

The War of Gradisca 1615-1617

Designer's notes

The War of Gradisca 1615-1617 was born with the intent to reenact a conflict as old as it is unknown to the general public, but which was also of great importance for the Italian populations and for the balance of the powers of the time. The game system is deliberately simple, without renouncing to historicity that is a feature of the productions of Europa Simulazioni. As it happens with all centuries-old conflicts, the first problem is the reasoned perusing of historical sources, which of course have not been written to document in detail the types and quantities of troops involved, and their disposition in the space and time of a long campaign. On the other hand, thanks to these sources and to the most recent works by national and international historians, it is possible to reconstruct with a certain degree of accuracy the main characteristics of the war of time and the sequence of events.

The game system is based on the activation, in random sequence, of Commands, roughly representing units endowed with a certain operational autonomy. On the two fronts, the coordination between the commanders was often weak, if not absent, while the matters of rank assumed a more important role than mere merit on the battlefield. Random activation therefore allows the replication of the difficulty of launching coordinated and decisive attacks against the enemy. The cards introduce a series of random events of political, military nature that characterized the conflict and allow the arrival of reinforcements on the theater in a historically plausible but not predictable sequence. With a scale of play of this type (the turn of play is two months), players can then consider various possible strategies for conducting the war. An innovative element of the project is the insertion, at a level of abstraction appropriate to the low complexity of the game, of the most relevant aspects of siege warfare of the time. As it is well known, the seventeenth century saw the recurrence of this particular way of conducting war, partly due also to the spread throughout Europe of walled and bastioned fortresses, and the War of Gradisca was no exception. Players will then cope with the activities of Bombardieri and Guastatori, for mine and countermine operations and for construction of strongholds at strategic points, which are a salient aspect of the game: taking Gradisca will not be easy for the Venetians, but doing it at the right time could be the key to victory. Players should remember that this is still a "game", ie the highest form of entertainment. In the best history games you study, learn, remember, but also, and here is the beauty, you have fun. The wish is that "The War of Gradisca" is at least partially successful in all of this.

Nicola Contardi

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Credits

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Note from the Curators

The map design, battle charts and events reproduced in this game are based on reliable historical sources; they were objects of careful remodeling to adapt them to the needs of the game.