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Review Article: Spain and the Netherlands in the 17th Century

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Spain's Struggle for Europe, 1598-1668 by R.A. Stradling. The Hambledon Press. 1994. xxv + 303 pages, 9 illustrations. ISBN 1 85285 089 2. £37.50 (Hdbk).

Conflict of Empires. Spain, the Low Countries and the Struggle for World Supremacy 1585-1713 by Jonathan I. Israel. The Hambledon Press. 1997. xxv + 420 pages, 12 plates, 5 maps, 7 text illustrations. £45 (Hdbk).

On the 6th March 1629, the Holy Roman Emperor issued the Edict of Restitution reclaiming all ecclesiastical land seized by Protestants in Germany for the Catholic Church. With imperial armies dipping their toes in the waters of the Baltic having thrashed the Danish invaders it seemed that the Hapsburg dynasty, driven by the powerhouse of Spain, was finally within reach of its holy grail, a universal monarchy. Yet only 40 years later its power was so broken that it was virtually incapable of offering any meaningful resistance to the French onslaught on the Spanish Netherlands during the War of Devolution (1667-68) and was only saved by the humiliating intervention of its former bitterest foe, the Dutch Republic. How this decline came about and how Spain was able to maintain the appearance of a great power despite apparently crippling military and economic problems has been a central theme of Robert Stradling's work as an historian. *Spain's Struggle for Europe* collects together the author's essays on the subject from a variety of academic journals. Four of them, filling about one-quarter of the book, examine military affairs and are described below.

Catastrophe and Recovery: The Defeat of Spain, 1639-43¹

It has been a commonly held historical belief that at the battles of the Downs (1639) and Rocroi (1643) Spanish arms suffered such catastrophic defeats that it effectively brought about the collapse of Spain as a major player on the European stage. In this essay Stradling attempts to question this assumption.

The war up to that point had been going reasonably well for the Spanish - the Dunkirk squadron had achieved some noticeable successes, whilst on land the French invasion of Spain had been repulsed at Fuenterrabia. In a mood of optimism Spain decided to launch a major naval offensive. A force was collected under Oquendo which was about

half the size of the Armada of 1588, its objective being to supply the Army of Flanders with men and money (the Spanish Road having been cut by the French capture of Breisach in Germany) and, if possible, to seek out and destroy the Dutch fleet. As it turned out the Spanish were outmanoeuvred by Tromp, sought shelter in English territorial waters and were then severely mauled. The following year both Portugal and Catalonia rose in revolt against the financial demands that were being made on them because of the war. In order to take pressure off the Spanish front, the Army of Flanders under Francisco De Melo began aggressively attacking Northern France. At Honnecourt he won an impressive victory killing or capturing 6,000 French and taking their baggage train. Thus encouraged De Melo became bolder and besieged Rocroi. In the resulting battle the lack of Spanish cavalry (due to problems with a supply of horses) gave command of the field to the French, who used it to batter the Spanish infantry.

These defeats have entered historical myth as marking the end of Spanish military might. C.V. Wedgwood, for example, wrote in her book on the Thirty Years War that Rocroi 'was the end of the Spanish army'. Yet this was certainly not the perception of contemporaries. Oquendo kept his post unlike his unfortunate predecessor Benavides who lost not only his job but also his head after the disastrous battle of Matanzas ten years earlier. Equally De Melo retained his position whereas Archduke Albert was sacked after fighting a losing draw at the battle of Nieuwpoort in 1600. The alleged collapse is also not borne out by subsequent events. The Dunkirk squadron continued to be such a thorn in the side of the Dutch and French that they launched a series of joint campaigns after Rocroi specifically aimed at capturing the Flemish ports. Neither was the Army of Flanders crippled. It maintained the fight against the French until the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1660 and in the early 1650's conducted a series of campaigns that resulted in the recapture of Dunkirk and the defeat of the French army at Valenciennes. Far more significant to Spain's decline, Stradling feels, was the defeat of the army sent to quash the Catalan revolt at Montjuich in 1641. This led to a ten-year strength sapping struggle in Spain's heartland. Ultimately, Stradling considers Rocroi and the Downs not as decisive battles but as body blows which weakened Spain's ability to withstand further disasters - part of the process of decline but not fatal in themselves.

The Spanish Dunkirkers, 1621-48: A Record of Plunder and Destruction ²

In 1625 the Spanish besieged and captured the Dutch town of Breda. Its fall was widely acclaimed in Europe but was greeted with muted satisfaction by the Spanish government. The costs of the capture of this one fortress had been enormous and there was a growing realisation that conventional methods of warfare were not going to bring the heavily-fortified rebel provinces to their knees. In the search for an alternative strategy an idea was hit upon that would attack the very foundations of Dutch economic power and one that had been used very successfully by the Dutch themselves against the Spanish - piracy! A successful precedent already existed in the shape of Austrian sponsored attacks on the Venetians and Ottomans by the Uskoks of the Dalmatian coast. Furthermore, the Dutch were thought to offer a rich choice of targets with regular convoys from the Indies

and the Baltic as well as the huge North Sea fishing fleet. Choosing Dunkirk as the headquarters for these operations, the Spanish government quickly set about building up a fleet of frigates with the effectiveness of the most efficient government of the early modern world. Dunkirk was soon to acquire a reputation as 'the Algiers of the North'. But of course such profitable activities naturally attracted the interest of private capital; these 'privateers' would eventually account for 80% of all prizes taken. To be fair the Royal fleet had a multitude of other tasks to perform such as escort duty, amphibious assault and support of the main Spanish battlefleet; also they often simply preferred to destroy Dutch vessels rather than take them back to port.

The Dunkirkers proved to be a huge success. In the period 1629-38 some 2,500-3,000 vessels were captured or sunk, amounting to about 250-300,000 tons of enemy shipping. So exasperated was the Dutch government by the failure of their navy to curb these activities that in 1637 the provinces of Holland and Zeeland dismissed their entire naval high command. Yet their blockading activities were not totally without effect, as only 18% of prizes were taken in the summer. Winter remained the favourite hunting time (40% of prizes taken) because of the extreme difficulty of maintaining an effective watch on the Flemish coast in the tempestuous North Sea; in 1625 for example, a joint Anglo-Dutch fleet lost over 30 vessels in one such storm. In addition when Dutch naval resources were distracted by such events as the battle of the Downs or the conquest of Brazil, the privateers would have a field day. Most of their victims were not surprisingly Dutch but when the English and French went to war with Spain they found their merchantmen made equally tasty targets.

When compared to other privateering campaigns of the 17th and 18th centuries, the Dunkirkers look very impressive. Yet undoubtedly their most significant contribution the Spanish war effort was in providing a very strong motivation to the Dutch to agree to peace with Spain in 1648.

Spain's Military Failure and the Supply of Horses, 1600-60 ³

In his essay *Catastrophe and Recovery*, described above, Stradling hinted at the lack of cavalry as a major cause of Spain's defeat at the battle of Rocroi. He expands on this theme more fully in this article.

The horse was central to the conduct of warfare in the mid-17th century. It moved wagons and guns, acted as the eyes of the army and (especially since the Swedish tactical innovations) was the offensive arm in battle; an army without horses was a beaten army. Spain had always found it difficult to supply Flanders with horses, they were extremely difficult to transport by sea and the land route over the Alps wrought a high attrition rate on the animals. She was fortunate, however, that the nature of war in the close country of the Netherlands never required them in large numbers - the cavalry of the Army of Flanders amounted to no more than about 10% of the whole force. This was to change with the entry of France into the Thirty Years War as the open rolling countryside of southern Flanders and northern France made for ideal cavalry country. Suddenly the Spanish needed horses and suddenly they could not obtain them. What

could be obtained were ruinously expensive - each being twice the cost of a black slave and twelve times the cost of an Irish infantryman! By 1640 Spain had managed to raise the proportion of cavalry in the Army of Flanders to 18% but this was still woefully short of the desired 33% thought necessary for campaigning in France.

There were a variety of reasons for these shortages:

- The already heavy demand for horses by the war in Germany was greatly increased by the requirements of France, herself, when she entered into hostilities and by the outbreak of the civil war in England. In 1642 for example, a supply of Danish horses bound for Flanders was seized by Parliament whilst sheltering in an English port.
- The destruction of war brought numerous famines to Hapsburg lands and these would affect not only man but beast as well.
- Spain's large empire required many beasts of burden and in this respect mules were much more efficient than horses. The mule was the product of breeding male jackasses with female mares so it stands to reason that if a mare is carrying a mule she cannot be carrying a horse.
- The 17th century saw a great increase in Spain of the leisure activities of hunting and bull fighting. These were very wasteful of horseflesh.
- The few horses that the Army of Flanders did possess often disappeared into the cooking pots of its hungry and ill-fed soldiers.

Filling the Ranks: Spanish Mercenary Recruitment and the Crisis of the 1640s ⁴

By the 1640s Spain had reached a state that would today we would call total war. Horses were not the only thing in short supply; money, munitions and in particular men were all desperately needed. However, the native-born Spanish soldier was becoming a scarce commodity, with perhaps only 50,000 of the 220,000 men Spain had under arms originating from the Iberian peninsula.

Things were brought to a head by the 1647 siege of the town of Lerida, which was strategically located on the border between Aragon and the rebel province of Catalonia. Its importance stemmed from the fact that it provided an ideal base for striking deep into either the heart of Spain or the bowels of Catalonia. The French had made several attempts to capture it (and even briefly succeeded) before deciding to summon the victor of Rocroi, the Great Conde to lead a supreme effort. The Spanish monarchy's attempt to raise an army of native Spaniards to relieve the siege was met with rioting from the war-weary general populace and open hostility from provincial governments. Spain seemed to be on the verge of disintegration. Help arrived in the nick of time in the shape of an assortment of foreign mercenaries - Italians, Walloons, Germans and Irish - brought in from Spain's European possessions. Lerida was relieved and Spain was saved.

Foreign troops in Spanish service were of course nothing new, a muster of the Army of Flanders in 1601 showed that only one in four were Spanish (this had dropped to nearly one in seven by 1640). However, it was unusual to see so many serving inside the Spanish peninsula. This was largely due to the belief, inherent perhaps in all that have

achieved military predominance, that Spanish soldiers were superior to those of any other nation. This opinion had been reinforced by the behaviour of some Italian troops brought to Spain to participate in the defence of the northern border and had been a significant factor in sparking the Catalan revolt. However, as the Franco-Spanish war continued, the need to seek manpower outside of the Hapsburg lands became apparent. Two of the most promising areas that were identified were Poland and Ireland.

The Polish were seen as the solution to Spain's lack of quality cavalry in Flanders. As early as 1636 Ukrainian Cossacks had gained an evil reputation for themselves when they participated in the invasion of France. By 1640 negotiations were in an advanced stage for the use of a large Polish army and only the veto of the Polish diet stopped the winged hussars galloping across the plains of Flanders. Unlike the Polish, the Irish had a long history of service in the Army of Flanders, in fact ever since 1587 when the catholic Irish regiment of Sir William Stanley had defected to the Spanish due to the failure of the English to pay them. Since then they had gained a strong reputation for courage and bravery in battle so naturally the Spanish were very keen to take on the 10,000 men that Stafford had originally raised to help Charles I in his quarrels with Parliament. Unfortunately the plan fell through when the revolt of the Catholic Confederacy broke out. The supplies of Irish recruits dried up and, worse still, many experienced soldiers, such as Owen Roe O'Neill, left Spanish service to go home to join the fight. When the rebellion was finally crushed the Cromwellian government shipped some 20,000 men to the Spanish but these were broken men of poor quality, as was reflected by the numerous desertions and defections that occurred.

Desperate for men the Spanish began to consider any source. In 1650 there were two Scottish tercios fighting in Spain whilst the Army of Flanders had units of exiled Royalist English. Perhaps most bizarre of all was the proposal to use Dutch regiments! In anticipation of a successful conclusion to the Munster negotiations that were aimed at establishing peace between Spain and the Netherlands, the Dutch offered the Spanish the use of two regiments of foot amounting to some 6,000 men. They were never delivered but other Protestants certainly found their way into Spanish ranks, leading to the situation where the most militantly catholic country in the world was using heretics to defend herself!

There are nine other essays in this book covering a variety of interesting topics such as attempts to discredit the Count-Duke of Olivares in the wake of the disastrous Mantuan War, the deterioration of relations between France and Spain prior to the outbreak of war in 1635 and the policies of Medina de las Torres who succeeded Olivares as Spain's minister of State.

Central to Spain's strategic thinking throughout most of the 17th century was the recovery of her rebellious Dutch possessions. This intense relationship, which was not always as hostile as one might at first believe, has been at the core of much of the writing of Jonathan Israel. Many of his essays on this theme have been collected

together and supplemented with new ones in *Conflict of Empires*. A number of them have a particularly military slant and are described below.

Garrisons and Empire. Spain's Stongholds in North-West Germany, 1589-1659 ⁵

From the late 16th century to the Peace of the Pyrenees, Spain made a very substantial investment to establish and maintain large and numerous garrisons in north-west Germany. Given the huge range of commitments that the Spanish monarchy faced all over the globe, why was this region considered to be so important? There are four major reasons:

- The area was the centre of a three-way struggle between Catholics, Calvinists and Lutherans. Left on its own the weak Catholic party was likely to fail. Spanish intervention played a large part in the eventual triumph of the counter-reformation in the region.
- The area was vitally important in Spain's struggle against the Dutch Republic. Since Prince Maurice's campaigns of the 1590s, the Dutch southern border had become virtually impregnable. But its flat, open eastern frontier was much more vulnerable. It was no accident that virtually every major Spanish offensive against the Netherlands in the 17th century originated in north-west Germany.
- Spain needed control of the crossings over the lower Rhine in order to enable her to intervene effectively in Germany if required.
- Control of the area enabled Spain to apply economic pressure on the Dutch by blocking their river trade and also by exacting contributions from their eastern provinces.

Spanish interest in the region began in the aftermath of the Duke of Alva's repressive polices of the 1570's. Many Dutch Calvinists fled the Netherlands to north-west Germany, tipping the balance of power in the region in their favour and leading to the Elector of Cologne announcing his conversion to Calvinism. Spain responded by launching the War of Cologne (1583-9) in which the Electorate was reclaimed for the Catholic Church. Thus began a lengthy and intense see-saw struggle for the region that was epitomised by the city of Rheinberg (a crucial crossing point on the Rhine). This changed hands so many times that it became known as the "whore of war".

Gradually Spain began to gain the upper hand, a process accelerated by the Jülich-Cleves crisis in which Spinola led a highly successful campaign to capture many of the strategically placed towns and river crossings in the area. The Dutch responded by seizing those not yet in Spanish hands. Yet remarkably there was no direct clash between the two and the 12-year truce held.

On its expiry in 1621, it was in north-west Germany that the Spanish chose to launch their attack, capturing the city of Jülich and most of the other positions that the Dutch had so recently occupied - a situation reinforced by Tilly's crushing victory over Christian of Brunswick at Stadtlohn in 1623. Spanish power in the region was now at its height and amounted to some 50 garrisons and a deployment of 11,000 troops.

However this situation was to unravel within only a few years. The huge drain on resources of the Mantuan War, the Dutch capture of s'Hertogenbosch in 1629 and the

dramatic intervention of the Swedish in the Thirty Years War greatly undermined Spain's position. In 1630 she was forced to hand over many of her fortresses to the control of the Catholic League in order to free up troops for use elsewhere. But the biggest nail in the coffin was hammered in by the Dutch offensive down the Maas valley in 1632 that drove a wedge between the Spanish Netherlands and Spain's remaining bases in north-west Germany. This attack culminated in the (final) fall of Rheinberg in 1633, ending the river-trade blockade and lifting the threat of raids on Dutch territory.

A Spanish counter-offensive in 1635 did meet with some success but all her gains were wiped out in the following year. Spain still regarded control of Rheinberg as a vital strategic objective and continued to insist upon its return as a condition of peace with the Dutch. However, as her position deteriorated though the 1640's this demand looked more and more optimistic. Eventually her remaining garrisons in the area were abandoned at the Peace of the Pyrenees and in her place slipped Louis XIV's France as the controlling power.

A Spanish Project to defeat the Dutch without Fighting: The Rhine-Maas Canal, 1624-29 ⁶

If the Rhine-Maas Canal had been successfully completed, it would have had profound implications for the course of the Eighty Years War and for 17th century Europe as a whole. The objective of this grand scheme was nothing less than to construct a canal to divert the waters of the Rhine into the Maas. The advantages to Spain of achieving this remarkable feat would be threefold:

- The river trade that ran up the Rhine to the North Sea would be diverted into Spanish pockets.
- The eastern provinces of the Netherlands would be exposed to attack.
- A near-impenetrable barrier would be provided to shield much Spanish territory from the activities of Dutch contribution collectors.

The originator of this idea was Jan van den Wouvere, an influential member of the government of the Spanish Netherlands who previously "project managed" a number of large military engineering tasks. His plans were submitted in early 1626 and received an enthusiastic response, particularly when a feasibility study carried out by government engineers returned a positive assessment.

However, before the first sod could be turned, there was much horse-trading that had to be entered into. Many of Spain's allies in the region were deeply unhappy about the project. For example the prince-bishop's of Liege and Cologne would both see large areas of their lands inundated. Equally some wanted to see the canal moved north so that their lands would lie south of the protective shield it would offer. Much like the planning stages of a modern highway, there was considerable alteration to the proposed route as various interested parties had their say. Finally a route was agreed - the canal would run from Rheinberg on the Rhine to Venlo on the Maas via Geldern - and at the end of September 1626 the Stadholder of Gelderland ceremoniously cut the turf.

Naturally the canal would be a target for attack by the Dutch so the main Spanish field army was deployed to protect the construction work. On a long-term basis it was intended to protect the canal with major fortresses at either end and one in the centre at Geldern. Along its path there would be small forts at regular intervals and two 'royal' forts featuring bridges and barracks for 500 men between Geldern and either end.

The Dutch did indeed come and Frederick Henry moved the States' field army into the vicinity. The two forces observed each other for several weeks with only a dramatic cavalry raid by the Spanish on the Dutch rear to bring a little excitement. Eventually the Dutch marched away, realising that they could find more profit elsewhere with the Spanish army tied to the defence of the canal; they took Oldenzaar by siege.

Work had proceeded well throughout the autumn and winter but slowed by the spring of 1627. Technical difficulties began to be encountered and the cash dried up - due in no small part to the money pit of the Mantuan War. In the summer the Archduchess came to make an inspection of the works, accompanied by a large body of soldiers. It was as well that she was so well protected as shortly after her return to Brussels a Dutch cavalry raid wrecked much of what had been constructed. Both the strategic and financial situation continued to deteriorate with the capture of the silver fleet by Piet Hien in 1628 and the fall of s'Hertogenbosch in 1629. The project was finally killed off when the Dutch captured several key points on the Maas in the 1632 offensive. All that was left to show for plan of a grandiose canal was a ditch that led to nowhere.

Olivares, the Cardinal-Infante and Spain's Strategy in the Low Countries: The Road to Rocroi, 1635-43 ⁷

In this essay Jonathan Israel re-evaluates Spain's strategic policy during the so-called 'French' phase of the Thirty Years War (1635-43). Conventional academic thinking, as propounded by the likes of Stradling, states that Spain relegated her war against the Dutch to a place of secondary importance and put the struggle against France in the forefront of her strategic thinking. Israel argues that the Dutch still remained the top priority during the 1630s and it was only in the 40s, and out of necessity, that her attention turned south.

During the period 1629-33, Spain had suffered a series of humiliating setbacks in the Netherlands, losing a string of important fortresses to the Dutch. It was in order to reverse this trend that the Cardinal-Infante led a Spanish army across Germany (via Nördlingen) in 1634. Upon his arrival he first helped to defeat a joint Dutch-French offensive that had overrun much of Brabant and then took part in a counter-offensive in the lower Rhine area that recovered many of the places that the Dutch had captured.

Strategic planning during the winter of 1635-6 centred on how to exploit these successes, and not on a grandiose three-pronged attack on France as is often asserted. Indeed no such plan ever existed. The invasion of France that reached as far as Corbie was a last-minute improvisation, decided upon by Brussels and not Madrid, when it was realised that a hoped-for invasion of France by the Imperialists was not going to

materialise. That it should have been so successful was as much a surprise to the Spanish as it was to everyone else.

The apparent weakness of the French did encourage the Spanish to adopt a French invasion strategy for 1637 and a three-pronged attack was indeed envisaged. But as the Army of Flanders massed on the French border ready for the operation, the Dutch seized the opportunity presented by their absence in the north to lay siege to Breda. By the time the Spanish had shifted their army back north the Dutch had completed their siege lines and held the city in a vice-like grip. The Spanish tried to draw them off by attacking again in the lower Rhine area but the Dutch held firm and Breda fell.

This affront to Spanish dignity caused Olivares to overrule his ministers and opt for a 'Dutch' strategy in 1638. However, events overtook him as Spain was forced to adopt a defensive posture on both fronts by co-ordinated Dutch-French action. This was successfully achieved with the Spanish winning the only pitched battle of the second half of the Eighty Years War at Kallo. The next year saw a continuation of the Dutch strategy but this time events switched to the sea where the Spanish navy drove up the Channel in an attempt to deliver large numbers of reinforcements to the Netherlands. Most of the troops got through but the fleet was subsequently smashed at the battle of the Downs.

The year 1640 was the key point in ending Spain's pro-Dutch strategy. Forced onto the defensive again in the Netherlands she lost Arras, but the really important events were taking place elsewhere. In the Iberian Peninsula both Catalonia and Portugal rose in revolt against the Spanish crown and in Italy the French occupied Turin. Now the overwhelming strategic priority was to regain control of Catalonia, which because of its close proximity to France, was the most dangerous threat to Spain. One means to achieve this was to use the Army of Flanders to pressure northern France sufficiently to stop the French from intervening effectively in the south. All thoughts of re-conquering the Netherlands were abandoned.

This new policy at first seemed to pay off when they crushed the French Army of Champagne at Honnecourt in 1642. Yet this very success was to lead to Spain's downfall. Overconfident, they tried to repeat their triumph the next year but instead the veteran Army of Flanders was destroyed at Rocroi.

Spain and Europe from the Peace of Münster to the Peace of the Pyrenees, 1648-59 ⁸

As Stradling's essay described above has indicated, the battle of Rocroi did not destroy Spain as a "superpower" and that in the late 1640s and early 1650s she underwent a recovery that brought her close to winning the war with France and restoring her position as the pre-eminent power in Europe. This essay traces the course of that recovery and her eventual collapse.

Spain in early 1648 was in a dreadful state. Revolts rent her empire in Catalonia, Portugal and Naples; much of Flanders had been overrun and the strategic port of Dunkirk lost. Her treasury was empty, her armies wanted for all sorts of supplies and her best soldiers had been killed on the field of Rocroi. She needed peace and so it was no surprise that along with all the other peace deals being brokered in Westphalia, she signed a provisional treaty with France. Yet despite her dire position, Spain was still the only power with the military and fiscal infrastructure to oppose France. Therefore when events brought a sharp upturn in her strategic position, she began to change her tune. These were the end of the Eighty Years War, the crushing of the Neapolitan revolt and the outbreak of the Fronde in France.

Initially all the Spanish hoped for were improved peace terms to those on offer. However, Mazarin proved stubborn so the pressure was upped on the Netherlands border, where in 1649 Ypres was captured and the siege of Cambrai thwarted. The next year saw a rapid improvement in Spain's position as France slid into anarchy. Conde was arrested and Turenne defected to the Spanish. Spain continued to press the advantage, capturing a number of frontier forts including La Chapelle and Vervins, driving the French out of southern Italy and pushing the Catalan rebels back until they held little more than Barcelona and the towns to the north. This continued into 1651 when a close siege was laid on that city and further gains were made on the Netherlands border. However the political sphere saw the most dramatic events as Mazarin was driven into exile in Cologne and Conde attempted to assume his mantle. He was prevented from doing so largely because Mazarin still retained a good measure of remote control over the French court. In frustration Conde openly defected to the Spanish and raised a Fronder army (with Spanish help) in southern France, occupying Bordeaux and Périgueux. The next year, 1652, was the high-water mark of Spain's resurgence and something of an *Annus Mirabilis* for the monarchy. In the Netherlands she recaptured Dunkirk and Gravelines, in Italy the vital fortress of Casale fell, and in Catalonia the war was finally brought to a close with the conquest of Barcelona. Spain reopened peace negotiations from what was her strongest position in years, but with Mazarin back in charge at the French court, there was little chance of them succeeding.

Things now began to go downhill for the Spanish, beginning with the collapse of the Fronde. South-west France, Alsace and Lorraine were all overrun by Royal armies and Conde was driven out of Paris and had to take refuge in the Netherlands. Here he became little more than a brigade commander in the Army of Flanders and was at open war with its commander. Worse was to come. When the Spanish attempted to besiege Arras in 1654, they were routed with much loss of men and material and only saved from a far greater disaster by a skillful rearguard action by Conde. The French made renewed pushes into the Netherlands, Catalonia and Italy and most serious of all, the army of the Duke of Lorraine defected to France after the Spanish arrested the Duke. Even victory at Valenciennes could not counter these catastrophes. At the end of 1656 both sides sat down again for peace negotiations but they floundered over the status of Conde. War was resumed but this time the English Republic? Commonwealth joined in on the side of the French. A crushing victory at the battle of the Dunes in 1658 saw the

defenses of the Spanish Netherlands collapse. The peace of the Pyrennes followed in its wake and with it the end of Spain's 150-year domination of Western Europe.

There are 14 other essays in this book on a wide variety of subjects, but all on the same theme of Spain and the Netherlands in the 17th century. Examples of the topics covered are the activities of Portuguese Jews in Antwerp, Gerard Ter Borch's painting of the signing of the Peace of Westphalia and the involvement of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange in the Glorious Revolution.

Notes

- 1) This originally appeared in *History*. Vol. 64. 1979. pp 205-19.
- 2) This was first published in the Dutch journal *Tijdschrift Voor Geschiedenis*. Vol 93. 1980. pp 541-58.
- 3) This was printed in *History*. Vol 69. 1984. pp 208-21.
- 4) This is a new essay that appears for the first time in this book.
- 5) This essay appears for the first time in this book.
- 6) This essay appears for the first time in this book.
- 7) Reprinted from *Spain, Europe and the Atlantic World: Essays in Honour of John H. Elliot*. Ed. by R.L. Kagan and Geoffrey Parker. Cambridge, 1995, pp. 267-95.
- 8) This essay appears for the first time in this book.