

PREFACE

Count Luchino dal Verme (1838–1911) was an Italian general, politician, and writer whose life brought together military service, public office, and a deep commitment to careful, informed commentary on the events of his time. Born in Milan on 26 September 1838 into an ancient noble family he received a solid education in mathematics and spent a formative period in England.

Dal Verme's military insight is reflected in how his career progressed steadily. In 1859 he volunteered for the Sardinian army, and distinguished himself at the Mola di Gaeta during the campaigns of 1859 and 1860, earning a silver medal for military valour. He joined the General Staff Corps in 1861, taught at the Military School of Modena and as a captain earned a second silver medal for his conduct during the 1866 campaign. Appointed colonel in 1882, he commanded the 60th Infantry Regiment. Promoted to general in 1890, he was placed in command of the Pinerolo and Umbria brigades and then, with the rank of lieutenant general, commanded the divisions of Catanzaro, Naples and Novara. He also served as a judge on the Supreme War and Naval Tribunal.

After being elected to the Italian parliament 1890, he served in various capacities including, by 1896, that of Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of War in 1896. His broad knowledge gained from extensive travels, strategic insight, and military experience meant that he was often entrusted with highly confidential diplomatic missions and international negotiations including the delimitation of Italian and British spheres of influence in Africa. Even after requesting to leave the army in 1899, he continued to undertake such missions until 1901.

Dal Verme was also a respected author. Writing as a soldier and statesman who understood both the battlefield and the diplomatic table, his writings are marked by an abundance of data and detail, first-hand observation and by scrupulous and accurate reporting. His works include "The Country of the Somalis", "*The Dervishes in the Egyptian Sudan*", "*Tsar Nicholas II in the Far East*", "*The War in the Far East*" and "*The Anglo Boer War*".

Dal Verme's rigorous approach to evidence, his international experience, his sensitivity to political and military nuance, and his habit of treating even contemporary events with sober, factual precision are clearly visible in his overview of the first 9 months of the Anglo-Boer War.