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"IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HERCULES": THE INFLUENCE OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY ON EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MILITARIES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by
Scott Madere
B.A., Louisiana State University, 1993
M.M.H., Norwich University, 2016
May 2024

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This project would not have been possible without the support of many people who believed in me from the very start of my effort to be a historian.

The late Prof. Gary Crump encouraged me to learn more about ancient Rome in my own time, independent of my undergraduate studies (1989-93), and gave generously of his time to help me understand the Roman people. They have always felt alive to me thanks to him.

In 2008, I returned to an LSU classroom after a meeting with Prof. Victor Stater, who suggested I learn Latin if I wanted to study Rome at the graduate level. I signed up for Latin 1001 the next day. It took a while to get to the next level as the professional world does not always accommodate scholarship while working full-time. I earned my Master's degree in Military History from Norwich University in 2016 and entered LSU as a Ph.D. student the next year.

No one can account from how Prof. Suzanne Marchand changed my life from that point on. When she offered to be my advisor and develop me as a modern historian, I finally felt purpose and confidence as a historian. I never doubted I could earn my Ph.D. because I had her in my corner. She is the ultimate advocate, mentor, and friend.

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Abstract

This project examines the pervasive influence of ancient Roman and Greek figures, historical events, literature, and military methods on the leaders and practitioners of eighteenth-century warfare. Rulers, generals, military theorists, and officers frequently consulted classical histories and literature for solutions to the common military problems of the period – tactical, operational, and strategic – showing remarkable faith in ancient military methods despite their growing dependence on gunpowder weaponry and related technologies. This dissertation examines why this was the case and concludes that classical antiquity not only maintained the credibility of its wisdom in the context of modern warfare, but also played a role in the establishment of several characteristic eighteenth-century military innovations like the column of attack, the oblique order, military self-study, and the citizen-soldier. This consultation of antiquity was international in nature, characteristic of greater cultural trends of the Age of Enlightenment, and directly influential on the results of battles, campaigns, and conflicts in Europe and North America. This study also breaks new ground in the historiography of the Military Enlightenment by examining the influence of classical antiquity on this period at a level of detail unseen in previous studies dedicated to the history and practices of the eighteenth-century militaries.

Introduction

Hercules is misunderstood.

On the title page of his 1755 *Projet d'un ordre françois en tactique,* Baron François-Jean Mesnil-Durand (1736-1799) boldly challenged his French readership with the question, "Do we fear getting lost in the footsteps of Hercules?"[1] Mesnil-Durand was a military reformer and zealous proponent of reviving the military methods of ancient Rome and Greece for the French army, and with this question he urged his audience to embrace change by trusting the methods of the past – by relying less on gunpowder technology and more on leveraging the French penchant for hand-to-hand combat. To walk in the footsteps of Hercules, in his view, meant following the example of a violent brute, winning through ancient, blunt force. The truth of the matter is that neither Mesnil-Durand nor Hercules were as simple as they seem. Each used reason to accomplish their goals. If one takes the time to closely examine Hercules's Twelve Labors, for instance, it would be easy to see that Hercules often used his wits to overcome his challenges rather than just his club. The Hydra, the Nemean Lion, and the Erymanthian Boar, three of Hercules's most violent labors, were all won by Hercules observing the weaknesses of his enemy and choosing the right approach.

Mesnil-Durand, like Hercules, followed a path based on reason. He based his theory on prior example, observation, and the desire to achieve victory decisively. He had witnessed what he believed made the French army distinct and powerful, and designed his military system to

[1] François-Jean de Mesnil-Durand, *Projet d'un ordre français en tactique, ou la Phalange coupée et doublée, soutenue par le mélange des armes, proposée comme système général* (Paris: A. Boudet, 1755), title page.

reflect those qualities. Mesnil-Durand's approach was typical for thinkers and writers of the Enlightenment Era. Reason was the tool. But make no mistake - Mesnil-Durand, like so many other military minds of the eighteenth century, did not reject tradition, either; indeed, classical antiquity was their inspiration and their reference archive of successful precedent. The battlefield outcomes and military innovation of the eighteenth century would have been vastly different without the enduring influence of ancient Greece and Rome on the militaries of Europe and America.

While this referencing of classical sources seems like something unique to the military writing of eighteenth-century theorists and thinkers, this is nothing more than a reflection of the culture of the time. Reminders of the greatness and mystery of the past surrounded these people every day in the form of ruins, art, literature, and architecture. Classical antiquity inspired the systems of authority, government, and law that organized their societies. Heroes and heroines of ancient Greece and Rome captured their imagination, compelled them to read mythology, history, and ancient epics, and called them to name their children after the mighty and the beautiful figures from those works. Translations of ancient history, poetry, and philosophy advised rulers, nobility and even literate commoners on how to live and interpret the world around them. Hieroglyphs still presented a fascinating mystery loaded with potential for secret knowledge.

At the start of the eighteenth century the wisdom and literature of the ancient world had never been more accessible to a wide audience. Audiences of all types and social levels enjoyed "steady" outpourings of new translations of Herodotus, Cicero, Lucretius, Didorus Siculus, Plutarch, Lucian, Pausanias, Eusebius and others, readily available for those who could read

neither Latin nor Greek.[2] They also had access to numerous full texts and abridgements of classical sources as well as anthologies of famous classical speeches on war and politics published in prior centuries.[3] Polybius's *Histories* alone was published no less than 13 times in the eighteenth century in places as diverse as Paris, London, Amsterdam, Vienna, and Madrid. The twenty-eight printings of Tacitus were even more widespread: Lyon, Amsterdam, Magdeburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Paris, Warrington, Glasgow, Nuremberg, Halle, and Dortmund. The popularity of these works was matched only by the influence they exerted on European aristocracy. The British literary community, for example, erupted into a decades-long debate over whether the Greeks and Romans were superior in all ways of life to modern civilization. This "Battle of the Books," (1690-1730) involved "nearly every literate Englishman," and crossed the English Channel into France.[4] Though such a lengthy, intense argument over literature might seem unusual to the modern eye, its importance cannot be overstated when it comes to assessing the intellectual environment of the early eighteenth century. As Joseph Levine describes, it was "beyond doubt" that when an eighteenth-century English gentleman read Cicero or Pliny the Younger, "he discovered in them a mirror image of himself and he naturally identified with his ancient Roman forbears." Beyond that, the political environment of Augustan Rome and eighteenth-century England were not dissimilar. The skills

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[2] Frank Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 8.

[3] Juan-Carlos Iglesias-Zoido and Victoria Pineda, eds., *Anthologies of Historiographical Speeches from Antiquity to Early Modern Times: Rearranging the Tesserae* (Brill, 2017).

[4] Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 6.

required to thrive and survive in both environments could be learned from the same ancient texts. A classical education, therefore, was necessary for statesmen to perform their duties.[5]

In some ways, the eighteenth century has been seen as the period in which Europe became "modern," yet the deep past held a tight grip on the imagination of people regardless of their homeland. Antiquarian societies formed to discuss artifacts from the ancient world. Scholarly debates ignited over the supremacy of ancient and modern ways of not just thinking and living, but also expressing ideas through literature and art. Soon, ancient art, symbology, and terminology would find its way into the environmental, cultural, and governmental norms of Europe and the New World. The United States Constitution would be formed on the Roman Republic model. The revolutionaries of Paris would stylize themselves collectively as a Herculean colossus. Napoleon would wear the trappings of a new Augustus, and Johann Joachim Winckelmann would journey to Rome and re-energize the interpretation of ancient art. The popularity of neoclassicism in the late eighteenth century was in part an outcropping of the age of Enlightenment, when writers and philosophes encouraged their increasingly diverse audiences to look outside traditional sources of knowledge like the churches and monarchies of Europe and find new sources of wisdom. Though it seems counterintuitive to move forward by turning back to the past, one must understand that from the Renaissance through the eighteenth century, ancient thought was on the cutting edge. It was innovative, respected, and highly visible in the physical and intellectual environment of the eighteenth century.

The generals, officers, and soldiers of eighteenth-century militaries, like the overall population of Europe at the time, could not avoid classical antiquity if they tried. In fact, military men were responsible for some of the most important endeavors concerning the preservation of

[5] Ibid.

classical artifacts and knowledge in this period. In doing so, they profoundly affected the public fascination with ancient Rome and Greece that shaped eighteenth-century culture across international boundaries. For example, the eighteenth century saw the first artifacts pulled from the volcanic heap of Herculaneum by an Austrian military officer, the future Duke of Elbeuf, Emmanuel Maurice (1711). The century also witnessed the full discovery of both Herculaneum (1738) and Pompeii (1748) by a Spanish military engineer, Roque Joaquin de Alcubierre. These excavations unleashed new excitement and interest in classical antiquities as well as the practice of archaeology itself among scholars, travelers, and the aristocratic military class - many of whom visited Naples, Herculaneum, and Pompeii as new sites on the Grand Tour in the eighteenth century.[6] Within 20 years of its discovery, Herculaneum was well-known to the lower classes as well. In the January 11, 1757 edition of Harrop's *Manchester Mercury*, a reprinted *London Gazette* article casually described an excavation accident at the "Ruins of Herculaneum" that left fifteen workers "falling into a Cavern of near fifty Fathoms Depth." No further geographic explanation was needed, nor was there any mention of exactly what was being excavated. It was assumed that the average Mancunian already knew.[7]

Bernard de Montfaucon (1655-1741), a Benedictine monk who once served two campaigns as a captain of grenadiers under Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne (1611-1675) in the Franco-Dutch War, took it upon himself to explain some of the classical symbology and artwork featured on antiquities from ancient Greece and Rome with his 15-

[6] Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 242-246.

[7] "Extract of a Letter from Naples, Dated Dec. 8," *Harrop's Manchester Mercury*, 1757, January 11 edition, Eighteenth Century Journals (Online), https://www-18thcjournals-amdigital-co-uk.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/Documents/Images/CHE_Harrops_Manchester_mercury_1755/425?searchId=aa3d60e9-727a-42c3-bcf0-bda71ef05dcb#Issues.

volume *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (1719-1724). The work attempted to illuminate the thousands of Greek and Roman artifacts circulating in Europe at the time, as well as the many copies and works of art inspired by them. In time, Montfaucon's diligent cataloguing of ancient art directly influenced an eighteenth-century masterwork itself. Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) considered his "great work" to be the 1790 duplication of the Portland Vase, a famous white-on-dark blue Roman cameo vase from the first century renowned for its intricate mixture of historical and mythological figures on its shadowy surface. The master marketeer of porcelain poured over Montfaucon's descriptions of the vase found in *L'antiquité expliquée* during the long process of trial and error that eventually produced a successful copy.[8] Wedgwood and his artisan peers also understood the popularity of classical themes in the public view. They produced works that represented the masterpieces they saw in their European travels as well as art that reflected the subjects of the books they read, like Ovid's very popular *Metamorphoses.*[9] Wedgwood greatly expanded neoclassical style to broader circles. His 1787 line of biscuit porcelain cameos placed 151 Roman gods and goddesses in the hands of eager buyers of all kinds.[10]

The cultural impact of Emmanuel Maurice, Roque Joaquin de Alcubierre and Bernard de Montfaucon did not arrive as a random event in the Enlightenment age. As this dissertation will illustrate, military officers and figures were products of their period, when military life and classical awareness and scholarship were not so far apart on the intellectual spectrum. In a world

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[8] Brian Dolan, *Wedgwood: The First Tycoon* (New York: Viking, 2004), 308.

[9] Suzanne L. Marchand, *Porcelain: A History from the Heart of Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 145.

[10] Ibid.

where war was the central event for a social class that set the tone for European societies, military life was a critical part of overall culture. Dividing military philosophy and method from the rest of Enlightenment culture, then, is an interpretive mistake. The same classical affinity that formed the heart of eighteenth-century European and American art, government, architecture, literature, science, engineering, theater, and philosophy also stood as a central pillar of its military innovation, method, and morality. As we will see, near the end of the century especially, the citizens participating in these other areas of cultural focus were the same people leading soldiers and fighting on the battlefield as well. In the eighteenth century, warfare was less separated from other elements traditionally identified as "culture" like art and literature than mutually supportive. War was then… and still partly remains… a defining element of Western cultural tradition inseparable from its more genteel and pacific undertakings.

The Military Enlightenment, in other words, is part and parcel of the Enlightenment. The operative tool of Enlightenment thinkers, reason, is front-and-center in the works of all the military thinkers presented in this study. Like other Enlightenment writers, military theorists of this period placed their faith and staked their reputations on the simple concept that if an idea worked in the past, under the same general conditions, it could work again. They also understood from their own observations what a reasonable solution could be to a problem and used prior example to refine and clarify their own hypotheses. In the case of the military theorists presented here, the prior examples often came from ancient Greece and especially from ancient Rome, both of which possessed a credibility enhanced by their visibility in the other aspects of culture that surrounded Europeans and Americans daily. Another characteristic of the Enlightenment thinkers, self-study, was commonplace among military writers of the eighteenth century. As Immanuel Kant suggested, we are all responsible for our own enlightenment, and in the proto-

professional era of the eighteenth century, many military officers, commanders, and theorists felt called to study their craft and become better and more effective leaders.[11] These military writers and officers were avid readers, eager to learn about the historical and contemporary techniques of war, and the works that they chose to enhance their learning often came from classical antiquity or were directly inspired by the ancient world. It is no wonder, then, that their own works would resemble the primary intellectual material to which they were most often exposed.

One might conjecture that writers and leaders like Folard, de Saxe, and Frederick II used examples from classical antiquity merely to impress others with their erudition; but in fact, as we shall see, they actually used their reading for the highly practical purposes of solving the specific organizational, training, and combat problems affecting their nations' armies. They made innovations in eighteenth-century warfare by looking backward for viable examples of success to address their modern issues. Historians can even identify these problems by the process of reverse engineering. Study the ancient source these leaders consulted, and one can deduce the problem facing the eighteenth-century theorist. They all agreed that consultation of historical example was a reasonable, Enlightened approach to solving the challenges of modern warfare introduced by technology, economics, politics, and the new sense of morality encouraged by the growth of humane philosophy in the Enlightenment. And they were not wrong.

Military consultation of ancient sources in the eighteenth century was an international phenomenon, enabled by new translations and increased information flows. This was an intellectual movement without borders, and this project covers figures related to the countries of France, Italy, Britain, Prussia, Austria, Sweden, and the United States of America. Just as the

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[11] Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?,'" in *Immanuel Kant, Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, ed. Ted Humphreys (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1983), 41–48.

overall Enlightenment promoted independent thought across Europe, so too did military reflection and writing take hold across the globe in the eighteenth century. While concentrated studies of one country's military theories and reforms are necessary and welcome, we must remember that these ideas spilled over into other lands. Also, certain classical writers and leaders, like Vegetius, Xenophon, and Julius Caesar for example, held universal appeal and relevance regardless of the national allegiances of those reading and commenting on them. This demonstrates that certain ancient writers served not only as popular repositories of relevant knowledge, but also that the shared study of these writers united military figures under a common intellectual umbrella illustrating the advanced literary engagement common to many generals and officers of this period.

The final common characteristic of classical influence on militaries of this period was that the consultation, study, and commentary on ancient sources by eighteenth-century military writers and leaders connected theory with the battlefield. Combat inspired and reflected scholarship across continents and throughout the century. Antiquity affected who lived and died on the battlefield on many occasions in the eighteenth century, from the tactics used by Frederick II to the operational philosophy of Washington, to the organizational methods used by de Saxe. Years of battlefield frustration directly affected the writing of Jean-Charles, Chevalier de Folard, whose classically inspired theory greatly influenced decades of French tactical experimentation. The techniques handed down through Vegetius, Polybius, Xenophon, Caesar, and others can be identified in the battles of leaders such as Raimondo Montecuccoli and Otho Holland Williams. The same sources also inspired observers of battles to link leaders such as Charles XII and George Washington to classical models such as Alexander and Fabius. Military theory and experimentation did not and does not occur in a vacuum. Its effects are measured in lives lost and

saved. There was a direct relationship between the affinity for classical antiquity and the battlefield in the eighteenth century, and it was a matter of life and death that has been under-studied.

This inquiry examines the ways in which classical antiquity inspired military writers and leaders in the eighteenth century from just before 1700 to the end of the American Revolution in 1783. It is intended to feature military theorists and figures from different lands and conflicts, to properly illustrate the international nature of classical affinity, and complements existing studies that focus on the cultural link between Enlightenment idealism and military life in the period. It is neither a campaign history nor a comprehensive analysis of any writer's theoretical system. It is also not a work intended to catalog the theoretical foundation of every military writer of the eighteenth century. Those works exist elsewhere. The distinct focus of this work is to illuminate areas of inspiration and to identify the ways in which classical antiquity provided the material from which theorists and leaders developed their thoughts and shaped military culture. Often, those thoughts found their way to the battlefield and shaped military events as well.

This project contributes to the historiography of the Military Enlightenment by placing classical influence in its rightful place at the center of military thought in the eighteenth century. While there have been many excellent studies of military theory and biographies of generals and leaders that have provided rich analyses of the military thinking and practice of the time, few detail how and why ancient Greek and Roman military methods and heroes directly inspired the most prominent writers of this intellectual movement. In these works, the consultation of classical antiquity by military leaders is nearly always mentioned in a peripheral manner, as a side activity that writers participated in to educate themselves or as a source of ideas that is not examined very deeply by historians. Their focus is on other Enlightenment ideals and writers, the

overall tactical legacy of theorists, the nuts and bolts of regimental organization and movement, the details of campaigns and their ramifications. Classical parallels are acknowledged, but rarely are they deeply analyzed. This study shows exactly where many of the most prominent eighteenth-century military ideas came from and places the source of those ideas squarely on ancient Greece and Rome.

To say that this dissertation begins on a foundation laid by other, excellent military historians is accurate. The history of military thought in the eighteenth century is a rich and growing field, and this study simply contributes to a thriving conversation that continually strengthens the link between militaries and the cultures they represent. As it concerns the influence of classical antiquity, however, the best-known studies take other angles for various reasons. Azar Gat's *A History of Military Thought*, for example, is an excellent starting point for research into the prominent military theories of the eighteenth century and does mention the influence of classical antiquity in limited fashion, but Gat's objective is to demonstrate the evolution of military thought from the Enlightenment to the Cold War.[12] Armstrong Starkey coined the term "Military Enlightenment" in 2003, and his *War in the Age of Enlightenment* is an essential work for any researcher of eighteenth-century military theory. Like Gat, Starkey mentions the role of classical antiquity on military thought where applicable, but his analysis does not dive deeply into the topic. His purpose is to illustrate the place of military thought in the larger Enlightenment and illustrate the experience of war on many fronts of the period.[13] Christy Pichichero's *The Military Enlightenment* is a brilliant work detailing developments and

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[12] Azar Gat. *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001, Chapters 1-3, p. 3-56.

[13] Armstrong Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment, 1700-1789*, Studies in Military History and International Affairs (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003).

innovations in French military thought, but her study is exclusively French in focus. Pichichero highlights the importance of classical antiquity to certain military philosophes, but this is not the exclusive focus of her work.[14]

Other studies focus on the tactical underpinnings of Enlightenment-era militaries or serve specific purposes that diverge from a thesis related to the reception of classical antiquity in the eighteenth century. John Lynn's *Battle: a History of Combat and Culture* identifies the role of classical antiquity in the development of battlefield tactics, but his study is *longue durée* in style and the eighteenth century is but a stop on his survey of war from antiquity to the present.[15] Christopher Duffy details ancient writers who were inspirational to the officer class of Enlightenment militaries in *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, but his study centers on the particulars of military service in eighteenth century Europe rather than its theoretical or philosophical underpinnings.[16] Robert Quimby's *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare* is frequently cited for its extensive coverage of military organization, drill, and maneuver, but its emphasis is exclusively tactical, and its references to the importance of classical antiquity are anecdotal to that effort.[17] Daniel Coetzee and Lee Eysturlid's encyclopedic reference work, *Philosophers of War* covers military thinkers from the ancient world to the present, and while they do acknowledge the inspirational and informative qualities of classical antiquity in some

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[14] Christy Pichichero, *The Military Enlightenment: War and Culture in the French Empire from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), 25-64.

[15] John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*, Rev. and updated ed (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2004), 125-128.

[16] Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 52-53.

[17] Robert S. Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare: The Theory Of Military Tactics In Eighteenth-Century France* (Pickle Partners Publishing, 2015), esp. Chapter 2, 26-80.

entries, the analysis is by nature brief and part of various biographical entries.[18] Pierre Briant's *The First European* focuses entirely on the reception of Alexander the Great in eighteenth-century Europe. It is a work every military historian should read, but it is not exclusively a work of military history.[19] With the exception of Briant, a common feature that all these historians share is an acknowledgement of the importance of classical antiquity in the period without exploring it as a central focus. The essential element missing from the historiography with regard to these writers and classical antiquity is a comparison of the source materials from the ancient world with the actual literary and martial careers of their subjects. That is what this study does differently.

Historians of early America so far seem to be more receptive to deeper analyses of the inspirational qualities of classical antiquity on military topics than their European history colleagues. Meyer Reinhold's *Classica Americana*, Thomas Ricks's *First Principles*, and Carl Richard's two works, *Greeks and Romans Bearing Gifts* and *The Founders and the Classics* are essential reads for anyone wanting an introduction to the deep association of classical ideals with the Revolutionary spirit of the early United States.[20] Richard in particular provides a thorough

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[18] Daniel Coetzee and Lee W. Eysturlid, eds., *Philosophers of War: The Evolution of History's Greatest Military Thinkers* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013).

[19] Pierre Briant, *The First European: A History of Alexander in the Age of Empire*, trans. Nicholas Elliot (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), see Chapters 3 and 4, p.93-158. Briant, in fact, is one of the world's most distinguished historians of the ancient Near East.

[20] Meyer Reinhold, *Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984); Thomas E. Ricks, *First Principles: What America's Founders Learned from the Greeks and Romans and How That Shaped Our Country*, First edition (New York, NY: Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2020); Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994); Carl J. Richard, *Greeks and Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008).

analysis of the ancient sources that inspired colonial Americans and the Founders, and Ricks lays out the central role of the classics to developing the character and careers of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. In Kevin Weddle's recent history of the Saratoga campaign, he elaborates on the importance of Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrocosus to the operational philosophy of George Washington.[21] This was also the main topic of an older work by Dave Richard Palmer who asserted that Washington was less an imitator of Fabius, but rather incorporated the Roman's ideas to form his own unique style of campaigning.[22] Sandra Powers's and Ira Gruber's dutiful works cataloguing the military and classical books popular among the American and British officer class in the eighteenth century deserve high praise for their research technique and valuable insight into the reading habits of these highly literate military leaders.[23] My project adds to the healthy historiography of this area with an analysis of certain sources not commonly mentioned by historians of this period, further demonstrating the depth of admiration Americans and the British both held for classical antiquity.

Military trends, intellectual and otherwise, do not come into being without a common culture that introduces ideas into the minds of the people who make up the military. This is where we will begin our journey through the decades of the eighteenth century, with a look at

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[21] Kevin John Weddle, *The Compleat Victory: The Battle of Saratoga and the American Revolution*, Pivotal Moments in American History (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[22] Dave Richard Palmer, *The Way of the Fox: American Strategy in the War for America 1775-1783*, Contributions in Military History 8 (Westport, Conn. London: Greenwood Press, 1975).

[23] Sandra L. Powers, "Studying the Art of War: Military Books Known to American Officers and Their French Counterparts During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Military History* 70, no. 3 (July 2006): 781–814; Ira D. Gruber, *Books and the British Army in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press; Co-published with the Society of the Cincinnati, 2010).

some of the inspirational elements of overall culture in Chapter One, martial and otherwise, that set the conditions for officers, theorists, and leaders to encounter classical antiquity. These include the inspirational figures of Montecuccoli and Charles XII of Sweden, whose military careers inspired people to think about the continued relevance of ancient Greece and Rome on the battlefield throughout the century. Folard was one of the military writers inspired by both men. His influential work, *Nouvelles découvertes sur l'art de la guerre* kicks off the next chapter, illustrating how reason and ancient example inspired men like Mesnil-Durand and Marshal Jacques-François de Chastenet de Puységur to follow Folard's example and create classically inspired theoretical systems of their own. Puységur emerges from this examination more prominent than ever, as his affinity for ancient Rome and Greece makes very clear how centuries of historiography have misinterpreted the main idea of his work, which was one of the most significant writings promoting military education of the eighteenth century.

Folard's best friend Maurice de Saxe is the subject of Chapter Three, in which we encounter a military mind distinct from other modern theorists, and reflective of a different sort of Enlightenment philosophy from pure reason – humanism. De Saxe was among the first military writers of the modern age to codify a theoretical system that took the human heart into account and specifically addressed the material and emotional needs of soldiers. But he was not the first writer to do so. In this chapter, we bring forth the ancient source of Maurice de Saxe's thinking and demonstrate how closely de Saxe's ideas align with the military practices of the Roman Republic.

De Saxe's contemporary, Frederick II of Prussia is another military leader with no shortage of biographies and studies based on his military life. But not many of them detail exactly how derivative the fundamentals of his military method were from classical antiquity. In

Chapter Four, we look at Frederick's military innovations against the backdrop of the Silesian Wars and compare how he developed his base tactical methodology from that of ancient Rome and Greece. Perhaps more so than any figure, we see in Frederick the perfect blend of scholar and tactician, aligned on the principles of ancient military method, and tested under fire repeatedly.

Another conflict in which ancient precedent and modern combat collided was the American Revolution, featuring the emergence of the modern Republican citizen-soldier in its most prominent form to date. The development of the citizen-soldier was hardly surprising when one considers the model for it already existed in the ancient Roman Republic. American soldiers and leaders openly modeled themselves spiritually and militarily on the examples of Roman heroes. Here, we examine the legacy of Cato, Fabius, Vegetius, and Cincinnatus and how their lives and deeds inspired the Continental Army to survive and outlast against a determined British foe. We will also see how classical affinity helped define Britain's own military ideas and how their theoretical foundations translated to English-speaking America.

As the details of how ancient Greece and Rome directly influenced eighteenth-century military theory unfold, readers should keep in mind the long-term legacy of classical modeling. Not every idea from antiquity worked, but some remain in practice in present-day militaries, including the notion of formalized military education itself. The remnant of ancient Greek and Roman military thought makes up the fundamental building blocks of what officers commonly consider to be "right" and "wrong" militarily. How do we know if a unit is likely to break? What do we consider to be favorable terrain? How should we attack an enemy that outnumbers us? How do we build discipline? How to we encourage professionalism? Should we pursue a defeated enemy? How many forces do we keep in reserve? What is the advantage of mixed

arms? How is light infantry used? How do we feed troops in hostile territory? What is expected of citizen-soldiers during war… and when the war ends? The answers to these questions and more all have precedents in classical antiquity – and the military minds of the eighteenth century rooted them out.

This study concludes with two appendices illustrating the volume of classically inspired works published in Europe and North America during the eighteenth century. These appendices list the many translations of ancient works printed in the period and show many of the original military treatises published during that century as well. The objective of these lists is to not only make it easier for future scholars to study this topic, but to also reinforce the notion that military readers had ready access to a significant field of classical works and references printed in the period.

Let us now follow Hercules on an adventurous path through the eighteenth century, with Vegetius, Caesar, Epaminondas, and all of ancient Greece and Rome's heroes in our train. And most importantly, let Reason be our guide in our Labors.

Chapter One. Sources of Inspiration

As unusual as it sounds for an age of Enlightenment, war was a cornerstone of European culture. Aristocrats and rulers across Europe relied on the battlefield to reinforce their authority, expand their holdings, and maintain kingdoms and empires. War was the bedrock of their social relevance and political credibility. Much like the nobles, kings, consuls, and emperors of classical antiquity, these men commanded their country's armies personally, and their integrity as a ruling class relied on their success in the field. Fortunately for these military leaders, they had many opportunities to prove their worth. Major powers in Europe went to war every six or seven years in the eighteenth century. It was worse in the previous century, when all but a few years were marked with conflict in Europe.[24] Like their classical forebears who also spent much of their lifetimes at war, the nobility of the eighteenth century viewed their military role as their most essential one.[25] It seems, behaviorally, Western rulers of the eighteenth century imitated their ancient ancestors, many of whom used force for similar motives.

The connection of modern and ancient societies through war, however, remains understudied even though it was a major feature of international culture in both periods. Evidence of the essential role of classical antiquity to the development of military thought and practice in the eighteenth century is extensive and deep, as it profoundly influenced the miliary theory of the time and extended onto the battlefield as well. The association of ancient and modern ideas in this transformative century can be seen not only in the physical, artistic, and

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[24] David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), 30-31.

[25] Ibid.

literary environment of Europe, but also in the examples of military figures who inspired the spread of classical affinity across the decades of the eighteenth century. Three such men were Italian Renaissance theorist Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), Italian General of the Holy Roman Empire, Raimondo Montecuccoli (1609-1680), and the volatile King of Sweden, Charles XII (1682-1718).

The lifespans of Machiavelli, Montecuccoli, and Charles XII naturally beg the question of how these men could have been so influential on a century in which only the Swedish king lived… and for only 18 years? The answer inspires the deeper analysis of this chapter. The three men collectively represent two important rhetorical tracks related to the persistence of classical ideas in the international military circles of the eighteenth century: the belief in universal rules of war, established by Machiavelli and Montecuccoli, and the willingness to associate modern events and people with those of the ancient past, represented by the life and deeds of Charles XII.

This chapter first examines the role of Machiavelli and Montecuccoli in developing the key foundational concept for the military world in the eighteenth century, a notion confirmed by Enlightenment reasoning – that it was possible to categorize military knowledge and methods into general, universal concepts that could be recorded, shared, and then used on the modern battlefield. Our analysis then looks at the association of Charles XII with the historical character of Alexander the Great, a comparison made by many writers across the decades of the eighteenth century to associate and compare the military morals and practices of the modern period with that of a well-known ancient model. As we will see throughout this project, these two themes repeat in works of military theory and literature throughout the century. Examining their philosophical underpinnings helps explain their persistence in Military Enlightenment thinking.

Machiavelli, Montecuccoli and the Idea of Universal Principles of War

In eighteenth-century Europe, nearly all aristocratic leaders were educated, entertained, and inspired by classical antiquity. Rulers, generals, and other influential military minds immersed themselves in ancient histories, poems, art, and philosophy; all of which was part of a classical antiquity's lasting influence on the overall culture of Western civilization. This trend only grew as the eighteenth century progressed. But just as Enlightened philosophes and writers fostered the spirit of rational observation and experimentation across political, social, and scientific fields, Europe's military minds demonstrated parallel growth in the attempt to discover rules and maxims of war that could be relied upon in the constantly evolving environment of war. In this crucial turn toward modern military theory, these leaders relied on classical antiquity as a credible archive of ideas for addressing the prevailing challenges of Enlightenment era warfare. The fundamental concept that strategic, organizational, and tactical lessons from the ancient world could shape modern warfare inspired military theorists and leaders throughout Europe and America in the eighteenth century. But this idea did not just materialize from "common sense." This was an idea that was cultivated and popularized by the writings of earlier thinkers whose ideas lasted well beyond their lifetimes – Niccolò Machiavelli and Raimondo Montecuccoli.

The tradition of consulting ancient sources for ideas and methods of military improvement began in the Renaissance, with Machiavelli's popular works, *The Prince* and the *Art of War*. Much of Machiavelli's motivation for writing these works was to respond to the events of the Italian Wars (15th c. to 16th c.), and to offer his advice to the ruling classes of Italy, especially the Medici family of Florence, on how to rule effectively and conduct war

successfully. Chief among Machiavelli's lessons was the idea that a ruler's viability was directly tied to the composition and strength of his military. To that end, the ruler should command his armies himself and his armies should be made of his own countrymen in the style of Sparta and the Roman Republic, rather than mercenaries, who were "always a liability."[26] Machiavelli stressed the importance of "every ruler" reading history to study the actions of admirable men, as "Alexander the Great took Achilles as his model, Caesar took Alexander, and Scipio took Cyrus."[27] Ancient Rome was a "utopia" in Machiavelli's mind, and the new laws of warfare he introduced with *The Art of War* and *The Prince* were the old laws of Roman military practice.[28]

It was not Machiavelli's intention to accurately reconstruct the Roman way of war. Rather, "he wanted to deduce the laws and principles that stood behind the facts of Roman military history, and show their applicability to the present."[29] Using the works of Vegetius, Frontinus, and Polybius, Machiavelli synthesized rules of war that blended with modern necessities. He was the first to openly and plainly suggest to the rulers of the West that the past held key maxims that could be distilled into successful ideas for use on the battlefield in modern times, regardless of the effects of technology. Machiavelli operated from the assumption that despite historical change, "human nature" was immutable.[30] In this way, Machiavelli suggested that there were universal methods related to human nature that cannot be nullified by arquebus or

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[26] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. David Wootton (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), 39.

[27] Ibid, 47.

[28] Felix Gilbert, "Machiavelli: The Renaissance of the Art of War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret and Gordon Alexander Craig (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986), 22.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Gat, *A History of Military* Thought, 4.

cannon – namely, *virtu* (strength, either moral or physical), discipline, and speed. For example, in Book Three of the *Art of War*, Machiavelli describes an imaginary battle where his troops nullify the effects of artillery by arranging themselves in a way to engage the enemy with greatest speed, so that the enemy's artillery may not fire multiple volleys. It does not actually matter that this is not a terribly effective strategy on a real-world battlefield. The focal point of Machiavelli's argument is that his men remained cool enough and disciplined enough to charge the artillery, as their ancient forebears would have done in their place: "So that I conclude this, that the artillery, according to my opinion, does not impede anyone who is able to use the methods of the ancients, and demonstrate the ancient *virtu*."[31]

Certainly, if one were to test Machiavelli's conclusion about artillery in the eighteenth century, it would have cost the lives of dozens of soldiers and the army would have fallen apart immediately. The effectiveness of Machiavelli's classically influenced tactics, however, is not the issue. What matters is its legacy, which carried on into later centuries. Machiavelli demonstrated the persistent credibility of classical military thinking and the idea of the universal applicability of its core traits. Machiavelli's reasoning enthusiastically supported the notion that if something worked in one era, particularly the classical one, it could work again in another.

This idea of universality was codified in the fourth century BCE by Aristotle in *Poetics* and *Metaphysics*.[32] In *Poetics*, Aristotle states plainly that poetry is more inclined toward the scientific world than history, "because poetry tends to give general truths while history gives

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[31] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Seven Books on the Art of War*, trans. Henry Neville, 1675, III. https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/machiavelli-the-art-of-war-neville-trans.

[32] Gat, *A History of Military Thought,* 31.

particular facts."[33] In other words, general ideas are more conducive to study because their conditions are more likely to be repeated than specific occurrences, which could likely only ever appear once. In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle stated even more explicitly that "art arises when from many notions gained by the same experience one universal judgment about a class of objects is produced."[34] As we will see, this idea of universality - that there are general conditions about the world that can studied and addressed through previous or collective experience – inspired early military theorists to call on the experience of ancient leaders to advise themselves and others on modern warfare.

While this is a continuance of a greater intellectual trend that applied to nearly all areas of civic and artistic life since the Renaissance, examining the publication history of *Poetics* in particular further reinforces the high likelihood that the literate classes of Europe, its aristocracy and military leaders (almost always one and the same) were exposed to Aristotle's ideas on art and literature.[35] *Poetics* was a very popular work in Europe up to and beyond the year 1800, transcending centuries, borders, and language. The first print edition of *Poetics* was produced in Venice in 1498, and Ancient Greek and Latin versions of the book were published ten times (Italy, Switzerland, France, then Austria) before appearing in Italian in Siena in 1572. From that point, no fewer than 38 new editions of Aristotle's *Poetics* were printed across Europe until

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[33] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451b.

[34] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.1.

[35] The publication history of *Metaphysics* is harder to track down. There is a manuscript translation of *Metaphysics* dated to 1400, but no library holdings of the work in book form dated before 1801. Either *Metaphysics* was not published in book form during the eighteenth century, or the contents we currently know as *Metaphysics* were collected and published under some other title. If *Metaphysics* only existed in manuscript form until 1801, it makes Montecuccoli's scholarship on that work (see below) even more impressive.

1800, in Switzerland, Italy, France, England, Portugal, the Netherlands, Scotland, Hannover, Saxony, and Spain, appearing in ancient Greek, Latin, Italian, French, Portuguese, Dutch, English, German, and Catalan. Aristotle was a hit among well-educated members of European society in pre-Revolutionary Europe. This reflects once again the lasting popularity of classical antiquity in the eighteenth century, regardless of borders. It also demonstrates that there was a significant readership in the eighteenth century ready to receive ideas similar to what they encountered with Aristotle. The idea that universal guidelines could exist not only in art but in many other areas of life and society as well, including war, was not an unfamiliar concept. The people of Europe saw the visual evidence of this idea every day in their physical environment and in the structure of their laws and society. When it came to war, one of the most influential military writers of the eighteenth century appeared in the late seventeenth century to formalize this relationship of military thought with Aristotelian universality, and his reach would extend well into the pre-Revolutionary era.

Montecuccoli took Machiavelli's thoughts about the applicability of ancient methods to a new level of credibility for eighteenth century readers. While Machiavelli himself had limited command experience, Montecuccoli's primary occupation was that of a general. The Italian-born commander led Imperial armies on behalf of the Habsburg monarchs for five decades of the seventeenth century (1628-1678) and was considered the equal of Turenne. His military writings perpetuated his reputation into the eighteenth century, when he was considered the most distinguished modern military thinker of his time.[36] Montecuccoli's *Mémoires*, composed of three books written between 1639 and 1670, were popular in eighteenth-century Europe and were published at least 18 times in various languages including French, German, Italian, and

[36] Gat, *A History of Military Thought,* 15.

Russian. Though he was a general of the seventeenth century, Montecuccoli's popularity after 1700 ensured his status as one of the leading voices of eighteenth-century military thought.

Much like Machiavelli, Montecuccoli displayed a deep affinity for classical antiquity and espoused the idea that certain aspects of ancient warfare held applicability in the modern age, regardless of technology.[37] Montecuccoli's belief in the usefulness of ancient military wisdom was very influential in the development of eighteenth-century military thought. His writings on that topic served as one of the foundations for the idea of a general theory of war, in which specific methods and tactics could be elevated to the status of universal applicability.[38] The eighteenth century saw some of the first attempts by modern military writers to create detailed military theory for a rapidly changing era of warfare. Montecuccoli set an influential example of seeking inspiration from the past that other writers like Folard, Mesnil-Durand, and Puységur followed as the philosophical starting point for their own theories.

Montecuccoli's list of ancient references illustrates the reading habits of a scholar with more than just a casual affinity for the ancient world. Aristotle, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Julius Caesar, Curtius, Tacitus, Frontinus, Plutarch, Polybius, Scipio Aemilianus, Sallust, Vegetius, and others appear as direct sources in his writings.[39] This long list of references contained in his handbooks of military advice reveals that Montecuccoli not only read the ancients recreationally, but also for inspiration and research. His goal was to extract from the ancient world the techniques and methods that should be revived as guidelines for the modern

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Thomas Barker, *The Military Intellectual and Battle* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1975), 57.

battlefield. Montecuccoli was a veteran of the Thirty Years War, a cruel conflict that applied pressure on commanders and soldiers like no other European war of the modern period. The Thirty Years War featured expansive battlefields and terrifying, difficult technology. The massive armies that clashed on these battlefields were made up of tens of thousands of soldiers who were frequently confused, undertrained, and often starving. Most held no particular loyalty to the flag for which they fought. Montecuccoli's incorporation of successful ancient methods in his writings represented the use of reason to make sense and introduce order to chaotic modern warfare, and it also reflected the humanist tradition of centuries of Italian scholarship. It comes as no surprise that once again this tradition would come to influence militaries across Europe just as it did in other areas like government, law, religion, and science. As a rational scholar, Montecuccoli had no reason to believe that ancient methods could not work again in the modern age. After all, the arch supported the bridge all the same in the first century BCE as it did in the seventeenth century. The forts of Montecuccoli's time were built with the geometric principles of Alexander's time. The visual art of the Baroque period pleased the eye with many of the same subjects and themes as the art of ancient Greece and Rome.

As in other areas in which deductive reasoning applies, a general theory of warfare would inspire thinking about war by presenting universal premises - methods that transcended time, technology, and geography. Montecuccoli's idea of the universal applicability of ancient military methods was grounded in the same rationality that inspired much of the scientific thinking of this period. Aristotle was particularly influential for Montecuccoli, and the Imperial general directly credited and referenced *Metaphysics* when he wrote that "From several combined recollections, experience emerges, and from many experiences there springs general understanding, which is

the beginning of all sciences and arts.[40] Montecuccoli dug further into the idea of general, or universal, experience when he clearly stated that changes in technology did not *necessarily* wipe clean the relevance of collected experience from the deep past:

> Since I have followed the whole history of the world from the beginning of things with an inquiring eye, I dare to assert that I have not found any remarkable act of war which cannot be traced back to these regulations and adapted to them.[41]

He later wrote:

> … since the invention of gunpowder, our weapons have become very different from those of the ancients, but we never stop imitating them.[42]

To Montecuccoli, the typical formations and armaments of Greek phalanxes and Roman legions, for instance, were not irrelevant to warfare in his seventeenth century. Montecuccoli spent page after page of his treatises describing how the ancient Greeks and Romans organized themselves for battle. He did this alongside his recommendations for arranging troops on the modern battlefield, drawing parallels when suitable, concluding:

> These are the main exercises, to which all others are reduced. The moderns took them from the Greeks and the Romans who wrote them excellently.[43]

Montecuccoli more explicitly outlined the universal nature of certain military maxims later in book one of his *Mémoires* when he discussed what he called the universal and particular

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[40] Raimondo Montecuccoli, *Ausgewaehlte Schriften des Raimund Fürsten Montecuccoli, General-Lieutenant und Feldmarschall* (Wien, W. Braumüller, 1899), Vol. 2, 199. See also Gat, *History of Military Thought*, 23.

[41] Ibid., 29.

[42] Raimondo Montecuccoli, and Jacques Adam, *Mémoires de Montecuculi, généralissime des troupes de lèmpereur : divisés en trois livres: i. de lárt militaire en genéral. ii. de la guerre contre le Turc. iii. relation de la campagne de 1664* (Paris : Chez Jacques-Nicolas Leclerc, 1751), 11.

[43] Ibid., 21.

dispositions of war. This would seem familiar to those who read Aristotle, who discussed experience and knowledge similarly. Montecuccoli began this discussion by explaining that a military thinker should find a middle ground between general and specific knowledge. In his mind, focusing on particular details was in no way superior to understanding general guidelines, which are more applicable to different situations.

> One disposes with wise counsel the matter for the form, the means for the end, and the parts for the whole.[44]

As Montecuccoli phrased it, he who thinks of everything does nothing, while he who thinks too little is often deceived.[45]

> It is necessary to hold the middle between the too much and the too little, and to choose some essential terms most specific and most intimate to the object of which one deliberates, by applying the rules of the art to the particular cases, compared to the end that we propose, to the means of arriving there, to the obstacles that must be removed, and to the connection of the past with the future by the present.[46]

Montecuccoli stated that the particular disposition of war concerned each member of an army's exact review, well-ordered conduct, and vigorous execution.[47] This is the only sentence in Montecuccoli's section on the particular disposition. He spent little effort on this notion because a general concerning himself with the particulars of war would have to consider every soldier's reaction in every situation. A general could never be specific enough to fully understand every detail of his army's operation.

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[44] Ibid., 70.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., 71.

[47] Ibid., 91.

The universal disposition was much more important to Montecuccoli, building on a theme from Machiavelli, who did not allow the particulars of technology to distract him from the heart of his theory. Montecuccoli was not sidetracked by minutia and focused on the applicability of core ideas. He wrote that the universal disposition looks at war in a general sense, prescribes a general rule for waging it, and sets an army upon an advantageous plan.[48] With those words, Montecuccoli established that universal observations, notions, and methods can be established about war and that they can help commanders run their militaries more efficiently and effectively. This was the first step toward a universal military theory in the modern period. This was one of the key building blocks of enlightened military thought, and it inspired writers from the eighteenth century and beyond to create systems that could advance military performance. And Montecuccoli's idea for the universal disposition of war comes directly from classical antiquity.

In this first book of his *Mémoires*, Montecuccoli credited Sextus Julius Frontinus (40 – 103) for addressing the universal disposition. Frontinus was a first-century Roman general, senator, and consul under Domitian who wrote *Strategemata*, a fascinating handbook containing short military anecdotes that recounted how legendary generals like Julius Caesar, Hannibal, Scipio Africanus, and Quintus Fabius Maximus solved various military problems and achieved victory in spite of adversity. Montecuccoli wrote:

> Frontinus deals with universal disposition under the title *De constituendo statu belli*; which we could translate as follows: On the manner of properly establishing the state of war; that is to say, of establishing and concerting the form, of conducting it well and of governing it well in relation to victory.[49]

[48] Ibid., 71.

[49] Ibid., 72.

When reading Frontinus's work, two notions become clear. First, Frontinus's anecdotes lack specific details. They are short bits of general, not specific advice. Second, Frontinus wrote with the motive of not only preserving military anecdotes for posterity, but also to educate military readers about what has worked in the past, and what could work again in the present.

> For in this way commanders will be furnished with specimens of wisdom and foresight, which will serve to foster their own power of conceiving and executing like deeds. There will result the added advantage that a general will not fear the issue of his own stratagem, if he compares it with experiments already successfully made.[50]

It is notable that Frontinus did not advocate a slavish devotion to maxims, but rather promoted the idea of using example to inform thinking and decision.

In order to understand the importance of Frontinus to Montecuccoli, it is important to examine the first three anecdotes of the *Strategemata* in the section cited by Montecuccoli in his *Mémoires*. From *De constituendo statu belli*:

1. Whenever Alexander of Macedon had a strong army, he chose the sort of warfare in which he could fight in open battle.

2. Gaius Caesar, in the Civil War, having an army of veterans and knowing that the enemy had only raw recruits, always strove to fight in open battle.

3. Fabius Maximus, when engaged in war with Hannibal, who was inflated by his success in battle, decided to avoid any dangerous hazards and to devote himself solely to the protection of Italy. By this policy he earned the name of Cunctator ("The Delayer") and the reputation of a consummate general.

It is plain to see that Montecuccoli and Frontinus thought similarly about the use of past success to inform future decision making. Frontinus's anecdotes have an instructive tone, but they are presented as a list, without cohesive theming, and without analysis of their potential for

[50] Frontinus, *Strategemata*, I (preface).

applicability in the present. Montecuccoli provided that sort of commentary in his *Mémoires* when he wrote about the past. Note the similarity between Frontinus and Montecuccoli in this passage on the universal disposition of war in Montecuccoli's *Mémoires*:

> If your army is strong and seasoned, and that of the enemy weak, of new recruits, without experience, or softened by idleness, you should look for battles as Alexander and Caesar did with their armies and troops veteran and victorious: if the enemy has the advantage in this, you should avoid them, to encamp advantageously, to fortify oneself in passages, to be satisfied with preventing his progress, and to imitate Fabius Maximus, whose campaigns against Hannibal are the most famous of antiquity, and it is, and it is by this way that 'he acquired the name of very great among the Captains: because we must consider this man in a time when a great number of lost battles. Routs of armies and other disgraces had thrown terror into the hearts of the soldiers, and of the Roman people.[51]

There is a reason why Montecuccoli included these anecdotes from Frontinus in his section on universal disposition. Like Frontinus, Montecuccoli understood that stories of past success could relate to a military audience in the present day because their simple truths were indisputable. They held a near universal applicability, regardless of time. In citing Frontinus, Montecuccoli not only acknowledged the ancient general's military content, but also validated the Roman's process of reasoning.

Montecuccoli did not just write with confidence about the universal applicability of certain ancient military methods. He also staked his life, and the lives of his men on that idea on more than one occasion. Specifically, Montecuccoli was one of modern warfare's most adept practitioners of the Fabian strategy, in which a commander, without the advantage of numbers or quality in his troops, harasses the superior army with maneuver and positioning, rarely giving battle until the precise moment of advantage – whether it be surprise, favorable terrain, or other circumstance. The idea of the Fabian strategy is to delay the decisive clash and outlast, rather

[51] Montecuccoli, *Mémoires*, 74.

than outfight, the opponent. The strategy was named for the foil of Hannibal's Italian campaign in the Second Punic War – Quintus Fabius Maximus, the delayer, mentioned by Frontinus in his *Strategemata*. Interestingly, Montecuccoli's French translator Jacques Adam compared Montecuccoli to Fabius directly in the introduction to Montecuccoli's *Mémoires*:

> The enemies of M. de Moutecucili (sic) accused him of not being enterprising, and they called him the delayer: but he was so far from defending this reproach that for all his life he gloried in imitating Fabius Maximus to whom the Romans gave a similar name.[52]

There are two instances in Montecuccoli's military career in which the Imperial general used the Fabian strategy in a prominent way, and Montecuccoli was victorious both times. The first instance is described in the third book of his *Mémoires*, in which Montecuccoli recounts how his military theories were applied on the battlefield in the Austro-Turkish War of 1663-64. The culminating event of this war for Montecuccoli was what some consider a masterpiece of command, the Battle of St. Gotthard, when his Imperial army of 25,000 soldiers defeated a much larger Turkish force of 60,000 that was invading Hungary. The battle took place on August 1, 1664, but not before nearly three months of maneuvering in which Grand Vizier Fazil Ahmed Koprulu tried and failed to bring Montecuccoli's smaller army to battle. Montecuccoli delayed engaging the Turks until the right moment, after reinforcements had arrived, and after he had positioned his Imperial and allied army in a superior defensive position on the opposite bank of the Raab River. The Vizier had attempted several times to cross the river in other places, but Montecuccoli's men forced the Turks into crossing the only ford available to them, where the Imperials and their allies waited for the Turks to arrive.

> On the twenty-seventh at noon, the Vizier made great efforts to pass the Raab: but he was repulsed with great courage. Early on the twenty-eighth morning he set

[52] Montecuccoli, *Mémoires*, xxxiv.

> fire to his camp and went up the Raab; he again attempted to cross it at Zachan, where the Imperials rebuffed it briskly and with great loss on his part. On the twenty-ninth he ascended even higher towards S. Gotard, the Christian army continued alongside him, and the cavalry joined the infantry. On the thirtieth the two armies encamped opposite each other near S. Gotard, the river between two, and cannonaded each other incessantly.[53]

Montecuccoli credits this positioning as one of the keys to victory at St. Gotthard, noting that the Vizier was astonished that Montecuccoli finally drew his army up into formation to face him. "The good man did not consider that we really wanted to fight, and not at his whim," Montecuccoli reminisced.[54] Just as Fabius Maximus's Roman army teased Hannibal's army in the Second Punic War, the Imperials and their allies frustrated the Turks until they attacked at a river fording that was not their choice. They marched directly into the teeth of Montecuccoli's defense.

Montecuccoli's lines at St. Gotthard also resembled very closely the battle plan of Hannibal's Carthaginians at Cannae (216 BCE), when one of the largest armies ever assembled by the Roman Republic was swallowed by a numerically inferior but clever force. The details of this battle would have been well-known to Montecuccoli and any of his peers who studied Polybius, Livy, or Plutarch, all of whom provided details on what was without a doubt the most famous battle of the Second Punic War. On that fateful day, the Carthaginians allowed an aggressive Roman force to charge into, and even push back, the center of their battle line (made up of Celts and Spaniards), while their more heavily armored left and right flanks formed a deadly crescent around the Romans. As Polybius describes, Hannibal's troops squeezed the Roman legion like a great boa constrictor:

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[53] Ibid., 471

[54] Ibid.

> The Romans, however, following up the Celts and pressing on to the center and that part of the enemy's line which was giving way, progressed so far that they now had the heavy-armed Africans on both of their flanks. Hereupon the Africans on the right wing facing to the left and then beginning from the right charged upon the enemy's flank, while those on the left faced to the right and dressing by the left, did the same, the situation itself indicating to them how to act. The consequence was that, as Hannibal had designed, the Romans, straying too far in pursuit of the Celts, were caught between the two divisions of the enemy, and they now no longer kept their compact formation but turned singly or in companies to deal with the enemy who was falling on their flanks.[55]

The end result was the utter devastation of the Roman military. More than half of Rome's 80,000 -man army at Cannae was killed outright, with nearly 20,000 legionaries taken prisoner by Hannibal's troops.

Montecuccoli's Imperials and their allies also formed a crescent-shaped line at St. Gotthard (see figure 1). The results were similar to Cannae. This time it was the Ottoman troops who found themselves in the Roman role, with Montecuccoli's men pressing in on all sides:

> The Emperor's regiments… on the right; the troops of the Emperor, and in particular those of the Swabians in the middle; those of France on the left, and all marching in a half-moon, they invested the enemy in front and from the sides, with so much resolution and vigor, that after a great carnage of his people, he (Koprulu) was forced not only to abandon the ground where he had entrenched himself, but even to follow in disorder, and to throw himself into the river to save himself on the other side, and that with so much confusion and terror that forced to press through a very narrow passage, to bump into and push each other. All who had escaped from the battle drowned in the river.[56]

The Vizier lost 16,000 soldiers, including the elite of both his infantry and his cavalry on that day, and forfeited the ability to directly challenge the city of Vienna.

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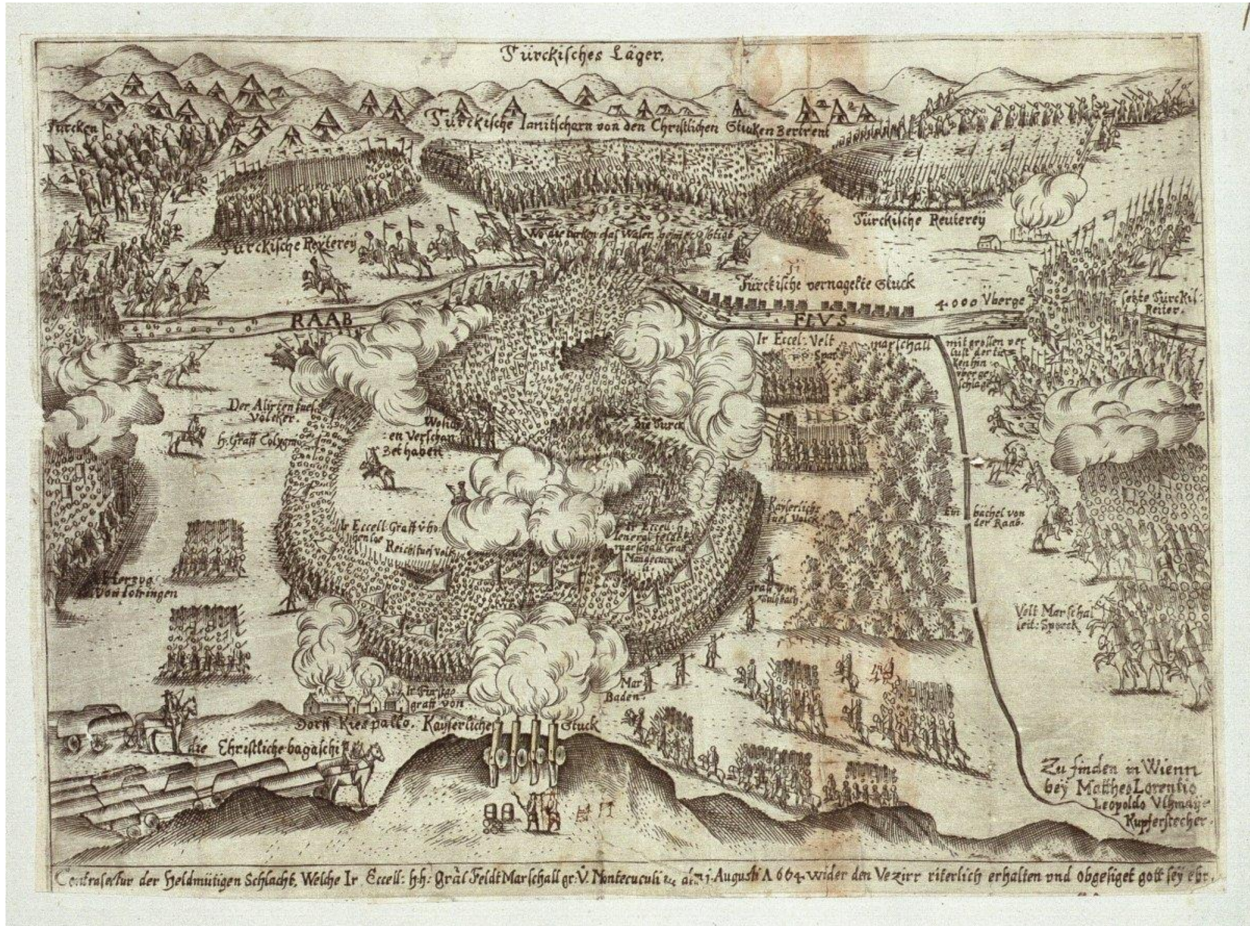
[55] Polybius, *Histories*, III.115.1

[56] Montecuccoli, *Mémoires*, 481.

Figure 1



Battle of St. Gotthard (1664) – note Montecuccoli's crescent shaped line (bottom), reminiscent of Cannae.[57]

A closer look at Montecuccoli's lines at St. Gotthard reveals even more examples of classical influence. Also like Hannibal at Cannae, Montecuccoli placed his less experienced and more expendable soldiers and allies in the center of the formation, where the enemy would be pressing most intently. Hannibal kept his heavily armed Africans on the wings and Celt allies in the middle. Montecuccoli placed Swabian allies and some Imperial troops there. Montecuccoli

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[57] Matthäus Lorenz Leopold Ultzmayer, *Depiction of the Battle of the Imperial Troops under Field Marshal Montecuculi against the Turks on the Raab, on August 1, 1664*, 1664, Digitales Archiv Marburg, https://www.digam.net/document.php?dok=2130.

called this positioning a "great coup," as the Turks became increasingly surrounded by the most veteran Imperial and French troops as they advanced against the less-experienced middle of the crescent.[58] In fact, Montecuccoli had written on the topic of positioning one's troops in a crescent more than 25 years before the Battle of St. Gotthard in his first work, *Sulle Battaglie* (c. pre-1639), which remained unpublished until the 1970's. In this work, Montecuccoli notes "there are also crescents that may be used to place the strongest part of one's army on the wings and the weakest in the center."[59] This leads to the enemy's best troops (in the middle) being surrounded, causing "confusion, whence results in his own, sudden undoing."[60] In his *Mémoires*, Montecuccoli also explained "how good it had been to mix battalions and squadrons (cavalry)" and also pikemen with musketeers to help win the day at St. Gotthard.[61] This mixing of troops is also covered in *Sulle Battaglie*: "Musketry and cavalry should be combined," he wrote. "The former makes the latter bolder." Montecuccoli noted that "Julius Caesar did this in many of his battles, and in our time the King of Sweden (Gustavus Adolphus) has profited by following his example."[62]

It is more than just coincidence that Montecuccoli would write about these classically inspired tactics in *Sulle Battaglie* before 1639 and later use them on the battlefield at St. Gotthard in 1664. By resurrecting the tactical ideas of Hannibal and Julius Caesar in this military

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[58] Ibid., 483.

[59] Raimondo Montecuccoli, "Sulle Battaglie," in *The Military Intellectual and Battle*, trans. Thomas Barker (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1975), 118.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Montecuccoli, *Mémoires*, 471.

[62] Montecuccoli, *Sulle Battaglie*, 106.

guidebook, Montecuccoli furthered the idea that some tactics from classical antiquity retained their value on the modern battlefield. This aligned with the notion that universal rules of war could indeed exist. Montecuccoli's linkage of Caesar and Gustavus Adolphus was an attempt to reinforce this notion on paper. His actual implementation of these ideas in one of his most famous victories brought the concept to life on the battlefield.[63]

The second event in which Montecuccoli channeled Fabius Maximus was so late in the Imperial general's career that it happened after his *Mémoires* were already written. This was the 1675 campaign against Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, vicomte de Turenne in the Franco-Dutch War, Turenne, considered by many to be one the most talented commanders of his time, continued a French invasion campaign of the Rhineland started the year before in 1674. He and his 25,000 men found Montecuccoli opposing him, with a slightly smaller army and no intention of fighting from a disadvantageous position. Using the Fabian strategy once more, Montecuccoli countered Turenne's every attempt to bring him to a direct head-to-head clash. Turenne, likewise, refused to fall into Montecuccoli's many traps. This back-and-forth campaign of maneuver, deception, and delay occupied both armies along the Rhine for four months, until Turenne himself was struck down by a cannonball on a scouting mission on July 27, 1674. Just five days later, Montecuccoli, sensing the command advantage he had over the reeling French troops, finally struck. He drove the French army back over the Rhine into Alsace on August 1.[64] The new Great Delayer, Montecuccoli, waited his way to victory once more.

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[63] The Battle of Cannae and Hannibal are both referenced in *Sulle Battaglie*, proof that Montecuccoli was indeed aware of the particulars of the battle before he ever penned his first military treatise. Though the battle is not specifically mentioned in the section on crescent formations in *Sulle Battaglie*, it would have been an obvious connection for Montecuccoli's potential readership to make. To suggest otherwise would be to underestimate a readership with a full and enthusiastic understanding of Hannibal's greatest victory.
[64] Barker, *The Military Intellectual and Battle*, 46.

It may sound anti-heroic to use this particular campaign strategy invented by the ancients, but there was a clear reason why Montecuccoli delayed confrontation against a superior opponent: despite changes in armaments the Fabian strategy still worked. It was still reasonable to assume that an outnumbered or outclassed force should delay rather than confront, regardless of time, fashion, or technology – criticism be damned. Montecuccoli directly referenced the critics of his strategy of avoidance in his *Mémoires*:

> Fabius Maximus was not stunned by the speeches of the people, nor Caesar at the opinions of his enemies, nor the great Captain of the murmurs of his soldiers, nor the Apostles of the persecution of the impious. Jupiter laughs at the foolishness of the Poets, who sometimes paint him with horns…[65]

The military theorists who followed in the eighteenth century took note of what Montecuccoli had to say. They recognized the spirit of what the Imperial general attempted to do as he demonstrated the universal applicability of certain military concepts from the past. Sometimes, they even acknowledged the callbacks to classical antiquity endorsed by Montecuccoli. Chevalier Folard, Maurice de Saxe, Frederick the Great, Jacques-Antoine Hippolyte Comte de Guibert, and Napoleon himself all had kind words for Montecuccoli's theories and generalship, and the most artfully inclined of these figures celebrated the link of Montecuccoli with Fabius Maximus in a poem. Here is what Frederick the Great wrote in his *Art of War*:

> *You, Montecuccoli, like the Roman,*
> *You who wisely shielded the Rhine and the Empire,*
> *With fixed camps you carefully kept*
> *Turenne in check despite his superior strength .*
> *If I refuse you the name of a hero,*
> *Mars would be called himself to report your fame.*
> *Marvel, young warriors, at that campaign,*

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[65] Montecuccoli, *Mémoires*, 253.

where he protects Germany through marches, camps,
always leans wisely on new positions
And lets the enemy fail plan after plan.[66]

Frederick's comparison of Montecuccoli and Fabius Maximus was an association of known characters to his literate, eighteenth-century audience. The oblique, artistic manner in which Frederick described Montecuccoli's encounter with Turenne implies the reader's prior understanding of the subject. The fact that Frederick praised Montecuccoli, an Imperial general no less, as an example for "young warriors" to follow speaks volumes about the Italian's stature in the military-obsessed Prussian court.

Montecuccoli is significant for eighteenth-century military scholarship because he established the intellectual framework for future works of military theory. But just as important, Montecuccoli is a clear example of classical affinity surviving into the modern period. His choice to repeatedly align himself with classical strategy had a direct effect on his record as a commander as well as the lives of his troops, who survived and won against superior opponents. Montecuccoli's improbable victories in the field and his carefully constructed application of universal principles on the page impressed military figures of the Enlightenment period. By extension, Montecuccoli ensured the credibility of classical military thought for another century after his death in 1680.

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[66] Frederick II of Prussia, "L'art de La Guerre," in *Œuvres de Frédéric Le Grand*, trans. Johann de Preuss, vol. 10 (Rudolph Ludwig Decker, 1849), http://friedrich.uni-trier.de/de/oeuvres/10/261-o2/text/.

The New Alexander - Charles XII of Sweden

As Frederick the Great's *Art of War* poem demonstrates, the writers in the age of Enlightenment were eager to call back to classical antiquity and make comparisons between modern and ancient times. In the context of military writing, theorists and commentators alike frequently associated modern and classical figures, events, and strategies that shared similar traits. The recurring comparison of Charles XII of Sweden with Alexander the Great from the early to mid-eighteenth century stands out as a prime example of this practice. Although the Swedish king left no formal work of his own demonstrating the influence of classical antiquity on his personality or style of command, Charles XII emerged as a popular model for writers of the eighteenth century to comment on various military and civil ideas and virtues. This was an attempt by Enlightenment thinkers to quickly communicate their observations on the changing morals and ideas of the time to their audiences. Paired in comparison, Charles XII and Alexander the Great became figures on which writers projected their thoughts, revealing interesting observations about the virtues of courage, aggression, and audacity in military and social circles.

Charles's aggressive stance in war clearly enchanted certain writers of the early eighteenth century who praised him for his personal courage and bold tactics. Later writers turned a more critical eye to Charles, however, revealing a parallel growth of rationality among intellectuals and a turn toward more sophisticated military theory as the decades advanced. But these writers share a curious commonality: so many of them could not write about Charles without making a reference to classical antiquity, as if relating Charles to ancient Greece or Rome was a contextual necessity to communicate their assessment of him. Regarding this tendency, one should remember that classical antiquity primed audiences to understand these

references because of its cultural saturation in the period. These writers simply interacted with characters and events already known by their readers.

Charles XII's story was well-known to the literate classes of eighteenth-century Europe, and indeed shares many interesting commonalities with that of Alexander the Great. Both men assumed the throne of their country at a young age; Alexander was 20, Charles even younger at 15. Nicknamed the "Swedish Meteor," Charles, like Alexander, spent most of his reign at war, almost always in foreign lands, frequently against numerically superior opponents. Both men personally led their troops on the battlefield and received praise for their ferocity and bravery. And both men also died young; Alexander from sickness at age 32, Charles XII at 36, from a bullet wound to the head at the siege of Fredriksten (1718). As Armstrong Starkey observed, Charles's bravery and tragic death left a powerful impression on the people of the eighteenth century, who ultimately viewed him as a flawed hero.[67] Importantly, Alexander and other classical characters facilitated that impression.

The running commentary on Charles and antiquity began in 1708, ten years before Charles's violent end. An English physician named Joseph Browne wrote a poem that would later prove ironic, titled *The Gothick Hero. A Poem, Sacred to the Immortal Honour of Charles XII. King of Sweden, etc. The Glorious Restorer of the Protestant Religion in Silesia, from Popish Usurpation, and Arbitrary Power*. Browne had obvious religious intent for his work, but his verse contains effuse praise for Charles, who at that time was embroiled in the Great Northern War (1700-1721) with Russia and had yet to suffer his crushing defeat at the hands of Peter the Great at the Battle of Poltava (1709). Browne compared Charles against the Caesars

[67] Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment,* 1.

and Alexander favorably, painting the Swedish monarch as a benevolent Protestant king with battlefield skill exceeding the heroes of ancient Rome and Greece:

> The Caesars fill'd the World with Fame and Blood;
> But none like Charles, with universal Good.
> …
> These were great Feats of Arms in elder Days,
> E'er Alexander, Scipio, Caesar was:
> But what were those to Wonders done of late
> By Charles the Wise, the Virtuous and the Great?[68]

Near the end of the poem, Browne notes that ambition was Alexander's downfall, but Charles would surely escape that trap:

> For his Ambition Alexander dearly pay'd,
> And William's Councils always were betray'd;
> But Charles, beyond all former Heroes Great,
> In ev'ry Enterprize is fortunate.[69]

Of course, ambition was Charles's undoing as his loss at Poltava put an end to a Swedish invasion of Russia begun in 1708. Charles fled to the Ottoman Empire for five years afterward. He returned in 1714 to find Sweden beset with enemies: Russia, Saxony, Hannover, and Denmark. Charles led offensives into Norway in 1716, 1717, and 1718 and met his end at the Siege of Fredriksten in 1718.

Charles's legend as the consummate bold commander only grew in the years following his death, and the comparisons with Alexander continued. Daniel Defoe was the next to write about the Swedish king in 1720, publishing a continuation of his *History of the Wars of Charles*

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[68] Joseph Browne, *The Gothick Hero. A Poem, Sacred to the Immortal Honour of Charles XII. King of Sweden, &c. The Glorious Restorer of the Protestant Religion in Silesia, from Popish Usurpation, and Arbitrary Power* (London: printed, and sold by B. Bragge in Pater-Noster-Row, 1708), 7.

[69] Ibid., 13.

XII, which originally appeared in 1715.[70] Defoe called the first year of Charles's Great Northern War "the most glorious year of victory that ever a king of eighteen years was blessed with in the world."[71] He also praised Charles's ability to command and win even when outnumbered, much like Alexander the Great. Here he described Charles's improbable victory over Russia at the Battle of Narva (1700), comparing the Swedish king's accomplishment with that of the Macedonian:

> Never was Great Caesar's *Veni Vidi Vici* so truly verify'd; and indeed, if we recal (sic) to Memory those famous Captains, who, with small, or lesser Armies, vanquith'd far superior Numbers; we shall hardly meet with one to match our Swedish Heroe. For if Alexander the Great overcome three hundred thousand men… he had fourty thousand to oppose them… But here, about twelve thousand Men, or suppose them twenty, which is the most that is discoursed of; this small Number… defeat(ed) one hundred thousand Muscovites…[72]

Defoe's numbers were close to accurate on Charles's forces, which featured about 10,500 men in the field and 1,800 men inside Narva. When it came to the Russians, Defoe exaggerated. The Russians besieged Narva with about 37,000 men, rather than 100,000. Still, this was a three to one disadvantage for Charles, reminiscent of Alexander's outnumbered forces at the Battles of

[70] The authorship of this work is disputed in Furbank, P. N., and W. R. Owens. "What if Defoe did not Write the 'History of the Wars of Charles XII?'" *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 80, no. 3 (1986): 333–47. Traditionally, biographers of Defoe have attributed this work to him. On the title page, the author's credit goes to "A Scots Gentleman in the Swedish Service," which could mean that Defoe was writing this account through a pseudo-persona.

[71] Daniel Defoe, *The History of the Wars: of His Late Majesty Charles XII, King of Sweden, from His First Landing in Denmark, to His Return from Turkey to Pomerania* (London: H.P., 1720), 41.

[72] Ibid., 42.

Issus and Guagamela.[73] Exaggerated odds helped with the association of Charles and Alexander in the minds of readers.

Charles XII next received favorable attention from one of his associates, Jean-Charles, Chevalier de Folard, who compared Charles XII and Alexander in his widely read *Histoire de Polybe*, a work that translated the ancient historian's record of Roman history while offering commentary on modern military trends and theory (see Chapter Two). Folard served with Charles XII in the Great Northern War and ranked the Swedish monarch among the finest commanders in all of history.[74] As he put it, "I am convinced that Charles XII. King of Sweden is comparable to Alexander the Great, if he does not surpass him by his actions, by his virtues, by his valor and by his great qualities for war."[75] Folard opined that Charles faced stiffer resistance in Peter the Great's Russia than Alexander's enemies, and that the Macedonian was overrated compared to the Swede. He blamed Charles's defeat at Poltava on being hopelessly outnumbered, while stating that Alexander had never encountered such a similar situation:

> Never had Alexander found himself in such a great circle of almost insurmountable difficulty as this great Prince, never has he had such formidable enemies in his vanguard, nor has he done such great deeds in so great a number,

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[73] Ancient sources familiar to British readers in the eighteenth century like Plutarch also inflated the numbers of Alexander's enemies. Plutarch estimated 600,000 Persians troops against Alexander's 40,000 at Issus, for instance. Modern estimates shrink the number of Persians at that battle to one-sixth Plutarch's estimates, but Defoe's readers were already exposed to the ancient biographer's figures. Plutarch appeared in English as early as 1683 and no less than five editions of Plutarch's *Lives* rolled off London's presses by the time of Defoe's publication. Plutarch's *Lives* was a popular work in English, published no less than twenty times in London, Dublin, and New York by the end of the eighteenth century.

[74] Jean Charles Chevalier de Folard, *Histoire de Polybe, avec un commentaire ou un corps de science militaire, enrichi de notes critiques et historiques, où toutes les grandes parties de la guerre, soit pour l'offensive, soit pour la défensive, sont expliques, démontrées, et representées en figures,* (Amsterdam, 1730), IV, 132.

[75] Ibid.

> nor where valor and conduct meet in the most eminent degree. Frankly speaking, Alexander doesn't seem as great to me as fame advertises him. One can boldly slant something, without being afraid to concern his conscience too much when comparing him [Alexander] to Charles XII, who made him see all parts of war in greater and more beautiful knowledge, as well as the virtues which give the final stroke to the most esteemed warriors most worthy of our admiration.[76]

In his analysis of the two commanders, Folard wrote that to be a hero, a general must show bravery and strategic acumen at the highest level. While he somehow doubted this combination in Alexander, he was certain of it in Charles XII.

Folard's next comparison of the two generals centered on an Ottoman raid against Charles's camp in Moldavia at Bender (1713), in which the Ottomans attempted to remove Charles from their lands. It was a day-long affair in which Charles fought hand-to-hand to defend his headquarters. Though it was another loss for Charles, Folard used Alexander to explain it away, focusing on the Swedish king's bravery instead. As he described the battle:

> The Swedish King Charles XII provides us with a house defense, where he was himself in person. This action is of a brilliance which has few examples in history, and he is, I think, the only crowned head to whom such an adventure has happened…The attack on this Prince's house near Bender is one of the most memorable events in the life of this truly extraordinary warrior, and perhaps among the greatest men of antiquity. I compared him to Alexander the Great, or to put it better, I put him before this Conqueror: for men are not judged by the extent of their conquests and the number of their victories, which are the more often the work of fortune rather than that of skill and experience.[77]

Folard even went so far as to suggest that non-military men were unqualified to judge Charles against Alexander in military terms, writing that they only did so because they

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., 351.

were conditioned to do so.[78] In his view, Alexander would "diminish infinitely," in direct comparison with Charles's war record in Europe.[79]

Regardless of whether Folard deemed them fit to comment, Voltaire and Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu were the next writers to approach Charles XII as a subject. Voltaire's biography, *Histoire de Charles XII* (1731) offered some insight into Charles's character independent of his military career, offering anecdotes from Charles's childhood that escaped the attention of earlier writers. But like the commentators on Charles before him, Voltaire also weaved Alexander the Great into his writing, inserting him into stories of the Swedish king's youth. Voltaire mentioned that as soon as Charles reluctantly learned to read Latin, the young monarch immediately took to Quintus Curtius's *History of Alexander*. Voltaire reported this anecdote, begun when a tutor questioned Charles for this thoughts on the Macedonian:

> The tutor who explained this author to him asked him what he thought of Alexander. "I think," said the Prince, "that I would like to be like him." "But," was the answer, he only lived thirty-two years." "Ah!" replied the Prince, "and is not that long enough when one has subdued kingdoms?"[80]

Voltaire also described Charles the teenage king as an imitator of Alexander and Caesar, who embraced a "Spartan" lifestyle that renounced vice, luxury, and women.[81]

Voltaire noted Charles's talent as a young commander, describing him in his early career as a general with limitless potential. In his assessment of Charles's ability, he directly compared

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[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Voltaire, *Voltaire's History of Charles XII, King of Sweden*, trans. Winifred Todhunter (London: J.M. Dent, 1912), 12.

[81] Ibid., 141.

Charles to Alexander. This was a means of efficiently describing the Swede's talent to his audience in contrast to a familiar historical figure known to every literate European:

> Nothing then seemed an impossibility to him; he even sent several officers secretly to Asia, and as far as Egypt, to take plans of the towns and inform him of the strength of those countries. Certainly, if anyone were capable of overturning the empire of the Persians and Turks, and then going on into Italy, it was Charles XII. He was as young as Alexander, as great a soldier, and as daring; but he was more indefatigable, stronger, and more temperate; then the Swedes, too, were perhaps better men than the Macedonians. But such plans, which are called divine, when they succeed, are regarded as chimeras when they fail.[82]

Voltaire portrayed Charles as entirely dedicated to war, interested in little else in society, having "never read anything but Caesar's *Commentaries* and the *History of Alexander*."[83]

Despite Voltaire's classically inspired descriptions of Charles's vast potential, the French philosophe stopped short of calling Charles XII great. Voltaire preferred builders to destroyers, and his later opinion on Charles reinforced that idea. Pierre Briant cites a 1738 letter in which Voltaire described Charles as "What the common man of all eras calls a hero, (one who) is hungry for carnage, (while the) legislating, founding, and warrior monarch is the true great man, and the great man is above the hero."[84] Voltaire closed his biography on Charles noting that greatness was achieved beyond the battlefield, emphasizing that "great" leaders like Peter I and Alexander exceeded Charles in that regard. He elaborated:

> He [Charles] was an extraordinary rather than a great man, and rather to be imitated than admired. But his life may be a lesson to kings and teach them that a peaceful and happy reign is more desirable than so much glory.[85]

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[82] Ibid., 141.

[83] Ibid., 334.

[84] Briant, *The First European,* 102.

[85] Voltaire, *Voltaire's History of Charles XII, King of Sweden*, 334.

Later writers in the eighteenth century mirrored Voltaire's criticism of Charles and continued to use classical antiquity as an archive of contextual models for comparison with the Swedish king.

Three decades after the Swedish Meteor's death, Montesquieu (1689-1755) offered his assessment of Charles XII in his classic work, *Spirit of Laws*. Montesquieu contrasted the Swedish conqueror with Alexander the Great in consecutive chapters of Book 10, harshly criticizing Charles's military ability rather than his faults as an Enlightenment-age ruler. He wrote:

> This prince, who depended entirely on his own strength, hastened his ruin by forming designs that could never be executed but by a long war; a thing which his kingdom was unable to support.
>
> It was not a declining state he undertook to subvert, but a rising empire. The Russians made use of the war, he waged against them, as of a military school. Every defeat brought them nearer to victory; and, losing abroad, they learnt to defend themselves at home.[86]

To Montesquieu, Charles ultimately failed because he ignored his country's limitations in war and chose for his enemy an ascending power that learned from its experiences on the battlefield. Montesquieu likened Charles military wanderings to a river with no source, insisting it was only a matter of time before either Peter or some other ruler defeated him.[87] Montesquieu's final assessment of Charles stung. "He was not an Alexander, but he would have made an excellent soldier under that monarch," he quipped.

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[86] Charles Louis de Secondat Baron de Montesquieu, "The Spirit of Laws," in *The Complete Works of M. de Montesquieu*, vol. 1, 4 vols. (London: T. Evans, 1777), X.XIII.

[87] Ibid.

Regarding Alexander, Montesquieu noted that the difference between the Macedonian and the Swede was that Alexander, in addition to being talented at war, was also an excellent planner, whose enemy, Persia, was ripe for the picking.[88]Alexander's prudence was his strength, according to Montesquieu. It is interesting that near the beginning of the century, writers like Defoe and Folard determined that Charles exceeded Alexander's battlefield talent by his bold nature. Here, decades later, Montesquieu illuminates Charles's failure by the same virtue. It was Alexander the Great's wisdom that impressed Montesquieu more than Charles's boldness.

Voltaire and Montesquieu were not military theorists or soldiers, but another Enlightenment philosopher was. Frederick II of Prussia chimed in with his opinion of Charles in 1760 with his *Réflexions sur les talents militaires et sur le caractere de Charles XII*, in which he identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Swedish monarach. Frederick, characteristically, did not hold back his quill. He started by labeling Charles as a general lacking a complete set of command tools, noting that the Swede's greatest gift, courage, was outdated in his time. "Cunning prevails over violence and art over valor," Frederick wrote, adding that "wisdom prepared the way for courage."[89] He was also dismissive of the educative potential of Charles's favorite book, Quintus Curtius's biography of Alexander the Great. "This book may have inspired our hero to imitate Alexander… [but] it could not teach him the rules that the system of modern warfare provides for success."[90] Ancient figures still possessed knowledge valuable to Frederick regarding systems of war (see Chapter Four), but here, the Prussian King clearly

[88] Ibid., X.XIV.
[89] Frederick II of Prussia, "*Réflexions sur les talents militaires et sur le caractere de Charles XII* (1760)," in *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, vol. 7, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846), 83.

[90] Ibid., 84.

viewed Charles's military life as a cautionary tale against acting impetuously on campaign. "His valor, although admirable, often led him only to be reckless," he wrote of Charles.[91]

Frederick's concluding summations on Charles's career assessed the Swedish king as "more valiant than skillful, more active than prudent, more subordinate to his passions than attached to his real interests; as daring but less cunning than Hannibal; resembling Pyrrhus rather than Alexander…"[92] He also cautioned generals and officers against reading about Charles's life too young, warning that Charles's "dazzling" nature that could mislead "feathery and fiery youth."[93] His final lines on Charles were his sharpest:

> It is claimed that Alexander made Charles XII. If so, Charles made Prince Edward (Charles Edward, i.e. "Bonnie Prince Charlie"). If he happens by chance to make another, he will be at most only a Don Quixote.[94]

As we saw with Montecuccoli, here, Frederick makes another assessment of a modern commander in the context of antiquity, this time damning foolish bravery and adventurism. How different was his praise of Montecuccoli's cool, reserved, Fabian thinking.

The decades-long debate about Charles XII's virtues and weaknesses demonstrates that Enlightenment-era writers wanted to make sense of the world around them against the context of a familiar frame of reference – the classical world. Charles XII, for better or worse, was considered an extraordinary man of his time. It seems that writers attempted to understand what was extraordinary about Charles (his courage/foolhardiness) by juxtaposing him to the exemplary men from antiquity they knew so well: Alexander, and to a lesser extent, Caesar. This examination of Charles's personal character is also notable for the way in which the conversation

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[91] Ibid., 85.

[92] Ibid., 100.

[94] Ibid.

attracted military and civilian writers alike. This illustrates the blending of classical military culture across martial, civic, and artistic lines in the period. Military theorists throughout the eighteenth century made repeated comparisons between ancient and modern personalities to seamlessly communicate important ideas about military matters. The literary culture of the American Revolution looms large when it comes to this practice of comparing modern heroes with those of ancient Rome and Greece.

As we head into an examination of military leaders and writers who used the thoughts and methods of ancient Greece and Rome to further their careers in the eighteenth century, it is important to bear in mind that the intellectual and cultural traditions of that effort ran deep. The cultural elements of classical affinity united the military and civilian spheres of the period and can be seen in the conversation surrounding the life and career of Charles XII. The tradition of consulting the methods of ancient Greek and Roman military leaders had already been established by Machiavelli and formalized with the focused thinking and successful application of those examples by Montecuccoli. The Military Enlightenment of the eighteenth century was a continuation of a path already marked by centuries of cultural admiration for the ancient past, and cut by prior thinkers like Aristotle, Frontinus, Machiavelli, and Montecuccoli. The military writers and leaders of the eighteenth century, then, inherited an already established cultural legacy of historical comparison, consultation, and emulation.

Chapter Two. *Les faiseurs des systèmes*

The best-known military writers of mid-eighteenth century France were called the *faiseurs des systèmes*, or “makers of systems” by their peers for their commitment to organizing rational, methodical solutions to the problems that plagued the officers and soldiers of Louis XV’s armies.[95] Jean Charles, Chevalier de Folard (1669-1752), Baron François-Jean Mesnil-Durand (1736-1799), and Marshal of France Jacques-François de Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur (1656-1743) approached military improvement from the standpoint that universal principles of war existed and could be harnessed to focus French military power on and off the battlefield.[96] But what 'system' were these 'system makers' actually embracing? By 'system' did they mean solely battlefield alignments and methods, or was this “system” also the reasoned approach these writers used to analyze military practice, in which scholarly theory was elevated to the same level of prominence as experience in the field?

The problems that the “makers of systems” attempted to address could be easily discerned from their various approaches to theory. Folard and Mesnil-Durand dedicated their work to improving French tactical methods that underperformed in the wars of the early eighteenth century. Puységur’s approach has been largely misinterpreted over the centuries. Prior analyses of Puységur have largely focused on his tactical methods, often categorized alongside those of Folard and Mesnil-Durand, proponents of the *ordre profond*, a tactical style favoring deeper formations as opposed to the thin lines of the *ordre mince*.[97] A closer read of Puységur

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[95] Pichichero, *The Military* Enlightenment, 39.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 121.

reveals his intent was more specifically to address the French army's deficiencies in preparing, training, and educating its officers and soldiers. His similarity to Folard and Mesnil-Durand rested more in the reasoned, methodical approach he advocated to that problem rather than any arrangement of soldiers into ranks and files.

In this chapter we will examine how classical antiquity played a central role in each of these writers' main works and discover that none of their core assertions to revive a wilting French military would have been possible without the prior example of ancient Greek and Roman military method. Folard combined a rare knowledge of the ancient past and his own frustrating experience as a soldier to propose a different way of fighting – inspired by the tactics of ancient Greece and Macedon. Mesnil-Durand challenged the French people to shirk decades of intellectual inertia and commit harder to the examples of the ancient world. Puységur looked to ancient Greece for inspiration in educating military officers, and to ancient Rome for evidence supporting his tactical and strategic arguments. Each writer demonstrated that the ideas of classical militaries could be mined to address the specific battlefield and operational problems of their time: lack of decisive action, lack of innovation, and a non-existent structure of military education. Their "system" of using classical precedence directly aided their attempts to solve the most important military issues facing their officers and troops on the battlefield. It also demonstrated that elements of classical military doctrine were just as important to the future of French military development for these writers as the principles of modern combat itself.

Jean Charles, Chevalier de Folard: Merging Modern Experience and Classical Method

In terms of tactics and philosophy, Jean Charles, Chevalier de Folard established the tone of the Military Enlightenment in France. His tactical innovation, the column of attack, was the source of prolonged debate in the French military hierarchy after his first military treatise, *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre*, appeared in 1723. This was the start of a theoretical discussion that would last not just years, but decades, as proponents of the column-based *ordre profond* squared off against the supporters of the linear-based *ordre mince* on the page, in training camps, and on the battlefield. Ultimately, Folard's column, with modification, found its place as a component of a larger, more adaptable system put into place by Napoleon and his contemporaries.[98] It would take many years of refinement and the contributions of other writers to turn the column into a useful battlefield tool, but the initial discussion of this tactical innovation began with Folard, whose combination of modern warfare experience and classical study gave birth to the idea.

Folard's column would not have existed without his leveraging of classical antiquity as source of credibility for his military thoughts. Folard rekindled ideas initially put forth by Machiavelli and Montecuccoli that ancient military history had something to offer, theoretically and practically, to his present day. This referent was a basis of thought that would inspire imitation and response in other military writers in the eighteenth century.[99] By the time of

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[98] Brent Nosworthy, The Anatomy of Victory: Battle Tactics 1689-1763 (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1992), 339.

[99] Toby McLeod, "Folard, Jean-Charles, Chevalier de," in Philosophers of War: The Evolution of History's Greatest Military Thinkers, ed. Daniel Coetzee and Lee W. Eysturlid, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 274.

Folard's writing, the practice of reviving ancient ideas for modern use was already a common practice in other areas of European life. When combined with the overall Enlightenment spirit of taking reasoned approaches to solving problems, the column appeared to be a tactical system backed with not only the certainty of ancient methods and geometry, but also Cartesian and Aristotelian principles of science and universality, respectively.[100] As Toby McLeod suggests, Folard's "principle merit probably resides in the fact that he gave soldiers of his time a *dialectique du métier* - a spirit of professional debate."[101] Regardless of military applicability, no activity could be more aligned with the ideals of the Enlightenment than informed intellectual exchange – a practice at the heart of Folard's career as a practitioner of warfare. Perhaps it is fitting then, that one of the most appropriate portrayals of Folard, artistically speaking, was a portrait of him as a teacher in Antoine Louis François Sergent's (1751-1847) work, *Portraits of Great Men, Illustrious Women, and Memorable Subjects*, published between 1786 and 1792, 34 years after the death of Folard (see Figure 2). The color engraving, intended for popular consumption, is titled *Folard Gives Lessons to Count de Saxe*, and it shows Folard and Maurice de Saxe engaged in a mentor/mentee relationship, with Folard as the instructor. Christy Pichichero describes this engraving as a celebration of the humanist and humane activities of military figures in eighteenth-century France.[102] It also demonstrates that more three decades after his death, Folard was still considered an illustrious figure in French history. The artist depicted Folard instructing France's most prominent military hero of the mid-eighteenth century, Maurice de Saxe, demonstrating a level of respect for Folard's ideas long after his death.

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[100] Gat, *A History of Military Thought*, 30-31.

[101] McLeod, "Folard, Jean-Charles, Chevalier De," in *Philosophers of War*, 274.

[102] Pichichero, *The Military Enlightenment*, 51.

Figure 2

Sergent took extra care to portray Folard as a mentor to a popular French hero, Maurice de Saxe.[103]

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[103] Antoine Louis François Sergent, "Folard donnant des leçons au Cte. de Saxe," in *Portraits of Great Men, Illustrious Women, and Memorable Subjects* (Paris, 1786). Charles de Coynart, *Le Chevalier de Folard* (1669-1752) (Paris: Librairie Hatchette, 1914), 20.

In the text accompanying the portrait of Folard as a tutor, there is a short biography in which Sergent declared that Folard's "genius was developed by reading *Caesar's Commentaries*," which was Folard's favorite book as a young man.[104] Sergent continued: "The Chevalier Folard demonstrated his new discoveries in his *Commentaries on Polybius*, a work that deserves the title of the modern Vegetius."[105] This was quite a revealing statement for Sergent to make in a non-scholarly picture book. By associating Folard with Vegetius, the most prominent ancient Roman military manual writer, Sergent puts Folard's work of military theory at the same level of respect as a Roman work that had been highly regarded in military circles for centuries. He also included a reference to Vegetius without further explanation in his text. This implied that Sergent expected his audience of everyday French readers to understand fully who Vegetius was on name alone. This is evidence of the persistent presence of classical names and references in the daily life of Europeans in the eighteenth century. Sergent also noted that Folard formed a "system of columns" as a distinguishing feature of his career. This easily overlooked note about Folard's work indicated that Folard was still associated with his signature tactical innovation, even after the debate over its practicality had been largely resolved.[106]

Certainly, this sort of renown had its root in the lasting credibility of Folard's writing and reputation, cultivated both on the battlefield and in the realm of scholarship. Folard was a veteran of both types of activity from a young age. Described as a "natural" for both reading and the study of war as early as age six, Folard grew up in Avignon and found the inspiration for his

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[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

military career as a teenage student at a Jesuit college. There, he won a copy of Caesar's *Commentaries* as a prize for his studies. The book "decided his inclination" toward a career of military service.[107] It also occupied his late nights so much that Folard's father intervened and took away his available reading light. The younger Folard stole candles from the college sacristy to provide enough illumination to continue his habit.[108] At the age of sixteen, Folard made an ill-fated attempt to join the army with a cousin as co-conspirator. His father discovered the plot and managed to keep the younger Folard from joining a regiment for another two years. Anecdotes such as these border on the unbelievable, but Charles Coynart wove them into Folard's life story as a way to communicate that reading and study helped define Folard's military experience from its very earliest days.

Folard's fifty-year career as a soldier and officer began with the Nine Years' War (1688-1697), continued through the War of Spanish Succession (1702-1714) and ended after a brief stint in the service of Charles XII in the Great Northern War (1700-1721). He was described in a 1704 letter to the Minister of War by Philippe, Grand Prior of the Order of Malta as an "inventive" officer whose ideas did not always succeed. However, being "very clever and highly active," Folard should be "put to good use" when the King calls for him.[109] There was no doubt of Folard's bravery. The future inventor of the modern column of attack was involved in the thick of combat on multiple occasions and was said to have conceived the idea of the column

[107] Coynart, *Le Chevalier de Folard*), 20.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid., 35.

while recovering from serious hand and abdominal wounds following the 1705 Battle of Cassano.[110]

Folard described the climax of this battle, which featured a close-ranged barrage of fire at "six pikes' lengths" as "one of the most furious engagements ever witnessed."[111] As the French and Imperial armies discharged their muskets over and over at each other with the space of only a few dozen yards between them, Folard reported that the French "We were not [the kind of] people to yield to our enemies in valor and audacity, nor in good conduct."[112] But the type of fighting here, in which Folard lost a finger, and had his hand "shattered," was not the sort of combat that Folard thought should have occurred. After years of reflection, Folard wrote that the French should have fixed bayonets and charged. Had they done so, "we would have lost far fewer troops and none of the (enemy) army would have escaped."[113] Instead, the French suffered more than 3,000 killed or wounded, and the Imperial army at least 4,500. Folard wrote that Louis Joseph, duc de Vendôme, who commanded the French that day, agreed with him a few months afterward that there would have been less trouble at Cassano if "the soldiers had been ordered to [attack the enemy] with bayonets at the end of their muskets. This was the only effective means of getting the better of them."[114]

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[110] Ibid., 69.

[111] Polybius and Jean-Charles Folard Chevalier de, *Histoire de Polybe*, trans. Vincent Thuillier, 6 vols. (Paris: Chez Pierre Gandouin, 1727, vol 3, p.331.

[112] Ibid., 332.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., 335.

It is not surprising that such a traumatic experience would leave an impression on Folard and motivate him to propose solutions for the French army. As his later writings indicated, Folard believed that a more effective system of battlefield tactics would not only ensure victory for the French, but also save French lives. This point was further emphasized by Folard's experience as a witness to the Battle of Malplaquet in 1709, where the English John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722) inflicted a Pyrrhic victory on a defensively-focused French army commanded by Marshal Claude Louis Hector de Villars (1653-1734). Folard was once again wounded in this battle, and he did not hold back in his criticism of France's leadership at Malplaquet, calling the whole affair a "joke" in his commentary in *Histoire de Polybe*.[115] In this battle, Villars correctly predicted that Marlborough would use his signature tactic against the French: attack the flanks of the French army, draw French forces away from the center to support the flanks, then overwhelm the reduced middle of the French lines with infantry and cavalry charges. To counter this, Villars fortified both flanks and constructed redoubts in the center, to withstand Marlborough and the Allies' provocations.[116] Although wounded in the battle himself, Villars managed to keep the French army defensively viable against a numerically superior enemy and inflicted heavy losses on Marlborough and his Allies. The French retreated with the majority of their army intact and preserved their prospects for a favorable continuation in the overall War of Spanish Succession.[117] The battle was the bloodiest of Louis XIV's reign, with 11,000 French either killed or wounded and 21,000 Allies fallen or wounded on the

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[115] Ibid., 297.

[116] John A. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV*, 1667-1714, Modern Wars in Perspective (London: Longman, 1999), 331-335.

[117] Ibid., 335.

battlefield.[118] While Louis XIV, Villars, and some historians viewed the French defeat at Malplaquet as a loss that potentially "saved France," it also preserved the tactical idea that the French "need not destroy the enemy, but only make it impossible to destroy them."[119]

This sort of idea infuriated Folard, who insisted that a better alignment of forces and a more offensively oriented approach to battle would have not only better suited the character of the French soldier, but also would have resulted in a rout of Marlborough and the Allies at Malplaquet. Folard considered Villars's tactics at this bloodiest of battles a failure and strove to improve French tactics moving forward.[120] One of his chief criticisms of Villars was his drawing up of French forces at only four ranks deep at Malplaquet, insisting that a deeper order would have allowed the French to maneuver more effectively.[121] By using shallower formations, Villars apparently focused on leveraging French firepower to deter the Allies' advance. Folard used strong critical language to attack this decision, writing that the enemy forces were better trained for this sort of tactic than the French, and that fighting in this way betrayed the French national character:

> This miserable way of fighting, so esteemed by the ignorant, and our thin battalions, are among the most foolish, ineffective, and certain ways to be defeated by those who cannot sustain the ardor and the violence of the shock of our nation, and from which all their strength is in shooting. Today one must fight in four ranks, as if this practice was very old. To know the disadvantages of this, one must examine whether those who are responsible for it are more skillful and more enlightened than our ancestors. Without a doubt my answer is no. The meager successes of the last war show the opposite with regard to those who have succeeded them [the ancestors]. We must therefore return to the ancient method of

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[118] Ibid., 334.

[119] Ibid., 335.

[120] McLeod, "Folard, Jean-Charles, Chevalier De," in *Philosophers of War*, 272.

[121] Ibid.

> fighting, and line up six deep, although there is something better to do [aka Folard's column]. Everything I have just said regarding custom serves to persuade us that [this ancient method's] influence is hardly less powerful today than it was in the days of most crass ignorance.[122]

Folard, not mincing words, continued, directly stating that commanders who did not understand this concept were unfit to lead.

> Nothing shows true courage less than fighting from a distance, without daring to join the bayonet at the end of the rifle. Those who defend this insane way of fighting, unknown thirty years ago, are hardly worthy of being at the head of a French army because it deceives our soldiers and our officers into accepting this: it absolutely destroys their courage.[123]

Clearly, Folard believed that courage and fighting spirit were crucial elements of an effective, traditional French tactical style that was aligned with its ancestry and also ancient methods of war. Had the French embraced this way of fighting at Malplaquet, instead of remaining "bored behind their entrenchments," as Folard wrote, the French army would have "seized a splendid opportunity" to put their valor into action.[124] This would have resulted, according to Folard, in the "decimation" and complete shattering of Marlborough's Allied army, instead of a result in which the French were left looking for ways to turn the loss of 11,000 men and a battlefield retreat into a glorious victory.[125]

Folard's rant about Malplaquet, first published many years after the fact in volume 3 of *Histoire de Polybe* (1728) displays a level of personal frustration and dissatisfaction with the

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[122] Polybius and Jean-Charles Folard Chevalier de, *Histoire de Polybe*, vol. 3, 297.

[123] Ibid., 298.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

French army that had been brewing within Folard for nearly two decades. On the one hand, Folard was recognized for his command potential and his ability as an officer. For example, he was awarded the Cross of St. Louis for exceptional merit, and he was appointed commander of the garrison of Bourbourg in 1711.[126] On the other, as his commentary in *Histoire de Polybe* reveals, he was often placed at the mercy of French generals who refused to fight in the way that he preferred, and he personally suffered trauma as a result.

We might compare this experience to his later short service with Charles XII in the Great Northern War. The Swedish king was a man whose chief virtue, courage, defined his perception for an entire century, and caused others to reconsider their own definitions of courage itself.[127] Folard wrote glowingly of Charles, and happily overlooked the king's faults on the battlefield because he relied on a virtue admired by Folard. The hypocrisy demonstrated by Folard is hardly surprising as a result. In Folard's evaluation of his superior officers at Malplaquet (Villars) and Poltava (Charles XII), he labeled one general ignorant (Villars) and the other heroic (Charles), even though both lost to numerically superior forces. The difference was that Folard believed one commander denied his men an opportunity to display their courage while the other deftly balanced battlefield conduct and valor in a way that shamed Alexander the Great himself.[128] It is evident that Folard's later theories on war were shaped by his personal experiences as an officer in the French army, where he saw a desperate need for improvement, and the Swedish army,

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[126] Sergent, "Folard donnant des leçons au Cte. de Saxe," and Coynart, *Le Chevalier de Folard*, 146.

[127] See Chapter 1.

[128] Folard, *Histoire de Polybe*, (Amsterdam, 1730), vol. 4, 132.

where he directly felt inspiration from one of the boldest commanders in modern European history.

Folard earned his final rank of colonel after his service in the War of the Quadruple Alliance. He retired an officer, not a general or a marshal of France.[129] He described himself as a man without fortune, which matters in the context of enlightenment. The very nature of enlightenment dictates that the individual is responsible for developing his own ideas. Though Folard was somewhat cynical about whether his tactical system would be taken seriously because of his social status, he forged ahead anyhow, believing that his system was rooted in wisdom, good sense, and rigorous scholarship of the ancient world.[130] In fact, Folard wrote that scholarship was more important to the development of military method than experience, noting that it was a "mistake to imagine that war is learned by routine. It is a science more speculative than experimental." Experience, Folard wrote, perfected great captains, but science, added the enlightened warrior, formed them.[131]

It may sound surprising that Folard, who had experienced so much of what it meant to be a soldier and officer in the early eighteenth century would place the experience of war in a secondary position to scholarship on war. Perhaps this says more about Folard's view of the potential of scholarship than any sort of denial of the first-hand lessons of battle, which also seem to have informed his views considerably as well. It could have been that Folard was just the right person to blend the two types of experience together. His embrace of scholarly literature

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[129] Coynart, *Chevalier de Folard*, 199.

[130] Jean-Charles, Chevalier de Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre, dans une dissertation sur Polybe* (Paris: Josse et Labottiere, 1726), xvi.

[131] Ibid., 11.

might also have played a role in the longevity and credibility of his theories, despite his own fears about their reception. If there was one key characteristic to Folard's military theory, it was that it inspired prolonged debate. Folard's tactical theory was based on methods from the ancient world, and as such, could not be easily dismissed due to its credibility. In the age of the Enlightenment, it was a reasonable position to assume that if a technique worked in the past, it could again. It was also reasonable to think that one's own observations about war could produce viable solutions to problems encountered in that experience. Folard possessed deep exposure to both types of reasoning, and it can be assumed that his readers understood that from his writing.

Folard's theory emerged as a bridge between the military and scholarly worlds, and he used material from ancient texts previously understood only by specialist scholars.[132] His research ability and the distribution of his ideas were, without a doubt, impressive. His two major works, *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre* (1723), and his commentaries within *Histoire de Polybe* (1727-1730), reveal an extraordinarily well-read mind on par with professional ancient scholars. Aside from Polybius, Folard cited Caesar, Xenophon, Tacitus, Livy, Vegetius, Plutarch, Thucydides, Arrian, Diodorus Siculus, Aelian, and other ancient sources in his works. This reflected a lifetime commitment to reading ancient sources and histories while simultaneously pursuing a competitive and dangerous life as a battlefield military officer.

That sounds like a unique combination of pursuits, but there would many figures like Folard across Europe in the eighteenth century, who enhanced their military writings with ancient knowledge. Publishing in the 1720's, Folard was simply continuing a trend among military figures in the Western world that seemed like something new in the eighteenth century, especially to readers looking backward from the twenty-first century. Some of the finest works

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[132] McLeod, "Folard, Jean-Charles, Chevalier De," in *Philosophers of War*, 274.

of history and literature from the ancient world were created by military figures - Xenophon, Thucydides, Caesar, Tacitus, Arrian, Vegetius, and others. Folard imitated these soldiers and leaders from the past not just by reviving their ideas and methods, but also by imitating their lives. The fact that he was not the only military figure of the eighteenth century to do this demonstrates either a continuation or revival of an enduring tradition that audiences of that time would have understood. Sergent's reference to Folard's work as the "modern Vegetius" stands as evidence of that.

For readers enthusiastic about the ancient world, Folard's *Histoire de Polybe* held significant and lasting appeal. This is an enormous work of more than 3,600 pages. Beyond that, there are 114 detailed illustrations of ancient and modern military references scattered throughout the first four volumes of the work alone. It features Folard's commentaries on the attack and defense of ancient places, a dissertation on siege mining, a dissertation on the politics and conduct of the Romans during the Second Punic War, and most importantly, the entirety of his earlier treatise, *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre*, in which his column formation was introduced. Placing his treatise on the column within the six-volume edition of *Histoire de Polybe* was an interesting move by Folard and his publishers that demonstrated the faith that the printing houses had in the marketability of both Polybius and Folard. This was an expensive set of books, and it was not published all at once. Folard's printers churned out volumes one and two in 1727, volumes three and four in 1728, volume 5 in 1729, and volume 6 in 1730. Judging from the 60-year publication record of Folard's two major works, the European public was ready to buy. Folard's treatise on the column, *Nouvelles découvertes*, was printed eight times in French –

in Paris and Brussels – between 1723 and 1759. The larger *Histoire de Polybe* was published 13 times in French and German between 1727 and 1783.[133]

Folard's ideas on the column enjoyed a long shelf-life in the French military community. When discussing the influence of classical antiquity on military theory and practice in the eighteenth century, we should not overlook the fact the general public's apparent enthusiasm for classical works assisted in the propagation of certain ideas, like Folard's column. One should also not overlook that a person as rational and well-read as Folard might have understood this concept and even planned on it.

Folard was not an unconvincing writer, and his use of classical principles in creating the column of attack provided his idea with a credible source. Folard's column was a response to what he thought was a stagnation of military methods that he experienced himself in the field. His introduction of the attack column was a proposal for a fundamental change in French battlefield tactics and a direct response to France's frustrating performance in the War of Spanish Succession, from 1701-1714.[134] Early in *Nouvelles découvertes*, Folard stressed the importance of not opposing an enemy in the field with a distribution and arrangement similar to one's own, recognizing Epaminondas, Scipio, Hannibal, Henry IV and Turenne as ancient and modern exemplars of this philosophy.[135] Thus, the column of attack was Folard's attempt to introduce something different to the French military, an infantry formation that was not long, thin, and reliant on firepower, but instead short across the front, deep in ranks, and built to deliver a shocking mass of combatants into the middle of an enemy line.

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[133] Verified via WorldCat.

[134] Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 26.

[135] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 21.

Folard clearly believed that hand-to-hand was the proper style of fighting for French soldiers and armies. He flatly criticized Villars for failing to rely on close combat at Malplaquet and also made his preference for hand-to-hand fighting clear in his assessment of the Battle of Cassano, where he was severely wounded. Folard believed the French national character was predisposed to fighting with cold steel, and his column was designed specifically to harness that cultural trait, which would further distinguish his battlefield innovation as something uniquely French and completely different from the battlefield arrangements of Prussia, the Holy Roman Empire, or any of France's other likely potential future enemies.[136] Leveraging this alleged national trait, which was believed by Folard to be a unique, unmatchable characteristic of French culture, was essential to the success of his column of attack. It was also essential to the longevity of Folard's column as a tactical idea, as it lent an air of romance to battle that was attractive to the French nobility in particular, and difficult to resist for a culture traditionally enamored with élan and offensive warfare.[137] Folard himself seemed quite convinced that armies should play to the strength of their national character, and asserted that this idea was also a core belief of one of the greatest of all ancient generals. He explained:

> … all I dare to assure is that the inclination, the mood, the genius of a nation must regulate not only the way of fighting, and the nature of the weapons; but also order and disposition in combat. This is what the (modern) generals do not seem to pay much attention to: I could perhaps be wrong, but I noticed in the war of 1701 that we had changed a lot in our way of waging war in relation to the genius of the nation, without it appearing to me that we were different [in terms of genius] in this war than we had been in the previous ones. However, it is certain that we must consider the genius of the troops, independently of military discipline, no

[136] Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte Guibert and Jonathan Abel, *Guibert's General Essay on Tactics*, History of Warfare, volume 137 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2022), xvi.

[137] Ibid., xx, xxii.

> less than the mood and the capacity of the general that we have in mind:
> this was the great principle of Hannibal, as I say.[138]

Here, Folard proposed a course of action for addressing a problem that he witnessed firsthand. We also see him referencing classical antiquity for a precedent that aligned with his idea that battlefield tactics should reflect the character of the troops involved. This concept, according to Folard's quote, took precedence over the general's talent and disposition, and had demonstrated its truth in antiquity, and stood independent from the idea of military discipline itself.

The essential theoretical motive, then, for Folard's column of attack was to present a tactical method that was unlike anything that could be put into use by France's rivals, and to direct France's innate fighting spirit into an effective form of fighting more aligned with its tendencies and values. These twin ideas, according to Folard, also aligned with the tactical wisdom of legendary ancient commanders – Epaminondas, Scipio, and Hannibal. And as Folard demonstrated throughout *Nouvelles découvertes*, the actual mechanics of the column were a spiritual continuation and a tactical refinement of ancient practice. To Folard, this was not a revival of tactics, but rather an attempt by a modern practitioner of war to "push research further in this important part of the science of arms, and to think beyond what they [the ancients] thought."[139]

Folard asserted there was "more profit in the reading of the historians of antiquity than in that of our modern," and he devoted entire chapters of his works to analyzing what he believed to be the most effective examples of ancient columnar combat – Epaminondas's heroic victories at

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[138] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 73.

[139] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, xxxix-xl.

Leuctra (371 BCE) and Mantinea (362 BCE).[140] Folard attributed the Theban victory at Leuctra to Epaminondas's use of a column in an oblique maneuver against the Spartans, and the way in which the Thebans penetrated the center of the Spartan line with a column of attack at Mantinea inspired him.[141] Some have suggested flaws in Folard's analysis here, but it is easy to see where Folard drew his inspiration.[142] Xenophon clearly described the left of Epaminondas's Theban formation at Leuctra as "50 shields deep" versus a depth of 12 for the Spartans at Leuctra. At Mantinea, Xenophon describes the middle of the Spartan line as only six deep while Epaminondas's men formed a "strong column" of infantry and cavalry against them.[143]

With an ancient foundation established for ideas on modern warfare, Folard laid out his plans for the reader, making it clear he should not be viewed as a person with an unreasonable prejudice for antiquity. "I do not admire it in everything," he wrote, "but only in things where it seems to me that it would be blindness to reject it."[144] According to Folard, the simplicity of the Greek phalanx made it the perfect model for modification on the modern battlefield, instead of the Roman system of warfare. The Roman legion required a sophistication of generalship that the modern French army did not possess, Folard suggested, and modern troops were less disciplined and practiced than the Romans as well.[145] In addition, Folard observed that the Roman "checkerboard" arrangement of troops, often imitated on the modern battlefield, resulted in the

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[140] Ibid. 146, 215.

[141] Ibid., 225-238.

[142] Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 27.

[143] Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 6.12, 7.24.

[144] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 39.

[145] Ibid., 42.

first line doing all the fighting, with the second line standing idly by in reserve – in case the first line failed. According to Folard, the second line often only fought when necessary, and often, not for very long due to the overall poor discipline of the troops.[146] As Folard saw it, the French would be better off fighting in a single line of tightly compacted troops that took advantage of the "violent and impetuous humor" of the French.[147] The Macedonian double phalanx, then, was the appropriate model for Folard.[148] "It is what Polybius says of the Macedonian phalanx, in particular the double, that I owe the discovery of the column, and the way of fighting and forming in this order," Folard wrote.[149]

Tactically speaking, the depth of formation was what made the phalanx of Philip and Alexander the appropriate choice for revival by Folard. He explained:

> The true strength of a (military unit) consists in its thickness and in the depth of its rows, in their union, in the pressing of the ranks. This thickness makes the sides as strong or nearly as strong as the front. By this method a battalion finds itself in a position to resist, to break up any battalion which will not fight on this principle and to move more easily than the others; whereas a body that fights on a wide front and little depth maneuvers with difficulty, and cannot avoid the wavering so ordinary (in such a unit)… in war, the thickness of the files remedies everything, and increases the force and the rapidity of the shock which achieves everything in combat.[150]

Folard advocated for a line of formations, narrow across the front, deep in its ranks, that could leverage its mass in hand-to-hand combat, akin to the block-like infantry formations of ancient

[146] Ibid., 73.

[147] Ibid., 72.

[148] Ibid. 83.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Ibid., 157.

Macedonia (see figure 3). The column's assault – and defensive – potential was the tightness of formation, according to Folard, which "pierces and resists" enemy formations "equally" and "against every kind of effort."[151] It was rigidity of the Greeks and Macedonians that inspired Folard more than the flexibility of the Romans.[152] Forming the column seems easy on the page, but one could understand the difficulty of executing it in reality, especially when one considers the lack of space each soldier was given by Folard. "The ranks and files must be so tight and condensed that the soldiers retain only as much space as they need to march and use their weapons," Folard wrote.[153] The modern column of attack proposed by Folard consisted of stacking anywhere from two to six battalions of troops behind each other to form a single, deep, continuous battlefield unit. Each of these battalions would have a depth of four or five ranks and could have a frontage of 24 to 30 soldiers.[154] A small number of grenadiers would then support the columns on either side of each formation. The actual number of soldiers arranged into column would vary "according to the situation of the country where one finds oneself obliged to act and fight," according to Folard.[155] The primary duty of a column like this was to charge an enemy battalion (which would only be arranged in three to five ranks) and use its mass to penetrate its line. With the formation broken, the column would then split itself down the middle, turn to the right and left, and roll up what remained of the enemy line to each side (see Figure

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[151] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 162.

[152] Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 26.

[153] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 162.

[154] Ibid., 163 and McLeod, "Folard, Jean-Charles, Chevalier de," in *Philosophers of War*, 272-73.

[155] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 163.

4).[156] For an allegedly simple formation, one can see where prolonged training and drill would be necessary to execute such a maneuver under fire. But Folard was supremely confident in his columns' ability to adapt to rough terrain, move quickly, adapt, and even change formation if necessary.[157] He wrote:

> The column formed according to my principles is quicker and more disposed to all kinds of maneuvers, it can perform them while preserving itself whole and in sections: it breaks and recovers in an instant, is divided from head to tail and is doubled according to occurrences, by rapid and sudden movements in the action itself.
>
> All terrain is specific to it. It defiles and forms by a single command, without the movements it makes being able to give the enemy the time and the opportunity to charge it. So great is the speed of its maneuvers, led the corps which compose it. They can attack and defend themselves independently of each other, and by themselves.
>
> Finally. the column has more action and more force in its shock than any provision which was invented. It has the solidity and the impulsion of the double phalanx of which Polybius speaks, without having its weakness. [158]

The confidence with which Folard wrote was secured by the knowledge that his theory was backed by both a successful model from ancient history, and his own experience in battle. So certain was Folard in historical precedent that he even proposed a revival of the pike in his formation, which had been so successful for Alexander many centuries before.

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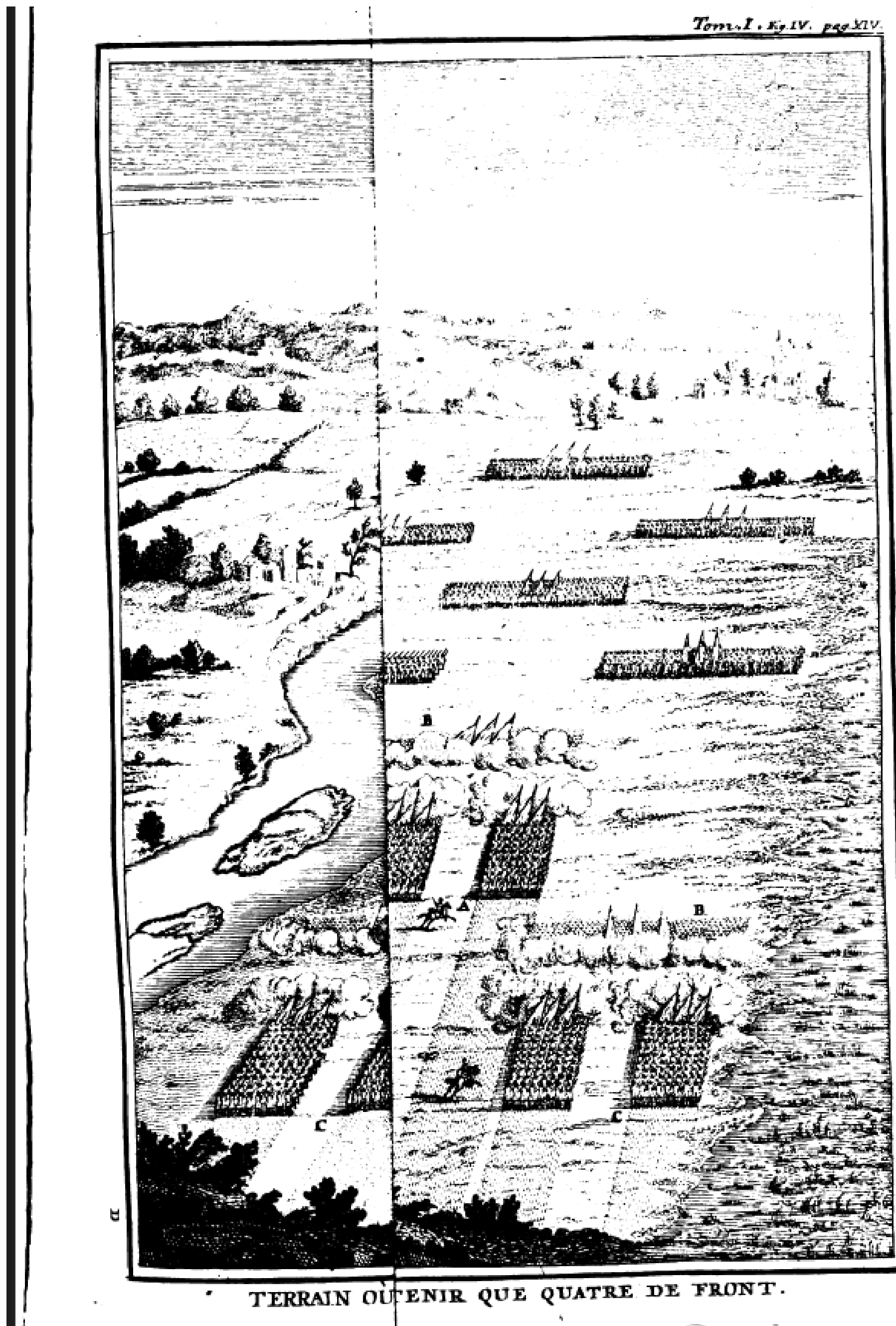
[156] Polybius and Jean-Charles Folard Chevalier de, *Histoire de Polybe*, trans. Vincent Thuillier, 6 vols. (Paris: Chez Pierre Gandouin, 1727), vol. 1, xiv.

[157] Nosworthy, *The Anatomy of Victory*, 149.

[158] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 199.

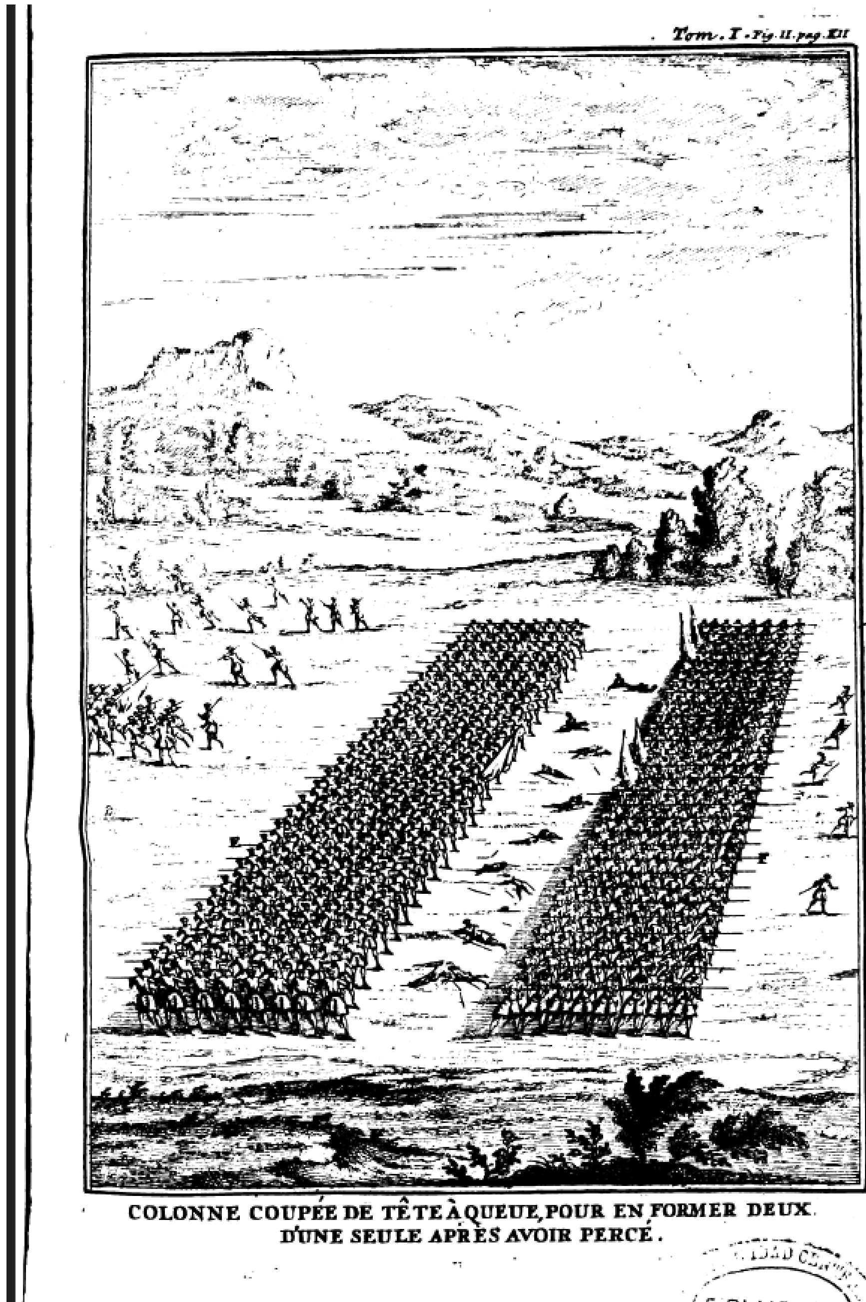
Figure 3



Folard's columns (bottom) were narrow across the front and deep in rank.[159]

[159] Jean-Charles Folard Chevalier de, "Traite de La Colonne," in *Histoire de Polybe*, trans. Vincent Thuillier, vol. 1, 6 vols. (Paris: Chez Pierre Gandouin, 1727), xiv, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008396758.

Figure 4



Folard's columns could split vertically down the center to attack right and left, simultaneously.[160]

[160] Ibid., xii.

The incorporation of pikes demonstrates that Folard's theoretical column attempted to be all things at once. In a component battalion of Folard's column, 20% of the infantry would be armed with pikes, alternating with every two fusiliers in the first rank of each section, and in the first two rows of the elongated sides of the formation.[161] He referred to this alternation as "perfect," in the way in which the two infantry types supported each other, allowing, in theory, for simultaneous defense and offense. Folard viewed these mixed arms as an improvement on the Greek/Macedonian model, in which the uniformity of their weaponry in formation was a weakness.[162] As the alternation of bayonetted fusiliers and pikemen ran the entire length of Folard's column, the flanks of the elongated formation would then be transformed from the traditional weakness of an infantry unit into the strength of his formation. Folard even bristled at the idea of referring to the sides of the column as "flanks," preferring the term "faces" instead, since they were six battalions deep and faced outward as easily as forward. "I call the wings of the ranks or the flanks, 'faces,' because by the term 'flank' we mean the weak sides of a battalion or a squadron, instead… there is nothing weak in a body like the column," Folard wrote.[163] The flanks of Folard's column, bristling with spontoons, halberds, pikes, and bayonets, were designed to intimidate enemy cavalry and infantry, and with so many muskets along the "faces" of the column, Folard predicted the firepower of the column would also cut down any threat that dared approach the column from one side or the other.[164]

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[161] Ibid., 256.

[162] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 26.

[163] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 169.

[164] Ibid., 199.

It would be fair to say that Folard underestimated the firepower of his potential enemies, or outright ignored innovations in ranged warfare, when he designed his signature formation.[165] After all, neither Alexander nor Epaminondas nor Polybius could have foreseen the effects of infantry fire or artillery in the gunpowder age. This was also the same mistake Machiavelli made in his own *Art of War* near the end of the sixteenth century, trusting the *virtu* of his troops over the devasting power of cannons. But it would also be inaccurate to say that Folard disregarded firepower altogether. Folard's column of attack did indeed incorporate gunpowder in its attack, although in an unusual way. Folard believed his column could triple the firepower of standard formations by firing from the sides of the column, or as he called it, the "faces" of the column. Together, these massive column formations were designed not only to assault, but to also deliver fire against enemy linear formations like the broadsides of ships-of-the-line.[166] When put into a situation where fire was necessary, individual columns in battlefield array would fire obliquely, and work in concert to interlock their fields of fire.[167] Instead of firing by rank, as the French army did, Folard suggested rolling platoon fire across the faces of these formations, thereby keeping the intensity of fire at a consistent level.[168] But make no mistake: Folard's intent was never to turn the column into a fire-based formation. Gunfire was to either defend the column from being flanked, or to assist the central goal of engaging the enemy directly in close combat, as "the ancients know better than we do; as their maxim was to come to blows first, which is the

[165] Nosworthy, *Anatomy of Victory*, 151.
[166] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 166-169.

[167] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 32.

[168] Nosworthy, *Anatomy of Victory*, 151.

secret to victory…" Folard wrote.[169] The notion that Folard placed firepower in a secondary position to melee combat is supported by his idea of alternating pikes and similar pole weapons in the hands of soldiers across the line. Clearly, if Folard valued firepower enough, he would have been satisfied with every soldier using a musket with a bayonet. Instead, he sacrificed firepower by replacing some muskets/bayonets with pikes that would have been useless at range.[170]

Folard's system of fire reveals that one should not think of the column as acting alone as a single entity on the battlefield. Columns were to act in concert as part of an order of battle in conjunction with battalions, according to Folard, interlocking fire, and supporting – while receiving support from – cavalry. Thus, in massed formation, Folard's ideas were further supported by classical antiquity. Folard advocated the mixture of cavalry and infantry units on the battlefield to support each other to seventeenth-century Imperial general Raimondo Montecuccoli, who attributed that idea to Caesar in his own writings.[171] With this idea, Folard hoped to reverse a trend in modern warfare in which the loser of the opening cavalry clash on the wings of the battlefield subsequently found their infantry flanked and defeated as well. By de-emphasizing the action on the wings by mixing cavalry and infantry in the center, Folard's column theoretically placed the key action in the middle of the battlefield, where Folard wanted to fight.[172] By placing cavalry and infantry "side by side," Folard's system allowed combat support between troop types in a reciprocal manner. This also extended to the area of morale in

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[169] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 205.
[170] Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 34.

[171] Ibid., and Montecuccoli, "Sulle Battaglie," in *The Military Intellectual and Battle*, 118.

[172] Nosworthy, *Anatomy of Victory*, 144, 150.

the army. “There is nothing that encourages cavalry more than when they see themselves supported by the infantry” and vice-versa, Folard wrote.[173]

Though the Chevalier believed his column to be “virtually impossible” to break under attack due to its mass, weaponry, flexibility, speed, and alignment with the national character of France, practically speaking, Folard’s column just did not work, and his critics were many. Even the most casual observer could see that there was no practical reason to arm a soldier with a pike instead of a bayonet-equipped musket in the mid-eighteenth century. In addition, as his friend Maurice de Saxe pointed out, the space requirement for each soldier in the formation made it difficult to leverage their collective mass on an infantry charge. The column of attack’s main purpose, a catastrophic charge, cannot occur as a result.[174] For the same reason, as de Saxe continued, the column cannot “move with ease,” either.[175] Also, Folard’s fire tactics, which required firing in a different direction from marching, would not be feasible in the field and would likely lead to mass casualties from friendly fire.[176] Further compounding the problems with the column was the idea that cavalry could not receive a charge in support of the infantry, and the infantry would have trouble keeping pace with the cavalry.[177]

Robert Quimby cites two officers critical of Folard, a Colonel Terson, who was a French officer in Dutch service, and a Swiss General Savornin, also in Dutch service, who both attacked

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[173] Folard, *Nouvelles découvertes*, 345.

[174] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries, or Memoirs upon the Art of War* (London: J. Nourse, 1757), 67.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 33.

[177] Ibid., 38.

Folard for his lack of concern about his formation being flanked. Both officers had their critiques published in a 1774 edition of *Histoire de Polybe* printed in Amsterdam, but Savornin also chided Folard anonymously in 1732 as a work titled, *Lettre d'un officier au service des Etats Généraux sur le Polybe, de M. le Chevalier de Folard* by "Monsieur D."[178] Terson pointed out the hypocrisy of Folard criticizing generals who allowed themselves to be outflanked, while giving little concern to the likelihood that own column would suffer the same fate.[179] Savornin commented that he wrote his critique as a series of letters to arouse the curiosity of his fellow officers about *Histoire de Polybe* and to assist in their judgment of it.[180] His chief criticism was that Folard's column suffered from the same weakness as the Macedonian phalanx it was based upon. Citing Polybius, Savornin pointed out that the phalanx was unbeatable in terrain that suited it, but as the Romans showed, it was easily outflanked and surrounded otherwise.[181] Savornin also had little use for Folard's pikes, noting their "cumbersome" nature and its "essentially useless" properties when confronted with an enemy keeping its distance with gunpowder weapons.[182] In addition to its value as a critical response to Folard's column, Savornin's *Sentimens* is also a fine example of the conversation that developed in military circles around Folard's treatise.

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178 Ibid., 39, n.347.

179 Ibid., 39.

180 Savornin. *Sentimens d'un homme de guerre sur le nouveau système du Chevalier de Folard, par rapport à la colonne et au Mélange des différentes armes d'une armée* ... par M. D***. La Haye: Jean Van Duren, 1732, preface.

181 Ibid.

182 Ibid., 10.

Sometimes, that conversation even drew royal attention. “He buried diamonds in a dung heap.” That was how Frederick II of Prussia described Folard’s masterwork, *Histoire de Polybe*.[183] Sensing the need for an edited version of Folard’s six-volume set, Frederick anonymously published a summary of the thoughts he deemed necessary in *L’esprit du Chevalier Folard* (1753), a year after the Chevalier’s death, and 26 years after the first volume of *Histoire de Polybe* appeared. Interestingly, Frederick’s collection of Folard’s most useful thoughts include many of the Chevalier’s memories of battles like Cassano and Malplaquet, and commentaries on ancient history, but no information on the column at all. “We have taken out the system of columns: we have retained only the war maneuvers of which he gives a fair description; the wise criticism he uses on the conduct of some French generals; certain rules of tactics, examples of singular and ingenious defenses, and some projects which provide material for reflections more useful than these projects themselves,” he wrote, utterly dismissing Folard’s main idea.[184] But Frederick also write that Folard should not be “criticized for having created a particular system of war,” rather he should be praised for the source material he provided for his edit.[185] Never one to pass up an opportunity to insult all of literature, Frederick then commented:

> In the great number of books that are written, there are very few that are all gold; there are few from which we could draw as many good things as from this commentary on Polybius. It would be to be hoped; for the progress of human knowledge, that instead of writing, without making new books, we instead apply ourselves to making good extracts of those we already have; we could then hope not to waste our time unnecessarily by reading. We flatter ourselves that soldiers

[183] Frederick II of Prussia and Jean-Charles de Folard, *L’esprit du Chevalier Folard, tiré de ses “Commentaires sur l’histoire de Polybe”, pour l’usage d’un officier, de main de maître / (par Frédéric II, Roi de Prusse)* (Leipzig, 1761), v.
[184] Ibid.

[185] Ibid., vi.

> will be grateful to us for having spared them the reading of the six volumes, by presenting them with the quintessential essence (of Folard).[186]

Folard may not have won Frederick's respect for his ideas about the column, but Frederick was just one voice among many that would debate the value of the formation and keep the discussion of the classically inspired tactic alive until late in the eighteenth century.

The viability of Folard's column does not matter so much for a study of the influence of classical antiquity on militaries as much as the longevity of the debate surrounding it. Folard's idea for the column of attack, promoted in an attractive translation of Polybius, kicked off the greatest military theory debate of the eighteenth century, the argument between supporters of the *ordre profond*, and the proponents of the *ordre mince*. Folard's alignment with ancient military practice contributed to the length of the debate. His assertion that the column/*ordre profond* appealed to the French national character also contributed to its longevity.[187]

Folard's ideas emerged in a time when there were few writings on tactical theory unrelated to siege warfare, and the focus on his theoretical system may have disguised the fact that the French needed more than universally applicable tactical ideas for the battlefield. They needed an aligned system of formal military theory, training, education, and organization in order to improve their battlefield performance in the early to mid-eighteenth century. This was a notion that Frederick II embraced wholeheartedly in Prussia, as he carefully aligned his theoretical, training, and tactical goals with the ideals of classical antiquity in mind. Folard, however, did not suggest a full overhaul so much as a different way to fight. Though his main tactical idea was innovative, it was flawed. As a full theoretical system for national

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[186] Ibid.
[187] Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte Guibert and Jonathan Abel, *Guibert's General Essay on Tactics*, xxii.

implementation, it did not go far enough into areas other than tactics. In addition to this, Folard had many critics – friends and foes alike – who published refutations of the column as a valid battlefield alternative. Despite this, the idea endured, and Folard became of one of the best-known military theorists of the *ancien regime*. It is difficult to identify the precise reason why the idea of the column endured, but the overall reverence for the credibility of ancient military methods was undeniable, as evidenced by Folard's disciple, Mesnil-Durand, who enthusiastically embraced both classical antiquity and Folard as the building blocks of his own tactical system, which in turn kept the idea of the column alive and prominent in minds of French military writers and leaders.

Mesnil-Durand: a Zealous Approach to Reviving Ancient Ideas

Baron François-Jean Mesnil-Durand is frequently referred to by modern historians as a disciple of Folard, and in many ways the description fits. Mesnil-Durand published his major work of tactical theory, *Projet d'un ordre françois en tactique* (1755), just three years after Folard's death, and his ideas were unabashedly derivative of the Chevalier. Like Folard, Mesnil-Durand possessed a clear affinity for reviving the successful models of classical antiquity on the modern battlefield. Also like Folard, Mesnil-Durand believed in the predominance of scholarship, as opposed to experience, in developing military theory. Both Folard and Mesnil-Durand were staunch proponents of the column of attack, as it appealed to the national character of the French. But Mesnil-Durand was, if anything, more extreme than Folard in all of these areas, and most especially in his devotion to classical antiquity.[188]

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[188] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 63.

It was Mesnil-Durand's zealotry for the classically inspired *ordre profond* that stoked the flames of military debate even higher in France following the Seven Years' War.[189] The experience of that war, which resulted in the loss of many of France's colonial territories and frustration with the performance of the French military on several continents, left the French army desperate for reform. Mesnil-Durand was one of the most fervent voices in the aftermath, pushing a columnar tactical theory that had already been made familiar to French readers by Folard's popular *Histoire de Polybe.*[190] Like Folard, Mesnil-Durand founded his claims on the conviction that that reason and classical inspiration could guide France's military future. So certain was Mesnil-Durand's confidence in theory that in *Projet d'un ordre françois en tactique* he abandoned the necessity of battlefield experience altogether. The result was a work that catapulted the *ordre profond* to the forefront of military debate by presenting something different from the prevailing methods of the Seven Years' War. Ultimately, Mesnil-Durand preserved Folard's initial concept so that it could be experimented upon and refined into a component of a valid system in the late eighteenth century.

Born an aristocrat, Mesnil-Durand hailed from Lower Normandy, and joined the French army at an early age. He served with distinction and was recognized for conspicuous courage in the War of Austrian Succession, but his career was significantly quieter during the Seven Years' War, which was spent refining his military theory. His highest rank achieved was colonel of the Navarre regiment during the 1770's and 1780's.[191] Like Folard and Puységur, Mesnil-Durand

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[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.

[191] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 62, and Jonathan Abel, *Guibert: Father of Napoleon's Grande Armée*, Campaigns and Commanders (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016),49.

demonstrated a thorough education in classical antiquity in his writings, which featured copious ancient events and anecdotes as evidence of theories he believed could reverse France's fortunes on the battlefield of the mid-eighteenth century. He even apologized to his readers for the number of references -classical and otherwise- made in his work, simply writing that his "masters" inspired him to do so:

> It is not my fault, but that of my age. It does not suit me to walk alone. I have been led by the ancients, not only because I believed, but because Folard, Puységur, and many others in whom I have faith told me they were good guides. And when I had to contradict my masters, not daring to do it myself, I borrowed their voice.[192]

While Folard was clearly the innovator Mesnil-Durand attempted to imitate, it is also notable how often Mesnil-Durand relied on classical precedents independent of Folard to illustrate his thoughts. Indeed, after Folard's death, Mesnil-Durand became the standard bearer for the column, and. continuing to invoke classical models, extended for many more decades the debates and experiments related to the *ordre profond*.

On the title page of *Projet d'un ordre françois en tactique* Mesnil-Durand asked a provocative question of his French military readership: "Do we fear getting lost in the footsteps of Hercules?"[193] With this question - and with the opening paragraph of his treatise - Mesnil-Durand signaled to his readers certain points of view that would be emphasized in his *Projet.* Of primary importance to him was convincing the French not to fear change, to embrace new systems of warfare, to trust the methods of classical antiquity, and to do so before its enemies did. Setting the stage for the commentary to follow, Mesnil-Durand compared France not only to

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[192] Mesnil-Durand, *Projet*, xxviii.

[193] Ibid., title page.

ancient Rome, but also Rome's enemies. "The Romans were among the people who most readily abandoned their old practices and took up new ones," he wrote in his opening line.[194] This was a rational cultural trait, as a progressive society should be willing to reject methods that do not work in favor of new ones with the potential to succeed. When it came to the French, however, Mesnil-Durand believed his people held on to old customs too rigidly, a national weakness that he wrote was "characteristic of our ancestors, the Gauls."[195] Not even the example of Hannibal's victories over Rome could shake the Gauls of their old customs of war, he wrote, suggesting that the French suffered from the same weakness, despite inheriting Gallic "valor and vivacity."[196] According to Mesnil-Durand, the French were frequently too slow compared to their neighbors when it came to adapting to new formations and techniques. He cited a medical parallel of Folard's to illustrate his point:

> In war, just as in medicine, as Chevalier Folard said, novelty is displeasing; one would much prefer to allow death by maladies than to cure with remedies which are not in use. Therefore, we faithfully adhere to our forefathers' methods. Occasionally we make slight changes here and there, for better or for worse, but they are always insignificant. In our country, the art of war is, as Folard said, a (sacred) field that no one would cultivate. Thus, hardly any military invention is attributed to us, which is surprising, seeing the decided taste and superior talent of the nation for war. We have not failed to improve sometimes: but we hardly had the boldness to think of it first.[197]

By couching his argument in terms of national pride and failure to live up to ancient standards admired across all levels of literate French society, Mesnil-Durand was intentionally

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[194] Ibid., ix.

[195] Ibid.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Ibid., ix-x.

provocative here. He twisted the knife further, noting that authors challenging prevailing military theory were wrongly branded as "heretics," and he reminded his French readership that they once laughed at Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707) as well, when he suggested the idea of ricochet firing, now an accepted practice. Then, he cited recent history: "… the training and discipline of the Prussians caused them to prevail in all situations against enemies superior in number, more seasoned, and also brave. I believe that there are still people (in France) who call them and their imitators puppets."[198] Here, Mesnil-Durand openly mocked those who criticized Folard's column and other theories intended to improve French military performance. His opening question, asking the French if they "feared" getting lost in the footsteps of a hero – the strongest and most manly of heroes – was a blow to the pride of the French people. If Mesnil-Durand intended to incite French military officers, writers, and thinkers, and continue the debate on the usefulness of the classically-inspired column, there was no way to accomplish this better than to question the bravery of the French, accuse them of ignoring the best practices of classical antiquity and of wasting the best traits of their ancient ancestry, and praise their neighbors -worst of all the Prussians - for their more progressive thinking on war. He did this all in the first two pages of his *Projet*, indicating to his readership right away that a more extreme work than Folard's theory was forthcoming.

The radical version of the *ordre profond* followed, with Mesnil-Durand openly advocating for a system of battle in which the French army would present itself entirely in columns, not in a mixed order as Folard advocated, which could include battalions.[199] The intent was to develop a unique French method of war unlike anything that had existed previously, but

[198] Ibid., X.

[199] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 73.

whose components were based on ancient examples and the French national character. Mesnil-Durand explained:

> It will no longer be extraordinary to use it as universally as each nation has used its own, the Greeks their Phalanx, the Romans their Cohorts, the moderns their Battalions. The Column, it will be said, will not be enough for everything, we will sometimes be obliged to leave this order. So be it. But were all the others not in the same situation? Nothing prevents (the column) from maneuvering like them, when necessary. And the difference between the Column and the other formations is that its natural order is always suitable wherever it is possible to charge and in the very rare cases where it will be obliged to develop (into firing positions), it will be done very calmly, and without fear of being disrupted by the enemy.[200]

Mesnil-Durand based his tactical theory on three concepts, all of which were foundations of Folard's theory as well. First, the formation must be solid, and dedicated to what he believed to be a simple truth: that a formation with more ranks cannot be broken by a formation with fewer ranks.[201] Second the formation must have secure flanks as an essential feature. Third, the formation must move with a "légéreté," a "lightness" or "speed" with which the formation can maintain its mass, its integrity, and transfer its force into an enemy formation.[202] Mesnil-Durand's basic building block for his system, then, was a column, similar to what Folard proposed nearly three decades before. But Mesnil-Durand made a few adjustments so that the column could maximize these properties. He called this refined column the *plésion*.[203]

Like Folard's hypothetical army, Mesnil-Durand's imaginary force arrayed its *plésions* into a single line. The reason for this, as Folard wrote, is that a second, reserve line rarely played

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[200] Mesnil-Durand, *Projet*, xxviii.

[201] Ibid., 3.

[202] Ibid., 2

[203] Ibid. 75,

enough of a role in battle to justify the resources dedicated to it. The single line, in theory, allowed a columnar army to also extend its front to match a battalion-based army. Mesnil-Durand suggested protecting his flanks by placing four plesions on his wings, with supporting cavalry.[204] Citing "the example of the Greeks and the Romans," Mesnil-Durand asserted that "the depth of the files makes the force of the infantry," and believed "the instincts of the greatest ancient and modern generals" backed that notion.[205] The primary purpose of the army, then, was to deliver that shocking force into the opposing army in hand-to-hand combat. Mesnil-Durand's *plésions* eschewed firepower almost entirely and were to rely on both the power of the infantry charge and the - allegedly - distinctly French talent for close quarters fighting.[206]

An interesting refinement in Mesnil-Durand's *plésion*s was its reliance on geometry for its organization. Mesnil-Durand was far from the first French or European commander to consider the application of geometric concepts in war. Vauban famously codified geometric principles to the attack and defense of places in the seventeenth century, for example. Folard also relied heavily on geometric principles, particularly in the manner he proposed his columns could fire on the enemy. Geometric concepts were, of course, better suited for siege warfare with its more rigid methods of combat. But Mesnil-Durand, Folard, and Puységur all thought that geometry, a legacy of Greek civilization, could be used a guiding influence in the field. This was despite the inherent chaos of formation fighting in varied terrain.

It is almost incredible that veterans of field combat like theses *faiseurs de systèmes* would embrace such a viewpoint, but this speaks to the power of rational thinking among these

[204] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 68.
[205] Mesnil-Durand, *Projet*, 11.

[206] Ibid.,104.

theorists, who had all seen geometric principles dominate siege warfare. Folard and Mesnil-Durand both trusted that geometry could overcome the frenzy of the battlefield and that imperfect human beings could behave without error in the most stressful environment imaginable. Mesnil-Durand viewed geometry as a way of overcoming the complexity and unpredictability of battle. He describes this idea as a foundational principle of his theoretical system:

> I begin by establishing a principle: it is that any well-combined movement, demonstrated geometrically, is possible, even more so with practice: because the paper is more delicate than the ground: in the field, one can assist a little in the execution, and overcome small irregularities that the compass would not forgive. We will therefore be able to make the troops execute everything we have executed on paper, especially if we find it very simple and very straightforward.[207]

Each *plésion* in Mesnil-Durand's theoretical army was composed of a series of smaller component formations, based on geometry. Instead of Folard's variable width and depth for each individual column, Mesnil-Durand set its dimensions at 24 files of 32 men each – a total of 738 men. Each *plésion* was divided vertically into two manches of 12 files of 32 men. Horizontally, the *plésion* could be divided into two sections of 24 files of sixteen men called *plésionettes*. Each *plésionettes* could then be divided into two *sections* of 24 files of eight men. Finally, each *section* could be subdivided into two *companies* of 12 files of eight men each.[208] If this sounds confusing to the reader, then the reader has encountered firsthand the difficulty of transferring perfect geometric concepts into the field. These were not the "very simple and very straightforward" principles that could easily be communicated to poorly-educated and trained French soldiers.

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[207] Ibid., 93-94.

[208] Ibid., 44-47, and Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 64-65.

This was a form of organization that trusted the scientific, reasoned, predictable approach of mathematics that proved so effective in the area of siege warfare.

The practical application of Mesnil-Durand's geometrical divisions of *plésions* was to make them flexible enough to address whatever disposition the enemy put before it. The commander could theoretically manipulate *plésions* according to any combination of *manche*, *plésionettes*, *section*, or *company* imaginable, giving the plésion unmatched flexibility over a standard column. For example, each *plésion* was capable of creating its own interlocking fields of fire in a special formation called the *faire tenaille*.[209] Though Mesnil-Durand downplayed the role of firepower on the battlefield, the plésion was capable of delivering it by setting the rear *plésionette* of a *plésion* in place and dividing the remaining three *plésionettes* into two *manches*. These two *manches* would then set themselves at 45-degree angles to the front-facing corners of the *plésionette*, and open the formation to start firing its guns (see figure 5).[210] This seems on the surface to be a confusing formation for all involved, but when one considers the faith that eighteenth-century commanders placed in geometry, reason, and concepts that originated in classical antiquity, it becomes understandable how someone like Mesnil-Durand could conceive of such a battlefield maneuver. To Mesnil-Durand this was not confusing at all. This was how order was established out of chaos on the battlefield – by using credible methods that had a track record of success in similar areas of life.

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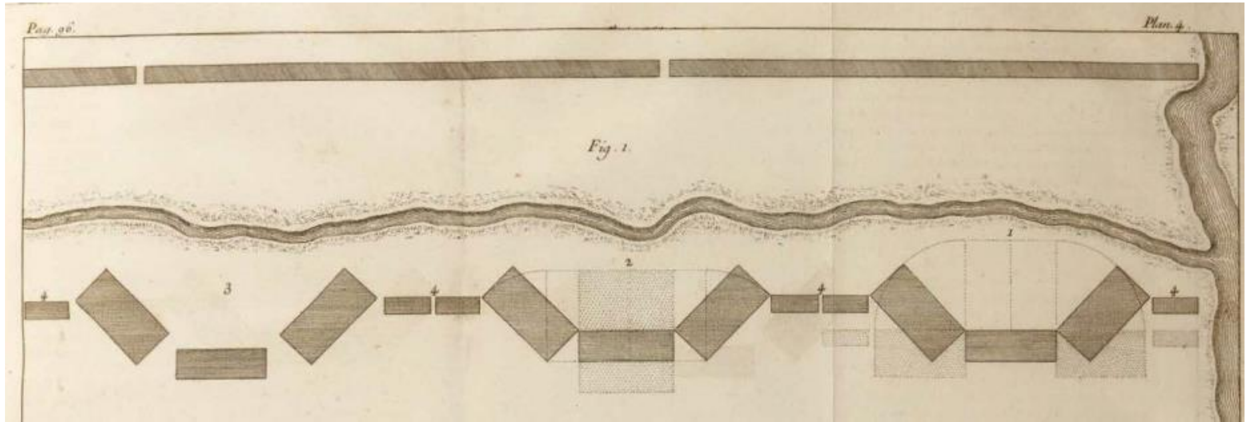
[209] Mesnil-Durand, *Projet*, 90, and Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 69-70.

[210] Mesnil-Durand, *Projet*, 96.

Figure 5



The *faire tenaille*. Mesnil-Durand's *plésions* divided into open formations, with *manches* set at 45-degree angles for firing their weapons.[211]

But one should not be misled about Mesnil-Durand's true intention for his theoretical troops. The *plésion* was a close-combat formation, and Mesnil-Durand made it plain to see that he believed this particular style of combat was uniquely suited for France's people. Such an idea played to the concept of national pride, which made the refined column, the *plésion*, appealing to those who espoused that point of view. For Mesnil-Durand, this was a concept with a basis in antiquity, both in terms of combat style and bloodlines. He wrote:

> We recognize in the French, the value and vivacity of their Gallic ancestors. These two qualities, the only ones they possessed for war, made them terrible even to the Romans, who made efforts against them that they have never made against anyone. They did not get used to the violence of their shock, which would have been even more terrible if they had not been so poorly armed. It is generally agreed that if the Romans had not had the advantage in this regard, the Gauls would have subjugated them.[212]

[211] Ibid.

[212] Ibid., 104.

In addition, Mesnil-Durand asserted that close quarters combat was the best way to deliver a "decided and real" victory. He cited the French frustration at Malplaquet as evidence, when the French inflicted more losses on the British and their allies, and still lost, because they refused to engage the enemy in a way that would have been decisive. This was proof, wrote Mesnil-Durand, "that it was not by killing people, but by displacing corps and entering the enemy line" that battles should be decided. The column and the *plésion*, in his reasoning, was a method to achieve that goal. "When we come back to this method," he wrote, "we will see that the Greek and Roman historians were not liars," when they demonstrated that this method of combat was most effective, and reduced losses for the French as well.[213]

These were attractive ideas for the time and place and Mesnil-Durand fervently stated his beliefs in far less subtle terms than Folard, de Saxe or Puységur. But it should not be overlooked that like Folard's columns, this system ultimately did not work, either. Quimby puts it best when he suggests the Mesnil-Durand "completely ignored the developments of two and a half centuries of warfare" in *Projet*.[214] Mesnil-Durand's dismissal of the importance of fire action and artillery produced a military theory that was narrowly-focused and already obsolete by the time it was published. But it was an idea that would not go away. His *Projet* was only the start of his military writing, in which he would continue to refine and defend his and Folard's system of combat for decades to come. Others would soon join the conversation opposing – and supporting – the column as well. This debate would eventually would not be settled until the 1780's, following field testing of column formations and the emergence of a more sophisticated system of theory developed by Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, Comte de Guibert (1743-1790). Ultimately,

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[213] Ibid., 107.

[214] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 74.

the column found use as a component of a more comprehensive French system of Napoleonic-era tactics.[215] Thus, Mesnil-Durand's role in keeping the idea and the debate alive is evident, despite the questionable nature of its various positions.

What both Folard and Mesnil-Durand also demonstrate is the trust that adherents of the column placed in this idea from classical antiquity. The ordre profond may not have been the most practical reform for the eighteenth-century battlefield, but it was backed by the credibility of the ancient world. Folard and Mesnil-Durand's interpretations of ancient method seemed reasonable. Both theorists placed military scholarship at the same level or above battlefield experience when it came to developing new theories of warfare, indicating a level of respect for the "system" of rational thinking itself. Jacques-François de Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur would encourage the system of scholarship at a level of development never seen to this point. As we will see, this veteran officer advocated for an overhaul in military thought that proves far more intriguing to the legacy of the *faiseurs des systèmes* than any sort of alignment of troops into line or column.

Puységur: a New System for Military Learning

Marshal of France Jacques-François de Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur (1656-1743) is remembered mostly for two achievements: the extraordinary longevity of his 58-year military career (1677-1735), and his lengthy treatise on military practice, *Art de la guerre par principes et par règles*, which was published at least 16 times between 1748 and 1790 in French, German,

[215] Nosworthy, *Anatomy of Victory*, 339.

and Italian.[216] Puységur made his mark as a logistics officer, serving under the Marshal of Luxembourg in the Dutch War (1672-1678) and rose through the ranks to gain the position of marshal of the king's camps and armies by 1690. Puységur demonstrated his command of supply and provisioning in the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714) in the Netherlands and Spain. He was an advisor on war to Louis XIV and a military tutor to Louis XV. The latter promoted him to Marshal of France in 1734.

As a logistics specialist, Puységur inhabited the world between high command and the battlefield, forming the crucial link between the state and the soldier that kept bellies full, guns powdered, and victories possible. This important position provided Puységur with an unusual outlook for a military theorist of his time. Capable of commenting on both tactics and overall strategy, Puységur was the rare eighteenth-century author who offered commentary on the operational level of military practice. In *Art de la guerre*, Puységur was both detailed and abstract in his analysis of war, as willing to discuss the positioning of troops in a column as the very nature of war itself. The venerable Puységur was also extraordinarily well-read when it came to history, both recent and ancient. In his only major work, the logistics master mined history vigorously for answers to problems that plagued France's armies, and openly bemoaned the fact that there was no apparent system or tradition for developing military skills and methods among the officers and soldiers of France.

It is not surprising then, considering his affinity for history, that Puységur would seek his model for that sort of tradition in the ancient world. While Puységur was not as famous in his time as Maurice de Saxe or Frederick the Great, and not as widely read as Folard or Mesnil-Durand, he remains a relevant military theorist to this day for his methodological innovation, a

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[216] Gat, *A History of Military Thought*, 36.

trait for which he perhaps does not receive enough credit. This reflective and thoughtful eighteenth-century military theorist proposed an entirely new way of educating military minds, inspired by the practices of ancient Greece and grounded in the idea that relevant military lessons could be learned from historical study.

Puységur's *Art de la guerre* was first published in 1748, five years after the death of its author. His son, François-Jacques-Maxime de Chastenet de Puységur (1716-1782) oversaw the compilation of *Art de la guerre* and wrote its preface. The younger Puységur's opening words detail Marshal Puységur's writing history and clarify the main theme - a necessary step for an ambitious work that diverges from tactics to strategy to philosophy. The younger Puységur explained that his father began writing his section in military movements as early as 1693, but did not conceive of a "fixed and useful body of military science" until 1739.[217] The elder Puységur wrote for two years afterward, pulling together works he had written previously until illness overtook him and he could no longer write.[218] The end product was a military treatise of two books. The first dealt with practices, methods, and tactics that could be improved in the French military. The second promoted the idea of historical self-study for the benefit of military education, centering on a hypothetical campaign between two opposing powers fighting between the Seine and the Loire Rivers in central France. Puységur's commentary in book two illustrated his essential point of *Art de la guerre*; that rules of war could be established intellectually and should be shared among France's military leaders and officers to improve overall education and performance.

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[217] Jacques-François de Chastenet Marquis de Puységur, *Art de la guerre, par principes et par règles* (Paris: Chez Charles-Antoine Jombert, 1748), I, preface.

[218] Ibid.

As the younger Puységur recalled, his father read ancient works extensively that "taught him that the Greeks and the Romans had a kind of academy where the youth were instructed in all aspects of warfare; that they even had particular masters who could explain their different maxims and teach the occasions when, depending on the circumstances, one had to make use of some in preference to the others."[219] Though the idea that war's precedents could be studied, reflected upon, and refined into current practice seems more like common sense than an especially innovative or meaningful theory, Puységur pointed out that in his time there were few, if any resources that explicitly laid out the most essential rules for warfare. It was his goal to create just such a resource, which would have been cutting-edge for the eighteenth century. He explained this purpose in his opening paragraph:

> Of all the arts, the one in which the greatest number of men have made their profession is without a doubt the art of war. Though even today, it is the art that receives the least support for learning it. It is difficult to give a complete idea of such a vast and complex art, composed of so many different parts, without treating them separately. It is also that which I attempt to do, at least as much as will be possible, by those rules and principles pulled from that which I have practiced.[220]

Puységur made an important clarification in the next paragraph when he wrote that the prevailing attitude among military personnel and the public was that one could learn about war only from practical experience in the field, and that nothing could be further from the truth.[221] Puységur continued:

> Contrary to the notion that we must wait for war to learn how to wage it, I believe that the greatest captains, who have formed themselves only through practice alone, have made many mistakes, from which they would

[219] Ibid.

[220] Ibid., 1.

[221] Ibid., 1-2.

> have protected themselves if they had studied the rules and principles of the different parts of war; this is what I will prove by their own writings.
>
> I therefore undertake to show that without war, without troops, without an army, and without being obliged to leave one's home, by study alone, with a little geometry and geography, one can learn the whole theory of campaign warfare from the smallest parts to the largest. And that in the same way as Marshal de Vauban, by the theory contained in the books he left us, and by the practice he established in conformity, teaches us the art of fortifying, attacking and defending places, which is taught daily, even by people who have never been to war, nor made to fortify places.[222]

Puységur's goal then, was to codify the successful methods of battlefield tactics and campaign organization at the same standards of precision and certainty as the rules of military engineering and siegecraft. Puységur argued if these campaign practices could be identified and formalized, then there was no reason a person could not learn the rules of warfare without ever taking the field as a combatant. Puységur's *Art de la guerre* illustrated which rules and resources should be used toward this goal. The marshal also included examples of these rules -both in theory and from history - that could help the reader transform military contemplation into military education.

This is an idea with wide ramifications for linking classical antiquity with present-day military culture, and it has been largely unexplored in the historiography of both Puységur and the Military Enlightenment.[223] Puységur's very notion that rules of war could be established and

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[222] Ibid., 2.

[223] Gat, *History of Military Thought*, 35-38, Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 16-25, Toby McLeod, "Puységur, Jacques-François de Chastenet, Marquis de," in *Philosophers of War*: The Evolution of History's Greatest Military Thinkers, ed. Daniel Coetzee and Lee W. Eysturlid, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 313–14, each provide summaries of Puységur's theory as sections of greater works on military theorists. As McLeod notes, no modern author covers Puységur adequately.

passed on to others was inspired by the traditions of ancient Greece, which he explained were superior to that of ancient Rome. Puységur deduced from his extensive reading of ancient history and philosophy that the Greeks possessed a more formal and intellectual approach to military training than the Romans, who were more focused on movement and exercise.[224] He compared the two after summarizing the military value of several works of antiquity, including Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Caesar, Vegetius, and others in Book One of *Art de la Guerre*.[225] He explained:

> What I think I must conclude from this, and from all the other extracts from Greek and Roman authors that I have quoted, is that it was the Greeks who were the first, or even the only ones, to have reduced war in art, who have held public schools where the theory has been taught, as much in relation to the operations of the mind as in relation to those of the body; and this separately from all practice, either by the lessons of the writing or diagrams…[226]

Puységur placed an emphasis on how the Greeks, in his interpretation, specifically developed and passed on military methods as formal public education, separate, but not completely removed from bodily exercise and practice, which was the foundation of Roman troop discipline. Puységur cited examples from Greek history to provide evidence for his claim, starting with Xenophon, who Puységur stressed was not a commander at all before he assumed leadership of the famed Ten Thousand in their escape from Persia in the *Anabasis*. He argued that it was not Xenophon's experience, but rather his scholarship that assured his potential for success as a commander in a desperate situation:

> … it was therefore not the great functions in the war that had formed him, but the theory that he had learned, and it was then by his application and his reflections on the art of war, that he acquired his great capacity. It was since he worked on

[224] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, 36.

[225] Ibid., I, 4-33.

[226] Ibid., I, 33.

> his *Cyropedia*, a scholarly work in which he includes everything that can serve to instruct a great prince in this art. Those who want to learn it today, have only to read it and reread it with reflection, they will understand that everything he did and said must still be taken as a model today, and that the difference of firearms that we use, with the weapons that were used at that time, bring little change to it, besides that it is only in a few parts.[227]

Puységur cited Xenophon again to continue his argument illustrating the value of formal military education, referencing a story from Xenophon's memorabilia in which Socrates advises a young man to "get an education" in war if he wished to be a leader, because "all the fortune of a republic rests on a general," and that "it would be necessary to punish very severely a person who would neglect to make himself capable of such a job…"[228] To this story, Puységur himself added this observation, pointing toward a glaring weakness in the French military of his day:

> Socrates has great reason to blame people, who want to command others, for not learning before going to the army, because in those times they had masters who taught war by theory based on principles.
>
> Today this theory is forgotten, it is not known, and there is no master who teaches anything in this genre, except for fortifications. So all people who want to go to war are not wrong to believe that they have to wait until they are in the armies to learn something there, at least by copying what they see them doing.[229]

Puységur intended to create a theoretical system that could aid in the development of officers before they ever experienced battle firsthand. This idea that self-study could make a difference between victory and defeat or life and death on the battlefield aligns perfectly with the ideals of Enlightenment. It was also a reasonable idea. It worked before. Therefore, it was reasonable for Puységur to think that it could work again. "This discourse of Socrates conforms to what I have

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[227] Ibid., I, 12.

[228] Ibid., I, 13.

[229] Ibid.

always thought, and it is in consequence of this feeling that I have always acted; to know that the theory of war exists separately from practice, that it is not necessary to have been in the armies to be versed in this art, as I will prove everywhere in my writings," he concluded in his analysis of Xenophon.[230]

To take his position further, Puységur referenced Arrian's history of Alexander's conquest of Asia as another example of how someone with limited experience in war could be fully prepared for command due to the quality of his education and scholarship. As Puységur reasoned, how could Alexander, made famous for conquering Persia at such a young age, have benefited from years of experiential education in war?[231] According to Puységur, it was not accumulated practice that guided Alexander to greatness. It was theory. He explained:

> It is to be believed that Philip had instructed Alexander, as we see in the *Cyropedia* that Cambyses [I] instructed Cyrus [II], and that he brought this prince into his council and communicated to him all his projects; besides, he had given him the most skillful masters to learn the sciences, and above all that of war. Without theory could he at his age have acquired this science by practice alone, since it does not consist only in the orders of battle, as many people imagine, but in much superior parts which are particular to the one who commands in chief?[232]

Puységur praised the "scholarly" and "prudent" approach of Alexander to warfare, even though some of his peers criticized Alexander for his recklessness. This sort of commentary can be seen in the changing association of Charles XII with the Macedonian king near the middle of the eighteenth century. Ever the logistician, Puységur drew attention to the way in which Alexander secured his supply lines with the ports of the Levant and Egypt before turning to the deep

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[230] Ibid., I, 14.

[231] Ibid., I, 20.

[232] Ibid.

conquest of Asia.[233] While some attributed Alexander's success to the singular excellence of his battlefield talent, Puységur noted that it was strategy and operational efficiency that assured his victories. "Winning a battle does not depend solely on the leader, he can only contribute part of it; but to plan the general plan of a war, to follow it well, to execute it well, the honor is undivided to him who commands and who has undertaken it," he wrote.[234] Adhering to the plan "was the essence of his (Alexander's) genius."[235] Puységur argued that Alexander knew how to make the most of his phalanxes and how to plan an order of battle because it was a "science which he had acquired by rules and principles, as was customary among the Greeks."[236] Experience, Puységur asserted, was only part of what made a great commander like Alexander. Theory and planning were also crucial elements for the successful general. He elaborated on Alexander:

> When Philip died, Alexander was still only twenty years old. With his great ability, he had with a small army won three battles against Darius and conquered Asia by age twenty-six; thus we can say that it is not to a long experience that we must attribute the science and conduct of Alexander in war, but to a great study and application, joined to his great genius and to the distinguished talents which nature had united in his person.[237]

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[233] Ibid., I, 20-21.

[234] Ibid., I, 20.

[235] Ibid., I, 21.

[236] Ibid.

[237] Ibid.

Considering that Puységur based his central argument about the viability of military study on ancient Greek principles, it makes sense that Puységur suggested sources from classical antiquity as essential to the process of learning about war.

Puységur's first item of discussion in *Art de la guerre* was the popular literary works of ancient Greece and Rome, and their potential suitability for military study. Puységur provides excerpts from and commentary on Homer, Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides, Arrian, Plutarch, Polybius, Caesar, and Vegetius.[238] The level of detail and accuracy displayed by Puységur in this section indicates deep knowledge of these sources that would have been possible without several years of dedicated reading. This illustrates yet again the presence of classical antiquity in the intellectual sphere of France's highest levels of leadership. This was a man who was a military advisor to Louis XIV after all, whose presence at Versailles would not have been unusual on any given day.[239] Puységur's commentary was targeted specifically on evaluating these writers for their military worth, and he did not find every work rich in content for the prospective officer. Regarding Herodotus, for example, Puységur wrote that some of what the Father of History said about war was "absurd," and that it was difficult to disentangle what was valuable and what was not in his works. He adds that one can tell from Herodotus's writing that he did not know anything about war.[240] Thucydides, Xenophon, and Arrian, however earned Puységur's praise as particularly useful for those who wished to learn more about leading militaries and

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[238] Ibid., I, 4-34.

[239] McLeod, "Puységur, Jacques-François de Chastenet, Marquis de," in *Philosophers of War*, 313.

[240] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, 10.

governments.[241] Puységur's highest levels of recommendation were for Caesar and Vegetius, who each received thorough attention in *Art de la guerre*, and are referenced throughout the work, rather than primarily at the beginning of Book One, as is the case for the other ancient authors cited.

A present-day criticism of Puységur is that he was over-reliant on historical precedent, and that his approach "serves as proof of the old adage that it is always dangerous to prepare for the last war rather than the next one."[242] This is an ordinarily sound warning against a limited, backward-looking point of view, but it is overly dismissive of what Puységur had to offer the eighteenth century, and misses the mark of what Puységur was actually attempting in *Art de la guerre*. It is also neglects to consider the overall cultural trend of the period of consulting antiquity for applicable ways to address all sorts of modern problems. In the military sphere, that was not the exception, but the norm.[243] Puységur attempted to prepare officers and soldiers for the next war by advising his audience on resources suitable to educate the next generation of France's military. The philosophical focus looked forward, not backward.

With regard to his tactical approach, Puységur does indeed call for a geometric approach to battlefield tactics and states that the principles of ancient warfare apply regardless of technology or time. But he also points out that one of those principles states that tactics are dictated by the terrain and weaponry at the disposal of the general. Puységur wrote:

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[241] Ibid., I, 16.

[242] McLeod, "Puységur, Jacques-François de Chastenet, Marquis De," in *Philosophers of War*, 314.

[243] Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment*, 87.

> But in order that the remarks I make on Greek and Latin authors may be read with confidence, I would like to destroy a vulgar opinion, which is to believe that since the [development of] firearms, war is fought in a very different way from that which was in practice before, and that thus all that one can read about war among the ancients is no longer useful. I would say on this subject that the science and the art of war have been and will always be the same, that they do not vary from whatever weapons are used, that captains who have been at the head of armies and who have known war by principle, have always been obliged to form their orders of battle according to the different situations of the places where they had to fight, and according to the use that they could make of their weapons. Our orders of battle for combat today must be formed on the same principles…[244]

Neither Folard, nor Mesnil-Durand, nor Puységur were dismissive of the importance of gunpowder weapons in their works of theory, contrary to what many cursory examinations of these writers may suggest. Folard's columns were intended to leverage more, not less, firepower – the same as Mesnil-Durand's *plésions*. Enthusiasm for geometry excepted, Enlightenment-era military theorists did not simply accept classical notions regardless of technology on the battlefield. For example, modern historians – Quimby, Starkey, Christopher Duffy, and David Chandler - all agree that Puységur was quite considerate of the importance of firepower on the modern battlefield.[245] Some write that Puységur was more enthusiastic about the potential for gunpower and modern weapons than the other theorists of the mid-eighteenth century, including Maurice de Saxe and Frederick II of Prussia.[246]

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[244] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, 36.

[245] Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 17; Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment*, 87; Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 206; David Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough* (London: B.T. Batsford Limited, 1976), 28.

[246] Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 17; Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment*, 87.

Puységur's treatment of Vegetius in *Art de la guerre* illustrates further how the French marshal weighed ancient rules with modern demands. Puységur's commentary on Vegetius was lengthy, and he focused on the ancient Roman writer's "seven orders of battle," in which Vegetius outlined the general approach a commander should take to certain battlefield situations, without considering terrain or the fighting style of the enemy. For example, Vegetius's first order was a simple oblong square with a long horizontal facing, and nothing more. Vegetius recommended that a general take this formation only when he outnumbered the enemy significantly, because it is easily flanked.[247] This first order of battle said nothing about armament, fighting style, or quality of troops. Interestingly, Vegetius did say that his fellow Romans used this order of battle in "ancient and modern times," meaning the first order already had hundreds of years of military tradition backing its viability.[248] The ancient origin of the tactic was not viewed as a negative trait in Vegetius's writing. Rather, it displayed the credibility of the formation and the reason for its inclusion in Vegetius's list. Certain military practices were as timeless to the Romans as they were to the French of the eighteenth century, regardless of technology. Vegetius's warning that the formation is easily flanked was as true in his time as it was in Puységur's age. When the French marshal examined what Vegetius wrote of the first order, he agreed with the Roman general. In the eighteenth century, Puységur wrote, this first order was still viable under the same circumstances as it was in Roman times, with the same weaknesses. He added another word of caution that extended formations like this handcuffed the creativity of the general and left "all the conduct and the success of the fight to the troops, which

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[247] Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Military Institutions of Vegetius, in Five Books*. Translated from the Original Latin, with a Preface and Notes, by Lieutenant John Clarke, trans. John Clarke, 5 vols. (London: W. Griffin in Catharine-Street, 1767), 143.

[248] Ibid.

is only too common."[249] Puységur's implication was that this practice held potential for disaster, commenting "…today, those who command the armies receive the troops as they are sent to them, without training them in any way or even instructing the subordinate general officer in their functions. This will continue as long as the war is conducted without strategy and a theory based on principles is not established."[250]

Puységur evaluated each of Vegetius's seven orders and judged most worthy of use for the French army of the eighteenth century. But the seventh order, which relied on the use of a wedge and bows and arrows, would not translate to modern times, according to Puységur.[251] Here is an example of Puységur acknowledging that an ancient tactic reliant on a particular technology would not work in the present day. Puységur, evidently, believed that general rules could guide the commander regardless of technology, but specific circumstances like weaponry required the judgment and creativity of the general to implement fully.

It would be misleading to summarize Puységur's commentary on these Vegetian orders of battle without noting that Puységur did not consider all of them to be equal in their potential. Of particular interest to Puységur were the second, third, and sixth orders of battle, all of which dealt specifically with the oblique order of attack. This is the disposition that Vegetius labeled "best," and it was recommended for armies that were smaller in number than their opposition on the battlefield. It involved the positioning of one side of an army against one end of an enemy

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[249] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, 162.

[250] Ibid., I, 183.

[251] Ibid., I, 165.

formation, while denying the enemy's other end an opportunity to engage.[252] This oblique maneuver enjoys thorough discussion in Puységur's *Art de la guerre*. It would also later become a staple of Frederick II's military writings and battles, as we will examine later. For Puységur, the oblique order was the keystone of his Book Two discussion where he compared the ancient tactics of Caesar at the Battle of Pharsalus with the modern tactics of Turenne at the 1645 Second Battle of Nordlingen. This discussion, which would not have been possible without Vegetius's detailed description of the inner workings of the Roman legion in the fifth century, set the tone for another key aspect of Puységur's military theory that has gone completely unnoticed in his historiography - the importance of military reflection and simulation.

If Puységur's main idea was to abolish the notion that war could only be learned from experience, then it was to his advantage to present ways in which military methods could be mastered without bloodshed or loss of life. Book Two of *Art de la guerre* takes the reader through a series of military reflections and comparisons, many of which are grounded in examples from ancient Greece and Rome. This section of Puységur's work lacks a consistent theme and takes the form of a collection of sections meant to either stimulate thought on war or to ruminate on a particular tactical or operational lesson. Book Two is also predominately hypothetical and is best known for the marshal's description of an imaginary modern campaign set in the Seine and Loire River valleys. Puységur also used Book Two to ruminate on actual campaigns from history, analyzing and making conjectures about what might have been if a general had made one choice or another. To illustrate his thoughts on war, Puységur drew from Turenne's campaign memoires of the seventeenth century and episodes from ancient Greece and

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[252] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius*, 143-47.

Rome – Caesar's Civil War with Pompey, Alexander's Battle of Issus, the Battle of Thermopylae, and Pericles's oratory. Puységur compared Turenne and Caesar on two different occasions in Book Two, and provided his opinions about how prospective generals should approach and evaluate these events for their own development.

In the first section of Book Two, Puységur described a hypothetical campaign as an example of the sort of thought exercise a general or student of war could perform in his leisure time to sharpen his command. The fictional conflict was set between the Seine and the Loire Rivers, with the French army as defender and an unidentified power as the invader. Here, Puységur presents a highly detailed mental simulation of moves and counters that one could expect to see as a general leading an eighteenth-century army.[253] This sort of exercise was neither the first nor the last of its kind when it comes to military theory or history. The ancient Roman historian Livy (59 BCE – 17 CE) daydreamed about a clash between Alexander the Great's Macedonians and the early Roman Republic in his *Ab Urbe Condita*, with Rome emerging the winner due to its systemic advantages in training, discipline, and depth of leadership.[254] Centuries later, Machiavelli described a hypothetical battle in Book Three of his own *Art of War* to emphasize the applicability of Roman-style military discipline in the face of danger.[255] After Puységur's publication, Jacques Antoine Hippolyte de Guibert (1743-1790) also presented a hypothetical campaign in his own writings that took place between the Seine and

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[253] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, 1-69.

[254] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 9.17-9.19. See also Ruth Morello, "Livy's Alexander Digression (9.17-19): Counterfactuals and Apologetics," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 92 (2022): 62–85.

[255] Machiavelli, *The Seven Books on the Art of War*, III.

Loire. He did this purposefully to demonstrate the difference in tactics and methods between his day (the 1770's) and the 1740's.[256]

Puységur's hypothetical campaign stands out not only for its tactical analysis of certain battlefield maneuvers, but also for its focus on the operational level of military action, which surely arose from Puységur's background as a logistics officer. This presents a more complete, modern view of warfare that differs from the tactical focus of Folard and Mesnil-Durand, who were more interested in the introduction of infallible orders of battle than the education of generals and officers. Among Puységur's observations in his hypothetical campaign was that possession of Paris (in his time) was not to the advantage of the French when conducting defensive operations against an invading power in the Seine River valley. He reasoned that the French would not be able to feed a large army and keep Paris from starvation at the same time. This meant that the French defenses would have to spread out into the country beyond the Seine to feed themselves in winter quarters before entering the campaign in the spring.[257] "This [situation] gives the enemy a significant advantage by entering the campaign early, while the [French] army faces great difficulties in entering first, a crucial matter to impede the progress of the opposing army," Puységur wrote.[258] The French general was then forced to take a defensive stance from the onset of the campaign, according to Puységur, and the French would then be relegated to waiting for an error by the invader to counterattack and regain the initiative.[259] Thus,

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[256] Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte Guibert and Jonathan Abel, *Guibert's General Essay on Tactics*, 37.

[257] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, 32.

[258] Ibid.

[259] Ibid.

"arrangements which are made for the defensive are disposed in a manner that could serve the offensive if the occasion arises."[260] Puységur also suggests that if the hypothetical French commander did not enter the campaign fast enough to prevent the enemy from entrenching itself around Paris, then attacking it would prove nearly impossible due to the large number of troops required to do so, and the obligation to defend Paris with their own entrenchments.[261] Certainly, one can see how prophetic this bit of advice was for those tasked with defending central France in later years.

The main takeaway from Puységur's hypothetical campaign was his focus on provisioning the French troops and the importance of preserving Paris. The logistics master warned prospective generals not to find themselves in the same trap as his imaginary French commander:

> … before being able to pass judgment on the unfortunate situation in which the general finds himself, caused by the lack of provisions which prevented him from entering the campaign first, it is necessary to examine whether this defect comes from a lack of foresight on his part, or for not having sought every means of procuring (provisions), in which case he has committed a great fault, and is worthy of blame; but if this lack of provisions is caused only by not being able to gather them, and he has done all he can, he is to be pitied and not to be blamed.[262]

Puységur's engagement with hypothetical example took a practice established in the ancient world and elevated it to a level of complexity unseen before his time. Where Livy wrote in general terms, Puységur was specific. Machiavelli imagined a battle, Puységur imagined a full campaign. Where Vegetius wrote about how to approach an enemy in a certain situation in his

[260] Ibid.

[261] Ibid., II, 32-33.

[262] Ibid., II, 33.

seven orders of battle, Puységur cautioned the commander to consider not just how his army was arrayed, but how it was fed and supplied. Puységur's focus on the operation of an army elevated eighteenth-century French theory beyond its inspirational predecessors and provided a useful hypothetical model for modern officers and theorists to emulate.

Puységur elaborated on his idea of using historical reflection for military education by introducing episodes from the past that demonstrated the core principles that French officers should imitate. In doing so, Puységur established Turenne and Caesar as important models for understanding these concepts. Puységur was very familiar with Turenne's career since the legendary French commander was one of the most respected military figures of the seventeenth century, and Puységur's former commanding officer in the Dutch War, Francois-Henri de Montmorency-Bouteville, Duke of Luxembourg (1628-1695), fought alongside him in the Thirty Years War. Surely, the Duke regaled Puységur with Turenne's exploits on campaign. If not, then there was Turenne's memoirs to pique Puységur's interest. "I do not see any war book since the Greek and Roman authors that better explains the facts of war, in better terms, more simply and scholarly… than Turenne…" he wrote.[263] Puységur thought that those who understood military practice had the capacity to "hear" both Turenne and Caesar as they narrated their respective campaigns.[264] The lack of a complete, consistent military theory held back Turenne's work, according to Puységur, who wondered about the easier road that Turenne and others could have

[263] Ibid., I, 36-37.

[264] Ibid., I, 36.

had if they possessed the "rules and principles" of war that the Greeks and Romans used in the field.[265]

Turenne served as Puységur's measuring stick for modern military excellence in *Art de la Guerre's* Book Two. The French hero's reputation and popularity made his experiences of war the proper setting for comparisons with Caesar, also a popular hero of the time, and Alexander, whose life story and feats were well-known by literate Europeans in the seventeenth century.[266] Puységur incorporates these comparisons with a commentary on the Aug. 3, 1645 Second Battle of Nordlingen in Book Two. In this clash around the village of Alerheim, France in the Thirty Years War, Turenne was a subordinate under Louis II Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien (aka le Grand Condé, 1621-1686). It was not an especially consequential affair. It was typical of many battles in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries – violence without a strategically decisive result.[267]

Turenne's experience at Nordlingen provided ample material for Puységur to introduce tactical topics grounded in ancient examples. On the day of battle, Turenne was in charge of the left (north) wing of a combined French and Hessian army that conducted an assault on a well-positioned Bavarian and Imperial army led by Bavarian Field Marshal Franz Baron von Mercy (1590-1645) and Imperial general Johann von Werth (1591-1652).[268] Mercy and Werth had the

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[265] Ibid.

[266] Pierre Briant, *The First European*, 3.

[267] Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80.

[268] Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 701-702.

advantage of three geographical features aiding their defense: Their right flank was anchored on Winneberg Hill to the north; the left flank was positioned against Schloss Alerheim; the center defended the village of Alerheim. D'Enghien ordered a frontal assault on all three positions simultaneously at 4 p.m. On the French right (south), the Antoine, Duc de Gramont's (1604-1678) men were pushed back by Werth's troops, while d'Enghien fought the center to a close-run stalemate that cost Mercy his life. The French left was the only part of the French/Hessian army that found clear success as daylight transitioned to dusk. Turenne's cavalry and the Hessian infantry successfully drove the Bavarian artillery from Winneberg Hill.[269] This tilted the Bavarian/Imperial defensive axis as night fell.

As the Bavarians withdrew from Turenne on their right, Werth pushed forward on the left from Schloss Alerheim. Had Werth realized the struggle d'Enghein faced in the center, he could have swept around the French commander's troops and hit Turenne from the back, instead of allowing his cavalry to pursue Gramont's fleeing horsemen. Unfortunately for the Imperials and the Bavarians, Werth ran out of daylight, ammunition, and the ability to communicate over a battlefield that measured more than a mile and a half across.[270] He returned to the center of the battlefield, discovering the death of Mercy. The fighting continued until 1 a.m. the next day when Werth withdrew from the field, leaving the French as the default victors. The Imperials and Bavarians outfought the French and the Hessians that day, inflicting 4,000 casualties (dead and

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[269] Ibid., 702.

[270] Ibid., 704.

wounded) upon d'Enghein's army. Werth and his allies suffered just 2,500 killed and wounded, but 1,500 men were captured in the retreat from the Village of Alerheim.

One of Puységur's specific areas of discussion regarding Nordlingen dealt with a "mistake as old as war itself:" when one wing of an army pursues the corresponding defeated wing of the enemy army too vigorously and takes themselves out of the fight. This is what Puységur suggested Werth did at Nordlingen, using Turenne's memoires as a source.[271] Puységur drew on two examples from Greek history to illustrate the dangers of aggressive pursuit. First, he cited Arrian's narrative of Alexander's victory over the Persians at Issus (333 BCE), in which Alexander displayed prudence in not pursuing a defeated Persian wing on his right flank. This allowed Alexander to respond when Darius's Greek mercenaries threatened the center and left flank of his army, pushing both Macedonian sections to their breaking point.[272] Alexander did what Werth should have done at Nordlingen: "after having defeated all that was in front of him, (Alexander) turned on the Greeks who were pushing the Macedonians," enveloping their exposed flank and butchering them in "appalling" fashion.[273]

Next, Puységur cited Polybius's account of the 207 BCE Battle of Mantinea (of the First Macedonian War)[274] in which the Spartan tyrant Machanidas aggressively pursued a defeated wing of Philopoemen's Achaean army, carried away by "imprudence" and "youth."[275] He later

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[271] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, 41.
[272] Ibid., II, 39.

[273] Ibid.

[274] Not to be confused with the 418 BCE or 362 BCE battles of the same name.

[275] Ibid.

returned to the battlefield, thinking the rest of the Spartan army had the fight well in hand. Philopoemen, in the meantime, took advantage of Machanidas's error, defeating the rest of the Spartan army in Machanidas's absence. The young Spartan tyrant returned to find Philopoemen's troops ready for them and met his death in this second phase of the battle.[276] Puységur suggested that the "art and science of war" could "set just limits" to this type of pursuit, which was necessary to drive off the enemy, but led to unnecessary slaughter and "the evil that results from it."[277]

These comparisons were more than just an attempt to illustrate a military maxim with ancient examples. Here and throughout *Art de la guerre*, Puységur repeatedly demonstrated the necessity of military theory to prevent military disaster and to inform generals and officers of what they could do when presented with a particular situation. Puységur's goal was not to create textbook responses to situations. Rather, his objective was to encourage contemplation of military history and the sharing of military methods. As Puységur noted in the first book of *Art de la guerre*, this concept was inspired by the ancient world, and he made that point even more explicit with another comparison of the Second Battle of Nordlingen with the ancient battlefield.[278] For this example, he called two titans to the page: Caesar and Pompey.

The Battle of Pharsalus signaled the end of the Roman Republic, with Caesar defeating the Senate and ushering in a new era of personal rule for Rome. According to Puységur, this monumental victory would not have been possible without Caesar's dedication to training and

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[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid., 39.

[278] Ibid., I, 33.

his overall knowledge of military theory. Puységur viewed these traits as characteristic strengths of Caesar's legions and a particular weakness of the French army of his time. Nevertheless, he believed the French, with a commitment to military theory, could emulate Caesar in military matters on and off the battlefield. He observed:

> (Proper training) is something we do not practice, and it is where the Greeks and Romans had superiority over us. They did not simply train their troops in open plains like we do, often without any principles. They trained them in all types of terrain and situations because battles take place everywhere. Caesar and the great captains did not confine themselves to common practices; they anticipated all possible outcomes and devised in advance the means they could employ in different situations… However, today, those who command the armies receive the troops as they are sent to them, without training them in any way or even instructing the subordinate general officers in their functions. This will continue as long as war is conducted without strategy and a theory based on principles is not established.[279]

Puységur believed that skilled generals actively sought situations where they could support their troops with their knowledge and expertise.[280] This was mostly confined to how well a general prepared his troops and arranged the conditions for victory. Ultimately, Puységur believed, the action on the battlefield "was entirely up to the troops," and acknowledged that a general's contribution to victory relied mostly on what they did before the battle.[281] Thus, Pharsalus was the perfect confluence of a general preparing and positioning his men to take advantage of the situation on the battlefield with an army of soldiers capable of adjusting to conditions without further instruction. Caesar positioned his army perfectly to counter Pompey's numerically-superior army as it assaulted his right flank. Anticipating Pompey's initial thrust on

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[279] Ibid., II, 183.

[280] Ibid., II, 38.

[281] Ibid., II, 56.

his right, Caesar ordered his men to form an extra infantry formation on that side to support his cavalry against Pompey's larger charge of horse.[282] The extra infantry on the right surprised Pompey and his men, who were quickly rolled up in a key moment in the fight. Caesar himself described it this way:

> (the extra infantry on the right) swiftly charged in tight attack formation and fell with such force upon Pompey's horsemen that not a single one of them held his ground: they all turned around and not only ceded their position but straightaway fled in full gallop toward the highest hills. Once the cavalry had withdrawn, all the archers and slingers, now abandoned, unarmed, and unprotected, were killed. Continuing their onrush, the cohorts came around Pompey's left wing and attacked his soldiers from the rear while they were still fighting and resisting in formation.[283]

Caesar's stacked right fell upon the remaining Senatorial troops in a cascade of slaughter, changing the course of Roman history in a matter of minutes.[284]

Puységur labeled Caesar's formation, with the reinforced right side, 'oblique,' and suggested it existed outside of Vegetius's seven orders of battle as an innovative eighth order.[285] The French marshal enthusiastically praised Caesar's incorporation of superior planning and training and suggested that some part of it could also have been effectively used at Nordlingen, if a foundation for military knowledge had been in place for the French. "Caesar's use of the oblique line at Pharsalus was carried out with the same intent as what should have been done at Nordlingen, albeit in a more disadvantageous situation. Caesar was significantly outnumbered by

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[282] Gaius Julius Caesar, "The Civil War," in *The Landmark Julius Caesar: The Complete Works: Gallic War, Civil War, Alexandrian War, African War, and Spanish War*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub (New York: Anchor, 2019), 11.93.
[283] Ibid.

[284] Ibid.

[285] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, 56.

Pompey's forces, while at Nordlingen, our army was slightly stronger than the enemy's," Puységur wrote.[286] The French at Nordlingen chose the simpler, straight-forward attack that Vegetius labeled the first order of battle, Puységur explained, "even though the difficulty was increased by the village (Alerheim) which was in the center."[287] The French chose this order of battle not because it was best, but because they lacked the theoretical acumen to consider anything else, according to Puységur. He explained further:

> As for the other ways of fighting, which the great captains among the Greeks and the Romans used, they were not proposed there [Nordlingen], because they were not only unknown, but also because the true science of war… can only be acquired when the practice of arms is formed by the study of a theory, founded on the principles of geometry, which consists of a comparison of moving forces which act one against the other.[288]

It was this theoretical foundation, according to Puységur, that allowed the general to combine battle formations and tactics adaptively; to be able to recognize the whole situation of combat before him and to use one's "imagination" to take the wisest choice of action.[289] It was not enough to just learn ranks, files, formation, and movement, according to Puységur. "…the theory of war alone teaches us to not only know all the different orders of battle that can be formed, but also how to apply them according to different situations." This, Puységur stressed, could not be learned solely from experience.[290] Because of this, Puységur surmised, if the great captains of Greek and Roman history "returned today to the world, they would have a greater superiority

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[286] Ibid.

[287] Ibid.

[288] Ibid.

[289] Ibid.

[290] Ibid.

over us than that which they had (in their time)," because "the practice in [their] armies was established on rules, and ours is only on usage."[291]

It would be easy to think, from the evidence presented so far, that Puységur's admiration for the systematic processes of classical militaries led him to conclude that the ancients made the right choices about war far more often than his modern peers. But in this second book of *Art de la guerre*, Puységur included a comparison between modern and ancient warfare that demonstrated that not every classical tradition was worth preserving in modern times. Puységur compared an incident from Turenne's memoirs of the Thirty Years War with two defining events from Spartan history, the Battles of Thermopylae (480 BCE) and Plataea (479 BCE) in the Second Persian Invasion of Greece (480-479 BCE). He did this as he shared his thoughts on the role of courage on the modern battlefield, demonstrating that raw bravery falls short of what is necessary from commanders and troops in combat. Puységur advised future commanders to embrace rational thinking, combined with courage, instead. The French marshal criticized the Spartans of the Persian Wars for their blindness to intelligent warfare, citing Leonidas's actions at Thermopylae as an example that should not be followed in modern times.[292]

The fatal actions of Leonidas's Spartans at Thermopylae would surely have been familiar to Puységur's readers, as it remains even in our present day one of the best-known of all ancient battles. The legend, passed down through Herodotus, was that a few thousand elite Spartan infantry and Greek allies held back an invading Persian army of hundreds of thousands of

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[291] Ibid., II, 57.

[292] Ibid, II, 125.

soldiers led by Xerxes I at the narrow mountain pass of Thermopylae for three days, briefly stalling them before the Xerxes pushed into Boeotia. Puységur recounted the details of this event in a chapter titled "The nature of true courage that one should demand of leaders and troops" in Book Two.[293] The key event in the battle, according to Herodotus and Puységur, was when a Greek traitor named Ephialtes showed Xerxes a path around the pass of Thermopylae, which allowed Xerxes to attack Leonidas's Greek forces from behind, ending the battle.[294] The bravery of the Spartans here was not in question for Puységur, who credited them for their bravery, but criticized them for their "lack of military acumen."[295] At issue for Puységur was Leonidas's lack of knowledge of his own region's terrain. He wrote:

> Once he received this commission, he would have taken the lead, gone to reconnoiter the Thermopylae, surveyed the area that needed to be defended, and explored the paths and locations where additional defenses could be set. But without examining, he marched to Thermopylae without any knowledge, guided only by some Trachinians who knew the pass. It is not surprising, then, that the Persians went around the mountain while the Greeks were occupied defending Thermopylae and then attacked them from behind.[296]

In other words, Puységur points out that if the Spartans had proper reconnaissance of Thermopylae, they would have taken note of the mountain pathway that led to their undoing. According to Herodotus, when Xerxes's Persians began marching on this route around the pass of Thermopylae, Leonidas allowed his Greek allies who wished to retreat to do so. The Spartans

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[293] Ibid.

[294] Ibid., II, 127.

[295] Ibid., II, 128.

[296] Ibid.

remained in the pass, however, for the sake of their honor and dignity.[297] Puységur saw it differently. He suggested that Leonidas allowed his Greek allies to leave not because of reasons of honor, but because of the criticism he would have endured for making such a basic tactical error. Puységur explained:

> I think… that what forced him to stay, rather than withdraw with the other Greeks, as he could have done, is that he was persuaded that he would be despised at Sparta, for not having properly recognized all the places by which the Persians could turn him, beat him, and enter the country.[298]

Puységur regarded the Spartans to be as valorous as any who have ever taken the field, but also thought them to be overly concerned with glory and courage.[299] He provided another example from Spartan history to reinforce this notion.

Puységur recounted how the Greek commander Pausanias, according to Herodotus, encountered Spartan stubbornness firsthand at the Battle of Plataea.[300] Pausanias, concerned about the allied Greek army's access to supplies and water, proposed moving their camp to a more suitable location, away from the harassment of Persian cavalry. This was to be done under cover of night.[301] A Spartan contingent led by Amompharetus refused to budge. Refusing to retreat before an advancing enemy, he stood his ground like Leonidas did. In a display of defiance, he placed a stone at Pausanias's feet, symbolic of his decision to not move. Puységur

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[297] Ibid., II, 129.

[298] Ibid.

[299] Ibid.

[300] Ibid., II, 130.

[301] Ibid.

criticized Amompharetus for what would otherwise seem like a valorous stand by the Spartan commander. He explained his position:

> We can say that Amompharetus shows great courage in not wanting to flee from the barbarians, but there is no question of fleeing here. These are ordinary army movements, and whoever does not follow the rules, however brave he may be, exposes his army to defeat by his ignorance and his disobedience. Caesar has great reason to say in Book Seven, of the *Gallic Wars* that he esteemed modesty and obedience in troops no less than courage and resolution.[302]

As Puységur saw it, the Spartans discredited themselves and their allies in the Second Persian Invasion by not thinking beyond their immediate situations. Essentially, Puységur accused them here of throwing Spartan lives away because of a predisposition toward valor, rather than preserving lives by understanding the nuances of rational military thinking – the exact practice that Puységur wanted to grow and develop in eighteenth-century France. At the end of this anecdote regarding Plataea, Puységur drove home his point by quoting Thucydides, who wrote of the Athenians: "We have this in particular, that our boldness is judicious; whereas most of the others are only brave because they are brutal and ignore danger."[303]

Puységur took time to emphasize the difference between the Spartans and the Athenians because he wanted to demonstrate how a city-state that embraced the rules and principles of warfare was superior in its practice to another that focused its efforts on cultivating emotions like ferocity and courage. It is an imperfect comparison, of course, since, historically, Sparta emerged triumphant over Athens in the Peloponnesian War. Perhaps here we see Puységur taking the changed conditions of modern warfare into account, with gunpowder weapons necessitating a

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[302] Ibid.

[303] Ibid., II, 131.

more cerebral focus. Much as we saw with the changing view of Charles XII in the eighteenth century, by the 1740's, blind courage was no longer seen as a desired military virtue. Focused courage and discipline, however, still had its place. Puységur clearly understood this when incorporating more examples of destructive bravery versus productive, "judicious" courage.[304]

As cited by Puységur, Herodotus reported that at the end of the Battle of Plataea, the Greek allies, with the Spartans in the lead, charged the well-defended Persian camp, to ensure the complete defeat of the invaders. The fight there was not easy. The Persians were well-defended and fought fiercely.[305] Here is how Puységur cited Herodotus:

> And certainly before the coming of the Athenians the barbarians not only defended themselves, but they prevailed over the Lacedaemonians, who did not know how to attack the walls; but when the Athenians had arrived, then this entrenchment was attacked and defended more powerfully than before. Finally, by their courage and their long obstinate efforts, they (the Athenians) forced the defenses of the Persians and made a passage through which the Greeks entered.[306]

"This is the effect of judicious courage based on principles," Puységur wrote, underscoring the importance of knowing the rules of the type of battle being fought.[307] As was well-known by the eighteenth century, mathematics, supply, and engineering methods trumped courage during a siege every time. Puységur demonstrated that concept was not particularly new. After all, Herodotus recorded this event illustrating that idea more than two thousand years prior.

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[304] Ibid., II, 132.

[305] Ibid.

[306] Ibid.

[307] Ibid.

Puységur next referenced a passage from Thucydides, once again illustrating the difference between the Spartan and Athenian philosophies of war. This example came from the siege of Ithome, an incident during a helot revolt in 462 BCE. This was when the Spartans and Athenians had the potential to be allies before the Peloponnesian War.[308] Puységur's quotation of Thucydides reads:

> The Lacedaemonians seeing the siege of Ithome drawn out in length, called among others the Athenians to their aid, who arrived there under the leadership of Cimon, with considerable numbers of troops. What compelled the Lacedaemonians to call them, was their skill in taking cities, for the length of the siege was attributed to this (Spartan) defect, and they (the Spartans) would have taken Ithome if they had not become suspect on account of their (the Athenians) bold and enterprising spirit, so that they thanked them under other pretexts.[309]

This quotation requires a little clarification. According to Thucydides, the long siege of Ithome had revealed to the Spartans their deficiencies in siege methods, so they called the Athenians for help. Since the Spartans were unable to take the place by assault, they distrusted the Athenians who they observed to have an "enterprising and revolutionary" way of conducting sieges. They then dismissed the Athenians, but asked their allies to stay. This deeply offended the Athenians and was "the first open quarrel" between the two cities.[310] Puységur chose this episode to show that beyond even a philosophical difference in methods of war, the Spartans found the thoughtful Athenians threatening to their reputation and their way of life. They dismissed the Athenians to

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[308] Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War ; with Maps, Annotations, Appendices, and Encyclopedic Index*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998) 1.102.

[309] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, 157.

[310] Thucydides, 1.102

the detriment of their own war effort as a result. Once again, Puységur provided an example of bravado working against itself.

This was a mistake the French continued to make into modern times, according to Puységur, who drew attention to the disastrous 1656 Siege of Valenciennes as evidence that his countrymen could still make the same errors of judgment that the Spartans did so many centuries before, at the cost of many lives. In this anecdote of the Franco-Spanish War (1635-1659), Puységur recounted the French difficulty at assaulting the Spanish fortifications at Valenciennes, one of many factors contributing to Turenne's overall defeat at the hands of a successful Spanish defense. Puységur's own father, Jacques de Chastenet de Puységur (1600-1682) was an officer in that siege, and it was from his memoires that Puységur drew the details of the story.[311] According to the elder Puységur, he and the other officers under Marshal Henri de la Ferte-Senneterre (1599-1681) attempted to advance on the glacis, redoubts, and trenches of Valenciennes for several days without established cover. Their goal was to establish temporary fortifications on the glacis to allow for successive assaults. In his first attempt to advance up the sloped glacis to assault the counter-scarp under the Spanish walls, the elder Puységur wrote that he lost "six hundred and twenty soldiers killed or wounded, along with seven officers."[312] His fellow officers fared no better over successive days, with the Marshal La Ferte losing a third of his regiment dead or wounded.[313] "I just allowed people to be killed," was how La Ferte described it to the

[311] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, 62.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Ibid.

elder Puységur.[314] The French engineers at Valenciennes were either incapacitated due to being wounded or killed in the trenches, or they were not capable of the work to begin with. The younger Puységur observed:

> … the officers of the regiments were charged with having their soldiers do (the engineering work), and the commanders of the corps oversaw it; but as the officers and commanders had no theory, no principles, they thought they could make up for everything by their courage and got themselves killed without much progress.[315]

The difference between the way the Siege of Valenciennes was conducted and the way the French conducted sieges in the Puységur's eighteenth century was the theory created by Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707), who built his method for attacking and defending places on a foundation of ancient Euclidian geometry.[316] Puységur credited Vauban for creating a level of "perfection" in the attack and defense of fortifications that in his day resulted in shorter sieges with "few" casualties.[317] It was Puységur's hope that Vauban's principle-based system of siege warfare could be translated to campaign operations. He explained:

> … if we similarly perfected the art of campaign warfare, we would avoid engaging in battles inappropriately and often uselessly… consequently avoiding having so many men killed, who are destroyed by a lack of science.[318]

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[314] Ibid., II, 63.

[315] Ibid.

[316] Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban, *The New Method of Fortification, as Practised by Monsieur de Vauban, Engineer General of France with an Explication of All Terms Appertaining to That Art* (London: Abel Swall, 1691), Preface.

[317] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, 63.

[318] Ibid., II, 63-64.

According to Puységur the logistician, the French army employed three hundred engineers at the time of his writing, trained on Vauban's principles. Unlike the past, Puységur noted, there were enough engineers to supply the army's needs, and their knowledge of sieges exceeded that of their officers, who "neglected to learn about fortifications."[319] Puységur lamented that because such knowledge demanded "dedicated study," there were few individuals in the officer corps who possessed such specialized, necessary expertise.[320] Puységur importantly connected suffering and failure to a lack of knowledge. "You can see that our conduct (at Valenciennes) was similar to that of the Spartans (at Plataea and Ithome)…" he wrote. Despite utmost valor among the troops, Puységur explained, "they ended up sacrificing themselves wrongly" and failing at their goals due to a lack of military art and science.[321] "Thus, in war, one should take the Athenians as a model, to try to have only judicious courage like them. But it is necessary by study and application to work to acquire the knowledge they had, otherwise everything is left to chance," Puységur stressed.[322]

If taking the Athenian approach to warfare was a goal for French officers, according to Puységur, where were the examples from French military history that could help his peers understand the nuances of judicious valor? Puységur provided one such episode from the aftermath of the Second Battle of Fribourg (Aug. 3, 4, 9 1644), in Turenne's memoirs of the Thirty Years War. Over the course of a week, the French army under D'Enghien and Turenne

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[319] Ibid., II, 64.

[320] Ibid.

[321] Ibid., II, 132.

[322] Ibid.

clashed repeatedly with an allied Imperial and Bavarian army under Mercy, and von Werth. After both sides combined for more than 10,000 dead and wounded, Mercy withdrew from his defensive position after D'Enghien received reinforcements and attempted to cutoff Mercy from retreat.[323] Realizing the opportunity to harass Mercy's baggage train as he withdrew, French cavalry officer Reinhold von Rosen attacked the rear elements of Mercy's forces near the Abbey of Val-Saint-Pierre on Aug. 9, with D'Enghien's and Turenne's main French force separated from, but following von Rosen.[324] As this main body of French troops nearly caught up with von Rosen, Turenne, on a hilltop "a quarter of a league away" reported seeing von Rosen engage the back lines of Mercy's troops. According to Turenne, von Rosen was in a valley, with Mercy's troops "atop a mountain," which von Rosen "could not see."[325] With only 600 horsemen, von Rosen fought against Mercy's rearguard cavalry, while, unbeknownst to him, Mercy's main infantry line arrayed to fire on von Rosen and his troops. "Three or four battalions fired upon them, causing casualties, but not confusion," Turenne recalled.[326] Von Rosen's cavalry suffered heavy losses, but were able to retreat in good order, keeping their wits about them, without being routed.[327]

This episode made quite an impression on both Turenne and Puységur. Writing in his memoires, Turenne described von Rosen's disciplined retreat as an action "among the battles I

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[323] Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy*, 683.

[324] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, 103.

[325] Ibid.

[326] Ibid., II, 104.

[327] Ibid.

have ever seen where the troops demonstrated the least astonishment given how many reasons there were to be astonished. This would be impossible for other troops except those who have participated in numerous battles, experiencing both luck and misfortune."[328] Puységur wrote that Turenne's account of this action showed that von Rosen did not realize he was charging directly into Mercy's full battle formation, and that his quick thinking to avoid total defeat was "remarkable."[329] "How precisely he must have given his orders," Puységur wrote, "and how courageously and calmly his troops must have executed them!"[330] He contrasted Rosen's actions against Mercy with the Spartan habit of choosing death over retreat, calling the Lacedemonian cultural trait "excessive, and not very useful."[331] He added:

> On this principle suppose that the troops of Rosen of which I speak above were Lacedaemonians; according to the custom of this nation, seeing themselves fallen into the front of the enemy army, they should have always pushed on, and been killed, rather than thinking of withdrawing as Rosen did. One asks on this occasion what kind of valor is to be preferred, that of Rosen and the troops, judicious valor, which in such great danger makes them fight their enemies with great order and great presence of mind, always by withdrawing, and thereby saves three-fourths of their number, or that of the Lacedaemonians who would rather be killed than withdraw?[332]

Here, Puységur clearly reflected a growing idea within the Military Enlightenment that would soon be explored further by Maurice de Saxe in his writings – the idea that the lives of soldiers were intrinsically valuable and should not be thrown away needlessly in the pursuit of

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[328] Ibid.

[329] Ibid., II, 123.

[330] Ibid.

[331] Ibid.

[332] Ibid., II, 132.

pointless or outdated virtues. Puységur did not advocate blind adherence to ancient military method, even the methods of successful warrior societies like the Spartans. Rather, Puységur recommended practices that embraced reason and judiciousness, despite extreme danger or surprise. For example, while Folard and Mesnil-Durand insisted that shock combat was necessary to represent the French national character on the battlefield, Puységur suggested otherwise. He wrote that it was deficiencies in training that led to this tendency on the battlefield as opposed to the outdated notion that "the French soldier should not be accustomed to firing and must be made to charge with a sword in hand."[333] Puységur adopted the attitude, shared by the ancient Romans, that the French should adapt whatever methods necessary to succeed in any situation, starting first with adopting orders of battle that facilitated firepower. He wrote:

> If on their side they believe they are superior to you in fighting with firearms, they will seek ways to avoid battles in open terrain And if you wish to attack them, you will frequently be compelled to do so in such places. Thus, they will study how to exploit the terrain's features or create advantages through engineering. In such cases, they will resort to long-range combat before engaging in shock combat. Moreover, firepower is what destroys the most men, especially today. To be convinced of this fully, one need only to visit hospitals and see how few there are who have been wounded by edged weapons in comparison to those injured by firearms… Therefore, one must strive to gain superiority over one's enemies in every aspect and not neglect anything in that pursuit. It is crucial to learn from foreign nations how they instruct their troops, in order to adopt from them what has been recognized as superior to our current practices.[334]

Here, Puységur begged the French not to follow the example of the Spartans at Ithome, who rejected Athenian innovation for cultural reasons based on pride. His suggestion that the French should be willing to learn from their enemies would have been culturally repugnant to the

[333] Ibid., I, 108.

[334] Ibid., I, 109.

Spartans, and it was just this sort of bias against innovation and adaptability in combat that Puységur strove to eliminate in his military theory.

Also in accord with Puységur's idea of a theory that could be learned at home was the notion that the nature of war and other important areas of warfare like supply, timeliness, and campaign positioning could also be learned with history as guide. In another Book Two comparison of ancient and modern warfare, Puységur discussed Turenne's campaigns of 1652 and 1653 alongside Caesar's campaign against Lucius Afranius during Caesar's Civil War (49-45 BCE). Here, Puységur continued his theme of discussing operational warfare that he began with his hypothetical campaign set in the Seine Valley at the beginning of Book Two. Puységur focused on how important it was for generals to understand this larger view of warfare, which emphasizes matters of logistics, the movement of whole armies, army morale, local politics, and grand tactics. This "big picture" of campaigning grew more important for militaries worldwide in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but here Puységur can be seen discussing this level of warfare with the expertise and detail that his peers like Folard, Mesnil-Durand did not demonstrate.

Puységur drew inspiration from Caesar's *Commentaries* to return to his examination of operational technique in Book Two, detailing Caesar's entry into Spain to confront Pompey's Senatorial allies there in 49 BCE. But before getting into the details of the campaign, he wrote a brief examination of the different kinds of wars, as an introduction to his analysis of Caesar. The simplest type of war, to Puységur, was a conflict between two sovereign states, like the Romans against the Carthaginians, or wars between France and Spain. "In this type of war, each power decides on its own the operations that it wants from its army and orders its general to act

accordingly. The troops are supplied and execute orders without difficulty."[335] This was to be contrasted with other types of war mentioned by Puységur like wars fought one or more sides that are part of coalitions, or a war fought between kings where one or more sides may have an internal revolt of some sort. It was this latter type of war that Puységur mentioned as the conditions under which Turenne campaigned in the Fronde of the 1650's. Puységur mentioned how the Duke of Lorraine fought against Turenne in 1652, having "sold his troops to the Spanish, uniting with the rebels in their war against the king." Puységur asked the reader to keep this in mind when he discussed Turenne's campaign later in Book Two. [336] Caesar's war with Pompey was a completely different type of conflict, as it was a civil war within a large republic divided into two factions. "In such cases, each individual aligns with the party that best suits their interests," Puységur wrote.[337] This was one of the keys to understanding Caesar's campaign against Afranius, according to Puységur, who asked the reader to remember this as he discussed Caesar's Civil War in Spain. The remarkable feature of Puységur's short explanation of the different types of war was that the distinguished soldier showed here that he was cognizant of the role of politics in war and how even an individual's choices could play a significant role in the outcome of a campaign. This sort of observation was not common at all in works of military theory in the mid-eighteenth century and is more generally associated with theoretical works written after Clausewitz in the nineteenth century. Considering that Puységur had already complained that French military training was overly reliant on field experience and lacked

[335] Ibid., II, 168.

[336] Ibid.

[337] Ibid.

theoretical foundations to begin with, the notion of politics having a role in military theory was nothing short of revolutionary thinking for the French of the mid-eighteenth century.

With Puységur's reminder to keep political ramifications in mind, he illustrated how Caesar understood the nature of his enemy, its needs, and his army's positioning as he narrated and commented upon Caesar's actions in Spain against Afranius. Puységur's objective here appears to be two-fold. First, he clearly wanted to show that the height of mastery when it came to generalship was not necessarily the slaughter of the opposition on the battlefield. Rather, it was to force one's will upon the enemy and convince it to surrender with as little loss of life as possible. Second, having already established what a general's limitations were in his analysis of Pharsalus, he apparently wanted to illustrate how a general could rise above those limitations of leaving the battle in the hands of the troops. Here, Puységur places an emphasis on the general's singularly ability to turn the outcome of a campaign or war on the operational level. His choice of campaigns in this examination was important, as neither Caesar's nor Turenne's campaign featured any significant battlefield action. They were both relatively bloodless affairs, unusually so.

In detailing Caesar's campaign against Afranius, Puységur placed an emphasis on the choices made by both commanders regarding their initial positioning of troops. For example, he criticized Afranius for not defending the mountain passes through the Pyrenees leading into Spain, especially since his forces were "substantial" compared to Caesar's, and the passes were easily defended.[338] This initial disposition was particularly dangerous for Afranius, as it provided

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[338] Ibid., II, 171-72.

Caesar with free entry into the country and immediate space to maneuver. Once within Spain, Caesar engaged in a series of marches and engineering activities specifically designed to separate Afranius's troops from their base of supply, while allowing his own men to live off the land. Initially, it was Afranius's army that held the advantage here, but Puységur noted that Caesar took this advantage away from Pompey's allies by using his cavalry to harass Afranius's foragers.[339] More importantly, however, Puységur noted that Caesar took special interest in acquiring the support of the towns and villages in Spain, convincing them to provide his forces with grain, while denying it to Afranius.[340] "… Following the change of alliance in the region, Afranius's army, disconcerted by the shift resulting from leadership errors, lost trust in its commanders," Puységur observed.[341] Caesar understood the nature of the conflict he was fighting and that the individual would act according to his best interests. "Knowing that most of Afranius's army is inclined to join him, Caesar refrains from the attack. He is confident these troops will surrender without a fight," Puységur added.

Drawing attention to the attitudes of the fighting men themselves, Puységur continued citing Caesar's narrative of the campaign. Caesar reported that eventually the men of both armies began to fraternize and negotiate for Afranius's men to come to Caesar's side.[342] Ultimately, Afranius himself realized that Caesar had robbed him of his bases of supply, and his men had lost the will to fight. Though Afranius had as many men as Caesar, and the ability to deploy

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[339] Ibid., II, 174.

[340] Ibid.

[341] Ibid., II, 175.

[342] Ibid., II, 177.

them, he chose not to. He negotiated a surrender to Caesar and avoided a potential disaster on the battlefield.[343] Because Puységur had already tipped the reader to the difference between a civil war and a war between rival states, a theme became apparent: campaigning was more than just military maneuvering and engaging the enemy in battle. Puységur successfully illustrated that campaigning carried a political element as well, in which the soldiers and the commanders both considered and acted upon the best available course of action for their armies, units, and selves. He explained:

> If these two armies were Roman against Carthaginian or French against Spanish, everyone would agree that the army lacking everything and being compelled to surrender, as Afranius's army found itself, would not hesitate to fight with great courage since it was the only means of escaping the dreadful situation in which they were trapped. This is based on the reflections that I have outlined in the various types of wars above.[344]

Drawing in the specific nature of a civil war inside a republic, Puysegur continued:

> In this type of war, the leaders and troops align themselves with the party that best serves their interests. If, by chance, individuals find themselves in units or armies that choose a different side than they would prefer, as soon as they find an opportunity to switch, they do not hesitate to do so.[345]

Rather than fight against their "own homeland and acquaintances" and "relatives and friends," Afranius capitulated.[346] This was no random event to Caesar, who, Puységur commented, understood the situation completely. "Caesar was well assured that the enemy would not advance

[343] Ibid., II, 176.

[344] Ibid., II, 178.

[345] Ibid.

[346] Ibid.

to fight, and furthermore if Afranius… would have wanted to, (his) troops would not have obeyed..."[347]

Puységur concluded his analysis of this particular episode by elaborating on a Latin phrase used by Caesar in his *Commentaries*. Puységur quoted Caesar as asking the question, why would he risk injury when he could be victorious not only by the sword but *consilio superare*, "to overcome by counsel?" Puységur took extra care to more specifically define this phrase, by writing that it did not mean simply to overcome "by skill" but to "triumph with one's intellect, knowledge, and expertise."[348] In this manner, Puységur demonstrated the importance that should be placed on the general's education and body of knowledge regarding war, which was aligned with his overall premise that generals and officers should cultivate and share their knowledge of the principles of war, as their models in the ancient world did themselves.

The final topic that Puységur discussed in *Art de la guerre* concerned what he called "the most significant and considerable aspect of warfare," which was, in his opinion, the overall plan of war and the necessary steps to ensure its execution.[349] Once again, we see Puységur addressing the "big picture," of warfare, this time with Pericles's 432 BCE speech inciting the Athenians to war against the Spartans as his guide. This oration can be found in Book One of Thucydides's *Peloponnesian War*, and Puységur described it as an "exemplary model to follow for learning to craft a general plan for war," as applicable in his time as it was in classical

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[347] Ibid.

[348] Ibid.

[349] Ibid., II, 199.

Greece.[350] In his discussion of the speech, Puységur drew attention to the areas of concern for nations considering or forced into war, and emphasized the importance of using historical models for planning and anticipating the events of a war from its outset.

Pericles's pre-war speech to the Athenians advised the citizens of that city-state that war with Sparta was inevitable, and as such, they should rely on their strengths as a city and culture to fight that war, while being aware of their weaknesses and expected sacrifices.[351] Among his specific details was that Athens should focus on the war at sea, their strength, as opposed to campaigning on land, their weakness against the Spartans, even if it meant the devastation of much of their territory.[352] Pericles reasoned that the Spartan weakness was lack of money and that Athens could rely on its own colonies and sea trade to continue functioning as a city, while Sparta would suffer a loss of vital commerce over time.[353] One element of Pericles's speech seemed to draw Puységur's attention in particular, the notion that the Spartans fought as a member of a larger alliance, which triggered a historical comparison for Puységur to the Nine Years War, begun in 1688 between Louis XIV's France and a coalition of countries including the Dutch Republic, Britain, the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, and Savoy.[354]

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[350] Ibid.

[351] Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 1.140-46.

[352] Ibid., 1.142.

[353] Ibid. 1.142-43.

[354] Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, 202.

Puységur recalled the discussions at Versailles surrounding the start of this war and drew a comparison to Athens and Sparta before the Peloponnesian War. He observed:

> Pericles's speech to the Athenians was intended to lead them to declare war on the Lacedaemonians who had made a league with several states of Peloponnese and others still to attack them, and by the jealousy they (the Spartans) had conceived of their power. The war that France had in 1688, was occasioned by a league made at Augsburg of almost all the powers of Europe united by a similar jealousy, or rather aroused by the Prince of Orange to avoid France's interference with his designs on going to England.[355]

Having no means to counter the league against France, Louis XIV was forced into war, Puységur wrote.[356] The next step, according to Puységur, was for Louis and his court to do as Pericles's Athenians did; examine the enemy's strengths and weaknesses, and conclude that the French did indeed have the means and the "superiority" over their enemies to "force them into a reasonable peace, which is always the goal that we must aim for in all wars."[357]

The assessment of strengths and weaknesses that Puységur recommended seems like a simple enough concept to carry out, but the questions to be answered go far deeper than one might initially think. Puységur suggested that it was necessary to "meticulously" make observations concerning the "(geographical) situation of the lands, consulting maps on hand if not perfectly in mind."[358] Stressing the importance of thoughtful historical reflection on the

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[355] Ibid.

[356] Ibid.

[357] Ibid.

[358] Ibid., II, 204.

events of war, Puységur flatly stated that it was not enough to have a cursory knowledge of conflicts:

> For this one must read the histories with attention and thoughtful study, and not be satisfied with knowing the outcome of the events of a war, for one must not only combine the reasons which occasioned it with the means employed to support and end it, but it is still necessary to follow all the particular events, and with the help of the principles that I establish, to discern the skillful maneuvers to profit from, and the mistakes made in order to correct them.[359]

The questions that Puységur recommended that war planners seek answers to before engaging in war were not simple and required serious military study to answer competently, as the country's future prosperity – and the lives of its soldiers were on the line. Using Pericles as a model, these are the questions that Puységur thought France's leaders should have contemplated before going to war with a large coalition of European states in 1688:

> …what were then our interests, our forces, our means to provide for the necessary expenses for the entirety of a great war? If there still remained means to avoid it, which negotiation was necessary to try to dissipate the League? … Would it be more advantageous for us to support the war alone against all than to acquiesce to the demands that were made of us? … If we had to attack or remain on the defensive? … To which power it was necessary to face first? What could be the consequences? What different consequences should follow if (we) face one rather than the other? How long could the war be? If it suited us better to remain on the defensive, from what power should we most fear being attacked? Where could they attack us? With how many forces? How far and by what means could they support the war? And on our side, who were those we could use to oppose their progress?[360]

Here, Puységur suggested that gut feelings, casual assumptions, and light assessments should play no role in planning for war. On the contrary, only concentrated, dedicated study and

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[359] Ibid.

[360] Ibid., II, 203-4.

reflection - supplemented by history – should inform leaders considering war or responding to threats. “One should dedicate oneself to the study of both ancient and modern history, seeking to discern the motives that led to different wars in each case,” he wrote.[361]

As for Pericles himself, Puységur mentioned the key recommendations he made to the Athenians in his pre-war speech found in Thucydides. Puységur noted that upon reflection, the Athenian leader decided to encourage sea battles over land battles, noting that the Athenian territory itself was not worth exposing their armies to potentially devastating losses to the Spartan area of strength. Puységur also commented that Pericles advised the Athenians to defend their capital city, and the port of Piraeus, which was its connection to its maritime empire.[362] But Puységur’s comment on the reason why Pericles made these choices is interesting, and shows a depth of analysis that set Puységur apart from his peers:

> It is apparent that this proposition and approach of Pericles are dictated by the sciences necessary for a man to govern a state well. This proposition is in fact so sensible that one only has to read what follows in Thucydides to know all its strength.[363]

Here, we see a military tutor of Louis XV himself commenting on the methods required of him to govern effectively, and the model was Pericles, a champion of Athenian democracy. This demonstrates that certain ideals of the Enlightenment as a whole – democracy, free speech, criticism of monarchy - even if somewhat guarded, had wheedled their way into the minds of members of the military aristocracy by the 1740’s. If this is not convincing of the persuasive

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[361] Ibid., II, 203.

[362] Ibid., II, 203.

[363] Ibid.

power of Enlightenment ideals in France's ancien regime, let it show then the weakening image of the French monarchy, apparently now open to commentary on its virtue.

A Sign of Things to Come

It is important for readers today to note Puységur's technique of informing his military training and theory with historical reflection and hypothetical re-enactment. This is perhaps one of the most important elements of Puységur's long-term historical legacy, which has been overlooked for centuries, and only emerges when the interpretation of his writing is taken in its proper context. His notion that military officers could be educated by reflection upon history and concentrated study of applied rules of theory would not exist without Puységur's deep appreciation of ancient Greece and Rome. The idea that higher concepts of warfare could be taught in a non-battlefield setting holds a position of primacy in Puységur's writing, and it is this very philosophy that forms the bedrock of all modern military academies, officer training schools, or any military program that embraces simulation as a teaching method. Puységur, therefore, is a key bridging figure to a longue durée spirit of military teaching and learning that exists worldwide in the present but has its root in classical antiquity – initiated in Greece, recognized by Puységur, implemented today.

The efforts of les *faiseurs de systèmes* from the 1720's to through the 1740's establishes these early decades of the eighteenth century as perhaps more important to the spirit of military innovation than previously considered. While it is easy to become fascinated by the tactical proposals initiated by these writers, none of which survived intact beyond the eighteenth century, it is the motivation behind their effort that deserves the most attention for its relevance to modern military development. Folard and Mesnil-Durand may have been misguided even in their own

time for the way in which they suggested the French should line up in battle. But no one can deny that their fervent commitment to innovation was the right direction for a stagnant French military. Puységur correctly realized that the French had to educate themselves and train their way out of that inertia of ineffectiveness. His theory of defining structures for military education presaged modern efforts to establish a more sophisticated officer class in militaries worldwide. All three looked to classical antiquity as a model for correcting the course of their army's path. That, in and of itself, is a rational system of behavior that reflected and contributed to the overall culture of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. This type of thinking branched into a different direction with the work of Maurice de Saxe, who researched ancient Roman practice for ways to turn the needs of the individual soldier into an effective basis for better military organization.

Chapter Three. A Heartfelt Interlude with Maurice de Saxe

Puységur's notion that military officers should educate themselves on the principles of warfare was not the only idea of the mid-eighteenth century founded on the virtue of developing individual military men. An even more prominent French marshal, Maurice de Saxe (1696-1750), suggested reforms set on a much more egalitarian foundation. Recognizing that it was more than just officers who needed development and attention, de Saxe's military theory is notable for its focus on the needs of individual soldiers, and the desire to improve their military experience and survivability on and off the battlefield.

De Saxe was a soldier's general, and his sympathy for the needs of his troops would not come as a much of a surprise to those familiar with his career. De Saxe was one of many bastard sons of Augustus II "The Strong," King of Poland and Elector of Saxony (1694-1733). Isolation marked de Saxe's childhood, as he was alienated from his mother by order of his father, who also had little time for him. Despite his royal lineage, poverty and insecurity marked his early years, and de Saxe bounced from tutor to tutor as he learned the business of war. De Saxe grew up with few notions of loyalty to any particular country and possessed a competitive streak ameliorated by a naturally outgoing personality.[364]

By the 1740's, Maurice de Saxe was not only France's most competent and effective general, but also one of its most experienced soldiers. De Saxe never shied from the thick of the fight, and was already on campaign in Flanders under the tutelage of Count Johan Matthias von der Schulenburg and Frederick of Württemberg (in the War of Spanish Succession) at the age of

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[364] John Manchip White, *Marshal of France: The Life and Times of Maurice, Comte de Saxe* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962), 17-18.

12.[365] He fought under Marlborough and Prince Eugene of Savoy at the 1708 Siege of Lille, and witnessed the carnage of Malplaquet (1709) before his thirteenth birthday. By 1712 (at the age of 16), de Saxe was a veteran of the Great Northern War against Sweden. Toby McLeod suggests that his experience in that war painted his future military outlook. At the Battle of Gadebusch (1712) in that war, de Saxe's regiment fell apart on retreat, teaching him valuable lessons about unit discipline and chain of command.[366] Maurice would not see war again until 1733. It was during this personal interwar period that Maurice put his military observations to the page in 1732 with his iconic work of military theory, *Mes Réveries sur l'art de guerre*.

De Saxe's military career ascended to lofty heights after entering French service in the War of Polish Succession (1733-1735), when his talent was recognized by the Duc de Noailles, and he was promoted to lieutenant general. The War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748) soon followed. De Saxe achieved legendary status in that conflict, leading French armies to victory at the Battles of Prague (1741), Eger (1742), Fontenoy, Ghent (1745), Antwerp, Namur, Mons, Rocoux (1746), Lawfeldt (1747), and Maastricht (1748).[367] He attained the rank of Marshal of France in 1743, became an official French subject in 1746, and gained a landed estate of his own when Louis XV awarded the Château de Chambord to him that same year. De Saxe would enjoy the good life as Chambord's master for only four years, dying of fever in 1750 at the age of 54.

Unquestionably the most accomplished French general in the decades before the reign of Napoleon, Maurice suffered the worst of all martial fates – to be mostly forgotten by popular

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[365] Toby McLeod, "Saxe, Marshal General of France, Comte Herman-Maurice de," in *Philosophers of War: The Evolution of History's Greatest Military Thinkers*, ed. Daniel Coetzee and Lee W. Eysturlid, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 149.

[366] Ibid., 150.

[367] Ibid., 151.

history. The French emperor's life and career draw readers and admirers like a supermassive black hole, attracting never-ending illumination while leaving little light for those previously regarded as distinctly brilliant. Luckily, de Saxe's legacy is greatly appreciated by military theorists and historians, who point to *Mes Réveries* as an entertaining and enlightening collection of ideas from a unique product of the eighteenth century's churning cycle of warfare. As we will see, Maurice de Saxe's theories reflected another time in history marked by constant war – the closing decades of the Roman Empire.

The title page of a 1757 English translation of *Mes Réveries sur l'art de guerre* features an interesting quote in Latin from Justus Lipsius:

> *Ad priscam illam, ac Romanam maxime militam flecte; cum cujus dilectu, disciplina, ordine, si nostra haecnovitia arma jungantur, que vis aut acies resistat.*

In English, the quote reads, "Turn to the former, and especially to the Roman warrior, with whose enlistment, discipline, and order, if our new arms (weapons) were united, what force or array could resist?"[368] It would be easy for any reader to skip past this little artistic flourish added to the title page by the printer. But its tiny, italicized text reveals much about the reception of de Saxe's work in the English-speaking world, just seven years after his death. The Lipsius quote does not appear on other title pages of the work, regardless of language. So the inclusion of the quote was a choice by the London publisher, John Nourse (1705-1780). There is no English translation of the quote on the page, which means the publisher assumed that at least some of his military and military-adjacent audience could read Latin. And for those who did, the message sent by the publisher was loud and clear: de Saxe's *Réveries* was a work that should be associated with the virtues of the Roman military and was relevant to the present audience of

[368] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, title page.

English readers. And Nourse apparently was willing to stake his money on it. He was not the only one. Written in 1732 and first published in 1756 posthumously, de Saxe's *Réveries* was reprinted three times in French in 1757, and again in 1761 and 1763. It was then printed in German in 1757, and 1767, and in English in 1757, 1759, and 1776.[369] A second work, a collection of notes written after *Mes Réveries* called *Esprit de lois de la tactique*, was published in 1762.

What was so meaningful, to eighteenth-century audiences, in the '*Réveries*' of Maurice de Saxe? His works were products of an accomplished leader invested in the idea of a military education firmly backed by the methods of ancient Rome and Greece. This is evident from the content of *Mes Réveries* in particular, as de Saxe presented a work not only of military theory, but also of military culture, centered as much on the heart and viability of the soldier as in the mechanical operation of an army. While Folard was obsessed with promoting a single style of warfare that could adapt to all situations, a true universal theory of war, Maurice de Saxe's approach was to create a treatise on military life that combined his experience as an officer with techniques that he thought could change the course of a stagnant French military culture.[370] This chapter will examine Maurice de Saxe's masterwork and reveal the ancient Roman blueprint the French marshal used to create one of the most forward-thinking works of the Military Enlightenment. We will also see how ancient Roman methods influenced de Saxe on the battlefield, at the scene of his greatest victory, the Battle of Fontenoy (1745).

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[369] Gat, *A History of Military* Thought, 35.

[370] Chris Bellamy, ed., "Saxe, Marshal Maurice de," in *The Oxford Companion to Military History* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 806.

A Personal Approach to Military Innovation

Many of the methods de Saxe chose to include in this work had their origin in classical antiquity, which de Saxe did not hide from his readers. In fact, he took nearly every opportunity possible to show when his ideas were either directly inspired by ancient Rome and Greece, or simply coincidental with them. Mirroring Vegetius's style above any other ancient writer, de Saxe asserted that fundamental principles of war had to be learned and established in the mind of a general before his genius could emerge.[371] This foundation would ensure that the general could guarantee the courage of the troops under his command, which de Saxe described as the "chief excellence" of a general's abilities.[372]

De Saxe overtly challenged his peers to reject intellectual inertia and ineffectual habit and custom, noting that war was the only science in which absolute certainties could not predict the outcome. According to de Saxe, human custom, prejudice, and above all, ignorance, were the factors that most obscured the study of war. [373] He makes this point clearly when referencing the writings of Montecuccoli:

> In reading Montecuccoli, who was contemporary with Gustavus, and is the only general who entered into any detail, it is very evident that we have already departed more from this system than he did from that of the Romans; from whence it appears that our present practice is nothing more than a passive compliance with received customs, the grounds of which we are absolute strangers to.[374]

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[371] Gat, 35.

[372] Ibid., 34 and Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, v.

[373] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, iii.

[374] Ibid., iv-v.

Throughout *Mes Réveries*, de Saxe demonstrates how examples from the ancient world and his own experience could be trusted to remove the inefficient methods clouding the potential of military practice. The Enlightenment spirit flows through *Mes Réveries*, as the entire work stands as one man's plea for modern militaries to end ineffective habits reinforced by tradition, and to embrace techniques backed by observation and historical best practices.

Nothing could demonstrate this point more effectively than de Saxe's willingness to disagree with his mentor and friend, Folard. Rather than parrot Folard's theory and style of presentation out of loyalty, de Saxe frequently disagreed with Folard's ideas in *Mes Réveries*. But they agreed on one thing for certain: the real enemy of modern militaries was the frustrating practice of leaders trying the same methods, over and over, and getting the same results. As de Saxe wrote, "The Chevalier Folard was the first who had spirit enough to pass the bounds of popular prejudice, and I honor him for the example; nothing is so disgraceful as that slavish adherence to custom, which prevails at the present; and which, as I have already observed, proceeds only from ignorance."[375] De Saxe praised Folard's choice to step out of the shadow of ignorance even though he did not always agree with his thoughts. It was not Folard's ideas that mattered to de Saxe as much as his intent. By placing this endorsement of personal enlightenment in the preface of *Mes Réveries*, de Saxe set the tone for his readers who were about to encounter his own ideas. *Mes Réveries* was a work of de Saxe's own free thinking, independent of the influences of his time – even those of his closest friend. As the title implies,

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[375] Ibid., v.

Mes Réveries were "My Daydreams," on the art of war, implying that even the dreams of the individual were worthy of publication over the slavish adherence of ineffective custom.[376]

Folard's mistake, de Saxe wrote, was that he "supposes men to be the same at all times and does not consider that bravery is a variable and uncertain quality of the mind."[377] To de Saxe, the heart of the soldier mattered. Soldiers of the line were not automatons to him, and he considered a general's ability to inspire bravery and confidence in his troops to be his greatest responsibility. "No person has of yet treated of this matter," he wrote, "which is of the utmost importance in war, and demands our particular regard and application."[378] In *Mes Réveries*, de Saxe concerned himself with issues that other military theorists of his time either downplayed or outright ignored, such as the recruitment and training of soldiers, the equipping and feeding of them, and what inspires them to fight or to run. De Saxe's thoughts on these matters constitute a type of compassionate thinking that was either uncommon among officers of his age, or unspoken of before. It was cutting-edge thinking even for the Enlightenment as a whole. As

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[376] The historiography and commentary on Maurice de Saxe is infested with references to *Mes Réveries* as a text written in a sort of drug-enhanced soporific haze. It is time to set the record straight on this matter. This accusation originates from an opinion given by Thomas Carlyle in *History of Friedrich II of Prussia*, vol. 6, 6 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1887), 257. Here, he calls *Mes Réveries* "a strange military farrago, dictated, I should think, under opium." There is no basis in fact for this claim by Carlyle, who cites no source for this. The quote is only Carlyle's opinion of the work, which has, unfortunately, served to discredit de Saxe and his writing due to the frequency with which it has been repeated by historians and military history enthusiasts since Brig. Gen. T.R. Philips dredged it up in his very popular *Roots of Strategy. The 5 Greatest Military Classics of All Time* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1985), 184 in 1940. Now is the time to stop carelessly using this overquoted and tired line from 1858, which Carlyle clearly intended to be interpreted as his own observation, in parentheses, unsupported by evidence of any sort.

[377] Ibid.

[378] Ibid.

Pichichero asserts, de Saxe defined the heart of the soldier as a type of mind-body connection that amalgamated emotion, psychology, physical reflexes, and instincts. He did this in the 1730's, far ahead of later practitioners of the idea of psychological medicine, meaning that Maurice de Saxe in *Mes Réveries* participated in what would later be called the "science of man," long before his fellow Enlightened peers.[379]

Yet de Saxe was not the first military writer to think in this way. Despite his desire to articulate modern conceptions, de Saxe drew heavily from the example of Vegetius, whose ancient Roman military manual also discussed matters related to the person of the soldier such as their recruitment, training, morale, and equipment. Regard for soldiers as human beings may have been revolutionary for eighteenth-century militaries, but the lack of focus on the individual soldier was a problem already under criticism by Vegetius, who wrote in the closing decades of the Roman Empire. Vegetius, for example, lamented the careless selection and training of troops in his age, which was inferior to that of the Roman Republic, which had fallen centuries before:

> To be victorious, therefore, over our enemies in the field, we must unanimously supplicate Heaven to dispose the Emperor to reform the abuses in raising our levies, and to recruit our Legions after the method of the ancients. The same care in choosing and instructing our young soldiers in all military exercises and evolutions, will soon make them equal to the old Roman troops who subdued the whole world. Nor let this alteration and loss of ancient discipline any way affect your majesty, since it is a happiness reserved for you alone best to restore the ancient ordinances, and establish new ones for the public welfare.[380]

De Saxe, then, either directly revived an ancient viewpoint for which he had great respect, or cultivated his own position after having read, at minimum, Vegetius, Polybius, and Caesar, all of whom are referred to in *Mes Réveries* to various degrees, and turn out

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[379] Pichichero, *The Military Enlightenment,* 119.

[380] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius,* 72-73.

to be foundational in the theoretical musings that make up the majority of his historical legacy. Maurice's penchant for modern reforms signals that he understood that the world had experienced an historical break with antiquity, but he also clearly looked to ancient examples for more than just inspiration. For Maurice, the ancient Roman military in particular was a model whose methods could be updated for eighteenth-century France.

De Saxe believed in creating a system of fundamental processes that would bring out the best in his soldiers. At the core of this belief was the idea that better trained, organized, and equipped soldiers could outfight larger enemy forces whose soldiers were of lower quality and preparedness. This is a concept that was particularly important for the militaries of the eighteenth century, which were frequently involved in expensive wars that required many soldiers and featured few decisive battles in the field. Wars were expensive, and de Saxe understood that large groups of men were difficult to train, equip, and feed. He noted that "multitudes serve only to perplex and embarrass" generals and he recommended that armies stay below 46,000 men.[381] The *quality* of the soldier, then, mattered to de Saxe, and he criticized the armies of his time for taking in the "refuse of society" to compose the soldiery, noting that "such men are far different from those by means of which the Romans conquered the universe."[382]

De Saxe lamented the "barbarous" methods by which troops were raised in his day: enlistment (for either fixed or unfixed terms, often abused), outright fraud, and compulsion, which he wrote caused a "general ravage" on the country.[383] He advocated

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[381] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 76.

[382] Ibid., 3.

[383] Ibid., 2.

instead for an egalitarian policy obliging men (age 20 to 30) of all conditions in life to serve in the military for five years with a set date of discharge. This included the "nobles and the rich" and would ensure an "inexhaustible fund of good recruits, as such as would not be subject to desertion," because in time it would be considered an honor to serve.[384] Better quality troops could be organized and trained more easily, and if the goal was a smaller army, de Saxe understood that the key component was the individual soldier. "The remarkable victories which the Romans constantly gained with small armies, over multitudes of barbarians, can be attributed to nothing but the excellent composition of their troops," he wrote.[385]

Vegetius thought similarly, noting that the defeats of Xerxes, Darius, Mithridates and other opponents of Rome and Greece showed that these armies were betrayed by their size.

> An army too numerous is subject to many dangers and inconveniences: its bulk makes it slow and unwieldy in its motions, and as it is obliged to march in columns of great length, it is exposed to the risk of being continually harassed and insulted by inconsiderable parties of the enemy.[386]

Vegetius added that the ancients, meaning the Roman Republic and the Greeks, preferred discipline to numbers, and that this lesson came directly from experience.[387] It was the quality of the legion that mattered to Vegetius, a virtue missing from his own time, in the late Empire. Thus, the quality of the troops mattered. Vegetius himself noted that the Romans negated many

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[384] Ibid.

[385] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, vii.

[386] Vegetius, *Military Institutions*, 91.

[387] Ibid., 92.

of the advantages of their numerous enemies by opposing them with "an unusual care in the choice of their levies, and in the instruction in the use of their arms."[388] He recommended rather strangely that levies were to come from more temperate climates, as their extraordinary "sufficiency in blood" inspired them to a "contempt of wounds and death," but that is beside the point. Vegetius's standards were his own, but the spirit of the process aligned with de Saxe: rid the army of refuse at selection. Realize the potential of the army by training and organization. And what better organization could there be than one modeled directly on that of the universally admired (or feared) Roman army?

De Saxe could have chosen any sort of organization to best array his theoretical troops, but he chose the Roman way – the legion. He made no attempt to make his organization style seem to be something of his own creation. De Saxe was proud to demonstrate to the world that his ideal army layout had the credibility and the pedigree of the Romans, titling Chapter Two of *Mes Réveries* "Of the Legion." He led the chapter by praising the legion as an expression of Roman discipline:

> The Romans subdued the universe by the effects of their discipline; they studied the art of war with indefatigable attention, and judiciously relinquished all old customs whenever experience threw better in their way; in which respect they differed from their enemies… [389]

He continued:

> The legion was a body so powerful in itself, as to be capable of undertaking the most arduous enterprises; its composition, says Vegetius, was undoubtedly the effect of inspiration only; a reflection corresponding with the opinion which I

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[388] Ibid., 5.

[389] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 24.

> have, for a long time, entertained concerning its importance, and which has rendered me more sensible of the defects of our own practice.[390]

The main defect of modern armies, according to de Saxe, was that they were designed around one and only one type of fighting: massed volleys of gunfire. When that was rendered ineffectual, he asserted, their formations were no longer of any consequence, and their next highest priority became self-preservation over the achievement of objectives. These infantry formations and methods were ineffective at their primary job, according to de Saxe, who proclaimed that he had seen "entire volleys without even killing four men," and that "the effects of gunpowder in engagements are become less dreadful, and fewer lives are lost by it, than is generally imagined."[391] De Saxe then challenged the whole world to produce evidence of "any single discharge" that so crippled an enemy that it could not advance, fire its own muskets and charge with fixed bayonets. "It is by this method," the charge, that de Saxe believed victories were obtained.[392]

It would be easy for someone reading Maurice de Saxe today to come to the conclusion that he was against his troops firing their muskets at enemy formations, but that was not the case at all. De Saxe was not against gunfire so much as he was against ineffectual gunfire. To de Saxe, effective gunfire came as an element of an infantry charge. It was trading gunfire that de Saxe despised in *Mes Réveries*. He produced anecdotes from the 1706 Battle of Castiglione and the 1717 Siege of Belgrade to support his position. At Castiglione, de Saxe recalled, an Imperial commander ordered his troops to hold fire until their French adversaries reached a distance of 20

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[390] Ibid.

[391] Ibid., 20.

[392] Ibid.

paces from them, expecting to defeat them with a devastating volley. When the French arrived at that distance, the Imperials let loose with a volley. So little damage was done that the French cut the Imperials to pieces "before the smoke was dispersed."[393] At Belgrade, de Saxe described his personal experience of watching two Imperial battalions fire at a "large body of Turks" at 30 paces. The Imperials killed 32 Turks and were cut down where they stood by Turkish swordsmen. De Saxe himself rescued one of the only Imperial survivors on horseback.[394] This experience apparently influenced de Saxe's theoretical outlook, as his recommended method of arranging an army began with distrust for the prevailing contemporary method.

De Saxe had three apparent aims in mind when suggesting the legion as his ideal army layout: enhance the mobility of the army, bolster their courage under fire, and leverage their ability to assault and defend productively. It stood to reason that de Saxe would find the legionary structure appealing. The Legion was, after all, the system of the most accomplished army of the ancient world outside of the Macedonian phalanx, which captured the imagination of Folard. Legions were known for their maneuverability and adaptability and could either attack or defend with a high degree of flexibility and effectiveness. A Roman legion varied slightly in size and composition from army to army, but the classic structure (after the Marian Reforms of 107 BCE) was approximately 4,500 to 6,000 men, arranged into ten cohorts of six centuries. Each century was further broken into 10 contubernia of eight legionaries. De Saxe's theoretical army was composed of four legions of 3,582 men, organized into four regiments of four centuries, with 10 companies. The ten companies contained 15 men each. De Saxe further explained that

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[393] Ibid., 21.

[394] Ibid., 22.

each century would be accompanied by a half-century of light infantry and a half century of horse.[395] While the numbers vary a bit, the cohort/century/contubernia structure of the Roman legion matched the regiment/century/company arrangement of de Saxe's legion. Quimby praised this structure as the forerunner of the infantry division that was adopted by the French army 30 years later.[396]

What made de Saxe's legion different from its ancient forebear was of course, the presence of gunpowder weapons and the organizational adjustments necessary for de Saxe to obtain his desired results on the modern battlefield. But the philosophy of offensive action was the same. De Saxe intended for his legion to outmaneuver its enemies, and to use its fire as a precursor of hand to hand combat. Interestingly enough, this was the accepted practice of Roman armies from the Republic to the early Empire as well. Of course, the Romans did not have gunpowder, but they did have missile weapons in the form of the *pilum*, a throwing spear that Roman legionaries carried into battle along with their shields and swords. The Romans traditionally threw their *pila* into formations of enemy infantry immediately before charging them. This caused casualties among the enemy, along with disruption in the enemy lines, and the breakage of enemy equipment before the ensuing hand to hand bloodbath.[397] Maurice intended the same effect with the fire from his legions, and he recommended a deployment of mixed weaponry at the battalion level to facilitate this. De Saxe suggested that his legionary centuries

[395] Ibid., 24.

[396] Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 49.

[397] Alexander Zhmodikov, "Roman Republican Heavy Infantrymen in Battle (IV-II Centuries B.C.)," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 49, no. 1 (2000): 67–78. Also, Polybius, 1.40.12.; Livy, 9.13.2-5, 9.35 4-6, 28.2, 5-6; Caesar, 1.25, 2.23, 11.46, 11.93.

be drawn up four ranks deep, with the front two ranks being armed with firelocks only, with the two rear ranks equipped with half-pikes and firelocks slung over the shoulder. De Saxe described these half-pikes as 13 feet long, with an 18 inch iron blade, and a hollowed spruce staff.[398] Contemporary military minds likely would have viewed the inclusion of pikes as a step backward into the tactics of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but de Saxe explained that the half pike had fallen out of use only out of habit. He commented that "half-pikes were found unserviceable in some affairs that happened in Italy, where the situation was rough and impractical for them, from whence they became totally laid aside, and nothing since has been thought of, but to increase the quantity of firearms."[399]

Hand-to-hand combat, de Saxe wrote, consisted of the two rear ranks of pikes lowering their weapons, extending their blades six to seven feet before the rear rank. This arrangement would provide the front ranks with support and encouragement from the rear ranks and vice versa. With this encouragement, de Saxe suggested, the front ranks would be able to more effectively fire their muskets, with less trepidation and shaking from fear. The front two ranks could then affix their plug bayonets and either charge or defend. De Saxe preferred the use of bayonets that soldiers jammed into the barrel of the musket. This forced his infantry to choose one way of fighting or the other. In de Saxe's thoughts, a battalion that committed to fire, shot better. If they committed to the charge instead, they charged better. De Saxe did not want his troops "to make use of two different ways of engaging at once," arguing for consistency of purpose. [400] This was important to de Saxe because he noted that troops had a habit of opening

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[398] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 24.

[399] Ibid., 33.

[400] Ibid., 32.

fire once they closed with the enemy, losing their charge momentum. De Saxe wrote that this happened regardless of orders, even if their general was present leading the unit. He mentioned in an anecdote in *Mes Réveries* that Charles XII himself could not stop the soldiers immediately next to him from firing in the middle of a charge against the Russians. "Although he routed the enemy and obtained a complete victory," he wrote, "He was so piqued that he passed through the ranks, remounted his horse, and rode off without speaking a word."[401] The momentum of the charge required the combined force of will and body, and to obtain both, the infantry required constant exercise and drill.

Both de Saxe and Vegetius address the topic of exercising their soldiers within the first few pages of their manuals but they differ somewhat in the details of their approach. Vegetius admired the famed Roman discipline of the bygone past. He noted that daily exercise was the regular practice of the old Roman army and the perfection of its officers inspired the rank and file as an example.[402] Vegetius recommended two activities in particular for new recruits: swimming to build strength and survivability, and weapons training with a post to train proficiency with arms.[403] But above all, it was the daily drill, the continuous hard exercise, even in non-fighting skills, that built discipline. "Inured to labor in peace, they may find no difficulty in war," Vegetius wrote of Roman soldiers. He added, "In war, discipline is superior to strength, but if that discipline is neglected, there is no longer and difference between the soldier and the peasant."[404] De Saxe agreed that manual exercise was a cornerstone of military discipline, but

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[401] Ibid.

[402] Vegetius, *Military Institutions*, 64.

[403] Ibid., 20-22.

[404] Ibid., 82.

cautioned that it was “by no means of sufficient importance to engage all our attention.”[405] De Saxe suggested that it was the legs that were the key to military fitness. “The principal part of all discipline depends on the legs,” he wrote. “The personal abilities which are required in the performance of all maneuvers, and likewise in engagements, are totally confined to them, and whoever is of a different opinion is a dupe to ignorance, and a novice to the profession of arms,” he insisted.[406] To de Saxe, his soldier’s legs were the difference not only when it came to outmaneuvering and charging the enemy, but also to holding together the legionary structure that he so greatly desired to promote to the military world.

One of the most common problems for early eighteenth-century militaries was that their formations tended to drift apart into irregular spacing, both in rank and file, when marching. This problem was especially prevalent among armies arrayed in thin, linear formations, as even the simplest obstacles caused spacing issues.[407] As de Saxe put it, for example, if the front of a formation on a march was ordered to quicken its pace, the rear would fall behind, forcing them into a run to catch up with the front. The formation behind that one would then see the back lines of the first formation run, and they would run themselves, throwing the whole army into a chain of disorder. “Thus it becomes impossible to march a body of troops with expedition, without forsaking all manner of order and regularity.”[408] De Saxe compared marching of armies of his

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[405] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 14.

[406] Ibid.

[407] Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 14.

[408] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 16.

time to a "machine constructed on no principle, which is ready to fall in pieces every moment, and which cannot be kept in motion without infinite difficulty."[409]

De Saxe advocated a solution from classical antiquity to address the problem. This was the cadenced step, which had fallen out of practice in European lands outside of Prussia by the mid-eighteenth century. The concept was simple: soldiers in formation would time the march of their step to the regular beat of a drum. This remedy, de Saxe wrote, appeared to be a secret left for only him to decode.[410] It was no secret to the ancient Greeks and Romans, however, and de Saxe attributed cadenced marching to be the cornerstone of Roman discipline.[411] The idea of marching to a beat was "dictated by nature," de Saxe explained,

> … in which alone consists the whole mystery, and which answers to the military pace of the Romans: it was to preserve this that martial sounds were invented, and drums introduced… by means of this, you will be always able to regulate your pace at pleasure, your rear can never lag behind, and the whole will step with the same foot…[412]

De Saxe suggested that the French should experiment with this concept not only for organizational purposes, but for increased speed of march. De Saxe noted that the "military pace of the Romans" was 24 miles in five hours. If the French could learn to change their speed of march during an engagement, de Saxe wrote, the advantage would

[409] Ibid.

[410] Ibid., 15.

[411] Ibid., 17.

[412] Ibid., 16.

be of “infinite consequence.”[413] Eventually, the French army saw it de Saxe’s way, formalizing cadenced marching in 1754.[414]

The fundamental nature of cadenced marching to the discipline and organization of an army was certainly an idea that de Saxe drew from Vegetius, who used similar language when describing the importance of this marching method. Vegetius stated firmly that the cadenced step, the “military step,” as he called it, was “the first thing the soldiers are to be taught.”[415] To Vegetius, this concept of training was paramount. There was nothing “of more consequence either on the march or in the line than that they should keep their ranks with the greatest exactness. For troops that march in an irregular and disorderly manner, are always in great danger of being defeated.”[416] De Saxe, like Vegetius, put this method in a position of prominence in his main work, leading off his section on “Forming Troops for Action,” with this concept.

In promoting the idea of the cadenced step in *Mes Réveries*, de Saxe also elaborated on the universal quality of music on human movement. This was part of a paragraph that seems more akin to Rousseau’s thoughts on natural laws than anything one would expect from a work of military theory. De Saxe compared the effect of marching to music to that of dancing.

> Nothing is more common than to see a number of persons dance together during a whole night, even with pleasure; but, deprive them of music, and the most indefatigable amongst them will not be able to bear it for two hours only; which sufficiently proves that sounds have a secret power over us, disposing our organs to bodily exercises, and at the same time, deluding, as it were, the toil of them.[417]

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[413] Ibid., 17.

[414] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 84.

[415] Vegetius, *Military Institutions,*18.

[416] Ibid.

[417] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 17.

De Saxe further pre-empted those who would disagree with him on this point, arguing that movement to music is so natural that it cannot be avoided. He noted that his soldiers fell into rank in cadence without being aware of the drumming.[418] This manner of thinking is what sets de Saxe apart from some of his contemporaries, particularly his intensely rational friend, Folard. Here we see de Saxe making a universal observation from his own experience of something that could not be seen, quantified, or measured. De Saxe's accounting for the unique properties of human behavior like the response to music shows that de Saxe was not just interested in how militaries and soldiers work, but how human beings work; and he was not unwilling to consider the human nature of his soldiers when thinking about the problems and solutions that his military theory addressed.

Among the more unusual reforms de Saxe called for was the positioning of light artillery within each of his sixteen legionary centuries. De Saxe called these weapons *amusettes*. These were rifled guns, smaller than a cannon but larger than an arquebus, that could be affixed to a light carriage if necessary. According to de Saxe, these guns could be advanced with the *light* infantry before an engagement and fire up to 200 accurate, long-distance rounds every hour, "with ease."[419] The theoretical addition of these weapons to his legion shows that de Saxe was not entirely distrustful of fire action. Rather, he trusted fire action that did not stop the momentum of a potential infantry charge.[420] According to de Saxe's theory, the charge comes from his legionary formations, but repeated, prolonged firing was a function of light infantry, and the amusette was to help them perform that task on the battlefield.

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[418] Ibid.
[419] Ibid., 39.

[420] Ibid., 19.

De Saxe was not the only modern European general to experiment with the idea of using light artillery to give his infantry more firepower. Gustavus Adolphus deployed lightweight leather cannons in the Thirty Years' War to middling effect. De Saxe could have been inspired by Gustavus Adolphus, but considering de Saxe was already apparently very skilled at adapting ideas from Vegetius and the Roman legions, it was also likely that de Saxe drew this idea from the ancients as well, who also understood the necessity of enhancing infantry action with projectile weapons. Vegetius mentioned that the number and bravery of soldiers was not enough to gain victory. Thus, as in de Saxe's proposed organization, every Roman legionary century was to carry a ballista, mounted on a carriage, drawn by mules for artillery support.[421] Even though the idea to equip divisions of infantry with light, portable artillery was originally generated in the ancient world, this is one of the most forward-thinking of de Saxe's tactics. Every army since the beginning of the twentieth century has included light artillery in the ranks of its infantry platoons, from mortars to anti-tank missiles to anti-aircraft weapons to drones. This idea flows from the notion that every effort should be made to maximize the firepower from a small group of soldiers or even the individual. To leverage this type of firepower, de Saxe once again leaned on an ancient practice – skirmishers.

In de Saxe's legion, light infantry was to mimic the style of the ancient Greek *peltast* or the Roman *velites*. They were to be composed of the "youngest and most active soldiers" and were meant to advance in loose formation before the main body of legionary infantry.[422] In this regard, they functioned as skirmishers, peppering enemy formations with fire as the legion

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[421] Vegetius, *Military Institutions*, 85.

[422] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 30.

advanced, or as the enemy closed on the legion. De Saxe suggested these young, highly-trained marksmen be positioned 100 to 200 paces in front of the legion and begin firing with their muskets and *amusettes* when the enemy was 300 paces from their position. Once the enemy approached to within 50 paces of the light infantry, they were to retreat into the intervals of the legionary centuries, firing as they retreated.[423] Functionally, these light troops were analogous to the Roman *velites*, who behaved in the same manner on the battlefield, only with javelins instead of muskets. Vegetius describes their movements in detail in his writings, noting that "light armed troops advanced in front on the line, and attacked the enemy: if they could make them give way, they pursued them, but if they were repulsed by their superior bravery or numbers, they retired behind their own heavily armed infantry, which appeared, to use the expression, like a wall of iron, and which renewed the action, at first with their missile weapons, then sword in hand."[424] Thus, de Saxe's legion, like the Roman legion, was to use light infantry and heavy infantry in a cohesive manner to pelt their enemies with missiles, then engage their battered and frustrated opponents in a violent, overwhelming charge. In legionary organization and action, it is clear that de Saxe drew his inspiration from ancient Rome in very specific ways.

Small details like the proper use of standards also caught de Saxe's reforming eye. To de Saxe, standards were more than just ornamental, they served a vital organizational purpose for the legion. Modern armies, de Saxe wrote, forgot the primary, ancient purpose of the standard, which was to organize and direct the motions of separate bodies of troops.[425] De Saxe noted that

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[423] Ibid., 36.

[424] Vegetius, *Military Institutions*, 72.

[425] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 34.

modern armies lumped unit standards together in the center of a battalion, to make obvious the middle point of a large group of hundreds of soldiers. He called this practice “absurd,” a habit of modernity contrary to ancient practice, and “proof of our ignorance.”[426] De Saxe explained that the “ancients” placed standards in the center of smaller units as a means of identification and orientation for the soldiers of the unit and their commanders. To align with ancient practice, de Saxe suggested placing a standard in the center of every century, that is, one standard for every 184 men, at most. Above them all would be a legionary standard to allow soldiers to form with “ease and celerity.” [427] Better orientation of standards, de Saxe wrote, assured that regiments would not be so easily disordered or mixed, which was a “matter of no small moment in an engagement.”[428] According to de Saxe, this would also prevent soldiers from firing prematurely or in an undisciplined manner, as it would be much easier for soldiers to spot their standard, see what the other soldiers of their unit are doing, and understand their orders more clearly.[429]

Furthermore, de Saxe suggested that generals should cultivate a legionary identity with their solders that exceeded the current habits of modern armies. For instance, according to de Saxe, legions should develop a permanent name, and not bear the name of their colonel, which was the prevailing naming system of the time. “The exploits of a corps that has any fixed title are not so soon forgotten,” he wrote, adding, “it is moreover natural for all men to be less interested about things that relate to others, than those about which they themselves are personally

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[426] Ibid.

[427] Ibid., 34-35.

[428] Ibid., 35.

[429] Ibid.

concerned."[430] Besides, the colonel may "very probably be disliked."[431] A title particular to the legion inspired the soldier, de Saxe suggested, once again displaying his concern for the mental and emotional composition of his troops. De Saxe suggested another proposal in that vein. He asserted that all soldiers should affix a "piece of brass" on each shoulder displaying the number of their legion and regiment, so that they might easily be identified with the standard that bears the same number. This was similar to the Roman practice mentioned by Vegetius of affixing the name of each soldier, along with the number of his cohort and century to his personal shield.[432]

The Romans in particular also understood this concept of legionary identity. The fanaticism of Roman legionaries for their collective legion is well documented in Caesar's *Commentaries*. For example, Caesar recounted an episode during the landing of his legion on the beach of Kent in his first invasion of Britain when the eagle-bearer of his legion pushed forward into the tide and a hail of enemy arrows to move the standard to the shore. His fellow legionaries rallied behind him, so the eagle would not be lost, to their great shame.[433] Later in the same work, Caesar also commemorated the name of standard bearer, Lucius Petrosidius, who preserved his eagle by throwing it over the rampart of a Roman camp as he was cut down by a horde of Nervii.[434] De Saxe would have understood this concept of legionary identity as a foundational element of Roman discipline and morale, and he understood well how small

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[430] Ibid., 41.

[431] Ibid.

[432] Vegetius, *Military Institutions*, 72.

[433] Caesar, *The Landmark Julius Caesar,* IV.25, 125.

[434] Ibid., V.37, 156.

measures like unit naming and legionary pride gave his regiments character. Regarding this type of collective identity, he cautioned generals, "Matters of the utmost importance depend sometimes on trifles, which escape our notice."[435]

De Saxe hoped that legionary identity would also be accepted and propagated through another, more permanent method. He proposed reviving a Roman practice for discouraging desertion: the tattooing of low-ranking officers and rank-and-file soldiers with an identifying mark of their legion. De Saxe suggested having soldiers' hands marked with their legion and regimental numbers, "with the kind of composition made use of by Indians, so as never to be effaced; which would effectually put a stop to desertion, and tend to innumerable good consequences," by establishing it as a mark of honor. "It was a practice among the Romans," he wrote, "but with this difference, that they were marked with a hot iron."[436] Vegetius mentions this practice of marking soldiers as something that should not take place immediately. The Roman writer advised commanders to wait until recruits were evaluated and judged fit for service before branding or tattooing.[437] This underscored a point on which de Saxe and Vegetius agreed, that the legionary mark was as much about honor and fitness as it was about ownership of the recruit. De Saxe and Vegetius both valued the individual emotions of the soldier and the pride they would feel from being permanently accepted into the army. The mark signaled to the soldier that he was taking a step forward in life by attaching himself physically to a greater cause.

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[435] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 41.

[436] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, II, 29.

[437] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius*, 15-16.

De Saxe hoped that in time the legionary identity would supplant national identity among his troops. He certainly understood as much as anyone that the soldiers of an eighteenth-century army may not always represent the country of their birth in the field. De Saxe after all, was a Saxon prince of the King of Poland, and was also a displaced Count in Courland, who previously fought for the Hapsburg Empire and Russia before accepting his commission as a French general. Any regiment of his French army could have many foreign nationals serving in the rank and file. That is why this concept of legionary identity is a part of his writings. It was a kind of military character that transcended language and culture, and acknowledged the "melting pot" reality of military service that de Saxe experienced in his lifetime. He wrote,

> These legions moreover form a kind of universal seminary of soldiers, where different nations are freely adopted, and their natural prejudices effectually removed; a circumstance of infinite use to a monarch, or a conqueror, who will thus always have a world to recruit in. And those who imagine that the Roman legions were totally composed of Roman citizens, are very much deceived, for they were a collection of all nations; but it was their composition, their discipline, and their method of fighting which gave them superiority over their enemies, and obtained their victories; neither were they vanquished in turn, until these prudent measures became supplanted, and negligence and degeneracy were suffered to prevail in their stead.

In this quote, de Saxe seemed to speak of the legion as a type of miniature, multi-national utopia united around the martial development of soldiers. However, he also implied that the breakdown of discipline in the ranks could lead to degeneracy and defeat. This was the experience of the Roman military in the late Imperial period, when Roman legions were often uncoordinated amalgamations of multiple nations, fighting styles, and languages - quite different from their early Republican roots. This was the Roman army at the time of Vegetius, who mentioned in his writings that "it is almost impossible for (foreign auxilia) to act in concert" with Roman legions because each nation has its "own peculiar discipline, customs, and manner of fighting."

However, when “properly trained and disciplined,” foreign troops can be of “material service.”[438] The operative idea for both Vegetius and de Saxe was uniform discipline, and the particular care shown by each writer for the small details that contributed to discipline showed that regardless of time and technology, parallel ideas existed between the two men regarding the heart of the individual soldier and his relation to an overall regiment.

Another practice related to unit cohesion that de Saxe wished to change was the tradition of prioritizing ornamentation over function when it came to the military uniforms of his day. The topic of clothing troops was important enough to de Saxe that it was the second topic addressed in *Mes Réveries*, right after the recruitment of troops. The central problem of clothing soldiers, according to de Saxe, stemmed from the “love of appearance” prevailing over a regard for health. All too frequently, soldiers were outfitted in rotting clothes ill-suited to withstand the rigors of campaigning. De Saxe noted that once the rainy season began, the stockings, shoes, and hats of soldiers rotted, sending many of them to the hospital with sickness and fever.[439] De Saxe advocated cutting soldiers’ hair short, and issuing them wigs to keep their heads warm. On top of this wig, de Saxe suggested that soldiers not wear hats, but helmets, “made after the Roman model, which will be no heavier, be far from inconvenient, protect the head against the stroke of a sabre, and appear extremely ornamental.”[440] This would go along with a waistcoat, a doublet, and a hooded cloak to keep them warm. To keep the feet warm, de Saxe recommended leather shoes waterproofed with tallow or fat, leather gaiters, galoshes, and wool stockings.[441] De Saxe’s

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[438] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius*, 50.

[439] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 4-5.

[440] Ibid., 5.

[441] Ibid., 6-7.

concern for his infantry's well-being with regard to their clothing also mirrors Vegetius, who likewise lamented the sorry state of soldierly clothing in the late Imperial period. Vegetius complained that it was not ornamentation but laziness that allowed the previously uniform clothing and armor of the Roman legion to fall to the wayside.[442] The Marian Reforms of 107 BCE opened military service to non-property owners and assured that Roman soldiers' equipment would be furnished by the state rather than the individual. By Vegetius's time, soldiers stopped going into battle properly equipped. As Vegetius described it, "The method of the ancients no longer subsists… negligence and sloth having by degrees introduced a total relaxation of discipline, the soldiers began to think their armor too heavy, as they seldom put it on." As a consequence, Vegetius wrote, "our troops, in their engagements with the Goths, were often overwhelmed with showers of arrows."[443] Vegetius therefore recommended that it was necessary to provide soldiers with "defensive arms of every kind… for it is certain that a man will fight with greater courage and confidence when he finds himself properly armed for defence."[444]

For Vegetius, the weight of carrying gear built discipline, and he recommended that recruits carry no less than 60 pounds of gear while marching in the ranks. He quoted a poem from Virgil to illustrate how carrying heavy gear seemed to be part of a Roman soldier's identity:

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[442] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius*, 31.

[443] Ibid., 32.

[444] Ibid., 36.

The Roman soldiers, bred in war's alarms,
Bending with unjust loads and heavy arms,
Cheerful their toilsome marches undergo,
And pitch their sudden camp before the foe.[445]

De Saxe thought similarly as he was unconcerned that a soldier's standard issue gear should over-burden him. His recommended pack load? Sixty pounds, same as Vegetius. It should come as no surprise that the two men arrived at the same encumbrance number. It should also come as no surprise that de Saxe also agreed with Vegetius that carried weight had a more positive than negative effect on the average soldier. De Saxe wrote that "weight serves to poise, and make them steady than otherwise."[446] If weight did not make the soldier more disciplined, then at the very least, de Saxe suggested, it made them less likely to run away in a fight, due to the mass of gear.[447]

In *Mes Réveries*, de Saxe was always careful to stress mobility, positioning, and morale over firepower and numbers, much like the classic Roman legionary model. Even in defense, de Saxe advocated a policy of flexibility and improvisation. De Saxe was a master of siege warfare, and much of his early military experience in the War of Spanish Succession and the Austro-Turkish War (1717-18) centered on the attack and defense of places.[448] It is no surprise, then, that de Saxe used an example from siegecraft to emphasize the importance of maneuverability. De Saxe suggested that the only good defensive lines were the ridges, hills, and rough ground

[445] Ibid., 31.

[446] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 31.

[447] Ibid.

[448] Jonathan Abel, *Maurice de Saxe: Marshal-General of France*, Ft. Leavenworth Series (Kansas, 2019), https://doleinstitute.org/event/de Saxe-de-saxe-marshal-general-of-france/.

provided by nature, reinforced by "the best disciplined troops."[449] Man-made defensive lines and retrenchments, he wrote, were unreliable, and he scarcely remembered "a single instance of lines or retrenchments having been assaulted and not carried."[450] If one was inferior to the enemy in numbers, he reasoned, the enemy would attack several points simultaneously. If one was even or superior in number, there would be no need for defensive works to begin with.[451] De Saxe suggested that defensive works actually emboldened the enemy to attack, and because of this, a sally from a defensive line was the proper way to turn away an enemy assault. "If you can contrive some passages in your retrenchments for a party or two to sally out of," he wrote, "just as the head of the enemy's columns arrives up on the brink of the ditch, they will certainly make them halt the same instant."[452] De Saxe wrote that the enemy, unprepared for this maneuver, would be alarmed for their flanks and rear, and in all probability flee the battlefield.[453] So certain was de Saxe of the effect of a flexible, maneuverable defense on an attacking column that he declared he could cite "a thousand examples" to prove it. But in *Mes Réveries*, he only cited two, and both were from Julius Caesar's campaigns in Gaul.

De Saxe's use of examples from Caesar's *Commentaries* reveals a familiarity with the work that once again speaks to de Saxe's confidence in making his point through ancient examples. In the first of his two citations, de Saxe demonstrated how flexibility and trickery in

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[449] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, II, 137.

[450] Ibid.

[451] Ibid.

[452] Ibid., 141.

[453] Ibid.

defense turned away the attacking Gauls at Samarobriva in 54 BCE.[454] De Saxe referred to the city by its modern name, Amiens, in *Mes Réveries*, indicating his knowledge of ancient geography as well as that of his readers, who would find "Amiens" nowhere in Caesar's *Commentaries* should they decide to look the passage up on their own. On this occasion, de Saxe wrote, Caesar desired to save besieged Samarobriva by marching an army within striking distance of the Gallic lines. As the Gauls left the siege to approach Caesar's legions, his men threw up a hastily-constructed defensive structure and purposefully appeared confused and scattered. The emboldened Gauls charged forward. Caesar then "sallied out with his cohorts, and thereby threw them into so great a consternation that they all turned their backs and fled, without so much as a single person making the least attempt to defend himself."[455] De Saxe's second example from Caesar was the famous sally at Alesia in 52 BCE, when a massive Gallic army was turned back by a Roman cavalry charge out of Caesar's defensive works at a key moment in the battle.[456] Instead of the defending the line against an overwhelming host, de Saxe wrote, Caesar made a sally and fell "upon the enemy on one side, while he attacked them on the other; in which he succeeded so remarkably well that the Gauls were routed with a considerable loss…"[457] The main point made by de Saxe with these two examples from Caesar's *Commentaries* was that the legion, both his and Caesar's, functioned best when it was most creative, maneuverable, and able to attack the sides and rear of the enemy formation - even under frightening levels of stress.

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[454] Caesar, *Gallic War*, 5.49-5.52.

[455] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 142.

[456] Caesar, *Gallic War*, 7.87-7.88.

[457] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 142.

Immediately following these examples from Caesar in *Mes Réveries*, de Saxe clarified this idea even more explicitly. The flexibility of the legion, to de Saxe, was paramount – far more important that the length of the firing line or the depth of the column. "If one does but consider the method in which I form my troops, one must readily allow that they will be capable of moving with much more facility than our battalions in their present extensive order," he wrote. Stacked lines of infantry were "unwieldy, every trifle serves to embarrass them… if the first (battalion) is repulsed, the second is thereby disordered," de Saxe wrote, describing a mass of confusion as the second battalion waits for the first battalion to clear before they could do anything against the enemy, who would "certainly drive that (first) battalion upon the second, and the second upon the third… and if there were thirty, one in the rear of another, he will throw them all into confusion. Yet, this is what is called attacking in column by battalions."[458] De Saxe's legionary system worked to address the lack of horizontal maneuverability of the line, and the difficulty of moving backward in a column.

"My disposition is of a very different kind," de Saxe stressed. "For although the first battalion should be driven back, that which follows it, will notwithstanding be able to charge in the same instant, moving up in quick succession, and renewing the attack with fresh vigor… my march is rapid, and yet free of all manner of disorder; my charge is violent; and I shall always outflank the enemy, although equal in numbers."[459] De Saxe asserted that his legionary organization addressed the absurdity of the prevailing current order of battle, a system so dysfunctional that he was "at a loss to know" why his fellow officers had not yet made any

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[458] Ibid.

[459] Ibid., 142-43.

concerted attempt to correct it. De Saxe's ideas offered a forward-thinking reorientation to prevailing military wisdom. He wrote critically and confidently. But it is paramount to understand the source of this confidence:

> (My method) is far from being new, for it is that of the Romans – that with which they conquered the universe.[460]

De Saxe used the credibility and authority of ancient Rome to reinforce the idea that his system could work in his present day. It could work, he reasoned, because it worked before. Furthermore, de Saxe clearly understood that his fellow enlightened officers would accept this sort of reasoning. After all, the elite military class of his time made their admiration for classical antiquity obvious in their personal ornamentation, their reading lists, their home decoration, their daily conversations. De Saxe's military thinking was an outcropping of two prevailing cultural themes of the eighteenth century: the Enlightenment spirit of innovation over habit, and the pervasive presence of ancient Greek and Roman influences in nearly every area of life.

De Saxe drove his point about flexibility even further in *Mes Réveries* by introducing a multiple page excerpt from Polybius that emphasized the superior maneuverability of the legion over the Macedonian phalanx. De Saxe began his preamble to Polybius by reiterating that the Greeks were knowledgeable about the art of war and disciplined, but "their large phalanx was never able to contend with the small bodies (of troops) of the Romans disposed in this (legionary) order; in which opinion I am supported by Polybius, who concurs with me in giving them the preference."[461] He then wondered, what then could be expected from the battalions of his own time, considering they had "neither strength, nor discipline" to resist de Saxe's revived

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[460] Ibid., 143.

[461] Ibid., 143.

legion. “Let the centuries be posted in what situation you please; in a plain, or in rough ground; Make them sally out of a narrow pass or any other place and you will see with what surprising celerity they will form.”[462] De Saxe bemoaned the impracticality of “long battalions” that needed time and favorable terrain to function without “the utmost disgust and impatience” of generals like him.[463]

Turning to Polybius for proof, de Saxe confided to his readers that he had not read Polybius completely before his first draft of *Mes Réveries* in 1732. He added the excerpt to the work in 1740.[464] “I was glad to give it a place here, esteeming myself happy to have thought like him, who was contemporary with Scipio, Hannibal, and Philip [V, of Macedon],” de Saxe wrote. “So illustrious an author cannot fail of justifying my ideas,” he added, proudly.[465] And Polybius did not disappoint either de Saxe or his readers. The excerpt from Polybius in *Mes Réveries* very clearly aligned with de Saxe’s top military priority, the flexibility and mobility of the legionary organization over that of the phalanx. In this long quote, Polybius praised the Macedonians for the phalanx’s near-invulnerability to attack from the front. “It is an invariable truth,” the quote reads, “…that so long as the phalanx can maintain itself in its natural order, nothing can possibly resist it in the front or support the violence of its shock.”[466] Then Polybius discusses the main weakness of the phalanx, the fact that conditions must be almost perfect for it to consistently

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[462] Ibid.

[463] Ibid.

[464] Phillips, ed., *Roots of Strategy,* 276.

[465] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 143.

[466] Ibid., 145.

work. "In war, the time and place of engagement make an infinite difference in circumstances, and the construction of the phalanx is such that it renders it incapable of acting with all its force but at a certain time and in a certain method," the quotation reads.[467] Polybius added that difficulties in terrain confounded the phalanx, as well as an enemy that refused to engage it directly. "The Romans do not employ all their troops to make a front equal to that of the phalanx, but always post one part of them in reserve, and oppose the enemy with the other," the quotation reads.[468] The next part is critical:

> Whether the phalanx disorders their front line, or is broken itself, they (the legion) still have a regular body in readiness for action, whereas the phalanx, if the event be such as to oblige it either to pursue or to fly, it loses equally all its force: for in both cases it must unavoidably make intervals, which the [legionary] reserve will take advantage of, and charge it both in the flank and the rear.[469]

In other words, the Roman legion, with its front and reserve lines broken into centuries, was more flexible than the Macedonian phalanx, which lined up in an uninterrupted front rank, and had a depth of up to sixteen ranks, according to Polybius. "…It may be readily conceived how much it is inferior to the disposition of the Romans," the excerpt reads.[470]

Why was it necessary for de Saxe to quote Polybius and show his readers the difference between a Roman legion and a Macedonian phalanx in his work on eighteenth-century military practice? Because de Saxe advocated a flexible legionary-like structure for his army, and compared the formations of his day, with their long battalions of musket-armed troops, to that of

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[467] Ibid., 146-47.

[468] Ibid., 147.

[469] Ibid., 147-48.

[470] Ibid., 148.

the Macedonian phalanx – hard to maneuver, hard to turn, and inflexible. When these long battalions were supported by reserve lines identical to the front line, as in a column of attack or march, the situation was even worse. As de Saxe viewed it, the reserves of a column stood uselessly in their lines behind the leading formations, ready to collapse in a cascade should the lead battalions fall. By quoting Polybius in such a manner, de Saxe made it very clear that the adaptability of the Roman legion was far superior to the Macedonian phalanx. The objective of his argument was not only to provide support for his own theoretical model, but also to suggest, as he does elsewhere in *Mes Réveries*, that this was an ancient method that still held real-world application for modern militaries. De Saxe quoted Polybius further:

> …the Roman order… is subject to no sort of embarrassment; every place, every time, is convenient; the enemy can never surprise it from any quarter; the Roman soldier is always prepared for action, whether it be with the army entire, or with a part of it; whether by companies or man to man. Is it then any longer surprising that the Romans, with an order of battle, all the parts of which were capable of acting with so much facility, succeeded in general, better in their enterprises, than those who opposed them with any other? Upon the whole, I thought it incumbent upon me to discuss this matter at large, because most Greeks look upon it as a kind of prodigy that the Macedonians have been defeated; and because there are others who are still at a loss to know the reason why the Roman order of battle is superior to the phalanx.[471]

While de Saxe's theoretical system places a high priority on reviving the organizational structure of the Roman legion, it is important to remember that this is only one part of a system that seems built around a central pillar of adaptability. De Saxe's various ancient methods align under this theme. High morale allows for discipline and control on the battlefield under stress. Mixed weaponry makes the infantry formation suitable for assault and defense. Cadenced marching

[471] Ibid. Polybius uses the ancient definition of "prodigy" here, which is a natural aberration that carries with it a divine message, often ominous.

facilitates rapid, ordered movement. Legionary standards eliminate confusion. Light infantry can be offensive or defensive. Line infantry can be fire-oriented or assault-oriented, simultaneously. The ability to rapidly change on the battlefield was so "essential" to de Saxe's tactical mind that he even suggested that it could be preferable to start a battle in a deliberately vulnerable position, to tempt the enemy into overplaying his hand.[472] Bad dispositions, de Saxe wrote, could and should be "instantaneously converted" into good ones. The counterattack would follow once the enemy committed to de Saxe's trap, or shifted out of it after it was too late.[473] Quimby called this a prime example of de Saxe's "Hannibalic guile."[474]

The Challenge of Fontenoy

Every great military theorist believes himself to be a genius on paper, and de Saxe was no exception in *Mes Réveries*. His confidence saturated every page because he believed in his system and the ancient tactical legacy on which it was founded. But the real test of any commander's theory is on the battlefield, where lives can be saved and lost because of a general's education and commitment to a military philosophy. De Saxe's opportunity to demonstrate his core military virtue, adaptability, came on May 11, 1745, at the Battle of Fontenoy, his most famous victory – more than a decade after completing his then-unpublished draft of *Mes Réveries*. Here, with his legions arrayed against a British-led coalition army under Prince William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (1721-1765), de Saxe's military philosophy

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[472] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 56.

[473] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 136.

[474] Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 56.

came to life. At Fontenoy, de Saxe kept his presence of mind in the face of excruciating physical pain and the stress of a battle that started poorly for his French forces. Suffering from dropsy and unable to walk, de Saxe commanded this battle from a wicker litter. Regardless, de Saxe led his troops with the same flexibility he emphasized in *Mes Réveries*. Much of his success at Fontenoy was due to the organization of his troops and the ability to counterattack his way out of the worst possible situation.

De Saxe's path to victory at Fontenoy started with the initial deployment of his troops in the center of his line along the ridge of a plateau overlooking Cumberland's approach. De Saxe advocated the use of natural features to anchor one's defensive layout, and did so here, in alignment with Vegetius's maxim of using the highest ground to your advantage when it was present.[475] To bolster his line, de Saxe had his troops construct two redoubt fortifications along this ridge, along with three more of these fortifications along his right flank, leaving space for his troops to sally if necessary against Cumberland's forces. De Saxe's center line was oriented west to east, and pivoted 90 degrees at the village of Fontenoy. This meant that his right flank was protected by a line of troops oriented south to north. On the left, de Saxe's center line was shielded by the *Bois de Barrie*, a forest that hid Grassin's Legion under its canopy. This was a regiment of 600 light infantry sharpshooters and 300 cavalry founded by de Saxe a year earlier in 1744.[476] Here we see another of de Saxe's theoretical assertions manifest – the use of lightly armed, highly trained marksmen to screen and protect the main infantry. De Saxe's center line was not quite the legionary layout of *Mes Réveries* or the Roman Republic, but a key feature of

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[475] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 151, and Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius*, 128.

[476] Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 72.

legionary organization played an important role in the battle – De Saxe kept a second line of infantry behind his front-and-center line and had plenty of cavalry in reserve.

Once the main action of the battle unfolded, Cumberland pressured de Saxe's well-protected flanks, but was unable to take them. This made the action in the center of de Saxe's line the critical point of the battle. Cumberland organized the troops under his command into a column and attacked de Saxe's center. This was a furious assault that stands out as the most memorable part of the Battle of Fontenoy. As French artillery tore into Cumberland's advancing troops, the British and allied Hanoverians squeezed themselves into an ever-narrowing column to make the assault up the plateau. Cumberland's formation, which was originally ten battalions wide, narrowed to six battalions across as they closed in on De Saxe's center.[477] When Cumberland's men were forty yards away from the French at the top of the plateau, De Saxe's troops opened fire to middling effect. The British retaliated with an angry volley that decimated de Saxe's lead formations. The French infantry regiments before Cumberland's troops immediately panicked and fell back on de Saxe's reserve lines, who soon found themselves under attack by the British as well. Only the reserve cavalry seemed fit to offer any resistance to the British column at this point. This was the worst possible start for de Saxe or any commander in any battle of any age. The center of de Saxe's line had utterly collapsed, and the enemy had penetrated deep into de Saxe's formations.[478] De Saxe admitted later that he was taken aback by

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[477] White, *Marshal of France,* 159.

[478] James Falkner, *The Battle of Fontenoy 1745: Saxe against Cumberland in the War of the Austrian Succession* (Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2019), 119.

Cumberland's strike against the middle of his lines. "I did not believe that there were generals who were bold enough to venture into this place," he said, following the battle.[479]

Though he was surprised, de Saxe, a student of Roman tactics, was also prepared. He did have cavalry and some more distant infantry in reserve, just as Vegetius recommended in his writing:

> The method of having bodies of reserve in the rear of the army, composed of choice infantry and cavalry… is very judicious and of great consequence towards the gain of a battle. Some should be posted in the rear of the wings and some near the center, to be ready to fly immediately to the assistance of any part of the line that is hard pressed, to prevent its being pierced, and to supply the vacancies made therein during the action, and thereby keep up the courage of their fellow soldiers, and check the impetuosity of the enemy.[480]

Vegetius's advice was almost prophetic. As it happened, de Saxe placed his reserve cavalry near the center before the battle started. De Saxe counted on them at the most critical moment of the battle - to delay the advance of Cumberland's column as it blew through the French front lines. De Saxe's reserve cavalry rushed to the center, occupying Cumberland's infantry (which had now formed into a three-sided near-hollow square) with wave after wave of cavalry charges. While French cannon fire continued from the redoubts in de Saxe's overrun center, the cavalry helped the French Marshal buy time with their lives. The British inflicted horrible losses on men and horses alike as they pushed deeper into the center of de Saxe's lines. There, the British caught sight of the French camp and Louis XV himself, who refused to evacuate the field.[481] Meanwhile, de Saxe rallied his scattered infantry and his reserves as well as his artillery. He

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[479] Voltaire, *Précis du siècle de Louis XV.* (Paris, l'imprimerie des frères Mame, 1808), 122.

[480] Vegetius, *Military Institutions*, 137.

[481] Falkner, *The Battle of Fontenoy*, 119.

maneuvered them into the right and left flanks of the British assault column. The French general then had the British, now exhausted and low on ammunition, from three sides. “The farther they penetrated, the more were they exposed to the fire of our troops and batteries in their rear,” de Saxe later said. “It was essential to distract their attention by repeated cavalry charges.”[482] Cumberland saw no option but to retreat, and doing so under pressure and fire from so any directions was no small feat of military ability.

As the British column retreated from the Battle of Fontenoy, de Saxe declined to pursue or fully surround them, and did receive some criticism of this choice following the battle.[483] De Saxe simply stated that his men had “had enough” for one day, and he was also concerned about the possibility of British counterattack.[484] De Saxe’s prudence here also reflects one of Vegetius’s maxims. The Roman general wrote that the flight of an enemy should not be prevented, but facilitated. “Unskilled generals,” Vegetius advised, “think a victory incomplete unless the enemy… have no possibility of escape.”[485] De Saxe instead kept his army composed as the enemy fled. His exhausted troops were the prime reason for his restraint, but de Saxe’s calm demeanor here in the face of massive bloodshed, desire for fame and revenge – and not to be forgotten – the extreme physical pain of dropsy, reveals an educated mind of the highest order at work. Only someone truly steeped in the lessons of self-control, care for one’s troops, and the

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[482] Francis Henry Skrine, *Fontenoy and Great Britain’s Share in the War of the Austrian Succession, 1741-1748;* (Edinburgh and London, W. Blackwood and Sons, 1906), 177.

[483] Falkner, *The Battle of Fontenoy*, 133.

[484] Ibid., 133., and White, *Marshal of France*, 163.

[485] Vegetius, *Military Institutions*, 84.

power of historical precedent could resist the temptation to pursue and cut down a dangerous, retreating foe.

Thirteen years before Fontenoy, de Saxe wrote in *Mes Réveries* that discipline relied on the legs, and that all the abilities required in the performance of maneuvers and in battles were "totally confined" to them.[486] At the most critical moment of the Battle of Fontenoy, when de Saxe scrambled to rally his troops and get them into position to flank Cumberland's column on the north, east, and west simultaneously, it was indeed the legs of his men that won the day. De Saxe's forethought in arranging his troops allowed him the ability to turn the battle in his favor, but it was his ability to quickly adapt that turned the tide just moments before utter disaster. Cumberland's column was unable to penetrate further not because of the fighting in the center, but because of the actions on the left and right flanks of the battle, where the British were unable to make comparable progress. This meant that Cumberland's column was unsupported by troops on either flank, and was vulnerable to the enveloping counterattack that de Saxe was able to put in place at just the right moment. For his part, de Saxe was capable enough to recognize that if his reserve cavalry could occupy the column long enough, and his troops could summon the courage, he could outflank the column.

It is interesting how similar this battle was to the 216 BCE Battle of Cannae, in which the Roman army found itself in the same situation as Cumberland. In one of the most famous episodes in all of ancient history, the 85,000-man Roman army under Gaius Terentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paullus thrust the main force of its legions into the center of Hannibal's Carthaginian army, which deliberately withdrew to lure the Roman army in. The result was that the middle of Hannibal's line took on a concave shape that the Roman's eagerly filled, thinking

[486] Maurice de Saxe, *Réveries*, 14.

they had the Carthaginians on the run. Polybius wrote, "The Romans… hastily closing in towards the center… advanced so far, that the Libyan heavy-armed troops on either wing got on their flanks." Hannibal's trap put the Carthaginians on three sides of the Roman army, just as he planned.[487] This was exacerbated by the fact that the Romans by this point no longer had cavalry support, as the Roman cavalry on each side of the oversized Roman army were defeated by Hannibal's superior horsemen. Stretched beyond normal standards, the Roman column was unable to maneuver, and with no flank protection, they had no way to prevent Hannibal's envelopment maneuver.[488] The Carthaginians were thin in the middle but remained strong on the flanks. That was the deciding factor in Hannibal's crushing victory at Cannae.

Fontenoy played out in similar fashion, but the difference was that Hannibal's maneuvering was a deliberate trap. De Saxe's predicament certainly was not. Fate played a hand in creating the concave shape in the middle of de Saxe's line, not tactical genius. Still, the predicament and the solution was the same. De Saxe faced the possibility of being completely penetrated in the center of his line, but like Hannibal at Cannae, timely movement on the flanks of the enemy column allowed him to win via maneuver. One wonders if de Saxe, in the heat of the moment - tortured by the physical agony of a crippling medical condition and the mental stress of protecting the physical person of his king – recognized the situation he was in and how similar it was to Hannibal's disposition at Cannae. After all, de Saxe showed years before in *Mes Réveries* a more than passing interest in what the chief historian of the Second Punic War, Polybius, had to say about the advantages of a mobility over that of a column. He certainly had

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[487] Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert, Penguin Classics (New York: Penguin, 1979), 272.

[488] Charles Andrew Willoughby, *Maneuver in War* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1931), 105-6.

the opportunity to discuss Polybius with his best friend, Folard, who was a translator of that Greek historian, and the chief proponent of columnar tactics in the eighteenth century. It has been said in military circles for time immemorial that one relies on his training in times of greatest need. De Saxe was a lifelong student of war, with a demonstrated knowledge and appreciation of Roman military history. It would seem likely that he would be able to recognize a Cannae-like situation if he was in it, but there is no proof of it. De Saxe left no writing specifically mentioning this similarity. Otherwise, it is only grist for the mill of speculation.

De Saxe remains one of the most respected and studied masters of military theory to the present day, and *Mes Réveries* remained popular well into the nineteenth century.[489] But to suggest that de Saxe is a household name would be far from the truth. A great hero to France, he was overshadowed by the titanic figure of Napoleon just a few decades after his death in 1750. De Saxe's main contribution to military thought was to revive the idea from ancient Rome that the individual soldier was worthy of contemplation and consideration. De Saxe viewed his soldiers as people that were more emotionally complex than an automaton, less villainous than they generally appeared at the recruiting station, and equally worthy of study as grand strategy and tactics. De Saxe was a needed addition to the roster of Enlightenment military writers because while many were focused on the discovering a great universal theory of war, De Saxe focused on the real-world application of military ideas at their most personal level, whether it was a discussion of how a soldier should be paid or what that soldier wore on his feet. While his friend Folard represented the analytical ideals of the Military Enlightenment, De Saxe represented the heart, the humanity of the movement.

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[489] Chris Bellamy, ed., "Saxe, Marshal Maurice De," in *The Oxford Companion to Military History*, 806.

Chapter Four. Frederick II and Classical Antiquity

"The Great" is half an epithet, waiting on a more descriptive term to complete it: the Great Tactician, the Great Philosopher, the Great Writer, Warmonger, Reader, Builder, Collector, Flautist, Secret-keeper, Mystery. As it applies to Frederick II of Prussia (1712-1786), the meaning and appropriateness of the term "the Great," is directly related the viewer's position. Frederick seemed to be keenly aware of this phenomenon, as he attempted to be "Great" or at least associated with greatness in so many ways. For better or worse, Frederick was a king driven by a personal desire for excellence, outright vanity, and also a duty to advance the interests of his kingdom, ruthlessly, if need be. In an environment of absolutism, in which the king's personal greatness was also a reflection of the reputation of the state, Frederick's eventful life was a constant balancing of his personal desire to be seen as an intellectually gifted, enlightened figure, with the real - and necessary - demands of leading a Prussian state into the rarefied air of European great powers.

Frederick's quest for 'greatness' was influenced heavily by his knowledge of the ancient world, and his admiration for the cultural and military legacies of ancient Rome and Greece. In his role as king, Frederick drew upon a central reserve of examples from classical antiquity, carefully collected and deployed not only to enhance his image as a philosopher king, but also to help the Prussian military survive an onslaught of violent reaction to his military adventurism. This was a plan for greatness that could not have been achieved without consulting the military methods of the ancient world. As has often been stated of Hohenzollern Prussia, the army was the state. To raise the state and the monarchy of new levels of greatness, Frederick set about constructing a military system that allowed his relatively small country to compete with great empires. In this chapter we will examine the ancient sources behind Frederick's military vision,

and witness exactly how Frederick translated that vision to the battlefield. Here, we see the military methods of the ancient world affect modern Europe's landscape in the hands of one of the eighteenth century's most focused students of classical antiquity.

The "Real" Frederick?

Frederick was not raised to be an enlightened monarch. He chose enlightenment. Nearly every biography of Frederick the Great features a first chapter detailing the consequences of being born a son to Frederick William I on January 24, 1712. The harsh treatment and abuse of Frederick at the hands of Frederick William is well-documented and studied by historians; over many years, the brutish king in Prussia hammered young Frederick's malleable mind into that of one of the eighteenth century's most iconic military figures. But it was Frederick's tutors, combined with his considerable willpower, that made the Prussian prince who he really was.[490] The young prince's enthusiasm for history, literature, and art played a critical role in the development of Frederick's mind and in his creative expression. This is generally well known, but historians have not paid sufficient attention to the *content* of his early education, and thus have failed to recognize the extent to which Frederick chose to immerse himself not in the modern, but in the ancient world. In the face of an overbearing and dangerous father completely opposed to the study of all things classical, Frederick made the choice to study ancient Rome and Greece regardless. This choice was a key to his development as an enlightened person, as well as the perception of Frederick as such by his peers.

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[490] Frederick William ascended to the throne in February of 1713, when Frederick was 1 year old.

"Enlightened," is not a word one uses to describe Frederick William I (1688-1740). The "Soldier King" was not a scholarly man to say the least. An avid hunter, drinker, and enemy of high culture, Frederick's father was a practical man with a short temper whose main activities centered on military reform, drill, and discipline. It was impossible for Frederick to avoid a similar military career. It was, after all, Frederick's duty as the future king of Prussia to know how to defend the country and use the army forged by his father. But it was also Frederick William's desire that his son gravitate more toward his harsh, militaristic outlook on rulership than that of his own father, the opulent Frederick I. Upon taking the throne in 1713, Frederick William dismantled the cultural infrastructure of his father's court, cutting support for theater, operas, and balls, disbanding the orchestra, and slicing the library budget to the bone.[491] The money saved helped Frederick William build and train a formidable army. While Prussia remained at peace through most of his reign, the kingdom was always ready for war. Frederick William's great recruiting reform, the canton system (1733), helped the king double the size of the army from 40,000 in 1713 to 80,000 at his death in 1740.[492] But not all of the Soldier King's military expenditures were efficient. He also spent exorbitant sums to assemble a special royal corps of grenadiers composed of exceptionally tall men from all corners of Europe – an expense with little to no practical value to his army. Assembling these "*lange Kerls,*" was a pastime for Frederick William, whose leisure pursuits, too, centered on the army and the masculine sphere of activities that surrounded it.

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[491] Tim Blanning, *Frederick the Great: King of Prussia* (New York: Random House, 2016), 25.

[492] Christopher M Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 95.

It was cosmic irony that Frederick should have such a father, and that Frederick William should have such a son. It was the king's expectation that young prince Frederick follow in his footsteps, and Frederick's frequent missteps at taking to the military life greatly frustrated the Solider King, who often beat his young prince.[493] But even away from the drill square, the king attempted to dominate Frederick's learning. Frederick William demanded that the prince's education confine itself to approved topics like Hohenzollern family history, Calvinist theology, and German culture. Most importantly, Frederick William had little respect for classical civilization and forbade the study of Latin in particular.[494] Frederick's education, if it was to exist beyond military and religious topics, was up to him and those he trusted most, certainly not his father.

With the help of household allies, Frederick pursued culturally enriched learning in the face of his father's abuse. This choice should not be under-emphasized, as it embraces the spirit of the Enlightenment itself. As Kant asserted, the individual must choose to overcome his "self-imposed immaturity" and step into the intellectual light. It took courage for Frederick and his tutors to continue his clandestine education. Frederick's governor Count Albrecht Finck von Finckenstein (1660-1735) and his tutor, Jacques Duhan (1685-1746) both worked outside their official capacities to free Frederick from the king's rigid scheduling and monitoring of his studies. Von Finckenstein allowed Frederick to befriend and visit his own sons as an escape from palace life. Duhan taught the French language to Frederick, and quietly cut Frederick's religious

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[493] Ibid., 104

[494] Nancy Mitford, *Frederick the Great* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 23.

studies short to teach him Greek and Latin language, history, and literature.[495] These lessons in classical subjects started for Frederick as early as age eight, and at the young prince's request.[496] One of the young Frederick's favorite novels was Fénélon's classically-themed *Les Aventures de Télémaque*, which revealed the untold travels of Odysseus's son (and imparted advice on royal ethics).[497] As Clark suggests, the prince was leading "a double life" by the age of sixteen, outwardly conforming to Frederick William's requirements while inwardly feeding an intellect diametrically opposed to the king's worldview.[498] Duhan encouraged the prince's independent thinking, and as the years passed, he fully gained Frederick's trust. Duhan encouraged Frederick's French mannerisms and smuggled French silk clothing into the royal apartments for the prince. He bought a flute for Frederick and taught him to play it. And it was Duhan who worked with teenaged Frederick to create a secret library across the street from the Berlin Palace.[499] This library of 3,775 volumes represented Duhan and Frederick's shared commitment to Enlightenment. Assembling the massive collection of books was not an inexpensive enterprise. Frederick, without a royal allowance at the age of 15, secretly borrowed 7,000 talers from a Berlin bank to fund his reading habit.[500]

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[495] Robert B. Asprey, *Frederick the Great: The Magnificent Enigma* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1986), 17-19.

[496] Mitford, *Frederick the Great*, 24.

[497] Giles MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great: A Life in Deed and Letters* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 34.

[498] Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 104.

[499] MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 37.

[500] Blanning, *Frederick the Great*, 36-37.

Frederick enjoyed his library ruse for a few years, but like his rebellious spirit, it was not destined to last. The library was discovered by Frederick William in the aftermath of Frederick's attempted flight from his father's court in 1730. This is perhaps the most famous incident of Frederick William's cruelty to his son, as the king had Frederick's co-conspirator in the escape attempt, Lieutenant Hans Hermann von Katte (1704-1730), beheaded in front of the prince. Frederick was imprisoned for a year afterward. The secret library was then packed away and sold, and Duhan was banished to the Polish frontier.[501] Frederick's independent attitude retreated after these setbacks. Outwardly, his father seemed to have won the struggle for Frederick's soul, as the prince acted more obediently after his release from prison. Inwardly, the prince may have maintained his same level of hatred for his father, but he dared not show it. In his most overt display of obedience, Frederick reluctantly took a wife of his father's choosing, a royal prison of a different sort, in 1733.

Despite the adversity, the cost, and the suffering caused by Frederick's desire to know more about world, however, he did not give up. Though he had little affection for his wife or the institution of marriage, having a spouse meant Frederick was given the freedom of his own household in the small town of Ruppin, northwest of Berlin. Out of his father's sight, Frederick immediately began reading French translations of Greek and Roman classics and reviving his considerable musical talents.[502] As the years passed, Frederick continued to refine his military leadership skills publicly, while privately cultivating his intellectual side. By 1735, Frederick had served in an uneventful campaign in the War of the Polish Succession and had started altering the physical environment of his relatively modest home at Ruppin. There, Frederick felt

[501] Ibid., 44-46.

[502] Ibid., 51-53.

confident enough to outwardly express his love for classical antiquity, commissioning a temple of Apollo that was built in the estate's formal garden. He called the grounds "Amalthea" after the nymph foster-mother of Zeus.[503]

It is clear from Frederick's choice of ornamentation that his affinity for the classical world had not been abated by prison or military service. In fact, Frederick was keenly aware of the message he communicated with the décor of his most personal spaces: he wanted to show the world his favorite things, and those favorites could not have taken root in the crown prince's mind without consistent classical reading, done in defiance of his father's wishes. The following year, Frederick and his wife Elizabeth Christine (1715-1797) moved into a larger palace at Rheinsberg, sometimes referred to by Frederick as "Remusberg."[504] The palace's interior design was heavily influenced by Frederick's classical sensibilities. The ceiling of his personal apartments there, painted by Antoine Pesne (1683-1757), prominently featured the Roman god of war, Mars, being playfully disarmed by various cupids and goddesses. There were medallion busts of Caesar, Pompey, Hannibal, and Scipio adorning the doorways. Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom was depicted by Pesne on the ceiling of Frederick's new, expanding library. The goddess was offered a book with the names Horace and Voltaire easily visible on the pages.[505]

It was not only through art that Frederick outwardly displayed his Enlightened spirit. During the Rheinsberg years Frederick engaged in correspondence with a number of Europe's

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[503] Ibid., 54 and MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 94.

[504] A local legend maintains that Remus, the mythical co-founder of Rome, survived his quarrel with Romulus, and settled at Rheinsburg. Asprey, *Frederick the Great*, 113.

[505] Asprey, *Frederick the Great, 112.*

intellectual elites. His stated purpose was to "maintain correspondences with superior minds," an activity that allowed Frederick to communicate with "people who are completely cerebral."[506] By this time, Frederick had already absorbed the published works of great European writers and philosophers: Molière, Christian Wolff, Michel de Montaigne, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet and many others.[507] From 1736-38, Frederick began to exchange letters with leading thinkers like Bernard Le Bovier Fontenelle and Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis, and he began his well-known and often rocky relationship with Voltaire. The most prominent French historian of his day, Charles Rollin (1661-1741), was also a correspondent of Frederick. Their letters reveal the depth of admiration Frederick had for ancient history and demonstrate that Rollin expected Frederick to understand his classical references.

Frederick and Rollin's correspondence is rich with mutual admiration and flattery. Certainly, Rollin understood what it meant to write to a prince, and complimentary language was good form. In the May 4, 1737 letter accompanying the presentation of volume 11 of his *Ancient History*, for example, Rollin compares Frederick to Scipio Aemilianus, the patron of Polybius, "in whose praise historians bring in that exquisite taste for literature which is common to you with him and which distinguishes you from almost all princes of our time."[508] This comparison is a little self-serving, as it portrays Frederick as the scholar/general hero of the Third Punic War, while quietly placing Rollin in the role of Polybius. But sometimes flattery is more than just an empty platitude. There is an important takeaway in this compliment - Rollin confidently

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[506] MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 116.

[507] Asprey, *Frederick the Great*, 115.

[508] Frederick II of Prussia, "Correspondance de Frédéric avec Rollin," 1737, *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846-56), XVI, 254.

expected that Frederick would understand the comparison completely and would actually read his works. Indeed, the King of Prussia wrote to Rollin only one week later, praising last two volumes as "beautiful" works. "I read them, I devoured them, and I will reread them again," he wrote.[509] Frederick and Rollin continued to correspond until shortly after Frederick became king in 1740. During this three-year interval, Rollin sent volumes of his *Roman History*[510] to Frederick as he wrote them. "Thoroughly educated in the virtuous actions and great qualities of kings, both ancient and modern, you think, Sire, of equaling them and, if possible, of surpassing them," Rollin wrote to Frederick.[511] The newly crowned king of Prussia's correspondence with this ancient historian and educator is evidence that Frederick had a voracious appetite for Greek and Roman history. It also shows that having the high esteem of one of the most popular ancient historians of the eighteenth century was important to Frederick, a man who was keenly aware of his image and the cachet that having friends in scholarly places could have on his reputation. Frederick chose a literary relationship with the most famous French scholar of the ancient world to do just that.

The Prussian prince's – unique - upbringing assured that Frederick became a master of hiding what he truly thought or felt while presenting an impression of himself that matched what others wanted to see. Frederick's letters to Rollin demonstrate that Frederick was rather adept at emphasizing one side of his dual personality when it suited him. He appeared a virtuous, accomplished scholar to one person, while turning to present himself as a strait-laced soldier to another. His many viewers and correspondents frequently saw only the side of Frederick they

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[509] Ibid., 255.

[510] His last, unfinished work. Rollin died in 1743 before its completion.

[511] Ibid., 266.

desired. Take Frederick's literary seduction of Voltaire for example. From 1736 onward, Frederick attempted repeatedly to intrigue this greatest of enlightened minds, cultivating Voltaire's friendship through frequent correspondence and literary projects. Frederick's insistence apparently struck a chord with Voltaire, who was also undoubtedly eager to win the favor of someone so well-positioned as the crown prince of Prussia. He wrote to Frederick in 1739 that he expected him as king to "make many men happy," and that he would achieve fame by "encourage(ing) the arts and making wise and advantageous alliances, establishing manufactures and earning your place among the immortals."[512] Frederick further encouraged Voltaire's interest with his 1739 introduction to a new printing of the French writer's *Henriade*. In this short piece of writing, the prince compared the force of Voltaire's genius to that of Caesar and Alexander, subduing geometry, poetry, and the arts and sciences as the ancient generals subjugated vast countries.[513] He also wrote that Voltaire was "infinitely superior" in judgment to both Homer and Virgil when it came to writing verse.[514] The fact that Voltaire later eagerly agreed to edit and help publish Frederick's first major public work, *The Anti-Machiavelli, or Examination of the Prince of Machiavelli* (September, 1740) shows the success of Frederick's careful cultivation of Voltaire's comraderie.

Anti-Machiavelli again represented the prince's dual persona. It was both the work of a young, virtuous prince ready to disavow the state policy of opportunism advised by Machiavelli and a sly endorsement of certain classically inspired policies of the Florentine humanist and

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512 MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 126.

513 Frederick II of Prussia, "Forward on Henriade by M. de Voltaire," in *Œuvres de Frédéric Le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, vol. 8, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846), 54-55.

514 Ibid., 56.

philosopher. The title of the work and most of the content drives toward refuting Machiavelli. This makes sense, because Frederick knew his audience, and how to tell them what they wanted to hear. Statements such as "I dare to defend humanity against this monster (Machiavelli) who wants to destroy it…" and "I have always regarded Machiavelli's *Prince* as one of the most dangerous works that have spread in the world," boldly declare that position in the first few lines of the introduction to the work.[515] In the chapters that follow, Frederick breaks down Machiavelli's most famous work, downplaying its most unscrupulous qualities while endorsing a different kind of kingship – benign, rational, and restrained. No one reading this work in early fall of 1740 would have had any reason to doubt Frederick, who by that time had become the newly crowned king of Prussia. But Frederick was at war within three months, invading Silesia in a land-grab unmatched in ambition by his rivals. As a result, it is difficult now to accept Frederick's sharp criticism of Machiavelli at face value, especially as he also openly agreed with certain views of Machiavelli within this work.

Anti-Machiavelli was not the writing of a genuine pacifist or a benevolent despot because Frederick could not allow that side of him to govern his persona in his new position as king. In time, all of Europe would come to understand that no matter what artistic or scholarly virtues Frederick had in his heart or what he believed to be his true self, his policies were consistent with the idea that the kingdom's priorities come first. As Frederick would himself suggest in later writings as king, the ruler himself was secondary to his responsibility as head of state.[516] If one reads *Anti-Machiavelli* from this standpoint, glimpses of the king's focus on duty can be found in

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[515] Frederick II of Prussia, "The Antimachiavelli, or Examination of the Prince of Machiavelli (1740)," in *Œuvres de Frédéric Le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, vol. 8, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846), 68.

[516] As seen in Frederick II's *Political Testimony of 1752*. Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 239-40.

the ways that he agrees with Machiavelli. Several of these areas of agreement stem from examples taken by Machiavelli from classical antiquity.

One such area of agreement centered on the idea that a state's military was most effective if it was composed of national troops, rather than mercenaries. This is one of the most prominent references to antiquity found in *The Prince*, as Machiavelli cited Carthage and Thebes as examples of what could go wrong if a state relied heavily on mercenaries or foreign troops, along with chastising his Italian neighbors for doing the same.[517] "Anyone who relies on mercenary troops to keep himself in power will never be safe or secure…" Machiavelli advised. In *Anti-Machiavelli*, Frederick finds himself agreeing with the "dangerous" work of the Florentine scholar, noting,

> It is certain, and experience has shown, in general, that the best troops in a State are the nationals. One could support this feeling by the examples of the valiant resistance of Leonidas at Thermopylae, and especially by the astonishing progress of the Roman Empire and Arabs.[518]
>
> The soldiers (mercenaries) are made up only of the vilest part of the people, of lazy people who prefer idleness than work, of debauched people who seek license and impunity in the troops, of young scatterbrains rebellious to their parents, who enlist out of thoughtlessness: all these have as little inclination and attachment to their master as foreigners. How different these troops are from those Romans who conquered the world![519]

Frederick himself was already the beneficiary of a mostly-national standing army, his chief inheritance from Frederick William, who established the canton system in 1733. Frederick William's method of recruitment relied on military districts (cantons) to provide replacement

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[517] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. David Wootton, 39. Here, Machiavelli notes that Carthage was beset with problem mercenaries following the First Punic War, and Thebes was eventually overthrown by Philip of Macedon, who was educated in military tactics by Epaminondas.

[518] Frederick II of Prussia, *Anti-Machiavelli,* 111.

[519] Ibid., 113.

soldiers for the Prussian army as needed. It was a policy that Frederick kept as king. A genuine pacifist would have little need for standing armies, national troops, or cantons. Frederick did not take the opportunity presented in *Anti-Machiavelli* to refute any of those things. Instead, he openly endorsed what would become one of the cornerstones of the Prussian military under his lead: an army with national troops as its core, consistent with models from classical antiquity, in alignment with the target of his criticism, Niccolò Machiavelli.

Another cornerstone of the Prussian military under Frederick was its legendary iron discipline, which would eventually distinguish the Prussians from their all-too-similar peers on the battlefield. In *Anti-Machiavelli*, Frederick can be seen agreeing with Machiavelli when it comes to maintaining rigid discipline among the troops. First, Frederick agrees with the Florentine that a great prince "must take the conduct of his troops upon himself" and "remain in his army as his residence," to ensure the proper attention is paid to his soldiers.[520] Next, Frederick discusses the careful balance between rigor and cruelty, and critiques Machiavelli's choice of classical modelling:

> Politics especially recommend rigor towards the troops; he [Machiavelli] opposes the indulgence of Scipio to the severity of Hannibal, he prefers the Carthaginian to the Roman, and immediately concludes that rigor is the cause of order and discipline, and consequently of the triumph of an army. Machiavelli did not act in good faith on this occasion, for he chose Scipio, the softest of all generals in terms of discipline, to oppose Hannibal, favoring severity.[521]
>
> I admit that the order of an army cannot exist without severity; for how to contain in their duty libertines, debauchery, scoundrels, cowards, reckless, rude and mechanical animals, if the fear of punishment does not stop them in part?[522]

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[520] Ibid., 113.

[521] Ibid., 130.

[522] Ibid.

Frederick generously maintains a position against being cruel to the troops, as he writes that he would prefer to be loved than feared by his soldiers on the day of battle.[523] But in this work, Frederick does not favor slack discipline in the ranks. His position is more akin to Machiavelli, who favors strictness over a relaxed style of personal command. Frederick's later military career as king and general reflects this position.

Lastly, the benefit of hindsight allows the reader to spot a preview of Frederick's soon-to-be unleashed tactical and strategic tendencies of the Silesian Wars in *Anti-Machiavelli*. In a paragraph musing about the qualities of effective leadership, Frederick wrote this gem, based on the Second Punic War. In this paragraph, he references the indirect style of campaigning favored by Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus against the pressing style of Hannibal, who sought decisive battles to annihilate the Roman army in the field:

> If an army general were daring and circumspect at the right moment, he would be almost indomitable. Fabius undermined Hannibal by his lengths [distance]; this Roman was not unaware that the Carthaginians lacked money and recruits, and that, without fighting, it was enough to watch this army calmly melt to destruction, so to speak, of starvation. Hannibal's policy, on the contrary, was to fight; his power was only a force of accident, from which it was necessary to draw quickly all the possible advantages, in order to give it solidity by the terror which brilliant and lively actions impress, and by the resources from which one elicits conquests.[524]

This is an especially telling quotation as Frederick demonstrates here his admiration for both indirect and direct styles of fighting. As we will examine, one of Frederick's strategic priorities in the Silesian Wars was bringing his opponents to the moment of decisive battle. In this way, he emulated Hannibal, who actively sought to shorten the Second Punic War by taking every

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[523] Ibid., 131.

[524] Ibid., 173.

opportunity to engage the Roman army up and down the Italian peninsula. Tactically, Frederick, like Fabius, had a great appreciation for distance and denying portions of the enemy force an opportunity to engage his troops. Often outnumbered, Frederick frequently chose the exact point of contact with the enemy and actively trained his troops to exploit the enemy's position via the oblique order. In *Anti-Machiavelli*, Frederick is foreshadowing the general he wants to be – aggressive, cunning, and fortified by discipline, the epitome of the best military leaders the ancient world had mustered.

Neither Frederick nor his readership would have to wait long for Frederick to reveal the sort of general and king he actually was. Within months of ascending to the Prussian throne, Frederick invaded Silesia, touching off the first of three wars fought over the resource-rich territory, covering the period from 1740 to 1763. The First Silesian War demonstrated the extent to which Frederick was prepared to act upon martial instincts expressed in his *Anti-Machiavelli*. To many, this came as something of a shock; for most persons other than his father, Frederick was better known for his softer, scholarly, qualities. The question—one that would never be fully answered--was now openly posed: who was the "real" Frederick? As we shall see, for all of his apparent contradictions, the one thing the king remained was a lover of the art, poetry, and history of the classical world. In fact, as the years went by, each side of Frederick began to inform the other, and the worlds of Frederick's scholarship and soldiery began to merge in new, more effective and consequential ways.

Ancient Knowledge for Violent Ambitions

A frequent question asked in biographies of Frederick is why the young Prussian king decided to invade Silesia in December of 1740, setting off the First Silesian War. A better

question, from Frederick's perspective, was why not? If Frederick was truly acting in the best interests of the state – a duty he took seriously as king, he should have been ready to press territorial claims Prussia had on parts of Silesia at a precise moment of Austrian weakness. Frederick's *causus belli* dated back to 1738, when Austria failed to support Prussia's claim to the Duchy of Berg, in exchange for support of the Pragmatic Sanction that elevated Maria Theresa (1717-1780) to the throne.[525] Moreover, the resource-rich, industrially-advanced territory was lightly defended, and Maria Theresa had yet to fully consolidate her power as the Habsburg monarch. Frederick's next step forward was easily justified from the Prussian point of view, and Frederick, the scholar of Machiavelli, acted with "breathtaking speed."[526] Prussia's invasion of Silesia guaranteed that Frederick would be at war with Austria until Maria Theresa lacked the willpower to continue the fight for the territory. It would take 23 years before her will was broken. But before that happened, Frederick had to adapt to challenges and setbacks in his decades-long struggle for Silesia. Frederick's self-driven education in the principles and tactics of ancient warfare aided in his quest to deprive Austria of its most profitable hereditary land and to add it to Prussia's dynamic and dangerous kingdom.

Frederick had plenty of problems in fighting the First and Second Silesian Wars, which were both regional conflicts that took place within the greater War of Austrian Succession. Some of these problems were common to all militaries of his time and could not be fixed so much as managed. The most prominent of these troubles was the one that all militaries had been facing for centuries: the scale of war was growing ever larger. Subsequently, war put a greater economic strain on belligerent countries, and that was certainly not helped by the fact that battles

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[525] Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 191.

[526] Ibid., 193.

had grown less decisive. This was a problem that earlier French theorists like Folard and de Saxe attempted to address with their writings. Frederick encountered these specific challenges in the first two Silesian wars, and the solutions that he later proposed to his generals reflected his desire to address these issues, so detrimental to the fast, offensive warfare he wanted to conduct.

Frederick's experience in the first two Silesian wars was not so different from European rulers since the beginning of the Renaissance, who saw the size of their armies grow right along with their imperial ambitions.[527] By Europe's eighteenth century, war was no longer limited to border skirmishes between principalities or noble houses. Wars were fought on the intercontinental level by great coalitions and empires who could (barely) afford it. Frederick's Silesian Wars were just a smaller part of much larger conflicts involving bona fide global powers. A major problem for Frederick before his soldiers even took their first step into Silesia was competing on this level in terms of cost. Frederick, like every other European military leader, had to win his wars quickly before the price of recruiting, equipping, feeding, and training his comparatively modest 24,000-man army bled his savings dry.[528] Luckily, the late Frederick William, in addition to being cruel, was also miserly. He left Frederick a war chest of eight million thalers after his death in 1740. By the end of the Second Silesian War in 1745, that war chest had dwindled to a mere 15,000 thalers. Such was the cost of two relatively short wars for Frederick.[529]

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[527] Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 147.

[528] MacDonogh, *Frederick the Great*, 154. The 24,000 number was the force Frederick brought into Silesia in 1740 during the First Silesian War.

[529] Ibid., 178.

Another factor lengthening wars was a holdover from the Thirty Years' War: fortresses were not only hard to take, but none could be left untouched. Enemy fortresses left unaddressed in their home territory resulted in a nightmare of supply line raids for the invading commander. Lines of communication wound along narrow, undeveloped roads and twisted through choke points dominated by enemy defensive positions.[530] Leaving an enemy's fort behind one's line of advance was foolish. As a result, generals led campaigns more focused on besieging and occupying fortified positions than fighting in the open. This made seeking a decisive battle very difficult. In turn, it also made winning such a battle crucial for Frederick when the opportunity presented itself, especially since Prussia was not the richest of European powers before the Silesian Wars.

The scale of war and battle also presented another problem for Frederick, who placed a high priority on being the singular and authoritative voice of command on the field of battle for the Prussians. Much like the ancient figures Frederick idolized, the Prussian king believed it was necessary that "he be in person with his army since all orders emanate from his person, and then the advice and execution follow each other with extreme rapidity."[531] But the scale of eighteenth-century battlefields put the effectiveness of that model to the test. It was not unusual for a battle to unfold over miles of territory, and once the action started, it was nearly impossible to alter the orders of an engaged unit. This was made worse by the smoke, confusion, and noise of an eighteenth-century battlefield.

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[530] Dennis E Showalter, *Frederick the Great: A Military History* (London: Frontline Books, 2012). 4.

[531] Frederick II of Prussia, *Anti-Machiavelli*, 113.

A common problem for all European commanders was that their troops lacked any distinguishing characteristics from each other. Unlike their ancient counterparts, there were no longer any significant regional variations in military units. The distinct Numidian cavalry, Briton chariots, and Carthaginian elephants of the ancient period had been replaced by the common flintlock infantry, cuirassiers, and artillery of the eighteenth century. "What makes the great princes of Europe safe is that their troops are more or less alike, and that they have no advantages over each other… ," Frederick opined in *Anti-Machiavelli.*[532] While that may not seem like much of a problem to some, it certainly was to a commander like Frederick who was constantly, even desperately, seeking a decisive engagement. Eighteenth-century armies were symmetrical and fighting them was like fighting a mirror image.[533] Frederick's ability to shorten a war then relied, in part, on his ability to distinguish his troops in some way from their opposition. The requirements of the war he wished to fight tasked Frederick with the extra duty of making something unique out of something similar.

It was unlikely that Frederick was unaware of any of these problems heading into the First Silesian War, but Frederick had a rare strategic window of opportunity open to him, and he acted quickly against Maria Theresa. Frederick beamed with optimism as his army invaded Silesia on December 16, 1740:

> My dear Podewils. I passed the Rubicon signs unfurled and drum beating; my troops are full of good will, the officers of ambition, and our generals hungry for glory, everything will go according to our wishes, and I have reason to presume all the possible good of this enterprise.[534]

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[532] Ibid.

[533] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 9.

[534] Frederick II of Prussia, *Politische Correspondenz Friedrich's Des Großen*, ed. Johann Gustav Droysen, vol. 1, 46 vols. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1882), 147. "Podewils" is Heinrich von Podewils the "Real Secret Minister of War, Budget, and Cabinet" under Frederick. In this same

The early days of the First Silesian War were easy for Frederick because he had achieved surprise and Upper Silesia was not especially hostile to the Prussians. Frederick's army swept aside token resistance at a few fortresses and took the Silesian capital of Breslau on January 2, 1741. The Austrian garrisons at Glogau, Brieg, and Niesse were much harder to crack. In fact, the Austrians did not give up Niesse easily at all. A relief force sent to lift the siege at Niesse encountered Frederick at the Battle of Mollwitz on April 10, 1741.

It was here, at Mollwitz, where Frederick learned many hard lessons from his first major action. To start, Frederick "wasted two hours methodically forming in front of a village where no enemy appeared," throwing away an opportunity to destroy a surprised Austrian army in their camp before the battle started.[535] As a result, the fighting opened with an Austrian cavalry charge into Fredrick's stationary cavalry on the Prussian right. Frederick led those horsemen, who were quickly overwhelmed by the Austrians. Making things worse, Fredrick's cavalry division and the Austrians pursuing them wandered into the firing lanes of the Prussian reserve infantry, who began firing without orders into the massed cavalry. Frederick's life was in danger. Only a few minutes into his first battle, Frederick found himself fleeing the scene under the advice of his more veteran officers.[536] The King of Prussia would not rejoin his troops until the next day, when

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volume can be found another interesting letter to Podewils on page 201. Written in early March 1741, Frederick instructs Podewils that should he die during his first campaign, he is to be burned in the "Roman style" and his ashes placed in an urn to be stored in Rheinsberg. The king also requested a monument there "like that of Horace in Tusculum."

[535] Frederick II of Prussia, "Histoire de mon temps (1775)," in *Œuvres de Frédéric Le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, vol. 2, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846), 86.

[536] Ibid., 47.

the action was long decided. In his place, Field Marshall Kurt von Schwerin (1684-1757) rallied the Prussian infantry, and through a combination of discipline and positioning, drove back the Austrians from the field. The Prussians won the Battle of Mollwitz, but it was a close victory whose outcome should never have been in much doubt.

To his credit, Frederick accepted his mistakes at Mollwitz, writing (in third person, à la Julius Caesar) that "Mollwitz was the school of the king and his troops: this prince [meaning Frederick] made profound reflections on all the faults he had made, and he tried to correct them afterwards."[537] On the positive side, Mollwitz was won because of the valor and discipline of the Prussian infantry in particular.[538] The Prussians could enjoy an especially stark comparison to the Austrians, who struggled to not only follow orders to advance, but also to load and fire their muskets under pressure. They formed "clumps of men" in the heat of battle with "bayonets pointing in all directions" rather than solid walls of resistance.[539] Discipline, the buzzword of Frederican military practice, was the difference at Mollwitz.

But not every Prussian unit displayed the discipline that Frederick's troops would become known for. The cavalry, in particular needed work. Frederick spent the remainder of that April and most of May drilling his cavalry to the point of exhaustion, converting them into a more aggressive unit founded on shock combat. Frederick rose at four in the morning each day to instill a sense of urgency in his officer corps and "imposed a regime so Spartan that over four

[537] Ibid., 86.

[538] Ibid.

[539] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 48-49.

hundred officers are said to have asked to resign." All were refused.[540] Marshall de Belle-Isle of the French army witnessed Frederick at work and commented, "I had some inkling before I came of the army's discipline, obedience, and exactitude, but I must say that they were driven to such a degree that I was ill-prepared for the reality."[541] The cavalry was the main target of Frederick's attention. They were taught to close their ranks, maneuver at speed, to charge at full gallop in the last thirty paces before smashing into their target with swords drawn.[542] The disciplined, shock cavalry that became a hallmark of Frederick's army was born here, in the drills after Mollwitz.

The Scottish historian of classical antiquity John Gillies (1747-1836) spent time in Frederician Prussia and claimed that Frederick had used a "Macedonian" model in his orders to his cavalry in his first wars:

> Frederick, who himself embodied his squadrons, formed them on the Macedonian model, made them lay aside their carabines, taught them to trust more to their spurs than to their swords, trained them to charge in full career, and reduced their service from the awkward and ineffectual use of firearms to that violent eruption, that close unexpected, and rapid assault, which is so often described with wonder in the memorable history of Philip and his successors.[543]

While it is impossible to determine whether Frederick's instructions derived directly from his reading of ancient tactics, it should be noted that Frederick's library at Potsdam had plenty of references to the effectiveness of Macedonian cavalry at his fingertips. Gillies specifically cites

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[540] Christopher Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great* (New York: Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1974), 161.

[541] Ibid.

[542] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 51.

[543] John Gillies, *A View of the Reign of Frederick II of Prussia with a Parallel between That Prince and Philip II of Macedon* (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1789), 11.

Arrian, Plutarch, and Didorus Siculus as sources describing the Macedonian style.[544] Frederick possessed copies of all three works in his library, and all three editions pre-date 1741.[545] The Prussian king surely did not hesitate to use his cavalry in the style of Alexander, whose cavalry played a decisive role at battles like Gaugamela (331 BCE) and Issus (333 BCE). Frederick's cavalry performance was much improved after this intense period of training, and in time became a decisive element themselves, as seen at the Battle of Rossbach (1757).

After Mollwitz, the First Silesian War developed into a long stalemate with no significant action until May of the following year. Diplomatic maneuvering dominated the interim, with the Prussians leaving the fight in October of 1741, then rejoining the war in February of 1742. By that point, Frederick had amassed 117,600 soldiers under his flag, but few, notably, actually took part in the Battle of Chotusitz, the next major clash after Mollwitz in the First Silesian War. The Prussians and the Austrians both fielded armies of about 28,000 men. In two years of campaigning, Frederick managed to fight just two significant battles, all while paying and feeding more than 100,000 men. All through the First Silesian War, Austrian light infantry and Moravian peasants raided Frederick's supply lines and forced his troops to live off the land or starve.[546] This was a problem for Frederick, and it placed great significance on each field action. To shorten the war, the Prussian army had to operate at peak efficiency and capitalize on the very few battles that presented themselves.

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[544] Ibid., fn.

[545] "Stiftung Preußische Schlösser Und Gärten Katalog Friedrich II," accessed January 24, 2021, https://vzlbs3.gbv.de/DB=5.2/LNG=EN/.

[546] Showalter, Frederick the Great, 57-58

The Battle of Chotusitz was an opportunity and a win, but far from perfect. The Prussians allowed themselves to be surprised here, much as the Austrians were surprised at Mollwitz.[547] The improved Prussian cavalry jumped right into the fray and performed well initially, but more than 900 were killed in just three hours of fighting.[548]Afterward, Frederick was critical of his subcommander, Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau (1676-1747), for not believing "that the enemies were coming to attack him, until he saw their columns which began to deploy before his front."[549] Chotusitz, then, underscored for Frederick the importance of reconnaissance and reliable light cavalry, which could have prevented the Austrians from surprising Leopold's men at camp.[550]

A few weeks after the battle, Frederick was able to wrestle a peace settlement out of Maria Theresa through the Treaty of Breslau (June 11, 1742), which officially ceded all but two small parts of Silesia to Frederick. The peace had little to do with Chotusitz and everything to do with Austria fighting multiple powers at once. Maria Theresa's British allies advised her to focus her efforts on fighting the French and to negotiate her way out of the war in Silesia.[551]

Frederick and his troops would not be out of the wider War of Austrian Succession for very long, kicking off the Second Silesian War in August of 1744. During Prussia's interwar years, Frederick re-assembled an army of 94,500 infantry and 29,200 cavalry.[552] Maria Theresa

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[547] Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great*, 162.

[548] Frederick II of Prussia, "Histoire de Mon Temps (1775)," vol.2, 140.

[549] Ibid., 142.

[550] Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great,* 162.

[551] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 61.

[552] Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great,* 162.

was anything but idle, achieving great success against Holy Roman Emperor Charles Albert of Bavaria. Maria Theresa's forces ejected the emperor out of both Bohemia and Bavaria, and the philosopher king grew concerned about his grip on Silesia. He invaded Bohemia with an army of 62,000 not only to recover these lands for Charles Albert, but also to secure his own hard-won gains with a pre-emptive strike against Maria Theresa. Frederick was successful right away, securing Prague on Sept. 16, 1744.

Frederick's campaign dissolved into catastrophe from that point, illustrating the many difficulties associated with supplying a large invading force in hostile territory. Seeking to press his advantage after taking Prague, Frederick marched south, deeper into Bohemia. He encountered a "desert."[553] The peasants in Frederick's path had, according to the Prussian king, been ordered to abandon their cottages, bury their food underground, and flee to the forests – all while "ten thousand" Hungarian hussars cut off Frederick's lines of communication to his supply centers and Prague. Frederick and his troops were isolated in a country "composed of marshes, woods, rocks, and of all the defiles that a field can produce."[554] Frederick retreated into Silesia in late November, with staggering losses to hunger, freezing, starvation, and desertion. The exact number of losses is still a matter of debate, but Austrian sources reported nearly 17,000 deserters came to their ranks from Frederick's army. Fewer than 40,000 Prussian soldiers made it across the Silesian border. Frederick later lamented his lack of secure supply lines, but the losses to desertion were also due to an understandable breakdown of discipline that led to the open questioning of Frederick's leadership among the officers and troops.[555]

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[553] Frederick II of Prussia, "Histoire de Mon Temps (1775)," vol.3, 67.

[554] Ibid., 67-69.

[555] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 76.

Frederick was in desperate need of a battlefield victory, but he could not find one in 1744. His fortunes changed when the Austrians and their new Saxon allies went on the offensive against Frederick in 1745. The Battle of Hohenfriedberg on June 4 was the clash that Frederick had sought since 1740. Here, the Prussians effectively used their training and maneuvering to rout a numerically superior Austro-Saxon army under the command of Prince Charles Alexander of Lorraine. Frederick's initial plan of attack was to attack Prince Charles' allied Saxon contingent at dawn's first light, defeat them, and roll the entire army from east to west. This was the first appearance of Frederick's trademark tactical arrangement, the oblique order, in which the Prussians attacked one edge of an enemy army's deployment, with the hope that the entire army would subsequently fall in a cascade of panic from that fallen edge.

Frederick's use of the oblique order was a gamble on the methods of classical antiquity that went well beyond the notion of training cavalry in the Macedonian style. By choosing this tactic, Frederick displayed a high degree of trust in the example of the Theban general Epaminondas, who deployed the oblique order for the first time at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE. Much like Frederick, Epaminondas fought a numerically superior foe in the Spartans, and his Thebans collapsed the Spartan line when attacking their extreme right wing. At Hohenfriedberg, the Austrians suffered a similar downfall when Frederick rolled up their Saxon left wing. This battle tactic deserves thorough attention, which will be given in the pages ahead. But for the moment it suffices to say that Frederick leveraged his knowledge of ancient warfare at Hohenfriedberg – against the conventional wisdom to withdraw – in order to devise and execute a plan against an army four thousand men larger than his force of 58,500. Here, despite the Saxon collapse, there was stiff resistance on the part of the Austrian lines. But a timely charge by Frederick's Bayreuth Dragoons decided the contest in favor of Frederick. The king

proclaimed, "These men of the Bayreuth regiment are veritable Caesars. You can imagine what monuments would have raised to their honor in Ancient Rome!"[556]

Despite the magnitude of the victory Hohenfriedberg was still not a decisive battle. Two smaller Prussian victories followed. The battle of Soor was especially difficult for Frederick's forces as once again they were taken by surprise – this time in camp. The Prussians failed to properly occupy or picket one side of their camp on September 29, and found the Austrians and Saxons just outside their tents on the high ground to their right. The Austro-Saxon army nearly doubled Frederick's in size, but the Prussians, aided by a timely early morning fog, were able to deploy in enough time to square off against them. Unlike Hohenfriedberg, there was no fancy maneuvering here – just a fight in which discipline and terrain determined the winner. "The combat was alternately only depths and heights, which constantly engaged new combats," Frederick wrote. "The Austrians were trying to rally on these heights; but repulsed several times, confusion became general, and their retreat turned to flight. The whole countryside was covered with disbanded soldiers; cavaliers and infantry, everything was mixed together."[557] Frederick discovered to his dismay afterward that Hungarian hussars managed to loot his poorly protected camp during the battle. The women and wounded in camp suffered "actions (that) revolt humanity, and cover with infamy those who do them or who tolerate them." He reflected that his troops, at least, were "valiant but never cruel," and "often been seen to perform acts of greatness that should not be expected of lowly people."[558]

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[556] Duffy, *Fredrick the Great*, 65.

[557] Frederick II of Prussia, "Histoire de mon temps (1775)," vol.3, 155.

[558] Ibid., 158-59.

In the final clash of the war, Maria Theresa ordered a stab at Brandenburg through Saxony in November of 1745. Frederick did not wait for the Austrians and Saxons to arrive at his front door. He marched two armies into Saxony to meet the Austro-Saxons, who put 20,000 men against the venerable Prussian general Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau at Kesseldorf on December 15. The "Old Dessauer" marched the Prussians straight into the teeth of the Austro-Saxon artillery and musket lines and relied on Prussian infantry and cavalry discipline to hold true. Both did, and the Prussians held the field after a two-hour battle.[559] Peace with Maria Theresa came ten days later, at Christmas. Once again, Frederick remained master of Silesia.

Despite his victories, Frederick had no doubt that war would come again, and it was his duty as king to see his people prepared once more for the continuance of his feud with Maria Theresa. As part of this effort, Frederick had to evaluate his military's performance in these critical years following the first two Silesian Wars and find areas of improvement. From the king's point of view, his potential future success in the coming Third Silesian war relied on this process. He started by improving his legal system, draining sections of farmland in the Oder River Valley, improving his manufacturing base, and boosting his customs revenue.[560] These

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[559] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 87.

[560] The legal reform introduced by Frederick in 1745, the Code Frédéric, was headed by the venerable Samuel Freiherr von Cocceji, "whose virtue and probity were worthy of the heyday of the Roman Republic," according to Frederick. Within the Code Frederic, the king is praised as "…an Alexander and a Solomon. This prince who is above all our praise cut like another Alexander the Gordian Knot that no one had been able to untie until now, abolishing the Roman laws, which despite their confusion have not stopped being followed in Germany for 700 years. And like another Solomon, he had a new body of law set up, drawn, so to speak, from the ashes of Roman law which in many ways did not depart from the principles of sound reason." See Frederick II of Prussia, "Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans," in *Œuvres de Frédéric Le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, vol. 4, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846), 2 for Frederick's praise of Cocceji. See "Biblioteca Europea di Informazione e Cultura," Project des Corporis Juris Fridericiani, April 13, 2011, https://gutenberg.beic.it/view/action/nmets.do?DOCCHOICE=14430789.xml&dvs=1614022443

improvements directly applied to Prussia's ability to withstand war, and Frederick proudly proclaimed he stuffed his war chest without "placing a denarius of new taxes on his peoples."[561] Frederick knew all too well how difficult it was for him to feed and supply his army on the march, and he worked to clear as many obstacles to that process as possible. Within the army itself, Frederick spent the interwar years directly addressing the puzzle posed to him by the first two Silesian Wars. How could Frederick's army survive the depredations of modern war, while simultaneously being prepared to win a decisive battle at a moment's notice? Frederick made adjustments within his military on the theoretical and practical level in the interwar years, and many of his solutions had a distinct classical influence.

In these interwar years, we see how Frederick's military training and readings in the classics at last came together harmoniously. His next critical treatise, *General Principles of War Applied to the Tactics and Discipline of the Prussian Troops* (1748), showed that he no longer suffered from the internal conflict evident in *Anti-Machiavelli*. This guidebook to command was a secret military manual for Prussian eyes only, and in fact was originally intended for an audience of one – his younger brother Prince August William, himself a capable commander during the Silesian Wars.[562] It was not until 1753 that Frederick shared this document with his other generals. *General Principles* is a particularly revealing work that

254~211&locale=en_US&search_terms=&show_metadata=true&adjacency=&VIEWER_URL=/view/action/nmets.do?&DELIVERY_RULE_ID=7&divType= for Cocceji's praise of Frederick.

561 Frederick II of Prussia, "Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans," 5.

562 Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux de la guerre, appliqués à la tactique et à la discipline des troupes prussiennes (1748)," *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846-56), vol. 28, 1, ft.

collects Frederick's thoughts on warfare, carefully recorded at an important time for him – after his first two wars, but before a third that was highly likely to come.

General Principles is an enlightened military treatise, and a work of idealistic thinking that draws its ideals overwhelmingly from classical antiquity. Frederick's personal reflections on war conveys his thoughts on warfare honestly, with an assessment on the state of his army, his enemies, and the ideal methods of military operation on and away from campaign. In this set of instructions Frederick sincerely attempts to describe the methods and philosophy of a perfect general. He does this with the hope that his brother will pick up these concepts and enact them, without reservation or hesitation. He does so, importantly, as an enlightened thinker, one who believed in the applicability of universal principles to all situations. Accordingly, if a set of rules worked for one general, under similar circumstances, reason dictates they should work for another.

It is clear that Frederick hoped to present the ideal general as a man who embodied the Enlightenment spirit first and foremost:

> A perfect captain is a being of reason… Perfection is incompatible in all ways with humanity; but the feeling of our imperfection should not prevent us from tracing perfect models, so that these generous souls, animated by a principle of honor and emulation, may approach it in part, if they cannot imitate it in whole.[563]

Frederick's trust in reason aligns perfectly with the practical spirit of *General Principles* and it is grounded in Frederick's intellectual respect for "great examples and the great models that form men." He calls out "Eugene [of Savoy], Condé, Turenne, and Caesar" as "heroes" worthy of admiration in this work. Frederick believed that models from the past existed for the education and development of generals who cared to seek enlightenment from them. To Frederick there

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[563] Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux," 39.

was a sense of honor and sincerity in the action of consulting models from history.[564] This is consistent with his assertion that a general, before all things, be an "honest man and a good citizen," who would not squander his knowledge of the art of war.[565]

But who were Frederick's models and how would he rely upon them during this critical moment in his reign? *General Principles* reveals the ideas that were at the forefront of Frederick's military mind as he prepared for a decisive clash with Austria over Silesia. The work also shows that classical antiquity was perhaps the most important archive from which Frederick drew his examples and formed many of these principles that he considered universal. Particularly important for his *General Principles* was Vegetius's *De re militari*, which *General Principles* echoes both in spirit and substance, particularly in its focus on discipline.[566] Vegetius offered detailed descriptions of Roman discipline from the bygone days of the Republic, lost and admired even in Vegetius's time. Just as the Roman writer attempted to revive a military model long out of practice, Frederick's modeled the discipline of his troops on classical antiquity and let the Romans set the tone for improving the training and cohesion of his troops in *General Principles*. This perfected discipline, revived from ancient practice, allowed him to more effectively deploy the tactical system that became his hallmark in his final war for control of Silesia.

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[564] Frederick's advice to educate oneself using models from the past foreshadows Clausewitz's later theory of military education via re-enactment. MacDonogh alludes to this in *Frederick the Great: A Life in Deed and Letters*, 244. See Sumida's *Decoding Clausewitz: A New Approach to "On War"* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008) for an extensive interpretation of this theory.

[565] Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux," 3.

[566] Frederick's library inventory at Potsdam shows three different editions of Vegetius's *De re militari* on his shelves: 1743, 1757, and 1772.

Before delving into the details of *General Principles*, it should be noted that Frederick and Vegetius attempted to do the same thing with their military guidebooks. Both men were generals who placed value on the sharing of military knowledge, and the idea that principles of military practice could be replicated from one commander to another. In this way, both generals were men of reason. Frederick wrote for his brother, and Vegetius wrote for his emperor, but the concept remains the same. Each wrote a guidebook, more a work of advice than a manual, for the benefit of a single person, even though it was later read by many. But what distinguishes each of these men from other military theorists was their open acknowledgement that their works were not products of unique genius. Each acknowledged the debt of gratitude owed to the military figures who came before them and who inspired their work.

The time in which Vegetius wrote is disputed (late fourth to early fifth century) but *De re militari* makes it clear that Rome's military then was no more than a shadow of its former glory. *De re militari* is no celebration of Rome's late imperial military prowess. Rather, Vegetius looked back to the best methods of past leaders like "Cato the Censor, Cornelius Celsus, and Frontinus" along with Paternus, Augustus, and Trajan as examples for emulation. Also, Vegetius made it clear that he did not intend to study the tactics of Rome's neighbors. "Our business as Romans is to examine the discipline of our ancestors only, the excellence of which, from a very confined territory, extended their empire almost over the whole world," he wrote.[567] It was Vegetius's hope that the Romans of the past still had something to offer an emperor as late as the fifth century.

Likewise, Frederick thought that military writers of the past could help his Prussian army of the eighteenth century. "I have merged into this work the reflections I have made and those

[567] Vegetius, *Military* Institutions, 16-17.

that I have found in the writings of the greatest generals," he wrote.[568] And like Vegetius, Frederick also made it clear that he did not intend to deliver advice on the tactics of neighbors: "I write only for my officers. I only speak of what is applicable to the Prussians, and I only consider enemies our neighbors, which is unfortunately a synonym." Both writers could have gone without mentioning that they drew upon past sources to develop their military guidebooks. Yet, neither did. In fact, both made a point to demonstrate that they were using the past as a guide, assuming, thereby, that readers would share their belief in the utility of historical examples – that the past held credibility. What makes Frederick so interesting, however, is that he chose to look backward to a time hundreds of years before, when there was no such thing as gunpowder, or muskets, or cannon. What did the ancients have to offer the battlefield of the eighteenth century, a time so different from that of sword, spear, and shield?

Evidently, Frederick thought the moderns could learn quite a lot from their classical forebears. In *General Principles*, he made it easy for the reader to spot what he believed was the most important contribution that the ancient world had to offer, on page one, paragraph one:

> The wars I have fought have given me the opportunity to reflect deeply on the principles of this great art which has raised or overthrown so many empires. Roman discipline has only existed with us [Prussia]; in the same way by following their example, war should be a meditation for us, and peace an exercise.[569]

In this first paragraph of *General Principles*, we see Frederick's two greatest military concerns in the year 1748 laid bare: discipline and preparation. First, Frederick thought that discipline, specifically *Roman* discipline, was a unique trait of his Prussian army among the militaries of Europe. As he continued to emphasize in the pages that follow, Frederick viewed discipline as

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[568] Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux," 4.

[569] Ibid., 3.

the core value of a successful military – the quality from which all martial abilities flow. The Romans, particularly Vegetius, provided Frederick with the central model for the kind of discipline he wanted to instill in his Prussian army, something Frederick would emphasize in many other texts throughout his life. The second concern made apparent in this passage is that the Prussian king did not want to waste this period of peace between wars with Austria. This peace should be an exercise, not a rest. War, then, should be the expression of lessons and methods mastered in that exercise. This was a message that Frederick repeated over and over in his life, both inside and outside of *General Principles.* In a history of the Prussian military, 1746, he writes:

> We could apply to this militia what Vegetius says about that of the Romans: 'Their discipline made them triumph over the tricks of the Greeks, the strength of the Germans, the great stature of the Gauls, and all the nations of the earth.'[570]

In *General Principles*, 1748, he repeats:

> I confidently hope that all generals are convinced of the necessity and usefulness of discipline and will strive with me to maintain and perfect it in war and peace. I will never forget what Vegetius said of the Romans, when he exclaimed with enthusiasm: "Finally the Roman discipline triumphed over the tall stature of the Teutons, over the strength of the Gauls, over the cunning of the Greeks, over the large number of barbarians and submitted to the whole known world. " So much does the welfare of states depend on the discipline of the armies![571]

In his *Political Testament* of 1752, he reiterates the point again:

> In order to be useful during the war, the army requires the most careful maintenance even in peacetime. In peace, says Vegetius, this art must be studied and used in war… Discipline is the soul of the armies. As long as it is in bloom,

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[570] Frederick II of Prussia, "Du militaire depuis son institution jusqu'à la fin du règne de Frédéric-Guillaume," 1746, *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846-56), I, 223.

[571] Frederick II, "Les principes généraux," 100.

> the state will survive. One only needs to read what Vegetius has to say about the Roman militia.[572]

In his military reflections during the Third Silesian War in 1758, he once again admonishes: "Vegetius says: 'War should be a study for us and peace an exercise.' He is right!"[573] And finally, in his memoires, 1775, he once again maintains: "So as said Vegetius, peace became a school for the Prussian armies, and war a practice."[574]

As these passages demonstrate, Frederick's admiration for Vegetius's perspective on Roman discipline was no passing fancy. Frederick repeatedly referenced Vegetius over the course of three decades of military life. His first overt reference to Vegetius arrived in his written works in 1746, just after the end of the Second Silesian War, at the start of a period of renewed focus on discipline within the Prussian ranks. *General Principles* formalizes that adaptation of Roman discipline as a model. Frederick's mention of Vegetius as late as 1775 shows that he had not abandoned his admiration for the Roman military virtue after decades in the field, and that apparently, he felt his faith in ancient reason was well-placed.

The program of discipline that is described in *General Principles* clearly draws from a number of examples outlined in Vegetius's *De re militari.* This was necessary because Frederick's challenge in the late 1740's was to improve his army into a force that could reliably

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[572] Frederick II of Prussia, "Das Politische Testament von 1752," in *Die Werke Friedrichs des Großen: in deutscher Übersetzung*, ed. Gustav Berthold Volz (Berlin: Reimar Hobbing, 1912), vol. 7, 168.

[573] Frederick II of Prussia, "Réflexions sur la tactique et sur quelques parties de la guerre, ou Réflexions sur quelques changements dans la façon de faire la guerre," 1758, *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846-56), vol. 28, 169.

[574] Frederick II of Prussia, "Mémoires depuis la paix de Hubertsbourg 1763, jusqu'à la fin du partage de la Pologne, 1775," 1775, *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. Johann de Preuss, 30 vols. (Berlin: Decker, 1846-56), vol. 6, 105.

deliver a decisive victory when the opportunity presented itself. Frederick had already attempted to implement classical methods in the First and Second Silesian Wars, but *General Principles* reflects his desire to refine and codify those procedures for his other generals, like his brother. Frederick understood that his Prussian army lacked the support system necessary to withstand a prolonged, attritive war with Austria and her allies. And a third war for Silesia was on the horizon. To compensate for Prussia's weakness, Frederick emphasized a training system that could make his troops more resistant to desertion, more competitive against similarly equipped enemy forces, and more capable of defeating a force that outnumbered them.

To begin, one of Frederick's main concerns in *General Principles* is that of desertion, which proved occasionally troublesome to Frederick's armies in the First and Second Silesian War. For a resource-strapped state like Prussia, the loss of a trained soldier to desertion meant more than the same loss for a populous or wealthy state like France. Frederick wrote that for these wealthier powers, the desertion of one clumsy man simply meant he was replaced by another, equally clumsy soldier. For Prussia, the loss was different. The loss of a soldier more rigorously trained than the average European infantryman meant that he would not be replaced by an equal, but by a lesser soldier. Further complicating matters was that the Prussian army at this time was "composed of half citizens, and the other half mercenaries," known to become "defectors at the first opportunity." Frederick's most direct solution to desertion in *General Principles* was to treat his soldiers on campaign almost like prisoners, with guards and patrols constantly on the lookout for runners.[575] But another, more subtle solution of Frederick's resembles Vegetius's advice.

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[575] Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux," 5-6.

Rome's armies of the late empire, according to Vegetius, were also composed of citizens and auxilia, "hired corps of foreigners, assembled from different parts of the Empire." Vegetius had a low opinion of these mixed armies, writing that "little can be expected from forces so dissimilar," and it was "almost impossible" for them to act in concert. But Vegetius also insisted that "when properly trained and disciplined," the foreign auxilia could be of "material service" and a "very considerable addition to their strength."[576] This underscored the importance of training in the Roman army, which was as brutal as it was effective. Vegetius's solution to curb desertion, mutiny, and sedition, then, comes as no surprise: intense physical exercise and constant drill. Vegetius warned that "an army drawn together from different parts sometimes is disposed to mutiny," and that it was necessary for the officers to "keep up so strict a discipline as to leave them no room to harbor any thoughts but of submission and obedience." According to Vegetius, a full day of weapons training, running, swimming, marching through thickets, and timber cutting not only left the rank and file too tired to revolt, but instilled the troops with confidence in their own skill and strength. Such a well-trained, exhausted group would be "inspired with emulation for glory and eagerness for action."[577]

Frederick echoed Vegetius's suggestion for curbing chaos in the ranks in *General Principles*. "Most of an army is made up of indolent people," he wrote. "If the general is not ceaselessly on their tail, this whole machine, so ingenious and perfect, will very quickly break down… It is therefore necessary to get used to working without ceasing, and those who will do it will see from their experience that this was necessary, and that there are abuses to be repressed

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[576] Vegetius, *Military Institutions*, 49.

[577] Ibid., 98-99.

every day."[578] Like Vegetius, Frederick endorsed working his men to exhaustion, but also like Vegetius, he realized the upshot of Roman-style discipline:

> Although this painful and continual application seems hard, provided a general has it, he is only too rewarded for it; and what advantages of troops so swift, so brave and so well-disciplined do they not give him over his enemies! … What would not be done with such well-disciplined troops![579]

Frederick not only saw in the Roman model the potential to address problems related to disorder, but he also simultaneously understood the positive effect that constant activity would have on his troops. They were better-trained than the armies of their neighbors, more physically fit, better able to handle light infantry harassment, and thus less likely to desert. In this way, Frederick indirectly addressed the unique Prussian problem of retaining and replacing highly trained, disciplined soldiers as they encountered attrition.

Frederick addressed another problem of the First and Second Silesian Wars with a solution similar to Vegetius – how to avoid being surprised on campaign. Frederick was no stranger to surprise thanks to his experience in the first two Silesian Wars. At Mollwitz, the Prussians failed to properly exploit the advantage of surprise. At Chotusitz and Soor, Frederick's forces met with near disaster as they were themselves caught unawares. If Frederick was to survive a prolonged war with Austria and her allies, he could not afford to put his men in the same starting positions as at Chotusitz and Soor. He outlined in *General Principles* a plan to prevent just that, based on proper scouting and camp construction.

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[578] Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux," 6.

[579] Vegetius, *Military Institutions*, 49.

Vegetius was very clear about the general's responsibilities concerning scouting and reconnaissance, showing that the ancient Romans understood well the potential for rapid victory or defeat by surprise.[580] Vegetius warned his readers that a general "cannot be too careful and diligent in taking necessary precautions to prevent a surprise on the march," and that he "should have an exact description of the country that is the seat of war."[581] Vegetius warned that generals should always know the nature of roads, shortest routes between points, and places where rivers could be crossed. But an additional step must be taken. "A general should also inform himself of all these particulars from persons of sense and reputation well-acquainted with the country, by examining them separately at first, then comparing their accounts in order to come at the truth with certainty," he wrote.[582]

Frederick's language, once again, closely mirrors Vegetius: "… after having got a general idea of the whole country, we must come to local knowledge. This asks us to know where all the highways go, that we know the situation of the towns." He adds, "We must know the course of rivers and their different depths, how far they are navigable, and the places where they can be forded," but most importantly, "it is necessary to go to these mountains on horseback, map in

[580] It is also appropriate to point out that Machiavelli has a similar discussion in chapter 14 of "The Prince," in which the Florentine tells the story of Philopoemon, a third-century BCE Achaean general who often rode through the countryside with his friends, constantly discussing the possibilities of future battles in his homeland. This is immediately followed by the statement, "Every ruler should read history books, and in them he should study the actions of admirable men." Then, "So it is said, Alexander the Great took Achilles as his model; Caesar took Alexander; Scipio took Cyrus." - Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. David Wootton, 47.

[581] Ibid., 102-103.

[582] Ibid. Also, this was the same sort of reconnaissance conducted by Julius Caesar before his invasion of Britain in 55 BCE, chronicled in Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, Book IV. Frederick possessed two copies of this work, dated 1658 and 1743 at Potsdam.

hand, having with you mayors of neighboring villages, hunters, pastors, and even butchers."[583] Both Vegetius and Frederick endorsed the idea of interviewing locals, who could provide the essential geographic knowledge needed by a general on campaign. While this may seem to be common sense, this is an opportune time to remind ourselves that much of what we assume to be "basic" knowledge regarding military campaigns simply is not "basic" at all. In countless campaigns across history, commanders have made clumsy mistakes by not reconnoitering the campaign territory properly, and Frederick seems to know this from his description of being surprised. He writes, "…one should not be embarrassed by anything when war is waged there [the area of campaigning]."[584] The use of the word "embarrassed," is a strong one, indicating that failing at scouting is disastrous, and that one should do everything he can to avoid failing in that situation. It also implies that it has happened plenty of times before. After all, how could anything be "embarrassing" if there is no sort of sympathy for the person embarrassed? Sympathy has its origin in experience. Perhaps Frederick is admitting here his own embarrassment at being surprised at Chotusitz and Soor - showing once more the value that Frederick places on historical modeling. Frederick does not want his brother, his other generals, or himself to suffer the same humiliation again.

Soor, though a victory, was particularly embarrassing because the Prussians were surprised at camp, which could have led to disaster. Frederick announced in *General Principles* his intent to standardize the defense of his camps in the Roman style moving forward:

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[583] Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux," 25-26.

[584] Ibid.

> The general rule that we observe in all the encampments is to choose them so that the troops have wood and water within reach, and we dig in like the Romans, to avoid the activities that light troops, which our enemies have in great number, could attempt during the night, and to prevent desertion; because I always found that we had less when we had joined the redans all around the camp than when we had neglected this precaution.[585]

This "Roman style" is discussed by Vegetius:

> It is very imprudent and dangerous to encamp in a straggling manner without some sort of entrenchment: the darkness of night, the necessity of sleep, and the dispersion of the horses at pasture, afford opportunities of surprise.[586]

Vegetius and Frederick both discuss the arrangements and different kinds of camps at length in their respective works. But in all cases, both generals stress the importance of placing soldiers, entrenchments, and wooden stakes and palisades. This combination of defensive works "makes your camp entrenched according to the use of the Romans," Frederick writes.[587]

While failure is considered by many to be the best teacher, Frederick demonstrated in *General Principles* that victory has its share of lessons to impart as well, especially pertaining to tactical maneuvering. Frederick's codification of the oblique order in *General Principles* is one of the most significant legacies of the work, second only to the emphasis on discipline that made the oblique order possible. In the Second Silesian War, Frederick used the oblique order to help him win a convincing victory over a numerically superior force at Hohenfriedberg. Though the battle was far from perfect, this tactical remnant from ancient Greece helped Frederick solve a problem that plagued all armies in the eighteenth century: that all armies were too similar, and

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[585] Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux," 31.

[586] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius*, 112.

[587] Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux," 38.

that battles played out like bouts of shadowboxing. The oblique order allowed Frederick greater control on the battlefield, enhanced the survivability of his army against greater numbers, and leveraged the superior "Roman" discipline of the Prussian troops to make his army more deceptive and offensive in nature.

The oblique order itself is nothing new. Frederick did not invent it, and some historians have suggested that Frederick drew his inspiration for the oblique order from French generals and military theorists like Condé, Turenne, Folard, Antoine de Pas Feuquières (1648-1711), and Montecuccoli.[588] But alongside the fact that these modern generals and theorists were inspired by antiquity as well, it is certain that none of them invented the oblique order either.[589] That was an ancient innovation of the Theban general Epaminondas at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE. Epaminondas's student of war, Philip of Macedon also implemented the tactic, and so did the son of Philip, Alexander the Great. It is safe to say that Frederick, being an admirer of all three men and a consumer of so much ancient literature, was well aware of the usage of this particular battle tactic, in both ancient and modern times.

The oblique order, like so many other military topics dear to the heart of Frederick the Great is prominently mentioned in Vegetius's *De Re Militari*. The ancient general reflects the Roman tradition of adapting its enemies' tactics for its own uses, as he describes how the Romans employed Epaminondas's great contribution to tactical canon:

> The second and best disposition is the oblique: for though your army consists of few troops, yet good and advantageously posted, it will contribute to your obtaining the victory, notwithstanding the numbers and bravery of the enemy. It is as follows. As the armies are marching up to the attack, your left wing must be

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[588] Adam Storring, "The Age of Louis XIV: Frederick the Great and French Ways of War," *German History* 38, no. 1 (March 2020): 33-35. Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 83.

[589] See editor John Clarke's comments in the introduction to *Military Institutions of Vegetius*, ix.

> kept back at such a distance from the enemy's right as to be out of reach of their darts and arrows. Your right wing must advance obliquely upon the enemy's left, and begin the engagement; and you must endeavor, with your best cavalry and infantry, to surround the wing with which you are engaged, make it give way, and fall upon the enemy in the rear. If they once give ground and the attack is properly seconded, you will undoubtedly gain the victory while your left wing, which continued at a distance, will remain untouched.[590]

Frederick's *General Principles*, similarly, addresses the question of "how we can beat the enemy with unequal forces." This is particularly important for Frederick, who knew that Prussia could be outnumbered in the anticipated war to come by the armies of empires like Austria, Russia, or France. Codifying a way to beat a numerically superior foe was important not only to Frederick, but every Prussian general who would follow him.

Because the survivability of troops tied directly to the defensive integrity of Prussia itself, a formation that emphasized the preservation of troops appealed to Frederick:

> Thus my first rule falls on the choice of the ground, the second on the disposition of the battle itself; it is on these occasions that my oblique order of battle can be employed very usefully. We refuse a wing to the enemy and the one who is to attack is fortified. With this one you make all your efforts on the wing of the enemy, which you take in the flank. An army of one hundred thousand men, taken in the flank, can be beaten by thirty thousand men, because the affair is then decided very quickly.

He also adds, "If you are beaten, only part of your army has been beaten, and three quarters, fresh troops, are used to retreat."[591] Additionally, the slanted nature of the oblique line allowed Frederick enhanced communication with the unengaged wing of his army. Unlike in previous battles like Mollwitz, where Frederick struggled to give orders to his forces in the chaos of battle, the oblique order allowed for adaptation and improvisation with the portion of the army he

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[590] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius*, 143-44.

[591] Ibid., 84.

denied to the enemy. This directly addressed some of the problems caused by the modern scale of battle, as the distance between the Prussian commanders and their troops was shortened in an oblique formation.

Frederick could easily have encountered the oblique order directly from another ancient source. We know that Frederick owned a copy of Diodorus Siculus's *Universal History*, dated 1743, two years before the Battle of Hohenfriedberg. Diodorus chronicles Epaminondas's first use of the oblique order at the Battle of Leuctra, in great detail:[592]

> … on the Boeotian side Epaminondas, by employing an unusual disposition of his own, was enabled through his own strategy to achieve his famous victory. He selected from the entire army the bravest men and stationed them on one wing… The weakest he placed on the other wing and instructed them to avoid battle and withdraw gradually during the enemy's attack. So then, by arranging his phalanx in oblique formation, he planned to decide the issue of the battle by means of the wing in which were the élite… the Boeotians retreated on one wing, but on the other engaged the enemy in double-quick time. As they met in hand-to-hand combat, at first both fought ardently and the battle was evenly poised; shortly, however, as Epaminondas' men began to derive advantage from their valour and the denseness of their lines, many Peloponnesians began to fall. For they were unable to endure the weight of the courageous fighting of the élite corps… the heavy column led by Epaminondas bore down upon the Lacedaemonians… the Lacedaemonians were with great difficulty forced back; at first, as they gave ground they would not break their formation, but finally, as many fell and the commander who would have rallied them had died, the army turned and fled in utter rout.[593]

The idea that Frederick derived the oblique order from classical sources is all but certain. In addition to his enthusiasm and passion for reading classical antiquity, and his willingness to consult Vegetius and other sources on other critical topics of military concern, the oblique order

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[592] "Stiftung Preußische Schlösser Und Gärten Katalog Friedrich II," accessed January 24, 2021, https://vzlbs3.gbv.de/DB=5.2/LNG=EN/.

[593] Diodorus Siculus, "Universal History Book XV Chapters 45-56," LacusCurtius, accessed February 26, 2021, https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/15C*.html.

is also, by nature, not the sort of tactic that one undertakes on the spur of the moment. It is a risky endeavor that would not be appealing to someone who did not have prior examples of its effective use in battle, and trusted sources for those examples. To attack an enemy that is numerically superior in battle is counterintuitive to "conventional" military wisdom that would suggest withdrawal instead – especially if one's soldiers were not easily replaced, like Frederick's. That Frederick would risk the lives of his very precious, well-trained, expensive soldiers against larger armies suggests a confidence that either originates in ignorance of history, or mastery of it. In the case of Frederick II, the philosopher king, which seems more likely?

We can gain added certainty that Frederick drew inspiration for the tactics articulated in his *General Principles* from the ancient world by taking a short detour into another one of Frederick's interwar writings, a poem called *The Art of War.* In this 1749 poem, Frederick celebrates some of the classical and modern heroes who shaped the warfare of his time. The Prussian king once again worked with Voltaire to write a poem praising the martial legacies of generals such as Caesar, Pompey, Fabius, and Hannibal as well as fictional characters such as Achilles, Hector, and Diomedes. The poem, written in this critical interwar period, is a joyful literary return to Frederick's days as crown prince, when he sought to fashion himself as a man of letters, and a scholar of the ancient world. Frederick wrote *The Art of War* as a response to Maurice de Saxe's *Mes Revéries*, and as a tribute to the poetic style of Ovid. "I took it upon myself to put in verse the precepts of this art [war], just as Ovid did that of loving," Frederick wrote to his younger brother August Wilhelm in April of 1751.[594] Voltaire polished and added to Frederick's initial verses. The resulting 1600-line poem is not loved universally as a great work

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[594] Frederick II of Prussia, *Politische Correspondenz Friedrich's Des Großen*, ed. Johann Gustav Droysen, 46 vols. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1882), 322.

of literature. Asprey calls it “a dreadful piece of work,” and Besterman describes it as “confused in structure, feeble in execution, commonplace in poetic style.”[595]

But one should not rush *The Art of War* to the wastebin for its crime of, according to some, being relatively ordinary. The poem is actually a treasure trove of clues with which to unlock the mind of Frederick. A closer look at the words on the page shows that Frederick was not only knowledgeable about a wide cast of characters and writers from classical antiquity but was also capable of demonstrating their relevance to his time in verse. At the beginning of the poem, Frederick invites a young prince to listen to “the lessons of a soldier,” which call him to learn the art of war, reflecting the historical modelling theme of *General Principles*:

> *These weapons, these horses, these soldiers, these cannons*
> *Do not support the honor of nations alone;*
> *Learn their use, and by what maxims*
> *A warrior can achieve sublime feats.*
> *May my muse in these verses draw you the pictures*
> *Of all the virtues that form the heroes,*
> *Of their acquired talents and their vigilance,*
> *Of their active value and their foresight…*[596]

Here Frederick appeals to his younger reader to not place his trust in technology alone, but to understand the maxims and the virtues of model soldiers - heroes whose words and deeds can be trusted. And who were these heroes? Throughout *The Art of War*, Frederick presents prominent figures and armies from classical antiquity as helpful models for handling the challenges and demands of modern warfare. He invokes the names of historical figures with lessons to teach modern princes and commanders. The lessons are not spelled out as they are in *General Principles,* but a careful eye can spot the references. In the verse below, note the close

[595] Asprey, *Frederick the Great,* 401 and Blanning, *Frederick the Great: King of Prussia*, 355.

[596] Frederick II of Prussia, “L’Art de la Guerre,” 261.

association of Epaminondas's name to the phrase, "art substituted for numbers." In writing these words, Frederick references not only the oblique order, but the discipline that makes such a tactic possible. He also shows the reader that the originator of the method is worthy of praise and consideration, thousands of years after the time of the phalanx.

> *Greece was the first to plant our laurels,*
> *Sparta was the cradle, the school of warriors,*
> *There were once born order and discipline;*
> *The phalanx to the Thebans owed its origin;*
> *Miltiades, Cimon, wise Epaminondas,*
> *You made heroes of your lesser soldiers;*
> *Art substituted for numbers, and boldness hardened*
> *By pride avenged your country of the Persians.*[597]

If this verse was written by anyone other than Frederick, it would be little more than platitude. But these words were written by a man only one year after composing *General Principles*, in which he openly advocated the practice of historical modeling, suggesting to his fellow Prussian commanders that the generals of the past remained relevant to eighteenth-century warfare. Beyond that, in the just-written *General Principles*, Frederick called for the standardization of the oblique order, in the section titled "How We Can Beat the Enemy with Unequal Forces." In the opening line of that section, he wrote, "When the number of Prussian troops is inferior to the enemies, we must not despair of defeating them; but then the aptitude of the general must make up for the number."[598] In other words, as the *Art of War* suggests, art substitutes for numbers. And as Frederick would later show in the Third Silesian war, discipline and tactics like the oblique order would be the focal point of that art.

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[597] Ibid., 267-68.

[598] Frederick II of Prussia, "Les principes généraux," 83.

It is plain to see that Frederick had these methods at the top of his mind in 1749, just as he set out to improve the Prussian army's capability to carry them out. Here, another reference to discipline and order, in Alexander the Great's army:

> *Look at this hero, this king of Macedon:*
> *He gives his friends his goods, his patrimony,*
> *But rich in hope and proud of his virtues,*
> *He descends on the Persians, he defeats Darius,*
> *He subjugates Asia, and his strong phalanx*
> *Slaves the Granicus, and the Euphrates, and the Ganges*[599]

The Romans' methods of entrenchment, just discussed in *General Principles*, also make an appearance in the *Art of War*:

> *Rome, a happy imitator of her rivals,*
> *Turning their features against them, was victorious;*
> *Its camps were changed into invincible forts.*
> *The Danube saw them, and trembled for its banks.*[600]

Frederick again references the Romans, this time describing the breakdown of their armies' discipline at the end of the Empire:

> *But this discipline, in fruitful victories,*
> *Who brought them to the point of their greatness,*
> *Under the last Caesars was no longer in force.*
> *So the Goths, the Huns, the Gepid vagabonds,*
> *Less warriors than greedy robbers and pillagers.*
> *Ravaged the empire in the grip of their fury;*
> *The Roman looked for defenders in vain,*
> *And this mighty state, approaching its ruin,*
> *Regretted, but too late, the ancient discipline,*
> *This art which was lost…*[601]

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[599] Frederick II of Prussia, "L'Art de la guerre," 268.

[600] Ibid.

[601] Ibid., 268-69. Interestingly, Frederick speaks glowingly of the Romans, but disparagingly of the people from which many Germans and eastern Europeans are descended.

Frederick also advises young princes to exercise a different kind of discipline - mercy in victory. He compares Caesar at Pharsalus to Louis XV (and by extension, Maurice de Saxe) at Fontenoy:

Know how to conquer, and above all how to use victory;
The greatest of the Romans by his various successes,
The day that in his power he subdued the universe,
Saved his enemies in the fields of Pharsalia.
See at Fontenoi Louis, whose equal soul,
Sweet in his success, relieves the vanquished:
He is a beneficent god from whom they are helped,
They kiss and weep the hand that disarms them,
His valor subdues them, His mercy charms them.
In the bosom of fury there is goodness,
If conquering is of a hero, forgiving is of a god. [602]

What also makes the *Art of War* so interesting is that even after betraying the enlightened virtues of *Anti-Machiavelli*, and fighting two wars over what was essentially a land grab, Frederick still seems invested in presenting himself as an enlightened figure, who associates with the greatest of literary minds. It should not be overlooked that Voltaire himself could have contributed as many as 300 of the poem's 1600 lines. This begs the question: how can the reader tell which lines belong to the king, and which belong to the philosophe? It is safe to say that the vast majority of readers could not accurately assign lines to either man as they are read. But as it concerns Frederick's intentions with this particular poem, this question is not as important as the collaboration itself. The more crucial idea is that Frederick collaborated on a poem about warfare, flavored it with classical references, and sought the input of one of the leading voices of the Enlightenment to make it better. Frederick cared and desired to make this work about war, as the title suggests, a work of art.

[602] Ibid., 317

Here, Frederick attempted to craft an image of himself as a man of formidable literary talent, and a man with an appreciation for the intellectual activities and trends of his time. He wanted his name associated with the most respected military figures in Europe such as Maurice de Saxe, but also with enlightened historians, poets, and scientists. He wanted to write about military matters, but chose to do so in verse, selecting Ovid as his poetic model. Not only was Frederick deliberately choosing a more artistic way of giving military advice, he was also showing to the world that he was skillful enough to imitate one of the great poets of antiquity, and one whose work was extremely popular in eighteenth-century literary and courtly circles. Not only was Frederick an admirer, but so was Voltaire, who had been thoroughly educated in Latin history and poetry at the Collège Louis-le-grand from 1704-1711.[603] Indeed, at the time he conceived the poem, Frederick was especially anxious to regain Voltaire's approval and comradeship, as their relationship had cooled significantly as a result of Frederick's military aggressiveness in the First and Second Silesian Wars.[604] The plan worked, and Frederick was able to coax Voltaire into helping him produce the final version of the poem. Frederick succeeded, thereby, in conveying the most important message of the poem: he, the great Prussian military conqueror, was also one of the Enlightenment's greatest minds. To prove that, he had to imitate the ancients.

The most pressing issue for Frederick as the interwar years progressed was how to translate the art on the page to violence on the battlefield, and Frederick spent the years between 1746 and 1757 teaching his army to implement the virtues he promoted in his interwar writings.

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[603] Nablow, "Voltaire, Ovid, And 'La Pucelle d'Orléans,'" 63.

[604] Asprey, *Frederick the Great: The Magnificent Enigma*, 395.

The discipline he admired from ancient Rome was strengthened on the drill ground in those years, as Frederick personally oversaw training and war maneuvers intended to strengthen both bodies and willpower.[605] The tactic that Frederick admired from ancient Greece, the oblique order, was made possible by this strengthened discipline and focus on movement and formation. Frederick's men practiced "holding back one wing while attacking and enveloping the enemy with the other," refining the process until it became practically useful on the battlefield. They also implemented cadenced marching, an art form lost from ancient Rome, brought back to life in Prussia in the 1730's by King Frederick William.[606]

The Prussian army of the Third Silesian Wars was personally shaped by Frederick more than any previous iteration. Theory and drill built the Prussian army on the model of the Roman infantry, as stated in *General Principles,* and the Prussian soldiers and rank and file were practiced to the point of proficiency in the tactical system that Frederick wished to employ. The question as Frederick headed into the Third Silesian War was whether that was enough to withstand the tidal wave of opposition that Prussia would encounter from 1756-1763.

The Test of Fire – the Third Silesian War

Frederick experienced both victories and defeats in the Third Silesian War, a long, dramatic conflict that nearly resulted in the destruction of Prussia itself. Frederick's apex as a commander came in the first two years, when he was able to properly leverage the training and discipline of his troops to their maximum effect. This is when the battles that made him famous,

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[605] Frederick II of Prussia, *Œuvres*, vol. 4, 5.

[606] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 110.

Leuthen and Rossbach, were fought. The remaining five years bogged down into a war of attrition, exactly the sort of war that Frederick could not afford to fight. Frederick won for two reasons only: the strength of the collective willpower of Prussia, and luck. But for Frederick the war was a fascinating combination of contrasting styles of warfare. In the early years of the war, commanders on both sides attempted grand maneuvers in what they hoped could result in a decisive, backbreaking battle. This was the type of warfare best suited to the style of Frederick and to his models from classical antiquity. The latter years of the war for Frederick were fought in what would one day be known as a Clausewitzian style – a defensive war in which willpower and politics played the deciding factor. The Third Silesian War, then, presents the visage of the two-headed god Janus. It looks backward to a style of warfare that worked in the past while looking forward to a style which would become more common in the future.

Prussia's enemies in Frederick's third war were different and more numerous than the previous two, and unlike the previous wars, many battles were fought in Prussian territory. A diplomatic shakeup aligned Frederick's kingdom with Britain, while Maria Theresa marched to war with France, Russia, and Saxony on her side. If Frederick was worried about being outnumbered on the battlefield during the interwar years, it seems his fears were well-founded from the start. The king sensed it was only a matter of time before Prussia was attacked. Rather than wait for his enemies to gather their forces and overwhelm him, Frederick launched a pre-emptive strike into Saxony in August of 1756.

The invasion of Saxony was met with little resistance, and Frederick's forces did not encounter a major battle until October, when northern Bohemia was invaded by the Prussian army. At the Battle of Lobositz, on October 1, Frederick's numerically inferior forces were turned back after a carefully laid ambush by Austrian Field Marshall Maximilian Ulysses Count

von Browne (1705-1757), who used rocky terrain and morning fog to lure Frederick's Prussians into a trap. The battle was hard fought, but von Browne was unable to capitalize on his initial advantage. The clash cost Frederick 2,900 of 28,300 men – ten percent of his force. But Frederick wrote after the war was over that in this quick incursion into Bohemia "the troops were so good, so well-disciplined, and the officers so brave that they reckoned themselves, if not superior, at least equal to the enemy," despite being outnumbered two to one in the country.[607] The difficulties of securing victory, and the cleverness of von Browne demonstrated to Frederick that the Austrians had also improved during the interwar years, a signal that the Third Silesian War would be no easy affair for Frederick and his men.

This point was driven home even further the following year as Fredrick's army suffered heavy losses in a narrow win at the battle of Prague, in which the Austrian Field Marshall von Browne was killed, along with Prussian Field Marshal Kurt Schwerin. Frederick had hoped this particular battle could be the "Pharsalia" or decisive battle he was looking for.[608] Instead, Frederick lost another 14,000 men (of 64,000 engaged). Frederick besieged Prague afterward, but was compelled to engage a relief army organized by the talented Austrian Field Marshall Leopold Joseph von Daun (1705-1766) at the Battle of Kolin on June 18, 1757. Here, Frederick's army of 34,000 men was outnumbered by nearly 20,000 Austrians. Frederick's initial plan at Kolin was to employ the oblique order against the right flank of the Austrians, who occupied an elevated defensive position. As Frederick wrote about this battle, "To support this attack [on the Austrian right flank], it was necessary to feed it with all the Prussian infantry which was in the

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[607] Frederick II of Prussia, *Œuvres*, vol. 4, 105.

[608] Franz A. J. Szabo, *The Seven Years War in Europe, 1756 - 1763*, Modern Wars in Perspective (London: Routledge, 2013), 57.

army; For this reason, the King proposed to refuse entirely his right to the enemies, and he severely forbade the officers who commanded it to pass the main road to Kolin; this was all the more sensible, since the part of the Austrian army exposed vis-à-vis this right occupied unapproachable ground."[609] This was in alignment with the idea codified in *General Principles*, that the oblique order was to be used in situations where the Prussian army was outnumbered. As Frederick suggested in *Art of War*, art could substitute for numbers.

What happened after the initial movement began at Kolin is difficult to interpret. Frederick afterward blamed Prince Maurice of Anhalt-Dessau for engaging the right side of the Prussian line with the Austrians prematurely. He also accused General Christopher Hermann von Manstein of defying his orders on the Prussian right, leading his troops into the teeth of the Austrian defense.[610] The more likely scenario, according to historians Franz Szabo and Denis Showalter, was that Frederick underestimated the impact of his troops on von Daun's right side due to dust clouds on that flank, which was the side that Frederick chose to anchor his oblique order.[611] As a result, Frederick may have ordered a general frontal assault on the Austrians, thinking his oblique maneuver had worked. The truth was that von Daun had held his right flank and enjoyed superior positioning across the remainder of his line. All the Prussians could do at this point was absorb the loss, and they did, with 8,300 killed and 5,380 captured, along with 45 cannons.

While Kolin was a devastating defeat that forced the Prussians to abandon their campaign in Bohemia, it is an important moment for the purpose of examining the influence of classical

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[609] Frederick II of Prussia, *Œuvres*, vol. 4, 146.

[610] Ibid., 147.

[611] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 161 and Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe*, 64.

antiquity on Frederick. So confident was Frederick in the principles of the oblique order that he did not hesitate to use Epaminondas's tactic against an equally equipped foe in a superior defensive position, who held a 20,000-man advantage over his Prussian army. But perhaps an even more important detail to consider is that even in the face of a crushing failure, this was not the last time Frederick would employ the oblique order in battle against his foes. In fact, Frederick would break out the oblique order two more times in 1757, at the Battles of Rossbach and Leuthen. Frederick's dedication to his preferred tactical system was remarkable, particularly in light of chaos and damage it caused among his own troops at Kolin.

Frederick's redemption came on November 5, 1757 at the Battle of Rossbach. By this point in the Third Silesian War, Russia and Sweden had also formally declared war against Prussia, and France sent an army into Saxony to join with the Austrians against Prussia. It was this army that Frederick encountered at Rossbach. The quality of the combined French and Imperial army could not be considered among the finest in Europe. The French general Charles de Rohan, Prince of Soubise (1715-1787) described his troops as "robbers" and "murderers" perpetually on the brink of mutiny.[612] Soubise shared a joint command with Imperial Prince Joseph of Saxe-Hildburghausen (1702-1787). Their encounter with Frederick at Rossbach started with the two armies parallel to each other in lines running roughly north-south, several miles apart. Soubise and Hildburghausen agreed to march their numerically-superior (42,000 to Frederick's 20,000) force into position against Frederick's southern flank, using hilly terrain to hide its movement. This converted his north-south line into an east-west column as they marched. In effect, this was an attempt by Soubise to position his army to use Frederick's signature tactic, the oblique order, against him.

[612] Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe*, 95.

The outcome of the Battle of Rossbach hinged on Frederick's ability to respond to the Allies with an oblique order maneuver of his own. Frederick's lookouts spotted the Allies on the march while the king was at lunch. Frederick left his table and ordered his cavalry commander Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz (1721-1773) to ride to the head of the Allied column and smash it when it came into range. This put 38 cavalry squadrons against the eastern edge of the Allied column, as the oblique order requires, while Frederick positioned the remainder of his infantry. When the Allied column came into position, Seydlitz's horsemen charged them repeatedly, overwhelming a hard-fighting division of Austrian cavalry that retreated back into the Allied column. This caused chaos. While this disaster for the Allies unfolded, Frederick hurried his infantry and artillery into position on Janus Hill, a long, elevated position that perfectly flanked the Allied column on its north side. As his cavalry hammered one edge of the column, as the oblique order requires, his infantry and artillery opened fire on a sitting duck. Soubise's officers had to decide quickly whether to form a line to face Frederick's elevated infantry, or form columns to attack them in the classically inspired style of the *ordre profond*.[613] The French officers in the heat of the moment chose the latter tactic, and their men were cut to pieces by Prussian musket fire and canister shot.

The allied army broke, and Seydlitz's cavalry ran down and killed French and German soldiers until it became too dark to see. More than 5,000 of Soubise and Hildburghausen's men were killed or wounded, with another 5,000 captured, along with 72 cannons. Frederick's total losses were only 169 dead and 379 wounded. Rarely had an eighteenth-century battle seen such a high discrepancy in losses.[614] Frederick achieved this with less than 25 percent of his forces

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[613] Ibid., 97.

[614] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 190.

engaged at the Battle of Rossbach.[615] This shows that at least on this day, the oblique order delivered on its promise for Frederick. It allowed the Prussian king to achieve a victory while vastly outnumbered by his enemies; it enabled the Prussians to collapse one side of the Allies' force and cause a general rout; and it allowed the Prussians to exit the battle with a high rate of survival. The majority of Frederick's men were untouched at Rossbach.

Near the Polish village of Leuthen, a few weeks later on December 5, Frederick faced even longer odds than he did at Rossbach. This time, the Austrians outnumbered the Prussians 66,000 to 33,000, and had more artillery as well – 250 cannons to Frederick's 167. At the opening stage of the battle, Prince Charles Alexander of Lorraine's Austrians aligned their forces north-south in the rolling grasslands near the village. Frederick, approaching from the west, sent a small detachment of cavalry and infantry to engage the northern, right side of the Austrian line. While this force occupied the right wing of the Austrians, Frederick used the low hills on his side of the battlefield to disguise the rest of his army's move south. The Austrians, convinced that Frederick was attacking north, then pulled troops from the southern, left, end of the line to reinforce the north. When the bulk of Frederick's army reappeared from the cover of the hills, it was perpendicular to the smaller end of the Austrian line, the south. As the oblique order intends, Frederick greatly outnumbered the Austrians on one side of its army – in this case, the southern flank, while the northern edge of the larger Austrian force remained disengaged.[616]

The Austrians were stunned. The southern end of their line came under attack by the Prussians while most of their forces were concentrated eight miles to the north, chasing

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[615] Russell Frank Weigley, *The Age of Battles: The Quest for Decisive Warfare from Breitenfeld to Waterloo* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 185.

[616] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 172-182.

phantoms. By the time those troops marched south to fight Frederick's Prussians, the south side of Prince Charles's line had been rolled up. Frederick's oblique order placed the Austrians in a losing position at the very start, and had erased any hope of Austrian victory in the battle's first few minutes that day. It did not help the Austrians that Prince Charles had so much confidence in his firepower advantage that he did not move until it was too late, anticipating a direct attack that never came. In the end, Frederick's deception cost the Austrians 22,000 men, with 12,000 captured.[617] Frederick's losses were not insignificant as they were at Rossbach, but still very small compared to the Austrians: 1,100 dead, 5,100 wounded.

Leuthen was perhaps Frederick's greatest victory and the most clear-cut battlefield implementation of Frederick's points of emphasis in the interwar years: Roman discipline, the oblique order, and better scouting and survivability. Rossbach and Leuthen were also the high points for this style of fighting in the Third Silesian War for Frederick. But the truth that Frederick had to face was that so far, this particular war was a difficult one for the Prussians, and war itself was beginning to evolve away from the type of war that Frederick trained for and preferred. While Frederick may have thought that the ancients had valid solutions for modern warfare, cracks began to show in that intellectual foundation, mostly because the oblique order had its limits, and Frederick's enemies began to understand the Prussian king's tendencies, after many encounters with him. In 1757, for instance, Emperor Frances I warned his brother Prince Charles Alexander of Lorraine at the start of his campaign that Frederick liked to attack with one wing only.[618] It was advice that Charles Alexander may have followed a little too aggressively at

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[617] Ibid.

[618] Duffy, *Frederick the Great: A Military Life*, 312. Duffy also drives home the point that Francis was no expert on military matters… thus, Frederick's tendencies well well-known among the Austrian high command.

Leuthen, when he bit hard on Frederick's initial feint to the north. Making matters worse for Frederick, a copy of the top-secret *General Principles* was captured by the Austrians in 1760 from a Prussian general captured at Cossdorf. Frederick's secrets were no longer his own.

After Frederick's bloody stalemate against the Russians at Zorndorf (1758), the decisive Prussian loss at Kunersdorf (1759), and the narrow, Pyrrhic victory at Torgau (1760), Frederick began to reassess his approach to warfare. In each of these three battles, the oblique order was deployed to various levels of ineffectiveness, and Frederick began to realize its limitations. First, the oblique order's emphasis on long flanking marches exhausted the Prussian troops, often before the first volley was fired. Those same flanking movements did not allow Frederick's artillery to keep up with the infantry they were tasked with supporting, a key contributor to the loss at Kunersdorf. Lastly, the unengaged wing of Frederick's oblique line was chained to the success or failure of the wing that was doing the fighting. If the fighting wing was successful, the unengaged wing moved in to clean up the routed enemy. If the fighting wing failed, the unengaged wing covered the retreat. The problem here was that a large portion of Frederick's forces was unable to act independently or in reaction to a sudden change in the initial battle plan. Frederick struggled with this sort of improvisation when his initial plan fell apart at Torgau.[619]

These weaknesses were exacerbated by the growth of Austrian and Russian forces in the years prior to and during the Third Silesian War. The armies of both countries learned to leverage terrain features to their advantage, each created systems for reserves to move more easily around the battlefield, and the Austrians in particular placed a greater emphasis on

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[619] Ibid, 312-313.

artillery, the Prussian Achilles heel.[620] Frederick noticed many of these improvements in Austria's military capabilities as early as 1758:

> The principal changes which I notice in the conduct of the Austrian generals during this war consist in their encampments, in their marches, and in this prodigious artillery which, carried out alone, without being supported by troops, would be almost sufficient to repel, destroy and damage a body that would come forward to attack him.[621]
>
> In that which modern Austrians are particularly distinguished, it is to constantly choose advantageous grounds for the base of their position, and to profit better than we did formerly of the difficulties of places…[622]
>
> If an Austrian camp presents you with a formidable front, this is not, however, where its defense is confined; its depth and its multiplied lines contain real ambushes, that is to say, new chicanes, places likely to surprise troops disturbed by the charges which they were obliged to make before reaching it.[623]

One of Frederick's solutions, true to form, was to base his adaptations according to Roman logic, suggesting that the Prussians imitate the good habits of the Austrians:

> The Romans, by appropriating the advantageous weapons of the nations against which they had fought, made their troops invincible. We must certainly adopt the way the Austrians stand, be content in any case with a narrower front to gain depth and take great care to position and secure our wings. One must conform to the system of numerous artillery, however embarrassing it may be. I have considerably increased ours, which will be able to provide for the defect of our infantry, whose fabric does not may only get worse as the war draws on.[624]

Frederick did indeed increase his emphasis on artillery in the later years of the Third Silesian war. He distributed 12-pound cannons to his infantry battalions in 1759 and 1760, and became

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[620] Ibid.

[621] Frederick, "Les principes généraux," 171.

[622] Ibid.

[623] Ibid.

[624] Ibid., 177-78.

infatuated with the high-arcing trajectories of howitzer fire, to dislodge the Austrians and others from their heavily-defended, often elevated positions.[625] Frederick's new main tactic from 1762 onward was to rely on artillery to displace enemy strong points while simultaneously threatening those positions with groupings of infantry intended to distract, threaten, or cut-off enemy formations and strongholds.[626] This particular plan of action was effective in the nick of time, at the Battle of Burkersdorf, one of the last major actions of the war.

The Third Silesian War after 1761 was not the same as the war before the turn of the decade. That Prussia was still fighting at all had much to do with the first "Miracle of House Brandenburg" in 1759, in which Russian and Austrian leadership could not agree on an immediate means of finishing off Frederick, while Berlin lay open for the taking. Frederick's brother, Prince Henry, harassed Austria's supply lines in Saxony to the point where the two invading forces felt it was prudent to withdraw from Brandenburg, to preserve their own forces. In 1762, Frederick had only 60,000 men to command in total, and the path to Berlin was once again open for Austria and Russia. It took a second "miracle," the death of Russian empress Elizabeth to reverse Frederick's fortunes. The Austro-Russian alliance crumbled as the Frederick-friendly Tsar Peter III (1728-1762) took the Russian throne and promptly switch sides to Frederick. Peter was even so kind as to mediate peace talks between Prussia and Sweden, resulting in the Treaty of Hamburg on May 22, ending that war. France, never fully invested in fighting Frederick after the Battle of Rossbach, came to terms with Prussia and evacuated the Rhineland later that year. After Catherine II (1729-1796) deposed Peter III from the Russian throne on July 9, Russia also formally pulled out of the Third Silesian War. Prussia and Austria,

[625] Duffy, *Frederick the Great: A Military Life*, 315.

[626] Ibid., 316.

ancient rivals, remained alone and still at odds over Silesia for another few months. With no subsidies from France or Russia, and no troops to help Austria continue its fight, an exhausted Frederick squeezed a *status quo ante bellum* agreement from an even more exhausted Maria Theresa with the Treaty of Hubertusburg, February 15, 1763.

All this goes to show that despite all the preparation made by Frederick in those crucial interwar years, the Third Silesian War was not decided by any sort of ancient secret, training method, or tactic. Like most modern wars, the Third Silesian War came down to who still had the willpower, money, and bodies to fight in 1762. The war could not be solved by Frederick's commitment to seeking out and winning a decisive battle or by any Prussian offensive into enemy territory. The war was won by Prussia, in Prussia, by no shortage of luck - and strategic flinching on the part of Austria and Russia. In time, a greater appreciation for this sort of war would develop, in Europe and other places around the world, in which an outmanned, outgunned defender would outlast a powerful invader through the process of willpower. Interestingly, in Frederick's quest to fight a regional offensive war styled on ancient tactical themes, he inadvertently fought a defensive war based on modern strategic themes, that integrated factors of global politics, finance, logistics, and national morale.

All but a few months of Frederick's military career as general was contained within the three Silesian Wars. The generously named War of Bavarian Succession (1778-1779) was little more than a staring contest between "Old Fritz" and the young Austrian Emperor Joseph II (1741-1790), co-regent with Maria Theresa. In this quick campaign fought to deter Joseph's designs on acquiring Bavaria, bad morale and disease were Frederick's chief enemies. Both Frederick's army in Silesia and Prince Henry's army in Bohemia were poorly supplied and plagued by lack of action. Frederick lost 40,000 men from sickness, skirmishes, and desertion

before Catherine II of Russia mediated a peace between Frederick and Joseph after a few months.[627] The two rulers signed a peace treaty before any major battle could be fought in May of 1779. The war was not much to write home about, but Frederick did prevent Joseph from adding Bavaria to his empire. Such a result would have been disastrous from the Prussian point of view. Militarily, the Prussian army successfully deterred the military expansion of a neighboring power, underscoring yet again the importance of military might to Frederick's political viability. But it was clear by this time that neither Frederick nor the Prussian army itself was as dynamic or fearsome as it once was in the Silesian Wars. The Prussian king had worked hard to rebuild his country and military after the Third Silesian War, but the Prussian military machine had become bloated and inflexible, while its leader suffered a slow, but understandable physical and mental decline.[628]

But the legend of Frederick the Great, military genius, was never greater than in the decades following the Third Silesian/Seven Years' War. Frederick emerged from the wars a popular figure in Protestant countries in particular, thanks to his spectacular victories over Catholic armies in 1757. Frederick's popularity in German lands and Britain soared, with his face and name adorning everything from snuffboxes to beer mugs to tavern signs.[629] In the decades following the Third Silesian War, Frederick's works – and works about Frederick became popular in Britain and France. This reflects the British people's interest in their new ally, as demonstrated by Henry Lloyd's *The History of the Late War in Germany: between the King of Prussia, and the Empress of Germany and her Allies*, originally published in 1766, and

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[627] Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great*, 205.

[628] Showalter, *Frederick the Great*, 352.

[629] Szabo, *The Seven Years War in Europe, 98-99.*

republished in 1781, 1794, and 1798. In 1781, Lloyd published *A Continuation of the History of the Late War in Germany* with an interesting addendum: *Containing first an analysis of the Grecian, Roman, and Modern Military Institutions, Together with a New System*. This shows that not only were the British interested in Frederick, they were also interested in Frederick and the interpretation of classical warfare in a modern context.

John Gillies's *A View of the Reign of Frederick II of Prussia with a Parallel between That Prince and Philip II of Macedon* (1789) took this idea further by directly comparing Frederick to the father of Alexander the Great. Gillies, more famous for his multi-volume *History of Ancient Greece, its Colonies and Conquests (1786)*, suggested that Frederick did indeed get his idea for the oblique order from the ancient world:

> It is affirmed by Mr. Guibere (sic), that the Battles of Leuctra and Mantinea suggested to Frederick the idea of his oblique order; but without attempting to prove this assertion, it may be observed that most armies in most ages… have charged with the full extent of their fronts. … Europe, however, had no sooner emerged from the gross barbarity of the middle ages than the commanders of armies endeavoured to avoid this dangerous mode of combat, and reciprocally strove to attack each other in the flank by detachments separate from the main body. But Frederick, aspiring to a higher aim, converted the occasional business of divisions into the habitual duty of his line; and reviving the sublime tactics of Epaminondas and Philip, rendered the attack in the flank, which had hitherto been considered as an incident, the principal action in this bloody drama.[630]

The importance of Gillies's work is less that it proves that Frederick derived the oblique order from antiquity than that it demonstrates the ways in which Frederick's contemporaries began to associate the philosopher king with ancient virtues, during and just after Frederick's lifetime.

From the reign of Louis XIV until their encounter with Frederick at Rossbach in 1757, the French army was considered the standard of excellence among continental states. This changed in the decades following the Seven Years' War, as officers in the French army

[630] Gillies, *A View of the Reign of Frederick*, 11-12.

begrudgingly came to accept Frederick and his troops as a source of inspiration and modeling for their own military. After 1763, military experts from France poured into Potsdam, Berlin, Magdeburg, and Silesia to review and study Prussian maneuvers and training techniques up close. This comparison of the French army with the Prussian troops accelerated the legend of Frederick as a great general in his time.[631] In 1777, French military theorist Jacques-Antoine Hippolyte Comte de Guibert published a work so complementary of Fredrick that it did little to deter the Prussian king's legend from growing even more among the French. *Observations on the Military Establishment and Discipline of his Majesty the King of Prussia with an Account of the Private Life of that Celebrated Monarch* enthusiastically celebrated the iron discipline of the Prussians while commenting on every part of Frederick's day, from how he combs his hair to when and where he prefers to drink chocolate. "Frequent exercises, and the continual pains that have been bestowed on them, under the King's immediate inspection, have brought the Prussian troops to the highest degree of perfection their tactics can possibly allow them to arrive at," Guibert gushed.[632]

As Frederick grew more remote behind his palace doors at Sans Souci, his inaccessibility made him more interesting and mysterious to political and military observers from around the world.[633] There, in his beloved palace, he surrounded himself with paintings, sculptures, and

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[631] Isabelle Deflers, "Die Militärreformen des Comte von Saint-Germain: Oder Der Zankapfel Zwischen Ausländischen Vorbildern Und Nationalen Stereotypen," *Zeitschrift Für Historische Forschung* 42, no. 3 (2015): 411.

[632] Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte Comte de Guibert, *Observations on the Military Establishment and Discipline of His Majesty the King of Prussia: With an Account of the Private Life of That Celebrated Monarch; ... Translated from the French: By J. Johnson, M.A.* (Fielding and Walker, 1780), 3.

[633] Ibid., 324-25.

artifacts either from or representing classical antiquity, outwardly expressing to the world his love for a period that his father detested. After the Third Silesian War, Frederick increased the footprint of classical antiquity on Sans Souci Park, adding the New Palace, the Temple of Antiquities and the Sans Souci Picture gallery to host his enormous collection of classically-themed paintings and more than 5000 sculptures, many of which were imported from Rome from 1742 to the 1760's.[634] Reading remained his favorite occupation, and his personal libraries swelled with classical titles: Caesar, Ovid, Virgil, Homer, Xenophon, Herodotus, Polybius, Thucydides, Plutarch, Cassius Dio, Cicero, Seneca, Plato, Aristotle – a who's who of writers from the ancient world. His favorite work was Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*, which had the distinction of accompanying him into battle. As he related to his private secretary Henri de Catt, he found that his good days were measured by the amount of reading he accomplished.[635] With secrecy no longer needed to read his favorite books at home, his good days increased even as they shrank in number, and ended in 1786.

And what did it take for Frederick to get to these good days in his library at Sans Souci? The deaths of hundreds of thousands of people was the price paid for Frederick's greatness. Frederick's choice to pursue the violent path to immortality itself resembled the ancient models he so dearly loved and imitated. The classical world played an important role not only in Frederick's self-fashioning as an enlightened despot, but also in the hard victories and losses on the battlefield that defined his reign and secured his complex reputation in history. As we will see, classical modeling on and off the battlefield played a role in another area of eighteenth-

[634] Blanning, *Frederick the Great*, 188-89.

[635] Ibid., 378.

century conflict, far from the military kingdom of Prussia, in the American Revolution, where a new form of enlightenment took root with republican virtues and classical inspiration.

Chapter Five. Britain and The United States of America

Specialization in military studies has led to a historiographical disconnection among the various nationalities associated with the Military Enlightenment. This is easily understandable, as historians and the programs that train them identify as European, British, or American in focus. The Military Enlightenment and its essential classical affinity, however, neither stopped at national borders, nor oceanic barriers. Admiration for the military methods of ancient Greece and Rome did not wither away near the end of the eighteenth century either. On the contrary, it was more important than ever, perhaps especially in the least 'ancient' of worlds, colonial and postcolonial America.

The American affinity for classical antiquity transformed from a theoretical viewpoint into a spiritual characteristic that was pervasive and essential for the success of the American Revolution. Although many American intellectuals read French easily, this inspirational characteristic of classical modeling would not have been possible without the English-language literary foundation laid by the British, who took the best classically inspired works from the continent of Europe, translated them, and added original works of their own. Through this process, the British and Americans showed that they were active participants in a global Military Enlightenment that could not have been possible without the thinkers, writers, and inspirational personalities of ancient Greece and Rome. Furthermore, these American and British military officers, writers, and citizens introduced new interpretations of classical material, like the idea of the citizen-soldier, that became essential to the future of Europe and the modern world.

Our analysis of classical inspiration in the New World first looks at the British military theory, their focus on training soldiers for a global mission, and the steady growth of original

military works that reflected the same classical themes as their counterparts on the European continent. Our examination then takes a closer look at the practice of classical modeling and its critical role of explaining the motives and methods of the American Revolution to the public. Here, near the end of the eighteenth century, the influence of classical antiquity also inspired the return of the citizen-soldier, a key legacy of Enlightenment-era militaries for the modern world. We will see how American soldiers framed their service in the context of the ancient Roman Republic, re-establishing a tradition from the ancient world with wide implications for the future of warfare.

British Military Theory

Success, sometimes, has lasting, unexpected results. The story of the influence of classical antiquity on British military thought has its start in the success of John Churchill, the First Duke of Marlborough, whose undefeated record in four battles in the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1704) set the example for the British army to follow in the decades to come. Marlborough's string of victories against Louis XIV at Blenheim (1704), Ramilles (1706), Oudenarde (1708), and Malplaquet (1709) had two effects on the development of military theory in Europe. First, the British forced the French into a period of self-reflection that inspired the classically-influenced works of Folard, de Saxe, and Puységur, all of whom were present at Malplaquet, as well as the writings of other theorists active through the mid-eighteenth century. The second result was that the British were disinclined to overhaul Marlborough's system in favor of radical change.[636] Because they possessed a firepower-based system that already

[636] Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment*, 53.

worked, British military theory focused on the codification of Marlborough-style techniques into drill books and manuals, and translating foreign military writers' works into English.[637] When it came to classical theoretical concepts, the British allowed the French, the Prussians, and others to do a significant amount of their research for them.

Britain also achieved the position of a global power after the various wars of the eighteenth century prior to the American Revolution – the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714), the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748), and, most notably, the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), which placed Britain in control of far-flung regions such as Canada, Florida, islands of the Caribbean, and new possessions in India. This gave the army responsibility for protecting the British global empire a decentralized structure that was constantly hungry for recruits and difficult to train due to the remote service of many of its regiments. Furthermore, the myriad missions of British troops required different types of trainings for civil support, garrison duty, and open war.[638] British military historian J.A. Houlding described the peacetime training of the eighteenth-century British army as "not good," and overly-reliant on training for war at the last minute.[639] Despite its preoccupations across the Empire, British army drill was well-regulated and closely-watched by the Hanoverian Kings, and a "flourishing" English-language catalog of military drill books supported the British effort to have their army ready when called upon.

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[637] Ira D. Gruber, *Books and the British Army*, 4.

[638] Victor E. Neuburg, "The British Army in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 61, no. 245 (1983), 41.

[639] J. A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795* (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1981), vii-x.

It would be a mistake to think that the comparatively small number of theoretical works generated by British writers in the eighteenth century indicated a lack of interest in military education or innovation. The number of military manuals, drill books, and compilations printed by British sources easily dismiss that notion. The most popular and significant work of this genre was Gen. Humphrey Bland's (1685-1763) *Treatise of Military Discipline*, originally published in 1727. Printers churned out dozens of reprintings of Bland's nine editions until 1759, making his manual the most successful and widely used English-language drill book of the eighteenth century.[640] Bland was a veteran officer of Marlborough's campaigns in the War of Spanish Succession, and wrote specifically for the new generation of British officers who had not experienced war and needed to learn from Marlborough's example.[641] Beyond that, the popularity and thorough nature of Bland's work led to the inclusion of his text in the King's *Regulations* for the Army in 1728, parts of which were copied word-for-word from Bland.[642] Classical antiquity was hardly a concern for Bland, whose primary purpose was to relay the "nuts and bolts" of organizing and operating a military regiment based on the command style of a Stuart-era general like Marlborough, not Caesar or Hannibal. Neither the frequently issued *Regulations* nor Bland's work was theoretical in nature. Practicality was the focus, and Bland's manual set the tone for many of the other English language drill books published in Britain and America in the middle of the century, when the comparatively poor performance of British forces in the wars from 1739-1748 inspired an updating of the system of drill in the King's

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[640] J. A. Houlding, "Bland, Humphrey (1685/6–1763), Army Officer and Author," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2607.

[641] Ibid.

[642] Houlding, *Fit for Service*, 182.

Regulations and inspired more curiosity about classically inspired French and Prussian military innovation.

The British focus on practicality in military education also extended to the curriculum of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, the first British military academy to open its doors in 1741. By charter, Woolwich was to produce artillery officers and engineers, and the curriculum outlined in the *Rules and Orders for the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich* focuses on coursework related to rigid military science. The influence of classical antiquity was an indirect experience at Woolwich, as exposure to ancient knowledge was largely limited to foundational elements of geometry and siege warfare. But the textbooks used by cadets were certainly drew on ancient military and mathematical concepts. *Rules and Orders,* for example, contained instructions for the "Professor of Fortification and Artillery," who was "to teach by the following books: [David] Gregory's *Practical Geometry*, Vauban's *Treatise of Fortifications*, [John] Muller's *Elements of Fortifications* and Muller's *Attack and Defence of Fortified Places*."[643] This list of texts on military engineering contained works influenced by prominent figures of the ancient world. For example, Gregory's three-part work culminated in a discussion of "solid figures and their mensuration" taken from Euclid and Archimedes.[644] Both Vauban and Muller defined the process of circumvallation and contravallation in their works, which are siege tactics preserved in two of the ancient world's most prominent military sources.[645] Thucydides recorded

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[643] *Rules and Orders for the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich.* (London: printed by J. Bullock, J. Spencer and J. Bullock, Jr.,1764), 7.

[644] David Gregory and Colin MacLaurin, *A Treatise of Practical Geometry. In Three Parts* (Edinburgh, Printed for J. Balfour, 1787), 6.

[645] John Muller, *The Attack and Defence of Fortified Places. In Three Parts.* (London : T. and J. Egerton, Whitehall, 1791), 13-18. And Sebastien le Prestre de Vauban, *The New Method of*

circumvallation in *The Peloponnesian War*, as he described the Spartans constructing walls to blockade the city of Plataea in 429 BCE.[646] Julius Caesar's finest hour of siege craft, the Battle of Alesia in 52 BC, featured both circumvallation and contravallation in the same battle.[647] Even if it was not the specific intention of Woolwich's commandant to introduce his students to ancient writers and concepts, they nonetheless imbibed some of this material in the classroom.

British military officers and the public showed their interest in reading about foreign and classical military theory on an individual basis by purchasing translations of classical works and theoretical treatises from continental Europe. The best evidence to illustrate this reading trend comes from Ira Gruber's 2010 analysis of the reading habits of 42 British army officers who "owned, bought, recommended, cited, or discussed" 650 books between the years of the War of Spanish Succession and the French Revolution.[648] Among Gruber's observations was that the officers greatly preferred works on military and naval history, engineering, the art of war, and the classics to drill books focused on discipline and medicine, the former set of topics comprising 84 percent of works they preferred while the latter set made up only 8 percent of their preferred reading.[649] According to Gruber's study, more than half of the books the officers owned and

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Fortification, as Practised by Monsieur de Vauban, Engineer-General of France. Together with a New Treatise of Geometry, Third Edition (London, 1702), 72-73.

[646] Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War ; with Maps, Annotations, Appendices, and Encyclopedic Index*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 136.

[647] Gaius Julius Caesar, "The Gallic War," in *The Landmark Julius Caesar: The Complete Works: Gallic War, Civil War, Alexandrian War, African War, and Spanish War*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub (New York: Anchor, 2019), 7.68-74.

[648] Gruber, *Books and the British* Army, 5.

[649] Ibid., 11.

referenced were published in continental Europe and in languages other than English.[650] Among the classics, the officers in Gruber's study clearly preferred Caesar's *Commentaries* more than any other work, but also held Polybius, Vegetius, Thucydides, and Xenophon in high regard.[651] Popular military theorists and diarists from continental Europe included de Saxe, Feuquieres, Turenne, Puységur, Guibert, Montecuccoli, Frederick II, Charles Guischardt, Turpin de Crissé and Machiavelli "all of whom eclipsed every British writer on the art of war" in popularity.[652] The importance of French military theorists on British military education was reflected in the 1776 regulation at Woolwich that required Upper Academy cadets to devote a minimum of 12 hours per week, eleven months per year on French, so that they could read Thucydides, Polybius, Santa Cruz and Guischardt in that language.[653] English translators of classical and foreign works were active in eighteenth century Britain. Among the most popular translations were Martin Bladen's 1705 translation of Caesar's *Commentaries*, Adam Williamson's 1740 translation of Turenne's maxims, Joseph Otway's 1761 translation of Turpin de Crisse's *Essay on the Art of War*, Isaac Landmann's 1784 translation of Friedrich Christoph von Saldern's *Elements of Tactics*, and William Fawcett's translations of Maurice de Saxe's *Mes Réveries* and Prussian infantry and cavalry regulations.

One of the most prominent translations of a classical work by a British officer was an English translation of Vegetius by Capt. John Clarke (1736-78), a Marine officer who became

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[650] Ibid., 12.

[651] Ibid., 17.

[652] Ibid.

[653] Ibid., 18.

the governor of Senegambia in August 1776.[654] Clarke's 1767 translation of Vegetius, in his words, corrected John Sadler's 1572 English translation that was of "little value but that of antiquity," and remains important in the present day as a frequently-printed and referenced translation of the ancient Roman treatise.[655] The translation was essential for formally introducing English-reading audiences to a work that had already inspired French language writers familiar to them like Maurice de Saxe and Frederick II. In a not-so-indirect way, English audiences had already been exposed to Vegetius's main ideas without knowing it. Clarke gave them the opportunity to connect with the primary source. As we will see, readers like American Colonel Otho Holland Williams eagerly took advantage of that opportunity to advance their military knowledge.

In the preface of his *Military Institutions of Vegetius*, Clarke acknowledged that Vegetius was not "universally known" but his "was the only continued and regular system of ancient military discipline now extant." He also pointed out that his countrymen were behind the curve on examining him, as Vegetius had been "long since translated into most of the European languages" and was "so little known among us."[656] Clarke mentioned that Montecuccoli and Folard held Vegetius in high esteem, and that the Roman writer was "the source whence all writers on the military affairs of the ancients have drawn their principal knowledge and

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[654] Michael King Macdona, "Lieutenant John Clarke: An Eighteenth-Century Translator of Vegetius," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 95 (2017): 123.

[655] Ibid., 127 and 140.

[656] John Clarke, "Preface," in *Military Institutions of Vegetius, in Five Books, Translated from the Original Latin. With a Preface and Notes. By Lieutenant John Clarke*, 5 vols. (London: W. Griffin in Catharine-Street, 1767), i.

information," noting the "all have not owned it with the same candor."[657] Clarke even went so far to suggest that "the authors of all modern treatises on war are not under less obligations to him," indicating the level of influence Vegetius still possessed among writers and military figures committed to "new" systems of training, tactics, and organization.[658] He expounded more on this idea in his preface:

> It is an opinion too universally prevalent, that the difference between the ancients and the moderns in the executive part of the art of war is such that the writings of the former on the subject can be of little service to the latter. No one, I imagine, will deny that the Principles of war always have been, and always will be, the same invariably, notwithstanding the alterations of particular modes or weapons: and many of the ancient institutions are even applicable to these. The modern military customs in almost every part of service are borrowed from the Greeks and Romans, many without any change, others with such inconsiderable alterations as scarce deserve mentioning.[659]

Clarke attributed the opening and closing of ranks in modern militaries - and the commands for doing so - to Aelian, the posting of officers in corps by seniority to the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and the modern hollow square to Xenophon.[660] Clarke suggested that many modern military organizational techniques, from signaling to arranging camp were ancient in origin, and even linked modern advances in siege warfare to ancient example. He wrote:

> The fundamental maxims of fortification are the same now as in their times: they built their walls with saliant and re-entering angles with towers at the extremities, that very part might be reciprocally discovered and flanked; and the distance

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[657] Ibid.

[658] Ibid.

[659] Ibid., ix.

[660] Ibid.

> between the towers was regulated by the reach of their arrows and other missive weapons, as now by musket-shot, in order that they might be defended by them.[661]

Clarke also took special care to note that the most distinguished modern military figures – Turenne, Montecuccoli, and Folard – "formed themselves" on classical models.[662] Regarding siege warfare, Clarke suggested that "the Prince of Orange, the Prince of Parma, and the Marquis of Spinola formed all their sieges, wherein they distinguished themselves so much," on the model of Caesar at Alesia.[663] It was Clarke's opinion that the classical affinity shown by the British military could open the door for even more innovation from antiquity:

> I think it proper to mention that what I have said is in order to show that classical learning is as necessary in the profession of arms as in any other whatsoever; and that the study of the ancient military writers is essentially requisite. The affinity, to say nothing more, of ancient and modern discipline confirms this observation: and as our present system is so nearly copied from antiquity, there is all the reason imaginable to believe that many other important and serviceable institutions might still be introduced into the service by careful and judicious examination of its valuable remains.[664]

Closing his commentary on the value of ancient military thought, Clarke summed up what he believed to be the rightful place of Vegetius in the hierarchy of military literature, suggesting an amendment to the Abbé de Pluche's list of requisite works for a soldier's library: the New Testament, Caesar, Euclid… and now, Vegetius.[665]

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[661] Ibid.

[662] Ibid., x.

[663] Ibid.

[664] Ibid., x-xi.

[665] Ibid., xiv.

Original works of English language military theory arrived in the eighteenth century with the writings of Welsh military adventurer, officer, and spy, Henry Lloyd (c.1729-83), whose unique military career found him in the service of the armies of France, Spain, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Austria, Prussia, and Russia.[666] Lloyd's service for several European countries on the continent provided him with a firsthand knowledge of military and cultural movements steeped in the philosophies of the Enlightenment. It also exposed him to conflicts like the Seven Years' War, the observance of which inspired his own military reflections.[667] Lloyd began his literary career in 1766 with the London publication of *The History of the Late War in Germany Between the King of Prussia and the Empress of Germany and her Allies*, followed by a series of political works, *An Essay on the English Constitution* (1770), *An Essay on the Theory of Money* (1771), and *A Rhapsody of the Present System of Politics* (1779). Like Puységur, some of Lloyd's most important themes concern the connection of politics and the military, the establishment of military theory based on principles like geometry and geography, and the development of operations-based campaign theory. De Saxe was also particularly influential on Lloyd as the French marshal's thoughts on the equipping and supply of soldiers as well as concerns about their emotional well-being are echoed by Lloyd.[668]

Classical antiquity's influence on Lloyd's military writing is most easily detected in his second edition of *The History of the Late War in Germany*, published in 1781. Within this work,

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[666] Daniel Coetzee and Lee W. Eysturlid, eds., "Lloyd, Major General Henry Humphrey Evans," in *Philosophers of War: The Evolution of History's Greatest Military Thinkers*, 2 vols. (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 95.

[667] Ibid.

[668] Gat, *A History of Military Thought*, 69-75.

Lloyd embedded an essay called *Reflections on the Principles of the Art of War* that introduced his proposals for a new system of field warfare, featuring many ideas with classical roots inspired by Caesar, Arrian, de Saxe, Folard, and Montecuccoli.[669] His motive was not unlike that of Folard, who aimed to create a tactical system that could yield more decisive results from battlefield actions. Like Folard, Lloyd embraced the classically inspired ideas of making infantry units sturdier, able to leverage hand to hand combat, and maneuver more effectively using elements of the *ordre profond.* What made Lloyd so distinct and modern from his peers was his systematic reasoning, in which he compared armies to machines. Their function, he reasoned, could be improved by manipulating their various components. As he explained:

> War is a state of action. An army is the instrument with which every species of military action is performed: like all other machines it is composed of various parts, and its perfection will depend, first, on that of its several parts; and second, on the manner in which they are arranged; so that the whole may have the following properties, viz. strength, agility, and universality; if these are properly combined, the machine is perfect.
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> The first problem in Tactics should be this: how a given number of men ought to be ranged, so that they may move and act with the greatest velocity; for on this chiefly depends the success of all military operations.[670]

This emphasis on speed was mirrored by Caesar in his own writings. For Lloyd, speed was essential to the fundamental concept of delivering a decisive mass of troops to the right moment at the right time, as he observed Frederick II doing so many times in the Silesian Wars. The point

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[669] Patrick J. Speelman, ed., *War Society and Enlightenment: The Works of General Lloyd* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2005), 97.

[670] Henry Lloyd, "Continuation of the History of the Late War in Germany, between the King of Prussia, and the Empress of Germany and Her Allies, Part II (1781).," in *War Society and Enlightenment: The Works of General Lloyd*, ed. Patrick J. Speelman (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2005), 386.

of his writing was to codify principles allowing an army to do just that.[671] A significant number of the principles Lloyd relied upon to achieve this theoretical goal came from classical antiquity.

Lloyd's analysis methodically proceeded from a comparison of the Greek phalanx to the Roman legion, noting the advantages in flexibility, armament, and mixture of units of the latter. Lloyd agreed with Polybius in calling the legion, "the most perfect order then known" with the defect of having its cavalry on the wings.[672] Lloyd preferred, as Montecuccoli did, a deployment of the cavalry amongst the infantry "in the line."[673] Lloyd also endorsed an army composition less dependent on just one type of weapon, like the modern musket. In his opinion, armies should be ready to take action in hand-to-hand combat when necessary, in order to make decisive victory more likely. To assist in this, Lloyd asserted that his theoretical battalions should be four ranks deep, as opposed to the usual three.[674] He also suggested that the troops be armed with muskets and four-foot-long spears, which could be inserted into sockets on his soldiers' shortened muskets. He also advocated, like Folard, that a portion of his army also be armed with pikes. In Lloyd's case, the percentage was 25%.[675] This gave his ideal troops the flexibility to be viable on offense, as musketeers, and on defense, as spearmen. The addition of a light infantry

[671] Ibid., 387.

[672] Ibid., 392.

[673] Ibid., 393.

[674] Ibid., 415.

[675] Ibid., 413-14.

screen for the protection of the main body of troops added to the ancient Roman and Greek influences seen in Lloyd's proposed improvements to the modern battalion.[676]

It would be a mistake to assume that Lloyd's innovative thinking on modern campaign and battlefield methods was wholly derived from classical antiquity. But a significant portion of his ideas about improving the composition and deployment of troops were either inspired by ancient Greece or Rome, or also reflected in the theoretical works of other continental European writers that predated and inspired Lloyd's writing of *Reflections.* This is not to discredit Lloyd, who remains one of the most important English language writers of military theory. It simply shows that Lloyd's writing, like so many other military, political, social, and creative works of the time reflected and contributed to the dominant cultural trends of the Enlightenment era. The two prevailing intellectual themes present in Lloyd's most prominent theoretical work were reason, easily seen in the mechanical references and systematic arguments of *Reflections*; and classical affinity, which was central to the proposals for regimental reform that composed much of Lloyd's theoretical foundation. Each of these intellectual concepts were also central to the shared common culture of Britain and continental Europe, of which Henry Lloyd was a unique representative.

If continental Europe was an unusual place to find a British military theorist, occupied New York City in the American Revolution was perhaps just as unlikely. But that was where career British army officer Robert Donkin (1727-1821) published an original treatise called *Military Collections and Remarks* in 1777. Donkin entered service in 1746 and was a veteran of the War of Austrian Succession, the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution. His work

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[676] Ibid., 416.

was intended, he wrote, to support the widows and children of the fallen British soldiers at Concord and Bunker Hill.[677] In *Military Collections and Remarks* Donkin expounded on the virtues of discipline and the citizen solider while simultaneously promoting the idea of meritocracy in the British military. His reformist tendencies revealed themselves in many of his statements pushing for a revival of classical military methods, and few British writers were as overt as Donkin when it came to expressing their admiration for ancient Greece and Rome.

Donkin opened his work with a direct criticism of British military organization and traditions, but not its personnel, calling the British system "the worst on the globe," even though it produced "abler generals" and "better soldiers" than any other country.[678] Quoting Vegetius in his opening lines, Donkin suggested that it was "impractical to discipline troops well, whose military constitution is bad," and that the potential for improvement directly relied on the cooperation of the civil and military elements of the state.[679] Donkin makes a strong connection here and elsewhere in *Military Collections* between the military and politics, and focused on the dual nature of the citizen soldier to illustrate his thoughts. The implication in much of what Donkin wrote hints at the idea that Republicanism was central to the fielding of a well-organized military that was aligned in its purposes. His model for such a military was the Roman Republic.

Very early in *Military Collections*, Donkin reinforced the intrinsic role of military service to the individuals that comprised Republics. According to Donkin, the system that governed ancient Rome and its armies was in fact, the same. As he described it:

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[677] Robert Donkin, *Military Collections and Remarks* (New York: H. Gaine, 1777), iii.

[678] Ibid., 1.

[679] Ibid.

> And it appears further that the civil and military constitution of Rome (as the founders of that city) were twins so alike that every citizen was a soldier, every soldier a citizen; nor were any capable of a civil, scarcely an ecclesiastical employment, who had not served so many campaigns, and when they solicited either, their wounds were recommendations. The annual magistrates presided in city or camp, according to lot; every legion had its senate: courts of justice and police were held in the field as in the capitol.[680]

He pointed out sharply that Rome conquered with its armies of temporary soldiers and "by virtue and vigor of this excellent constitution," but, as Vegetius also believed, Rome could not preserve its empire once it turned away from the military practices of the Republic, and embraced standing, professional armies.[681] "The Republic of Rome had armies at command without keeping them standing," Donkin explained. "And their troops just levied were sooner fit for service in war than those of other nations," he continued, noting that the "excellence of the military constitution" of Rome made their soldiers "invincible when the general was not overmatched."[682]

The Republican civil structure and the military organization of Rome together comprised this "military constitution" to which Donkin referred, and of which every citizen-soldier was an essential, participating element. In *Military Collections*, Donkin essentially promoted the idea that Republicanism was a central element to the most effective militaries. He wrote:

> The soldiery, in their civil capacity, chose the magistrates, consequently the generals who were to command the troops, of the commonwealth; the consuls chose the tribunes for the legions, and the people frequently a part of them; and tribunes chose the centurions, and these the officers inferior to them, provided the parties elected had served so many campaigns. The choice being in those who were perfectly acquainted with the abilities and merit of the chosen, and whose

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[680] Ibid., 2.

[681] Ibid.

[682] Ibid., 6.

> interest it was not to elect amiss, with some other fundamentals, made the Roman military constitution the most perfect of any; and gave them such advantages in war that no power in arms since has been capable of.[683]

Donkin lamented that "nobody has thought of providing any military establishment of the moderns with the animal spirit and economy" of the Roman Republic.[684] Donkin concluded that the "essence" of the Roman Republican system "produced union, emulation, and confidence; and framed them (Republican legions) to perfect and ready obedience, which is the basis of discipline."[685] To drive home the importance of using a system that leveraged the strengths of the citizen-soldier, Donkin remarked that "the Romans perfected their military skill and extended their empire with troops raised occasionally," and that the direct involvement of plebians in the military led to them to becoming "masters of the world."[686]

Donkin also asserted that meritocracy was complementary to this type of military constitution and was not without criticism for a British military that he thought could do more to cultivate its own considerable talent. To Donkin, a competitive spirit among peers was necessary for developing discipline. He noted that merit distinguished Roman soldiers from one another and "this vie for promotion made every private man keep so strict an eye on his own and behavior of others," that the attention and correction of officers was redundant.[687] "Obliging all (without exception) to serve in the ranks 'till called out by merit, formed them to perfect obedience, (that pure form of discipline) on which success so absolutely depends!" he explained.

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[683] Ibid., 16-17.

[684] Ibid., 17.

[685] Ibid., 18.

[686] Ibid., 148-49.

[687] Ibid., 14.

To Donkin, his own army performed poorly at creating a system that took advantage of the human desire to advance his own interests and gain the rewards of the individual efforts toward that end. He compared the British system to the Romans:

> In a large body of people more geniuses, talents and dispositions will be found than in less. At the time of the institution of the legion, there were sixty plebian families for one patrician; the difference in number between one order and another, is greater among us than it was among the Romans, but our private soldier is not so encouraged to merit, or so certain of preferment, should he deserve it, as theirs. This is the rock we split upon! For neither our officers or men can ever be so useful to the public as they might, if emulation was as much encouraged, judiciously managed, and well-rewarded as in the legion.[688]

A meritocratic system would "make the worth of everyone known," Donkin explained. "Capacities and abilities would then want to be discovered… in persons who from our system seldom get higher than captains of companies!" he wrote.[689] A well-contrived military, according to Donkin, would take the many different personalities and tendencies of individual soldiers and bend them toward "the sole interest of the public."[690]

Converting individual into community interests was a critical concern of all militaries in the eighteenth century, as unit discipline stood alone as the most prominent organizational challenge of the era. Donkin acknowledged this problem in the British army and proposed a model for its solution in the Roman military. "The fate of empires depends on the fortune of war; success in arms on discipline; good discipline makes good soldiers; good cost no more than bad; and fewer will do, which is economy," Donkin wrote. He then noted that Caesar had half the

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[688] Ibid., 20.

[689] Ibid., 21.

[690] Ibid., 21-22.

number of Pompey's soldiers at Pharsalus, while being better suited for victory due to discipline.[691] The interplay of Roman values like citizen participation and competition fostered discipline, according to Donkin, and their military fortunes rose and fell with its quality. He wrote:

> So long as the Romans preserved their military system, they improved in the science of war proportionately as they did in letters, comparing the times of Camillus, Papyrius Cursor, Scipio, Sulla and Caesar: after Augustus's days it was neglected; now and then revived, 'till (like brewed wine) there was nothing less than the juice of the grape in the mixture: at last the military constitution died, and with it discipline perished![692]

It is notable that in Donkin's analysis of the rise and fall of Roman military power, the Romans' defining trait, discipline, rose under Republican leadership and fell after Augustus and the establishment of the Empire. This was a not-so-subtle theme of Donkin's that appeared throughout his work to varying degrees of conspicuousness. The ability to choose one's leaders was to Donkin, a way to ensure greater levels of obedience in the ranks. And as he wrote, "Obedience is the foundation of discipline."[693] To the Romans, obedience and discipline were prerequisites for command, most prominently command over oneself, Donkin asserted.[694] He quoted Gaius Marius on this particular topic, writing that the populist Republican general said of his critics, "They envy the dignity which the free choice of the people has conferred upon me!"[695] Here, Donkin stressed Marius's right to command, given to him by the people. Marius's

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[691] Ibid., 5.

[692] Ibid., 25.

[693] Ibid., 104.

[694] Ibid.

[695] Ibid.

next line emphasized his self-discipline: "Why don't they envy the pains and the perils I have gone through? The wounds I have received in battle? I have obtained command by long obedience, they would command without having obeyed!"[696] In choosing these quotes from Marius, Donkin stressed the cycle of Roman ideals that the British should emulate. It starts with choosing one's leaders, whose self-discipline qualified them for command. This same self-discipline developed from long obedience, which was fostered by choosing one's leaders.

Donkin published his treatise in the middle of a politically charged war, in the largest city of his enemy's homeland. It was only natural, then, that he should have a keen sensitivity to the interplay of war and politics, and his view presaged the most popular military theorists of the nineteenth century. Donkin viewed war and politics as essentially linked, with the connection not being a modern development, but an ancient one. Donkin noted that "Anciently, war and politics were not separate professions… Minerva was no less revered as politic than as military and the officers no less diligent to study the art of governing than that of conquering states; for they, from a concurrence of circumstances excelled us in the art of war."[697] Donkin explained that in ancient Rome, the magistrates were generals and officers in the army, and as citizen-soldiers they "won the world." They in turn lost it when that connection was broken with "regulars" and professional generalship.[698] To Donkin, "war and politics should never be two separate

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[696] Ibid.

[697] Ibid., 3.

[698] Ibid., 4.

employments," and a "Civil War is a hundred times worse than the most unjust monarchy," he wrote, perhaps offering an observation on his own army's current conflict.[699]

Regarding theory, Donkin aligned with Puységur and mentioned him by name in *Military Collections.* Donkin clearly viewed experience as vital to learning in war, but "a good education and theory assist greatly," he wrote, "and shorten the way to that knowledge we endeavor by service in war."[700] Focusing specifically on the importance of theory and study, Donkin commented, "Without a theory founded upon principles, whatever is done, is done by chance, as Vegetius expresses it," and "Mr. Puységur recommends reading to all warriors." The notion that theory should be founded on principles is a direct reference to Puységur, and Donkin alludes to him again a few sentences later by writing that "The order of march, the manner of drawing up ought to be executed in all the rules of geometry, and according to the local knowledge of the country."[701] Donkin echoed Puységur most of all, however, in his consistent reliance on historical precedent throughout *Military Collections* and his use of historical anecdotes to convey theoretical ideas and principles. A cluster of quick anecdotes within a few pages of each other in his work relate to defensive and Fabian warfare, a key concept that played out in the Revolutionary War of which he was a part. He first referenced Caesar's skill at avoiding pitched battles by occupying important posts as an invader:

> Among the Romans, the general was not to purchase victory too dear, but to vanquish by industry rather than by the sword; and this was so sacred, that whoever neglected it, dishonored himself! Therefore Caesar (the most jealous of all men of his military reputation) avoided fighting when he could conquer by

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[699] Ibid., 37.

[700] Ibid., 38.

[701] Ibid., 39.

> address, because the latter was his duty; and the army would have shared with him the glory of the one; the other was more entirely his![702]

Donkin then referenced a conversation between Scipio and Fabius from the Second Punic War, underscoring the importance of preserving one's troops on campaign:

> Scipio says to Fabius, you are honored with the title of Maximus, for only having kept an army together! While I (who have beaten the enemy in a pitched battle) am simply styled Magnus! True, says Fabius, but had I not known how to preserve troops, and harass the adversaries at the same time, you could never have had them to fight with and overcome![703]

Lastly, Donkin referenced Plutarch to make a comment about Pompey and being goaded into acting impetuously:

> The principle in a commander of an army is to know how to force the enemy to fight, when he himself if the strongest; and to avoid being drawn in to engage when weakest! But to be provoked to come to action when it was not in his interest, by the jibes and raillery of impertinent people, is inexcusable in Pompey – see Plutarch.[704]

Donkin's focus on educating his readership in what would become a dominant Continental Army strategy in the Revolutionary War seems more prescient than coincidental here. Perhaps an officer as learned as Donkin had already seen enough of the conflict to predict the type of war to expect by his publication date of 1777; but even if the choice of this topic for inclusion in his treatise was coincidental, it reflects a broad scope of knowledge acquired from antiquity by Donkin that could be implemented at any moment it became relevant to him: exactly the skill Puységur hoped to cultivate in his own work.

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702 Ibid., 58.

703 Ibid., 60.

704 Ibid.

Donkin's many references to a diverse cast of ancient historical characters demonstrates the importance of prominent ancient generals and statesmen as models in English speaking audiences. As we will see, historical modeling was important for the self-image of the United States leadership in the American Revolution. In *Military Collections* Donkin is particularly complimentary of a figure that was typically viewed unfavorably among Americans: Julius Caesar. Donkin viewed Caesar as "much superior in all things to Alexander," and admired him as a "private citizen of the most powerful republic that ever existed" that "acquired an absolute authority over those high-spirited conquerors of the universe (the Romans)."[705] Donkin praised Caesar for his myriad talents- literary, martial, and political, and was quick to compare his skill at defensive warfare to British Maj. Gen. Guy Carleton (1724-1808), who successfully defended Quebec in December 1775. He wrote:

> General Carleton's defense of Quebec (besieged by two armies of American rebels, possessed of the whole province of Canada without, and amply provided with all munitions of war) when duly considered, is as great a coup de maître as any extant in ancient or modern history… [706]

Donkin then mentioned Carleton's sally at Quebec and referenced a similar episode mentioned in Caesar's *Commentaries*:

> The general having refreshed about 200 (troops) (like Caesar, who thought it better to fall on the enemy at Arminium with a few, than wait a reinforcement of troops) sallied out at their head, drive the rebels entirely from their works, who were so affrighted, that they not only left all their cannon and stores behind, but even their dinners![707]

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[705] Ibid, 139.

[706] Ibid., 152.

[707] Ibid., 153.

Donkin's favorable comparison of Carleton to Caesar is an example of a British writer using an ancient figure to quickly communicate the virtues necessary for victory in the American Revolution. This was a common literary device used by the Revolutionaries who had their own unique set of heroes to imitate (see below), but here Donkin reassured the British side of the conflict that their cause, too, had historical precedent to follow. Caesar, like Britain was an invader of an enemy homeland that had to use creativity as an attacker and defender in siege operations and conduct campaign operations with an emphasis on speed. These were virtues easily associated with the British tactical and strategic priorities of the war, as they consistently struggled to bring the Continental Army to battle, and worked to seize and occupy cities and towns large and small in order to bring the war to a quick conclusion.

Donkin is useful to history because he provides insight from a veteran of the system for several decades, who has witnessed firsthand the strengths and shortcomings of his military. His expression of opinions about what can and should be reformed in the British Army – along with the publications track of his peers - hints that officers like him felt a duty to speak publicly about improving military service, and believed they had the natural rights to do so. This is an outcropping of Enlightenment thinking that was supported by the establishment of a British political system reflective of these principles. Unlike France, Prussia, and other kingdoms in Europe, Britain was a constitutional monarchy with a tradition of parliamentary debate and open speech, with publications and periodicals that participated in that tradition. Though subjects of a sovereign king, the people of Britain, even their military officers, saw themselves as free. The rights and duties of the citizen, as evidenced by Donkin's writing, did not stop with the obligations of military service. This idea of the citizen-soldier became the foundational concept for the military service of American soldiers in their Revolution, and it was an idea that would

spread to other countries as well. The idea, as Donkin and others have shown, had its origin in the ancient world.

The writings of these British military figures serve to demonstrate that the same affinity for classical antiquity found in France, Prussia, Austria, Italy, and other lands held true in the English-speaking world as well. The British and American militaries and the public they defended were well acquainted with the legacy of classical military methods by the dawn of the American Revolution because of the translation and preservation of those techniques by British military writers, many of whom were mid-ranking officers in the Army. In addition, original British military works like those of Lloyd and Donkin display a thorough understanding of classical military concepts that had trickled down into the officer class of the English-speaking world. Clarke, the translator of Vegetius, made it possible for English language readers to encounter one of the most authoritative sources on ancient warfare for themselves. It would only be natural for American military officers to draw on that same pool of shared knowledge and enthusiasm for ancient practices shown by the British. In America, the focus on antiquity became even more specific, as the military virtues of the ancient world took center stage in an more spiritual and personal way than their British forebears.

Classical Models in the American Revolution

The historical actors of the American Revolution are particularly demonstrative of the way in which the spiritual qualities of classical antiquity played a significant role in late eighteenth century warfare. The classical characters of Cato, Fabius, and Cincinnatus were essential for defining the purpose, practice, and perpetuation of the American Revolutionary

cause. Vegetius once again also featured prominently in specifically addressing the common military problems of the conflict. Taken as a whole, classical antiquity – specifically the Roman Republic – played a critical role in providing personal models for the Revolutionaries to emulate on and off the battlefield, and in identifying the virtues that would define their actions for perpetuity.

Cato

One of the most overt expressions of affinity for classical antiquity in Colonial and Revolutionary America was the association of their cause of liberty with the persona of Marcus Portius Cato the Younger, the pillar of *romanitas* who opposed Julius Caesar's civil war on the Roman Senate (49 – 45 BCE). Cato famously committed suicide in the wake of Caesar's victory, preferring death to Caesar's mercy. Throughout the eighteenth century, before and after the American Revolution, political actors in Britain and America alike attempted to co-opt Cato's legacy of stalwart resistance to tyranny for their own causes. This was due to the overwhelming popularity of Joseph Addison's (1672-1719) play, *Cato*, which resonated with audiences eager to project their political allegiances upon its main character.[708] Addison's *Cato* first appeared in England in 1713, to the delight of both Whigs and Tories eager to demonstrate their party as the one more reflective of *Cato*'s defense of liberty.[709] Alexander Pope (who wrote a prologue for the play) and Voltaire were among prominent admirers, and the international community soon

[708] Rob Goodman and Jimmy Soni, *Rome's Last Citizen: The Life and Legacy of Cato, Mortal Enemy of Caesar*, 1st ed (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2012), 297.

[709] Ibid.

followed in its appreciation of the production. Before *Cato* recorded one of the longest continuous runs in British theatre history, it was translated into six languages and performed in countries across Europe.[710] To say the play influenced popular culture of the eighteenth century is an understatement. In time, the memorization and study of *Cato* became a common, encouraged activity for an educated European.[711] Literary inspiration followed the stage sensation. In 1720, British reformers John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon notably published 144 letters defending liberty in the popular *London Journal*, signed with the pseudonym, Cato. Among their messages was this excerpt from Letter 59, which may sound familiar to those who have read the Declaration of Independence:

> Liberty is the unalienable right of all mankind. All governments, under whatsoever form they are administered, ought to be administered for the good of society; when they are otherwise administered, they cease to be governments and become usurpations.[712]

Before this message could be echoed in the founding document of the United States of America, *Cato* had to cross the Atlantic and wheedle its way into the hearts of colonists on stage. As Silverman asserts, the play, historical Cato, and the writings of English radicals like Trenchard and Gordon combined to cement a "powerfully resonant" Catonic image in the foundations of the country.[713] This included the United States' emerging

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[710] Ibid.

[711] Ibid.

[712] John Trenchard, "Liberty Proved to Be the Unalienable Right of All Mankind," *London Journal*, December 30, 1721, https://www.nlnrac.org/earlymodern/radical-whigs-and-natural-rights/documents/cato-letters#cato_libunalien.

[713] Kenneth Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution: Painting, Music, Literature, and the Theatre in the Colonies and the United States from the Treaty of Paris to the Inauguration of George Washington, 1763-1789* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 83.

military, which had a special relationship with this theatrical production that captivated audiences in Europe for the first three decades of the eighteenth century.

Cato appeared on American stages in Charleston, South Carolina in 1735 and became the most popular play in America within 30 years.[714] One of the key elements of its popularity was the virtue of its hero, who stood for selfless patriotism, sacrifice, and courage in the face of persecution and death.[715] Colonial Americans easily associated their political and moral virtues of liberty and self-sufficiency with Cato, and saw in their British overlords the corruptive influence of Caesar, Cato's sworn enemy.[716] The Colonial concern with morality reflected a greater trend of Enlightenment philosophy, in which virtue played a role in the historical rise and fall of nations. In his new epilogue to Cato, added in 1778, Jonathan Mitchell Sewall illustrated that idea:

> You see mankind the same in ev'ry age
> Heroick Fortitude - tyrannick rage -
> Boundless ambition - patriotick truth
> And hoary treason - and untainted youth,
> Have deeply marked all periods and all climes;
> the noblest Virtues, and the blackest Crimes.
> Did Caesar, drunk with pow'r and madly brave,
> insatiate burn, his Country to enslave?[717]

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[714] Margaret Malamud, "Manifest Destiny and the Eclipse of Julius Caesar," in *Julius Caesar in Western Culture*, ed. Maria Wyke (Malden (Mass.): Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 148.

[715] Malamud, "Manifest Destiny and the Eclipse of Julius Caesar," 149.

[716] Ibid.

[717] Joseph Addison et al., *Cato: A Tragedy: As It Is Acted at the Theatres*, second Worcester (Worcester, MA: Isaiah Thomas, 1787), epilogue.

He made clearer than ever the connection between Caesar and Britain in his next few lines:

> Did he for this, lead forth a servile host,
> And spill the choicest Blood that Rome could boast?
> The British Caesar too hath done the same,
> And damn'd this Age to everlasting fame!
> Columbia's crimon'd fields still smoke with gore!
> Her bravest heroes cover all the shore!
> The flow'r of Britain, in full martial bloom.
> In this sad war, sent headlong to the tomb![718]

It was the role of theater in the Enlightenment era to educate audiences about the importance of virtue to everyday life and society. Diderot drew attention to the instructive obligation of the arts when he wrote, "To make virtue attractive, vice odious, ridicule forceful: that is the aim of every honest man who takes up the pen, the brush, or the chisel."[719] Alexander Pope echoed that educational sentiment of virtue in his prologue to *Cato*, when he wrote: "to make mankind in conscious virtue hold, Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold."[720] *Cato*'s virtues echoed the notion that an American state could be as great as Republican Rome itself, provided its virtue was correctly cultivated and cemented in the foundation of a new republic.

Cato's ideals were exciting to the American public, who saw onstage the principles of liberty and righteousness that they hoped would define them in their struggle for independence from Britain. Cato's dialogue was, according to Samuel Johnson, poetic, and unlike a standard drama. Because of this, amateurs easily adapted the play to their own venues, and *Cato* was a

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[718] Ibid.

[719] Ibid., 152 and Denis Diderot, *Essais sur la peinture ; par Diderot* (Paris: Fr. Buisson, 1795), https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k56237255.

[720] Malamud, "Manifest Destiny and the Eclipse of Julius Caesar," 152 and Joseph Addison et al., *Cato: A Tragedy: As It Is Acted at the Theatres*, second Worcester (Worcester, MA: Isaiah Thomas, 1787), prologue.

fixture as a school play in the Colonies.[721] Among the young people deeply affected by *Cato* was the future commander of the Continental army in the American Revolution, George Washington (1732-1799), who was already an avid reader of Addison's newspaper, *The Spectator* by the age of sixteen. Washington reread *Cato* over and over and even mentioned the play in his letters home to Virginia as an officer in the Seven Years' War. "I should think my time more agreeable spent, believe me, in playing a part in Cato," he wrote.[722] Washington identified with historical Cato's stoic virtues, and cultivated those ideas into a personal philosophy of emotional control and resilience to adversity.[723] Other young colonists echoed Washington's enthusiasm for *Cato* and later displayed traits reflective of its main character. Harvard student and diarist Nathaniel Ames wrote in 1758 that he had seen three productions of *Cato* in three weeks, "each more perfect than before."[724] Ames would later become a physician, and was present at the aftermath of the 1775 Battles of Lexington and Concord, tending to the wounded.

When the War for Independence ignited with Britain, the interaction of American military figures and politicians with *Cato* burned hotter than ever before. These leaders and the American public were equally familiar with the dramatic and the historical character of Cato, and as such, they looked for opportunities to cast themselves and others in the role of the Republican statesman, often using very specific language to elicit the response they desired from their

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[721] Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution*, 83.

[722] Goodman and Soni, *Rome's Last Citizen*, 301 and George Washington, "George Washington to Sarah Cary Fairfax, 25 September 1758," Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-06-02-0033.

[723] Goodman and Soni, *Rome's Last Citizen*, 302.

[724] Richard M. Gummere, "The Heritage of the Classics in Colonial North America. An Essay on the Greco-Roman Tradition," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 99, no. 2 (April 15, 1955), 77.

various audiences. For example, in the obituaries for General Richard Montgomery, killed in the failed American invasion of Quebec in 1775, newspapers across the colonies compared Montgomery to the fallen British hero of the Seven Years' War, James Wolfe, and Cato:

> When Cato fell, Rome mourn'd the fatal blow;
> Wolfe's death bid streams of British tears to flow;
> Why, then, should freemen stop the friendly tear,
> Or ever blush to weep for one so dear?[725]

Language strongly resembling lines from *Cato* also appeared in two of the most famous quotes in all of American history. Patrick Henry (1736-1799) declared at the 1775 Second Virginia Convention, "Give me Liberty or give me death!" This closely resembles a quote from *Cato*'s Act II, Scene 4: "It is not now time to talk of aught/But chains or conquest, liberty or death."[726] Nathan Hale (1755-1776), led to the gallows on September 22, 1776 on charges of spying for the Colonials, defiantly uttered, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" as his final words. Again, the language mirrors *Cato* closely. From Act IV, scene four: "What a pity it is/That we can die but once to serve our country."[727] Whether Henry and Hale consciously paraphrased Cato is up to interpretation, but one thing is clear. These statements delivered at dramatic moments share the same spirit as *Cato*, and the lasting quality of their words is due in no small part to the same sentiment for liberty and sacrifice that *Cato* actively cultivated in the Colonies.

There were times in the American Revolution when indirect inspiration was not enough. *Cato* bore the burden of directly raising morale for the struggling Continental Army in one of its

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[725] Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution*, 314.

[726] Joseph Addison et al., *Cato,* II.4.

[727] Ibid., IV.4.

darkest hours. Following successive defeats at Brandywine, Paoli, and Germantown in 1777, George Washington wintered the Continental Army at Valley Forge, just 20 miles away from British-occupied Philadelphia. Washington's 12,000 soldiers desperately needed blankets, clothing, food, and relief from disease as they battled harsh temperatures and plummeting morale. As many as 2,000 Continental Army troops died in the winter of 1777-78 from various diseases such as typhoid, dysentery, influenza, pneumonia, and typhus. As Washington himself described in early January, 1778, the struggling American forces were barely viable as an army at all:

> Our condition in point of force is far from being the most eligible or respectable, and in case the Enemy should make a General push would be hazardous.
>
> I shall use every exertion that may be expedient & practicable for subsisting the Army & keeping it together: But I must observe, that this never can be done by coercive means. Supplies of provision and Clothing must be had in Another way, or it cannot exist.[728]

Though Washington himself doubted he could immediately solve the army's material problems, he did take steps to address his army's flagging morale. He staged a production of *Cato* at Valley Forge, hoping to inspire his troops as they endured the many hardships of camp life in the winter of 1778.[729] This was the act of a true believer in the motivating power of Addison's words, as there likely could never be a more difficult audience than the hungry, sick, clothed-in-rags soldiers of Valley Forge. There is no record of the troops' reaction to the play, and historians disagree over whether it was performed once or multiple times. But this was an example of

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[728] George Washington, "From George Washington to the Board of War, 2–3 January 1778," January 2, 1778, Founders Online, United States National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0093.

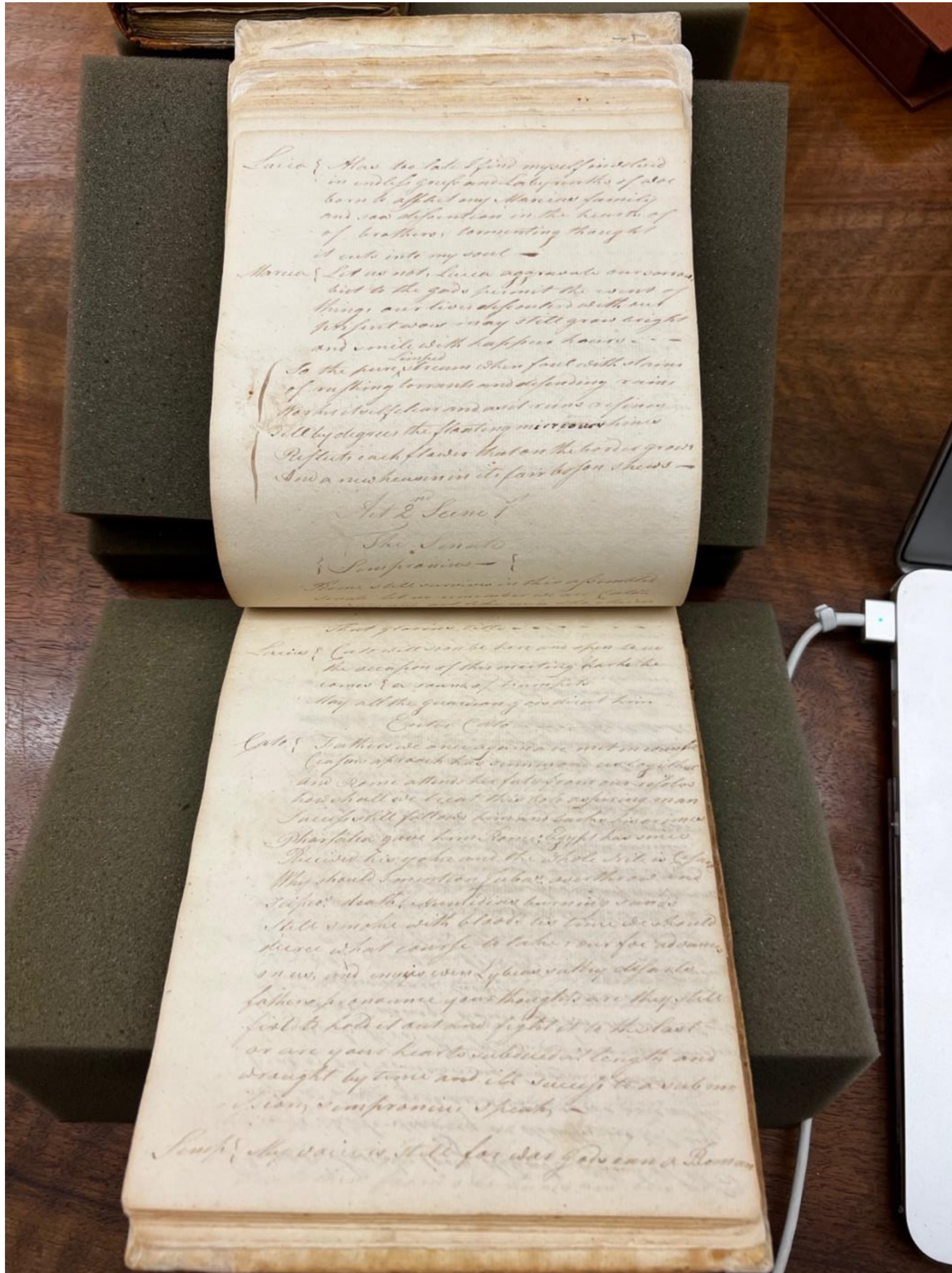
[729] Malamud, "Manifest Destiny and the Eclipse of Julius Caesar," 148.

George Washington not sitting still when it came to addressing the needs of his troops. Just as he worked constantly to acquire clothes, food, and training for his men during the months at Valley Forge, he also attended to their spiritual needs as well. If he could not feed their bodies with food, he was confident he could feed their hearts with *Cato*'s zeal for Republican stoicism.

An interesting piece of evidence further demonstrates the affinity for *Cato* in the Continental Army. A lieutenant of Connecticut's Fifth Regiment named Cornelius Russell, for reasons unknown, kept an unofficial orderly book for his own reference from February 8 to April 28, 1779, recording the orders sent to the regiment (see Figure 6). These orders primarily applied to matters of supply and logistics. About halfway through the orderly book, the information changes from routine regimental business to 92 consecutive pages of handwritten dialogue transcribed from Addison's *Cato* (see Figure 6).[730] This dubious achievement of military initiative is the sort of activity only a soldier with an abundance of time and enthusiasm for *Cato* could undertake. As the orderly book's pages are roughly 10 inches long, this represents more than 72 linear feet of cursive text, written by hand with a quill. For what purpose? Perhaps Russell simply wished to have a copy of *Cato* for himself, and a printed copy was unavailable for him to keep either for reasons or affordability or access. Or, considering the affinity that high-ranking members of the military and society - like George Washington - had for *Cato*, it could be likely that Russell was simply trying to fit in. If memorization of *Cato* could be viewed as a positive trait in a gentleman, would that process not begin with a written copy of the work?

[730] Cornelius Russell, "Lt. Cornelius Russell's Personal Orderly Book of the Fifth Connecticut Regiment: Reading, Conn., 8 February - 28 April 1779" (Reading, CT, 1779), Society of the Cincinnati Library.

Figure 6


Lucia { Alas too late I find myself involved
in endless griefs and labyrinths of woe
born to afflict my Marcias family
and sow dissention in the hearts of
of brothers: tormenting thought
it cuts into my soul —
Marcia { Let us not, Lucia aggravate our sorrows,
but to the gods permit the event of
things: our lives discoloured with our
present woes may still grow bright
and smile with happier hours - - —
So the pure, limpid stream when foul with stains
of rushing torrents and descending rains
Works itself clear and as it runs refines
Till by degrees the floating mirrour shines
Reflects each flower that on the border grows
And a new heaven in its fair bosom shews —

Act 2nd Scene 1st
The Senate
{ Sempronius — {

Cornelius Russell's enthusiasm for *Cato* is evident in this rare orderly book housed at the Library of the Society of the Cincinnati.[731]

[731] Ibid.

Fabius

Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus "Cunctator" could never have imagined that his namesake strategy would still be discussed and implemented thousands of years after his campaign against Hannibal in the Second Punic War, much less in a land not even conceivable by the Roman mind in the third century BCE. The situation in Colonial America at the outset of the Revolutionary War in 1775, however, inspired Americans to recognize the historical model of Fabius and the applicability of his strategy to their struggle from the outset. It is interesting to note that while Washington mirrored the strategic outlook of Fabius's Italian campaign against the Carthaginians, there is actually very little evidence suggesting that Washington drew direct strategic inspiration from the ancient sources on Fabius like Polybius, Livy, and Plutarch.[732] It is more likely that Washington acted on a strategic concept thoroughly engrained in the collective wisdom of the literate military class. The Fabian strategy is counterintuitive to those who have not been exposed to its core concept. It seems from the outside that a strategy engineered to win by avoiding confrontation is pointless in warfare. But the strategy works by attrition of the manpower, resources, and willpower of the invader. Decisive clashes are avoided by the defender in favor of endless skirmishes that tease, delay, and gradually weaken the enemy over time. After Fabius's use of this system of defense against Hannibal, the strategy became accepted and preserved in Western military thought. Montecuccoli, Folard, and Puységur, for example, all mentioned Fabius in their writings. It is highly unlikely that Washington, who resembled Fabius in many of his campaign choices, would have done so by accident or coincidence. Whether Washington definitively and purposefully followed Fabius's example, however, does not matter

[732] Ricks, *First Principles,* 135.

as much as the fact that his peers linked the two generals together easily and often. Fabius was a source of ancient credibility for those advocating the strategy of attrition, sacrifice, and delayed victory against the British. Fabius's historical example allowed the American Revolutionaries to make sense of a difficult and unusual war and maintain their confidence and faith in a commander that resembled the well-known Roman general. The spirit of Fabius served Washington's cause whether he was aware of that assistance or not.

As long as the young American nation supported and believed in the righteousness of their cause and the viability of their military, it stood a chance in a Revolutionary War in which willpower played a central role. Because the Continental Army ensured the survival of the United States as a viable, independent country, the Army's survival was paramount to the Revolutionary cause.[733] Avoiding events in which the Continental Army's destruction was likely, then, became a strategic priority for Washington. The American Commander in Chief limited his offensive actions - like Fabius in the Second Punic War – to attacks of opportunity in which he could extract the most gain for the least amount of loss.[734] Over time, this strategy had the additional benefit of providing a consistent stream of small successes that could keep the public engaged with the Revolutionary effort despite military defeats and communal sacrifice.

Soon after the start of the war, Washington's peers compared him to the ancient opponent of Hannibal, sometimes favorably, other times critically. The future second president of the United States, John Adams (1735-1826), was often one of those critics. He frequently expressed his frustration with a lack of decisive action in the war, and it is easy to understand why. As the head of Congress' Board of War and Ordnance, Adams was responsible for the

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[733] Palmer, *The Way of the Fox,* 231 and Ricks, *First Principles*, 156.

[734] Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, xviii.

supply of troops and worked tirelessly to ensure the viability of the Continental Army. A short war, therefore, was in his best interest. But even before his appointment by Congress, he expressed a personal preference for action in a 1775 letter to pamphleteer and poet Mercy Otis Warren:

> The inactivity of the two armies, is not very agreeable to me. Fabius's cunctando was wise and brave. But if I had submitted to it in his situation, it would have been a cruel mortification to me. Zeal, and fire and activity and enterprise strike my imagination too much.[735]

While Adams had a personal preference for action, he grudgingly respected the militarily proper "cunctando," or delaying, of Fabius, implemented by both armies as they gained strength in the first year of the rebellion. Adams's early criticism of Washington for inaction in November of 1775 was certainly unfair, as Washington and the Continental Army were embroiled in Siege of Boston. In that month, Washington had just ordered Henry Knox (1750-1806) to acquire the artillery necessary to conduct the siege from the recently-seized Fort Ticonderoga. The siege would end successfully for the Americans after another three and half months.

Summer of 1776 proved disastrous for Washington as he unsuccessfully attempted to defend New York City from invasion by the British. After the sound defeat of the Continental Army at the Battle of Long Island (Brooklyn), Washington's aide, Gen. Nathanael Greene (1742-1786), wrote a desperate letter to Washington urging him to raze the city to prevent it from falling into British hands. The Battle of Long Island was one of the largest encounters between the Continental Army and the British in the American Revolution, with more than 30,000 soldiers involved. It was the sort of encounter Fabius himself would have attempted to avoid.

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[735]John Adams, "From John Adams to Mercy Otis Warren, 25 November 1775," November 25, 1775, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-03-02-0170.

Greene advised Washington to lean into Fabian style tactics harder moving forward, to preserve the army and prevent the Revolution from collapsing. He wrote:

> Part of the Army already has met with a defeat, the country is struck with a panic, any capital loss at this time may ruin the cause. Tis our business to study to avoid any considerable misfortune. And to take post where the enemy will be obliged to fight us and not we them.[736]

In the days following the defeat at the Battle of Long Island, a letter from Continental Army Judge Advocate General William Tudor (1750-1819) to John Adams showed that Washington had not lost the confidence of his officers despite the defeat in a large battle. Here, Tudor still paints Washington in the color of Fabius rather than Hannibal in defending him to Adams. He wrote:

> The Character you have drawn of a General Officer may perhaps have been exhibited by, a Turenne, Eugene, Marlborough or Saxe, but no country can boast such a one now. We have an exceedingly good Commander in Chief, who though he may approach nearer the character of Fabius than of Hannibal, is not wanting in intrepidity or the truest patriotism; I pity his situation and wish him more able counsellors and spirited assistants.[737]

Washington's later triumph at Trenton on Christmas, 1776 was more representative of the Fabian strategy that Greene advocated and Tudor defended. On that night, Washington and 2,400 poorly-supplied Continental troops crossed the Delaware River, and quickly marched 10 miles to take a British garrison manned by 1,500 surprised Hessian mercenaries. The encounter was small-scale, quickly executed, surprise oriented, and – most importantly- a battle that ended with

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[736] Nathanael Greene, "To George Washington from Major General Nathanael Greene, 5 September 1776," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed November 27, 2023, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-06-02-0180.

[737] William Tudor, " To John Adams from William Tudor, 6 September 1776," September 6, 1776, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-05-02-0007.

the deprivation of supplies for the enemy and a gain of supplies for the Continental Army. This was an attack of opportunity that revitalized the American cause and caught the attention of world leaders like Frederick II, Catherine the Great, and the Marshals of the French military.[738]

As Washington wintered in Morristown, New Jersey in 1777, Greene wrote a letter to Adams, rebuking the Board of War and Ordnance chief's dissatisfaction with the performance of the Continental Army's field leadership. Greene passionately accused Adams of expecting too much of the men leading the troops, writing, "I am sensible you have not the most exalted opinion of your generals. Who is in fault? Every one would wish to be an Epaminondas, Sertorius or Turenne if they could, but if Nature refused to crown the sons of America with such gifts, who is to blame, either she or we?"[739] He then turned to a defense of Fabian fundamentals to Adams, explaining the reasons behind the Continental Army's alleged lack of action:

> Perhaps the generals may be thought blamable for not fighting more. I must confess I advised to the bringing on an action at the White Plains and then thought it right, as our Army was daily wasting away and the grounds being very strong on which the Army lay. But the discipline of the British troops and the superiority of their artillery might have given us a general defeat. In that case the consequences would have been terrible. The alternative was disagreeable if we did not defeat the enemy, the dissolution of our Army was soon to take place, and they left at liberty to range at large.[740]

Greene then explained the actions of both British general William Howe and his own commander, Washington, and how the lack of support for the Continental Army undermined the American war effort:

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[738] Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 135.

[739] Nathanael Greene, "Nathanael Greene to John Adams, March 3, 1777," March 3, 1777, Founders Online, United States National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/?q=sertorius&s=1111311111&sa=&r=1&sr=.

[740] Ibid.

> General Howe has invariably pursued the maxims of an invader this campaign, by endeavoring to bring us to a general action, and avoid skirmishing. General Washington as every defender ought has followed directly the contrary conduct, by endeavoring to skirmish with the enemy at all times, and avoid a general engagement. The short term of enlistments and the still shorter aid of the Militia has lost us almost all the benefit of those skirmishes.[741]

This letter to Adams is notable because it was an example of a Republican military officer directly contradicting and criticizing the chain of command. This would have been an unusual type of letter for someone serving in Frederick II's army or a Marshal in Louis XIV's army, but here, Greene writes to Adams as a peer, not a subject. Also, Greene based his argument in reason, the guiding principle of the Enlightenment. When Greene wrote that Howe "invariably pursued the maxims of an invader" and that Washington acted "as every defender ought," he was referring to tactics already codified in the conventional military knowledge of the Enlightenment Age – knowledge that certainly had its basis in classical antiquity. The very notion that a defender "ought" to skirmish with the enemy "at all times" and "avoid a general engagement" was founded in the West by Fabius in the third century BCE. Here, Greene confidently pointed out that it was the right thing to do because precedence is an element of reason. If something worked once, it is reasonable to assume it could work again under similar circumstances.

Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804) was another of Washington's subordinates who subscribed to the validity of the Fabian strategy. Writing to his mentor Hugh Knox as the British threatened Philadelphia in summer of 1777, Hamilton stressed the idea that the survival of the Continental Army was far more important than that of any single American city. He understood that if the Army perished, the Revolution did as well. He wrote:

> It may be asked, if to avoid a general action, we give up objects of the first importance, what is to hinder the enemy from carrying every important point and ruining us? My answer is that our hopes are not placed in any particular city or

[741] Ibid.

> spot of ground, but in the preserving a good army furnished with proper necessaries, to take advantage of favorable opportunities and waste and defeat the enemy by piece-meal.[742]

Hamilton referred to Washington as the "American Fabius" and was candid in his fears that the public would not fully understand the Continental Army's slow, delayed process of depleting William Howe's British forces at the cost of American lives, material, and prosperity.[743] He explained Washington's operational priorities in a letter to New York politician Robert R. Livingston in June of 1777:

> I know the comments that some people will make on our Fabian conduct. It will be imputed either to cowardice or to weakness: But the more discerning, I trust, will not find it difficult to conceive that it proceeds from the truest policy, and is an argument neither of the one nor the other. The liberties of America are an infinite stake. We should not play a desperate game for it or put it upon the issue of a single cast of the die. The loss of one general engagement may effectually ruin us, and it would certainly be folly to hazard it, unless our resources for keeping up an army were at an end, and some decisive blow was absolutely necessary; or unless our strength was so great as to give certainty of success.[744]

Hamilton seemed certain that Howe's forces would not be reinforced, and that the British commander was locked into using only the resources currently available to him. As he explained to Livingston, the long-term outlook for the Continental Army was good, as long as they did not play into Howe's hands when it came to meeting in a decisive battle. He wrote:

> Their affairs will be growing worse—our's better;—so that delay will ruin them. It will serve to perplex and fret them, and precipitate them into measures, that we can turn to good account. Our business then is to avoid a general engagement and

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[742] Alexander Hamilton, "From Alexander Hamilton to Hugh Knox, [July 1777]," July 1777, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-01-02-0238.

[743] Alexander Hamilton. "Eulogium on Major-General Greene" July 4, 1789, in *The Works of Alexander Hamilton, (Federal Edition), vol. 8*. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

[744] Alexander Hamilton, "From Alexander Hamilton to Robert R. Livingston, 28 June 1777," June 28, 1777, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-01-02-0201.

> waste the enemy away by constantly goading their sides, in a desultory teasing way.[745]

Hamilton worried that the Fabian strategy would be misunderstood by the public; the act of writing to Livingston in particular, was a clue that he was concerned about occupied New York City in particular. He knew well that Washington's decisions might be difficult to understand for citizens and soldiers alike:

> In the meantime it is painful to leave a part of the inhabitants a prey to their [British] depredations; and it is wounding to the feelings of a [Continental] soldier, to see an enemy parading before him and daring him to a fight which he is obliged to decline. But a part must be sacrificed to the whole, and passion must give way to reason.[746]

Hamilton closed his letter by suggesting that Livingston "circulate" the ideas he suggested in his letter (without naming Hamilton) in order to "prepare the minds of the people for what may happen and take off the disagreeable impressions our caution may make."[747]

As for Adams, the summer of 1777 evoked a range of emotion regarding Washington and the Fabian strategy, as his correspondence revealed. In June, after six consecutive months without a major American defeat and growing signs that French involvement in the war may be imminent, Adams confided to his wife Abigail that "We shall have all the sages and heroes of France here before long," and that "We are under no more apprehensions here than if the British Army was in Crimea. Our Fabius will be slow, but sure." He added, ironically in retrospect, "[Benedict] Arnold, you see will have at them if he can."[748]

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[745] Ibid.

[746] Ibid.

[747] Ibid.

[748] John Adams, "John Adams to Abigail Adams, 18 June 1777," June 18, 1777, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-02-02-0210.

Adams remained confident after Howe's British forces landed on Aug. 25 at Head of Elk, Maryland, not far from the U.S. capital of Philadelphia. With Washington's forces in the area growing, Adams fervently hoped Washington would switch from the ancient Fabian strategy into a more offensive mode. As he wrote to Rev. William Gordon on Aug, 31:

> [Howe] is at the Head of Elk about 55 miles from this city. Gen. Washington is at Wilmington, about 15 miles on this side of him, with a noble army of continental troops, and a large body of militia, which is constantly and rapidly increasing. Whether the General will be compelled to depart from his Fabian system or not time will discover. A general action, successful to us is destructive to them—and even if they should be successful and keep the field, they will lose so many men, as to be crippled after it whereas I think we should be able speedily to reinforce our army, notwithstanding the panic and consternation which would follow a defeat.[749]

Adams's tone remained impatient and became accusatory in a letter just a few days later to Abigail Adams, in which he bluntly stated what he thought of Washington delaying action against Howe. He wrote:

> I am sick of Fabian systems in all quarters. The officers drink a long and moderate War. My toast is a short and violent war. They would call me mad and rash etc. but I know better. I am as cool as any of them and cooler too, for my mind is not inflamed with fear nor anger, whereas I believe theirs are with both.[750]

If Adams truly desired a general action between the Washington's Continental Army and Howe's British Army in defense of Philadelphia, he received it on Sept. 11, 1777. Washington, in a departure from the Fabian strategy, used the opportunity given to him by his collected

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[749] John Adams, "From John Adams to William Gordon, 31 August 1777," August 31, 1777, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-05-02-0163.

[750] John Adams, "John Adams to Abigail Adams, 2 September 1777," September 2, 1777, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-02-02-0271.

14,600 troops to make a stand against Howe's 15,500 at the Battle of Brandywine. The result was a clear British victory, but Washington and Greene managed to conduct a fighting withdrawal from the field that preserved much of the Continental Army. Howe's British troops occupied Philadelphia itself fifteen days later.

While Howe's men settled in at Philadelphia in fall and winter of 1777, their forces in New York under General John Burgoyne (1722-1792) went unsupported against a numerically-superior Continental Army under Horatio Gates (1727-1806) at Saratoga. The Americans scored an important victory there on October 7 and secured French involvement in the conflict against the British as a result of the battle. The outlook for the British in the mid-Atlantic took a sudden turn for the worse. While Howe contemplated how long he could hold Philadelphia, Washington wintered in Valley Forge just 25 miles away. His choice of camping close to the enemy fell in line with Fabian precedent. Because Washington was so close to the American capital and the British Army, Howe had to account for their presence when attempting to forage and supply his forces. Washington's men had been regularly harassing British patrols and foraging parties since early 1777, and they were particularly effective in the winter – farmers had more time to fight when not tending crops.[751]

While Washington's Continental troops recovered from the actions near Philadelphia, and later retrained at Valley Forge, their Commander in Chief received advice from the generals under his banner, who urged him to stick to the Fabian strategy. Answering questions put to him at an October 29, 1777 war council, Maj. Gen. John Sullivan wrote that "a general action is by all means to avoided by us at present," as it was the "only thing (Howe) ought to wish for." He

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[751] Ricks, *First Principles*, 151.

also recommended the continuous harassment of British foraging parties and their sympathizers by purposing "four or five hundred men" from Pennsylvania for a week at a time to patrol the roads around Philadelphia.[752] Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834) advised Washington not to listen to "stupid men" in Congress who believed that "attacking is the only thing necessary to conquer." He mused that "those ideas are entertained in their minds by some jealous men and perhaps secret friends to the British government who want to push you in a moment of ill humor to some rash enterprise upon the lines or against a much stronger army."[753] Washington's final bit of advice was less conspiratorial, but more deeply reflective of classical influence.

Educated at the University of Edinburgh, apprenticed to a physician, and formerly in the service of the British army in the Seven Years' War, Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair (1737-1818) was educated, experienced, and eloquent in his manner of giving advice to George Washington. In a Jan. 5, 1778 letter to the Commander in Chief, St. Clair offered similar counsel as Lafayette regarding Washington's critics, but in a more polished tone:

> It is certain this [Fabian] method is not attended with so much splendor and éclat, and the ignorant, the envious, and the factious will ascribe it to very different motives than the most exalted bravery and prudence, but those who are truly acquainted with the science well know that it requires both, in much more

[752] John Sullivan, "Major General John Sullivan's Opinion, 29 October 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed November 27, 2023, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-12-02-0045.

[753] Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier Marquis de Lafayette, "Founders Online: To George Washington from Major General Lafayette, 30 December, 1777," December 30, 1777, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0063.

> eminent degree and indeed every military qualification than where war is carried on offensively.[754]

St. Clair noted that "the history of Hannibal's war is pregnant with proofs" of the effectiveness of Fabius's methods, and that the Roman Republic "was saved from the very brink of ruin" by the strategy.[755] He elaborated:

> All the great designs of Hannibal one of the greatest generals the world ever saw, rendered abortive, and the glory of his actions obscured by the less shewy but regulated conduct of Fabius, by which he acquired the most honorable title of maximus bestowed upon him alone—that system you adopted from choice, and I persuade myself will not depart from it without good reason and it will certainly ultimately crown you with glory and the blessings of a free and happy people.[756]

As it happened, Washington did heed the advice of his supporting staff, and committed to a strategic policy of evasion, harassment, and delay until the war in the North significantly calmed. In late 1778, the British shifted their efforts to subdue their former colonies to the Southern United States, where Greene eventually attained command of the Continental Army and enacted the same policy of avoiding decisive battles where the outcome was virtually predetermined.[757]

St. Clair's reassuring advice to Washington clarifies the importance of the perception of Fabius to the American cause. The idea that Fabius's patient approach to war saved the Roman Republic and rendered Hannibal himself powerless was not accurate, but it was a popular notion among the Americans that gave them confidence that a past victory against long odds could once

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[754] Arthur St. Clair, "To George Washington from Major General Arthur St. Clair, 5 January, 1778," January 5, 1778, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0123.

[755] Ibid.

[756] Ibid.

[757] Weddle, *The Compleat Victory: The Battle of Saratoga and the American Revolution*, 376.

again be repeated by a young republic. The parallels between the early Roman state and the American Republic were clear to the members of the Continental Congress, the Continental Army's leadership, the literate public, and the soldiers who came from those educated classes. Even those who criticized Washington's methods, like Adams, could not resist couching their argument in Fabian terms. Washington, whether he desired the role or not, had Fabius projected upon him by his followers and his opposition. This is indicative of the level of intellectual saturation that classical antiquity had achieved in America, thousands of years removed from the Roman Republic, yet alive with its easily recognizable heroes and virtues.

Vegetius and Otho Holland Williams

One of the remarkable features of warfare in the late eighteenth century was the growing professional attitude of military leaders as military theory, education, technology, and science developed along with the spread of Enlightenment ideals like widespread literacy, rationality, and humanist philosophy. As war grew more complex, it could no longer remain an exclusive international competition for upper-level aristocrats and kings. Real talent was always required of the best generals and officers, but the mid to late eighteenth century required expertise at advanced level, reflective of the larger armies, firepower, and size of military operations, which now took place in globe-spanning wars. Even a highly educated general like Frederick the Great, groomed from his first days of life to lead an army, suffered difficulties in the Third Silesian War that genius alone could not solve. Slowly, warfare began to creep toward meritocracy and professionalism. Its companion concept, the idea of the citizen soldier, grew along a parallel

track. These were ideals that appealed to the American side of the Revolutionary War against Britain. Farmers, tradesmen, and merchants, for example, lived dual lives as ordinary citizens and soldiers who fought when events warranted.

A fascinating example of a citizen-soldier consulting classical antiquity was that of Continental officer Otho Holland Williams (1749-1794), who transcribed eight pages worth of notes on Vegetius's *De Re Militarii* during the Revolutionary War. The manuscript located in the archives of the Society of the Cincinnati unfortunately cannot be precisely dated, as Williams did not indicate the date of his transcription. But Williams's selection of material to record, and his wartime service record, present an interesting meld of life imitating military "art." Like many of his citizen-soldier peers, Williams was not a career military man. His thoughts did not turn to war until he was called to action; and as evidence later demonstrates, he was also eager to return to civilian life afterward. This is important to note when interpreting the timing of Williams's notetaking, as there was no motive for consulting Vegetius before or after the Revolutionary War. His experience was quite unlike European aristocrats or royals like de Saxe or Frederick II, groomed and educated for war from an early age. Williams was a 26-year-old clerk and businessman in Maryland when he signed up for duty in 1775. He was orphaned at the age of 13 and spent his formative years serving an apprenticeship under his brother-in-law, who worked in the Frederick County clerk's office. Williams became a clerk himself in Baltimore by the age of 18, and then "entered into commercial life in Fredericktown, shortly before the commencement of the American Revolution."[758] Williams was one of the new breed of soldiers in America

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[758] Osmond Tiffany, *A Sketch of the Life and Services of Gen. Otho Holland Williams : Read before the Maryland Historical Society, on Thursday Evening, March 6, 1851* (Baltimore, MD: Printed by John Murphy & Co., 1851), 5.

brought about by the confluence of Enlightenment-era egalitarianism, classically inspired Republicanism, and military necessity.

Williams's merit in combat would eventually carry him to the rank of brigadier general in 1783, but he first endured a journey through the ranks full of pain and peril. He was commissioned a first lieutenant in a Continental Army rifle unit in 1775 and took part in the Siege of Boston that year. After a rapid promotion to major, Williams then fought at the Battle of Fort Washington in 1776. It was there that Williams was severely wounded in the groin and captured by British forces. He was placed on parole on Long Island for seven months, then, after being accused of espionage, his captors threw Williams into a four-by-four-foot prison cell for the remainder of his time in custody. For another seven months, he shared that tiny space with another prominent American citizen-soldier, Ethan Allen. Williams's health was said to have been permanently affected by the experience.[759] After a prisoner exchange in 1778, the British freed Williams, who was eager to rejoin the service. He was promoted again to colonel and given command of the Sixth Maryland Regiment of the Maryland Line. Here, he encountered another problem that would come to define his reputation as a commander. His small unit of about 100 men was notoriously undisciplined and undersupplied.[760] It was up to Williams to correct that.

Vegetius offers no shortage of advice on troop recruitment, training, and discipline, and these are the topics that appear most frequently in Williams's notes on the Roman general's work. Of the 57 total notations taken by Williams on John Clarke's English translation of

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[759] Ibid., 9.

[760] Ibid., 10 and John Beakes, *Otho Holland Williams in the American Revolution* (Charleston, SC: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Co. of America, 2015), Kindle loc. 1210.

Vegetius, 32 concern the recruitment, training, and discipline of troops.[761] This presented a clear interest by Williams in the development of his unit and his soldiers, and reflected the primary military problem that occupied his thoughts for the remainder of the war: how to keep his unit combat-ready and effective. Williams's own statements show a commander deeply concerned about this issue, as well as his frustration with not returning to combat. Regarding the small size of his regiment and its need to grow its numbers, Williams wrote the Governor of Maryland, "I heartily desire to join the army as soon as possible, but certainly it had better be reinforced by a regiment without a colonel than by a colonel without a regiment."[762]

Williams took notes while reading no less than 163 pages of Clarke's 213-page English translation of Vegetius. He apparently transcribed passages from the work as he went along, as Williams included the page numbers of the source material in ascending order on his transcription document. Williams's excerpts are almost always perfectly repeated from Vegetius, save for a few specific examples that are quite telling in their small inaccuracies. Williams's notes predictably include the same maxims that have attracted military minds for centuries such as the famous line, "He who desires peace must prepare for war," and the "seven orders of battle" that captured the attention of Folard and Puységur. But what is different about Williams's record of his study, is that the pagination allows present-day observers to follow along through Clarke's translation as well, to understand what Williams believed was most important to him, and what was not. For example, with regard to recruiting, Williams quotes Vegetius page 6:

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[761] Otho Holland Williams, "Notes from Vegetius in [Otho Holland Williams Papers, Middle Brook [N.J.], Baltimore, and Elsewhere, 1778-1790]" (Baltimore and elsewhere, 1790-1778), Society of the Cincinnati Library.

[762] Otho Holland Williams, "Otho Holland Williams to Governor Thomas Johnson," March 16, 1778, Otho Holland Williams Papers, Maryland Historical Society, in Beakes, *Otho Holland Williams in the American Revolution*, Kindle loc. 1210.

> It is certain that every country produces both brave men and cowards, but it is equally as certain that some nations are naturally more warlike than others and that courage, as well as strength of body depends greatly on the influence of different climates.[763]

Vegetius goes on to theorize that nations "which lie near the sun," have a "greater share of genius and knowledge," while "Northern People" are more suited to "intrepidity in the field."[764] Williams does not record this theory of Vegetius, so he obviously did not believe it to be relevant or even true. But Williams did record that different nations produced different men for war. One can only theorize what Williams might have believed those differences to be, whether physical, mental, or spiritual. There is, however, a notation on recruiting lifted from Vegetius that seemed to resonate with Williams:

> An army raised without proper regard to the choice of its recruits, was never yet made good by length of time: and we are now convinced by fatal experience, that this is the source of all our misfortunes.[765]

Vegetius wrote in the fifth century near the end of the Roman Empire, complaining about the Romans of his time taking very little care to select high-quality soldiers for front-line action. Williams's selection of this quote from Vegetius for his own reflection could indicate that perhaps Williams either saw a similar trend occurring in the Continental Army, or he feared its development. By 1779-80, the troops of the Continental Line were not primarily part-time militia drawn from the middle class, but rather a new model of full-time regulars approved by Congress

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[763] Otho Holland Williams, "Notes from Vegetius," (p.6) – Please note that "p.6" refers to the page number mentioned in the note on the manuscript, which matches up with the page number in Clarke's translation of Vegetius as well. This will be the citation format moving forward for this source in this project.

[764] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius,* 7.

[765] Williams, "Notes from Vegetius," (p.15).

in September of 1776, drawn mostly from the lower classes. These were soldiers with less education, fewer options, and longer terms of service.[766] As Williams commanded a regular Continental regiment, these were the sort of soldiers that composed his unit. Still, Williams soon had his men in fighting shape and "equal if not superior in thorough discipline, to any in the whole army."[767]

After moving into the Southern Department of the war in June of 1780, Williams and his regiment participated in the disastrous Battle of Camden, under the command of Southern Army Commander in Chief Horatio Gates. The August 16 battle also gives a clue as to the timing of Williams's consultation of Vegetius, as he gave a bit of specific advice to Gates as the battle got underway, mirrored in Williams's notes on the Roman theorist. As related in Williams's own account of the 1780 Southern Campaign, when the British army first approached the outnumbered Continental lines (flanked on either side by "marsh"), Williams advised Gates to attack the British as "first impressions were important."[768] Williams words here, especially "marsh," are very important to note. As Vegetius advised:

> If your forces are few and weak in comparison of the enemy, you must make use of the seventh disposition, and cover one of your flanks either win an eminence, a city, the sea, a river, or some protection of that kind.[769]

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[766] Paul A. C. Koistinen, *Beating Plowshares into Swords: The Political Economy of American Warfare*, Modern War Studies (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 15.

[767] Tiffany, *A Sketch of the Life and Services of Gen. Otho Holland Williams*, 10.

[768] Otho Holland Williams, "A Narrative of the Campaign of 1780, by Colonel Otho Holland Williams, Adjutant-General," in *The Life of Nathanael Greene, Major-General in the Army of the Revolution. Ed. by W. Gilmore Simms.*, ed. William Gilmore Simms (New York: Jierby & Jarkson, 1859), 372.

[769] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius,* 162.

But Williams records this quote in his notes differently, mentioning specific terrain not referenced by Vegetius at all:

> If you are weak in comparison to your foe you must cover one of your flanks with a river, **marsh**, mountain, etc. (emphasis mine).[770]

Here, Williams mentioned terrain unique to his experience in war, featured prominently at the Battle of Camden. And the Continental lines, of which Williams's Marylanders were a part, happened to be arrayed according to Vegetius's textbook recommendation against a numerically superior foe. Seeing the British arranging for battle on the right flank of the Continental army's lines, Williams took action. He ordered an artillery captain to open fire on the British and rode to Gates to explain himself. In Williams's words:

> The general (Gates) seemed disposed to wait events; he gave no orders. The deputy adjutant-general (Williams) observed that if the enemy, in the act of displaying, were briskly attacked by General Stevens's brigade, which was already in line of battle, the effect might be fortunate, and first impressions were important. "Sir," said the general, "that's right. Let it be done."[771]

This was also an action recommended by Vegetius, who used similar language to describe such a specific battlefield occurrence. Williams's notes read:

> Always endeavor to be beforehand with your enemy in drawing up in order of battle, your dispositions will be more without obstructions: it will encourage your men and intimidate your enemy. A superiority of courage seems to be implied on the side that first offers battle.[772]

Williams's suggestion to Gates aligned with Vegetius's tactical philosophy, but as it happened, Gates approved the idea too late. Williams returned to the front to find the British already

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[770] Williams, "Notes from Vegetius," (p.161).

[771] Williams, "A Narrative of the Campaign of 1780," 373.

[772] Williams, "Notes from Vegetius," (p.139).

bearing down on the Continental lines. Despite a gallant delaying action by Williams and a small contingent of 50 volunteers, the British intimidated the Virginia, then the North Carolina militia into full retreat. Two-thirds of the militia fled without firing a shot.[773] Williams noted the panic was instantaneous, "like electricity," on the battlefield, as the militia ran.[774] The regulars, Williams noted, held fast as long as they could against overwhelming odds, due to their "strict discipline and hard service."[775] Ultimately, Camden was an embarrassing defeat for the Americans, as "not even a company retired in any order; everyone escaped as he could."[776] The debacle expediated the replacement of Gates as Commander in Chief of the Southern Army by Gen. Nathanael Greene later in December 1781, and left Williams contemplating more than ever the necessity of enforcing discipline in his command.

Before being replaced, Gates gave Williams command of a patchwork regiment of Maryland and Delaware troops cobbled together in the aftermath of the Battle of Camden. While Williams had experience training and shaping the First Maryland Regiment before their deployment in the South, the new amalgamated Maryland-Delaware regiment under his command in fall of 1780 presented a challenge that would test the patience and resources of any commander. Greene described these troops in January of 1781, months after Williams began working with them, as appearing "wretched beyond description, and their distress, on account of provisions, was little less than their sufferings for want of clothing and other necessities. General Gates had lost the confidence of the officers, and the troops all their discipline." Greene also

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[773] Williams, "A Narrative of the Campaign of 1780," 373.

[774] Ibid.

[775] Ibid.

[776] Ibid., 374.

noted that the men were "so addicted to plundering that they were a terror" to the local inhabitants surrounding their camp near Hillsborough, North Carolina.[777] Williams's consultation of Vegetius reflected his concerns about discipline and the use of corporal punishment to enforce it. His notes range from general transcriptions about the value of discipline to more explicit notations about justifying the punishment of rulebreakers. Among his many notations from Vegetius on the general importance of discipline were these transcriptions:

> Victory in war depends not absolutely on numbers or mere courage, Conduct and discipline only will ensure it.[778]
>
> The less a man is acquainted with indulgences, and sweets of life, the less reason he has to be afraid of death.[779]
>
> No state can either be happy or secure that is remiss and negligent in the discipline of its troops.[780]
>
> For as the well trained soldier is eager for action, so does the untaught fear it: in war discipline is superior to strength; but if that discipline is neglected, there is no longer any difference between the soldier and the peasant.[781]

One should note that these various notations recorded by Williams, do not all appear on the same page or within a small range of pages. Williams picked the small sample above from a range of 80 pages of Vegetius, demonstrating his specific desire to select and record advice on discipline from the Roman writer.

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777 Nathanael Greene to Joseph Reed, Written at Camp on the Peedee. January 9, 1781 in Beakes, *Otho Holland Williams in the American Revolution*, kindle loc. 3130.

778 Williams, "Notes from Vegetius," (p.4).

779 Ibid., (p. 9).

780 Ibid., (p. 26).

781 Ibid., (p. 82).

It would be unfair to paint a portrait of Williams's regimental camp in North Carolina as an institution focused on pain, deprivation, and punishment. The truth was Williams had a fighting force to cultivate, and that meant training had to be a pillar of activity in the camp, alongside strict enforcement of military and civilian laws. Vegetius thought similarly in his day, and Williams's commanding officers also aligned themselves with that philosophy. Greene's second-in-command in the South, Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, had been the Continental Army's Inspector General since 1778. This command duo had its own intellectual lineage extending back to Vegetius. As detailed in Chapter Four, the Roman theorist directly inspired Frederick II's strict commitment to "Roman discipline" in his Prussian troops, and Steuben was a direct product of Frederick's system. As a former aide-de-camp of Frederick II himself, Steuben had been exposed to Frederick's Vegetius-inspired *General Principles* and was the author of his own *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, a drill book intended to standardize the movements and commands of the Continental Army, devoid of direct references to theory. Indirectly, Steuben's *Regulations* reflected both Vegetius's and Frederick II's intense focus on efficiency of movement and organization. Steuben also reflected Frederick's commitment to constantly drilling and exercising his troops to build their physique and tenacity for war. This was seen famously in the winter of 1777/78, when Steuben set the standard for constantly drilling Continental Army soldiers at Valley Forge. Though Steuben's role was primarily in Virginia overseeing the logistical needs of the Southern Army, it can be seen from Williams's writings that he was committed to the same standard of activity in his camp as that which Steuben, Frederick, and Vegetius all recommended in their works and habits.

Williams's top priority at the start of training was to isolate his soldiers from the population of Hillsborough so they could concentrate on their discipline and development. He stationed sentries preventing access to the camp and began to win over his troops by providing them with supplies as best he could. "In this encampment no circumstance of want or distress was admitted as an excuse for relaxing from the strictest discipline," Williams wrote, noting that the soldiers "cheerfully submitted, as they saw their officers constantly occupied in procuring from them whatever was attainable in their situation."[782] Williams then established a pattern of regular drill, three times a day:

> The Regiment is to parade at Troop beating o'clock in the morning, at noon, and at Retreat every day till further orders.[783]

Williams's notes on Vegetius reflect the same philosophy of consistent drill:

> The very essence of an art consists in constant practice.[784]
>
> On military exercises depend health in the camp and victory in the field.[785]
>
> The best judges of the service have always been of opinion that daily practice of the military exercises are much more efficacious towards the health of an army, than all the art of medicine.[786]

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782 Williams, "A Narrative of the Campaign of 1780," 386.

783 Otho Holland Williams, "Brigade and Regimental Orders, O.H. Williams Commd. MS 768, Manuscripts Collection, Maryland Historical Society" (1780-1781), Maryland Historical Society.

784 Williams, "Notes from Vegetius," (p.83).

785 Ibid., 94.

786 Ibid.

Williams took training a step further by encouraging “manly exercises and field sports” in the intervals between drill sessions, a Roman practice also recorded and recommended by Vegetius.[787] As Williams noted in his transcriptions of Vegetius’s maxims,

> An army is strengthened by labor and enervated by idleness.[788]

Williams reported that his officers “had very soon the entire confidence of the men, who divested themselves of all unnecessary care, and devoted themselves to duty and pastime within the limits assigned them.”[789]

So much of Williams’s effort in training his troops centered on their survival in battle. As long as the unit remained cohesive and in the fight, the unit could be effective on the battlefield. That is why discipline was so important on the tactical level for the Continental Army as a whole. Williams saw the breakdown of discipline at Camden and worked diligently to prevent a similar result in future battles. This concern for remaining in the fight, of course, reflected Washington’s overall Fabian strategy, which emphasized the survival of the Continental Army on the strategic scale. As long as the army as a whole remained viable in the field, the war could continue, and the Revolutionary ideal could survive in the collective consciousness of the young American state. Some of Williams’s notes on Vegetius indicate his understanding of the overarching Fabian strategy employed by the Continental forces, who had to be judicious about participating in potentially decisive general actions. Williams’s notes could be interpreted as

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[787] Williams, “A Narrative of the Campaign of 1780,” 387.

[788] Williams, “Notes from Vegetius,” (p.161).

[789] Williams, “A Narrative of the Campaign of 1780,” 387, and Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius,* 98-99.

either in support of the strategy or against it, but either way, it demonstrates a commander attempting to make sense of a larger strategic undertaking of which he was a part.

Vegetius understood well the gamble that a general action represented because he had knowledge of Rome's successes and failures near the end of the Empire. Those historical events, like Rome's campaign against Hannibal in the Second Punic War, informed his own writing. A general action had the potential to be a near-existential catastrophe, like Cannae, or a decisive blow to end a war, like Zama. One of the lessons Williams copied from Vegetius was that "no one whoever despairs of effecting what has already been performed."[790] Williams added to that maxim his own original note: "Things possible may be repeated," which reflected not only the Enlightenment emphasis on reason as a guiding influence, but also the value Williams placed on historical precedence.[791] A direct comment on general actions appears in Williams's next note from Vegetius:

> A general engagement is a conjuncture full of uncertainty. In the decision of a pitched battle consists the fullness of victory.[792]

This note demonstrates that Williams was aware of the uncertain nature of a large, pitched battle, but his focus was on the potential for victory. Here, the evidence suggests that Williams favored engaging the enemy in a potentially decisive clash because a victory could be total as a result. Williams's outlook on this maxim is evident because what he recorded and what Vegetius wrote were two different things. Vegetius was more cautious:

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[790] Williams, "Notes from Vegetius," (p.122-23).

[791] Ibid.

[792] Ibid., (p. 125).

> A general engagement (is) a conjuncture **so** full of uncertainty **and so fatal to kingdoms and nations; for** in the decision of a pitched battle consists the fullness of victory (emphasis mine).[793]

By taking the more pessimistic view, Vegetius focuses on the potential for disaster more than Williams does. This indicates that Williams possessed a more aggressive approach to battle than Vegetius, and perhaps even his own superior officers, whose Fabian strategy centered on the survival of the army as a main priority. This is not to say that Williams's notetaking as a whole appeared to signal a personal tendency toward the abandonment of caution. Other notes taken by Williams on Vegetius suggest that Williams wanted to remember the Roman's advice on the costly nature of mistakes:

> Errors in action cannot be committed with impunity.[794]
>
> A good situation for a camp is not sufficient. We must take the best or it may be occupied by the enemy to our detriment.[795]

Still, the greatest mistake of all would have been to engage the enemy with soldiers not properly prepared or seasoned for battle. Williams also took note of another of Vegetius's maxims regarding this danger, and again modified the meaning of the original words, indicating his own preference for action. In Williams's notes on Vegetius:

> No great dependence is to be placed on the eagerness of young soldiers for action. For fighting has something agreeable in the idea to those who are strangers to it.[796]

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[793] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius,* 125.

[794] Williams, "Notes from Vegetius," (p. 100).

[795] Ibid., (p. 111).

[796] Ibid., (p.127).

Immediately following this quote from Vegetius, Williams adds, in his own words, “The disposition of old soldiers ought to be considered and attended to.”[797] This differs from the actual maxim passed down from Vegetius:

> No great dependence is to be placed on the eagerness of young soldiers for action. For fighting has something agreeable in the idea to those who are strangers to it. **On the other hand, it would be wrong to hazard an engagement if the old, experienced soldiers testify a disinclination to fight** (emphasis mine).[798]

Williams’s observation on this quote, and Vegetius’s actual quote seem to be in alignment but there is a subtle difference. In Vegetius’s example, the old soldiers are more passive, and the commander should listen to them if they express an inclination to not fight. Williams leaves open the possibility of attack in his notation. “The disposition of old soldiers” could be to either fight or not. According to Williams’s interpretation, if the veterans wanted to fight, the commander should listen.

It was not enough in the American Revolution for the Continental Army to just make the right strategic decisions to assure its survival. For the Americans and their allies fighting the British, good morale was essential, and guiding virtue was necessary. Good generalship and willpower propped up Washington’s and Greene’s overall strategies of picking and choosing their battles, and knowing when to retreat, regroup, and reorganize for future campaigning. Williams’s consultation of Vegetius also contains several notes related to the importance of morale while on campaign, which was particularly important for a commander operating in this specific strategic mode. Once again, what Williams recorded and what Vegetius passed down in

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[797] Ibid.

[798] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius,* 127.

his writing were not the same thing, providing a few telling glances into the mind of a Revolutionary leader known to be aggressive and in the thick of the action on the battlefield. Regarding when to fight, Williams inaccurately transcribed this note from Vegetius: "Troops led to battle should be confident of success."[799] This short note displays that Williams showed interest in the idea that troops were expected to be confident if they were well-led into battle. Vegetius, however, did not see it that way. Here is the note upon which Williams's transcription was based: "Troops **are not** led to battle **unless** confident of success (emphasis mine)."[800] Vegetius's emphasized that confidence was a prerequisite of attempting battle. Here, again, Williams appeared less conservative than Vegetius concerning when to engage.

One of the most significant omissions by Williams was another line from Vegetius that ran counter to the Revolutionary spirit at its core. On page 89 of Clarke's translation, Vegetius ended Book Two with a critical paragraph of maxims. Williams recorded all of these maxims but one in his notes, making its absence particularly notable. Upon reading the missing maxim, certainly one could understand. The omitted text is bolded in the excerpt below:

> He, therefore who desires peace, should prepare for war: he who aspires to victory should spare no pains to form his soldiers: and he who hopes for success, should fight on principle, not chance. **No one dares to offend or insult a power of known superiority in action**.[801]

There are two observations to make regarding this particular paragraph as it was recorded by Williams. First, with regard to fighting on "principle," in original Latin, Vegetius uses the word "arte" instead of "principle," which is how Clarke interpreted the word. It should therefore be

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[799] Williams, "Notes from Vegetius," (p.161).

[800] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius,* 161.

[801] Vegetius, *Military Institutions of Vegetius,* 89.

understood that Vegetius meant military rules, or the "art" of war as opposed to moral principles. But one should also remember that Williams did not read Vegetius in Latin, but rather Clarke's translation of it, and to Williams, fighting "on principle" could mean fighting for moral reasons as easily as it could have meant fighting by military rules. Regardless, the idea that war should be fought on "principle," moral or military, aligned with the Military Enlightenment paradigm that rules of war existed and could be followed to achieve more favorable and decisive results from conflict. Second, despite the close proximity of the last maxim, in the same paragraph with other well-known principles of Vegetius, Williams did not record in his notes that "no one dares to offend or insult a power of known superiority in action." He certainly read the line, considering he took the time to record every word of the remainder of the paragraph. But here, even in his private notes on Vegetius, intended only for his personal reference, Williams could not bear to copy a maxim that ran counter to the cherished Revolutionary ideal that defined his character as a soldier and commander of a young country struggling to survive against a global military power.

Following his re-organization of the Maryland-Delaware regiment under Greene, Williams and his men went on to participate in the 1781 Battles of Kings Mountain, Cowpens, Guilford Courthouse, (Second) Camden, and Eutaw Springs. He developed a reputation for ferocity and personal bravery under fire and was eventually promoted to Adjutant General of the Army (following the Battle of Guilford Courthouse in March, 1781), and later, Brigadier General (1782). Following this final promotion, Williams did not fight again in the field during the war. After 1783, Williams returned to private life like many of his fellow officers and was not interested in a life of further military service. He turned down an offer from President George Washington to return to service as a brigadier general and second-in-command of the United

States Army in 1792, and died soon afterward at the age of 45 in 1794.[802] Williams's retreat from war and full commitment to a peaceful life afterward may seem out of place for someone seemingly so committed to a harsh military existence, but the choice to return to private life by Williams and many of his peers held deeper meaning also related to the ever-present influence of ancient Rome on the young American nation.

Cincinnatus

The legendary Roman hero Cincinnatus proved to be one of the defining models for the American citizen-soldier in the Revolution. The public was eager to project Cincinnatus's civic virtue onto its own leader, George Washington, and the American commander-in-chief did not discourage the association. In fact, it was important to Washington that he present himself as a leader who would return to private life after his military role was complete.[803] Cincinnatus was an attractive mythic hero for the American public to embrace, equal parts warrior and farmer, but excellent in both roles as protector of a Republic and a family. If virtue was critical to the success of American morale and identity, then there could be no figure from ancient Rome outside of Cato more important to Washington and the other Revolutionary leaders, who knew well that Cincinnatus personified the citizen-soldier that was so important to the viability of their military. They certainly made no attempt to discourage the public's enthusiastic association of themselves with the Roman legend who voluntarily removed himself from power once the threat to his homeland had ended. Many of the Revolution's military and civic leaders referred to

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[802] Tiffany, *A Sketch of the Life and Services of Gen. Otho Holland Williams*, 30.

[803] Richard, *Greeks and Romans Bearing* Gifts, 125.

Cincinnatus during and after the American Revolution, in a myriad of contexts and forms. It was as if the Roman hero enjoyed a rebirth in a young republic attempting to create epic heroes within itself, much as Livy did when he recorded Cincinnatus's legend during the first few decades of the Pax Romana.

Revolutionary leaders cast themselves in the role of Cincinnatus as soon as it was appropriate to do so. Washington set the terms of service for the American Revolutionary soldier immediately, in a June 1775 letter to the New York Provisional Congress, writing:

> When we assumed the soldier, we did not lay aside the citizen, and we shall most sincerely rejoice with you in that happy hour, when the establishment of American liberty on the most firm and solid Foundations, shall enable us to return to our private stations in the bosom of a free, peaceful, and happy country.[804]

The conflict was only a little more than two months old here, when Washington began to frame the conditions of retiring from the field victorious, and peacefully, in the style of Cincinnatus. In doing so, Washington framed his and his peers' military service against the King of Britain as a benevolent public action of ordinarily rational, peace-loving citizens. By terming the end of service as a "return" to their duties in a free, peaceful, and happy country, Washington implied that America's soldiers were free, peaceful, and happy before the war, and it was only the necessary conflict against a tyrant that interrupted that bucolic state. It was a wise turn of words, as Washington cleverly cast George III in the role of disruptor rather than the Revolutionaries, who would rather be on the farm. Though Washington did not mention Cincinnatus here by name, the allusion would not have been missed by his literate colonial correspondents, fully educated in classical literature, either formally or recreationally. Military and civilian leaders alike conjured the spirit of Cincinnatus to describe themselves and those they admired during the

[804] George Washington, "George Washington to the New York Provincial Congress, June 26, 1775."

war, as a signal to each other that their shared struggle would be temporary, honorable, and ultimately, successful.

Early in the war, in a 1776 sermon eulogizing Gen. Richard Montgomery and his fallen compatriots, William Smith compared the American general and his officers directly to Cincinnatus, chastising those who would suggest title and privilege created the worthiest leaders. Here, Smith directly compares the virtues of the American soldier with the best virtues of their Roman spiritual predecessors:

> There are also many whose minds are so little that they can conceive nothing great, which does not court the eye in all the trappings of dress, titles, and external splendor. An American-Patriot! A Blanket-Hero! A General from the plough! All these are terms of ridicule and reproach among many. Yet such was Cincinnatus, in the best days of Roman virtue.[805]

It should be noted that "the best days of Roman virtue," according to Smith, was the time of Cincinnatus – the early Roman Republic, mere decades after its founding (509 BCE) and the overthrow of its last king. Doubtless, Smith intended to link those events from classical antiquity to the contemporary struggle of the young American republic.

In their personal correspondence, Revolutionary figures invoked Cincinnatus to express the moral component of their struggle, and their declared eagerness to retire gracefully to a peaceful life outside of the fray. John Adams used this type of language to describe his fatigue with politics in a June 1776 letter to his law office partner (and future Continental Army Judge Advocate General), William Tudor:

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[805] William Smith, *An Oration in Memory of General Montgomery, and of the Officers and Soldiers, Who Fell with Him, December 31, 1775, before Quebec: Drawn Up (and Delivered February 19, 1776)* (Philadelphia, PA: John Dunlap, 1776), 14-15.

> When a few mighty matters are accomplished here, I retreat like Cincinnatus, to the plough and like Sir William Temple to his garden; and farewell politics.[806]

Tudor would not have missed the reference, even if he was not Harvard educated like his correspondent Adams. Cincinnatus, like Cato, was well-known to the Founders, regardless of occupation. Declaration of Independence signee and New York Provincial Congressman Lewis Morris, referred to Cincinnatus in a September 1776 letter to his father, reflecting his concern with the stature of the Revolutionaries after the war:

> Then those losses which every man has sustained will make his perseverance and patriotism shine forth with more conspicuous luster, and like a Cincinnatus or Camillus will be caressed by his country and called the father of his people.[807]

The ink of Morris's signature on the Declaration of Independence was barely dry before he expressed concern to his father about how his actions would be interpreted by posterity. Cincinnatus's virtuous example, then, provided comfort in a stressful time for men like Adams and Morris.

As the war continued, comparisons between Washington and Cincinnatus grew more explicit. William Smith took to the pulpit again in 1778, a critical turning-point year in the conflict, to cast Washington directly as Cincinnatus, and once again connect Roman Republican virtue to the American struggle for independence. From the text of his sermon:

> Such, to name no more, was the character of a Cincinnatus in ancient times; rising awful from the plough to save his country; and, his country saved, returning to the plough again, with increased dignity and luster. Such too, if we divine aright, will future ages pronounce to have been the character of a (Washington)… Honored with his presence as a brother, you will seek to derive virtue from his example; and never let it be said, that any principles you profess, can render you deaf to the

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[806] John Adams, "From John Adams to William Tudor, 24 June 1776," June 24, 1776, Founders Online, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-04-02-0136.

[807] Lewis Morris, "Lewis Morris, Jr. to Lewis Morris, New York, 14 September 1776," September 14, 1776, New York Historical Society.

> calls of your country; but on the contrary, have animated you with the intrepidity in the hour of danger, and humanity in moments of triumph.[808]

Another Episcopal clergyman, Charles Henry Wharton (1748-1833), penned a poetic tribute to Washington during the war that saw printings in 1779 and 1780, the latter printing in London. In his verse dedicated to Washington, Wharton repeated the foundation of the Cincinnatian ideal:

> Thus, when of old, from his paternal farm
> Rome bad her rigid Cincinnatus arm,
> Th'illustrious peasant rushes to the field
> Soon are the haughty Volsii taught to yield:
> His country sav'd, the solemn triumph o'er,
> He tills his natives acres as before.[809]

The faith shown by these writers in Washington's character is remarkable. They had no proof that Washington would follow through on the Roman ideal of surrendering power and returning to the countryside, but they spoke of Washington and his soldiers' return to the farm as though it had already happened, years before the war had concluded. Such was their trust in Washington and the guiding moral current of the war personified by Cincinnatus. This faith in Roman virtue by the public helped set the expected terms of service in the war for the Revolutionary leaders and their soldiers. Even in visual media, the public made their admiration for the citizen-soldier apparent. In 1777 the Delaware Assembly adopted a depiction of the Cincinnatian ideal on their state seal. Standing atop a banner reading "Liberty and Independence," two men, - perhaps two aspects of the same man – a farmer and a soldier, flank a shield depicting wheat, corn, and cattle.

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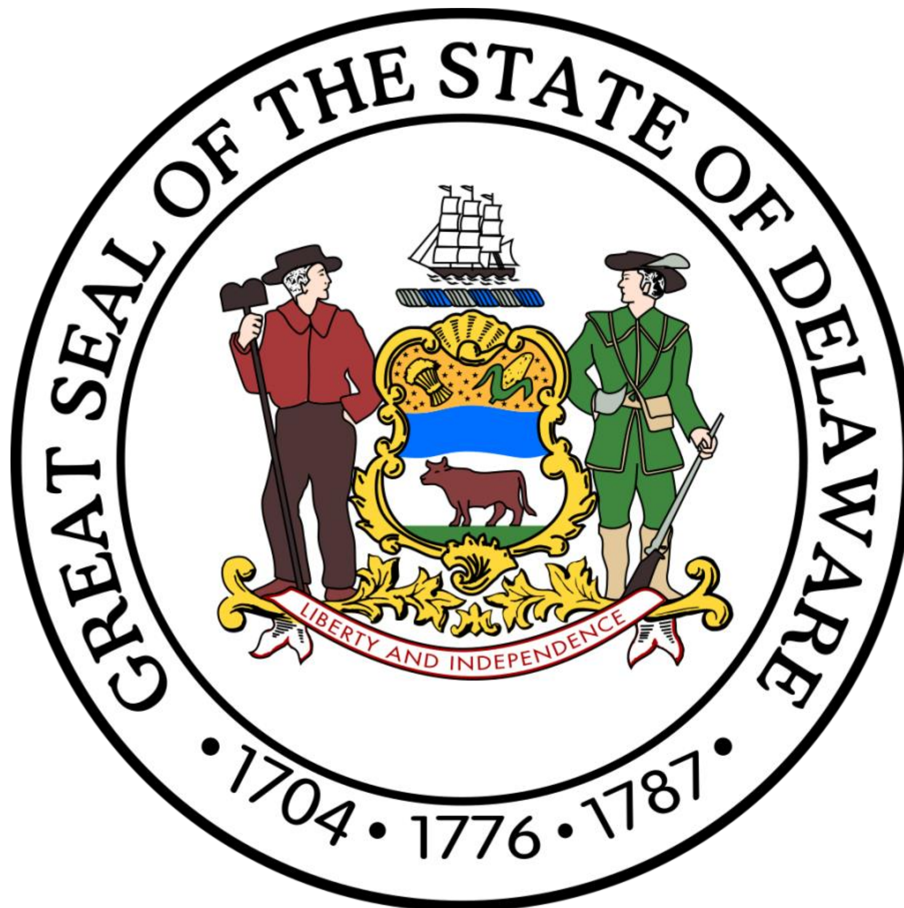
[808] William Smith, *A Sermon Preached in Christ-Church, Philadelphia, [for the Benefit of the Poor] by Appointment of and Before the General Communication of the Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Pennsylvania, on Monday, December 28, 1778* (Philadelphia, PA: John Dunlap, 1779), 22.

[809] Charles Henry Wharton, *A Poetical Epistle to His Excellency George Washington, Esq., Commander in Chief of the Armies of the United States of America, from an Inhabitant of the State of Maryland* (Annapolis, MD, 1779), 7.

Each man is positioned as equally critical to the maintenance of Delaware's freedom and independence (see Figure 7).[810]

Figure 7



Note the Cincinnatian ideal and agrarian virtue immortalized in the Great Seal of Delaware.

[810] M.N.S. Sellers, *American Republicanism: Roman Ideology in the United States Constitution* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

True to the philosophy and the expectations of the time, American soldiers and leaders happily returned to their homes in 1783, at or near the end of war in September of that year. Gen. William Moultrie (1730-1805) wrote to Gen. Nathanael Greene of his - and troops'- joy at leaving the war behind them:

> … I believe there is scarcely an American officer but most cheerfully lays by his sword and uniform. I most sincerely do, and with heartfelt joy return to the callings of a country life free from the tumultuous busy scenes of war. Cincinatus [sic] himself never returned to his plow better pleased, and what adds more to my happiness is to hear that the cloud which hung over our heads and threatened ruin to us all is now dispersed, and that all will be well again…[811]

Moultrie's association of his men with the great Roman Cincinnatus was only natural, as this was an obvious metaphor that only expressed a common thought in the shared consciousness of the literate American public. This easy association between American and Roman soldiery was most appropriate in literary tributes to the American commander-in-chief, George Washington, who lived up to his early war promise that he would not "lay aside the citizen" as a soldier. He returned to his home of Mount Vernon, and between the end of the war and the beginning of his presidency in 1789, the comparisons to Cincinnatus flowed in tribute. Englishman John Hunter, touring Canada and the United States in 1785, stopped off at Mount Vernon and made this observation of his host:

> I could not refuse the pressing and kind invitation of so great a General, though our greatest enemy, I admire him as superior even to the Roman heroes themselves… The soldiers, though starving at times, in their manner adored him… his greatest pride now is to be thought the first

[811] William Moultrie, "William Moultrie to Nathanael Greene, May 5, 1783," May 5, 1783, Moultrie Papers, Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

> farmer in America. He is quite a Cincinnatus, and often works with his men himself – strips off his coat and labors like a common man…[812]

Likewise, Continental Congressman William Pierce (Georgia) (1753-1789), himself a veteran of the Revolutionary War, described Washington in his notes from the Constitutional Convention in May, 1787:

> …like Peter the Great he appears as the politician and the statesman; and like Cincinnatus he returned to his farm perfectly contented with being only a plain citizen, after enjoying the highest honors of the confederacy…[813]

And as the Virginia legislature contemplated ratifying the newly-drafted United States Constitution in 1788, Patrick Henry offered this tribute to the leaders and soldiers of the Revolution, once again stressing the link between the young Republic and the Roman Republic:

> We have seen the sons of Cincinnatus, without splendid magnificence or parade, going, with the genius of their great progenitor Cincinnatus, to the plough. Men who served their country without ruining it – men who served it to the destruction of their private patrimonies – their country owing them amazing amounts, for the payment of which no provision was then made… The soldiers, who were able to command everything, instead of trampling on those laws, which they were instituted to defend, most strictly obeyed them.[814]

Henry's idea of Cincinnatus as an intellectual progenitor reflected the same spirit found in the establishment of a Revolutionary veterans' fraternity just five years before, which memorialized

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[812] John Hunter, "An Account of a Visit Made to Washington at Mount Vernon, by an English Gentleman, in 1785. From the Diary of John [Robert] Hunter," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 17 (1893): 78-79.

[813] Richard Leffler, John Kaminski, and Samuel Fore, *William Pierce: On the Constitutional Convention and the Constitution: Notes from the Convention, Sketches of Delegates, and Writings on the Constitution* (Dallas, TX: Harlan Crow Library, 2012), 48.

[814] Wirt, William Henry. *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence, and Speeches*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891, III: 487-88.

the contributions of Washington, Greene, Williams, and many others to the cause of American independence.

It might seem that the creation of the Society of the Cincinnati in 1783 was the culmination of the American Revolution veterans' association with Cincinnatus, but the truth was that it was only the beginning, as the Society actively promoted and sustained the spiritual link between these veterans and the Roman Republic for hundreds of years afterward. Henry Knox, the Continental Army chief of artillery in the American Revolution, drew up a founding document for the organization called the Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati. The Institution established a hereditary fraternity that commemorated the service of Revolutionary veterans, promoted the "rights and liberties of human nature" they fought for, provided financial assistance to veterans' families in need, and celebrated their role as citizen-soldiers.[815] Knox recorded the admiration these veterans had for Cincinnatus in the first few paragraphs of that document:

> The officers of the American Army, having generally been taken from the Citizens of America, possess high veneration for the character of that illustrious Roman, Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, and being resolved to follow his example, by returning to their citizenship, they think they may, with propriety, denominate themselves the Society of the Cincinnati.[816]

Washington (the Society's first president general), Knox, Greene, and Steuben were among the 18 Revolutionary war generals and 18 other officers who signed this founding document (See Figure 8). In addition, the Institution established state level Societies of the Cincinnati in all

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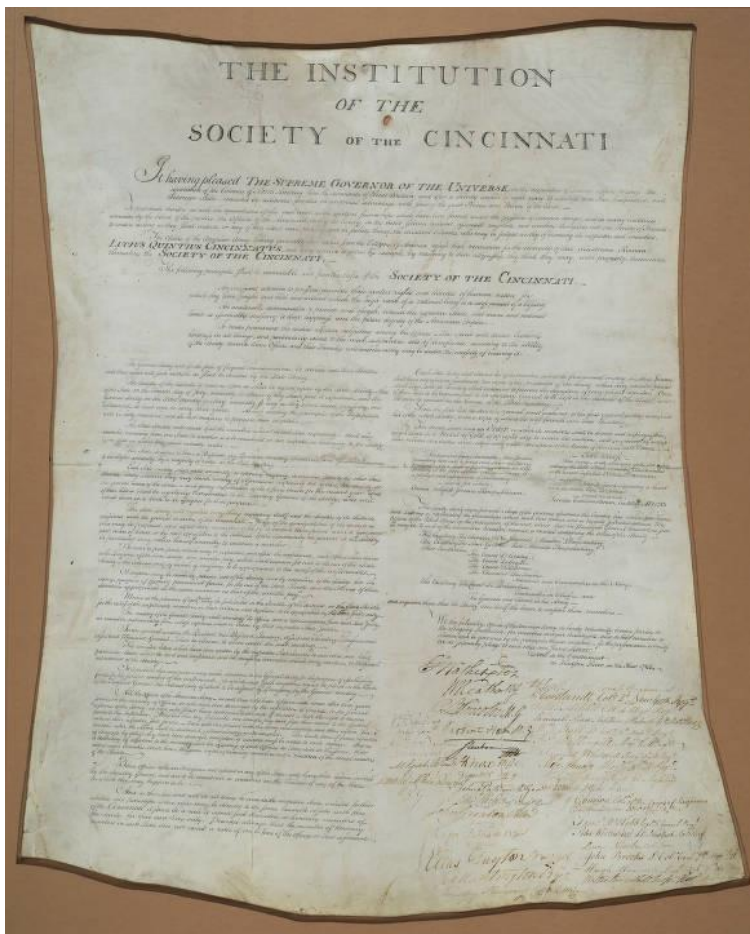
[815] Henry Knox, "The Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati" (May 13, 1783), Society of the Cincinnati Library, https://www.societyofthecincinnati.org/institution-the-society-of-the-cincinnati/.

[816] Ibid.

thirteen original United States, and an affiliate Society was later founded in France for veterans of the American Revolution there. This is significant to the legacy of classical antiquity because these were all officers who voluntarily identified themselves with Cincinnatus and formally declared their affiliation with the idea of the citizen soldier in a public manner.

Figure 8



THE INSTITUTION
OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

It having pleased THE SUPREME GOVERNOR OF THE UNIVERSE

The Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati contains the signatures of prominent Revolutionary leaders like Washington, Knox, Greene, and Steuben, a Prussian.[817]

[817] Ibid.

Visually, each member of the Society of the Cincinnati could be identified by the gold medals circulated among them, designed by Pierre-Charles L'Enfant (1754-1825), a French-born engineer in the Continental Army, and first manufactured in Paris in 1784 (see Figure 9). The eagle-shaped medal featured a central design of intricate artwork depicting the legend of Cincinnatus, as specified in the Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati:

> The principal figure Cincinnatus – three senators presenting him with a sword and other military ensigns. On a field in the background, his wife standing at the door of their cottage – near it a plough and instruments of husbandry – round the whole *Omnia reliquit servare Rempublicam*.
>
> On the reverse – Sun rising – a city with open gates, and vessels entering the Port. Fame crowning Cincinnatus with wreath inscribed *Virtutis Praemium* – below, Hands joined, supporting a heart, with the motto *Esto Perpetua* – round the whole, *Societas Cincinnatorum, instituta* AD. 1783.[818]

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[818] Ibid. *Omnia reliquit servare Rempublicam* – "He left all (everything) to save the Republic," *Virtutis Praemium Esto Perpetua* – "May the reward of virtue be perpetual."

Figure 9

Lt. Col. Tench Tilghman's "Eagle," signifying his membership in the Society of the Cincinnati.[819]

The ancient spirit of the citizen-soldier and Cincinnatus, so critical to the success of the American Revolution, sat dormant prior to the eighteenth century. The specific nature and conditions of the American War for Independence resurrected the idea within a population primed to appreciate and recognize the relevance of ancient virtue to modern life. In a genuine

[819] Nicholas Jean Francastel and Claude Jean Autran Duval Duval, *Society of the Cincinnati Eagle Insignia Owned by Tench Tilghman*, 1784, Society of the Cincinnati Library.

way, Cincinnatus stood intellectually present alongside the American Revolutionaries, for whom the virtues of classical antiquity were a necessary component for victory. As long as the Revolutionary cause was morally sound, as long as the overall strategy was rational and grounded in prior example, the long odds of winning remained alive, even in the face of defeat, sacrifice, and adversity. In the American Revolution, people who were not subjects of a crown or vassals or mercenaries to a local or regional lord set the terms of their service by securing a citizenship based on the idea of self-governance. They ultimately served themselves, collectively represented as a republic, defended by a military that was, by its nature, temporary in its power.

It was only natural that their political leaders would be temporary in their service as well. Cincinnatus taking up and putting down the sword, then, was a guiding principle not only in the military world, but also the civilian world. This idea, which underpinned and secured modern democracy around the world for centuries after the American Revolution, was once the foundation of a culture that existed and thrived centuries before, the Roman Republic. The Founders of the American Republic understood this, demonstrated faith in historical example, and collectively believed that "things possible may be repeated." The military organization and strategy of the American Revolution stood as undeniable evidence of this idea, and the ultimate political product of the conflict, the republic of the United States of America, reflected that notion.

Whether Cato, Fabius, Vegetius, or Cincinnatus, American leadership used classical models and imagery to define their actions in the Revolution. Excepting Vegetius, it is notable that three of these Romans were heroes and defenders of the Roman Republic, not the Empire,

and that distinction would not have been lost on the Founders or their constituency.[820] Just as the Romans turned to each of these figures in times of extreme emergency – civil war and invasion-- so too, did the Americans, who projected these personas onto Washington and themselves to ensure the moral integrity of their cause and the preservation of morale in a war that was very much about willpower. This was emblematic of a new role of classical antiquity for eighteenth century militaries, as a source of inspiration as much as it was a source of knowledge.

While it would seem easy to view the American Revolution independent of the historical influences on its military practices, it is important to remember that the American public of the time did not ignore it themselves. They embraced classical examples and sources, openly referencing the ancient world as a way of assuring themselves that they acted on credible precedent. What's more, American leaders and soldiers also continued a tradition of respect for ancient Greece and Rome displayed by their once-fellow countrymen in Britain, who recognized the value of classically inspired theory from continental Europe. Lloyd, Donkin, and Clarke all demonstrate a thorough knowledge of ancient Roman and Greek military methods, that reflected and contributed to an overall British culture just as steeped in classical affinity as any other European country. Just as it should be remembered that *Cato* was a British play long before it was an American one, it should be likewise recognized that the very concepts of representative government, free expression, and civilian military service, among many other virtues, have their origin in the ancient world. Evaluating the cultural and military sphere of the American Revolution, then, would be an incomplete effort without understanding the classical sources that influenced it. If the participants in the Revolution recognized them, studied them, understood

[820] It should be noted however, that Vegetius admired the Republic and wrote to preserve its military virtue.

them, and explicitly commented on them, then our various analyses of the time should do so as well.

Epilogue. The French and the Future

The French veterans of the American Revolution returned home to a military environment on the brink of significant change in the late eighteenth century. Citizen-soldiers rose to new levels of prominence in France in the 1780's and contributed strongly to the character of the French Revolution in the decade ahead. It is important to note that though the American Revolution inspired and reinforced the idea of the French citizen-soldier, the concept developed in France before and during the service of the French army in America. The decades of the late eighteenth century saw several elements of French military culture pushing a revival of this classical concept, which was a contributing factor to the French Revolution itself.[821] The soldiers, citizenry, and military theorists of France all produced works in the late eighteenth century that furthered the blending of the social and military spheres, expanding the development of modern military service in Western Civilization. Classical antiquity's central position in these works was assured, as the figures and methods of the ancient world continued to serve as a source of relevant wisdom for those who embraced the spirit of citizen responsibility in the military.

The foremost of all these promoters of the citizen soldier was the highly-influential general Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, Comte de Guibert (1743-1790), whose military theories directly inspired Napoleon and the Revolutionary leaders of the 1790's. Guibert represented himself not only as a military man, but also as a social and literary figure, uniquely positioning

[821] Julia Osman, *Citizen Soldiers and the Key to the Bastille* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 3.

him among leaders and philosophes alike.[822] It was Guibert who clarified and focused the French military debates of the eighteenth-century, presenting a military theory that incorporated elements of the *ordre mince* and the *ordre profond* for a new century.[823] But in doing so, Guibert also further reinforced ideas from classical antiquity that would be necessary for the future of the French military. One of those ideas was the essential nature of the citizen-soldier for the future of French warfare.

Guibert's background as a military administrator qualified him to comment with authority on the compositional elements of the French military, and his 1770 *Essai general de tactique* drew admirers in the military and civilian spheres.[824] One of his assertions in the Preliminary Discourse of that work was that a citizen army could solidify the security and integrity of a powerful state, and that the Roman Republic offered a model of virtue upon which that state could base its government and military. His reasoning was that ancient Rome, despite its troubles, "germinated more citizens and heroes" in 500 years than "the rest of the earth has borne since," and that it was the "powerful and constant" plan of "patriotism and virtue" that formed the base of their success. He elaborated on this idea:

> I admire Rome when I examine its military constitution, bound to its political constitution; the laws of its military; the education of its youth; its great men, passing indifferently through all of the offices of state, because they were proper to fill them all; [and] its citizens, proud of the name of their *patrie* and believing themselves superior to the kings that they were accustomed to conquering. I say that there was perhaps, in some comer of the universe, an obscure and peaceful nation whose members were happier, but there was certainly never a people who

[822] Jonathan Abel, *Guibert: Father of Napoleon's Grande Armée*, Campaigns and Commanders (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 12, 198-99.

[823] Ibid.

[824] Osman, *Citizen Soldiers*, 64.

> had as much grandeur, as much glory, and as much merit by their courage and by their virtues.[825]

Guibert then posited the question "what if" a "vigorous people" with good government could arise with "austere virtues" and a "national military" to a plan of aggrandizement that stayed true to its founding principles? "This people would subjugate its neighbors and reverse our feeble constitutions like the north wind bending the reeds," he mused.[826] Guibert refused to specifically state what that "good government" would look like, but Guibert historian Jonathan Abel assures that the French general meant a constitutional monarchy of the kind promoted by Voltaire and Montesquieu, the latter of which was a direct inspiration for Guibert's political ideas.[827] To Guibert, a "permanent corps" of enlightened advisors should guide the state's king, ministers, and generals in the manner of ancient Rome and France's rival, Britain. "Thus is England in some ways constituted by its Parliament a quite-imperfect image of the majesty and virtues of the Roman Senate," Guibert wrote.[828]

With the lineage of Guibert's national military system linked to the credible moral and intellectual pedigree of ancient Rome, he then described how a citizen army could benefit a "well-constituted" and "powerful" state. According to Guibert, such a system would insulate the state by focusing on permanent structures rather than relying on the mercurial talents of an extraordinary commander in war.[829] Such a state would have a "redoubtable citizen militia"

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[825] Guibert, Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, and Jonathan Abel. *Guibert's General Essay on Tactics*. History of Warfare, volume 137. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2022, 5.

[826] Ibid., 7.

[827] Ibid., 16fn.

[828] Ibid., 12.

[829] Ibid., 15.

watching over its frontiers and would "never fear the enmity of its neighbors" due to the union of its possessions and resources.[830] Should that state find itself under invasion, Guibert wrote the invading army would encounter "all the effort" of the state's power, with the "firm resolution" to lay down its arms without proper reparations. When a "happy and pacific people" is insulted, "they raise themselves up; they quit their home. They will perish to the last man if they must, but if they obtain satisfaction, they will be avenged, they will be assured by the éclat of their vengeance, of their future repose," he wrote.[831] France, Guibert asserted, "can become this state."[832]

Another French military officer, the future general and Revolutionary-era Minister of War Joseph Marie Servan de Gerbey (1741-1808), reinforced Guibert's call for a citizen army with a more explicitly titled work, *Le Soldat Citoyen* [The Citizen Soldier], written between 1760 and 1771, published in 1780. Servan's treatise, like De Saxe's, focused more on the needs of individual soldiers for the benefit of the larger group, and was well-received in both military and court circles by the 1780's. Servan won the Cross of Saint Louis as a result of this work in 1783.[833] Servan advocated in *Le Soldat Citoyen* that France fully embrace the cultivation of citizen soldiers with an emphasis on developing their national character, education, and relationship with government.[834] To Servan, the state had an obligation to inspire the individual

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[830] Ibid., 16.

[831] Ibid., 16.

[832] Ibid.

[833] Osman, *Citizen Soldiers*, 65.

[834] Joseph Servan de Gerbey, *Le soldat citoyen, ou, vues patriotiques sur la manière la plus avantageuse de pourvoir a la défense du royaume* (Dans le pays de la liberté, 1780), 8.

citizen to take up arms when called, a far cry from Folard's assumption in the 1720's that soldiers would always act when ordered, without question.

As Servan wrote, it was the responsibility of the government to establish a national character that would inspire the service of its citizens. He chose the ancient world, like so many other eighteenth-century theorists, as his model. He cited the Greek "republican spirit," education, and love of liberty and glory as the source of their heroism, as though its citizens "were born to defend their homeland."[835] He praised Sparta for setting conditions for the individual development and education of their soldiers. "They are trained to fatigue, pain, and obedience," Servan wrote. But he also noted, "those who distinguished themselves more, commanded others, but under the eyes of the elders…" indicating a Spartan lean toward meritocracy in the ranks.[836] In the case of these Greek city-states, Servan wrote, their military virtues were "part of the government." He hoped France could similarly develop a culture that reconciled military service with the needs of both individuals and the state.[837]

To accomplish this goal, France would need more soldiers that were well-trained and willing to serve. Servan suggested reforms that could address those needs and provide citizen-soldiers with a military environment that treated them fairly while encouraging patriotism. One of Servan's classically-inspired solutions was to expose young children to the military lifestyle and emphasize the ways in which military service could elevate their quality of life.[838] Another

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[835] Ibid., 10-11.

[836] Ibid., 11.

[837] Osman, *Citizen Soldiers*, 66.

[838] Ibid., 67.

proposed reform from classical antiquity was to normalize military service for all citizens, as was seen in ancient Greece and Rome. As Servan asserted, France had to embrace a more egalitarian military structure in the future to cultivate patriotism and enthusiasm in the lower classes. Servan described the traditional military service of these non-professional soldiers in the French army as poorly-organized and horrific.[839] Commanders often consigned many of these conscripted and volunteer militia to the bloodiest parts of the battlefield, where they suffered unusually high casualty rates.[840] Servan looked at these soldiers in a way few had before, describing them as "precious" to the military.[841] To promote their survivability and ensure fair treatment on the battlefield, Servan proposed a citizen-based military in which all classes participated, with fewer exemptions for family connections and social rank. From Servan's viewpoint, one's level of patriotism should elevate his social standing in the military, and the state had an obligation to cultivate and celebrate that trait among its citizens.[842]

The latter half of the eighteenth century also presented new opportunities for soldiers and civilians to learn more about each other's respective spheres. Two publications in particular stand out for the way in which they encouraged learning about military topics across a wider spectrum of citizenry in France. Both Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* and an unrelated military publication, the *Encyclopedie Militaire* encouraged the growth of military knowledge by fully embracing the Enlightenment notion of self-education through reading. Denis Diderot (1713-1784) and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert's (1717-83) published the *Encyclopédie* in France

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[839] Servan de Gerbey, *Le soldat citoyen*, 70-71.

[840] Osman, *Citizen Soldiers*, 67.

[841] Servan de Gerbey, *Le soldat citoyen*, 71.

[842] Osman, *Citizen Soldiers*, 67-68.

between 1751 and 1765. This encyclopedia of 74,044 entries contains 1,250 military subject headings, from Roman military organization to the concept of victory on the battlefield.[843] Of these military entries, 161 centered on military history, describing the weapons, tactics, and units of earlier times, with a "strong classical emphasis."[844] The entries of the *Encyclopédie* sometimes featured the direct words of the ancients themselves. The eccentric nobleman Chevalier Louis de Jaucourt (1704-1779) wrote thirty-six *Encyclopédie* entries dedicated to Roman military topics, and often "borrowed" information from Folard and Polybius in his articles.[845] "The encyclopédists display the reverence for ancient Greece and Rome that typified eighteenth-century military literature," writes John Lynn, adding that the contributors of the *Encyclopédie* favored long-winded discussions of Greek and Roman military precedent. Among their favorite references was Alexander the Great, who appears in the *Encyclopédie* "hundreds" of times in its many volumes.[846]

From 1770 to 1772, the military world had an encyclopedia of its own. The *Encyclopédie Militaire*, published in Paris, was the world's first military journal. This monthly review pulled together reviews and commentary on military works from all periods of history, and was spearheaded by a former cavalry captain, Adrien-Marie-François de Verdy du Vernois (1738-1814), who served as the journal's primary scribe.[847] Classical military works mentioned

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[843] John A. Lynn, "The Treatment of Military Subjects in Diderot's *Encyclopedie*," *The Journal of Military History* 65, no. 1 (2001): 133.

[844] Ibid., 140.

[845] Ibid., 141.

[846] Briant, *The First European*, 179.

[847] Pichichero, *The Military Enlightenment*, 59.

in the *Encyclopédie Militaire* included those written by Caesar, Polybius, Vegetius, and Xenophon.[848] Topics in the *Encyclopédie Militaire* ranged from tactical considerations to criticisms of ancient and modern works. The April 1771 edition of the *Encyclopédie*, for instance, featured back-to-back articles, first on the arms and armament of the ancient Gauls, then, a dissertation on the sorry state of military discipline in the modern age. In the latter article, an artillery officer named Dulacq lamented the "different education we receive today," and praised ancient Roman soldiers for their unwillingness to surrender. He asked, "Is it the same today?"[849]

Though short-lived, the *Encyclopedie Militaire* was groundbreaking for encouraging literary activity among military officers and soldiers, and remains an important piece of evidence for demonstrating how military men directly contributed to the Enlightenment spirit of spreading knowledge and encouraging self-study. In this publication, military officers traded articles and commentary in much the same manner as the philosophes of the salons and the great literary figures of the Republic of Letters. It was a publication more portable than Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopedie*, and far more targeted for the interests of the military mind. Nearly half of all French army regiments subscribed to the publication, including five out of eight artillery regiments, and 16 of 40 cavalry and hussar units.[850]

All of these significant literary activities concerning either the role of the citizen soldier or encouraging the influence of the civilian and military spheres on each other in France took

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[848] Powers, "Studying the Art of War," 783.

[849] M. Dulacq, "Dissertation sur les changemens que la poudre à canon et la corruption de la discipline militaire ont apporté dans la guerre," *Encyclopédie Militaire, par une société d'anciens officiers, et de gens de lettres* (Paris: Chez Lacombe, April 1771), 49.

[850] Pichichero, *The Military Enlightenment*, 59.

place either before or concurrent with the American Revolution, which demonstrates that the French did indeed have their own parallel track of citizen-soldier development to the American version, which fully erupted in 1775, or the British version, which also deserves mention. It might seem like splitting hairs to illuminate this distinction, but this notion is important to understanding that the re-emergence of this ancient practice was an international event, much like the greater trend of consulting classical military methods during the eighteenth century itself.

As the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars readily demonstrated, the citizen-soldier was the way of the future… but it is interesting that here, on the verge of 1789, our study has come full circle. The first modern Western work of military theory came to us in the 1520's in the form of Machiavelli's *Art of War*, in which the armed citizen and state militia is a central pillar. At the dawn of the French Revolution, we discuss the cutting edge of military thought, the – the citizen soldier, the future. And… the past.

Conclusion

All levels of eighteenth-century society experienced the effects of classical influence whether they were soldiers or not. It also did not matter whether they consciously sought out ancient Roman and Greek sources, or even if they were literate. The morals, imagery and methods of the rulers, architects, artists, philosophers, scientists, and families of the time all possessed elements of classical influence, and military life simply contributed to a dominant cultural trend of the period. Their rulers, officers, and theorists turned to the classics for advice because the cultural and political leaders of the eighteenth century did as well, lending credibility and a record of success to the notion of reviving ideas from ancient Rome and Greece.

The fair question to ask after considering this history, as well as all the evidence presented above, is: why does it matter? A historian of military theory would say that it matters because the consultation of ancient works and application of ancient ideas represented an effort by the theorists of the time to discover universal truths about war that could be revived to make sense of a new type of warfare for which there were very few authoritative guides. A cultural historian would say it matters because referencing classical antiquity turned out to be an Enlightenment technique for problem solving, demonstrating the clear association of eighteenth-century military thinking with the intellectual techniques of an identifiable and distinct international philosophical movement. But the reason why the military use of ancient models matters is far simpler and more memorable: the application of these ideas was a matter of life and death.

When Folard wrote about implementing classically inspired column formations into the French army, his motive was to prevent the indecisive butchery on the battlefield that he

experienced himself as a soldier. His columns were intended to decisively defeat the enemy, end battles quickly, and save French lives. Of course, this would come at the expense of enemy lives if he was successful. Maurice de Saxe wrote *Mes Réveries* to implement a legion-style organization of the French army and increase the survivability of troops on and off the battlefield. Frederick disciplined the Prussian army on the model of Vegetius so that he could kill more enemy troops using techniques passed down by Epaminondas. Washington adopted elements of the Fabian strategy so that his troops would survive and his Revolutionary cause endure. All too often, historians write about military theory independent of the notion that the ideas under examination ultimately translated into people dying or being saved as a result of their military service. When we ask the question, what is the legacy of a particular military theory, this is the first thing we should think about. It may be impossible to determine exactly how many lives the ideas of Vegetius, Epaminondas, or Fabius cost or saved in the eighteenth century, but it is not difficult to imagine that they did have an effect – especially considering the depth of intellectual saturation their ideas achieved among the military elite of the period. The evidence presented in this study is intended to demonstrate that notion.

The rulers and generals of the eighteenth century certainly had plenty of opportunity to demonstrate their admiration for antiquity through violence. They went to war frequently, and why would they not? Their classical idols like Alexander and Caesar went to war almost annually to expand their empires and increase their personal fame, glory, and wealth. Why should the aristocrats and rulers in this later age have behaved differently when examples of their classical heroes' legacies surrounded them daily? Affinity for ancient Rome and Greece went beyond theoretical boundaries in the eighteenth century and affected not only tactics and operations but national strategy as well. Supporting wars to achieve the equivalent glory and

power of the ancients bankrupted a global empire in France and strained Britain's hold on the North American continent. Ironically, both empires suffered revolutions as a result, both of which were inspired by the ancient Roman Republican ideals of a sovereign citizenry, demonstrating that classical affinity transcended social strata and inspired violence on all levels of society. As much of the writing of the ancients directly concerned war, there were models from antiquity to be found for every class of violent person in the eighteenth century.

Beyond the impact of lives saved and lost, the writings of classically inspired theorists confirmed a place for military figures among the enlightened minds of the period advocating for humane morals and the spread of education and literacy. In this regard, Maurice de Saxe in particular steps forward as a pivot figure in the 1740's, angling military theory away from the geometric patterns of regimental formation and maneuver, and toward a system of thought more focused on the needs of the soldier and the morale of the unit. This is perhaps the most important theoretical legacy of all eighteenth-century military writers, as de Saxe's emphasis on the heart of the soldier seems to have far more relevance to present-day military method than any other idea from the time. Of course, the idea did not originate in his time at all, as Vegetius was the clear inspiration for that line of thought. A closer look at the influence of classical antiquity in this period also allows the now-forgotten French theorist Jacques-François de Chastenet de Puységur to step forward in prominence. His insistence on a formal approach to military self-study is far more important to the long-term development of military education and theory than any tactical maxims developed and published in his *Art de la Guerre*. Puységur attributed the idea for his educational system to the ancient Greeks, and his content supporting that idea consistently referred to classical examples and anecdotes. Clearly, Puységur felt ancient Greece and Rome had quite a lot to offer when it came to educating officers.

Puységur and de Saxe's turn toward ideal, rather than practical matters of military theory reflected a growing spirit of Enlightenment thought centered on the value of human rights and responsibilities when it comes to society and government. Puységur and de Saxe hinted at the rewards of investing in the individual soldier. Robert Donkin openly advocated for more equitable means of recognizing and promoting individuals who displayed talent for command in his writings. Otho Holland Williams embodied the spirit of an individual officer taking the initiative to reverse the fortunes of his unit. The various founders of the American Republic displayed in their admiration for Cincinnatus what they believed the responsibilities of a free citizen-soldier should be. The establishment of the Society of the Cincinnati signaled how important these men believed the concept was to the future of their young nation. The citizen-soldier was a remnant of classical antiquity, revived for a new period of political turmoil, and relied upon for future stability.

Another legacy of the study of classical works by military figures in the eighteenth century was that it prepared military audiences for the arrival of more modern and abstract forms of military thinking, like that presented by Antoine-Henri Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz in the nineteenth century. Writers like Folard, Puységur, Maurice de Saxe, and Frederick set an example for what was expected from an educated general, and there are hints of Clausewitzian theory buried in Puységur's work, from the connection of politics and war to the idea that self-study and historical reflection should be a central activity of military education. Works by officers with experience in the rank and file also proliferated under the trend of classical affinity. Henry Lloyd, Donkin, and the writers of the *Encyclopedie Militaire* all participated in the spread of classical ideas to their fellow officers. For example, 447 subscribers to Donkin's *Military Collections and Remarks* were of the rank of Major or below. That number represented 75% of

Donkin's presales for his work.[851] There was a clear trend of military self-education on display in the eighteenth century that had spread to the lower ranks by the time of the American Revolution. This growth of interest in military learning surely had long-lasting ramifications for the future technical and theoretical development of military leaders in the next century. As this study has shown, much of the scholarship and writing fueling this educational trend was inspired by the ideas of ancient Greece and Rome.

Now that we have arrived at the end of our journey, we might with confidence suggest that classical antiquity should no longer be pushed to the periphery or consigned to anecdotal footnotes in studies related to eighteenth-century military theory, its writers, or the international Military Enlightenment. Ancient Greece and Rome had so great an influence on 'the moderns' that the effects of its study were felt right alongside that of cannons and muskets on the battlefield, and in the very shaping of the identity of the modern soldier. This study concludes with a modest but firm suggestion for future studies in this area: the keys to understanding the military theory of the eighteenth century in a more complete manner are the same keys to understanding the ancient world: *ad fontes*. Go backward. To the source. Do not be afraid to follow the footsteps.

[851] Mark H. Danley, "Military Writings and the Theory of Practice of Strategy in the Eighteenth-Century British Army" (Dissertation, Manhattan, KS, Kansas State University, 2001), Society of the Cincinnati Library,, 174.

APPENDIX A. Eighteenth Century Translations of Ancient Military Sources[852]

Aelian

Varia Historia

Leiden	(du Vivie) 1701, 1702 Latin; 1703 Latin; (Luchtmans & Langerak) 1731 Latin
Strasbourg	(Dulssecker) 1713 Latin
London	(Knapton et al.) 1726 Latin;
Amsterdam	(Luchtmans & Langerak) 1731 Latin
Dresden	(Hekel) 1746 Latin
Leipzig	1754 Latin; 1780 Latin; (Schwickert) 1784 Latin; (Breitkopf) 1794 Latin
Saumur	(Lenerium) 1768 Latin
Halae	(Typis Orphanotrophei) 1772, 1777, 1793 Latin; 1800 Latin
Paris	(Moustard) 1772
Basel	1774 Latin
Quedlinburg	(Neusner) 1775; (Ernst) 1787
Eton	(Pote) 1785 Latin

Arrian

Anabasis of Alexander

Leiden	(Van de Aa) 1704 Latin; 1714 Latin
London	(Worrall et al.) 1729
Verona	(Ramanzini) 1730
Frankfurt	(Hermann) 1790
Rome	(Desideri) 1793
Leipzig	(Schwickert) 1798 Latin

Indica

Hamburg	(Liebezeit) 1710
Amsterdam	(Wetstenium) 1757
Braunschweig	(Meiszner) 1764

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852 Compiled from WorldCat; Sandra L. Powers, "Studying the Art of War: Military Books Known to American Officers and Their French Counterparts during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Military History* 70, no. 3 (July 2006): 781–814; and Ira D. Gruber, *Books and the British Army in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press; Co-published with the Society of the Cincinnati, 2010), 267-307. Languages assumed same as country of printing unless otherwise specified.

London	(Cadell & Davies) 1797
Magdeburg	(Gebauer) 1798 Latin
Paris	(Imprimerie de la Republique) 1799

Ars Tactica

Amsterdam	(de Coux) 1750 Latin

Works Collections

London	(Richardson) 1758
Leipzig	(Gsellius) 1765

Caesar, Gaius Julius[853]

Commentaries

London	(Smith) 1705; (Tonson) 1753
Leiden	(Boutesteyb et al.) 1713 Latin; 1737 Latin
Glasgow	(Clarke) 1750
Paris	(le Petit) 1752

Cassius Dio

Roman History

London	(Churchill) 1704
Rome	(Chracas) 1724 Latin; (Desideri) 1790
Naples	(De Bonis) 1747 Latin
Hamburg	(Herold) 1750 Latin
Frankfurt	(Hermann) 1783, 1784, 1786, 1787, 1796

[853] A WorldCat database search for publications between 1700 and 1800 authored by Gaius Julius Caesar revealed more than 990 individual results, with filtering for duplicates. This historian begs the reader for understanding that listing them all in this appendix would be excessive. The five English and Latin publications of *Commentaries* listed here represent the eighteenth-century titles present in 28 of 42 British officers' libraries surveyed in Gruber, *Books and the British Army*, 280. Powers notes d'Ablancourt's French translation also listed here as a popular choice for officers. See Powers, "Studying the Art of War," 802.

Curtius Rufus, Quintus

Historiae Alexandre Magni

Antwerp	(Societatis) 1700 Latin; (Verdussen) 1723 Latin
Venice	(Prodocimo) 1700; (Remondini) 1723, 1736 Italian; (Remondini) 1738, 1787 Latin; (Perlini) 1756 Latin; (Brigonci) 1776
Florence	(Brigonci) 1700 Latin
The Hague	(van Thol) 1708 Latin; (van der Kloot) 1727 Latin
Lucia	(Marescandoli) 1712 Latin
Patavia	(Manfrè) 1714 Latin; 1755 Latin
London	(Tonson & Watts) 1716 Latin; (Lintot) 1725, 1726; (Millar) 1747
Madrid	(Mojados) 1723; (de Urrutia) 1791 Latin; (Ruiz) 1794
Ulm	1731 German
Paris	1731 Latin; (Barbou) 1772; (Monsieur) 1781
Edinburgh	(Freeburn) 1732 Latin
Hofstadt	(Gasti) 1738, 1754, Latin
Berlin	(Haude) 1746 French
Augsburg	1750 Latin; (Rieger) 1786, 1794 Latin
Halle	1763 French
Piedmont	(Munchen) 1764 Latin; (Gasti) 1768 Latin
Leipzig	(Hartung & Zeisius) 1765 Latin
Naples	(Migliaci) 1766 Latin
Zweibrücken	(Societatis) 1782 Latin; 1798 Latin
Vienna	(Haas) 1799 German
St. Petersburg	1800 French

Diodorus Siculus

Universal History

London	(Awnsham & Churchill) 1700, 1718; (Taylor) 1721
Luxembourg	(Chevalier) 1705 French
Leiden	1725 Latin
Paris	(De Bure) 1737, 1744, 1758, 1777
Amsterdam	(Wetstein & Smith) 1738 French, 1745, 1746 Latin; 1743 French; (Changuion) 1769, 1770, 1780 French
St. Petersburg	(Imperial Academy) 1774
Frankfurt	(Hermann) 1780, 1782, 1783, 1785, 1786, 1787
Gotha	(Ettinger) 1784
Leipzig	1788 Latin
Zweibrücken	(Typographia Societatis) 1793, 1799 Latin
Rome	(Desideri) 1793
Lemgo	(Meyer) 1798, 1799 Latin

Strasbourg	(Typographia Societatis) 1798, 1799, 1800 Latin
Halle	(Hemmerd) 1800 Latin

Florus

Epitome of Roman History

Copenhagen	(Spiringi) 1700 Latin
Amsterdam	(Gallet) 1702 Latin; (Waesberge et al.) 1736 Latin
Zweibrücken	(Gleditsch) 1704 Latin; (Societatis) 1783 Latin
Berlin	(Liebpert) 1704 Latin; 1750 Latin
Venice	(Bonarrigum) 1715 Latin; (Remondini) 1787 Latin
Leipzig	(Weidmann) 1718, 1734 Latin; 1760 Latin
Leiden	1722 Latin; (Luchtmans) 1744 Latin
Florence	(Tartinium) 1723 Latin
London	(Midwinter) 1725 English, 1727 Latin; (Astley) 1738; (Bettesworth and Hitch) 1739; (Innys et al.) 1744 Latin (Ward) 1752
Geissen	1769 Latin
Birmingham	1773 Latin
Mannheim	(Societatis Litteratae) 1779 Latin
Utrecht	(Ribbius) 1780 Latin
Nuremberg	(Riegel) 1787 Latin
Frankfurt	(Hermann) 1789
Basel	(Schweighauser) 1795

Frontinus, Sextus Julius

Strategemata

Leiden	(Luchtmans) 1731, 1779 Latin
Paris	(Ganeau) 1743; (Debure) 1763 Latin
Leipzig	(Suikert) 1772 Latin
Zweibrücken	(Societatis) 1788 Latin
Gottingen	(Ruprecht) 1798 Latin

Herodotus

Histories

London	(Castle & Buckley) 1709; (Bell) 1720; (Midwinter et al.) 1737, 1787; (Leigh & Southeby) 1791
Leiden	(Luchtman) 1715 Latin;
Verona	(Ramanzini) 1733, 1734
Berlin	(Voss) 1753
Lemgo	(Meyer) 1756, 1781

Glasgow (Foulis) 1761
Amsterdam (Schouten) 1763 Latin
Leipzig 1778 (Suikerti) Latin; (Junius) 1780 Latin; (Teubner) 1784 Latin; (Sommer) 1800 Latin;
Frankfurt (Larcher) 1783
Paris (Clousier) 1713; (David) 1713; (Foucault) 1713; (Gosselin) 1714; (Musier) 1786; (Nyon) 1788
Rome (Desideri) 1789
Düsseldorf (Schreiner) 1799

Josephus, Flavius

Works Collections

London (Turner) 1700; (Roper) 1701; (Chiswell) 1701; (Sare) 1709, 1725; (Penny) 1732, 1733; (Knapton) 1733; (Brindley) 1736; (Bowyer) 1737; (Proprietors) 1754; (Owen) 1755; (Browne et al.) 1755; (Ware) 1755; (Fielding and Walker) 1777; (Cooke) 1785, 1786, 1789, 1790, 1792, 1800; (Walker) 1785; (Hogg) 1792; London (Proprietors) 1795
Oxford (Sheldon) 1700, 1720 Latin
Glasgow (Khull) 17??
Gotha (Schallium) 1710 Latin
Frankfurt (Weinmann) 1717
Amsterdam (Oosterwyk) 1722; (Wetsten) 1726; (Schagen) 1732; (Allart & Holtrop) 1783
Tübingen (Cotta) 1735, 1736
Zürich (Gessner & Orell) 1736 German
Dublin (Reilly) 1741
Edinburgh (Gray) 1751; (Peterson) 1762; (Coke) 1777; (Brown et al.) 1793
Paris (Chaubert) 1756, 1757
Aberdeen (Bruce & Boyle) 1768
Birmingham (Earl) 1770
Philadelphia (Bradford) 1773; (Woodruff & Turner) 1795
New York (Lowdon) 1773; (Hodge and Shober) 1775; (Durell) 1792, 1799
Leipzig (Schwickert) 1782 Latin
Newcastle (Dinsdale & Angus) 1784.
York (Pennington) 1791
Worcester, MA (Thomas) 1794
Dublin (Bates) 1796

The Jewish War

Venice 1711; (Orlandini) 1727; (Lovisa) 1740; (Chelero) 1788
London (Norris) 1717; (Woodgate and Brooks) 1759

Zürich	(Gebrüd & Orell) 1735 German
Brussels	(Leonhard) 1738
Trnava	(Societatis) 1755 Latin
Manchester	(Harrop) 1767
Madrid	(Cano) 1791

Livy

Ab Urbe Condita

Caen	(Cavalier) 1701 Latin
Venice	(Pezzana) 1706 Latin; (Bortoli) 1737 Latin
Padua	(Manfré) 1707, 1727, 1733 Latin
Oxford	(Sheldon) 1708, 1738 Latin
London	(Tonson & Watts) 1722, 1749 Latin; (Bettenham) 1744; (Nourse) 1747, 1750 Latin
Paris	(Nyon) 1730 Latin; (Quillau & Desaint) 1735 Latin; (Prault) 1741; (Brocas) 1747 Latin; (Lormel) 1769; (Barbou) 1769, 1775, 1789 Latin;
Rotterdam	(Lallemant) 1732, 1766 Latin
Amsterdam	(Wetstenium) 1738 Latin
Leiden	(Luchtman) 1738 Latin
Basel	(Thurnisios) 1740 Latin
Berlin	(Spener) 1751 Latin
Edinburgh	(Ruddimann) 1751, 1752, 1772 Latin; (Donaldson) 1761; (Wood) 1764; (Dickson) 1785 Latin
Halle	(Orphanotrophei) 1759, 1760, 1777, 1793 Latin; 1789
Boston	(Fleet) 1788 Latin
Glasgow	(Smith) 1783; (Mundell) 1797 Latin
Dublin	(Academic) 1797 Latin
Vienna	(Haas) 1798 German
Milan	(Mainardi) 1799

Collections of Works

Amsterdam	(Wetstenium) 1710 Latin
Paris	(Barbou) 1718; (Dupuis) 1739; (Brocas et al.) 1770; (Durand) 1784 Latin
Turin	(Fontana) 1731, (Typographia Regia) 1775 Latin
Venice	(Baglioni) 1734 Latin; (Pitteri) 1739; (Remondini) 1751, 1778 Latin
Leipzig	(Weidmann) 1735, 1743, 1755, 1769, 1785 Latin; (Fritsch) 1785, 1800 Latin
Padua	(Typis Seminarii) 1740 Latin; 1759
Heidelberg	(Haener) 1743 Latin
Oxford	(Fletcher) 1746 Latin; (Clarendon)1800 Latin

Caen	(Pyron) 1749 Latin
Rome	(Casaletti) 1773 Latin
Naples	(Terres) 1773 Latin; (Cervone) 1774
Brussels	(Le Franq) 1774 Latin
Mannheim	(Societatis) 1779 Latin
Gotha	(Ettingerum) 1780-84, 1796 Latin
Marseille	(Mossy) 1781
Zweibrücken	(Societatis) 1784
London	(Dilly) 1790 Latin; (Ritchie & Sammells) 1794 Latin
Frankfurt	1790
Uppsala	(Edman) 1795 Latin

Plutarch

Lives

London	(Tonson) 1700, 1703, 1711, 1716; (Lintott) 1713; (Tonson) 1723 Latin; (Dilly) 1770; (Gray) 1737; (Newberry) 1762; (Manson et al.) 1764; (Routledge) 1770; (Strahan) 1771; (Donaldson) 1774; (Mozley) 1794; (Longman) 1795; (Mundell) 1798; (Religious Tract Society) 1800
Paris	(Clousier) 1721; (Compagnie) 1762; (Humblot) 1778; (Savoye) 1778; (Huart) 1784; (Couturier) 1785; (Ricard) 1798; (Barrois) 1798, 1799
Amsterdam	(Wetstein) 1724 French; (Chatelain) 1734 French; (Emery) 1734 French
Dublin	(Williams) 1769
Leipzig	(Hilscher) 1770 Latin
Edinburgh	(Donaldson) 1774
Berlin	(Decker) 1777
Frankfurt	(Hermann) 1800

Polyaenus

Strategems

Paris	(David) 1770
Berlin	1756 Latin; (Haude & Spener) 1756 Latin
London	(Nicol) 1793, 1796
Frankfurt	(Hermann) 1793

Works Collections

Paris	1738; (Ganeau) 1739, 1743; 1739
Copenhagen	(Berling)1749
Leipzig	(Jacobi) 1750
Aberdeen	(Douglas) 1758 Latin

Polybius

History

Amsterdam	(Compagnie) 1729-30 French; (Chatels) 1743 French; (Chatelain) 1753, 1759 French; (Arkstée et Merkus) 1774 French
Paris	(Gandouin) 1727-30, 1753
Verona	(Ramanzini) 1741, 1743
Berlin	(Uebersetzer) 1755-56, 1759, 1760, 1762, 1769
Vienna	(Trattnern) 1759-60 German
Leipzig	(Krausium) 1763, 1764 Latin; (Weidmann) 1789
London	(Dodsley) 1772; (Davies) 1772, 1773
Lemgo	(Meyer) 1779, 1783
Rome	(Fulgoni) 1783 Latin; (Portoghesi) 1792
Madrid	1789

Sallust

Works Collections

Florence	(Brigonei) 1701 Latin
Cambridge	(Crownfield) 1710 Latin
London	(Bowyer) 1715; (Sare) 1726; (Woodward & Peele) 1744 (Cooke) 1746; (Caslon) 1769
Dublin	(Hyde) 1727; (Wilson) 1784 Latin
Lisbon	(Augustiniana) 1731 Latin
Venice	(Paschal) 1737
Amsterdam	(Changuion) 1742 Latin
Metz	(Collignon) 1750 Latin
Birmingham	(Baskerville) 1773
Paris	(Dijon) 1777
Glasgow	(Foulis) 1777 Latin

The Jugurthine War (often combined with the *Conspiracy of Cataline*)

Paris	(Gosselin) 1713
Oxford	(Societatis) 1730 Latin
London	(Lee) 1744 Latin; (Brown et al.) 1757
Glasgow	(Urie) 1749 Latin; (Chapman & Duncan) 1783 Latin

Edinburgh	(Hamilton & Belfour) 1755 Latin; (Kincaid & Bell) 1770; (Ruddimann) 1788 Latin; 1789 Latin
Leipzig	(Jacobi) 1759 Latin
Dublin	(Stewart & Spotswood) 1772; (Walker & Exshaw) 1778

Conspiracy of Cataline

Naples	1760
Venice	1761
Florence	1790
Leipzig	(Breitkop) 1790 Latin
Paris	(Renouard) 1795

Suetonius

The Twelve Caesars

Dresden	(Mieth) 1705 Latin
London	(Hodgkin) 1704; (Morphew) 1713; (Sanders) 1726 Latin; (Clarke) 1761 Latin; (G.G. & Robinson) 1796
Patavia	(Manfre) 1714 Latin
Leipzig	(Weidmann) 1722 Latin
Venice	(Piacenti) 1738
Leiden	(Luchtmans) 1745 Latin
Edinburgh	(Donaldson) 1761 Latin
St. Petersburg	(Imperial Academy) 1776 Russian

Tacitus

Germania

Amsterdam	1714 Latin; 1766 French
Frankfurt	1766 Latin
Magdeburg	(Hechtel) 1777
Warrington	(Eyres) 1777
Halle	(Hendel) 1793, 1794
Görliz	(Anton) 1799 German
Uden	1800

Agricola

Lyon	1706
Glasgow	(Foulis) 1777 Latin
Leipzig	(Goeschen) 1788
Paris	(Bailleul) 1797

Works Collections

Amsterdam	(Elzevir) 1703 Latin; (Wetstein et al.) 1704
Leiden	(Poolsum & Visch) 1721 Latin
Paris	(Cailleau) 1724, 1735; (Duchesne) 1755; (Quillau) 1760; (Delatour) 1776 Latin; (Moutard) 1784
Dublin	(Rhames) 1728; (White) 1794
London	(Woodward & Peele) 1737; 1790 Latin; (G.G.J. & Robinson) 1793
Glasgow	1753 Latin
Padua	(Comino) 1755
Parigi	(Quillau) 1760 Italian
Zweibrücken	(Leonard) 1779-1780 Latin; (Societatis) 1792 Latin; 1798 Latin
Mannheim	(Societatis) 1781 Latin
Venice	1782-83 Latin
Deux Pontes	1783 French and Latin
Edinburgh	(Braduete et al.) 1792 Latin; (G.G. & Robinson) 1796 Latin
Milan	(Meinardi) 1799
Nuremberg	(Riegel & Wiesner) 1800

Thucydides

The Peloponnesian War

Paris	(Nyon) 1741, 1788; (David) 1741; (Gail & Aubin) 1795; (Nicolas) 1795
London	(Motte) 1723; (Watts) 1753
Amsterdam	(Wetsten & Smith) 1731, 1744 Latin
Verona	(Ramanzini) 1735
Zweibrücken	(Societatis) 1788-89 Latin
Rome	(Desideri) 1789-90
Leipzig	(Schwickert) 1790 Latin; (Rabenhorst) 1799 Latin
Bremen	(Crameri) 1791 Latin

Vegetius Renatus, Flavius

De Re Militarii

Amsterdam	1744 French; 1757 French; (Harrevelt) 1762 French
Madrid	(Ibarra) 1764
Nuremberg	(Raspe) 1767 Latin
London	(Griffin – Clarke trans.) 1767
Montargis	1779 French
Paris	(Nyon) 1783

Xenophon

Anabasis

Paris	(Barbin) 1706; 1736; (Cellot) 1788; (Nyon) 1788
Oxford	(Sheldon) 1735 Latin
Cambridge	(Archdeacon) 1767, 1785 Latin
Leipzig	(Fritsch) 1785; (Schwickert) 1785

Cyropaedia

Oxford	(Sheldon) 1700, 1703, 1727 Latin; 1772 Greek
London	(Wellington) 1742; (Redmayne) 1703, 1713, 1720 Latin; (Bennet) 1703 Greek; (Powell) 1728; (Noon et al.) 1728; (Wood) 1729, 1736 Latin; (Bettenham) 1730, 1738, 1747, 1756 Latin; (Knapton) 1736 Latin; (Barker) 1738 Latin; (Johnson & Payne) 1770 ; (Bowyer & Nichols) 1773 Latin; (Rivington) 1778; (Nicols et al.) 1782 Latin; (Brown) 1790, 1797 Latin
Dublin	(Benson) 1728; (McDonnel) 1785, 1798
La Haye	(Gosse) 1732, 1782
Vienna	(Grundt) 1750 Latin
Rostock	(Berger & Boedner) 1761 German
Glasgow	(Foulis) 1767 Latin
Edinburgh	1768
Leipzig	(Schwickert) 1774, 1784 Latin; (Fritsch) 1780, 1798, 1800 Latin;
Frankfurt	(Erhard) 1776 Latin
Paris	(Debure) 1777
Berlin	(Hesse) 1784
Stuttgard	(Erhard) 1789 Latin
Basel	(Schweighauser) 1790 French
Rome	(Desideri) 1791

Works Collections

Hamburg	(König & Richter) 1734
Verona	(Ramanzini) 1736-37
Berlin	(Nicolai) 1762
London	(White) 1770
Leipzig	(Libraria Gleiditschiana) 1763 Latin; 1778 Latin; (Fritsch) 1791 Latin
Frankfurt	(Hermann) 1783
Paris	(Imprimerie de la république) 1797; (Delalain) 1797

APPENDIX B. Eighteenth Century Editions of Military Works[854]

Adye, Stephen Payne

A Treatise on Courts Martial

New York (J. Murray) 1769, (H. Gaine) 1769
London (J. Murray) 1772, 1778, 1785, 1786, 1788, 1794, 1797, 1799
(W. McDowall) 1800
Philadelphia (R. Aitken) 1779
Berkhamsted 1800

Considerations on the Act for punishing mutiny and desertion; and the rules and articles for the government of His Majesty's land forces

London (J. Murray) 1772, 1794

Algarotti, Francesco

Letters Military and Political

London (T. Egerton) 1782, 1783
Dublin (P. Byrne) 1784

Anderson, James

Essay on the Art of War

London (A. Millar) 1761, 1762

[854] Compiled from WorldCat; Sandra L. Powers, "Studying the Art of War: Military Books Known to American Officers and Their French Counterparts during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Military History* 70, no. 3 (July 2006): 781–814; and Ira D. Gruber, *Books and the British Army in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press; Co-published with the Society of the Cincinnati, 2010), 267-307. Languages assumed same as country of printing unless otherwise specified.

D'Arcq, Philippe Auguste de Sainte-Foix Chevalier

Histoire générale des guerres

Paris	(Imprimerie Royale) 1756, 1758
Amsterdam	(Arkstee & Merkus) 1758, French

Beaurain, Jean de

Histoire militaire de Flandres

Paris	(Self) 1755, (Jombert) 1755
La Haye	(Gosse) 1776
Potsdam	(Horvath) 1787, French

Histoire militaire du Duc de Luxembourg

La Haye	(Gibert) 1756

Bélidor, Bernard Forest de

Oeuvres diverses

Amsterdam	(Arkstée & Merkus) 1754, 1764 French
Leipzig	(Arkstée & Merkus) 1754, 1764 French
Paris	(Jombert) 1754, 1764
Stockholm	1785

Le Bombardier François

Paris	(Imprimerie Royale), 1731
Amsterdam	(La compagnie), 1734, French

La science des ingénieurs dans la conduit des travaux de fortification

Paris	(Jombert) 1729, 1734, 1739
La Haye	(Gosse) 1754, 1775

Nouveau cours de mathématique à l'usage de l'artillerie et du genie

Paris	(Jombert) 1725, (Nyon) 1725, 1757
Vienna	(Pentz) 1745, 1746, German; (Bernardi) 1773, German

Dictionnaire portatif de l'ingénieur et de l'artilleur

Paris	(Jombert), 1755, 1768

Des Herrn von Belidor kurzefaßtes Kriegs-Lexicon

Nüremberg (Raspe) 1765

Bentivoglio, Guido

Della guerra di Fiandra

Venice (Hertz) 1702, (Indrich) 1778
Paris (Van den Berghen), 1770

Bever, Samuel

The Cadet

Dublin (Powell) 1756
London (Johnston) 1756, 1762

Biggs, William

The Military History of Europe

Limerick (Welsh) 1749
London (Baldwin) 1755, 1756

Bisset, Charles

The Theory and Construction of Fortification

London (Millar) 1751, 1791

Bland, Humphrey

A Treatise of Military Discipline

London (Buckley) 1727, 1734, 1740, (Knapton, Birt, and Longman) 1746, 1753, (Baldwin, Richardson, Longman) 1759, (Baldwin) 1762
Dublin (Rhames) 1743
Boston (Henchman) 1743, 1744, 1747, 1755
New York (De Foreest), 1754
York (Ward) 1760

The New Manual Exercise

New York (Parker and Weymam), 1754
Philadelphia (Bradford), 1755

Le Blond, Guillaume

Abrégé de géométrie à l'usage des pages de la Grande Écurie du roy

Paris (Jombert) 1737

Élémens de fortification

Paris (Jombert) 1739, 1752, 1756, 1764, 1766, 1775; (Cellot) 1786
Frankfurt (Jäger) 1772

Elemens de la guerre des sieges

Paris (Jombert) 1743

Traité de l'attaque des places

Paris (Jombert) 1743
London (Cave) 1748

Traité de l'artillerie, ou des armes et machines en usage a la guerre

Paris (Jombert) 1743, 1762
London (Cave & Cooper) 1746
Frankfurt (Uebersetzers) 1766

Traité de la defense des places

Paris (Jombert) 1743, 1762

L'arithmétique de l'officier

Paris (Jombert) 1747, 1748, 1767
Frankfurt 1766, 1769

Essai sur la castrametation ou sur le mesure et le trace des camps

Paris (Jombert) 1748, 1758
Strasburg (König) 1770, German

Élémens de tactique

Paris (Jombert) 1758

The Military Engineer

London (Nourse) 1759

L'artillerie raisonnée

Paris (Jombert) 1761, 1776

Hernn. L. Blond Ausführlich abgehandelte Artillerie-Wissenschaft

Frankfurt (Uebersetzer) 1766

Herrn le Blonds 2. Theil der Kriegskunst

Frankfurt 1767

Der Kriegs-Kunst III

Frankfurt 1769

Blondel, François

Nouvelle manière de fortifier les places

La Haye (de Voys) 1711
Moscow 1711 Russian

Elemens de fortification

Paris (Lombert) 1764

Bombelles, Henri Francois de

Traité des evolutions militaires

Paris (Lottin) 1754; (Herissant) 1754

Boyer, Abel

The draughts of the most remarkable fortified towns of Europe

London (Cleave) 1701

Buonamici, Castruccio

De Rebus ad Velitras

Leiden	1749, 1752, 1756, 1759 Latin
Valencia	(Monfort) 1766
Dresden	(Walther) 1779 Latin
Madrid	(Lopez) 1788

Commentariorium de bell italia

Leiden	1750, 1751 Latin
London	(Millar) 1753

Cambridge, Richard Owen

An Account of the war in India

Dublin	(Ewing) 1761; (Williams) 1769
London	(Jefferys) 1761, 1762
Amsterdam	(Boudet) 1766 French

Campbell, John

Lives of the British Admirals

London	(Applebee) 1742, 1744; (Waller) 1750; (Osborne et al.) 1761; (Donaldson) 1779, 1781; (G.G.J. & Robinson) 1785; (Murray) 1785
Dublin	(Ewing et al.) 1748
Göttingen	(Luzac) 1755
Edinburgh	(Donaldson) 1785

Clairac, Louis André de la Mamie

L'inginieur de campagne

Paris	1749; (Jombert) 1757
Breslau	(Korn) 1755, 1776
Dublin	(Smith) 1758
London	(Millan) 1760, 1773
Philadelphia	(Aitken) 1776

Clarendon, Edward Hyde Earl of

The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England

Oxford	(Theater) 1702, 1703, 1704, 1705, 1706, 1707, 1712, 1720, 1732; (Batley) 1720; (Clarendon) 1759, 1760, 1761
London	(Nutt) 1703; (Baldwin) 1704; (Baker) 1712; (Morphew) 1713; (Nicholson) 1717; (Wilford) 1720, 1724; (Reynolds) 1731 (Woodward & Peele) 1727; (Pemberton) 1730; (Woodyer) 1756 (Booksellers) 1738; (Cooper) 1740; (Hooper) 1744
Dublin	(Hyde & Owen) 1719; (Leathley & Dugan) 1720
Basil	(Tourneisen) 1798

Coehoorn, Baron Menno van

Nieuwe Vestingbouw (*New Fortifications*)

Leeuwarden	(Rintjes) 1702
London	(Midwinter) 1705
Wesel	(van Wesel) 1706, 1708 French
The Hague	(van Bulderen) 1706 French
Düsseldorf	(von Wesel) 1709
Moscow	(Shafirov) 1709, 1710
Augsburg	(Wolffens et al.) 1740
La Haye	(Scheurleer) 1741, (van Doyle) 1743

Cuthbertson, Bennett

A system for the complete interior management and economy of a battalion of infantry

Bristol	(Rouths & Nelson) 1776
London	(Millan) 1779

Dalrymple, Campbell

Military Essay

London	(Wilson) 1761
Edinburgh	1761
Newcastle	(White) 1762
Philadelphia	(Humphreys et al.) 1776

Diderot, Denis

Encyclopédie, ou, Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers

Paris (Briasson) 1751-1765

Du Fay, Abbé

Veritable manière de bien fortifier de m. de Vauban

Amsterdam (Mortier) 1703 French; (Janssons) 1726 French
Paris (Jombert) 1771

Manière de fortifier

Paris 1707; (Coignard) 1729

Dupre d'Aulunay, Louis

Traité général des subsistances militaires

Paris (Prault) 1743, 1744; 1754

Donkin, Robert

Military Collections and Remarks

New York (Gaine) 1777

Drummond de Melfort, Louis Hector

Essai sur les evolutions de la cavalerie

Unknown 1749, 1775 French
Paris (Nyon) 1776; (Desprez) 1776
Dresden (Walther) 1780, 1781, 1786

Encyclopédie Militaire

Paris (Chez Valade) 1770-1772

Espagnac, Jean Baptiste Joseph d'Amarzit de Sahuget chevalier de

Mémoire pour servir à l'histoire de la dernière guerre d'Italie

Amsterdam 1739 French
Relation de la campagne en Brabant et en Flandres

La Haye (Scheurleer) 1747, 1748

Journal historique de la dernière campagne de l'armée du roi, en 1746

La Haye (Scheurleer) 1747, 1748

Journal des Campagnes du Roi en 1744; 1745, 1746, 1747

Liège 1748

Essai sur la science de la guerre

La Haye (Gosse & Neaulme) 1751; (Ganeau) 1753; (Garieau) 1755

Histoire de Maurice Comte de Saxe

Mittaw 1754
Paris (Duchesne) 1773; (Pierres) 1775; (Saillant & Nyon) 1775
Utrecht (Compagnie) 1774 French
Leipzig (Schwickert) 1774 French
Unknown 1789

Supplément aux "Rêveries ou mémoires sur la guerre" de Maurice comte de Saxe

La Haye (Gosse) 1757

Feuquèries, Antoine de Pas

Memoires sur la Guerre

Amsterdam 1730 French, (Changuion) 1731 French; (Bernard) 1734, 1735 French; (Chatelain) 1741 French; (Loveringh & Lobé) 1745
London (Woodward & Davis) 1735, 1736, 1737; (Dunoyer) 1736, 1737, 1740, 1750 French, (Jombert) 1775 French
Leipzig (Weidmann) 1738; 1788
Berlin (Unger) 1786

Folard, Jean-Charles Chevalier de

Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre....

Paris	1723; (Josse) 1724, 1726
Brussels	(Foppens) 1724, 1753 French

Histoire de Polybe

Paris	(Gandouin) 1727-1730, 1753
Amsterdam	(Compagnie) 1729-1730 French, (Chatelain) 1753, 1759 French (Arkstée & Merkus) 1774 French
Berlin	(Uebersetzer) 1755-1756, 1759, 1760, 1762, 1769
Vienna	(Trattner) 1759-1760 German
Lemgo	(Meyer) 1783

Abregé des commentaires de Mr. de Folard sur l'histoire de Polybe

Paris	(Gandouin) 1754

Supplément a l'histoire de Polybe avec le commentaire militaire de monsieur le chevalier de Folard

Paris	(Jombert) 1753
Amsterdam	(Arkstée & Merkus) 1774 French

Auslegungen und Anmerckungen des Polybius…

Berlin	1755
Vienna	1759-1760 German

Frederick II of Prussia

Examen du Prince de Machiavel, avec des notes historiques & politiques [aka Anti-Machiavel]

Copenhagen	(Preuss) 1740 French
La Haye	(Paupie) 1740; (van Duren) 1741; (Compagnie) 1743
The Hague	(Meyer) 1741 French
Amsterdam	(La Caze) 1741 French; (Loveringh) Dutch 1741; (Iansonio-Waesbergios) 1743 Latin; (Compagnie) 1747 French
London	(Woodward) 1741; (Meyer) 1741, 1759 French
Göttingen	(Royal University Bookshop), 1741
Marseille	(Colomb) 1741

Frankfurt	1741, 1745
Berlin	(Storti) 1792 French

Instructions militaires du Roi de Prusse pour ses généraux

London	(Beckett & Hondt) 1762; (Seyffard) 1762 French; (Elemset) 1777 French; (Heydinger) 1772 French; (Egerton) 1797
Hannover	(Helwing) 1794
Sherborne	(Crutwell) 1797, 1800

L'esprit du Chevalier Folard

Paris	(Compagnie) 1760
Germany	(n.p., n.l.) 1760
Amsterdam	(Compagnie) 1760 French; (Chatelain) 1761 French
Berlin	(Woss) 1761 French
Leipzig	1761 French; 1766 French

L'art de la guerre (poeme)

Berlin	1760 French; (Neaulme) 1760 French
Potsdam	(Schneider) 1760 French
Amsterdam	(Schneider) 1764 French
London	(Riley) 1780, 1782; 1787

Principes de l'art Militaire

Berlin	(Haude & Spinner) 1763 French

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London	(Robinson) 1789

Frederick William I of Prussia

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London	(Vaillant) 1754; (Rivington & Fletcher) 1757; (Nourse) 1759

Funck, Jakob

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Strasbourg	(Gosse) 1750; (Pauschinger) 1750

Goulon, Louis

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La Haye	(Van Bulderen) 1706; (Gosse) 1730; (Compagnie) 1743
Amsterdam	(de la Feuille) 1706 French; (Arkstée & Merkus) 1764
Wesel	(van Wesel) 1706 French
Stockholm	(Merckell) 1728
London	(Bathurst) 1745
Breslau	(Pietsch) 1754
Nuremberg	(Monath) 1761

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Frankfurt	(Knoch & Esslinger) 1758 French
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Gray, John

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London (Cole) 1746

Rules and articles for the better government of His Majesty's horse and foot guards

Unknown 1749

A new exercise, to be observed by His Majesty's troops

New York (Parker & Weyman) 1757

Explanations of the manual exercise for the foot; : with some general field-directions

Halifax (Bushell) 1759

The manual exercise, as ordered by His Majesty, in the year 1764

Norwich, CT	(Robertson & Trumbull) 1774
New Haven	(Green) 1774
Newbury	(Lunt & Tinges) 1774
Philadelphia	(Humphreys et al.) 1775, 1776
Williamsburg	(Dixon & Hunter) 1775
New York	(Anderson) 1775; (Gaine) 1780
Boston	(Fleet) 1776

General regulations and orders for His Majesty's forces

London (Adjutant's Office) 1786

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Montreal (Mesplet) 1787, 1793

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Dublin (Stewart) 1793

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London (Walter) 1795, (War Office) 1796; (Egerton) 1797, 1799

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England 1797

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Edinburgh (Brown) 1797

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London (War Office) 1798, 1799

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Grotius, Hugo

De Jure Belli ac Pacis

Utrecht	(Van de Water) 1700 Latin; (Schoonhoven) 1773 Latin
Amsterdam	(Waesberg) 1701, 1712, 1720, 1735, 1750 Latin; (Wetsten) 1712, 1720 Latin (Visscher) 1720; (de Coup) 1724 French; 1729 French; (Fritsch) 1735 Latin
Unknown	(Abraham & Someren) 1701 Latin
Edinburgh	(Anderson) 1707 Latin
Frankfurt	(Fischer) 1709 Latin; 1721
Tübingen	(Cottae) 1710 Latin
London	(Brown) 1715; (Innys et al.) 1738
Leiden	1719 Latin; 1759 French; (Wetstein) 1768 French
Marburg	(Müller) 1734 Latin
Basel	(Thorneisen) 1746, 1768, 1776 French
Robereti	(Balleon) 1746 Latin
Lausanne	(Bousquet) 1751, 1752, 1759 Latin
Cambridge	(Bentham) 1751 Latin
Vienna	(Kaliwoda) 1753 German
Leipzig	(Krause) 1758 Latin
Groningen	(Bolt) 1771 French
Naples	(Dominici) 1777; (Manfredi) 1777 Latin
Zürich	(Orell et al.) 1789 German

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London	(Libraires associés) 1772, 1773 French; (Millan) 1781
Liège	(Plomteux) 1773, 1775
Paris	(Magimel) 1785; (Didot) 1785

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Geneva	(Bibliothek Zoffingen) 1773 French
London	1773 French; (Libraires associés) 1773 French; (Millan) 1781
Liège	(Plomteux) 1773, 1775
Dresden	(Walther) 1774

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Berlin	1777 French
Amsterdam	1778 French
Cölln	(Marteau) 1778
Suisse	1778 French
London	(Fielding and Walker) 1780

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Amsterdam	1779 French
Neuchatel	1779
Geneva	1781 French

Éloge du roi de Prusse

London	1787, 1788 French
Madrid	(En la Imprenta Real) 1787
Leipzig	(Crusius) 1787
Berlin	(Maurer) 1787, 1789 French; (Lagarde & Friedrich) 1788
Paris	(Magimel) 1789

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La Haye	(de Hondt) 1758
Lyon	(Bruyset) 1760
Brussels	1762 French

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Berlin	(Haude & Spener) 1763 French

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Paris (Durand et. al.) 1774
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Herouville de Claye, Antoine de Ricouart de

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La Haye (Compagnie) 1753; (Gibert) 1753; (Jombert) 1777
London 1753; (Osborne) 1753
Strasbourg 1753 German

Holliday, Francis

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London (Innys and Richardson) 1756

An easy introduction to fortification and practical gunnery

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Horst, Tileman van der

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La Haye (Gosse) 1755

Remarques sur un nouveau systême de fortification proposé par M. le comte de Saxe

La Haye (Gosse) 1757, 1767
Edinburgh (Martin & Mcdowall) 1787

Jeney, L.M. de

Le Partisan

La Haye (Constapel) 1759, 1769
London (Griffiths) 1760
Supraśl (Bazyliańow) 1770 Polish
Stuttgart (Mezler) 1778

[855] This work is sometimes attributed to Maurice de Saxe

Kane, Richard

Campaigns of King William and Queen Anne from 1689 to 1712

London (Millan) 1745
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A System of Camp-discipline

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Catéchisme militaire

Paris (Guillaume) 1790

Landsberg, Johann Heinrich von

Nouveau projet d'une citadelle confronté celle de Lille

La Haye (Hussen) 1714

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Dresden (Sohn) 1724

Nouveaux plans et projets de fortifications

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Le Cointe, Jean-Louis

La science des postes militaires

Paris (Desaint & Saillant) 1759
London (Payne) 1761

Valencia	(Monfort) 1770
Copenhagen	(Moller) 1781

Commentaires sur la retraite des dix-mille de Xenophon

Paris	(Nyon) 1766

La santé de Mars; ou moyens de conserver la santé des troupes en temps de paix

Paris	(Briand) 1790

Lediard, Thomas

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London	(Wilcox and Payne) 1735
Lyon	(Duplain) 1751

The life of John, Duke of Marlborough

London	(Wilcox) 1736

Lloyd, Henry

Essai sur la grande guerre de main de maitre, ou Instruction militaire du roi de Prusse pour ses généraux

London	(Compagnie) 1761 French

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London	(Self) 1766; (Hooper) 1781; (Pion) 1784 French; (Egerton) 1790, 1793
Frankfurt	1777
Dresden	1779 French
Braunschweig	1779
Berlin	(Unger) 1783, 1785
Lausanne	1784 French

A rhapsody on the present system of French politics on the projected invasion, and the means to defeat it

London	(Faden) 1779; (Stockdale) 1779, 1793

Abhandlung ueber die allgemeinen Grundsaetze der Kriegskunst

Frankfurt	(Perrenon) 1783

A political and military rhapsody on the invasion and defence of Great Britain and Ireland

London	(Egerton) 1790, 1794, 1798; (Debret et al.) 1792, 1794, 1795, 1798

Mably, Gabriel Bonnot de

Observations on the Greeks

Geneva	(Compagnie) 1749 French; (Dufart) 1789
Venice	(Pasquali) 1766
Zürich	(Füesslin) 1767 German; (Fuesslin) 1767 French

Observations on the Romans

London	(Griffiths) 1751
Venice	(Pasquali) 1766, 1794
Geneva	(Dufart) 1789

Machiavelli

Discours politiques de Machiavel sur la I. decade de Tite-Live

Amsterdam	(Desbordes) 1701 French; (Mortier) 1711 French
Cosmopoli	1769 Italian
Danzig	(Flörke) 1776 German

Works

The Hague	(Boucquet) 1703
London	(Wood) 1720; (Guisti) 1760 Italian; (Davies) 1762, 1775; (Davies) 1762, 1772 Italian; (Prault) 1768;
La Haye	1726 Italian; (Compagnie) 1743
Florence	(Cambiagi) 1782-83; 1796-99
Paris	(Volland) 1793; (Potey) 1799
Philadelphia	1796 Italian
Geneva	1798 Italian

The Prince

The Hague	(Boucquet) 1705
La Haye	(van Duren) 1741
Frankfurt	1745
Hannover	(Schmidt) 1756, 1762
Cosmopoli	1768, (Pasquali) 1769 Italian

Lausanne	1771 Italian
Rome	(Barbiellini) 1771
Philadelphia	1792 Italian

The Art of War

The Hague	1726 Italian

Maigret, Philippe

Traité de la sûreté et conservation des États par le moyen des forteresses

Paris	(Billiot) 1721, 1725; 1726; (Samson) 1770
London	1747

Maizeroy, Paul-Gédéon Joly de

Traité des stratagemes permis a la guerre : ou remarques sur Polyen et Frontin, avec des observations sur les batailles de Pharsale & d'Arbelles

Metz	(Antoine) 1765

Cours de tactique thêorique, pratique et historique

Nancy	(LeClerc) 1766
Paris	(Jombert) 1766; (Merlin) 1766, 1767, 1781-82, 1785
Strasbourg	(Bauer) 1771-72 German
London	(Cadell) 1781

A Treatise on the Use of Defensive Arms

Nancy	(LeClerc) 1767
London	(Walter) 1770

Dissertation sur le Feu Grégeois

Paris	1771

Institutions militaires de L'Empereur Leon le Philosophe

Paris	(Jombert) 1771, 1778

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Paris	1771, (Jombert) 1778

Tableau Général De La Cavalerie Grecque, Composé de deux Memoires & d'une La tactique discutée, et réduite à ses véritables loix

Paris (Jombert) 1773

Mémoire sur les opinions qui partagent les militaires

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Mémoire contenant des observations desquelles on peut déduire une théorie de manoeuvres

Metz (Bouchard, et al.) 1775

Traité des armes et de l'ordonnance de l'infanterie, relativement au génie de la nation françoise

Amsterdam (LeClerc, Jombert) 1776

Théorie de la Guerre

Nancy (Jombert) 1777

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Paris (Imprimerie Royale) 1780

Manesson-Mallet, Allain

Les travaux de mars ou l'art de la guerre

Paris (Thierry) 1785

Manningham, Henry

A compleat treatise of mines

London (Say) 1752; (Millar) 1756

Melville, Robert

New manual exercise: as performed by His Majesty's dragoons…

London (Millan) 1758

Mesnil-Durand, François-Jean de

Projet d'un ordre français de tactique
Paris (Boudet) 1755

Suite du Projet d'un ordre françois en tactique

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Observations sur le canon, par rapport a l'infanterie en général, et a la colonne en particulier

Amsterdam (Jombert) 1772 French

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Paris (Didot) 1774; (Jombert) 1774

Réponse à la brochure intitulée L'Ordre profond et l'ordre mince considéré par rapport aux effets de l'artillerie

Amsterdam (Cellot) 1776 French
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Reflexions sur l'ordre et les manoeuvres de l'infanterie

Bayeux (Nicolle) 1778

Collection de diverses pièces et mémoires, nécessaires pour achever d'instruire la grande affaire de tactique

Amsterdam 1780 French

Monro, Donald

Observations on the means of preserving the health of soldiers…

London (Murray) 1780

Montecuccoli, Raimondo

Memorie del general principe

Colonia	(Compagnia) 1704; (Filoni) 1704

Arte universal de la Guerra

Lisbon	(Manescal) 1708 Italian
Barcelona	(Figuerò) 1746
Madrid	(Matin) 1767

Memoires de Montecuccoli

Paris	(Nyon) 1712, 1751, 1760; (Musier) 1712; (Brocas) 1751; (LeClerc) 1751; (Savoye) 1751; (Gissey) 1760; (Jombert) 1760; (Guillyn) 1760; (Despilly), 1760; (Barois) 1760
Amsterdam	(Compagnie) 1734 French; (Wetstein) 1746, 1752, 1760 French; (Arkstée & Merkus) 1750, 1756, 1770 French
Strasbourg	(Doulssecker) 1735, 1740
Leipzig	(Weidmann) 1736
Moscow	(Imperial Moscow University) 1760

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Vienna	(Voigt) 1718 Latin

Muller, John

A Treatise containing the elementary part of fortification…

London	(Nourse) 1746, 1774, 1782; Millar 1764; Strahan 1774 (Wingrave) 1799
Barcelona	(Piferrer) 1769

The attack and defence of fortified places…

London	(Millan) 1770; (Egerton) 1791

A treatise of artillery

Philadelphia	(Styner and Cist) 1779
London	(Millan) 1780

Nicola, Lewis

A treatise of military exercise, calculated of the use of Americans…

Philadelphia (Styner & Cist) 1776

A treatise on the military service of light horse and light infantry…

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Rules for the government of His Majesty's forces by land during the present war

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Edinburgh 1788
Perth (Morison) 1795

Pickering, Timothy

An easy plan of discipline for a militia

Salem (Hall) 1775
Boston (Hall) 1776

Pictet, Gabriel

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Geneva (Villard) 1761
Amsterdam (Rey) 1761

Pleydell, J.C.

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Puységur, Jacques de Chastenet

Les Mémoires de Messire Jacques de Chastenet, Chevalier, Seigneur de Puysegur, Colonel du Regiment de Piedmont et Lieutenant général des armées du roy

Paris	(Jombert) 1747

Puységur, Jacques François Maxime de Chastenet

Art de la guerre par principes et par régles

Paris	(Jombert) 1748, 1749, 1752, 1768; (Duchesne) 1758
La Haye	(Scheurleer) 1749
Basel	(Thourneisen) 1752, 1755 French
Leipzig	(Gleditsch) 1753, 1754
Naples	(Pellecchia) 1753
Breslau	1755
Frankfurt	(Zimmerman) 1760

Quincy, Charles Sevin Marquis de

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La Haye	1727; (Scheurleer) 1745
Paris	(Delespine) 1740
Nuremberg	(Lochner) 1745
Venice	(Corona) 1745
The Hague	(Johnson) 1787

Ray de Saint-Geniès, Jacques Marie

L'art de la guerre pratique

Frankfurt	1754, 1755 French; (Eslinger) 1755 French
Paris	(Jombert) 1754
Berlin	(Günther) 1760, 1772

Histoire militaire du Regne de Louis le Juste XIII

Paris	(Durand) 1755

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Paris	(Durand) 1755

L'officier partisan

Paris	(De Lalain) 1763, 1766; 1769

Strategêmes de guerre des françois

Paris	(De Lalain) 1769

Saint-Rémy, Pierre Surirey de

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Amsterdam	(Mortier) 1702 French
Paris	(Rigaud) 1707; (Rollin) 1745; (Jombert) 1745, 1765
St. Petersburg	(Imperial Academy) 1732 Russian
La Haye	(Neaulme) 1741

Santa Cruz de Marcenado, Alvaro Navia Osorio Marques de

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Turin	(Mairesse) 1724, 1725, 1727 Spanish; (Vimercato) 1725, 1726, 1727 Spanish
Paris	(Langlois) 1730 Spanish; (Guerin) 1735, 1736, 1738, 1744; (Rollin) 1735, 1738; (Clousier) 1738, 1744
La Haye	(Hondt) 1735; (Kieboom) 1739
Gdansk	(Jakuba) 1741, 1742 Polish; (Knocha) 1745 Polish
The Hague	1771 French
Havana	(Olivos) 1775
Madrid	(Imprenta Real) 1787
Warsaw	(Nadworney) 1787

Saxe, Maurice de

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La Haye	(Compagnie) 1753; (Gibert) 1753; (Jombert) 1777

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La Haye	(Gosse) 1756, 1758
Amsterdam	(Arkstée & Merkus) 1757 French
Mannheim	(Drieux) 1757 French
London	(Nourse) 1757
Dresden	(Walther) 1757 French
Leipzig	(Weidmann) 1757

Edinburgh	(Sands, et al.) 1759; (Donaldson) 1776
Berlin	(Compagnie) 1763 French

Esprit des loix de la tactique et de différentes institutions militaires, ou Notes de mr. le maréchal de Saxe; contenant plusieurs nouveaux systêmes sur l'art de la guerre

Leipzig	(Weidmann) 1762 French
La Haye	(Gosse) 1762

A complete system of the military art, explaining and describing, the technical terms, works and machines, used in the science of war

Dublin	(Jackson) 1780

Scharnhorst, Gerhard von

Handbuch für Officiere, in den anwendbaren Theilen der Krieges-Wissenschaften

Hannover	(Helwing) 1787, 1788, 1790

Militairisches Taschenbuch zum Gebrauch im Felde

Hannover	(Helwing) 1793, 1794

Seran de la Tour, Abbé

Histoire de Scipion l'Africain. Pour servir de suite aux Hommes illustres de Plutarque. Avec les observations de M. le Chevalier de Folard sur la bataille de Zama

Paris	(Didot) 1738, 1752; (Couturier) 1785
London	(Richardson) 1787

Histoire d'Epaminondas, general des Thebains

Leide	(van der Aa) 1741 French

Histoire de Catilina : tirée de Plutarque, de Ciceron, de Dion, de Salluste, et des autres historiens de l'antiquité

Amsterdam	(Rey) 1749 French

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Servan de Gerbey, Joseph

Le soldat citoyen, ou, Vues patriotiques sur la maniere la plus avantageuse de pourvoir a la défense du royaume

Neufchâtel 1780
Paris (Imprimerie nationale) 1792

Plan d'organisation pour des bataillons de piquiers, arrêté par le Conseil exécutif proviso ire

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Thomas Simes

The Military Medley

Dublin (Powell) 1767
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Philadelphia (Humphreys) 1776

A military course for the government and conduct of a battalion

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The military instructor: for the non-commissioned officers and private men of the Infantry

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The Regulator: or, instructions to form the officer

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A portable military library in four volumes

London (Self) 1782

Spar, Joseph Ignace Magnus de

Instructions militaries

Paris 1753; (Savoye) 1783

Steuben, Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin, Baron von

Regulations for the order and discipline of the troops of the United States

Philadelphia (Cist) 1782, 1800; (Cist) 1793 German
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Charleston, SC (Young) 1794
Exeter, NH (Ranlet) 1794

A letter on the subject of an established militia, and military arrangements, addressed to the inhabitants of the United States

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A history of the campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the southern provinces of North America

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Memoires des deux dernieres campagnes de monsieur de Turenne en allemagne

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Memoirs of the Viscount de Turenne

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Des Heren Grafen Turpin von Crisse ... Versuche über die Kriegskunst : aus dem Französischer übersetzt mit einigen Noten und einem Pflichten eines jungen Officiers

Potsdam (Bauer) 1756

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Berlin (Gunther) 1764, 1772

Commentaires sur les Mémoires de Montecuculi, généralissime des armées, & grand-maître de l'artillerie de l'empereur

Paris (Lacombe) 1769

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Montargis (Lequatre) 1779

Vauban, Sébastien le Prestre de

Deutsch-redender Vauban, oder, Vollkommene Unterweisung alle Plätz, sie seyen regular oder irregular, auff die allerneuste Art und Weiss nach der heutigen Fortifications-Kunst zu befestigen

Mayntz (Bourgeat) 1702, 1707

The new method of fortification : as practiced by Monsieur de Vauban

London (Freeman) 1702; (Bettersworth) 1722; (Ballard) 1748; (Hitch & Lowes) 1762

Manière de fortifier

Paris 1707; 1740
Amsterdam (Janssons) 1718, 1726

Traité de l'attaque et de la défense des places

La Haye (Hondt) 1737, 1742, 1743
Leide (Verbeek) 1740
Berlin (Haude & Spener) 1751

Traité de la défense des places

Paris (Jombert) 1769; (Magimal) 1794-95
Amsterdam (Arkstée & Merkus) 1771, 1779

Traité de l'attaque des places

Paris (Magimel) 1769, 1795

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Paris (Magimal) 1791, 1795

Villars, Claude Louis Hector de

Mémoires

La Haye	(Gosse) 1734, 1735, 1736; (Compagnie) 1758
Frankfurt	1735; 1784 French
London	(Woodward et al.) 1735; 1785 French
Amsterdam	(Compagnie) 1736 French
Paris	(Moutard) 1784; 1785; (Bossange) 1792

Windham, William

A plan of discipline, composed for the use of the militia of the county of Norfolk

London	(Shuckburgh) 1759
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Warrant for increasing and regulating the pay and allowance of non-commissioned officers and private men of the Corps of Infantry

London	(Walter) 1797

Young, William

An essay on the command of small detachments

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Vita

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