

[Accueil](#)[Revenir à l'accueil](#)[CollectionBoite_013](#) | [Bibliographies diverses. Pauvreté. Hermaphrodites. Anormalité. Criminalité. Onan](#)[Item\[Michael Roberts, The Military Revolution, 1560-1660, p. 5-6\]](#)

[Michael Roberts, The Military Revolution, 1560-1660, p. 5-6]

Auteur : Foucault, Michel

Présentation de la fiche

Coteb013_f0162

SourceBoite_013 | Bibliographies diverses. Pauvreté. Hermaphrodites. Anormalité. Criminalité. Onan

LangueFrançais

TypeFicheLecture

RelationNumérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730

Références éditoriales

Éditeuréquipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).

Droits

- Image : Avec l'autorisation des ayants droit de Michel Foucault. Tous droits réservés pour la réutilisation des images.
- Notice : équipe FFL ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle). Licence Creative Commons Attribution - Partage à l'Identique 3.0 (CC BY-SA 3.0 FR).

Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 18/03/2021 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

like it, was dominant all over western Europe. The pike was "queen of the battlefield";¹ the millennial ascendancy of cavalry was broken; the Chevalier Bayard fought on foot.²

The invention of the wheel-lock pistol, about 1515, seemed for a time to offer to the mounted arm a chance of revival. The horseman equipped both with lance and pistol might seem to embody in his own person an economical combination of arms. And so no doubt he would have done, if the pistoleers could have been persuaded to use both their weapons. But after about 1560, the cavalryman, deterred by the bristling and uninviting aspect of the *tercios* which he was called upon to attack, his lance outranged by the infantryman's eighteen-foot pike, preferred to confine himself to discharging his pistol by successive ranks, in that intricate but futile manoeuvre known as the *caracole*. Since the effective range of the cavalry pistol was perhaps as little as five paces,³ this did no great harm to anybody, except possibly to the cavalry themselves, who became very generally perverted and degenerate.⁴ At the same time, the improvement of siege artillery led to profound changes in the science of fortification. First the Italian school, led by Michele Sanmichele, and then the Dutch, led by Simon Stevin, replaced the old curtain-walls by bastions, ravelins, and horn-works, designed to give mutually-supporting fields of fire, and above all to provide gun emplacements; since it had now been found that the best defence against artillery was superior artillery.

The effect of these developments was to hobble the conduct of operations. The huge size of infantry units forbade the practice of minor tactics. The refusal of cavalry to behave as cavalry deprived commanders of their aid in attack. The strength of fortresses encouraged blockade rather than assault. The steady increase in the proportion of musketeers to pikemen strengthened that element in the infantry which was least apt to the offensive. Contemporary theorists, rationalizing their own impotence, extolled the superior science of the war of manoeuvre, and condemned battle as the last

1. Pikes, said Londoño, "son la fuerza de los escuadrones, y allí reinas, como se dice, de las armas": S. de Londoño, *Discurso sobre la forma de reducir la Disciplina Militar a mejor y antiguo estado*, [new edn.] (Madrid, 1943), p. 26.
2. General Weygand, *Histoire de l'Armée française*, (Paris, 1938), p. 107. So too Londoño describes the nobility as "el nervio de la infantería española": *op. cit.*, p. 43.
3. J. W. Wijn, *Het Krijgswezen in den Tijd van Prins Maurits*, (Utrecht, 1934), p. 164.
4. Except in Poland; and possibly also except those of the French nobility who remained uncorrupted by the example of the *Reiters*: Marjan Kukiel, *Zarys historii wojskowości w Polsce*, (London, 1949), p. 54; Weygand, p. 123.

resort of the inept or unfortunate commander.¹ Strategic thinking withered away; war eternalized itself.

Upon this military *ancien régime* there now fell a major revolution. The first of the revolutionaries was Erik XIV of Sweden, in the 'sixties; but his experiment passed unnoticed, and it was not until after 1590 that the revolution can really be said to have got under weigh.² It took place in two stages: the first, from about 1590 to 1609, under the leadership of Maurice of Orange; the second, from about 1617 to 1632, under the leadership of Gustavus Adolphus. Maurice and his cousins, inspired by a study of Vegetius, Aelian, and Leo VI, and reinforced by the neo-Stoicism of Justus Lipsius (which provided them with a new ideal of military virtue), attempted to return to Roman models in regard to size of units, order of battle, discipline, and drill.³ Their new infantry unit, the battalion, was about the size of a cohort; and they ranged their battalions *quincunx*-wise, to form a *duplex* or *triplex acies*. They thus reverted, for the first time for more than a century, to a linear order of battle, with a proper reserve; by their arrangement of shot and pikes within the unit they avoided the great waste of manpower implicit in the *tercio*, and were thus able to increase the proportion of pikes to muskets (a reversal of previous trends);⁴ and by their drastic reduction in the size of the tactical unit they were able to achieve much greater elasticity and flexibility within the framework of their battle-line: a Spanish army of 12,000 men would have only 4 units, a Dutch would have 24, and the task of reinforcing a threatened sector of the line was proportionately simplified.

These were great innovations; but they did not at once gain

1. Thus Lazarus von Schwendi wrote (1578): "Das ist ein gemeine regel im Krieg, dass man on [sc. ohne] grosse noth oder grosser und schier gewissen vort, sich der schlachten ungewissem und misslichem ausgang nimmermehr unterwerfen soll": E. von Frauenholz, *Lazarus von Schwendi. Der erste deutsche Verkünder der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht*, (Hamburg, 1939), p. 230; and Londoño (1589): "se deben tentar todos los medios que puede haber antes de poner en discripen de batalla la victoria": *op. cit.*, p. 61.
2. For Erik's reforms, see Generalstabens, *Sveriges krig 1611-1632*, (Stockholm, 1936), I. 60 ff.; Generalstabens krigshistoriska avdelning, *Axtorna. En studie i organisation och taktik* (Meddelanden från Kungl. Krigsarkivet utg. av Generalstabens krigshistoriska avdelning, IV), (Stockholm, 1926); G. Petri, *Kungl. Första Livgrenadjärregementets historia* (Stockholm, 1926) I. 136-146; Barkman, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-6.
3. For the Maurician reforms, J. W. Wijn, *op. cit.*; Werner Hahlweg, *Die Heeresreform der Oranier und die Antike*, (Berlin, 1941); G. Oestreich, 'Der römische Stoizismus und die Oranische Heeresreform', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 176 (1953); *Krijgskundige Aantekening van Johan van Nassau*, ed. J. W. Wijn, (Utrecht, 1947).
4. Wijn, pp. 173-180.

