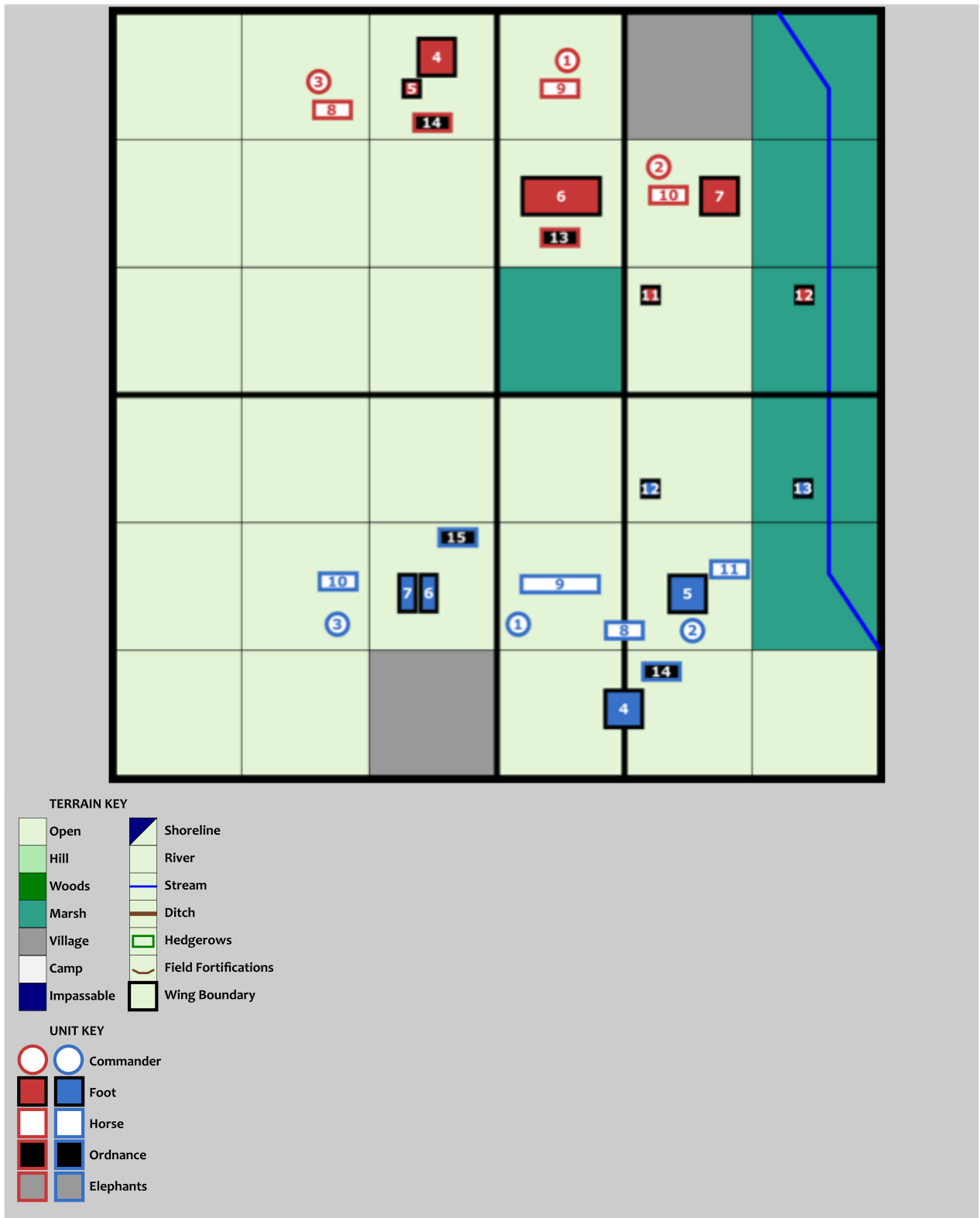


The Battle of Ceresole – 1544

Scenario conditions: ZF = 3, 12 Turns, Side 1 first move, Side 2 victorious if draw



Side 1: Spanish and Imperialists

Wing 1: A1:C2

Wing 2: A3:C4

Wing 3: A5:C6

1. Alfonso d'Avalos, Marquis del Vasto	1/o
2. Ferdinando Sanseverino, Prince of Salerno	o/1
3. Phillip de Lannoy, Prince of Sulmona	o/o
4. Imperial veteran infantry	^VF/=
5. Spanish <i>manga</i>	vVF"<
6. German Landsknechts	^^TF/=>
7. Italian Infantry	^TF/=<
8. Gonzaga gendarmes	vTH+->>
9. Neapolitan cavalry	vTH->
10. Florentine cavalry	vTH->
11. Spanish arquebusiers	vTF"<
12. Italian arquebusiers	vTF"<
13. Artillery	MO
14. Artillery	MO

Side 2: French

Wing 1: D1:F2

Wing 2: D3:F3

Wing 3: D4:F6

1. François de Bourbon, Count Enghien	o/1
2. Guignes Guiffrey, Sieur de Boutieres	o/1
3. Dampierre	o/1
4. Swiss infantry	^VF/=>
5. Gascon infantry	^TF/=
6. Gruyere infantry	RF/=>
7. Italian infantry	TF=/
8. Boutieres gendarmes	vVH+->>
9. Enghien gendarmes	vVH+-->>
10. Dampierre's detached 'archers'	vVH->
11. des Thermes light cavalry	vTH->
12. Skirmishers - Monluc	<u>vTF"<</u>
13. Skirmishers - Favas and Lienard	<u>vTF"<</u>
14. Artillery	MO
15. Artillery	MO

Off board – any wing:

16. Mounted Arquebusiers	vTH"<
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Design notes:

The main source for the order of battle for this scenario is Karl Stallwitz' 1911 doctoral dissertation *Die Schlacht bei Ceresole (14. April 1544)*. This was supplemented by Sir Charles Oman's *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century* (1937) and English translations of a few contemporary sources, i.e. Monluc, Paulus Jovius, and Du Bellay. While covering an earlier period, Maurizio Arfaioli's *The Black Bands of Giovanni: infantry and diplomacy during the Italian wars* covers the evolution of Italian cavalry toward lighter lancer types and the evolution of pike to shot ratios. The scenario presented below reflects this research – while it is sometimes at odds with other reconstructions, we believe it is a more accurate reflection of the primary sources (see Terrain Notes below).

Turns represent ~15 minutes, zones represent ~300 m. Base unit sizes are 1500 men for foot units and 750 men for cavalry, though as with most 16th century battles, most infantry units will be larger and all cavalry units smaller.

The default scenario begins as the Imperial infantry are arriving on the field, but as this battle was a true meeting engagement, it is perhaps best played with the free deployment rules. Preliminary skirmishing began at sunrise, and lasted for hours before the battle proper began in the late morning. It seems to have begun in the southern sector of the battlefield before expanding to cover the entire front as skirmishers were detached from their parent formations.

As much about the course of the battle is unclear, players are encouraged to experiment – units are few and the battle will play quickly, allowing one to test different variations. The interpretation presented here (see **Terrain Notes**), is derived from careful reading of the primary sources, and extensive discussions with Simon Miller of BigRedBat Ventures, and represents our preferred understanding of the battle.

The playing pieces shown in the examples of play are derived from the *Kriegssbuch* of Leonhardt Fronsperger, published in 1573. While postdating the battle by three decades, this work contains a brief description of the battle of Ceresole, and an engraving depicting a stereotyped engagement between French and Imperial forces that seems more consistent with the later Italian Wars than the date of publication.

Some sources describe the armies deploying on opposing ridges, with low ground in between. The rolling plateau between the villages of Tre Vie and Cantarelli seems the most likely location, with the 'valley' between the armies more of an impediment to sightlines than a genuine obstacle to movement. The 'mares' that Monluc claims disorganized the advance of the German pike block was probably one of the artificial fishponds that the area around Ceresole is known for, and the surrounding soft ground. Treating the whole zone as a marsh may seem excessively punitive to the Germans, but this formidable unit was not fighting at its best on the day of the battle, and the terrain may offer a partial explanation.

The farmhouses used as strong points during the preliminary skirmishing, while important reference points for locating the battlefield, do not merit being treated as terrain features at this scale. The map is a hodgepodge of various mid 16th c. engravings, mostly depicting sieges of the later Italian Wars, altered to fit the reconstructed battlefield topography.

The 'light cavalry' described casually in the sources are, in the mid-16th c. Italian context, probably of the 'celada' or 'burgundian' type – partially armored lancers who are 'light' only in comparison to the gendarmes. On the Imperial right, they were opposed to 'archers' detached from the French gendarme companies, who are assumed to be similarly-equipped but with higher morale. While only Enghien's gendarmes are deployed *en haye* in the default scenario, this formation is optional for all cavalry except Boutieres' undersized company (**Optional Variant 3**). The 80 gendarmes commanded by Boutieres, stripped of their 'archers', are too few to constitute even a very small unit, but their elite status and outsized impact on the battle merits inclusion. As an *ad hoc* compromise, the unit is depicted as in wide, rather than

en haye formation, to prevent them from enjoying an unrealistic bonus to their size, while avoiding the penalties for maneuvering in extended lines.

It's not always clear which, if any, Imperial cavalry would count as 'heavy' by French standards. The Florentine contingent is described in one source as 'elmetti', which usually indicates armored men-at-arms, while Gonzaga's company, usually assumed to be gendarmes, are said to have attempted a wheeling maneuver inspired by Moorish cavalry tactics (and which instead initiated a rout). **Optional Variant 4** offers some alternative interpretations of these Imperial cavalry.

Infantry formations are generally assumed to be unitary unless there is evidence otherwise. The story from du Bellay about the German pike block neatly splitting in two to fight both the Swiss and Gascons would be a unique event in 16th century warfare, and is not easy to distinguish from a single large block fighting on two fronts. As a very large unit is deep formation, the Germans should be able to resist a flank attack while focusing their efforts to the front. Alternatively, one could model the Germans as two smaller units – that recruited by Madruzzo and the Scaligers. The former of these seems to have had higher morale on the day of the battle. (**Optional Variant 5**).

On the other hand, the French leftmost infantry formation of Italians and Gruyeres is described as breaking sequentially, with the survivors of the Gruyeres formation taking refuge among the pikes of the Italians, so these are treated as separate units (alternatively, see **Optional Variant 6**). Infantry numbers are highly variable between sources – the default scenario follows Stallwitz' consensus numbers, but **Optional Variants 8 -10** cover other possibilities.

The default scenario models those 'sleeves' of arquebus-armed skirmishers explicitly mentioned by Monluc, but assumes most returned to their parent formations as pike formations began to advance. **Optional Variant 11** follows du Bellay, in modeling thousands of detached skirmishers all along the front; using this variant will model the skirmishing in more detail, and should be coupled with smaller sizes for parent pike formations.

Monluc's dramatic story about a Swiss officer talking Enghien out of a battlefield suicide is probably exaggerated, but the 'official' French leadership did approach the battle with more chivalry than strategy. Enghien and Dampierre both seem to merit a 0/1, with their heroic style of command taking the form of leadership ratings. Boutiere's charge into the landsknecht pikes was well timed, which could potentially merit a tactics rating, but he commanded only his own company, so a 0/1 seems appropriate.

With their 25-year old commander fighting in the front lines, the French army had to look elsewhere for overall leadership. Du Bellay demurely states that he was charged "to go from the battle to the vanguard and the rear guard, so that according to the movements of the enemy, he may advance our troops accordingly." - which sounds a lot like he was given battlefield command of the army. As a mature middle-aged soldier with knowledge of the Italian Piedmont, Du Bellay would have been a natural choice for this role. **Optional Variant 12** adds him as a 0/1 commander. We've found that having the extra command on the board does yield more historical results.

Del Vasto, in contrast, was overconfident in his arquebusiers, citing them as the reason he offered battle despite his disadvantage in heavy cavalry. There is little evidence of leadership at the 'wing' level. The Italian condottiere princes are included as wing commanders, but formations generally obeyed only their own leaders, as reflected in the low tactics ratings across the board.

The Imperial armies hoped to relieve the siege of Carignano – if they cannot break through the French, the fortress will surely surrender, so del Vasto has no choice but to attack.

Optional Variants:

1. Sources vary on the Imperial deployment. Stallwitz has Gonzaga's cavalry on the right flank (as in the standard deployment), while Oman has them in the center. The Gonzaga and Lannoy cavalry units may switch starting positions. The Italian infantry may switch positions freely with Baglioni's cavalry.
2. Paulus Jovius, writing from an Imperial perspective, reverses the positions of the Gascon and Swiss infantry units. Switch the locations of these two units in the deployment.
3. The *en haye* formation is most associated with French gendarmerie, but may also have been used by lighter French cavalry or Italians in Imperial service. Any horse formation, with the exception of the mounted arquebusiers or Boutiere's troop, may be given the *en haye* attribute.
4. Baglioni's Florentine cavalry and Gonzaga's men-at-arms may alternatively be classified as **TH+>**, while keeping their original unit size.
5. Replace the German infantry with two Large infantry units under Madruzzo (^{^TF/=>}) and Scaliger (^{^TF/=>}), to simulate the 'splitting' of this large unit described by du Bellay. The Scaliger unit may be deployed as a Raw unit (^{^RF/=>})
6. The Italian and Gruyeres infantry units were deployed side-by-side, and can be brigaded together as a single formation (^{^TF/=}).
7. Enghien's gendarmes, having detached their archers, were supported by d'Aussuns light cavalry company. These may have been detached to cover the flank of the Swiss while Enghien charged the Imperial infantry. Replace the Enghien gendarme unit with a very small unit of gendarmes (vvVH+-->>) and a very small unit of light cavalry (vvTH->).
8. Oman reconstructs significantly larger infantry units than Stallwitz, particularly on the Imperial side. The Imperial veteran infantry and/or Italian infantry may be deployed as Very Large Units, while on the French side the Gruyeres infantry may be deployed as a Large unit.
9. Cesare Maggi, commanding the Imperial Italian infantry, suggested exchanging Italian arquebusiers for landsknecht pikemen to make both units more balanced. This request was denied, but can be tested here. Remove the < or > attributes from the landsknecht and Italian units.
10. Some sources state the French cannon were deployed in three separate batteries. Replace one of the French batteries with two Small artillery batteries vMO. Deploy the standard size battery with the Gascon foot, and the Small batteries with the Swiss and Gruyeres.
11. Du Bellay suggests that thousands of skirmishers were eventually deployed between the armies. To simulate the preliminary skirmishing in more detail, replace all default arquebusier units with:

On the French side, four skirmisher units in the same zone as the Italian infantry, two in the same zone as the Swiss infantry, and two in the same zone as the Gascon infantry. On the Imperial side, deploy four skirmisher units with the Italian infantry, two Spanish *mangas*, and two Landsknecht skirmisher units. All skirmishers are vvTF"< except for the Spanish, which are vvVF"<.
- All parent units should be reduced in size by one size class. Units with the < attribute lose it, and units without the < attribute gain the > attribute, to simulate the remaining parent unit being largely pikemen.
12. Du Bellay minimizes his role in his historical account, but may have been an important rear echelon commander who oversaw French deployment as Enghien fought with his gendarme company. Add Du Bellay as a o/1 Commander in the same zone as Enghien.

Alternative Scenarios:

1. **Evening Variant:** The French force march the army to occupy the heights west of Ceresole, and the battle as evening falls, as a meeting engagement between two exhausted armies.

Use the Free Deployment optional rules. French units 11, 12 and 13 are scouting. Imperial units 9, 10, and 12 are scouting. All turns are fought in Darkness. The French count as Exhausted, but the Imperials do not have access to units 5, 11, and 13, and unit 4 counts as a normal size unit with the assault heavy attribute (The Spanish are delayed with the heavy cannon, this unit is just the Seisnach landsknechts) VF/>.

2. **Early Morning variant:** The French force march the army overnight to occupy the heights west of Ceresole, and the battle begins at first light. The first four turns are fought in Darkness. The French army (Side 2) is given the first move, but counts as Exhausted.

Terrain Notes:

In developing this scenario, we've benefited from extensive discussions with Simon Miller of BigRedBat Ventures. We've tried to place a few of the landmarks from Monluc's colorful account on the battlefield terrain, and arrived at some conclusions that differ from existing reconstructions.

Vespasiano Bobba, an Italian nobleman in the Imperial camp, is quoted by Stallwitz as writing that the battle took place to the right (i.e. north) of the Ceresole-Carmagnola road. But which road? Stallwitz identified it with the direct (central) route, but this was not as important of a road in the 16th century, and may not have been what Bobba intended.

Three roads radiate eastward from Tre Vie, just outside of Ceresole. The northern route eventually leads directly to Carmagnola (and is called the Via Ceresole where it exits that city). The central route is the main paved road today, but does not seem to have been as important in the 16th century – it was perhaps only a minor farm track serving the villages of Boretti and Cantarelli. The southern route skirts the swampy Ricchiardo valley. Both the central and southern roads eventually intercept the main road from Carmagnola to Sommerive, which was a more significant thoroughfare at the time.

The *mares* mentioned by Monluc as obstructing the advance of the landsknechts are almost certainly the pair of large fish ponds between the northern and central routes (Zone D3), and the *chemin creux* the landsknechts marched on is either the Via Pautasso itself (part of the northern route) or the short section connecting it back to the central route.

The Gruyeres and Italians are described as fleeing along the road back toward Carmagnola – this is most likely the northern route, which anchors the northern end of the French infantry line around the Cascina Giovannina or a smaller farm to the west (Zone B4/B5). Jovius describes the buildings here as 'cottages', and they may no longer exist, though fish ponds are still present.

It seems to be clear from the sources that the line of Gascon skirmishers commanded by Monluc did not extend over the entirety of the Imperial front, but over the southern half at the very most, which would place Monluc himself roughly near the center of the French line (this is supported by his ability to confer with d'Aussun, who was supporting Enghiens gendarmerie). Thus, locating the approximate center of the French line can be approached by identifying the *maisonette* that Monluc used as a strongpoint during the preliminary skirmishing.

The Stallwitz reconstruction would place the center of the French line around the Cascina Cerrato (Zone C3). This farm complex appears on 19th century maps, making it a possible candidate, but it is not located on a topographic high as Monluc describes.

The Cascina Alfieri (Zone E4) is the most likely possibility for the location of the *maisonette*. The complex also appears on 19th century maps, and has the advantages of being a wooded hill, which slopes down toward Ceresole as described by Monluc. It would provide the earliest opportunity for the French forward elements to catch a view of the enemy. If this is indeed the site, it suggests that the Gascon skirmish line extended into the Ricchiardo valley – and that when Bobba described the armies deployed north of the road, he referred to the southern route, from Ceresole to Carmagnola via the road junction at Ricchiardo.

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