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N. 6 2025

Fascicolo 23. Luglio 2025 Storia Militare Moderna (6)



Società Italiana di Storia Militare

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Stendardo di Lepanto (1570), Lati A e B, Museo Diocesano di Gaeta. Wikimedia Commons. Lo stendardi fu dipinto a tempera su seta da Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta (1521-1575), su incarico del Cardinale Onorato Caetani. L'11 giugno 1570 fu benedetto da Papa Pio V nella Basilica di San Pietro e consegnato a Marcantonio II Colonna ponendolo al comando della flotta pontificia. Partito da Civitavecchia e giunto a Gaeta il 22 giugno 1571, Marcantonio Colonna, fece voto di consegnare lo stendardo al patrono della città qualora fosse tornato vincitore. Il 13 agosto Pio V fece consegnare un secondo stendardo della Lega a Don Giovanni d'Austria, comandante generale della flotta cristiana che, riunitasi a Messina, salpò il 24 agosto verso Lepanto. Durante la battaglia del 7 ottobre i due vessilli sventolarono rispettivamente sull'Ammiraglia e sulla Capitana pontificia e non furono mai centrati dal tiro nemico. Nelle stesse ore il papa ebbe la visione della vittoria e in ricordo rifinì l'Ave Maria nella forma attuale, aggiunse le Litanie lauretane alla recita del Rosario e l'appellativo mariano di Auxilium Christianorum e consacrò il 7 ottobre a Santa Maria delle Vittorie sull'Islam, celebrato con lo scampanio al mattino, a mezzogiorno e alla sera in ricordo della vittoria. Papa Gregorio XIII trasferì poi la festa alla prima domenica del mese di ottobre intitolandola alla Madonna del Rosario. Al ritorno da Lepanto, Marcantonio Colonna sciolse il voto consegnando lo stendardo al vescovo Pietro Lunello. Il vessillo fu poi conservato presso la cattedrale dei Santi Erasmo e Marciano.

Schwerpunkt

A YouTube Channel Revitalizing Western Strategic Culture through Clausewitzian Military History and Interactive Scholarshiply

Introduction to Schwerpunkt:

A Scholarly Channel for Military History and Strategic Studies

chwerpunkt is a digital channel on YouTube dedicated to the rigorous study, critical reflection, and dissemination of military history, with a particular emphasis on the Art of War, strategic culture, and their intersections with political, religious, and anthropological dimensions. Drawing inspiration from the perspective of Carl von Clausewitz, it seeks to promote an analytical, comparative, and diachronic approach to military history, addressing scholars, students, and enthusiasts. Schwerpunkt aims to provide a comprehensive encyclopedia of military history, encompassing battles, strategies, tactics, military organization, war theory, historical units, and more across all historical eras, meticulously organized into numerous specialized playlists to facilitate access. Through accessible yet rigorously researched content, Schwerpunkt endeavors to foster a profound understanding of war as a universal human phenomenon, underscoring its relevance to historical and academic discourse. Its collaboration with the Italian Society of Military History (SISM) and Nuova Antologia Militare (NAM) integrates the channel's public engagement with academic rigor, fostering dialogue between scholars and a broader audience.

Schwerpunkt's mission extends beyond dissemination: it seeks to revitalize Western strategic culture by reclaiming von Clausewitz's conceptualization of

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war as a political instrument. As a YouTube channel, Schwerpunkt leverages the platform's global reach to address the urgent need of the West to recover a deeper strategic culture, rooted in an awareness of its own historical capacity and the enduring power of Tradition. By presenting meticulously researched content in an accessible digital format, the channel bridges the gap between academic scholarship and public discourse, encouraging viewers to reconnect with the foundational principles of Western military thought. Schwerpunkt warmly invites all readers of Nuova Antologia Militare to join its YouTube channel, where they can engage with its extensive content and participate in a dynamic Question and Answer interaction with subscribers, fostering a collaborative environment that enriches the study of military history through direct dialogue and exchange of ideas. Military history is vital because it elucidates the practical functioning of war, and its theory is not grounded in abstract speculations. In an era where war is frequently reduced to cultural or sociological narratives, Schwerpunkt emphasizes the importance of studying its practical realities through comparative and diachronic analysis, highlighting the universal dynamics of the human phenomenon of war. The only proper method to study war and comprehend its mechanisms is through the near-continuous and meticulous examination of wars, campaigns, and battles, utilizing all ideally available sources. Even von Clausewitz derived his theory not from abstract reflection or solely from his critical experience in command, which was philosophical and scientific, but also from his rigorous study as a refined military historian. This approach aligns with the interests of NAM's academic audience, which values military history as a tool for understanding the complexities of modern warfare, defined in the Italian historiographical tradition as the period from 1492 to 1789.

Schwerpunkt distinguishes itself through its encyclopedic structure, organized into specialized playlists covering every aspect of military history, from tactics to strategies, historical units to war theory. Schwerpunkt's videos enable scholars to explore war as a universal phenomenon rooted in human nature and to understand its political, cultural, and anthropological implications. The channel positions itself as an authoritative resource, blending accessibility with academic depth. Its specialized playlists facilitate access to complex content, rendering Schwerpunkt an invaluable tool for scholars and enthusiasts seeking to explore military history systematically and comparatively. Its collaboration with NAM amplifies this effort, promoting studies that examine modern warfare through a von Clausewitzian lens, with particular attention to its political and anthropological dimensions. Schwerpunkt invites viewers to reconsider war not as a fragmented phenomenon but as an integrated process wherein theory and practice intertwine to reveal the deeper dynamics of warfare.

A Clausewitzian Foundation

The intellectual core of Schwerpunkt resides in the work of Carl von Clausewitz, particularly his treatise Vom Kriege, which serves as the primary theoretical and methodological reference. War is not an extension of politics mediated by violence but a true instrument that continues politics by other means, constituting an act of force aimed at compelling the enemy to submit to one's will. This definition underscores the political nature of war. Von Clausewitz's "trinity" passion (morale and collective enthusiasm), chance (the unpredictability of the battlefield), and reason (strategic planning and political direction)—provides an analytical framework for exploring the complexity of war, enabling Schwerpunkt to analyze armies, campaigns, and tactics as expressions of political, cultural, and human dynamics.

The creator of Schwerpunkt, who holds a doctorate as a specialist in military history, has undertaken, over the years, a thorough and ongoing analysis of Vom Kriege, employing it as a guide to understand both the theoretical aspects of war and their practical application through the study of armies, strategies, and tactics. Von Clausewitz emphasizes the importance of military "genius," a quality combining intuition, experience, and rationality, enabling commanders to navigate the uncertainties of war. This concept is central to Schwerpunkt, which asserts that an authentic understanding of war requires a balance between theoretical reflection and empirical analysis of military practices. The Art of War cannot be reduced to abstract principles but must be studied through the reconstruction of tactical decisions, military organization, and technological innovations that have shaped historical wars, and thus cannot dispense with a solid historical culture, exercised in the true sense of the word and not vaguely connected to so-called political, strategic, or other studies lacking this essential foundation.

This approach opposes contemporary trends in military historiography, such as culturalism, structuralism, and the "new military history." Culturalism, in particular, is academically problematic because it denies the universality of war and attributes it to anomalous societal characteristics often mischaracterized as barbaric, whereas, in reality, the destructive potential of war increases with the development of civilization, necessitating ever-greater capacities for its collective dimension. The replacement of the warrior by the citizen-soldier is clear evidence of this, yet many contemporary trends emotionally and subjectively conflate the two, favoring a more subjective, individualistic perspective incompatible with the inherent superiority of military civilization. Culturalist scholars often appear unfamiliar with Vom Kriege: for example, it is absurd and baseless to claim that von Clausewitz addressed only the warfare of his time, without understanding medieval feudal warfare or being capable of grasping war as a phenomenon in itself, beyond his era. In fact, von Clausewitz's theory remains an objectively valid and practical method for understanding modern warfare, unmatched by any other theoretical framework. Even more egregious are misconceptions regarding the supposed comparability between Vom Kriege and works like Sun Tzu's The Art of War: this error stems from a profound educational and cultural deficit, erroneously equating a philosophy contemporaneous with Heraclitus and Pythagoras to one contemporaneous with Hegel and Kant, resulting from a failure to apply these theories to the study of the Art of War. By ignoring Vom Kriege, culturalists focus on secondary aspects such as propaganda or gender dynamics, diverting attention from practical realities such as campaign conduct or army organization. Schwerpunkt rejects vague jargon, prioritizing clear, practical analysis aligned with von Clausewitz's intellectual rigor.

Structuralism, often intertwined with culturalism, imposes rigid interpretive frameworks that obscure the dynamic nature of war, while the "new military history" prioritizes social or economic factors at the expense of strategic and tactical realities, complicating the dynamic simplicity of war itself: as von Clausewitz explained, its conduct is both simpler and more difficult, as seen in major clashes. This practical approach ensures that Schwerpunkt's analyses remain grounded in the actual functioning of war, as advocated by von Clausewitz.

Among various historical-military examples, the channel examines how 16thcentury tactical innovations, such as the introduction of pike and arquebus formations, were integrated into the pre-existing socio-political framework of the Ancien Régime, established in the final centuries of the Middle Ages and remaining fundamental until 1789 1918, depending on the country. For instance, the pike and arquebus formations adopted by the Spanish in their tercios were integrated with the feudal system, maintaining aristocratic command of the army. Similarly, it studies the emergence of the first modern national army under Louis XIV, built on a state foundation that no longer relied on mercenary or private forces, which now depended on the crown: although Louis XIV's army, with its 400,000 men, relied on medieval taxes and noble officers, it represented a far greater leap than that emphasized by the "military revolution," which incorrectly places the end of this supposed and now discredited historiographical construct in the mid-17th century, ignoring both the continuity of military institutions in prior centuries, seen as a period of rupture, and the far broader changes in subsequent generations.

Schwerpunkt's von Clausewitzian approach is also reflected in its critique of deterministic views of war, which reduce wars to products of pre-existing or material factors. This approach emphasizes the moral dimension, underscoring the eminently political, universal, and human nature of the phenomenon, and the role of decision-making, identifying command as the most competent element of the system, upon whose decisions the strategic dimension depends. This holistic approach distinguishes Schwerpunkt from contemporary historiography and informs its mission to actively revitalize strategic culture, transferring upon the awareness of Tradition as a YouTube channel, military culture from civilian study to the strengthening of military training. Great historical events stem from will, not from crude determinism or materialism, often used in terms like "geopolitics" to support self-legitimizing narratives based on a merely rhetorical, empty, and incompetent view of a reality far removed from the constant change to which humanity must consciously adapt with strength, competence, and intelligence.

Modern Warfare: Continuity and Critical Perspective

Schwerpunkt devotes a significant portion of its content to modern warfare, defined in the Italian historiographical tradition as the period from 1492 to 1789, from the onset of the Italian Wars to the decline of the Ancien Régime. This era is characterized by political, military, and social transformations that reshaped the European landscape. These include the gradual centralization of the state, which has existed in every historical era as intrinsic to the state itself, as is evident from the basic logistical and supply challenges in the great warehouses and workshops of war chariots in Mesopotamian cities since the Bronze Age; the development of firearms and their impact on siege warfare, which, due to the relative static

nature of warfare in terms of the dimension of armies, not much larger than those of the medieval period for much of the Renaissance, does not significantly differ from the preceding era; the intensification of religious conflicts due to the decline of the great Catholic civilization; and the emergence of increasingly structured interstate competition based on individual perspectives. However, this should be seen as a negative process of modernization and disintegration toward an increasingly relativistic and subjective concept of reality, where the human element is less capable of adopting morally and scientifically objective terms: the elite no longer controls the masses, which are increasingly difficult to align with a unified vision of reality, undermining the fundamental principles of political unity, strategic culture, and social harmony. This negative modernization fragmented traditional structures, promoting a relativism that weakened the ability to approach war with moral and scientific clarity: it is no coincidence that von Clausewitz stands at the crossroads of the decline of the great traditional civilization, steeped in Mitteleuropean culture, and the urgent demands of the mass society of the French Revolution, against whose force Prussia had to contend to find an effective solution. This synthesis, repeated in all successful military cultures, occurred at a critical juncture between tradition and innovation: thus, modernity is not understood as progress but as a continuation and expansion of traditional knowledge with new means and evolving relationships between society and the individual. This notion is naturally difficult to digest in a world where modernity is often associated with the rejection of an ineffective and inefficient old order, which is, in reality, the same order from which we derive, representing a constant effort and development, relatively greater in the past than the present, and even in absolute terms regarding the average value of individuals.

Returning to other examples of modern history, Schwerpunkt focuses on key figures who influenced the Art of War. Maurice of Nassau introduced a training system based on discipline and standardization, improving Dutch tactics and influencing European armies: a process heavily emphasized, particularly in Protestant culture, which owes much to its confessional propaganda of the time and achieved military merit primarily through the direct experience of the Dutch commander in numerous successful sieges rather than providing a competitive model against large Catholic armies in open battle, as evidenced by the disasters of German principalities inspired by Nassau's school during the Thirty Years' War. His reforms, such as codified drills, increased the efficiency of Dutch troops



Fig. 1. Pierre-Denis Martin (1663-1742), Battle of Wien, 1683, detail. Commissioned by Marie Casimire Sobieska, Queen of Poland. Schleißheim State Gallery, Wikimedia Commons. In Schwehrpunkt's video Prince Eugene of Savoy early life & path to Catholic knighthood and martial autonomy before 1683.

against the Spanish in the Eighty Years' War. Prince Eugene embodied the resurgence of a Mitteleuropean power rooted in traditional identities—Latin, Germanic, and Slavic—often undervalued by Anglo-centric modernism focused on the strictly Western part of the continent, granting Austria a broader dimension of regional imperial power, though without leaving a true reform or theoretical framework, which would later develop under Maria Theresa and in Frederick the Great's Prussia, building on lessons learned under Eugene by Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau. Gustavus Adolphus, during the Thirty Years' War, integrated mobile artillery and flexible formations, creating a competitive army model against Catholic rivals, marking a turning point in military history: largely funded by anti-Habsburg France, it leveraged the relative simplicity of the Swedish state to establish a national territorial recruitment system from scratch, still reliant on a significant number of foreign mercenaries and, above all, experience gained against various enemies, such as the Poles, who prompted the Swedes to adapt larger yet more agile cavalry formations compared to their previous limitations on Western European battlefields, naturally supported by firepower. Raimondo Montecuccoli, a stalwart of imperial warfare, embodying the loyalty of the Modenese noble to universal tradition, saved Vienna at the Battle of Saint Gotthard before the more famous Ottoman siege of 1683, offering a synthesis of practice and theory, anticipating von Clausewitzian insights on the importance of morale and tactical flexibility, developed during his remarkable career in the Thirty Years' War and beyond. These figures embody the dialogue between tradition and innovation in modern warfare.

Schwerpunkt's content ranges from general analyses of European armed forces to studies of emblematic wars. The Italian Wars highlight the crisis of wealthy but politically divided systems, a dramatically relevant theme in contemporary Europe, which helps understand that, beyond technology and resource quantity, their optimal use against an apparently superior enemy (assuming those foundations are taken for granted) is key. The English Civil War (1642–1651) introduced ideological and military dynamics, with armies combining religious fervor and modern organization, such as Cromwell's New Model Army: its study is useful, among other things, for understanding the ideological paradoxes of war, with the embryo of British global power emerging from the rejection of Ship Money to fund the king's wars, a contribution that would be multiplied tenfold within a few generations by the same Parliament that triumphed over the monarchy, now aware of the immense potential of military expenditure. A minor factor, the early abandonment of the pike, compensated by significant firearm development due to the flexibility of "shooters" compared to pikemen in the English countryside, characterized by hedges and fields unsuitable for large pike formations: a development that would have occurred regardless but was seemingly accelerated by this relatively trivial factor. The channel also analyzes the campaigns of the aforementioned Thirty Years' War, exploring how various cultural factors, religious propaganda, and erroneous preconceptions have often skewed the objectivity of contemporary historiographical assessments of much of this period. These studies underscore the importance of a practical analysis of war.

A central element of Schwerpunkt's perspective is its critique of the traditional periodization of modern warfare, emphasizing continuity with medieval military traditions. As noted, the political, military, and social systems of the Ancien Régime-rooted in feudal hierarchies, dynastic loyalties, and religious authorityremained unchanged until the late 18th century or, in some contexts, until 1918. This continuity is evident in the persistence of aristocratic hierarchies and local militias alongside new military systems. This view challenges the concept of a "military revolution," which identifies radical transformations in the 16th and 17th centuries marked by increased army sizes, the introduction of firearms, and the growth of state power. Schwerpunkt suggests that the term "revolution" overestimates, at least in popular perception and some historiographical frameworks, the scope of these changes, given the cultural and institutional continuity of premodern Europe. Military innovations, such as the adoption of the musket or standardized formations, did not immediately supplant the feudal system, nor were they intended to, but integrated with it, fostering the development of monarchy within the framework of the Ancien Régime. Military leadership remained dominated by aristocratic elites perpetuating medieval chivalric values, while civic militias continued to play a significant role, reflecting continuity with late medieval systems: professional mercenaries, feudal levies, and local militias, whose identities were often intertwined, remained the organic foundation of Ancien Régime armies.

If a moment of transformation must be identified, Schwerpunkt places it in the mid-17th century with the emergence of Louis XIV's France as a tendentially hegemonic continental power. Under the Sun King, France developed a permanent army dependent on the crown and a more advanced logistical system, foreshadowing contemporary military organization, achieved by revolutionary France just a century later. However, even Louis's system relied on "medieval" precedents, such as late medieval administrative reforms that introduced taxation systems to fund militias through avocation, only recently expanding state infrastructure to support the army. For example, Charles VII's ordinances in 15th-century France prefigured Louis XIV's centralization process and shared its foundational principle, inextricably tied to the monarch's divine mandate and its truly imperial mission to safeguard the natural rights of its people. This perspective invites a reconsideration of traditional periodization, proposing a vision of continuity linking the Middle Ages to the modern era in a single historical arc that challenges the validity of the latter as a meta-historiographical concept.

Schwerpunkt's analysis extends beyond Western Europe to include Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, regions that retained premodern mentalities and traditions well beyond the 17th century. In these areas, warfare was shaped by a blend of local customs, religious identities, and imperial ambitions with dense archaic and traditional content. For example, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth employed hussar cavalry, rooted in both feudal and steppe traditions, while Ottoman Janissaries reflected a unique military-religious system based on their redeemed slavery under sultanic adoptive paternity. By examining these regions, Schwerpunkt highlights the ancestral and cultural motivations behind warfare, transcending the secular and rationalist narratives of Western historiography and their forceful return, not only in the form of "ethnic" military specialties in Western armies but also in their close proximity to the symbolic and metaphysical meanings of tradition.

Anthropological and Religious Dimensions

A distinctive feature of Schwerpunkt is its focus on the anthropological and religious dimensions of military history, particularly in modern warfare. The channel analyzes how moral forces – a von Clausewitzian concept encompassing the psychological and ethical factors sustaining armies in combat – were shaped by religious beliefs and cultural traditions, essential for understanding the political and thus military aspects of the era. These factors have often been marginalized by what is termed "modern" culture, or rather, the anti-traditional culture that emerged gradually from the end of the Ancien Régime, diverting attention from moral forces toward deterministic and technocratic preconditions that deny the moment of decision, will, and human ingenuity in the constant evolution of the Art of War. Religion was a central force in defining military ethics and behavior, influencing soldiers' motivations, the organization of armed forces, and the rituals accompanying warfare, shaping a strategic culture to which contemporary societies seem almost entirely alienated, both scientifically and morally.

Schwerpunkt explores how religious beliefs, particularly within the Catholic tradition and the Holy Roman Empire, provided an ideological framework for warfare, which scholars of religious history can easily identify in a universal

comparative framework, though this is often opposed in historical-religious studies in favor of structuralism, the rigid and erroneous conceptualization of monotheism versus polytheism, or even more transformative, the opposition of "paganism" (a concept actually rejected by the great "universal" and thus "catholic" civilizations even before Christ) and Christianity itself. Loyalty to the Church and the emperor served as a unifying force for heterogeneous armies, while the Counter-Reformation inspired a sense of mission that permeated military campaigns, drawing on a millennial Tradition that has little to do with an equal-level opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism, confessions incomparable in their theological and metaphysical significance.

The channel also considers Protestant militancy and its influence on the depersonalization of soldiers within a more rigid political-social hierarchy, gradually losing its fideistic connection, as evidenced by the subsequent strong processes of modernization and secularization in those countries, now often founded on anti-state, anti-war, and anti-religion stances (understood as a system of universal, morally, and scientifically objective values). These religious dynamics were reflected in military culture through symbols and rituals connecting soldiers to their community and faith.

The importance of uniforms, martial music, and rituals is a central theme in Schwerpunkt's analysis. Uniforms were not merely practical tools but expressions of collective identity, often adorned with religious or dynastic symbols tied to millennial archetypes. For example, Habsburg uniforms bore crosses and imperial crests, reinforcing Catholic identity and the evangelical mandate of the Holy Spirit, the ancient winged Victory. Martial music bolstered morale based on traditional-anthropological values, such as wind instruments like trumpets, which, striking the eardrums, suited cavalry charges and their Apollonian dimension, and drums, designed to induce infantrymen to cross the battlefield under enemy fire through a hypnotic trance reminiscent of chthonic-Dionysian cults. Rituals, such as blessings before battles, linked warfare to a spiritual dimension. These elements, often overlooked by modern historiography, were integral to the military experience, embodying universal archetypes transcending national boundaries.

By integrating military and religious studies, Schwerpunkt proposes a holistic view of warfare that considers not only practical aspects but also human and cultural dimensions on a universal, non-culturalist plane. The channel argues that

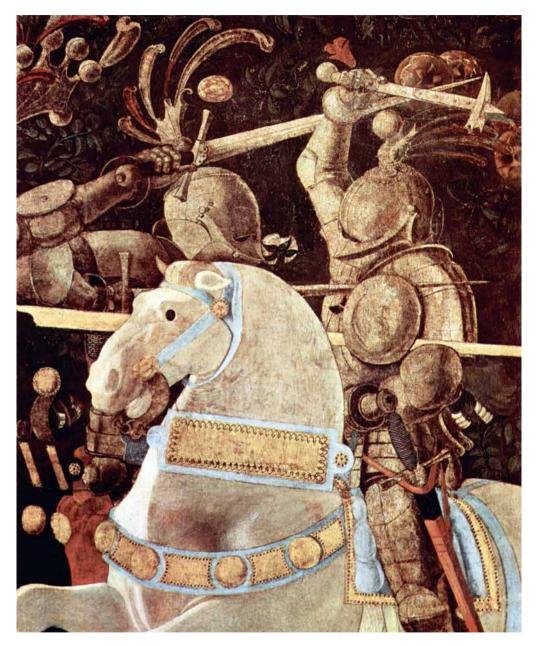


Fig. 2. Paolo Uccello (1397-1475), Niccolò Maruzzi from Tolentino, *Condottiere* of the Florentins. Detail of a paintings (1438) of the Battle of San Romano for the Medici Palace in Florence. Wikimedia Commons. In Schwehrpunkt's video on *The Condottieri:* masters of warfare, architects of power, harbingers of brutality & lords of culture.

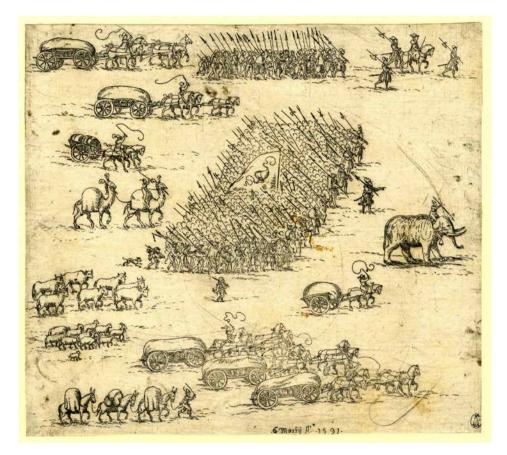
modern warfare reflected broader social values abruptly eradicated by bourgeois reforms and contemporary ideologies, often rooted in nationalist and/or socialist matrices born in opposition to the Ancien Régime. This anthropological approach highlights war's role as a crucible for testing the resilience of civilizations, a theme resonating with NAM's academic audience.

Revitalizing Strategic Culture

Schwerpunkt's broader goal is to promote strategic culture and education, particularly in the contemporary Western context, where von Clausewitz's understanding of war as a political instrument has been obscured by fragmented or overly specialized approaches that endanger public safety without communities even realizing it. As a YouTube channel, Schwerpunkt harnesses the power of digital media to address this critical gap, urging the West to recover a deeper strategic culture grounded in its own past capacity and an awareness of Tradition. By presenting its content on a platform accessible to a global audience, Schwerpunkt fosters a renewed appreciation for the historical and intellectual roots of Western military thought, encouraging viewers to engage with the Art of War as a means to strengthen collective resilience and strategic competence. The channel observes that, despite the abundance of military history literature, much of it lacks a comparative and cohesive framework rooted in the Art of War.

Schwerpunkt's encyclopedic structure, with its specialized playlists, addresses this need, providing systematic access to content ranging from war theory to military practices. Playlists dedicated to specific eras, such as the Renaissance or the 17th century, enable comparative exploration of warfare, highlighting continuities and innovations in military systems. This methodological approach stands out for its ability to integrate theoretical reflection with empirical analysis, offering a unique resource for scholars and enthusiasts.

Schwerpunkt



A convoy of supplies and some foot-soldiers marching to right; the supplies transported on horse-drawn carts and by asses and camels; an elephant at far r; a herd of cows and a flock of sheep at left; from a series of 69 etchings of soldiers and military equipment.

1591. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a <u>Creative Commons</u> Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.



Carle Vanloo (1737 / 1747), *Le Voeu de Louis XIII au siège de la Rochelle en 1628*, esquisse du tableau du Maître-autel de l'église de Notre-Dame-des-Victoires. Musée Carnavalet, Histoire de Paris, P1912, CC0 Paris Musées / Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris,

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