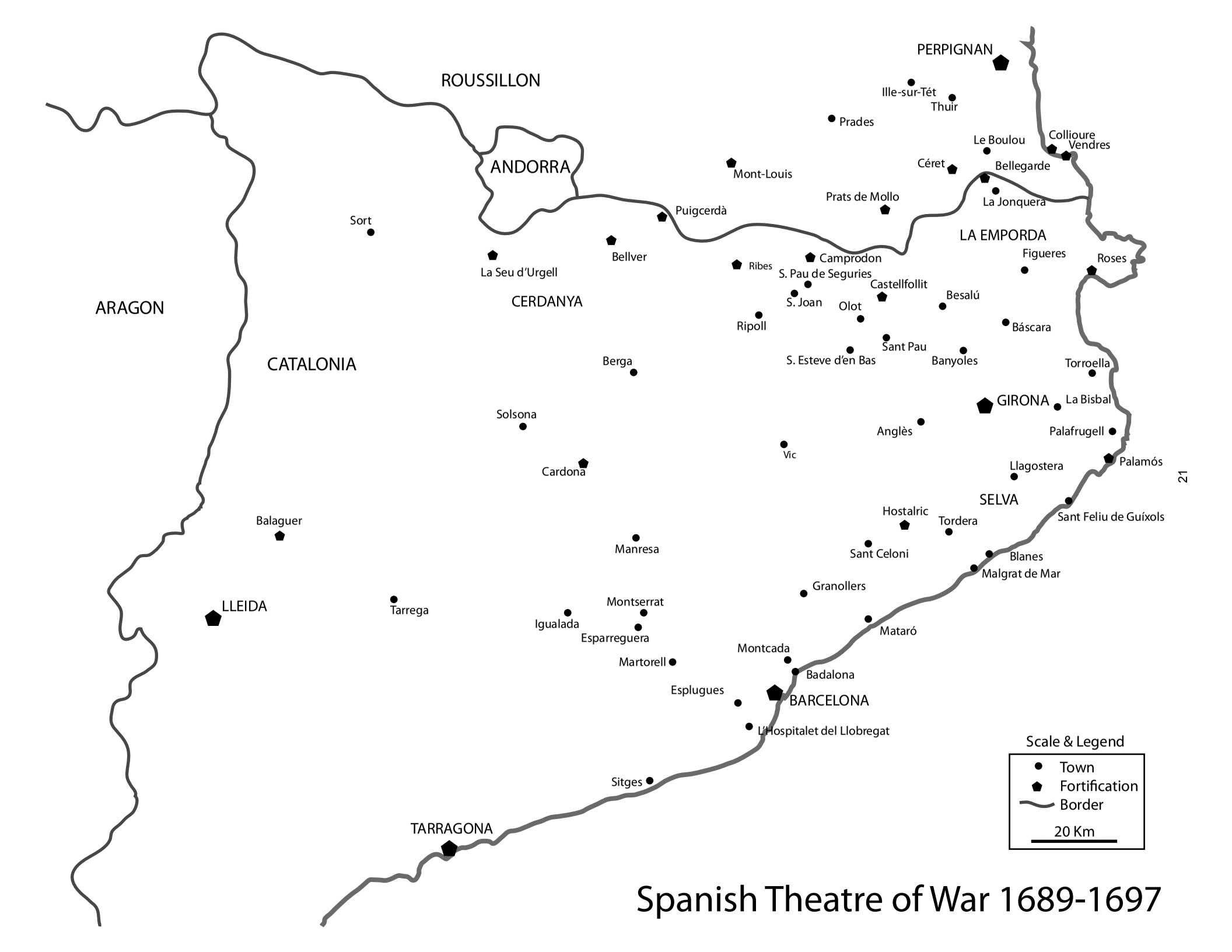
Between this gap, west toward the road to Camprodon, there are no practical routes for an army. The mountains, though not as difficult as the Alps, are thickly wooded even today, and there are only hiking trails. True, there is one exception, a road that leads south off the valley of the Tech, by Saint-Laurent-de-Cerdans to Coustouges, but it brings one out to the coastal plain by a far longer and more difficult route than that covered by Bellegarde. From Perpignan to the entrance to the valley of the Tech is about 20 Km SSW, and from the entrance to Prats-de-Mollo-la-Preste another 30 Km, southwest. Prats-de-Mollo was the jumping off point for any march over the Col d'Ares into Spain. To protect this pass Vauban had the town fortified, and Fort Lagarde built on the northern slope above the town as a backstop.

The Tech Valley does lead farther west but dead-ends in the Concrós massif. The Col d'Ares lies to the south of Prats-de-Mollo; the first key feature on the Spanish side was Camprodon, some 14 Km away as the crow flies. The path is not exactly easy: 3 Km straight up the slopes of El Casal to an elevation of 1100 metres and along the Col de la Seille for another 3 Km to some switchbacks taking one to Col d'Ares itself (elevation 1513 m). From here the road descends to the ridge-top village of Mollo, about 5-6 Km downslope. The town of Camprodon lies 5 Km farther on, at the bottom of a deep valley, where the River Ritort comes down from Mollo to join the River Ter. The French brought cannon by this route – on standard caissons, no less – but at a rate of advance measured in *feet*-per-day.

Like all the towns of this region, on both sides of the border, Camprodon was built for defence, with narrow streets and few outlying buildings. Its key defensive feature was a star fort built onto a hill rising out of the valley floor. According to the Spanish authorities, it was one of the only two 'modern' fortifications in Catalonia.

From Prats de Mollo one approaches the hill from the opposite side of the Ritort. The confluence with the Ter is on the western side of the hill, and the old, walled, town behind the hill. On the near bank of the Ritort was an unfortified 'suburb'. The main fort had four bastions, but was not properly maintained, and weakly garrisoned. Three valleys fan out from Camprodon, west, east, and south; the latter diverges, leading one either by way of the town of Ripoll to the rich Plana de Vic, west of the city of Girona, or back to the coastal plain by way of the town of Olot. Other options are also possible.

The next route to the West lies along the valley of the River Tét, which flows to the sea through Perpignan. A march of 40 Km west from that city to Prades, where the valley narrows, then 28 Km southwest to Mont-Louis (yet another of Vauban's masterworks). Mont-Louis was much larger than Fort Lagarde; the town was encased in the plan of the fortification. At Mont-Louis the pass emerges onto a plateau perhaps 10 Km wide. On either side lie high mountains. The fort covered not only the main road to Perpignan but another pass leading northwest into the French County of Foix. The Spanish town of Puigcerdà lies 18 Km southwest from Mont-Louis; the plateau here begins to slope down, following the River Ségre, and is quite fertile.



Spanish Theatre of War 1689-1697

Puigcerdà was a substantial town. Tightly built on raised ground, even possessing its own lake within the town precincts, it was a strategic position, but there was no money to maintain either walls or garrison, and it was deemed 'ruinous' by the Spanish fortress inspectors, its walls razed in the last war. Also, the people were well disposed to the French. For these reasons it never became an obstacle worth mentioning.

[A curious territorial anomaly exists just north of Puigcerdà. This is a wing-shaped bit of Spanish territory, 6 Km by 3 Km, lying 1.6 Km within France. Under the Treaty of the Pyrenees of 1659, which ceded Roussillon to France, all Cities were exempted; despite its small population, Llívia held this status as the ancient capital of the district of Cerdanya. On the North side of the town is a hill surmounted by an old castle. The hill is actually the rubble of the pre-Roman town; Llívia has been around for a long time. Between Puigcerdà and Llívia lies the French border village of Bourg-Madame, less than a kilometre away from the former.]

Puigcerdà commanded entrance to the *veguerie* of Cerdanya, a western arm of the province of Girona, whose populace was generally friendly to France. It was possible to head east from here by way of La Molina and Ribes de Freser down to Ripoll and thence to Vic; from Vic the road led to Barcelona. Or, and of more interest to the French in the early years of the war, one could 'course' west along the valley of the Ségre, which flows in that direction for many leagues before turning south and running over the central plateau. The high, barren ridge-line of the Serra Pedregosa blocks movement to the South along the Ségre's upper waters.

The key towns in the valley were Bellver de Cerdanya, which overlooks a bridge over the Ségre, and La Seu d'Urgell, which guards the pass leading from Andorra, an exceedingly narrow one. Also at La Seu, the Ségre River bends south through another narrow pass. Following the Ségre takes one through the province of Lleida, a rough country until one travels 50 Km or more to the South, well beyond the range of French magazines. Both border towns were, in theory, highly defensible. Bellver is built on a steep knoll and La Seu was walled, with the addition of a detached citadel, Castellciutat, about 1 Km southwest of the town. But, the fortifications of La Seu's town and citadel were decrepit, while Bellver was only fortified during the war, by the French.

Andorra at this time was under the co-rule of the Bishop of La Seu d'Urgell and the King of France, to whom tribute was paid. The Andorrans thus favoured France over Spain, but so did the Bishop, and by extension the entire countryside around La Seu d'Urgell.

Immediately south of the Pyrenees in Lleida and Girona provinces the hills are high and rugged, heavily wooded on their northern faces and bare or lightly wooded on their southern. The valleys are deep and narrow, and armies had to follow the rivers, which tend to flow south and then turn toward the Mediterranean. Those rivers starting nearer the sea flow directly out of the hills to the coast. There are very few lakes, mostly far up in the mountains; two or three used to exist within volcanic depressions at lower elevations, but only one has survived being drained. None of the reservoirs one sees on modern maps existed. Water flow in the rivers varies dramatically with the seasons. This hill country extends south with few breaks to the Llobregat River that cuts southeast, reaching the sea just south of Barcelona.

The high sierra, which saw no fighting, extends from Aragón into Lleida province; it is quite fertile, thanks to a number of large rivers. As one heads north, the land becomes wrinkled by successive bands of ridges, running east to west and cut by only a few valleys. This is why the French decided they could not campaign against the city of Lleida, despite its importance. To take Lleida, they would have to take Barcelona first, then march inland up the Royal Road beside the Llobregat River to the open country, but once Barcelona was taken the war would be over anyway.

The coastal zone is not a uniformly flat plain. Several ranges of heavily wooded hills divide it into isolated segments. The largest plain is La Empordà or Lampourdan. This is immediately south of the border. A smaller plain, the Selvà, (the name also includes the dividing range of hills), is located southeast of the city of Girona. From this region a key valley, called La Vallè, leads to a large plain of the same name, northwest of Barcelona. The City is divided from the heavily populated Vallè by a range of hills that terminate at the Llobregat River.

Connecting with the Vallè from the North is another valley leading to the Plana de Vic, Vic being the administrative capital of the *Veguerie* of Vic, west of the city of Girona. The river associated with this valley is a tributary of the Llobregat, which provides access to the hill country via several such tributaries. The main branch of the Llobregat passes by the town of Berga, which was a jumping off point for Spanish armies campaigning in the Pyrenees. West and south of the Llobregat the land opens up, with fewer hills and good farmland. But, the French never made it that far; the Spanish wintered their troops there. Of the other rivers, the Ter is perhaps the most important, flowing down from the Cerdanya, first south, then east, until it reaches the sea. Girona city lies on its right bank, and the river was the scene of the only pitched battle of any size, which took place not far from its mouth.

The coast itself, La Marina, had its own road, but this was a poor one; where there are hills, they come right down to the water. Normally, armies moving between the various coastal towns marched to the Royal Road that ran from Barcelona by the Vallè to Girona and into the Empordà, travelling along it until forced to turn aside to their final

destination. Apart from Barcelona, the best Spanish harbours within the area of operations were at Roses (Rosas in Castilian), Palamós, and Cadaqués. Cadaqués, a small harbour isolated on the rugged peninsula of the Cap de Creus, was never the focus of a campaign. Like Puigcerdà, it was 'ruinous'. The other ports were besieged during the war. All these ports were fortified, and all needed repairs. Roses was the other 'modern' fortification, along with Camprodon. The remaining towns on the Costa Brava, all small, except perhaps for Mataró, north of Barcelona, lay exposed to the weather and were not fortified.

Lleida, Girona, and Barcelona were the principal fortifications of Catalonia. Away from the border and the coast there were few walled towns (Cardana and Berga being exceptions). Girona was celebrated as the 'Virgin City'; she had resisted no less than 22 sieges. Barcelona had the biggest defensive system, but all locations were in need of a lot of work to make them secure.

Apart from these and the border forts, there were a number of small but key installations. The two most important were Castellfollit de la Roca and Hostalric. Castellfollit, perched on a sliver of rock above the Fluvià River, blocked the northern route from the Empordà into the Plana de Vic, which road also leads to Camprodon; obviously, it blocked movement in the opposite direction, too, but its eastern side is nearly impregnable, while the western can be attacked. Hostalric lies at the northern end of the Vallè, plugging that valley. Both locations saw heavy fighting.

In Roussillon, the neighbouring ports of Collioure and Port-Vendres, southeast of Perpignan, were of some significance. Perpignan itself was a major fortification, on the same scale as Barcelona, but in much better shape. All of the roads leading down out of the mountains were guarded with commanding forts, and the larger towns were all defensible.

The *Revolta del Barretines*

Before narrating the course of the war in detail, it would be as well to examine a critical event that took place in the years immediately prior. This was the *Revolta de Gorretes,* or the *Revolta del Barretines,* which lasted from 1686 to 1689, if one excepts occasional eruptions in the early 1690s. The insurrection was sparked by the evils inherent in quartering soldiers on the populace. Heavy taxation also played a part.

[The Barretina *is the national hat of Catalonia.* Gorreta *is another word for it.]*

In the 1640s a similar insurrection took place, known as the Reapers' War. In that one, the Catalan elites took a hand, harnessing the power of the peasants to wrest special privileges from Madrid. In contrast, the current unrest was purely a revolt of the countryside, and actually opposed by many of the Catalan nobility and burgesses. The leaders of the revolt were wealthy commoners, men who held the social rank of 'honorary citizen'. The superficial similarity between the revolts, however, led the local French authorities to believe they might profit from it, as they had previously.

But the Catalan oligarchs, most of whom resided in Barcelona and the other principal towns, were favourably inclined toward Madrid partly because Carlos II was incompetent and left them alone, partly because the pre-war Viceroy, Don Juan José, an Austrian by birth, favoured them and ensured power was kept in local hands, and partly because they were engaged in local economic rivalry with the French, in which they currently had the upper hand.

Discontent among the *paisanos* increased dramatically in 1684 when a plague of locusts struck the region, impoverishing many. The locusts returned in succeeding years and were especially pestilent in 1687. That was the year Madrid sent 2,400 troops, mainly cavalry, to Catalonia. Tensions between France and Spain had remained high after the War of the Reunions, and it was rumoured the French were fomenting unrest in the Principality.

Because the fortresses were in disrepair, the troops were quartered on the civilian population. On top of this, the civilians were required to pay for their upkeep. After the series of ruined harvests, that was simply not possible. When three members of the *Generalitat* (the autonomous element of Catalonia's government under the Crown of Aragón) wrote to the King asking that the soldiers be transferred, the Viceroy arrested them.

In October of 1687 there was an incident where a soldier struck a woman over an argument involving a chicken; this resulted in the soldier's unit being pulled from her town. Negotiations then led to the decision by many towns to agree to quarter the troops but not to pay for their upkeep.

In April of 1688, another incident led to a march of the people against one of the ports of the region, Mataró. The marchers forced the local notables to join them, which gave the illusion that the oligarchs would allow themselves to become leaders of the movement, which generated an immediate groundswell of popular support. After a few days, the marchers headed to Barcelona, where they demanded a general pardon, a reduction in 'contributions' toward soldiers' upkeep, and the release of political prisoners, including the three arrested members of the *Generalitat*. Blockaded by the peasants, the Viceroy's government gave in and the peasants returned to their homes.

This spontaneous uprising unnerved the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. In May, the latest Viceroy, the *marqués* de Leganés, quit, to be replaced by the *conde* de Melgar, who did not last long in the post. The government conceded every point to the peasants, but because the quartering continued, incidents also continued. Eventually, the government lost control of large sections of the countryside, including, critically, the countryside around Barcelona. The border regions, now the subject of French propaganda efforts, actually saw much less unrest, probably because the troops were not quartered there. All the same, 800 farmers marched on the border town of Puigcerdà, demanding a minimum wage; this event was repeated at other towns as the peasants realised what a good idea it was.

By June of 1688 the clergy had become embroiled, over the question of tithes. Arguments in this quarter led to a riot, which led to the sacking of an armoury and the distribution of the weapons among the rioters. However, the next day was a feast day which gave the Army the opportunity to surprise the rioters and disarm them. Eight of the ringleaders were hanged, but this only sparked more uprisings across the Principality. By August there were riots in Barcelona. Generally speaking the rioters targeted the aristocracy, who were exempt from military service, and the monied classes, especially bankers and moneylenders.

A unique feature of Spanish revolts in this period was the relatively small body count. The King was never blamed for the bad things that sparked the revolt, so it was never a matter of civil war or treason. The revolutionaries rarely attacked soldiers, preferring instead to disarm them – and the soldiers allowed themselves to be disarmed. If tempers were high, troops were withdrawn, not thrown on the fire. At the end of a given revolt, the ringleaders would be executed, often brutally, but there would be no general reprisals, and the Government might even accede to the demands of the people.

It should also be noted that there was an atmosphere in Spain that a modern visitor would certainly associate with a police state. This was indeed the Inquisition's work, but curiously, that institution was not active in repression, contrary to what the reader might expect. In fact, the Inquisitors often dismissed the denunciations of overenthusiastic 'narks'. The state of affairs had more to do with the 'group think' of the Spanish, for whom the tight village social structure was still the foundation stone of life. In a village, everyone knows everyone else's business, and everyone else's business is ones' own business. It was not unusual for people to denounce themselves out of a sense of social guilt. It may have been this attitude which allowed the Viceroys to so easily learn of the various plots against them and eliminate the revolt's leadership before matters escalated too far.

In December of 1688 the *duque de* Villahermosa became Viceroy. France had already gone to war on the Rhine. The Viceroy had his hands full trying to keep the lid on things while readying the Principality's defences. There was no money to repair the fortifications. Indeed, there was barely enough money to keep the soldiers from deserting. In March of 1689, shortly before Spain declared war on France, Villahermosa attempted to institute a voluntary donation, or *donative voluntario*. It was approved by the *Consell de Cent* (Council of Hundred – Barcelona's ruling council) and the Estates, but those men were not compelled to contribute, while the lower classes were. The *donative* was a failure, and the French used it as a propaganda tool.

As war with Spain approached, the French made a determined effort to capitalise on Catalonian unrest. French agents of the *Intendant* of Roussillon, Ramôn Trobat, were in contact with many of the peasant leaders attempting to coordinate what was otherwise an unstructured revolt. Trobat distributed leaflets denouncing the central government and its attempts to impose unfair taxes. He also made much of the fact that the Castilian government was siding with a number of Heretical states, such as Holland. Supplies were smuggled to the insurgents, many of whom swore allegiance to France. Border communities spontaneously placed themselves until French protection.

Some historians believe that if France had struck quick and hard during her initial campaign, which began in April, all of Catalonia wold have gone over to them. The commanding general, Anne Jules de Noaïlles, guided by Trobat, wanted to do just that. But, Versailles imposed a cautious strategy; Catalonia was a diversionary theatre. There is still debate over whether King Louis was simply unaware of how successful French propaganda had been, or whether he was fixated on the Rhine. It was probably the latter. It should also be remembered that to an aristocratic mind of the *Ancien Régime*, peasant revolts were anathema, no matter how beneficial they might appear in the immediate moment. Roussillon and Languedoc were at this time in the throws of anti-Huguenot repression; the Protestants should not receive encouragement from examples across the border.

The *Revolta del Barretines* ultimately led nowhere. Its back was broken at the end of 1689 with a combination of amnesty and surgical reprisals. However, it proved beneficial to French operations until it petered out completely in 1691. Even then, the French could rely on substantial Catalan goodwill, but this changed in 1694 with the breakdown in the discipline of the French Army and a shift in French policy.

At bottom, the French were overly optimistic. They assumed that because large numbers of Catalans looked on them favourably, the majority of the Principality could be encouraged to secede. But pledging loyalty to France was an act

of desperation for those not living astride the border. In Spain it was family first, then parish, then regional loyalty, then, for the Catalans, loyalty to the Catalan people. After that it was a toss up between the government at Barcelona or the government at Madrid – mainly because they could be played against each other. In any attempt to impose foreign rule, the probable outcome would be a proud Catalan declaration '*som Espanyol*': 'we are Spanish'. The fact that *maréchal* Noaïlles' elevation to French Viceroy at Girona in 1694 was welcomed by that city is a measure of just how bad the situation was felt to be, but it must be emphasised that this was only *regional* backing for French rule. In Barcelona they were cleaning out the moat.

By war's end, most Catalans were opposed to French interference in their affairs. This is the reason the Habsburg Candidate was able to establish himself in the country during the War of the Spanish Succession. The upper classes especially, still angry with France for trying to foment rebellion, opposed the succession of Philip of Anjou on two counts: he was a Castilian choice, and he was French.

[Catalonia was not the only region to suffer rebellion during the war. Valencía had its Segona Germania*, or Second Brotherhood, which was a peasant revolt against high rents.]*

Ramón Trobat

Ramón Trobat i Vinyes was a native of Barcelona in the service of France. Trained for the Law, he fought in the Catalan rebellion of 1640 (the Reapers' War). At the Peace of the Pyrenees he was an advisor for Cardinal Mazarin of France. After Roussillon's annexation he joined its government as a member of the six-man Sovereign Council (1660), becoming *president à mortier* in 1680 and *première president* in 1691. From 1660 to 1681 he was also *avocat général* of the council. In 1681 he became *Intendant* of Roussillon. He died in 1698.

Intendants were key functionaries. The title can apply to high ranking members of certain government departments, but Trobat was a common-or-garden *intendant*. They were appointed by king's commission, unlike other posts, which were sold to the highest bidder as a means of generating revenue for the Crown. If the appointment was to a border province such as Roussillon, their candidacy was examined by the Secretary of State for War as well as the Controller-General of Finances. They enforced the King's will in the areas of justice, policing, and finance. By the 1680s, each *intendant* oversaw a *généralité*, which was a region that could overlap more than one province. Under Louis XIV they were given oversight of military matters, particularly recruiting and promotions, including those of the lesser military officers (general officer rank was always obtained by a combination of birth, bribe, and the King's Will). Trobat worked closely with the French theatre commander, *général* (later *maréchal*) Noaïlles.

An influential participant in the war effort during the early years, Trobat disappears from the sources mid-war, though he remained an *intendant*. This is because that portion of Catalonia conquered by France was made an independent viceroyalty, with its own set of officials. As will be seen, those officials had a very different idea of the way to treat a conquered province.

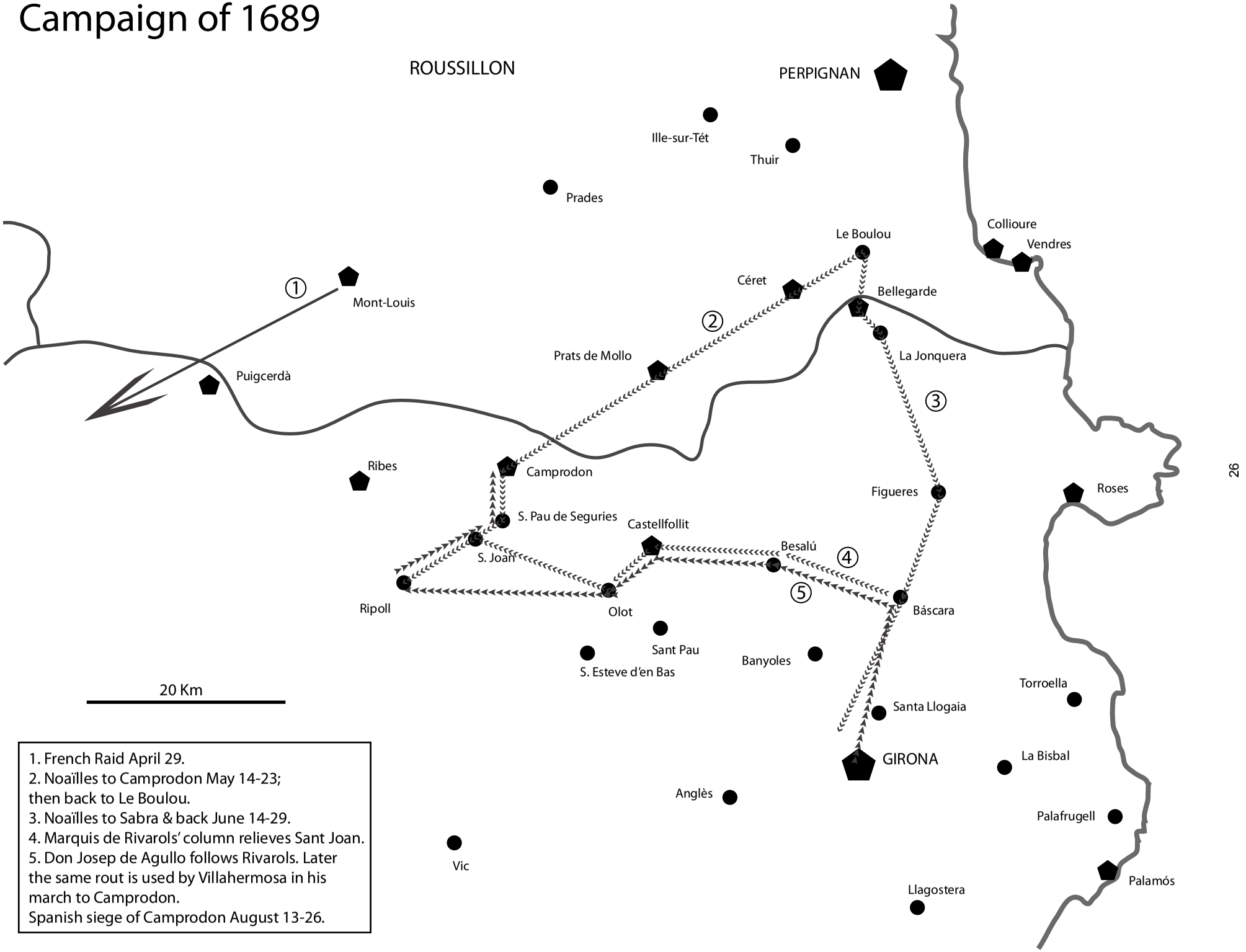
1689 – The War Opens

The history books disagree on whether Spain declared war on France or the other way around – this was one of those conflicts which 'just happened'. France was clearly the aggressor, but it seems Spain made the first formal declaration. France followed suit on April 15.

The campaign of 1689 was short, something more than a reconnaissance in force, but far less than a full offensive. In the years before the French became established in Catalonia, the campaigning season could not start much before May, nor last longer than late September. Crossing the Pyrenees meant waiting for the snow to melt, and getting home before it fell. If naval support was required, the ships took time to fit out, and were to an even greater extent dependent upon the weather. The French also discovered that high summer could be brutally hot, even in the mountain valleys, and action was often paused for an extended siesta. If one could force the other side to remain 'on guard' in an unhealthy spot during this time, the chances were good that they would suffer severely. The short season meant that only a few operations could be completed each year. For Versailles, Catalonia was also a low priority. More than once, units had to be sent elsewhere, and though the numbers lost to redeployment were small, for this front, their removal could be crippling.

When war was declared, the Viceroy of the state of Catalonia was Carlos de Aragón de Gurrea y de Borja, 9th Duque de Villahermosa. Aged 55 in 1689, Villahermosa had been Governor of the Spanish Netherlands in the 1660s, but was replaced for 'timidity'. Lacking the resources to fight on his own account, he had permitted France and Holland to wage war on Spanish territory without interference. His dismissal did not affect his receipt of the Order of the Golden Fleece, nor his assignment to Catalonia in 1688, but he found himself doomed to repeat the scenario in his new command.

Campaign of 1689



1. French Raid April 29.
2. Noaïlles to Camprodon May 14-23; then back to Le Boulou.
3. Noaïlles to Sabra & back June 14-29.
4. Marquis de Rivarols' column relieves Sant Joan.
5. Don Josep de Agullo follows Rivarols. Later the same rout is used by Villahermosa in his march to Camprodon.

Spanish siege of Camprodon August 13-26.

The war did not come as a surprise to Villahermosa, or to the central government, which had been concerned for some time – as had most of Europe – with the Sun King's bellicose attitude. As the winter of 1688-89 waned, the French made no secret of their buildup in Roussillon. It served their purpose that Spain should be distressed by the threat of invasion. But, in the spring of 1689, the Viceroy was confronted by two major problems besides the French.

First, there were the aftershocks of the *Revolta del Barretines*. Though conditions for the peasants were improving, this was due to Nature, not the efforts of Madrid, and discontent still seethed in many districts.

Second (and this will become a constant refrain) he lacked the money to pay his troops. As already explained, all payments in Catalonia had to be made in silver. Local payment in kind was also difficult, since a primary reason for the uprisings had been a succession of bad harvests; extracting payment in kind threatened to undo the work of pacification. In fact, such an attempt had to be suspended at the very outset of the campaign when the *donative voluntario* failed. The end of the current campaigning season would see another outcry against the quartering of his troops.

There was something else to be considered. Villahermosa's enemies at Court were not above sabotaging his efforts in hopes of ensuring his replacement with one of their own. This was a pattern that also repeated itself, because King Carlos II was too weak to put a stop to such mindless games. (From the point of view of the Castilian noblemen, the sacrifice of a province was a small thing when one could down a rival in the process – besides, who cared about the Catalans.)

Villahermosa expected to face an army of perhaps 10,000 men, whose probable immediate goals would be the taking of Camprodon and a foray west down the Ségre Valley. Noaïlles' objects in doing so would be to a) prevent the Spanish from launching their own invasion by way of the Col de Ares, b) preventing reconstruction of the fortress of Puigcerdà, which would otherwise have neutralised the key French fortress of Mont Louis opposite it, and c) lending moral support to the border population who favoured France.

Villahermosa had just over 3,000 men with which to secure the principal city, Barcelona, all the important coastal towns, and the frontier fortifications, while at the same time conducting internal security activities. He immediately requested funds for an additional 12,000 foot and 4,000 horse to be raised in the province, mostly for garrison duty. Though these numbers would eventually be exceeded, a lack of local manpower would vex each Viceroy in turn; at the outbreak of hostilities Catalonia mustered only two *tercios* fit for field duty, meaning that costly reinforcements had to be sent from Castile, Aragôn, and ultimately Flanders and Italy. All the available cavalry was deployed forward, around the town of Figueres, 23 Km south of Bellegarde, with the intent of restricting access to the Empordà.

Madrid began levying war contributions. By May 14 Villahermosa had managed to scrape together an additional 1,500 infantry, fleshing out the existing *tercios* and raising at least one new one from the local population. Castilian army units began to assemble, but the numbers would not be sufficient to take the offensive. The difficulty now was to find enough supplies to maintain the army.

On April 29 the French governor of Mont-Louis raided into the district of Cerdanya and snapped up some of the local magistrates. That same day, the French theatre commander, the *duc* de Noaïlles, held a formal review of his troops at Le Boulou, a border town lying north of the Col de Perthus. Noaïlles was looking forward to this campaign. Before the war, he had been – indeed still was – the Governor of Languedoc, which included Roussillon. Most of his time had been divided between stamping out Protestant unrest, which he did with an unusually light touch, and improving his province, with particular attention to the construction of the grand canal that was to link the Mediterranean with the Atlantic. He arrived back from his annual winter visit to Versailles with the *cordon bleu* adorning his uniform and two unexpected gift commissions, one for the raising of a cavalry regiment in his name, and the other for a similarly named regiment of Roussillon militia. Most important of all, the King had awarded him the theatre command.

[The militia regiment would serve on this front throughout the war but the cavalry would eventually be sent to Flanders.]

Noaïlles actually arrived in theatre on March 30, visiting his offices in Perpignan. There he conducted a preliminary review. From his latest observations he deduced that the enemy was short of funds and proceeding with exceeding caution. He also learned that Villahermosa was having difficulty finding billets for his troops. The consuls of Sant André refused to meet with the Viceroy and ill-used the detachment commander he sent to them.

On April 7 the *Général* sent a report to Paris. It seemed that significant gains could be made at little cost. Based on a tour of inspection he had made in 1687, when the 'consuls' (town magistrates) of Puigcerdà and the local clergy had approached him asking to be placed under French protection, he recommended Versailles accept the offer, which was still outstanding, to encourage the Catalans to revolt and abandon the 'Castilian' Government. Noaïlles cited the Spanish Governor of Ribes de Freser, a small town southwest of Camprodon lying in a valley that led to Puigcerdà, who had sent repeated demands to Madrid for money without getting a reply, and who in exasperation went and told

the French his troubles. They paid him 20 *ecus* for the information, which was more than he had been paid in three months by his own government!

Noaïlles cautioned the War Minister, Louvois, that the French must strike quickly. Public opinion still held (for no good reason) that Spain was stronger than France, and a slow response would serve to confirm that opinion. The *Général's* original plan was to enter Catalonia by way of Mont-Louis with 5 or 6 battalions and a couple of cavalry regiments which were already based in Guienne. The operation would last until July, at which point the Spanish could be expected to respond in force. The column would lure them west, and Noaïlles would enter the Empordà with his main body via the Col de Perthus. Perhaps, he would be able to lay siege to Girona, certainly to Camprodon. As an afterthought, he mentioned the need for naval support.

Noaïlles' report crossed paths with official orders from Louvois, which were dispatched on April 1. The orders rather dampened the *Général's* enthusiasm. He was not to expect any more troops than were already in his province. He was not to conduct any sort of expensive operation, such as a major siege, but simply to waste the border regions. Louvois wanted to wage economic warfare.

[The effects of this strategy were not minimal. In his book, Kamen notes that prewar, Catalonia's balance of trade was divided into 25% exports and 75% imports – which by itself is a mark of Spain's economic woes – but that in 1695-96 the percentage had changed to a paltry 6% exports and 93% imports. Whatever other effect it may have had, the war undid Catalonia's economic lead over Languedoc.]

Ultimately, Noaïlles and Louvois arranged a compromise. The primary focus of the campaign would be a 'grand coursing' to strip the border zone of forage, but Noaïlles would also use the operation to spread anti-Castilian propaganda. Before the armies marched, leaflets were distributed stating that the French were making war on the Government, not on the Catalans. Almost immediately, Puigcerdà placed itself under French protection, as did much of the Empordà. The *Général* also got permission to conduct a small siege – at Camprodon.

Noaïlles commanded 9 battalions and 17 squadrons, with 12 cannon and 2 mortars, and 1,200 pack animals. There were also 11 companies of *miqueletes,* 'free companies' of border militia. As of May 14, most of his generals had not yet arrived, so that evening he dispatched 3,700 men under *lieutenant génér*al the *comte* de Chazeron to Camprodon by way of Prats de Mollo.

[The number of cavalry regiments listed for 1689 seems rather high for 17 squadrons – 5 regiments of horse and 2 of dragoons – but some of the units may have been reinforcements, and some were certainly allocated to border patrolling or anti-Huguenot activities. As a rule of thumb, a full cavalry regiment had 4 squadrons. Most units recorded at less than full strength are allocated 2 squadrons.]

Camprodon I

Chazeron arrived at Camprodon at nightfall on May 16. Immediately, he began digging in. Noaïlles left Le Boulou the same day with the rest of the army, arriving at Prats de Mollo on May 17 in the middle of a snow storm. The next day they braved the Col d'Ares, losing some dragoons who were blown off a cliff. Setting out at 3am and halting at 10pm they managed no more than 12 Km. The guns could barely move at all – they were setting a cracking pace at 120 *feet* per day. By May 19 the French had 8,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry on site, soon to be supported by two half-batteries of 3 guns each (captured pieces, as will be recounted), plus 2 or 3 mortars which could be brought up on mules. Villahermosa could campaign with roughly half this number – 5,300 – few of whom were anywhere near Camprodon.

The original garrison of Camprodon numbered exactly 125 men, under Don Diego Rodado, to whom were dispatched one Don Pere de Ribas, a popular local notable, and three companies of militia totalling 200 men. They arrived on May 16, just before Chazeron. Though the town of Camprodon was in sorry shape, it was well sited and covered by fire from a citadel called La Roca. Noaïlles was not sure he could take the place, so he summoned Don Pere and Don Diego to surrender. The Governor, an able commander, retorted that he and his men were prepared to fight.

[French sources claim a garrison of 500 men.]

While the work was going forward, a band of 1,400 *somatén* and *migueletes* (militia and irregulars) from Vic, under a magistrate named Fontanella and a *capitán* Trinxeria, were reported to be approaching, intending to raid the French artillery train before it arrived. Noaïlles dispatched *maréchal de camp* the *marquis* de Rivarols to intercept them. Trinxeria got wind of this and changed the plan. The Spanish would make a night assault on the French camp, jumping off from Sant Pau, 4 Km away, over an intervening ridge. They were forestalled by Rivarols, who occupied the high ground overlooking the Spanish camp instead, after making an unobserved night march. The French swept through the village at daybreak in a violent surprise attack.

Though the *migueletes* fought bravely they were overwhelmed in hand to hand combat. Some fled to into the rocky slopes above the village, others barricaded themselves in a tower, where they were joined by the locals after the village caught fire. Though these held the French off for a while, they were finally forced to surrender. Noaïlles, still awaiting his train, was encouraged when Riverols sent him 6 pieces he had found in the Spanish tower; he used the captured pieces to begin the cannonade against Camprodon.

That evening, May 21, the French captured 30 paces of the covered way. The siege might still have lasted for some time, but on May 22 a mortar bomb struck the magazine and blew up a section of the fort. This forced the Governor to surrender upon the French threatening a formal assault. The fort surrendered on May 22 and Camprodon itself on May 23.

The descriptions of the siege are not given in any detail. There is an existing plan of the fortifications, dated to 1689, but the number of battery positions seems far too high for this siege; in fact, the diagram depicts *both* sieges that took place here in 1689. The diagram shows a small fortification atop the northern ridge line that reaches down toward the confluence of the Ter and Ritort Rivers, along with an extensive battery position. This fortification was called La Roca. On the East bank of the Ritort, in the hills above the suburbs and extending toward the town, is a series of trenches, with a small battery. And, on the South side of the town, straddling the Ritort, is another set of trenches and a larger battery. It seems clear that the French positions in this siege were those above the suburbs, astride the French approach route; the size of the battery fits the number of guns available. The other positions depicted deal with the siege that took place at the end of the season.

Don Diego was given permission to surrender by one of Villahermosa's senior commanders, *general de caballería* Pignatelli, but apparently this was not to the Viceroy's liking; he courtmartialed both men. Pignatelli was exonerated but Don Diego was beheaded. This may have been because while the defenders expected no succour and felt justified in surrendering, reinforcements were actually on their way: 300 cavalry dispatched from Girona under command of *teniente general* Salvador de Montforte, plus, as the Viceroy believed, the 1,400 militia from Vic.

[Beheading was a common punishment in a number of Continental armies for yielding a fortress too soon, but in Don Diego's case it was criminally unfair, since he had been given permission to do so by his superior officer (who, by the way, received a promotion).]

[The somatén *were a sort of 'minutemen' organisation, normally used to chase bandits. Such forces typically bolstered the central authority; in the Twentieth Century they appear on the Falangist side of the Civil War, but representing Catholic and 'traditional' society rather than the populist Fascists. They broke strikes, but they also delivered the mail. The word 'guerrilla' was not used in this war, they were called* migueletes *(or* miqueletes *if French). The French* miqueletes *gave good service at Camprodon, settling an argument between Noaïlles and Louvois over their usefulness. The War Minister chided the* Général *for wasting money on an extra company of irregulars, but Noaïlles ultimately received permission to boost their numbers from 11 companies to 18. Villahermosa was not one to distain the use of partisans either, and even managed to keep 500 of them in the field over the winter; during the campaigning season the officially sanctioned ones numbered well over a thousand. For his part, Noaïlles introduced his own bands into Cerdanya, partly French, and partly local in origin.]*

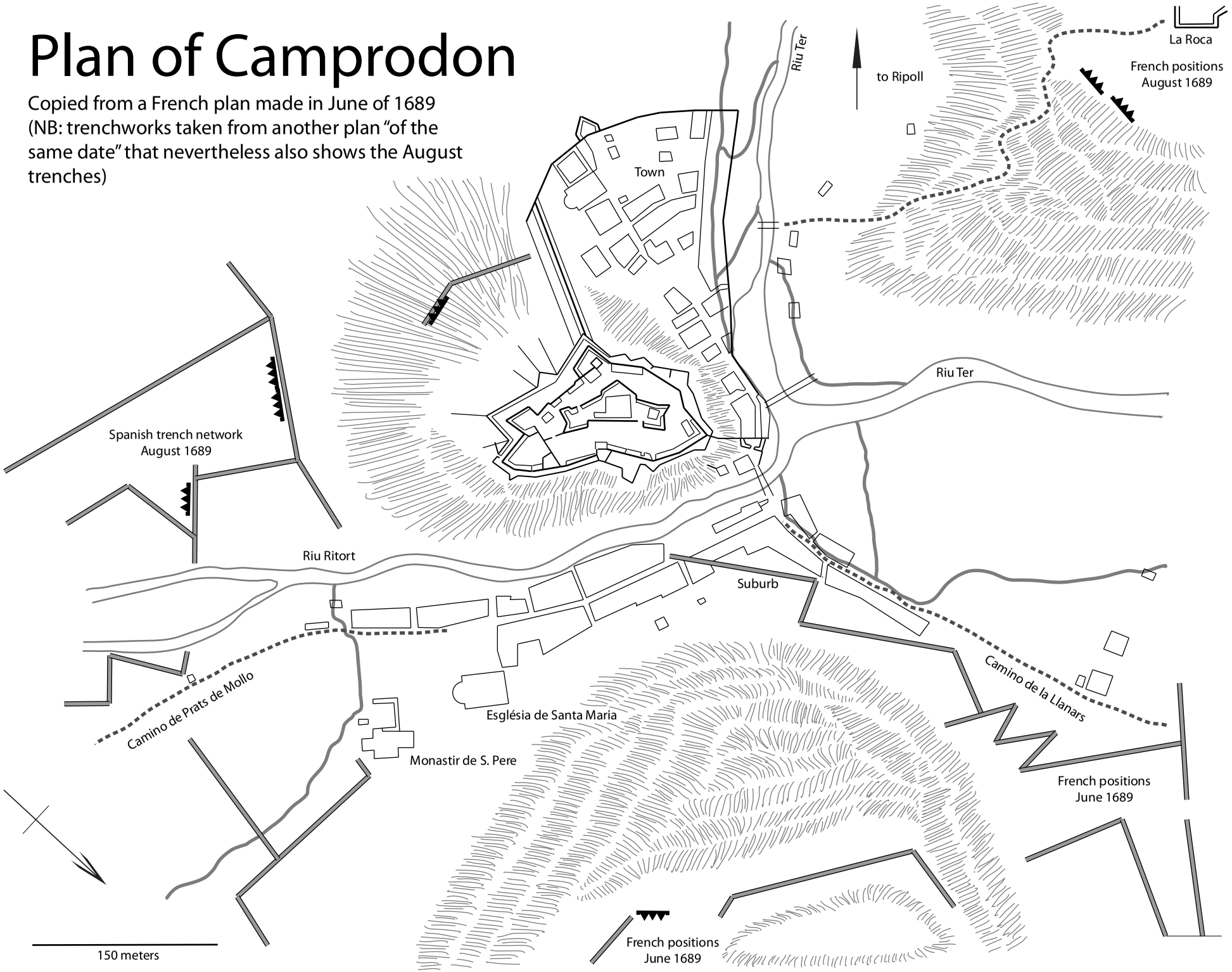
After this debacle, Villahermosa was in a panic. The last siege of Camprodon had dragged on for 47 days. This Noaïlles must be a miracle worker! Fearing a general French offensive, he concentrated all available forces at Girona, where he could response to an attack from any direction. By reducing Barcelona's garrison to 300 men, and through the receipt from the Crown of 4,000 foot and 2,000 horse, he managed to pull together some 13,000 troops.

Meanwhile, a jubilant Noaïlles was vainly trying to persuade Louvois to authorise a major effort in the South. He scented the opportunity for winning great prestige, but the War Minister refused to listen, and would continue to shoot down all his schemes for the next few years. Unlike the Spanish, the French *could* pay for their armies, but only just. Louvois told Noaïlles to stick to the plan, a grand 'course' through the foothills, showing the flag, distributing propaganda, and generally making the country unusable until the Spanish had mustered sufficient strength to contest him. At that point he was to retire to defend Roussillon. Merely forcing the enemy to levy an expensive army would accomplish Louvois' strategic goal. That is essentially what happened this year, and the year after.

Noaïlles paused after Camprodon, to collect his train and let his feat of arms sink into the popular imagination. He then advanced down the Ter, briefly taking Ripoll on June 3. Louvois wanted him to raze any town he occupied, but this would have alienated the population, and Noaïlles forbore when the locals petitioned him to save their churches. No further advance was made, and the French marched southeast, leaving a small garrison at Sant Joan des Abadesses and 1,000 men at Camprodon, under a commandant named Pitoux. Descending the Ter by its eastern (and northern) banks, on June 12 the French emerged from the hills 4 Km from Girona at a place called Santa Llogiaia del Terri. The Spanish were camped at Celra, on the opposite bank, about the same distance from the city and 8 Km to the east of the French.

Plan of Camprodon

Copied from a French plan made in June of 1689
(NB: trenchworks taken from another plan "of the same date" that nevertheless also shows the August trenches)



[Alternatively, the French camped at Sabra, now Germans Sabat, which is about 11 Km to the south of Santa Llogaia. This is not as likely, though perhaps part of the army did camp there. It should also be noted that there is some confusion in the sources because there are two Santa Llogiaias: del Terri, and d'Algouema. The latter is just south of Figueres and lay on Noaïlles' retreat route.]

The *Général* had orders to enter the Empordà, but had taken this route to avoid the fatigue of a march through hot terrain (and perhaps to see if Girona might be taken by surprise, despite his orders). But, the Spanish were now stronger than he. Villahermosa had 13,000 men (though this counts the garrison of Girona), while Noaïlles had only 7,000 foot and 2,000 horse, not counting garrisons he had left behind.

The Catalans were amazed at the French speed and audacity. However, the enemy did not remain long. It was too hot, and both men and horses were falling sick. Orders had to be given banning the eating of green fruit and the soup ration was augmented with expensive meat (unless perhaps they used the sick horses). As Villahermosa summoned more men, Noaïlles skirted his camp and marched north, reaching Le Boulou on June 30.

Villahermosa broke camp and followed, but cautiously. He lacked artillery and his mobile forces merely matched the French in size. Moreover, as he marched north he received word that there were 30 enemy 'sail' off the coast. Fearing a naval 'descent' he dispatched troops to the cities of the coast, such as Roses, Cadaqués, and Palamós. The inland towns of Vic and Olot (at the northern end of the Plana de Vic) also petitioned for garrisons.

[It was quite normal during this period for there to be more men in garrison than with the field army. Garrison troops could both man fortifications and serve as a reserve of manpower. The French assessed Villahermosa's field strength at 20,000 men. Even they, it seems, still believed the Spanish to be superior in arms.]

There was only one action of note that took place before this retreat, when a *capitaine* Berthelin encountered 500 Spanish horse while on a training ride with 80 troopers. They charged the Spanish and rode through their ranks three times, breaking them at a minimal cost to their own side. During the retreat itself, the French rearguard was attacked by another body of 500 Spanish horse, but suffered no losses.

Either just before or during his retreat north, Noaïlles dispatched a column under the *marquis* de Rivarols to succour the garrison at Sant Joan, which was being attacked by *capitán* Trinxeria's militia. Trinxeria, possibly aided by Salvador de Montforte's 300 regular cavalry, had collected a large force of *migueletes* and *somatén*. After Rivarols appeared on the scene, *sargento general de batalla* Don Josep de Agullo was sent to aid the militia. He had orders to clear the French *miqueletes* out of Cerdanya.

*[The s*argento general de batalla *was a field grade officer, acting as lieutenant to the field marshal (or in this case, the viceroy). Though an officer, he held his rank by warrant, not commission, just like a modern sergeant major. The Roman legionary rank of* primus pilus *is often cited as a comparison.]*

This led to a series of skirmishes among the hills. In most cases the French had the better of the encounters, but at the village of Das they were badly beaten in a fight lasting 9 hours, and 111 of them were taken prisoner. The men surrendered on terms but were put in irons. Despite this success, Trinxeria was so disgusted by the way his men typically behaved that he told them they should all return home, since only he and the French were interested in fighting.

Having cleared a space to work, Don Josep and Trinxeria placed Camprodon under blockade. No formal siege was possible, but the garrison was cut off, and ambushes laid in the passes. Fortunately, a supply column, escorted by 3,000 foot and 1,000 horse under *maréchal de camp* Langallerie reached the town during July, before the blockade was put in place. Noaïlles had dispatched them to Villefranche-de-Conflent in the valley of the Tét, so they probably arrived by way of Puigcerdà and Ribes de Freser. The sources do not make it clear whether Langallerie deposited any men in the garrison or not; he retired to France with all or most of his forces, where he would later link up with Noaïlles.

Trinxeria had prepared an ambush, but for an unexplained reason moved away. Perhaps he felt the escort was too strong. Alternatively, the approach of the *marquis de* Rivarols from farther south may have led the guerrillas to disperse for safety. After relieving Sant Joan, the latter had taken up residence there, but moved to Camprodon upon the approach of Villahermosa.

The Viceroy had been bombarded with dispatches urging him to advance on Bellegarde and break into Roussillon on a retaliatory raid, perhaps even laying siege to Perpignan, but such a campaign was unrealistic. He merely advanced north as far as Bàscara, where there was good forage. The Spanish remained here for some time, while the French reentered their own country. Not until reinforcements numbering 1,930 men had arrived by sea did Villahermosa break camp.

He had two options now. Attempt the Col de Perthus, or obey the Government's latest demands, which were to reoccupy the towns taken by the French. He decided to march north, mainly because the Spanish galley fleet, after

dropping his men off, intended to raid the French ports. The operation did not go well. At Bellegarde it was the French turn to use guerrilla tactics. Bands of regular infantry infiltrated the hills around the pass and poured volley fire down on the advancing Spanish column until the enemy withdrew. They pursued them as far as La Jonquera, a few kilometres south of the pass.

After bolstering the coastal defences of Roses and Cadaqués, Villahermosa tried his luck a second time, marching west to Camprodon. This was in mid-August. The Viceroy was momentarily stalled at Sant Joan de les Abadesses by the *marquis* de Rivarols. It was at this time that the *marquis* withdrew his 1,500 men to Camprodon. The Spanish were then able to resume the advance. At the village of Sant Pau de Segúries another French post was cleared out with a short bombardment. The Viceroy appeared before Camprodon on August 13.

[Lopez says Villahermosa arrived at Camprodon on August 19 after bombarding Sant Pau the day before. This may be a case of misreading some of that olde-fashioned print one finds in the archives. Noaïlles' memoirs give August 13 and make a point of mentioning the Spanish had had the place under siege for 8 days when he arrived to take personal command on August 20.]

Camprodon II

Noaïlles was under orders to not to winter in Catalonia, but he intended to hold Camprodon. There was much sympathy for the French in Cerdanya, and Ramón Trobat had done good work distributing pro-French tracts and setting up an espionage network – to such effect that Villahermosa had little news of the enemy's activities even within his own country, while the French were kept informed of his every move. Such efforts should not be wasted by abandoning the country.

The Viceroy hoped that the *Général* would be pinned near Perpignan by the Spanish galley fleet, but Noaïlles was unconcerned by the threat. Assured that his coastal garrisons were sufficient, he left his main camp at Ille-sur-Tét (23 Km west of Perpignan) on August 17, travelling by Villefranche-de-Conflent (another 23 Km up the valley of the Tét), where he picked up Langallerie (giving him 6,600 men), and marched to Prats de Mollo by back roads across the lower slopes of Canigou, then over the Col d'Ares. He left his artillery behind.

A skirmish was fought at Mollo, which scattered the partisans guarding the pass, but the French did not come down the Ritort vale by the usual road. Instead, they crossed onto a spur of the Estanyols de Concros that extends southeast to overlook Camprodon. Most likely, they followed the Ritort at a higher elevation; there is something that might vaguely pass for a road there, below the crest of the spur but well above the valley floor. It would bring them off the mountain roughly opposite the confluence of the Ter and Ritort. They arrived on August 20, by which time the Spanish had been entrenching for a week.

According to the period diagram, the French occupied the lower slopes of the Concros spur, within long musket range of the Spanish. Securing their position was the La Roca fortification. The map shows adjacent battery positions, but since the French had no guns, must have been manned by infantry. The Spanish were dug in on the opposite side of the town, straddling the Ritort, with a battery on their left and another in their center, both west of the Ritort, and an advanced position at the extreme left of their line on the slope leading up to the fort, which included another battery.

The day Noaïlles arrived the garrison made two sallies, nearly capturing an enemy battery (probably the closest one). The Spanish never had many field or siege pieces, though there were of course numerous rusty guns littering the various fortifications, so this would have been a critical blow.

On August 21, Villahermosa trained his guns on the French relief army, bombarding them all day. The gunners did not do much damage because they were shooting upslope; the *Général* ordered his men to conceal themselves. Noaïlles sent his cavalry splashing across the Ter to drive in the enemy picquets, but they were too exuberant, were countercharged by 3 squadrons of Spanish horse, and retreated in disorder. When the Spanish pursued in turn, French dismounted dragoons and infantry caught them in a crossfire. Casualties were light, because the Spanish tumbled off their horses and fled into the hills, making the French a present of 60 horses.

While this action was taking place, a Spanish *tercio* crossed the Ter and stormed up the slopes, engaging a post guarded by 300 French. The fighting became desperate, but the French would not budge; when the *Général* sent up reinforcements, half the Spanish withdrew under covering fire from a line of fusiliers along the bank of the Ter. The other half of the *tercio* was lost, whether killed or made prisoner is not noted.

The next few days saw fighting of a quite 'modern' nature. Giving up on the siege for the moment, the Spanish left their trenches and deployed to cover the line of the Ter, taking advantage of the terrain and digging in above the bank. Reserves were concealed behind high ground or in ravines. The French did the same, and the two sides sniped at each other from August 22 to August 25. The Spanish were unable to drive the French off, but Noaïlles feared for his communications and lacked the reserves to risk a laborious close-quarter clearing operation.

Spanish miners were spotted at work. On August 24, Noaïlles sent word that Pitoux should prepare to evacuate. On August 25, the Spanish began to bombard the town again. They quickly made two breaches and assaulted, beginning a fight that raged for nine hours. That evening Noaïlles ordered Pitoux to leave early the next morning, which he did, joining the relief army without incident. Apparently the Spanish never noticed, for they were still cannonading the town after the French had retreated a good 4 Km. Noaïlles withdrew over the border.

[Lopez says the French pulled out on the night of August 24/25. He is often one day out in his dates.]

Pitoux had saturated the town with explosives and incendiaries, 16 mines in all. However, most were either reported by POWs or misfired. Only three detonated, but they were sufficient to wreck the defences.

On August 27, 300 Spanish soldiers and their officers deserted to the French. They had not been paid in some time (also, half of them were Germans or Italians and Noaïlles advertised the fact that the *Régiment d'Alsace* was under his command).

The recapture of Camprodon marked the end of the campaign for 1689. For Villahermosa, it was an unsatisfactory end. At a cost of 4,000 men, mainly lost to to disease, heatstroke, and desertion, he had managed to capture a wrecked fort, after the French had abandoned it. Noaïlles was a little disappointed at not retaining his one gain, but satisfied he had fulfilled his orders, and very gratified by the Catalans' response to his overtures.

On top of these troubles the Viceroy had also to deal with an unwanted v*eedor general del ejército* (the equivalent of a French *intendant*) appointed by Madrid – Villahermosa had his own local candidate he wanted to sponsor – and faced questions about his severity in having certain officers (i.e., Don Diego) slated for execution, plus insinuations against his lack of strategic vision.

Both sides went into winter quarters in September. This was somewhat earlier than Madrid wanted, and the Viceroy's personal enemies used the fact against him. But, mountain operations are subject to early snowfalls. Besides, neither of the protagonists had any further aims that year. Villahermosa, still fearing a naval landing, withdrew to the coast and began assessing the cost to the countryside, which was considerable. Noaïlles quartered in Roussillon. Spanish control of their side of the border was so ineffective that he was able to station French officials in a number of their border towns, where they collected taxes and recruits. He went off to hold the Estates of Languedoc at Nismes, an annual occurrence which was another reason for ending the campaign early.

Strategically, French aims had been accomplished, if that meant distracting the Spanish and making them waste money. Operationally, French propaganda had had a good effect, playing on existing tensions and what appeared to be a callous disregard for Catalan needs on the part of the central government. On the other hand, Villahermosa managed to keep the lid on the pot; in some areas unrest was dying down thanks to a good harvest, in other areas he used a firm hand – Don Diego's head was not the only one to roll.

Over the winter, the Viceroy fought to retain his command and obtain veteran soldiers who could remain under arms – as described elsewhere, the Spanish habitually disbanded many of their troops over the winter, including field-quality militia. This meant long delays before an army was ready for the next campaign. The French had long abandoned this practice, allowing them both to retain the initiative and to keep their soldiers well drilled. Villahermosa also wanted more cavalry (automatically classed as 'veteran' troops). He hoped to muster 14,000 infantry for the spring of 1690, of which 8,800 would be Spanish nationals. 9,000 foot and 1,000 horse would be employed in the field army, and 5,000 in garrison.

Anne Jules de Noaïlles, 2nd *Duc* de Noaïlles (1650-1708)

Général Noaïlles was 39 when the War of the Grand Alliance began. As his dates show, he died comparatively young, aged 58. He picked up a case of what was probably rheumatic fever while campaigning in the Pyrenees, a disease which tends to shorten one's lifespan. His father, Anne de Noaïlles, fought for the King in the wars of the Fronde and in the Franco-Spanish War, becoming *capitaine-général* of Roussillon on its acquisition.

Thus, the son, who succeeded to the title in 1678, would have had ties of patronage with Ramón Trobat and other members of the Catalan elite. This, plus a reputation for fairness and an easygoing nature, explains his great popularity in Catalonia. He remained popular even after the French as a whole were not.

Noaïlles was also well connected at Court. One of his brothers was Archbishop of Paris. His wife was a Bournonville. HIs children made influential marriages: into the Louvois family (ministers of war), into the d'Estrées and Gramont families (marshals of France), into the Maintenon and La Vallière families (mistresses of the King), and to the *duc* de Toulouse (one of the King's illegitimate sons). The princes of Monaco are descended from yet another daughter.

Noaïlles, created *maréchal de France* in 1693, spent his entire military career fighting on the Spanish front, both in the current war and in the War of the Spanish Succession.

He was a humane man and a skilful general, full of energy. Under his leadership, the Army performed wonders with minimal resources, but without his personal presence (as happened mid-war), it nearly fell apart. His greatest weakness was probably too much indulgence toward his subordinates – he even made excuses for generals who were clearly trying to sabotage his plans.

Carlos de Aragón i Gurrea Borja, IX *Duque* de Villahermosa, *Conde* de Ficalho y de Luna (1634-1692)

Not much information is available about Villahermosa. He was born at Zaragoza, and was thus a man of Aragón rather than a foul Castilian. He married into the powerful Guzman family, who were dukes of Medina Sidonia – the current holder of that title would be his replacement as Viceroy – but had no surviving children.

Villahermosa was Viceroy of the Spanish Netherlands from 1675-77. This was during the Dutch War; he displeased everyone by allowing the French to march as they willed across his lands. Since his soldiers were unpaid and badly trained, he had little choice in the matter. This did not stop him being made a Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1678. He served as Viceroy of Catalonia from 1688 to 1690, being 54 when he took office.

On a more positive note, Villahermosa founded the Royal Academy of Brussels in 1675.

Showing the Flag – The Campaign of 1690

The campaign of 1690 was a bit of a fizzle. Each side's actions during the campaign can almost be described in isolation from each other, since there was little interaction. The year began well for the French, but Noaïlles was forced to send away a third of his army before he could really get down to business. Villahermosa managed to quench most of the remaining hot spots from the *Revolta del Barretines*, but the Army bumbled and fumbled and accomplished nothing. They fired Villahermosa, not that it did much good.

Général Noaïlles spent the winter of '89/90 presiding over the Estates of Languedoc – the province was still suffering from Protestant unrest and there were many legal cases to try – before making his way to Versailles and an audience with the King. He arrived back at Perpignan on April 22, 1690, not having fully persuaded His Majesty or the War Minister of his views, but at least free of any impractical directives.

His assessment after the 1689 campaign was that it would be difficult to undertake any major operations while the Spanish outnumbered him; either the King should give him more men, or he should be given a smaller army of veterans and spend the year defending Roussillon from incursions. This, after all, was the Ministry's original plan for the war, even if it was not the *Général's*. If a larger army were made available, Noaïlles argued it could be financed by having it live at the enemy's expense. This was to Louvois' liking, both because it cut expenses and because it fitted in with his violent temperament. But, King Louis plumped for the 'small solution' and Noaïlles' orders this year were simply to keep the Spanish out of Roussillon while fomenting revolt across the border.

Noaïlles was allowed 14 battalions and 24 squadrons, including 800 *miqueletes*, for a total of 12,800 foot and 1,800 horse. Not included in this count were the *milices provinciales*, a valuable subsidiary force which this year began serving with the field armies on a regular basis. Many would serve in the Italian and Catalonian theatres, where infantry were at a premium. Noaïlles also, based on his experience of the previous year, had some special cannon and mortars cast locally. These were an early instance of 'mountain artillery', capable of being disassembled and carried by mule train. The mortars were particularly lethal, small, but firing 24-pound shells.

On May 21 the French assembled at Le Boulou. They did not enter the Empordà. It was already becoming too hot for campaigning, and Noaïlles estimated he could avoid losses from heatstroke and disease for no more than two days. Instead, a demonstration was made, while the bulk of the army marched west to Camprodon through Roussillon, arriving on May 29. The journey was almost as bad as the year before, but at least there was no fighting.

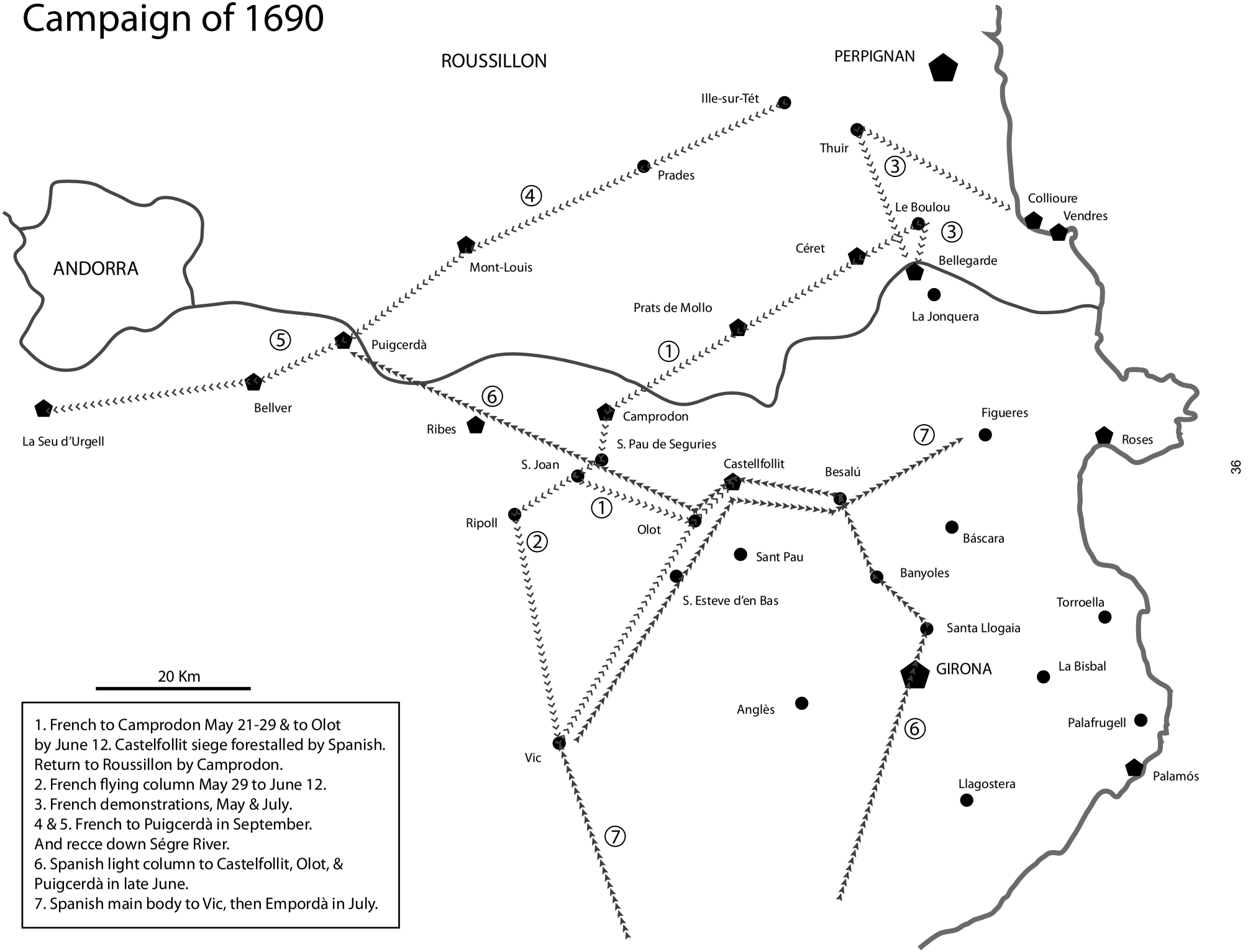
From Camprodon, which was unguarded, the French penetrated into Cerdanya. Noaïlles divided his forces, sending a flying column of 4,000 foot and 1,000 horse toward the episcopal seat of Vic, in the plain of the same name. Marching down the upper waters of the Ter, these found Sant Joan de les Abadesses refortified and garrisoned, but the garrison fled when fired upon; Ripoll they found abandoned. Meanwhile the rest of the French, minus a garrison at Camprodon, marched on Olot. The enemy in this region of wooded hills appeared to be a mix of regular detachments, *miqueletes*, and *somatén* bands, whose presence could be felt but not seen. They made the French nervous, but did not mass for an attack.

Olot was reached on June 12. The corn was ripening, so the French remained in the district for nearly a month (26 days), harvesting. Meanwhile, *Intendant* Trobat's propaganda was continuing to pay off. Many village magistrates submitted, as did the district (*veguerie*) capital of Vic.

Villahermosa was technically in the field but unable to do much. He was at Barcelona. The Spanish estimated the enemy's strength at 13,000 foot and 1,800 horse, while he, thanks to the mandatory dismissal of most of his army the previous winter, effectively had only 3,300 foot at the outset of the campaigning season. His first reinforcement consisted of 750 men and 2,500 horses. Morale was low. Moreover, he was still short of funds (hence the low morale) and trying to stem a steady drain of sick and deserters, while simultaneously working on the fortifications of Roses, Girona, Palamós, and Castellfollit, a little at a time. On June 1 he received some relief in the form of a large shipment of bullion, which enabled him to pay his bills in the currency the Catalans preferred.

The initial Spanish response to the French incursion was thus feeble. Troops were dispatched from Girona to secure Castellfollit, but the main defence was entrusted to the *somatén* and *migueletes* of Cerdanya. 2,000 local militia responded to the French column in the Plana de Vic, marching north from El Grau del Racó (13 Km south of Vic), but they were defeated in a light engagement. Most of the Plana de Vic, a wide plain rich in forage, now, as already noted, pledged allegiance to France, which irritated the Viceroy mightily (the town magistrates later excused themselves by saying they had been captured and had no choice). *Intendant* Trobat dealt carefully with the locals, preventing the devastation of the country. The district government was allowed to supply the French army on terms similar to those imposed on French districts.

Campaign of 1690



[One cannot say, 'the entire veguerie *was in French hands' because of the fierce individuality of each community. But most of it was.]*

With the French settling in at Olot, Villahermosa decided to stir them up by sending a column of cavalry and *migueletes* against them. These marched first to Santa Llogaia d'Alguema (south of Figueres), before heading to Olot via Castellfollit, which was reinforced.

Coincidentally, however, the French were now pulling up stakes (July 5). Noaïlles, preparing to lay siege to Castellfollit, had just received orders to send away 5 precious battalions to the Italian front. They were accompanied by a dragoon regiment and a horse regiment. The French made demonstration of their moral superiority by defiling under the guns of Castellfollit before marching back into the West. The Spanish column followed hard on Noaïlles' heels.

[According to Lopez, a French column crossed the border from Le Boulou, marching to Figueres before either returning north or moving west to join Noaïlles at Olot. There is nothing implausible about this, but the Maréchal's *memoirs do not mention such a march.]*

The new defenses of Sant Joan de les Abadesses were razed by the French, as were those of Ripoll and Ribes de Freser. This policy of destruction was mitigated by Noaïlles expending money for the rebuilding of churches. He also entertained complaints against *lieutenant général* Langallerie, a creature of the War Minister whose arrogance and jealousy were beginning to hinder operations. After this, the French retired into Roussillon via Camprodon. The Spanish flying column never did catch them, but proceeded west as far as Puigcerdà.

[Ribes de Freser is 12 Km north of Ripoll, on the Freser River, a tributary of the Ter.]

Villahermosa had spent much of May and June making excuses. That they were valid did not help his career at all, even though his immediate superiors supported him. His order of battle for the end of June included 10,536 foot and 3,452 horse. Of these, 7,084 foot and 2,130 were effective. Many were needed for garrison duties, leaving him roughly 6,000 men in his mobile army, or half of what the enemy could field (as he thought). With Camprodon and Puigcerdà virtually defenceless, and the enemy established on the Plana de Vic, there was nothing to stop the French advancing further. So went the Viceroy's lament. By July, however, he felt strong enough to act, first sending out the light column to probe the French, then shifting his base north from Barcelona to Granollers, 25 Km away. From here marched to 'liberate' the Plana de Vic, 35 Km farther north.

After the French crossed the border into Roussillon again, Villahermosa moved into the Empordà and camped on the Muga, a small river which flows east out of the hills across the plain, reaching the sea just south of Roses. Concerned that the enemy, now deployed behind Bellegarde, might make a second invasion, he took particular care to fortify the village of Perelada (6 Km NE of Figueres), which covered the main approach to Roses and secured a rich foraging district. He also gave orders for the refortifying of Camprodon, which the French had abandoned, but nothing was accomplished there.

At this time, the French had dispersed into summer quarters, within one day's march of the town of Thuir (13 Km NNW of Le Boulou). Langallerie, more obnoxious than ever, insisted Noaïlles attack the Spanish, whom he was sure intended to invade Roussillon. The enemy's galley fleet had been active off the coast, though not very effectively; they had landed and burned a few fishermen's huts and taken a French scow. The *Général* was unconcerned about the Spanish but very concerned with Langallerie's attitude, and wrote to the War Minister. Louvois excused his protégé, but ordered him to apologise. With King Louis interesting himself in the affair, things were smoothed over.

Noaïlles did order his men up to the frontier again, about July 22, garrisoning Bellegarde with 1,300 men and Collioure (a French coastal town, 20 Km east of Le Boulou) with 1,000. The rest of the army concentrated at Ille-sur-Tét, upriver from Perpignan. In all, he had about 8,000 men. He had no intention of invading the Empordà, but wanted to show his own detractors that there was nothing to fear from the Spanish. The enemy retreated from the Empordà on September 20, having eaten up the country. They had suffered terribly from the heat and went immediately into winter quarters to recover their strength. By mid-September, Spanish defections were on the rise (in contrast, the June report listed no desertions, only sickness). To top it off, Madrid requested troops for Italy, and 795 men had to be sifted from a number of *tercios* and shipped away. (This dribbling of men from one front to another was a habit of the Government that they found hard to lay aside.)

Noaïlles remained in the field, leading a column to Mont-Louis and moving from there against Puigcerdà. The town was defended only by local militia reinforced by the flying column sent out in pursuit of the French. These enemies were easily brushed aside and the Ségre Valley swept as far as La Seu d'Urgell. The *Général's* object was only to examine the country's suitability for campaigning, so after this march he once more retired and sent his men into winter quarters.

Coursing the Mountains – The campaign of 1691

The campaign of 1691 saw more activity, though nothing truly dramatic. From a grand plan to capture Barcelona, the French scaled back to a 'coursing' of the upper Ségre Valley, assisted somewhat disjointedly by a naval diversion. Noaïlles could have wished he had not requested the Fleet, since their actions had a deleterious effect on his propaganda war. Spanish moves were reactive throughout the summer, but at the end of the season they managed a feeble penetration of Roussillon.

Neither Madrid nor the Catalan elites were satisfied with Villahermosa. A feeling of depression lay on the land. The French were all-powerful. They levied contributions on the Spanish border districts without leaving their bases in Roussillon. Some districts even appeared ready to secede. The *Generalitat* charged Villahermosa's army, and by implication, himself, with a variety of crimes, of the usual wartime sort. These crimes were increasing as the central government became reluctant to send more money – and was beginning to question his management of the monies already sent. A replacement had already been chosen: the *duque de* Medina Sidonia. But the coming of Juan Claros Pérez de Guzmán y Fernández de Córdoba, 11th *duque de* Medina Sidonia, would change nothing.

The enemy greeted the appointment of the new Viceroy by conducting an incursion in mid-February. 5,000 foot and 1,000 *miqueletes* descended on the Empordà, forcing the dispatch of several cavalry *trozos* from Vic and Granollers to Torroella de Montgrí and Bàscara, under command of *teniente general de la caballería* Don Gabriel Corada. The general was empowered to raise troops and was given the cavalry of Girona's garrison, too.

[Torroella de Montgrí is a town near the mouth of the Ter, 26 Km ENE from Girona and 22 Km SE from Bàscara. There is a strategic crossing there.]

No further action occurred, but Medina Sidonia, concerned the French might add naval support to the mix, requested the use of *La Flota* (the Navy) which so far had operated mainly off the Italian coast. An agreement was reached, giving him 12-13 galleys, including some rented from Genoa and Sardinia. This was less than his predecessor had been able to employ. His political opponents thought he should be content with 5-6 transports.

To add to his temerity, the Viceroy then spent the spring of 1691 asking Madrid for money; he was feeding his troops on credit. This fact, coupled with the February alarm, was raising discontent among the population of the Empordà, since the troops were consuming the crops as fast as they were planted.

Medina Sidonia's fears were not groundless. There were strong indications that between 4- and 8,000 additional French troops were being transferred from Savoy to Roussillon. The *duc* de Noaïlles had in mind a major operation for the summer of '91 – nothing less than the siege of Barcelona. Louvois quashed the plan when he refused to authorise enough troops. Noaïlles had estimated that 18,000 foot and 6,000 horse would be required, and requested ships carrying provisions for 24,000 men. Shot down, he then asked for enough men to take the port of Roses, which would be needed as a base if an attack against Barcelona was to be carried out by slow stages. This also was rejected by the War Minister, leaving Noaïlles with little to do beyond an operation in Cerdanya, which had started out as a diversionary action for the main campaign.

(According to Lopez, Noaïlles' plan to take Barcelona or Roses was never more than disinformation. Since there was no way to prevent strategic information leaking out of Paris, subterfuge during the various councils of state is certainly plausible.)

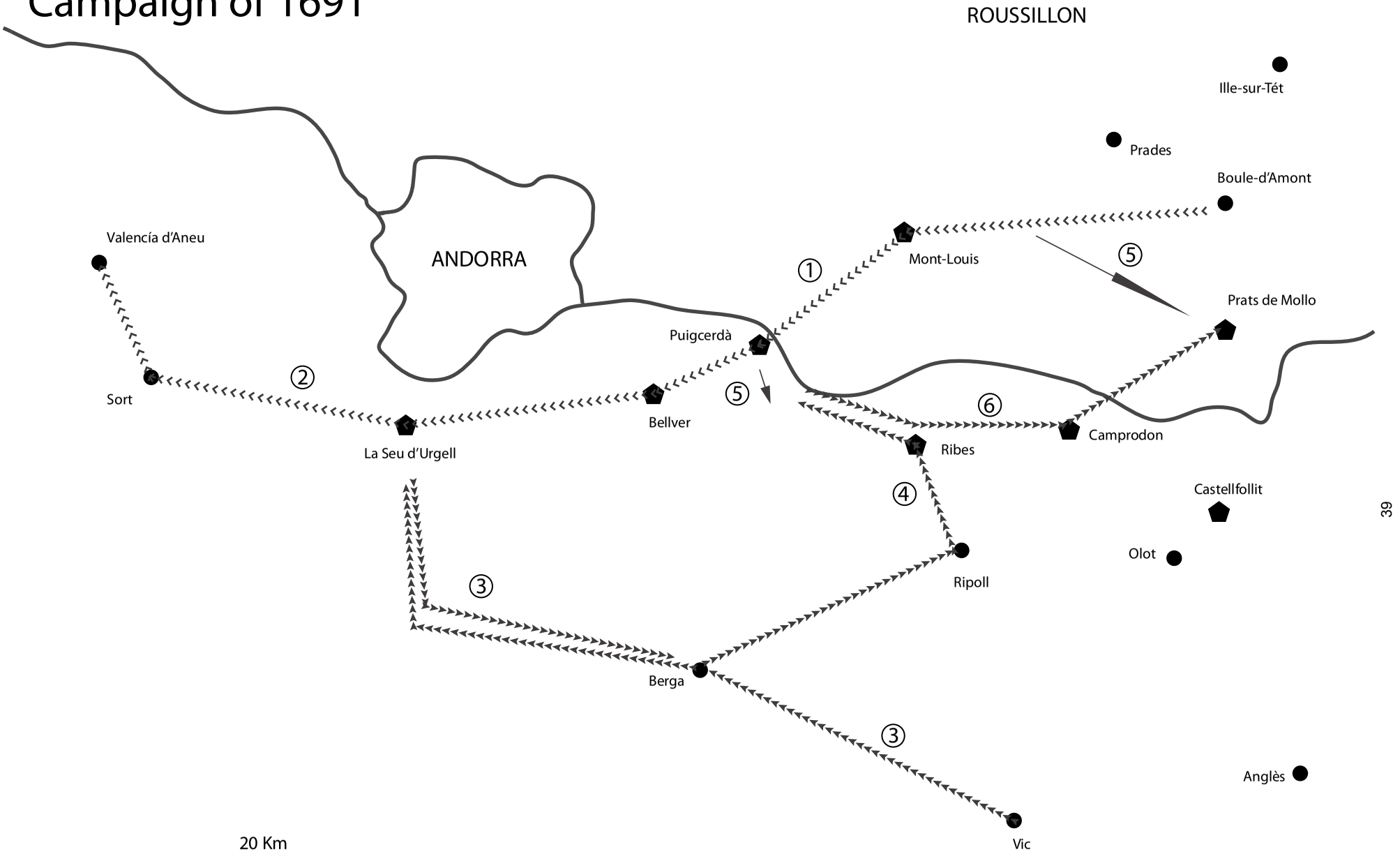
The *Général's* investigation of Cerdanya the previous year led to a plan, approved by Versailles, of a campaign against La Seu d'Urgell. The march would not be an easy one, even against light opposition. They would be a long way from their depôts, and there was a difficult pass to force about halfway between Puigcerdà and La Seu. However, the route was suitable for cannon, and in a pinch they could use the pass through friendly Andorra.

Noaïlles still hoped to involve the Navy. His 'diversionary operation' would need a diversion, so the *Général* requested the presence of the Toulon Squadron off the Spanish coast. It was known that the enemy were in a panic over the recent taking of the town of Nice, on the Riviera, by a naval descent, and had reinforced the garrisons of their coastal towns, leaving the Viceroy with only a small mobile force.

[Nice did not belong to France. It belonged to Savoy. Captured a number of times, it was not formally ceded to France until 1860.]

Rumours of these discussions, coupled with actual preparations by the French at Toulon, led Medina Sidonia to fear the worst. Madrid thought he was having hysterics and ignored him. It was learned that the French commander on the Savoy front – Catinat – could spare no one and that Noaïlles would be operating with minimal forces. The Government expected, correctly, that the enemy's main efforts would once again be made in Flanders and Italy. They also expected the Viceroy to make do.

Campaign of 1691



1. French to La Seu May 30 - June 10. Siege of La Seu June 5-10.
2. French raid through Ségre valley to Valencía (July).
3. Aborted Spanish relief of La Seu (June).
4. Aborted Spanish attack on Bellver (mid-August)
5. French countermarches against Spanish.
6. Aborted Spanish attack on Prats de Mollo (September 1-5).

On paper, in February, Medina Sidonia had 15,359 men (11,600 foot and 3,759 horse). In practical terms he had perhaps 3,000 mobile effectives at that time. By mid-May, he could field 6,000 foot and 3,500 horse. Castellfollit was strengthened and given 400 men. *Sargento general de batalla* Don Josep Agulló was sent with 500 foot and a *trozo* of cavalry to place a watch on Mont-Louis.

The French had 13 or 14 battalions (7-8,000 men) and 18 squadrons (2,000 men), plus 6,000 militia in Roussillon, plus a few hundred *miqueletes*. Of the infantry, only the Swiss *régiment d'Erlach* (4 battalions), and perhaps the German *régiment d'Alsace* (also 4 battalions), could be considered veteran. The rest of the line were of lower quality. The cavalry were somewhat better but considered inferior to the Spanish. *La Royale*, commanded by *maréchal de france* Victor-Marie, *comte* d'Estrées, consisted of 36-37 galleys, 10 ships of war, and 6 sloops.

[There is some indication that the forces used in February remained in the Empordà at the opening of the general campaign. Noaïlles does not mention the February incursion at all, probably because he would have been in Languedoc, conducting his civil affairs; it may have been done on a subordinate's initiative, though that is unlikely.]

The campaign against La Seu began on May 30. Originally, it had been intended that the fleet provide the diversion first, but coordination was bad, and Noaïlles' army proceeded alone. The *Ministère de la guerre*, in fierce departmental competition with the *Ministère de la Marine*, could not even guarantee the fleet would sail at all; if it did sail, it might return to base as early as August, which was another reason for curbing Noaïlles' ambitions. Fortunately, the initial action was taking place far from the coast, while the Spanish Viceroy refused to withdraw men from his port garrisons. In fact, the whole affair was to be over before the French fleet put in an appearance.

The late start was mainly the fault of King Louis, who only issued his orders on April 3. But, a late start was mandated by the weather in any case. The winter had been bitter and the spring awful, with high winds, dry and cold, destroying the first planting. As late as May 8 there were four feet of snow clogging the passes.

On April 16, *Général* Noaïlles left Versailles. From his camp, on May 21, he published a manifesto portraying France in the role of defender of the Catholic faith and pointing out that the Castilian Government was leagued with Heretics. The publication further claimed that French rule was better than Spanish rule, as the previous two years had demonstrated to those who had seen his army in action; unlike the Spanish viceroys, French commanders punished all offences carried out against the natives by their troops. The manifesto ended with a dire warning against those who might wish to interfere with the supply lines of their liberators.

Still bereft of naval support, Noaïlles decided to make his own diversion, first sending a portion of his force to Le Boulou while the rest concentrated at Boule-d'Amont (26 Km SW of Perpignan). Boule-d'Amont lay behind Canigou, unobservable by the Spanish. From here the French could march either to Camprodon or Mont-Louis without being spotted. *Lieutenant général comte* de Chazeron led the initial advance, leaving Mont-Louis on May 30. It was his job to lay siege to La Seu d'Urgell. Puigcerdà did not impede the French advance, being well disposed. Noaïlles, after confirming there would be no naval diversion, followed him, arriving at Puigcerdà on June 3. The following day, Chazeron's advance guard arrived before La Seu.

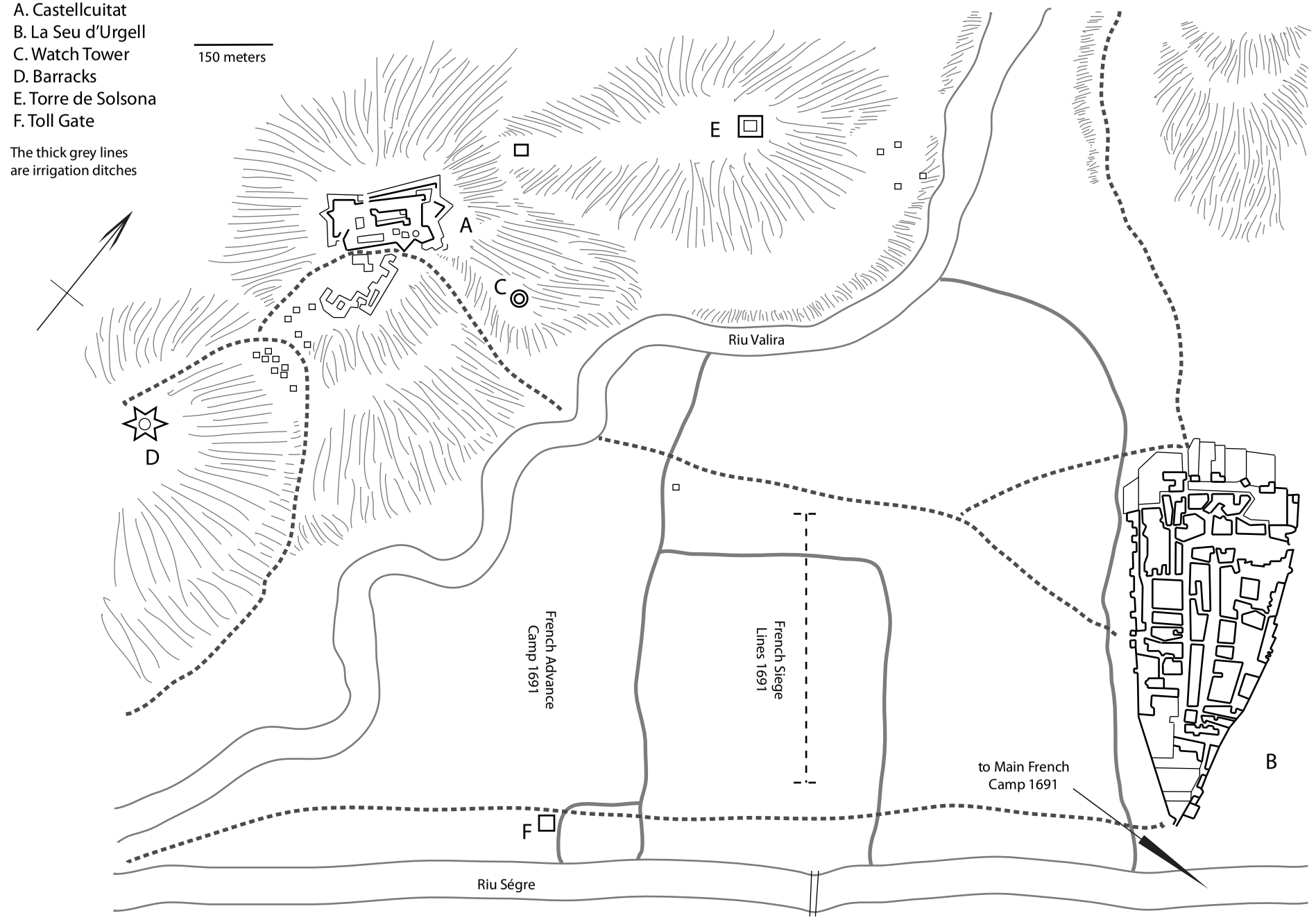
[According to Lopez, Noaïlles did not follow Chazeron, but came to La Seu via Andorra, but Noaïlles' memoirs stipulate Puigcerdà.]

The French established a depôt at Bellver, a highly defensible spot midway between Puigcerdà and La Seu. The cannon were brought this far without difficulty, but further progress required the blasting of a road 60 yards long through solid rock.

La Seu was defended by Don Agulló, who had retired from in front of Mont-Louis as the French approached. He had 748 foot and a *trozo* of 200 horse (or, according to Noaïlles' memoirs, 1,000 troops and 1,200 peasants). Agulló reported the place was unsuitable for defence by such a small number, being dominated by mountains to the North and the ridge of Castellciutat to the West. He was facing an estimated 7-8,000 French infantry and another 2,000 cavalry. (This was most of Noaïlles' army; Roussillon was guarded by the 6,000 militia.)

The French did not actually establish themselves on the high ground, though Chazeron had the danger points cleared to protect his own troops. Instead, they placed their main camp on flat ground across the river from the town. The Ségre flows northeast to southwest at this point, with the town on the right bank. In those days it was shaped like a spear head, its point toward the river, its length orientated north-south. The town was walled, but had many entrances and a number of cultivated properties adjoining it that permitted easy access. About 1.5 Km downstream from the old town lies a confluence with one of the Ségre's tributaries, the Valira, which flows down from the mountains to the North. The intervening land was flat and cultivated. Across the Valira, which cuts a deep channel through the earth, rises the ridge on which Castellciutat still sits, along with a number of other defensive works, some older and some newer.

Plan of La Seu d'Urgell



Compiled from various sources. Castellcuitat & town plan derived from a 1787 map. French positions derived from a 1691 panorama.

Chazeron decided to besiege the town on its western side, crossing the river below the town and establishing an advanced camp in the neck of land between the Ségre and Valira. Castellciutat was at his back, but being ruinous, was unoccupied. He extended his siege lines across the whole front of the town, anchoring them against the hills with cavalry. Trenches were opened on June 5, but then a delay ensued. It took eight days to manhandle the cannon along the improvised road from Bellver, and they did not arrive until June 10. Though it was only 16 Km from the French depôt to La Seu, it took 10-12 hours to traverse the distance on horseback.

Noaïlles, meanwhile, remained at Bellver, awaiting a Spanish relief column which were reported to be on its way. Indeed, they were only a day's march from him when the town finally fell. La Seu's actual capture did not take long. Early on June 10 the guns arrived and were quickly emplaced, opening fire as soon as they could. By 11am a breach had been made. Without hope of relief, Don Agulló surrendered, after suffering 6 dead and 20 wounded. He and his men passed into captivity.

[In Noaïlles' memoirs, the batteries were unmasked on June 6, but this cannot be if it took over 8 days to get them there; Lopez must be correct.]

Under orders to protect Barcelona, Roses, and Girona at all costs, Medina Sidonia had limited means at his disposal. Out of an effective force of 5,234 foot and 2,400 horse (or, 6,000 foot and 3,500 horse, including those on the sick rolls), 3-400 men were sent to Roses, Cadaqués, and the Selvà (east of Girona), against the threat of potential naval landings. 400 more were added to Castellfollit. The rest marched for La Seu under the Viceroy. Hearing of the fall of that place they retired to Berga, in the valley of the Llobregat, 38 Km south of Puigcerdà. Medina Sidonia has been faulted for not attacking the French, but he was weaker in numbers and the enemy was in a fortified camp. Moreover, with La Seu in his hands Noaïlles could retreat via Andorra, so a battle would decide little.

Agulló, a renowned soldier, was indicted for surrendering his charge; since he was a POW there was no way to appeal, but at least he could not lose his head. Medina Sidonia tried to justify his own conduct, blaming arguments among his generals for his slow response, but there were calls for new leadership from the Catalonian elites. The debacle had one good effect: the <eventual> dispatch of veteran *tercios* to the theatre.

[Intendant Trobat attempted to win over Agulló but Medina Sidonia turned this trick by agreeing to buy back the prisoners.]

Noaïlles quickly assessed La Seu as indefensible unless great sums were expended on its improvement, while Bellver could be cheaply fortified (at an estimated 40,000 *livres*) and made into a highly useful post. It was protected by escarpments on three sides, at least 4.5 metres high, while the fourth side was inaccessible. It would allow the French to control the entire valley above La Seu and would prevent the enemy from entering the County of Foix by the Val de Carol. Louvois having already dispatched orders for the demolition of both La Seu and Bellver, Noaïlles applied successfully to have the latter order rescinded.

Meanwhile, surprising news was received. The Navy had put in an appearance after all. The *Général's* brother, who was his *baillie* in Languedoc, had spurred d'Estrées to put to sea. This was a mixed blessing. D'Estrées also had orders to bombard Barcelona. While welcoming the naval diversion, Noaïlles deplored the idea of bombarding the capital, which would undo much of Trobat's propaganda. Also, it would be better to reserve the threat of such a bombardment than to actually make it.

But, Noaïlles' objections, shared in a lesser degree by Louvois, could not effect the cancellation of the order. The operation was a case of inter-service rivalry. The *Ministère de la Marine* was run by the Phélypeaux family (the *comtes* de Pontchartrain), who got the post when Colbert died in 1690. They hated the Tellier family who ran the *Ministère de la guerre* and were not about to obey Louvois. Wanting a piece of the action, they took it, regardless of the wider consequences.

The bombardment of the city occurred on July 10. 24 galleys and 12 ships of the line, supported by 3 sloops, blockaded the port and fired either 80 or 800 bombs (Noaïlles' memoirs state that only 80 bombs were fired, the Spanish say 800). 200 houses (surprisingly, the Viceroy claimed only 50) were destroyed, along with the granaries. 12 people were killed. Since the port contained two royal galleys – and apparently only for that reason – 23 Spanish ships and 5 galleys were sent north to drive off the French, but they arrived a month late, on August 10. D'Estrées tried to minimize the political damage by distributing leaflets along the coast that claimed he was merely trying to show the people that King Carlos was a broken reed, and that he had tried to avoid any 'collateral damage'.

Unfortunately, this was not the only naval bombardment, Alicante being attacked in the same way on July 21. Taken together, the two raids stirred a great anti-French reaction among the urban population.

With Medina Sidonia paralyzed by the appearance of the French fleet, Noaïlles risked a further operation in Cerdanya, sending a column under a Brigadier Préchac farther west. On July 20 his men took the town of Sort, 27 Km west of La Seu, in the valley of the Pallaresa River, and the next day they took the chateau of València d' Àneu

some 24 Km north of Sort, with the assistance of the militia of Foix. The Val d' Àneu leads to no place in particular, but by a rough road called the Bonaigua Pass one comes to the Val d'Aran, which leads ultimately to the Garonne and Tarbes, in France. The village contained the administrative offices for the Alt Àneu municipality, the most extensive in all of Catalonia, though the region's modern population numbers only about 400. Also, the place had abundant forage.

The advance to Sort was mirrored by the *comte de* Chazeron taking a column on an extended raid toward Barcelona in order to deprive the Spanish of forage. There was some thought of doing the same in Aragón, but Noaïlles decided the roads were too poor to risk it. If La Seu, Sort, and València d'Àneu could have been held, the border with Aragón could have been secured, but as already noted, La Seu was not defensible, and there was no way to support even a moderate garrison in the region over the winter.

The taking of Sort was a shock to the Spanish. The town had held out for two years during the Franco-Spanish War, when the rest of Catalonia had been under French control. King Carlos became extremely depressed and abruptly dismissed the *conde* de Oropesa, one of Medina Sidonia's sponsors and a chief member of the Queen Dowager's 'Bavarian' faction. Orders came down from Madrid that Bellver must be taken and razed, even if it meant the destruction of the Viceroy's entire command.

By now, however, Noaïlles had determined to withdraw to Roussillon, leaving a garrison at Bellver. Surprisingly, the valley of the Ségre becomes unbearably hot in high summer; the locals were in the habit of taking a two-month's siesta. Sort was demolished. La Seu's walls were slighted on August 9, and the French marched for Puigcerdà.

Medina Sidonia, meanwhile, had withdrawn east, from Berga to Ripoll. Only about August 15 did he react to the promptings of Madrid, marching up to Ribes de Freser, well to the east of Puigcerdà. If he had acted sooner, and used all his force, which gave him an advantage in cavalry, he might have defeated Noaïlles in detail when the latter's troops were dispersed on their western raids. But by the time he made up his mind, the French had concentrated again.

From Ribes, the Spanish marched to within 8 Km of the French encampment at Puigcerdà, but, hearing that Bellver had been reinforced, instead of attacking Noaïlles or bypassing him, the Viceroy withdrew. Noaïlles had been sure the Spanish would attack. He had distributed leaflets trumpeting the rightness of the French cause and his willingness to fight the Army of Castile, but he was bluffing. For honour's sake he could not abandon Bellver, but he was afraid the enemy's advantage was too great. The Viceroy's retreat was a welcome surprise.

[Bellver's garrison consisted of 2 battalions and 1 squadron, 600 miqueletes *in 4 companies, and 600 workmen, all under the able Pitoux.]*

On August 16 Medina Sidonia withdrew to Planoles (5 Km west of Ribes), and from there to a village called Llanars, about 2 Km west of Camprodon. The sources somewhat garble the Viceroy's intentions. It is recorded that he was profuse with excuses for not attacking Bellver, stating that he intended to attack the French port of Collioure in reprisal, but that this operation never took place, because a) the naval support stopped at Roses and b) Medina Sidonia changed his mind again and attacked Prats de Mollo.

Probably, the Viceroy, foiled by Noaïlles in front of Bellver, hoped to force the latter to withdraw from Cerdanya by applying indirect pressure. The idea would be to break through at Prats de Mollo and descend to the coast at Collioure, where La Flota would rendezvous with supplies and the siege train. En route, the Spanish would conduct their own 'coursing' of Roussillon south of the Têt. In execution, however, the plan foundered.

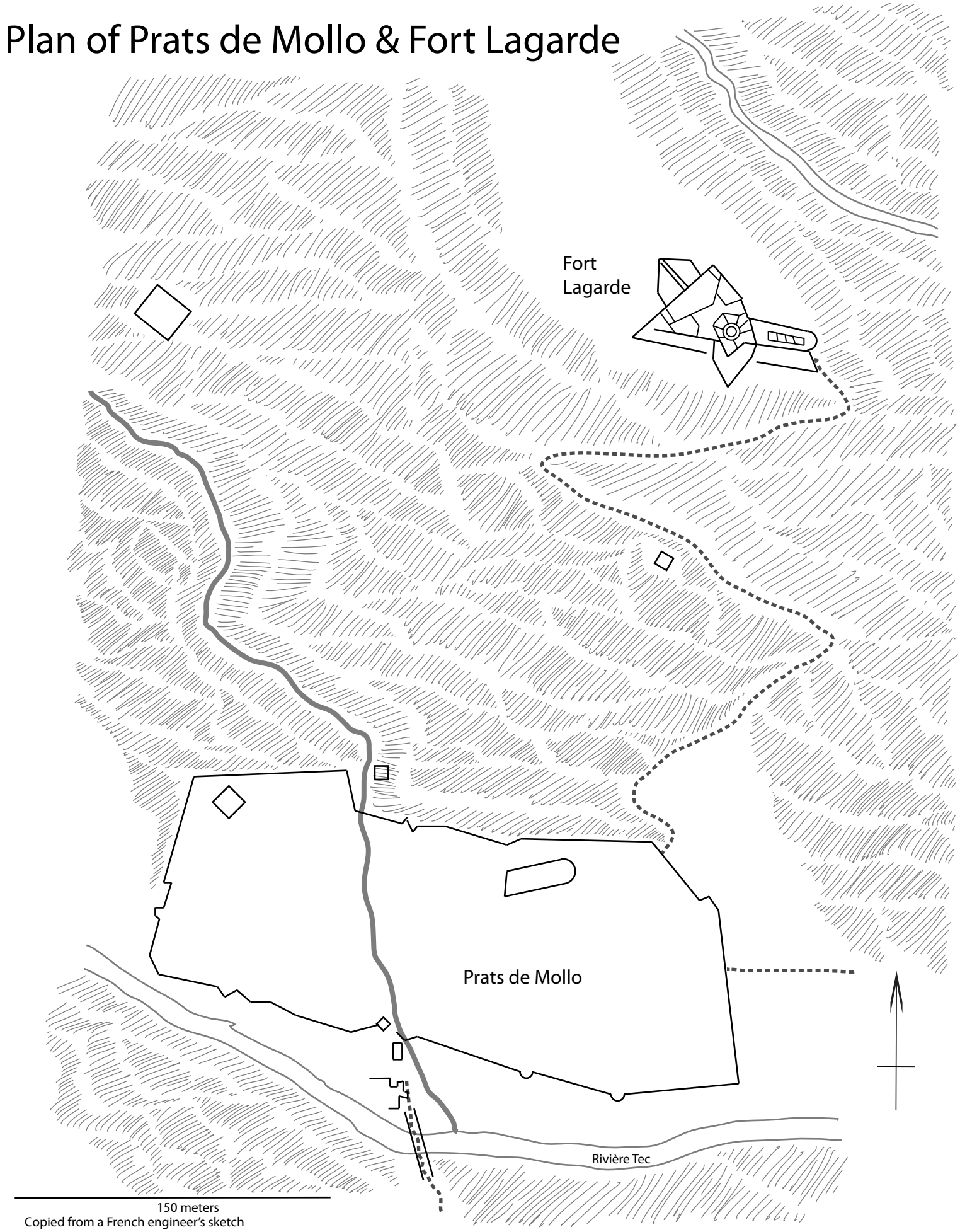
22 Spanish ships and 15 galleys, newly arrived at Barcelona in response to the French naval bombardment, were ordered to Roses, escorting the Spanish siege train. From that port 4 guns and 2 mortars were sent upcountry to join the Viceroy. The fleet halted at Roses, not 'inexplicably', or because of lassitude, as the sources often imply, but because it was waiting on events.

Meanwhile, the French got wind of the plan and strengthened Collioure with militia. Noaïlles detached a column of mountaineers under Brigadier Préchac to harass the Viceroy. These journeyed cross-country until they made contact with the enemy, and succeeded in sowing confusion without suffering any losses. At the end of August the French were to reassemble in a camp about 3 Km from Prats de Mollo.

[Noaïlles praised the miqueletes *of both sides to the skies. He felt the French ones were better, but only because they trusted their leaders more.]*

Thanks to the screening efforts of the *miqueletes* and the hostility of the locals the Viceroy was unaware that the French had concentrated there and he expected it to be lightly defended. In late August, the Viceroy shifted from

Plan of Prats de Mollo & Fort Lagarde



Copied from a French engineer's sketch

Llanars to Camprodon, where he waited for his cannon. These arrived at the start of September, upon which the Spanish advanced to Prats de Mollo and prepared to lay siege.

The defenses consisted of the town itself, a small place made strong by old walls and narrow streets, and Fort Lagarde, sited on the mountain behind it. The whole was under a capable governor, the Chevalier de Landoste. Playing for time, he sent out two priests, ostensibly to parley about avoiding damage to the church, but really to spy and spread disinformation. They told the Spanish that the French had 1,000 men, that the town was heavily fortified, that the garrison was all set to fight to the last man, and that the civilian population had been enrolled to fight, too. (This was true; the townsfolk were terribly disappointed when the Spanish abandoned the siege.)

This news unnerved the dithery Viceroy, allowing time for French reinforcements to arrive: Préchac's men first, and then Noaïlles with the bulk of his army. The Spanish lifted the siege on September 5, abandoned their planned invasion of Roussillon, and went into winter quarters around Girona. The French likewise retired to Roussillon, leaving the Bellver garrison behind. *Général* Noaïlles proceeded to Montpellier, where he was appointed *Lieutenant Général* of Guienne, and then to the Languedoc *Estates*, where he retained authority.

Spanish losses for this year's campaign are not reported but it is enough to say the Army bled men constantly, from sickness, lack of pay, and a general disgust with the conduct of the war. The French lost under 450 men, from all causes.

After his thoroughly unsatisfactory performance, Medina Sidonia was universally castigated. He had acted hesitantly, even timidly, and did not seem able to stick to one course of action, even if it were the wrong one. Most of his difficulties arose from systemic problems, however. Failures in leadership, failures in supply, flaws in the whole society. Lacking ability, he was further hampered by a pack of incompetent subordinates, except for a handful of men like Agulló, who could do little by themselves. The soldiery were everywhere mutinous. They abused the Catalans, who returned the favour. The French could march in small detachments all over the mountains and be welcomed, while similar parties of Spanish troops risked ambush from their own side. Local opinion was inflamed when Madrid dispatched an ambassador to Catalonia – such was the nature of Spanish rule that the Principality rated an ambassador – without consulting the natives.

Drought had exacerbated a bad harvest. After stamping out most of the unrest over the past two years, the Government was dismayed when revolts again broke out, particularly at Cardona, on the southwestern border of Cerdanya; the local magistrate was implicated in a plot to hand the place over to France. Men were also abandoning the border regions and seeking work as *miqueletes* in French service, primarily to obtain food. Despite this, the Viceroy was compelled by the Crown to maintain a large cavalry force over the winter 'so as to be ready for next year', while the neighbouring states did little to help. For example, *duque* de Guarra of Aragón raised a substantial militia force in his own territory, but his men refused to cross the border.

Unable to change the circumstances, the Court resolved to once again change the Viceroy. It was rumoured one of his subordinates, the *marqués* de Conflans, and the latter's patrons at Court, were behind some of the hindrances Medina Sidonia was suffering from, and the *marqués* was pegged by many as the coming man. But, he was to be disappointed.

Juan Claros Pérez de Guzmán, XI *duque* de Medina Sidonia (1642-1713)

The name Medina Sidonia is famous as the commander of the Spanish Armada who was defeated in the reign of Elizabeth I. Contrary to popular history, he was actually an able soldier, but his fleet was unmanageable and he had bad luck. Not as much is known about this descendant of his. Based in Andalucia, theirs was the oldest dukedom in Spain. The Duke under consideration here inherited the title in 1667. He was a couple of years younger than his opposite number, Noaïlles, being 49 when he became Viceroy of Catalonia, serving in that capacity from 1691 to 1693.

Medina Sidonia was *Mayordomo mayor* (High Steward) to Carlos II. As such he was the man responsible for the organisation and functioning of the Palace community, the King's secretariat (meaning also that he held the privy seal and controlled the scheduling of audiences), the King's physicians, the offices of heraldry, and the Palace inspectorate. He was responsible for civil and criminal jurisdiction within the Palace walls. The office granted membership in the Order of the Golden Fleece. Under Philip V, however, he held the lesser title of *Caballerizo mayor*, or Great Equerry, in charge of the royal stables. The histories do not recount whether he had to provide his own shovel.

Victor-Marie d'Estrées, *comte* d'Estrées (1660-1737)

D'Estrées was born in Paris, although his family were from Picardy. The House of d'Estrées gave France four field marshals. The current count's military service (he was created *duc* in 1723) followed a similar pattern to his father, who rose to become a *maréchal de France*, transferred to *La Royale* (the Navy) and ended his career as *vice-amiral de Ponant,* administrative commander of the Mediterranean Fleet. The father's career change was due to an argument with Louvois, so the family became clients of Colbert, who was running the Navy at the time.

The younger D'Estrées' regiment was that of *Picardie*, campaigning in Flanders in 1676-77, after which he transferred to the Navy and served under his father, fighting in the Battle of Tobago (1677). His father was a 'West Indies man', serving 5 tours there; Victor-Marie commanded his first ship in the Caribbean. He ended the war in the Med. After, he served under the famous Duquesne against the Barbary pirates and was at the Bombing of Algiers (1682-83). In 1684 he served on land (!) at the Siege of Luxembourg.

His first action in the War of the Grand Alliance was under Tourville, against a Spanish squadron in 1688 (before war was declared). During the opening campaigns of the war however, he served as a volunteer on the Rhine and was wounded at Philippsburg. Back with the Navy in 1690, he led the rearguard in the Battle of Beachy Head. He was then sent to command the Mediterranean fleet (his father was still *vice-amiral de Ponant;* Victor-Marie did not receive that post until his father's death in 1707).

In 1691 he assisted Catinat to capture Nice, bombarded the Piedmontese port of Oneglia, and bombarded Barcelona and Alicante (July). In 1692 he was ordered to combine with the Brest Fleet under Tourville but arrived too late to participate in the Battle of Barfleur. The next year he assisted in the capture of Roses and helped Tourville at the Battle of Cape St. Vincent, where the English Turkey Convoy was decimated. In 1697 he again commanded the Toulon Fleet, bombarding Barcelona in support of *maréchal* Noaïlles' siege.

D'Estrées also served in the War of the Spanish Succession, becoming a *maréchal de France* (1703), mentor of the *comte* de Toulouse (1704) – a natural son of the King who was *Amiral de France* – a Knight of the Golden Fleece and *mares generales de España* (both Spanish honours for his victory at Velez-Malaga in 1704), a member of the Order of the Holy Spirit (1705), chairman of the Marine Board (1715), and a member of the Regency Council (upon the death of Louis XIV). In 1707 he was visited by Peter the Great, Tsar of Russia. He also received membership in several academies. After his father's death he succeeded to the title, to the office of *vice-amiral de Ponant*, and was created *lieutenant général d'Angleterre* and *vice-roi de la Nouvelle-France.* He was also granted the island of St. Lucia as a freehold and was a director of the *Compagnie de l'Orient*. He retired in 1731, comfortably well off.

Equilibrium – The Campaign of 1692

1692 was a seminal year, but not in Catalonia. A titanic struggle would be waged in Flanders, where King William III, having secured the British throne, brought all his forces to bear on the French. In Catalonia, there was a 'phoney war', culminating in a Spanish invasion of Roussillon that penetrated a staggering 5,000 metres across the border.

Général Noaïlles went to Versailles, as usual, yet again seeking permission for a general conquest of the Principality. In his view the Catalans were ripe for revolt and the Castilians in disarray. *Intendant* Trobat had devised a wonderful scheme for building a road to facilitate movement as far as Vic, with the aim of besieging Barcelona.

The death of Louvois on July 16, 1691, may have encouraged the *Général's* hopes, but the new War Minister was Louvois' less able but equally parsimonious and ruthless son, the *marquis* de Barbezieux. Military policy was unlikely to change. However, King Louis was so pleased with Noaïlles' achievements that he graciously permitted direct access to the Throne on questions of strategy.

The *Général* thought that this would surely gain him the resources he needed. His plans, however, which he had submitted in September of the previous year, had already been rejected. All eyes were on Flanders. In fact, Noaïlles' forces were to be reduced, and there was a real chance the Spanish might invade Roussillon; their numbers were being increased. He was told Catalonia had priority over Italy, but even this was to be reversed when the Allies invaded the Dauphiné that summer.

On the other side of the hill, the Spanish High Command could not agree on a strategy. Some argued that maintaining an army in Catalonia was a waste of time, except perhaps to garrison Barcelona. This attitude did not exactly foster loyalty to Carlos II within the Principality. There was a general sense that Madrid was abandoning the Catalans to their fate. The lack of trust severely hampered military operations, as did the retention of the existing commanders of the Army of Catalonia – reputedly, 70 officers were under consideration for removal from their posts, but dismissing such a large number would have crippled the Army to a greater extent than leaving them where they were! *Teniente general* Pignatelli, one of the most insubordinate, was transferred by giving him a Viceroyalty. Medina Sidonia, after investigation of his conduct by court martial, was also retained for the present.

In January of 1692 Catalonia at last received a promise of veteran reinforcements, in the form of 800 Italians and 500 Germans (*and* money to pay them), plus 600 Walloons. New guns were also to be cast: 8 cannon, 6 demi-cannon, and 2 '*tercios'* of iron guns for use in naval fortifications. But, a new difficulty arose. Rather than serve in Spain, the reinforcements, especially the Walloons, preferred to desert; the French in Flanders distributed broadsheets specifically targeting the Walloons and offering them service in the *Régiment de Roi Tres-Chrétian*.

In February, the Spanish began work on Castellciutat, the fortress located a little to the west of La Seu. Chazeron had ignored it when he laid siege the year before, because it was in ruins. Due to his campaign, the Spanish had some expectation of a French advance into the province of Lleida, and decided on repairs. There was not enough money to fortify La Seu d'Urgell as well.

With regard to his personal role in the campaign, the Viceroy intended to wipe out the stain on his honour by invading Roussillon. (And more practically, to construct a pair of forts at the Col de Perthus that would hinder any future French advance; the pass would first have to be occupied to keep the French from interfering in the construction work.) He gave orders that the Army was to assemble a month earlier than usual. They would camp on auspicious ground, a spot near Bellegarde where the *duque* de Sant Germain had held off *général* Schomberg for 6 months during the Franco-Spanish War.

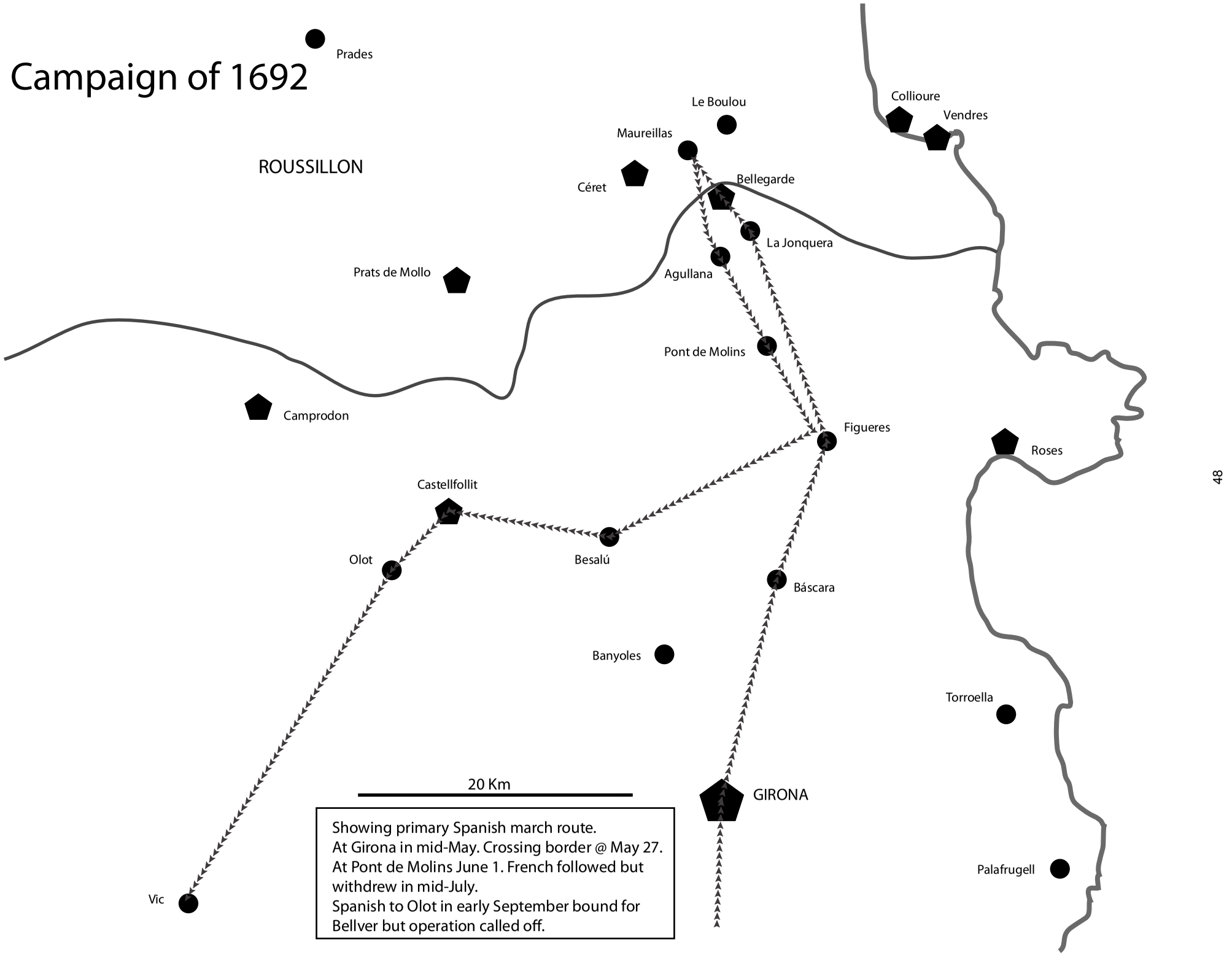
The two sides took the field around the same time. Noaïlles arrived at Perpignan in mid-May to learn the Spanish were already mustering at Girona. Not counting static militia, he had under his command only 16 battalions and 25 squadrons, plus his train. But, he also had 5,000 *miqueletes*. These last were spread out along a 10 Km stretch of the border from Céret (8 Km southwest of Boulou), to the village of Arles on the road to Prats-de-Mollo. For naval assets the French had an estimated 32 ships of the line, 30 galleys, and 'several' sloops.

The Viceroy could dispose of 6,000 foot and 3,000 horse (by an exact count a little later in the season, 5,228 foot and 2,258 horse), 4 siege guns, 6 field guns, and 2 '*trabucos*' (a blunderbuss-style gun). On paper he had 16-17,000 men, while the French estimated he had 11,000 foot and 3,500 horse (counting garrisons, this was substantially correct).

Because the French fleet appeared to be preparing for sea, the Spanish once again bolstered the garrison of Roses. They also stationed cavalry at Bàscara in advance of the Army, and deployed a *tercio* at Girona to act as garrison.

Dismissing the Spanish work at Castellciutat, Noaïlles concentrated at Le Boulou on May 27, then personally led a detachment to reconnoitre the plain around Maureillas-las-Illas, at the entrance to the Col de Perthus. Military wisdom had long held that this was *the* spot to meet an invader, but Noaïlles saw that it was worthless for defence. Instead,

Campaign of 1692



Showing primary Spanish march route.
At Girona in mid-May. Crossing border @ May 27.
At Pont de Molins June 1. French followed but withdrew in mid-July.
Spanish to Olot in early September bound for Bellver but operation called off.

he deployed detachments in the hills on either side of the pass and garrisoned the fort at Céret to secure his right flank. The rest of his troops were held at Le Boulou.

By the time this had been done, the Spanish were already passing their guns through the Col de Perthus. Leaving Girona, the Viceroy had camped at Santa Llogaia d'Alguema and then proceeded to La Jonquera, just south of the pass. He sent bands of *migueletes* to clear the defile and isolate Bellegarde, which he intended to ignore. The light troops succeeded in exiting onto the plain at Maureillas, capturing 24 of their opposite numbers. For the second time in this war, the Spanish had invaded Roussillon! It was to be the last time.

When the enemy reached Maureillas in strength, Noaïlles directed his own forces to occupy the high ground near Sant Joan de Pagès (Saint-Jean-Pla-de-Corts), about 3 Km northwest of the entrance to the pass. The Viceroy, unable to spread out and forage, and unwilling to attack, decided to retreat, moving back to Agullana, about 6 Km southwest of the *col*. There is no mention of the Spanish taking Bellegarde during this operation, which means the Viceroy had no other option than retreat. It would not do to be trapped in the pass between the fortress and a French army. His irregulars continued to occupy the *col* for a time.

For the next three months Medina Sidonia and Noaïlles sat and watched each other. After swiftly exhausting the forage around Agullana, on June 1 the Spanish moved to Pont de Molins on the Muga, 13 Km south-southeast of the Col de Perthus, where they dug in. The French advanced to La Jonquera, burning the two forts the Spanish had built, but they had difficulty bringing up supplies, thanks to the activities of the Spanish *migueletes,* and made no further advance – Noaïlles estimated he required 4,500 men to protect his convoys.

The Fleet, which could have threatened the Spanish flank and eased the supply situation, never did put in an appearance. The enemy already had 22 ships of the line and a large body of galleys on the water, a force which was too strong to oppose.

[The unsatisfactory naval situation led Noaïlles to recommend the improvement of the port of Vendres, which would bear fruit in the next war. Currently, Collioure was receiving funds for its own improvement, but the site, though only around the next headland from Vendres, was not as defensible. Having a protected anchorage on this section of coast, where galleys could be based, would neutralise the Spanish superiority in that arm.]

Noaïlles chafed at the lack of action, especially after learning of the capture of the great fortress city of Namur. The news was read out to the troops on June 30. It being a dispatch from the King himself, the men took off their hats.

Some four or five foraging expeditions went out each night, but even these failed to elicit a response from the Spanish, except on one occasion, when a *capitaine* Rademaker of the Carabiniers disobeyed instructions and got too close to the enemy camp. He was surprised by a regiment of Spanish cavalry. 84 horse and 100 foot were captured by the Spanish, after withstanding two charges.

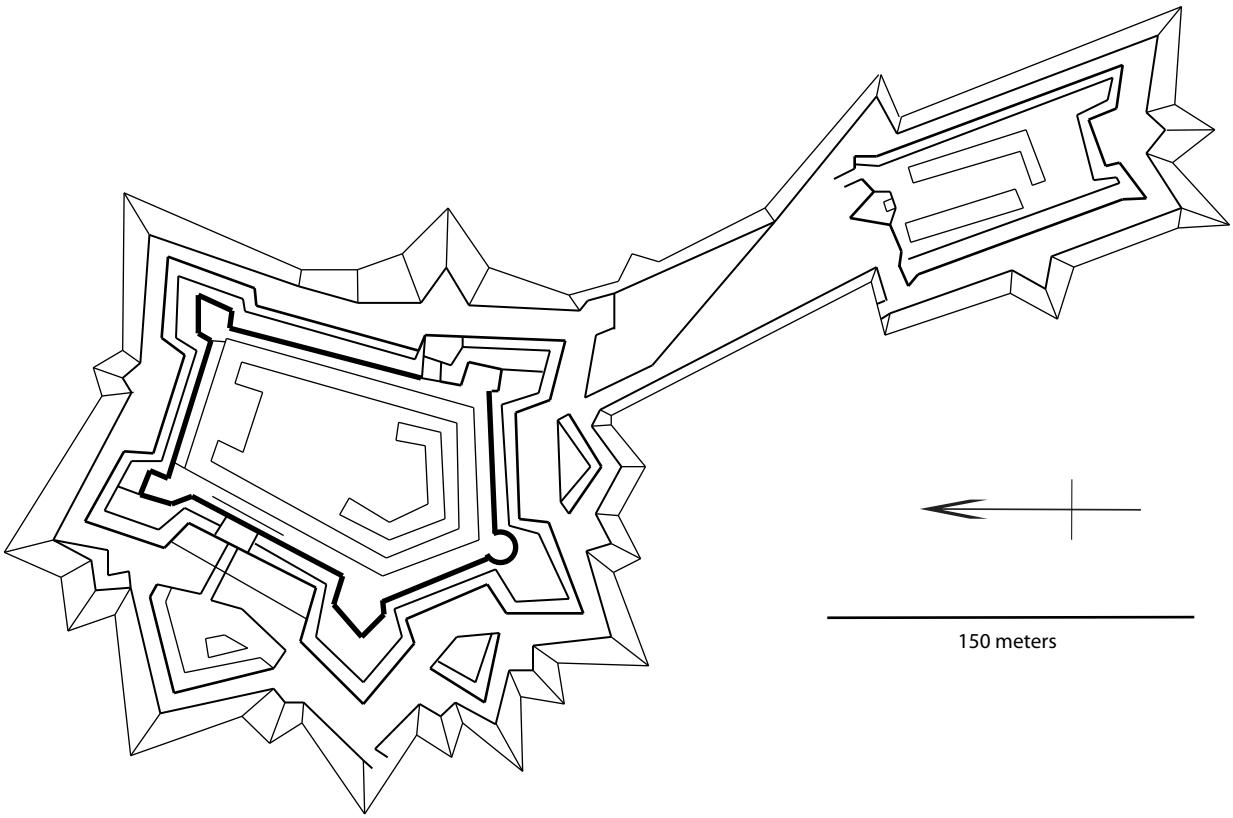
The next day the heat became intense – it was mid-July – and Noaïlles, who was out of supplies, ordered a withdrawal to Maureillas-las-Illas. This was the point when the *Général* had to send significant forces to the Dauphiné, effectively ending his campaign. The withdrawal was made in stages over a period of two days, by four separate columns, and suffered no combat losses.

Crossing the mountains made all the difference in the weather. French losses from heat and sickness dropped to nothing once they were through the pass. The Spanish remained in the Empordà until September and lost 3,000 men. The Viceroy did have an objective in mind. He intended, by means of constant guerrilla activity, to wear out the French cavalry, and in this he seems to have been fairly successful, while the armies were in contact. But, once the French had gone there was little reason in remaining encamped in such an unhealthy spot.

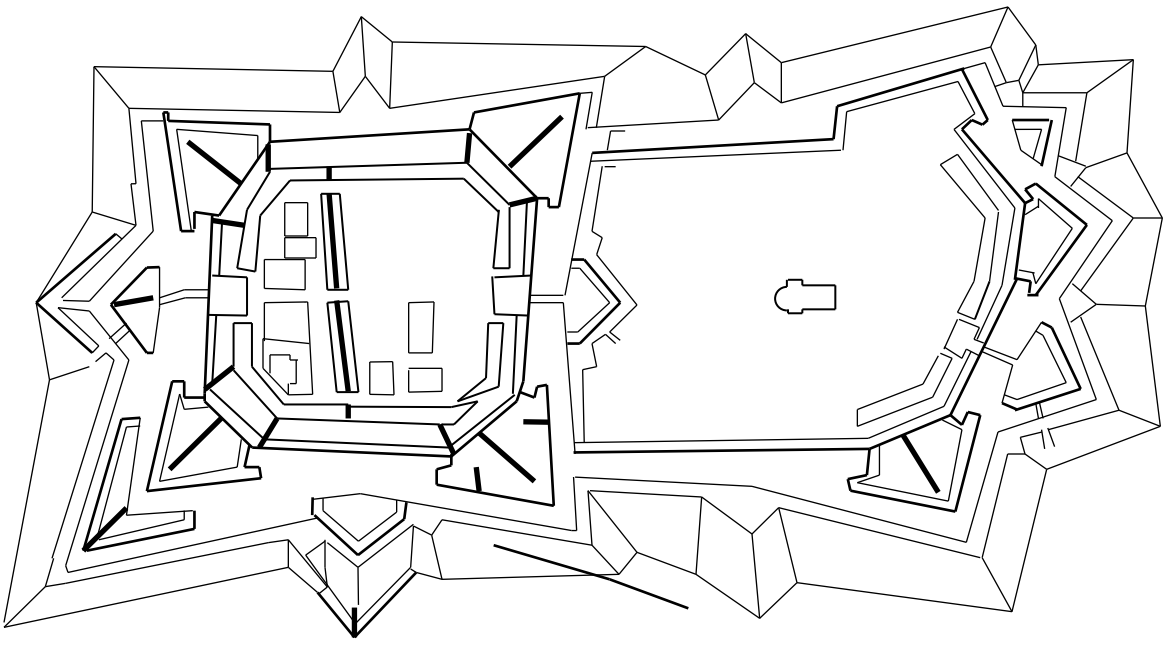
Medina Sidonia made no attempt to begin a counter-campaign. Lopez points out that La Seu d'Urgell could have been used as a springboard for a 'grand course' against Toulouse, only 5 days march away, or that given the absence of the French fleet, the Spanish could have dropped troops along the coast. In either case the French would have had to withdraw from Catalonia and perhaps even yielded territory in Roussillon. However, lack of money, lack of talent, and a defensive mindset prevented any such operations.

Medina Sidonia did investigate the possibility of expelling the French from Cerdanya by retaking Bellver, and marched his army to Olot in early September. The operation was cancelled for a number of reasons, lack of manpower being at the top of the list. In addition to the summer wastage, the Army of Catalonia lost 1,183 men to the Army of Milán. Noaïlles, though he had had to send off 5 battalions to Savoy, received 3 battalions of Wild Geese in exchange for his veterans – Irish volunteers who had received honours of war instead of execution or transportation to the colonies by signing on to the French rolls; the Spanish received nothing in exchange for their redeployment. Also, the *Général*, now based at Ille (August 27), sent up several battalions to form a cordon along the border for a distance of some 20 Km. These had orders to attack only if King Louis himself gave the word, but sent constant reports on the Spanish

Plan of Bellegarde



Plan of Mont-Louis



movements. Finally, the French had eaten up the country round Bellver. The Viceroy therefore went into winter quarters in early October, posting a corps at Berga and retiring with the rest of his army to Vic.

[The Irish units were 2 battalions of Dillon's *and the dismounted dragoon regiment* Reine de l'Angleterre*. They had been received in 1691 as part of the Mountcashell deal that swapped French regulars in Ireland for Irish recruits, but only took the field this year. Later in the war,* Clancarty's*, a regiment belonging to the exiled King James II's private army, would join the team, as would the* Queen's Irish, *a unit belonging to ex-King James' private army.]*

Tired of Medina Sidonia's lame justifications for aborting the Roussillon offensive, Madrid decided to keep him in his post, but during the retreat from the Col de Perthus his superiors appointed Juan Carlos de Batevile, *marqués* de Conflans, to be *Gobernador de las Armas del Ejército de Cataluña*.

[Conflans' family was French: Jean Charles de Watteville.]

(The *Gobernador de las Armas* was another one of those Medieval titles whose function is difficult to pin down, since it changed over time. 'Commander of a Frontier Military District' is perhaps the best definition of his original role. Originally, such a man would have raised and equipped provincial forces that would join with the Royal Army when the latter campaigned in his province. As the centuries progressed, the position developed more of an administrative role than a combat one. The post became more important year by year as the numbers of militia increased, necessitating better coordination with the Regular Army. Importantly, 'militia forces' includes not only *somatén* and *migueletes*, but urban militias and the 'line' *tercios* raised within the Principality. Conflans would thus have been in charge of all the indigenous forces of Catalonia, leaving the Viceroy in charge of the Castilian troops. The implication in the sources, however, is that Conflans was made *de facto* field commander of the whole mobile army.)

Though his own army was inactive, *Général* Noaïlles was still busy. As governor of Guienne he was responsible for preparing the province for an expected naval descent on the Atlantic coast in aid of the Huguenots, who had a strong presence there. He took a portion of his army to the coast, leaving Chazeron in charge of the border. Versailles gave him authorisation to call out the nobility of Guienne, Poitou, Béarn, and Haut-Languedoc as cavalry – a vestige of the old Medieval levies. However, no descent was made, thanks to the inconclusive sea fight off La Hogue earlier in the year.

Guns and Roses – the Campaign of 1693

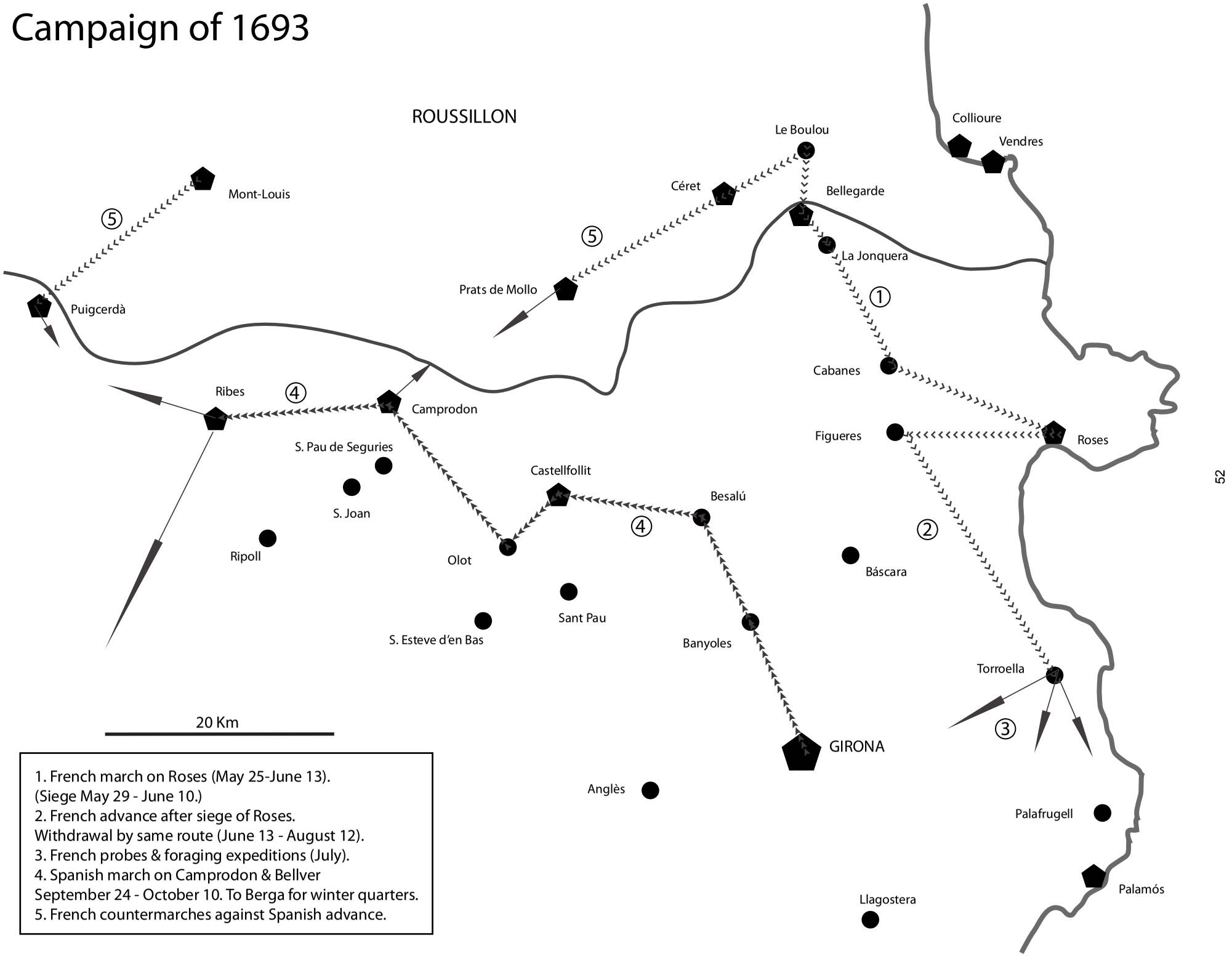
The campaign of 1693 was much more vigorous. As he did every year, Noaïlles tried to interest the Government in a full conquest of Catalonia. This time, they listened, but unfortunately failed to give him enough resources, after which they complained of his lack of progress. In rough outline, the program was to take Roses to secure a base south of the mountains, then Girona to secure a line of advance, then, Barcelona to secure the Principality. By occupying the Empordà year-round, the war could be subsidised by the Catalan peasantry instead of those of Roussillon. Provided the French continued to treat the locals well, this might even be willing support. As before, a propaganda offensive would make it clear the war was being made against Madrid, not the Catalans. *Maréchal* Vauban was interested enough to take a hand, and the plan was a masterpiece of detail and strict timetables. The plan was too ambitious and only Roses was besieged and captured. The Spanish adopted a bunker mentality that may, ironically, have slowed the French advance, but otherwise had no effect on their operations. Medina Sidonia would last out the season and then get the sack.

The Spanish Army remained poorly manned, worse equipped, and underpaid. Bad living conditions – such as being forced to sleep out in all weathers without proper shelter – meant that sickness and desertion remained high. The Navy was positively decrepit. It had started the war as a force to be reckoned with, but without money, the ships could not be crewed or repaired. The Treasury was so short of money that the King sold patents of nobility to raise funds (a French trick that the haughty Spanish despised). Soon, he would be dipping into his private purse.

The French, on the other hand, were beefing up the Army of Roussillon. Louis XIV intended to go on the defensive in Flanders and on the Rhine, while intensifying efforts in Italy and Spain. Over the winter, King Louis also raised the succession question, not for the first or last time, offering his grandson to Spain. If Carlos II made him his heir, France would restore Flanders and Burgundy to Spain. However, these offers were made 'sword in hand'. It was clear that the Sun King intended to press his suit by force.

For the coming campaign, Noaïlles was assigned 14,000 foot and 5,000 horse, not counting garrison troops and irregulars. Thanks to the *provincial milices* system, and the influx of Catalan volunteers, these were considerable. The regulars amounted to 22 battalions and 40 squadrons. Though not a major port, Roses was expected to be heavily defended, so the French train included 20 positional pieces, 16 field guns, and 5 mortars, which would be shipped in by sea. Of the Navy under d'Estrées, Lopez say there were of 22 warships and 2 sloops, plus 11 galleys, while Lynn says 28 ships of the line and 35 galleys.

Campaign of 1693



Medina Sidonia, acting on reports that the French had 25,000 men and 40 guns, drew up defensive plans for the coming year, with the intent of locking the French out of Catalonia, but these required money for fortifications, particularly Castellciutat, plus an army of 18,000 veterans. Efforts were made to meet this target. According to an April report of 1693, the Army of Catalonia had 8,967 foot and 3,306 horse, and 4,000 more soldiers were to be raised. In May, 7,000 foot and 3,000 horse were available for mobile operations. 600 men of a new *tercio* from Barcelona, plus 1,000 men of the *tercio de la Generalitat*, were distributed among the Spanish fortifications inland, particularly Girona. Money and labour was made available to complete the defenses at Berga, Cardona, and Castellfollit. In May, 4 *trozos* of horse were diverted from Italy to Catalonia, and 45 companies (roughly 30 men each) of *migueletes* were raised.

When active campaigning began, the Spanish were thus quite strong, usually estimated at 16,000 men, and the *Consejo Supremo de la guerra* insisted that the Viceroy react vigorously against any French encroachment, to justify the existence of such an expensive force. Unfortunately, the Spanish had now become 'musclebound' – according to the Viceroy, his army was using its stockpiles so fast it would have no supplies when it took the field.

The French concentrated at Le Boulou in mid-May. Here, Noaïlles received word that he and several other generals had been created *maréchals de France*, the first since the great Turenne died in 1675.

Meanwhile, the Spanish, uncertain of the enemy's intentions, camped on the River Ter and sent spies across the border. At least three of these men were discovered and executed. From Noaïlles' initial movements it appeared that Girona would be the target.

The French were having difficulty keeping to schedule, but that statement is relative. Compared to the Spanish their Army was a precision instrument. On May 25 they exited the Col de Perthus and camped at La Jonquera, and the following day reached Cabanes, 15 Km to the South, near Figueres. Here they waited 3 days for the field train, as heavy rains made the roads temporarily impassible for guns. 5 pieces were washed over a cliff. For security, a battalion was sent to occupy Figueres, and it was this movement that led Medina Sidonia to believe the French would try to take Girona. The French fleet had been sighted 10 days before, but it had sailed down past Palamós and Barcelona. D'Estrées, however, doubled back and arrived in the Golfo de Roses on May 27. A day later, Noaïlles' advance guard arrived and blockaded the town; the *maréchal* arrived on May 29. The Spanish were taken by surprise.

[According to Lynn, the French did not march directly into the Empordà but entered Catalonia by Prats de Mollo. According to Lopez and Noaïlles' own memoirs, they entered the logical way, by the Col de Perthus. The Prats de Mollo route can be justified: such a route would allow Noaïlles to collect men from Bellver and reorganise the border garrisons, plus pick up volunteers for the miquelet *bands. The forage was perhaps better. But, Lynn is probably mistaken.]*

The fortifications of Roses had been built by the French, long, long ago, and had since been 'modernised'. The town was regarded as a very tough nut to crack. During the Franco-Spanish War, the French took 49 days to capture it. The garrison consisted of 1,400 foot (including, if not exclusively, the famed *Morados Viejos* or Old Purples), 2-300 of the *Tercio de Viejo de Dragones*, rather disorganised, and 15 cannon. Morale was low; after the siege Noaïlles called the place 'a cesspool of garbage' and guessed that the Spanish had used it as a rubbish tip ever since the French gave it back to them in the 1650s.

The fortifications were quite functional, and of the 'Italian trace' variety. However, they were only 'modern' when compared with Catalonia's other fortifications. The walls were up to 40' high, but crumbling in spots and only the outworks were protected by a glacis; the inner walls stood out above them. Constructed by the seashore, Roses comprised a pentagon, with a bastion at each point, and 7 outworks of the *demi-lune* variety (not actually half-moon shaped, but triangular). An outwork was situated in front of each of the three inland bastions, and in front of each curtain wall, except along the seafront. There were two gates, one facing the sea and the other opposite it. Taken clockwise from the western side next to the sea, the bastions were named: Sant Juan, Sant Jorge, Sant Andreas, Sant Jaime or Iago, and Sant Marti.

[The bastion of Sant Marti has been demolished to make way for a parking lot and some housing, as have the outworks on that side, but otherwise the fortress seems well kept. It is open to the public. Old maps and pictures show the town completely enclosed by the defenses, but the modern town lies to the East; nothing remains in the fortress itself.]

At the last minute, the Spanish tried and failed to strengthen the garrison by sea from Palamós. They could not slip past d'Estrées' blockade.

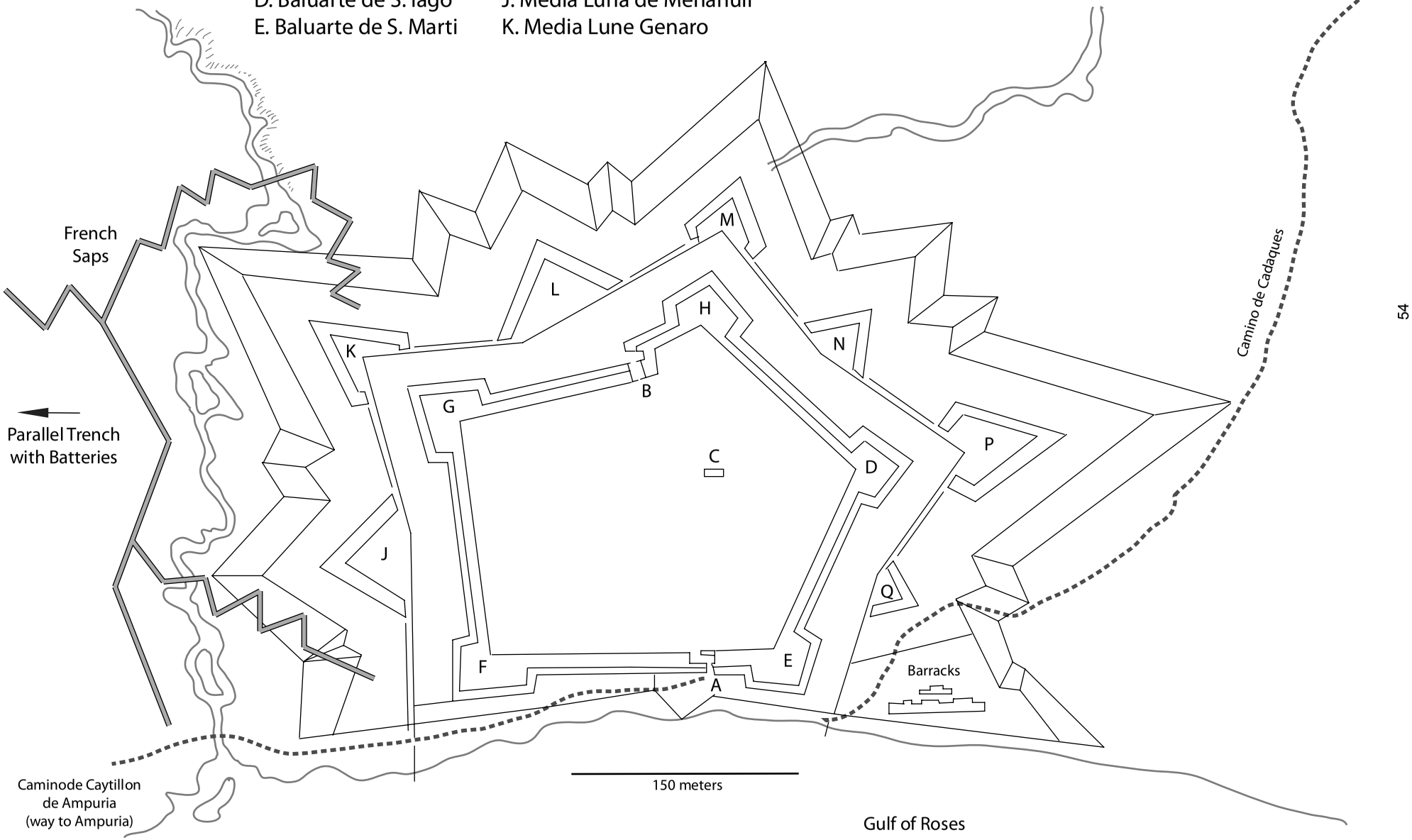
The French encamped on high ground, which runs in a semicircle around the fortress from swampy ground on the western shoreline to some real hills in the Northeast. After much preparation, the French opened their first trench on June 2, following the western coastal road toward the town. After crossing a stream, a parallel was constructed, and the main trench advanced again until it split into two communications trenches. That on the right was made for a

Plan of Roses

Copied from Chief Engineer Borsano's plans

French encampments to west and north on high ground out of cannon range
Steep hills to the east at about the same distance from the town

A. Puerta de La Mar
B. Puerta de Tierra
C. Fuente (well)
D. Baluarte de S. Iago
E. Baluarte de S. Marti
F. Bauarte de S. Iuan
G. Baluarte de S. Jorge
H. Baluaret de S. Andres
J. Media Luna de Menanuil
K. Media Lune Genaro
L. Media Luna Cavallero
M. Media Luna S. Andres
N.P.Q. Medialunas de Tierra



diversion; the saps were begun on the left, or inland. The batteries, of which there were three, were located in first parallel.

By the next day, the communications trenches encircled half the fortress. Digging continued until June 6. It rained incessantly, with high winds and rough seas. D'Estrées kept his station with difficulty, and spent much of the time a good 8 Km out to sea. He lost some ammunition galleys on the rocks, while the soldiers dealt with flooded trenches and the gunners with wet powder. But Noaïlles' preparations were so thorough that these were regarded as minor obstacles. The French prosecuted the siege with vigour, digging rapidly regardless of exposure to enemy fire, and sealing the enemy in so tightly that they could not even send foraging parties onto the counterscarp. The cavalry carried fascines under fire with great élan. The *maréchal* visited the lines twice a day.

On the night of June 6 Noaïlles gave the order to storm the counterscarp. The defenders offered only weak resistance and the whole western side of the fortress was seized. Already, one bastion (probably Sant Jorge) had been smashed by artillery fire and another (perhaps Sant Juan, by the sea) was being battered. Mines were begun against this bastion on June 7.

[This pattern was repeated at Barcelona in 1697, where the siege works covered two primary bastions; the lefthand bastion was prepared for assault, while the righthand bastion was first the object of a feint, and then mined from a distance.]

Meanwhile, the *bailli* de Noaïlles arrived with additional galleys. 1,500 men were landed from the fleet and another 2,000 from the galleys, plus 60 *gardes-marines*. This gave the French enough manpower to continue the siege if a Spanish relief force appeared. The enemy's galleys were still attempting to break through, but without success.

On June 8, the Governor of Roses, Don Pere Rubí, was mortally wounded when his arm was torn apart by shrapnel. His successor, Don Gabriel Quinones, ordered the garrison to beat the *chamade* for a parley on June 9, as soon as the French had achieved a 'formal breach' of the defences. The surrender took place that afternoon, with the garrison receiving honours of war. They marched out the following day with their arms and three cannon, bound for Girona. For some reason, a nearby fort named La Trinité was left out of the agreement, leading to a brief siege (June 11-13). In all, the Spanish lost between 2-300 men. The French lost 3-4 officers and 60 men killed, and 150 wounded. This compared very favourably with the loss of 8,000 men in the previous siege of the place.

Don Gabriel received short shrift from the Viceroy. He and all his captains of foot were arrested and imprisoned. Indicted for his 'poor performance', he countered with a litany of complaints against his superiors and the Government. Without hope of relief, by the laws of war he was obliged to spare the rest of his command, and the civilians of the town. The entire Administration was in great distress of mind. Letters to Madrid written at this time breathe despair of holding any part of Catalonia. There were calls for the King to come and lead his people before they abandoned him and swore fealty to France.

This demand was seriously considered at Madrid, but it was felt that it was not safe for Carlos to leave the house on his own. To make a truly splendid pageant (and provide more practical aid than a drooling idiot), 8,000 more men would have to be raised to accompany him. Portugal was approached for assistance, but although the Portuguese feared French expansionism they were unwilling to do anything. Reinforcement by the Army of Milán was investigated, but its commander refused pointblank to consider the idea, stating (correctly) that if he weakened his army, Savoy would feel forced to seek a separate peace with France. That idea was dropped, for the present.

Meanwhile, Medina Sidonia was instructed to barricade himself in Girona with 4,000 men and hold to the last. Priests and women were ordered to leave the city. Left to his own devices he authorised the raising of companies of '*veguerías*' (county militia) to be incorporated in a set of new Provincial Tercios. In addition the *tercios Consell de Cent* and *Generalitat* appeared at Girona (600 and 1,000 men respectively). And, 3,370 men were obtained from neighbouring Aragón; 2,600 more were requested. By the end of the panic, 13,000 men had been stuffed into the city.

Girona was certainly Noaïlles' next target. On June 3 he had received a letter from the King which superficially gave him the choice of his next assignment, but strongly hinted that Louis would like to see the reduction of Girona. Although the *Maréchal* had the same desire, there were difficulties.

First, Roses had to be put in a state of defense. Before that could be done it had to be thoroughly mucked out. For instance, the French discovered a store of 20,000 pounds of powder, all of it spoiled. Rather than let it go to waste Noaïlles had it shipped to the Perpignan powder mills to be 'cured'.

And, the Fleet disappeared. A formal siege of a city such as Girona would require 250,000 pounds of powder, 120,000 of lead, 30,000 bullets, 4,000 bombs, plus all sorts of tools. Without the fleet, it would be difficult to bring up

these materials fast enough. Convoy relays would be needed, each one heavily escorted, meaning few troops would be available to cover Girona. That would mean the enemy could reinforce and resupply at will.

The galleys had been left with the Army of Roussillon, but they had instructions to ferry 5 battalions to the Italian front, which was the third argument against laying siege to Girona this year. The Spanish had 13,000 men waiting for the French at the city and the *Maréchal* had only 12,000 foot and 5,400 horse to play with. These numbers were dropping daily, thanks to the hot summer and a shortage of food supplies. Lastly, the French would have to endure heat and rain in an open encampment, while the Spanish had the shelter of the city. These arguments convinced King Louis.

(D'Estrées left the Golfo de Roses on June 17, bound for Cap St. Vincent and a rendezvous with Anne Hilarion de Costentin, *comte* de Tourville, commander of the Atlantic Fleet. *Amiral* Tourville's ships had sailed from Rochefort (May 15) and Brest (May 26), in what the Sun King hoped was the greatest display of naval might France had yet put forth, partly to demonstrate their capability to brush off the heavy losses suffered at La Hogue in 1692. There were 71 'rated' ships and 3 fireships. On June 27 they ambushed the Allied Smyrna Convoy off Lagos, 130 Km northeast of Gibraltar – 400 merchantmen and 20 escorts under Admiral Sir George Rooke – and destroyed a good portion of it, though faulty execution allowed 18 of the escorts to escape and turned the ambush into a pursuit battle. Tourville chased the convoy as far as Málaga; during the chase, d'Estrées joined in. After this, the Combined Fleet of 88 (in some sources, 93) ships sailed to Roses.)

[Lopez says d'Estrées left on June 28, Lynn on June 17. This seems a clear case of mixing Old and New Style dates. Since the Navy left shortly after the siege was completed, Lopez must have made the slip, not Lynn.]

Noaïlles did not quit the field just because he felt the siege of Girona could not be undertaken. The French concentrated at Torroella de Fluvià and Sant Pere Pescador, both about 12 Km southwest of Roses, close to the coast. From here they could march on Girona, or Palamós, or even Castellfollit. Palamós, however, was the intended target.

A pause ensued. Prisoners were exchanged. A column of French cavalry coursed as far as Madremanya, by way of Bàscara and Sant Jordi Desvalls. The Spanish cavalry trounced them at Sant Jordi, taking 60 POWs and leading the Constable of Castile to praise the Spanish *caballeros* as 'the terror of the French'. But, on July 9, the French bested them in turn when a lieutenant colonel Vandeuil led 100 horse and 60 dragoons in a charge that broke 5 enemy squadrons who had been supported by 5 more squadrons. The French retired with few losses while the Spanish suffered 40 killed and many wounded.

[These villages are all near Girona. Madremanya is 11 Km to the East, Sant Jordi is 15 Km to the Northeast on the left bank of the Ter, and Bàscara is 21 Km to the Northeast.]

With the return of the Fleet, Noaïlles was ready to act. The Spanish had concentrated their own fleet at Port Mahon – 21 warships and 19 galleys – from where it would be easier to catch the wind and intercept the French, but Tourville's forces were far too strong. Noaïlles agreed that Tourville should take 20 of his best ships to intimidate Barcelona while the rest supported the siege of Palamós.

This sally against the city was more subtle than the last. Instead of making a bombardment, Tourville, knowing there were many former *Barretines* in and around the city whom the French hoped to recruit, simply sailed into the harbour and paid a 'courtesy call' on the Governor. He asked for a 'gift' for his officers, which was paid, and sailed away, leaving the Spanish 'covered in shame'. Fortunately for Medina Sidonia, he was not present. However, Tourville's coup only frightened the Catalans.

At the last minute the siege of Palamós was postponed. The Savoyards were making a grim effort to take the Alpine fortress of Pinerolo and Noaïlles was forced to send away 12 squadrons of horse. On August 10, therefore, the French withdrew to the border, and on August 12 they went into quarters around Le Boulou. The *Maréchal* reported that a stay of two days more in the Empordà would have crippled his army. His troops were enervated. Pack animals had been dying from the heat and even the acclimatised locals were seen to be abandoning their villages for the hills. A strong garrison was left in Roses. Depôts were maintained at Collioure and at Figueres. In mid-September, Tourville sailed for Brest.

[Noaïlles determined that an average campaigning season could only run from mid-April to July. Curiously, an early start was also beneficial from the point of view of forage, because the Empordà was already producing crops at that time, while Roussillon remained bare.]

Military wisdom advocated living off the enemy, but this had been done with kid gloves in Catalonia, for fear of alienating the populace. Though he had secured much of the Empordà, and though he himself suggested living off the country, Noaïlles would infinitely have preferred drawing supplies from home. But, 1693 was the year of the Great Famine in France. It was neither possible to supply his men from France nor supply them *in* France. This would

cause a dangerous shift of policy in 1694. Meanwhile, he proposed buying supplies from the Catalans without imposing any duty.

Relations with the locals were already beginning to deteriorate, making such a plan difficult to implement. The famine compounded a financial crisis, which itself exacerbated the habitual attitudes of the new War Minister and his creatures in the Army, all of whom seem to have been obsessed with amassing either personal *gloiré* or wealth, whether at the expense of the enemy or their own troops. This led to a breakdown of discipline and a number of soldier-civilian 'incidents'. These were more severe because Noaïlles had recruited large numbers of Huguenots into his militia (to take them out of circulation in Languedoc) and the Huguenots thought nothing of watering their horses at Catholic baptismal fonts and sweeping altar ornaments into their knapsacks. Or, for that matter, of raping nuns.

The Spanish Army made no attempt to chastise the enemy for such atrocities. While the French were in his country, the Viceroy thought only of collecting men and distributing them among his garrisons. But once the French were gone, the tortoise stuck out his head.

[Apart from the main concentration at Girona, his troops were spread among Tarragona (on the coast, 80 Km southeast of Barcelona), Palamós, Castellfollit, and Berga. Medina Sidonia had force-marched with 2,200 foot and 5 trozos of horse to Barcelona on learning of Tourville's visit of extortion; these remained in garrison there.]

The Viceroy hoped to retake part of Cerdanya before the end of the season. Roses was held under observation by troops from Girona, based at Castelló d'Empúries, 9 Km to the West. Medina Sidonia placed himself at Esponellà, a village on the right bank of the Fluvià, 22 Km north of Girona, until September 24. The army then marched up the Fluvià by Besalú (9 Km to the West) and Olot, then to Sant Pau and Camprodon.

Officially, the Spanish intended to strike at Bellver, though their actions seem to indicate they were looking for any opportunity to make an easy gain. Anticipating an attack at either Bellver or Prats de Mollo, Noaïlles, with great difficulty, moved to Prades on the Tét, dispatching reinforcements to various border posts. For this operation he had about 11,000 foot and 2,000 horse.

Medina Sidonia made a two-day forced march up to Camprodon but found the heights above Prats de Mollo already held against him. Establishing a magazine, he marched to Ribes de Freser. Noaïlles anticipated him by marching around to Puigcerdà. This was not to the liking of the Spanish. The main body of the French lay in front of them at Puigcerdà. Noaïlles was about 6 hours distant, bringing up additional battalions. The forces at Prats de Mollo, of unknown strength, lay behind them and near to their depôt. On top of it all, the Spanish could not get their guns over the passes leading to Puigcerdà. Medina Sidonia called a council of war and it was decided to retreat. Only the *marqués* de Conflans objected, but he had no veto power. The *Consell de Cent* later asked why Medina Sidonia had not used his men to try something more practical, like retaking Roses.

The Spanish fell back first to Camprodon, where they disposed of their supplies, then to Berga, after which they dispersed into winter quarters, on October 10. The French followed suit. Significantly, this year the Spanish did not follow their habit of disbanding their provincial forces – the news from the Italian front was bad and it was feared the French might begin the campaign of 1694 early.

[Losses to the French this year totalled 2,000 men, mostly due to general attrition.]

Over the winter, the Spanish Court and Spanish Society still remained divided in its opinions. There were, however, a great many more calls for seeking a separate peace. At the other end of the spectrum, demands for a stronger military presence in Catalonia also grew. Practical measures adopted were few. As an instance of this, Lopez describes how in November the *Consejo de Estado* (Council of State; the supreme Castilian governing council) held a lengthy debate on whether to send 1,000 men to Italy or Catalonia. He points out that 1,000 men would make little difference in Italy and a great deal of difference in Catalonia, nevertheless it took a long time for the Council to make up its mind.

If Madrid was confused, Catalonia's neighbours, Aragón and Valencía, were not. They saw themselves next on France's list. The question for them, however, was whether to concentrate on their own defenses or send troops to aid the Catalans.

Median Sidonia was replaced at the end of 1693. The decision to abandon the operation against Bellver, which had cost over one million *reales*, much of which had come out of the King's personal budget, was the final straw. The *marqués* de Conflans did not get the job of Viceroy. Instead, it went to the *duque* de Escalona y *marqués* de Villena, formerly Viceroy of Aragón. Escalona was familiar with the situation, having served in Catalonia since 1689 as a *general de la caballería*. It was a toss-up between him and Conflans, who was regarded by some (particularly the Queen) as the better soldier.

Anne Hilarion de Costentin, *comte* de Tourville (1642-1701)

Born in Paris, though his family came from Normandy (near Coutances), Tourville fought his first battle in the service of the Knights of Malta, aged 17. He joined the French Navy at 25, fighting in the Franco-Dutch War. He commanded a ship (the *Syrene*) at the Battle of Agosta. In 1676 he served under *lieutenant général* (vice admiral) Duquesne. He was promoted to *amiral* in 1690 and commanded at the Battle of Beachy Head (1690), which he won, La Hogue (1692), which was inconclusive, and Cape St. Vincent (1693), which was a convoy battle. The same year he was made *maréchal de France*. From 1693-1697 he commanded in both the Med and the Atlantic, but primarily supported French operations in Spain and Italy. He retired in 1697, a national hero.

Fureur Française – The Campaign of 1694

Peace was in the air. Holland was making the most noise, and though it was unlikely she would quit with King William at the helm (he hated King Louis), the House of Orange did not have full control of the Dutch Estates, or the English Parliament, for that matter. But, some of the noise might have been amplified by William, in an attempt to get the Emperor, happily romping through Turkish Hungary, to pay more attention to serious business.

In Madrid, all they could see was a fracturing alliance. Should not Spain beat the Dutch to the punch by surrendering first? Given the current situation – stagnation after five years of grinding attrition, there was not one member of the Alliance that would not try it. The French were also suffering and would be glad to accept. But Spain had no cards to play against France. It would actually be better to threaten peace in order to gain support from the Alliance for continuing the war than to try and bluff the Sun King into giving good terms.

French strategy helped. King Louis chose (in hopes of wooing Holland) to maintain a defensive posture in the Low Countries and distributed his troops to the other fronts, including Catalonia. This was bad for Spain in the short term, but it did mean the Allies were prepared both to reduce their demands on the Spanish Netherlands, allowing the transfer of 2,000 men (out of 10,000 requested), and to send aid of their own to Iberia. Especially, they would send a combined fleet.

For his campaign this year, *maréchal* Noaïlles was permitted 30 battalions and 59 squadrons – 15,000 foot and 6,000 horse. To aid him, 4 *lieutenant généralS*, 5 *méstre de camp*, and 12 brigadiers were appointed. Even so, the enemy was estimated to be stronger by at least a third. Moreover, the French Army was underfunded. The Treasury was empty and the troops were issued vouchers in lieu of pay. The *Maréchal* and his officers met some expenses out of their own pockets, and loans were taken out at Toulouse. As a stop-gap, the King imposed extraordinary taxes and awarded some tax contracts, but Noaïlles suggested the edicts be suspended while he was busy during the campaigning season, or he would have no means of keeping the tax farmers of his provinces in check.

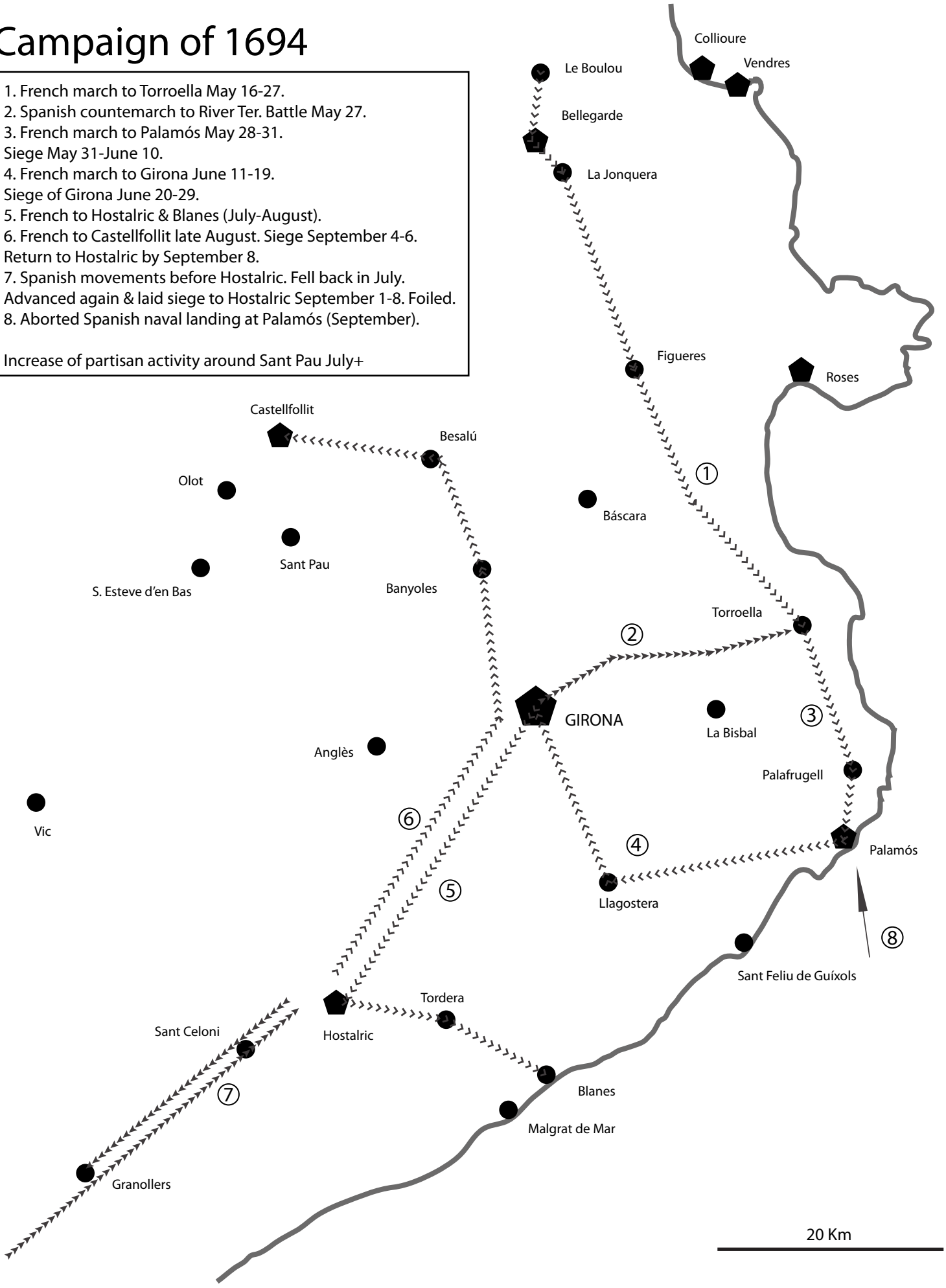
[In the sources, Noaïlles is credited with only 46 squadrons at the outset of the campaign, but had 59 squadrons at the Battle of the Ter. The discrepancy is not accounted for in the sources. Either the number 46 ignores patrolling regiments that were summoned at the last minute, or it ignores late reinforcements. Or, possibly, it is based upon an assumption of 3 squadrons maximum per regiment (a 'traditional' value among historians), when the maximum was really 4 squadrons per regiment.]

Cooperation with the fleet was slow in coming, but Tourville eventually sailed from Toulon with 45 ships, to be joined by a further 60 ships of the Brest fleet under *chef d'escadron* François Louis de Rousselet, *marquis* de Châteaurenault.

Campaign of 1694

1. French march to Torroella May 16-27.
2. Spanish countemarch to River Ter. Battle May 27.
3. French march to Palamós May 28-31.
Siege May 31-June 10.
4. French march to Girona June 11-19.
Siege of Girona June 20-29.
5. French to Hostalric & Blanes (July-August).
6. French to Castellfollit late August. Siege September 4-6.
Return to Hostalric by September 8.
7. Spanish movements before Hostalric. Fell back in July.
Advanced again & laid siege to Hostalric September 1-8. Foiled.
8. Aborted Spanish naval landing at Palamós (September).

Increase of partisan activity around Sant Pau July+



Though the campaign of 1694 would fail of its ultimate objective, the year yielded some unqualified successes for France. Action along the border was reduced to partisan scuffling, but the port of Palamós, south of Roses, would fall, shortening French supply lines and allowing a successful siege of Girona; the French would then march to within 20 Km of Barcelona. But first, the protagonists would fight the only major battle to take place in Catalonia during the war. Things would not be all bad for the Spanish, however. Trobat's 'hearts and minds' policy would be shelved in favour of a more typical occupation regime, ultimately sparking a popular uprising against the French that would only intensify as the years passed.

The new Viceroy, Escalona, at first refused his appointment, fearing he would suffer the fate of his predecessors, and insisted strenuously that he receive more money, more materiel, and more men. Of money and material there was none. It was hard even to live off the Principality now that the French controlled the Empordà. The last request was tricky but theoretically possible. He was promised 10,000 veteran German troops. He got 10 *tercios* of conscripts.

Escalona spent the winter in preparation to meet a major French offensive. He overestimated enemy strength at 20-22,000 foot and 5-6,000 horse. A major recruiting drive was launched. 12 companies of locals were raised and incorporated into the *tercios de la Generalitat* (8 companies) and *de la Consell de Cent* (4 companies). This brought these two *tercios* to full strength, at 2 battalions of 600 men each. More reinforcements were obtained from elsewhere during April and May: from Castile, six *tercios*, emergency levies of dubious utility (they were composed of 'old men and boys'); the *tercios* of Granada, arriving by sea at Palamós; a 1,000-man Neapolitan *tercio*, which was unusual, because the Neapolitan Army typically served as a manpower reserve for the Army of Milán; 3,000 more men from unspecified locations. On paper, the Army of Catalonia would soon number 20,000 foot and 5,000 horse.

[The tercio de la Consell de Cent i*s not recorded in the various ordered of battle. Either it was a city militia unit, or an alternate name. The Spanish had an irritating habit of giving units and ships multiple names. It should also be noted that modern sources, and even those dating from the 18th Century, sometimes use the name of a tercio's descendant formation, which can on occasion be the same name as a complete different unit from the period being studied.]*

Additional artillery was requested for Barcelona and Peniscola (on the Castellón coast, well south of the war zone). The defences of Barcelona were repaired, including two of the bastions and the moat. The city of València's citadel was also scheduled to be strengthened.

On the economic front, Escalona issued draconian regulations against trading with the enemy, a common malpractice that was transferring both essential supplies and hard cash to the French.

Torroella, or the Battle of the Ter, May 27 1694

Noaïlles had no intention of allowing the Spanish time to turn their raw numbers into an effective force. Assembling at Le Boulou on May 15, he exited the Col de Perthus May 17, two days after Escalona received his last batch of reinforcements. The French halted at La Jonquera on May 18. The advance guard, 34 squadrons and 20 field guns, camped along a 3 Km east-west line between Santa Llogaia d'Àlguema and the village of Borrassà. From here, they moved east along the Riu Fluvià to Sant Pere Pescador, on the left bank of the river near the sea, a march of 12 Km. Here they threw two bridges over the river and were joined by Tourville off the coast, transporting the siege train.

On May 21, Escalona was at Girona, expecting that city to be Noaïlles' goal. Unlike the previous Viceroy, he intended to be proactive and march to intercept Noaïlles.

On May 23, after learning of the French dispositions, Escalona took his army from Girona down the Ter River to Foxà (Foixa), 16 Km northeast of the city. His forces consisted of 11,900 foot and 4,000 horse in 29-30 *tercios* and 42 squadrons (or 7 *trozos*), plus 3-400 mounted *migueletes*. Ten of the foot units were the new 'provincial' *tercios* hastily raised for this campaign and rushed to Catalonia as fast as possible. A couple of these had 2 battalions, meaning 12 battalions, or close to 40% of his infantry, was completely untrained. The rest included the 10 battalions of the original Provincials, about the same number of regional militia from the Principality and its neighbours, and some battalions of Italian and German troops.

The Provincials and also the militia were well understrength, meaning the percentage of raw troops was in actuality much higher. The best units, too, would be placed at the wrong end of the battle line. Escalona's other weaknesses were in artillery – he only had 8 cannon out of a reported 12 field guns available – and a shortage of equipment, including carbines for the cavalry; letters of credit that would have rectified this problem did not arrive until after the impending battle.

Noaïlles faced him with 59 squadrons, 30 battalions composed primarily of solid line formations fleshed out with *milices provinciales*, and a least 20 guns, professionally manned.

On May 24 the Spanish arrived south of the river opposite Verges, a town 13 Km south of the foe. This was a short march, of 4 Km; the rest of the day was spent preparing the defensive line. The Viceroy chose to deploy along the length of the river, from the crossing at Verges to the last crossing downstream, at Torroella de Montgrí, a front of nearly 7 Km.

The Ter is a significant obstacle here. It is wide, with a sandy bottom that shifts, and water that was at that time of year waist-deep. The southern bank is higher than the northern; both banks were sandy and covered with thick undergrowth. Since there were no bridges, crossings could only be made at fords. There were four of these: opposite Verges, Torroella, Ullà (a little way to the west of Torroella) and at a stone weir about halfway between Verges and Ullà. The weir, whose principal job was to divert water into a canal, slowed the flow of the river below it. There was a mill associated with the canal at this spot.

The Canal de Moli, leaving the Ter at the mill, flowed in a southeasterly direction until it reached the village of Gualta, which lies opposite Torroella about 1,000 metres south of the river. Here it split, recombining on the other side of the village and continuing off the battlefield. The canal was about 6 metres wide, muddy, and deep. It was bridged in four places, at Gualta, at the confluence with the Ter, about midway along, and again about midway between the central bridge and the one at Gualta. All the bridges were narrow.

[Noaïlles' memoirs only note two bridges; perhaps the French only crossed the canal at two of the bridges.]

The Spanish did not entrench along the entire length of the river; their ranks would have been incredibly thin. They constructed redoubts at each ford with lines of trenches extended on each side, manned by musketeers. The bulk of the *tercios* were brigaded as local reserves. This was a common tactic for such positions. The cavalry was arranged in the gaps between the infantry, and on each flank of the line. From the point of view of an attacker crossing at one of the fords, the entrenchments appeared 'three stories high'. Since the banks created ravines at each ford, an attacker would be funnelled between these dominating positions.

In case the French tried to slip past upriver, on May 25 Escalona sent several *trozos* of horse across to Verges, covered by a battery of 5 guns. There was not so much danger of an outflanking move happening downstream, since the sea was near. Torroella is backed by the hill of Montgrí, a steep, bare rock, but any force attempting to move behind the hill to come out near the river's mouth would become entangled in rough country. West of Verges there is some open country before the land becomes rolling hills. However, the best place to cross the Ter was where the Viceroy had entrenched.

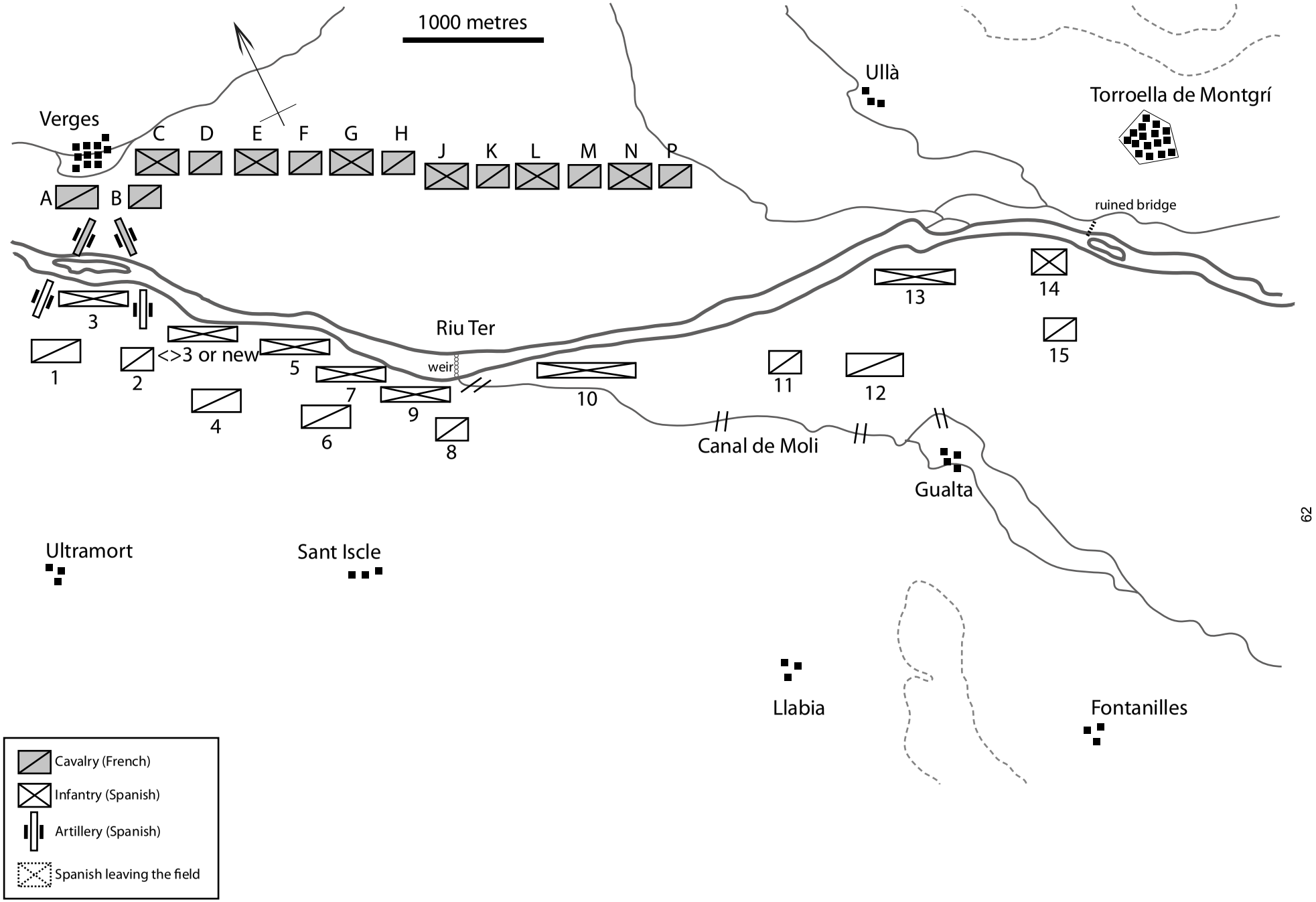
On May 26 the French crossed the Fluvià and approached the Ter. Scouts confirmed the Spanish were dug in on the far bank. Noaïlles rode ahead and mounted the hill of Montgrí to observe and make his plan. He saw that the crossing at Verges was the best, but deemed it too dangerous. He decided to feint there, first sending a detachment to drive the Spanish out of Verges; the enemy withdrew without resisting and recrossed the Ter. Next, he deployed his batteries in front of Verges, as if they were to support a crossing there. The main body of the army, which arrived late in the day, arranged itself in a mixed line of cavalry and infantry from Verges to a spot just below the weir; there is a small stream that enters the Ter at this point on the northern bank, marking a suitable boundary.

Escalona posted himself and his guns at the Verges ford in readiness, but about 10pm, under cover of dark and a thick river fog, Noaïlles shifted the weight of his forces over to his left, opposite the fords of Torroella, Ullà, and the stone weir.

The attack began at dawn, which on May 27 1694 was at 4:30am. The fog had not yet lifted. While assembling, the French began to come under heavy fire; their own artillery, angled from the right, could not see to shoot. Noaïlles was making a last-minute investigation of the Ullà ford, where he intended that the *comte* de Coigny should lead a detachment, when his troops by Torroella spontaneously charged, three 'brigades' of mounted carabiniers and a body of converged grenadiers dashing madly across 50 yards of open water. He could hear Spanish bands playing and the ripple of enemy volleys. On the far bank, the carabiniers rode straight into the entrenchments, followed by the grenadiers hurling their bombs. Behind them came two regiments of dragoons, the dismounted Jacobite *Régiment de Reine d'Angleterre* and that of *La Salle*.

[The maps are sketchy on unit positions once the battle was joined. As shown on the second map, the French crossed at each ford more or less in order, leading from the left, but some of the assault forces came from the far right of the French line – especially the Carabiniers. The presence of Reine d'Angleterre *and* La Salle *suggests their respective brigades were in the van.* Las Salle's *was on the extreme left of the French line anyway, but* Reine d'Angleterre *was originally posted on the extreme right. The Carabinier brigades were each equivalent to a regiment in size.]*

The ford at Torroella was defended by 3 *tercios*: at the ford itself, *Casco de Granada* – a militia unit that had been in service for most of the war*;* in support, two of the new provincial *tercios* raised for this campaign, that of *Nuevo Valladolid* (1 out of 2 battalions) and that of *Nuevo Toledo.* Both were slightly upriver from the ford. The infantry were



Battle of Torroella (Battle of the Ter) May 27 1694
Initial Positions (pre-dawn)

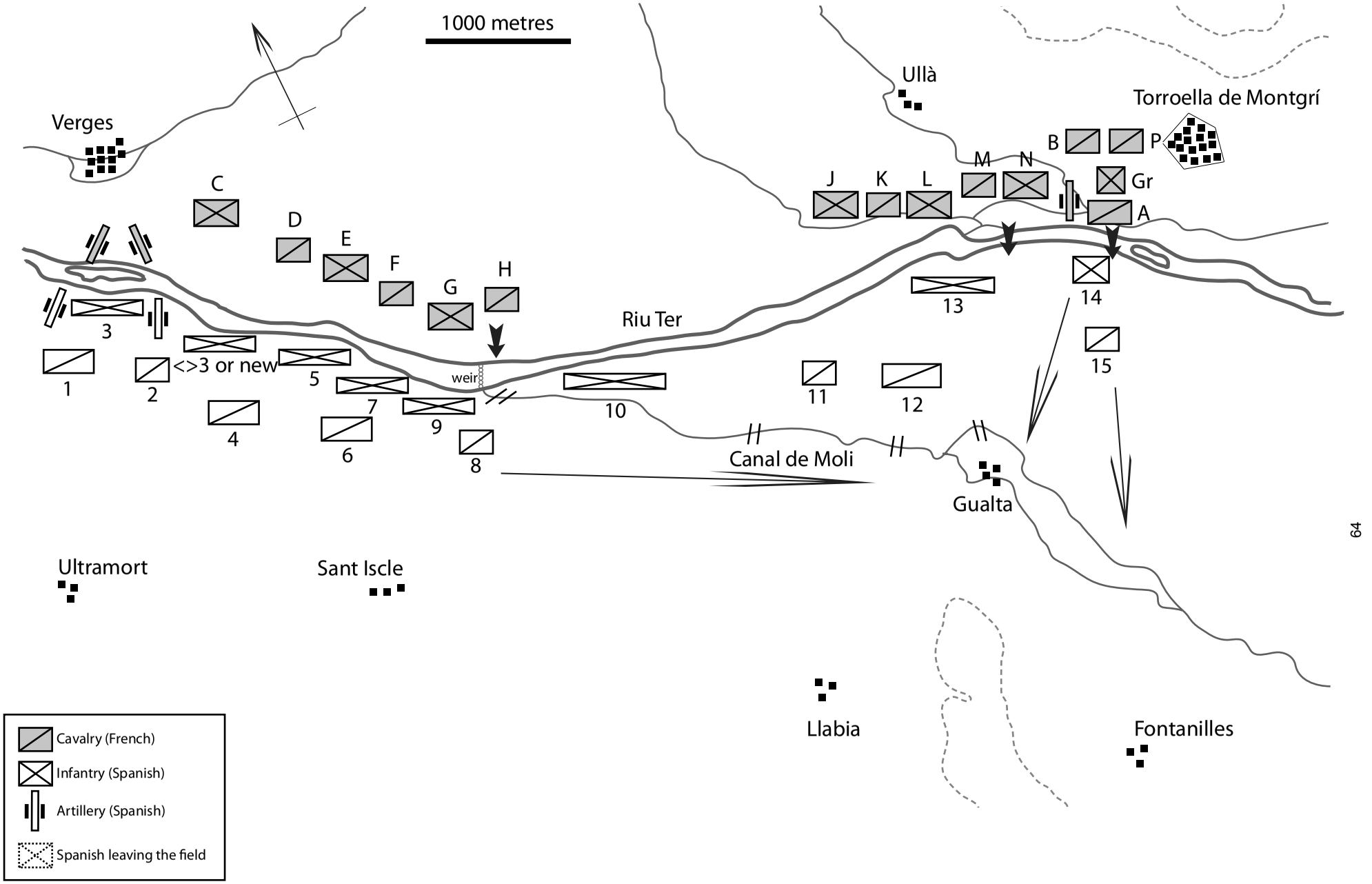
Torroella Battle Unit Key

French

A. Brigade de Courcelle: Carabiniers Royale (5 very large sqn)
B. Brigade de Cambout: Bretagne Dragoons, Wartigny Dragoons, Du Breuil Dragoons, Reine d'Angleterre Dragoons (4 sqn each)
C. Brigade de Sault: Sault x3 bn, Noaîlles x1 bn, Vogue Languedoc Milice x1 bn.
D. Brigade de Noaïlles: Marquis de Noaïlles (Brionne or technically Broglie) & Duc de Noaïlles Horse (4 sqn each)
E. Brigade d'Erlach: Erlach x4 bn, La Bastide Milice x1 bn
F. Brigade de Le Gall: Le Gall & de Vienne Horse (4 sqn each)
G. Brigade de Vaubecourt: Dillon x2 bn, Famechon x1 bn, Vaubecourt x2 bn
H. Brigade de Bercourt: Bercourt Horse (2 sqn), Courlandon Horse (4 sqn)
J. Brigade de Touraine: Touraine x1 bn, Caixon Milice x1 bn, La Garde Milice x1 bn, Leisler x2 bn
K. Brigade de Narbonne: Narbonne Horse (2 sqn), Vendeuil Horse (4 sqn)
L. Brigade de Sourche: Sourche x1 bn, Chelleberg x3 bn, Bournazel Milice x1 bn
M. Brigade de Sibourg: Sibourg Horse (4 sqns), Bientz (Bains) Horse (2 sqn)
N. Brigade de Alsace: Alsace x4 bn, Noaïlles Roussillon Milice x1 bn
P. Brigade de La Salle: La Salle & Morsan Dragoons (4 sqn each)
Artillery x20 guns

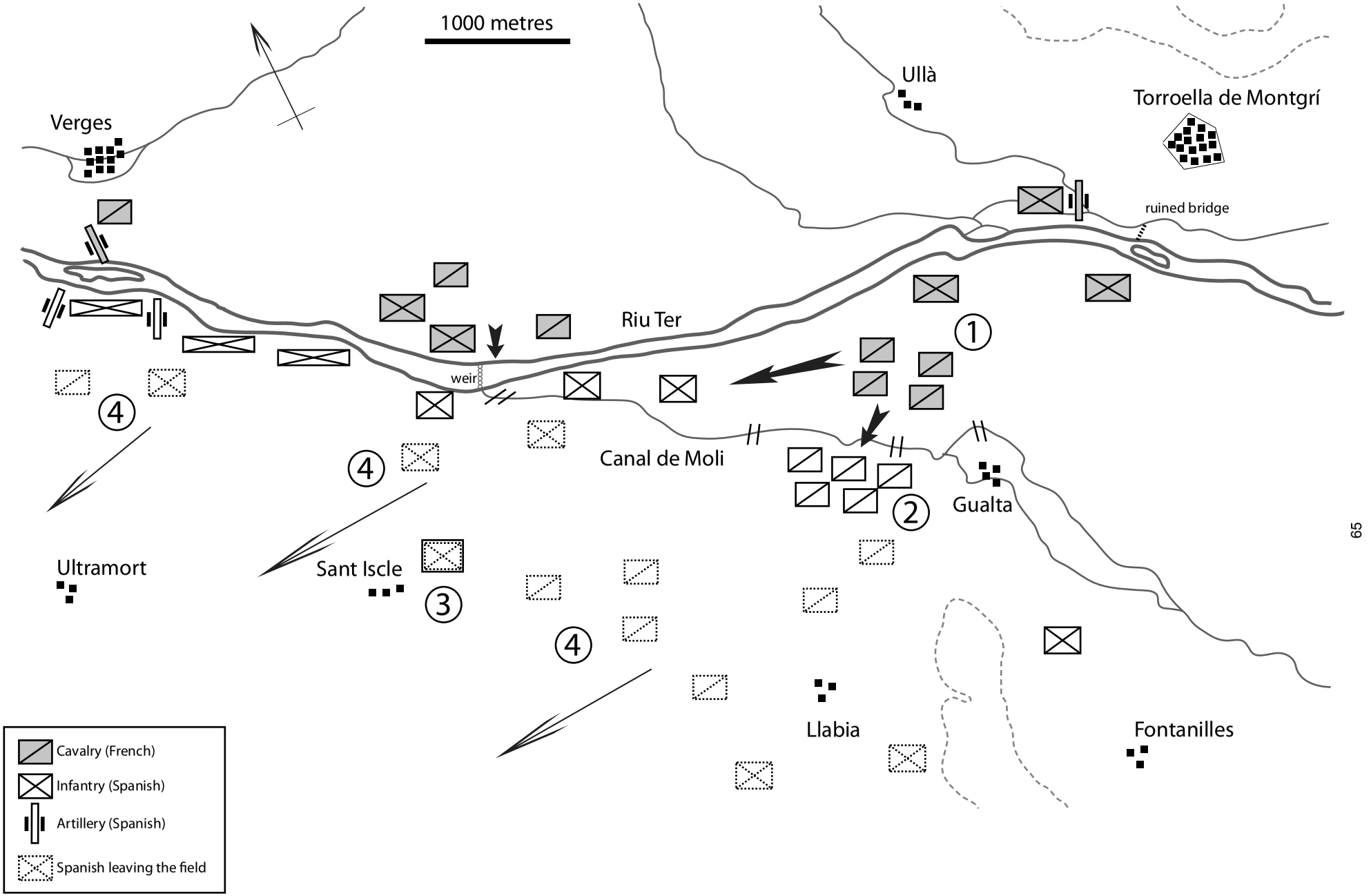
Spanish

1. Gardes de Virrey Arquebusiers & Extremadura Horse (7 sqn total)
2. Alemanes Horse (5 sqn)
3. Tercios: Nuevo Amarillo, Amarillos Viejo, Azules Veijo
4. Osuña & Rossillon Horse (8 sqn total)
5. Tercios: Collarados Viejo, Ciudad de Barcelona x2, Diputación de Catalunya, Verdes Veijos
6. Valones & Osuña Horse (8 sqn total)
7. Tercios: Cabrera, Valencia, Jaen(?), Mastrotuccio, Beck
8. Gardes de Marqués de Conflans de Catalunya (2 sqns migueletes)
9. Tercios: Pignatelli, Aragón?, Nuevo Colorados, Nuevo Sevilla, Costa de Granada
10. Tercios: Nuevo Burgos x2, "Torres" (?), Nuevo Segovia, Nuevo Azules, Cuenca
11. Gardes de Marqués de Conflans de Catalunya (2 sqns migueletes)
12. Milán Horse (6 sqns), Ordenes Horse (4 sqn).
13. Nuevo Valladolid (a), Vecchio de Nápole, Morados Veijo, Aragón, Ciudad de Castilla, Nuevo Valladolid (b), Nuevo Toledo
14. Tercio de Casco de Granada
15. Veijo Dragoons (6 sqn)



Battle of Torroella (Battle of the Ter) May 27 1694

The French cross the river 4:30am: beginning downstream, then at Ullà, then at the weir.
The ford guards retreat, Spanish left tries to support.



Battle of Torroella (Battle of the Ter) May 27 1694: Final Stages

French clear area between river and canal (1); Spanish countercharge (2);
stand of the Old Purples (3); rout of the Spanish (4)

supported by 16 squadrons of horse and dragoons (*Viejo* dragoons on the right and the brigade of *Milán* and *Ordenes* on the left). Functioning as mounted infantry, the dragoons were more of a 'rapid reaction' reserve than a force for counterattacking. The infantry put up a fierce fight but when the Spanish cavalry charged the French and was repulsed the Carabiniers broke through, after a dramatic sword fight between the c*hevalier* de Courcelles and a Spanish squadron commander.

After this point the descriptions become a little confused, like the action itself. Basically, the French began rolling up the Spanish line. They scattered the enemy infantry on the eastern side of the canal, most of these fleeing to the West, but some to the South. *Maréchal* Noaïlles, coming across right behind the leading troops, and assisted by the generals Chazeron, Quincy, and Saint Silvestre, brought his cavalry onto the plain and shook them out. The *comte* de Coigny brought up some infantry by the Ullà ford, which he had cleared of enemy. At the stone weir the crossing proceeded slowly, as the Spanish still held this part of the line with at least some units. No action took place at Verges: the French had only cannon (much of which had been redeployed to Torroella) and a light screen, while the Spanish were beginning to dribble away. Most of the latter's cavalry was pulled together and shifted over to the canal to make a counterattack.

The French could see this force approaching across the plain to the West, on the far side of the canal. It is not clear if the Spanish actually did make a charge, but the evidence is against it. The French sources speak only of them withdrawing in haste, and of the French being unable to cross the canal fast enough to catch them. Most likely, the Spanish expected to cross the canal while their Foot continued to resist at the fords, allowing them time to redeploy into line. Upon seeing their infantry in flight and realising they could not cross the bridges without being attacked in the process, they withdrew, though they could have remained on the near side of the canal, threatening the French with a riposte in mirror image of the one they avoided.

Turning west, the French cavalry swept across the whole width of the plain between the Ter and the canal, overrunning any infantry that tried to stand. They crossed the central bridges over the canal, but the delay involved allowed the enemy cavalry to escape.

While Coigny pursued the foe with several small detachments as far as Foxà, the *La Salle* and *Reine d'Angleterre* dragoons clashed with a body of foot occupying a hamlet on the plain, most likely Sant Iscle d'Empordà, which is on higher ground. The defenders were the *tercios de Morados Viejo* (the Old Purples) and the Catalonian *de la Generalitat,* rallied by Don Josep Boneu, *maestre de campo* (colonel) of the latter. Noaïlles led two charges against them before they routed. Their sacrifice allowed the bulk of the infantry to get off the field. Most of the men of these two *tercios* also escaped, by clambering through a hedge and over a ditch. They could not save Escalona's baggage train, however, to the delight of the French, who seized his papers and war chest.

[The Old Purples survived the battle, but a sister unit, the Viejos Colorados*, or Old Reds of Madrid, was captured during the siege of Girona. The new Provincial* tercio de Ciudad de Castilla*, a unit that performed well from this point on, took its place on the roll of Provincial* tercios.*]*

The battle was over by 11am – and this includes the 20 Km pursuit almost to the gates of Girona, wither the entire Spanish Army fled. According to the Viceroy, the Spanish lost 2,931 foot and 324 horse. 140 officers were taken prisoner. The French claimed to have inflicted 9,000 casualties. Their own casualties amounted to 1,300 men, though claims as low as 500 exist. 16 Spanish colours were captured.

[Lynn cites 3,500 Spanish casualties and 2,200 POWs, who were sent by sea to Languedoc.]

Torroella was the only large battle of the war to take place in Spain. (The significance of the many minor actions that occurred is usually dismissed, yet on some of them turned the fate of that particular year's campaign.)

The reasons for the Spanish flight are quite simple. Escalona set up a decent blocking position, but his side of the river was bisected by the canal, and Noaïlles outmanoeuvred him. The high percentage of green Spanish units both prevented a quick response and made it more likely the army would fall apart. One also suspects the cavalry horses were not yet in condition for fighting. Leadership was certainly wanting, from Escalona on down. As would be revealed later in the war, some subordinate officers were opposed to the war, while others formed factions either for or against the current viceroy. There was still a strong 'Medieval Host' element to the Spanish Army in Spain. This was not the case in Flanders and Italy, where the armies kept abreast of the latest tactics and drills, and the regimental officers considered themselves professional soldiers.

Rather than continue the pursuit, Noaïlles encamped on the battlefield. His men, under direction of their officers in some cases, ravaged the villages on the banks of the river, looting churches and raping women. This was not on the *Maréchal's* orders, but a symptom of the general breakdown in discipline that was to come. Though the Spanish Army seems a shambles, the French were not exactly in peak condition, either.

Escalona left a strong garrison in Girona and retreated to Barcelona with the bulk of his forces. Here he remained throughout June, while calls for his replacement grew in volume. A debate was started over whether to evacuate Palamós and raze it; perhaps the same should be done with Girona. Others suggested the Viceroy throw all his infantry into the towns and campaign with a pure cavalry force. It was claimed this had been done successfully in Flanders (but that claim ignores the presence of large numbers of mobile Dutch, British, and German infantry regiments).

Palamós

Maréchal Noaïlles did not remain idle long. Marching south by way of Palafrugell (14 Km south of Torroella), on the night of May 29/30 his advance guard invested Palamós. Like Roses, this coastal town was fortified but under observation from high ground to the North. Unlike Roses, not much is left of the fortifications today. Palamós was intrinsically a much stronger place than Roses, but at the time the defences were considered unsatisfactory. Cut off by land and sea, the 2,716-man garrison would manage to hold out for 11 days, keeping up a continuous fire, that doubled in volume as the French established their own batteries.

The seafront of modern Palamós faces south. Midway along the seafront is a peninsula that juts southward, creating two bays. This peninsula rises significantly toward its southern tip. The original town lay on this peninsula, more specifically at its northern base, with the citadel at the southern, higher end.

A naval landing on the peninsula itself was only practicable at the harbour's mole, which was overlooked by cannon; the rest of the coast consisted of cliffs with rocks at the bottom. For this reason the three sides of the town facing the sea had only curtain walls, except for a small bastion covering the harbour. On the landward side there were what amounted to two-and-a-half bastions: a large one on the East, 'done up proper', a moderately strong one in the center, called the *baluarte* Faxina, which contained the Portal de Terra, or land gate, and a truncated redoubt on the West called the *baluarte* San Benito, where a marshy stream assisted the defence but made construction difficult.

The citadel was the usual star-shape, with a demi-lune facing north. Between the town and the citadel was a gap, so that each was separately enclosed. The town's harbour lay in the western bay, with a mole extending from the western end of the citadel's glacis. There was a postern gate into the town on this side, and a matching gate into the citadel.

Noaïlles began the siege on May 31, assisted by *Amiral* Tourville, who arrived late. The harbour was sealed by 30 ships and 40 galleys. The army encamped in a ring on the slopes of the surrounding hills, in a solid line from the beachfront in the West around to the North. On the eastern side, a set of high hills approached close to the town. Some regiments were camped here to cover the defiles.

[Tourville may have begun with only 9 warships and added more as the siege progressed. The siege train was on board ship, and the transports would have required escorts; the bulk of the fighting sail may have arrived as a separate body.]

On the first day, a battery of 3 guns was established on the Puig de las Creus. This was a hill on the eastern side of the town featuring three large crosses. Beside the cannon were 4 mortars. These all began hammering the Portal de Terra.

On June 1, a second 3-gun battery was established on the Puig de las Creus, and the first trench was opened.

That evening Noaïlles was almost killed. Headquartered at an inn, well within cannon range of the town, he was making ready for bed when the *maitre d'hotel* knocked on his door to give him his bill. A round-shot crashed through the wall, showering the *Maréchal* with stones and dropping straight on his bed.

On June 2, Noaïlles landed 5 guns from the fleet and emplaced them at the Puig de Sant Joan, a hill to the north of Puig de las Creus. Fire was concentrated against the western section of the defences. Thanks to their elevated position the guns could fire over the Portal de Terra.

On June 3 a battery was pushed forward to within 'pistol shot' of the San Benito bastion.

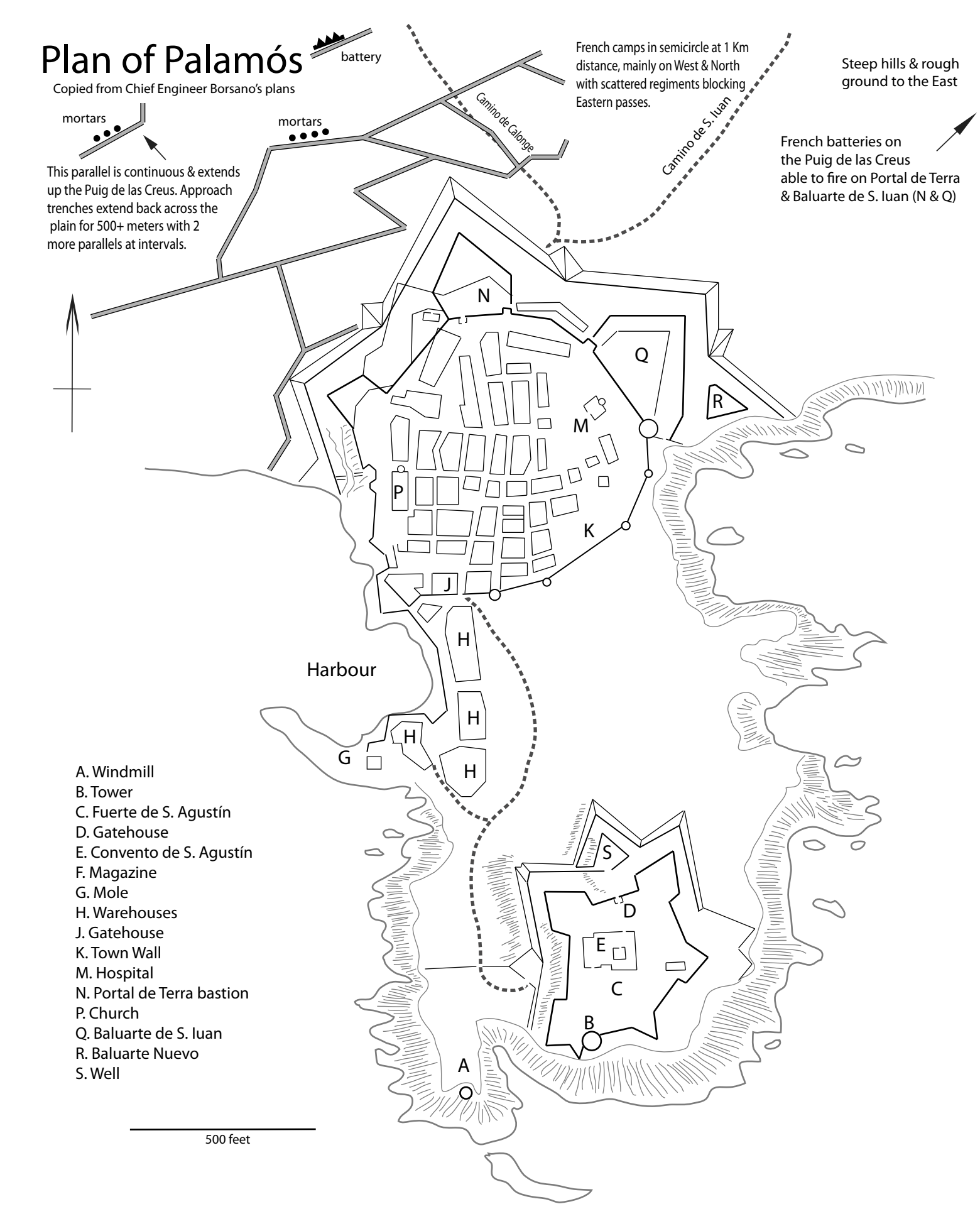
Between June 4 and June 5 communication trenches were dug, connecting the batteries. By the end of June 5 a breach 9 paces wide had been opened.

The Spanish countered with no less than five sallies against the French batteries, three of them obtaining tactical success, but many men took the opportunity to desert – 40 in one combat alone.

On June 6 the main assault commenced, led by the grenadiers and dismounted dragoons. The French swarmed the defenders, entering the town by both the breach and the Portal de Terra. The *Maréchal* himself commanded at the

Plan of Palamós

Copied from Chief Engineer Borsano's plans



breach. After a fierce fight among the narrow lanes, 27 of the garrison were killed, 200 wounded, and 600 surrendered. This left the citadel.

Its siege began on June 7 with a bombardment by 10 mortars and 5 cannon firing at pointblank range from the town's inner wall. By the end of June 9 a breach of 20 paces was created, and on the morning of June 10 the Governor surrendered. His request for honours of war was refused. After a delay of 8-10 hours the Governor agreed on full surrender, and he and his remaining men (1,400) became prisoners of war and were sent by sea to Roussillon.

[Lynn says there were 3,000 Spanish POWs, but the entire garrison did not match this number. 1,400 plus 600 casualties makes 2,000 out of the actual 2,700 men present. 200+ were wounded on June 6 alone. Most of the remaining men would probably have been sick. There is a slight discrepancy of one day in Lopez's chronology, substituting June 7 for June 6, and June 8 for June 7. The dates in Noaïlles' memoirs have been used here.]

Escalona was viciously attacked at Court for failing to even attempt a relief. He did not lack for manpower, they said, with 9 *tercios* at Barcelona, and a further 8 *tercios* (6 Spanish, 2 Italian), 2 auxiliary regiments, and 1 *trozo* of horse at Girona (5,000 foot and 5-600 horse). But, when the Viceroy claimed he could not take the field, he was probably correct. Morale was low and more than half the army needed basic training – the Governor of Palamós, Don Melchor de Avellandea, reported after the fall of that place that during the final bombardment the men of the *tercio Costa de Granada* had fired at their own officers.

[By a tremendous effort, upon the approach of the French the city of Girona raised and armed a regiment of 849 men in one day. Enthusiastic, but hardly battle-worthy.]

It was therefore decided, despite fierce ongoing debate, to maintain a purely defensive strategy, almost a null-strategy, of simply holing up in Girona and Barcelona. Cavalry columns would operate as they could. Critically, guerrilla forces such as the *somatén* were not drawn upon, perhaps because the rebellious nature of the regular troops was taken as an indication of the unreliability of the local populace, or perhaps because Escalona was of the Aragón nobility and distrusted them (and they him). Without the *somatén*, there was no way to interfere with the French supply lines.

Girona was next on Noaïlles' list. King Louis had at first insisted his *maréchal* bypass Girona and strike directly at Barcelona. When that city fell, Spain would capitulate. He even gave his *maréchal* a patent for the (French) viceroyalty of Catalonia. Noaïlles argued (June 14) that Girona was too strong a post to leave in his rear. With only 14,000 effectives (and they underpaid and with rations for only five days, and those aboard the fleet which had been unable to land anything at Roses for the last four days due to the weather) did not have enough men to mask it. They would be dependent on the Navy, which was likely to have enough to do now that the Alliance was sending a fleet to the Mediterranean. The Sun King saw the sense in this; later, after hearing that the Allied Fleet had halted its progress, he regretted a lost opportunity to end the southern war at a stroke.

Authorisation for the attack on Girona arrived on June 24. Noaïlles was already there.

Girona Deflowered

He had sent his irregular forces through the coastal hills of the Selvà region south of Girona, to Hostalric, on the Girona-Barcelona Road, demanding and receiving submission from the surrounding countryside. Primarily, they foraged for the army. To protect them, 3,000 regulars in 3 detachments were stationed in the Selvà until the work was done. The scavengers were merciless; post-war, *général* Saint-Silvestre, in charge of this work, was accused by *général* Du Bruehl of torpedoing the whole strategy of turning Catalonia against the Spanish monarchy. Saint-Silvestre may have been shortsighted, but he may have had little choice – France was enduring a severe famine and supplies had to be obtained locally or not at all. The main body of the Army arrived before Girona on June 19.

[Hostalric is 33 Km from Girona and 55 from Barcelona. There was a significant fortification here and the spot would become the scene of more than one siege.]

Girona was called the Virgin City. She had undergone 22 sieges and never fallen. This was not ancient legend. The most recent siege had been during the last war. Her garrison now numbered 5,000 men.

The city lies on the right bank of the Ter, in a gap some 10 Km wide between two regions of very rough country, and at a point where the river bends from east to north. The *Riu* Onyar flows up from the South to join the Ter at this bend, and the smaller *Riu* Galligants does likewise from the East. Most of the old city lay on the eastern bank of the Onyar. Across the Onyar lay the fortified suburb of Mercadal. The only decent road in the Principality, the Royal Road, ran through the city. Though an army could march on Barcelona direct from Palamós, any move inland would be through narrow passes, with Girona and its garrison on the right flank, and any move down the coast would be funnelled through a very narrow chute. Girona both bridged the Ter and served as a chokepoint on the only adequate route south. Even the Plana de Vic, to the West, runs into close country before reaching Barcelona.

Girona is dominated by a large hill to the East, immediately beyond the city precincts. This hill is an outcrop of the main coastal range. The key section of the hill is 1700 metres long and 700 metres wide, bounded by the Galligants to the North and the Onyar to the South. The hill features a number of high points and dips. Most of the dips run east to west. Each of the high points had some defensive works erected on it. In theory, the dips between them should have given the defenders an advantage, but in fact, taking one high point would allow an attacker to erect a battery capable of smashing the next strongpoint. Once the hill was in enemy hands the city was at the mercy of a besieger.

The Onyar requires some further description. It runs northeast across the plain south of the city, until it encounters the main massif east of the city. It then bends west, running through the Ribes del Riu Onyar, a gap in the hill dominating Girona, before running north again along the base of the hill into Girona and its confluence with the Ter. The section from the last bend to the city walls is only 500 metres long.

The French advance guard, travelling from Palamós via the Platja d'Aro, a gap in the hills west of that town, arrived before Girona's southern flank on June 17. On June 18 Noaïlles and the main French army reached Fornells de la Selvà, about 5 Km south of the city. On June 19 the main French camp was established at Vilobí d'Onyar, about 7 Km southeast from Fornells, on the far side of the Onyar.

On June 20 Girona was formally invested, though a few days were then spent making reconnaissance of the ground. The main goal was to establish a grand battery overlooking the city. And so, the French began to painstakingly conquer each of the hill forts. The ground was too rocky to dig trenches, so 'sangers' or walls were erected instead. On June 22, the first grand battery was unmasked, opposite the Convento de los Capuchinos. This was the southernmost strongpoint on the hill line, and the most difficult to take. The slope before it is extremely steep and rocky – terraced, in fact – with numerous cliff faces. Before it, the Onyar flows west through the Ribes del Riu Onyar, a deep cut in the earth. South of the river lies another hill, about 450 metres away between peaks, and on this hill the French erected their grand battery.

Under heavy bombardment, the Spanish abandoned the compound and the French occupied it. 4 mortars were carried up to the Convent and began to bombard the Carmen Bastion, which lay in the valley below, at the Southeast corner of the city.

[The accounts do not describe how the Onyar was crossed, but it was probably bridged by the engineers at the point where it exited the ravine and bent north.]

The first trench was opened on June 24, the day the Sun King's orders were received. They began by connecting the Convent with the next objective, the Condestable *Fuerte* ((Constable Fort). This lay on the extreme right of the Spanish fortifications, as the French viewed them, opposite the Convent, and was connected with a lesser redoubt on a knob to the left, overlooking the city, call the Ciudad *Fuerte* (City Fort). A battery was erected to take the Ciudad under fire. Meanwhile, the trench network was extended around the base of the hill and down the hill from the Convent, then along the Onyar toward the Carmen Bastion.

On June 25 the city came under fire. A trench was dug between the Condestable and the redoubt, and a grand battery of 18 40-pounders was established on the slopes below the latter, but above the city's eastern wall. The Mercadal suburb across the Onyar was also struck. A 14-gun and 4-mortar battery established at the Convent was unmasked on June 26 to fire upon the Condestable Fort. By the end of the day a breach had been created in the fort.

On June 27 this breach was widened, and in the night the garrison withdrew, as did those of the Ciudad, and the Cabildo and Calvario forts, which were reserve positions. This cleared the hill of Spanish – the remaining forts were north of the Galligants and of no concern.

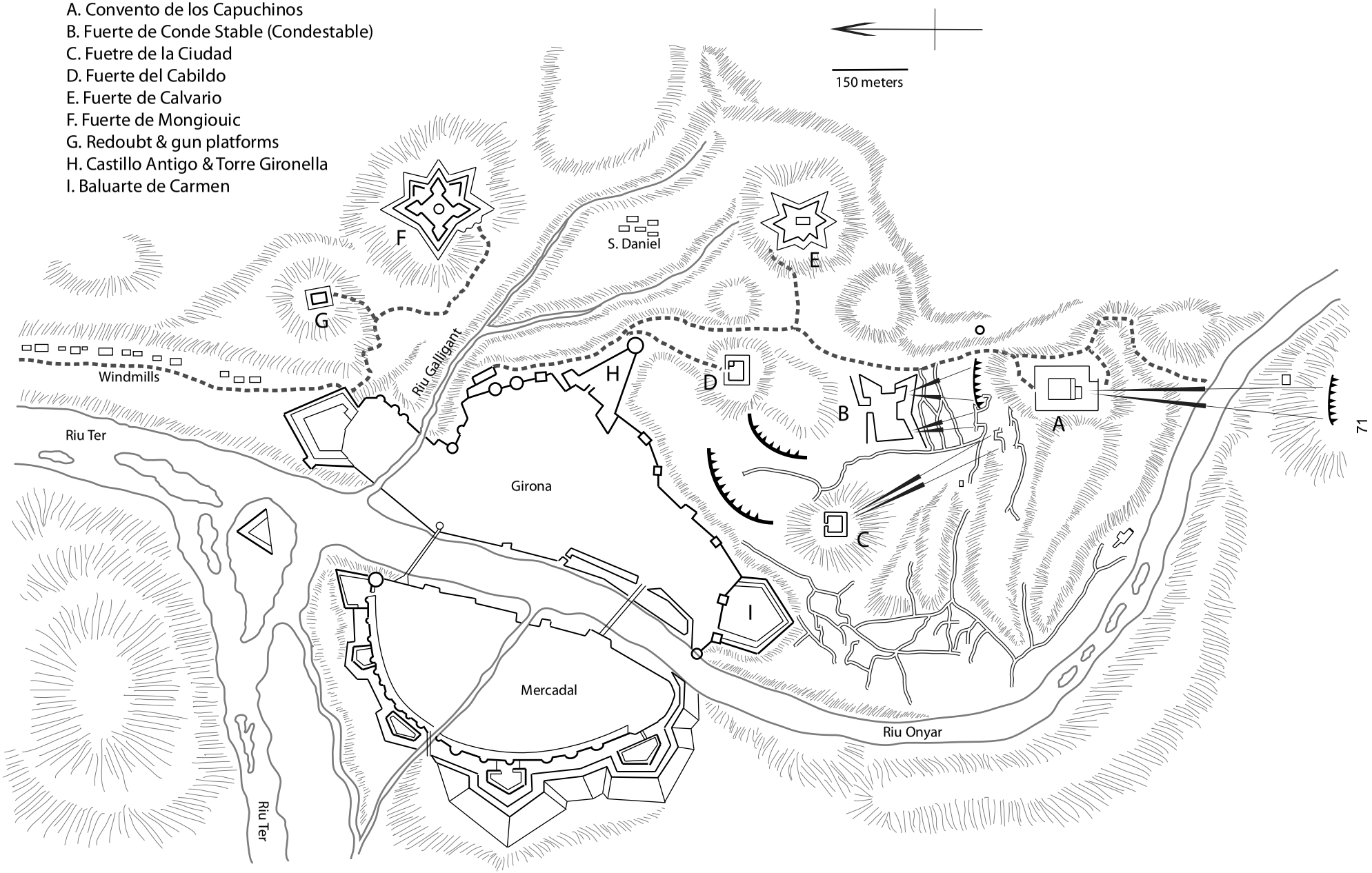
From the texts, it is not clear why a general evacuation was ordered. But, examining the French plan of the siege shows that they had penetrated all around the Spanish strongpoints and threatened to isolate them. The withdrawal was poorly managed, and many soldiers deserted. According to the *conde* de Montijo who was in the city during the siege, around 1,000 men were lost, some from the two German regiments that had been serving in Catalonia since 1689, but also the bulk of the *tercio de Napolitanos*. Surrounded, they may have had little choice. Montijo was a vocal opponent of Escalona,

[There were at least two Neapolitan tercios *serving in Catalonia. The one here could either be the Tercio de Napolitanos Viejos de Cataluña (Pignatelli's), or the Tercio de Napolitanos Carmignano. Probably, the other regiment served at Palamós (given that a street may have been named after it). The German regiments were* tercio de Christian del Beck *and* tercio de Cabrera.*]*

June 28 was a day of continuous bombardment. The French sappers dug up to the city wall by the Carmen Bastion and began opening a breach at the sap heads with 40-pounder shot. The Spanish command called a council of war. In the opinion of the chief engineer, Ambrosio Borsano, Girona's fall was immanent. Upon the news that mines had

Plan of Girona

A. Convento de los Capuchinos
B. Fuerte de Conde Stable (Condestable)
C. Fuetre de la Ciudad
D. Fuerte del Cabildo
E. Fuerte de Calvario
F. Fuerte de Mongiouic
G. Redoubt & gun platforms
H. Castillo Antigo & Torre Gironella
I. Baluarte de Carmen



Compiled from Chief Engineer Borsano's pre-siege map & French siege map of 1694.
Showing French trenches & grand battery positions.

been started, the garrison beat the *chamade* and the city capitulated on June 29. The French had lost a mere 60 men. The Spanish suffered 381 wounded; the record of the dead is not known, but was probably low.

[Borsano, Catalonia's senior military engineer, made sketches of various fortifications which are still extant and were used as source material. He also made prewar recommendations that were ignored.]

This time, the garrison was given honours of war, with the stipulation that it retire to Aragón and not return to the theatre of war until November – quite generous terms. Probably, such large numbers could not be dealt with as POWs. They were allowed personal baggage, but the city had to give up its silver and munitions, and Noaïlles requisitioned 300 horses which he gave to his officers in lieu of a monetary bonus.

There was a week's pause. On July 9 *Maréchal* Noaïlles revealed his patent and in a splendid ceremony was proclaimed Viceroy of Catalonia. Most of the population of Girona welcomed the French, asking only that the Castilians not be allowed to return. They agreed to pay taxes to France and not Spain. An exception was the Bishop, who was, ironically, from Roussillon. He left the city. (Perhaps he had left Roussillon as a young man when it was annexed and was annoyed the French had followed him here.)

Further Operations

Escalona made no effort to come to Girona's relief. Calls for his own relief increased. At first, he claimed the presence of Tourville's fleet (50 ships, some sloops, and 24 galleys) threatened support of a coup in Barcelona. He had not actually received any information about a coup, but there was sure to be one, so he was forced to remain there.

Madrid wanted action. Levies from Vic, Manresa (46 Km northwest of Barcelona), and Vilafranca del Penedès (40 Km ESE of Barcelona) were ordered to Barcelona or directed to Hostalric. Unfortunately, the levies, mixed with refugees numbering some 12,000 people, were nothing but a mob; Escalona was worried they might attack his army, which only numbered 11,000. He argued with Madrid, saying the Catalans feared the French so much they would force him to surrender if he marched on Girona. He suggested a general truce. The Court was of the opinion that this was nonsense, that the *somatén* would be of great aid in cutting the French supply lines and raising the siege. If Girona had fallen by the time the Viceroy arrived, the armed populace would in like manner assist him in retaking the city.

Bottom line, Escalona received only vague orders that gave him the option of remaining where he was in order to support Barcelona's garrison commander, the *marqués* de Conflans, or taking the latter with him and marching to Girona, leaving Barcelona in charge of *maestre de campo* Castillo and a smaller garrison. In other words, despite being urged to attack, he had permission to remain idle. The only strongly worded order was one forbidding him to seek a truce – a large Allied fleet under Admiral Russell was enroute to the Mediterranean.

Having the promise of this reinforcement, the news of which also frightened Tourville away, the Viceroy felt free to leave the city. But, it was too late and he was too slow. His army encamped at Moncada (10 Km north of Barcelona) on June 28, La Roca del Vallès (15 Km farther) on June 29, and Sant Celoni (15 Km farther) on June 30. Sant Celoni is well south of Hostalric. The Viceroy had taken three days to make a march that could have been made in one.

The French were not as strong as they appeared. Noaïlles had less than one month's pay in the kitty, his officers were broke and living on basic rations – some even deserted – and his men were considering turning to banditry. When it was learned that there were 100,000 florins stored at Bellegarde a major operation was mounted to collect them. Despite these hindrances, Noaïlles had more to accomplish this year.

The next goal was Hostalric. This town lies at the entrance to the Vallè and blocks the Royal Road between Barcelona and Girona. The town runs down the North face of an isolated spur of high ground, with steep slopes everywhere except on the southern face. At the southern end lies the fortification proper. The southern approaches were covered by a series of 7 raised entrenchments. There was a picked garrison of 500 men and 100 officers. The governor was a skilled engineer. Nonetheless, the town fell to the French.

There are two quite different versions of the taking of Hostalric. According to Lopez's sources, it took place on July 19. According to Noaïlles' memoirs, it occurred on August 1.

In the Spanish version, Escalona waited two weeks at Sant Celoni. He had no intention of advancing farther, but as the French approached, thought about adding 400 men to the garrison of Hostalric. He was again too slow. Hostalric was attacked on July 18. The garrison resisted fiercely until the following day, but under bombardment from 32 cannon and mortars was forced to withdraw when the magazine blew up. Many were killed.

In the French version, Escalona moved no farther throughout the whole month of July. On August 1, the French appeared at Hostalric, firing cannon and blowing trumpets to summon a surrender. The garrison bid them defiance, but one of the magistrates of the town was secretly lowered out of a window to the base of the hill. On behalf of the civilians he placed the town under French control. Now, they just had to get rid of the garrison.

A plan was concerted with the citizens. The French would demonstrate against the citadel where an assault was practical, if dangerous. This would draw off the garrison to that side. The townsfolk would then admit the French during the night and show them how to get into the citadel by means of a side door and a hole in the wall.

But events overtook the protagonists. The demonstration was conducted quite close to the citadel's trench system. A couple of drunken soldiers from Noaïlles' own militia regiment were standing under the outer entrenchment, which had a height of ten feet, topped by a three-foot wooden palisade. One of them bet the other that he could not climb up. That did it. The one boosted the other, who hoisted himself over the palisade, crying '*vive le Roi!*' Their antics attracted notice. More men came up to the pair and wanted to try this new game. Then officers came up and organised things. When Frenchmen started spilling over the palisade the defenders panicked. Some of the garrison fled along the covered way and down the hill into a wood; they were later rounded up. Others ran for the citadel. The French charged, got mixed in with the defenders, and entered the citadel with them. Hostalric was taken.

This version is more entertaining. But though Noaïlles' memoirs do not mention it, there is no reason why the cannonade and magazine explosion could not have occurred at the same time, adding to the panic.

After the fall of Hostalric, Escalona fell back on Granollers, 30 Km to the South, then retired to Moncada. Noaïlles followed, advancing as far as Granollers and La Roca del Vallès, only 16 Km from Barcelona.

Things appeared desperate. At Granollers were 1,000 Spanish foot and 800 horse. This was all the Viceroy could spare as a screening force, having only 3,392 infantry effectives. In all he may have had 9,000 men under arms, but most were protecting Barcelona.

However, Noaïlles was beginning to feel the pinch. He might have had as many as 15,000 men, but most are reported to have been of poor quality. 3,000 were garrisoning Girona, 2,000 Hostalric, and 1,000 Sant Salvador de Breda (a spot 6 Km west of Hostalric). And, a column of 3,000 foot and 1,000 horse was directed against Castellfollit de la Roca. To take Barcelona this year he needed Tourville, lots of money, 10-12 more battalions and 4-5 more cavalry regiments. Thus, the 1,800 Spanish at Granollers proved a sufficient blocking force.

The money problem did not go away. War Minister Barbezieux refused to authorise more funds. If he could not pay the Army of Italy, why should he pay the Army of Roussillon? Lack of pay inevitably led to looting, in which the officers sometimes joined. By one count, 22 churches were pillaged. Barbezieux saw nothing wrong with this; he was desperate to find money for the Treasury. Besides, now that Catalonia was a French viceroyalty it was officially 'occupied territory', and in accordance with custom, should be milked dry as expediently as possible. Noaïlles, who did not see things this way at all, pledged to repay the Catalans and sent the bill to Versailles. (King Louis did repay enough so that the churches could celebrate Mass.)

The looting led to increased anti-French partisan activity. This is what had led Madrid to consider a more formal use of the *somatén*, though their Viceroy still feared a resurgence of the *Barretines*. His fear spiked when a band of French *miqueletes* seized the castle of Corbera in the Llobregat district, well behind the Spanish lines (Corbera is 20 Km west of Barcelona, across the Llobregat River). Many of the men were former *Barretines* who had entered French service earlier in the war. Escalona, more afraid of Rebellion than of the French, reacted quickly for once and sent 28 companies of foot and 2 *trozos* of cavalry to retake the castle, which was demolished. The surviving *miqueletes* were hunted down by parties of Spanish *migueletes*.

The change in Catalan attitude manifested itself elsewhere. On the Plana de Vic, the *somatén* was levied and French officials and soldiers were attacked. The same thing happened at Arbúcies (a village in the hills 12 Km northwest of Hostalric). This is why m*aréchal* Noaïlles thought it prudent to garrison Hostalric and Sant Salvador de Breda so strongly. In the Vallè district, the *somatén* came out in force, and in reprisal, the frontline villages of Palautordera, Sant Esteve, and Campins (all near Sant Celoni) were sacked. These were spontaneous local responses on the part of some Catalans; in other districts, the French went about their business unopposed.

On the diplomatic front, Spain again approached Portugal for aid; the response was noncommittal. European opinion predicted the utter loss of Catalonia by the following year and questioned throwing away good money after bad. In the end, though, this gloomy attitude aided Spain. The Anglo-Dutch had already sent a fleet. In 1695, the Bavarians and Imperials would each send contingents of troops (in a spirit of rivalry, since they were competing for Carlos II's inheritance) and more soldiers would come from Flanders.

Within Catalonia itself, the threat of revolt against the Castilians, which had been increasing over the summer in tandem with guerrilla activity against France, was diffused in August by formal agreement to pay the population for forage and quarters. Cunningly, this was done before plans to 'regularise' the *somatén* were implemented, so that the Catalans could not bargain with guns in their hands.

Here Comes the Navy

On August 8, Admiral Russell's combined fleet dropped anchor at Barcelona.

The idea of sending a strong fleet to the Mediterranean had been under discussion for some time. The operation took on greater urgency upon the fall of Girona. Intelligence was received from Paris that the French were sending an embassy to Madrid, offering to make a separate peace. Several key members of the Spanish Court were reported to be in favour. King William III had made up his mind long before, so that the news of Girona's fall and the peace embassy on his part only generated a spate of letters urging haste. But, his anxiety heartened the Spaniards, who saw that the other Allies were still committed to aiding them.

Unfortunately, the operational end of the plan became mixed up with a concurrent operation against Brest. (This seems to be a habit with the Royal Navy.) The object of the latter operation was to a) force an encounter with the French Atlantic Fleet before, as intelligence suggested, it tried to rendezvous with the Mediterranean Fleet, and b) make an amphibious assault against the port. In true British style, the landing went horribly wrong, but the biggest mistake lay in waiting until all elements of both plans were in place before sending the fleet out. The Brest Fleet left for Toulon before the English even sailed.

Admiral of the Fleet Edward Russell, 1st Earl of Orford, was given command of the expedition to the Med. He cruised for prizes off the Western Approaches while waiting for the Admiralty to get its act together, rejoined the fleet in port, refitted, and sailed with it. Off Brest he detached himself and his squadron and headed south – this is a mark of just how important the Mediterranean scheme was, that the senior admiral should not take part in an attack on Brest. His first destination was Cadiz, where he would receive information on conditions in the Mediterranean and collect a Spanish squadron. Enroute he picked up reinforcements under the capable Rear Admiral Neville, and a Dutch squadron under admirals Calemberg and Evertsen.

Informed that the French, estimated at 70 sail, were blockading Barcelona, Russell did not pause but sailed straight for that city. The French, as mentioned previously, decided not to risk an encounter and withdrew to Toulon.

The official tally of the French fleet is 60 ships of the line and 45 galleys. The size of Russell's fleet is debatable. Lynn says 140 vessels in all, including 80 ships of the line and 28 galleys. He says 50 of the ships were Anglo-Dutch, the rest Spanish. Lopez says 14 Spanish, 14 English, 8 Dutch, and 13 support ships, or 49 in all. But Russell's own correspondence says 63 ships of the line. Only 4 of these were Spanish; Lopez is correct as to his nation, as there were 14 Spanish ships in all, but only 4 of the line. Subtracting these 4 from Russell's count, this means there were 59 Anglo-Dutch ships of the line, not 22. In 1695 there were 16 Dutch ships of the line, so one may assume (since they did not send a replacement squadron) that there were 16 Dutch ships in 1694. That leaves 43 English. Russell's correspondence is full of complaints against the Dutch, who were too parsimonious to send out victualers and who therefore had to stop at Cadiz. If one assumes half the Dutch remained at Cadiz, along with about 30 English, Lopez's number should be correct for the forces arriving at Barcelona. As to the 140 vessels quoted by Lynn, this will include everything from victualers to frigates. A notable exception, however were bomb ketches. The lack of these was something Russell regretted exceedingly.

[30 English ships of the line seems a high number to leave behind, but many would need repairing or revictualing; also, 30 ships were stationed at Cadiz at the end of the campaign to prevent a French breakout, and since Russell would not have sailed up the Spanish coast without blocking the Strait of Gibraltar, this justifies the number '30'.]

Lopez says the Spanish contribution was not negligible, although Russell states the entire Spanish Navy amounted to only those 14 vessels. However, they may have contributed much needed transports and supply ships. Not only did they provide 'many ships' according to Lopez, they did so despite atrocious service conditions; Russell himself praised their courage for essentially 'putting to sea in sieves'. (To this author, Russell's praise seems a little backhanded.)

The Admiral found dealing with Escalona a trying experience. The Viceroy wanted 30 ships to base in his area of operations. The Admiral objected that, first, Catalonia could not support such numbers (Cartagena, far to the South, was the only decent naval base on the Mediterranean coast), and second, the French could blockade them in port, leaving him with a divided command. Fortunately, Russell's orders were to come from Madrid, not the Viceroy. The central government agreed with him on both points. In any case, he was not expected to support land operations. The original plan, to have a go at Toulon and Marseilles, was to remain his primary focus, though it would probably have to be postponed until next year. Meanwhile, his mere presence made Noaïlles' job more difficult. Until the weather turned sour, the Allies would patrol off Cape Creus, preventing the French from shipping supplies through Roses.

[The Dutch admirals were Russell's whipping boys. Although his subordinates, they received their orders direct from King William, while he received his secondhand from the Admiralty. One of his grievances against William was that he had never received a personal letter from the King, while his Dutch vice-admiral went about waving a sheaf of them. Now, Russell did not read French, so

it is possible William intended that the Dutch vice-admiral translate and share the letters; perhaps the Dutchman made it an opportunity to vaunt it over his commander.

Besides the communication issue, the Dutch made constant objections to Russell's orders. The British Admiralty might be crazy enough to have him cruise about the Med in midwinter, but a superior Navy like the Dutch (they had beaten England three times in the past 30 years) would not give such stupid instructions. Russell debated that superiority. Apart from improvidence in the matter of stores, he also found their ships slovenly. Rather than careen them, they let them get slower and slower and leakier and leakier.

Russell's relations with the Spanish were also sticky. Their Navy left him in despair, though he admired their spirit. He was not impressed with the Army, giving descriptions reminiscent of extras in a spaghetti western. For their part, the Spanish looked down on him since he was only a naval officer; Russell requested, and got, the rank of General, solely in order to command more respect.]

Castellfollit

The arrival of Russell spoiled Noaïlles' chance of taking Barcelona in '94, and threatened to prevent it in '95, too. The *Maréchal* therefore shifted his focus to an operation against Castellfollit de la Roca. But before that could occur, there were a few issues to deal with.

A detachment of French had established themselves at Santa Pau, in the hills 8 Km south of Castellfollit. From here columns could step off to conduct punitive raids on Olot and Castellfollit, or Vic and Manresa, or as far away as Berga and Cardona. This post was suddenly attacked by a mixed body of Spanish under the *marqués* de Preu and the French were driven out. 1,500 of their compatriots had to be sent to Olot to deal with the threat to Noaïlles' flank.

Encouraged by this action, and by the receipt of fresh drafts of 3,500 men, mostly from within the Principality, Escalona debated retaking Hostalric, but the ill-discipline of his own troops – at Barcelona they were robbing the local farmers of crops and firewood, with the connivance of their officers (and getting sick from eating unripe produce) – gave him pause for thought. Madrid's tone was cooling, too.

In late August, Noaïlles marched the bulk of his forces toward Blanes, on the coast 15 Km ESE of Hostalric, camping between that place and Tordera, about 5 Km to the West. His intention, as French Viceroy, was to carve out a secure enclave and remain in the country over the winter. Blanes was the penultimate brick in the wall. Castellfollit de la Roca was the last.

After securing his southern line, the *Maréchal* marched north with 14 battalions and 300 cavalry, plus guns, arriving at Castellfollit on September 4. He had to act fast. On September 1, the Spanish finally got into motion, and Noaïlles was sure they were planning to forestall him.

Castellfollit de la Roca sits on a spur of rock, between 150 and 180 metres high, with sheers sides on its northern, western, and southern faces. The northern face overlooks a wooded gorge through which the Fluvià River runs. The road from the East could not pass through this gorge but had to cross a narrow bridge and snake up the hill. In those days it was a ramp about 2-3 metres wide. At the top, the road passed through the town westward and ran out onto a plateau; one could follow the river here or head southwest toward Olot. To the South, the hills, all heavily wooded, dominate the spur, but are separated from it by a ravine as deep and steep as the rest of the vale. The town occupied most of the spur, with a large church at the eastern end. To the West there was the usual covered way and glacis, with a pair of redoubts, but no modern bastions. The town was garrisoned by 900 men.

Maréchal Noaïlles determined to take Castellfollit by surprise and speed – perhaps 'by astonishment' is a better term. He could only assault from the West, on a narrow frontage. But, he could achieve domination in firepower by establishing a flanking battery. This involved an approach via the southern hills. 10 battalions working around the clock constructed an artillery road 9.6 Km long and 2 metres wide. At the end, they constructed a platform three stories high (18 metres), about halfway up the hillside overlooking the town. The foundations still exist. The tower was pierced with embrasures and protected by a ditch and covered way. To conceal the work, he made a demonstration on the plateau from his camp west of the town.

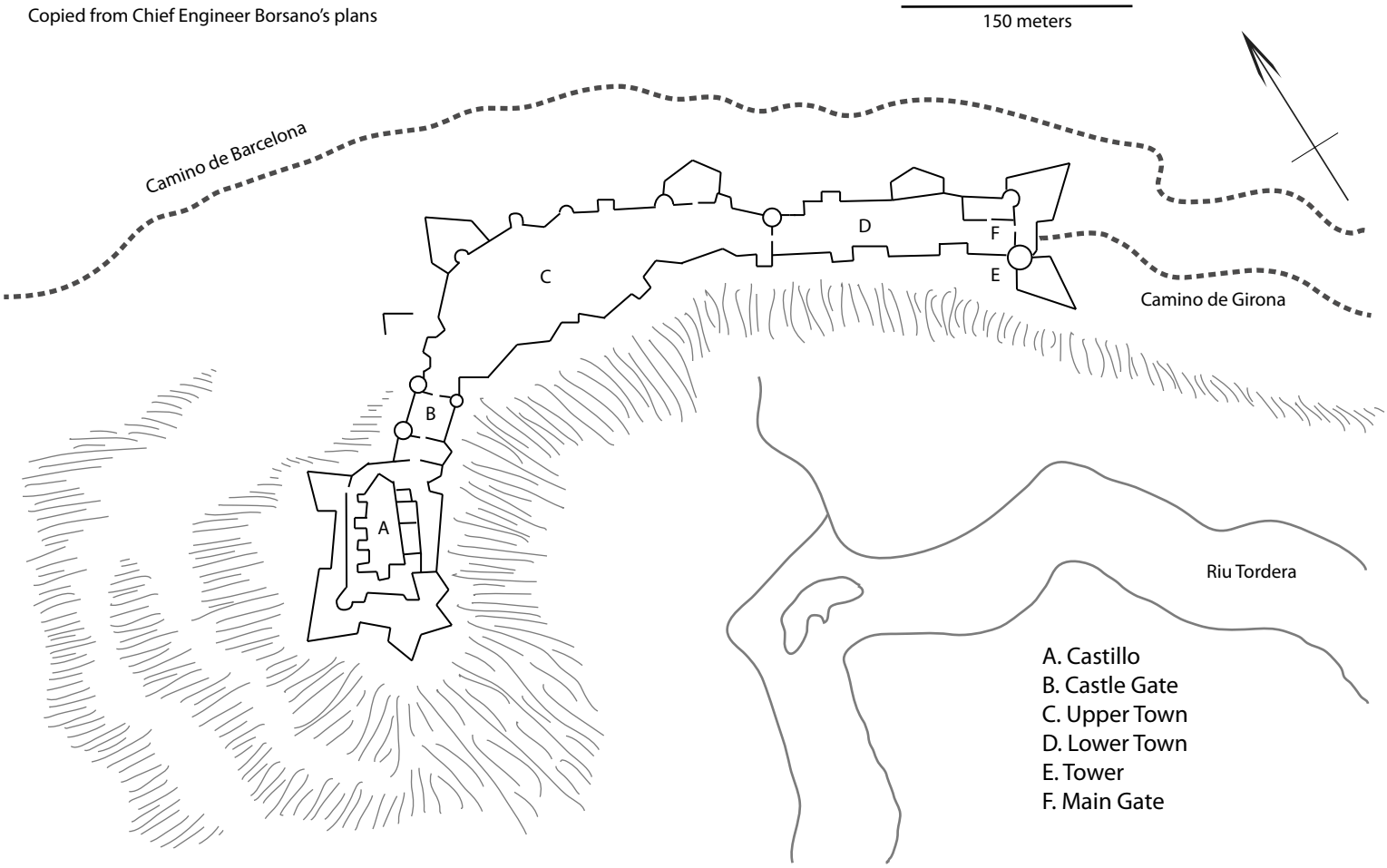
The work was accomplished in about 2 days, on the night of September 5/6. The French did not have to assault, or even begin trenches. At 8am the Governor of the town asked for a parley. He was refused honours of war and a few hours later agreed to surrender unconditionally. He and two or three other officers were paroled and the rest of the garrison were packed off to France.

Just in time. On September 3, the *marqués* de Conflans appeared before Hostalric. Next day, the Spanish laid siege to it. A fierce combat ensued. A breach was made by September 6, but the Spanish delayed assaulting for two days, fearing mines. On September 8, they unexpectedly withdrew.

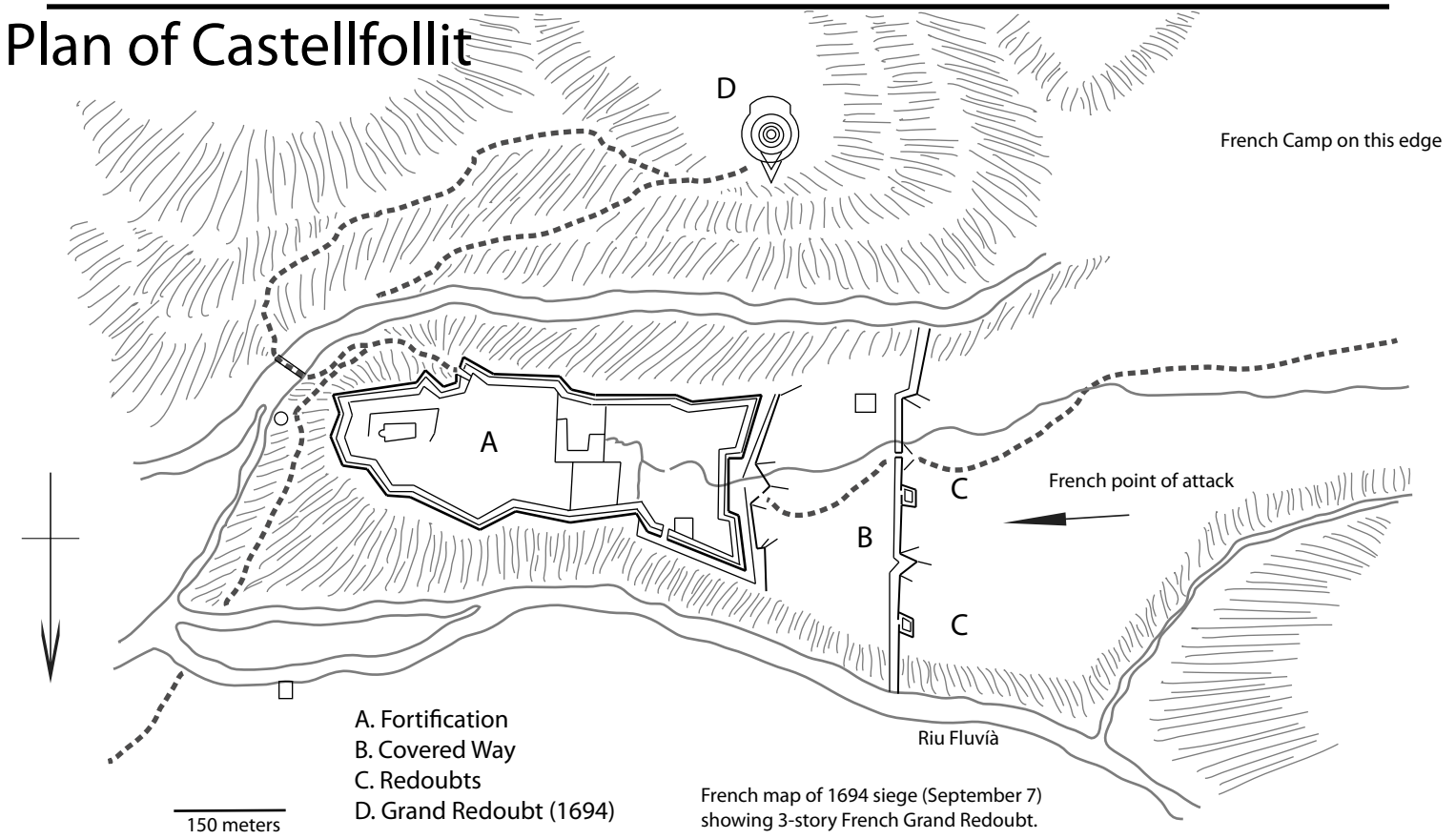
There were two reasons for this. First, the French came barrelling down from Castellfollit, in the midst of a storm, along washed out roads, Noaïlles bumping along in a bath chair, sick with fever. News of his approach reached the

Plan of Hostalric

Copied from Chief Engineer Borsano's plans



Plan of Castellfollit



French map of 1694 siege (September 7) showing 3-story French Grand Redoubt.

Spanish as they were discussing surrender terms with the French garrison, but Noaïlles' letter urging the latter to hold on was received in time.

Second, the attack had been unauthorised. Bad enough to take a place without permission, but worse to fight a battle and perhaps lose without permission. Escalona made a propaganda appearance, sanctioning his subordinate's actions, and this led to criticism when he then ordered the evacuation – 'treachery' was whispered – but it was safer to leave. Shortly after, news came of the French taking of Castellfollit. The number of northern forts in Spanish hands was now down to only Berga, Castellciutat, and Cardona.

In other news, Escalona sent 1,000 horse and 2 *tercios* to aid the *somatén* of the Plana de Vic, who were concerned that the French might raid them from Ripoll or Banyoles (16 Km north of Girona). A Spanish attempt to retake Palamós with the help of the galley fleet was intercepted by Girona's garrison and repulsed.

Admiral Russell does not appear to have participated in the latter operation. He had rebased to Cadiz, but on September 17 he moved north up the coast to Alicante with only a weak force – the Dutch, who had neglected to bring provision ships (because the Dutch were a nation of cheapskates, in the Admiral's view), refused to sail from Cadiz until they *were* provisioned. In Russell's opinion this was just an excuse for them to stay in port and swan about with the local ladies. He tried to persuade them that Cartagena could provide supplies, but his argument lacked conviction.

On land, the campaign petered out. The French took up quarters along the Ter, from Banyoles, to Vilobí, to Torroella. Bellver was held in the North, linked to the main front by garrisons at Olot and Castellfollit. Hostalric and Blanes secured the southern front. Girona and Figueres were strongly held. The Spanish defended Barcelona with the bulk of their forces, and relied on the *somatén* and *migueletes* to monitor the French.

Both sides maintained their positions with difficulty. The French had it worse, despite retaining the initiative, because much of the countryside, what was left of it after six years of war, was now against them. King Louis promised reinforcements from Italy if Noaïlles would continue the campaign and take Lleida or Balaguer, in the far off province of Lleida. Both towns are on the *Riu* Ségre and thus accessible, in theory, from La Seu d'Urgell. The *Maréchal* objected that they were too far away. It was a 15 day march from the district of Cerdanya to Lleida, over a country with no roads to speak of.

The Sun King then promised a return of the fleet if Barcelona could be attacked – Noaïlles received definite orders to this effect on September 27 – and the King did order Tourville out. But Admiral Russell, cruising off Alicante, responded swiftly, after receiving a report on October 29 that the enemy were landing 15,000 men at Blanes and blockading Palamós with 70 sail. The numbers were grossly inflated and the news was mere guesswork, since it dated from a time when the French were still in Toulon. Tourville did make a halfhearted attempt to obey Louis' instructions, landing 4,000 recruits at Blanes and making a demonstration off Barcelona. Upon Russell's approach, the French ships withdrew. Noaïlles wrote to Tourville: "I understand that the King wants Barcelona; but I do not understand how we want to run such an enterprise without providing the necessary resources." By then, the French had gone into winter quarters (October 2).

The correspondence between King and *Maréchal* this year is material for a period drama. The debate over whether there was time and opportunity to take Barcelona intensified around the middle of September, when things had stabilised. King Louis, it seems, allowed himself to be bemused by the vanities of his Court. Abandoning the idea of Barcelona when the Allied Fleet first appeared, he demanded Lleida be taken instead, then switched back to Barcelona when Russell left the scene (letter to Noaïlles on October 6, which hinted it would give the King 'great pleasure' if Barcelona were captured).

But, instead of ordering the Mediterranean Fleet to sally in force in support of the Army, Louis told Tourville to break out of the Med with 30 ships, leaving only 20 to assist Noaïlles. He did not seem to realise that Admiral Russell was strong enough to both pursue Tourville and deal with the remaining ships. On October 8, the Maréchal risked a private letter to Tourville asking him to delay this sailing. On October 12, he wrote to the King again.

Louis, who was often a horribly competent opponent to face seems at this point in time to have left reality behind. A mistress or favourite would make some snide comment about Noaïlles wanting to prolong the war to enrich himself and murmur that it was 'too bad' the Spanish could not be knocked out of the war, and Louis would ask his War Minister what they delay was. Could they really be short of provender in such a rich country? And Barbezieux, looking in the mirror, would say that Noaïlles was incompetent and greedy.

The *Maréchal*, at some risk to his reputation and his neck, tried to enlighten his monarch. There is no money and there are no provisions. Barbezieux says we can strip the country, but that has already been done and now the people hate us, so it is no longer safe to travel except in combat formation, which is slow and cumbersome. The

officers have not been paid for six months and no longer want to continue the campaign; they have all got second jobs as bandit chiefs. I am no longer sure we can winter in the conquered territories, although I have spent the entire season trying to arrange it. Perhaps if the men receive at least *some* pay their will be a few volunteers to form garrisons in the more important places. And so on. Fortunately, the King's opinion of Noaïlles' abilities and loyalty had not really changed. The *Maréchal* did not lose his head, and the King regained his.

Noaïlles' cause was assisted by people returning from the war zone. The King's chief military clerk, a man named Chamlay, had just come back from a fact-finding mission to Piedmont. He reported identical problems in the Italian campaign. Though Noaïlles' request that Chamlay be sent to Catalonia to make another report was not taken up, the *chevalier* de Genlis, who had been in Catalonia that year and who was considered by all a reliable witness, spoke for him at Court, while the great Vauban was at some pains to explain to the King just what the siege of Barcelona would entail. An order to enter winter quarters reached Noaïlles on October 21 (he had already done so weeks before, having exhausted his supplies).

Noaïlles' credit at Versailles dropped as a result of these arguments, but only among the dilettantes – and at the *Ministère de la guerre*, which saw him as an opponent of their policies. Interestingly, he was still liked by the Catalans, who felt he was the only man standing between them and a merciless occupation force. Unfortunately, the illness that he picked up in the summer was a debilitating one. There have been many diagnoses, but it was probably rheumatic fever, which is something one risks when camping out in all weathers.

The success of the French actually compounded their problems. They had taken so much territory that they needed a larger army than they could afford to hold it. The growing size of the army also meant its quality declined, meaning there were more incidents leading to more guerrilla activity, meaning they needed a larger army. The campaign had begun as a diversion, sponsoring a local insurgency. It had become a war of occupation, with the notion of annexation. Now the focus would have to change again, to a single massive blow that would knock Spain out of the war. That meant taking Barcelona. But *that* meant getting rid of the Allied Fleet. It also meant that Noaïlles, so vested in the 'hearts and minds' approach, would inevitably lose influence.

Admiral Russell had been ordered to base at Cadiz over the winter. His first impression of King William's plan was distinctly unfavourable – remember, the British owned neither Malta nor Gibraltar, nor even Port Mahon on Minorca. They had to use Spanish ports, facilities in his view more inefficient than British ones. And Cadiz, although an enclosed harbour, was on an exposed coast. No help could be expected from the impoverished Spanish Administration. Resupply from home, in the dead of winter, would be difficult.

The Admiral had originally though to finish whatever enterprise might present itself by August and be back in England before the Equinoctial gales began. This was already an unlikely scenario, but in any case King William was adamant that the fleet remain on station. Like its fleet commander, the Admiralty disapproved of such a non-traditional approach. But, a stickler for duty, Russell decided he could at least remain operational until October. Perhaps 16 ships (10 English and 6 Dutch) could be left at Cadiz to give the French pause for thought. By October, however, Savoy was also requesting he remain in the Mediterranean. So, Russell stopped objecting.

This Mediterranean gambit was King William's pet project. As any student of history must be aware, it was the correct strategy, bottling the French fleet in the Med and making them think twice about conducting operations even within that sea. More was accomplished from this strategic redeployment than from any of the great naval battles fought to date. It led in time to France abandoning the idea of fleet battles in favour of *guerre de course* – commerce raiding. But, it had never been done before. There were no facilities *in situ*. Ideally, an entire replacement fleet should be sent out in the spring, but there were not enough ships to do that and simultaneously keep a watch on the Channel. Instead, the dire warnings of experienced mariners had to be turned into a justification for remaining on station.

Even Russell eventually embraced the idea, though he griped continually that he was being hung out to dry. He was in fact a very good admiral. Though in his own words he hated sea service and was constantly ill aboard ship, while he was in command the French had no hope of breaking out. 30 ships remained at Cadiz over the winter. The others, minus a few on patrol duties, were sent home as circumstances allowed, and a few replacements were sent out.

[Russell was so good at his job that he was given a new command even after requesting relief in 1695, and even after letters of his that slighted King William came to light – Russell felt the King favoured the Dutch, giving them the easy jobs. There was some truth to this, which of course the King denied with his usual fish-eyed stare. Russell certainly fell from favour, but he remained an essential cog in the machine, unlike the Duke of Marlborough, whom William refused to employ despite his undoubted talents. Marlborough had betrayed William's father-in-law, King James.]

Both sides spent the winter in anguished debate. A number of factors disturbed the Spanish Court. First, there was the perennial Imperial-Bavarian feud. Escalona had been yet another Bavarian choice. His performance had been so abysmal that nothing could stop his replacement by the Imperial candidate, the *marqués* de Gastañaga, lately

Viceroy of the Spanish Netherlands, who had been punted from his post (diplomatically speaking) by King William, technically because it took so long for him to get orders from Madrid, but actually because William despised the man. The downside to both these changes in posting was a cooling of relations with the Bavarian Elector. The change of command was made official in October.

The next factor, the debate between Doves and Hawks, had been temporarily laid to rest thanks to Allied aid. Catalonia was now an essential theatre of war in the eyes of William III and the Emperor. Spain must not be allowed to sue for peace.

Taking heart, Madrid called for yet more troops, and money to repair Barcelona's walls. Portugal was again approached, and this time promised some money. Similar requests were made of the Spanish Netherlands and Milán. Galicia and Aragón were asked to provide 1,500-2,000 men each, and Castile was requested to send all its forces. In turn, this led to the raising of 8 *tercios* of Castilian infantry (5,000 men, admittedly of low quality). A strength estimate from November 20 puts the Army of Catalonia at 9,793 foot, 4,519 horse, 963 *migueletes*, and 797 replacements from Granada. Gastañaga put in a request for even more men in December.

On the French side, the chief question was whether to hold their conquests and campaign in steady, deliberate fashion, or just go for the throat. It all went back to the question of whether they planned to hold the country or not. Many called for the razing of the captured fortifications. This would free up manpower and reduce the risk of partisan attacks against supply columns.

Noaïlles argued against the idea on the grounds of prestige. The Spanish would think the French were slipping, or even afraid. He felt the risks of spreading his men out were worth it, arguing France's strategic drift toward the acquisition of Catalonia ever since the mid-century war with Spain, and painting his campaigns as French support of an incipient civil war. He cited figures demonstrating operations in the theatre were far more costly to Spain than to France – 81,000 Spanish and 8,000 foreign soldiers pricked out on the rolls, yet only 5-6,000 foot and 3,000 horse remaining as of that year. The Italian front was far more costly to France, in the *Maréchal's* view. Enemy fortifications were vital bargaining chips. And, by holding them, the French could live off Spanish resources (though this was stretching the truth, given the level of devastation in the Principality). A forward strategy also protected Roussillon, which had been Noaïlles' original mandate.

But, the *Maréchal* made little headway against counter arguments for 'cutting losses'. In Versailles' view, Catalonia was now likely to hold out longer than Savoy, and there was a push by the 'Savoyard generals' to dump resources on the Italian front and finish the job there. The eruption of guerrilla warfare in Spain could mean crippling losses. His opponents ignored Noaïlles' argument that good treatment of the populace would defuse the situation. That was no longer an option.

Juan Manuel Fernández Pacheco, *duque* de Escalona y *marqués* de Villena, formerly Viceroy of Aragón (1650-1725)

The dukes of Escalona were a powerful family from Toledo. The present duke was born in Navarre; his family were typically awarded the viceroyships of Aragón, Navarre, Sicily, Naples, and Catalonia. Juan Manuel held these posts as follows; Navarre 1691-1692, Aragón 1693, Catalonia 1693-1694, Sicily 1701-1702, and Naples 1702-1707. He was also a Knight of the Order of he Golden Fleece and an Academician of the Royal Spanish Academy – Escalona had the reputation of being one of the most learned men in Spain. As can be inferred by his viceroyships under Philip V, he was not a favourite of the Imperial faction.

Admiral Edward Russell, 1st Earl Orford (1653-1727)

Russell was a younger son of the Earl of Bedford. He began his naval career in 1666, fighting as a lieutenant in the Third Dutch War; he took part in the Battle of Solebay in 1672, after which he received promotion to captain. After the Dutch war he was engaged in anti-piracy actions on the Barbary Coast, but his career came to a screeching halt in 1683. That was the year of the Rye House Plot against King James II, in which his brother William was implicated and executed. William was a leading member of the proto-Whig Country Party and an ally of Lord Shaftesbury.

Edward himself was not apolitical, and he was one of the Immortal Seven who invited William of Orange to invade England in 1688. He went to Holland and helped William plan the invasion. After the Revolution he became MP for Launceston (later becoming MP for Portsmouth, and later still MP for Cambridgeshire) and Treasurer of the Navy (1689). The same year he was promoted to full admiral and given command of the Channel Fleet. The next year he was made a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty. From 1689 to 1691 he was concerned with the blockade of France and naval support for the campaign against the Jacobites in Ireland.

His antagonism toward the Dutch grew throughout this period, to the point that, being made Admiral of the Fleet and Commander-in-Chief of the Navy in 1690, he was forced to step down from his post as Lord Commissioner because of his views on them. He retained his other titles and commands however, and fought the French at Barfleur (May 1692) and its sequel, La Hogue (June 1692).

He fell out with the Earl of Nottingham, a crypto-Jacobite who was then Secretary of State, and resigned his post as Commander-in-Chief. This led to the Navy being led operationally by a council of three admirals during 1693. This council's inevitable failure led to Russell's reinstatement.

In 1694, the year he sailed to the Med, Russell was made First Lord the Admiralty. He asked to be relieved of his duties in the Mediterranean at the end of 1695 and returned under a cloud because of his outspoken criticism of King William and the Dutch, but continued to be employed. He was created Earl of Orford in 1697.

Post war he was accused of misappropriating naval funds, but nothing was proved. He resigned his positions of First Lord and Treasurer the following year when the Whigs fell from power. He was appointed First Lord twice more during the 1700s, each time the Whigs came to power, and was also made Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire (1715).

For Whom the Bell Tolls – The Campaign of 1695

"You know why we did not kill them, though?" Robert Jordan said quietly.

"Yes," Agustín said. "Yes. But the necessity was on me as it is on a mare in heat. You cannot know what it is if you have not felt it."

"You sweated enough," Robert Jordan said. "I thought it was fear."

"Fear, yes," Agustín said. "Fear and the other. And in this life there is no stronger thing than the other."

Yes, Robert Jordan thought. We do it coldly but they do not, nor ever have. It is their extra sacrament. Their old one that they had before the new religion came from the far end of the Mediterranean, the one they have never abandoned but only suppressed and hidden to bring it out again in wars and inquisitions. They are the people of the Auto de Fe; the act of faith. Killing is something one must do, but ours are different from theirs.

Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls

1695 marked a departure for the Spanish. It was the first year in which the Government authorised, at least *post facto*, a true guerrilla campaign. It was also the first year in which foreign auxiliaries were deployed in reasonable numbers – after the disaster of the previous year, the Allies saw the need to prop their Southern member up. Of course, the lull that allowed the Allies to send reinforcements permitted the French to do the same, but in raw numbers the latter would deploy only about half that of Spain.

From a modern perspective, it might appear that Spain and guerrillas have a natural affinity and should have been a potent weapon to use against an invader from the very start. But both Madrid and the Regular Army were opposed to the use of the *somatén*, and even to the use of 'official' *migueletes,* except in controllable quantities. There were three main reasons for this. First, the *Revolta del Barretines* was a recent memory, inflaming fears of Catalan separatism. The other reasons were social ones.

On the one hand, it was simply unwise to upset the social order by giving peasants the means to fight. In the case of the Army, this was couched in the statement common to military institutions in every age, that if the peasants wanted to fight they should don uniforms and take the King's wages. Peasant mobs a) were bad for social discipline, b) those mobs effective enough to be allowed an official existence competed for resources with the Army, and c) they complicated relations with the enemy. If the *somatén* were an officially recognised 'auxiliary' corps to the Army, and if the *somatén* refused quarter to cornered Frenchmen, then the Army might be held liable for the killings.

The other social reason was the fragmentation of the Spanish people. Coordinating a guerrilla campaign would be exceedingly difficult when men from one valley distrusted men from a neighbouring valley. There were a very few leaders who commanded the respect of all. The simple solution would be to second Regular officers to command the partisan bands, but they, too were objects of suspicion. Moreover, it would create a 'catch-22' situation *vis-a-vis* the other reasons for not using guerrillas.

By the winter of 1694, however, occupied Catalonia had had enough of the French. Past atrocities suffered had been isolated acts, mitigated by a deliberate policy of appeasement. But when the French viceroyalty was created, the author of that policy *Intendant* Trobat, was superseded by a separate governor, and his main champion, *maréchal* Noaïlles, was seriously ill. The hardliners, such as Saint-Silvestre, could do as they pleased.

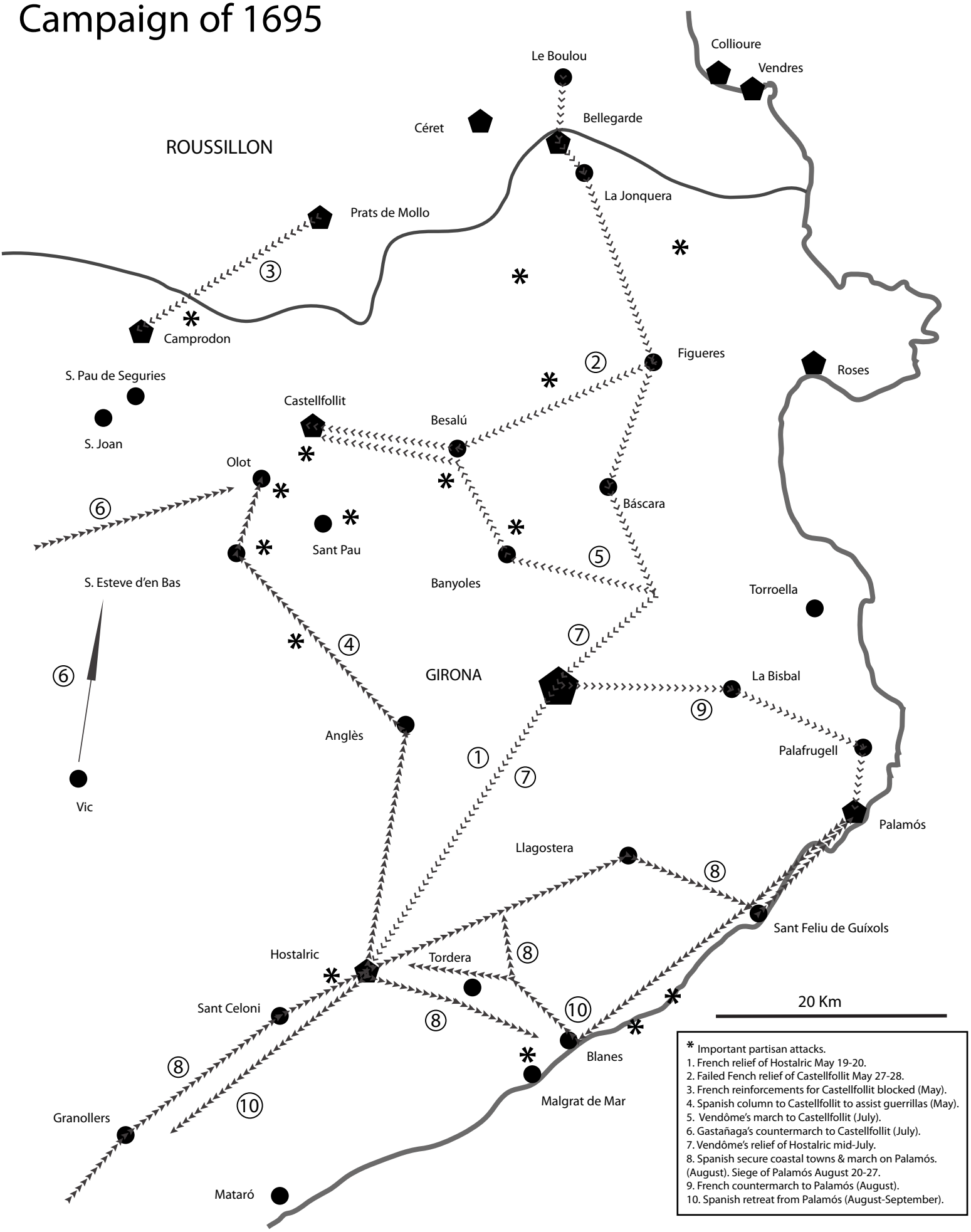
[Trobat was not dismissed, but Catalonia was no longer within his purview.]

As a matter of fact, Noaïlles' illness would prove incapacitating and he would be replaced at his own request by the *duc* de Vendôme, who would command the theatre for the rest of the war.

The spark that set off the general uprising may have been a demand for *contributions* – that is, war taxes – issued in December of 1694 to the towns of Blanes, Malgrat de Mar, Pineda, and Calella. The towns, all in the vicinity of Blanes, refused to pay (they probably could not, in any case). Soldiers were sent to take hostages from the latter two towns, sparking riots that killed a few French. In reprisal, the acting governor of 'French Catalonia' ordered some 800-1,000 troops from Blanes to attack the town of Pineda on December 23. The populace was warned and escaped to the hills; the French burned about a dozen homes and left. As they did so the populace emerged from hiding and mobbed them, chasing them all the way past Malgrat to Blanes. For once, the Spanish authorities encouraged the act, and Gastañaga dispatched 3 companies of horse, 2 companies of foot, and 3 squadrons of *migueletes* to Blanes, which was blockaded.

Around the same time, a band of partisans under Sala i Sasala, the *veguer* (chief magistrate) of the *veguerie* of Vic, ambushed a convoy bound for Hostalric, killed 25 of the enemy, and took many more prisoner. Sala was to become

Campaign of 1695



* Important partisan attacks.
1. French relief of Hostalric May 19-20.
2. Failed Fench relief of Castellfollit May 27-28.
3. French reinforcements for Castellfollit blocked (May).
4. Spanish column to Castellfollit to assist guerrillas (May).
5. Vendôme's march to Castellfollit (July).
6. Gastañaga's countermarch to Castellfollit (July).
7. Vendôme's relief of Hostalric mid-July.
8. Spanish secure coastal towns & march on Palamós. (August). Siege of Palamós August 20-27.
9. French countermarch to Palamós (August).
10. Spanish retreat from Palamós (August-September).

the most famous partisan leader of the war, with many victories to his credit. On February 24, 1695, he ambushed a company of French dragoons, killing 7 and taking 28 prisoners and 32 horses.

On March 10, he and another guerrilla leader, Josep Mas de Roda (an 'honorary citizen' of Barcelona), joined with a P. Baliart, who was the captain of a band of *migueletes* at Sant Feliu de Pallerols (12 Km south of Olot). The *somatén* leaders were in discussions over forming 3 new bands of *migueletes* (i.e., putting their men under Army jurisdiction) when news was received of an impending French attack on Sant Esteve d'en Bas by the Governor of Castellfollit.

It seems Sant Esteve was refusing to pay its taxes. The town had a history of resistance to the French (it was sited on a knob of rock and was naturally fortified), consistently refusing to make contributions. 80 of its men had served with the *marqués* de Preu at Santa Pau. On December 28 of 1694, 700 French came and took two priests hostage. All this did was encourage the locals to form 4 companies of *vizcondados* (levies raised by local nobles, as opposed to those raised by local magistrates).

On March 10, as on the earlier occasion, the townsfolk fled, leaving the French to burn 16 houses. The guerrillas caught the enemy as they were withdrawing toward Olot. It appears the French split their forces, some travelling through the Malatosquera Forest on the East side of the valley, and others trying to reach Olot by the main road. In a pitched battle in front of the Ponte Sant Roc bridge just south of the town, 16 companies of *migueletes* (650 men) routed the French, killing 500 out of an estimated 900-1,300.

The remainder, pursued by the Spanish, fled to the Convento de Carmen at Olot. The defenders repulsed three attacks but were smoked out of the cloister by the Spanish, who used burning pitch and sulphur. Those that did not surrender fast enough were killed. In all, the French lost 1,086 out of 1,300 (826 dead and 260 prisoners, including 32 officers). 90 Swiss soldiers in the hospital were spared.

Sala struck again on March 12, leading a body of *somatén* against a flour convoy bound for Castellfollit. 300 of the escort were killed and 500 captured, out of a total of 2,000 foot and 600 horse; the Spanish suffered 20 casualties. This was a heavy blow, as Castellfollit (and Hostalric) had been living on bread and water for some time.

On March 18, the garrison of Blanes, still blockaded, was ordered to pull out. They mined the church and castle. A local notable, Don Valerio Saleta, got wind of this and rounded up a band of insurgents from the surrounding *Marina* (the name of that coastal region). Reinforced by the *trozo de Extremadura* and several companies of infantry, they attacked the French, inflicting 400 casualties and taking 70 prisoners (or alternatively, 150 and 280).

On April 5, *somatén* and *migueletes* from Berga, aided by 5 companies of dragoons, fought foraging parties from Castellfollit and took 200 prisoners as well as killing 60 French.

On April 21, Sala repeated his convoy ambush on the road between Figueres and Hostalric. This was part of a larger operation. Sala was supported by 2 *tercios* of dragoons and several companies of foot. Meanwhile, a *maestre de campo* named Tolosano made an abortive attack on Besalú. In this operation 70 French out of a band of 100 reinforcements were killed, while the 600-strong garrison of Sant Feliu de Guíxols, 11 Km southwest of Palamós, evacuated by sea to the latter place. This allowed the Spanish to reclaim Sant Feliu, which was the entrepôt for goods coming to Girona by sea.

In a major propaganda blow, 36 men who had deserted to the French *miqueletes* returned to Spain and publicly begged the Viceroy for forgiveness.

Lopez cites these actions as examples of a number of such incidents that occurred over the winter, and that would occur with greater frequency throughout 1695. In all, the French estimated a loss of 2,000 men to these actions, with a corresponding drop in morale. Gastañaga claimed the rapacity of the French officers was worth 30 million *reales* to him.

Unfortunately, enthusiasm for combined operations dwindled as the year progressed. Cooperation between the *somatén* and Army was fortuitous rather than a carefully prepared program of reconquest. Unlike his predecessors, Gastañaga welcomed popular support, but even he was leery of letting the Catalans bear arms. Once they had helped the Army to reconquer lost territory they should be swiftly disbanded.

Class consciousness led to friction between militia and regulars. The army officers lacked the temperament needed to employ irregulars successfully. Instead, they repeated the common mistakes of either not keeping the militia commanders in the picture, or of treating the partisans like second class line troops.

Nevertheless, the rapidity of movement and local knowledge of the *somatén* did contribute to a number of tactical successes. Even though they were not used to their full potential, they spooked the French.

Madrid took heart from the change of tempo in Catalonia. The recapture of Blanes and Sant Feliu excited the country. *Migueletes* from those towns, and from Tossa de Mar and Lloret de Mar (12 and 5 Km northeast of Blanes, respectively) began harassing the convoys headed for Hostalric, which had to run the gauntlet all the way from Girona. The only solution the French could devise was to overwhelm the partisans by sending convoy after convoy in a continuous stream.

The question now became, should the Viceroy take the offensive, or should he merely use the advantageous situation to strengthen the defense of Barcelona. Those at Court who equated Barcelona with Catalonia, seeing the rest of the Principality as not worth fighting over, were still vocal. This 'Barcelona party' was challenged by a party which called for a second army to defend Lleida, key to Aragón. Where the money and troops were to come from was anyone's guess.

Gastañaga estimated that to go on the offensive he would need a mobile force of 4,000 foot and 3,000 horse, plus 16 field guns and 5,000 labourers. These numbers are not particularly high and probably assume the receipt of reinforcements from other fronts (which would be paid for by the senders). He also had 3,000 *migueletes* (who were demanding back pay).

Even this modest force put a severe strain on the Treasury, which was also providing maintenance for Russell's fleet at Cadiz and searching for spare *reales* to repair the walls of Berga, replace uniforms that were mere rags, find remounts, pay the massively increased numbers of *migueletes*, and improve Barcelona's decrepit walls. Ultimately, the Spanish tried to cover all bases and failed to achieve any of their goals.

Requests were made to William III for the loan of 7-8,000 Anglo-Dutch. This loan was made more necessary by some bad news from North Africa, where the Moors were on the offensive against the Spanish possession of Ceuta, an episode in a conflict that had been going on for some years and which periodically siphoned off a number of units, usually marine *tercios*, but occasionally Provincials such as the Old Purples; 1695 was the year that saw the most intense fighting.

As early as January 25, 5,000 men of the Army of Milán were earmarked for Catalonia; Admiral Russell would escort them. There were delays, however, and the convoy had yet to sail by mid-March. 2,582 men were also 'reported sent' from Flanders on April 13. In actual fact they embarked on June 3, arrived at Cadiz on July 24, and had not arrived at Barcelona as of August 20. Of those units that did arrive in time for the summer campaign, many deserted: in one case cited by Lopez, 120 men out of 888 sent to reinforce the Provincial *tercios* just disappeared.

The French tried to regain the initiative before the Spanish could act. A pre-season prisoner swap was arranged between Gastañaga and *lieutenant général* Saint-Silvestre, commanding in the absence of Noaïlles, who arrived at the front in mid-May. This gave the French an additional 1,200 men and 60 officers. Such a swap was deemed acceptable because the French held about 350 Spanish officers, resulting in a crippling shortfall of commanders for the Gastañaga's army.

Maréchal Noaïlles arrived at Perpignan on May 12. He was in great pain, and had already requested a replacement. King Louis gave sealed orders which Noaïlles was to open and apply at his discretion. Louis' choice was Louis Joseph, III *duc* de Vendôme, an able commander who would go on to become one of his best marshals. Vendôme received a private letter from the King warning him to be ready.

If the situation in Catalonia was dire for the Spanish, it was more so for the French. Ill as he was, Noaïlles lacked the energy of former years. His army, seeded with place-seekers and fortune hunters, starved of resources, and under incessant attack by partisans, was coming apart. And, this was the moment *lieutenant général* Saint-Silvestre chose for a showdown. The *général* was a devotee of Barbezieux's and the most vocal advocate of razing the outlying fortifications and concentrating force in the center. The strategy itself was sensible enough, given that the French could not, and did not desire to, occupy the whole country, but it went against everything Noaïlles had worked for.

Saint-Silvestre's behaviour in the field leads one to suspect he was deliberately trying to sabotage Noaïlles' plans in concert with Barbezieux – a not implausible way of imposing policy in that age, when the King's patronage would put the *Maréchal* outside the War Ministry's full authority – but it is more likely that he was simply carrying out his own ideas in defiance of his sick commander.

As prime examples, consider the Hostalric and Castellfollit relief operations. Castellfollit had rations that would only last until May 24, and Hostalric had even less. The *Maréchal* decided to send convoys to resupply them.

In all, the French had an estimated 12,000 foot, 6 cavalry regiments, and 3 dragoon regiments (4,000 mounted troops), including garrisons. The French forces in Catalonia were concentrated at Torroella de Montgrí, Girona, and Navata (9 Km southwest of Figures). These were Saint-Silvestre's dispositions. The outlying garrisons had been left

in place but were not supported. Reinforcements were accumulating in Roussillon but Noaïlles was not up to leading them. Therefore, Saint-Silvestre was given the job.

On May 16, the partisan commander Sala assaulted the garrison of Sant Llorenc de la Muga, a hill village 15 Km WNW of Figueres (toward the border), with 6 squadrons of *migueletes*, taking 93 prisoners and killing 17 of the enemy. 4 more squadrons attacked a French detachment on the road between Banyoles and Girona, taking 23 prisoners. This served to demonstrate how difficult any resupply operations were likely to be.

Nevertheless, on May 19 the French marched south from Girona with a column of 8,000 foot and 3,000 horse, led by Saint-Silvestre, seconded by the Irishman, Colonel Arthur Dillon. They broke through the three-month-old blockade of Hostalric and reinforced the garrison on May 20. The French column, minus those left in the garrison, then withdrew from Hostalric, burning villages as they went. The Spanish could not prevent the breakthrough, and a counterattack on the French rearguard as it withdrew (by 4,000 *migueletes* and 5 squadrons of cavalry) was foiled by Dillon, who had 50 men killed but routed the Spanish. But the Spanish fared better on the French line of communications, killing 300 in subsidiary operations like that of May 16.

The success of this operation was mainly due to the fact that Hostalric was a necessary post for an army intending to attack Barcelona. Saint-Silvestre had no reason to drag his feet here (although Hostalric had been on his evacuation hit list). This was not true in the case of Castellfollit, where the French suffered a severe defeat on May 27.

The garrison was in a bad way, closely blockaded by Spanish partisans under Sala. Don Juan de Acuna of Vic had been sent to Olot to provide a screening force. After relieving Hostalric, Saint-Silvestre was ordered to proceed immediately to Castellfollit with another supply column and sufficient force to break the siege. Preferring to evacuate the place, he demanded a written order before he would resupply the garrison. Besides this petulant delay, he conducted the whole affair with contempt.

The French made no attempt to conduct reconnaissance or to preserve march discipline. They simply blundered up the road in a long line of troops and carts and mules until they bumped in to the peasants blocking their path. The Spanish had dug entrenchments protected with brushwood and *chevaux-de-frise* on all routes into the town. The French advance guard of 4 companies walked through the waiting ambush and reached the town with a train of 120 mules carrying flour, but they were the only ones to make it through.

When they saw that the enemy failed to occupy the high ground overlooking the road, or to attack a large body of *somatén* just standing around on the far bank of the Fluvià, the Spanish, who had been rather nervous, swiftly occupied the heights, stormed across the river, threw their barricades across the bridges that cut the road into sections, and went to work. The battle lasted 6 hours. Saint-Silvestre came up the next day to find bits of dead convoy littering the road in front of him and the bulk of his troops stalled well back from the town. He ordered a retreat. The Spanish, a mixed force of regular foot and horse plus Sala's irregulars, suffered 30 casualties. 1,500 French reinforcements from Prats de Mollo were held at bay by cavalry and *somatén* under Don Juan. Castellfollit fell to the Spanish on May 28.

The action at Castellfollit had a demoralising effect on the French. Gastañaga reported an influx of French deserters (mainly foreign troops) actuated by fear of the *migueletes,* the offer of Spanish enlistment bounties, and a desire for food. The enemy demolished sections of the defensive works at Besalú, Navata, and Banyoles, withdrawing from those places to Bàscara. *General de caballería* Don Salvador de Montforte tightened the blockade of Hostalric. The districts of Selvà and Marina became guerrilla bastions.

[The Selvà is a heavily wooded and mountainous region east of Girona; Marina simply means 'coast', but the region meant here was that from Sant Feliu de Guíxols south to Malgrat.]

All that was required now was a general offensive by the Army of Catalonia, and the Viceroy was pressured to begin one. However, he demurred. Claims that he possessed 20,000 men were denied as false estimates made by ignorant bureaucrats. He insisted he was suffering a continual drain of manpower as unpaid and ill-clad troops deserted, and that the replacements being sent to him were poorly trained.

Even so, June belonged to the Spanish. Hostalric was under guerrilla blockade again. Late in the month a number of reinforcements were received from the Army of Milán. They included 2 Imperial regiments and 1 Bavarian regiment, each of 2 battalions, and the *tercios* of Milán, Peruca, and Naples. The most important reinforcement was their commander, Prince George Louis of Heßen-Darmstadt, whose family connections to the Spanish Court would prove a hindrance to the war effort, though he was a competent field commander and became very popular with the Catalans.

At the beginning of June *maréchal* Noaïlles handed his command over to *maréchal* Vendôme. He sent his resignation to the King on June 4, from Perpignan. Vendôme arrived on June 12. Noaïlles remained in an advisory capacity for some time. His last official act was to indict Saint-Silvestre for his poor performance. The two *maréchals* held two six-hour conferences, which went smoothly. Noaïlles felt Vendôme was a good choice. Though he regretted the current shambles, he was still positive of ultimate success. The French generals were not.

On June 9, Vendôme called a council of war for his generals at Pontous, at which he and Noaïlles were to be absent, allowing them to speak freely amongst themselves. They came up with several findings. Hostalric and Castellfollit should be evacuated. It was hoped the governor of the latter place would exercise his initiative and break out on his own. It was safe to retain Palamós, which had supplies that would last until October 15, and which could be razed in an emergency. It was futile to garrison Girona. Too many men and supplies would be required, not only to hold the city, but to secure its supply lines. Finally, there was a shortage of ammunition.

Noaïlles' only comment was that it was a pity the generals could think of no way to beat a peasant rabble. Vendôme saw he had his work cut out for him. As will be recounted, he was not long in restoring morale and discipline. He first made his headquarters at Cervià de Ter, a central location on the North bank of that river, 12 Km northwest of Girona, where he stayed until July 5.

After some preliminary shifting about, on July 8 Vendôme marched to Banyoles, and then to Castellfollit. Gastañaga, collecting his forces from their quarters in Lluçanès and Berga, also approached the town with 8 *tercios*, plus 1,000 horse and dragoons. The interdicting bands of *migueletes* and *somatén* under the command of Don Juan de Acuna were to support him, but it appears the regulars were too slow. Vendôme easily brushed aside the militia.

Before Gastañaga was prepared to attack, Castellfollit was stormed by massed French grenadiers and the Jacobite *Reine d'Angleterre* dragoons. The Spanish Army remained a good 4 Km off and did not approach closer. Vendôme's generals became ashamed of their earlier timidity. The French began to slight Castellfollit's defences on July 8 and finished 10 days later. Gastañaga retreated to Llinars de Vallès, 80 Km to the South, probably by way of Vic.

[Gastañaga tried to mitigate the moral effect of Castellfollit's destruction by saying he would have demolished the place himself if he had taken it. There are several towns named Lluçanès, all in the same region. So, perhaps the sources mean the region, a rich farming district midway between Berga on the upper Llobregat and the Plana de Vic.]

The French suffered the most losses – an estimated 800 men – when they spread out to pillage the countryside afterward. The guerrilla leader Sala, now a *maestre de campo*, held the mountains between Vic and Prats de Mollo with 4 companies of dragoons, 200 foot, and 12 squadrons of *migueletes*. More Spanish reinforcements were arriving. *Tercios* were sent up the coast from Barcelona by Badalona and Arenys to solidify the front in the Marina, and inland by Granollers and Vic to reinforce the Viceroy.

[Badalona is on the coast, 10 Km northeast of Barcelona. Arenys is 30 Km farther up the coast, midway between Badalona and Blanes.]

On July 16 the Viceroy joined up with the newly arrived George of Heßen-Darmstadt and his 2,300 Imperial soldiers. Olot was reinforced by 3 *tercios* (2 foreign regiments of 500 men and that of the *Generalitat*). The remainder of the Army tried unsuccessfully to hold onto the Marina and Selvà districts. Gastañaga camped near Sant Celoni.

Maréchal Vendôme next swung over to Sant Jordi Desvalls, just east of Cervià de Ter, picked up 2,000 men from Girona, and broke the siege of Hostalric on July 17. The Spanish Foot were at Llinars, with Don Salvador commanding the bulk of the Spanish cavalry near Hostalric. Rather than bring on a battle, Don Salvador was pushed back without support from the Viceroy. Vendôme then sent 2,000 men to sack Tordera, Pineda, and Blanes in punishment for 'rebelling'.

The Spanish pursued the raiders with 500 foot, 7 companies of dragoons, and a *trozo* of cavalry, killing 25-30 French and recovering some of the plunder. Gastañaga left 600 men to garrison Blanes and ordered the reoccupation of Hostalric. Meanwhile, *maestre de campo* Sala demolished the French defences at Banyoles, which was now in Spanish hands.

At the moment, despite renewed French vigour, the Spanish still had the ball. The enemy only controlled the coastal strip, the Royal Road as far as Girona plus some of the border towns. An assessment of Spanish strength yielded a figure of 15,000 troops, including 3,100 cavalry and excluding the *migueletes*. However, quality was still low. The Neapolitans were the worst off, being poorly equipped as well as poorly motivated. After much debate it was decided that the French were too strong to challenge directly, but that some enterprise had to be undertaken to justify the costs of maintaining Spanish numbers. If good foraging grounds were reclaimed it might prove easier to support the Army.

The seesaw campaign was interrupted in mid-August, when everyone took siesta. They needed the rest. The Spanish were the first back into the field, with a plan to recapture Palamós. By this point they had managed to roll back the enemy from most of the coastal towns south of this place using only guerrillas, but now naval support was needed.

Naval Operations

The day Castellfollit fell to the Spanish, May 28, Admiral Russell's fleet arrived at Barcelona, bringing supplies and reinforcements from Cadiz. The fleet, 130 ships in all, of which 70 were men-o-war (including 16 100-gunners) soon departed for Finale, on the Italian Riviera. Here Russell was to pick up the Milanese reinforcements, plus some German units loaned by the Emperor.

Russell had fully replenished in February, when the last of four convoys arrived at Cadiz. No action was taken in late winter or early spring, as Russell was awaiting the arrival of 4,500 troops, along with a supply fleet and 12 bomb vessels. These appeared in April, upon which Russell sailed for Barcelona on May 10, reaching Alicante around May 21, where he waited for his 16 Dutch ships under Calemberg. The latter had sailed ahead of Russell on a watering expedition but took his time about it, and ultimately refused to sail beyond Alicante. The French Navy had made no move.

[Lynn enumerates 54 rated vessels, 10 bombs, and 11 fireships. The latter were typically used to carry stores, or in this case, troops. Burning them was simply an option. The numbers taken from Noaïlles' memoirs are 44 ships of the line and 12 frigates (making 56 rated vessels), 10 bombs, 'several' transports (i.e., fireships), and 22 galleys.The ship numbers tally with the '40 ships' Russell had later in the year. The troops were 4 English battalions under command of a Brigadier Stuart and a Graf *von Nassau, who is probably John Ernst of Nassau-Weilburg, a relation of the Queen of Spain. The regiments were Puizar's (late Venner's, which became the 24th of Foot; Venner had recently been stripped of his command for corruption), Stewart's (later the 9th of Foot), Coote's, and Brudendell's (ex-Rowe's). The sources variously list the expedition's soldiery as 2,000 or 3,000 men; 4,500 was the paper strength. 500 Dutch are cited in some sources but there seems to be no record of a Dutch battalion in this operation. Russell makes no mention of them in his dispatches.]*

King William had given the Admiral a broad mandate. He was to protect Trade, particularly the large annual 'Turkey Convoy' from the Levant, to show the flag along the Catalan coast, to liaise with the Spanish and offer his services, to scout Toulon and Marseilles and see if a naval descent were possible, to contact the Allied army in Italy and see if they would be interested in such an operation, and to ferry Spanish regiments from Italy to Spain.

While at Barcelona, Russell dispatched Rear Admiral Neville with 8 ships of the line and 2 fireships to carry out the Italian jobs. Neville sailed to Finale, contacted Lord Galway, King William's man on the spot, learned that no troops could be spared for a descent on the Riviera, and picked up the Spanish reinforcements.

Meanwhile, Russell sailed for the Îlles d'Hyéres, east of Toulon. Here he awaited Neville and scouted the enemy ports. Patrol vessels were dispatched to Messina (to escort the Turkey Convoy) and Leghorn. Rear Admiral Mitchell was sent with some frigates, the chief engineer (named Beckman), and the lieutenant colonels of the four regiments, to Marseilles. The verdict was not good. Both Toulon and Marseilles had strong garrisons. Marseilles had 36 galleys fitted for sea, and 20 more were observed entering Toulon's harbour. Galleys could play havoc with the bomb vessels. There were 52 ships of the line at Toulon.

Russell was keen to try something anyway, but a storm blew up, lasting 3 days and nights, which sent his fleet flying south for 50 leagues (200 Km). Fortunately, Mitchell had already rejoined him, and Neville had no difficulty rendezvousing either. When the latter reported that the Duke of Savoy was uninterested in attacking the French coast, Russell decided to return to Spain. Toulon had been a long shot, anyway.

The fleet returned to Barcelona in late July. As already recounted, the Spanish reinforcements had reached their destination long before (Neville having sent them off on their own). It was at this time that Gastañaga first petitioned Russell to aid him in the siege of Palamós.

The Admiral thought such an operation superfluous and seems to have agreed to it only because he had been ordered to appear helpful. In fact, he initially intended to make himself absent before he could be roped into any nutty schemes, but foolishly opened the Viceroy's letter in the presence of witnesses. He stipulated that his troops could be loaned for no more than 7-8 days ashore, and insisted that he retain the authority to reembark them any time the French fleet was in the offing. He would decide if a strange sail was French.

Gastañaga, who had come up with his army from Hostalric by way of Fogars de Selvà (4.5 Km east of Hostalric), was at this time camped about a half hour's ride from Blanes (possibly at Tordera), wither the fleet repaired itself. The Viceroy wanted the soldiers to land here and make a two-day march north to the target. This was probably for morale reasons, since foreign troops had a magical aura about them, but Russell did not understand why anyone would want

to walk when they could sail. He promised to rendezvous with the Spanish just down the coast from Palamós. Brigadier Stuart remained ashore as liaison officer. The *Graf* von Nassau would lead the landing party.

Palamós II

The Spanish reached Sant Feliu de Guíxols, roughly a day's march from Palamós, on August 17. They had marched by way of Llagostera, since the coastal route was quite rough. The French were reported to be camped beyond the town of La Bisbal d'Empordà, 16 Km northeast from Palamós, behind an extension of the Selvà hills. Meanwhile, the fleet divided, with a portion going to bombard Roses in hopes of confusing the French.

On the night of August 18/19, *Graf* von Nassau disembarked the expeditionary troops near Sant Feliu, roughly a day's march from the town. The landing was complete by 2am. At 9am, the combined army, which also included the Imperial contingent under Heßen-Darmstadt, marched north, camping that night about 3 Km from Palamós in the neighbourhood of St. Antóni de Calogne.

Vendôme had assembled 7,000 foot and 4,000 horse at La Bisbal to meet the threat of a naval descent on either Roses or Palamós. Troops had been drawn from Vilobí, Cassa de la Selva (21 Km east of Palamós), Llagostera, Vall d'Aro, La Bisbal, and Palafrugell (9.5 Km up the coast from Palamós). Once the direction of the threat was determined they moved southeast toward the port.

The first encounter occurred on August 20, with the final approach of the Allies to the town. While debouching from a defile, the Allied vanguard, composed of the English, was rushed by a large body of French cavalry supported by some infantry and 4 cannon. These were the French vanguard. They were easily brushed off, according to Russell, and a camp established in front of the town. Vendôme's main body was still marching from Pals, 13 Km north of Palamós. They halted at Palafrugell, 8 Km or a short day's march from Palamós.

[The encounter was probably near the monastery of Santa Maria del Mar, just north of Calogne. The monastery sits on a low hill, forming a defile with the sea on the other side. Or, it could have been at Puigsesforques a little way inland. This is the only section of that day's march that could have encountered rough ground.]

On August 21 the opposing forces faced off against each other only a mile (1.6 Km) apart. The Allies kept to their camp, which Russell says was poorly fortified thanks to a dearth of both specialised siege equipment and basic tools such as axes and spades. Fortunately the French did not attack. According to Russell, the enemy was drawn up with his Foot on the hills and his Horse on the plain. Probably, this means the cavalry was lined up in the center of the position and the infantry held the hills to either side. Such an arrangement ties in with next day's activities, when the enemy drew up for battle within a half hour's march (again, about a mile distant) along the line El Figuerar – Sant Joan de Palamós.

Having stood to arms throughout August 21 and all through the night, the Allied army was somewhat disheartened to learn the Vendôme had received 3,000 cavalry and 4,000 'Rousillons' (to use Russell's term – i.e., militia but probably also some *miqueletes*) as reinforcements. This may have been a gross exaggeration, and may even have factored in the French vanguard, but the Spanish, feeling overwhelmed, and riven by party strife, implored Brigadier Stuart to take command of their whole force.

The foe formed for battle again on the morning of August 22. Surprisingly, after advancing about 200 paces, the French unexpectedly retired. According to Noaïlles' memoirs (added to by his son, who was second in command of a cavalry brigade in this campaign), Vendôme decided the enemy were too strong after all.

Deserters reported the French had been issued a ration of wine and brandy and told to concentrate on the English; the Spanish would be sure to flee once they were defeated. It was said that the vanguard in their first encounter had intended simply to ride down the Spanish and had been surprised by the firm defense offered. Unsure of what to expect they had waited for reinforcements, and had only learned the night before that the Spanish were supported by foreign auxiliaries.

[Lopez offers a slightly different narrative to Russell's dispatches. He says the investment began on August 16 when the British landed siege guns and mortars, and that the bombardment began on August 18. Russell's dates are probably correct. The last statement in his dispatch says, "the King's subjects were on shore six days". It is quite possible Russell used the fleet to bombard the town before the army arrived, but he makes special mention of being asked to do so at a later date, in rough seas that made it difficult to hit the target. Lopez also says the English had 1,200 men, so it is possible a last battalion was landed directly at Palamós, though he may simply be quoting the totals under Russell's care. Lopez says the town was fully besieged by August 20. His account merges with Russell's regarding August 22, only he says it took place the day before.]

Upon retiring, the French were attacked in turn by 3,000 of the Allies, who were repulsed by heavy artillery fire. It appears that the Spanish cavalry and *migueletes* pursued the retreating forces; the accounts do not mention

participation by the infantry. *Maestro de campo* Sala i Sasala was present, and was caught in a rearguard ambush that inflicted 25-30 casualties on his men before they could be extricated by the *trozo de Extremadura*.

[The French ambush led to complaints being lodged against the Viceroy, who was accused of deliberately using the Catalans as cannon fodder.]

On August 23 (22 in Lopez) the Spanish bombardment intensified, ending in an assault on the western side of the town. According to Lopez, rough seas prevented bombardment by the fleet and the landing of additional guns. According to Russell, the seas were high but the fleet succeeded in striking both town and citadel, and in setting some fires that burned all night. According to Noaïlles' son, Palamós was struck by 2,400 bombs during the course of the siege, and was almost rubbled.

The Admiral was not impressed by the performance of his allies. The Spanish had no siege equipment and yet were hot to conduct a siege. They had promised him victuals but had almost no food for themselves. Matters came to a head on August 26 (24 in Lopez) when a frigate arrived from Toulon with two captured fishermen. They reported Tourville was readying 60 sail for immediate action.

This clinched matters. Russell insisted his troops be reembarked. Gastañaga pleaded with him to leave the troops as they gave heart to his army. Just for four days? He then confided that it was not he who wanted to press the siege – he could see well enough they had no means to do so – but his generals. Three times Russell asked to reembark. The third time, some of the Spanish generals grew angry and said too much. Dismissing the Allied fleet as useless to Spain, they said they would make a separate peace with France and have the Dauphin as their king upon Carlos II's death. This gave the whole operation the illusion of being only a means of drawing the Viceroy's army out so that Vendôme could attack it. Russell was highly suspicious, as was Heßen-Darmstadt, who refused to place the Imperial regiments in danger of attack at bad odds.

Vendôme was capable of such subtlety, though in this case it was just tough talk on the part of the Spanish. However, those two fishermen taken by the frigate were not what they seemed, but a plant, intended to lure Russell away from Palamós! Their story was confirmed by coordinated disinformation from Paris. In reality, Tourville was making no preparations for departure.

Not realising this, Russell loaded up on the night of August 26, completing the operation by midnight. (To be pedantic, he first unloaded 8 cannon around 6pm so that the Viceroy could make a battery, then loaded his troops, then inexplicably reloaded his 8 cannon.) Gastañaga said he planned to remain for one day more and then leave in the night, which he did, at 2am. Far from planning lure the Viceroy to his destruction, Vendôme only learned the siege had been broken up the day the Spanish left.

[To the question of why not leave the troops behind while the fleet hunted for Tourville can be posed another question: what were they supposed to eat? In any case, Russell did not trust the Spanish.]

After agreeing to hang about until his allies were well away, the Admiral made best speed for Toulon, where he found he had been hoodwinked. However, he was glad of the excuse. The fleet cruised for some time, trying whether they could effect a landing, but endured two storms; in the second an advice (dispatch) boat capsized with the loss of most aboard. Having satisfied himself that Tourville was incapable of conducting any support operations on the Spanish coast this year, and doubly sure the Allies could not land on the Riviera either, Russell sailed away. At the worst, the French might sally when the Levanters blew and try to break out of the Med. By September 14 Russell was Altea Bay, some 50 Km northeast of Alicante.

The Spanish, meanwhile, made an untidy retreat to the lands around Barcelona by way of the coast road, turning inland at Blanes, then marching by Hostalric to Llinars. The troops were distributed between Sant Celoni and Montcada (8 Km up the Llobregat from Barcelona). In Admiral Russell's words:

"by what I have observed already, they will march farther in two days from the enemy, than they did in six towards them. God send them well thither; for nothing but a high mountain or an unfordable river is security sufficient for such miserable creatures, with officers at the head of them who are no soldiers."

The French razed Palamós and abandoned it.

To the rumour of a pro-French coup can be added rumours that the disagreements between Russell and Gastañaga were part of a plot to elevate Heßen-Darmstadt at Gastañaga's expense by making him appear as useless as the former viceroys. Ironically, while Heßen-Darmstadt was a cousin of the Queen of Spain, Gastañaga was also an appointee of the Imperial faction. However, the former had been at odds with his hosts from the start, demanding the post of Lieutenant General and the address of 'Highness'. Instead, he was created a mere General of Cavalry and *not* addressed as 'Highness'. In reprisal, Heßen-Darmstadt refused to allow his men to swear allegiance to Spain, in

the person of the Viceroy, instead making them swear allegiance to himself – an act which his opponents promptly magnified to denigrate him as a lousy condottiere.

Seeking a party of his own, Heßen-Darmstadt embraced the Catalan nobility, supporting them in their grievances and painting Gastañaga a tool of the Castilian Government who cared nothing for the locals. He ingratiated himself with the *Consell de Cent*, who were dead against the Viceroy. When the *Consell* complained of Gastañaga withdrawing to a position south of Hostalric and refusing to split off garrisons for Blanes, Hostalric, Olot and Vic (which would serve to protect the 'frontier'), Heßen-Darmstadt agreed with them. The fact that the Viceroy had practical reasons for acting as he did – the countryside was utterly exhausted – did not enter into the argument.

Heßen-Darmstadt's refusal to risk the Imperial troops at Palamós now became a full blown *cause célébre*. The Viceroy tried to patch things over with Madrid, saying that he was in agreement with Heßen-Darmstadt on the question, but others, *maestre de campo general* Francisco Dávila Orejón, and g*eneral de caballería* Don Juan de Acuna, claimed that Heßen-Darmstadt was trying to highjack the Army, causing a breakdown of discipline. The prince made matters worse by going behind Gastañaga's back at Court. Ultimately, the Emperor Leopold had to intervene and order the prince to obey the Viceroy. Nevertheless, caught between the Catalan nobility and Heßen-Darmstadt's machinations, Gastañaga's days were numbered.

[At this point maréchal Noaïlles' memoirs end, so that henceforth Lopez must be relied on for dates and details. The rank of maestre de campo general *was second only to that of* capitán general *(the latter held in this case by the Viceroy). It was an administrative and logistical appointment made by the King himself.]*

The action at Palamós was the last of the season. Both sides settled into winter quarters, the French at Figueres and Girona, the Spanish in the Vallè, between Barcelona and Hostalric, and the hill country toward the sea. Blanes, was garrisoned by them. Some infantry was based as far away as L'Anoia, about 60 Km WNW of Barcelona, and Penedes, about 40 Km west of the city. The cavalry, as a concession to the *Consell de Cent*, was distributed closer to the frontier, in the Ribera d'Ebre, the Alt and Baix country, at La Seu d'Urgell, Segarra, Cervera, Montblanc, and Moià, which were not near the front, and also in the Plana de Vic, Plana d'en Bas, Bianyà and Lluçanès. The main reason for such a dispersion was lack of forage. Without money, much of the troops' subsistence allowance had to be taken directly off the land.

Admiral Russell had his own troubles. At the beginning of the year he had been given the option of staying on or returning home. Tired and sick, after 18 months at sea he was ready for a change. Admiral Sir George Rooke was slated to replace him. Russell wanted to leave his successor a clean machine. Although only about two-thirds of his ships were fit to remain at Cadiz he was pleased with his the skill of his English crews. What was left of them, that is. At the beginning of the year he had been given 3,000 replacements, of which he was now expected to send home all 3,000. Rooke would have to make do with skeleton crews. As for the Dutch, they had been no help all season and now stated flatly that they had to return home before their home ports were blocked with ice; they left in September. No replacements would be forthcoming until after the ice melted next year.

[Russell had no plans for further service but found himself in harness almost immediately as the French threatened an invasion of England.]

23 of the best ships of the line remained on station under Rear Admiral Mitchell. 12 went home with Russell. Fortunately, Rooke brought with him enough ships to make up a fleet of 65 vessels.

[Lynn says there were no more than 30 ships in all.]

Louis Joseph, III *Duc* de Vendôme (1654-1712)

The *duc* de Vendôme was just shy of his 41st birthday when he was appointed to command the Army of Roussillon. He was the great-grandson of Henri IV of France and Henri's mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrées. His mother was Laura Mancini, sister of the mother of Eugene of Savoy. He inherited his family's title in 1669, along with vast wealth passed down from another great-grandmother.

He married a granddaughter of the Great Condé in 1710. At that time, he was pegged to succeed Philip V of Spain, should he die childless. He had no children of his own.

In 1688 he held the rank of *lieutenant généra*l, serving under the *duc* de Luxembourg at Steenkerke (1692) and under Catinat at Marsaglia (1693). He was not made *maréchal* until after the war, although it was in recognition for his capture of Barcelona in 1697.

In the War of the Spanish Succession he fought his cousin Eugene in Italy (and even defeated him in battle), then fought in Flanders. His final campaigns were in Spain.

Even more energetic than Noaïlles, Vendôme was a brilliant commander and an exceptionally brave soldier. His influence over his men was greater than any other French general of his generation. There are clear indications that he was a homosexual.

Francisco Antonio de Agurto, I Marqués de Gastañaga (1640-1702)

Gastañaga was 55 when he took command in Catalonia, serving as Viceroy from 1695 to 1696. He was a Basque. Prior to his service in Spain he was Viceroy of the Spanish Netherlands (1685-1692). He led the Spanish contingent at Fleurus (1690) and surrendered Mons in 1691, though after a hard fight. His recall to Spain is ascribed either to having lost Mons, or to the Prince of Orange's dislike of him; on practical grounds, William wanted to replace him with an Imperial governor so that Madrid did not have to be consulted before every military operation. After his recall, the court martial exonerated him of all blame for losing Mons.

His dismissal in 1696 rankled – once his replacement had been confirmed he abandoned all interest in his 'lame duck' command – and the highest post he seems to have held after that date was colonel of the horse guards. He never married.

Prinz Georg Ludwig von Heßen-Darmstadt (1669-1705)

George Louis, or Jordi as he is known in Catalonia, was the third son of the Landgrave of Heßen-Darmstadt, a Protestant prince. It is thus incorrect to call him the Landgrave, as many histories do. His brother held the title until 1739.

George was only 26 when he arrived in Spain. His previous military experience included the Battle of Mohacs in Hungary (1687), as a volunteer, age 18, under Eugene of Savoy. He fought for King William in Ireland (1689-91), but converted to Catholicism and joined the Austrian service, becoming *generalfeldwachtmeister* in 1692 and serving against France.

After the war in Spain, he was made a Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, appointed Viceroy of Catalonia, and promoted to *general de caballeria* (1699). His term as viceroy was popular and innovative; he was dismissed when the Bourbons came to power.

Before the War of the Spanish Succession broke out he was given the job of representing the Emperor in a mission to forge an alliance with England and Portugal in favour of the Imperial candidate for the Spanish throne, the Archduke Charles.

Appointed to lead the Archduke's cause in Spain he joined the British in an abortive attempt to spark a rebellion in Catalonia in 1704.

Though the attempt failed, it led to the capture of Gibraltar. The idea of a surprise descent on that locale was Heßen-Darmstadt's; he also commanded the garrison after Gibraltar was captured, defeating Spanish attempts to retake the port.

When the Catalonian front opened in 1707, Heßen-Darmstadt commanded the Archduke Charles' forces in the Principality until killed while storming the hill of Montjïuc in September of that year.

Lull Before the Storm – The Campaign of 1696

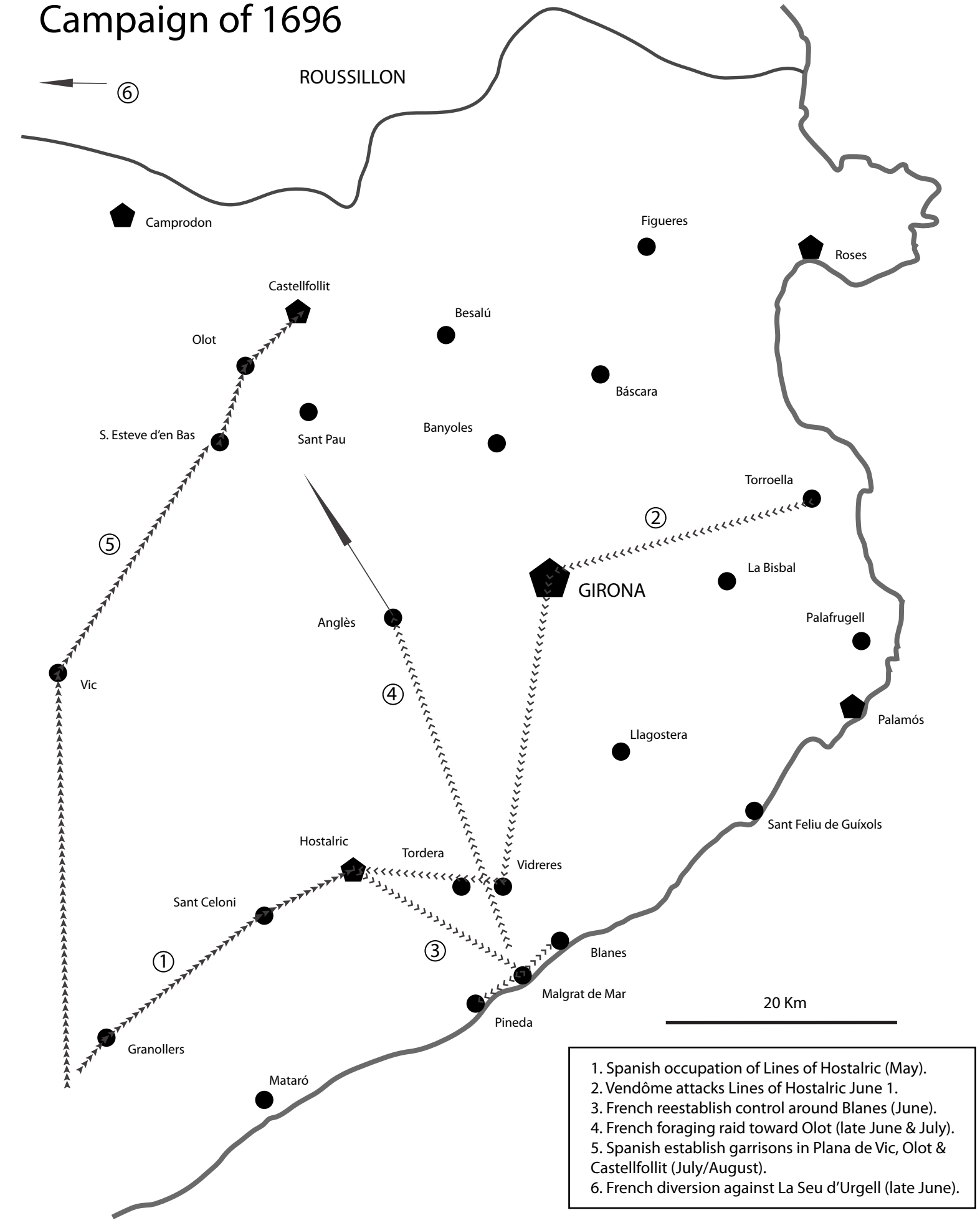
Despite everything, 1695 had been a pretty good year for the Spanish. The French had been forced back on the defensive and the Army of Catalonia had received new blood and <grudging> aid from her allies. Militarily speaking, little happened in 1696; most of Spain's troubles were domestic. There were two highly significant events, however. First, the Toulon Squadron, now under Château-Renault, broke out of the Mediterranean. Second, Savoy made a separate peace, releasing large numbers of French troops for the Catalonian front.

The winter of 1695/96 was taken up with political infighting. The Catalans continue to demand the Army be strengthened and permanently stationed in the Principality. There were also demands that Girona be retaken. To meet this need, in December of 1695 it was decided to levy another 7,000 men from Castile, despite the fact that the Principality could not support them.

The morale of the Army of Catalonia was at an all time low. 150 men from a *tercio* stationed at Berga mutinied over pay, threatened their officers and tried to defect. The *jurats* (town councillors) of Berga caught up with them at Bellver.

Morale at Madrid was not much better. Heßen-Darmstadt was busy defending himself at Gastañaga's expense. The pro-French party (or peace party) was very strong – supposedly 7 out of 9 members of the *Consejo de Estado* – and though the Duke of Savoy's plans to defect were not yet known, the Court felt something was in the wind. There were discussions over what to do when – not if – French regiments were released from Italy. Barcelona must be held, but her defenses were still, after eight years of war, in disrepair.

Campaign of 1696



1. Spanish occupation of Lines of Hostalric (May).
2. Vendôme attacks Lines of Hostalric June 1.
3. French reestablish control around Blanes (June).
4. French foraging raid toward Olot (late June & July).
5. Spanish establish garrisons in Plana de Vic, Olot & Castellfollit (July/August).
6. French diversion against La Seu d'Urgell (late June).

Gastañaga's solution was to establish the Lines of Hostalric. Heßen-Darmstadt, very temporarily reconciled to the Viceroy, was placed in charge of these. But by the time the Army took up its position Gastañaga was no longer in command. He had been replaced by Francisco Velasco, the Governor of Cadiz and a natural son of the Constable of Castile. Since Velasco delayed taking up the baton, Gastañaga continued a lame-duck administration, taking no action that his successor might appropriate for his own prestige.

Enthusiasm among the guerrillas was also down. Not that hatred of the French had departed, but they felt ill-used by the Army, an army that preferred robbing to fighting (Madrid was reduced to pressing the dregs of the country) yet insisted out of pure jealousy that it should have all the resources (and that statement is not hyperbole). Gastañaga received much of the blame, but his generals were also despised. Vendôme tried to capitalise on the situation, offering amnesty to 'rebels' – presumably both deserters and Spanish *migueletes* – and promising tighter discipline in the French Army. Still, harassment of his forces continued. In April, a supply convoy was hit, with 97 men taken prisoner and 35 horses captured.

Château-Renault sailed from Toulon at the end of March, with 47 ships of the line. Because Rooke had been recalled to deal with a threatened invasion of England – another one of the Sun King's Jacobite diversions – he was able to escape the Med, although delays in fitting out meant his ships were too late to participate in the abortive invasion scheme. However, the operation still worked to France's benefit. Her Navy began a program of *guerre de course*, tying down English warships in convoy escort and hunter-killer work and leaving the Mediterranean free for the French galleys and the remainder of the Mediterranean fleet, which supported Vendôme in his attacks on coastal towns this year.

By April, the bulk of Vendôme's forces were camped at Torroella de Montgrí, on the Ter. The Spanish believed he had 20,000 men who would be able to take the field in May. Early in that month, therefore, Heßen-Darmstadt marched to Hostalric. 2 *tercios* were stationed in the town and 4 more to the North, along with the 2 Imperial regiments and the Bavarian regiment. The Horse was also based on the town, with a detachment 2 days march away. Once the Lines were constructed, the army would be fully deployed in them. Reinforcements were expected in the form of *tercios* from Granada and marines from the Fleet.

Spanish estimates of Vendôme's strength were not far off. He had roughly 16,000 foot and 5,000 horse in the Army of Roussillon (28 battalions and 33 squadrons). By a report from slightly later in the year, 11,200 foot and 5,248 horse were concentrated at Girona. He opened his campaign in late May and on June 1 probed against Heßen-Darmstadt with 6,000 men. The latter had about 1,600 to oppose him, with perhaps 2,000 foot in distant reserve and a reasonably large body of cavalry under Gastañaga's command.

Very little is recorded about this battle. It is not clear if it was primarily a grand cavalry skirmish or a real attack on the Lines. Nowhere is it described as a 'major battle' like Torroella. Still, it had drama.

The French attacked with vigour and Heßen-Darmstadt became isolated with about 800 of his men. These were able to cut their way free while the Viceroy engaged in a mass cavalry battle, in which his forces were worsted. However, the French did not win a significant enough victory to actually take Hostalric, and withdrew to Vidreres, about 15 Km to the Northeast. 300 of the Spanish cavalry fled to Barcelona, where they spread reports of a disaster.

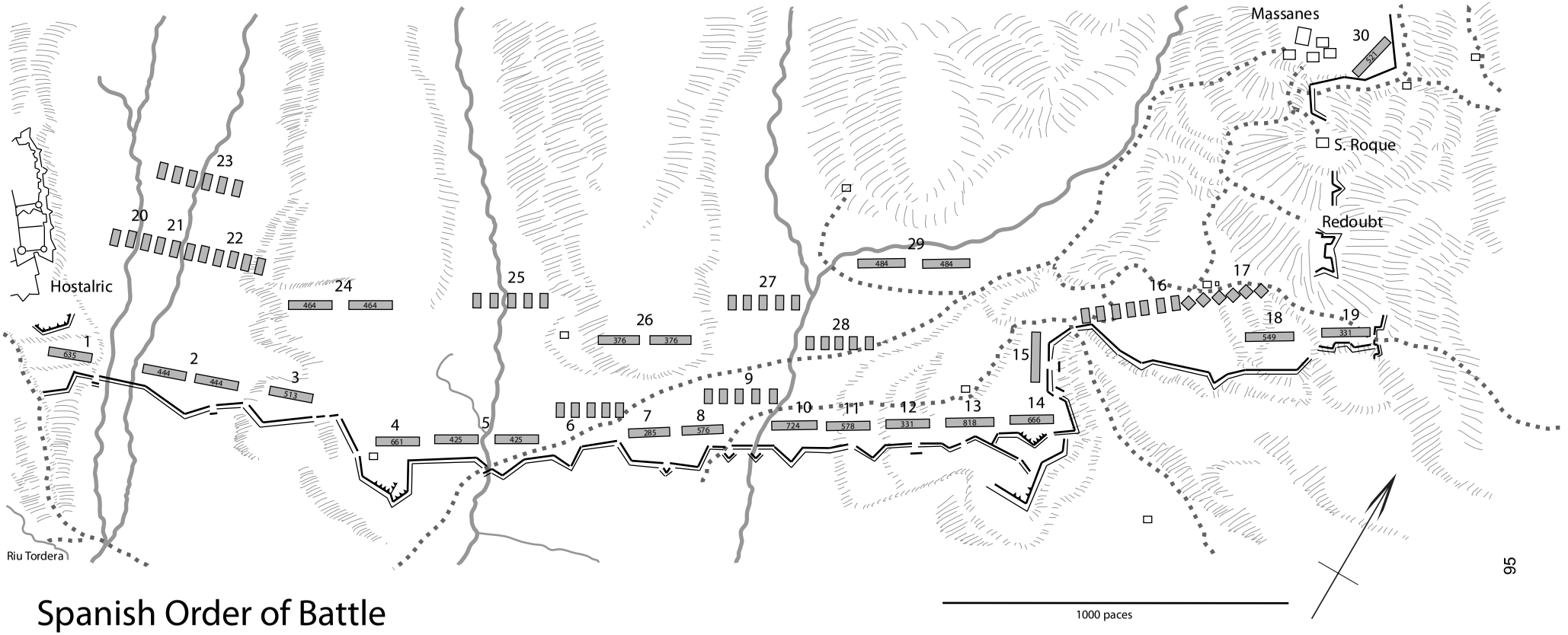
[In some versions of the affair Heßen-Darmstadt requested and was refused the 2,000 reinforcements, but after being surrounded was succoured by the cavalry.]

After this affair, Vendôme made it known he was preparing for a full assault against the Lines. This was disinformation. Though the combat may have been a defeat for Spain, it gave them time to complete the works and Vendôme did not feel strong enough to attack.

The Lines were about 3 Km long, stretched between Hostalric and the low ground in front of a hilltop hamlet called Massanes. To man them the Spanish scraped together 11,556 foot and 4,002 horse, plus 18 field guns. Vendôme was now matched by an equal force, who's inherent weaknesses were nullified by entrenchments.

The Lines were oriented from southwest to northeast, backed by hills. This position did not physically prevent an army from marching south via Hostalric; in fact, an army coming from Girona would take them end-on. But, the northern end was fortified with redoubts and occupied the high ground. Though the Lines were not astride the valley an enemy could not pass without being attacked in flank. Moving supplies along that road would be impossible for the French. Supplies for the defenders could be brought up via the western side of Hostalric's hill. If the French attempted to march on Barcelona by another route they would either be traveling through rough terrain and harassed by partisans, or by a route that overextended their supply lines.

Gastañaga's opponents, however, blamed him for not taking the offensive. Even allowing that he was not the most dynamic of commanders, this was unfair, not only because of the shaky morale of his troops, but because he was



Plan of the Lines of Hostalric
4 June 1696

Spanish Order of Battle

24 battalions of infantry; 12,242 men
53 squadrons of cavalry; 3,656 men
Total: 15,898 men
(artillery not recorded, but 3.5 batteries)

1. Tercio de Juanez (Jaen?)
2. Tercio de la Costa de Granada
3. Tercio de Grimau (Ciudad de Barcelona)
4. Tercio de Gasco (Nuevos Castilla)
5. Tercio de Olalla (Verdes Viejos)
6. Caballería de Estremadura
   (CGL, Medinilla, Riuaguda, Solis, Ortis; 399 men)
7. Tercio de Marimon (Diputacíon)
8. Tercio de Granada (Casco de Granada)
9. Caballería de Alemanes
   (Atimada, Zerda, Vincentelo, Carrera, CGL; 342 men)
10. Tercio de Avila (Amarillos Viejos)
11. Tercio de Toledo
12. Tercio de Nueros (Aragón)
13. Tercio de Alarcon (Azules Viejos)
14. Tercio de Noiel (Noyelle)
15. Tercio de Leden (no strength given)
16. Unnamed cavalry regiment (Brabante or Milán)
    (no name, Mariso, Olca, Zerda, CGL; 281men)

plus independents: Salazar (50), Monsorte (60)
& mounted migueletes?
Armendariz (Dragones Nuevos) (100 in 2 cy).

17. Dragones de Belvale (Viejos) (290 men in 4 cy).
18. Tercio de Machia Caraciole
19. Tercio de Recco (Perucca)
20. Gardias Caballería in 3 squadrons; 219 men
21. Independent cavalry squadrons: General (83), Otazo (77)
22. Caballería de Ordenes
    (CGL, Primo, Portugal, Querel, Ramirez, Melgaryo; 423 men)
23. Caballería de Valones
    (CGL, Henriquez, Castro, Sarmiento, Guzman, Charni; 323 men)
24. Tercio de Couburg
25. Unnamed cavalry regiment (Brabante or Milán)
    (CGL, no name, Cardenas, Reno, Boufquerq; 309)
26. Tercio de Dupont (Zweibrücken)
27. Caballería de Flandes
    (Albelada, Sabaloy, Pinatelo, Marino, CGL; 396 men)
28. Caballería de Rosellon
    (Sinosain?, no name, Diaz, Marquisani, CGL; 348 men)
29. Tercio de Telenbac (Tattenback)
30. Tercio de Becky Gorsi (Christian Beck or Baron Beck)

'CGL' = colonel's squadron

under orders not to leave the Lines until Velasco arrived, and Velasco seemed to be in no hurry to reach the front. From Granada, he travelled to Madrid, where he and the other exalted ones hunted around for more pocket change to pay the Army. He was not sworn in as Viceroy until July 17.

[On July 10, a memorial was published, praising Heßen-Darmstadt and blaming Gastañaga's army for its inaction. All part of Velasco's build up.]

Velasco was a proud, rather melancholy man, whose 'Castilian' demeanour was predicted to be grating on the Catalan psyche, but once on the scene he acted with diligence.

Vendôme, meanwhile, improved the shining hour by plundering the coastal districts between Hostalric and Blanes for over a month. Mixed parties of foot and horse torched Calella, Pineda, Malgrat Palafolls, Blanes, and Tordera (June 16). Under cover of these activities, an artillery road was begun, intended to link the coastal towns of Blanes and Mataró, halfway to Barcelona. This would allow Vendôme to bypass Hostalric entirely. (Ultimately, the road was not used.)

The *Régiment de Dillon*, of 600 men, was one of the units assigned to provide security, being based at Calella, a coastal town 13 Km southwest of Blanes. Occupying the town on June 22, they were attacked next day by 2,000 Spanish regulars and 3,000 *migueletes*. Despite the numbers involved, the regiment held the enemy off, inflicting anything from 2 to 30 casualties, and suffering only 3 wounded. On June 24 the Spanish attacked again, this time supported by brigantines offshore. Vendôme sent cavalry to succour the garrison, and the enemy withdrew on its approach.

To divert attention from Blanes, the French a developed subsidiary operation against Castellciutat (far away at La Seu d'Urgell). The *marqués* de Preu commanded the garrison of 300 foot and 50 dragoons, supported by *maestre de campo* Sala i Sasala and 3 companies of *migueletes,* plus the *somatén* of Lluçanès. They had no difficulty holding off the French. Blanes was not so well defended, and Gastañaga did not feel able to leave his position to assist.

On the day of Velasco's induction the French left Tordera and Blanes, distributing themselves in a line from Vidreres in the Southeast (21 Km south of Girona), to Vilobí, Anglès, and Amer in the Northwest (18 Km west of Girona). Vendôme returned his cannon to Girona. His main base was established at Banyoles. The French were not creating a defensive line but engaging in a massive foraging operation, intended to clean out the countryside south and west of Girona.

On July 29 the peasantry drove the French out of Anglès; in reprisal, those troops later sacked Sant Marti de Llemena, 9 Km to the North, then proceeded to do the same at Olot (July 30). Nemesis overtook the marauders, however. On July 31 they were caught in a forest fire while collecting snowmelt in the Santa Bàrbara Mountains.

On August 1, 200 French infantry razed the walls of Anglès as part of a foraging operation between that place and Vilobí which lasted until August 7. They spared the town itself on payment of a bribe. The Spanish ambushed the parties numerous times, inflicting an estimated 400 casualties.

To prevent more raids, Velasco was forced to spread out his own troops. In early August his mobile forces were on the Plana de Vic. In mid-August 2,500 horse and 1,000 foot were sent to Vall d'Aro upon word that the French were requisitioning fodder there. Castellfollit was occupied by 500 foot and the remainder of the cavalry were stationed at Olot. The Lines of Hostalric remained occupied until October, until in fact Vendôme was reported to be enroute to Roussillon.

Both sides then entered winter quarters, the Spanish as described, with the troops from Hostalric disbursed to regions that had not been eaten bare – Manresa, Montserrat and the Llobregat, to the west of Barcelona. The French had at least 2 battalions and 3 cavalry regiments in the Cerdanya and the rest of the foot were either at Girona or in the Empordà. The bulk of the cavalry was withdrawn to France, wintering between Roussillon and Narbonne.

Velasco, his honeymoon with the Catalans already over, spent the winter mucking out Barcelona's ditches and reinforcing the works with whatever materials were to hand. Montjïuc, the city's citadel, was strengthened by a trench system connecting it with the city walls. Savoy's defection from the war meant that Barcelona would feel the full weight of the French Army in the next few months.

[Velasco may have been competent, but some of his decisions caused unnecessary friction. In particular, he replaced the popular Catalan general Don Juan de Acuna with general Otrazo, an arrogant boaster and 'un grand poltron' in the words of a French report.]

Finish the Job – The Campaign of 1697

Geopolitically, the situation in 1697 had changed significantly. First, Savoy was out of the running. Second, the Maritime Powers were close to cutting a deal with France themselves and saw no reason to prolong the war; therefore, they made no attempt to aid Spain by returning a fleet to the Med. In contrast, the Emperor wanted to continue the struggle. He was not happy that the Maritime Powers were willing to let France keep Luxembourg and Strasburg and hoped to accomplish something on the Rhine. The closing of the Italian front gave him the opportunity to strengthen his forces in Germany without drawing off strength from the Hungarian front, where the Empire was steamrollering the Turks. But this advantage would be nullified if the French diverted all of Catinat's army to the Rhine. Some of it must be persuaded to go to Spain.

These military issues blended with the question of the Spanish succession, which lay in the background throughout the war but took on prominence as King Carlos approached his end. Bavaria, France, and the Austrian Habsburgs all had claims on the throne of Spain. The Maritime Powers were secretly backing the Emperor; France had her supporters at Madrid who backed the Dauphin. Leopold wanted the crown for his son Charles.

And so, the Emperor's envoy to Spain, Count Harrach, pulled enough strings at Madrid to keep the Spanish in the war. This gave King Louis the excuse to seize Barcelona, which he could then trade back for greater influence in Spain's affairs. Spain's chances of defeating the combined armies of Vendôme and Catinat were slim, but the odds were lowered further by internal politics.

The so-called Francophiles, foiled in their hopes of a separate peace by the will of the Queen, were aiming at the surrender of Barcelona without much of a fight. So much blood had been shed that a formal siege was necessary for honour's sake, but it need not be a long one. The Imperials had the opposite idea. Barcelona must be held at all costs for another year. Velasco was of the French party, and Heßen-Darmstadt was of the Imperials, and both would be in the field together, the latter as commander of the garrison, and the former as his 'rescuer'. The reader can see what that meant.

For a while, peace actually seemed likely. In early March, the Emperor Leopold sent a strongly worded letter demanding the Spanish keep in the fight, but the Queen's party were in the minority at that time and, perhaps due to the obnoxious tone of the letter, the *Consejo de Estado* was virtually unanimous for peace, unless Allied aid was forthcoming. Velasco contributed his two cents, reporting not only that the Army was unpaid (as usual) except for the elite German regiments, and that an epidemic had broken out. There was not enough money to erect hospitals to deal with it.

[Spain was the first European nation to use military field hospitals, but that innovation had been made two centuries before and by now they were not much better at combat medicine than the rest of Europe.]

However, despite the opinion of the Council, peace was not sought. Perhaps, between the general talks taking place in the Low Countries and the fact that the French juggernaut was already being cranked up, it was felt that they might as well carry on until a diplomatic breakthrough was achieved. Then, they could abandon the Emperor. And, one never knew, they might win the siege.

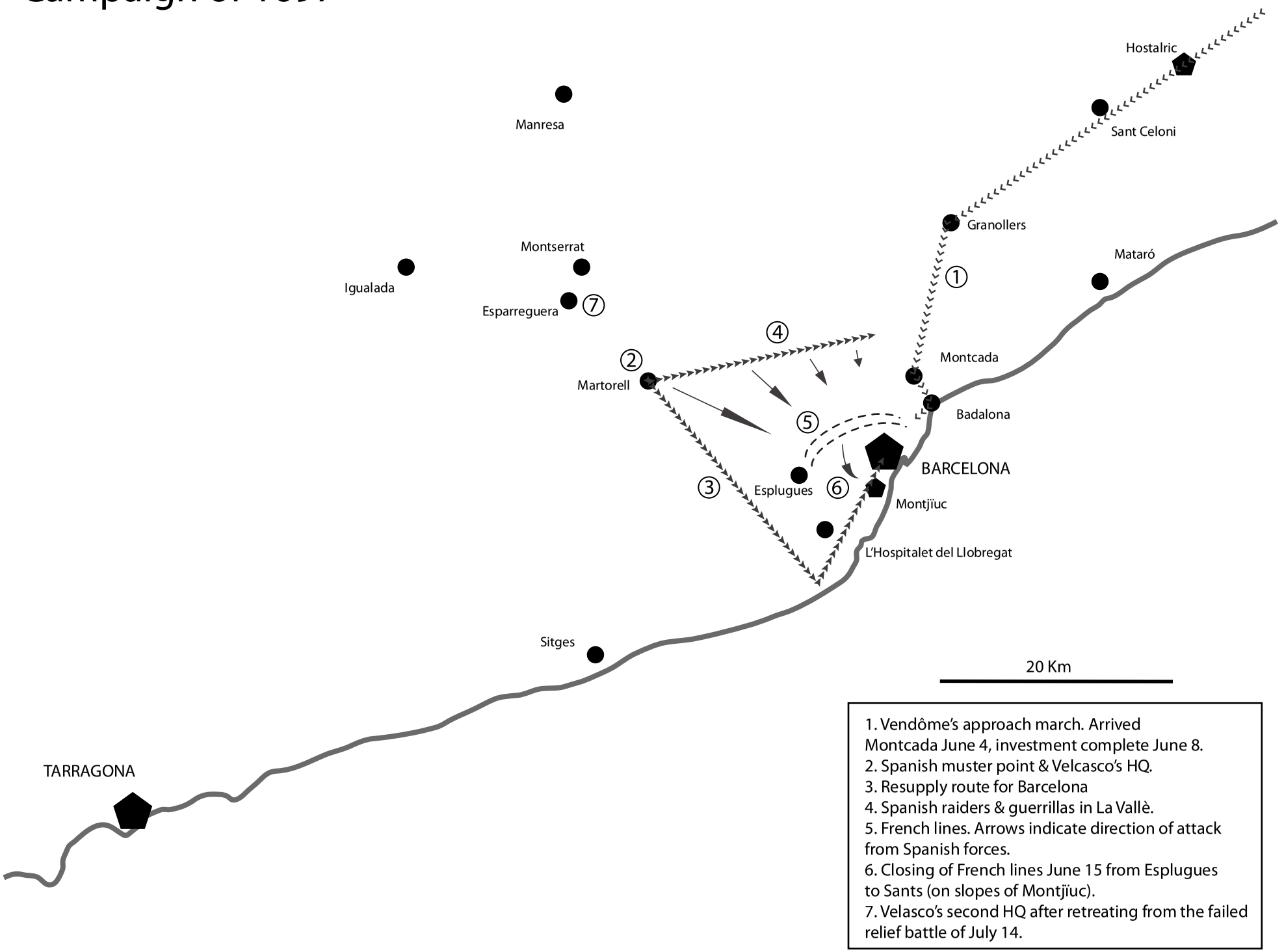
Somehow, the Spanish cobbled together enough grain for a six-month campaign, and by a combination of loans, special taxes, and begging letters, enough money to keep the Army in being. Despite serving the peace party, Velasco made an effort to strengthen Barcelona's defences. A strong defence would require a larger besieging army, one so large that it might be forced to raise the siege for lack of provisions. In that case, honour could be saved and peace arranged on better terms.

The biggest debate that took place over the winter centered on manpower. There were two elements to this. First, the cities were given the choice of sending a quota of men or making a money payment. Most chose the latter, though some did both – it was a good way to dispose of vagrants (even if they deserted at the first chance, they would be some other city's problem). This sort of thing was pretty standard across Europe by now, but for the Spanish it was the first time during this war that they actually approached a nation-wide draft; before, Madrid had made panicky calls on individual states for voluntary contributions. Portugal was also approached, as before, and as before, neglected to respond.

Money payments were preferred, of course, since this enabled veteran and foreign regiments to remain in the field. Formerly, within the Iberian Army, only the Provincial *tercios* were maintained and the rest disbanded over the winter. However, the troops from Flanders and Milán could not be disbanded, and, some of the militia units were now of veteran quality and worth keeping in being.

The second element was more important: the question of whether to call for a general Catalan insurrection. The act of Raising the Standard of St. Eulalia (patron saint of Barcelona) would be extremely popular in Catalonia, but it might

Campaign of 1697



have uncontrollable results. It was estimated that up to 40,000 Catalans could be levied in a mix of *migueletes* and 'free' companies, and that most of these could be armed with muskets. There were a number of experienced commanders to take charge of them, too. Though unable to stand in the line of battle, they could run rampant in the French rear. Their use, and their limitations, had been amply proved in '95 and '96.

The fear was that after the war these peasant bands would remain in arms and turn on the central government. It might also prove difficult to come to terms with the French if every time a truce was called some zealous *paisaños* slit a few French throats. And, unless kept well in hand, they would strip the country bare, since every community other than their own village was fair game for plundering.

In the end, Velasco compromised. Fortunately, from his point of view, the King forbade the Raising of the Standard. But, he did call for the levying of the *General Somatén* (alternatively called by the Latin name of *Princeps Namque*). This was the feudal levy, based on the *vegueries* (feudal counties) of the Principality; the *veguer,* or governor, of each *veguerie* levied men according to the old formulae and sent them to the field under the command of local notables.

The next question was the strategy to be employed. This had still not been decided by the spring of 1697. In mid-April, Heßen-Darmstadt and the Viceroy had a major argument over whether to hold a forward position or hunker down in Barcelona. Velasco, knowing that peace was being actively sought, favoured holding the city with a strong garrison and keeping the rest of the Army behind the city, to ensure a lifeline remained open. Heßen-Darmstadt wanted to reoccupy the Lines of Hostalric or to construct new lines near Maçanet de la Selvà, about 9 Km northeast of Hostalric, in the plain south of Girona. With this base established, the Army should advance to that city. The cavalry could eat up the country, while merely holding the Lines would delay the enemy for some weeks and allow the Spanish to forage in the rich Vallè north of Barcelona until it was depleted. Allowing the enemy to reach Granollers, on the other hand, would mean he would gain control of Vic and Manresa, guarding access to the valleys of the Llobregat and Cardener rivers, which led to the important towns of Lluçanès, Berga, Cardona, and Solsona.

[Lopez points out that in 1696 Heßen-Darmstadt opposed using the Lines of Hostalric, because it was a passive strategy that kept the initiative in French hands. In 1697 he insisted the Lines be held, to delay the French approach to the City.]

Velasco's counterargument was to the effect that the Army had too few veteran formations to go on the offensive. Heßen-Darmstadt's estimate of enemy strength was also too low. He expected only 14-15,000 men, rising to 22-23,000 as the campaign progressed. The Viceroy estimated the latter number for openers. To this, Heßen-Darmstadt replied that the Lines would allow them to hold off an army three times as large. As in the case of the militia, the Viceroy compromised, and an effort was made to deny these towns to the French, mainly by using the *somatén*.

They were both wrong: the French had over 30,000 men. Counting the *somatén* the Spanish might outnumber even the true French strength, but the militia could not stand in the line.

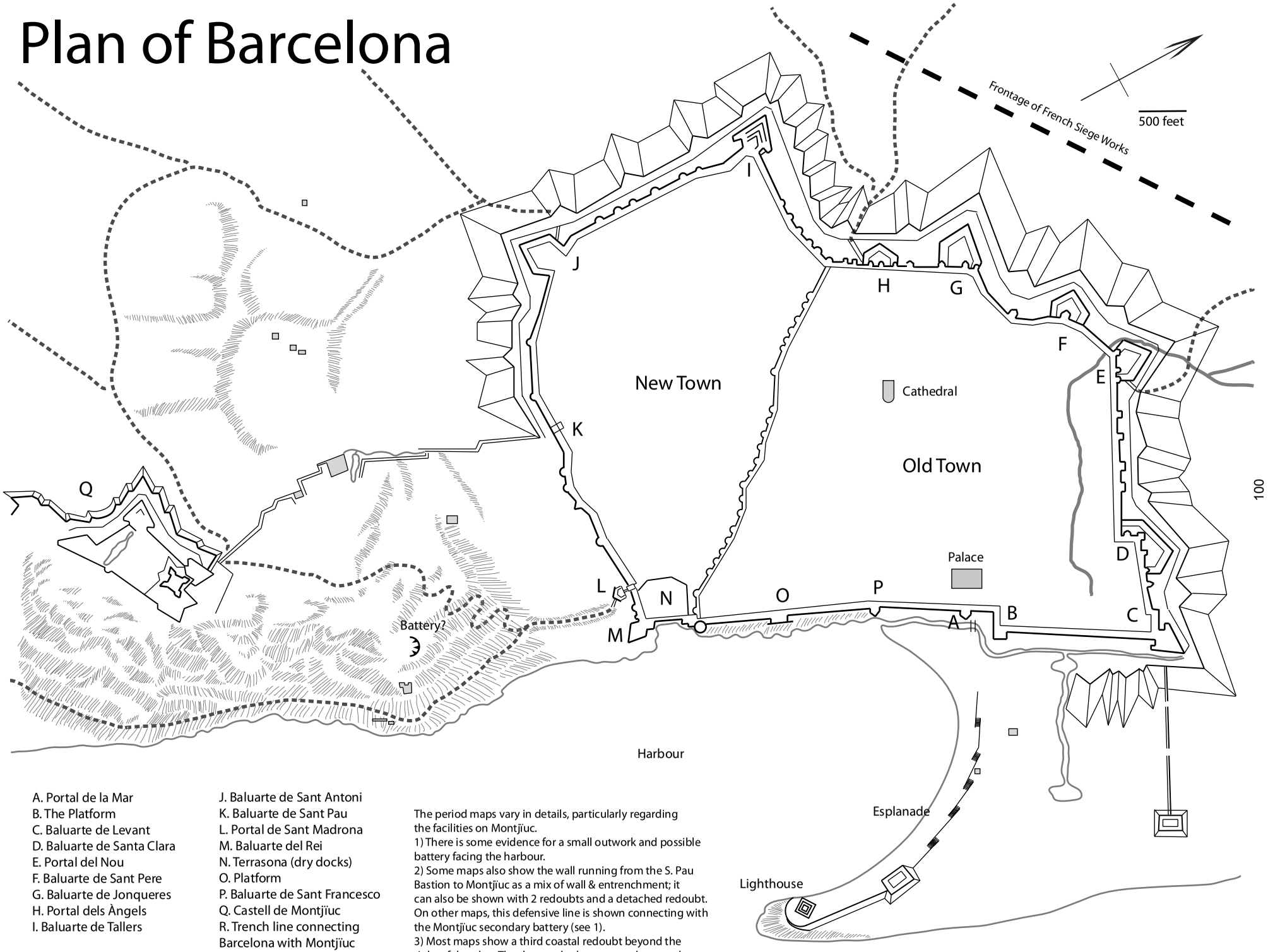
[Lopez feels Velasco made the right choice. First, a defeat outside Barcelona would only make the siege that much easier for the French. Second, the war was winding down. Only the Emperor wanted it to continue, and why should Spaniards die for him?]

The Viceroy did not make his decision by fiat. He put it to the vote, and there was general agreement that Hostalric should be torn down and the main defence centered on Barcelona. As a sop to Heßen-Darmstadt, 2,500 horse would base at Montmeló, 7 Km south of Granollers, from where they could raid north to Vilobí. Agreement was not reached on where the Viceroy should command from: in, or outside the city? When the majority favoured his commanding from outside the city, the King was petitioned for an order to that effect.

The city of Barcelona was very much smaller than it is now, with a population of about 18,000. That still made it the largest city in Catalonia. When comparing with the modern city, the walls extended north to south from the southern side of the Parliament grounds to where the Moll de Sant Bertran projects into the harbour, and east-west from the harbour side to the Plaça de Catalunya (now the official city center). The fortifications were all torn down and filled in long ago, but one can clearly see the extent in an aerial view, because the Old City's buildings are more tightly packed, except on the South side, which at that time was open space and market gardens. The southern third of the city had an inner wall running east-west across it, where the La Rambla Boulevard now runs.

The fortified hill of Montjïuc was outside the walls but was connected to the city defenses by entrenchments. A pond that appears to have been used as a water supply was incorporated into the system, as were a few structures. Some plans show the connecting works reinforced by two redoubts, but these were probably built later, as were a number of detached outworks not shown on the plan. There may have been a battery on the hill, covering the harbour, but again, this was probably constructed later.

Plan of Barcelona



A. Portal de la Mar
B. The Platform
C. Baluarte de Levant
D. Baluarte de Santa Clara
E. Portal del Nou
F. Baluarte de Sant Pere
G. Baluarte de Jonqueres
H. Portal dels Àngels
I. Baluarte de Tallers

J. Baluarte de Sant Antoni
K. Baluarte de Sant Pau
L. Portal de Sant Madrona
M. Baluarte del Rei
N. Terrasona (dry docks)
O. Platform
P. Baluarte de Sant Francesco
Q. Castell de Montjïuc
R. Trench line connecting Barcelona with Montjïuc

The period maps vary in details, particularly regarding the facilities on Montjïuc.
1) There is some evidence for a small outwork and possible battery facing the harbour.
2) Some maps also show the wall running from the S. Pau Bastion to Montjïuc as a mix of wall & entrenchment; it can also be shown with 2 redoubts and a detached redoubt. On other maps, this defensive line is shown connecting with the Montjïuc secondary battery (see 1).
3) Most maps show a third coastal redoubt beyond the right of the plan. The three redoubts are evenly spaced.

The old harbour was only what is now the northern extremity of the modern harbour. The city glacis turned south about where the railway station now is. There were three evenly spaced coastal redoubts, starting near the Lighthouse and running north. The Lighthouse was the terminus of the city's esplanade, which was fortified.

Access to the city was obtained at a number of gates. Roads led from the North to the Portal del Nou, at the northern corner of the city, from the West to the Portal dels Àngels, on the northwestern face, from the *Riu* Llobregat to the Southwest corner at the Baluarte de Sant Antoni, and from the South to the Portal de Sant Madrona. This last gate accepted an access road from Montjïuc, but also one that ran at the base of the hill, right by the water, which would prove critical for resupply, as the French could only take it under fire from the sea.

Heßen-Darmstadt is often named as the commander of the garrison. Technically, he was assistant to *maestre de campo* the *conde* de la Corzana, Governor-in-Chief. Composing the council of war were the *conde* de la Rosa, Governor of the Fortress, plus generals Pignatelli, Gondolío, Corada, Acuna, the *conde* de Penarrubia, Salinas, Don Josep Agullo, the *marqués* de Preu and the *marqués* d'Aytona (serving in a volunteer capacity).

The garrison consisted of 10,000 regular infantry and 1,300 cavalry. To this would be later be added 3,000 marines (in at least 2 *tercios*; one of them was *Navarrete's*), and two *tercios* of Granada (*del Casco* and *Costa de Granada*). 4,000 militia of Barcelona formed into a special *tercio de la Coronela* (*tercio* of the Colonel of the City, or Corzana's). The remainder, or mobile section of the Spanish forces included 4,000 cavalry (divided as described above) and 500 regular infantry (supporting the band of 1,500 cavalry).

[The tercio de la Coronela *was issued 800 state muskets. The remaining members carried personal weapons. Citizen militias were a recurring feature of Spain's military machine, and could serve well in garrison, but they were worthless in the field.]*

On the other side, *Maréchal* Vendôme assembled close to 32,000 men for this final campaign: 42 battalions (18,000 foot), 55 squadrons (6,000 horse and dragoons), either 56 or 84 cannon (the latter total counting 60 heavy guns) and 18 or 24 mortars. Though it would have only counted as a subsidiary corps in Flanders, this was the largest force assembled in Catalonia during the war. *Chef d'escadre* d'Estrées made a return to the scene, supporting the campaign with either 9 or 14 rated ships, 3 sloops, and 80 transports and other auxiliary vessels from Toulon, and 30 galleys from Marseilles.

The Siege of Barcelona

The Army of Roussillon jumped off from Perpignan and reached Barcelona at the beginning of June, marching first to Girona and then by Hostalric to Granollers. As a preliminary, Vendôme issued a proclamation, promising that the Catalans and their property would not be molested if they remained passive while his army marched on Barcelona. They French do not seem to have encountered any interference, even after leaving their forward base at Girona. Once they reached Barcelona they would be cut off, but they could get supplies from the Fleet and the environs of the City, which were relatively untouched by war.

The French reached Moncada i Reixac, on the right bank of the *Riu* Besós, some 14 Km north of Barcelona, on June 4. From here, the next step was to pass through a gap in the coastal hills – the Cordillera de Besós – following the river to its mouth. This was done. The hills were cleared and occupied and the towns of Badalona and Sant Adrià de Besós taken. Badalona lay on Vendôme's left flank. His right was anchored on Esplugues de Llobregat, directly west of Barcelona, giving his army a frontage of over 16 Km. The bulk of his forces were concentrated near the city, however, with a cordon of troops in the Cordillera de Besós to protect the coastal plain where Vendôme intended to establish his magazines. The chief of these was at Sant Martí, about 2 Km north of the city walls; 15,000 bombs and 50,000 bullets were stored there. Badalona was occupied because it contained valuable grain mills.

[Sant Adrià lies at the mouth of the Besós, Badalona a little to the North. Esplugues is 7 Km west of Barcelona's harbour.]

The French deployment left the lands on the South bank of the Llobregat in Spanish hands. Hardly a complete investment of the city, but Vendôme could not afford to extend his lines any farther. Velasco removed himself from the city on June 5, taking his mobile forces to Martorell, 24 Km to the Northeast, on the right bank of the Llobregat. This placed him slightly behind the end of the French right wing, but on the far side of the river. His position allowed him to threaten that flank or to pass behind the French Army and either ravage the hinterland or even assault the other end of the French line by way of the Besós gap.

On June 7 Velasco received the *tercios* of *del Casco* and *Costa de Granada* – 1,700 men – and dispatched them to the city. On June 11 he entered the city personally in order to take stock and arrange for the levying of the *General Somatén*, which was to take place on June 18. Those *vegueries* south and west of the city were to be called upon. A *maestre de campo* named Marimon was sent up the hill of Montjïuc to reinforce its garrison with 500 men.

The next day (June 8), Vendôme declared his investment as complete as it was ever going to be and chose the points of attack. These would be the bastions of the Portal Nou and the Portal de l'Angel, on the northwestern side of the city, opposite the French lines, plus everything in between. As their names imply, the Portals were actually gates, though full bastions.

[Looking at an aerial view of the modern city, Portal de l'Angel stood opposite the eastern corner of the Plaça de Catalunya (at the end of the Avinguda del Portal de l'Angel), and the Portal Nou at the end of the Carrer del Portal Nou, where the telecom building now stands. This encompasses quite a large section of the old city, nearly half of the western side. The bastion of Jonqueres likewise sat at the end of the Carrer Jonqueres, where that road meets the Plaça Urquinaona. The bastion of Sant Pere is a little trickier to place, since it had no road running directly to it, but it sat about two blocks from the Monasterio de Sant Pere les Puelles.]

There was an interlude of a few days as the French prepared themselves. The fleet arrived on June 8 and began unloading siege equipment. As a preliminary to opening trenches, the French occupied two key building complexes outside the walls: the Convento de los Capuchinos (held by the *Régiment de Dillon,* of 600 men) some 680 metres from the covered way opposite Sant Pere, and the Convento de Jesús, opposite Portal de l'Angel. These buildings should have been demolished by the garrison. In the absence of instructions from the Viceroy, Corzana eventually did order them razed, but too late, as the French were by then in possession.

[Jacobite regiments serving at Barcelona included Dillon's*, and a brigade under Simon Luttrell which included 3 battalions of* La Reine *(from King James' personal army) and* Clancarty's*, rounded off with the French* Régiment de Vendôme*. The* Reine d'Angleterre *dragoons also served in a dismounted role.]*

Then, on June 15, Vendôme moved his right wing from Espluges to Sants, at the bottom of the southwestern face of Montjïuc, virtually enclosing the city. Sants sits partway up the hill, allowing good observation of the Royal Road and presumably enabling the French to dominate it by fire, yet the cordon here cannot have been very strong, since the Spanish routinely passed convoys into the city. The line then ran near l'Hospitalet de Llobregat before turning north. Vendôme also garrisoned Sarrià-Sant Gervasi, 4 Km northwest of Barcelona's harbour, placing his bread ovens there. He established his HQ in the Convento de Gràcia, at about the same distance and 2 Km northeast of Sarrià.

On the night of June 15/16 the first trenches were opened. There were two, both starting at the Convento de los Capuchinos. 800 men worked on one and 1,200 on the other. The Spanish bombarded the two convents. French Bomb ketches lobbed shells into the city that night, setting fire to a granary. The Navy continued firing until noon on June 16, when two sloops and a larger ship were dismasted, possibly by accident.

At 5am on June 17 Vendôme unmasked his first batteries: 10 cannon and 2 mortars on the right and 12 40-pounders on the left (from the French perspective) firing from an outlying farm called Casa de Caluet.

Meanwhile, Velasco's forces began concentrating on the landward flank of the French. Reinforcements amounting to 7,000 men were ordered to Martorell, while the *General Somatén* was to assemble between that place and Olesa de Montserrat, about 7.5 Km farther up the Llobregat. Barcelona itself received a reinforcement of 70 gunners from Mallorca.

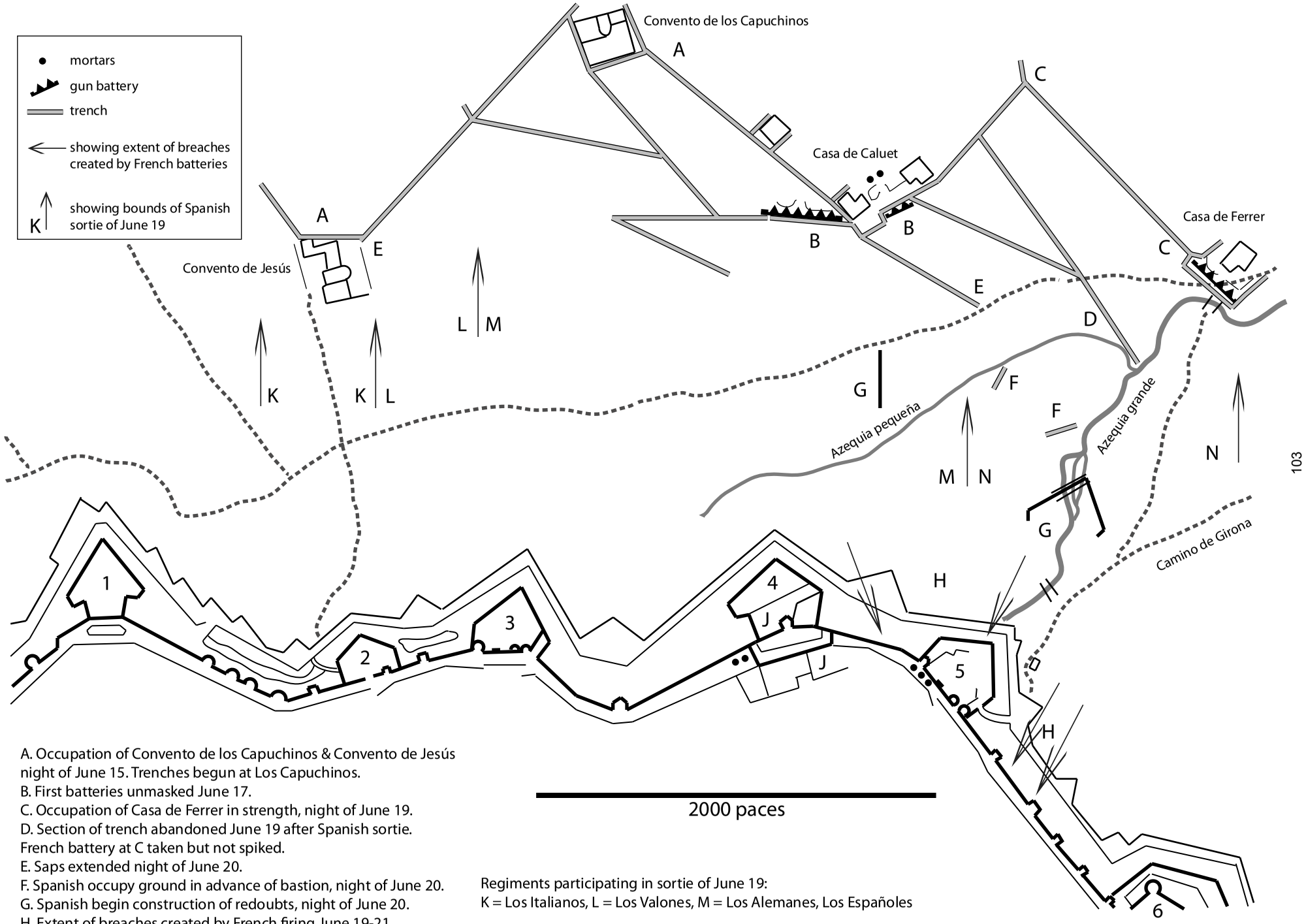
With these forces assembling, the Spanish sallied against the Casa de Caluet on June 18, using 800 men. They managed to reach the French guns, but, having forgotten to bring the means of spiking them, it was a wasted effort. 72 Spanish were lost, though an estimated 400 French were killed. They also captured the colours of the *Régiment de Turenne*, which they hung over the fortress walls to taunt the French. The next day Vendôme erected a third battery farther to his left, at the Casa de Ferrer.

It was around this time that the first instances of looting occurred. On June 17 two Germans belonging to the garrison were arrested. The next day, some men from the *tercio de Granada* were sentenced to death for theft. Among Velasco's forces a party of dragoons foraged without permission by the Besós River, close to the French lines. When the provost tried to arrest them they mutinied, stoned the provost, and took three of their captains and their commander hostage. They were eventually subdued and one of the mutineers was hanged.

Spanish morale soared with the levying of the *General Somatén*. So many recruits came in that they were able to completely dominate the region between the Llobregat and Besós rivers, as well as the adjoining hills, where they pushed out the French, forcing them onto the coastal plain. The militia were assigned experienced *reformados* (spare officers) of Catalan origin and *maestre de campo* rank to command them. *Sargento general* Agulló and *teniente general de la caballería* Otazo were given overall command, including command of the supporting cavalry led by Don Francisco Vila and the *marqués de* Grigny.

*[The number of militia in the field is anyone's guess. Local government officials reported up to 30,000 people, but even if accurate this would probably include noncombatants. A reliable source quoted by Lopez gives 8,000 men in Velasco's army, supported by 10,000 '*naturales*' – i.e., the* somatén*. If the Viceroy still had about 2,500 cavalry (4,000 less 1,300 sent into the city), this would give him a high estimate of 5,500 regular infantry.]*

Siege of Barcelona June 15-21



A. Occupation of Convento de los Capuchinos & Convento de Jesús night of June 15. Trenches begun at Los Capuchinos.
B. First batteries unmasked June 17.
C. Occupation of Casa de Ferrer in strength, night of June 19.
D. Section of trench abandoned June 19 after Spanish sortie. French battery at C taken but not spiked.
E. Saps extended night of June 20.
F. Spanish occupy ground in advance of bastion, night of June 20.
G. Spanish begin construction of redoubts, night of June 20.
H. Extent of breaches created by French firing June 19-21.
J. Counterwall being constructed behind the bastion of Sant Pere.

Regiments participating in sortie of June 19:
K = Los Italianos, L = Los Valones, M = Los Alemanes, Los Españoles

Bastions: 1 Tallers, 2 Portal dels Àngels, 3 Jonqueres, 4 Sant Pere, 5 Portal del Nou, 6 Santa Clara

Early on June 19 the Spanish again sallied, this time against the whole of the French trench system. The regiments were assigned sectors based on nationality: Spanish, German, Walloon, Italian. The attack, led by Don Juan de Acuna, was ineffectual. The French were alerted by the glow of the Spanish slow-matches. However, the Spanish did manage to temporarily occupy a forward position with 400 men in front of Casa de Ferrer, where they began constructing redoubts, and they suffered only 30 casualties.

[In an alternate version, the French were not alerted by the sight of burning match, but by a Spanish soldier who advanced prematurely.]

The next day featured a general bombardment by both sides. The French had their 3 batteries and the fleet, and the Spanish had 7 batteries. Heavy rain minimized the impact of the bombardment and rough seas prevented effective use of the fleet. These conditions continued into the next day (June 21).

On June 22 the Spanish made their third sally. This was the worst one yet. Vendôme was informed of it by two of his soldiers on reconnaissance and the Spanish lost 200 men and 6 captains. The city notables lodged a protest against Corzana's poor planning and loose security arrangements. They also wrote to the King, blaming the Viceroy for not using his 'vast' manpower to relieve the city. Of course, the *somatén* were not really capable of such an action, but their members would have agreed with the city fathers.

[In an ironic twist, the dispatches included a note of thanks to the duque de *Montalto, Consejo de Aragón, for all he had done to help them hold Barcelona. But he was the one member of the Council of State most adamant for an immediate peace with France!]*

On the night of 22/23 June the weather cleared and the French brought their fleet in close, causing much damage. The Spanish could not do much about the fleet, but the *somatén* and cavalry raided the French lines, trying to clear them out of a number of their fortified posts. The garrison also sortied with 1,500 men, intent on spiking the French mortars, which were adding their fire to that of the fleet. The mortars were located, but once again tools for damaging them could not be produced. 250 troops and 8 officers were lost. Vendôme arranged a two-hour truce to recover the dead.

[These raids usually employed the veteran foreign regiments, but some Spanish had to be included. The foreigners spoke French as a matter of course, and they would be shot at when they approached the walls unless preceded by Spanish troops.]

Not much happened on June 24. The French were making final preparations for their first assault. On June 25 Velasco's irregulars attacked a French detachment of 600 men. The enemy were extricated from a precarious situation by a relief force of 3,000 horse and 2,000 foot. (Vendôme did not bother to construct a complete line of contravallation around his army, but established garrisons in the villages around the coastal plain and fortified them. These posts were supported by mixed columns of cavalry and infantry.)

Having dug their trenches to within pistol shot between the bastions of Sant Pere and Portal Nou, the French unmasked a battery there on June 26 and commenced firing. The Spanish made a local counterattack, suffering 42 dead, 99 wounded, and 35 prisoners (alternatively 32 dead and 69 wounded). Meanwhile, the French began digging a mine from the Convento de Jesús.

(During these days there were serious ceasefire discussions at Madrid, but Carlos' German queen, the Emperor's main ally at Court, quashed them. The fight went on.)

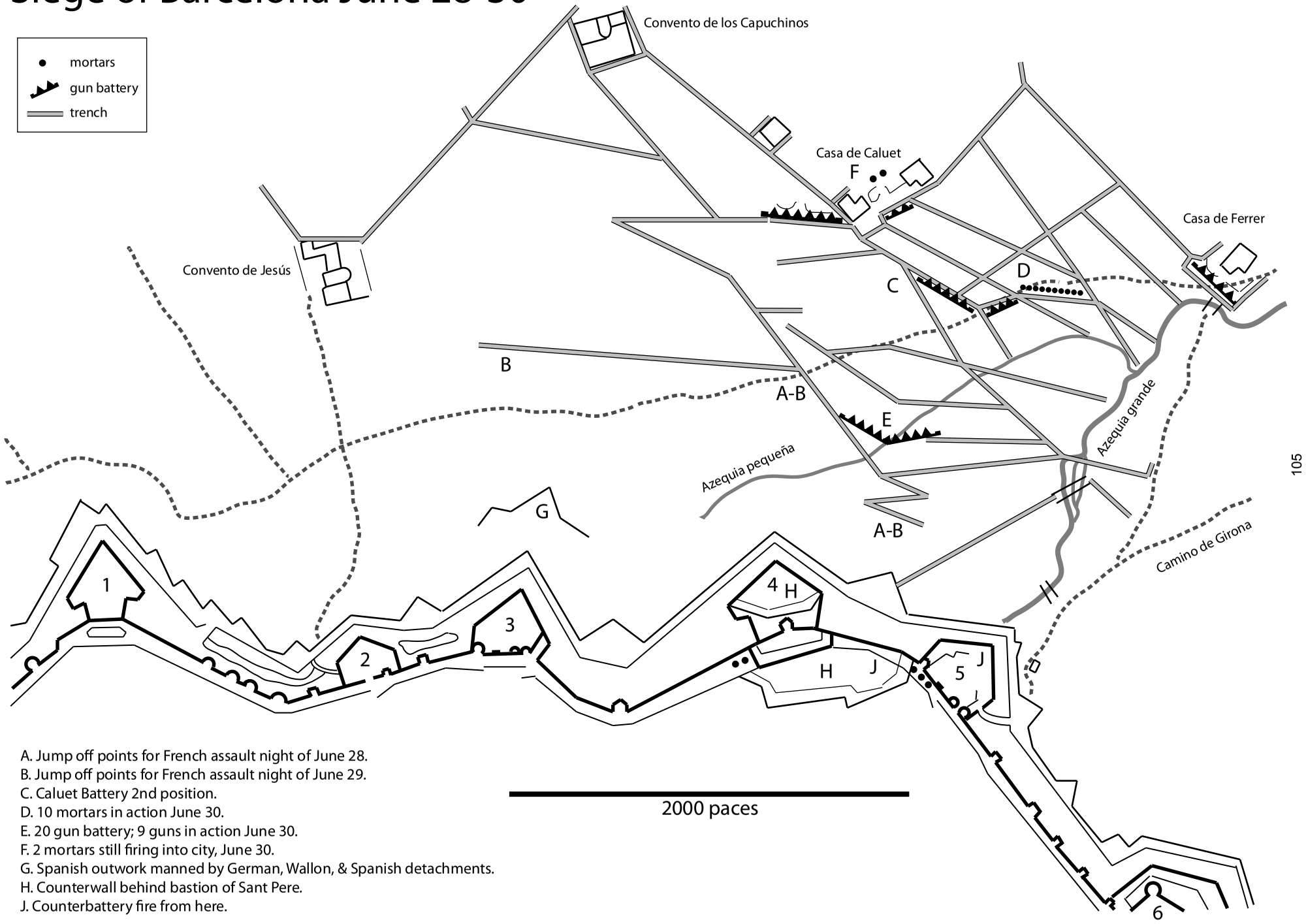
Deploying 4 more mortars on June 27, that night Vendôme ordered his first assault. Three charges were made from the Convento de Jesús, in which the Spanish suffered 200 dead and 80 wounded and the French lost 2-3,000 men. As the enemy tried to gain the covered way the Spanish mowed them down with canister shot. As later reported by a deserter, this led to a drop in French morale; the man said there would have been more desertions by now except that everyone was afraid of the guerrillas. To take advantage of this bit of news, Velasco gave orders that deserting Frenchmen were to be well treated and given a bounty, and distributed leaflets to this effect.

[Referring to the various diagrams, there are no sketches for the time period between June 22 and June 27. The third and fourth Spanish sallies took place over the same ground as before, as did the first French assault. The next sketch in the series, covering June 28-30, shows the positions of the French batteries as they were when the assault took place; the trench system is more advanced, and much of the work shown had been done before June 26.]

By June 28 Vendôme was employing 16 mortars. His cannon were battering the Portal Nou and the bastion of Sant Pere at pointblank range. A French deserter reported the existence of the Convento de Jesús mine, but it was thought the French were only digging wells. The French fleet, fired upon by Spanish mortars which sank several light vessels, withdrew out of range.

Both sides were feeling the pinch. The French were dispirited after their failed assault of June 27 and had suffered well over 3,000 casualties to date. Vendôme's rear was virtually a no-go zone thanks to the *somatén*. He was reliant

Siege of Barcelona June 28-30



A. Jump off points for French assault night of June 28.
B. Jump off points for French assault night of June 29.
C. Caluet Battery 2nd position.
D. 10 mortars in action June 30.
E. 20 gun battery; 9 guns in action June 30.
F. 2 mortars still firing into city, June 30.
G. Spanish outwork manned by German, Wallon, & Spanish detachments.
H. Counterwall behind bastion of Sant Pere.
J. Counterbattery fire from here.

Bastions: 1 Tallers, 2 Portal dels Àngels, 3 Jonqueres, 4 Sant Pere, 5 Portal del Nou, 6 Santa Clara

on the fleet to keep his communications open. Fortunately, the French controlled the flour mills of Badalona. This was evidently a substantial industrial complex because they harnessed the entire collection and distribution infrastructure for their own use.

On the Spanish side, Barcelona had been struck by 7-8,000 shells. Whole neighbourhoods had been rubbled. Corzana had to order citizen patrols within the city to maintain public order. Losses so far amounted to 1,000 soldiers and 12 civilians killed; there were 600 wounded in the hospitals. Furthermore, Velasco had left the militia to its own devices. In the absence of positive orders – especially, orders commanding them to relieve Barcelona and crush the French – men were beginning to drift away.

From June 30 to July 3 Vendôme continued his bombardment of the Portal Nou with 30 cannon while opposite the Portal de Santa Clara (the next bastion toward the sea) 2 heavy mortars fired into the city. The French rate of fire peaked at an estimated 120 rounds per minute.

[The state of the French trenches at this point can be seen in the third sketch of the siege works, which covers July 1-4. The reader should also refer to the last sketch, which shows a closeup of the action over the period July 1-13.]

On July 1 the *Consejo de Estado* met and decided that the Viceroy should make some positive effort to relieve Barcelona. Surrender was not to be considered, yet. The Viceroy replied that *teniente general* Ortezo could sweep around to the sea with 3,500 line troops and the *somatén*, taking Montcada and Badalona, while the garrison sallied against the bread ovens sited at Sarrià. Velasco contacted Heßen-Darmstadt in this regard but delayed implementing the attack, saying he needed to consult with the various unit commanders scattered around the region. Heßen-Darmstadt bitterly chastised him for this delay, but Velasco was having difficulty rounding up enough men to make the attack effective. Never a fan of armed peasants, he had neglected the *somatén* – despite his talk – considering them nothing more than a nuisance factor, while his regular troops, *still* unpaid, were also dribbling away. The campaign had reached the point where deserters from both sides were roaming the countryside in armed bands, robbing everyone they came across.

[Those who found fault with Velasco's strategy claimed he had raised some 6,000 men locally, not *including the* somatén*, and thus had plenty of manpower. The Viceroy claimed only 2,000 had been levied; by late July over 50% of these would have deserted. In fact, the number of Catalan 'regular' (that is, 'provincial') troops levied may have been closer to 1,500.]*

With a breach in the Portal Nou approaching practicality, the Spanish had been throwing up a screening wall behind it. It was completed on July 3. They had already constructed another one behind Sant Pere. The latest containing wall had a capacity for 8,000 men and 20 guns. It was put into use almost immediately. On the night of July 4/5, after unmasking a battery on the glacis in front of the Portal Nou, the French made three assaults against that bastion, suffering 2,000 casualties against 4-500 Spanish losses. The French did not break in, but remained lodged close to the covered way.

That same night the Spanish sealed off zone of conflict by completing defensive works across the moat on the left of Sant Pere and the right of Portal Nou.

On the night of July 6/7 a massive assault was launched with 8,000 men, but it was repulsed. 300 French were killed as they dropped into the covered way and tried to cross the moat. Only 19 Spanish were lost on this day. However, the French solidified their positions on the glacis. More guns were brought up until the edge of the counterscarp was lined with them. Mortars were emplaced in the trenches behind. The Spanish countered by bringing up more guns and mortars of their own.

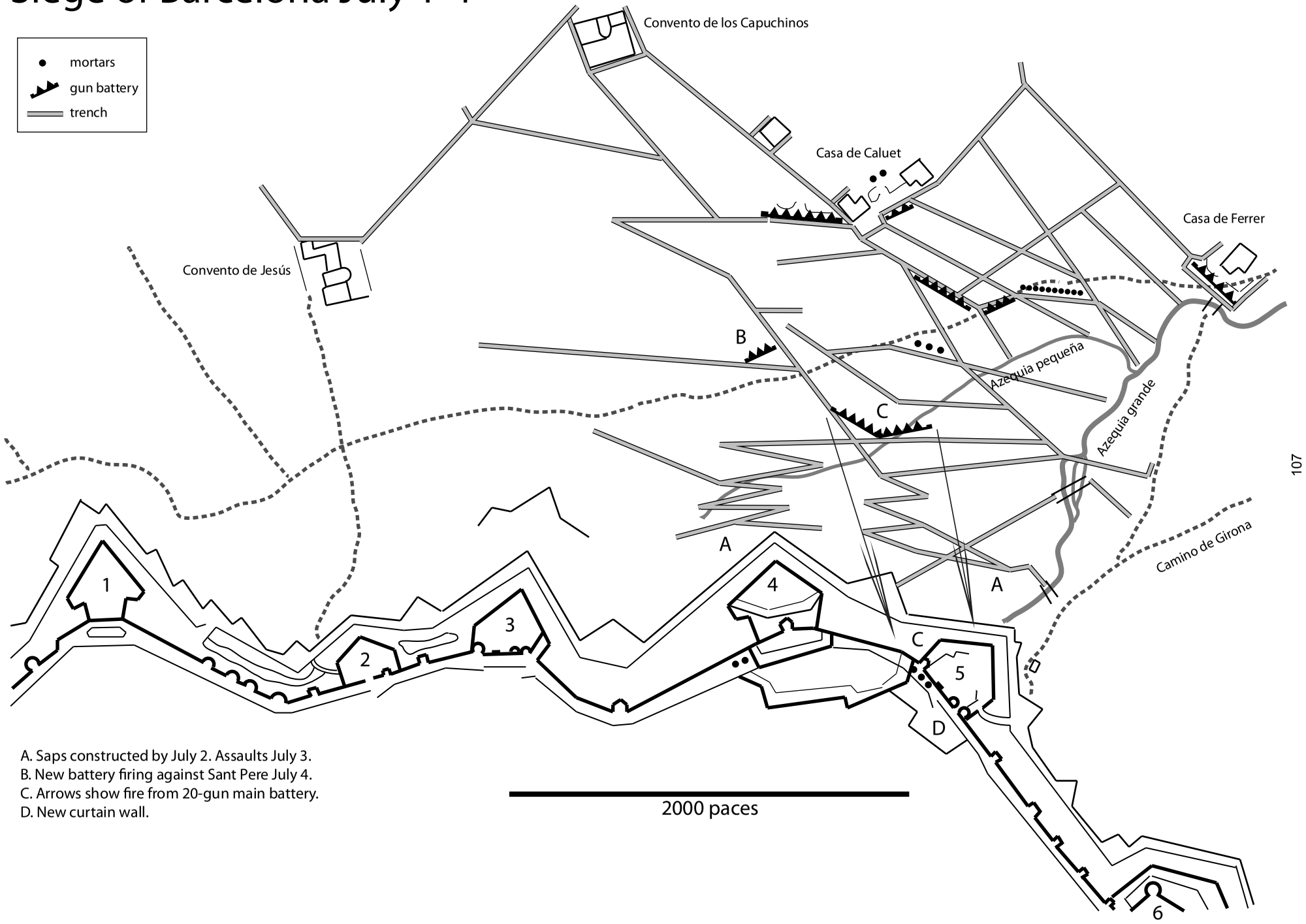
The next day, Barcelona received 1,400 reinforcements. 1,500 more were on their way. This day also, 300 French deserted from the post of Vall d'Hebron, at the base of the hills not far from Vendôme's HQ. The locals attacked them despite the order for clemency, because they did not believe such a large number would desert all at once.

[The French suffered 2,522 casualties between July 5 and July 6.]

July 8/9: Vendôme recommenced the bombardment of the city with about 20 cannon hammering the bastions opposite his trenches. Meanwhile, plans for a general counterattack were being formulated by the Spanish. It seemed the French were tiring. On July 10 additional troops entered the city: 100 Neapolitans and 500 militia escorting a large supply convoy, plus the *tercio de Valencía*.

Also on July 10, Heßen-Darmstadt planned a limited attack against the French HQ at Gràcia by 300 foot and 800 horse under his personal command, in conjunction with diversionary attacks by the Viceroy. The raid took place on July 11 and was completely successful, except that on their return the raiders came too close to the shore and lost 30 men to naval gunfire. The French lost an estimated 300 dead and 60 prisoners.

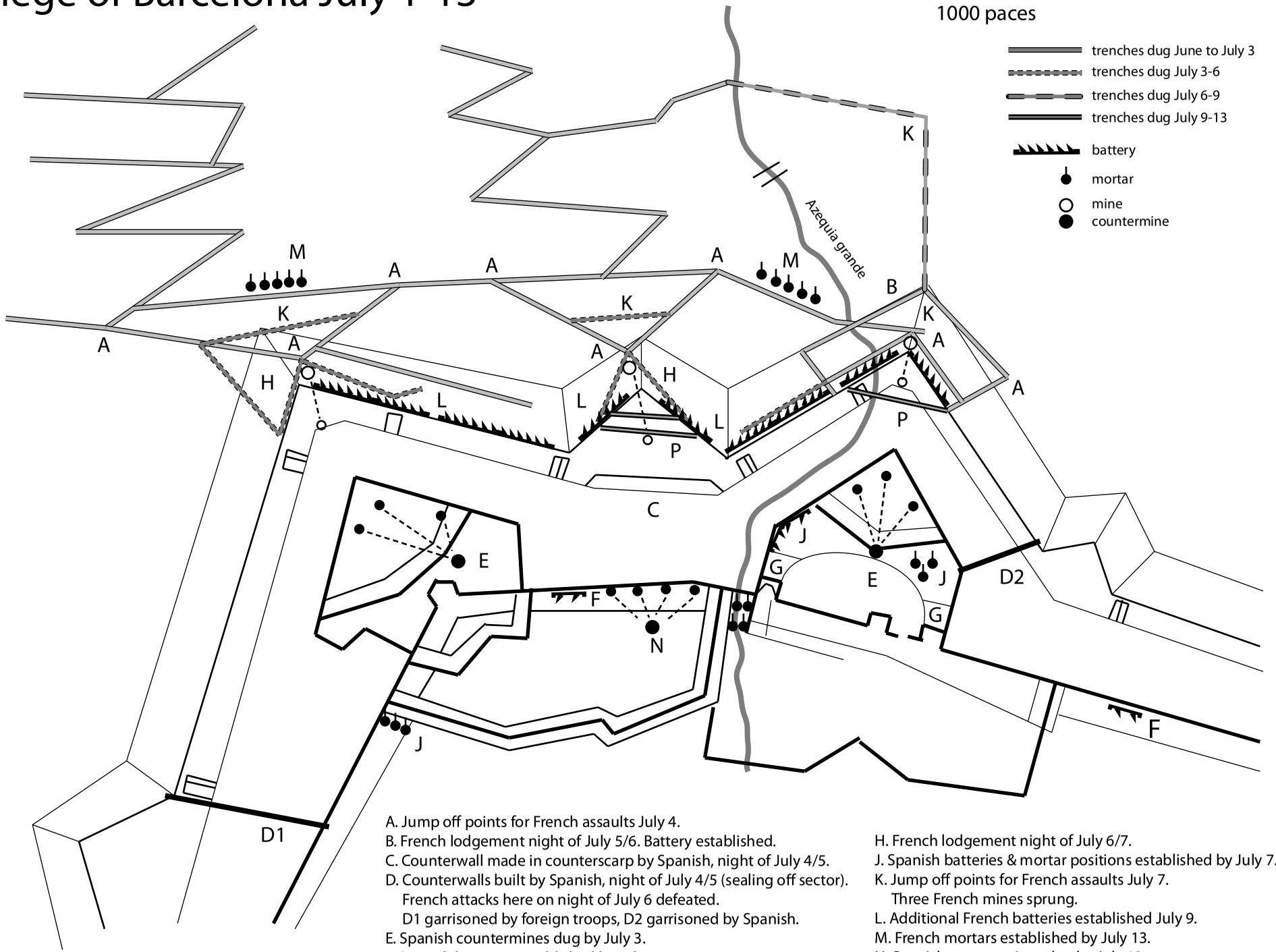
Siege of Barcelona July 1-4



A. Saps constructed by July 2. Assaults July 3.
B. New battery firing against Sant Pere July 4.
C. Arrows show fire from 20-gun main battery.
D. New curtain wall.

Bastions: 1 Tallers, 2 Portal dels Àngels, 3 Jonqueres, 4 Sant Pere, 5 Portal del Nou, 6 Santa Clara

Siege of Barcelona July 1-13



A. Jump off points for French assaults July 4.
B. French lodgement night of July 5/6. Battery established.
C. Counterwall made in counterscarp by Spanish, night of July 4/5.
D. Counterwalls built by Spanish, night of July 4/5 (sealing off sector).
French attacks here on night of July 6 defeated.
D1 garrisoned by foreign troops, D2 garrisoned by Spanish.
E. Spanish countermines dug by July 3.
F. Spanish batteries established by July 3.
G. Counterwalls built by Spanish inside Portal Nou bastion.
H. French lodgement night of July 6/7.
J. Spanish batteries & mortar positions established by July 7.
K. Jump off points for French assaults July 7.
Three French mines sprung.
L. Additional French batteries established July 9.
M. French mortars established by July 13.
N. Spanish countermines dug by July 13.
P. Jump off points for French assaults July 13.

The batteries shown facing inward on the counterscarp are French, firing across the moat. They were erected as the French consolidated their positions.

From intelligence gained in this raid it was learned that the French had begun the siege with 32-33,000 men (instead of the 20,000 estimated at the start of the campaign) and that they had lost around 8,000 so far. It was understood that their main fear was of an Allied fleet which would suddenly appear and drive off d'Estrées. Without his presence the besiegers would have to raise the siege and might even have to surrender. Of course, there was no Allied fleet, but this fact does not seem to have been generally known.

On July 13 the French trenches reached the moat of the Portal Nou. By now, the Spanish had constructed additional walls within the bastion and laid three counter-mines, one in each of the bastions of Sant Pere and the Portal Nou, and one between them, facing three French mines.

[Unfortunately, no sketches could be found for the remainder of the siege. As will be described, the French secured a lodgement in Portal Nou and turned their attention to Sant Pere. The remains of both bastions were occupied by the French by the end of the month, though their occupation was contested. The area shown in the 'closeup' sketch remained the sole point of assault until the end of the siege.]

Velasco hoped to preempt the inevitable assault and called a council of war at the Barcelona shipyards that day. The garrison cavalry would sortie against Vendôme's HQ. General Otazo would lead a simultaneous attack against the French from outside. Unfortunately, the plan became known to the enemy almost immediately.

The Spanish attack got underway on July 14. Velasco placed his HQ at Sant Feliu de Llobregat, 10 Km west of Barcelona, where the line of the Cordillera de Besós terminates. While the cavalry sortied against Gràcia, Otazo led 6-7,000 foot and a cavalry wing against the village of Horta, 2500 metres north of Gràcia. Horta was essentially the northern rear of Vendôme's line. From the sources it is not clear whether the Spanish marched northeast from the Llobregat with their entire force, but since Otazo was in charge of the militia, he probably attacked from the hills while the Viceroy attacked from the direction of the river.

Horta was taken at a cost of 100 French and no Spanish. The attackers drove another column, of 1,500 foot and 3,000 horse, against Vendôme's main position in front of Gràcia, but were beaten off after a hard fight. Thanks to his spies, Vendôme was prepared for this attack, but it had been a ticklish moment. Regaining the initiative, he counterattacked with 2,500 horse and 3,000 foot, plus 500 Carabiniers. They pushed the Spanish back and broke their line, charging into Sant Feliu and seizing Velasco's HQ; they nearly seized the Viceroy himself. As it was, they captured most of his baggage, and the Spanish war chest, and plundered their depôts along the line of the river. The Spanish suffered 3,000 casualties to 80 French.

It has been averred that the attack on the Spanish HQ was not an accident of the day's fighting, that Vendôme in fact gave explicit orders for the killing of the Viceroy. It is alleged that the *marqués de* Grigny was Vendôme's spy, and that the *marqués* suggested the idea as a means of protecting himself from discovery. Corroboration comes from a statement that Grigny had the opportunity to warn Velasco of the approaching enemy but did not do so, and from the fact that a man named Valverde was pulled out of Velasco's coach – Valverde was attempting to flee in it – and deliberately slain.

It is even less clear whether there was a conspiracy – the other cavalry generals disassociated themselves from the *marqués* by saying they *had* warned Velasco, which means exactly nothing. However, conspiracies generally come to light pretty quickly, and no formal charge was ever made. There is a suggestion that, even if his subordinates were not conspiring against him, the pro-Imperials were; not only Heßen-Darmstadt, but the Grand Admiral and the Queen herself – the reasoning being that Velasco, son of the Constable, was not so easy to dismiss from office as Gastañaga, so other means had to be employed.

While the general combat was going on, the French sprung their Convento de Jésus mine. The bastion of Sant Pere collapsed, though not entirely, along with part of the connecting wall. 200 French accidentally died in the blast. Combined with the breach made the day before, there was now a sizeable gap in the defences. Dismayed by the accident, the French were heartened again by the arrival of 2,000 reinforcements.

Rather than begin an immediate assault, Vendôme proceeded cautiously. On July 15, Velasco strengthened the city with 1,000 more cavalry, which suggested a new sally would be attempted. The French spent the next day digging in on the Cordillera de Besós to protect their flank, and erected a wooden gallery against the Portal Nou wall; this was burned down by the Spanish. When the French started yet another mine, 800 Spanish were employed against it in a countermining operation. Throughout this stage of the siege the French suffered badly from one Lluís Novas, who invented all sorts of incendiary devices to drive them away from the walls. He was rewarded with an official position worth 400 ducats.

[The gallery was wide enough for three men, and was intended to allow miners to dig into the wall.]

On July 17, both sides suffered minor debacles. The French lost 200 men when a magazine exploded (possibly due to carelessness), while Velasco, now at Martorell, covered himself with shame, fleeing from his bed on a borrowed horse at a false rumour that the enemy were upon him. In consequence, the Viceroy moved his HQ to Esparreguera, about 8 Km farther up the Llobregat, opposite Montserrat.

[It is possible the magazine explosion has been confused with the mine blast, or vice versa.*]*

July 19: Velasco pulled most of his cavalry out of the city, though he made no immediate use of them. This was not as disturbing as the actions of some of the city officials, who could be seen packing up their belongings. On the other hand, 130 crates of fusils were shipped into the city, and preparations were made to meet the next assault. Cannon were brought up to the wall sealing the breach behind Sant Pere, which was also strengthened by a 300-strong work party; they even laid out boards with nails in them on the approaches. The Spanish were certainly not finished; a general parade on July 21 (possibly conducted for morale reasons) discovered the garrison to be 7,000 strong, not counting the remaining cavalry or the special *tercio de la Coronela*.

Calls for the replacement of the Viceroy began to increase at this time. Perhaps unnerved by the plot against him, or disheartened by the failure of attack of July 14, he had made no effort to interfere with Vendôme's siege work for several days. It was also claimed that he had misappropriated the funds intended for recruiting the *somatén*. Heßen-Darmstadt complained 'his' Germans were doing all the work. Few, however, really believed that changing the commander would make any real difference. What was needed was the Allied fleet, now known to be nonexistent.

The night of July 22 was filled with bombardment by cannons, mortars, and the fleet. The French exploded another two mines on July 22, at Sant Pere and the Portal Nou, commencing a series of three assaults that stalled against the breach defences with a loss of 2,000 French and 200 Spanish. However, the attackers lodged themselves in the ruins of the Portal Nou. The Imperial regiments assaulted them at 6am the next morning but could make no headway until the *tercio de la Generalitat* under Don Joan Marimon made a flanking attack. They occupied the post but were blown out of it at 3pm when the French detonated a third mine in the rubble. Unable to reinforce, the Spanish sealed up the bastion's postern gate to prevent the French from breaking through. 23 Walloons are said to have been abandoned.

On July 24 the French tried again, storming the bastion of Sant Pere and losing 200 men in the process before being repulsed. Both sides took reinforcements over the next two days. The French gained 1,700 from Languedoc, Roussillon, and the Cerdanya, shipped in by sea. The Spanish added 2,000 men from a mix of sources: from troops released from the siege of Ceuta in North Africa, marines, Neapolitans, and 600 militia from the countryside. The hole created by the Sant Pere mine was covered by two cannon and a '*trabuco*' (a giant blunderbuss).

On July 27 the Spanish called a council of war. The question was whether to make another sally to dislodge the enemy from his gains. The French had lost a third of their strength and seemed unwilling to launch another assault. Heßen-Darmstadt was in favour. He was backed by the *conde de* Rosa, and the *marquéses de* Aytona and Florida. Everyone else was opposed, Corzana claiming a deserter had already betrayed the plan. The same parties were for and against continuing the fight at all. Heßen-Darmstadt, possibly to bolster morale, cited an informant in the enemy camp who said the French had lost 14,000 men so far, with another 17,000 sick. These numbers were vastly inflated, but the enemy were certainly not sanguine of success.

(Having said, 'everyone else was opposed', this did not include the general population, who were still either confident of victory or more afraid of a sack than suffering incidental losses.)

The same question vexed the *Consejo de Estado*. There were roughly two months left to the campaigning season. Could the city hold out until then? Would it not be better to save the populace and the garrison, which could be redeployed to continue the fight until winter quarters. Was there any point – how soon would the general peace treaty be ready to sign?

July 28: the French dug a trench connecting the two captured bastions and established another battery on Sant Pere. The next day, the bastion blew up with the loss of 300 French. The Spanish had dug a countermine. According to Lynn, the Spanish also suffered losses in the blast.

During the last two days of the month, Vendôme made preparations for another assault, which was scheduled for the evening of July 31. A naval landing was attempted behind the Spanish lines at Casetlldefels and Sitges, 14 Km southeast of the mouth of the Llobregat, using 20 galleys and five ships, but the Spanish rushed 2 '*batallones*' of cavalry to the shore and prevented it.

Meanwhile, Velasco's replacement was being selected – the Queen had won the argument. The new man was to be Don Juan Larrea, her *Secretario del Despacho*. Corzana was named interim Viceroy, and Heßen-Darmstadt promoted to command the fortress as *Gobernador de las Armas*.

On August 1/2 the French continued pounding the breach with artillery, trying to reduce the wall behind it. The Spanish feared, correctly, that new mines were being prepared and that another assault was immanent. This led to another council of war on August 3 to discuss surrender. The next day the city fathers wrote to the King, condemning Velasco for his inaction and stating their willingness to fight on.

On August 4 the Spanish attempted to introduce a large convoy into the town. As before, it passed along the Royal Road. A large portion of the cavalry was employed to screen it, and a mixed force of infantry and cavalry created a diversion by attacking the French outposts near the Llobregat end of the Cordillera de Besós. Unfortunately the French response was swift and aggressive; the infantry attack was repulsed in confusion and the cavalry screen was routed, preventing the city from being supplied.

With this action under his belt, on August 5 Vendôme decided to summon the city to surrender. His mines were prepared and 16 battalions had been assembled for the assault. The bastions of Sant Pere and the Portal Nou held 500 French apiece, with a further 800 in the gap between. A shallow mine, fired from Sant Pere, was set to bring down the inner wall so that it could be climbed. There was a deep mine ready to be set off from Portal Nou. It may have been this was Vendôme's last gasp, too, but the Spanish blinked first. The *marquis de* Barbesières called a parley. Corzana drew out the negotiations for three days, one day at a time, but was finally told he had 12 hours to make a decision.

Heßen-Darmstadt is sometimes named as the man making these negotiations, but he had not yet received his promotion. He was, in fact, still bitterly opposed to surrender, and said the French mines were a bluff. Corzana did the all the talking. To make sure Heßen-Darmstadt (the best French speaker among them) could not overrule his decisions, Corzana refused the appointment of interim Viceroy, received on August 8, which would have taken him out of the city, until the capitulation was signed.

Velasco, still nominally in command at Esparraeguera, received the news and sent his last report to the *Consejo de Estado*. Given the timing of its receipt he may have sent it before the French summons came. It was read during a meeting on August 7 and 8. The tone of the report, in Lopez's words, was 'apocalyptic'. Barcelona was a hopeless case. This was not true, but it led the Council to agree with the Governor's decision to capitulate on August 10.

His decision backed by the Crown, Corzana handed the Portal Sant Antoni to the French on August 10, signifying surrender by a token capture of one of the main gates. The articles were signed the following day, and the garrison marched out with full honours of war, including a train of 30 guns with 30 shots apiece, on August 15.

[The Portal Sant Antoni lay at the Southwest corner. It was probably chosen because it would be the gate through which the garrison would have to pass when it evacuated the city. Its control by the French thus had a doubly symbolic aspect.]

Total battle casualties for the siege vary considerably. According to Lynn, the French lost 9,000 men, plus 400 officers, and the Spanish more than 12,000. But Lopez's sources unanimously state the garrison marched out to the number of 9,128 foot and 1,837 horse, leaving 4,500 dead and 800 wounded. They say the French lost 15,000 men, including 52 out of 64 engineers. Losses to Velasco's mobile force are not given by Lopez, so the overall number of 12,000 may be a good approximation.

Francisco Antonio Fernandez de Velasco y Tovar

Velasco is the least documented of the Viceroys, serving from late in 1696 until the end of the war. He was a natural son of the Constable of Castile, an office hereditary in his family, and was Governor of Cadiz. He never married. He was of the pro-peace faction, opposed to the Imperial faction led by the Queen and her avatar, Heßen-Darmstadt.

After the Siege

Everyone knew the war was over, but they insisted on going through the motions. On August 13 the State Council discussed the best means of raising more men. The idea of additional peasant levies was dismissed as too much money for too little return. Instead, the regular Army should be expanded (that is, more 'provincial' *tercios* raised). A figure of 4,000 men was quoted. This step, however, required the summoning of the full parliament, the *Cortes Generales de los Tres Brazos,* which, like the French *parlements,* had a fiscal rather than legislative role. The Government's only recourse now was to implement new taxes. There was also the little matter of a 50 million *reales* deficit to discuss.

Corzana, now acting Viceroy, was assigned to cover Igualada, 50 Km northwest of Barcelona, on the Anoia River, a tributary of the Llobregat. Heßen-Darmstadt's men were distributed among Vic and Berga. The country of the Plana de Vic was now primarily in Spanish hands. Their main goal at this point was to prevent French depredations. The coast south of Barcelona was left open, but d'Estrées and the fleet had departed for France on August 16. There was little danger of any major operation against the coastal towns.

Vendôme made no move until early September. Once his men were rested they marched up the Llobregat to Esparreguera, Olesa de Montserrat, and Monistrol de Montserrat. 5,000 men garrisoned Manresa, where the *Maréchal* made his HQ on September 18. In late September he pushed 12,000 men south toward Tarragona, leaving 9,000 around Manresa.

Neither side attempted an engagement. They were both stockpiling grain and fodder for the winter, the Spanish paying outrageous prices – cash only, please – and the French just taking what they wanted. Well, not entirely. On October 2, a band of 300 Spanish *migueletes* and cavalry stole 300 sheep from Manresa. The locals were as displeased as the French. The town was not receiving any grain, either, because the Spanish Army took it all for its own use.

Spain signed the Treaty of Ryswick on September 20, 1697, in company with all the major combatants except the Emperor, who signed on October 30. The news was received at Madrid on October 4. Corzana had word shortly after, and, after pulling back to allow the French to depart without incident, sent his army in to winter quarters, the cavalry in southern and western Catalonia, leaving 2 *trozos* of horse and a *tercio* of dragoons scattered through the regions of Osona, the Empordà, and Girona.

The French remained in the country until January 4, 1698. Partly, this was with the honourable goal of returning territory in a peaceable manner, minimising any potential unrest. And partly, it was to give the French time to 'slight' certain fortifications, particularly Bellver. They also made sure to collect arrears of maintenance from the Spanish towns – Barcelona alone paying between 145,000 and 174,000 *reales*, or £25-30,000.

There was also a debate within the French Administration centered on whether a long term occupation of the 'francophile' Principality was desirable. Sympathisers ought to be protected. The north of the country might even want to secede. This was *Intendant* Trobat's view. The counter arguments were that a) the King did not desire the territory, and b) if the French did absorb part of Catalonia, or even if they occupied it for some years, they would be stuck dealing with a lot of proud and arrogant nobles, all insisting on the preservation of obscure and limitless privileges, and a populace that would treat any new law as a reason to revolt. The French left.

[Interestingly, the Spanish did not demobilise. Both the Imperial and Bavarian factions wanted a strong army to overawe their opponents. The Queen ordered Heßen-Darmstadt to raise 30,000 men. The Bavarians failed in this game, their main prop, the duque de Montalto, being banished beyond 30 leagues from Madrid.]

In Conclusion

Most of the conclusions historians draw from the events in Catalonia revolve around the Principality's allegiance in the War of the Spanish Succession. For them, this is the only reason the Nine Years War is worth examining at all. They try to answer the question of why the Catalans backed the Habsburgs. The short answer seems to be that the people who mattered – those in Barcelona – opposed the French pretty thoroughly and consistently. The Government and leading citizens had benefited under the Habsburgs, so they were not inimical to the old regime, and they knew that with a Bourbon monarch, Catalonia would become an economic backwater.

With regard to the actual war, the key points seem to be these:

a) The Castilian Government was fully invested in defending Catalonia, despite local griping to the contrary, and despite the feebleness of their efforts. They expended far greater resources here than on the other fronts. In Flanders, the Allies were persuaded to subsidise Spanish troops, while in Italy the administration of Milán appears to have 'taken it easy', not fully assisting either the Imperials or the Sabaudians.

b) However, the Castilians and Catalans had different desires. The former treated Catalonia as the 'rampart of Spain', while the latter wanted to be left alone, and especially, to avoid responsibility for supporting Castilian troops. They would also have liked to regain their economic advantage *vis à vis* both Castile and the French province of Languedoc, which would have been much easier to do if Catalonia was not a war zone.

c) As a rough guide, Barcelona can be said to have been pro-Castilian (on aristocratic grounds) and anti-French (on economic grounds), while the rest of the Principality was both anti-Castilian, and after 1694, anti-French. For their part, the Castilians were disdainful of the Catalans. Such an attitude led to highhanded methods of requisitioning and taxation, which explains why the countryside did not like them. Also, the Castilian aristocracy tended to be more concerned with palace squabbles than events at the distant front. Lopez blames them rather than the King for the fragmentation that took place in the next war.

d) Ironically, by war's end, it was the Catalans who wanted to continue fighting and the Castilians who wanted to quit. There are no surprise reasons for this. The Catalans hoped that by holding out they could swing a better deal, or even gain the aid of Imperial troops, while the Castilian peace faction felt that Spain was exhausted and

some were angling for positions in the new regime which many believed was not far off. For such small troop numbers, Catalonia was one of the most devastated theatres of the war. Perhaps only the Palatinate fared worse.

e) French intentions morphed over time. Initially, the goal was to keep the Spanish busy. After early successes, the French may have begun to believe annexation was possible – though it is also possible such arguments were merely made so as to squeeze more men and money out of Versailles. After 1693 and 1694, which were disastrous economic years for France, despite victories like the taking of Girona, the French lost the initiative. Fortunately the Spanish were too weak to obtain it themselves. By war's end, the main goal was to knock Spain out of the war with a single blow. By taking Barcelona they essentially took Catalonia. Once Spain's 'rampart' was in French hands Madrid had to capitulate, not having the strength to resist an advance on the Capital. (As a side note, some monarchs might have abandoned their palace and fought on, but Carlos II was physically incapable of doing so. He had left the environs of the palace only twice in his life, and those times were a severe trial on his physique.)

A number of points can also be made about the military side of things.

a) For the French, they were at the peak of their operational art. They could mobilise men swiftly, move them rapidly, and, within the net of their frontier depôts, keep them supplied. Beyond the frontiers their armies functioned much like those of other nations, living off the land, dispatching convoys across the border, or hoping to seize a fortress containing stores. It was the great discrepancy between the 'good living' within the depôt net and the risk of catastrophic losses outside of it that limited the scope of operations. But, as can be seen in Catalonia, it was possible to advance a reasonably long way, even in a country without good roads, provided supply convoys or naval support could be arranged.

b) As already mentioned, the French were divided in their operation thinking between 'winning hearts and minds', occupying control points that would allow the establishment of an administration to collect taxes and begin the 'Frenchification' of the Principality, or treating the country as enemy territory. For the latter option, the Army should remain concentrated and harvest the land of its resources by sweeping it periodically. The French tried all three, and all with some effect. The trick was to switch from one to the other without handing the initiative to the Spanish. Ultimately the course chosen depended on the manpower available and the political desires of Versailles.

c) Most of the French officer corps was uninterested in the hearts and minds approach. They wanted *gloire*, and loot, and were as disdainful of the Catalans as the Castilians were. The attitude of Saint-Silvestre when raiding the country is one example of this, and the siege methods of Vendôme are another. This was the age of Vauban, a man who reputedly could predict to the day when a fortress would fall, give precise figures for the resources required, and limit French casualties to almost nothing. But, most French officers (and their opponents) preferred to batter their way into a fort. Vendôme bought into this viewpoint, though at Barcelona there was a race against time that forced him to expend men.

d) Seapower was critical. Even though most of Catalonia was beyond the reach of amphibious forces, the bulk of the population and infrastructure lay on or within range of the coast. The stalling of the French advance in 1695 and 1696 had as much to do with the presence of the Allied Fleet as the sudden reduction in troop numbers they experienced or the sudden surge in guerrilla activity.

e) As the reader is by now aware, the Spanish forces were crippled by a litany of woes. Boiled down, they lacked the infrastructure to maintain even a moderately sized army in Catalonia. This meant it was as much 'enemy territory' to them as to the French. By the end of the war the Spanish were also suffering a manpower shortage and had lost many of their veterans. Their enemy had the largest population in Europe at this time, but even they had difficulty meeting quotas. In such a situation, a good fortress system would have provided the Spanish with the means to resist even with mediocre troops and leaders, but Catalonia was bereft of such a system.

f) For the Spanish, the operational options were to garrison the whole Principality, with a strong forward defence, or concentrate around Barcelona. For the former option, decent fortresses were required. For the latter option, Girona had to be held for as long as possible. Its loss in 1694 was a severe blow to the Spanish strategic position. A variant for both these options would be to have conducted a war of manoeuvre using the fortresses as supports, but for this the Spanish required a disciplined mobile force. Their cavalry suited the purpose, and the *migueletes* were certainly of great help, but the numbers were too few. Which goes back to paragraph (e): no infrastructure to maintain a large army.

The historians are partly correct. One of the best reasons for studying the campaigns in Catalonia is to determine their effect on the course of the War of the Spanish Success. But the campaigns can also be studied for their inherent value, too. They provide a detailed picture of warfare during a period of transition, between an army using the latest

techniques and equipment, and an army still structured in the manner of the previous generation. In the 1650s, and even in the Dutch War, the Spanish had fought well against the French, even occupying parts of Roussillon. But, the French war machine had progressed and the Spanish had not.

The campaigns also show the problems armies faced on campaign, their operational goals and methods, their tactics and drills, how they manoeuvred and kept themselves supplied, how sieges were conducted, and how the *petite guerre*, the 'little war' of guerrillas and supply columns, affected them.

Perhaps most importantly of all, the war paints a picture not entirely unfamiliar to readers in this age. The tactics were of that period, and even the motivations can strike one as somewhat alien, but the underlying dynamics whether personal or 'national', are the same.

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