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Arnaud Guinier, *L'Honneur du Soldat: éthique martiale et discipline guerrière dans la France des Lumières (1748-1789)*. Ceyzérieu dans l'Ain: Éditions Champ Vallon, 2014. 410 pp. Tables, charts, figures, notes, bibliography, and index. 25€ (pb). ISBN 978-2-87673-992-5.

Review by Julia Osman, Mississippi State University.

Arnaud Guinier makes an impressive contribution to studies of the eighteenth-century French army and the broader Enlightenment with his book *L'Honneur du Soldat*. Guinier shows that from the War of the Austrian Succession in the 1740s up to the cusp of the Revolution of 1789, the French army transformed from one obsessed with scientific, mechanical, standardized movement and tactics to one focused more on individual soldiers and how best to develop their inherent qualities. To understand this transformation, he draws on an impressive array of sources, from detailed tactical documents in the French army archives to complex Enlightenment texts on themes as varied as education and geometry. Throughout, Guinier focuses on officers' considerations of the soldier and applies Foucault's theory of discipline and the body to their writings, especially on tactics.^[1] The book blends multiple historiographies, methodologies, and archival sources into a thorough yet readable volume that works both as a narrative of military transformation and as a reference work. Guinier's unification of two distinct (until now) historiographies in particular speaks to a wider readership than one might anticipate for a book on the pre-Revolutionary French army. In addition to clarifying the status of the French army in the era of the Enlightenment, Guinier brings his argument up to the modern day and shows how Enlightenment conversations continue to shape the contemporary French army.

As Guinier writes in his introduction, his book marries two historiographic trends: the cultural and social history of the French army's transformations in the decades before the French Revolution, and the traditional operational history that focuses on tactics and "strictly military" questions (p. 16). The former includes discussions of psychology, philosophy, culture, and politics that provide the undercurrent for French reform and focus on war and society, as championed by Christy Pichichero and Thomas Hippler, among others.^[2] The latter focuses on debates regarding tactics, battle, and changes wrought by the military revolution, covered by historians such as John Keegan, Victor David Hansen, and John Lynn.^[3] Guinier corrects this superficial separation by studying both tactical and cultural innovations in conjunction with one another, based both on his thorough understanding of secondary literature and on his own meticulous research in the army archives at Vincennes.

The primary way that Guinier marries (or perhaps remarries is a better term) the two historiographical strands is by applying Foucault's theory on discipline and the body to soldier training. Foucault highlighted military tactics as important to understanding discipline, but Guinier is the first person to apply that theory thoroughly to this context. In the process, he sheds light on attitudes towards soldiers, tactics, and the army and mines sources, such as diagrams of soldiers standing, marching, and moving through terrain, that more culturally-minded historians have rarely used. In analyzing these sources, Guinier is especially adept at unpacking tactical illustrations while clearly underlining how they were crucial or transformational to French soldiers on campaign. For example, Guinier discusses the major innovation of the *pas réglé*, in which soldiers' steps were perfectly regulated in time to a strict cadence, which allowed them to move quickly, yet remain in a tight formation (pp. 40-41). As key as this

innovation was from a tactical point of view, Guinier further points out how such a measure required a certain mentality and had implications for how officers treated their soldiers. Military reforms and initiatives occurred in a context of the wider Enlightenment, and Guinier examines how these tactical changes spoke to or grew from discussions among men of letters regarding science, engineering, education, and communication. The art of arranging a battalion, for example, nearly comprised its own branch of elementary geometry, and finding ways to move large numbers of troops efficiently required understanding of force vs. speed, a subject that had been debated by Leibniz and Descartes (pp. 58-63). Here, Guinier also points out officers' use of the young discipline of psychology in their means of arranging troops. Soldiers, it was concluded, felt more secure when standing in deeper lines, because they enjoyed the support of their comrades, rather than being more sparsely placed. Such an example demonstrates how the operational and cultural approaches to military studies work best when applied simultaneously. Troop arrangements had as much to do with giving soldiers courage and controlling their fear as they did in effectively engaging the enemy (pp. 66-7, 70).

To combat the lack of sources available from the soldier's perspective, Guinier compiles a great deal of statistical information about their behavior, especially rates, means, and types of desertion, as well as other misdemeanors and their respective punishments. His categories, numbers, and presentation of them in mostly readable charts for quick and easy comparison is reminiscent of Andre Corvisier's exhaustive work on soldiers.^[4] Guinier also wades into the debates surrounding the punishment of soldiers, as officers searched for ways to discipline the body without damaging the soul. Most of these attempts, which involved beating soldiers with an array of different instruments, usually backfired on the officers who had to enforce them (p. 282).

Guinier concludes his study by analyzing the many debates at the end of the old regime concerning the role of soldiers' initiative, and whether they should be considered as individuals or part of a group. This is the denser part of the book that, after the more clear-cut discussions on tactics accompanied by eye-catching illustrations, makes for more difficult reading. The arguments officers hurled at each other can be complex and contradictory and overlap in ways that make them difficult to separate and analyze. These include the use of patriotism as a tool in the army and how the soldier's relationship in the army could mirror that of the citizen with the nation. One of the more interesting discussions is the development of the cult of the "hero soldier," a member of the rank and file who served bravely and saved the lives of his fellow soldiers or even his officer (p. 332). In opposition to the obedient, passive bodies that Guinier discussed in the earlier part of the book, soldiers in these discussions are fully fleshed-out human beings who possess honor and individual initiative, as well as some rather "noble" characteristics (p. 336). Guinier touches on issues of gender and religion as well, rounding out the many lenses used to view the French army. Throughout, Guinier articulates clearly the intersection and tensions of all the discussions and measures that transformed the view of soldiers by their officers, from obedient cogs in a machine to warm-blooded individuals who could earn rich rewards for acts of selflessness and bravery.

It is this transformation of the soldier from a body to be molded according to precise, scientific structures, to an autonomous individual who needed good influences and opportunities that forms the narrative of Guinier's book. While the structure of the book is perhaps more thematic at times, it follows a basic chronology. Guinier's story begins with the war of Austrian Succession, which ushered in a new fascination with strictly-disciplined troops that the Prussian army had demonstrated so well, with its speed and easy maneuverability. This fascination with strict discipline provided the "matrix" for the reforms that followed, but while there were many admirers of this Prussian system, there were also those who reacted against it (pp. 19-20). Such discipline would take away the individuality of the soldier, his ability to act on moral grounds, and his love of country. Thus was born, "in the Enlightenment age, two ideas of military discipline, born conjointly from an initial preoccupation with tactics" (p. 20). Efforts to try to discipline soldiers' bodies led to attempts at standardization and uniform practices and training, but gave way to a realization that soldiers were individuals and a resultant desire to cultivate

these individuals. Officers thus sought ways to educate their soldiers, informed by Enlightenment ideas on education, communication, science, and motivation. This movement towards humanizing the soldiers gathered support from the anti-Prussian reaction following the Seven Years' War. He follows these debates through discussions of the relationship between the soldier as an individual and the soldier as a member of a group, with various attempts to improve the physical conditions of the soldier so that he would become a better treated and more respected member of the nation by 1789.

In his final chapters, Guinier shows how this army of the Enlightenment influenced and directed the French Revolution and is still active in the contemporary French army. Noting the end to obligatory service in the French army in 1996, Guinier demonstrates how discussions surrounding the French army still focus on the soldier and exactly what and who he is and what should be expected of him. In particular, he highlights stories in which families of soldiers killed in combat have sought redress for the mistakes or flaws in the army that caused their family member's death. Such an example begs the question of the role of risk in the army and the social position of the soldier. Is the death of a soldier a heroic sacrifice for the *patrie*, or is the fallen soldier the victim of an avoidable accident? Debates regarding the French army today continue to center around the relationship between the soldier and the nation.

Part history of science, part intellectual history, part tactical history, part cultural and social history, Guinier's book represents the best of what the "new military history" has to offer by combining multiple methodologies to crack open and complicate our understanding of military tactics and their place in a larger society and nation-building. It is a must-read for historians of the eighteenth century, especially of the Enlightenment and the army, but it would also serve as an excellent resource for those interested in military history's cultural turn.

NOTES

[1] Michel Foucault, *Servir et punir. Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).

[2] Christy Pichichero, "Le Soldat Sensible: Military Psychology and Social Egalitarianism in the Enlightenment French Army," *French Historical Studies* 31 (Fall 2008): 553-580; Thomas Hippler, 'L'État le citoyen, l'armée: volontariat et contrôle sociale' in *Civils, Citoyens-soldats et militaires dans l'État-Nation (1789-1815)*, eds. Annie Crépin, Jean-Pierre Jessenne, and Hervé Leuwers (Paris, 2006); Thomas Hippler, *Citizens, Soldiers and National Armies: Military service in France and Germany, 1789-1830* (New York: Routledge), 2008.

[3] John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983); Victor Davis Hansen, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise to Western Power* (New York: Anchor, 2002); John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History Of Combat And Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

[4] André Corvisier, *L'Armée Française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul : Le Soldat*, 2 vols., (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964).

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