

PREFACE

The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) was one of the greatest military conflicts between the two world wars of the twentieth century. The ideological nature and the involvement of foreign powers in the conflict have been attractive subjects for historians. Nevertheless, Spain's civil conflict was essentially fought by Spanish armies (navies and air forces are beyond the scope of this monograph). Surprisingly, this fact seems to have gone unnoticed by most academic historians. This situation stems from the scarce interest in the military history of Spain after the Napoleonic Wars that they displayed until recently. It is not that the Spanish army is missing from their works, but they deal with the military as a political actor, a social group or a bureaucratic institution. Unfortunately, such scholarship has not fostered a similar interest in warfare-related issues.

It is an exaggeration to say that the Spanish armies of the Civil War are unknown, but there is more than a grain of truth in it, especially in relation to military professional matters such as tactics, logistics, training, small unit leadership and so on. On the other hand, the regular officers in both sides were those of the pre-war Spanish army under different caps. Therefore, the performance of the armies on the battlefield depended very much on the way the Spanish military prepared for war before 1936. This last issue has been neglected in academic scholarship and is precisely the main subject which this monograph is to address.

This book intends to explore the attitudes of the Spanish military towards the evolution of warfare during the early decades of the

twentieth century and their influence on the armies of the Spanish Civil War. The campaigns fought in Morocco by the Spanish army during this period have received only limited attention, since their influence on Spanish battlefield doctrine was limited. A partial exception has been made with the campaign of Melilla (1909) because it was a testing ground for new infantry tactics and the machine gun. On the other hand, although the emphasis is on professional topics, the present author thought necessary to include a survey of the civil–military relations, which influenced—and were influenced by—the internal problems of the officer corps during the period under consideration.

A problem found during the research for this monograph was that the records available in the military archives for the period 1899–1936 were fragmentary and dispersed, whereas the present author lacked enough funding and time to delve into these archives exhaustively. This fact makes it very difficult to reach definitive conclusions about some of the topics discussed in this monograph. By contrast, there are lots of records of the Civil War waiting to be exploited, but the same financial and time constraints only allowed the present author to examine a limited number of files. Nevertheless, it is hoped that, together with the published primary sources, enough evidence has been found and presented as to broaden significantly the scholarship on the Spanish army. So far as the present author is aware, no other academic work dealing with this subject has been written before.

The present author is grateful to the staff of the following institutions, whose collections were the foundation of this book: Archivo General Militar de Ávila; Archivo General Militar de Madrid; Archivo General Militar de Segovia; Biblioteca de Aragón, Saragossa; Biblioteca Central Militar, Madrid; Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid; Centro de Documentación, Ministerio de Defensa, Madrid; Hemeroteca Municipal, Saragossa; and King's College London Library. Special mention must be made of the staff of the library of the Academia General Militar, Saragossa, whose collections were extremely helpful in the final phase of research for this book.

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General Militar en Zaragoza (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, Secretaría General Técnica, 2003), pp. 365–371. Most of the content of Chap. 8 was first published in ‘De la División Orgánica a la Brigada Mixta. La evolución de las Grandes Unidades en España, 1914–1939’, *Revista de Historia Militar*, 93 (2003), pp. 109–134. Chaps. 9 and 10 include contents which were first published in ‘The Spanish Military and the Tank, 1909–1939’, *Journal of Military History*, 80 (2016), pp. 757–780.

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