CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ
PETER PARET
D. MORAN

Carl Von Clausewitz

Historical and Political Writings

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CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ

Historical and Political Writings

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A NOTE TO A LIBRARIAN

In the note, written in 1820, Clausewitz requests five books. The first two are on England: "1. Schmalz über England 2. Vinke dito —," i.e., Theodor Anton Schmalz, *Staatsverfassung Grossbritanniens* (Halle, 1806), and Ludwig von Vincke, *Darstellung der innern Verwaltung Grossbritanniens*, (Berlin, 1816). The third, "Herders Zerstreute Blätter," is a volume of Herder's essays and his collection of Greek lyrics and epigrams. The fourth, "Schillers Gedichte," is an edition of Friedrich Schiller's poetry. The last work, "Religion fur das Herz, auserlesene Stellen aus geistvollen Schriften unseres Zeitalters," refers to an anthology of thoughts on religion, whose full title read "Religion for the Heart, or Testaments of Faith, Love and Hope, selected from the Spiritual Literature of Our Age." The place and date of publication, "Stuttg[art], 1802," are added at right in the librarian's hand. (Collection of Peter Paret)

CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL WRITINGS

Edited and Translated by

PETER PARET *and* DANIEL MORAN

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IN MEMORY OF

Felix Gilbert

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MAPS 1, 2, and 4 are details from the "Operationskarte für den Feldzug von 1812 in Russland" that accompanied the first two editions of Clausewitz's *Hinterlassene Werke*. Map 3 is reproduced from Dmitrii Buturlin, *Atlas des plans, légendes et tableaux d'organisation de l'histoire militaire de la campagne de Russie en 1812* (Paris, 1824). Map 5 is reproduced from A.J.F. Fain, *Manuscrit de mil huit cent quatorze* (Paris, 1823).

PREFACE

This volume contains selections from Clausewitz's historical writings and the majority of his essays and notes on political topics, excluding memoranda he wrote in an official capacity. One selection, from the "Political Declaration" of 1812, comes close to having an official character. Clausewitz drafted it with the help of others at a critical point in Prussian history to justify the political views of the radical military reformers, including men who held positions of authority in the state, and to oppose the impending alliance with France. The "Declaration" therefore expresses the position of a faction, but many of its passages bear such a pronounced personal note that its inclusion here seems justified.

The texts are grouped into two categories—"Historical Writings" and "Political Writings." Here, too, no precise dividing line can be drawn. Clausewitz developed his political ideas in part out of intensive historical study, and his political reasoning proceeds in conjunction with historical argumentation, drawing at every point on historical references, examples, and analogies. History performs a similarly creative role in Clausewitz's development of military theory. Nevertheless, in nearly every case it is not difficult to determine whether his primary concern is to understand the past or to express opinions about the present or future. The fusion of history and politics is perhaps most complete in his early "Notes," and in the essay "Agitation." We have placed these in the category of "Political Writings" because it is apparent that they were primarily stimulated by a desire to understand contemporary conditions—the increasing diplomatic isolation of Prussia and the threat posed to the balance of power by Napoleonic France in the first case, the demands for political change in Germany that followed the defeat of France in the second.

The editors have divided their task; Peter Paret was responsible for the historical writings, Daniel Moran for the writings on politics. The translations are a joint effort. English versions of extended passages from several of the historical writings and most of the political works are contained in Peter Paret's monograph, *Clausewitz and the State* (rev. ed., Princeton, 1985), but to the knowledge of the editors, only one of the works in this volume, *The Campaign of 1812 in Russia*, has ever been translated into English in its entirety; it appeared in London in 1843 and was last reprinted in 1977. That translation was based on the German text in the seventh volume of Clausewitz's posthumous works, which varied considerably from the original man-

uscript. The present translation is based on Clausewitz's original version. Similarly, the first section of the essay "On the Life and Character of Scharnhorst" is based on Clausewitz's manuscript rather than on the text that Ranke published in somewhat altered form in 1832. In both cases, passages omitted by the original editor are printed within curly brackets. A few illustrative examples of editorial substitutions intended to moderate Clausewitz's language have also been reproduced in the footnotes.

The translation of the German of Clausewitz's time into modern English presents problems with which anyone who has attempted a similar task will be familiar. The educated language of the *Goethezeit* was elegant and specific, characteristics that are difficult to reconcile in English with an equally characteristic proclivity for passive constructions and the use of abstract nouns as the subjects of transitive verbs. Clausewitz exhibited both tendencies to some extent, and over the years they have contributed to his undeserved reputation among foreign readers for abstruseness and complexity. His stylistic peculiarities are of course related to the substance of his thought. That he should have preferred, on occasion, to speak of individuals as being possessed by ideas rather than as possessing them, or to present events as the objects rather than as the agents of historical forces, is not surprising in someone whose intellectual horizons were defined by the methods and attitudes of German idealism and historicism. But these tendencies should not be overstated. Clausewitz had little use for abstractions or for theories divorced from personal and historical experience. What finally stands out even in the most intricate Clausewitzian sentence (and a few occur in almost everything he wrote) is the concrete reference, the piling up of evidence, the specificity of its point.

The search for an English equivalent to Clausewitz's prose demonstrates once again the pertinence of Walter Benjamin's observation that all translation is, in the end, interpretation. The translators have tried to preserve or at least reflect those elements of Clausewitz's style that are most distinctive of his way of thinking: his preference for dialectical modes of argument; his sometimes extreme efforts to present the reader with all relevant considerations in the same breath; his occasionally labored parallelisms, which were a stylistic corollary of his desire for objectivity. But there has been no hesitation in settling for less than literal equivalence, when to do otherwise would have resulted in preciousness or evasiveness. Nor has it seemed advisable to translate the same words in the same way in every instance. Expressions like *moralische Grössen* and *innere Bewegungen* admit a wide range of meanings, and Clausewitz put no stock in rigid or artificially systematic terminology. Language always took second place to thought.

Clausewitz frequently emphasized words or phrases. His emphases have been preserved as italics in the translations; phrases in parentheses are also his. Numbered footnotes, and emendations in square brackets, are supplied by the editors; footnotes marked with an asterisk are in the original. Clausewitz rarely mentions the first names of individuals, or the dates of the events he discusses. These are included in the index.

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For information on issues of fact and interpretation they are indebted to the late Werner Hahlweg of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster; Joachim Niemeyer of the Militärgeschichtliche Museum, Rastatt; Diethelm Prowe of Carleton College; and Gunther E. Rothenberg of Purdue University. Princeton University Library kindly permitted the reproduction of the map of the battle of Borodino from Dmitrii Buturlin's *Atlas des plans, légendes et tableaux d'organisation de l'histoire militaire de la campagne de Russie en 1812* (Paris, 1824); and the editors of *Central European History* graciously allowed the inclusion, in the introduction to the Political Writings, of material that first appeared in that journal in somewhat different form.

The editors also want to thank the members of the staff of Princeton University Press who saw the book into print, most especially our editors Joanna Hitchcock and Alice Calaprice, and the designer Laury Egan.

In the course of preparing the manuscript for publication, the editors repeatedly discussed issues of translation and of interpretation with Felix Gilbert, whose responses never failed to illuminate and expand on the issues raised. Felix Gilbert died in February 1991. With our gratitude and affection this book is dedicated to his memory.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following short titles are used throughout:

On War	Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, rev. ed. (Princeton, 1984)
Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*	Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, rev. ed. (Princeton, 1985)
Pertz-Delbrück, *Gneisenau*	G. H. Pertz and H. Delbrück, *Das Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen Neithardt von Gneisenau*, 5 vols. (Berlin, 1864–80)
Politische Schriften und Briefe	Carl von Clausewitz, *Politische Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Hans Rothfels (Munich, 1922)
Rothfels, *Politik und Krieg*	Hans Rothfels, *Carl von Clausewitz: Politik und Krieg* (Berlin, 1920; reprinted Bonn, 1980)
Schriften	Carl von Clausewitz, *Schriften–Aufsätze–Studien–Briefe*, ed. Werner Hahlweg, 2 vols. in 3 (Göttingen, 1966–90)
Schwartz, *Leben*	Karl Schwartz, *Leben des Generals Carl von Clausewitz und der Frau Marie von Clausewitz geb. Gräfin von Brühl*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1878)
Verstreute kleine Schriften	Carl von Clausewitz, *Verstreute kleine Schriften*, ed. Werner Hahlweg (Osnabrück, 1979)
Werke	*Hinterlassene Werke des Generals Carl von Clausewitz über Krieg und Kriegführung*, 10 vols. (Berlin, 1832–37)

PART ONE

Historical Writings

INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE

In Clausewitz's thought, history and theory were closely linked. They did not, however, interact on a level plane. Clausewitz believed that a valid theory of such social phenomena as politics or war could be developed only by taking account of the past as well as the present. Without the instrument of history, theory should not be constructed. On the other hand, he did not believe that a theoretical understanding of government and of armed conflict, although desirable, was essential for their historical reconstruction and analysis. Long sections in his historical works reveal neither theoretical arguments nor foundations. Theory might assist but did not direct Clausewitz's historical interpretations. History not only tested and validated his theories, it gave rise to some of them.

One reason for Clausewitz's elevated view of the importance of history may at first seem paradoxical: his conviction that theory must remain as close to reality as it was possible for an abstraction to be. In a comment on one of his theoretical studies that preceded *On War*, he noted that its

> scientific character consists in an attempt to investigate the phenomena of war and to indicate the links between these phenomena and the nature of their component parts. No logical conclusion has been avoided; but whenever the thread became too thin I have preferred to break it off and go back to the relevant phenomena of experience. Just as some plants bear fruit only if they don't shoot up too high, so in the practical arts the leaves and flowers of theory must be pruned and the plant kept close to its proper soil—experience.[1]

Put differently, Clausewitz's theoretical writings on war were based on the experience of war—his own experience and that of his generation, but also on another form of experience that only history can transmit. By opening up the past for us, history added to the fund of knowledge that we can acquire directly and also made possible universal concepts and generalizations across time. To enable history to do this, the historian must be as objective or—as Clausewitz would have said—as scientific or philosophical as possible.[2] In fact, the two latter qualities encompassed more than objectivity. They also represented the search for the essential quality of the phenomenon studied—violence in the case of war—and the consequential tracing of this quality in

[1] "Author's Preface," *On War*, 61.

[2] "Wissenschaftlich" or "philosophisch"—terms that Clausewitz often used interchangeably.

its changing forms through all parts of the subject. The theoretical reflection of this dynamic reality should focus on its basic structure rather than seek completeness.

Clausewitz's comment on the scientific character of his theories, as just quoted, opens with the combative assertion that the "scientific approach does not consist solely, or even mainly, in a complete system and a comprehensive doctrine."[3] Even as a young man, in his first attacks on the convoluted military theories of the late Enlightenment, he argued that a closed system of laws, principles, and prescriptions could be achieved only at the expense of reality and of history, which represented past reality. History in the service of a philosophic worldview as Hegel encapsulated it, for instance, would not serve Clausewitz's purpose.

Clausewitz's demand for objective, analytic, nonteleological history gained further strength from the affinity between this ideal and the character of his theories. The purpose of his theoretical writings was not to teach a specific doctrine that would lead to successful strategies and increase operational effectiveness, but rather to contribute to an understanding of war as an apparently permanent element of human experience. By enabling the theorist to join past and present, objective history might make possible generalized insights into the timeless reality of war. Consequently historical study became a major component in Clausewitz's pursuit of theory.

Social scientists today might find little to disagree with in this position, although few would base their hypotheses and arguments as firmly on historical interpretations as Clausewitz did. But the reciprocal relationship between the effort to understand the uniqueness of the past and the effort to generalize and conceptualize is so pervasive in his writings that the reader soon comes to feel that more is at work than the belief that history must nourish and control theory. Clausewitz's writings reflect the mind of an author who is fascinated by the specific and unique as much as he is by the general. The study and writing of history, it might be said, responded directly to his need to understand and indirectly by sharing in the development of theory. In consequence, his historical work assumed many different forms once it progressed beyond the school exercises that he wrote as a young officer, exercises that were not important in themselves but that accustomed him to think historically. *On War* and his other theoretical writings are filled with references to the past, discussions of past events, and even more or less self-contained historical essays that analyze a development over time. An example is chapter 3B of Book VIII of *On War*, which traces the interdependence of military, political, and social forms from antiquity to the nineteenth century.

Clausewitz also wrote a large number of separate historical studies. In

[3] *On War*, 61.

some of these the theoretical motive was important, perhaps even dominant, even if he did not always communicate this to the reader. He believed he could not draw theoretical conclusions from the available accounts until he himself had worked through and reinterpreted the material. Several of these studies were brief; a few were very long and demanded years of effort. The histories of the campaign of 1796 in Italy and of the war of 1799 in Switzerland and Italy fill three volumes in the posthumous collected edition of his works. Both were written in the second half of the 1820s, at a time when Clausewitz had decided to revise the manuscript of *On War* so as to strengthen the treatment of two concepts that he had come to regard as major themes of the work: the political nature of war, and the distinction between absolute and limited war. Other works are marked by a strong personal element. The author reports and interprets events that he himself had witnessed or in which he had taken part, conditions that he had experienced, individuals he had known. Still other writings, which treat war only marginally or not at all, have a political motive. The past is drawn on to illuminate domestic politics and foreign affairs of Clausewitz's own day. Finally, some of his historical studies lack either a personal, a political, or a theoretical note; the sole motivation behind them appears to be the author's fascination with the past.[4]

Clausewitz's ambition to see the past truthfully and objectively did not mean that he excised all personal opinions from his texts. On the contrary, the author is ever present, as observer, commentator, even judge—especially when he writes about conditions or events he himself had witnessed. In the chapter "Critical Analysis" of *On War,* Clausewitz distinguishes between "the critical approach and the plain narrative of a historical event," and further identifies three paths that the critical approach might take: "The discovery and interpretation of equivocal facts . . . ; the tracing of effects back to their causes . . . ; [and] the investigation and evaluation of means employed. This last is criticism proper, involving praise and censure."[5] In his previously cited essay on Clausewitz, Hans Delbrück argued that despite his "eminently historical bent" and his "extraordinarily rare faculty of absolutely objective perception," Clausewitz had chosen the last of these paths. "By vocation and intent Clausewitz was a military critic and solely a military critic."[6] This seems to confuse criticism with an analytic interpretation that goes beyond plain historical narrative, and judges Clausewitz's writings from a historicist

[4] For general discussions of Clausewitz's historical writings, see Hans Delbruck, "General von Clausewitz," in *Historische and politische Aufsätze* (Berlin, 1887); Rothfels, *Politik und Krieg;* Rothfels's introduction and notes to *Politische Schriften und Briefe,* which discuss a number of historical texts; and Paret, *Clausewitz and the State,* 78–89, 327–55.

[5] *On War,* 156.

[6] Delbrück, *Aufsätze,* 218.

position of impossible purity. But undoubtedly Clausewitz was prepared to make sharp judgments, even if he always sought to understand the conditions obtaining at the time. Several of his works could not be published immediately after his death because they would have given offense to the court and to senior personages in the government and the army. Other manuscripts that were included in the first posthumous edition of his collected works or that appeared separately had their language toned down. Recently it has been recognized that editorial emendations and substitutions were far more frequent than had been supposed. Two motives are apparent from the changes: the replacement of unusual words and phrases to make the text stylistically more conventional; and the reduction or even elimination of the author's criticism of personalities and of Prussian institutions and policies.

The restored texts not only reveal Clausewitz's individuality with greater precision, they also offer additional evidence for his political views, which in the sixteen years he was to live after Napoleon's downfall placed him among those groups in Prussia that favored a constitution, responsible ministerial government, equality of legal rights, and a degree of political participation of the upper classes. To the conservatives that regained full control of the government and army after 1815, he was a man of doubtful political reliability who had never renounced the radical reformism of his earlier years. When the prospect arose of his being made ambassador at the court of St. James, his conservative critics succeeded in reversing the appointment, because, as the British envoy reported to his government, in Berlin "there is not that confidence in his being wholly free from revolutionary views."[7] These views did not shape Clausewitz's historical interpretations, but occasionally they enriched them with a grace note.

His urge to explore past reality was strengthened by the succession of events that began with the fall of the Bastille a few days after his ninth birthday. Four years later, as an ensign in a Prussian infantry regiment, he first fought against the armies of the new republic, and until his thirty-fifth year, when he served as chief of staff of a Prussian corps in the campaign that ended with the battle of Waterloo, his existence was largely determined by the French Revolution and its political and military consequences. In particularly intense form his career reflected a more general experience. The French Revolution was the central political and social fact of Clausewitz's generation. Its material and intellectual forces changed the political map of Europe, accel-

[7] Clausewitz's prospects for a diplomatic career between 1818 and 1820, and the reasons for their eventual failure, are reconstructed from archival sources in Peter Paret, "Bemerkungen zu dem Versuch von Clausewitz, zum Gesandten in London Ernannt zu Werden," *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands* 26 (1977): 161–72; Harald Müller adds further details in "Die Karlsbader Beschlüsse und Clausewitz," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte* 36 (1988): 7–25. The episode is summarized in Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, x, 319–23.

erated the opening up of society, and beyond these pressures and dislocations affected large areas of European thought. New possibilities emerged, but at the cost of old certainties. If this was at first especially marked in philosophy and political theory, it soon spread to the study of history—understanding the Revolution and its causes became an urgent necessity. In a more general sense, the fact that the Revolution had occurred at all altered people's ideas about the past as such, changed the character of historical inquiry and interpretation, and especially in Germany helped raise historical scholarship to a position of cultural dominance that it was to retain for several generations.

Among the great variety of reactions to the Revolution, Clausewitz's response stands out for its nonpartisan, complex realism. From the time when he began to set down his ideas on the history and present condition of Europe as a young officer of twenty-three, he seems to have been convinced that the Revolution had been inevitable, that the administrative system of the French monarchy and its economic and social institutions were so inefficient and inequitable that a violent correction had to come.[8] His view of a society regaining its balance and progressing toward its full potential of power was accompanied but not clouded by a strong distaste for revolutionary rhetoric and mob rule. On the other hand, his recognition of the need for change and his sympathy for the claims of at least the educated and commercial elements of the Third Estate did not weaken his sense of the danger that a reformed, rejuvenated France posed to Europe. He never doubted that war alone could bring French expansion to a halt.[9] This way of looking at the Revolution as it blended into the Napoleonic empire, which emphasized the inevitable interaction and conflict of interests and energies instead of making moral judgments, was closely linked to attitudes that were to characterize his historical writings: a sense of impermanence in human affairs, disbelief in progress, denial that the social and political status quo reflected a God-given order, and rejection of any teleological force in history.

Revolutions demonstrate the reality of great and sudden change. In an unusually direct manner, the events of his youth and early maturity confronted Clausewitz with the need to explain the changes that were taking place, and offered him the choice between two different views of history. In the beginning the French Revolution presented itself to Clausewitz largely in military terms. It coincided with revolutionary innovations in military organization, tactics, and operations, first implemented on a large scale by the Republican armies, and until the Napoleonic empire collapsed it was more urgent for Clausewitz to understand these innovations and turn them against

[8] References to the French Revolution abound in his writings. The most important analysis of its causes occurs in the essay "Agitation," pp. 338–45, below.

[9] For a characteristic statement of this view, see his note of 1803 beginning "Whether the Franks are like the Romans?" p. 239, below.

the French than to fit the Revolution into the larger processes of European history. On a deeper level, he took for granted that, like the Revolution, the revolution in war could be accurately interpreted only if the conditions preceding it were also taken into account. To many of the more reflective soldiers of his day this posed no particular difficulty. Jomini expressed a widely held belief when he claimed that Napoleon, the heir of the Revolution, had discovered permanently valid principles of war, and that earlier wars were merely stages in a long, continuous development leading to the Napoleonic pattern of large armies launched on campaigns of deep penetration, aimed at destroying the opponent's forces and occupying his capital. According to this view, the most gifted commanders of the past, Frederick the Great for example, acted whenever possible according to strategic principles that subsequently were fully implemented by Napoleon in a military environment that had changed little between the 1740s and 1815.

Clausewitz never questioned the links—ranging from the central element of all wars, organized mass violence, to the use of similar or even identical weapons—that joined warfare before and after the Revolution. But he also insisted on important discontinuities. The military institutions of the ancien régime, he wrote in an essay on the life of his teacher, Scharnhorst, "had collapsed in the wars of the French Revolution; its forms and means were no longer appropriate to the changed times and new political conditions."[10] The earlier period should not be dismissed as merely preparatory to the present, and the present was misinterpreted if it was regarded merely as the fulfillment of past strivings. This fundamental difference aside, individual human beings should not be regarded as interchangeable. Clausewitz noted the uniqueness of the creative personality—a historical force that in his theories reappeared as the concept of genius—each acting in conditions that could never be duplicated. Frederick the Great and Napoleon not only governed and waged war in dissimilar environments, they also differed in character and personal circumstances. That Napoleon reigned not by inheritance but as a newcomer who needed to establish his dynasty and demonstrate the permanence of his rule might have compelled him to take greater risks than a hereditary monarch was likely to accept. The norms of war that some writers thought they had discovered were not only dependent on the circumstances of the times, they were derived from the unique situation and interests of one individual, which might not recur under altered conditions or in different personalities. Napoleon's mass armies and all-embracing strategic goals were made possible by new conditions and also expressed a highly personal conception of war. In the same way, the society, economy, and politics of the ancien régime had been conducive to, and had justified, limited operations.[11]

[10] "On the Life and Character of Scharnhorst," p. 102, below.

[11] Clausewitz's view of this issue is discussed more extensively in Peter Paret, "Continuity and

In his differentiated view of the past and in his efforts to interpret each period according to its own measure, Clausewitz reveals certain affinities with Ranke and other scholars of the Restoration era who were introducing a new outlook to the study and writing of history. This marked a departure from nearly every historian he had read in his youth. Between his arrival in Berlin in 1801 and the outbreak of war in 1806, he made excerpts of Schiller's *Revolt of the Netherlands* and of Johannes von Müller's *History of the Swiss Confederacy*, which he read with sufficient care to recognize that a passage was paraphrased from Machiavelli. Notes from those years refer to Machiavelli's *Discourses* and *Art of War*. Among other historical works he read before 1806 were books and essays by Montesquieu, Robertson, Ancillon, and Gentz. Justus Möser's *History of Osnabrück*, themes of which reappear in an essay Clausewitz wrote in 1807, he had perhaps already encountered in the 1790s, and he had begun the intensive exploration of Frederick the Great's *History of My Times* and *History of the Seven Years' War*, which resulted in important studies in the 1820s. The number of specifically military historians cited or referred to in his early writings is even greater.[12]

We can guess which aspects in the works of these writers were most interesting or appealing to him. Machiavelli's frank recognition of the primacy of political and military power might have had a liberating impact on his thought. He must have valued Montesquieu's skepticism, specificity, and recognition of the importance of irrational factors; years later Clausewitz singled out his work as a model for his own theoretical efforts. In the same way, he valued Möser's belief in the individuality of historical epochs and his replacement of the Enlightenment's concept of progress with the more earthbound, less abstract sense of historical evolution. He might have learned above all from Schiller, the author most frequently cited or referred to in his early manuscripts and correspondence, that a historian need not express himself in convoluted, academic-bureaucratic German, but could develop ideas and narrate events in vigorous, carefully structured prose. But particular influences are difficult to trace. Perhaps Frederick's irony and easy use of antithesis helped inspire similar characteristics of Clausewitz's prose, but he encountered such elements in other authors as well. Far easier to recognize are the important differences that distinguished Clausewitz even in his youth from writers who could stimulate, nourish, but not fully satisfy his intense wish to reach back and understand the past.

Above all, his historical writings are free of any teleological message. Much as he admired Schiller, he could not write history in order to celebrate

Discontinuity in Some Interpretations of Tocqueville and Clausewitz," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (1988): 161–69.

[12] On Clausewitz's early reading, see Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, 78–97.

the idea of freedom or, indeed, the workings of any abstraction supposedly revealed through the realities of the past. In the same way, the patriotic, idealistic purposes of Müller's *History of the Swiss* could never have served as a model for him—neither in its purpose nor in its style—although this did not prevent him from studying Müller's works and learning from them. Schiller and Müller were born in the 1750s; their elevation of moral absolutes as the dramatic goals of social, political, and military events was an essential part of their struggle against narrowly rationalistic and judgmental tendencies of Enlightenment historiography. But even some scholars who were Clausewitz's exact contemporaries and who published their most important and influential works during the last decade of Clausewitz's life differed sharply from him in the concerns they carried to the study of history. Friedrich Christoph Schlosser saw himself as an educator of liberal Germany, and regarded his histories as means of strengthening ethical values and building moral character. Heinrich Luden and Friedrich von Raumer both idealized the German Middle Ages, and Raumer in particular helped turn the Hohenstauffen emperors into heroic figures for the Germans of the Restoration, symbols of a past empire that held out the promise of renewed German unity in the future. They used history for purposes external to it. Clausewitz studied and wrote history to gain greater understanding of the past, and—by means of the contribution history could make to theory—of the past, present, and future phenomenon of war.

One author, Scharnhorst, whom Clausewitz not only read with the greatest care but who also strongly influenced his scholarship was not primarily a historian. Like Schiller and Müller, Scharnhorst was born in the 1750s, but he was never entrapped in the moralizing assumptions of late-Enlightenment historiography, nor did he seek to rise above them by writing history as a drama of ethical grandeur and conflict. In his voluminous theoretical and technical works on military institutions and war, the interpretation of the past is only one among several fields of study. He was nevertheless convinced that the study of history should be at the center of any advanced study of war, and the historical passages in his writings are anything but mere background or decoration. Historical examples fill his theoretical treatises and manuals and illustrate how the techniques under discussion functioned in reality. In *On War* Clausewitz praises Scharnhorst's use of historical material even in manuals meant to be carried on campaign in the officer's saddlebag—examples drawn from earlier wars whose analysis helped to bridge the ever-present, dangerous gap between theory and practice—and his own extensive use of historical examples owes much to Scharnhorst.[13] The expert, sober manner in which Scharnhorst outlined these circumscribed episodes of military his-

[13] "On Historical Examples," *On War*, 170.

tory carried over to his more extended historical studies, whose subject was no longer the formation of combat patrols or the effectiveness of land mines but strategy and national policy. Particularly interesting in this group is a long essay of 1797 on the reasons for the French successes in the revolutionary wars, which Scharnhorst wrote as an analytic introduction to a history of these wars. The essay is an original and farsighted effort to appraise the more important components of the French effort, from the Republic's geographic position and its unified political and military command to ideology and psychological factors. That the author was a serving officer who had fought the French for years in the army of an absolutist state did not prevent him from emphasizing the importance of political and popular energies that were generated in a society more open than his own.[14]

Scharnhorst's thorough knowledge of military engineering, siege warfare, and the design and employment of firearms is often reflected in his historical works. Clausewitz's campaign histories contain little of this. They focus mainly on the relationship between government policy and military action, the psychology and ability of the commanders, and on the construction of often highly detailed analytic narratives of strategic decisions and their operational implementation. They are also more openly speculative and seek illustrations and comparisons across a wide spectrum of the European past. The writings of teacher and pupil nevertheless show a number of related traits. Some psychological and social affinities may have helped Clausewitz incorporate parts of Scharnhorst's historical style, and perhaps made the process of adoption possible in the first place. Like his teacher, he valued the specific. If he could never quite attain Scharnhorst's profound realism, he always strove for it, and both men held nonpartisan, utilitarian views of the political and military forces whose histories they interpreted. Clausewitz developed even his abstractions in a remarkably concrete manner, surrounding them with examples and analogies drawn from the sciences and everyday experience; he liked to characterize states, armies, and the processes of conflict in terms borrowed from physics and mechanics.[15] Perhaps he adopted

[14] On Scharnhorst's writings, see Rudolf Stadelmann, *Schicksal und geistige Welt* (Wiesbaden, 1952); and the chapter "Scharnhorst's Mediation Between Old and New," in Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, 56–77.

[15] One of the most striking examples of this approach is the concept of friction, which Clausewitz describes in part in the following words: "The military machine—the army and everything related to it—is basically very simple and therefore seems easy to manage. But we should bear in mind that none of its components is one piece, each part is composed of individuals, everyone of whom retains his potential for friction. . . . A battalion is made up of individuals, the least important of whom may chance to delay things or somehow make them go wrong. . . . This tremendous friction, which cannot, as in mechanics, be reduced to a few points, is everywhere in contact with chance, and brings about effects that cannot be measured, just because they are

this device from Enlightenment authors. And yet to imagine large institutions and their component parts as machines, levers, ratchets, or counterweights, subject to the pull of gravity and the retarding force of friction, might have contributed to the evenhanded, practical note that runs through his historical interpretations—an interest in understanding how things really work that was further strengthened by a social fact: like Scharnhorst, Clausewitz did not belong by birth to the traditional or even to the recently ennobled elites among whom he spent his life. Scharnhorst was an outsider, Clausewitz's background was only marginally more privileged. Each had made his own way, and each thought about society and his place in it in highly pragmatic, unideological terms.

Clausewitz's writings are marked by the struggle for an objective interpretation of the past, a quality he thought essential for its own sake as well as for enabling history to create theory. But what historian did not seek or claim objectivity, which in any case is an ideal of many meanings? In his *History of the Thirty Years' War* Schiller tried to be evenhanded, and, according to Johannes von Müller, he succeeded. This did not prevent him from glorifying Gustavus Adolphus as the inspired champion of religious freedom while condemning Catholic obscurantism and political ambition. Clausewitz's objectivity was more encompassing, and his rejection of myths in favor of more mundane realities perplexed many of his early readers. His evaluation of Frederick the Great became famous for its sober recognition of the king's superior qualities and its total lack of adulation. When one of his first, long manuscripts, "Gustavus Adolphus's Campaigns of 1630–32," was at last published in 1837, the editor felt compelled to note that "Clausewitz's characterization of the king [did not] sufficiently emphasize that the war was a matter of conscience for him, and that his true greatness had another basis than military ambition."[16] Perhaps ultimately Clausewitz's historical objectivity derived from his matter-of-fact belief that the urge for power and expansion was inherent in most political and social entities. Even if the scholar favored one side over the other, his recognition that the opponent also functioned according to his nature and interests served as a brake on partisanship. Clausewitz's refusal to judge the past by the standards or concerns of the present did the rest. Indeed, as his political essays demonstrate, he was far more critical of his own time than of any period of the past, and the evenhandedness that generally marks his historical writings is unusual not only in comparison with the historical literature of his day, but perhaps even more so in comparison with the historical literature of the following generation.

largely due to chance." "Friction in War," *On War*, 119–20. An early version of this statement is found in *The Campaign of 1812 in Russia*, pp. 165–66, below.

[16] "Gustav Adolphs Feldzüge von 1630–1632," *Werke*, 9: v.

Ranke published his first books toward the end of Clausewitz's life. Clausewitz was familiar with at least some of them. He read *The History of the Serbian Revolution* shortly after it was published at the beginning of 1829, but we do not know his opinion of the work.[17] In his own historical writings, Clausewitz approaches his younger contemporary in his rejection of abstract and teleological elements in history, in his emphasis on the unique, and in his respect for the separateness and particularity of each epoch. Even their views of the state and of the European community of states reveal certain similarities, grounded in their understanding of political and military power. But Clausewitz does not follow Ranke in combining a sense of the uniqueness of each age with a belief in God's immanence in historical forces, nor was he inspired by visions of large structures and patterns of history, akin to the unity and division of the Latin and Germanic peoples that for Ranke defined the European experience since the rise of Christianity and the decline of the universal empire of Rome. Equally, perhaps even more significant, Clausewitz's historical writings show no sign of the methodological revolution initiated by Ranke and by a few older scholars whose work influenced or paralleled Ranke's: Savigny, Karl Ritter, Niebuhr—once again almost exactly Clausewitz's contemporaries. Nothing in Clausewitz's treatment of his material points to the new, more systematic comparative analysis of documents, accounts, and traditions that these men developed to reveal the genuine facts of the past and gain a firmer sense of the dynamic of events. He possessed only the most limited recognition of the importance of archival research and of the systematic exploitation of the available material, and seems on the whole to have been prepared to accept published texts as faithful to the original manuscripts. His sources were other historical accounts, as well as published memoirs, reports, and correspondence. His sparse references suggest that he based his works on a small number of sources, which he read critically and compared to one another. He put himself in the position of the writer, as he always tried to put himself in the position of the people that he and others wrote about. His treatment of Napoleon's memoirs in his history of the Italian campaign of 1796 is a good example: he uses the memoirs to help him understand events and compares the events with Napoleon's account to evaluate the memoirs, always conscious of the personality, exceptional ability, and the political and private motives of their author.

Taken together, these practices suggest a writer who in historiographical terms is a transitional figure: a rigorous thinker who has left past preconceptions behind but has not acquired the new methodological tools that are being developed; an amateur scholar, not an academic, untouched by the na-

[17] Clausewitz to Gneisenau, July 8, 1829, in *Schriften*, 2, part 1, 549.

scent professionalism of the discipline of history. We may regard him as a precursor of German historicism whose work has not yet acquired scientific character. But as always when we are faced with a scholar who rises above the average, what is most interesting and valuable about his work transcends methodological and historiographical categories.

ONE

"Some Comments on the War of the Spanish Succession after Reading the Letters of Madame de Maintenon to the Princess des Ursins" (1826 or later)

Clausewitz wrote these comments in or after 1826, the year of publication of the edition of Mme de Maintenon's correspondence that he must have used.[1] *The notes exemplify his manner in maturity of working with historical sources and of thinking about the past. He is interested in differences in conditions and attitudes between former times and his own, differences he tries to understand by putting himself in the position of the people he writes about. On the other hand, his frequent observations on strategic factors almost always link past and present—for instance, he comments that the best route by which to invade France is still from the northeast, as it was in the age of Louis XIV. The notes also demonstrate the dialectical form in which he liked to develop his interpretations. The opening paragraph begins with a statement emphasizing the serious dangers facing France between 1706 and 1711. This is immediately followed by the observation that France was not as weak as is usually assumed. The paragraph ends with the assertion that not weakness but the superior talents of the allied commanders caused France to lose the war. In subsequent paragraphs, however, nothing is said about Marlborough and Prince Eugene—both of whom are frequently mentioned by Mme de Maintenon—but a great deal about the personalities of the French commanders and the limited scope of their authority, which in turn help explain the success of Marlborough and Eugene.*

The comments end with an extended gloss on a passage of one of the letters, which expressed approval that Louis XIV did not directly involve himself in the conduct of military operations. Mme de Maintenon's statement, Clausewitz believes, reflected a general attitude toward kingship and war, which in part is explained by the limited character of war at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Perhaps it was no accident that this passage caught his attention: at the time he wrote, in the second half of the 1820s, he was refining his analysis of the nature of limited and unlimited war, making the distinction

[1] *Lettres inédites de Mme de Maintenon et de la Princesse des Ursins*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1826). An earlier edition of selections (*Lettres inédites de la Princesse des Ursins a M. le Maréchal de Villeroi, suivies de sa correspondance avec Madame de Maintenon* [Paris, 1806]) does not include Mme de Maintenon's letter of April 28, 1708, which Clausewitz discusses.

between the two forms the basis of his entire theoretical work. We cannot say whether Clausewitz knew that Mme de Maintenon's letters to the Princess des Ursins, first lady-in-waiting to the queen of Spain, had a pronounced official character; but it was obvious to him that Mme de Maintenon expressed not so much her own views as ideas widely held at court, which makes her letters significant beyond their account of personalities and events. The refusal of Louis XIV to lead his armies thus becomes a key to the understanding of his times.

We see from these letters:

1. In what perplexities, distress, and anxiety France found herself between 1706 and 1711. A few successful campaigns might threaten her very existence! To be sure, people always talk of a Europe united against Louis XIV. But this Europe consisted merely of Austria, parts of the Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch, Great Britain, and intermittently Savoy. Ranged in opposition were France, the greater part of Spain, and the insurgent Hungarians, against whom Austria was waging war. If we consider how badly located were the armies that England, Holland, and Savoy could use against France, how inconsequential were the armed forces of the Holy Roman Empire, and that Austria was compelled to divert part of her army to Hungary, we will scarcely claim that their political superiority over France was very great, and that the cause of their eventual success lay in this superiority. No! Success was brought about by the two great and enterprising commanders of the alliance.

2. That of all perplexities, the need for money was the greatest, which demonstrates how completely war was dependent on money at that time.

3. That although favor and caprice had far less influence on the appointment of senior commanders than is usually assumed, secondary considerations did often play too large a part, which significantly damaged the king's cause. In 1708 the duke of Burgundy was sent to Flanders because opinion in the army strongly favored the presence of a prince of royal blood. Vendôme's authority was reduced, soon disputes arose between him and the prince, and matters grew even worse when Berwick arrived in Flanders with units of the army from Germany and became the prince's councilor. Now the army had three commanders in chief. According to these letters, the battle of Oudenaarde, usually regarded as the work of the duke of Burgundy, seems to have been opposed by him: Vendôme alone made the decision.

The failure of this campaign kept Vendôme from serving in the following years, and he did not regain command until 1710 in Spain. In 1709 Villars, who until then had been successful in Germany, was made commander in chief in the main theater of war, Flanders. A bold, gay, somewhat reckless personality, he was regarded as the best of the senior commanders, or at least

the luckiest. However, the king seems to have felt uneasy, and the sixty-five-year-old Boufflers, who had restored his reputation the previous year by his defense of Lille, and since then had gained considerable trust and made himself seem important through his honest zeal in carrying out administrative assignments, was sent to the army in Flanders. It was said that this was a precaution in case Marshal Villars met with some accident; but presumably the careful and conscientious Boufflers was sent to assist him. This is how the matter appears when the letters allow us to look backstage, while before the footlights the drama of the aged veteran hurrying to serve under a young marshal is presented as an act of enthusiastic patriotism, designed to inflame the spirit of the entire army.

As is known, Villars actually was wounded in the battle of Malplaquet, and Boufflers made himself very useful to the army when he took command of the retreat. But surely it had been hoped that his usefulness would consist in preventing a battle of Malplaquet from being fought at all.

Unless the duke of Orleans (the later regent) is numbered among generals of the first rank, the French lacked sufficient commanders of this quality for all their major armies. They fought in four theaters of war: Flanders, Germany (that is, the upper Rhine), Italy or Savoy, and Spain; but they had only three commanders of more or less equally high quality: Villars, Vendôme, and Berwick.

4. We learn from these letters that the French court was always much more concerned about Flanders than about the other theaters of war. This is only to be expected, because despite the many fortresses in Flanders the area is so much nearer the capital, which could also be regarded as the core of the monarchy. At the same time, the concern of the court points to the policies that the allies should have pursued.

If one operates in conjunction with England and Holland, the line of advance from Brussels to Paris is far superior to an advance from Strasbourg. For one thing it is much shorter, besides it runs through rich, level, populated areas, with few warlike inhabitants; and finally (and this is the main point) the line is not flanked by the mass of French territory as would be the case with an advance from Mainz, and even more so with an advance from Strasbourg. Immediately to its right is the sea, and on its left—since the invading force would cross the French frontier in a southwesterly direction—only as much enemy territory as is gradually left behind during the advance. By contrast, an advance from Strasbourg to Paris has all of southern France, or rather five sixths of the whole of France, on its left. This consideration is even more important today than it was in the past when extraordinary means of defense [for instance, guerrilla operations] were less common.

5. We see that the operation against Toulon did alarm the court, because the loss of this city would have meant a significant reduction of the state's

resources. But we also find that it was not difficult or costly to protect the city. An offensive in Provence is the poorest measure one can take against France. In those days, of course, people still feared an insurrection in the Cevennes, which might have been coordinated with such an attack.

6. As already noted, Villars emerges in these letters as a bold, somewhat reckless commander; Vendôme as lazy, cynical, but enterprising; Berwick as thoughtful and cautious.

7. On April 29, 1708, Madame de Maintenon writes to the Princess des Ursins: "No, Madame, the king will not go to Flanders, for the same reason that the king of Spain will not place himself at the head of his armies. Their affairs are not in sufficiently bad shape to warrant desperate actions, nor sufficiently favorable to allow them to do something that is worthy of their greatness."

Elsewhere she praises the king of Spain for not having joined the army, "because he would not have been able to do anything brilliant."

We should not be misled by the fact that these are the words of a woman, moreover a woman, as Madame de Maintenon says of herself and as is evident, who has no talent whatever for matters of state and for war. She merely voices the opinions of her environment, but this environment is made up precisely of the individuals whose opinions and points of view matter to us: the king, the senior commanders, princes, ministers, etc. If we take Madame de Maintenon's statement as the considered opinion of these men, it becomes highly significant. That a ruler who is not also a great man may quietly hold the view she expresses should surprise no one familiar with human weaknesses. But that such a point of view is openly stated, in a sense preached as a political principle, is most remarkable! It is explained by the fact that in the conditions of the French state at the time, war—even a very serious and dangerous war—appears to be a matter of secondary importance, not worthy of the king's personal involvement, unless the war, like some luxurious object, can be used to glorify the monarch's person and his reign. Certainly people had learned from European history that war could come to dominate a state, that a state could be drawn into the whirlpool of war and be threatened with extinction. But the size of the French monarchy was so disproportionate to the limited nature of war in the early eighteenth century that no one could think extinction was a possibility for France. The limited intensity of war gave rise to the opinion that for France war was a secondary matter, and in turn this point of view influenced the character of the war.*

* On July 22, 1675, after Louis XIV had left the army in the Netherlands, Turenne wrote to Louvois: "I am pleased with the king's decision to leave the army. This is no longer the time for His Majesty to remain, and it seems to me that nothing can be more prudent than his decision to leave after having demonstrated so much resolve during the time he was here."

TWO

"Observations on the Wars of the Austrian Succession" (early 1820s)

Aside from the Napoleonic Wars, the wars of Frederick the Great are the military episodes most often discussed and cited in Clausewitz's writings. Together they make up over three quarters of the references to military history in On War. *The young Clausewitz was undoubtedly brought up on the triumphs, hardships, and legends of the Frederician campaigns, and after he returned, a fifteen-year-old lieutenant, from the War of the First Coalition, he began to study them seriously and continued to occupy himself with the subject for the rest of his life. In the early 1820s he decided to set down his ideas in comprehensive chronological form. The manuscript was printed in the tenth volume of his posthumous works under the title, "The Campaigns of Frederick the Great from 1741 to 1762." It is not a true history but rather, as the subtitles of the two main parts indicate,* Bemerkungen*—remarks, observations, comments, some no more than one or two sentences long, set apart by § signs. The text that follows is of the first main part, "Observations on the Wars of the Austrian Succession."*

At the time of writing, Clausewitz notes, relatively little had been published on the first two Silesian wars, from 1740 to 1742 and 1744 to 1745, in contrast to the Seven Years' War, on which the literature was already extensive. The first part mentions only one source, Frederick the Great's Histoire de mon temps. *To this should be added Jacob de Cogniazo's* Geständnisse eines österreichischen Veteranen, *which contains material on the early period, but is not referred to until the second part, and probably Ludwig Müller's* Kurzgefasste Beschreibung der drey schlesischen Kriege, *a work Clausewitz must have known because he was Müller's student in Berlin from 1801 to 1804.* A *few articles as well as references in memoirs and other larger works complete the narrow historiographical base available to him.*

"In no war was strategy as saturated with politics as in this one." With this comment in §3 of the "Observations," Clausewitz does not mean to suggest that other wars were to any lesser degree instruments of policy, but that in the Wars of the Austrian Succession policy and political considerations determined strategy and even the movement of subordinate units to an unusual extent. The wars, which began in December 1740 when Frederick exploited the political uncertainties following the death of the Holy Roman Emperor,

Charles VI, by occupying Silesia, were an alternating sequence of fighting and negotiating between powers, some of whom changed sides more than once. Throughout the conflict, the victories the Prussians gained were more important psychologically and politically than in their direct military impact. At last two victories over the Austrians in the summer and fall of 1745, combined with the defeat of Austria's ally, Saxony, led to the Peace of Dresden, which left Frederick in undisturbed possession of Silesia for the next eleven years. The wars marked an important phase in the development of the Frederician and post-Frederician army and in the growth in power of the Prussian state—the traditions and environment in which Clausewitz spent his early life. They also differed significantly from the wars of the Napoleonic era. Repeatedly, Clausewitz interprets a course of action that his own generation might find flawed or incomprehensible by referring to the conditions of the times and to attitudes and assumptions then current. The "Observations" are a step in a lengthy comparative process. Similar studies of the Napoleonic era, for instance his critique of the campaign of 1814, also included in this volume, gradually led Clausewitz to comprehensive interpretations of the character of war in both periods and eventually also to his theory of the dual nature of war.

In the first paragraphs of the "Observations," Clausewitz discusses his subject from the perspective of war, not of diplomacy, although political factors are always in evidence and occasionally become preeminent. His comments follow an approximate chronology of events. He opens with a specific operational phenomenon that might be regarded as of secondary significance but which is linked to fundamental issues of war and society of the times: surprising the opposing army when it is dispersed in quarters. Several encounters of this kind occurred in the war because reconnaissance was poor, especially on the Prussian side. In part, these tactical surprises were a consequence of the social conditions of an age when the rank and file consisted primarily of mercenaries and of men pressed to serve. The organization of the troops, their march formations, and to some extent even their tactical deployment were influenced by the need to prevent desertion. Scouting and patrolling were therefore best left to the minority of men whose loyalty could be trusted and who knew how to act on their own. In the Wars of the Austrian Succession these requirements were met by the Austrian light troops, most coming from the so-called military frontier at the southern edge of Hungary. A brief paragraph in the "Observations" refers to these units, which were one of the institutional forces that gradually transformed the armies of the ancien régime into the more flexible mass armies of industrializing Europe.

The treatment of specifically military topics is accompanied in the "Observations" by a section on the political and strategic fragmentation of the war, and above all by an essay on the manner in which Frederick's political concerns determined his operations, a discussion that takes up over half of the

entire work. The predominantly military focus broadens to encompass policy and diplomacy in an analysis that Hans Rothfels judged to be exemplary in its "energetic bringing together of military and political factors."[1] *Its unusual character is perhaps best appreciated when the "Observations" are compared with studies of eighteenth-century wars by Clausewitz's contemporaries. A similar integration of diplomatic, strategic, and operational analyses is found only in the works of Frederick the Great; the accounts by other participants or academic historians concentrate either on diplomacy or on the fighting. But even in military history as it is written today a comparably comprehensive approach would be very rare.*

Few readers who are not military specialists will want to follow the operational movements in detail. What matters far more is to gain an impression of the way in which Clausewitz clarifies the political and strategic reasons for operational decisions, and in turn analyzes their political and strategic consequences. The result is a remarkable case study that brings out the essentials of limited war in the eighteenth century.

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1. Surprising the Enemy in His Bivouacs

(1741) In its opening the campaign of 1741 is very strange. With about 39,000 men on two roads over Zuckermantel and over Johannisberg, Field Marshal Neipperg breaks into the Prussian bivouacs, which extend along the mountains toward Troppau. Frederick the Great is with the upper Silesian corps at Jägerndorf; in the little time available he can assemble only thirteen battalions. His forces at Frankenstein, Neisse, Brieg, and Jägerndorf are separated from one another. Neipperg advances on Neisse, raises the Prussian siege of the town, and continues toward Brieg. The king hurries back, is already too late to cross the Neisse River by Sorgau, marches down river, and crosses near Michelau. He has now been joined by the forces from Neisse and Brieg and intends to march to Ohlau to cover his wagons and heavy equipment when he encounters the Austrian bivouacs near Mollwitz. In the true sense of the term, Neipperg had surprised the king in his quarters, and had cut off his direct line of retreat so that the king was forced to fight with his front reversed. Had Neipperg won the battle, it would have been the most brilliant campaign imaginable. The king wins the battle, but he does not exploit his victory. Instead of assaulting Neipperg once more at Neisse, to which he has withdrawn, Frederick is satisfied with reoccupying Brieg.

[1] *Politische Schriften und Briefe*, 244.

2. *Defense of Large Rivers*

(1744) The defense of the Rhine by Marshal Coigny and General Seckendorf against Prince Charles of Lorraine in 1744 deserves closer analysis, although it led only to average results. One would probably find that the defense might have achieved much.

3. *The Political Nature of Wars at the Time*

The Austrians succeed in crossing the Rhine—and do nothing, although they are the superior force. Noailles reinforces the French considerably, and the Austrians, in any case called back by Frederick's new offensive, withdraw across the Rhine and move to Bohemia. The French remain on the Rhine, lay siege to Freiburg with 70,000 men, and detach only a small number to General Seckendorf. In short, the campaign is very much in tune with the times.

In no war was strategy as saturated with politics as in this one. Except for Austria, none of the powers had interests that called for an all-out effort, and the dispersed location of the belligerents led to a variety of plans and operational choices unequalled in any other war. The Austrians faced the French in Italy, on the upper Rhine, in Flanders, but also in Bohemia and Austria proper. One year men fought in Bohemia, the next on the Danube, then along the Rhine. In Flanders the French faced the Dutch and the British but could also turn against Hanover.

4. *Leaving Garrisons in Unimportant Towns*

When Frederick the Great quits Tabor and Budweis in October 1744, he leaves the towns garrisoned, in part because he doesn't want to give up the few hundred ill and wounded soldiers who remain there. This [sort of] measure, which scarcely seems justified and nevertheless occurs often, is characteristic of the time. And in general, this campaign in Bohemia consists of many insignificant steps, if we exclude the rapid conquest of Prague with its garrison of 12,000 men.

5. *Characteristic Deployment of Forces*

(1745) Frederick the Great's position in Bohemia before the battle of Soor is curious. In his camp near Chlumetz and later between Jaromirs and Smirschitz he faces the Elbe, and his supply lines and lines of retreat over Trautenau to Schweidnitz as well as over Braunau to Glatz lie nearly in front of him. The prince of Lorraine between Königgrätz and Jaromirs also has his

supply line in front of his left wing in Pardubitz and Deutsch-Brodt. The County of Glatz is occupied by Prussian troops under Fouqué, who engages the light troops of the Austrians with good success. The Austrians have far more light troops than the king, who is forced to fight for each transport as it arrives from Schweidnitz every five days. This situation lasts 4½ months. To cover his supply lines the king also detached forces to Glatz and to upper Silesia, so that the army of 65,000 men with which he had entered Bohemia was reduced to no more than 18,000 in the camp at Studenz and in the battle of Soor, while the prince of Lorraine had 40,000 men.

6. *Character of the First Four Battles*

(1741–1745) Basically all four battles of the first Silesian wars—Mollwitz, Czaslau, Hohenfriedberg, and Soor—are true encounter battles, defensive actions that occur by chance, in which at the last moment Frederick the Great goes on the attack. The exception may be Hohenfriedberg, a battle that he more or less foresaw and wanted to fight. In the others, the enemy appeared close at hand, it would have been dangerous to retreat—in any case the political situation made a victory desirable—and so he went ahead in God's name. As a result he gained no advantage from these battles other than the prisoners he took and the trophies he won. In much the same way, the Austrians weren't really interested in fighting a battle. They did not advance with the firm intention of seeking out the opposing army and attacking it. They did not hunger for a victory. They advanced because their government had ordered them to attempt something. And in every case they wanted to maneuver the enemy back toward his own borders and gain some territory rather than to win a genuine victory. They fought merely because a battle wasn't diametrically opposed to their purpose, and because the king advanced so rapidly that they couldn't easily avoid him.

7. *Frederick the Great's Plans of Campaign in the First Silesian Wars*

The strategic plans of Frederick the Great in his first four campaigns link up very simply with his political plans. In 1741 he wanted to occupy Silesia, then defend it, and nothing more. He even signed a secret agreement mediated by the British, according to which the defense of Neisse was only for show. But the king realized that he was not yet able to gain a satisfactory peace. Consequently he could not do without his allies; new prospects of conquering a part of Bohemia appeared; if he could not retain these territories they might always serve in a trade for the firm possession of Silesia. In the campaign of 1742 he consequently decided to help in the relief of M. de