Lauro Martines. *Furies: War in Europe, 1450–1700.*
New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013. xv + 320 pp. $28. ISBN: 978-1-60819-609-8.

The geographical scope of this book is narrower than the title implies, being largely confined to the Italian states, the empire, France, and the Spanish Netherlands. Moreover, it is not a study of war in general but of one of its features, namely the direct or indirect violence inflicted by besieging and marching armies on the wretched civilians in their way. This vivid evocation of victimhood does not need denigration of

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other aspects of military history to stand on its very real merits. Alas, Martines disparages what he constructs as old-fashioned and narrow military history. But the distinction between old and new is no longer relevant, if it ever was. A scholar like, for instance, John Lynn moves effortlessly between camp and train (*Women, Armies, and Warfare*), the council of state, and trench or battle line (*Giant of the Grand Siècle*).

Martines dismisses the study of weapons and tactics as the product of "narrow military concerns" (xiv) without "meaning" (263). If one is trying to convey the experience of warfare by its victims and one includes common soldiers in that category (xiv) then one cannot so casually dismiss weapons and tactics. In a siege, the most common operation in early modern warfare, it mattered to the soldier in the trenches if the commander was a patient and systematic engineer digging his way to victory or a field officer eager to hurl storming parties against intact fortifications.

Martines observes that such phenomena as bigger armies, more powerful states, and tamer nobility have "seldom, if ever drawn together into an overall view" (xiv). Actually, historians have spent sixty years grappling with the military-revolution thesis to come up with conflicting explanations why armies got so much bigger, and relating swelling numbers to the formation of the early modern state.

Rather than dissect, reify, or explain, Martines responds. The siege of Brescia (1512) was followed by a three-day sack characterized by "horrific scenes of torture, rape, butchery, and violent theft" (59). One-quarter of the city's swollen population lay dead and were taken out "like dung on carts" (62). The effect would be numbing except that Martines brings it down to a human scale by telling, in this instance, the story of the mathematician Niccolò Tartaglia, the "stammerer," so nicknamed because a sword blow split the twelve-year-old boy's jaw and upper palate. Even where a sack was averted, the suffering of "poor folk" (110) through starvation could be extreme, expelled as "useless mouths" or reduced to eating dogs, cats, vermin, candle fat, animal dung, ground up human bones, and, ultimate horror, corpses.

We are rightly reminded of the overriding logistical constraints on warfare when in high summer 1632 Wallenstein and Gustavus Adolfus warily maneuvered against each other near Nuremberg. Wallenstein's cramped camp was filled with 55,000 troops and almost as many women, boys, servants, sutlers, and children. The author challenges us to imagine the heaped manure and ordure swarming with flies and rats and the inevitable ravages of epidemic disease. Consequently, Wallenstein's army was thinned out by desertion and disease to less than half its peak strength by the time he fought the Battle of Lützen in November. The denizens of this wagon-train world are portrayed as victims, hapless civilians uprooted by armies and trailing after them. Perhaps we should be reminded more often that camp followers could abuse stay-at-home civilians as mercilessly as any soldiers.

The chapter "Hell in the Villages" describes what befell villages in the path of these juggernauts and its description is so powerful because it is grounded in aptly chosen primary-source case studies. In November 1634 some 300 Imperial horsemen descended on Saint-Nicolas-de-Port in Lorraine, broke into houses and

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beat the dwellers with whips to find out where they had hidden their valuables. Three days later, German Protestant and Swedish troopers burst into a church where they raped women, beat priests to death with candlesticks, and set the church and town ablaze. Martines presents incidents like these as so many undifferentiated horrors, but in fact there are important nuances. The Imperialists did not kill the villagers or raze the village, and presumably observed some notion of sanctuary. Why else would the civilians have sought shelter in a church on the second occasion?

To conclude, the author conveys the victimization of civilians with imagination, empathy, and unforgettable prose. It may be magnificent but it is not war or the history of war.

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