

Queens' Gambit



The War in Italy
1742-1748

Historical
Commentary

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Chanson of Baron Leutrum

*In Turin there are Counts,
there are Counts and ladies,
there are ladies and barons;
they are crying at Baron Leutrum's death.*

*Baron Leutrum is dead.
Cry barons, cry, you, ladies,
ring the bells, fire the cannons,
since Baron Leutrum is dead.*

*The King, when he knew
Baron Leutrum was ill,
Gave orders to his coachmen;
He went to visit Baron Leutrum.*

Baron Leutrum is dead, etc.

*When he arrived at Madonna dell’Olmo,
before entering the city of Cuneo
trumpets rang, cannon fired,
to please Baron Leutrum.*

Baron Leutrum is dead, etc.

*The King, who was there, asked
"Baron Leutrum, how are you?"
"This illness, it will kill me,
I have no more hope".*

Baron Leutrum is dead, etc.

*The King then said to him:
"Baron Leutrum, screw up your courage;
I will give you gold and silver
I will make you the premier general".*

Baron Leutrum is dead, etc.

*"There is no gold or silver,
that death will accept in exchange!
There is neither King nor general,
that can be saved from death".*

Baron Leutrum is dead, etc.

*"Tell me, Baron Leutrum,
Don't you want to be baptized?
I should call for the bishop,
I should be your godparents".*

Baron Leutrum is dead, etc.

*Baron Leutrum told him:
"Your Highness be thanked,
never can I do that,
as a good Protestant or a good Christian.*

Baron Leutrum is dead, etc.

*"Tell me, if you have to die,
where do you want to be buried?
I will have a gold coffin made for you,
I will give you great honours".*

Baron Leutrum is dead, etc.

*"I will write in my testament,
I will be buried in Luserna Valley;
In Luserna Valley they will bury me,
where my heart has had much rest".*

*Baron Leutrum is dead.
Cry barons, cry, you, ladies,
ring the bells, fire the cannons,
since Baron Leutrum is dead.*

THE WAR IN ITALY

THE SPRINGS OF WAR

“At this time there is a good opportunity to obtain something for the Infant, Don Philip, and at the same time I beg the King, my nephew, to think of his daughter on this occasion in order that their children may have something to live upon and may not remain cadets.”

Philip V of Spain to the King of France, upon the news of the death of the Emperor Charles VI in 1740.

Of all the theatres of operation in the War of the Austrian Succession, the Italian is perhaps the most interesting, if not always the most dramatic. The series of campaigns, opening in 1742 and closing in 1748, make the Italian war the longest running of any of the subplots to this conflict. Moreover, while occurring in physical isolation from the rest of Europe, it still had tremendous political repercussions.

Fought with armies of, on average, less than 40,000 men a side – often far fewer – the Italian campaigns saw a mixture of masterly inactivity, long marches and countermarches, trial after trial against the Alps, and vicious instants of combat that were, proportionally speaking, the most sanguinary of all the many battles that are incorporated within the War of the Austrian Succession.

The fighting here did for the north Italian state of Piedmont-Sardinia what it did for Prussia, though the motivation was different: it turned a middle-ranking power into a dominant one. Like Frederick of Prussia, King Carlos Emanuele of Sardinia's decisions were driven by regional geopolitics, but since his lands were at the center of things, rather than on the periphery, best choices were much more difficult to determine. Indeed, because of his success, at not only preserving his state but also expanding it, Charles Emmanuel III has been deemed one of, if not the greatest statesman of his time.

Northern Italy, like the Low Countries, has always been a “cockpit” of war. The more so because of its geographic isolation: bounded on three sides by mountains, and on the fourth by the sea. Piedmont, at the rugged western end of the bowl, enjoyed the most favoured location, supremely defended by the Alps and the tributaries of the Po. To the north of Piedmont, Swiss neutrality and Swiss arms were a sure protection.

With the acquisition, in 1713, of the Duchy of Savoy and the western outlets of the Alpine passes, the mountain kingdom could easily hold her own against France. The latter, in consequence, hoped to keep Piedmont as an ally in order have free access to the plain of Lombardy. To the east and south of Piedmont lay a parcel of small states, some independent rivals, some ruled by the Habsburgs. The Austrians, though a powerful local force, would not dare to move against a state that could, at will, unlock the mountain gates for their hereditary Bourbon foes.

But this finely calculated balance was upset by Spain. The Spanish kings had, by the 1740's, lost their original Italian possessions, bar the Presidii (four ports on the Tuscan coast and one on Elba). Spain was not even supplying Europe with Popes any more. This state of affairs was particularly galling for the Spanish Queen, Elisabeth Farnese. Her native state of Parma, ruled by her family for generations, was now under the Habsburg yoke.

Parma had been part of the price paid to establish her son, Don Carlos, at Naples, Spain's one regional gain. But the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Sicily and southern Italy) was the most backward and savage of all the Italian lands. Not only that, but Don Carlos felt it would be politic not to place Naples under direct Spanish control, but to rule it independently.

[Technically, the name Kingdom of the Two Sicilies applies to the Napoleonic era. In the 18th Century, there were really two kingdoms – Sicily and Naples – that shared a joint heritage, and under Don Carlos, a single ruler (much like Scotland and England). When he later became Carlos VII of Spain, Don Carlos renounced the throne of Naples in favour of his son, and this became standard practice for the family].

The Role of Spain

At the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, King Philip V of Spain had been forced by his grandfather, Louis XIV of France, to accede to the demands of his enemies, giving up his extra-Spanish lands in Europe, handing over Gibraltar and Minorca to the British, granting the British trade concessions in the Caribbean, and agreeing never to unite his crown with that of France. All of which was for public consumption. Privately, he reserved the right to change his mind when a suitable occasion arose.

Despite his smouldering resentment, however, Philip was far to indolent to actually do anything, instead allowing his wives to govern his actions. His first wife – a political cipher – died in 1714. Her replacement turned out to be Elisabeth Farnese, heiress to the Duchies of Parma, Piacenza, and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Hand-picked by the powerful Princess Orsini, like the previous queen she was intended to be a mere pawn. This proved a major error of judgement on the Orsini's part. Frederick of Prussia once called Elisabeth “the Personification of Maternal Blindness, combining Spartan pride, English obstinacy, Italian finesse, and French vanity”.

From the first, Elisabeth dominated the Spanish Court and her hypochondriac husband (who, it may be said, loved her passionately). For Elisabeth, being the dominating presence was simply a matter of survival. Spain in the 18th Century was the closest thing to a police state that the Age of Enlightenment had. The Russian Court might be a more *dangerous* place, but at least life there was *interesting*. In Spain one was not exiled *from* Court, one was exiled *to* it. The Court of Spain was a sepulchre. And Elisabeth was Italian.

Travelling from Parma to consummate her marriage in late 1714, she stayed some time with her aunt, who had been married to the previous king and was now living in exile in France. The new queen was left in no doubt as to her choices. Philip V was incapable of ruling himself, let alone ruling others. If Elisabeth did not take the reins, she would be nothing. Also, if (when) Philip died, she was guaranteed to become an exile. This explains Elisabeth's thirty-year obsession with the establishing of her sons as independent rulers, preferably in Italy.

It helped that Philip, too, wanted to see a resurgence of Spanish influence in Italy. Also, there was a natural affinity between Italy and Spain, with many grandees owning land in both countries; pro-Spanish factions existed in many Italian cities. Thus Elisabeth's private desires soon became Spanish foreign policy.

The years between 1714 and 1740 are filled with a tangle of politics, but one or two features stand out. The Spanish began their “reconquista” with the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718). This saw an unholy union of England and France (and the Emperor) against perceived Spanish aggression. At the peace table, Sicily was awarded to the Emperor; the Duke of Savoy was compensated

with Sardinia; Parma and Tuscany were to be held for Don Carlos until he came of age. But the Emperor, Charles VI, insisted Don Carlos hold his lands as an Imperial fief.

At first, the Spanish were so angry with the Emperor that during the 1720's they made a marriage alliance with France out of spite (French policy was, as it had been for a century, still oriented toward the reduction of the House of Habsburg). But the deal fell through. Policy dictated that Louis XV wed Maria Leszcynska of Poland, and the *Infanta* was returned to sender. Angrier with France than they had been with Austria, the Spanish turned once more and became even tighter with the latter.

For example, the Spanish recognised the Pragmatic Sanction (the right of the Emperor's daughter to inherit his possessions). Also, Maria Theresa was promised to Don Carlos. This the British and their allies would not countenance. There was a brief war, with Gibraltar under siege (1727) and Spanish Trade at a standstill, during which it became obvious that the Emperor was not about to help Spain recover The Rock as he had promised, nor to marry his daughter to Don Carlos – the British had bought him off with their own recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction. As a sop to Spanish pride, Don Carlos was formally recognised as Duke of Parma (1732), with the right to inherit the Grand Duchy of Tuscany when the current Medici ruler died.

The Polish Succession

The next major incident was the War of the Polish Succession (1733-35). Louis XV was strongly inclined, as the head of his House, to recover Poland for his father-in-law. Also, some in his Administration felt the war would also be a good opportunity to attack Austria, and simultaneously help the Spanish branch of the family establish itself in Italy (the two sides were speaking to one another again, after the birth of the Dauphin ended any chance of Philip V actually acquiring France).

The War of the Polish Succession was also to involve the King of Sardinia. Brilliant in his own right, Charles Emmanuel III was ably assisted by Carlo Vincenzo Ferrero, the Marquis d'Ormea. D'Ormea followed a classic policy for the House of Savoy: seek aid from France against Austrian pretensions and aid from Austria against French aggression.

At this particular juncture, Spain was regarded as a Sabaudian ally in the quest to add Milan to Charles Emmanuel's possessions. With all or even part of the Milanese under Sabaudian rule, Piedmont-Sardinia would have a fine natural frontier on its eastern side. The deal made with Cardinal Fleury of France (Louis' chief minister) was that in a war with Austria, Charles Emmanuel should receive Milan – and Mantua, if it were also conquered. Furthermore, Charles Emmanuel was to command any combined army in Italy (giving him the greatest amount of control over the course of events).

The good Cardinal was ever a double-dealer. Elisabeth Farnese categorically refused to part with Milan, already promised to Don Carlos. So Fleury made a separate deal, promising Mantua, Parma, Piacenza, the Two Sicilies, and by unstated implication, Milan, to Spain. This was the Treaty of the *Escorial*, sometimes called the First Family Compact.

[Escorial after the building in Spain where the treaty was signed.]

Elisabeth Farnese (1692 – 1766)



Officially, Queen Consort of Spain. Only daughter of Odoardo II Farnese, Duke of Parma, son of Ranuccio II Farnese, Duke of Parma. On her mother's side, she had ties to several German Houses: the Elector Palatine of the Rhine, Hesse-Darmstadt, Saxony, Brandenburg, Prussia, Cleves, Cleves-Jülich, Cleves-Jülich-Berg, not to mention the Imperial House itself.

A description from 1721, by the French Ambassador, Saint-Simon (when she was 28): "The Queen shocked me by her face, marked, scarred, much disfigured by smallpox... She was well-built, at that time thin, but her throat and shoulders beautiful, shapely, full and white, as were her arms and hands; a well-set figure, an easy carriage, slender and short waist; she spoke French very well, with a slight Italian accent; the words well-chosen and found without effort; her voice and enunciation most agreeable. A gracious, constant, natural charm, without the slightest affectation, accompanied her conversation, and varied her expression. She united an air of kindness and of politeness, of the precise degree appropriate, often amounting to a friendly familiarity, with a dignity and majesty which never left her. From this combination it came about that when one had the honour of seeing her privately, always, be it noted, in the presence of the King, one felt at one's ease, without being able to forget who she was, and one was soon accustomed to her face..."

Ambitious, and containing a fiery, imperious temper, she was kept in seclusion until married by proxy at twenty-one to Philip V of Spain (1714). The Prince of Monaco's report on her "advantages" included the following statement: "Heart of a Lombard, wit of a Florentine; she has a will of her own."

The marriage was arranged by Cardinal Alberoni and the Princess Orsini, the pre-eminent woman at the Spanish Court, who hoped to keep Elisabeth under her thumb. This she completely failed to do, and found herself dismissed. Elisabeth very quickly gained ascendancy over her weak husband.

In her early years she was guided by Cardinal Alberoni as the two Italians sought to reacquire Spanish territory in Italy. Elisabeth was so keen that when the French threatened to invade Spain she placed herself at the head of a portion of the Spanish army. Although Sardinia and Sicily were taken, the Quadruple Alliance against Spain dashed her hopes. One condition of the peace terms was the dismissal of Alberoni, another, the return of Sicily. To make matters worse, Philip V abdicated in favour of his heir. However, the young king died after reigning only seven months, and Philip was recalled.

As Philip took less and less interest in affairs of state, and more and more interest in his diseases, real or imaginary, Elisabeth began to direct Spain's policy. Distrusting advice from the Court (remembering the Princess Orsini) she took no counsel, and began to focus her efforts on obtaining duchies in Italy for her sons – regardless of the cost to Spanish interests. In 1736, during the War of the Polish Succession, her son Don Carlos obtained the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies by force of arms. Don Carlos became King of Spain in later life.

Spanish involvement in the War of the Austrian Succession revolved solely around the need to give a duchy to Elisabeth's other son, Don Felipe. (She had a third surviving son, Infante Luis Antonio, but he was early put in holy orders, and had been Primate of Spain since 1735). At the end of the war, Don Felipe was made Duke of Parma, founding the line of Bourbon-Parma. King Philip died in 1746, at which point Elisabeth lost all influence in Spain and was forced into retirement. She survived her husband twenty years.

The war went well for the Bourbon cause, especially in Italy. Charles Emmanuel did all the work in the Po valley, occupying Milan with a Franco-Sabaudian army. Under cover of this distraction, Don Carlos invaded Tuscany and the Two Sicilies, and successfully established himself in the latter territory. The Austrians counterattacked, but were defeated by Charles Emmanuel at Guastalla (1734). The King of Sardinia could have taken Mantua as well, but learning of Fleury's betrayal, he dragged his heels.

In the end, Bourbon unity was ruined by the classic ploy of "the separate peace" - the Emperor negotiating with his enemies individually. It was Fleury who dictated the final treaty, much to the dislike not only of Charles Emmanuel, but Elisabeth Farnese as well. The terms were as follows: France to recognise the Pragmatic Sanction; the ex-king of Poland to receive Lorraine; Francis Stephen of Lorraine to receive Tuscany in compensation, as well as the Emperor's daughter's hand in marriage. This was a package deal, even though Maria Theresa, happily enough, was in love with him (and had refused the hand of Don Carlos shortly before). In addition, Don Carlos would be formally recognised as King of the Two Sicilies and be awarded the Spanish Presidii. Austria would receive Parma and Piacenza, until then under Farnese rule, and would give Charles Emmanuel certain portions of the Milanese to round out his territories.

Parma and Piacenza were placed under Austrian governance; in 1737, Maria Theresa and Francis Stephen took up residence in Tuscany as Grand Duke and Duchess. These three territories had been destined, in the Spanish Queen's mind, for her son Don Felipe. And she understood that they were intended, in Austrian minds, as a springboard for the conquest of southern Italy.

Charles Emmanuel was not satisfied either. He had made a powerful enemy in the Queen of Spain, and received little in compensation. The Austrians did not particularly like him, even after he married Francis Stephen's sister. And it was obvious that the French were not to be trusted.

[Something that is not always made clear is that the settlement of the War of the Polish Succession was not completed until 1738. Only a year later, Spain was engaged in an overseas war with Britain, and the Turks were soundly trouncing Austria. The year after that, the Emperor died and the nations began to contest his daughter's right to retain the Imperial throne. Frederick of Prussia made the first move, but France, having pledged to support the Elector of Bavaria's own claims to the Imperial throne (which they had betrayed by recognising the Pragmatic Sanction) soon plunged into the fray. It is possible, therefore, to view the Wars of the Polish and Austrian Succession, and also the Seven Years War, as a continuous struggle.]

WAR!

Watching the war unfold in its first year, the Spanish formed a low opinion of the chances of the House of Habsburg. Silesia, Bohemia, Upper Austria - the richest Habsburg provinces all stripped away. Elisabeth Farnese mocked Maria Theresa, calling her "the naked queen". Planning began for the recovery of all Spanish lands "stolen" by the Habsburgs.

France was asked to help (indeed, to do most of the work). But Cardinal Fleury replied that since the Spanish had previously renounced their claims and recognised the Pragmatic Sanction, they really had no justification for war. France herself was busy supporting the Elector of Bavaria, and it was Fleury's

contention that by winning the Imperial election, all things would be added unto the Bourbon cause.

In Italy itself, no state was eager for war. The Habsburgs stripped their garrisons and no one moved against them. The great Republics - Genoa and Venice - had weak militaries. Don Carlos was still trying to convince his new subjects that he was a nice guy. The only other strong state was Piedmont, in many ways similar to Prussia: centralised, authoritarian, agrarian, and always seeking to expand. Habsburg Lombardy was the logical victim, but Charles Emmanuel had to be careful. Most North Italians did not like centralised, authoritarian, agrarian states telling them how to think. Furthermore, joining the anti-Habsburg bandwagon might result in the Austrians becoming too weak to counterbalance his other enemy, the Bourbons. The King chose to wait and see.

As the year of 1741 progressed, Cardinal Fleury's policies underwent a shift. His man in Germany, with whom he was ironically at odds most of the time, was the *Maréchal* de Belle-Isle. Belle-Isle, seeing the rapid conquest of Silesia by Prussia, advocated a return to the more aggressive methods of Louis XIV and the overt creation of a series of buffer states in Germany, and in Italy, to hem the Habsburgs in. Fleury agreed to send French troops to act as "auxiliaries" of Bavaria (saving France from the opprobrium of actually declaring war on anyone).

Spain, actively preparing for war, pressed repeatedly for free passage through southern France in order to invade Habsburg Italy. The French finally agreed, provisional to Piedmont being brought on board. It was assumed that the King of Sardinia would understand where his true interests lay.

Charles Emmanuel understood only too well. The Spanish had nothing to offer but blows, and France would eventually side with them. At best, he would receive the same treatment as in the last war: made to do the dirty work for nothing. On the other hand, Austria would grant little and ask much, and even if he *could* form an alliance with Maria Theresa, the Habsburgs had their plate full north of the Alps.

Unfortunately the sand in the King of Sardinia's glass was running out. On the plus side, he held the all-important Alpine passes and the last of their fortifications was nearly complete. Also, he had made certain he had a friend in the British, who had the eccentric habit of championing smaller states, in order to keep the powerful in check.

An alliance with the Bourbons was ruled out. But for safety's sake, he had better make the appropriate gestures. In that way, he could also blackmail the Austrians into providing some support - with the British as intermediaries, perhaps a lot of support.

Dance of the Diplomats

Talks among the interested parties continued throughout 1741. As noted earlier, France stood aloof, but granted permission to the Spanish to enter Italy from French soil, provided they left Tuscany alone (otherwise France would feel bound to return Lorraine to Francis Stephen), and provided the Piedmontese became an ally. The Spanish offered to divided Italy with the latter. Charles Emmanuel's minister, d'Ormea, replied that his monarch would be only too happy to oblige, if France also got involved in the theatre, which of course, they had already stated they were not prepared to do.

D'Ormea then contacted the Austrians and informed them that Piedmont might be forced into an alliance against the Habsburgs if

his king were not backed up by Austrian troops. Austria proposed a vague alliance without any conditions, then, when French soldiers were seen in the field with the Bavarians, offered some paltry concessions and the Genoese port of Finale (a former Imperial zone which was no longer theirs to give).

D'Ormea, with inside knowledge that Austria was desperate for Piedmontese aid, referred the matter to the British for mediation. He especially noted that any alliance must not have terms conditional upon the outbreak of war, or the Spanish, getting wind of the treaty, would not attack in the first place (which shows some keenness on Charles Emmanuel's part to fight, after all).

Austria was advised to seek the aid of the larger powers, and to cut a deal with Prussia; Piedmont would be happy to join in a grand coalition against the Bourbons, who were otherwise too powerful. This was all just the usual diplomatic wind. But a provisional military convention was hammered out, allowing Piedmont to come to Austria's aid if Lombardy were invaded. And the Alpine passes remained closed by virtue of Piedmont's "strict neutrality".

THE NAKED QUEEN

"...tell the Cardinal we can without difficulty at once transport to Italy 40,000 men who will join the 10,000 or 12,000 of the King of Naples. If Fleury wishes to negotiate you will let him know the minimum of the claims on which we shall insist; we shall consent to Tuscany being ceded to Prince Charles of Lorraine on condition that the Infant Don Philip be given all the Milanese with Parma, Piacenza, and Mantua.

Instructions for the Spanish Ambassador to France, December 9th, 1741

Elisabeth Farnese was impatient. She had no desire to grant concessions to the King of Sardinia, who in her opinion had nothing to offer. And Cardinal Fleury was an old woman. 40,000 men were already assembled in Catalonia ready to begin the "reconquista". Both Spain's leading military man, the *Duca* de Montemar, and her own helmsman, José del Campillo, Secretary for Finance, War, the Navy, and The Indies (how's that for centralisation) believed the time to strike was now.

Fortunately for Spain, the British were behaving with more than their usual muddle-headedness. The Royal Navy was twice the size of the Spanish Fleet, but instead of bottling up potential enemies in port, they pursued a policy of commerce raiding and amphibious descents on Spain's Caribbean possessions. Blockade duty did not bring in much prize money.

The abject failure of the last of these enterprises, the assault on Cartagena in April 1741, sent shockwaves throughout Europe. Britain feared for her Indies plantations and the largely civilian-run Admiralty Board refused to augment the Mediterranean Squadron, at this time commanded by Admiral Haddock. A competent man, Haddock was given a set of tasks that would have boggled a master strategist. He was required to watch all the Spanish ports, and the French at Toulon, and protect Minorca, and see to the security of any British traders, and to prevent any Spanish squadron from reaching the West Indies. To fulfil his mission, Haddock had exactly 12 ships.

Thus it was comparatively easy for Spanish troop convoys to sail from Barcelona directly to Italy (November/December, 1741). Especially if shielded by a "neutral" French squadron under Admiral de Court; Haddock felt that an attack by him

might be seen as an attack on France, which would be exceeding his instructions sufficiently to ensure a court-martial. Two Spanish convoys got through safely but the third (and last) was thwarted.

Commodore Lestock had replaced Haddock, who was suffering from a general breakdown of health (how odd...). Lestock brought reinforcements. With 24 British warships at Port Mahon (the naval base at Minorca), the Spanish did not want to take the risk, and hid with the French in Toulon. In any case, two round-trips across the Ligurian Sea had proved rather wearing on their merchantmen.

All the same, the Spanish now had 13,600 men at Orbitello (under the *Duca* de Montemar) and a further 11,700 (under the *Marqués* de Castelar) at La Spezia, in supposedly neutral Genoa. They were short on horses and artillery, but the Neapolitans would provide these. The latter, 10-12,000 strong (but as it turned out, with little artillery), led by the *Duce* di Castropignano, were already waiting at Spoleto, in the also-neutral but pro-Bourbon Papal States.

The last trick was to march across the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the ruler of which they were at war with, without violating its neutrality and annoying the French. Here they were helped by *Großherzog* Francis Stephen himself – Maria Theresa's husband – who authorized free passage to the Spanish so they could fight his wife's army on the Po, and not in his duchy.

[This was not the archduke's only schizophrenic act. He also sold grain to the Prussians so they could maintain their armies in Habsburg Moravia, and supplied Genoa when it was under British blockade. Business is business, and Vienna needed the money.]

The Spanish intended crossing the Apennines directly into Lombardy, but Charles Emmanuel, while continuing to allow the French to court him, warned the Bourbons that on the approach of a Spanish army, he would join with the Austrians in resisting them. This, the French completely understood, and agreed was the correct attitude (the Spanish hadn't listened to their advice; too bad for them). Not wanting to be defeated in detail as he emerged from the Apennine passes, de Montemar, the Bourbon generalissimo, chose to cross the mountains further south.

So, after rendezvousing with the Neapolitans, the combined Napolispans army assembled at Rimini on the Adriatic coast (end of March 1742). Despite losing over 10,000 men to desertion and sickness, de Montemar's army posed a considerable threat. The Napolispans had 30,000 men to pit against 10,000 Austrians and an indeterminate number of Sabaudians that might or might not appear. (Over half the Austrian army in Italy, 13,600 men, had been sent to Bavaria; they were doing good work there, but Lombardy was nearly defenceless).

The place to meet the Bourbons was the neutral Duchy of Modena, wedged in between the Papal States and Habsburg Lombardy. An invading army could advance from here via either bank of the Po and still retain a good line of communications. Conversely, if a defender occupied the duchy and blocked the crossings of the Panaro River on the south bank of the Po, no advance on either bank was practicable.

Modena

On February 1st, 1742, Charles Emmanuel and the Austrian commander in Italy, the 64-year old Marshal von Traun, cut a deal (the Convention of Turin). A portion of the Piedmontese army (15,000 foot and 3,200 horse) would occupy Parma, Piacenza, and Pavia, and place itself under von Traun's command. Von Traun would use these troops and his own to invade Modena. The King of Sardinia agreed to shut up about Milan until campaigning was over. He also reserved the right to recall his men with a month's notice

(assuming a better deal could be made with the French). If all went well, Austria would have a decent defensive position and Piedmont would have control of Modena – not high on Charles Emmanuel's wish list, but a bargaining chip nonetheless. The only person who was not consulted in the matter was *Duce* Francesco III d'Este, ruler of Modena.

Aware that his small state was about to become a battleground, d'Este acquiesced in its occupation, but secretly contacted the Bourbons with a view to handing over the fortifications of Modena and Mirandola to them. In late March, von Traun, short of both cash and men, crossed the Po at Revere and entered Modena, while the Piedmontese guarded the flanks in Parma and the Milanese. Initially welcomed by d'Este, the Allies paused. Charles Emmanuel, who fancied himself a defender of the Church, would not agree to a crossing of the Panaro into the Bolognese, which was Papal territory. (Or, perhaps it was merely an excuse not to be dragged all the way to Naples).

Meanwhile d'Este signed a secret agreement with Spain (April 30th), denying to all and sundry that he had done anything of the kind. On the 6th of May, d'Ormea, representing Charles Emmanuel, confronted the duke with the text of the treaty. On May 10th, the Piedmontese crossed the Enza River into Modena, and by the 16th they were on the Panaro. D'Este was given until the end of the month to join the Allies or be declared an enemy (married into the Bourbon family, he was suspect in any case). The betrayer betrayed d'Este fled to the Spanish camp. Many of his men would later join him, but for now, they were under siege.

The Spanish were still organising themselves. Their army was not fully assembled and stocked until the end of April. It then advanced up the *Via Æmelia* to Bologna, but despite repeated urgings from Madrid, did not attack the enemy. De Montemar held a council of war to officially prove that attacking would be a bad idea. Still, the citadel of Modena, commanded by the Cavalliere de Negro, a Genoese, was holding out. Something ought to be done to help.

At this time, the Napolispans had 25,000 foot and 3,200 horse facing 25,000 foot and 5,000 horse on the other side of a formidable river. De Montemar decided to divert the Austro-Sardinians by taking Mirandola, on the lower Panaro. This operation involved shifting his base to Ferrara and marching across the enemy front. Von Traun was unperturbed. He had sufficient forces now (reinforced by 4,800 Croats and Slavonians) to hold the river and prosecute the siege of Modena simultaneously. He rather hoped de Montemar *would* attack him.

The Spanish established a bridgehead over the river, but declined to do more. Modena's 3,000 defenders capitulated on June 29th. A short pause ensued. Maria Theresa, having arranged a truce with Frederick of Prussia (Kleinschnellendorf), felt confident enough to attempt the reconquest of Naples and issued orders accordingly. This Charles Emmanuel would not agree to because Maria Theresa refused to reward him with any Milanese territory (and driving the Bourbons out of Italy entirely would mean decades of Austrian bullying).

Francesco III d'Este, Duce di Modena (1698-1780)



A cadet of the Fulc-d'Estes (the main branch of which had ruled Ferrara until it was incorporated into the Papal States). The family were probably Franks who settled in Lombardy in the 9th Century. Their original territory of Este was incorporated into the Venetian Republic in 1405.

The Fulc-Estes became Lords of Modena in 1288, Dukes of Reggio and Modena in 1452 – this elevation made Modena into an Imperial fief. During the Renaissance they married into the Sforza (Milan), Medici (Tuscany), Borgia (Spanish-Papal), and Gonzaga (Mantua) families. The French deposed the dukes of Modena in 1796, though a branch of the family regained control between 1814 and 1859. The near bloodline is now extinct and inheritance must be derived from the Duke of Bavaria.

[The eldest branch of this House were the Welfs, who became Electors of Hanover and Kings of Britain. Francesco III actually had a higher claim to the British throne than George I (he placed 46th and George placed 57th) but he was barred as a Catholic.]

A hedonist and libertine, Francesco III was married three times. In the 1750's the Austrians gave him the post of Administrator of the Duchy of Milan; this allowed him to indulge in the pleasures of the city without actually having to do anything.

The eldest son of the previous duke, he succeeded to the Duchies of Modena and Reggio in 1737. Although he had served as a general in the Austrian service, he was tied by his first marriage to the House of Orléans. Thus he was inclined to back the Bourbons in the War of the Austrian Succession, though a greater consideration was the fact that the Piedmontese coveted his duchy.

On June 6th 1742 he was exiled from Modena and spent the rest of the war serving with the Neapolitan Army; many of his soldiers escaped to Naples and served as a separate corps, though mostly in garrisons. He himself became generalissimo of the Neapolitan expeditionary forces serving with the Spanish Marshal de Gages. After the war he was guaranteed in his possessions and remained loyal to the Habsburgs, even lending Maria Theresa money during the Seven Years War.

Von Traun also had reservations – on operational grounds. But de Montemar's army was in a bad way. The British had strengthened their Mediterranean forces (now under Admiral Mathews), being more committed to Continental involvement since the recent fall of their pacific chief minister, Robert Walpole. Three ships sent to the Adriatic were sufficient to cut the Spanish supply lines and destroy their siege train while it was still afloat.

Retreat

During July, de Montemar, unable to help the Duchy of Modena, retreated, first to Ferrara, and then to Rimini (August 3rd) via Ravenna, using the Po to move his heavy equipment and supplies. The Allies followed, but were hampered by difficulties with their transport. It was not until the 7th of August that they encamped at Cesena, on the bank of the Rubicon.

De Montemar was now in a near panic. Rumours that Austrian troops from Trieste were to be landed behind him by the Royal Navy led him to retreat to Fano, and then over the Apennines. But by the 22nd of August he felt safe again. The Neapolitans were at Spoleto and his own men at Foligno, ready to cover the approaches to the Kingdom of Naples.

At this point both sides' plans unravelled. Charles Emmanuel, with his HQ at Reggio, learned that Spanish troops based in France had invaded the Duchy of Savoy. By the 19th of August, he and his army were gone; the King of Sardinia urging the Austrians to respect the wishes of the Pope and leave the latter's territory. Some Piedmontese units were dropped off at Bologna and Parma but most marched back to Turin.

Coincidentally, on August 19th Commodore Martin of the Royal Navy arrived off the port of Naples with 5 ships of the line, 4 smaller vessels, and 4 bomb ketches (carrying large mortars). His instructions were to insist on Don Carlos withdrawing from the war. Non-compliance would mean the destruction of the town of Naples. This was very bad timing for Don Carlos. Naples was already partially destroyed – by a major earthquake the day before. With 300,000 defenceless citizens under the gun, the King of Naples had little choice. And anyway, he was only in the war because his mamma made him. This left the Spanish with only 13,000 men (1,300 horse) – too few to take advantage of the disappearance of the Sabaudians.

[Less well known is a second bit of gunboat diplomacy off Genoa. Executed soon after the Naples affair, it brought a republic that had been leaning toward the Bourbons back to strict neutrality, and allowed Britain to unload her yearly Austrian subsidy at that port, rather than having to go all the way round to Trieste.]

Respecting the Pope's wishes, and too weak to advance in any case, von Traun and his remaining 10,000 men retired behind the Panaro for the winter. De Montemar and de Castelar, after receiving peremptory orders to attack in early September and failing to do so, were relieved of command and replaced by the *Conde de Gages*. For the next four years, this would be his war. A Walloon who had risen from the ranks to become a field marshal, de Gages soon restored the army's morale. He was an excellent soldier and commander; unfortunately, he was resented as a foreigner – the usual story. Charged with attacking, de Gages advanced to Bologna, arriving there on October 5th, but with the season so advanced, chose to go into winter quarters himself.

DINING AT THE SAVOY

"[Savoy is] a barrier between us and France...it keeps her at a distance, so that she cannot suddenly fall on Piedmont."

Charles Emmanuel

While von Traun and de Montemar's armies danced the saraband, things had been heating up in the West. Don Felipe, the Queen of Spain's second son, asked to go with de Montemar to Spain, but his mother demurred, suggesting he instead attend to his new wife, who was with child. Then, of course, the naval situation became unfavourable. It will be remembered that a third portion of the expeditionary army (13,700 foot and 3,800 horse) had still to sail. This force, gathered at Barcelona, was placed under the command of the *Conde de Glimes* and ordered to march overland (with French permission) to Antibes.

[Antibes was the normal staging post when taking ship to Genoa or the Tuscan coast, since the road along the Riviera itself was virtually nonexistent.]

De Glimes marched out with the army, and the *Infante* followed in state, with 24 coaches, 59 barouches, 27 wagons, and 462 mules. Languedoc and Provence were impoverished by his passing, and the peasantry outraged by the indiscipline of the Spanish soldiers. Leaving Madrid in February 1742, and Barcelona in March, the *Infante* arrived at Antibes in April. The army caught up with him in May.

Some months of waiting now ensued. Sea transport to Tuscany or Genoa was out of the question. The King of Sardinia had garrisoned his borders in strength, particularly the line of the Var River in the County of Nice, and in any case, the French were still deep in hopeful negotiations with him. Now came one of those wonderful little moments that make 18th Century politics so much more interesting than those of the present day.

The Queen of Spain had a suggestion for Charles Emmanuel. Why not take advantage of his "month's notice" clause to withdraw his services from Austria, and at the same time strip the fortress of Mantua of its defences. He rebuked the Queen for such a dishonourable suggestion. Infuriated, she ordered an immediate attack on Charles Emmanuel's possessions.

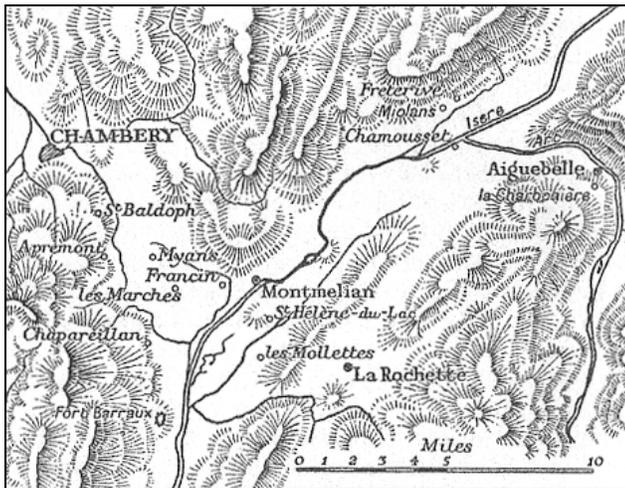
For the French, the best route of attack into Italy was a central one, staged from their bases in the Dauphiné, but the Spanish just wanted to cause damage. Deeming the Var too formidable, de Glimes (much to the relief of the inhabitants of Antibes) marched north to attack the Duchy of Savoy – in April, Louis XV had given permission for the Spanish to stage attacks from French territory. Arriving at Barcelonnette on August 13th, de Glimes there contemplated a French suggestion of moving into Piedmont but thought better (or worse) of it. Instead he marched to Briançon and over the Col de Galiber to St Michel de Maurienne.

Savoy was more or less empty of defenders. It could not *be* adequately defended, lying on the wrong side of the Alps, with all lines of communication snowbound in winter. The Spanish contented themselves with occupying the southern reaches of the duchy, around Montemélian, and with nothing further to do beyond alienating the local population, went into billets.

A Bad Mistake

The news reached Charles Emmanuel at Reggio. Reaching Turin by September 10th, the King held a council of war. He was advised by d'Ormea not to attempt a relief operation, especially so late in the season, but some of his generals were eager for action. 14-15,000 men were assembled, most at Aosta, but some at Novalesa (by Mont Cenis).

De Glimes had detachments at Moutiers and St. Jean, and posts at St. Michel, St. André, and Modane. The main Piedmontese column from Aosta was ordered to cross the Little St. Bernard Pass and clear the valley of the Isère River. This column would also send detachments via the side valleys to cut off the Spaniards' retreat. The column at Mont Cenis was to do likewise with the valley of the Arc, isolating the defenders with flanking detachments that would converge on Moutiers.



De Glimes did not wait to discover whether this was a good plan or not, simply retreating everyone over the French border at Fort Barraux. (In mitigation, he had fears for the *Infante's* safety after a local Abbé maliciously suggested nothing would be easier than a Sabaudian kidnapping). The French kindly sent word to Charles Emmanuel that an attack against the Spanish on their soil would be considered an act of war.

For Charles Emmanuel, the question remained whether to stay in Savoy over the winter, or leave. He chose to stay, and secured the border, while sending a letter of protest to the French and other interested powers. De Glimes received the usual order to attack from Madrid, plus some reinforcements, but declined and sent a request for even more reinforcements. De Glimes was then sacked. The Queen of Spain also said she wished she could sack Don Felipe, calling him "the second edition of Montemar" and ferociously declaring it would better for him to be dead than dishonoured.

De Glimes' replacement was the cordially detested *Marqués* de la Miña (he had been Ambassador to France at one time). De la Miña was not skilful, but he was reliable. He once stated he would march his army into the sea if ordered to do so.

Arriving at Fort Barraux on December 5th, de la Miña first told de Glimes he was fired, and then contemplated the latter's army. The Spanish now had 20,000 well-rested men against 10,000 rather worn Sabaudians. Charles Emmanuel had positioned his men well, in an arc from the Château d'Apremont to Montmélian, to the Isère, to La Rochette, barring all routes into Savoy from Fort Barraux. His main body

lay at Montmélian. De Glimes had been counselled to flank this position by bridging the Isère, feinting against d'Apremont on his right, and doubling back to cross the river and occupy Fréteville, cutting the Piedmontese retreat. This plan was too complicated for de Glimes, who chose to do nothing instead. And, when he left the army, he neglected to inform de la Miña about the plan.

The latter's own plan was superficially similar, but much less ambitious. The attack would be made *at* d'Apremont (on the Spanish right), with a demonstration on the Isère. The advance was begun on December 18th. Charles Emmanuel drew his army up at Francin to cover all eventualities. When he was satisfied that the action on the Isère was a feint, he closed up to d'Apremont, and also placed a watch on Chambéry (the old capital of Savoy).

For several days the two armies faced each other across an impracticable marsh. The Sabaudian garrison of d'Apremont capitulated. Unable to challenge an army twice his own in size, the King of Sardinia issued orders for a general retreat (December 28th) over the passes to Piedmont. The Spanish followed in a leisurely manner, letting the weather do most of the work for them. A rearguard action was magnified by de la Miña into a glorious victory (and he received a promotion to Captain-General in consequence). However, even the Spanish found it impossible to pass the mountains. They went into winter quarters.

Charles Emmanuel later declared that this campaign was the worst mistake he ever made, and absolutely refused to try it again. Thousands of Piedmontese soldiers died of exposure and exhaustion, or were crippled for life. The failure also damaged his credibility as an ally – the Austrians suspected him of reaching an accommodation with the Spanish. The latter retained Savoy for the duration of the war.

Pierre Bourcet (1700 – 1780)

"Staff officers have no names", but this man deserves to be remembered for his work in the field. Born at Ussaux in the upper valley of the Chisone, in what was at the time French territory, to an army captain who served in Louis XIV's Alpine campaigns. At 19, Bourcet served as a volunteer in the Pyrennees. At 20, he was commissioned and served in the Royal-Vaisseaux regiment for 8 years. Became an Engineer and was stationed at Briançon for many years.

Served with distinction in the Italian campaign of the War of the Polish Succession, and under de Maillebois in 1741, in Westphalia. Summoned to Paris in 1742 and appointed Chief Engineer at Mont Dauphin. But this was merely to ensure his salary. He was actually to report to the *Comde* de Glimes, to whom he would act as staff officer, preparing maps, plans, and appreciations. After de Glimes' dismissal he continued to serve the Spanish and French commanders as they came and went. Was responsible for planning or advising on all the attempts to penetrate the Alps; was not responsible for the way they were executed, though it was not until 1745 that he found a general capable of carrying them out properly – de Maillebois.

Colonel by 1747, after the war he became Director of Fortifications in the Dauphiné (1756), and a lieutenant general in 1762. In 1775 he published "*Principes de la Guerre de Montagne*", which became a standard textbook on mountain warfare. It has been contended that his writings influenced the "Napoleonic" style of war: self-contained divisional formations (this may be going too far), concentration of dispersed columns in time but not space, a preference for turning manoeuvres. He has also been credited with providing Napoleon with a blueprint for the latter's Italian campaign in 1796. In any case, his "Principles" still have validity.

THROWING DOWN THE GAGE

“I hope that your Majesty will also be good enough to obtain the establishment of the Infant Don Philip, my son, the Infanta, your daughter. Your Majesty certainly could not give me a greater pleasure than that.”

Philip V to Louis XV; from a letter of condolence on the death of Cardinal Fleury.

The Battle of Campo Santo was an affair of honour rather than a serious attempt to invade Lombardy. Since October of 1742, the armies facing each other over the Panaro had been in winter quarters. The Spanish, under de Gages, had lost the Neapolitans, but received enough reinforcements (mainly amnestied deserters, but also new troops brought in by blockade runners) to bring their strength up to 15,000 men. The Austrians were much weaker, although by the time the campaign opened they would have 11,800, including some Piedmontese. But the Panaro was a formidable obstacle.

The fly in the ointment was the Queen of Spain, who, after the “great victory” in Savoy, believed Charles Emmanuel was done for. Now de Gages should finish off the Austrians and complete the conquest of Italy. De Gages ignored her letters for a while, but eventually he received one (January 31st 1743) that told him either to attack or resign. He had three days to decide. Ejaculating the Spanish equivalent of “*Jawohl, mein Führer!*” the marshal concentrated his men at Bologna and plotted the best way to get at the enemy.

[Since it took a minimum of three weeks for a letter from Madrid to reach Bologna, one suspects The Farnese of gauging how many letters it would require to get a particular commander moving and just sending them all off one after another without waiting for a reply. “Let’s see, 8 for Gages, 10 for la Miña, 12 for Glimes, 1 for Montemar – oh, we only need a letter of recall for him...”]

Ideally, the Spanish ought to chase off the Austrians and lay siege to Mirandola or Modena. However, de Gages’ siege train lay at Orbitello (north of Rome; sent there by de Montemar months before, with a view of loaning them to the *Infante*... or something... who knew for sure with Montemar). So it would be a straight fight for the sake of Spanish honour and de Gages’ job.

Using the ruse of a grand ball held the same day, the Spanish left Bologna on the 1st of February, bridging the Panaro at Campo Santo (“Holy Ground”) on the 3rd. The enemy was still commanded by von Traun, not the easiest man to deceive. Von Traun knew of the Spanish move from spies in Bologna. Although weaker, he had the advantage of position, and, he felt, in quality of troops. The Sabaudian garrisons of Parma and Piacenza, and Austrian forces north of the Po, would not be required. By the 5th, his army was concentrated at Bomporto.

The day before, de Gages had marched up the Austrian side of the river, got halfway to Bomporto, and learned that the Austrians were ready for him. He retired toward Campo Santo, hoping to cross the river before he was caught. Encamped at the bridgehead, the Spanish were funnelling their baggage across the river, but progress was slow. Eventually things became so snarled that a whole day had to be set aside to sort out the tangle. By now the Austrians were camped only three miles away, and obviously intended to attack. Unable to retreat without heavy losses, de Gages formed up for battle.

Battle of Campo Santo: February 8th 1743

The Spanish began to deploy at 3am on the 7th. De Gages had 33 battalions (averaging 400 men each) in 4 brigades of 6 battalions, one of 4, and one of 5. His left was the expected point of attack, so it was reinforced and anchored on the Panaro. Occupying a large farmhouse on the extreme left were the Parma Brigade (5 bns), followed by the Walloon (Guards) Brigade (6 bns), extending the line a quarter mile from the river. The Castile Brigade and the Spanish (Guard) Brigade (both 6 bns) ran parallel to the river in front of Campo Santo. 9 squadrons of cavalry, angled back to the river, covered the Spanish Guards’ right flank. Here, light troops occupied another farmhouse. The remaining two brigades were in reserve. The vital bridges were behind the center of the position.

Nothing happened on the 7th, so the Spanish continued to sort out the mess at the bridges and dig in. Von Traun was expecting them to retreat to Bologna and was content to let them go, but if they remained in place, he was resolved to attack. Now, as noted, the Spanish would have retreated, but the bridges were clogged. So it appeared to von Traun as if they were intending to maintain a lodgement. He called a council of war. The Piedmontese commander, d’Aspremont, was eager to attack despite the enemy’s superiority, and the normally cautious von Traun was in agreement. He too had his accusers at Court whispering he was incapable. It would also help to cement the alliance if a little Piedmontese blood were spilled.

It was now too late in the day to attack. Besides, von Traun was hoping for a consignment of heavy artillery from Mirandola. So the assault was timed for the 8th.

On the morning of the 8th, the Allies formed for battle in two lines. The Austrian intent was to engage the strong Spanish left with light troops, which they had in abundance, and strike the weaker right flank with the bulk of their army. The cavalry, on their far left, would sweep along the Panaro, while the infantry in the center engaged the Spanish Guards and its associates. This deployment entailed a speedy march, including a canal crossing (the Fiumecello, running parallel to the Panaro), to avoid the Spanish observing what was afoot. The movement succeeded.

Von Traun’s men were in position around 1:30 in the afternoon. They were deployed parallel to the Spanish, but offset so that the center of their line was opposite the right flank of the Spanish. Earlier, von Traun’s Croats had begun harassing the enemy left, successfully pinning the Parma and Walloon Brigades for most of the day. The general advance began at 2pm, but due to the presence of many ditches it took two hours to advance a thousand yards (many of the later battles in this theatre began with the units advancing in columns, but here the by-the-book linear style was followed).

Though operationally von Traun had initiated the attack, it was the Spanish who began the actual combat. At 4pm, the Spanish Guards, led by General Macdonald, plus 6 battalions from the reserve, advanced to meet the enemy, extending their line to the right until it rested on a pond. An extra battalion was stationed on the right of this pond.

[By moving in close, the Austrians had forced the Spanish to try and drive them away.]

The Austrian cavalry now crossed the Spanish right in order to take the infantry in flank, but were exposed to the Spanish squadrons only 300 yards away. Without hesitation the 5 right-hand Spanish squadrons charged. 2 Sabaudian squadrons wheeling to flank this movement were countered by 2 of the Spanish squadrons peeling off on the left, and the remaining 3 Spanish squadrons crashed into the Miglio Cuirassiers before they could form line. That regiment was routed from the field. The Austrian second line, 8 squadrons of the Berlichingen Cuirassiers, in turn attempted to flank the Spanish horse, but took heavy fire from the enemy battalion posted on the right of the pond, which had been lying down in concealment. 3 Spanish squadrons brought over from the left wing then charged and routed the cuirassiers.

Fortunately for the Austrians, after seeing their much-vaunted cavalry chased off the battlefield, the Spanish horse lost control and wasted itself in a pursuit, leaving the infantry to slog it out. When they eventually did return, they merely reformed on their old position and took no further part in the action.

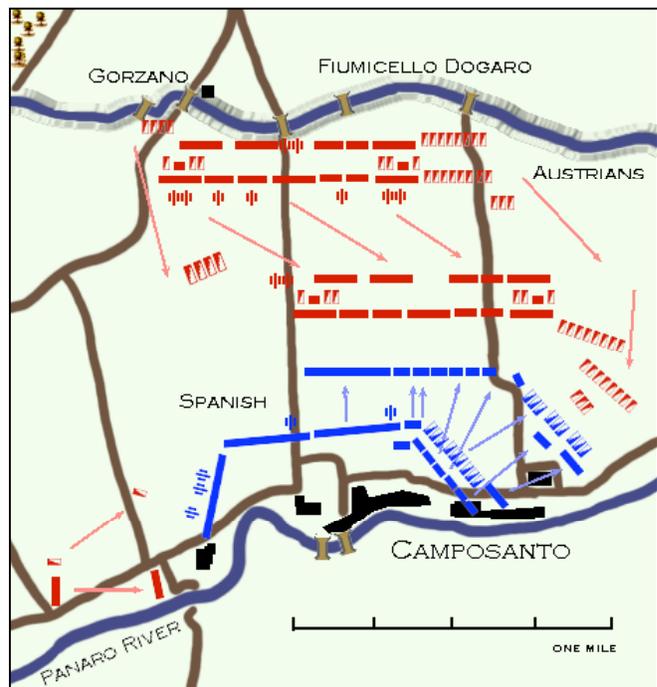
At some point, the Austrian artillery opened up. Initially, the heavies from Mirandola did the talking, but von Traun's field pieces soon had their say. By 4:30 in the afternoon, both sides were close enough for muskets. Galled by artillery fire, the Spanish charged with the bayonet, driving back the Austrian infantry on its exposed right flank. D'Aspremont brought up one of his Piedmontese regiments and stabilised things, but both he and his second in command were wounded, d'Aspremont mortally so. Von Traun was everywhere in evidence, having two horses shot out from under him.

By 6pm darkness had fallen and both sides took a breather. De Gages only had 4 battalions in his reserve, and his left was still pinned. At 7pm, the Piedmontese general, the Baron Leutrum, later famous for his defence of Cuneo, led an attack by 4 Sabaudian battalions from the second line, supported by 3 Austrian battalions. Capturing an entire Spanish battalion near the pond (possibly the isolated one), they forced the rest back to their start line. The brigadier commanding the Walloon Guards led 3 of his battalions against the Austrian right but was recalled by de Gages: wrongly, for de Gages now ordered 2 of the Castile battalions to help them. In the darkness, the Castilians mistook the Walloons for Austrians. 200 men were killed before order was restored.

[Karl Sigismund Frederick Willeim Leutrum. Born Karlhausen, Baden, 1692, died Cuneo (as the city governor) 1755. Probably the best Piedmontese commander of the 18th Century.]

After failing in an attempt to storm the Spanish fieldworks, von Traun ordered a withdrawal back to the near side of the canal. He fully intended to renew the attack next day, but by then de Gages was gone. The Spanish quietly began crossing the Panaro at 3am on the 9th; by dawn there were only a few mountain guns to be moved across. De Gages' men reached Bologna on the 10th.

The Battle of Campo Santo cost the Spanish 3,464 men (23%) and the Allies 1,751 (14%). This was the bloodiest battle of the war to date, and seemed even more so from the small numbers involved. Both sides claimed victory. The Austrians, with the better case, because they had repulsed the enemy and were ready to go a second round, the Spanish because they had retained the field at the end of the day.



Finishing Touches

Both de Gages and von Traun were fêted by their respective governments. De Gages was made Captain-General, while Major-General de Torres, who had led the cavalry that routed the Berlichingen Cuirassiers, was created *Marqués de Campo Santo*; most of the other general officers were promoted.

Von Traun did not immediately pursue, not entering Bologna until March 26th. The only unwounded Piedmontese general, Cinzano, told him his own men had explicit orders not to enter Papal territory. Too weak to start an offensive, the Austrians returned to winter quarters on the 12th of February. The Spanish had trouble enough. They had already eaten up the district, and now suffered from a pestilence that put their commanding general in his sick bed. Ordered to attack (this phrase will become monotonous), de Gages asked to be posted to another command.

Von Traun was reinforced. Technically not active, he sent his cavalry to forage in Ferrara, and began to edge around the Spanish flank. De Gages, like de Montemar before him, feared the Royal Navy would cut his supply lines or land troops in his rear. Down to 6,000 effectives, he ordered a gradual withdrawal to Rimini on the 26th of March.

This battle set back the Spanish drive into Lombardy by a whole year, and because of that fact, also sealed the defeat of the "simultaneous" Franco-Spanish Alpine offensive before it had even begun. Ironically, the campaign did have one beneficial effect for the Spanish. King Louis' guilt at failing to support his uncle was to lead to greater French participation.

[Von Traun's actions at Campo Santo have been compared to Frederick's at Kolin, perhaps with good reason. Recalled from Italy to Germany in 1744, von Traun was charged with the defence of Bohemia. The Prussians lost the campaign and suffered 30,000 losses without fighting a battle; Frederick later termed von Traun his "tutor" in the art of war.]

HANNIBAL REDUX

“The King of Sardinia usually retires before our Generalissimo, the Infant. As he did at Montmélian, so he is doing at Castello di Ponte.”

De la Miña to Philip V, Varaita Gorge, October 7th, 1743.

In May of 1743, the French again approached Charles Emmanuel on the subject of an alliance. The King of Sardinia’s situation was not of the best. His army was in bad shape, and the Austrians, soon to be cock-a-hoop over the conquest of Bavaria and the defeat of the French at Dettingen, were not disposed to concede the territory he desired – they said they didn’t want to transfer property to someone who could not retain what he already had. The King made it clear to Versailles that he was still talking to Vienna, but if the former could, in the event of a combined victory, award him all of Milan and part of Piacenza, then he was interested. The Spanish would, of course, return Savoy to him.

This was all so much bluff. The Bourbons were far too powerful a combination to yoke oneself to and expect to remain free. Hence the dismay in Turin when Louis XV agreed to all the Piedmontese demands – even agreed to twist Madrid’s arm. D’Ormea, the King’s chief minister, was hard put to find excuses for delay. He asked for more: France to replace the British subsidy, and Spain to complete payments owed from the last war. The Bourbons agreed to everything. On the 22nd of August, the papers were ready to sign.

Charles Emmanuel, negotiating with Austria through the good offices of King George of England, asked for a last delay as a favour to King George, “who had done so much for him”, then told Villettes, the British minister at Turin, that if Austria did not seal the deal in the time it took for a courier to travel to Worms and back (where the Austro-Piedmontese talks were taking place), he would be forced to ally with France. The Austrians signed.

The Treaty of Worms (September 13th) lay between Austria, Piedmont-Sardinia, and Britain. Charles Emmanuel gave up his full claims on Milan and guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, immediately gaining some Milanese borderlands in compensation, plus the old Imperial rights to the Genoese port of Finale (an unwelcome addition, as it put Piedmont and Genoa at loggerheads). The Austrians were to send 30,000 men to Italy as soon as conditions allowed, and Charles Emmanuel was to field 40,000 men. Britain agreed to handle the naval angle and increased Charles Emmanuel’s subsidy to £200,000. The King of Sardinia had pulled off a major coup, delaying the Bourbons for an entire summer, and being paid by the Austrians for something he would have had to do anyway!

[Some sources indicate that the Piedmontese actually asked for Finale, but it would appear as an extra demand, intended to be dropped during negotiations.]

[The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carteret, also hoped to bring Don Carlos of Naples into the agreement (with concessions from Austria), but though he remained passive, he was too deeply rooted in the Bourbon Camp. And Austria, wanting to conquer Naples, wasn’t about to give Don C. concessions anyway.]

The French were annoyed, but not unduly surprised. The Spanish attitude was “we told you so”. In September, the Spanish declared war on Piedmont, and the French followed suit on October 25th, with the signing of the Treaty of

Fontainebleau (also called the Second Family Compact, or Second *Escorial*) – the answer to the Treaty of Worms.

Louis XV realised he and the Spanish must form closer ties. The situation called for (and the King’s new ministerial team insisted on) greater commitment to the war. The prime mover in the ensuing negotiations was the Marquis de Maurepas, Minister of Marine. Given his office, it is not surprising that he saw Britain as the key enemy player. He was also very friendly with the Spanish Ambassador, Campo Florida – to the detriment of French policy and Louis XV’s best interests, in fact.

Under de Maurepas’ oversight, the French agreed to every one of Spain’s demands, with the important exceptions of awarding Savoy to the *Infante* (Charles Emmanuel would have had to be compensated elsewhere) and warring for Tuscany (likewise because the French would have to give back Lorraine). The Treaty of Fontainebleau was a diplomatic victory for Spain, but a major defeat for France, now yanked into an unnecessary war in Italy. But Louis XV, placing family above self-interest, did not care.

[The idea that one could take a territory by force and just keep it was simply not a part of the 18th Century mindset – Elisabeth Farnese would have liked to, but even she bowed to the political mores of the day. Frederick of Prussia’s land grab was, for propaganda purposes at least, in compensation for not receiving certain lands within the Empire to which he had a legitimate claim – even so, his outrageous behaviour led to the Seven Years War.]

Under the Second Family Compact, France had to declare war on Austria and Britain, no longer acting as an auxiliary of Bavaria (now crushed by Austria anyway) or Spain. The treaty’s provisions dealt with all the active theatres, but in the Mediterranean, France was committed to helping Spain regain Milan, Parma, and Piacenza, Gibraltar, and Minorca. Don Carlos’ Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was guaranteed its existence, though it would remain neutral (sort of). The King of Sardinia would be required (after his defeat, or through negotiation) to return the key fortresses of Fenestrelle and Exilles to French control.

[Fenestrelle and Exilles commanded the most direct routes to Turin from France.]

In practical terms, France would commit 35 battalions, 30 squadrons, plus artillery (roughly 1/5th of that branch’s total establishment). For his part, Philip V agreed to maintain 48 battalions and 38 squadrons on the Riviera Front. France was also committed to a (originally) diversionary campaign in the Low Countries, an attempt to topple the Georgian regime in England, and a great naval effort – enough to tax the even the greatest power in Europe.

On to Lombardy!

Elisabeth Farnese had, as usual, sent a stream of letters to de la Miña demanding an offensive from the west against Lombardy, with or without Piedmontese acquiescence. The army could go around via Switzerland. Nothing could be simpler. Except that the Swiss were prepared to meet any violation of their territory by force. De la Miña’s attitude was also unhelpful: his army was not fit for operations without massive reinforcement. So, more troops were dispatched from Spain, although “extreme measures” had to be used to find enough bodies. De la Miña, typically, asked for even more. In any case the question of an offensive had to wait on the weather. The passes did not open before the end of June.

Assisted by a French staff officer born in the region, Bourcet by name, and expecting some 14 battalions of French, plus 24 heavy guns, de la Miña was confident of success. The main question was

Charles Emmanuel (1701-1773)



“The new king of Sardinia... was as brave and statesmanlike and much more virtuous than his father. Although lacking the genius of Victor Amadeus, he had a sure judgement and a sound tact. He was an accomplished soldier; his policy, at once profound and wise, was based on straightforwardness.” – Beaucaire.

Born at Turin, his maternal grandparents were Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, and Henrietta Stuart (through her his House has a claim to the Stuart throne). The second son of Victor Amadeus, Charles was a sickly child, growing up to be short, slender, and ungainly. When his brother died in 1714, his father began to take an interest in him. But the relationship was not happy. He was treated severely, forced to study mathematics and the military sciences at the expense of the literary studies he would have preferred. He was taught to ride and hunt well, and given duties like the inspection of fortresses, administrative and financial tasks, and was present in council, after which his father would explain his true policies (and why he should not divulge them to anyone).

In 1730 his father abdicated in his favour, then tried to resume the throne the next year. Encouraged by his ministers, Charles had his father arrested and imprisoned for life.

Married in 1722, but his wife soon died. Remarried shortly after to Polyxena of Hesse-Rheinfels, to whom he became deeply attached.

Fought in the War of the Polish Succession, as the commander of all Bourbon forces in northern Italy. Defeated an Austrian army at Guastalla (1734).

Charles Emmanuel III has been labeled the Italian Frederick. Not only were they rulers of moderate-sized states that did extremely well out of the war, but even their upbringing was similar. Further, both their descendants were extravagant and incapable. Both also made costly mistakes in their early campaigns. Frederick, however, was a gambler and a bully, whereas Charles was always polite, but opaque and calculating.

the choice of pass. The Spanish were in Savoy, but the two passes into Piedmont from there – the Little St. Bernard and Mont Cenis – were well guarded and impracticable for artillery, which were essential for taking the fortifications on the enemy's side of the border. So the army marched south into the Dauphiné – to Briançon. Here the passes were higher and the snows took longer to melt, but distances to Turin were shorter.

Again there was a choice of two passes: the Varaita valley to the north or the Stura to the south. De la Miña and Bourcet decided on the former. The Bourbons were to advance in two columns, 33 Spanish battalions under de la Miña and the *Infante*, from Briançon to Molines, and 29 Battalions (15 Spanish, 14 French) from La Bessée to Guillestre, and then to La Chalp, beyond Molines. In all, 30,000 men. The cavalry and the heavy artillery were left behind after all. The first goal was to enter the basin of Chianale, then force a passage through the Varaita Gorge to the lower courses of the Varaita. From here, the valley would take them, via Casteldelfino and Sampeyre, to a point between Cuneo and Saluzzo, south of Turin.

[The French were at this point, still acting as auxiliaries to the Spanish, as France had not yet declared war on Piedmont.]

The offensive began on the 24th of September. The initial marches were completed by September 28th. On October 2nd, both columns marched six hours to the French side of the Cols d'Agnel and St. Veran (both over 9,000 feet). A light snow was

falling on the cols, and there was a bitter cold. In front, bands of the local peasantry, the *Vaudois*, harassed them.

October 3rd was spent driving off the *Vaudois*. On the 4th, the advance continued, down to Chianale. While the army assembled on the 5th, de la Miña went on a reconnaissance. Chianale lies in a fairly large bowl of land, on the upper reaches of the Varaita. Most of the ridges surrounding it are between 8-10,000 feet high. About 9 km downstream, at the junction of the Varaita and, to the south, the Bellino valley, lies the town of Casteldelfino. Wedged between the valleys is the great ridge of Pietralunga, a 3-mile long hog's-back topping 9,000 feet, with Monte Cavallo looming above the town at its eastern end. A little further upstream on the Varaita, another tributary, the Vallante, runs down from Monte Viso (12,000 feet) to the northeast. This valley, running perpendicular to the Varaita, made an excellent defensive position. In the “V” north of the confluence stands a long ridge, running parallel to the Vallante, called Tre Chiosi (9,500 feet). The slopes of this edifice are reasonably gentle when approached from Chianale, but drop steeply to the Vallante. At the present time, a reservoir on the Varaita fills the gap between Pietralunga and Tre Chiosi, but in the 1700's there was a gorge, which was also the only road out of the Chianale basin.

Charles Emmanuel had had plenty of time to dig in. He had 15,000 men covering both the Bellino and Varaita valleys (the enemy could have crossed to the Bellino by a track halfway down from Chianale). On the Bellino, troops held the hamlet of Ribierra, with trenches up both Monte Cavallo and the southern slopes of the valley at the Col Biacocca. But the main position was on the Vallante. The length of the eastern slope, from the Varaita to Monte Viso, was entrenched. Additional fieldworks covered the gorge of the Varaita, up and along Pietralunga back to Monte Cavallo, on which there was a redoubt. An advanced post, with a few guns, was sited at the ruins of Castello di Ponte, on the east bank of the Vallante, just north of the confluence. Strict orders had been given for the troops to remain concealed, but when ordered, to fire independently, and aim low.

De la Miña's reconnaissance was hampered by mist, but eventually the sun came out, long enough for him to observe the castle and determine to attack it. It did not look formidable. Although the locals told him the Piedmontese were dug in on the slopes behind, the fact seems not to have registered.

Battle on the Varaita – October 7th-10th 1743

After moving his army in closer, and making more observations, de la Miña began his assault on the 7th, with his army in 5 independent columns. The first was to clear Pietralunga, and the second Monte Cavallo behind it, thus turning the flank of the defenders in the gorge. The third and fourth columns were to sweep across Tre Chiosi's easy slopes, with one column descending to attack the castle, and the other, higher up, to direct plunging fire on the same target. The last column was to swing wide to a saddle beyond the high point of Tre Chiosi, and come down the Vallante.

The Bourbons kept up the attack all day, mainly with musketry, which had no effect. A dozen or so field pieces bombarded the castle, also without result. At dusk, when the third column put in its attack, they found the place empty. The column to the north sent word at the end of the day that they were finding it hard going on the icy ground, but would be able to attack in the morning. Believing the enemy had retreated, de la Miña sent off a dispatch claiming victory, and a written order for the fifth column to cancel its intended movement and rejoin the main body.

The next day (8th October), the marshal discovered his mistake. Once again he ordered an attack but the troops could make no headway. For the most part they were taking casualties without even seeing the enemy. Then, late in the afternoon, the fifth column was observed descending the Vallante. Around 4pm, the officer commanding it had received de la Miña's order to return. At that time, his men were opposite the upper end of the Piedmontese entrenchments. No movement was visible, and this fact, along with his instructions, led the officer to believe the trenches were empty. He and his men shouldered arms and proceeded down the track on the west bank with drums beating. The Piedmontese, hidden in the trench line on the opposite slope – above the Bourbons – were astonished for a moment. Then they all stood up and blazed away. The Spanish ran. They could do nothing else. Initial reports indicated that 500 men had been lost, but most turned out to be stragglers who had climbed Tre Chiosi to get away.

That night, de la Miña held a council of war. It was decided, for the record, that the enemy's position was impregnable, and that if they were not careful, the troops on Pietralunga might move further up the ridge and cut off the army's retreat. The weather was also turning sour. The marshal made a show of ordering a renewed assault on Pietralunga (the only idea, other than retreat, that found any favour), but after a day of preparation, in the nick of time new orders came from Madrid. The army was to return to Savoy.

The retreat began on the 10th of October. The Piedmontese bombarded the columns at long range, a mist descended, and chaos reigned. The defenders did not pursue; even so, a great many French and Spanish found the means to desert. What was left of the army had great difficulty carting its sick and wounded over the cols behind Chianale – a 4,000-foot climb. The artillery and baggage trains were abandoned. It took a week for the army to reach the first of its cantonments. The Spanish, who had contributed the bulk of the 30,000-man army, were down to 14,412 – including the sick – meaning a 2-3 week campaign had cost something like 10,000 casualties. Charles Emmanuel lost exactly 30 men killed and 174 wounded.

The fallout from this affair was both good and bad, but probably more bad than good in the long run. De la Miña kept his job, because he had attacked when told to do so. It was put about, both then and later, that he had ordered the offensive knowing it would fail, just to please the Queen of Spain. Also on the plus side, Louis XV was once again embarrassed at the lack of support he had offered his uncle, and vowed to increase the level of French aid. On the debit side, besides the casualties, and the general sense of being worsted, the French Army was fed up, not only with de la Miña, but the Spanish war machine in general. This rancour remained for the rest of the war, and was to increase as time went on.

ROMAN HOLIDAY

"The conquest [of Naples] has become essential to the queen, if she really wishes to keep a foot in Italy"

Grand Duke Francis Stephen to Prinz von Lobkowitz

"The heat begins to affect the Germans, who are said to sicken apace"

British envoy's report

Reconquering Naples was a dream of Maria Theresa's that now seemed likely of fulfilment. Britain, after persuading her to yield territory to Prussia and Piedmont, had an obligation to help. Irritatingly, it was her own people who made difficulties. After de Gages' retreat to Rimini in March of 1743, the Queen of Hungary expected von Traun and Charles Emmanuel to pursue him. They did not. The King of Sardinia saw his own realm under threat, and anyway, had told the Pope he would not cross the Panaro. Von Traun sided with the King. Von Traun further explained that before he could act he needed more men, and more money to pay them.

The marshal had proven himself, and the Queen liked him, but her advisors suggested a change of command, sending von Traun to Germany (to replace the recently deceased von Khevenhüller) and installing *Prinz* von Lobkowitz. Pleasure loving, and irascible almost to the point of insanity, von Lobkowitz had no skill, but he had connections; he was also second in command to Maria Theresa's brother-in-law, *Prinz* Karl von Lotharingen, who detested him and wanted him out of Germany.

[The most notable of Maria Theresa's ministers was her Counsellor, von Bartenstein, an appointee of her father's, who though able enough in an "old school" way, tended to exert a pernicious influence on Habsburg policy and promoted the interests of his friends, regardless of their ability.]

In July 1743, von Traun, ordered to resume the offensive without having received the resources he required, asked to be relieved. His wish was granted. *Feldmarshal* von Lobkowitz relieved von Traun in September.

[The Army of Italy was supposed to obtain its finances and sustenance from Lombardy, a rich region, but one heavily depleted from recent conflicts.]

Since even the new commander-in-chief was unable to obtain Piedmontese help (their army was fighting in the Varaita), and since the season was advanced, little was done in 1743. With the Spanish at Pesaro and the Austrians now at Rimini, both sides went into winter quarters until March 1744.

[The armies had eaten up the Bolognese, but at Rimini, von Lobkowitz could receive shipments from Trieste, or from the Royal Navy.]

For the campaigning season of 1744, the Bourbons planned a drive into the County of Nice, followed by a sea move that would unite the Spanish Army in Italy. This led to the naval engagement called the Battle of Toulon (February 19th 1744). The combined Bourbon Fleet (not as powerful as the name suggests) sortied from Toulon in an attempt to drive away the blockading British Fleet, in preparation for seizing the port of Villefranche, from whence the Spanish could sail to Italy.

Although mismanaged by the British (resulting in the court-martial of the commanding admiral, Mathews, and his second in command), the battle had the effect of driving the French back into Toulon, where they remained. The Spanish escaped home after being bottled up for two years, but the attempt to unite the Spanish Army by sea was abandoned, and thinking in the Bourbon Camp turned to a new attempt on the Alps.

[Coupled with a French naval disaster in The Channel around the same time, Toulon did much to secure the seas for Britain.]

The Velletri Campaign

Although the Royal Navy had removed the threat of a reinforced Spanish army in Italy, in doing so, it had rendered itself unavailable for the coming offensive against Naples. And, Charles Emmanuel still had his hands full in the west. However, von Lobkowitz did receive reinforcements – 7,000 men – giving him 20,000 to de Gages 13,000. As Governor of the Italian Duchies he was also in a position to obtain the necessary money and supplies without argument.

At Pesaro, though well fortified, de Gages was unable to increase his strength, since Don Carlos at Naples refused to break his neutrality (in this he was seconded by his mother). To cover his future actions, de Gages obtained written opinions from all his generals. Most agreed that the Austrians were strong enough to simultaneously pin them in front and flank them. Therefore, de Gages prepared to withdraw upon the first stirrings of von Lobkowitz, which occurred in March of 1744.

The Spanish did 105 miles in 11 days, down the Adriatic coast to Atri, in Neapolitan territory, losing 25%-30% of their army to stragglers. Von Lobkowitz followed slowly, though his advance guard commander, General Ulysses von Browne, counselled vigour, and proceeded to demonstrate what vigour meant with the forces under his command. The Austrians stopped at Fermo. Here, von Lobkowitz sent to Vienna for money and new orders. He was also living in hope of aid from the Royal Navy, beyond the 2-3 ships they had permanently stationed in the Adriatic, and did not want to drive the Bourbons inland.

Don Carlos of Naples had been spooked by de Gages' rapid retreat. He was fearful that an Austrian invasion of his territories, even if only to engage the Spanish, would spark an uprising against his House. Having Spanish troops on his land was already a violation of his neutrality. And if he did nothing, his supporters might rise against him in disgust.

The Neapolitan King called up all the troops he could, and assembled them at Capua, placing detachments at Cassino and on the Tronto River, his northeastern boundary (these forces, by their very presence, screened de Gages' army from attack – another implicit violation of neutrality).

On April 1st the Neapolitan main force was concentrated at Castel di Sangro. Learning that von Lobkowitz was, after all, going to invade, and would do so on the west, Don Carlos shifted his base to Lago Fucino. Here he could adequately support the Spanish, and they, him.

Meanwhile, von Lobkowitz sat at Fermo. He really did not want to involve himself in battle, the technicalities of which were beyond him. On April 21st, he received a chastising letter ordering him to invade Naples. He was told the Neapolitans would rise in his aid. The Austrian envoy at Rome suggested the *Campagna di Roma* as the best location for an army that needed to live off the land.

Screening forces were deployed across the Apennines, and the bulk of the Austrian army marched southwest, via Spoleto, Civita Castellana (May 18th), and Monte Rotondo. Von Lobkowitz, his troops and subordinate commanders already demoralised by his indecisive character, took his time about it. At Monte Rotondo he left the army for a week to visit the Pope. Soon officers and men were making regular pilgrimages to the

Eternal City – though not so much to the Vatican. At Vienna, Maria Theresa's chief adviser, von Bartenstein, who had suggested von Lobkowitz to her, moaned, "time lost, everything lost".

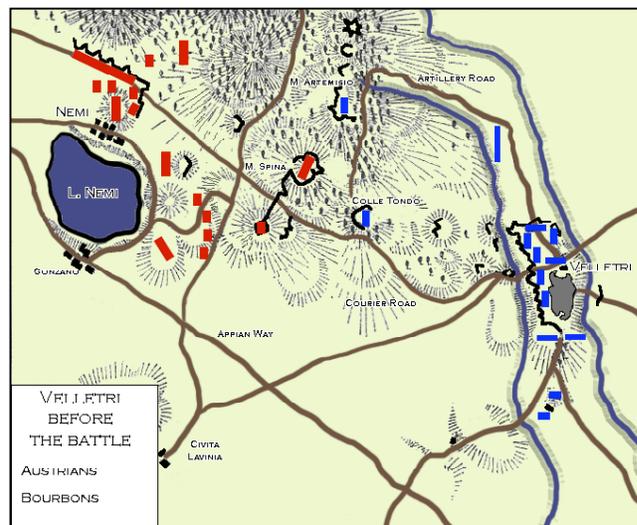
Don Carlos used the delay to his advantage, concentrating his army at Cassino before marching north. South of Rome, there were three routes into his kingdom: along the north edge of the Alban Hills and round by Valmontone and Anagi (this was the route the King was on); or, by crossing the Alban Hills to Velletri, either taking the *Via Appia* by the Pontine Marshes or the "Courier Road" that skirted the Apennines. Thus the best place for the Bourbon army to be was on the Alban Hills, where it could block or dominate all three routes.

By the time the Austrians, once again in motion, reached Frascati, they were engaged in cavalry skirmishes with the Spanish, who were marching across the waist of the peninsula to join Don Carlos. De Gages' occupied Velletri – but not the Alban Hills – ahead of the Austrians and waited for his ally. On June 2nd, the Austrians climbed Monte Artemisio, overlooking Velletri from the north. They had won the race for the high ground.

Somehow, von Lobkowitz contrived to gain no advantage from the fact. He had 14,000 foot and 3,000 horse against 25,000 Bourbons. (But everyone discounted the Neapolitans, leaving, in practical terms, 12,000 Spanish). The Austrians held the high ground, and had a choice of routes off it. They did not have the raw manpower to pin the Bourbons and outflank them (perhaps the Neapolitan numbers had some use after all), but they could attack. Instead, von Lobkowitz sat on the Alban Hills for two weeks, observing. De Gages fortified his position.

At dawn on June 17th, the Spanish made a surprise attack, gaining a lodgement on Monte Artemisio and Mont Spina to its west (the right of the Austrian position). The action serves as an example of the state the Austrian army had lapsed into. 5,000 Spanish attacked a line of outposts whose sentries were all asleep, and whose commander was visiting a local winery. 1,000 Austrians were killed or captured. This was the First Battle of Velletri.

Unfortunately, de Gages' recalled his men from pursuit, allowing the Austrians to counterattack and retake Mont Spina. Both sides entrenched on the ridge. For the next few weeks the contenders waged a war of outposts. The Bourbons, bringing up a battery of heavy guns from Naples, had the best of the exchanges, but the Austrians were more comfortable, since they had easy access to the society and pleasure palaces of Rome.



It appeared to de Gages that his opponent was thwarted, and would have to retire. But von Lobkowitz proved to be as dilatory in retreat as in advance. At a long distance from his base in Lombardy, he still hoped to winkle the Bourbons out of their position by using his superiority in cavalry to raid their supply convoys and cut their water supply. And he still had hopes of an insurrection.

A band of irregulars under a Colonel Soro was sent into the Abruzzi (on the Adriatic side of the Apennines) with orders to proclaim Maria Theresa Queen of Naples. In this Soro had some success, since the enemy had no troops in the Abruzzi. However, the Austrians did not support him. Von Lobkowitz was unconvinced as to the loyalty of the local nobility; more importantly, he did not want to detach the regulars that would have convinced the locals the Austrians were in earnest. By the end of July the rising had been suppressed.

Also in July, the Austrians received some aid from the Royal Navy when Commodore Long and 7 ships arrived off the Tiber. The Austrians asked for an amphibious landing behind the enemy. 2,000-2,500 men under General von Browne were to participate. Possible targets were Naples and Gaeta.

But, von Lobkowitz then received a request for aid from Charles Emmanuel. The Austrian commander decided he had better do some commanding, before he was ordered to give up any of his precious men. He dropped the amphibious project, asking instead for some guns from the squadron, and planned a direct attack.

Second Battle of Velletri: August 11th 1744

This was to be no conventional battle. Von Lobkowitz had just heard that Don Carlos was visiting the Front. He aimed at nothing less than the kidnapping of the King of Naples, his companion the Duke of Modena, and hopefully de Gages too.

The town of Velletri, where the Emperor Caesar Augustus was born, is situated on a rise of ground between two ravines, lying east and west of the town. Three-quarters of the Bourbon Army was in a fortified camp north of the town, with 4-5 battalions regularly rotating through the lines on Monte Artemisio. The remainder of the army, mainly cavalry, occupied camps to the south – one to the southwest and one to the southeast. The command element, stores, etc. were in the town itself, which was also walled. Between the northern camp and the town lay a monastery, which had been turned into a redoubt.

These defences meant that an open assault in daylight would be very bloody. Stealth was needed. The Austrians, led by the intrepid von Browne, were to approach by night, rush the town, and leave as soon as they had made the snatch. But which side to enter from? East and west were impracticable thanks to the ravines. Significantly, though the streams in the ravines were bridged, no roads led directly into the town from those directions. The northern side was too strong, especially with a small party, and too close to Monte Artemisio for a column to approach unobserved, even though the Napolispans were scandalously lax in security. It would have to be the south.

Unfortunately, the primary target was residing at the Ginetti Palace on the north side of town, and von Browne had no helicopters. But a deserter was found who could lead them by a wide circuit to the southern gate. The trick would be to go the length of the town and back without losing unit cohesion. For this task the cavalry would be invaluable.

[Cavalry was often used in urban combat in order to move quickly through the streets and seize key intersections and strong points; mounted men, even in such circumstances, were at a great advantage in close combat. However, there was always a risk that a unit would be cut off or caught in a dead end.]

Von Browne was given 4,500 foot and 1,500 horse to do the job. Two other, similarly sized columns were to demonstrate against the positions on Monte Artemisio and against the northern camp. They might get lucky and actually take one or the other. 3-4,000 men remained in reserve to the north of Monte Artemisio.

Initially, all went well. Von Browne's column approached undetected in the night of the 10th, and easily dispersed the troops guarding the southern gate. His men forced their way into the town and began the hunt, meeting opposition not from enemy troops, but an annoyed citizenry that fired on them from rooftops and windows. Then the plan unravelled. Given license to break down doors, the Austrians began to plunder.

[A couple of humorous incidents have been recorded. In one, a grenadier (or possibly a Croat), eager to begin the plundering bit of the operation, drank off an entire bottle of black ink. In another, a band of Croats, instructed to "bring back the French envoy's papers" came back with a stack of blank sheets – they had thrown away the ones with writing on them because they had been used!]

Aroused just in time, Don Carlos and the Duke of Modena (staying at the nearby Toruzzi Palace) managed to flee to the main camp in their nightshirts, where the King began to organise a counterattack. De Gages was away inspecting the defences on Monte Artemisio, but returned on hearing the sounds of battle from the town.

Von Browne's plan had called for the Austrian cavalry to ride through the town and seal off the north gate against an enemy approach. But most of the horse were lost somewhere in the rear, and the small parties that made it all the way to the end of the town were insufficient. They were thrown back.

De Gages sent some of his own forces on a sweep outside the town (to the west) in order to link up with the southern camps and cut off the enemy's escape. Von Browne ordered a timely retreat, which was executed successfully – with the losses to be expected from a disordered rabble. The whole affair was over by 9am on the 11th.

On the plus side, the Austrians had captured 87 officers and 500 men, caused a further loss of 3,500 men, and utterly disorganised the Bourbon defences. On the debit side, the primary goal of the operation was not attained. Also, Monte Artemisio remained in enemy hands. The commander of the column sent against the camp was able to storm it from the flank, but made no progress. Don Carlos remained free, the Austrians had also lost heavily (2,000 men), and a great opportunity had been lost. If von Lobkowitz had sent reinforcements (which von Browne asked for); if the commander of the third column had pressed his attack on the north camp instead of turning aside; or even if the attack on Monte Artemisio had been reinforced, the Bourbons would almost certainly have been routed from their position.

Velletri had been von Lobkowitz's last chance. In mid-August, 3,000 Spanish additional troops arrived via blockade-runners and the balance of force turned against him. Charles Emmanuel was in difficulties and needed the remaining troops in Lombardy (3,000 Austrians). And on the 15th of the month the Second Silesian War began. There would be no more men from Germany.

In any case, the day Frederick of Prussia invaded Bohemia, von Lobkowitz received definite orders to – assuming he could not win a decisive victory – send 10,000 men to cover Tuscany, and the rest to help Charles Emmanuel.

[The Austrians, with 17,000 men in June, reinforced by 5,000 during the campaign, now had only 11,000; Charles Emmanuel was not going to get very much.]

Outnumbered, the Austrians had to be very careful in breaking contact, but were successful. The baggage, the infirm, and the artillery were first sent away on Commodore Long's ships. Von Lobkowitz faked an attack on the 1st of November (fortuitously instigated through a "recreational" attempt by a Bourbon dinner party to capture an Austrian outpost) and by the afternoon was 11 miles away. The army retreated by a bridge of boats over the Tiber, which was then destroyed on the 3rd without any move by the Bourbons. The hardest part of the operation proved to be saying goodbye to the Roman ladies.

No longer under threat, Don Carlos returned to Naples, leaving de Gages with 12,000 Spanish and 6,000 Neapolitans (probably regiments that were still in Spanish pay) to pursue. Apprised of a Piedmontese victory at the critical siege of Cuneo, von Lobkowitz abandoned hasty plans to rush north, and marched instead to Viterbo, to cover Tuscany. The Austrians made Ronciglione on the 6th of November, with the Spanish at Monterosi in the valley below them on the 7th. The latter's position was weak, and von Browne wanted to attack, but was outvoted. The Austrians arrived at Viterbo on the 9th. De Gages decided to retrace his path and swing round through Spoleto and Foligno to cut the enemy off, but delayed his march for such a long time that the move became pointless. He made it anyway – burning out his army by rushing 43 miles in three days to make up for lost time.

This gave von Lobkowitz the opportunity to withdraw further, screened by Colonel Soro's irregulars on his southeastern flank. On the 17th and 18th Soro repulsed Spanish attacks at Nocera. Summoned to surrender when faced with overwhelming force, he refused. His men, some of whom were Spanish deserters, had committed atrocities, and he, a Catalan, was hated by the Spanish. On the 19th, de Gages, having lost 200 men, decided to burn Soro out. Rather than see the inhabitants of the town butchered, Soro surrendered. Most of his 800 men, those that did not die on the march, were sent to the galleys. Von Lobkowitz, who had done nothing to help his subordinate, got clean away (he also said Soro's fate was the man's own fault – the true aristocratic perspective).

The campaign was winding down. On the 22nd of November, de Gages entrenched at Assisi, facing Perugia. The Austrians covered Gubbio for a day then marched over the hills – 65 miles in six days – to Fano on the 28th. De Gages probed to Perugia, and then went into quarters around Orvieto. Von Lobkowitz put his men behind the Metauro for December, then moved them to better quarters around Faenza, and set outposts stretching from there to the sea at Cesenatico (covering the shipment of supplies up the Po).

[On the prospects of a Neapolitan rising. Don Carlos won the Kingdom of Naples only in 1734. Prior to that it had been ruled by the Habsburgs (with a short Republican interregnum) for two centuries – by the Austrian House since 1707. The region was one of the most backward in Europe, kept so deliberately. Taxation fell on the "middle classes" of the towns exclusively; the clergy and large landowners were all-powerful. Don Carlos had been trying to win support by making changes. As might be expected, the net effect was that those most oppressed under the old administration were keen to support him but the ruling classes and their serfs pined for the old days. After Commodore Martin's visit, Don Carlos lost credibility, but the battle of Velletri, which also demonstrated the unexpected prowess of his army, more than restored it. If Don Carlos had been captured, he would have

probably lost all chance of ruling a stable kingdom after the war, but instead, his dynasty was cemented in place.]

A FAMILY AFFAIR

"The King of France is master of his own troops. But there is nothing to prevent us sending on our troops and risking everything rather than expose de Gages' army to certain ruin."

Elisabeth Farnese to the French Ambassador

While von Lobkowitz was gallivanting about southern Italy, Charles Emmanuel had been having a rather interesting time himself. As mentioned earlier, Bourbon operations this year had the intent of capturing Villefranche, following which the rest of the Spanish expeditionary force would take ship to Italy. This plan fell through with the loss of the Battle of Toulon, but operations against the County of Nice would still be a helpful prelude to an attack on Piedmont. And the Spanish believed in the practicality of the Riviera. The French did not, but the army had to do something until the passes opened in late June.

Conquering the County of Nice would also increase the pressure on Charles Emmanuel by the loss of yet another territory, but, though on the wrong side of the Alps and thus hard to support, it afforded rough going and was well protected by the Var river valley. Villefranche itself was a major fortification that could be supported by the Royal Navy. (But if taken, the loss of this handy anchorage would hurt the British).

Command on this front was now split between the Spanish, under de la Miña and (nominally) the *Infante*, and the French Prince de Conti, a young but able general, who had proven himself in Germany. Over the winter, de Conti, de la Miña, and their staffs, concerted their plans. If the naval enterprise should fail (as it did), then an attempt would be made from the Dauphiné against one of the central passes into Piedmont. Taking Nice would permit the use of the Tende Pass, but this route, though it thawed earlier, was very long and winding, and protected by a nasty fortification at Saorgio that would take months of preparation to assault, assuming the road could even be improved enough to bear artillery.

The Spanish still hankered after a direct march to Parma, but the Riviera had no practical road, was guarded by three neutral Genoese fortifications – Ventimiglia, Finale, and Savona – and lay 20 mountainous miles from southern Piedmont. An attack from the Dauphiné on the other hand, was not contingent on a successful occupation of Nice. The ultimate goal was the great fortress of Cuneo, lying at the confluence of the Stura and Gesso rivers. If the Bourbons could hold Cuneo over the winter, it would serve as a springboard for a major offensive in 1745. This would be a difficult operation to pull off, but not impractical.

There were some discordant rumblings. The French, among themselves, agreed not to send any troops to help a Spanish stroll along the Riviera, though they would not prevent the Spanish from acting alone. The Spanish, among themselves, agreed to do all they could to bring the French along on their great eastern drive. De la Miña believed Genoa would side with them once Spanish arms were present in the country. Elisabeth Farnese, acutely aware that one of her sons still had no duchy, while the one that did seemed likely to lose it that summer, hovered over the enterprise like a black cloud. For the moment, however, both sides could agree on the taking of Nice.

By the end of March 1744, the Spanish were assembled at Cagnes and the French at Grasse (with covering forces on the Var, of course). The Spanish were given the right-hand "post of honour" to draw out the fiction that the French (despite having declared war on

Piedmont) were mere auxiliaries. De la Miña had 44 battalions and 137 squadrons, de Conti 36 battalions and 134 squadrons, plus a battalion of artillery. This made 46,000 men in all. Most of the horse was left in Languedoc since the terrain was not suitable for cavalry operations and no exploitation was intended (at least in French minds).

Savoy still contained 3 Spanish battalions, 600 Swiss troops (most likely a regiment originally hired by the Duke of Modena), and a few squadrons of horse. 5 French battalions went to the Dauphiné, and 2 each to Provence and Languedoc, to watch the coasts. There was already a battalion at Monaco (an independent principality, but a French protectorate for the last hundred years). This left 30,000 men: 26 battalions of French and 41 (weaker) battalions of Spanish, plus the guns. Originally, a force was to be landed behind Villefranche at Monaco, but the naval battle off Toulon scotched the idea.

On to Villefranche!

The enemy's dispositions were as follows: 14 battalions (6,000 men) plus 1,000 British marines at Villefranche, under the Marquis de Susa (a natural brother of the King), 6 battalions at Sospel under General Pallavicini (a Genoese), and 3 battalions at Cuneo. The remainder of Charles Emmanuel's army was either defending the central and northern passes, or in reserve on the plains around Turin. Pallavicini was charged with breaking any investment made against Villefranche. Given the nature of the ground, a regular siege was not possible. The place had to be taken by assault.

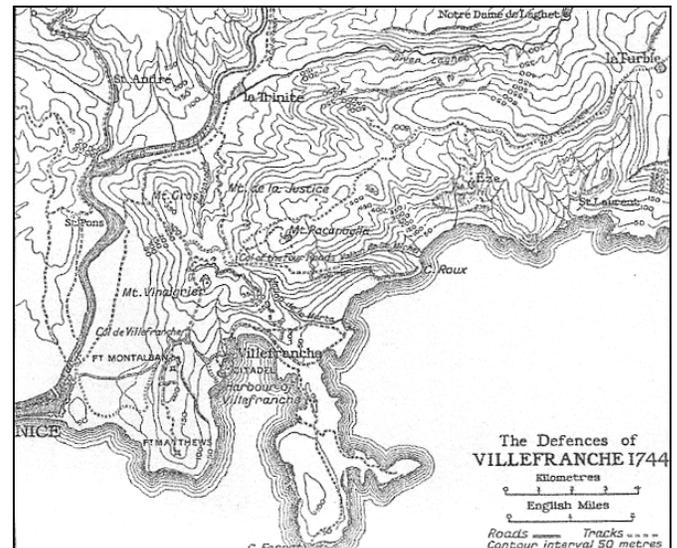
On April 1st, de Conti crossed the Var. Four battalions blocked Pallavicini at Utelle, while the rest crossed at St. Laurent the next day. The town of Nice surrendered without a fight. On the 9th, the leading Spanish general, de Castelar, took 14 battalions around the flank of Villefranche; Pallavicini, fearing he was the intended target, withdrew to Saorgio in the Tende Pass. This allowed the Bourbons to invest Villefranche unmolested by the 13th.

The arrival of the British Fleet raised the question of an early assault to pre-empt any further landings, but this plan was not adopted, and in the end, it made no difference to the outcome of the operation. On the 14th, the attack began. Unfortunately, a storm arose and many were drowned in a flash flood while crossing the Paillon River. The affair was postponed.

Meanwhile, Pallavicini had been replaced by General Della Rocca, who advanced on the 14th, but felt himself too weak to succour the garrison. On the 18th, the British Admiral, Mathews, conferred with de Susa, and arrangements were made to take off the garrison if necessary – and if the winds allowed the British to both enter and leave the harbour safely.

Villefranche was a tough nut. Though not a fortress in and of itself, the hills surrounding it had been entrenched and provided with batteries of guns, and the approaches were covered by interlocking fields of fire. De Conti planned to use 46 battalions in the assault, which was now set for the morning of the 20th. 12 battalions would mask the attack from Della Rocca's interference. The rest were to be formed into 6 columns, plus a reserve. The main attack was to be delivered against a key redoubt called The Snail – a position on Mont Pacanaglia that commanded all the other works. 3 columns were to make an attack from the direction of Nice against the spur that juts into the sea there (one column had a diversionary role), the rest were to attack from northerly directions against the works

surrounding The Snail, and then against the redoubt itself. The diversion began at midnight on the 19th, with the main attack going in at 3am on the 20th.



The diversionary attack in the west was so successful that it captured the ridge between Nice and Villefranche, not to mention 5 Sabaudian battalions and the commandant, de Susa. The general reserve was sent in to reinforce this windfall. One of the other columns on the west, however, lost its way and got mixed up in the main attack; many casualties were suffered as it and two other columns had to sort themselves out under fire. The attack in this sector failed. One of the two easternmost columns, under de Castelar, took The Snail. Unfortunately, de Castelar had no artillery and had to wait for a battery to be sent up. Meanwhile, the defenders, led by their second-in-command, de Cinsan, retook the ridge overlooking Nice.

In the morning, de Conti was writing of the failure of the assault. But at the same time, the defenders, down to 5,000 effectives, were deciding on evacuation. The British brought in 33 transports that day, covered them with 7 warships, and took off most of the garrison, landing them at the Piedmontese enclave of Oneglia. A few defenders remained in the citadel and the fort called Mont Alban, both of which were isolated. These surrendered on the 25th of April (the besiegers had been so disorganised that they had not even noticed the empty trenches until the 22nd).

This ended the operation to conquer Nice, and the Bourbons began to implement phase two of the campaign – their own conceptions of it, that is. Since de Conti and de la Miña could not come to an agreement, the army was billeted and direction was sought from Louis XV and Philip V.

The Genoese town of Ventimiglia was occupied, ostensibly to obtain supplies but actually as part of a Spanish “inch-forward” ploy. The various approaches from Piedmont were also covered, though the passes were not yet open. Late April and early May were spent in inactivity, waiting for a verdict from on high, and in coping with the snowmelt and consequent flooding.

The Stura

At length, de Conti received from Louis what he perceived to be a favourable reply to his own choice of taking Cuneo via the Stura Valley. None too soon, as de la Miña was still edging forward and was now (early June) approaching Oneglia with his advance guard. The Piedmontese did not stand, but retreated overland to Ormea. De Conti was resigned to join the Spanish if necessary, but still carried on with preparations for the central thrust. A war of words now raged between the courts of France and Spain.

Finally, in mid-June, King Louis and his advisors came down on the side of de Conti, though their dispatch suggested the use of the Col de Tende rather than the Stura. De Conti ignored this inadequate bit of political compromise. The King further ordered that, after the taking of Cuneo, de Conti was immediately to assist the Spanish in an invasion of Lombardy. Well that was all right – it was unlikely they would get that far in one campaign anyway. De la Miña read the dispatch on the 16th of June, and on the 17th, began collecting his men for a march into the Dauphiné.

At this date, Charles Emmanuel's army consisted of 55 battalions (2 of which may be ignored as they were in the island of Sardinia). 9 battalions were stationed on the northern and eastern frontiers (these included the garrisons of Piacenza and Modena). 10 battalions were in the valley of the Dora Riparia and the Chisone, and 1 along the upper Po acted as a support base for the *Vaudois* peasantry. 18 battalions were in the Varaita, where the defences had been strengthened even more, and an artillery road built from Ribiera south to Demonte, two valleys away. There were 4 battalions, plus dismounted dragoons and militia, associated with the Maira valley defences. The remaining battalions were in the Stura: 8 at The Barricades – an artificially strengthened choke point – and 3 at Cuneo. Additional parties of militia covered various side valleys and cols. The cavalry was stationed in the plain north of Cuneo. With nearly all his troops in the front line, Charles Emmanuel was setting himself up for a French breakthrough.

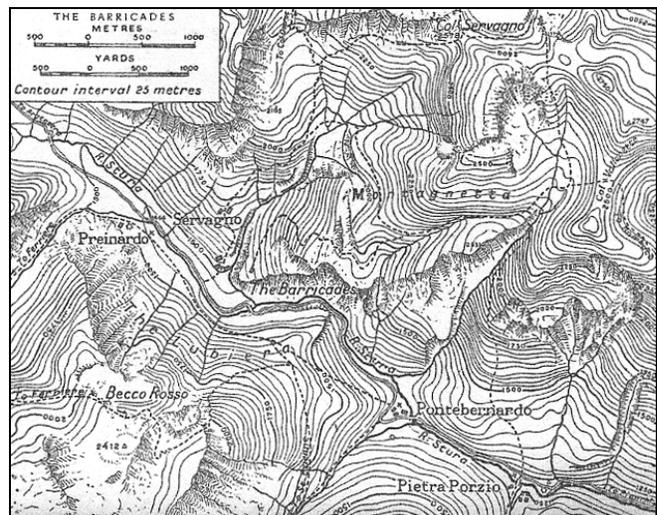
The Bourbons concentrated at Briançon and its environs. The last elements arrived around July 8th, and by July 9th, the offensive had begun. The fortress of Exilles, to the north, was to be approached to give the impression it was the prime target – it was indeed an essential key to an advance via the Dora Riparia. After the Piedmontese had taken the bait, Demonte, on the Stura, would be revealed as the true objective. After Demonte fell, Cuneo would be next. It was hoped Charles Emmanuel would choose to save Exilles, but if he concentrated at Demonte anyway, Exilles might actually fall, and it was a better jumping off point for a subsequent campaign.

De la Miña now fouled things up by forcing the pace. De Conti had shown himself at Bousson to give the impression that the offensive was against Exilles. De la Miña now showed himself and his Spanish on the Stura front. The French were not pleased. To make matters worse, the Spanish HQ was a sieve of secret information. At back of it all was Elisabeth Farnese, who now had the King of France insisting that Cuneo be taken as soon as possible. De Conti and his staff made the best of it – they would demonstrate on the Varaita and then proceed to the Stura.

The staff officer (Bourcet) whose plan in large part this was, had succeeded in placing 9 columns of French and Spanish troops in such a way that although separated in space by many miles and several ridges, they could be concentrated on the Stura at the same time – a classic maxim not usually attributed to 18th Century armies. The deployment marches were short (13.5 miles was the longest) but fairly vertical, requiring frequent rests that had to be properly sequenced. And at all times lateral communications were maintained.

The Bourbons had 33,700 men: 38 Spanish battalions (average 350 men), 32 French battalions (average 550 men), plus 2,000 irregulars, both Spanish and French. The 9 “divisions” or columns varied from 4 to 14 battalions depending on their task and the limitations of their routes. 7,200 men were assigned to the demonstration on the Varaita, 9,800 to the Maira, and 14,650 (with help from the above) to the assault on The Barricades. Most of the artillery was left south of the Tende Pass, where it could be called up for the sieges of Demonte and Cuneo.

On the 15th and 16th of July, the columns that had been destined for Exilles – about 35 battalions – crossed the watershed and threatened to move into the Varaita Valley, successfully pinning a large portion of Charles Emmanuel's army. More columns poised themselves on the edge of the Maira and Stura valleys, and two entered the valley lying to the south of the Stura.



The first obstacle the Bourbons had to overcome on the Stura was The Barricades: a narrow, winding gorge some 1100 yards long, on the middle reaches of the valley. On the south of the gorge, the precipice was 30-40 feet high, on the north 600-800. The road ran on a ledge on the river's southern bank, directly below the cliffs, and crossed the Stura by a bridge at the western end. The Piedmontese had thrown down the bridge, strewn boulders at the entrance to the gorge, dug a trench – with palisade – behind, and erected a parapet with artillery behind that. The gorge bent south around a promontory; on this, several guns had been emplaced. The slopes to the north and south were also entrenched (above the cliff, the high northern slope was practicable for infantry). 8 battalions were assigned to the defence, 4 in the defile and to the south of it, 4 above the northern cliff. Both sides deemed The Barricades unassailable.

However, it could be turned. So, Charles Emmanuel constructed additional defences in the well-used Maira valley to the north. To the south, though, he only deployed parties of militia. Unknown to him, two of the Bourbon columns were to pass The Barricades in

the valley to the south and then cross over the ridge well behind the position.

[There were a number of reasons for this lapse of judgement: the southern route was not considered a good one for a large body of troops; the Piedmontese expected any effort in the Stura to be a flanking attempt for the main battle farther north; and, finally, Charles Emmanuel thought he had accounted for all the enemy's forces – the enemy columns approaching from this direction were hidden by an intervening mountain range.]

It rained heavily the night of the 16th/17th – unpleasant for troops at 8,000 feet – but every column got off on time. The diversion in the Varaita worked perfectly. Charles Emmanuel did not weaken his southern defences, but he did pull down troops from further north, and kept the positions there fully occupied (18 bns). The trenches in the Maira (at Gardetta in the upper reaches of the valley), held by only a battalion, were easily taken. The two southernmost columns of the offensive entered the Stura at different points below The Barricades without much opposition. The rest of the forces, destined for Demonte, approached The Barricades down the Stura but did not attempt an engagement.

Faced with encirclement, the local Piedmontese commander ordered a retreat. The defenders left the valley via a northern pass, picked up the survivors in the Maira, and retreated by the lateral artillery road to Demonte. The Barricades had fallen without a shot. Not so Casteldelfino.

The Varaita Again

“There will be occasions where we shall do as well as the French, for it is not possible to do better.”

Spanish officer, after the assault on Monte Cavallo.

Although the main defences on the Varaita and Maira were the same as the year before, Piedmontese outposts had been pushed well beyond Chianale. These were driven in by the two Bourbon columns operating here, and retreated to Ribiera. The Bourbons established themselves on the ridge of Pietralunga. One column (Spanish) moved to the Col de Sampeyre in order to pin the 6 enemy battalions there (19th of July) and the other (French) column, under the Baille de Givry began to construct a road along the crest of Pietralunga (17th-18th). This was done primarily to give the enemy something to think about.

The Baille's instructions were to refrain from attacking unless it appeared that the enemy troops were leaving their positions. But his officers were so keen to have a go that he decided to “modify” his instructions. It was decided they would try and take the redoubt of Monte Cavallo, at the eastern end of the ridge, overlooking the key town of Casteldelfino.

Monte Cavallo was separated from Pietralunga proper by a narrow cleft several feet deep, called the Cat's Leap. This was, for day-to-day purposes, bridged, but the bridge had been removed. Monte Cavallo itself had a redoubt and two equidistant barracks, one of which was within firing range of the Cat's Leap. Fortunately for the French there was a thick mist. One at a time the attackers jumped into the Cat's Leap and climbed the other side. When they were assembled they rushed the nearest barracks, then the other. While waiting for the main body, the commander of the advanced guard summoned the Monte Cavallo's commandant to surrender, but was refused.

The French spread themselves over the slopes and commenced to assault the redoubt. Concealed by the mist, at first they took

only light casualties. Even so, they were thrown into disorder by the rough ground. The defenders had 6 battalions in the redoubt, swiftly reinforced by a seventh (the King of Sardinia himself was on the scene). They were attacked by a roughly equal number of Frenchmen.

As the French approached the main fortification they began to suffer heavy casualties from musketry and the fire of two mountain guns. Painfully, they clawed their way to the trench below the palisade. There they remained. The Baille ordered a retreat, but the trench was safer than the road back up Pietralunga, so no one budged. They stayed there for three hours – 3pm to 6pm. Most of the officers, including the Baille, were killed.

Finally succour arrived. Two battalions of French militia that had been scouring the lower slopes appeared on the other side of the redoubt. At the same time, with one desperate effort, the men in the trench hauled themselves on to the rampart and began to pull the palisade down. The Piedmontese broke, suffering 200 prisoners and 700 casualties. The French had suffered 800 killed and 800 wounded.

This amazing feat of arms forced Charles Emmanuel to abandon his entire position and retreat to Sampeyre. And all because a Piedmontese outpost commander had earlier abandoned the high point of Pietralunga in order to help another post that was in difficulties, thereby allowing the Bourbons to establish themselves on the ridge.

In Paris there was more rejoicing over this action than the bloodless affair at The Barricades. But although the French rightly congratulated themselves, it was not good strategy. The entire Piedmontese position could have been turned in the same manner as The Barricades, by flanking it and attacking at Sampeyre. The attack was also unnecessary: after The Barricades were taken, orders had been sent to the northern columns not to engage at all, but either did not arrive in time, or were suppressed in favour of the glory-seekers.

Demonte and Cuneo

Of de Conti's nine columns, the 3 diversionary ones remained in the captured enemy positions on the Varaita. The remaining 6 now proceeded down the Stura to Demonte. It took two days to repair the road through The Barricades, and it was not until the 26th of July that the main body was encamped at Vinadio. The troops on the Varaita did not remain entirely idle, however. 6 battalions pressed forward to the Col de Sampeyre.

Charles Emmanuel's main body was at the town of Sampeyre. He also had 3 battalions at (retreating from) the Col de Sampeyre, 6 at San Damiano, and 8 at Demonte. The Piedmontese cavalry was ordered to assemble at Saluzzo and then to watch the exit of the Stura. The bulk of the artillery was placed in reserve near Saluzzo.

On the 22nd, the commander in the Stura (Pallavicini again) divided his forces and sent them to Cuneo (4 bns) and Busca (4 bns or so), leaving 1,100 men in Demonte. The King established his main position at Becetto, on the slopes north of and above Sampeyre. Here, the Varaita was effectively blocked once more. This force was also in a position to counter a move down the Maira, and the Maira itself was only two marches away from Demonte.

The Bourbons were concerned. After the debacle at Pietralunga it had appeared as if all the passes were open, but it now became evident that this was not so. And the Piedmontese Army was concentrated. But there was a flaw in the enemy's deployment. The Piedmontese forces at Becetto, so effectively placed for flanking

anyone using the Varaita or Maira, were themselves vulnerable to a flanking attack from the Col de Sampeyre should they attempt to aid Demonte – and thus the latter position was effectively isolated.

Even so, the siege of Demonte could not start until August 9th. It took the besiegers an average of two assaults to clear each of the outlying positions on the surrounding hills, bands of militia constantly harassed the advancing columns, and there was insufficient transport (mules) to bring up siege guns and provisions at the same time. At the end of July, 12 battalions were told off for the siege; the remainder, plus some cavalry that had been brought up, now continued on toward Cuneo, pausing at Gajola (30 bns) and Borgo San Dalmazzo (4 bns and the cavalry). The Piedmontese placed a blocking force at Caraglio to the north of the valley's mouth.

Having served its purpose, most of the diversionary force was removed from the Varaita and used to cover the line of communications to the Stura. They were sorely needed. Only one column commander, the Spaniard, Campo Santo, was able to supply his men in safety. The rest treated the locals with great brutality, and in consequence, no convoy was safe. On the 10th of August, partisans burnt the village of Aisone and its environs – the village contained the lodgings of de Conti and the *Infante*. Reprisals only led to more raids. Parties of *Vaudois* from the neighbouring valleys appeared and began attacking billets – in one case 50 prisoners were taken.

With the removal of the column from the Col de Sampeyre, Charles Emmanuel was free to move – in the event to San Damiano in the Maria valley. Meanwhile, the siege of Demonte had begun. Five batteries were opened, which soon began to do a great deal of damage. On the 17th of August, bombs set fire to a pile of timbers and the fires could not be put out. (The wood was to have been used for repairs on the works but had not been properly stored). Fearing for his magazines, the commandant surrendered. The Bourbons pillaged the town to make a statement.

Now the siege of Cuneo could begin. Cuneo sits at the confluence of the Stura (on the west) and the Gesso (flowing up from the south on the east). The fortress was immensely strong, and could only be attacked on its southern side, between the rivers.

Charles Emmanuel, foiled in his plans to relieve Demonte, collected his cavalry and retired to Busca. The Bourbons, concentrated at Caraglio (22nd August) and on the plain between the Stura and the Gesso, tried to force an engagement, but the King of Sardinia retired to Saluzzo. Simultaneously, his chief minister, d'Ormea, was raising a large body of militia (10,000 men) in the south of the country, around Mondovi.

De Conti divided his army into a corps of observation (19 battalions and 50 squadrons) at Madonna dell'Olmo, to the northwest of Cuneo on the west bank of the Stura. 14 bridges were erected to connect the position with the siege corps (25 battalions) facing Cuneo. The fortress had an excellent commander in the Baron Leutrum (hero of Campo Santo), 3,244 regulars, and a large number of militia.

The first saps were dug on September 12th. Naturally, the French and Spanish argued over their placement (de Conti wanted a secondary position over the Gesso on the east, which was eventually built). The firing commenced on the 16th – 18 heavy guns, 7 mortars, and 5 batteries of field pieces. 4 more heavies and 2 mortars were added next day. The bombardment

proved effective, and a second parallel was completed by September 25th. The same day, work was begun on a three-battery position over the Gesso.

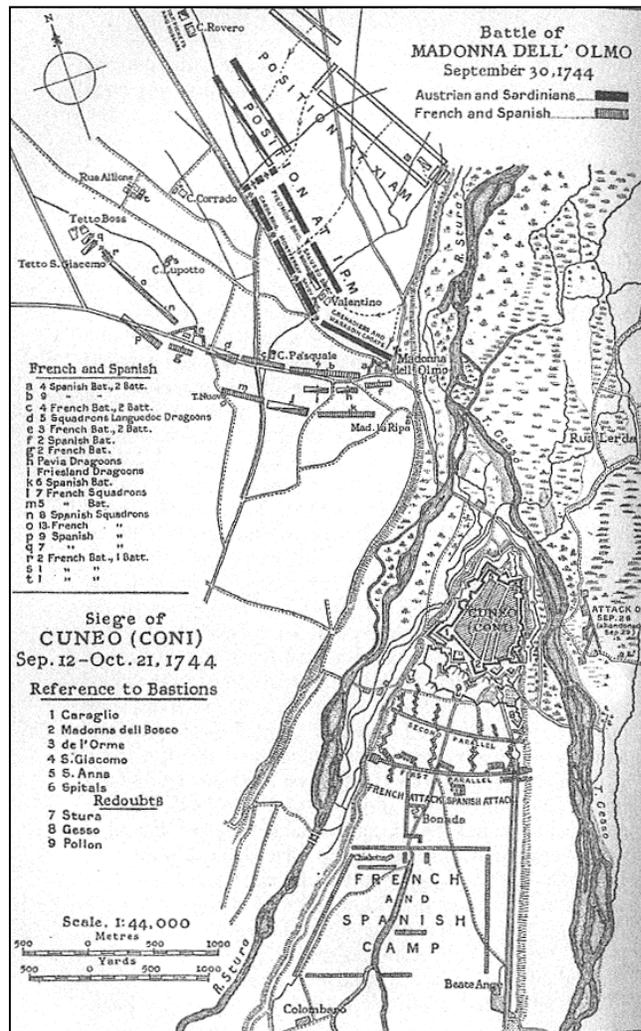
Battle of Madonna dell'Olmo: Sept. 30th 1744

"My soldiers... my poor soldiers"

Charles Emmanuel, wandering the battlefield afterward.

The time had come for the Piedmontese to act. The enemy did not have to be driven away; reinforcing the garrison would be sufficient to prolong operations beyond the season's safety margin. The plan devised proved just as cunning as anything de Conti had attempted earlier in the season.

After feinting toward Busca, the Piedmontese would march on Madonna dell'Olmo and attack the Bourbon *corps d'observation*. The sick and wounded would be removed from Cuneo and replaced with fresh troops. The garrison would also sally, parties of regulars and militia would threaten the Gesso batteries, and further detachments would strike at the enemy's logistic network. The really clever point was that the battle was only intended to pin the enemy covering force – it did not have to result in victory in order for the plan as a whole to work.



The Piedmontese army set out on September 26th. It was a march across the front of the Bourbon posts, but there was no interruption. Bad weather and bad roads delayed them for a day, but by the 29th

they were at Ronchi, 2.5 miles from Madonna dell'Olmo. The Bourbon defence, in two lines, was anchored on the Stura, stretching west, and angled slightly toward the foe on the left. By the river, in front of the church that gave the place its name, there was a redoubt. The guns here could sweep the flank of any force attacking the main line. Spaced at half-mile intervals along the front were three fortified farms containing batteries of guns. The second line was composed of cavalry, except on the right.

**Baron Karl Sigismund Friedrich Wilhelm Leutrum
(1692-1755)**



Born at Karlhausen, Baden. Sent to Piedmont at 14 as part of the escort of *Prinz* Eugene. Deciding to join the Sabaudian army, he was made Captain of Infantry (c.1706), then in 1725 Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment Rehbindler (one of the German regiments in Piedmontese service).

Became Colonel of Rehbindler in 1732 and distinguished himself in the War of the Polish Succession, making Brigadier in 1735.

At the start of the War of the Austrian Succession he was still a Brigadier, and in 1743 accompanied his regiment when it was sent to assist the Austrians. Fighting at Campo Santo, he and General Aspremont-Linden led a counterattack with three regiments, including his own, that stabilised a Spanish breakthrough. Aspremont-Linden was killed; Leutrum badly wounded. But they had compelled a Spanish regiment to surrender, and Leutrum was promoted to Major General on the battlefield.

Later that year he helped defend the Susa valley, while his regiment was sent south to counter the main Bourbon effort on the Varaita.

In 1744 he fought at Villefranche, leading a counterattack that temporarily recaptured several positions. Evacuated to Oneille by sea, he found himself appointed Governor of Cuneo, under immanent threat of siege. Leutrum energised the defence, restoring morale, organising the citizens, laying in enough stores for a five-months siege, and building outworks and redoubts – he preferred to defend as far forward as possible. The siege of Cuneo is recognised as his greatest moment and he became a hero to both the Sabaudian army, and the townspeople.

In 1745 he twice defeated French attacks against the key position of Ceva, south of Asti and Alessandria, and in early 1746, he led the counteroffensive against the French at Asti with an army of 30,000 men. Leutrum remained in Lombardy that year, finally concluding the siege of Tortona in November. In the Bourbon offensive of 1747 he held, with inferior forces, a defensive position covering the Tende Pass to the sea against 50 battalions.

At war's end, Leutrum returned to Cuneo as its Governor. He was further honoured by the renaming of Regiment Burgsdorf, "Regiment Leutrum". But he refused the collar of the *Ordine della Santissima Annunziata*, Piedmont's greatest decoration, because only Catholics could qualify; Leutrum was a Protestant, and chose to remain so. Before he died of dropsy in 1755, he asked to be buried in the Waldesian Valley, home of the Protestant *Vaudois*.

Charles Emmanuel, now reinforced by some 3,000 Austrian light troops and 1,000 cavalry, intended to advance on the 30th and spend the day bombarding the enemy strong points – he had additional heavy batteries brought up for this purpose. To speed things along, he ordered an advance in columns, rather than line. This went all right, and at a bend in the river, about

half a mile from the enemy, the army deployed in line, fixing a *chevaux de frise* in front and emplacing the guns.

Then things went wrong. From Charles Emmanuel's position, the enemy's redoubt was hidden by a wood. The column closest to the river, tasked with bombarding the redoubt, was also told to reconnoitre. Being composed largely of Croats, it did so with gusto, attacking the handful of houses around the Madonna dell'Olmo. The column was thrown back and its associated battery captured. A riposte retook the battery and the exchange escalated. Judging it too dangerous to call off the attack, Charles Emmanuel gradually fed men in from his right; the enemy did the same with their left. Exposed, as the line in front of them thinned, the Bourbon cavalry in the second line tried charging the enemy right but could not make headway against the *chevaux de frise* and were broken by the enemy batteries.

As evening came on, Charles Emmanuel was running out of fresh troops. He waited until dark and then withdrew – to Murasso, still close enough to threaten the Bourbons. The latter did not pursue vigorously. Madonna dell'Olmo was a rather nasty battle for both sides. The Piedmontese lost 4,300 men out of 25,000, and the (predominantly) French forces lost 4,000 out of 26,000.

[It is known that the attack was actually timed for the next day, when a raid was made against the Bourbon command and hospital elements. The assumption is, therefore, that the Croats initiated the combat by accident, because the armies were too close at that point of the line. But Charles Emmanuel was not just trying a demonstration – he did intend to attack the redoubt at some point. Some suggest an attack on the Bourbon left would have been more effective, pinning the latter to the river. However, this would have been dangerous, given the enemy's cavalry superiority – and anyway, the battle did not go as originally intended.]

Meanwhile, Leutrum made two sorties, against each of the siege lines, and succeeding against the Gesso batteries, which were destroyed. The other elements of the grand scheme were relatively successful, though a raid on the Bourbon hospital at Borgo San Dalmazzo failed due to poor timing (the defenders were able to receive additional forces without interference since the main battle was already over).

The End of the Venture

It began to rain, steadily and heavily. On the 4th/5th of October, floods washed away the bridges over the Stura when the river rose twelve feet. Roads were ruined, trenches swamped, and the artillery had no firm platforms to fire from. The siege continued, but de Conti now had few hopes of success, and de la Miña none.

On the 7th, a mine was exploded under the Stura Redoubt (built on that end of the southern ramparts), but Leutrum drove off the attackers. On the 8th, Charles Emmanuel conducted a relief operation, putting 1,500 fresh troops into Cuneo. It was time for the Bourbons to leave.

A thousand cannonballs a day were being fired at Cuneo (40,000 over the 40 days of the siege), and its capture was further away than ever. De Conti had lost 10,500 men so far. Already his army was starving, as it could not venture far for forage in a land swarming with enemy militia. Even if safe passage could have been arranged for convoys over the passes from France, it was already too late: the snows were beginning.

The wrangling between the French and Spanish became worse. De la Miña blamed de Conti for putting Don Carlos at risk that summer – by not invading Lombardy and drawing off the Austrians. And now it was too late to go after von Lobkowitz. (In all this, de la Miña was the Voice of The Farnese). De Conti

wanted to put Demonte in a state of defence before he withdrew, so that they would have the necessary springboard for next year. De la Miña did not. With no “springboard” the advance would have to be by the Riviera as he (and his Queen) had always insisted.

It was not until the 17th of October that a council of war agreed on retreat, and even then the Demonte Question had to be submitted to King Louis for arbitration. They kept up the pretence of the siege. Another mine was exploded on the 18th. But on the 21st the outposts were called in, and on the 22nd, the retreat began; the rear services had already gone.

More comedy. On the 1st of November de Conti received orders to abandon Demonte (not unexpected given Louis’ preference for supporting his family at the expense of strategy), but on the 2nd, the *Infante* received instructions to return to Piedmont, besiege Ceva and Saorgio, and to quarter near Genoa. This was insane of course (the *Infante* wrote back “impossible”), but new orders came on the 5th repeating the demand. Obviously Madrid was simply sending a barrage of messages hoping to hypnotise their army by repetition; nonetheless de la Miña insisted they halt and wait for a definitive answer to the *Infante*’s letter. The Spanish began to repair Demonte – while the French were preparing it for demolition! Meanwhile, communications with France were almost severed by partisan bands – 23 battalions, unsupplied and very cold, were needed just to keep the road open.

At last a message came (November 12th) from Madrid ordering the retreat, which began on the 14th. Close behind came the Piedmontese, who retook Demonte before it could be completely demolished. The 19th saw the last of the Bourbons cross the Col de a Madeleine into safety. On the 20th, heavy snows buried the passes.

The Spanish billeted in Nice, the Swiss (in Spanish service) in Savoy, and the French in Provence and Languedoc. De Conti repaired to Versailles, his reputation not particularly tarnished, but fed up from dealing with the Dons all summer. De la Miña was recalled in disgrace (probably because at the last he had counselled retreat, not because he had spent the entire campaign obstructing its progress).

NAPOLEON’S BLUEPRINTS

“[France’s foreign policy should be] to diminish the power of Austria to the point when the Emperor will have no more territory than the richest Elector.”

Political Testament of Cardinal Richelieu

In his excellent and hard to obtain book, *The Defence of Piedmont 1742-1748, A Prelude to Napoleon*, the British military analyst, Spenser Wilkinson, makes a convincing argument that Bonaparte’s Italian campaign of 1796 was closely based on *Maréchal de Maillebois*’ campaign of 1745. The man who planned the earlier campaign, Bourcet, and the man who executed it (de Maillebois), both kept copious notes. The marshal was extremely meticulous. Napoleon, a great reader and student of history, would have at least studied the campaign while training to be an officer. In both cases the operation succeeded, but Napoleon’s success was greater. He had the advantages of unity of command, unlimited manpower, and speed of both decision and execution. His opponents also made mistakes that the men facing de Maillebois did not make. This makes de Maillebois’ own success all the more remarkable.

[By the way, near-mint copies of Wilkinson sell for £350-£400, if you can find them.]

1745 was the pivotal year of the war. This was the year of the Jacobite Rising, the year of Fontenoy, of Hohenfriedburg, Soor, and Kesseldorf. Of the expulsion of France from Germany and the withdrawal of a satisfied Prussia from the conflict. This was also the year that the Bourbons finally penetrated into Lombardy, taking nearly all their objectives, only to lose them again at the beginning of 1746.

Politically, the omens were mixed. In November of 1744, King Louis appointed the Marquis d’Argenson as his Foreign Minister. A brilliant man, over a period of some sixteen years of political solitude he had completely crystallised in his mind the foreign policy that France should adopt. Unfortunately, his premise was based on the dictates of the last century, not the current one. In essence, the Habsburgs were to be driven from Italy and replaced with a system of small states under French protection.

[D’Argenson was brilliant, but a theorist only. Wits said he had dropped straight out of Plato’s Republic. One of his contemporaries said that, as Foreign Minister, “the affairs with which the Marquis d’Argenson was charged were truly foreign to him”. The Duc de Luynes noted his brilliance, but “unfortunately he lacks the talent necessary for success”.]

This was much the system that Napoleon was to adopt in both Germany and Italy, and has therefore been seen as visionary, but it was in fact based on the geopolitical realities of the 17th Century – Louis XIV’s wars were fought for the same reason. France could only be made safe from Habsburg encroachment by the erection of a buffer zone of states so weak they would need constant French protection. (A policy as inconsistent as it sounds).

Besides, in the middle of the 18th Century there was another major power in Italy besides the Habsburgs – Bourbon Spain. Elisabeth Farnese was all for expelling the Austrians, but not for being expelled herself. And she had a powerful ally in the French King, who, early in 1745, oversaw the marriage of the Dauphin to the *Infanta* Maria Theresa of Spain. (It was also on that occasion that he first met Madame de Pompadour).

D’Argenson did not want to make war on Piedmont, to his mind the perfect model of the buffer state. He saw Spain as a drag on France, and on his own designs, calling the French ally “a bad comrade in war, still worse in negotiations”. And he detested Elisabeth

Farnese. Ultimately, however, the choice lay between having some Spanish cooperation, or none at all, and France needed Spanish bodies.

[As Reed Browning puts it in his account, The War of the Austrian Succession, *d'Argenson's Italian ends defied French means.*]

A better sign could be read at Genoa. The Genoese Republic was negotiating with Philip V. Traditionally they sided with the Habsburgs. But the House of Savoy was a dangerous rival, and when, by the Treaty of Worms, Piedmont was given the “rights” to the port of Finale (sold by the Emperor to Genoa a generation before, with arguable rights of reversion), they felt they had been shafted. The Treaty of Aranjuez was, for the purposes of concealment, not signed until May 1st, 1745, but since the summer of 1744 Genoa had been quietly preparing for war.

The treaty’s provisions were that Genoa would be paid a subsidy in exchange for a 10,000-man army, a supply of artillery and other provisions to the Bourbons, and permission for the latter to move and fight on Genoese territory. In exchange, the Bourbons would besiege Alessandria and Tortona with a view to awarding them to Genoa (Genoese troops later participated in these sieges), and screen the Republic with an army strong enough to keep the Sabaudians at bay. At last, the great offensive to cleanse Italy of the Habsburgs would be along the Riviera.

The 63-year-old *Maréchal* de Maillebois was placed in command (de Conti took over his job in Germany). De Maillebois was more than competent, he was thorough, and a master at logistics. The Spanish were still nominally commanded by the *Infante*, but no replacement had been approved for de la Miña. Instead, de Gages would bring his army across to support the Genoese, and ultimately link up with the remainder of the army in Lombardy.

Well-rested and fully stocked, the Bourbon armies comprised the following: 38 battalions and 38 squadrons of Spanish (32,000) under the *Infante*, plus 3 Spanish and 7 Swiss battalions in Savoy; 25-26 battalions and 35 squadrons of French (2-3 battalions were told off to deal with food riots at Lyons – an indication of the toll the war was taking). The French also had 8 battalions guarding the artillery park at Jausiers, 11 in the Dauphiné (at Barcelonnette), and 6 on the coast of Provence. (Total French: 43,000 or so). The Genoese were initially to field 6 battalions outside of the Republic. In all, there would be 70 battalions and 73 squadrons, plus de Gages’ forces. The latter was expected to have 15,000 men, including a Neapolitan (perhaps 5,000) contingent. A grand total of 100,000 men set against 20,000 Austrians and (on a good day) 40,000 Piedmontese.

De Maillebois actually thought the idea of an advance along the Riviera was a good one, now that supplies could be obtained from the Genoese. It would still be slow going, however. In broad terms, de Maillebois and the *Infante* were to march along the Riviera di Ponente, climb the watershed to the Bormida and Tanaro Rivers, and descend them, besiege Ceva and Mondovi, and then proceed to Cherasco. This plan was later modified as the situation changed, but Ceva remained key: Ceva is only 20 miles from Finale and de Maillebois believed he had to take it in order to secure his lines of communication.

The Genoese would supply the artillery for these operations, and the Spanish would cover the Republic while the French and Genoese did the work (in the original plan, the Spanish were to

**Jean Baptiste François Desmarets
Marquis de Maillebois (1682-1762)**

Grandnephew of Colbert. Served under Marshal Villars and distinguished at the siege of Lille (1708). Fought in the War of the Polish Succession, in Italy, where he showed great ability at the “divisional” level of command; besieged and took Tortona. Spent several years as Governor of the Dauphiné. In 1739 sent to assist the Genoese against rebel forces in Corsica; the operation was successfully concluded in only three weeks. Marshal of France in 1741. In the early years of the War in of the Austrian Succession, he commanded an army of observation on the border of Hanover, with the task of keeping the Elector (King George) neutral. His reputation suffered in uneducated circles after his failure to relieve Marshals Belle-Isle and Broglie at Prague in 1742. But he had held positive orders not to risk an engagement under any circumstances, and besides, Broglie was at loggerheads with him the whole time. The 1745 campaign was his most brilliant enterprise. It succeeded, but the Spanish threw the victory away. Maillebois was dismissed in November of 1746, another victim of the Family Compact. He was not disgraced for long, however, ending his days as Governor of Alsace.

**Jean-Bonnaventure (“Don Juan”) Thierry
Conde de Gages (1682-1753)**

A Walloon (born at Mons) who rose from the ranks. Served with the Walloon Guards, beginning as a lieutenant, from its creation in 1702 (the unit has roots dating to 1537, but this incarnation was a prop to the new Bourbon monarchy). Fought in the War of the Spanish Succession, and in Africa, including the conquest of Oran. Served with the Spanish army in Italy from 1742-1746. Initially he was a subordinate of de Montemar, but he carried secret instructions to replace the latter in case of ill health or incompetence, which came into effect at the end of 1742. From 1743-46 he was commander of the Spanish army in Italy (from 1745 commander-in-chief of Spanish forces in Italy). Made Viceroy of Navarre in 1746. Replaced by de la Miña in that year.

besiege Saorgio, Ceva, and Mondovi, but that was before de Gages was incorporated into the plan). De Gages was to elude von Lobkowitz, cross to the Riviera di Levante, and then march to Genoa. His job would then be to besiege Tortona. The upshot of the campaign would be the permanent separation of the Habsburg and Sabaudian armies.

Further suggested operations (suggested by de Maillebois himself and then handed back as discretionary orders) included the siege of Cuneo or the siege of Alessandria, or again, a diversionary move from the Dauphiné against Exilles. If Exilles were actually taken, this would open up the Dora Riparia, a much shorter route to Turin and Milan than the Riviera.

It was made clear to de Maillebois that he did not have to accede in any hasty moves toward Milan, not until Piedmont was neutralised and/or the Riviera could be covered sufficiently. However, he was not to argue if the Spanish wanted to go it on their own, only to threaten to fall back on the frontier. If the Austrians were somehow reinforced, he was to permit the Spanish troops under his direct command to leave in aid of de Gages, but not to yield them a single French battalion. It was further stipulated that the French and Spanish troops be kept separate (in billets, on the march, in the line of battle, and so forth). Relations between the allied soldiers were not of the best.

The marshal and his sovereign were making the best of a bad situation. King Louis had already agreed to help the *Infante* acquire a duchy in Lombardy; that is why the French were there. But the King had to agree with his field commander that the best way to do this was to deal with Piedmont first. Elisabeth Farnese, however, did not have to agree with a French marshal. All she had to do was, as usual, send a constant stream of letters ordering de Gages to scoop up the *Infante* and his men as soon as possible and invade Milan, Parma, and anywhere else the Austrians were.

Speaking of whom... With Maria Theresa fixated on the reconquest of Bohemia and the Second Silesian War, von Lobkowitz could not expect any reinforcements. The Austrians still had a paper strength of 20,000, but some of these were helping Charles Emmanuel. The rest, less interior garrisons, were at Faenza, with outposts from Rimini to Pesaro. Von Lobkowitz was in Maria Theresa's bad books, but his influence at Court lasted him until April 1745.

The Offensive Begins

Von Lobkowitz's tardy dismissal was occasioned by his failure to catch de Gages, who shifted his base in April. Having collected the *Duc de la Vieuville's* reconstituted Neapolitan contingent, de Gages advanced north to the Adriatic. Von Lobkowitz retired to Modena, and the Napolispans followed. At this time, de Gages was still operating on the assumption that he was to attempt to break into the Milanese unaided, but before he could try the Panaro again, he received new orders. The artillery was sent to Orbitello, thence by sea to Genoa (risking a chance of interception by the British). De Gages took the rest of the army over the Apennines to Castelnuovo, through Massa, to Sarzana (May 6th). This last place was in Genoese territory, but Genoa was no longer neutral. Von Lobkowitz failed to move at all against de Gages and was dismissed. Morale improved dramatically. His replacement was General von Schulenburg, until then envoy to the Court of Turin. Von Schulenburg tried to catch the enemy, but it was too late. By May 18th, the Spanish were safely through a narrow pass at Sestri, and preparing, after a short rest, to move to Genoa itself.

The "Galligurinapolispani" grand offensive opened at the start of June. With the Spanish starting from Albenga and the French from Nice, the *Infante's* army would march to Finale then take the Pass of Bormida north. From Nice to Finale was 75 miles of rough track, potentially under fire from the Royal Navy most of the way. Fortunately, the latter's most recent commander, Admiral Rowley, was not the stuff of which Nelsons are made. He let de Gages' artillery convoy pass him by, and failed to intercept a number of other troop convoys.

[In mitigation, Rowley had orders to watch and assist the nascent Corsican Revolution – to say a major enemy offensive was underway and "how about exercising one's initiative" is to ignore the dead hand of the British Admiralty. Corsica had been in a state of insurgency for some time, but in August 1745 a Consulate would be proclaimed, severing all ties with Genoa. Both Britain and France hoped to capitalize].

The Piedmontese were a greater threat. This was a grand flank march, and the coast was a mere 40 miles from both Cuneo and Mondovi. Either Charles Emmanuel would attack while the Bourbons were spread over 20-30 miles of track, or he would wait until the army had past and go via Tende into the County of Nice. Therefore, de Maillebois assigned 8 battalions as a screen, from the Tende Pass to Finale. These units were not to

be passive, but to harass the enemy's posts. With respect to the main army, its left wing was to hem Charles Emmanuel in on the upper Tanaro; if the enemy tried to join the Austrians, this screen would move north to cut him off.

Making preparations of his own, Charles Emmanuel already knew the main threat was coming from the Riviera (Genoa's secret treaty was no secret). He had replaced his losses and called up additional militia. A total of 7 battalions guarded Fenestrelle, Ivrea, and Susa. 2 battalions were at Modena, and 2 at Piacenza. 12 were around Tortona and Alessandria (1 at Acqui). 17 battalions and 6,000 militia were on the Tanaro, from Ormea to Ceva, and 13 battalions, with the cavalry, were in reserve between Susa, Cuneo, and Asti. Von Schulenburg's Austrians (20,000) were concentrated at Pizzighettone, moving to Novi (to find fresh forage) by mid-June.

Fully expecting to be attacked on the march, the Bourbons were elated when nothing happened. The Piedmontese found the districts they had to pass through devoid of forage and good roads; partisans alone would stand no chance against a large force of regulars. By the end of June, Bourbon picquets were on the crest of the Apennines. De Gages took the Bochetta Pass by storm on July 1st. Acqui surrendered to de Maillebois' advance guard on the 9th of July, and the Bourbons were out on the plains.

Now came the first shivers of dissension. Because of the fact that Genoa was providing all the siege guns, it had been decided to besiege Tortona first, approaching down the Scrivia River. This was de Gages' main task. But Ceva also had to be taken, and the sooner the better. De Gages' army was needed for the covering operation. This, the Spanish marshal refused to agree to. It did not matter that he would not be in a position to besiege Tortona for weeks, and the French would have meanwhile eaten out their district waiting for him. His orders came from Madrid (and the implication, which de Maillebois understood too well, was that once Tortona had fallen, off would go the Spanish). But, given King Louis' desire to help his uncle at all costs, there was nothing to be done.

The Allies' own choices were to cover either Tortona or Alessandria, or cover both from the area of Bassignana. The first choice put the Piedmontese on the wrong side of the Scrivia River. The second abandoned Tortona and the Austrians to a separate fate. The third protected Alessandria and threatened any force that might seek to invest Tortona. The Allied Army thus encamped at Bassignana, except for 5 Piedmontese battalions that went into garrison at Tortona. Charles Emmanuel then sent to Ceva for 17 more battalions (leaving 8 in that region, mostly militia). All this was accomplished by August 1st.

Bassignana lies at the junction of the Po and the Tanaro. Upstream, the Bormida joins it, and on the Bormida lie the fortifications not only of Alessandria but Acqui; further west, on the Tanaro, lies Asti. All were important fortifications. By camping at Bassignana, the Allies were not only protecting themselves, but also threatening the flank of any force that tried to besiege these locations. The Po was also bridged at this point, permitting the reinforcement of Milan or Pavia – or a safe retreat into northern Piedmont.

Meantime, de Gages had moved his army closer to the *Infante*; on the 23rd of July the armies combined near Castelazzo and Frugarolo. With the bulk of the Spanish under his direct command, he was in a position to challenge de Maillebois' operational supremacy.

Beginning on the 24th of July, de Gages and the Spanish began the preliminary work for investing Tortona. The *Infante's* soldiers covered. The first trench was completed on August 8th, and the first

battery opened on August 14th. The town promptly surrendered (in strict accordance with the laws of war) and the besiegers moved on to the citadel, which surrendered on September 5th, the garrison under parole not to fight for a year. Charles Emmanuel made an attempt on Acqui, hoping to recapture it while the enemy was busy, but was repulsed.

Throughout August, the French around Ceva, in order to better secure their lines of communication and pin down the Piedmontese, fought a number of minor actions. Available were 15 French battalions against 8 Piedmontese (reinforced at one point to 13). The Sabaudians countered by launching raids against the enemy's communications. Overall, these activities resulted in a stalemate, though the French position was improved slightly.

The Spanish now openly began talking of moving on to Parma, Piacenza, and eventually Milan. De Maillebois again insisted that Ceva be taken. De Gages countered by saying that Cherasco, Asti, and Alessandria were even more vital (and who was going to deal with them, eh?). The problem was, de Gages already had orders from Madrid to stop dithering and get on with the "reconquista". He planned to march off immediately and call for the *Infante's* men once Alessandria had been taken. The French could handle the Piedmontese on their own.

The objections to this course of action were legion. The Bourbons would have divided their army in the presence of a united enemy. The French would be forced to quarter in a region devoid of supplies. Genoa would not be protected (per the Treaty of Aranjuez). And, again, their lines of communications were not safe (not that the Spanish cared; they intended to live off the fat of the land in the Milanese). As a compromise, de Maillebois offered the following. De Gages would march on Milan, forcing von Schulenburg to follow. He would then double back and join a combined assault on Charles Emmanuel. By the time the Austrians returned, the link with Turin would have been severed. To help matters, the enemy's positions at Ceva would be attacked, and an offensive would be launched from the Dauphiné against Exilles. After a successful battle, it might be possible for the Bourbon armies to separate in safety. This was agreed upon, and things fell out as intended – at least initially.

Battle of Bassignana: September 27th 1745

On September 6th, the Neapolitans (5,000) under de la Vieuville, marched away and took Piacenza (12th of September), and also occupied Bobbio and Parma. The rest of de Gages' force (no more than 20,000 Spanish and Genoese) made as if to head east and cross the Po. At first, the feint was not bold enough and the Austrians only made minor adjustments to their positions. So all the Spanish were sent off, and boats were collected to build a bridge over the Po at Stradella.

Now the Austrians flinched. Some units were sent toward Pavia, others to Milan. De Gages actually did cross the Po and took Pavia by surprise on the 23rd of September. More troops were brought up and de Gages spoke openly of heading for Milan. That did it. Von Schulenburg's responsibility to defend Milan and Mantua was paramount. He left 3 battalions at Bassignana and marched for Pavia via the north bank of the Po. As soon as the Austrians crossed the Ticino, de Gages faced about and returned to the Tanaro, picked up the *Infante's* men on the way.

Otto Ferdinand Graf von Abensperg und Traun (August 27th 1677- February 18th 1748)

Born at Oldenburg, the young von Traun was sent to Halle to finish his education, but left university in 1693 to serve with the Prussians in the Low Countries (they were at that time merely a contingent of the Imperial Army). Von Traun saw much service in this War of the Grand Alliance, and joined the Imperial Army of the Habsburgs at its conclusion. Served again in the War of the Spanish Succession in Italy and on the Rhine. In 1709, Traun became a Lieutenant Colonel and aide-de-camp to Field Marshal Starhemberg (1654-1737) at Spairf. In 1710, he was promoted to Colonel due to his distinguished services, and in 1712 became colonel of an infantry regiment. At the end of the war he found himself employed again at the action of Francavilla in Sicily (War of the Quadruple Alliance – 1719), where he was wounded severely. For his services he received a promotion to *General-Feldwachtmeister* (Major General) in 1723. Governor of Messina in 1727; *Feldmarshall-Lieutenant* in 1733.

In 1734 Traun became famous for his defence first of the Pass of S. Germano, and then of the fortress of Capua. Despite surrendering the latter (the place was in ruins), his men received the honours of war and he received a promotion to *Feldzugmeister* (General of Infantry), after which he was given a political role in Hungary, which proved very difficult. Later he was made commander in chief in north Italy and an interim governor of the Milanese. In this post he received the homage of the army and civil bureaucracy on behalf of Maria Theresa, at the time of her father's death in 1740. In 1741 von Traun was made *Generalfeldmarshall*.

During the War of the Austrian Succession, von Traun served in Italy until 1743, with great success. On the death of Marshal Khevenhüller, he was moved to the German theatre and made Prince Charles' principle military advisor. Von Traun was responsible for executing the crossing of the Rhine (in both directions) and removed of the Prussians from Bohemia in 1744 without fighting a battle.

His last active service was in 1745, when he commanded an army sent to Frankfurt am Main to pressure the Diet into electing Francis Stephen as Emperor (thus allowing Duke Charles to blow the whole anti-Prussian campaign at one go). Von Traun died at Hermannstadt in February 1748.

While these actions were taking place, the French discovered the location of some fords on the Tanaro, by the device of luring parties of enemy cavalry across. Charles Emmanuel was unaware these locations existed, as the river was not usually this low.

With the defection of their ally, 30,000 Piedmontese were left to cover a front of 6 miles, from Pavone on the right to Bassignana on the left. Charles Emmanuel was counting on the river as a "force multiplier". But the attackers achieved surprise by the speed in which they were able to cross.

In the dawn of September 27th, 50,000 Bourbons swarmed across the Tanaro: 2 Spanish columns (on the right) and 3 French (on the left). A post of 6 Sabaudian battalions at Rivarone, in the Spanish sector, was sent packing in the direction of Pecetto. One Spanish column pinned the defenders' center at Montecastello (the location of the Sardinian King's HQ), and a French column did the same on the enemy's extreme right. Charles Emmanuel had no reserves to speak of and could not respond.

De Gages himself led the right-hand column, which drove the 3 battalions of Austrians out of Bassignana and threw down the communicating bridge over the Po just as von Schulenburg's advance guard was hurrying up. After the initial work was done, the Bourbon cavalry crossed and beat off the Piedmontese horse between Bassignana and Rivarone (the ground here was cut with

ravines and it was possible to do real damage to them in the pursuit).

The battle lasted some hours. By the end, the attackers were quite disordered, so in the evening Charles Emmanuel rounded up his men at Valenza and retreated to Giarole. Von Schulenburg kept pace on the north bank of the Po. The Bourbons camped on the battlefield, well pleased. They had lost 200 men (some accounts state 1,000; possibly this includes stragglers) at a cost of 2,000 of Charles Emmanuel's own. The outcome could have been improved. In the center, there had been an opportunity to cut off a large body of Piedmontese, including perhaps the King himself, but the column commander responsible had halted too soon. Also, two of the French column commanders, told to use their initiative and attack any retreating troops opposite them, had simply made a demonstration without crossing the river. But the main objective had been achieved. Charles Emmanuel's army was knocked about, and forced away from his ally's territory.

Von Schulenburg's token force of Austrians remained in contact with the Piedmontese; a bridge was thrown across the Po at Casale, and some 1,000 cavalry sent across.

The next step for the French was the siege of Alessandria. Here 22 battalions and 2 regiments of dragoons were engaged. The first battery opened on the 8th of October, on the 12th the town surrendered, and the citadel was blockaded.

Exilles

September had seen the attempt on Exilles. The French commander in the Dauphiné (*Général* Lautrec) had received his orders by the 28th of August. He had his 11 battalions at Barcelonnette, but he was ordered to wait for 6 Spanish battalions from Savoy. As might be expected, the Spanish took a week to arrive (having to receive their orders direct from Madrid, of course), giving the defenders time to prepare.

The Fort of Exilles was located on the north bank of the Dora Riparia, and could only be approached from the village further upriver (that is, toward the enemy's side). There was a garrison of 500 men, plus a battalion nearby, and lots of *Vaudois* on the surrounding mountain slopes. Even so, the French managed to invest the place, taking Chiomonte further down the valley, breaking the bridge between it and Exilles, and cutting the fort's water supply. Now the Spanish and the guns came up, while the Piedmontese, expecting reinforcements from the garrisons of the northeastern defences, prepared to ruin the artillery train with a flank attack from the key ridge of de l'Assiette to the south.

This attack was repulsed, but the Sabaudians retained de l'Assiette. This happened to dominate the best positions for emplacing siege batteries. Now, Lautrec would have to cut a road through solid rock to reach another suitable location. This was a major project, so he gave up the siege. The Piedmontese attempted a close pursuit over the cols into the Dauphiné and lost their general in the process. They retired into winter quarters, as did the Bourbons. A backdoor would not be available for the French; on the other hand, Charles Emmanuel had no fresh troops he could throw at de Maillebois.

High Tide

That worthy was (October 16th) in the process of preparing the long awaited siege of Ceva. The Piedmontese in the region prepared to resist manfully, but ironically, de Maillebois no

longer felt that Ceva was a threat. He expected he would soon hold all the fortresses of Montferrat, and would then be able to store sufficient supplies acquired locally.

By the end of November, Asti, Casale, and some lesser fortifications were all in French hands. Charles Emmanuel had fallen back and gone into winter quarters around Chivasso, Chieri, and Cresentino, with his horse advanced at Villanova d'Asti; these positions covered Turin, which was beginning to seem with the Bourbon grasp. More forces extended the front over the Po in the north, and down to Ceva in the south.

But the high water mark had been passed. The Spanish left for the Milanese in the second half of November. Their army numbered 99 battalions and 85 squadrons (Spanish, Neapolitan, and Genoese), but many units were mere cadres – it was estimated that they would need 30,000 men to be brought up to strength. The advance across Lombardy (leaving 16 battalions and a paltry 5 squadrons with the French) was virtually unopposed. Von Schulenburg, now subordinated to *Prinz* von Liechtenstein at Mantua, remained at Novara, in semi-contact with the Piedmontese.

Milan was occupied on December 16th, its strong pro-Spanish faction welcoming the invaders. The citadel was besieged, and Don Felipe entered the city on December 19th, to be proclaimed as King of Lombardy. More practically, a line covering the Adda River from the Po to the Lago di Como was established. The Bourbon garrisons of Parma and Piacenza were also strengthened. Now, all of Lombardy, bar Mantua and the citadel of Milan, was under Bourbon sway.

A YEAR IN PROVENCE

"A negotiation is far advanced with Turin, but it is more difficult to deal with Madrid. We are adopting a tone which may be effectual; it is the greatest secret in the world, everything here being done by the King and me. This by the King's wish."

D'Argenson to Maréchal de Maillebois, January 1746

Bourbon policy in Italy was about to unravel, and the man who more than anyone helped bring it about was the one who most wanted it to succeed – the Marquis d'Argenson. At the very moment when *Maréchal* de Maillebois could, with only some few reinforcements and a stern word to the Spanish, have completed the conquest of northern Italy, France's Foreign Minister changed his mind.

D'Argenson saw Charles Emmanuel's state as the perfect model for his geopolitical "system". He also respected the King as a statesman. He did not respect Elisabeth Farnese, whose policy in Italy was diametrically opposed to his own. Late in 1744, after Prussia seemed to be breaking with France, he persuaded King Louis to authorize talks with the Piedmontese with a view to having them switch sides. These talks were to remain secret even from their Spanish allies – especially from their Spanish allies.

[D'Argenson actually preferred a "Germany first" strategy, but given that everything had gone wrong there, he switched direction.]

Several false starts were made, but in the latter half of 1745 the Piedmontese agreed to listen. The proposal was that the Habsburgs were to be removed from Italy, to the extent that the Emperor would give Tuscany to his brother, Charles of Lorraine; Parma and Piacenza would go to Don Felipe (the *Infante*); Charles Emmanuel would get a large chunk of Milan, but give Oneglia to Genoa, and also renounce any claims to Finale. Piedmont would have to pull her weight militarily, too.

The Piedmontese were anxious to avoid a siege of Turin (next on the list after Alessandria), but found the draft treaty too visionary. Removing all Habsburg influence simply meant Turin could not play off the two sides against each other – and anyway, at the time it looked like the Bourbons were well on their way to accomplish that goal without Piedmontese help.

So, the French envoy played his second string, a more conventional agreement: settled boundaries for each of the players; in particular Don Felipe's Parma would act as a buffer for Piedmont's new territories in the Milanese by extending its borders into Cremona and Mantua. A sticking point remained the ceding of Oneglia to Genoa, but Charles Emmanuel indicated he was willing to give the principality up if there was no other choice. At the end of December, the French envoy set off for Versailles with the deal in his pocket. Now came a tricky bit of finagling by Charles Emmanuel.

At the turn of the year, Maria Theresa and Frederick of Prussia had signed the Treaty of Dresden, by which Prussia withdrew from the war. Before the ink was dry her armies were in motion toward Italy – 30,000 men under von Browne would cross the passes in mid-January and be ready to take the offensive in February. Charles Emmanuel no longer needed to come to terms with France.

Meanwhile, the Franco-Piedmontese treaty had to wait on the Spanish reaction. So, Charles Emmanuel, having already asked for an immediate armistice, specifically requested that de Maillebois be instructed not to molest him, pending a formal signing. He also asked to be able to resupply Alessandria. All this d'Argenson agreed to. In his view, the Bourbons would be free to deal with the Austrians much earlier than anticipated. The fact that resupplying a besieged fortress weakened the French hand seems not to have occurred to him.

Now d'Argenson tried to be clever. He wrote a "final draft" of the treaty and sent copies to Turin and Madrid. This draft included clauses from the original, which would almost certainly not be accepted by either Court. Accompanying the Madrid copy was a letter, written by King Louis at d'Argenson's request, which threw any blame for excessiveness in the terms on Charles Emmanuel – he was represented as the instigator of the talks. The letter also told Philip he had 48 hours to reply, or France would consider herself free to go her own way. The Spanish reaction can easily be imagined.

After venting their spleen on the French Ambassador, the Spanish monarchs dispatched the *Duca de Huescar* to Versailles (arrived February 18th). His instructions were to protest the treaty, which he did so effectively that all negotiation between Paris and Madrid was deadlocked.

Meanwhile, the other copy of d'Argenson's masterpiece arrived at Turin. Charles Emmanuel was not given 48 hours. He was given 24. The French envoy had conflicting instructions. On the one hand, he had to sign the treaty himself beforehand (thus showing the drift of it was official French policy). If Turin failed to sign, he was to break off all negotiations and return home; no armistice would be possible until Charles Emmanuel signed the treaty. But at the same time he was to secretly tell the Sardinian King that if Spain failed to fall in line France would abandon her.

The Piedmontese smelled a trap. They once again referred to the treaty they had agreed to (version 2.0), and the attached armistice. Their own envoy was instructed to sign the armistice

but not this new/old version of the treaty. Once the armistice was signed the parties could discuss the actual treaty at leisure. Charles Emmanuel stressed the fact that the Austrians were already asking him what his plans for the season were. He gave the French until the end of February to sort themselves out, or he would consider himself a free agent. He further asked for a written statement from King Louis confirming that if the Spanish had not also agreed to the terms in two months, the French would withdraw from Italy, as the envoy had hinted.

It is difficult when considering d'Argenson's actions to link his tactical manoeuvring to his grand strategy. This is because he was a theorist with little knowledge of practical politics. So long as it fit the theory, the means could be contradictory. Reading between the lines, it appears d'Argenson hoped to frighten the Spanish by presenting them with an apparent Franco-Piedmontese understanding ("Turin is looking to change sides; the deal is too good for France to miss; the Piedmontese want the Spanish on board or out of the equation; France must reluctantly agree"). But if the Spanish did join in, Don Felipe would get his territories. At the same time, d'Argenson hoped to frighten the Piedmontese ("our armies are at your gates; Austria is no more; we can't hold the Spanish off forever; see, we've already had to make concessions to them; but sign now and we'll give you a square deal").

There were a great many contradictions in the details, but even at the "macro" level, the plan was full of holes. The Spanish saw no need for a treaty when they could have it all anyway in one more season of campaigning. They also, for once, saw clearly that the grand scheme d'Argenson had proposed to them was a pipe dream; better at least *some* Austrian presence in Italy, to counterbalance Charles Emmanuel. King Louis also made it clear that on no account would he abandon Spain. To write a nasty letter was one thing, but to act was another. And the Piedmontese were thoroughly spooked.

To the Court of Turin, it seemed d'Argenson had plotted to cut the ground from under them by agreeing verbally to the "soft" treaty, holding off on an armistice, and then reimposing the "hard" one. More, the supposedly secret negotiations seemed common knowledge in Paris. The guess was that Austria would be informed of some of the treaty's terms in order to leave Charles Emmanuel no option.

[Partly true – d'Argenson was indeed trying to pressure all the players to come to a speedy agreement – but the loose lips were King Louis'. He just couldn't keep such a juicy secret.]

As the now deceased d'Ormea once put it, the King of Sardinia "had an aversion to cloisters" – he would not be backed into a corner. Already tainted by the rumour that he was seeking a separate peace, he approached the latest Austrian generalissimo, von Liechtenstein, with a plan for a combined assault on Asti followed by the relief of Alessandria. Charles Emmanuel had to remain passive until the end of February, when the proposed armistice would either have been ratified or not. (Nothing need actually be said to the Austrians about this, since the combined operation was not due to start until early March, giving plenty of time to notify them of any diplomatic changes).

Bourbon Collapse

A preliminary armistice having been agreed to on February 17th; both sides remained quiet. In the first few days of March, the armistice was to be ratified, but the French introduced new conditions that reopened the whole issue and could not be accepted. Everything hinged on the timing of a Piedmontese relief column being sent to Alessandria, slated for March 4th. If the armistice could be signed before midday on the 4th, then the column would be recalled, if not, it would proceed, using force if necessary to resupply the fortification. The French envoy, *le Comte de Maillebois* (the marshal's son, and coincidentally d'Argenson's son-in-law), dithered, accepted the terms in the evening, and was informed it was too late. Having arrived at Turin with great pomp, he was forced to return to Briançon with his tail between his legs. The negotiations had failed. They had only served to set the Bourbons up for a fall.

The French were ill prepared for the coming season. With great effort and skill, de Maillebois had poised himself for the total conquest of Piedmont, after which the combined Bourbon armies could meet the Austrians. Only Alessandria stood between him and Turin. But the Spanish, obstinate as their own mules, had divided his forces. Now, spread out over the Milanese, they were under attack by superior arms, while he could not even complete the Alessandria operation, thanks to d'Argenson and his amateur hustling.

At the start of 1746, the Bourbon positions were as follows. The Spanish had forces covering the Adda from Lago di Como to the Po while they besieged the citadel of Milan. They had garrisons at Pavia and Piacenza, and a second line of posts facing west on the Ticino (22 battalions and 32 squadrons), from Lago Maggiore to Vigevano and forward to Mortara. The bulk of their forces were on the Adda. The French lines ran from Mortara to Valenza, Casale, Moncalvo, Asti, Nizza, and Acqui. Strong forces around Carcare covered the Riviera. The main force, including some Spanish troops, was blockading Alessandria.

Facing the Bourbons were von Liechtenstein's Austrians at Novara, Vercelli, and Trino, and the Piedmontese at Crescentino, Verua, Chivasso, and Chieri. The Allied cavalry was at Villanuova d'Asti. Further outposts on the right led up the Tanaro to Ceva. Charles Emmanuel still retained many battalions in the Alpine passes. The remaining Austrian forces, apart from the besieged garrison of Milan, were at Mantua under von Schulenburg, where von Browne's reinforcements (30,000 men in 13 infantry, 4 cavalry, and 2 hussar regiments) joined them in February, after a tough march over the Alps.

[Von Browne averaged 13 miles a day for a month through snow-covered mountain passes. Unheard of.]

Action began in mid-February. De Maillebois had just come back from Milan, where he had been arguing for a finish to the siege of Alessandria. The Spanish had not agreed, saying Milan must come first (they had the Genoese siege guns and wouldn't release them), but that he could use their forces on the Ticino if Charles Emmanuel tried to relieve Alessandria. Now he learned that the Austrians, under von Browne, had crossed to the south bank of the Po and were on the Secchia River, while Austrian patrols had been seen on the Adda between Cremona and Pizzeghettone. The Spanish had, without his permission (which was not needed) called up their line of communication troops from the Riviera; the French were only with difficulty able to

beat off a Piedmontese thrust from Saorgio, only 8 miles from Ventimiglia.

The Bourbons had to concentrate. But the French could not go to the Spanish, or they would all lose their communications with France. The Spanish were not interested in abandoning Milan. So the only hope appeared to be a treaty with Charles Emmanuel. The marshal bent over backwards trying not to give cause for a resumption of hostilities. Unfortunately, d'Argenson had neglected to give him one important bit of information. The marshal knew that an armistice was to be proclaimed from Turin; his son was the one arranging it. He did not know – and d'Argenson did – that Charles Emmanuel reserved the right to resume hostilities as of March 1st.

Asti

The commandant of Asti was reporting increased enemy activity in his sector. He felt he would be attacked soon, possibly on the 5th of March. De Maillebois ordered him to take precautions, but did not think the roads suitable for the movement of artillery. Moreover, the marshal felt sure the armistice had gone into effect by this time; surely in a day or so he would receive the official word. But none came.

Now de Gages and the *Infante* got wind of the Franco-Piedmontese talks. Apparently they did not hear of them from Madrid. Incensed at French perfidy they refused to send him any reinforcements (though he was still free to use the Spanish under his own command). On the 5th, de Maillebois marched to the relief of Asti with 17 battalions – all he could spare – and arrived there on the 8th, to find the enemy in possession. 9 battalions had been lost.

On the 5th, 31 Allied battalions and 6 cavalry regiments had invested the fortification. Bourbon forces elsewhere were pinned by a series of attacks and demonstrations. The batteries opened on the 6th. The commandant, stuttering vainly about “the new peace treaty”, surrendered once the outer walls were breached on the 7th. De Maillebois withdrew and concentrated at San Salvatore.

[Some historians claim Charles Emmanuel's taking of Asti was treacherous, but neither King Louis or d'Argenson thought so. He had acted exactly as he had explained he would, and as they had been prepared to accept. Low-key negotiations continued with him for some time, until, given the course of events, the presence of the French Ambassador at Turin became an embarrassment. The Spanish eventually (25th March) agreed to the terms of the treaty, though its implementation had been overtaken by events. The failure of the talks hurt D'Argenson's reputation, but he was not finally dismissed until January of 1747: the Dauphin's bride had died in July of 1746 and he suggested a Piedmontese connection rather than a second offer from the Spanish, only to see Louis rebuffed by Charles Emmanuel, an embarrassment Louis could not forgive.]

To the Spanish, the loss of Asti was a prearranged event, part of the separate peace France would soon announce to the world. On the 11th, the Spanish, Genoese, and Neapolitans at Alessandria were all withdrawn to Tortona, thence to march to the aid of the *Infante*. The prince taunted de Maillebois, saying the Spanish could take care of themselves – the marshal was now free to protect his precious lines of communication. Still de Maillebois tried to do his duty. He had to abandon Alessandria, of course. The French were withdrawn over the Tanaro to Sale and Piovera. His immediate concern was that the Piedmontese might reoccupy Bassignana. Once there, they could reverse his own operation of the previous year and divide the Bourbon armies. He urged the Spanish retention of their last western post, at Valenza; from which if needed they could take Bassignana from the rear.

On the 24th of March, the Piedmontese invested Casale, which surrendered on the 28th. By now the Spanish were concentrating in the east, the French along the banks of the Scrivia: around Sale, Novi, and the Lemmo. The Spanish still held Tortona. The Piedmontese were concentrated in the angle between the Po and the Tanaro. The Austrians were advancing up both banks of the Po from the east.

After the middle of March, General von Bärnklaus marched with 15 battalions from Mantua, purportedly against Milan. Von Browne, on the south bank of the Po, started a few days later and marched to Guastella, which he besieged. The *Infante* fled Milan on the night of March 18th-19th. Von Bärnklaus turned aside, crossing the Po to join von Browne at Guastella. The main Spanish army (47 battalions and 53 squadrons) camped at Pavia. Their forces at Parma, 22 miles away from Guastella, attempted a relief but were beaten off. Von Browne then bypassed Parma and cut it off from Piacenza. He was using his light troops to seize the river lines ahead of his main body, turning the enemy's positions one by one.

De Castelar refused to break out and join the *Infante*, who had now crossed the Po and was establishing himself at Piacenza, despite a reinforcement of 12 battalions and two regiments of horse. The *Infante* attempted to come to him, but found the intervening Taro flooded. Von Liechtenstein, joining with Bärnklaus, marched to link up with von Browne, leaving a detachment to watch Piacenza from the north bank of the Po. De Castelar eventually broke out to Chiavari, on the Ligurian coast – he too could not get across the Taro.

[De Castelar was apparently jealous of de Gages and sought to curry favour with the Spanish Queen by defending her hometown.]

These moves occupied the end of March and all of April. The Austrians were not able to cross the Taro either. On May 6th, the *Infante*, back at Piacenza, drove away the Austrian observing force on the far bank of the Po and established a bridgehead there. On May 11th, the Austrians arrived in front of Piacenza.

In the west, de Maillebois and Charles Emmanuel strove to throw each other off balance. Probes were made on the Riviera – one as far west as Sospel – and at the other end of the line, Valenza was besieged. Baron Leutrum commanded both of these actions, riding between the two fronts. In the center of the action the Piedmontese had about 20 battalions. De Maillebois opposed these with 17 French and 3 Genoese battalions. He forced the enemy back by probing simultaneously from Savona and in the center, and pushed them behind the Bormida. Then he feinted against Bassignana. Leutrum took the bait and reinforced his left, whereupon de Maillebois crossed the Bormida above the enemy's right and forced it back. A bridgehead was established on the central Tanaro. But Valenza had surrendered (May 2nd), so the French merely cleared out the ground between the Tanaro and the Bormida, occupying Nizza and besieging Acqui.

The Battle of Piacenza: June 16th 1746

"I want to hope that this event will dispel from my enemies any thought of they may have of completely banishing me from Italy"

Maria Theresa, after the battle.

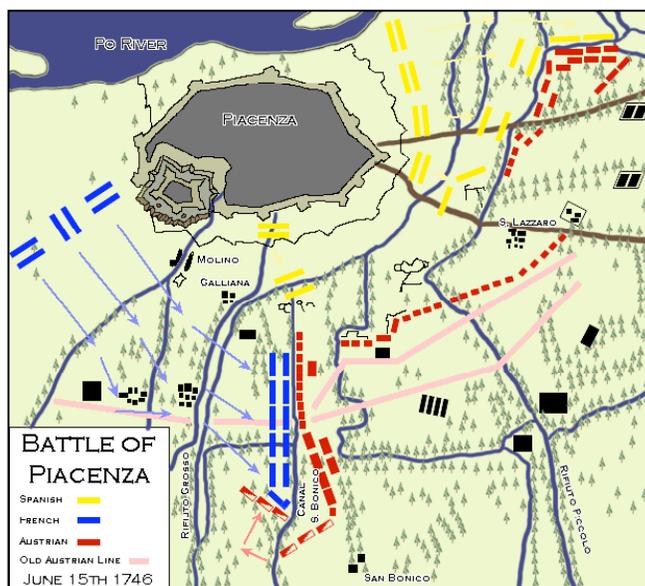
At this point de Maillebois received fresh instructions from Versailles. On April 5th, King Louis had written to the *Infante* in an attempt to patch up the quarrel between Spain and France.

He had stressed that de Maillebois would be under the *Infante's* orders and 'would obey him in all things'; Louis himself would answer for his conduct. The marshal was given the further injunction that he must – regardless of the strategic cost – march to reinforce the Spanish. To put it bluntly, the French King was prepared to sacrifice both his own and the Spanish army, with no hope of a successful outcome, in order to please Elisabeth Farnese.

[The man who suggested putting the French army under Spanish orders was, ironically, that despiser of the Dons, d'Argenson. His goal was still the isolation of Austria, but more than ever he needed Spanish cooperation to achieve it. This new ploy had two halves. One was letting the Spanish control strategic direction in Italy. The other was to yield up Flanders to the Allies at the end of the war as a bargaining chip for Don Felipe – something its conqueror, Maréchal de Saxe, was not excited about.]

The day that Valenza surrendered, Parma did too, and Liechtenstein, the Austrian theatre commander, moved on to Piacenza. On the 15th of May, de Castelar's men arrived at Piacenza from Chivari. The French also sent 10 battalions there (22nd May), and retired from their recent conquests to the vicinity of Novi. The Piedmontese concentrated at Alessandria, crossed the Bormida, and pushed the French back to the Scrivia. A tenuous line of communications still stretched, via the Bochetta Pass, to Genoa and beyond.

French morale had plummeted. In the month they spent at Novi, 15,000 men were lost, mostly from desertion. On June 15th, de Maillebois, after repeated urging from the *Infante*, arrived with his whole army at Piacenza; he had given orders that the line of communication troops, if threatened, were to fall back behind the Var River on the border between France and Nice. Charles Emmanuel followed the French, but was blocked from direct pursuit by a rearguard at the defile of Stradella.



The battle of Piacenza (16th June) was initiated by the Bourbons, who hoped to crush the Austrians in isolation, then turn and defeat the Piedmontese. De Gages, now the Bourbon theatre commander, had fortified a camp on the town's glacis (not wanting to be restricted by poorly constructed walls). He had 25,000 Spanish and 15,000 French. His opponents numbered 45,000 Austrians and 10,000 Piedmontese, but the latter seemed in no mood for fighting and remained at Stradella, while the former were digging in to the south and systematically clearing away Bourbon outposts.

De Maillebois was the one who urged an attack on the Austrians, while the Piedmontese remained a day's march away. De Gages made the actual plan. His center would be weakened, and would hold the Austrians with artillery fire. The French would go in on the right, swinging wide and attack the Austrian left flank, pushing a detachment even deeper, in order to establish a blocking position directly behind the enemy. The Spanish would attack from the left in order to squeeze the Austrian right into the center. The terrain they would be fighting over consisted of fields lined with poplars and muddy canals, often only a few inches deep, but edged with high earthen banks covered in gorse. There were also scattered farm buildings and blockhouses.

The attacks went in at dawn, but the night approach marches had not been without bloodshed. Von Browne (Liechtenstein was nominally in charge, but ill) understood the enemy plan from the start. The commander on the right, Botta d'Adorno, did no more than place his troops on alert the night before, but that was sufficient. Von Browne refused his left (under General Nadasti) behind the Rifiuto Canal. De Maillebois was shocked to find the enemy facing him, and believed a spy had betrayed the plan. As the Bourbons advanced, the Austrian guns began bombarding their camp.

Worse was to follow. Thanks to the flat terrain, the right-hand French formations drifted too far to the left, wedging their neighbours firmly into the Austrian killing ground. De Maillebois worked feverishly to sort things out but his men took heavy casualties. They tried pressing forward, into a withering fire, but were never able to close with the enemy. Then the Austrians launched a counterattack. De Maillebois, in the thick of it, tried to rally his men without success.

The Spanish performed better but achieved no more. They attacked Botta's men repeatedly, the Walloon Guards advancing with bayonets fixed and not a shot fired. Inexorably they gained ground. But the Austrians had a vast superiority in cavalry. Von Bärnklaus's horsemen broke the Spanish line around noon.

The French were broken around the same time. By 2pm the Bourbons had been chased back into their fortifications. Don Felipe hid himself in the city, disguised as a peddler. Lombardy would remain Habsburg for another generation.

This action was the most decisive battle to date. The Austrians lost 3,400 men (700 killed), the Bourbons 13,000 (9,000 Spanish, 4,000 French) – a casualty rate of 33% (4,500 dead, 4,800 prisoners of war). In Reed Browning's words, "Piacenza was an abattoir". If not for the fortress, the Bourbons would have been completely destroyed. As it was, the two sides remained in position.

[For his actions during the battle, the Marquis de Montcalm was to receive (after several months as a POW) promotion to Brigadier.]

The Austrians held a line from the Po to the Rifiuto, the Piedmontese were beyond Stradella on the far side of the enemy, and the latter were stretched between Piacenza and San Antonio on the Trebbia. Along the Riviera, partisan attacks were becoming more frequent, but none had lasting success. De Maillebois ordered some of the troops there brought forward and replaced by fresh troops from France (6 battalions for 6).

The Austrians remained inactive for some time. Von Liechtenstein's illness prompted him to resign (June 18th). His temporary replacement, over the more able von Browne, was

Botta d'Adorno, a Genoese exile who concurrently held an administrative posting that gave him rank over the Irishman. Botta and Charles Emmanuel disagreed on the proper course of action. (Though disagreement would have remained between any two equals vying for command – Botta was a disagreeable person).

[Botta had proven his nature in the diplomatic arena; he was the man whom the Czarina wished to execute for plotting against her while ambassador to her Court. After he imposed his will on conquered Genoa later in the year, sparking its revolt, the general wish among the Allies was that she had succeeded.]

Both allies were of the "golden bridges" opinion, but the Austrians wanted the enemy to move west (into Piedmontese environs) so the Austrians could have another go at Naples, and the Piedmontese wanted them to go north or east (where they would be a problem for the Austrians). De Maillebois solved the argument by leaving on his own terms (in the subsequent operations, it was the French marshal, not de Gages, his nominal superior, who had the helm).

Bourbon Retreat

On the 27th of June, the Bourbons crossed the Po at Piacenza. The plan was to march along the north bank to Pavia, cross again to Tortona, behind the Piedmontese army, and then either resume operations against Piedmont, or go home, as the situation warranted. Covering forces were sent to screen the Adda as far as Lodi. At first all went well, but once in the Milanese again, the *Infante* began to drag his feet. Milan had him mesmerised. De Maillebois returned to help him make up his mind, but wrote to the Minister of War asking to be relieved of command. The Piedmontese meanwhile fell back from Stradella, sent troops to Pavia, and covered the Trebbia.

Fortunately for the Bourbons, the Allies were still in disagreement. Eventually a plan of action was hashed out. Von Browne crossed the Po, and then the Adda, with 30 battalions and 36 squadrons (6 cavalry regiments), plus light troops. Charles Emmanuel's forces crossed the Trebbia eastward to link up with the remaining Austrians covering Piacenza. This left an exit for de Maillebois if he dared to cross the Po once more. But at the moment, he had other issues to deal with.

The Bourbons were now in the patch of land between Milan, the Ticino, the Po, and the Adda. The *Infante*, feckless as always, intended to remain there and commence his rule as King of Lombardy. So de Maillebois established a position on the Lambro, facing east.

The Allies occupied Cremona and Pizzeghettone. But von Browne felt the enemy's position on the Lambro was too strong and hesitated, asking for additional forces. De Maillebois saw an opportunity and began arguing for an attack against him. Then the thunderbolt fell. Philip V was dead.

The Spanish King died on July 9th, 1746. Succeeding him was a son from an earlier – Spanish – marriage: Ferdinand VI. Described by Elisabeth Farnese as "simple-minded", the 32-year old was certainly unskilled in the nuances of diplomacy. But at least one minister, the *Marqués* d'Ensenada, had kept in favour with him. The new king's wife, a Portuguese princess, hated Elisabeth Farnese and loathed the French. Certainly Spanish policy would change. Both his wife and Ensenada persuaded Ferdinand that peace was the best policy.

As a nephew of Charles Emmanuel the new King immediately suggested negotiations (which were not taken up, given the circumstances). But that was the least of the changes. The "wicked

stepmother's" pernicious influence was at an end. Her son, Don Felipe, was playing with an army that did not belong to him.

Ironically, Don Felipe was the reason Spain did not simply pull out. Recalled to Spain, he would have been an embarrassment and a potential threat (Ferdinand lived in fear of assassination, and Don Felipe did not like him). Also, by championing his half-brother's cause, the new King would enhance his own reputation. So, the Spanish remained in arms for the time being.

The Spanish HQ was paralyzed, waiting on instructions from Madrid. Things did not bode well; Don Felipe had been stripped of his title of Grand Admiral (a purely nominal, but lucrative, position). And the Dauphin's Spanish wife, (confusingly named Maria Theresa) had just died in childbirth – D'Argenson pointedly suggesting a Sabaudian, rather than a Spanish replacement.

Two men saved the Bourbon armies: de Maillebois and Botta d'Adorno. Botta still refused to act, so Charles Emmanuel left him covering Piacenza and marched to join von Browne at Santa Cristina (with 15 battalions and 2 cavalry regiments). Arriving on August 2nd, he, too, judged the enemy's position to be overly strong, but now the Allies had the men to conduct a flanking operation. By taking Lodi, through which the Bourbons were routing supplies from the neutral Republic of Venice, the enemy army would be forced to retire.

[Charles Emmanuel had to threaten to quit the campaign before Botta would let him go. This was in part because he intended to evacuate Pizzeghettono and Pontenure on the way, which opened up a route for the Bourbons if they wished to return to Parma – something that would please the Piedmontese just as much as a retreat to Genoa.]

De Maillebois could not persuade the Spanish to attack, but he could persuade them to retreat. A route to Tortona was open, and Botta remained supine. On the 8th of August, the Bourbons began to cross the Po at the confluence of the Lambro and of the Tidone. This was a two-day operation. First, an advance guard was ferried across the Po into a marshy peninsula between the Po and the Tidone. A party from this set off to destroy the enemy's closest bridge over the Po – at Parpanese. The bridge over the Tidone into the peninsula was likewise broken down. Then three bridges were thrown over the Po and the rest of the army crossed. A covering force watched the road from Piacenza to Tortona. Charles Emmanuel was far behind at Borghetto, but Botta rushed from Piacenza (9th August) to catch the Bourbons.

The guard on the Tidone had not been well placed. The Austrians attacked (10th August) and rolled it up, threatening to pen the Bourbons into their neck of land. De Maillebois stemmed and finally repulsed this effort, while the bulk of his army escaped to the west. His rearguard was composed of de Castelar's Piacenza garrison, which had had time to cross to the north of the Po, march along the bank, and cross into the peninsula. Not until the 15th did Charles Emmanuel cross the Po and arrive at Casteggio; Botta had made even less progress, not wanting to put de Maillebois at bay.

[De Maillebois' crossing of the Po was seen as a great feat of arms. Unlike some of the other retreat actions vaunted at the time, it really was both a bold and skilful move.]

On the 11th, the Bourbons were at Stradella, on the 12th at Voghera. They had 88 battalions and 83 squadrons, which however they might have been reduced, was the greater part of the army. At Voghera they met de la Miña, newly arrived (August 13th) with orders to take command, with the *Infante*

specifically placed as his subordinate. Both de Castelar and de Gages were recalled.

The Spanish were infused with a new spirit, but it was not an aggressive one. Their new King had said he intended to carry on the war and see that his half-brothers were guaranteed in their Italian possessions, and that he wanted complete harmony with France. But he refused to use Spanish treasure and blood in these endeavours. De la Miña, who had once stated he would march his army into the sea if so ordered, now had orders to extricate it "without exposing a single grenadier". The *Infante* was instructed to shun his former advisors, and to pay no attention to the French.

[Thanks to the failed marriage proposal between France and Spain, and the suggested substitution of a Sabaudian connection, the Spanish believed King Louis was still negotiating with Charles Emmanuel behind their back.]

Further Operations

Now began the frustration of de Maillebois. Around Voghera and Alessandria the terrain was good for defence, with many rivers and rough ground. By holding here the Bourbons, reinforced (they soon received 13,200 men) could then resume the attack. But of course, de la Miña had no inclination to do any such thing. He forced de Maillebois to agree to retreat to Tortona, allowing the enemy (von Browne with 20,000 men) to cross the Scrivia in safety and approach Novi. The Austrians began to threaten the line of communication with Genoa. De Maillebois wanted to counterattack, but the Spanish marshal refused to see him (de Maillebois was technically his subordinate), sent off the *Infante* toward Genoa, and then told the French he would participate if the *Infante* (also his subordinate and now miles away), ordered him to do so.

De Maillebois sent a Spanish party to hold Novi. De la Miña countermanded this move after the party arrived, and the Austrians took the place. The Bourbons retired to Gavi, but the Spanish kept on marching to Voltaggio. Obviously the campaign was at an end. Novi was the last position from which an offensive could be launched, or Genoa covered. However, the route from Gavi via Voltaggio led to the 7-mile long Bochetta Pass, which might be defended for some time, though it would eventually be outflanked.

[The Ligurian portion of the Apennines only averages 5,000 feet, but the terrain is extremely rugged. The Bochetta Pass was the only practical route through them for a large army, and the defile was so narrow that only three men could march abreast.]

August 22nd. The Bourbons placed their rearguard in the Bochetta Pass and carried on into the Republic. Strong forces had been sent to Oneglia and Savona to forestall Charles Emmanuel, now advancing up the Bormida with 20 battalions; the Austrians were positioning themselves to enter Genoa, with von Browne at Novi and Botta at Tortona. The two Bourbon marshals wrote to their respective governments, explaining that a withdrawal to Nice was the only acceptable course. The same day (24th August), the army began its march home. 7 brigades were left behind to guard the Republic (including all the Genoese troops).

It was also possible that Charles Emmanuel might invade Savoy or the Dauphiné. Therefore, de Maillebois sent back the battalions he had called up from those locations, and tried to hasten his retreat. The army had to pass along what was essentially a 100-mile defile between the sea and the mountains 5-6 miles away. The only road was a mule track above the seacoast, along which the troops had to pass in single file, under constant threat of naval bombardment. Fortunately, there were only two routes by which an enemy could come from the north: from Acqui up the Bormida, crossing the watershed and descending to Savona, or from Alessandria via Ceva

to the Col di Tende, and then down to Albenga or Oneglia. This latter route is somewhat higher and more difficult. Delaying as long as he dared to help the Genoese prepare a defence (a waste of time, as it turned out), de Maillebois sent an able commander (de Mirepoix) to hold the first choke point at Savona.

On the 1st of September the Bochetta Pass fell to the Austrians. Von Browne had taken on the task of clearing it; Botta gave himself sick leave so he would not have his name linked to the coming disaster. The pass was studded with redoubts and von Browne expected 50% casualties. In the event, the Austrians only lost 200 men and probably inflicted more on the enemy. They simply mounted the ridges on either side and turned every position in succession. The job was done in a single day.

Meanwhile, Charles Emmanuel's men probed the approaches to Savona from the Bormida. They were still hampered by the siege of Tortona, which consumed 10 of their battalions, and by the fact that cavalry was unusable in the Apennines.

On the 3rd of September the Bourbon rearguards abandoned their positions and marched toward Savona; the main body was at Voltri. The Genoese, their city already pounded by naval gunfire, promptly surrendered to Botta d'Adorno, who began exacting his personal revenge on the city that had exiled him by levying a huge indemnity (20,000,000 livres, plus requisitions in kind).

[The Austrians lost 300 men and much of their baggage when their camping ground, on the dry bed of a river, was hit by a flash flood. But the city council was divided and no advantage was taken of the disaster.]

On the 6th of September, 10 battalions of Austrians moved on Savona; the Bourbons were at Finale. On the 7th through 9th, Charles Emmanuel raced to Savona, occupying the town just ahead of the Austrians. He had no wish to have to beg his allies for access to the sea. The combined force blockaded the Genoese-held citadel. On the 9th and 10th, a flank detachment of Piedmontese came out of the mountains and made attempts on the still-retiring Bourbon columns, but these were all repulsed.

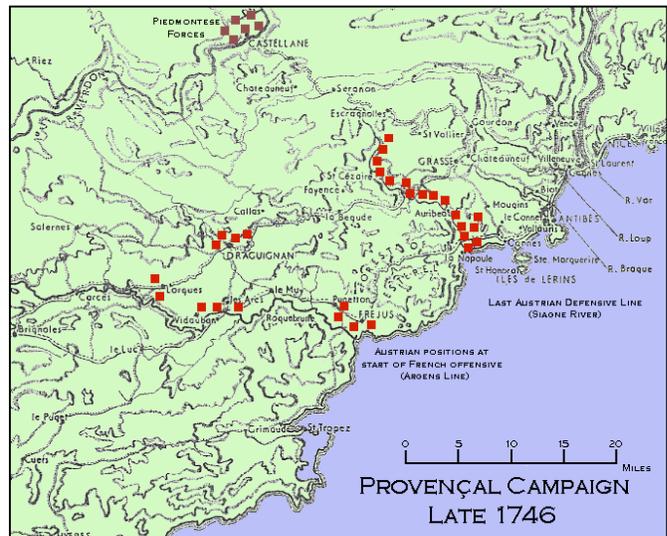
Last Stand

On the 23rd, de Maillebois was at Ventimiglia, where he hoped to make a stand. For once, de la Miña agreed. He hoped that a defence here could save Nice for the *Infante*. So de Maillebois occupied Ventimiglia with 1,200 men, put 8 battalions at Mentone, and 15 battalions on the other possible approach at Sospel, with 17 battalions covering the hills in between. The rest of the army returned to Nice. The defence was ready by the 27th. By the 29th, Charles Emmanuel, with 52 battalions (including Austrian ones) was pressing on Dolceacqua, with another party of 10 battalions moving on Breil (October 4th) from Saorgio.

The commander at Sospel, Campo Santo, feared to be turned, and retreated. This forced the troops on his right to withdraw as well. The entire corps concentrated at Mentone and marched to La Turbie. Charles Emmanuel ordered Ventimiglia to be masked and bypassed, pursuing the Bourbons to Mentone a few days behind them. Still the Bourbons tried a stand – the affair of Mont Agel, a mountain to the east of La Turbie, about a mile from the coast, which rose sharply to 3500 feet.

Positions were dug and occupied behind the hill, but the intent was to use them as a jumping off point for a riposte against the Piedmontese as they advanced. This was due to take place on October 13th, but the plan fell apart. De Maillebois left, as he

thought, sufficient men (400) on Mont Agel to hold it. The detachment commander, however, read the ground wrong. Seeing the enemy moving in strength to the north, he thought he was going to be flanked, and withdrew. The withdrawal observed, the Piedmontese investigated Mont Agel and took it. They also, from there, assaulted and took a French redoubt at La Turbie that was the key to the whole position, forcing the French to abandon their works.



On the 18th of October, after a council of war, Nice was abandoned and the army took up positions along the Var. Two days later Ventimiglia's citadel surrendered. For the rest of the month, the Allies mopped up, and began talks to determine further operations.

Maria Theresa still wanted to conquer Naples, which would be easy now that Don Carlos' friends were gone. Charles Emmanuel had reclaimed most of his original territory (except Savoy) and could either lend a hand, or go back to guarding the Alps. It was at this point that the British weighed in. As paymasters to both the Austrians and the Piedmontese, they felt they had a say. The war in Flanders was not going well. In fact, the war wasn't in Flanders any more; it was on the borders of Holland. They asked for an invasion of the rich, untouched province of Provence. Either King Louis would send substantial forces to defend it, or the Allies would get some payback.

[It is important to note that Marlborough had made a similar suggestion in 1707 and had been thwarted because Eugene had been ordered to attack Naples instead. The British did not fail to mention this bit of history.]

Across the Var, de Maillebois sweated. As long as the combined Bourbon armies, weak as they were, held together, an invasion of Provence seemed unlikely. But on October 30th, de la Miña revealed his intention of taking all the Spanish troops (6,000 men) into Savoy, to hold it as a bargaining chip. Also, 10 battalions of Neapolitans would be returning to Naples.

[This last is an assumption; in the sources, the "Neapolitans" are merely labelled "Spanish" troops, but the numbers match the Neapolitan contingent with the army, and Don Carlos was certainly withdrawing into neutrality again. The Neapolitans in service on the Riviera were most likely his ex-Spanish regiments, still paid for by Spain.]

After the Spanish marched away (the *Infante* to Aix on November 5th), de Maillebois was left with 11,000 infantry, plus the 10 battalions bound for Naples. The country was not suitable for cavalry. The enemy was three times as strong as his. He pulled 3

battalions from Barcelonnette, raised 12 of local militia, and received a promise of 20 battalions from Flanders.

In early November the French concentrated at Grasse, covering the Var with a thin screen. At Grasse, they could hamper a crossing on the middle Var while avoiding being pinned to the coast. A southern thrust against Toulon would also have to take this position into account. Secondary, complementary positions were also established, allowing for a safe retirement. After organising the defences, *Maréchal* de Maillebois was then sacked. King Louis was more concerned to win back Spanish goodwill, and de la Miña refused to cooperate any longer with the marshal. His replacement was to be the *Maréchal* de Belle-Isle.

The Invasion of Provence

By the end of November, the Allies had assembled 42 Austrian and 18 Piedmontese battalions in Nice, plus 5,000 horse (43,000 men). Their communications, from Villefranche to Ventimiglia to Savona (whose citadel was still blockaded) to Genoa, were clear. The last Bourbon fortress in Lombardy, at Tortona, surrendered on November 23rd. On the coast, the Royal Navy presence, substantially augmented, and now under Vice-Admiral Medley, promised ready supplies, fire support, and a secure flank. Von Browne was in command at the request of Charles Emmanuel, now ill with the smallpox.

[The RN was to prove less effective than hoped, due to bad weather; winter is not the calmest of seasons on this coast.]

On November 30th, the Allies crossed the Var in 6 columns, and the French fell back, as prearranged by de Maillebois. His senior commander, de Mirepoix, was running the show. De Belle-Isle was at Avignon, meeting the Spanish, whom he persuaded to reverse course and cover the French left at Brignoles, St. Maximin, and Tourves. De Belle-Isle had also been promised 40 battalions from Flanders, and so decided to abandon the original plan of withdrawal, and simply deploy on the coastal plain, retreating as necessary until the extra manpower arrived. With any luck, the Allies would be taken in flank as they advanced.

De Belle-Isle formally took over command on December 2nd. By the 10th of December, the Spanish were in position (and the Neapolitans were heading off to Marseilles to take ship for Naples). Careful watch was kept on the coast in case of a naval landing. The Allies were at Cannes and Grasse, but soon (December 15th) moved to take Draguigan, and threatened the stockpiles created by de Maillebois at Moustiers and Riez. De la Miña refused to budge until the battalions from Flanders arrived, so de Belle-Isle retreated again, to Puget, with his advance guard at Gonfaron, Pignans, and Carnoules; de la Miña also moved back between St. Maximin and Aix.

Meanwhile, the British had landed troops (about 1,000 Austrians and Sabaudians) on the Isles de Lérins (off Cannes), discovering large quantities of naval stores; securing these islands would ensure a safe wood-and-watering point for the fleet. The young captain who bombarded the defences was recommended for promotion; the 74-year old enemy commandant was stripped of his nobility by his own government and sentenced to ten years in his own prison.

Toulon's defences seemed to be faltering, but the promised forces from the north were dribbling in, and the Allies were not moving. First, Antibes was still in enemy hands. All the siege material had to come from Genoa and be landed in heavy

swells on open beaches (when the weather permitted it to be landed at all). In any case, Botta was requisitioning much of the necessary material for his own private collection. The fleet was bombarding the fortification, but making little progress, thanks again to the weather. Second, materials of any kind were in short supply; the army was having difficulty finding forage, and their heavy-handed methods of requisitioning were only making the locals angry. Third, Genoa was in revolt.

Revolt in Genoa

"Sweetest mortar, dearest mortar, I could embrace you all day, and never tire. Oh, wherever did that ugly lantern-jawed Botta want to have you taken?"

Genoese Hymn to Botta's Mortar

The Genoese Revolt was sparked on the 5th of December 1746, when an Austrian mortar crew saw their piece fall through the pavement of a street as they were wheeling it along. They asked passers-by to help dig it out, and the officer in charge thought to make the "volunteers" work harder by using his stick. This produced a shower of stones from the watching crowd, and the fight was on.

On the second day the mob broke into an armoury and armed itself. Demobilised Genoese soldiers joined them. By the 10th, the governor, Botta d'Adorno, discovered that negotiating with the city council was a waste of time, as they were no longer in charge. He and his men were driven out, over the Bochetta Pass, and (December 11th) the Genoese "requisitioned" all the supplies – and transports – destined for von Browne's army.

By the 31st of December, de Belle-Isle had 85 battalions and 22 squadrons, plus the Spanish with 25 battalions and 14 squadrons – 44,000 foot and 6,000 horse. In early January 1747, he began his counter-offensive. By the 20th, after detaching forces to guard the coast, he had entered the enemy's zone with 50,000 men (6,000 horse). At Antibes, they had barely begun to open the first saps. And, in order to survive, the observation corps had had to spread itself over the countryside.

The first action occurred against the Piedmontese, at Castellane (21st January). They lost their general and 1,000 men. On the 24th Draguigan was reoccupied by the French, on the 25th a line was established to Fréjus. By the 30th, the Bourbons had pushed up to the Siagne River (the best defensive position west of the Var), and had artillery in action against the opposing Austrian batteries. The next day the Allies retreated to Cagnes. They had no provisions, and with storms off the coast were unlikely to get any. On February 1st, de Belle-Isle concentrated at Grasse, while his advance guard relieved Antibes. His brother, *le Chevalier* de Belle-Isle, attacked the Allied rearguard on the Var on February 2nd, following it halfway across the last remaining bridge over the 300-yard wide river before the defenders could set it on fire.

This 12-day campaign cost the French 100 men and the Allies 4,000. De Belle-Isle's high reputation received further confirmation, but so did von Browne's (it was recognised that the British had asked him to perform an extremely difficult task and that failure was due circumstances beyond his control). His army remained intact.

Now the forces of both sides sat watching each other until March (it took until then for the Allies to completely burn that last bridge), at which point they went into their respective winter quarters or marched off to deal with Genoa. The diversion of 40 French battalions from Flanders made no impact on *that* campaign. By

spring they were back in action there, helping *Maréchal* de Saxe win yet another battle, at Laffeld.

DEATH OF A TITAN

“Our situation is such, that if M. de Belle-Isle does not carry out the plan of going by the coast of Genoa, we shall have an irreparable breach with Spain, we shall not enter into Italy at all, and we shall leave Genoa and Naples exposed; and if, on the other hand, M. de Belle-Isle, in obedience to the King’s orders, defers to M. de la Mina’s opinions, the consequence will perhaps be the loss of the King’s army, and in that case I am bound to admit that our complaisance was going a little too far.”

M. de Puyseulx, French Minister of War

The war was winding down. All parties were actively seeking peace and a variety of negotiations were in progress. However, both France and Austria felt an additional push was needed. For the Habsburgs, the Genoese Revolt was a stain on their arms that had to be wiped out. For the Bourbons, the same revolt gave them a doorway into Lombardy and perhaps one last attempt at winning a duchy for Don Felipe. For the other players in the Italian theatre, this last year was just a nuisance. Naples was quit of the war. Genoa was the cauldron and had little choice. The Piedmontese, with their short term territorial goals resolved, tried as best they could to do as little as possible to support their ally Austria.

At the end of the previous winter’s campaign, *Maréchal* de Belle-Isle had redistributed his forces in winter quarters: 18 French battalions to the Dauphiné, 6 to Franche-Comte, 3 to Languedoc, along with the 25 Spanish battalions remaining to de la Miña that were not in Savoy. This left him 71 battalions on the French side of the Var. Opposed to him were 27 battalions under Baron Leutrum. The rest of the defenders had gone to deal with Genoa.

Von Schulenburg replaced Botta d’Adorno in January 1747. Prior to his dismissal, the latter had been told to retake Genoa at any price, and, after recouping his losses at Novi, had advanced and cleared the Bochetta Pass of its militia defenders. When he took over, von Schulenburg conducted some probing attacks, which were repulsed, cheering the defenders. Obviously this was going to be a tough job. To the 24 battalions Botta had left him, von Schulenburg added 32 from von Browne (who was made theatre commander in February), and received a promise of aid from Charles Emmanuel.

Von Schulenburg was not ready to move until April. In February of 1747, de Belle-Isle risked dispatching a group of officers and 200,000 livres by ship to Genoa. Creeping along the coast to avoid British patrols, their arrival electrified the Republic. The Genoese had about 4,000 regulars still under the colours. They had also armed not only the citizens, but the peasants as well. All that was needed was experienced leadership, and this they now received.

In March, de Belle-Isle, who had to wait until May to conduct active operations in his own sector, began sending major convoys of troops to Genoa. Each packet contained about 6,000 men, or 6 battalions. The first was of 4,000 French and 2,000 Spanish, the second of 4,000 Spanish and 2,000 French. Half of the first convoy was lost, but the remainder arrived safely. Accompanying the troops was Brigadier General de Mauriac. He was placed in charge of the defence.

French support for the Genoese was ironic: an absolute monarchy helping a people’s revolution! In the aftermath of the

first eruption of violence against the Austrians, lower and middle class elements had pushed the traditional Senate aside; the revolt was almost as much about reform as routing a foreign army. However, as time went on, it was decided to bring back the Senate in order to please the French, who felt more comfortable dealing with an established oligarchy.

[Genoese society was split between the older aristocratic families and the merchants on one hand, and the newer noble families. The latter were the war party, but had weak representation in the Senate.]

The city of Genoa is nestled between two spurs of a high ridge running down from the north. The key to the defence lay where the spurs joined, at Fort Sperone. The weakest part of the defences lay at the end of each spur, between the high ground and the sea. Each location had its fort: Belvedere on the west and Madonna del Monte on the east.

Von Schulenburg’s offensive began on April 11th, hampered logistically by the Captain-General of Lombardy, Pallavicini – a Genoese who, unlike Botta, had no desire to see his city raped. Von Schulenburg had about 15,000 troops; the defenders had, if armed citizenry is included, 50,000. While the Royal Navy watched the port, columns of Allied troops approached the city on all sides. By the 12th, the Genoese peasant levies had been pushed back and some of von Schulenburg’s forces were quite close to the coast, at the village of Bolzanetto. One column had taken a hill called Due Fratelli, about a mile north of Fort Sperone, another had captured Madonna del Monte. On the 13th, de Mauriac took his tiny force of French regulars and recaptured Due Fratelli, Bolzanetto, and the Madonna.

A parley was then called. The negotiations lasted three days but had no result. Beginning on the 20th, von Schulenburg and de Mauriac consolidated their respective positions. On May 1st the defenders were heartened by the arrival of *Maréchal* de Boufflers, who declared, “show me the danger, and I will seek my glory in protecting you from it”. The marshal proved an effective commander, but was not to last long, dying of smallpox on July 2nd.

In early May the Austrians conducted another series of probes and began clearing enemy militia bands on the upper Scrivia; the key town of Voltri was taken on the 15th, along with the castle of Masone. General Della Rocca also showed up, with 8 Piedmontese battalions. The Royal Navy began unloading cannon on the western flank of the lines, and battery positions were put under construction. To bolster the defence, more Spanish and French regulars were shipped in, landing at La Spezia and Leghorn, and marching overland – obviously the siege lines were not airtight.

Von Schulenburg’s first assault began on the 21st of May. The main effort was made in the valley of Polcevera. De Boufflers launched a series of counterattacks, but after four hours, the Austrians retained the positions they had gained. Little more happened during the rest of the month. The Piedmontese, now 12 battalions strong, took over the Polcevera Valley, and the Austrians the rest of the “circumvallation”.

On the 12th of June, another attack took place, with the object of taking the Madonna del Monte a second time. Three Austrian columns came from the Bisagno Valley, and one of them attempted to take the position from the rear, but was stopped by 2 enemy battalions. The remaining columns pushed down to the sea and forced the defenders back onto the Madonna. With this flank sealed off, von Schulenburg had cannon from British warships unloaded and emplaced, then commenced a bombardment against the enemy entrenchments with a view to conducting a major assault. The Genoese were confident of repulsing it: they had plenty of artillery

themselves, and also 18 regular battalions (11 French, 7 Spanish). But the attack never came.

Operations in the West

Maréchal de Belle-Isle commenced offensive operations at the end of May. It had been decided that the best way of helping Genoa was a) to continue sending small bodies of troops into the city as circumstances permitted, b) to occupy the County of Nice and advance closer to Genoa in order to shorten the time that the troops bound for Genoa would have to spend at sea, and c) to launch a major offensive against Piedmont that would at the least force Charles Emmanuel to call for Austrian aid. If the Austrians reduced their forces in front of Genoa they would be unable to prosecute the siege effectively. The Alpine offensive might also catch Charles Emmanuel between two stools and force the Piedmontese to withdraw from the war.

First, the French retook the Isles de Lérins, offshore from Cannes. This was a handy watering hole for the Royal Navy. On the 24th of May, a storm forced the enemy squadron covering the islands to seek shelter at Villefranche, allowing 30 companies of foot to land unopposed from a collection of galleys and boats. These soon captured the islands, with the help of gunfire from two barques. Admiral Byng, the latest Mediterranean commander, made no real attempt to retake the islands, a fact that counted against him at his court-martial in 1757 (he was shot “*pour encourager les autres*”, as Voltaire put it) for failing to retake the much more important base of Minorca.

Next, de Belle-Isle began the second conquest of Nice. For this he had 48 battalions (including 2 Spanish – the Spanish had promised 33 battalions and 40 squadrons for the operations this summer, despite their desire to disengage). De Belle-Isle had sent additional forces to the Dauphiné (23 bns) in preparation for the third phase of the offensive. His opposite number, Leutrum, with only 27 battalions, thought that the Var was too swollen from the rains to be crossed. He was wrong. On June 9th, the French crossed in 5 columns, losing 9 men drowned, and the Piedmontese retired. De Belle-Isle bridged the river the same day.

On the 11th, the citadel of Villefranche surrendered. Leutrum had orders not to defend Nice, and simply withdrew before the enemy advance. With all the Genoese coastal fortifications in Allied hands, it was not expected that the Bourbons would be able to clear a path to the city in a single campaign.

By the 20th, the Piedmontese held a line between Oneglia and Ormea; the French advance guard was at San Remo. Ventimiglia was laid under siege on the 26th of June and surrendered on the 30th. Already de Belle-Isle had sent back 3 brigades for use in the Dauphiné.

[The speed of the French siege operations was aided by Admiral Byng, who choose to use his entire force in support of the operations at Genoa, rather than actively patrol against French shipping. This allowed the attackers to move their siege guns by sea.]

At this point, de la Miña once again put his spoke in, arguing, given the success of the campaign so far, that the Bourbons should make their main push along the Riviera. This was in accordance with the overall strategic goal, but entirely in opposition to de Belle-Isle’s plans and the dispositions he had made. Deadlocked, the commanders referred the matter to their respective Courts. Eventually, de Belle-Isle, who, though he held the typical French opinion of de la Miña, was always

polite, got his way, and a further 4 brigades (18 French and 2 Spanish battalions) were sent off to the Dauphiné.

[Although de Belle-Isle’s plan was a sound one, he did have an ulterior motive: his brother, le Chevalier de Belle-Isle, had been appointed to command the offensive into Piedmont, and the marshal hoped in this way to win a second marshal’s baton for the family.]

Meanwhile, von Schulenburg had raised the siege of Genoa (June 20th) and sent his siege guns away. Reassured by Charles Emmanuel that the enemy would not break through, he attempted to resume operations, but by July, events elsewhere were serious enough that the siege was terminated anyway.

De Belle-Isle did not receive a reply from King Louis until July 9th. It offered the worst sort of compromise. The marshal was to fall in with the Spanish desire to proceed directly to Genoa, partly to improve Franco-Spanish relations, but mainly to demonstrate Louis’ commitment to the Genoese. Acknowledging the realities of the situation, de Belle-Isle was absolved from any subsequent failure. He was, however, urged also to proceed with the move against Piedmont using the forces so far collected in the Dauphiné, which were insufficient for a decisive operation. The spirit of the age did not offer the option of “resignation in protest”. Besides, the Chevalier still had a chance to win his baton.

It took two days to convince de la Miña that they ought to “just go on with things as they were”. De Belle-Isle’s brother was at Guillestre (14th July) when he received the verdict. On the same day, the Chevalier ordered his troops to move up to their starting positions; the offensive would begin on the 18th.

The Col de l’Assiette: July 19th 1747

For a central thrust, the French had two choices of approach: over the Col de Monte Genève and into the valleys either of the Dora Riparia or the Chisone; or, over the Col d’Argentière into the Stura. They chose the former. Colonel Bourcet, still in evidence despite all the changes of command over the years, devised the plan of attack. It went as follows. The fortress at Exilles was to be besieged and taken. Then the fortress at La Brunette was to be blockaded. Finally, the great works at Fenestrelle were to be invested.

From Briançon, the Bourbons would march to the watershed leading to the Dora Riparia. They would cross this in its upper reaches, then move east along the ridges on the far side to the plateau of de l’Assiette, lying between the valleys of the middle Dora Riparia (containing Exilles and Susa) and the Pragelas (containing Fenestrelle). After taking the enemy’s position at l’Assiette, the bridge between Chiomonte and Exilles would be broken and the fortress invested on the left bank by troops sent down the Riparia. Upon Exilles’ capture, the army would advance by l’Assiette to the Col delle Finistre, northeast of Fenestrelle.

With the taking of Exilles and the masking of La Brunette, the road to Turin would be wide open. The second thrust, against Fenestrelle, was not absolutely necessary to accomplish this, but it was a location that the Piedmontese would be forced to defend at all costs, since, if it were ever taken, the French would demand enormous concessions for its return.

The situation for the French initially looked very favourable. Charles Emmanuel had limited resources. 18 battalions were with Leutrum, and 12 with von Schulenburg. The rest were in garrison, either in the east, at Piacenza and Modena, on the Riviera, at Savona and Finale, or in the chain of mountain forts: Demonte, Cuneo, Fenestrelle, Susa, and Exilles. At the end of June, the Sabaudians had only 3 battalions on the slopes north of Exilles, 1

battalion at Susa, and 6 at Fenestrelle; there were militia bands on de l'Assiette, but that was all.

Demonte and Cuneo had been strengthened since 1744, so the greatest threat lay where the French were actually planning to come, and especially on the poorly protected ridge of de l'Assiette. It was decided to put a substantial force on this ridge, where, defended by fieldworks, it could threaten an advance down the valleys on either side. Thanks to the delay imposed by de la Miña, the Sabaudians had sufficient time to prepare. Several new battalions were brought up; also, gangs of peasants were had at work fortifying l'Assiette, and a chain of signal posts had been arranged.

On June 29th, Lieutenant General de Briqueras was given charge of l'Assiette. He had 4 Piedmontese and 5 Swiss battalions to play with, stationed within two days' march of Fenestrelle, plus a tenth battalion at Turin. Charles Emmanuel also managed to acquire 4 Austrian battalions from the garrisons of Lombardy (they arrived at Pinerolo on July 13th).

In the first days of July, Della Rocca's men at Genoa were pulled out of the line and sent to Leutrum on the Riviera (2 battalions were dropped off at Savona). This was the signal to curtail the siege of the city, and the Austrians, now commanded by von Browne, drew back to Novi, where they left a covering force, and then marched to Piedmont. Thus far, de Belle-Isle's plan had succeeded.

[Von Schulenburg returned to Vienna, complaining bitterly of his treatment at the hands of Pallavicini and the Genoese "clique" in the Austrian administration.]

July 14th. Charles Emmanuel's spies at Mont Dauphin reported the Bourbons were going to attempt de l'Assiette. The 4 Austrian battalions (one was a converged grenadier unit) were sent up into the mountains, and de Briqueras' reserve battalion was posted to Susa. De Briqueras put 9 battalions into the trenches on l'Assiette (4 Austrian, 3 Swiss, 2 Piedmontese) and his remaining 3 between his position and Fenestrelle. Della Rocca was ordered up to Pinerolo, along with 2 battalions from the Cuneo area (all arriving in the Chisone valley on or after the 20th).

Understanding that the enterprise would be harder than first expected but hoping to acquire merit, the Chevalier sent his forces over the frontier in 3 columns: 14 battalions under De Villemur on the right, 15 battalions, 6 four-pounders, and 3 mountain guns, under du Mailly and the Chevalier in the center, and 6 companies of grenadiers plus 6 fifty-man picquets, reinforced by 2 Spanish battalions, all under d'Escars, on the left.

By the 17th of July, the attacking columns were either at Oulx (with the HQ), or heading up via the Col Cotte Plane to the ridge of l'Assiette. Parties were detached to cover the Dora Riparia and Pragelas headwaters, and the intervening ridges, in case of counter attack.

[D'Escars intended to go wide to the north of the Dora Riparia through a side valley, winding up northeast of Exilles, but the snow was too deep, so he returned to Oulx.]

Reconnoitring the Col Cotte Plane on the 17th, the Chevalier found Piedmontese outposts, who were pushed back, but no further evidence of the enemy. Thanks to a thick mist, visibility was down to twenty yards. Later in the day the mist turned to rain, snow, and hail. As late as 1pm, de Belle-Isle could see nothing, so he returned to Oulx. There he heard from de

Villemur that the enemy had no more than 7 battalions dug in on the ridge. Although incorrect, this news gave the Chevalier the impression that he still had local surprise. His orders were for the right and center columns to attack the enemy works on the 19th, while d'Escars moved directly down the Dora Riparia to Salbertrand (beyond which lay Exilles).

The French had bitten off more than they could chew. L'Assiette runs roughly east-west, topping 8,000 feet. Though having a gentle slope to the west, on the south, it drops 3,000 feet in under 2 miles to the Chisone (a side valley of the Pragelas leading directly to Fenestrelle). On the north it drops 5,300 feet in 2 miles to Exilles. The Col de l'Assiette itself is a plateau of an hundred square yards or so, on which the Piedmontese defences were centred. The works ran along the top of the ridge from east to west for about a mile and a quarter, with the col midway along. The defences also ran north-south on the western face of the plateau; this is where the defenders had their camp, the Redoubt of the Assietta. The wall at the western end of the line was called the Butta del Assietta, and that at the eastern end, the Redoubt of the Serin (after the Gran Serin on which it sat). In their nature, the works consisted of a parapet 7-8 feet high, made of layers of fascines, and faced with rough stones. The slopes in front acted as a natural glacis, but were also cleared of obstructions to line of sight and sown with obstacles to movement.

The French bivouacked on and below the ridge on the 18th. Pressed for time, the Chevalier determined to assault the Butta de Assietta with his advanced guard (composed of elements from both de Villemur's and du Mailly's columns), the northwestern side of the Assietta Redoubt with du Mailly's column, (to the left), and the Redoubt of the Serin with de Villemur's column (to the right). This entailed a halt, out of range of the defenders, while de Villemur moved around the position's southern flank to its far end.

A Piedmontese account of the battle tells how the first of the attackers came in sight at 10am, and the enemy's HQ and main body appeared on a knoll to the west by 11am. The French formed up in plain view, and then advanced as planned. They halted just out of carbine range, remaining there from noon until 4:30. The few guns they had were emplaced on a mound and began firing at the closest portion of the works.

At 4:30, du Mailly's column began its advance against the Assietta Redoubt. But in doing so, it had to pass close under the palisade connecting the Butta del Assietta to the Redoubt, which was held by an Austrian battalion (of Traun's Regiment). The defenders waited until the French were within the angle formed by the two positions, and opened a blistering fire, pinning them. Du Mailly tried four times to resume the advance, but to no avail. Eventually, his column pulled back and swung around to the right, penetrating between the Assietta Redoubt and another fortification lower down the slope. But by this time it was pretty late in the day and du Mailly's attack petered out.

In the center, the advance guard approached under cover of a crest, then, dividing into two parties, suddenly appeared at pistol range, the men running to each of the Butta's salient angles. This position was defended by Piedmontese grenadiers and saw ferocious fighting. Here again, four separate assaults were made, one after the other, without pause. The Piedmontese account describes how the French generals led the way in, followed by their officers; once up to the works, the men began pulling out fascines with their hands, or digging at the foundations. The defending grenadiers blazed away at them the whole time, hooking their arms over the palisade to fire down one-handed, or pitching stones over its lip. Some even clambered onto it, risking return fire, so they could stab at the

French with their bayonets. Still the enemy came on, fresh assaults clambering over mounds of their own dead. Eventually, the French began to turn the wall into a slope that could be climbed.

Seeing this from his vantage point on the battery knoll, the Chevalier de Belle-Isle, feeling the decisive moment had come, galloped up. Wounded by a musket ball, he climbed right up onto the palisade, and planted a flag, but as he did so he was shot again and fell dead, joining the column commander, 5 colonels, and a great many other officers. Even so, the French for a time continued their frenzied attack. One man managed to climb to the top, but instantly received a bayoneting for his trouble.

The fight raged through 7pm, when the defending grenadiers began to run low on powder and started to throw more stones. They were also taking casualties, both from the attacking column and from the French battery, which was still in action. It seemed as if the defenders would have to abandon the position.

At the opposite end of the fortification, the Grand Serin, held by a mere 3 Swiss battalions, came under attack by de Villemur's column somewhat later in the day – 12 battalions and 12 companies of grenadiers. This position was critical, first, because it overlooked the rest of the works, and second, because it covered the defenders' path of retreat. Three times the French assaulted with the same élan they were displaying elsewhere; each assault approaching up a steep reentrant that would have been struggle enough to climb without anyone shooting at them. Three times they were repulsed.

With the setting of the sun, the French broke off their attacks and began to retreat. Exhausted and almost out of ammunition, the defenders did not pursue, though the battalion commanders begged de Briqueras for the order. If they had been fit to do so, it is likely the French would have been completely destroyed. As it was the attackers lost a quarter of their force: 94 officers killed and 337 wounded, and 4,553 men killed or wounded. The Allies suffered 219 casualties, including 9 officers. The French did not continue the campaign. On the 22nd, de Villemur, the senior surviving general, withdrew his forces over the frontier.

[The Battle of Assietta is still remembered in Piedmont. There is a monument, and recreations of the battle are conducted. The French, too, won laurels, but they didn't fight a very competent battle. The paper plan, devised by Bourcet, did not call for a frontal assault, but for the fortification to be turned. A number of officers, including du Mailly, protested the Chevalier's orders, calling for a delay to prepare scaling equipment, or to make the attack against a weaker flank. Even Maréchal de Belle-Isle had doubts about putting his brother in charge. Impetuous by nature, the Chevalier, concerned that the weather, or Charles Emmanuel, might cheat him of victory, seized on the first indication that surprise had been retained, did not wait to prepare, and simply tried to rush the position.]

FINAL OPERATIONS

Very little action occurred during the latter half of 1747 and the spring of 1748. The Austrians, were by now the most belligerent party left in the war, and they were having difficulties meeting their recruiting quotas – in fact, they couldn't meet them. Von Browne was told to continue operations against Genoa, but to be chary of his resources; the manpower situation was rendered more acute by the mutiny of a large number of Warasdiners (Croats), who simply packed up and went home (they were more or less entitled to do so by

their terms of service; which, incidentally, were about to be changed for more demanding ones).

Allied Invasion of Nice

In July of 1747, *Maréchal* de Belle-Isle had prevailed on de la Miña to send yet more troops to Barcelonnette (20 Spanish and 10 French battalions). This left 40 battalions in Nice, which was not considered strong enough to hold the current line. They were pulled back to the Paillon River, in front of Nice (July 22nd).

On the 23rd came the news of de l'Assiette. Devastated at the loss of his brother and the failure of his plans, de Belle-Isle thought only of defence. He began recalling units to hold the line of the Var – in all, 40 battalions from the Dauphiné. 30 battalions were left under du Mailly in the latter district, with orders to begin construction of a series of defensive works on the frontier. De la Miña was encouraged to go ahead with a Spanish advance on the Riviera, but even he thought this was silly, and refused.

In August 1747, de Belle-Isle's dispositions were as follows: 11 French and 7 Spanish battalions at Genoa; 31 French and 31 Spanish battalions in Nice; 10 battalions on the Provençal coast, and 48 battalions in the Dauphiné, 18 of which were en route to Castellane and the Var defences. This gave a grand total of 61,000 men (8,000 at Genoa). On the other side, the Austrians had 87 weak battalions (30,000 men) and 6,000 irregulars; the Piedmontese had 57 battalions (27,000 men), plus 10,000 militia and *Vaudois*. An Allied offensive was possible, but the political climate made it unlikely.

King Louis still hoped for a deal with Charles Emmanuel and Ferdinand's Spain was seeking a rapprochement with England. The latter was pressing for another invasion of France, but neither the Austrians nor the Piedmontese were interested. For form's sake, they agreed on a limited offensive: Charles Emmanuel was at least keen to recover Nice, and the Austrians had to be on good terms with the British, since they needed naval support if they were ever to capture Genoa.

Charles Emmanuel proposed concentrating near Cuneo, moving up the Stura and going over the Col della Maddalena. From here, the army could either march on Barcelonnette (not likely, given that it was covered by the impregnable Fort Tournoux) or south via several passes into Nice. The difficulty here was the lack of roads to be found away from the coast; it was possible they could be barred by a defence along the Roja River – ironically, right where the Bourbons *had* been deployed prior to their withdrawal. All approaches were difficult. The best thing about a start from Cuneo, though, was that the Allies could take fewer marches to reach their destination than de Belle-Isle.

In all, 35 Austrian and 16 Piedmontese battalions were assembled for the initial moves. Leutrum commanded the forces destined for Nice. The Austrians, under von Browne, would feint toward Tournoux, while the Piedmontese entered Nice. Attacks were also scheduled against du Mailly's men further north, but in the event these were to have no effect. The advance began on August 23rd. By the 31st, Leutrum was at Dolceacqua.

The Austrians climbed the valley of the Stura and made to cross the Col della Maddalena, but von Browne could do little in the face of strong French opposition. In any case, he had secret orders not to risk his men. The provocation of a French raid gave the Austrians an excuse to act aggressively. An advance guard that penetrated over the col and tried to take on an outpost was surrounded and captured. Von Browne tried to pull in his horns, but the

Piedmontese elements under his command (in a manner of speaking) continued forward, dragging the Austrians with them.

[Von Browne was in a cleft stick politically. He strongly agreed with Charles Emmanuel's ideas, and had promised to use the bulk of his army in the invasion, only to be ordered by Vienna to pull his punches. Genoa was to remain the premier target of the Austria war effort. This he found extremely embarrassing – he was forced to obstruct his own campaign.]

On the 17th of September the rains began; on the same day, a magazine was lost to an accidental fire. Still the Sabaudians wanted to continue. On the 19th of September, the Allies tried to outflank a French outpost blocking their advance, but their ill-coordinated effort had no success. A few days later the weather closed in and they withdrew back to the Stura, their Croats having stripped the French valley clean of all movables.

Ventimiglia

At the end of August, de Belle-Isle was preparing to meet Leutrum. He had 14 battalions at Eze, 37 around Drap, 14 near Châteauneuf, and 8 at Levens – all covering the town of Nice. On September 3rd, the Piedmontese appeared at Mentone, from which the Bourbons withdrew. They also retired from La Turbie, exposing Ventimiglia to the enemy, and it was invested.

By September 4th Leutrum had accumulated 35 battalions at Dolceacqua, with an equal number scattered across northern Nice. On the 10th, de Belle-Isle, certain that the passes were closing for the season, ordered additional reinforcements south (12 battalions from Tournoux). No major actions occurred for the rest of the month. On October 9th, de Belle-Isle suggested the relief of Ventimiglia, but de la Miña, though now instructed to cooperate fully with the French, was reluctant. Such an operation would be risky. A council of war on the 11th decided nothing.

Leutrum, covering the siege of Ventimiglia, was dug in on Mont Grammonde – a 7-mile long ridge running north-south, which averaged 3,000 feet and peaked at 4,600. The western face was impractical for an assault, being almost sheer. The ridge comes right down to the coast, where narrow defiles at the water's edge are the only way through. And this was only a forward line of defence. The main positions were on the Roja behind it. Leutrum's left held the ridge and the line of the Roja. Numerically weak, they enjoyed relative immunity. The bulk of his forces were several miles to the north, where they could march straight into the town of Nice behind an advancing enemy.

But on the 14th of October, de Belle-Isle received word that the enemy was moving into winter quarters. The Austrians in Leutrum's army (surreptitiously handed to him in September by von Browne behind Vienna's back) were headed to Lombardy, and the Piedmontese were pulling in some of their posts. It seemed less likely that Leutrum would be able to flank any Bourbon advance.

In an operation beginning on October 18th, de Belle-Isle pushed 61 battalions to the Roja; on the 19th Sospel was taken. The Grammonde position, held mainly by Austrians, was abandoned. They had had orders to hold, but not to resist a determined attack. By the 20th, the last Allied picquets were driven over the Roja, destroying the bridge at Ventimiglia as they left. The town had been relieved.

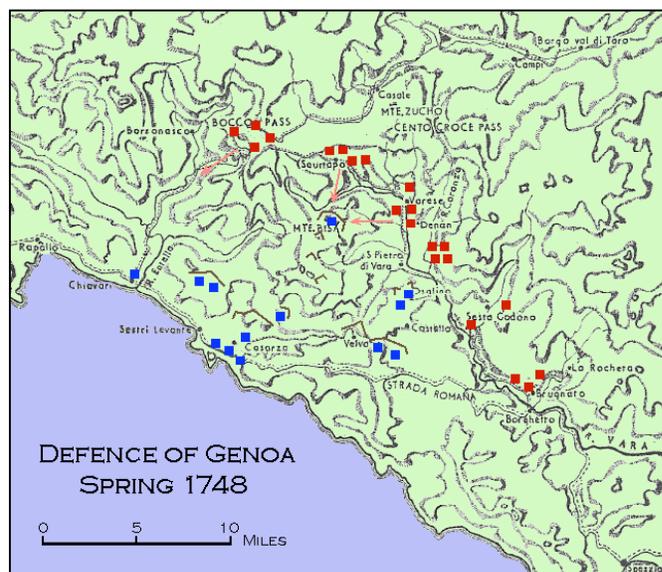
After repairing the bridge, de Belle-Isle discovered Leutrum's main position was too strong, so he made no further offensive moves. Both sides sent their forces into winter quarters at the end of October, leaving garrisons to cover their respective territories.

“Cursed Genoa”

1748 was the last year of the war. In the Low Countries, *Maréchal* de Saxe laid siege to Maastricht in order to force the pace of the peace talks at Aix-la-Chapelle. In Italy, no moves were made on the Alpine Front. Operations could not commence here until May, by which time the preliminary peace treaty had been signed (Maria Theresa on May 25th, Charles Emmanuel on May 31st). However, the Austro-Spanish negotiations were slower, dragging on until June 28th. Therefore, the Austrians kept up the pressure at Genoa, and both the Spanish and French continued to support the Genoese.

Both sides had built up their strength in the latter half of 1747. By February 1748, the Bourbons, commanded since September 1747 by the *Duc* de Richelieu, had amassed 24 French and 8 Spanish battalions, plus at least 3,000 Genoese regulars. After repulsing an Austrian attack on Voltri in January, de Richelieu attempted to retake Savona by landing a portion of his forces from the sea to the west of the town. Unfortunately the landing was botched and the attempt had to be called off. Troops were also sent to help the Genoese in Corsica, where the British were aiding the rebel cause.

Von Browne commanded the Austrians again this year. Having failed to close to Genoa directly, via Voltri, he decided to make a stab at La Spezia. For one thing, nearby Sarzana was the breadbasket of the Republic. For another, there was a greater choice of approaches through the Apennines on the state's eastern flank. It would be difficult enough in any case, as the Army of Italy could only muster some 26,000 men (in Dr. Duffy's words, “the enemy could form entire units from Austrian deserters”).



Von Browne had hoped to begin the offensive in February, but the state of the Administration in Lombardy was as bad as the Army; the officer in charge of the commissariat, one Chotek, has to have been one of the worst ever appointed by Vienna. The English money needed for the siege train was not forthcoming, and their blockade had more holes than a fishnet (to be fair, what were needed with light craft, and these, having to be requisitioned, proved surprisingly scarce). To rub salt in the wound, the Emperor

Francis Stephen, still Grand Duke of Tuscany, saw fit to fill his coffers by supplying the Genoese with Tuscan goods!

48 Austrian battalions assembled at Parma. 14 battalions remained under General Nadasti, who would attack the Bochetta Pass as a diversion. It had also been agreed that the Austrians would continue to help the Piedmontese block the Riviera di Ponente; 13 battalions were withdrawn from there, but 10 fresh ones added, with a promise of 5 more.

[Piedmontese insistence on this matched Austrian reluctance, and contributed to the souring of relations between the two allies.]

Preparations took until May, by which time de Richelieu had assembled 39 battalions, plus masses of armed peasantry. The main body of his army was based at Sestri Levante, and a screen was established in front – militia on the crests of the hills, regulars in the valleys. 9 battalions were kept at Genoa. The triangle of La Spezia, Sarzana, and the Castle of Massa (which was not in Genoese territory) was garrisoned and heavily fortified.

The best approach for the Austrians, under the circumstances, was to crest the Apennines at the Vara Valley, and follow it down to the sea to a point a little east of Rapallo. This would (notionally) cut Genoa off from its food supply. Since it looked as if the Royal Navy might soon cease operations, von Browne was instructed to proceed only as far as he could expect to without aid – i.e. this was to be a political demonstration, nothing more.

Von Browne's advance began at the end of May; on May 28th he was at Borgotaro (56Km from the coast). The main body moved directly from Borgotaro to the Vara. Another column marched to the Magra Valley on its left, and a third toward Borzonasca on its right. The peasants gave a great deal of trouble; there were proclamations, defiance, and reprisals.

On June 4th the Austrians took Varese, in the Vara Valley, but their further advance was temporarily checked. On the 5th, Nadasti advanced into the Bochetta Pass. Von Browne concentrated at Varese (35 battalions), sending 7 other battalions to Borzonasca. He was now ready to take on the main Genoese defensive works on Monte Bisa in the center, which were anchored on the coast at Chiavari. The assault, against 32 battalions of regulars and 8,000 militia, went in on the 9th and got nowhere.

De Richelieu was about to launch a counterattack on the 10th when he received word that hostilities would soon be suspended, so he sent to von Browne for a parley instead, offering an immediate armistice. This was agreed upon, though on the 12th, the Austrian forces not under von Browne's direct control (Nadasti and the forces at Borzonasca) launched simultaneous attacks in their sectors, both of which failed. De Richelieu's men, for their part, took an Austrian position around the same time, and on the 13th, an annoyed von Browne ordered a general advance; one element of the army actually reached the coast on the 14th. On June 15th, hostilities were completely suspended, but not before a horde of Genoese peasants had tried to storm the Austrian coastal positions. It was the last act of war.

Aix-la-Chapelle

By the final terms of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (actually, like most such documents, a collection of bilateral agreements), Don Felipe was awarded Parma, Piacenza, and Guastella – a victory paid for by French successes in the Low Countries. Elisabeth Farnese had to be satisfied with this (though the new Spanish administration was not – they invoked Fontainebleau, to no avail). Modena was restored to the d'Este family, under close Austrian supervision. Genoa retained her pre-war territories intact, while Piedmont gained the portions of the Milanese ceded in 1743 in the Treaty of Worms, except for certain lands belonging to Piacenza, which were given to Don Felipe. Charles Emmanuel also recovered Savoy and Nice (both more of a liability from a military standpoint). Maria Theresa lost territory not only in Italy, but more importantly, the rich province of Silesia), but secured her inheritance and enhanced her reputation. France received nothing, not territory, not financial compensation for her efforts, not even Spanish goodwill.



M. Charles Louis Auguste Fouquet, Maréchal le Comte de Belle-Isle (1684-1761)



Maréchal Belle-Isle was one of the prime movers, perhaps *the* prime mover, of the war of the Austrian Succession – certainly as far as the French were concerned. He was born at Villefranche de Rouergue, the grandson of Nicholas Fouquet, Louis XIV’s Superintendent of Finances, the man made famous by Alexandre Dumas’ portrayal in *The Man in the Iron Mask* (you remember, he was arrested by d’Artagnan for throwing more lavish parties than the King – a true case of *lèse majesté*). Although the son lived in disgrace, by keeping out of politics he enabled the grandson, the present Belle-Isle, to prosper in a military career. Colonel of a dragoon regiment in 1708, Belle-Isle fought in the War of the Spanish Succession, becoming successively a Brigadier and (in 1718) a *Maréchal de Camp*. Fought in the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-19), being present at the capture of Fontarabia (1718) and St. Sebastian (1719). Belle-Isle was imprisoned in the Bastille when the Duc de Bourbon took office as prime minister, and was later exiled to his estates. Under Cardinal Fleury, however, he was restored to favour and made *Lieutenant Général*. Fought in the War of the Polish Succession, under James Stuart’s brother, *Maréchal* Berwick, and participated in the capture of Trier and Trarbach, as well as the siege of Phillipsburg (1734). At the end of the war, Belle-Isle, in recognition of his military and diplomatic services (he assisted at the negotiations over the fate of Lorraine), was made perpetual Governor of Metz, Toul, and Verdun. By now he had become a principle advisor to the government.

Thus, in 1741, as a new *Maréchal de France*, he was appointed France’s plenipotentiary to Germany in order to carry out a grandiose reorganisation of the “decaying” Holy Roman Empire by supporting the Wittelsbach bid to replace the Habsburgs on the imperial throne. Ultimately he failed miserably, less from lack of ability (which he had in spades) than from a lack of resources – given the limitations of the *ancien régime*, even the most powerful nation in Europe proved incapable of effecting the changes that Napoleon would later institute with the help of the *levée en masse*. The action for which Belle-Isle became most famous was the Retreat from Prague. Despite the heroism and skill demonstrated here, Belle-Isle was held up to ridicule in France and his star went into decline. Things were not helped by his capture by the Hanoverians in 1744. After a year in Britain, Belle-Isle was exchanged and sent to command on the Piedmontese front. Here he restored a demoralised Army of Piedmont, and, with inferior forces, defeated a combined Austrian-Piedmontese offensive, though an attempt to break through the Alps by his brother met with defeat at l’Assietta in 1747.

At the peace, Belle-Isle was created a Duke and Peer of France. By 1757 he had restored his credit at Court and was named Secretary for War, a post he held for three years. In this position, Belle-Isle managed to implement many much-needed reforms – such as suppressing the awarding of colonelcies to boys who were too young to command. He also instituted the Order of Merit. He died at Versailles, 26th January, 1761. An intellectual with literary tastes, Belle-Isle was elected a member of the French Academy in 1740 and founded the Academy of Metz in 1760. His only son being killed at Crefeld in 1758, the Dukedom lapsed with his death.

Belle-Isle had a younger brother, Louis Charles Armand Fouquet, known as le Chevalier de Belle-Isle (1693-1746), who was his partner in his endeavours (they were nicknamed “Thunder and Lightning”). A junior officer in the War of the Spanish Succession, the Chevalier served as a Brigadier during the Rhine-Moselle campaign of 1734, and won promotion to *Maréchal de Camp*. The Chevalier carried out political missions in Bavaria and Swabia during 1741-42, was promoted to *Lieutenant Général* in 1743, campaigned in Bohemia, Bavaria, and the Palatinate in 1742-43, and was arrested with his brother in 1744. On his release, the Chevalier again accompanied his brother and was given a command in the Army of Piedmont. He was killed leading the assault on the Col de l’Assiette position, 19th July 1747.

Thomas Carlyle’s epitaph on *Maréchal* Belle-Isle is worth quoting at length:

“A man of such intrinsic distinction as Belleisle, whom Friedrich afterwards deliberately called a great Captain, and the only Frenchman with a genius for war; and who, for some time, played in Europe at large a part like that of Warwick the Kingmaker: how has he fallen into such oblivion? Many of my readers never heard of him before; nor, in writing or otherwise, is there symptom that any living memory now harbors him, or has the least approach to an image of him! “For the times are babbly,” says Goethe, “And then again the times are dumb –

*Denn geschwatzig sind die Zeiten,
Und sie sind auch wieder stumm.*”

“Alas, if a man sow only chaff, in never so sublime a manner, with the whole Earth and the long-eared populations looking on, and chorally singing approval, rendering night hideous, – it will avail him nothing. And that, to a lamentable extent, was Belleisle’s case. His scheme of action was in most felicitously just accordance with the national sense of France, but by no means so with the Laws of Nature and of Fact; his aim, grandiose, patriotic, what you will, was unluckily false and not true. How could “the times” continue talking of him? They found they had already talked too much. Not to say that the French Revolution has since come; and has blown all that into the air, miles aloft, – where even the solid part of it, which must be recovered one day, much more the gaseous, which we trust is forever irrecoverable, now wanders and whirls; and many things are abolished, for the present, of more value than Belleisle! –

“For my own share, being, as it were, forced accidentally to look at him again, I find in Belleisle a really notable man; far superior to the vulgar of noted men, in his time or ours. Sad destiny for such a man! But when the general Life-element becomes so unspeakably phantasmal as under Louis XV, it is difficult for any man to be real; to be other than a play-actor, more or less eminent, and artistically dressed. Sad enough, surely, when the truth of your relation to the Universe, and the tragically earnest meaning of your Life, is quite lied out of you, by a world sunk in lies; and you can, with effort, attain to nothing but to be a more or less splendid lie along with it! Your very existence all become a vesture, a hypocrisy, and hearsay; nothing left of you but this sad faculty of sowing chaff in the fashionable manner! After Friedrich and Voltaire, in both of whom, under the given circumstances, one finds a perennial reality, more or less, – Belleisle is next; none FAILS to escape the mournful common lot by a nearer miss than Belleisle.”

Taken from Carlyle’s History of Frederick the Great, Book XII, Chapter Seven

NATIONS & ARMIES

“Let us have a respectable army, and such that will be competent to every contingency.”

George Washington

THE BOURBONS

“The good harmony that [the French] lauded as so useful to the two crowns was in substance only a blind acquiescence that they sought from us.”

Duca de Huescar, Spanish Ambassador to France

France

The *Armée du Roi* of the 18th Century is an immense topic, still not fully documented, and only a few notes can be made here.

France was unquestionably the most powerful nation in Europe. And it truly was a nation, even if the Bretons did choose to speak their own language and Swiss mercenaries were considered to be the only reliable elements in the Army. By developing a bureaucracy to assist the King and harnessing the unruly nobility to his service, a succession of brilliant officers of the Court (most prominently Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin) forged a unified central administration. Louis XIV had used his machinery of power to wage wars of aggrandisement and dynastic ambition; he nearly beggared the country doing so, but he made Europe tremble. Louis XV gave the country a breathing space, but as he matured, France went into decline and a power vacuum appeared in Germany. France’s old enemies began to think of revenge and new powers were on the rise.

The Bourbons were a relatively new dynasty for France. They were descended from Louis I, *Duc de Bourbon* (1327-1342), who was the grandson of the Capetian French king of that day, Louis IX. The Capetians died out in 1328, but a senior branch of the family, the Valois, blocked the accession of the Bourbons. Historians thus call the Bourbons the “third race” of French kings. It was the Valois who promoted the Salic Law, which said that inheritance could only pass through the male line, and under this law, it was not until 1589 that Henry IV of Navarre became the first Bourbon monarch of France.

Prior to their accession as kings, the Bourbons ruled the region later known as the Bourbonnais, plus La Marche and the Vendôme. In 1503, Charles de Bourbon-Montpensier became *Duc de Bourbon*; he was famous as Constable of France, and also because of his arrest for treason. The line of La Marche-Vendôme then took over the title. This family continued to divide and subdivide while acquiring new holdings; the Vendômes, who were also heads of the House of Bourbon, acquired Navarre (as “king-consort” to the Navarrese queen) in 1555. The son of this marriage was Henry IV of France (1553-1610, King in 1589). Henry himself is famous for changing his religion in order to become King. The equally famous Condé family, who owned Soissons and Conti as well, were descended from an uncle of Henry IV.

The heirs of Henry IV ruled from 1610 to 1792. As everyone knows, the monarchy was “suspended” during the Napoleonic era – according to diehard monarchists, Louis “XVII” ruled through this period. His son, Louis XVIII, ruled after the Napoleonic wars, followed by the reactionary Charles X, and a pretender, Henry V. The House of Orléans replaced the Bourbons in 1830, with the accession of Louis-Philippe

(reigned 1830-1848). The Orléans are related to the Bourbons. The Brazilian Portuguese-French dynasty of Bourbon-Braganza traces its descent through Louis-Philippe. The Bourbons also supplied monarchs to Spain (1700-1808, 1814-1868, 1874-1931, and from 1975 on), Naples and the Two Sicilies (1734-1808, 1816-1860), Etruria (1801-1807), and dukes to Lucca (1815-1847 and Parma (1731-1735, 1748-1802, and 1847-1859).

The accession of a Bourbon (Philippe *Duc d’Anjou*, a grandson of Louis XIV) to previously Habsburg Spain in 1700 sparked the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713). The Italian Bourbons are also of Spanish origin; Parma and Naples were of some importance in the War of the Austrian Succession.

The monarch who reigned during the War of the Austrian Succession, Louis XV, *le Bien-Aimé* – Louis the Well-Beloved – was born in 1710, and ruled from 1715 to 1774, though during his minority the régime was controlled by a Regent, the Duc d’Orléans (the King’s cousin twice removed). It should be noted in passing that Louis’ grandfather had married into the House of Wittelsbach, and that his father was Duke of Savoy. He himself married the new Duke of Lorraine’s daughter; this being the old King of Poland, Stanislaus Leszcinski. In other words, the French King had connections.

Louis has been described as an indolent monarch who had great potential, but never used it. He displayed flashes of leadership on the battlefield, but preferred women and the chase as his “active” pursuits. At other times he was sunk in lethargy. A large part of the problem lay in his upbringing. Orphaned at age five, he had been a pawn between the powerful Duc d’Orléans and the even more powerful Madame de Maintenon. To keep him out of their hair, his education was entrusted to the Jesuits. A common tag of that order was “give us the child until age five, and we will give you the man”. As a result, Louis grew into a deeply religious person, but his religion cast back to a Medieval-seeming superstition.

A pious king would have been a good thing, but in order to keep him under control, the worldly factions at Court saw to it that he received an education from them as well. Thus Louis was constantly going off on a tangent. His latest mistress would encourage his martial ardour; Louis would go to the war. Tired of camp life, Louis would return to the fleshpots of Paris. Remorse for his conduct with another mistress would send her to a convent and him back to the war. And so on.

Up until 1743, France was in effect governed by Cardinal Fleury, a man who took office at the age of 70 and died at the age of 90. Since Louis’ early youth the Cardinal had acted as his mentor and was a restraining influence on him. Under the Regent, domestic affairs had been somewhat unsettled by Court intrigue until Fleury stepped in. In general, the government throughout his tenure was feeble but predictable. There was no attempt to “do great things” as in the time of Louis XIV. With the death of the Cardinal in early 1743, it was generally felt that the reins had been loosened, and that it was time for Louis to prove himself a true king. Men of greater daring and ambition, like the Belle-Isle brothers and the visionary new Foreign Minister d’Argenson, came to the fore.

In this new period, Louis chose as his primary counsellor the Duc de Noailles. This man, one of France’s better marshals, has been described as a farsighted and able man, and he proved so in the realms of both politics and strategy. But Louis had to be driven to greatness by his associates, who wanted him to behave like his great-grandfather the Sun King. Thinking he was copying his ancestor’s grand manner, he rarely informed his ministers of his plans, nor kept himself informed of theirs. In consequence, each

government department ran itself in isolation from all the others, ministers jockeying for the King's ear (the last man to talk to him usually getting what he wanted). As d'Argenson once wrote:

“never have the Ministers been so deeply at variance as now. If they are in harmony it is by chance... Such ministerial jealousy... would be an advantage to a Prince who should administer, overrule all others, and make plans freely on his own account. But, instead... what reigns is a vacuum”.

Louis took the field every year from 1744 to 1748, but after contracting a near-fatal illness in the summer of '44, did not make a habit of prolonged stays at the front. In general, he let his marshals conduct affairs as they sought fit, with only minor, yet still irritating, interference – the summer campaign generally could not open until he had arrived in camp, for example. Germany did not see much of him, since Flanders was a safer stomping ground, but he did travel down to Metz in that fateful summer of '44, in order to deal with the Austrian menace on the Rhine. With his death appearing immanent, the French counteroffensive lost momentum, allowing the Austrians to escape and deal with Frederick of Prussia.

An older and even lazier Louis took yet less interest in the campaigns of the Seven Years War. In fact, his former mistress and close friend, Mme. de Pompadour, had a greater influence on that war than he did. He had little interest in domestic affairs either, and under his rule, taxation and the costs of bureaucracy rose tremendously, despite efforts at reform, while the aristocracy gained back some of the strength they had lost under Louis XIV. Although he was not the author of the phrase *“après moi, le déluge”*, it aptly describes his reign. Only a general prosperity among the common people held back the revolution that was to come with the next king.

The French Army

Louis XIV bequeathed to his great-grandson Louis XV one of the mightiest armies the western world had ever seen. It was a curious blend of the progressive and the feudal. Weapons, equipment, uniforms, all were standardised. Efforts were made to practice large-scale manoeuvres on a regular basis. On at least one occasion it is recorded that storming parties carried out dress rehearsals on full-scale mock-ups of the sections of the fortress they were to assault. Very modern indeed. A formidable artillery train was established, strictly under army control. In theory the medical services were among the best in Europe – enough so that King George abandoned his wounded at Dettingen, trusting they would receive better care from the French.

But the regiments were still the property of feudal magnates owing individual fealty to the King, jealous of their privileges and envious of their rivals. A regiment might be the best-dressed formation in the army, and yet be no better than a rabble off the square (or on it, for that matter). Or its men might be ferocious fighters, but much given to looting. Among the international clique that was the European officer corps, the French were considered dauntless in the attack, but lacking tenacity in defence. Army wisdom said that the men always knew when they were beaten and would never fight to the bitter end.



The line infantry was divided into home and foreign regiments (*régiments étrangere*), of which there were about 140 by the war's end (very few new regiments were raised during the war). Men were supposed to be enrolled into the regiments belonging to their country or province of origin, except for the Alsatians, who could join French, German, or Swiss units. Walloon and Lotharingian units were treated as native French. Each regiment had from one to four battalions (later standardised into two battalions for most and four battalions for the more senior and/or larger – *Régiment d'Irlandois* had six).

Brigades were invariably composed of four battalions for native French and six battalions for foreign; regiments were not normally split. Thus the Irish constituted a brigade, as did large regiments such as Picardie, while some brigades would be composed of regiments of three and one battalions, and so forth. Foreign and native regiments rarely brigaded together.

Generally, battalions averaged 500 effectives prior to battle. After a battle the unit might be as weak as the one whose strength after Roucoux (1746) is listed at one officer and four men! Battalions were divided into twelve companies of fusiliers of 42 men each, and one of 48 grenadiers. Not only were the grenadiers often detached to form assault battalions, they were also required to act as skirmishers.

In 1740, there were 57 regiments of line horse (including six *régiments étrangere*), 3 hussar regiments, and 15 dragoon. These numbers remained fairly constant throughout the war, except for the hussars, which were expanded to 7 regiments.

The *“chevaux-légers”* (line) regiments were organised into two squadrons apiece, with each squadron being divided into four companies of 32 men. Exceptions were *Colonel Général* (the senior regiment) with three squadrons, and *Les Carabiniers du Roi*, with ten squadrons of 120 men.

[One regiment, Royal-Cravattes – Royal Croatsians – originated the use of the cravat as a fashion statement.]

The dragoons were given lighter horses than the line, and organised as mounted infantry. Their regiments consisted of five companies each, and could number up to 1,000 men in all. They were also equipped with muskets rather than carbines, and dressed in a similar fashion to the infantry, with concessions to the needs of the horses. They were equipped to fight with swords on horseback as well.

The hussars naturally attracted the wilder and more dashing spirits, and the regiments were used as scouts and skirmishers. The men were dressed and equipped in typical hussar fashion, and the units were quite large, with 7 squadrons apiece.

There were a variety of foot guard units, but only *Les Gardes Françaises* and *Suisses* served in action. Except for their fancier uniforms, they were equipped as line troops. The French Guards consisted of 6 battalions, and the Swiss of 3 (a few sources say 4 Swiss).

As with the foot, the king's mounted guard included a number of ceremonial units, but, when Louis took the field in person, so did his *Maison du Roi*. All its members were of noble stock, excepting the *Grenadiers à Cheval*, who, being commoners, were treated as mounted infantry and wore black stocks in contrast to the white cravats of the nobility. The *Maison* were the only true heavy cavalry in the French army.

The *Garde du Corps* consisted of four squadrons (companies) of 336 men and formed the King's Escort. Sister units were *Les*

Gens d'armes du Roi, consisting of a single squadron of 300 men, *Les Chevaux-légers du Roi* the same, and *La Gendarmerie de France*. Also known as *La Gendarmerie du Roi et des Princes*, this unit consisted of sixteen companies (ten of gendarmes and six of chevaux-légers) of 175 men each. The men were dressed in red and mounted on the best blacks available. This unit was not technically part of the Guard; its nearest equivalent would be the British Royals – neither Line nor Household. *Les Mousquetaires de la Garde* consisted of two companies of 300 men, one mounted on grey horses, the other on blacks. The musketeers were a separate class of horsemen, neither *chevaux-légers*, nor dragoon, nor cuirassier.

The *Régiment Royal-Artillerie* dated from 1670, and ranked as the 46th regiment of the infantry of line. In 1720 it was organised into five battalions. Depôts were at Grenôble, Besançon, Metz, Strasbourg, and Fère. The first three locations also fielded 100-man fusilier companies (as “train guards” – fusils being safer to use around gunpowder). Each artillery battalion had eight companies of 90 men each. Five companies were gunners who served both the battalion guns and the field pieces (with help from the infantry); two companies were called bombardiers and were responsible for the mortars and howitzers. Each battalion also had a company of sappers and labourers.

By the 1730's the ordnance had been reduced to five calibres, of which only three were field pieces: 4-lbers, 9-lbers, and 12-lbers. However, standardisation was still not complete when war broke out. In particular, the gun carriages remained atrociously awkward and heavy and batteries could only be moved about the battlefield with great difficulty.

There were 226 engineer officers in 1741. The arm, a branch of the artillery, was well respected and a path of choice for the career officer. The Engineer Corps had two sapper companies of its own, and its own labourers. Contrary to what might be expected, labourers were supposed to be of “above average intelligence”, as they might have to take over from the gunners or sappers.

Spain

Spain under the Habsburgs, the Spain of the Armada, Spain in her Golden Age, was a geographic term, not a state. Until the 16th Century, in fact, the Iberian peninsula had four independent states (Castile, Aragón, León, and Navarre), each with its own language, laws, administration, and army. Portugal, Catalonia, and the Basque country fluctuated between semi- and full independence. The Habsburgs were “kings of the Spaniards”, not “kings of Spain”. The King ruled his provinces through the Parliament, or Cortes – a body of extremely fractious nobles and clergy. Under the later Habsburgs, some centralisation was begun, but there was little “national” sentiment; the Emperor Charles V, for example, was a Belgian, and no one saw anything strange in this.

Spain's vast empire contributed greatly to the growing prosperity of Europe, less so to Spain herself. The influx of silver from Peru generated massive inflation, compounded by incessant warfare as the Habsburgs attempted to defend their possessions from all comers. Plague also took its toll. And the entrenchment of the “old aristocracy”, their exemptions from taxes and service, the vast grants of property to the similarly exempt Roman Catholic Church, placed the burden of the economy squarely on the backs of the peasants.

Bourbon rule led to the establishment of a centralised, Absolutist state; even so, the Catalans and the Basques retained a measure of independence (Portugal had broken away much earlier). Spain's decline was halted, but she had lost her great power status and eventually became a European backwater. However, at the time of the War of the Austrian Succession she was still powerful, still influential.

Philip V "*El Rey Animoso*" (1683-1746) was placed on the throne of Spain by his grandfather, Louis XIV of France. Born at Versailles, the second son of the Dauphin, he was not intended for the throne, but the Sun King believed he could use him as a cats-paw to acquire the wealth of the Spanish Empire. The last Habsburg ruler had died, and Philip had a legitimate claim through his grandfather's half-sister. Nevertheless, this act provoked the War of the Spanish Succession, as the Emperor Charles VI disputed the claim in favour of his own. Philip earned the title "*El Rey Animoso*" when he rallied the people of Castile to his side (the term means “the inspired”). The Catalans, incidentally, supported Charles VI.

Sombre and devout, silent and cold, solitary and suspicious, Philip suffered from hereditary melancholia (his mother was a Wittelsbach – it was the family curse). At times he experienced bouts of manic depression that made it impossible for him to govern. Deliberately taught, as a younger son in France, how not to be a king, he lacked the confidence necessary to rule.

His only outlets of pleasure were hunting and sex (this last the “family curse” of the Bourbons). Philip's need to be in continuous possession of a woman, coupled to a conscience (and a confessor) that forbade him to take mistresses, placed him under severe mental and physical strain while campaigning in Italy in 1702; after that he refused to be separated from his wife for an instant and in the eyes of his Court, “became her slave”.

When his first wife, Maria Louise, died in 1714 (the doctors were forbidden to touch her and had to make their diagnosis from a distance), Philip had to be torn from her bedside. As a widower he went into seclusion and his health declined. Fortunately his needs were well understood in the courts of Europe and a new wife was speedily found for him. This was Elisabeth Farnese of Parma (1692-1766), a masterful woman who took complete charge of Philip's life. Anyone who wanted to meet the King had to do so through her. She paid a price in the bedchamber to accomplish her dominance, but it was total. The couple remained inseparable for thirty years (she even accompanying him on campaign in 1719).

Elisabeth was dedicated to the recovery of Spain's Italian possessions, and this vision became Spanish policy. Eventually two of her sons became respectively King of Naples and Duke of Parma; a third son became Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain. Initially she ruled through favourites, but as time went on she took less and less council; her early experiences with advisors were not good.

Philip's melancholia increased yearly. In 1717 he had a serious attack, amounting to temporary madness. Only the Queen and his confessor were admitted to his presence (the Queen was not permitted to leave it) – his confessor because Philip believed he was being punished for his sins. In 1718 he recovered somewhat, but the ordeal had left him prematurely aged, shrunken and stooped.

The French Ambassador, Saint-Simon, visited him in 1722: “He was very bent, shrunken, his chin poked far in advance of his chest; he planted his feet straight, touching one another, and though he moved quickly enough, his knees were more than a foot apart. His

speech was so formal, his words so drawled, his expression so vacuous, that I was quite unnerved.”

In 1724 Philip abdicated in favour of his eldest son (from his first marriage), Louis I. He cited an unfitness to rule and an intention to withdraw from the world and prepare himself for death: “Thank God I am no longer a King, and that the remainder of my days I shall apply myself to the service of God and to solitude”. But his son died after seven months and the Queen persuaded him to resume the throne.

His depression reappeared in 1727, when he became alternately lethargic and violent towards not only his doctors and the Queen, but himself as well. He became delusional, saying he could not walk because his feet were of different sizes. He refused a barber for eight months; pen and ink were removed from his reach so that he could not write a second abdication (apparently he did write one, but the Queen destroyed it secretly).

Beginning in the 1730's, Philip imposed a strange routine on his well-ordered Court. He would go to bed about 8am, rising at noon for a light meal. At 1pm he would go to mass, then receive visitors. Evenings were spent looking out the window, playing with his collection of clocks, or being read to; later there would be music or theatricals. State business was conducted around 2am until 5am. He would then take supper and go to bed.

In 1732 Philip suffered another major attack. He remained in his bed, not even rising for meals, and refused to change his clothes for 19 months. His ministers had no access to him and the government ceased to function. His son Ferdinand, who would eventually be his heir, eventually roused him, but the Queen then made Philip issue an order forbidding Ferdinand or his wife to appear in public – fearing they would supplant her.

Philip's last years were more than ever orchestrated by his wife, who tried to keep his melancholia at bay with diversions such as music, but who also made sure that everything he learned of policy and events came through her. From 1738 his seclusion was tightened; his bouts of madness growing too strong for people to be witness to. In this state he suffered a stroke on July 9th, 1746.

His successor, Ferdinand VI (1713-1759), sought to disengage Spain from her martial follies, and to institute a number of administrative reforms. Most of the old régime were removed from office – except for those like the *Marqués* d'Ensenada who had curried favour with the rising star before Philip's death.

Unfortunately Ferdinand too, suffered from manic depression; he was also intensely suspicious and fearful of assassination. His wife, Barbara of Portugal, was neurotic and asthmatic, living in constant fear of sudden death, and an even greater fear of poverty (naturally, she amassed a fortune in consequence). Despite her unattractiveness, both mentally and physically, he grew very fond of her and, by 1732, completely dependent on her. Shunted aside under the rule of The Farnese, the couple's position at Court had been extremely precarious. They were shunned, confined to their quarters except on state occasions, and deliberately placed in antagonism with the Queen's own sons.

Ferdinand had no great ability, but he was at least Spanish, with a Spanish Court, and therefore supported by the people. At the same time, like his father, he was kept away from the actual

workings of government, Barbara serving as intermediary. Since the government was bent on peace, extra revenue became available that increased the King's popularity: tax relief, famine relief, earthquake relief. Although he enjoyed hunting, Ferdinand also patronised the performing arts. The new Queen was an accomplished musician and singer. Scarlatti and Farinelli were prominent at Court – the latter so much so that he obtained political influence over the royal couple (though to his credit he refused all bribes from place-seekers).

The King was too much like his father. Irresolute, shy, and lazy, he suffered from attacks of rage and melancholia, followed by loss of self-confidence. For many years he kept the demons at bay with music and the opera, but his wife's death in 1758 hastened his own, as he lapsed into permanent insanity.

The Spanish Army

The Army of Philip V was 130,000 strong at the time of the present war, built from scratch in 1701, when the Bourbon dynasty took over Spain. Fighting in the Wars of the Spanish, Polish, and Austrian Succession, it was a force to be reckoned with, though often disregarded by historians as a mere *apanage* of France.



The army was modelled directly on the French – given that it had a French cadre of advisors this is not surprising. But its battle honours were its own. As with the *Armée du Roi*, the *Ejército d'España* was divided into Household troops (foot and horse), Regulars (ditto), and Militia. The Spanish had far fewer light troops than the French, but some just as colourful.

The infantry regiments were standardised at 2 battalions for the line (National), and 1 for the militia (Provincial) – except for *Málaga*, which had 2 battalions. Most national regiments added a *depôt* battalion during the war. The internal organisation of all units except the Swiss was the same: 1 company of 55 grenadiers, 12 fusilier companies of 50, giving, with the command element, a total of 682 men per battalion. The Swiss had 4 companies of 200 men each, with each company including 25 grenadiers. Though they could be combined into separate battalions, Swiss grenadiers often served as a 100-man company associated with their battalion. Units (except for the Swiss) were named for their province of origin rather than their colonel, though numbering was not practiced.

Of course, these totals were rarely achieved, especially in Italy, which saw massive desertions from all armies. Spanish battalions tended to be weaker than their French counterparts, averaging 250 men versus 400, and were often amalgamated during a campaign.

Equipment and dress followed the French, though the Spanish wore their coats buttoned to the collar (at least in the regulations), and whitened with pipeclay, except for *la Réiña* (The Queen's) and some foreign units: Irish in red, Swiss in red or royal blue, *la Réiña* in royal blue. All regiments wore coloured cuffs and sometimes turnbacks. Waistcoats were in the facing colour. Breeches were usually in the coat colour. Everyone wore the tricolor, except for the grenadiers, who wore a fur grenadier cap, with “flamme” in the facing colour. The national cockade was red, and that for foreign troops, black.

The musket was a 1723 pattern based on the French model, with some improvements. From 1729 they used metal ramrods; the musket also had a leather sling, making the Spanish stubble-hopper the envy of all. The powder used for priming was of high quality, very fine, and carried in a pewter horn, which meant that none had

to be doled out from the cartridge. The Spanish were also the only army to use waterproof caps for their muzzles and locks. Unfortunately, these advantages were not as useful as they might have been, since peacetime musketry practice was very rare.

Ammunition was normally carried in the older-style “belly-box”, though it could be carried on the right hip – this was where the grenadiers slung their grenade pouches. The latter also used “hangers”, whereas the fusiliers only carried a bayonet.

The *Milicias Provinciales* were uniformed and equipped just like the regulars, except that in 1744, they switched over to blue uniforms. Many militia units were mobilised during the war, with some even serving overseas; like the French *Milice*, the Spanish militia was also a manpower reserve for the regular army.

Spain also had 25 companies of *Granaderos Provinciales*, in practice grouped like the French *Grenadiers Royaux*, though serving as separate battalions, not a single regiment. Like their French counterparts, they gave excellent service, and were allowed to retain their white uniforms with distinctive purple cuffs.

Foreign and specialised units included 2 Regiments of American Colonials operating in scattered garrisons (worth 2 battalions each when not dying of disease), 3 Irish Regiments of 2 battalions, 3 Italian Regiments of 2 battalions, 3 Walloon Regiments of 2 battalions. 4 Swiss Regiments of 3-4 battalions, 1 Regiment of *Fuñileros de Montaña* of 1 battalion (expanded to 2 Regiments of 3 battalions during the war), and a few “free companies”.

The Colonials were equipped exactly the same as the rest of the infantry, but were distinguished by the enlistment bounty of a plot of land upon 20 years service (not a major drain on the Exchequer, given their area of operation).

All the foreign troops were rated as excellent. The Irish were virtually erased over the course of the war, as they insisted on participating in every engagement. The Walloons were renowned for their steadiness. The Swiss served mostly in the Alps, as one might expect, and of course did well there. Many Swiss units were raised during the war, some serving as garrisons in Savoy. The Italians included a Neapolitan regiment, many Modenese expatriates, and exiles from Milan and Parma. The Parma Regiment followed Don Felipe when he took up his duchy in 1749.

The *Fuñileros de Montaña* – mountain irregulars – were of Catalan origin (they are often mislabelled “Catalan light infantry”), augmented from 1 to 6 battalions during the course of the war. They were intended as a counter to the Sabaudian *Vaudois*, and proved very effective. In organisation they followed the line units, though the grenadier company appears to have had a purely honorary function. As mountaineers they seem to have fought in their waistcoats (red) and used their blue jackets as cloaks, and to have worn sandals rather than gaiters and shoes; much improvisation was tolerated.

One special light unit was the “Albanian” light infantry, which officially was composed of men recruited in Venice’s Illyrian territories (though most were probably deserters).

Philip V had a very fine force of Guards. Like the French Household, there were a number of specialised palace units that

did not fight, but the Spanish and Walloon Guards served continuously in Italy for the duration of the war. Each regiment had 6 battalions of 1 grenadier and 6 fusilier companies, with 86 men each. This made a total of 650 men per battalion, or 4,000 per regiment. Like most guard units, they were kept up to strength, and were thus very powerful formations. Uniforms and equipment were as for the line, with the usual fripperies of silver lace, sword knots, and the like; the rank and file wore swords as well as the officers. Their coats and breeches were royal blue, faced scarlet.

Philip’s Household Cavalry closely matched that of his nephew, Louis XV. There was a 4-squadron *Garde du Corps* (King’s, Queen’s, Flemish, Italian squadrons) of 600 men, and a single-squadron (250-man) *Granaderos a Caballo* (Horse Grenadiers). A third unit matched the French Carabiniers – the *Brigada de Carabineros Reale*. These units appeared almost identical to their French counterparts, though there were subtle differences in the uniforms. The Carabiniers also had 600 men. They were not originally of the Household, but were awarded that status in 1742. All three units served in Italy.

The line cavalry was divided into Horse (cuirassier, though cuirasses were not much used) and Dragoons. As in the French Army, dragoons were still considered mounted infantry, despite fighting mostly on horseback. Most of the regiments saw service during the war, but a lot of time was spent in garrison, since there was little call for cavalry among the mountains.

Regiments consisted of 2-3 squadrons of 4 troops/companies each; each troop was 33 men, giving a total strength (plus HQ) of 300-425. Many served dismounted for lack of remounts – in 1743 four whole regiments of dragoons were formed into a battalion of infantry.

The Horse were uniformed like the infantry (to the extent of buttoning their coats up), with the addition of riding breeches and a single shoulder strap (so their carbine belts would not slip). Weapons consisted of a cavalry broadsword similar to the Austrian model, and a carbine. The *Coraçeros* (Cuirassiers) were the only unit to wear cuirasses. The dragoons were distinguished by their famous canary yellow coats and “dragona” (shoulder-knots), the use of muskets, and the wearing of “bottines” or boot-gaiters.

There was only one hussar regiment, *El Cuerpo de Húsares*. This was actually a free corps, originally a company of “húsares a pié”, later becoming a two-company mounted unit, composed of Austrian deserters and POWs (its first commander was named Captain Ladislav Harvor). The unit was uniformed and equipped like any other hussar unit; uniforms were yellow, faced in blue with blue stockings. It was equipped with muskets rather than carbines.

The Spanish artillery arm was antiquated. Reforms were only instituted in 1741. There were 2,000-3,000 personnel, divided up into a variety of independent companies who were assigned to a particular element (field guns, siege guns, marines, etc.) on an ad hoc basis. In 1741 the *Regimento de Real Artilleria* was organised into 3 battalions, each of 3 gunner companies, a miner company, and 8 fusilier companies (to serve as assistant gunners, ammunition guards, or workmen, as needed). There were also three independent fortress companies (Málaga, Oran, Ceuta) and a bridging train. The men were uniformed and equipped like the infantry (with the addition of their arm’s special tools), but with dark blue coats and breeches.

Spanish artillerymen were well trained and noted for their accuracy, but due to the difficulties of transporting their equipment, Italy did not see much of them. Most of the heavy pieces in the peninsula were Neapolitan, Genoese, or French, and the infantry

were usually called upon to man their own battalion guns (one gun per battalion). Even these were in short supply – in 1744, eleven 3lbbers had to be bought from the Pope.

Ordnance included 2-3lbbers (including mountain guns), 6-, 9-, 12-, and 18lbbers in both “light” and “heavy” categories (depending on the weight of shot), 24-32lbber siege guns, 6-, 10-, and 18lbber mortars, plus six 10lbber howitzers.

Naples

At this time the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies comprised the separate Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. Originally the Norman and then the Angevin Kingdom of Sicily, in 1282 the people of the island threw off the Angevins with the massacre called the Sicilian Vespers, and accepted Aragonese rule. The Angevins continued to rule Naples as “Kings of Sicily”, maintaining their claim to the island. The two kingdoms were not reunited until the Spanish Bourbon, Carlos VII, took power in 1735. Technically, the name “Kingdom of the Two Sicilies” was not used until after the Napoleonic Wars.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, part southern Italy and Sicily remained under Byzantine rule (South Apulia, Calabria, Sicily, and the Duchy of Naples proper), while the rest was conquered by the Lombards and ruled as the Duchy of Benevento. Sicily fell to the Saracens in the 9th Century. Over the next two hundred years, the region broke up into a multitude of increasingly impoverished communities. This allowed the Normans under the d’Hauteville family (or Altavilla) to establish their rule as champions of certain communities against the rest.

The first Norman earldom was established at Melfi in 1043. The powerful Norman earl, Robert de Guiscard, then conquered Apulia and Calabria; 1091 the Saracens were expelled from Sicily. The Normans also fought the Emperor and the Pope in their attempts to increase their own power in the region. Roger II persuaded the Pope of his day to proclaim him King of Sicily, Apulia, and Calabria (even though he was the Pope’s vassal). Roger II subsequently took control of Capua, Benevento, and Naples, forming the original Kingdom of Sicily.

The Normans died out with Constance of Altavilla. But she was the wife of the Emperor Henry VI Hohenstaufen, and her son, Frederick II Barbarossa, inherited both the Empire and the Kingdom (in 1197) – he was born in the kingdom, brought up in Palermo. Frederick spent much of his reign consolidating his power in southern Italy at the expense of the Empire’s unity.

The Hohenstaufens ruled the Kingdom of Sicily throughout the 1200’s, but were involved in the struggle between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines – they being the Ghibellines. To counter their anti-clerical policies, the Pope invited Charles of Anjou to Italy. He fought a number of engagements against the Hohenstaufens and was ultimately successful, taking the title Charles I of Anjou, King of Sicily, and beginning the Angevin (Capetian) dynasty. But, as noted above, he lost the island in 1282, to Peter III of Aragon. A struggle ensued that would last for a century and a half.

In 1443, Alfonso V of Aragon defeated the Angevins in Naples and took control of both kingdoms (he had been cited as heir by Queen Joan II of Anjou, but she changed her mind). Alfonso’s son, however, ruled Naples only, with Sicily becoming independent. The Aragonese dynasty was briefly interrupted at the end of the 15th Century, by Charles VIII of France, but

otherwise remained unbroken until Ferdinand the Catholic united the realms of Aragon, Sicily, and Spain with his marriage to Queen Isabella of Castile (1504). For the next two centuries both Sicily and Naples were ruled by a viceroy.

The throne of Spain went to Charles I of Habsburg, who became the Emperor Charles V – he thus had a double claim on Naples. With the War of the Spanish Succession, the Bourbons, represented by Philip V, ruled Spain, but part of the price paid was the surrendering of their claims to Naples and Sicily in favour of the Austrian Habsburgs. In 1720, Sicily was awarded to Victor Amadeus of Savoy, but later swapped for Sardinia.

In 1734, Carlos VII (1716-1788) won Sicily and Naples in the War of the Polish Succession. He was recognised as the legitimate ruler in 1738, reuniting the ancient kingdom. Although a member of the Spanish Bourbon dynasty, it was generally recognised that his intention was to rule independently of the Spanish throne.

Carlos’s acquisition came about as follows. He had always had a claim to Parma, through his mother, Elisabeth Farnese, and was guaranteed that duchy in 1732. In 1731 he had also declared himself “great Crown Prince” of Tuscany, as he was the legitimate heir of the Medici rulers, who were dying out. But in 1734 his mother placed him in charge of the Army of Italy, with instructions to conquer Naples. This was accomplished without much effort, and he discovered that his father, Philip V, had deeded him the kingdom. He then defeated the Austrians at Bitonto and conquered Sicily as well.

Although of age, Carlos was still in his early twenties and subject to direction from Madrid for much of his policy. The core of his army was Spanish, paid for from the Spanish Treasury. Thus he found himself compelled to aid his mother in her attempts to win the rest of Italy for the Spanish, and the Duchy of Parma for his brother, Felipe.

The Bourbon victory at Velletri in 1744 was key to establishing the stability of the Neapolitan throne and the King’s independence from Madrid. With the death of his father in 1746, he began to replace his Spanish advisors with Italian ones. Eventually he became confident and experienced enough to dictate his own policy, centralising his monarchy.

It was due to Carlos’ farsighted arrangements that his kingdom was not reunited with Spain; in 1759 he became Charles III of Spain, renouncing all claims to the crowns of Sicily and Naples in favour of his son, and formally separating the two Houses.

The Army of Naples

Because the Austrians had ruled Naples with their Imperial Army, rather than an indigenous one, King Carlos was forced to build his own army from scratch. Beginning in the 1730’s by the outbreak of war he had several “National” line regiments. He also retained a core of Spanish units, paid for by Spain and officered by Spaniards. During the war he began raising militia, or Provincial regiments. In general, then, he followed the pattern laid down by the Spanish Army.

All the line and militia infantry were organised, uniformed, and equipped like the Spanish – to the extent that they wore their coats buttoned to the collar. Unlike the Spanish, however, coats could be white, red, or blue; some provincial regiments even wore yellow. Cockades appear to have been, as for the Spanish, red for the domestic and black for the foreign units



(Irish, Walloon, Swiss) and the regiment *del Re*, though the official Neapolitan colour was white, which may have been used instead.

The Foot Guards – Royal Italian and Royal Swiss – were organised differently. The Royal Italian had 3 battalions of 13 companies (2,000 officers and men) and the Royal Swiss 2 battalions of 8 larger companies (1,440 officers and men). Neither unit had grenadiers.

The militia, although classed as such, was organised on a regional basis and the units had a high esprit de corps, fighting extremely well, at least on their home turf. One regiment, Terra di Lavoro, won promotion to the Line for its performance at Velletri.

The foreign units were all ex-Spanish in origin: the Irish Limerick as The King's (*del Re*), 4 regiments of Walloons, 3 of Swiss, and 2 Spanish-Italian. All were of 2 battalions. The Swiss followed their usual practice of holding to their unique unit organisation.

In 1735 a marine regiment was raised: 1,000 men in 19 independent companies, serving aboard Naples' large fleet of galleys. Some companies fought the British in coastal defence actions. Other specialised infantry included the *Fucilieri di Montagna*, which was a two-company detachment from the Spanish *Fuñileros de Montaña*, and the *Reale Macedonia* Regiment, composed of Christians from Greece and Albania.

The *Reale Macedonia* had an establishment of 1 battalion of 13 fusilier companies and 1 grenadier company, totalling 800 men. The unit was uniformed like the Austrian Grenzers, with red jacket and breeches, and bright blue facings and veste. The men were required to wear queues, plaited pigtails over the ears, and long black moustaches. Equipped with Balkan-style muskets and cavalry swords, the unit retained a high level of quality through its officers' refusal to enrol deserters. This regiment was one of those used in the assault on Monte Artimisio at Velletri, and was responsible for the capture of 1,000 prisoners on that occasion. The also fought at Tortona, Guastella, and Piacenza.

Don Carlos' cavalry contingent was quite small – suitable horses were scarce and there were few places with good forage. By 1745, all the regiments had at least one troop serving as infantry.

The *Guardie del Corpo* mustered 180 men in a single squadron, notionally mounted on black horses; its ranks were drawn from the Spanish *Garde du Corps*' Italian squadron.

The rest of the branch was divided into Horse and Dragoons, but there were only 2 regiments of horse, and 3 of dragoons. Uniforms and equipment were the same as the Spanish, including yellow dress for the dragoons. Coats were of the same cut as the infantry, but turned-back in the contemporary European style.

The *Reggimento Reale di Artiglieria* was formed from a Spanish cadre in 1736. By 1742 it consisted of 10 companies of 80 gunners each. An 11th company was added in 1744. Like the Spanish arm, uniforms were dark blue, but turnbacks were red. The branch also incorporated an Engineer Corps, plus sappers and miners.

The artillery's guns were a hodgepodge of pieces left over from previous wars. Reforms were not instituted until 1750. In addition to the field train, the infantry battalions were

notionally equipped with a single 3- or 4lber manned by the gunners.

Modena

Duke Francesco III d'Este was an Austrian general, and a close personal friend of both Emperor Charles VI and Marshal von Traun. Additionally, he was not keen to see the Spanish take over the neighbouring duchy of Milan. However, he had a dangerous rival in Charles Emmanuel, who coveted his lands, and saw his efficient little army and his good relations with the Habsburgs as a threat to Savoy's destiny. With Piedmont and Austria hand-in-glove, the Duke decided he had to court the Bourbons in order to counterbalance any aggression by Charles Emmanuel. Of course, the negotiations and subsequent defensive alliance with Spain only served to prove his "disloyalty". Modena was quickly overrun. However, the duke, and those of his soldiers who managed to escape, fought on; after the war the Austrians reinstated him.

The Modenese Army

In 1740, Modena's army consisted of 2 regiments of foot – an Italian one of 3 battalions, and a Swiss, of 2 – a company of artillery, and a squadron each of cuirassiers and dragoons. On the outbreak of war, the cavalry units were expanded to regimental size, garrison troops (3 "companies of veterans") installed, and 2 more companies of gunners raised. 5 single-battalion regiments of "Provincial" infantry were also recruited. At the last moment, 2 more battalions of Swiss were raised, but these (Regiment Jaccaud) never arrived, instead serving with the Spanish in Savoy.

Foot battalions consisted of 4 musketeer and 1 grenadier company, for a total strength of 800 men. Due to the short duration of the army's existence, the grenadiers never did serve as a composite formation. In peacetime, the cavalry had 2 squadrons of 250 men each. The point of this was that half the unit could be "put out to grass". Upon mobilisation, the regiments were organised into 3 squadrons of 3 companies each (still averaging 500 men in all). One of these companies was designated Carabinier (Cuirassier) or Horse Grenadier (Dragoons).

Each of the 3 artillery companies (160 men apiece) had a unique role: battalion guns, field artillery, and position artillery. The latter included howitzers, siege guns, and harbour defence artillery (on the Po). The park consisted of 22 4lbers as battalion guns, 5 8lbers, 12 12lbers, and 2 10lber howitzers. Because the establishment was so small, however, infantrymen had to be drafted to help the gunners. The artillery arm included 6 Engineers and a half-company of sappers, plus a company of marines (harbour police).

Modenese weapons and equipment were either Austrian or Austrian-pattern (1722 Austrian musket, for instance). The infantry did not carry hangers. Uniforms were based on a mix of Austrian and Spanish styles, white as befitted a Catholic army (red for the Swiss). Grenadiers were only distinguished by a shoulder knot. The national cockade was yellow.

The cavalry were equipped the same regardless of official title – as heavy cavalry. The cuirassiers wore breastplates, and the dragoons, red coats. Élite companies were distinguished with shoulder knots.

The foregoing applies to the Duke's army before his duchy was overrun. After, escaping cavalry elements were organised into a *Garde du Corps* based on the cuirassier regiment, uniformed and equipped like the Neapolitan one. Some 4 infantry battalions (2 Italian and 2 Swiss) were reconstituted, eventually including battalion gunners from the old artillery companies. These served in

Italy under Spanish command, and were raised and paid for by Spain.

[A portion of Modena's army was preserved, by virtue of its forming the garrison of Massa, principal town of Massa-Carrara (famous for its marble and the Italian explorer Alessandro Malaspina), on the Ligurian side of the Apennines. The d'Estes had marriage ties to the ruling House of Cybo-Malaspina.]

Genoa

The only other state of any size to participate in the war was Genoa. Favourably inclined to the Bourbon side in any case, they were also fearful of Piedmontese encroachment, especially after Austria "ceded" the Genoese port of Finale to Charles Emmanuel. In addition, France offered to aid the republic in restoring order to Corsica. With the Treaty of Aranjuez in 1745, Genoa joined the Bourbon cause, assisting in the nearly-successful attempt to remove the Austrians from Italy in that year. Overrun after the Bourbon position collapsed, Genoa endured a heavy yoke for some months, before revolting and ejecting the Austrians from the republic. For the rest of the war, Genoa endured a state of semi-siege.

The Serene Republic of Genoa was founded at the beginning of the 12th Century, when the city became a self-governing commune (like many other Italian cities of that time). Like Venice, Genoa's republic developed into a self-perpetuating oligarchy; the first Doge (Duke) was elected by popular acclaim in 1339. Originally the Doges ruled for life, but after 1528, the term was reduced to two years. But since the Senate was composed of a select group of families, this merely ensured a certain amount of rotation in the office. Also, Genoese Doges were essentially faction leaders and/or military men, with limited access to state funds, whose actions were overseen by an executive committee.

[For many generations, the office of Doge was retained by only two rival families, the Campofregoso, and the Adorno.]

For centuries, Genoa was second only to Venice as one of the great entrepôts of the Mediterranean. Thanks to the poor coastal communications along the Riviera, she was able to dominate the trade of the Ligurian Sea, eventually expanding her empire as far as the Black Sea.

In 1284 the Genoese defeated their main rival, Pisa, in the naval battle of Meloria, soon after taking Corsica from the Pisans. Around the same date, they moved their operations into Sicily, acting as moneylenders to the ruling class. From Sicily they obtained sugar, silk, and most importantly, grain (the republic has little arable land). Excess grain was traded to Africa in exchange for gold.

Failing in its bid to challenge Venice, however (Battle of Chioggia, 1380), Genoa went into a decline. The Ottomans grabbed the republic's Aegean holdings and cut off trade with the Black Sea. During the late 15th and early 16th Centuries, Genoa was under French occupation. In 1522, the Spanish "liberated" the city, and pillaged it.

But then the famous Genoese admiral, Andrea Doria, allied with the Emperor and drove the French out of the Republic; coincidentally, the Genoese became Imperial bankers. In 1557, Philip II's Spanish régime went bankrupt, and in consequence, the Fugger family lost their monopolistic role as Spain's financiers. The Genoese banking families swiftly moved in, and for the next half-century underwrote most of Spain's endeavours, receiving Peruvian silver in exchange. It is

noteworthy that the great Spanish general, Ambrosio Spinola, was in fact a Genoese banker.

[Curiously, Andrea Doria was never a Doge.]

Unfortunately, Spain's gradual decline meant the decline of Genoa as well. Many great houses were ruined in Spain's own financial ruin. As well, new routes of commerce were opening up, some dominated by Genoa's growing rival, Piedmont. At the end of the War of the Austrian Succession, Genoa regained its independence, but was soon (1768) forced to sell Corsica to France. In 1797 Napoleon conquered the city and replaced the old oligarchy with a new Ligurian Republic. In 1805 Genoa was annexed by France. Though restored once again to independence in 1814, the Congress of Vienna decided to award the state to Piedmont; since 1815 Genoa has had no independent existence.

The Genoese Army

The Genoese Army was a new organisation. The Genoese had provided mercenaries (including Corsican units) to other powers, particularly France and Spain, for many centuries. Unfortunately, their "national" army retained the same form of semi-independent companies. The battalion was established as the basic tactical unit only in 1737. A cavalry arm was never developed.

Apart from a wide array of semi-documented militia forces (mostly raised after the revolt of 1746), Genoa's army consisted of 21 battalions of foot in 19 regiments, and 2 regiments of artillery, a total of just over 16,000 men. Infantry regiments were mostly mercenary: Italian, Swiss, and Corsican. The Italian component did include native personnel. As usual, the Italians wore white and the Swiss red or blue; the Corsicans wore blue. The national cockade was red-over-white.



Battalion organisation for most regiments consisted of 6 companies and an artillery detachment, totalling 750 men. There were no grenadier companies, but each of the foot companies had a file of grenadiers, and as usual, these were combined into ad hoc companies and battalions. The Swiss retained their traditional organisation of 4 companies per battalion (820 men), with 54 grenadiers per company (roughly 1/3rd). Like the other regiments, they were given an integral artillery component.

The Genoese manufactured their own muskets, to the French 1727 pattern, with slings in the Spanish fashion. Battalion guns were 3lbers, manned by infanteers; mules were used for transport.

The field and siege trains, including coastal defence, were manned by the personnel of the artillery regiments. The siege train in particular proved vital to the Bourbon attempt to conquer Lombardy in 1745, as neither the French nor the Spanish had an adequate establishment in the region.

THE ALLIES & THE NEUTRALS

“In our service you descend at once from the grands seigneurs to the parvenus”

The Prince de Ligne

Austria

The Habsburgs original seat was in northeast Switzerland, with lands extending into Swabia, but it only took two or three generations after their emergence onto the European stage in the 13th Century for them to secure the imperial throne and hold it (with a few interruptions) until the Napoleonic era. The first Habsburg Emperor was Rudolf I. Emperor Charles V was the greatest of the family, owning lands that extended around the world – Germany, Italy, the Low Countries, Spain, America, and the Philippines. However, this grand empire broke into two branches after his abdication in 1556. The two lines were the Spanish and Austrian, with the former holding the overseas empire, the Low Countries, and much of Italy. The Spanish line ended in 1701, and was supplanted by a Bourbon nephew of Louis XIV of France, sparking the War of the Spanish Succession. The Austrian branch held the Holy Roman Empire – without interruption in this period – until death of Charles VI in 1740. Apart from their imperial holdings, several Italian provinces, and the region of modern Belgium (recovered during the War of the Spanish Succession), the Austrian branch also ruled the nominally independent kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia (of which Silesia was a province). Strictly speaking, the family, from the accession of Maria Theresa, should be called the Habsburg-Lorraine branch, since her husband was Grand Duke Francis Stephen of Lorraine (confusingly he is also known as the Duke of Tuscany, since he exchanged Lorraine for the latter as a result of the War of the Polish Succession).

When Napoleon dissolved the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 and took the title of Emperor for himself, the current Habsburg, Francis II, countered by declaring himself the Emperor of Austria; this title was held by the family until 1918 when the post-war German revolutions forced them to abdicate. (The name Austro-Hungarian Empire was adopted in 1867).

The Habsburgs never really ruled a united nation state; the central bureaucracy was imposed on a federation of provinces, duchies, and kingdoms. A partial list of Maria Theresa's titles later in her reign runs as follows: Empress, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, Archduchess of Austria, Duchess Moravia and Schlesia (even though it was now Prussia's), Queen of Croatia and Dalmatia, Princess of Transylvania and Grand Duchess of Siebenbürgen, Duchess of Gelders, Limburg, Jülich, Luxembourg, Brabant, Quilon, Bar and Franche-Comté, Margravine of Higher-Elsass, Breisgau, Lower-Elsass and Antwerpen, Countess of Flanders, Hainault, d'Artois, Boulouge, Namur, Ponthieu, Picardie, d'Eu, Vermandôis, Charolais, Macon, Montbeliard, Zutphen, Nevers and Rethel, and Baroness d'Ilês, Bar-sur-Seine, etc. One can see why her contemporaries thought it would be easy to collect a few of those items, but the Habsburg Empire proved amazingly resilient.

The character of the late Charles VI did much to harm the Habsburg cause. He was slightly less bigoted and narrow-minded than his father, Joseph I, but not as well educated, or as intelligent. Fortunate in having a string of superior diplomats at his command, he still managed to negate a large part of their

efforts. He also neglected to reform the Army, and was ultimately responsible for the defeats that he blamed on his generals. Finally, he lacked the supreme requirement of a ruler – the ability to make a decision.

Under his father Leopold's reign, the western realms were neglected in favour of eastern affairs, which a) drew the Habsburgs into conflict with the Turks, b) helped weaken the position of the western (Spanish) branch of the family, and c) contributed to the rise of France under Louis XIV. The War of the Spanish Succession was the first great clash between the Habsburgs and the Bourbons since the Thirty Years War. When Charles VI took over toward its end, he continued the ineffectual policies of his father. Wanting to reunite the old Habsburg lands in such an obvious manner, he found himself abandoned by the British and forced to make a poor peace – a peace that could have been arrived at much earlier and on much better terms if he had simply been willing to do a deal with the Bourbons. Instead, though France's ambitions were checked, Charles had made a powerful enemy and lost half the Habsburg dominions.

This trait of stubbornness continued throughout his reign. He persisted in holding on to the dream of a reunited Habsburg Empire (hence the emphasis on Italian possessions and the acquisition of the Spanish Netherlands) and now neglected the East – not just Turkish affairs, but Russian affairs too. He focused almost exclusively on guaranteeing his daughter Maria Theresa's accession – to the point that he broke off her projected marriage into the Spanish Bourbon house (!) because the British and Prussians would not sign on to the Pragmatic Sanction if the marriage went through.

Maria Theresa was eventually married to Francis Stephen in 1736. It was an unusually happy match for the period. Recently awarded the Duchy of Tuscany, together they ruled this small patch of the world until the Emperor's death. Two months later the twenty-three-year-old Duchess of Tuscany found herself running an empire at war with most of Europe.

A biography of Maria Theresa would be a history of the Habsburg Empire over the course of the 18th Century. She reigned for 40 years, and was probably the greatest member of her House – the only woman ever to rule the Habsburg dynasty. An attractive woman, she reportedly had a warm personality and a strong will (sharing the Habsburg trait of stubbornness that plagued her father). She was conservative in outlook and religious to the point of bigotry, her Court being “the most moral in Europe” (very surprising for an *Austrian* court); Habsburg Italy also retained the last Jewish ghettos before the rise of the Third Reich.

Maria Theresa was also a true “*Küche und Kinder*” *hausfrau*, devoted to her children, indeed loving children in general (especially babies). She also loved her husband, though she came to recognise his lack of ability in certain areas, notably on the battlefield. During this, her first war, she suffered greatly from lack of experience, forcing her to rely on her late father's choice of councillors (mainly narrow-minded ones like himself). Educated to be a woman of the Court, with all the expected accomplishments from coquetry to needlepoint, she was forced to learn diplomacy, strategy, and imperial administration the hard way.

The Habsburg Army



Without a Prussian-style cantonal system, the Austrian regiments depended for their strength on a combination of recruiting drives, peasant levies, and the personal efforts of the *inhabers* (colonel-proprietors) – who often recruited men from their own estates in a semi-feudal manner.

Infantry regiments were posted to new locations on a three-year rotation, usually to areas other than where they were recruited. The cavalry was mainly stationed in Hungary, due to the availability of cheap and plentiful forage.

A standard, or “German” infantry regiment consisted of three battalions, one of which was a *depôt* battalion used for storing recruits and gathering stragglers. “Foreign” regiments – including Hungarian, Netherlandish, and Italian – had four battalions. A few rogue units, like the Tyrolers, had different establishments.

The cavalry was organised into regiments of cuirassiers and dragoons, plus an increasing number of hussars. In practice, cuirassiers and dragoons were both medium cavalry, but the cuirassiers used heavier horses and wore breastplates. The hussars were a step up from the typical pandour warband, but still rowdy and hard to control. In large numbers they could be very effective, but could also be driven off by artillery or steady infantry fire. The regular horse regiments were the cream of the Army, and considered the best in Europe at this date.

At the start of the war, the Austrian artillery, though numerous, was outdated and cumbersome, and still relied on civilian contractors for transport. Such people were not interested in remaining on a battlefield any longer than necessary, so the guns were often rendered immobile once battle commenced. *Prinz* Liechtenstein was given the task of reforming the branch in 1744, but his efforts did not pay off until the Seven Years War. The associated “technical services”, such as engineers and pontooneers, were also rudimentary during the early part of Maria Theresa’s reign; there were no pioneer units, merely pioneer files in the infantry companies.

The Habsburgs never employed guard formations. With all the nationalities involved, it would be too easy for a group of praetorians to engineer a coup.

The light troops were a mixed bag of mercenaries (*frei-korps*) and *insurrection* (militia) units, and the famous *grenz* corps. The latter were only regularised toward the end of the war, originally serving as tribal units. They fought for booty rather than regular pay. The huge numbers employed in Central Europe were a fraction of the total available, since only a third could be called up at any one time (they were also permitted to go home every autumn); some 20,000 were permanently stationed on the Turkish border. Despite their motley appearance and organisation, and a near total lack of discipline off the battlefield (and sometimes on it), the Pandours, Croats, and other *grenz* units made a sizable contribution. The Austrian war effort would have collapsed without them.

As to tactics, the Habsburg armies employed the normal linear deployments, based on easily defended terrain and/or fieldworks, with lots of artillery support. They tended to favour the defensive and to be somewhat slower than their opponents.

Partly this was due to the fact that they usually fielded larger armies, and partly it was due to an overloaded command structure, but mostly it was because each regiment had its own way of doing things. Fire drills in particular were atrocious, but marching drills were little better.

The cavalry was taught to countercharge – never to receive a charge at the halt – and to go for the enemy’s flanks. Most cavalry actions of the period consisted of each side passing through the other, turning round, and going again, then taking a break to rest the horses. Only if one side panicked and fled would a general meleé occur. Although both cuirassiers and dragoons carried firearms, these were only to be used in the meleé, or on piquet duty.

Light troops (foot and horse) were most effective in large swarms, but because they were so effective, every commander just *had* to have some, which diluted their effect. Converged grenadier battalions only became popular later in Maria Theresa’s reign, after the Prussians had demonstrated their effectiveness. This was in part because the *inhabers* did not want their best men siphoned off.

The Habsburgs also ruled the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Normally, Italian possessions were protected by Imperial troops, but this state had its own establishment: a 1-battalion *Guardie* regiment, the Regiment *di Toscana* (2 bns), the *Battaglione di Marina* (1 bn), and a dragoon regiment. In addition, important localities (such as Florence) had their own garrison troops.

The House of Savoy

The House of Savoy is reputed to be Burgundian in origin (Burgundian *federatii* under the Roman Empire, that is). The earliest known progenitor is Humbert (Umberto) “the White Handed” (c.980-1047), possibly a descendant of the Holy Roman Emperor Otto II. Humbert received the title Count of Savoy in 1003, as a reward for faithful service to the Empire, but he already had other lands not held as an Imperial fief. His capital was at Chambéry.

Humbert’s grandson established himself in Piedmont (an inheritance from his mother, Adelaide of Turin), as well as Aosta, which was a separate region. From this point the family began a slow but steady expansion. Not until Amedeo VIII “the Peaceful”, were they awarded the title of Dukes of Savoy (1416), again for services rendered to the Emperor – throughout this period, they were the Imperial door-wardens of Italy, and Amedeo VIII, despite his nickname, was a tough warrior. He also briefly worked as an anti-Pope (Felix V) after abdicating and entering a monastery, but repented and became reconciled to his opponent.

During 16th Century the French occupied much of Piedmont and the dynasty seemed on its last legs, but in 1553 Emanuele Filiberto “Iron Head” (for his hard-headed pragmatism) became Duke of Savoy. A general in Spanish service, he reorganised his defences and administration. At the battle of Saint Quentin, as an ally of the Empire, he defeated the French and was rewarded by a treaty (Cateau Cambrésis) guaranteeing his position as ruler of a buffer state between France and Spanish Italy.

In 1560, Iron Head moved his capital to Turin. He made Italian the official language (though Piedmontese remained the language of the Court until the 20th Century) and created a modern army and navy. The last had its purpose – as a good Catholic, Iron Head wished to take on the Moslem pirates that infested the Mediterranean at that time.

On the question of the Reformation, the House of Savoy was squarely in the Catholic camp, permitting the establishment of

Jesuit schools and using the army to persecute the Waldensian sect (1655). They also founded the Knights of Saint Maurice, champions of the Counter Reformation. In 1578 the Sacred Shroud of Christ was deposited at Turin for safekeeping.

After Iron Head, his House saw a run of mediocre rulers. At the same time, however, the vision of an Italy united under the leadership of Savoy was germinated.

In the 17th Century, the House's prospects dimmed even further. The French kings were in the process of mopping up the last of the old Kingdom of Burgundy. Savoy was more or less annexed, first through occupation, and then by the garrisoning of the fortresses on the Italian side of the Alps (Pinerolo, for example). But in 1675 another great Sabaudian ruler emerged: Vittorio Amedeo II.

Married to a niece of Louis XIV, and a faithful follower of French policy, he had a reputation for duplicity, but the quality was a necessary one. The Bourbons and Habsburgs were struggling for mastery in Italy and Piedmont was caught in the middle. Switching sides several times, toward the end of his reign he began to favour the Habsburgs, who at that time controlled both Austria and Spain.

During the War of the League of Augsburg, the Piedmontese began the recovery of the Alpine fortresses under French control with the receipt of Pinerolo. During the War of the Spanish Succession, Victor Amadeus completed the process by acquiring Fenestrelle and Exilles. He backed the Bourbons in this war, first Spain, then, after the Spanish refused to reward him with Milan, France. But at the end of the war this policy was reversed and Piedmont joined the Habsburg camp again. At the peace he was rewarded with the crown of Sicily.

The island was obtained with British help: they preferred strategic locations to be controlled by states with only moderate ambitions. Friendly relations with Britain were almost the only constant of Sabaudian foreign policy – that and their expansionist aims. Sicily at this time was much wealthier than Piedmont, but difficult to administer at such a distance from home, so in 1720 the King exchanged it for Sardinia.

Unfortunately the Emperor Charles VI was so annoyed at thus losing half of the Neapolitan lands that he reneged on the rest of the deal he had made with Victor Amadeus and kept the Milanese territories that the latter coveted. The Emperor also sold the Imperial city of Finale to Genoa at this time, creating a bone of contention between them and Piedmont.

Victor Amadeus' son was Carlo Emanuele III, probably the wiliest statesman of his age. Not only did he play both sides during the War of the Austrian Succession, assuring his own survival, he also increased Piedmont's territories and established a moral ascendancy for his House in the minds of many Italians that would eventually lead to their becoming the rulers of a united Italy that would last until the end of the Second World War, when a republic was proclaimed and the House sent into permanent exile (in 2002 they were again permitted to visit Rome).

The Army of the House of Savoy



The Army of Piedmont-Sardinia followed the typical model for many of the smaller Continental armies, though it was bigger than most. The cavalry consisted of Guard, Horse, and Dragoons; the infantry of Guard, National (line), and Provincial (militia). The line infantry had a foreign component (Germans and Swiss), which was standard, but an unusual militia element in the *Vaudois*: peasant guerrilla bands fighting for their own valleys. As for the technical services, Charles Emmanuel's was one of the most modern in Europe with regard to training and organisation, though equipped with obsolescent materiel.

Piedmontese National regiments had 2 battalions, Provincials 1. The Swiss and German varied between 1 and 4 battalions. On paper, indigenous battalions had 700 men in 7 companies (6 musketeer, 1 grenadier). In wartime, the Provincials had an "additional company" of 300 men added to them. The foreign battalions had 700 men as well, but organised into 4 companies, each with 25 grenadiers and 125 musketeers. Grenadiers were frequently pulled and used as independent battalions. Uniforms and equipment followed the standard European fashions. Coat colours were mainly white for the Piedmontese and blue for the foreign units; cockades were blue. The Guards were no different in uniform or equipment, though they did have extra lace.

Piedmont had a very effective militia system, though somewhat irregular in nature. Most militia were called up as needed, and mostly from the border regions. Uniforms generally consisted of a blue cockade and a spring of green in the hat (the Imperial field sign). The men were organised roughly into independent companies of 100 men who elected their own officers. These formations could be grouped into battalions under the command of a seconded line officer, who would be given the local rank of Colonel-Commandant. Although the militia only expected to serve in their own region, on a number of occasions, battalions were used on "foreign" service, most notably against Genoa.

The *Vaudois* were considered a part of the *Milizia Ordinaria*, but in employment they functioned as light troops. These men were descended from the French Protestant Waldenses sect, persecuted by the Catholic House of Savoy for decades, but since 1689 given liberty of faith. Their earlier experiences, however, had made them ideal irregulars. Generally they served in 100-man companies. Some served "abroad": at Campo Santo in 1743, in Genoa in 1747, and in Provence the same year.



In addition to the "usual" formations, the army included a unit of *Micheletti Sardi* (native Sardinian militia) of 80 men, 3 companies (100 men each) of *Companias des Galires* (marines), who distinguished themselves at Ventimiglia, and the *Compania Disertori* – a company of deserters. These last were so useless that the Baron Leutrum contemplated returning them to the Spanish in chains.

There were 2 regiments of Horse, 4 of Dragoons, and 1 *Garde du Corps* regiment. The horse regiments consisted of 5 squadrons of 2 companies each, totalling 650 men. In 1744, one company in each regiment became Carabiniers, armed with rifled carbines.

Though there are some recorded instances of their serving on foot in the Alpine passes and as assault troops during sieges, the dragoons normally brigaded with the horse as a strategic reserve. Their strength and organisation matched that of the horse regiments, and in 1744, one company per regiment received elite status as Horse Grenadiers.

The Garde du Corps had 3 companies of 130 men, and was equipped as heavy cavalry. One special distinction (apart from the usual finery) was the wearing of white cravattes in place of a stock – all ranks were theoretically commissioned.

Piedmont's artillery train began as a single regiment of 15 companies, each of 100 officers and men. 8 companies were Artillerists and 1 was of Bombardiers (manning indirect fire weapons). In addition there were single companies of Sappers, Miners, and Labourers, Artillery Train and Commissariat Train Drivers, and a Volunteer Company of gunners in Sardinia. By war's end, 3 more artillery companies were added. In addition to the regimental establishment, many personnel were seconded to the infantry and the militia.

Piedmont had a wide variety of obsolescent weapons, but their gunners were well trained. Field calibres ranged from 3&1/2lb to 20lb, mostly of Imperial weight. There were also 1&1/2- and 3&1/2lb mountain guns, and 2 batteries of Swiss "Hyenner" breechloading rifled cannon (1&1/4lb). The siege train was even more mixed, with some pieces dating to the 17th Century. But they had a lot of them.

The Engineering Corps was exceptionally good – Frederick of Prussia had two Sardinian chief engineers in his army.

Other Italian States

Very little is known about the forces of the non-participating Italian states. Most did not amount to more than nominal garrisons. The one state that might have had the potential to change the balance of power – Venice – did not do so. She was in no condition financially to undertake a war at this time.

Some few Venetian units are known: Lifeguard and Carabiniere Lifeguard units dating from the 17th Century (at that time known as Morosini's), at least 1 regiment of Cuirassiers, the Irish Regiment *di Terry* (1-2 bns) and presumably other National and Provincial regiments on the usual Italian model (though no record of any Swiss), and an Artillery Regiment.

Venice's great strength had always been her navy, but with no money, even this could not be outfitted to the extent desired. The republic's unfulfilled plan was for a fleet of 20 "1st Class" and 10 "2nd Class" galleys.

With regard to the few remaining city states, Lucca's army is probably a fair sample: 1 company of Catholic Swiss, 1 company of artillery, 700 infantry, and 1500 militia.

The Papal States could field the Vatican's 100-man Swiss Guards, some artillery, and a number of garrison units. In addition, a 90-man mounted Guard Cavalleggeri unit was formed in 1744, most likely as a Papal escort.

ANNEX A: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PAPAL STATES



During the 18th Century, central Italy was divided between two moderately sized states: Tuscany (ruled at the time of the War of the Austrian Succession by the House of Habsburg-Lorraine), and the Papal States. The latter consisted of those territories ruled by the Pope as a temporal prince, not as the spiritual overlord of Christian Europe.

In the beginning, the Christian Church was an underground movement, outlawed and unable to either own or transfer property as a corporate body. After three centuries the Roman Emperor, Constantine I, made Christianity (a politically correct form of it, anyway) the State religion and lifted the ban on property holding, after which the Church swiftly became rich. (Constantine is reputed to have led the way with the gift of the Lateran Palace).

Until the 5th Century, however, the Church was considered a private landowner, not a sovereign entity. With the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, the Pope and the Western Roman Church transferred their allegiance first to the barbarian warlord Odoacer, and then to the Ostrogothic kings. Feudal forms of land tenure were now developing, giving the Church additional temporal authority over its holdings, though still subordinate to its Barbarian overlords.

In the 6th and 7th Centuries, Italy became a battleground as the Byzantines (the Eastern Roman Empire) crushed the Ostrogothic Kingdom and were themselves beaten down by a people called the Lombards. At the end of this period, the Byzantines, now represented by an Exarch at Ravenna, ruled a diagonal swath across the peninsula from the Exarchate all the way to Rome. North and south of this "Roman" territory was the Lombardic Kingdom, somewhat nibbled at by the inroads of the Saracens.

The Eternal City was far enough away from the Exarch at Ravenna that she could flaunt Byzantine will when desired, but also far enough away to be threatened by the desire of the Lombards to consolidate their rule in the peninsula. Therefore, the people of the region turned to the largest landowner on the peninsula, the Bishop of Rome (now styling himself *the Pope*), for political leadership.

[The term "Pope" basically means "father"; in the Eastern Orthodox faith, a village priest can be a pope, but the Bishops of Rome used the term as a way of claiming the right to speak for all Latins when dealing with the Eastern (Greek) Church.]

Often at odds (with Pope Gregory II even excommunicating a Roman Emperor) the Popes and the Exarches nevertheless worked together to limit Lombard power as best they could. Over time, the Exarch's position weakened, while the Pope's improved. The Popes were more successful in dealing with the Lombards – as Westerners, the latter recognised the Pope's authority to a greater degree than they did the Emperor's. This led the Lombards to focus on reducing the Exarchate.

The Papacy took up the administrative slack in the Imperial Roman territories. Specifically, in 728AD, Pope Gregory II received King Luitprand's Donation of Sutri. This donation of land was effectively a boundary agreement between the Papacy and the Lombardic Kingdom that expanded temporal Papal control beyond the original Duchy of Rome that lay around the Eternal City.

In 751AD, the Lombards finally sacked Ravenna, cutting the Duchy of Rome off from the Byzantine Empire, of which it was still notionally a part. To counteract the surge of Lombard power, Pope Stephen II negotiated with the Frankish nobleman, Pepin the Younger, agreeing to recognise him as King of the Franks – in place of the current figurehead that Pepin was manipulating. Pepin was also styled Patrician of the Romans, giving him even more authority. (How powerful the dream of Rome still was). In exchange, the Franks twice invaded Lombardy as champions of the Pope, conquered large tracts of land, and significantly reduced Lombard dominance. Thus began France's long history of intervention in Italy.

Most importantly for the moment, Pepin donated the former Exarchate of Ravenna to the Pope. In 781AD, the Emperor Charlemagne, wearing his "The Sword of Rome" hat, codified what territories should belong to the Papacy. These included the Duchy of Rome, Ravenna, the Pentapolis (a single duchy including Ancona, Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, and Sinigaglia), parts of Benevento, Tuscany, Corsica, and Lombardy proper, plus a variety of independent Italian towns. As a reward for this, the Pope crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans in 800AD.

Still, the nature of the Papacy's relationship to its properties was unclear. Were the Popes merely feudal overlords under Imperial suzerainty? Or was their temporal power sovereign? The question was shelved for a time, as the Frankish Empire broke up and the Papacy's influence weakened during the "Pornocracy" of the 900's. The Popes were unable to effectively administer the lands beyond the Duchy of Rome, most of which preserved the forms of Lombard rule – generally collections of counties or marquisates surrounding fortified towns.

[The Pornocracy, also called the Rule of the Harlots, saw the Papacy under the sway of the womenfolk of three powerful Roman families.]

In the 10th Century, a German ruler, Otto I, invaded and conquered northern Italy. Pope John XII crowned him Emperor and in return received the Diploma Ottonium, guaranteeing the independence of the Papal States. Nonetheless, Otto's recognition of Papal authority over Papal territory could be and was used repeatedly to justify, under feudal law, Imperial supremacy over the Pope in the latter's capacity as a temporal ruler. The question waxed and waned over the next two centuries with the ebb and flow of Imperial power.

The 11th Century saw a major reformation in Church policy and doctrine – the Gregorian Reform. From this, the lifework of Pope Gregory VII, came the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, the supremacy of the Pope over all other earthly rulers, and the call for a reduction of all secular states in favour of a universal Church State. In practice, Gregory VII, a consummate politician, decreed that the Divine plan was that Church and State should have a symbiotic relationship – but not an equal one. The Church was superior to the State, period. Despite Gregory's certainty (perhaps because of it), the struggle between Church and State continued unabated.

But by the 14th Century, the powerful Hohenstaufen Emperors were no more. Their successors had enough to do retaining their position in Germany, and the Papal States, like their neighbours, became truly independent. The Papal States, but not the Papacy. This was the period of the Babylonian Captivity (1305-1378AD), with the Popes (one set of them, anyway) living at Avignon under the thumb of the French kings. The Popes' spiritual authority might be shaken by the

phenomenon of two or three Popes reigning at once, but the Papal States retained their power; Avignon was added to them and retained until the French Revolution.

The 15th Century saw the rule of Alexander VI (House of Borgia, with all that infers) and Julius II "the Warrior Pope". Spiritually, the Papacy sank even lower, but the Popes became extremely powerful secular rulers, forging marriage alliances with other Italian states and waging wars of aggrandisement. Ironically, Papal authority within the Papal States remained nominal until the 17th Century – when the Reformation saw much of northern Europe break away from Catholicism, reducing the Popes' workload.

The Papal States were at their greatest extent during the Age of Enlightenment, consisting at that time of the original territories of Latium, Umbria, and Marche, the Legations of Ravenna, Ferrara, and Bologna, and the Romagna. Apart from the Comtat Venaissin surrounding Avignon, there were also the enclaves of Benevento and Pontecorvo in southern Italy.

Benedict XIV

The Pope at the time of the War of the Austrian Succession was Benedict XIV (Prospero Lorenzo Lambertini, born Bologna, March 31st 1675, died 3rd, 1758 in Rome, and reigning from 17th August 1740 to 3rd May 1758). His predecessor, Clement XII, died in February 1740.

Good humoured and even tempered (in a period of deadlock during the tiresome six month conclave that led to his election, he once stated, "If you wish to elect a saint, choose Gotti; a statesman, Aldobrandini; an honest man, elect me"), Benedict was renowned as one of the most erudite men of his time (he received doctorates of Theology and Utriusque Juris – canon and civil law – at nineteen).

Seeking recreation among the learned and artistic of his day, he devoted much time and effort to scientific and historical studies, as well as literature, and was himself renowned for his lively wit and conversation. At the same time, he was tremendously active and energetic, not only in correspondence with like-minded scholars, but in his duties as head of the Church.

At times he could shock: he once expressed disapproval of the way the French Court was conducting itself toward the Papacy, and when the French Ambassador (Choiseul) tried to argue with him, thrust the latter into his own seat, saying "Be pope yourself".

[As a matter of fact, Benedict had not aggressively sought the pontificate; being the Pope's assistant gave him more time for study.]

Benedict was idolised by the Romans, who greatly admired his wit and learning, but also applauded his interest in the common people. He saw his episcopate "not as an honour, but an opportunity to do good". Thus he was tireless in overseeing all facets of his ministry, from visits around the diocese, to convening synods, to administrative reform, to simply wandering the streets of Rome and speaking to people. He was also well versed in the realities of politics.

On this front his aim was conciliation, to the point that he is reputed never to have allowed anyone to leave his presence angry or dissatisfied. He made friends even among the Protestant courts, even of Frederick the Great, and even more surprisingly, of the atheist Voltaire, who dedicated his *Mahomet* to him, and wrote at another time: "This is Lambertini, the pride of Rome, the father of the world, who teaches that world by his writings and honours by his virtues".

[Although Benedict accepted the gift, he later condemned Voltaire's writings.]

Even the Ottoman Sultan spoke well of him, and was in return called the “Good Turk”. Ironically, during the War of the Austrian Succession he was on bad terms with Maria Theresa of Austria, though this was not usually the case (she was as conservative a Catholic as he was). Faulted by some for reducing the temporal power of the Papacy, his goal was to strengthen it spiritually, and in this he appears to have been successful. As a moral force, the Church gained ground, albeit in a staunchly conservative vein.

[Maria Theresa had demanded Parma and Piacenza swear fealty to her, which they did, but Benedict, reviewing the Papacy's own claims to the duchies felt his prerogative was being infringed.]

Some examples of his secular policy included granting permission to the King of Spain to tax the clergy of the Spanish possessions, rights of patronage for the King of Portugal in his own realm, the recognition of the title “King of Prussia” (which was not universally accepted), and the award of the title “Vicar of the Holy See” to Charles Emmanuel (which carried the right of nominations to benefices and the income from pontifical fiefs – no wonder the King of Piedmont refused to march his army into the Papal States).

Temporally, Benedict managed to replenish the papal coffers through strict economy, to remove or reduce some of the abuses that had crept in to the Church administration (such as usury), and to make the Papal States more economically efficient. On the spiritual side, his influence was lasting. He clarified many points of ecclesiastical law, writing reams of treatises, letters, and essays on a wide variety of subjects; many of these are still used as guides today. Also, he arrived at an accord with some members of the Orthodox Church (no mean achievement).

Though on the political side many of his actions were quite “liberal”, on the theological side they were not. Mixed marriages between Catholics and Protestants, for example, were to be strictly limited in that the children must be raised Catholic; also, such marriages could not be celebrated with formal Catholic rites. He also renewed the Church's prohibition of Freemasons, and ruled firmly against the leavening of pagan traditions in the Oriental Church. This led to the loss of many converts, but Benedict said he preferred fewer feasts so long as they were properly Christian.

Likewise, Benedict's reforms of the Catholic liturgy were extremely conservative, though this actually led to the removal of a number of extraneous practices. Surprisingly, he was quite hostile to the Jesuits, but his instructions for a reform of that body were rescinded by his successor.

At the same time, as a true child of the Age of Enlightenment, he founded four academies for the study of history and antiquities, chairs of chemistry and mathematics, plus many more for the arts, a Christian museum, and an immense library. (All of which received his close supervision).

Benedict XIV's influence in an age when the Papacy is popularly supposed to have been in decline cannot be overstated. For good or ill, he is *the* great legislator among the modern popes. Rigidly orthodox in his faith and interpretation of doctrine, he nevertheless managed to win the respect and friendship of many, even among those who ought to have been his enemies. As Horace Walpole wrote, “[he] restored the lustre of the tiara. By what art did he achieve that glory? Solely by his virtues”.

ANNEX B: ORDERS OF BATTLE

Distribution of Forces at War Start

Napolispan Forces

At Orbetello (8th November 1741)

Reales Guardías España	6 bns
Reales Guardías Valona	6 bns
Reales Regimiento Réina	2 bns
Regimiento Lombardia	2 bns
Regimiento Irlanda	2 bns
Regimiento Suizo Bessler	2 bns
Brigada de Carabineros Reales	3 sqns
Regimiento Dragona Sagunto	3 sqns
Artillery & Train (about 600 men)	

At La Spezia & local ports (13th January 1742)

Regimiento Castilla	2 bns
Regimiento la Corona	2 bns
Regimiento Guadalaxara	2 bns
Regimiento Ibernía	2 bns
Regimiento Parma	2 bns
Regimiento Flandes	2 bns
Regimiento Suizo Bessler	1 bn
Regimiento Suizo Wirth	1 bn
Fuñileros de Montaña	1 bn
Artillery & Train (460 men)	

At Spoleto (estimate: closest OoB dated May '42)

Reale Guardie Italiana	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reale Guardie Svizzero	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Belga Borgona	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Belga Hainault	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Belga Naumur	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Belga Amberes	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Svizzero Wirth	2 bns (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Svizzero Tschoudy	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Svizzero Jauch	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reggimento del Re	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reggimento della Regina	1 bn (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Reale Borbone	1 bn
Reggimento Reale Farnese	1 bn
Reggimento Reale Italiano	1 bn
Più Cuirassier Reggimento del Re	3 sqns
Reggimento del Cavallo Rossiglione	3 sqns (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Dragoni di Tarragona	3 sqns (ex-Sp)
Reggimento Dragoni della Regina	3 sqns
Reggimento Dragoni di Borbone	3 sqns
Artillery unknown	

Enroute to Antibes (OoB dated August 1742)

Regimiento Galicías	2 bns
Regimiento Burgos	2 bns
Regimiento Soboya	1 bn

Regimiento Tolédo	2 bns
Regimiento Africa	2 bns
Regimiento Victoria	2 bns
Regimiento Soria	2 bns
Regimiento Mallorca	2 bns
Regimiento Córdoba	2 bns
Regimiento Asturias	2 bns
Garde du Corps	3 sqns
Granaderos a Caballo	1 sqn
Brigada de Carabineros Reales	1 sqn
Regimiento Caballeria Principe	3 sqns
Regimiento Caballeria Sevilla	3 sqns
Regimiento Caballeria Caltrava	3 sqns
Regimiento Caballeria Montesa	3 sqns
Regimiento Dragona Merida	1 sqn
Regimiento Dragona Belgia	3 sqns
Regimiento Dragona Numancia	3 sqns
Regimiento Dragona Pavia	3 sqns
Regimiento Dragona Frisfa	3 sqns
Artillery unknown	

Austrians (Based on July 1742 OoB)

CO: Feldmarshal Traun

1st Line

Right Wing: FML Payersbert & Baron Havor

Huzaren Regiment Hávor	3 sqns
Kurassier Regiment Miglio	6 sqns

Center: FML Schulenburg

Fuß Regiment Alt-Wallis	3 bns
Fuß Regiment Roth	1 bn
Fuß Regiment Deutschmeister	3 bns
Fuß Regiment Traun	3 bns

Left: FML Ciceri

Kurassier Regiment Berlichingen	8 sqns
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Attached

Croatian Grenz	3 bns
Slavonier Grenz	2 bns
Artillery	

2nd Line: FML Pallavincini

Slavoniers zu Pferd	2 sqns
Fuß Regiment Diesbach	3 bns
Fuß Regiment Piccolomini	3 bns
Maroser zu Pferd	3 sqns

Piedmontese Expeditionary Corps

CO: King Carlos Emanuele III

1st Line

Right Wing: Generalita de Tenente d'Aspremont

La Martiniere's Brigade	
Reggimento Dragoni de Re	3 sqns
Garde du Corps	2 sqns
Reggimento Corazze de Savoia	3 sqns

Center Right: Generalita de Tenente Carrail

Baron Leutrum's Brigade	
Reggimento Guardie	2 bns
Reggimento Tedesco Reh binder	1 bn

Reggimento Fuziliere	2 bns
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Center

Guibert's Brigade	
Reggimento Monferrato	2 bns
Reggimento della Regina	1 bn
Reggimento Svizzero Guibert	2 bns

Center Left: Generalita de Tenente de Susa

Verger's Brigade	
Reggimento Svizzero Audibert	1 bn
Reggimento Svizzero Reidtmann	2 bns
Reggimento Savoia	2 bns

Left Wing: Count della Manta

Della Villa's Brigade	
Reggimento Corazze Reale Piemonte	3 sqns
Reggimento Dragoni di S.A.R.	3 sqns

Artillery

4 "brigades"

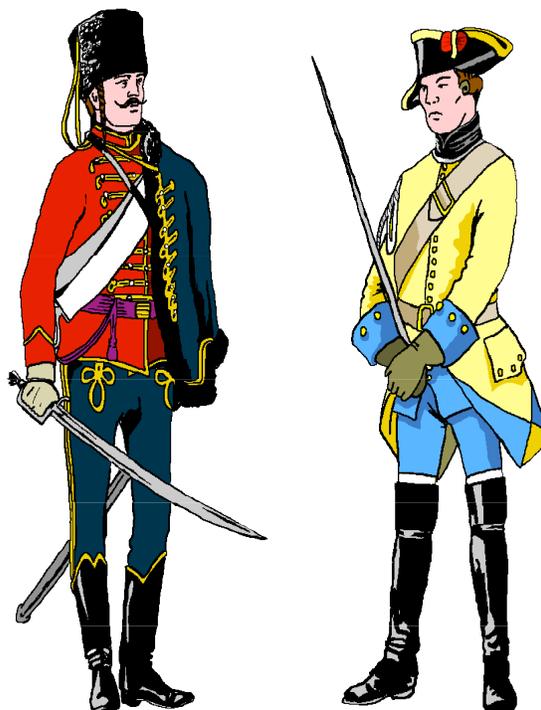
2nd Line: Generalita de Tenente Schulenburg

Right Wing: Chevalier de Cinzano

Comiane's Brigade	
Reggimento Dragoni Piemonte	3 sqns
Reggimento Piemonte	2 bns
Reggimento Svizzero Diesbach	2 bns
Milizia Reggimento Aosta	1 bn

Left Wing: GM Donnaz

Noeffe's Brigade	
Reggimento Tedesco Schollembourg	2 bns
Milizia Reggimento Vercellio	1 bn
Reggimento Saluzzo	2 bns
Reggimento Dragoni della Regina	3 sqns



Battle of Campo Santo (8th February 1743)

Spanish Forces

CO: General de Teniente Gages

1st Line

Right Wing: General de Teniente Atriasco

De Silva's Brigade

Brigada de Carabineros Reales 3 sqns

Regimiento Caballeria Réiña 3 sqns

Center Right: General de Teniente MacDonald

Romero's Brigade

Reales Guardías Española 6 bns

Center: General de Teniente Ramirez

MacDonald's Castilian Brigade

Regimiento Castilla 2 bns

Regimiento Flandes 2 bns

Regimiento Lombardia 2 bns

Center Left: General de Teniente Mariani

Grossberg's Brigade

Reales Guardías Valona 6 bns

Left Wing: General de Teniente Beaufort

De Castro's Brigade

Regimiento Dragona Sagunto 3 sqns

2nd Line: General de Teniente de Sayve

Right Wing: de la Torre

D'Arco's Brigade

Regimiento Dragona Réiña 3 sqns

Center Right:

Pacheco's Queen's Brigade

Regimiento la Corona 2 bns

Regimiento Guadalaxara 2 bns

Reales Regimiento Réiña 2 bns

Center Left:

Burke's Irish Brigade

Regimiento Irlanda 2 bns

Regimiento Ibernía 2 bns

Left:

Bessler's Parma Brigade

Regimiento Suizo Bessler 2 bns

Regimiento Suizo Wirth 1 bn

Regimiento Parma 2 bns

Fuñileros de Montaña 2 bns

Reserve

Fuñileros de Montaña 2 bns

Compañía Franca de Húsares a Pié

Compañía Franca d'Italiana

Compañía Franca d'Albania

Artillery: unknown but weak

Austro-Sardinian Forces

CO: Feldmarshal Traun

1st Line

Demonstration Group

Croatians

Huzaren Regiment Hávor (100 men)

FML Schulenburg's Brigade

Fuß Regiment Alt-Wallis 2 bns

Fuß Regiment Roth 2 bns

FML Pallavicini's Brigade

Fuß Regiment Deutschmeister 2 bns

Fuß Regiment Traun 3 bns

Piedmontese: Generalità de Tenente Aspremont

Cumiane's Brigade

Reggimento Svizzero Diesbach 1 bn

Reggimento Tedesco Schollembourg 1 bn

Reggimento Savoia 2 bns

5 guns

FML Payersburg's Brigade

Kurassier Regiment Miglio 6 sqns

Dragoner Regiment Savoy 2 sqns

Huzaren Regiment Hávor (300 men)

4 fortress guns

Slavonier Grenz formation

Slavoniers zu Pferd 2 sqns

Maroser zu Pferd 2 sqns

Slavonier Grenz formation

200 "Reiters"

2nd Line

Brigade

Combined Austro-Sardinian Cavalry 4 sqns

Neuhaus' Brigade

Fuß Regiment Diesbach 3 bns

Colloredo's Brigade

Fuß Regiment Piccolomini 3 bns

Baron Leutrum's Brigade (Piedmontese)

Reggimento Svizzero Diesbach 1 bn

Reggimento Tedesco Rehbinder 1 bn

Reggimento Piemonte 2 bns

Ciceri's Brigade

Kurassier Regiment Berlichingen 8 sqns

Reggimento Dragoni della Regina 2 sqns

Velletri Campaign Summer 1744

Napolispan Forces (OoB dated end May 1744)

CO: King Carlos VII of Naples
Duke Francesco III of Modena

1st Line: Mariscal de Campo Gages
Duce de Castropignano

Right Wing: General de Teniente Atriasco

Sillero's Brigade

Brigada de Carabineros Reales	3 sqns
Regimiento Caballeria Réiña	3 sqns
Modenese Garde du Corps	1 sqn

Center: Generals de Teniente Mariani & MacDonald

Grossberg's Brigade

Reales Guardías Española	6 bns
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Wirth's Brigade

Reale Guardie Italiana	1 bn
Regimiento Castilla	2 bns
Regimiento Lombardia	2 bns
Regimiento del Re	1 bn

D'Aranda's Brigade

Reggimento della Regina	1 bn
Reggimento Svizzero Wirth	2 bns
Reggimento Svizzero Tschoudy	1 bn
Reggimento Svizzero Jauch	1 bn
Reale Guardie Svizzero	1 bn

D'Alaba's Brigade

Reales Guardías Valona	6 bns
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Left Wing: Generalita de Tenente Vieuville

De Silva's Brigade

Più Cuirassier Reggimento del Re	3 sqns
Reggimento del Cavallo Rossiglione	3 sqns
Reggimento Dragoni di Tarragona	3 sqns

2nd Line: General de Teniente Sayve

Right Wing: General de Teniente Sangro

Santis' Brigade

Regimiento Dragona Réiña	3 sqns
Regimiento Dragona Sagunto	3 sqns

Center: Villafuerte & A. MacDonald

Bessler's Brigade

Reales Regimiento Réiña	2 bns
Regimiento la Corona	2 bns
Regimiento Terra di Lavoro	1 bn

Finnes' Brigade

Regimiento Guadalaxara	2 bns
Regimiento Flandes	2 bns
Reggimento Belga Hainault	1 bn
Reggimento Molise	1 bn

Bassecourt's Brigade

Reggimento Reale Farnese	1 bn
Regimiento Irlanda	1 bn
Regimiento Ibernía	1 bn
Reggimento Capitanata	1 bn
Reggimento Belga Naumur	1 bn

Pachero's Brigade

Reggimento Reale Macedonia	1 bn
Reggimento Abruzzo Ultra	1 bn
Regimiento Suizo Bessler	2 bns
Regimiento Parma	1 bn

Left Wing: General de Teniente Beaufort

Coriada's Brigade

Reggimento Dragoni della Regina	3 sqns
Reggimento Dragoni di Borbone	3 sqns

Reserve

Fuñileros de Montaña	2 bns
Compañía Franca de Húsares a Pié	
Compañía Franca d'Italiana	
Compañía Franca d'Albania	

Artillery

1 Spanish & 1 Neapolitan battalion

Austrian Forces (OoB dated 5th March 1744)

CO: Feldmarshal Lobkowitz

1st Line

FML Aspremont-Linden's Brigade

Kurassier Regiment Berlichingen	3 sqns
Dragoner Regiment Savoy	3 sqns

FML Browne's Brigade

Fuß Regiment Alt-Wallis	2 bns
Fuß Regiment Piccolomini	2 bns

FML Platz's Brigade

Fuß Regiment Colloredo	2 bns
Fuß Regiment Deutschmeister	2 bns

FML Pallavicini's Brigade

Fuß Regiment Pallavicini	2 bns
Fuß Regiment Daun	2 bns

FML Petusati's Brigade

Kurassier Regiment Miglio	3 sqns
Dragoner Regiment Koháry	3 sqns

Slavonier Grenzers

3 bns

2nd Line

Brigade

Dragoner Regiment Savoy	3 sqns
Kurassier Regiment Berlichingen	3 sqns

GWM Hinderer's Brigade

Fuß Regiment Vasquez	1 bn
Fuß Regiment Marulli	1 bn
Fuß Regiment Roth	2 bns

GWM Vogtern's Brigade

Fuß Regiment Sprecher	2 bns
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GWM Neuhaus' Brigade

Fuß Regiment Traun	2 bns
Fuß Regiment Andrassy	2 bns

Brigade

Kurassier Regiment Miglio	3 sqns
Dragoner Regiment Koháry	3 sqns

Reserve

Huzaren Regiment Hávor 6 sqns
Huzaren Regiment Splenyi 6 sqns
Colonel Soro's Catalan Partisans
Minguella's Catalan Partisans

Battle of Pierre Longue 17th July 1744 **(The Assault on Mont Cavallo-Pietralunga)**

French (5000 men)

CO: Lieutenant Général Bailli de Givry

Left Vanguard

Chevert's Brigade
Régiment Brie 1 bn
4 picquets of grenadiers of Poitou, Conti & Provence

Center Column: Marquis la Carte

Brigade de Provence
Régiment Provence 1 bn
Régiment Conti 2 bns

Right Column: Comte de Danois

Brigade de Poitou
Régiment Poitou 3 bns

Detached Corps

Régiment Travers Grison 2 bns

Reserve

Régiment de Milice Beziers 1 bn

Piedmontese

7 battalions under Charles Emmanuel

Madonna dell'Olmo 30th September 1744

Piedmontese Forces

CO: King Carlos Emanuele III

1st Line: Generalita de Tenente d'Aix

Refused Right Wing (Austrian)

Fuß Regiment Pallavincini 2 bns
8 guns
Austrian Grenadier battalion 6 coys
2 guns
Austrian Grenadier battalion 6 coys

Right Wing: FML Pallavincini

Des Roches' Brigade
5 guns
Reggimento Guardie 2 bns
Reggimento de Re (Diesbach) 2 bns
Reggimento Fuziliere 1 bn
5 guns

Guibert's Brigade
Reggimento Monferrato 2 bns
Milizia Reggimento Pinerolo 1 bn
Reggimento Svizzero Guibert 2 bns
5 guns

Left Wing: Generalita de Tenente Cinzano

Ducker's Brigade
Reggimento Tedesco Schollembourg 1 bn
Reggimento Svizzero Reydt 2 bns
Reggimento Savoia 2 bns
5 guns
Grenadier Battalion 8 coys

Refused Left Wing:

Warasdiner Croats 3 bns
Austrian Grenadier battalion 6 coys
2 guns
Austrian Grenadier battalion 6 coys

2nd Line

Right Wing Cavalry

Hussars & Infantry Picquets
Garde du Corps 2 sqns

Della Manta's Brigade
Reggimento Dragoni Piemonte 3 sqns
Reggimento Dragoni de Re 3 sqns
Reggimento Corazze Savoia 3 sqns

Liguane's Brigade
Reggimento Dragoni di S.A.R. 3 sqns
Reggimento Dragoni della Regina 3 sqns
Reggimento Corazze Reale Piemonte 3 sqns

Infantry: FML Pallavincini

Trinita's Brigade
Milizia Reggimento Torino 1 bn
Fuß Regiment Baden-Durlach 1 bn
Milizia Reggimento Lombardia 1 bn
Reggimento Svizzero Kalbermatten 2 bns
Fuß Regiment Clerici 2 bns

Bricherasso's Brigade
Reggimento Svizzero Audibert 1 bn
Milizia Reggimento Nizza 1 bn
Reggimento de Re (Diesbach) 2 bns
Milizia Reggimento Casale 1 bn
Milizia Reggimento Tarantasia 1 bn
Reggimento Saluzzo 2 bns

Bourbon Forces (# of battalions unclear)

CO: Prince de Conti

1st Line

Right Wing: Marishal de Campo de la Mina

Converged grenadiers & dismounted cavalry
Regimiento Córdoba 2 bns
Regimiento Suizo Jung-Reding 1-5 bns
Regimiento Asturias 2 bns
Regimiento Soboya 2 bns
Regimiento Victoria 2 bns
Regimiento Tolédo 2 bns
Régiment Lyonnais 2 bns
Régiment Beauce 1 bn
Regto Dragona Pavía (dismounted) 3 sqns
Regto Dragona Frisia (dismounted) 3 sqns
Régiment Languedoc 1 bn

Left Wing: Lieutenant Général Chevert

Régiment Poitou	3 bns
Régiment Flandres	1 bn
Régiment Foix	1 bn
Garde du Corps	3 sqns
Granaderos a Caballo	1 sqn
Brigada de Carabineros Reales	1 sqn
Regimiento Caballeria Principe	3 sqns
Regimiento Caballeria Montesa	3 sqns
Regimiento Dragona la Réiña	3 sqns
Cuirassier Rgt Commissaire-General	2 sqns
Cuirassier Rgt Chabot	2 sqns
Cuirassier Rgt Conti	2 sqns
Cuirassier Rgt Royal Piédmont	2 sqns
Milice Régiment Quercy	1 bn
Milice Régiment Isle de France	1 bn
Cuirassier Rgt Anjou	2 sqns

2nd Line: Campo Santo

Regimiento Granada	2 bns
Regimiento Iberia	2 bns
Regimiento Navarra	2 bns
Regimiento Mallorca	2 bns
Régiment Conti	2 bns
Régiment Stainville	1 bn
Gardes Lorraines	1 bn
Régiment Vivarais	1 bn
Regimiento Principe	2 bns
Regimiento Numancia	2 bns

Artillery

Both light & field organised in a redoubt on the right & 3 farmhouse strongpoints across the front

Battle of Assietta 19th July 1747

French Forces (20,000 men)

CO: Chevalier de Belle-Isle

Left Column: Comte de Mailly

Brigade Bourbonnais	
Régiment Bourbonnais	3 bns
Régiment Landes	1 bn
Régiment Soissonais	1 bn

Brigade de la Rheine	
Régiment la Rheine	2 bns
Régiment Béarn	1 bn
Régiment Guise	1 bn

Central Column: M. d'Arnaud

Brigade d'Artois	
Régiment Artois	2 bns
Régiment Auxerrois	1 bn
Régiment Aunis	1 bn
Régiment Santerre	1 bn
8 coys of Grenadiers & 16 Picquets	

Right Column: Marquis de Villemur

Brigade de Mailly	
Régiment Mailly	2 bns
Régiment Boulonnois	1 bn
Régiment Agenois	1 bn

Brigade Royal Rousillon	
Régiment Royal Rousillon	2 bns
Régiment Perigord	1 bn
Régiment Guyenne	1 bn
Régiment Beaujolais	1 bn

Brigade de Condé	
Régiment Condé	2 bns
Régiment Saintogne	1 bn
Régiment Beauce	1 bn
Régiment Grenadiers Royal de Modène	1 bn

Artillery

7x 4lber "vit de mullet" (penis mules)

Not Present

5 squadrons of cavalry, several 8 lbers, & 3 battalions (2 from Mailly & 1 from Boulonnois) left at Oulx (the dépôt)

Piedmontese Forces (5500 men)

CO: Generalíta de Tenente Bricherasio

Col de L'Assiette (3000 men): Major-General Alciati & Major-General Colloredo

Right Wing

Reggimento Svizzero Meyer	1 bn
Fuß Regiment Traun	1 bn
Fuß Regiment Forgatz	1 bn
Fuß Regiment Hagenbach	1 bn

Left Wing

Milizia Reggimento Casale	1 bn
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Reserve

Fuß Regiment Colloredo	1 bn
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Butte de L'Assiette (500 men): Conte di San Sebastiano

Reggimento Guardie	1 bn
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Col de Gran Serin (1500 men): Conte di Martinengo

Reggimento Svizzero Kalbermatten	2 bns
Reggimento Svizzero Roy (Diesbach)	1 bn

Light Corps (500 men)

Vaudois Milizia	
Milizia di Pragelal	
Volontaires de Piemont	

OoB Note

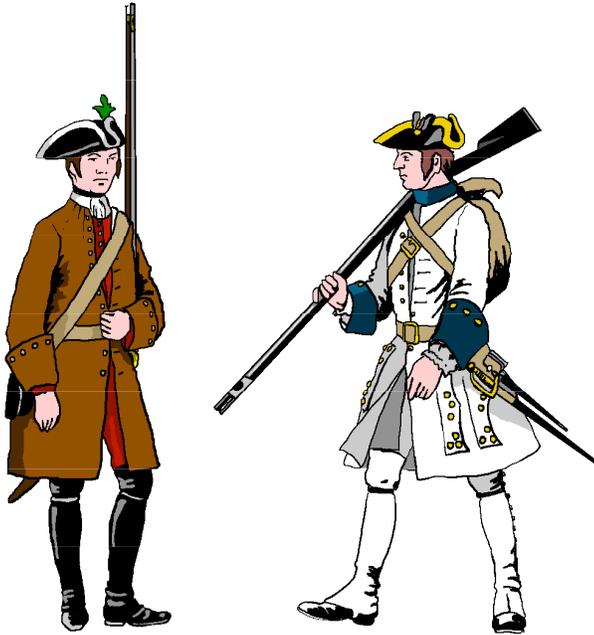
OoB information on the most interesting period, the campaigns of 1745 and 1746 is sadly lacking, at least in accessible English translations. Raw numbers may be found in the earlier portion of this work. For the rest, all contributions will be gratefully accepted. The following item is the only OoB for this period so far located:

Austrian OoB Start of 1745

CO: *Prinz* von Lobkowitz

Fuß Regiment Deutschmeister	618 men
Fuß Regiment Alt-Wallis	719 men
Fuß Regiment Colloredo	658 men
Fuß Regiment Andrassy	665 men
Fuß Regiment H. Daun	901 men
Fuß Regiment Roth	618 men
Fuß Regiment Sprecher	805 men

Fuß Regiment Traun	499 men
Fuß Regiment Vasquez	314 men (2 bns)
Fuß Regiment Maruli	2 bns
Fuß Regiment Piccolomini	745 men
Kurassier Regiment Berlichingen	473 men
Kurassier Regiment Miglio	376 men
Dragoner Regiment Savoy	444 men
Dragoner Regiment Koháry	406 men
Huzaren Regiment Hávor (Desswffy)	189 men
Huzaren Regiment Splenyi	128 men
Slavonier Grenz	674 men
Minguella's Catalan Partisans	383 men



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Anderson, M. S. **The War of the Austrian Succession. 1740-1748.** Longman Group Ltd. Longman House. Essex, 1995. A good primer, nowhere near as detailed as Browning *q.v.*

Anderson, M. S. **War and Society in Europe of the Old Regime 1618-1789.** Sutton Publishing Ltd. Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK. 1998. General work, part of the same series as the above.

Browning, Reed. **The War of the Austrian Succession.** St. Martin's Press. New York, 1995. Essential reading for anyone interested in this war.

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Duffy, Christopher. **The Army of Maria Theresa: the Armed Forces of Imperial Austria, 1740-1780.** David & Charles Publishers Ltd. London, 1977. Companion volume to *The Army of Frederick the Great.*

Duffy, Christopher. **The Military Experience in the Age of Reason.** Routledge & Keegan Paul. London, 1987. Another essential read. Entertaining, too.

Duffy, Christopher. **The Wild Goose and the Eagle. A Life of Marshal von Browne, 1705-1757.** Chatto & Windus. London, 1964. Contains details on the Velletri campaign of 1744, the Lombardy and Provence campaigns of 1746, and Genoa, in addition to von Browne's other endeavours.

Kahn, Robert A. **A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918.** University of California Press, 1974. Primarily political and social history. A balance to the purely military view; the War of the Austrian Succession is treated as an episode in the larger whole.

Preston, Richard M. & Wise, Sydney F. **Men in Arms. 4th Ed. Chapter 9.** Holt, Rinehart, & Wilson. New York, 1979. Quick overview in one of the sections.

Wilkinson, Spenser. **The Defence of Piedmont 1742-1748, A Prelude to Napoleon.** Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1927. The definitive work on this theatre in English and a must read, if you can find a copy. The original is long out of print, as is a 1995 Pallas Armata reprint. There were two copies in the Canadian university loan system. Second hand copies retail for £350 to £400. Wilkinson is one of the great British military analysts of the 1920's, belonging to the "rearmament" school, but strongly critical of Liddle-Hart's views. The thesis of this work, as the title suggests, is that Napoleon studied the campaigns of his predecessors, particularly the *Maréchal* de Maillebois and his chief staff officer, Colonel Bourcet (whose book on Alpine warfare was a standard text at French military colleges), and that the brilliant campaign of 1796 was really a reprint of the campaign of 1745 that achieved lasting success because of the greater resources at Bonaparte's disposal, the lack of a coalition partner, and his own unique drive. Whether one accepts the thesis or not, the book is invaluable, as it covers all aspects of the war in Italy, not just the Alpine theatre, and political as well as military subjects.

Other Items. Various Osprey uniform guides, L. & F. Funcken's 2-volume set of plates (in French), plus an excellent series on the armies of the War of the Austrian Succession by Stephen Manley. And, of course, Naftziger's ubiquitous orders of battle (though these must be treated with caution).

Major Online Sources

http://www.chez.com/praetiritifides/Page_Principale.htm

Documents, maps, and orders of battle. Site is not complete, but has details on the War of the Austrian Succession, the Seven Years War, and bits on other events in the 18th Century.

http://vial.jean.free.fr/new_npi/enter.htm

Documents and especially OoBs for the armies of the Ancien Régime.

For period maps, the following proved invaluable:

<http://www.library.ucla.edu/yrl/reference/maps/blaeu/germania-nt.htm>

<http://www.davidrumsey.com/>

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