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Review of *The War People: A Social History of Common Soldiers during the Era of the Thirty Years War* by Lucian Staiano-Daniels

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Lucian Staiano-Daniels, *The War People: A Social History of Common Soldiers during the Era of the Thirty Years War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024. 228 pp. ISBN 978-1009428415 (hardback). Price £85.

Luciano Staiano-Daniels' first book is not just a well-researched volume, but one of the first to merge the perspectives of military history and microhistory. The latter may be better seen as a perspective rather than a field and is particularly close to the different levels through which warfare can be studied, also for technical reasons. The author therefore uses the microscope to look at a specific regiment at the beginning of the seventeenth century and within a specific timespan and place. As thoroughly explained in the doctoral thesis at the origin of this first monograph, and in the different aspects explored in recent years, the investigations consider the regiment mobilised by Wolf von Mansfeld in service of Spain and the transnational life of its members. Staiano-Daniels also reflects in this way on some of the elements considered central to the warfare of these years, investigating the processes of transformation, particularly the much-debated Military Revolution and the theory of the Fiscal-Military State, and whether these had relevance to the actual life of the soldiers, or if other aspects were more influential.

One of the elements behind this research is the thesis that the experience of the soldiers who composed this regiment (*Das Kriegsvolk*) was, first of all, a collective human experience, with some specificities but fundamentally normed and subject to formal and informal rules, as in every other collectivity of the time. The methodological insight is that, for the author, these aggregation dynamics must be studied from a closer perspective, because it is there that we understand them. This view emerges from the 'history from below' tradition and its ties to the *War and Society* studies. This is also visible in the predilection for the type of sources available and used: the judiciary and criminal documents and the administrative ones. In essence, often not ego-documents, but testimonies written by others that tell us about ordinary soldiers or report their voices. In this case, this has been made possible by the extraordinary archival documentation found, organized, and studied systematically by Lucian Staiano-Daniels for the first time. These sources—though not the only ones used—were produced by the regiment's bureaucracy and employed for the first time from an internal point of view, rather than an external one as in the past, such as in the extraordinary works of David Parrott. This allows us to understand how the soldiers described and perceived themselves as righteous, not in the act of working but in service of a duty (which implied a code of honor), therefore in contrast with the historical myth of a bunch of rootless mercenaries, for which the author also seeks an explanation.

Across nine chapters, the author follows the formation of the regiment in Dresden and its descent into Italy in 1625, a mobilisation intended to intervene during the Valtelline War for the defense of Milan and its roads to Tirol. Particular attention is devoted to how the soldiers actually lived and moved. The regiment was divided into smaller groups for marching and quartering in different areas to sustain themselves or be resupplied by the regimental logistics. These environments are framed by the author to analyze how the soldiers lived, particularly how the mechanisms of cohesion (exploring the social dynamics of primary groups, which the author reformulates as small group cohesion) worked during daily life and not in combat, discussing these used for the seventeenth century by Geoffrey Parker, Gregory Hanlon and others, and expanding them to include women's roles, as integral parts of the military community.

The author also includes a gender perspective in the different aspects of masculinity in this society, reflecting on how it influenced the experience of living together. In different chapters, the focus is also on how these behaviors, for different reasons, led to homicides or violent internal actions, and on how it is possible to follow them through the criminal processes of the regiment, that had its own jurisdiction and was therefore more ordered than often assumed. Particular attention is also given to the status of soldiers, how mobility and recruiting functioned, the importance of veterans, and other essential elements for which the author presents important quantitative and well-analyzed data. Among these, the serious study of the pay system is especially important and how this was part of the economy of the time, clarifying new elements of how warfare was conducted in the early seventeenth century. Furthermore, another problem assessed is the importance of the spatial element and the relation between civilians, who weren't always disarmed victims, and the military world, highlighting how this link was highly conflictual, partly due to the lack of quarters and forced cohabitation, but was central to warfare, as recently also demonstrated from the operational point of view by Peter Wilson, Katerina Tkacova, and Thomas Pert. In the end, the last chapter focuses on the reasons that contributed to the disbandment of the regiment and on how and why it dissolved in 1627.

As is often affirmed in microhistory studies, this book explores the normal exceptionality of a case study, reflecting on the extraordinary elements of something that was common for the period, and could therefore be used, hopefully, for future comparisons. Certainly, this book adds a new and essential study to the field of early modern military history, but also to the social and economic history of the same period, researching new documents with a fresh perspective. Those interested in operational warfighting will not find many elements for their studies (actual fighting is analyzed in the case of a raid), but this cannot be considered a negative element of the book, as is also specified in the subtitle: 'A Social History of Common Soldiers...'. Furthermore, the book is also important for every military historian and researcher

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interested in War Studies from a wide perspective. Indeed, to put it briefly, the book reflects on the kind of efforts that in warfare go 'wasted' from a strategic point of view, and the efforts to sustain war. Reflecting on these aspects is always useful to remember the degree of uncertainty in the decisions that define a certain strategy of certain historical actors, and that these choices are taken in a dynamic sequence, not following a certain plan: the Mansfeld regiment went to Italy too late to take part in the war, but disbanded too early for the following war in Italy (just one year after the collapse). From another perspective, reflecting on how the reality of military transformations is not linear, but full of different possibilities engaged, the investment of efforts that sometimes go wasted, and the coexistence of contrasting mechanisms, is always central. To look at how these processes developed in the first half of the seventeenth century offers food for thought for military historians of any period.

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Graeme J. Milne. *Making Men in the Age of Sail: Masculinity, Memoir, and the British Merchant Seafarer, 1860-1914*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2024. 270 pp. ISBN: 978-0228021308 (paperback). Price £31

In this most interesting and informative book Graeme Milne examines the society and culture of sailors on British merchant sailing ships during the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries. Although merchant sailing ships were being replaced by steamships during this period, they were still significant in number until after the Great War. They were publicly portrayed in a large body of literature, especially in fictional literature that tended to romanticise seafaring. Milne's major sources are not fictional, however. He has used forty-one memoirs published from 1883 to 1971 by former seamen, most of whom had come to enjoy middle-class status. Milne tells his readers how these memoir writers sought to represent merchant seafarers in this period, but he also uses the memoirs to provide his readers with a wealth of information about merchant sailing, while recognizing the biases of these authors.

As indicated in his title, a major interest of both Milne and his memoir writers is in masculinity. Milne observes that during the nineteenth century traditional gender roles were challenged ideologically and by changes in the nature of work, but that gender divisions of labour hardly declined and that masculinity continued to be celebrated in