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Narrating War
Early Modern and Contemporary Perspectives

edited by
Marco Mondini / Massimo Rospocher

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In God's Fields

Military Chaplains and Soldiers in Flanders during the Eighty Years' War

by *Vincenzo Lavenia*

I.

In 1640, one hundred years after the founding of St Ignatius' religious order, the Flemish province of the Society of Jesus had a monumental book printed that is perhaps the first example in the West of an institution publishing self-publicity. Its title is *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu a Provincia Flandro-Belgica repraesentata* and the volume (roughly one thousand folio pages, of which there was also a version in Flemish) retraces the history of the Society, its triumphs and its martyrs, including stories of missionaries, letters and documents that concern above all the history of the Jesuits in Belgium. It also contains some of the most beautiful engravings of the seventeenth century, and part of the text also relates the history of the so-called «missiones castrenses et navales», with seven *emblemata* accompanying an account that transcribed extracts from the letters of those fathers, both living and fallen in battle, who were involved in the land and sea chaplaincies during Spain's ferocious war against the 'heretic' rebel provinces of the Low Countries¹.

In detailing the assistance given to soldiers, the authors of the *Imago* wrote that many souls had been and were being saved; but, as tongues continued to wag, the work sought to justify the Jesuits against the ac-

¹ For the history of the book, see M. FUMAROLI, *Baroque et classicisme. L'«Imago Primi Saeculi Societatis Iesu» (1640) et ses adversaries*, in M. FUMAROLI, *L'école du silence. Le sentiment des images au XVIIe siècle*, Paris 1994, pp. 343-365; L. SALVIUCCI INSOLERA, *L'«Imago primi saeculi» (1640) e il significato dell'immagine allegorica nella Compagnia di Gesù. Genesi e fortuna del libro*, Roma 2004; N. TJOLKER, *Jesuit Image Rethoric in Latin and Vernacular: The Latin and Dutch Emblems of the «Imago Primi Saeculi»* (http://www.renaissanceforum.dk/6_2010/06_tjolker_imago.pdf); J.W. O'MALLEY (ed.), *Art, Controversy and the Jesuits: 'The Imago Primi Saeculi Societatis Iesu'*, forthcoming.

cusation of accepting the task out of interest. How could it be thought that so many priests had sacrificed themselves for lucre? The chaplains had comforted the troops in the snow, without food, in extreme conditions («Saepe fixis media nive tentoriis traductae noctes asperrimo frigore & gelu; saepe annona deficiens, aut famem, aut miserimum victum et alias detestandum, imperavit»). Many of the brethren died in the hospitals or in the front line of battle, inciting the troops. But the fruits of their labours repaid the effort: so much so, that the Jesuits could be described as instituting a new kind of soldier: the *miles christianus*, which an idealizing literature had presented since the times of the crusades. This meant making permanent what still seemed fragile after sixty years of hard work. In fact, we read, chaplains were needed not only in war, but also when wars were interrupted, in peace, and in the camps, where souls could be educated better than in the thick of battle, when the chaplains' main duty was to incite the soldiers against the enemy («in campo non de rebus animi, sed de hoste victoriaque cogitandum»). The ships had been a den of wild animals before the Jesuits arrived («ferarum verius quam hominum receptacula»); and the same could be said for the infantry: «nulli praeter nos medici, pastores nulli». Figures such as Guillaume Buvet, a priest who died at Breda (1625), showed the courage and sacrifice of the Jesuits, silencing their critics. And the account in the *Imago* closed with a triumphant exclamation: «Haec castrensium patrum vita est»².

We may mistrust the exalted tones of this work of propaganda and history, but research can demonstrate that the religious climate among the *tercios* and the crews of the Spanish fleet in that period really had changed, thanks to the Jesuits. This is confirmed by Parker's research, which documents what a turning point was the foundation of a pious *Confraternitas Sanctissimi Sacramenti inter milites*, approved by Sixtus V in 1589. The catechesis of the soldiers improved, and the scandals that had involved the first chaplains sent to Flanders ceased. The confraternity put to good use the zeal of the most devout soldiers, using them in works of mercy, in hospital care and in handling the testaments of the deceased; and this confraternity, like the *missio castrensis*

² *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu a Provincia Flandro-Belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata*, Antverpiae, ex officina Plantiniana Balthazaris Moreti, MDCXL, pp. 804-826, see also pp. 910-913, for the engravings, see pp. 941-948.

itself³, was the aim of a man who has an extremely important role in this story—Thomas Saily, the author of a beautiful illustrated text entitled *Guidon et pratique spirituelle du soldat chrestien*. Yet it was not the first text written specifically to catechize the soldiers. If the 1580s were the period in which the first fixed chaplaincies were set up, the preparation of books devised to give a religious purpose to war, to instruct the troops in the faith and to reform a dirty trade that affected the civilian population preceded the Belgian experiment by a few years⁴.

This kind of publication—which originated in Italy, to be distributed to the soldiers sent to fight Turks and heretics—flourished in the two centuries in which the first fixed chaplaincies were founded, later enjoying a wide circulation until the two world wars of the last century⁵. There were many of them, and they were conceived with an eye to ease of distribution: almost always written in vernacular, they were quickly imitated in the Protestant world, and distributed to commanders and military confessors, but also to any ordinary soldiers who could read. They have not, on the whole, had the attention they deserve. Nor has the history of the Catholic chaplains in the early modern age—one of the keys to understanding how permanent mass armies were created, motivated to fight and die in the name of an idea (first God, and then Country, as Kantorowicz has written)—received adequate attention⁶.

³ Cf. J. SCHOONJANS, «*Castra Dei*». *L'organisation religieuse des armées d'Alexandre Farnèse*, in *Miscellanea Historica in honorem Leonis van der Essen*, Bruxelles - Paris 1947, pp. 523-540; G. PARKER, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659. The Logistic of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' War*, Cambridge - New York - Melbourne 1972, pp. 178-179.

⁴ For one particular aspect of the Jesuits' military ethos in the early modern age, see D. DE LUCCA, *Jesuits And Fortifications: The Contribution of the Jesuits to Military Architecture in the Baroque Age*, Leiden - Boston MA 2012.

⁵ See G. MINOIS, *L'Eglise et la guerre. De la Bible à l'ère atomique*, Paris 1994, *passim*; E. GARCÍA HERNÁN, *Capellanes militares y Reforma Católica*, in H. GARCÍA HERNÁN - D. MAFFI (eds), *Guerra y sociedad en la Monarquía Hispánica. Política, estrategia y cultura en la Europa moderna (1500-1700)*, Madrid 2006, vol. 2, pp. 709-742; M. PAIANO, *Pregare in guerra: gli opuscoli cattolici per i soldati*, in D. MENOZZI - G. PROCACCI - S. SOLDANI (eds), *Un paese in guerra: la mobilitazione civile in Italia 1914-1918*, Milano 2010, pp. 275-294; V. LAVENIA, *Milizia e catechesi per il soldato nel cattolicesimo moderno. Un percorso testuale*, in «*Rivista di Studi Militari*», 2012, 1, pp. 117-140.

⁶ E.H. KANTOROWICZ, 'Pro patria mori' in *Medieval Political Thought*, in «*American Historical Review*», 56, 1951, pp. 472-492 (also in E.H. KANTOROWICZ, *Selected Studies*, Locust Valley NY 1965, pp. 308-324).

Doris Bergen has recently edited the proceedings of a conference for scholars of various periods, tracing the long-term history of the relation between war and religious mission in various confessional contexts⁷. And yet there is a significant gap right in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, those of the Catholic and Iberian hegemony, while in recent years there have been studies (such as those of Donagan, Laurence and Griffin for the period of Cromwell; or Marschke for pietist Prussia)⁸ that have filled gaps in research for the reformed world (this also applies to the Sweden of Gustavus Adolphus)⁹.

All the same, I think a step back to the late sixteenth century is useful for understanding how permanent chaplaincies for European armies originated and how they then contributed to the creation of disciplined soldiers in barracks. The catechisms described an ideal model that should be analyzed, bearing in mind their abstract and ideological nature. But if these texts with their many stories are read alongside the history of the first chaplaincies and the accounts written by priests in letters and, sometimes, like a diary¹⁰, they offer a glimpse of the survival of the idea of the holy war after the end of mediaeval chivalry; and of the slow process that later secularized the language of the crusades in

⁷ D.L. BERGEN (ed.), *The Sword of the Lord. Military Chaplains from the First to the Twenty-First Century*, Notre Dame IN 2004.

⁸ A. LAURENCE, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains: 1642-1651*, Woodbridge 1990; B. DONAGAN, «Did Ministers Matter». *War and Religion in England, 1642-1649*, in «Journal of British Studies», 33, 1994, pp. 119-156; M. GRIFFIN, *Regulating Religion and Morality in the King's Armies 1639-1646*, Leiden - Boston MA 2004; B. MARSCHKE, *Absolutely Pietist. Patronage, Fictionalism, and State-Building in the Early Eighteenth-Century Prussian Army Chaplaincy*, Tübingen 2005.

⁹ M. ROBERTS, *The Swedish Imperial Experience 1560-1718*, Cambridge - London - New York 1979, pp. 69-70.

¹⁰ For this type of source in the context of the wars of the sixteenth century, see C. ZWIERLEIN, *Fonti per una storia delle percezioni. I diari di guerra del XVI secolo (il caso dei partecipanti alle guerre di religione in Francia)*, in A. DATTERO - S. LEVATI (eds), *Militari in età moderna. La centralità di un tema di confine*, Milano 2006, pp. 83-114. The manuscript papers on the Jesuit military chaplaincies in Belgium have been catalogued in A. GAILLARD, *Inventaire sommaire des archives de la Compagnie de Jésus conservées aux Archives Générales du Royaume à Bruxelles*, Bruxelles 1910; H. CALLEWIER, *Inventaris van het archief van de Nederduitse Provincie der Jezüieten (Provincia Belgica, vervolgens Provincia Flandro-Belgica) en van het archief van het professenbuis te Antwerpen (1388) 1564-1773*, Bruxelles 2006.

the context of the national states and, then, of the French Revolution; of the discipline imposed on the believer-subject, who, in the modern era, became above all a soldier in uniform; and of the relation between religion and regular armies—a subject recently tackled in the collections of essays edited by Donati and Kroener, Kaiser and Kroll, and Onnekink¹¹. And though there has been excellent scholarly research on the military pastors, Catholic and otherwise, who were part of the mass armies of the twentieth century¹², we still do not understand how far this originated in the sixteenth century¹³. It is certainly no accident that the genre of military catechisms started with the Jesuits during the bellicose papacy of Pius V and the wars of religion; and that it was perfected in Flanders before the Twelve Years' Truce. Thanks above all to the Jesuits' *missio castrensis*, this made real the pious hope of many authors during the first half of the sixteenth century, when the criticisms formulated by Erasmus' irenics¹⁴ were countered by the ideal of a soldier who should curb violence and any tendency to crime and sin, and comply not only with the true faith but also with Stoic ethics.

¹¹ M. KAISER - S. KROLL (eds), *Militär und Religiosität in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Münster 2004; C. DONATI - B.R. KROENER (eds), *Militari e società civile nell'Europa dell'età moderna (secoli XVI-XVIII)*, Bologna 2007; D. ONNEKINK (ed.), *War and Religion after Westphalia, 1648-1713*, Farnham 2009.

¹² The bibliography is too vast to be given in full. For Italy, see at least R. MOROZZO DELLA ROCCA, *La fede e la guerra. Cappellani militari e preti-soldati (1915-1919)*, Roma 1980; M. FRANZINELLI, *Il riarmo dello spirito. I cappellani militari nella seconda guerra mondiale*, Treviso 1991; M. FRANZINELLI *Stelletta, croce e fascio littorio. L'assistenza religiosa a militari, balilla e camicie nere 1919-1939*, Milano 1995; G. ROCHAT (ed.), *La spada e la croce. I cappellani militari nelle due guerre mondiali* (suppl. «Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi», 112), Torino 1995; for Germany H. MISSALLA, «*Gott mit uns*». *Die deutsche katholische Kriegspredigt 1914-1918*, München 1968; for the United Kingdom M. SNAPE, *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars*, London 2005; M. SNAPE, *The Royal Army Chaplains' Department, 1796-1953: Clergy and Fire*, Woodbridge 2008; E. MADIGAN, *Faith under Fire. Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War*, London 2011.

¹³ For the French context and the Huguenot front, see now P. BENEDICT, *Prophets in Arms? Ministers in War, Ministers on War: France 1562-74*, in G. MURDOCK - P. ROBERTS - A. SPICER (eds), *Ritual and Violence: Natalie Zemon Davis and Early Modern France* (suppl. «Past & Present», 7), Oxford 2012, pp. 163-196.

¹⁴ A. PROSPERI, *I cristiani e la guerra: una controversia fra '500 e '700*, in «Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa», 30, 1994, pp. 57-83.

II.

At this point let us go back to the *Imago*. It was brought out by the printing house of Plantin and Moretus at Antwerp, which was home to an intellectual circle of major importance for the history of European culture and had also published Sailly¹⁵. It was thanks to their presses that in the late sixteenth century Justus Lipsius had been able to publish many of his books. Lipsius had been educated by the Jesuits of Cologne, and when he returned to Flanders, after a long stay in Rome and years of teaching, during which he had crossed the religious borders of Europe (pretending to believe, now in Luther, now in Catholicism), he had had direct experience of war in the conflict between Spain and the Seven Provinces that had rebelled against the Habsburgs. As Oestreich¹⁶ noted in a famous essay, Books V and VI of the *Politicorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* (1589) reflect that context and were the sixteenth century's most significant contribution to a «modern» concept of disciplining the profession of arms. In those pages, Lipsius dealt with both civil and external war, suggesting that good policy required, above all, proper control of military violence. He therefore set out an ideal of a non-mercenary army whose core figure should be the *miles perpetuus*: the member of a band of soldiers *laboriosi, duri, probi, fati sui securi* and *gloriae avidi*. Stoics in uniform, the new *milites* should put to good use the moral benefits of an elitist philosophy trickling down to the lower social ranks, and should comply with a martial discipline that was the necessary premise for victory in a just war, in which violence was permitted. Nevertheless, this discipline required better equipment, regular pay, permanent lodgings, spiritual assistance and rigorous leadership of small troop units that were carefully selected and willing to moderate their behaviour on the basis of four basic rules: *exercitium, ordo, coercitio et exempla*¹⁷. Lipsius wrote

¹⁵ L. VOET, *The Golden Compasses. The History of the House of Plantin-Moretus*, 2 vols., Amsterdam - London - New York 1969-1972.

¹⁶ G. OESTREICH, *Neostoicism & the Early Modern State*, Cambridge - London - New York 1982, pp. 50-55. For a sharp criticism of Oestreich's political positions as influencing his reading of history, see P.N. MILLER, *Nazis and Neo-Stoics: Otto Brunner and Gebrard Oestreich before and after the Second World War*, in «Past & Present», 176, 2002, pp. 144-186.

¹⁷ IUSTUS LIPSIUS, *Politicorum sive Civilis Doctrinae Libri Sex*, Antverpiae, ex officina Plantiniana, MDCLXXXIX.

at a time when mutiny, massacres, rape, and pillage were frequently carried out in the name of religion. His aim was to develop the virtue of the modern soldier: a sober professional, well trained, zealous and religious. No longer exceptional and «anarchic», the army could thus become (and did indeed, shortly after, become in states like Prussia) an ideal social body, an ordinary profession and the basis of political discipline in a well-regulated state.

Oestreich has written that Lipsius' scheme was influenced by the methodology of Ignatius of Loyola (an ex-soldier). But the master of the neo-Stoics did not only read the *Spiritual Exercises*, he also established direct contact with minor figures in the Society of Jesus who, like him, were developing new types of catechisms in that period, which would reform the profession of arms and discipline the conscience of the soldiers¹⁸. One was Sailly, who was put in charge of the first permanent mission of chaplains—in Flanders of all places: a priest and confessor of Alessandro Farnese, he was admired by Lipsius, and his guide for Christian soldiers was published by Plantin the year after Lipsius' *Politica* appeared (1590)¹⁹. The other was one of Sailly's masters, whom Lipsius may have met during his time in Rome. This was Antonio Possevino, author of the first catechism for troops: *Il soldato cristiano* appeared in 1569 and was later translated and published many times. Possevino was the author of a plan to reform war, in which he envisaged the foundation of military colleges very similar to the barracks of the future, and this later became part of his monumental *Bibliotheca Selecta*. And in the second edition of the work, which appeared in 1603, he recommended Lipsius' works to Catholic soldiers and captains in search of improving reading²⁰. In this way the process of Catholic discipline cross-fertilized with neo-Stoic philosophy about war, to oppose Erasmian irenics and also the Machiavellian theory that the Christian faith was incompatible with the classical and Stoic virtue of glory (*Discorsi*, I,12 and II,2).

¹⁸ J. KLUYSTENS, *Justus Lipsius (1547-1600) and the Jesuits, with Four Unpublished Letters*, in «Humanistica Lovaniensia», 23, 1974, pp. 244-270.

¹⁹ L. BROUWERS, *L'«Elogium» du père Thomas Sailly S. I. (1553-1623) composé par le père Charles Scribani S.I.*, in «Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu», 48, 1979, pp. 87-124.

²⁰ V. LAVENIA, *Tra Cristo e Marte. Disciplina e catechesi del soldato cristiano in età moderna*, in G.P. BRIZZI - G. OLMÍ (eds), *Dai cantieri alla storia. 'Liber amicorum' per Paolo Prodi*, Bologna 2007, pp. 37-54.

III.

So how did the first permanent, organized military chaplaincies originate? Dozens of letters in various archives (the Jesuit archives and sources in Rome and in Belgium) give us an almost day-by-day account of the process, because, as we know, the Society of Jesus was expert in glorifying its activities, flooding Europe with stories of missions set up in the global empires and with accounts of miraculous conversions. But the question of military missions was more delicate, and for them there were dozens of internal, secret instructions that tried to protect priests from any 'contamination' with the world of war. For brevity's sake, I will leave to one side the first attempts to organize the chaplains (who were not all Jesuits) in the Spanish armies, which date back at least to the 1550s and saw their first results at Lepanto. That was when the scene, which until then had been populated by individual preachers such as Giovanni Capestrano, began to change²¹. I shall start from 1588, the year of the *Invencible Armada*. Around twenty-three fathers left Lisbon, under the guidance of Gonzalo del Álamo: there were eight Portuguese and around fifteen Spanish, including the priests and *coadiutori*, who had power to absolve cases reserved for the Holy Office, heresy above all. However, many died in the hospitals before leaving; others perished during the outward or return journey, and only two fathers survived the shipwreck and reached Flanders. These were Antonio Crespo and Alonso del Pozo, who were able to acquaint themselves with the work that their brethren had done in Belgium²².

The *missio castrensis* had just come into being, and after 1623, it was flanked by a *missio navalis*, by wish of Ambrogio Spinola and Father Theodore Rosmer, and was stationed at Dunkirk. After 1579, the Habsburg authorities had nominated a grand chaplain for all the armies. At first, it was the Bishop of Cambrai, who in 1583 delegated the function, first to an Italian Franciscan friar and then to a Spanish

²¹ E. GARCÍA HERNÁN, *La asistencia religiosa en la Armada de Lepanto*, in «Anthologica Annua», 43, 1996, pp. 213-263; L. BROUWERS, *Misión Castrense*, in C.E. O'NEILL - J.M. DOMÍNGUEZ (eds), *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, Roma - Madrid 2001, vol. 3, pp. 2687-2688; G. CIVALE, *Guerrieri di Cristo. Inquisitori, gesuiti e soldati alla battaglia di Lepanto*, Milano 2009.

²² F. DE BORJA DE MEDINA, *Jesuitas en la armada contra Inglaterra (1588). Notas para un centenario*, in «Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu», 58, 1989, pp. 3-41.

vicar, Monsignor Francisco de Umara, under the wing of Farnese, whose protection saved him when he was accused of mismanaging hospital funds²³. In 1597 Archduke Alberto, the new governor of Flanders, entrusted the function of nominating a Vicar General for the armies to the Bishop of Malines²⁴, a responsibility that was later confirmed throughout the seventeenth century, suspended only in the years of peace. But it was not easy to coordinate the dozens of priests who were serving in the *tercios*, many of whom were untrained, apostate or corrupt. Nor was it easy to find priests for every linguistic community among the conscripts—there being, ironically, a notable dearth of Flemish priests. Many of the chaplains were by nature restless and in search of adventure, and the Franciscan friars included an Italian and the Spaniard Antonio Granada, who had also had brushes with civil justice in the past.

This was the context of the Jesuits' mission. Many Spaniards had been active in Flanders since 1574, but their presence was opposed by the Flemish as they were regarded as being too close to the Madrid authorities and Don Juan of Austria. The Jesuits' Provincial tried to close down the office; but Rome's envoy, Olivier Mannaert, retained it. In a letter of 1584 he wrote to the General of the Society that he was aware of the mission's shortcomings, but hoped for the arrival of a priest «liber a melancholia, . . . , integerrimum, deinde alacrem, excitatum, industrium, robustum, expeditum, et patientem»²⁵. Sailly was certainly not sturdy, but (thanks to the support of the Farnese) his austerity seemed to qualify him for a task that the Society had accepted with reluctance.

And so, after the *missio* had been founded, precise instructions were issued that were approved by the General of the Jesuits Acquaviva in May 1588. Priests were advised not to seem too close to the Habsburg

²³ L. VAN DER ESSEN, *Documents concernant le vicaire général Francisco de Umara et l'organisation religieuse de l'armée espagnole aux Pays-Bas pendant les guerres de Flandre (1597-1599)*, in «Analectes pour Servir à l'Histoire Ecclésiastique de la Belgique», 37, 1911, pp. 263-281. For Umara's role in organizing health care see M. PARRILLA HERMIDA, *El hospital militar español de Malinas en los siglos XVI y XVII*, Madrid 1964, pp. 27 ff.

²⁴ J. LEFÈVRE, *L'aumônerie militaire à l'époque de l'archiduc Albert (1598-1621)*, in «Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire», 7, 1928, pp. 113-129.

²⁵ Quotation from A. PONCELET, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas ...*, Bruxelles 1927, vol. 2, p. 407 fn. 2.

commanders so as to avoid criticism. They were also instructed to be scrupulous in their dress, in their handling of sacred things, in correspondence with their superiors and in receiving the last wishes of the soldiers. For their pastoral duties, they should give regular sermons and lessons of catechism, on Sunday at least; and prevent ill-treatment of the civilian population, though here they should act with caution as the soldiers might take it badly. A good chaplain should also gain trust with effective medical treatment and by promoting moral assistance to the troops²⁶. To this end, a confraternity was set up that Saily vindicated as the pride of the *missio*.

At first there were only twenty-four chaplains, some of them priests and some *coadiutori*; but after 1600 Rome halved them, which Saily accepted with great reluctance. The fervent letters he sent to Acquaviva seem to have been an attempt to convince his superiors of the worth of the mission. In 1590 he claimed to have driven the prostitutes away from the camps and to have converted some British soldiers in the pay of the Spanish²⁷. In 1592 he boasted of the services in the hospitals that the Jesuits had made efficient; the divine punishment of hardened blasphemers who had died without warning; and the mercy of Farnese, a sincere «alumnus» of the Church, who had died *pro defensione fidei*. Before dying, on entering a part of the city that was under siege and defeated, he had seen a mother weeping because two of her daughters had been seized by soldiers; he had helped one of the Jesuit fathers save the third girl from the rapists, giving her back to her mother and punishing the soldiers. In short, thanks to the fathers of Brussels and the efforts of the Italian General, the *missio* was gaining the souls of soldiers who were far from the faith and used to living amid sack, sacrilege, blasphemy, rape, ill-treatment of civilians, duels, lust, bigamy, dangerous books, dicing, and cards. Many had begun to confess, while others had converted in the face of divine and diabolic prodigies, of which the historian may have leave to doubt²⁸. And to understand

²⁶ Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (hereafter ARSI), *Inst.* 117a, fols 517r-518v, «Ordinationes pro missione castrensi».

²⁷ ARSI, *Fl. Belg.* 67, fol. 57r-v.

²⁸ ARSI, *Fl. Belg.* 67, fol. 76r-v. Cf. 188r-189r, a letter of 1598, which describes priests fomenting war with the symbol of the cross, devils defeated by miraculous divine intervention, the successes of the Confraternity of the Sacrament, the soldiers' Lenten fasts and penances, cures of the vice of drinking, duels prevented by the use of the

how much these sources were a mixture of realistic and idealized accounts, one need only read the *Imago*, which mentions that in 1600 at Nieuport three Jesuits had lost their lives: they had incited the troops to battle but they had also begged for mercy for the defeated Calvinists²⁹. So, there was no contradiction between appealing to the holy war and mercy—a useful mercy politically after years of mishandling of the crisis by Philip II.

Suspended during the Twelve Years' Truce, the *missio* continued even after the death in 1621 of Sailly, the man in charge of it. And it is significant that it was Carolus Scribani who wrote the first biography of Sailly—the Jesuit who had also described the Catholic death of Lipsius and who had had a long association with the Plantin press³⁰. Herman Hugo (author of an *Obsidio Bredana* and a book on chivalry in the ancient and modern world) was nominated as Sailly's successor, but he died of the plague in 1629, when the successes of Breda were now in the past. After 1633 the mission was divided: six fathers were sent to Artois and Picardy, and six to the Moselle, in the fortress of the Marquis of Aytona. After the Peace of the Pyrenees their work came to an end, while the *missio navalis* continued until 1700. It had been established for the fleet of Dunkirk in 1623, and then transferred to Bruges and Ostend³¹. But this new mandate divided the Jesuits as well. It was noted by many that these were not soldiers but pirates. In 1628 a Jesuit wrote that giving them the sacraments was difficult, unless there was actual danger to life. And it was a slow process normalizing the sacraments for the crews³². Finally, in 1642 the vicar of the bishop of Malines-Brussels, Carolus Mansfelt, who was responsible for all the

peaces and the conversion of dozens of heretics in the German camp: «Castrensis missio laboribus multis ac vitae periculis exposita excellentem ac copiosum laboris fructum colligit. Belluas immanes ad humanitatem revocavit».

²⁹ Cf. *Imago primi saeculi*, p. 808.

³⁰ L. BROUWERS - J.F. GILMONT, *Carolus Scribani*, Bruxelles 1977; E. DE BOM, *Carolus Scribani and the Lipsian Legacy: The «Politico-Christianus» and Lipsius's Image of the Good Prince*, in E. DE BOM et al. (eds), *(Un)masking the Realities of Power: Justus Lipsius and the Dynamics of Political Writing in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden - Boston MA 2010, pp. 281-306.

³¹ E. HAMBYE, *L'aumônerie de la flotte de Flandre au XVIII^e siècle, 1623-1662*, Louvain - Namur - Paris 1967.

³² A. PONCELET, *Histoire de la Compagnie*, vol. 2, pp. 410-424.

chaplains, wrote a treatise entitled *Castra Dei* to regulate some delicate questions for the post-Tridentine Church: for example, who could celebrate marriage for soldiers and who could absolve reserved cases like heresy³³. And in future the chaplains, in Flanders and elsewhere, were to be less closely linked to the religious orders.

IV.

But the production of Catholic catechisms for the soldiers went on and influenced not only the writing of similar works among the Puritans and, later, the English Methodists³⁴, but also the compiling of collections of casuistry and penal law for the military tribunals that had been introduced among the Spanish and papal troops at the end of the sixteenth century³⁵. But the most complex of the catechisms was Saily's *Guidon*, and the Plantin-Moretus museum at Antwerp still has the plans for the final printing with the eighteen original drawings for the engravings³⁶. The text took up Possevino's proposal, but set it in a more complex context than that of which Saily had direct knowledge³⁷. «C'est une chose fort louable»—he wrote—«quand le prestre et le soldat sont bien unis & d'accord au service de Dieu, de leur patrie et du bien public»³⁸. The chaplains, then, were not to seek simply to provide spiritual

³³ Cf. CAROLUS A MANSFELT, *Castra Dei, sive Parochia, Religio et Disciplina Militum*, Bruxellis, apud Martinum de Bossuyt, MDCXLII.

³⁴ I hope to return to this question on another occasion. See, however, B. DONAGAN, «*Did Ministers Matter*».

³⁵ Cf. TULLIUS CRISPOLTUS, *Casus militares discussi ac resoluti ... in quibus tota materia delictorum, contractuum ac ultimarum voluntatum militum continetur ... Opus omnibus, praesertim vero militibus militiarum ecclesiasticae ditionis summe utile & necessarium*, Romae, ex typographia Phaei, MDCXXXV; FRANCISCUS CESPEDES, *Dubia conscientiae militaria a diversa proposita & resoluta, opus confessoribus militum necessarium*, Mediolani, ex typographia Georgy Rollae, MDCXXXIII.

³⁶ J. DENUCÉ (ed.), *Correspondance de Christophe Plantin*, vols. 8-9, Antwerpen - Gravenhage 1918, reprint Nendel 1968, *ad indicem*.

³⁷ In 1588 Saily wrote his first work for the soldiers, adapting Possevino's catechism into Spanish.

³⁸ THOMAS SAILLY, *Guidon et pratique spirituelle du soldat chrestien reveu & augmenté pour l'armee de sa M.tè Catholique au Pays-bas*, Anvers, en l'Imprimerie Plantinienne, MDXC, p. 158.

comfort, because the soldiers needed «de mediciens, tant spirituelz que temporelz, et des hospitaliers»³⁹. The wounded could not be abandoned, and the army now had «personnages qualifiez» who took charge of the weaker. The members of the confraternity handled wills and comforted the dying, «a fin que venans a mourir en la guerre, ilz ne laissent la guerre en leurs familles»⁴⁰. Nor was religious vigilance of the conscripts lacking in the camps. The soldiers often read impious works: «livres des Machiavelles ..., livres de furieux amoureux et libidinaires». Far better was Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, which Sailly may have known through Lipsius; and catechisms were necessary⁴¹. He was familiar with the previous works of his brethren: both Possevino's and those of the Spaniard Francisco Antonio and the Frenchman Emond Auger⁴².

But in Sailly the classification of the typical sins of soldiers was accompanied by a more realistic description of the military world, as when the priest condemned those who seized the goods of dead fellow-soldiers⁴³. The experience of sieges filled pages, and the sin of drunkenness was regarded as a danger, not only because it fomented brawls and blasphemy, but because it weakened the soldier's resistance. Sailly condemned the widespread use of charms in the camps, and combined classical and biblical *exempla* for soldiers with many modern cases of the triumph of Catholic armies, in Europe and the colonies, also drawing up a war calendar for prayer and worship that included the feast days of the Church's holy warriors and reminders of recent victorious battles against heretics and infidels⁴⁴. Finally, before dying, Sailly recounted his experience in the long pages of a *Memorial Testamentaire*. He had spent his last months in the Palatinate, which had been conquered by the Catholic armies during the first part of the Thirty Years War, and

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 174-175.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140, 157.

⁴² EMOND [AUGER], *Le pédagogue d'armes, pour instruire un prince chrétien à bien entreprendre et heureusement achever une bonne guerre, pour estre victorieux de tous les ennemis de son Estat et de l'Église catholique*, Paris, chez Sebastien Nivelles, 1568; FRANCISCO ANTONIO, *Auissos para soldados y gente de guerra ...*, En Madrid, por P. Madrigal, MDXC.

⁴³ Cf. THOMAS SAILLY, *Guidon*, p. 71.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 126 ff., 309 ff.

in that German principality he had performed the functions of Senior Chaplain at Spinola's request, before returning to Flanders, where the war against the Dutch had resumed.

This meant the first part of the text was written in Germany and dedicated to Spinola (1621), while the second was composed in Brussels in 1622. Sailly listed, first of all, the duties of the generals, those of the military judges⁴⁵, the doctors and nurses⁴⁶ and of anyone else involved in organizing and supplying the armies, not forgetting women⁴⁷ and merchants, who often sold the soldiers poor-quality food and beer, causing disease and death⁴⁸. Sailly also admonished the captains to pay those under them regularly, and exhorted the soldiers not to mutiny, but to obey their superiors, referring to the writings of authors like Scribani⁴⁹. Many pages gave instructions to those confessing the soldiers⁵⁰ and others dealt with taxes and the army's financial requirements («car le thresor est semblable à l'estomach des hommes»)⁵¹. Finally, to exalt discipline, Sailly mentioned the examples of military commanders such as Alessandro Farnese⁵² and Archduke Alberto, who had made use of the services of good chaplains like the Jesuit Pedro de Vivero⁵³.

Having invented catechisms for soldiers, the Jesuits could thus boast—as they did in the *Imago*—that they had created a new ideal of the religious and disciplined *miles christianus*, and at the same time formed the figure of the modern chaplain, showing how to narrate war from the clergy's viewpoint.

⁴⁵ Cf. THOMAS SAILLY, *Memorial testamentaire composé en faveur des soldats, premiere partie*, A Lovain, chez Henri Hastens, MDCXXII, pp. 47-61.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 236-248.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 251-254.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 255-257.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, *Partie seconde*, pp. 32-36.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, *Premiere partie*, pp. 168 ff.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, *Partie seconde*, pp. 43-72; *Premiere partie*, p. 259.

⁵² *Ibid.*, *Partie seconde*, p. 80.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-149.