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Napoleon's Italian Campaigns, 1805-1815 (review)

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many references to people, events, and institutions that the author does not explain in detail. Woloch does, however, give some warning of this fact in his introduction by stating that his book should be read after digesting a full-scale biography of Napoleon.

The author adroitly examines the political machine that Napoleon used to run France and focuses on the most influential politicians in the government. While Talleyrand and Fouché, Napoleon's two most famous civilian officials, are given their rightful place in the text, they are not the main focus. Woloch illuminates a host of officials from the Directory and Consulate governments as well as the Imperial Senate and Legislative Corps who can be shown to have been crucial to Napoleon's success. The author chose to focus on men like: Boulay de Meurthe, Théophile Berlier, Antoine Thibaudeau, Regnaud de St. Jean d'Angely, Lazare Carnot, and most important, Jean-Jacques-Régis Cambacérès. His goal of exposing the reader to a generally unknown aspect of the Napoleonic period is ambitious and could easily have led to a quagmire of stories of petty political dealings. Woloch escapes this fate with a clear writing style and a level of detail that is comprehensive without stifling the flow of the narrative.

Woloch's sources are excellent. He uses numerous files from the Archives Nationales in Paris that are the logical choices for accurate primary documentation and supplements these by consulting a number of memoirs and collections from the private papers of the participants dealt with in his accounts. His documentation is concise and careful with an average of sixty endnotes per chapter.

Anyone looking for a military or diplomatic history of the era should look elsewhere. However, for the reader interested in acquiring a better understanding of the Napoleonic regime or the larger issue of how nascent republics can be led to dictatorship, this is a worthwhile addition to the field of study.

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*Napoleon's Italian Campaigns, 1805–1815.* By Frederick C. Schneid. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002. ISBN 0-275-96875-8. Maps. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xviii, 228. \$64.95.

Napoleon's Italian campaigns of the 1790s are familiar to readers interested in Revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare. The reason for this is obvious. In Italy, Napoleon defeated Austria, the Republic's most dangerous enemy in the 1790s. He established French hegemony in the Italian peninsula, put Vienna in an impossible strategic situation, and solidified his reputation as a military genius beloved by the men in the ranks. Napoleon's revolutionary campaigns in Italy had transcendental consequences, so military historians have naturally been interested in recounting them and drawing lessons from them.

In contrast, the three wars France fought in Italy after 1805 are less well known. The Italian theater was a sideshow to the great campaigns in northern Europe, where the emperor personally led the Grand Army into combat, while leaving the fighting in Italy to others. This fact alone ensured that official imperial histories ignored or played down the importance of events in Italy, and ever since, scholars have continued to pay scant attention to the Italian theater of operations. Indeed, no account in English has ever attempted to examine all of the campaigns fought by the Imperial Army of Italy. This is the gap that Frederick Schneid attempts to fill in *Napoleon's Italian Campaigns*. In the process, Schneid challenges the view that combat in Italy did not really matter very much compared to the great battles at Austerlitz, Ulm, Leipzig, and elsewhere.

This revisionist viewpoint is perhaps most convincing for the campaign of 1805. In October, Austrian Archduke Charles and 120,000 men moved into northern Italy, while General Karl von Mack led an undersized Austrian army into Bavaria, where he hoped an allied force of 100,000 Russians would join him in time to attack Napoleon. However, Napoleon moved with his characteristic speed and forced Mack and 25,000 Austrians to surrender at the battle of Ulm before the Russians could arrive. This left Charles with no choice but to withdraw from northern Italy in order to cover Vienna. The French Army of Italy numbered only 48,000 men, but its commander, Marshal Masséna, was determined to slow down the Austrian withdrawal. On 30-31 October, Masséna forced a battle at Caldiero, a combat that, according to Schneid, illustrated perfectly "the differences in the military systems of France and Austria" (p. 31). Charles proved to be a dull and unimaginative general, while Masséna and the French were the aggressors, despite their numerical disadvantage. Charles could not disengage himself from Masséna nor extricate himself from Italy in time to protect Vienna, which fell to Napoleon on November 13.

Back in Hapsburg territory, Charles nursed his army's wounds for over three weeks before he felt confident enough to move against the French. Once again, Napoleon was too fast for him. On December 2 the French won a great victory against Austrian and Russian forces at Austerlitz, leaving the Habsburgs with no choice but to sue for peace on any terms. Charles had led the largest portion of the Austrian army and had done almost nothing with it. One can affirm, then, that the Italian theater was of vital importance, because it was there that a lesser French army immobilized the bulk of Austria's forces.

Ironically, the importance Schneid ascribes to this campaign and to the Italian theater in the wars of 1809 and 1813, he denies to the campaign in Naples in 1806. Schneid especially seems to want to strip the battle of Maida of the significance historians have traditionally given to it. At Maida, a small British expeditionary force proved capable of defeating numerically superior French armies, against a background of insurgent activity by Calabrian peasants. In particular, the British line at Maida proved superior to French columns, firing disciplined volleys that broke the previously irresistible élan

of the imperial troops in a way that shocked French commanders. On a small scale, Maida foreshadowed Wellington's campaign in Portugal and Spain, and that is its significance. Schneid recounts all of this, but strangely, he insists that the war in Calabria was nothing but a "pin prick" and a "footnote in the larger framework of the Napoleonic wars" (pp. 54–55). This is precisely the same kind of argument that has always been made about the Italian theater in general in 1805, 1809, and 1813, so it is odd to hear Schneid repeat it.

Schneid's book is not aimed at a general audience, and it is purely military history with no analysis of the social, economic, and political origins and outcomes of the several wars examined. Nevertheless, people interested in the minutiae of Napoleonic warfare will find it appealing, and it does serve to fill a significant gap in our knowledge of Napoleonic warfare. This reader is convinced that the Italian wars were much more than footnotes in the story of Napoleon's defeat.

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*Jomini et la stratégie: Une approche historique de l'oeuvre.* By Ami-Jacques Rapin. Lausanne, Switzerland: Editions Payot Lausanne, 2002. ISBN 2-601-03297-9. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 336. Euro 23.70.

This is a work of historiography, focusing on the historical writing of and about Antoine-Henri Jomini, a young Swiss banker who turned to producing military history and theory. He became a baron and brigadier general under Napoleon (serving largely on Marshal Ney's staff). Nonetheless, in 1813, he defected to the Russians, and was made a lieutenant general by Czar Alexander.

Ami-Jacques Rapin is Swiss, a professor at the University of Lausanne, and justly proud of Jomini's worldwide influence and of the fact that his theories were studied at West Point long before those of Clausewitz. He feels, however, that the works of the two theorists complement each other.

The author details Jomini's works and their interrelationship. For example, in 1803, he finished a draft volume of his *Traité de grande tactique* (based on the campaigns of Frederick the Great), later entitled *Traité des grandes opérations militaires*. In search of funds to publish it, he submitted a prospectus for a *Cours . . . de grande tactique* to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, to no avail. He then presented the manuscript of the *Traité* as a "calling card" to Marshal Ney, who assigned him to his staff as a major (despite his lack of military training or experience). It was published as *Traité de grande tactique*, 3 vols. (1805–6), including a volume of his *Histoire des guerres de la révolution française*. In 1807 the *Traité* became the *Traité de [sic; later des] grandes opérations militaires* and was expanded to five volumes by 1809. In 1810 Jomini added a conclusion, published separately as *Résumé des principes généraux de l'art de la guerre, L'Art de la*