

Frederick the Great
and the
Meanings of War,
1730-1755

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Summary – Frederick the Great and the Meanings of War, 1730-1755

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This dissertation fundamentally re-interprets King Frederick the Great of Prussia as military commander and military thinker, and uses Frederick to cast new perspectives on the warfare of ‘his time’: that is, of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries. It uses the methodology of cultural history, which focuses on the meanings given to human activities, to examine Frederick and the warfare of his time on three levels: cultural, temporal, and intellectual. It shows that Frederick’s warfare (at least in his youth) was culturally French, and reflected the towering influence of King Louis XIV, with Frederick following the flamboyant masculinity of the French baroque court. Frederick was a backward-looking military thinker, who situated his war-making in two temporal envelopes: broadly in the long eighteenth century (1648-1789), which was dominated by the search for order after the chaos of religious and civil wars, but more specifically in the ‘Century of Louis XIV’: the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Frederick embraced French military methods, taking inspiration from generals like Turenne and Luxembourg, employing aggressive French battle tactics, and learning his concept of ‘total war for limited objectives’ from French writers like the Marquis de Feuquières. Frederick also sought to surpass the ‘personal rule’ of the Sun King by commanding his army personally.

This work shows the early eighteenth century as a liminal period, which saw the Louisquatorzean paradigm interact with the beginnings of the Enlightenment, developments in scientific methods, and the growth of the administrative capacity of states, all of which would exercise an increasing influence as the century progressed. The combination of older traditions and newer ideas placed enormous pressure on the monarchs of this period, and this was seen in Frederick’s strained relations with his generals.

Finally, this work examines how ideas are created. It shows military knowledge in the early eighteenth century as the product of power structures (and often an element within them). Military command was itself an element in the assertion of political power, and Frederick depended on ‘the power of (military) knowledge’ to maintain his authority with his generals. Power, however, is negotiated, and knowledge is typically produced collectively. In the early part of Frederick’s reign, the Prussian war effort was a collective effort by several actors within the Prussian military hierarchy, and ‘Frederick’s military ideas’ were not necessarily his own.

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Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

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Among those of my own generation, I am grateful in particular to two mentors who have done so much to keep me on the straight and narrow: Ilya Berkovich and Jasper Heinzen have guided my work from the very beginning, and helped to imbue me with sound principles for academic life. I am deeply grateful.

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The work habits – and particularly the understanding of how to plan work – which got me through the PhD were primarily learnt during my time at the Office for Strategic Coordination of Health Research. I am grateful to Monika Preuss, Liam O’Toole and Karen Todd for teaching me so much, and helping me to grow so much professionally. I am also grateful to my long-time manager at the Department for Education, Alison Britton, who worked hard to make my transition from the Civil Service back to academia as smooth as possible.

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Introduction

This dissertation fundamentally re-interprets King Frederick the Great of Prussia (reigned 1740-1786) as military commander and military thinker, and uses Frederick to cast new perspectives on the warfare of ‘his time’: that is, of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries. It uses the methodology of cultural history, which focuses on the meanings given to human activities, to examine Frederick and the warfare of his time on three levels: cultural, temporal, and intellectual. It shows that Frederick’s warfare (at least in his youth) was culturally French, and reflected the towering influence of the France of King Louis XIV in the early eighteenth century, with Frederick attempting to emulate the Sun King not only in cultural but also military terms. Quite in contrast to his reputation as an ‘austere, thrifty [military] workaholic’, Frederick in fact went to war in the tradition of the flamboyant masculinity of the French baroque court.¹ The present work shows Frederick as a backward-looking military thinker, who situated his war-making in two temporal envelopes: broadly in the long eighteenth century (1648-1789), which was dominated by the search for order after the chaos of religious and civil wars, but more specifically in the ‘Century of Louis XIV’: the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, dominated by Louisquatorzean ‘absolutist’ monarchy and its associated masculinity, and by the literature of the French *grand siècle*. Frederick embraced French military methods, taking inspiration from generals like Turenne and Luxembourg, employing aggressive French battle tactics, and learning his concept of ‘total war for limited objectives’ from French writers like the Marquis de Feuquières. Portrayals of Frederick as part of a ‘German way of war’ must therefore be rejected.² Frederick also sought to surpass the ‘personal rule’ of the Sun King by extending this to the military sphere and commanding his army personally.

This work also shows the early eighteenth century as an important liminal period – culturally, politically, intellectually, and also militarily – which saw the

¹ Christopher Clark, *Iron kingdom: the rise and downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (London etc., 2006), p. 84.

² Robert M. Citino, *The German way of war: from the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence, KS, 2005).

Louisquatorzean paradigm interact with the beginnings of the Enlightenment, developments in scientific methods, and the growth of the administrative capacity of states, all of which would exercise an increasing influence as the century progressed. The combination of older traditions and newer ideas placed enormous pressure on the monarchs of this period, and this can be fully seen in Frederick's strained relations with his generals.

Finally, this work examines how ideas are created, and in the process it finally overturns the focus on the person of the king that has continued to dog the military history of Frederick's reign, ending the 'great man' tradition that has survived in operational military history even as it has been rejected by the rest of the historical profession. This work shows military knowledge in the early eighteenth century as the product of power structures (and often an element within them). Order was actually seen by contemporaries as military efficiency, armies were conceived as a household just like the state itself, and concepts of military knowledge focused on the nobleman or ruler commanding an army. Military command was itself an element in the assertion of political power, and Frederick depended on 'the power of (military) knowledge' to maintain his authority with his generals. Power, however, is negotiated, and knowledge is typically produced collectively. This work shows that, in the early part of Frederick's reign, the Prussian war effort was the result of a collective effort by several actors within the Prussian military hierarchy, and therefore that 'Frederick's military ideas' were by no means necessarily his own.

The Meanings of War

John Keegan noted that 'war . . . is . . . an expression of culture'.³ Culture, however, is everything. Keegan described it as 'that great cargo of shared beliefs, values, associations, myths, taboos, imperatives, customs, traditions, manners and ways of thought, speech and artistic expression which ballast every society'.⁴ Historians now recognize that every form of human activity can be defined as part of human culture, so that all history is cultural history. Cultural history is therefore defined by its methods rather than by any specific subject matter, and focuses on the *meanings* that

³ John Keegan, *A history of warfare* (London, 1993), p. 12.

⁴ Keegan, *History of warfare*, p. 46.

humans attach to things.⁵ The study of war has recently embraced the cultural turn (particularly since the experience of Afghanistan and Iraq showed the limitations of attempts to fight war and explain it on the basis of technology).⁶ Emile Simpson has for instance emphasized that military force can be understood as a language, with the meanings that humans ascribe to it fundamentally important for shaping it.⁷ The present work follows this methodology. It explores both Frederick and his time from the perspective of the ‘meanings’ that were attached to war in the early eighteenth century and which shaped it. This approach is valuable because it gets us as close as possible to *how contemporaries* experienced war, rather than dividing it into categories like culture and temporality devised by historians. It also ties war closely to the broader cultural context that created it.

Cultural and Intellectual Histories of War

A series of works have sought, often with great imagination, to identify the connections between eighteenth-century warfare and its broader political, social, cultural and intellectual context, and to use this to shed more light in both directions. Elizabeth Krimmer and Patricia Anne Simpson emphasized the importance of studying ‘the nexus of war and Enlightenment discourse’, as did Daniel Hohrath.⁸

⁵ Miri Rubin, ‘What is cultural history now?’, in David Cannadine, ed., *What is history now?* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 80, 84-5, 90-1; Megan Vaughan, ‘Culture’, in Ulinka Rublack, ed., *A concise companion to history* (Oxford, 2011), p. 233-8.

⁶ Jeremy Black, *War and the cultural turn* (Malden, MA, and Cambridge, 2012), passim, esp. pp. vii-ix, 1-3, 15-16, 153-5, 159-64, 171-4. For previous claims of the transformative power of technology, see Geoffrey Parker, *The military revolution: military innovation and the rise of the West, 1500-1800* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 2001); Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual war: Kosovo and beyond* (London, 2000), pp. 164-77, 210-3; John U. Nef, *War and human progress: an essay on the rise of industrial civilization* (New York, NY, 1968), pp. 303, 315-25; Alvin and Hedi Toffler, *War and anti-war: survival at the dawn of the 21st century* (London, 1994), pp. 52-80. For criticism of the concept of technologically-focused ‘revolutions in military affairs’, see Jeremy Black, ‘Eighteenth-century warfare reconsidered’, *War in History*, 1, (1994), p. 217; Andrew N. Liaropoulos, ‘Revolutions in warfare: theoretical paradigms and historical evidence – the Napoleonic and First World War revolutions in military affairs’, *The Journal of Military History* 70 (2006), pp. 363-84.

⁷ Emile Simpson, *War from the ground up: twenty-first-century combat as politics* (London, 2012), passim, esp. pp. 1-5, 15-38, 61-3, 67-9, 98-100, 127, 232-3, 243.

⁸ Daniel Hohrath and Klaus Gerteis, eds., *Die Kriegskunst im Lichte der Vernunft: Militär und Aufklärung im 18. Jahrhundert* (2 vols., *Aufklärung* 11 and 12, 1999-2000); Elizabeth Krimmer and Patricia Anne Simpson, eds., *Enlightened war: German theories and cultures of warfare from Frederick the Great to Clausewitz* (Rochester, NY, 2011), (quotation,

Peter Paret gave an example of this, studying the Prussian defeat in 1806 from the operational, cultural and intellectual perspectives.⁹ Max Jähns laid the basis for an intellectual history of eighteenth-century warfare with his three-volume 1889 work, but he did not seriously explore the broader context in which military treatises were produced.¹⁰ In 1977, Henning Eichberg argued that a Baroque fascination with geometry fundamentally influenced not only warfare but also dance, fencing, riding, architecture, painting and many other elements of elite culture.¹¹ Azar Gat argued in 1989 that Newtonian physics, the Enlightenment, and the Neo-classical movement in art led to military ideas focused on exact calculation.¹² More recently, David Bell has argued that the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, at the end of the period, reflected the cultural revolution of the Romantic Movement, and that the warfare of the long eighteenth century that preceded it was shaped by a noble culture of restraint.¹³ James Whitman argued that long-eighteenth-century warfare could be explained in legal terms as the product of a ‘law of victory’.¹⁴ Anders Engberg-Pedersen also argued that geometry and calculation dominated warfare in the long eighteenth century, succeeded by an ‘empire of chance’ in the Napoleonic period which reflected developments in contemporary literature.¹⁵ Most recently, Christy Pichichero has argued that eighteenth-century warfare was directly influenced by the Enlightenment, with war one of the major areas in which enlightened ideas were actually put into practice.¹⁶

Elizabeth Krimmer and Patricia Anne Simpson, ‘Introduction: enlightened warfare in eighteenth-century Germany’, in *Ibid*, p. 2).

⁹ Peter Paret, *The cognitive challenge of war: Prussia 1806* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2009).

¹⁰ Max Jähns, *Geschichte der Kriegswissenschaften: vornehmlich in Deutschland* (3 vols., Munich and Leipzig, 1889).

¹¹ Henning Eichberg, ‘Geometrie als barocke Verhaltensnorm: Fortifikation und Exerzitien’, *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 4 (1977), pp. 17-50.

¹² Azar Gat, *The origins of military thought from the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 26-94.

¹³ David A. Bell, *The first total war: Napoleon’s Europe and the birth of warfare as we know it* (New York, NY, 2007).

¹⁴ James Q. Whitman, *The verdict of battle: the law of victory and the making of modern war* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2012).

¹⁵ Anders Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance: the Napoleonic Wars and the disorder of things* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2015).

¹⁶ Christy Pichichero, *The military Enlightenment: war and culture in the French empire from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Ithaca, NY, 2017).

The imaginative links between war and culture made by these works are inspiring, but they suffer from trying to make generalizations about the whole long eighteenth century. Bell and Engberg Pedersen treated the period before 1789 only briefly, as a contrast to the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, which were their prime focus.¹⁷ Patrick Speelman's work on Henry Lloyd offers a case study for the later eighteenth century, and the present work aims to emulate this for the earlier period.¹⁸ Christian Ayne Crouch has used the case study of the French in Canada to offer revealing insights specifically on the cultural meanings attached to war.¹⁹ Erik Lund produced an important study from the perspective of the history of science.²⁰ The work of Jürgen Luh benefited from a strong grounding in the wars of Frederick the Great but, in trying to explain the whole period, Luh also focused only on two aspects: war as a reflection of the nature of contemporary states and of noble culture.²¹ This study takes a much wider perspective, also discussing aspects of contemporary intellectual life, examining the influence of early eighteenth-century understandings of history, and looking at how military ideas were developed in practice. Johannes Kunisch examined war's connection to its broader context again and again, including in works rooted in the case studies of irregular warfare and of Frederick himself.²² This work will, however, revise a number of his conclusions, using new methodological approaches including gender history and the history of science. The case study of Frederick, and the perspective of actual military operations, also puts the claims of Eichberg, Gat and Engberg-Pedersen into serious doubt, at least for the first half of the eighteenth century.

¹⁷ Bell, *First total war*, pp. 24-83; Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 10-67.

¹⁸ Patrick J. Speelman, *Henry Lloyd and the military enlightenment of eighteenth-century Europe* (Westport, CT, and London, 2002).

¹⁹ Christian Ayne Crouch, *Nobility lost: French and Canadian martial cultures, Indians, and the end of New France* (Ithaca, NY, 2014).

²⁰ Erik A. Lund, *War for the every day: generals, knowledge, and warfare in early modern Europe, 1680-1740* (Westport, CT, London, 1999).

²¹ Jürgen Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa, 1650-1800* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2004).

²² Johannes Kunisch, *Der kleine Krieg: Studien zum Heerwesen des Absolutismus* (Wiesbaden, 1973); Johannes Kunisch, *Das Mirakel des Hauses Brandenburg: Studien zum Verhältnis von Kabinettspolitik und Kriegführung im Zeitalter des Siebenjährigen Krieges* (Munich, 1978); Johannes Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg: Studien zur bellizistischen Disposition des absoluten Fürstenstaates* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992); Johannes Kunisch; *Friedrich der Grosse: der König und seine Zeit* (Munich, 2004).

‘Frederick the Unique’

King Frederick II of Prussia offers the best possible case study for examining the varied ways in which eighteenth-century warfare interacted with its broader context. Not only a ruling prince but also a general, famous for his attachment to the nobility, and deeply involved with the intellectual and cultural life of his time, Frederick allows the historian to examine the interaction of political, military, social, cultural and intellectual factors in one person. Recent years have seen an outpouring of new research on Frederick, marking the king’s 300th birthday but also reflecting the slow return of Prussian history to the German academic mainstream brought about by Christopher Clark’s 2006 work *Iron kingdom*.²³ The new works have fundamentally changed our understanding of Frederick. He has been revealed to be homosexual.²⁴ Far from there being a contradiction between Frederick’s intellectual interests and his war-making, as previously claimed by Theodor Schieder and Friedrich Meinecke, Jürgen Luh has shown that Frederick used both war and culture in the single-minded pursuit of glory in all its forms.²⁵ Andreas Pečar showed that Frederick’s writings were not genuine expressions of his ideas but rather texts written to have an effect on particular audiences.²⁶ Thomas Biskup has shown that, far from despising court ceremonial, Frederick made full use of it when it suited him.²⁷ The perspective on

²³ Clark, *Iron kingdom*. For the impact of this book on the perception of Prussian history, see Richard J. Evans, *Cosmopolitan islanders: British historians and the European continent* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 26-7.

²⁴ Reinhard Alings, “‘Don’t ask – don’t tell’ – War Friedrich schwul?“, in Generaldirektion der Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin Brandenburg, ed., *Friederisiko – Friedrich der Grosse: die Ausstellung* (Munich, 2012), pp. 238-47; Tim Blanning, *Frederick the Great King of Prussia* (London, 2015), pp. 176-180, 445-8; Wolfgang Burgdorf, *Friedrich der Große: ein biografisches Porträt* (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna, 2011), pp. 23-4, 76-103.

²⁵ Jürgen Luh, *Der Große: Friedrich II. von Preussen* (Munich, 2011), pp. 9-111, (esp. pp. 9-13, 23-4, 35-6); Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: the doctrine of raison d’etat and its place in modern history*, trans. Douglas Scott (London, 1957), pp. 275-7, 290-1, 297, 301, 308-9; Theodor Schieder, *Friedrich der Große: ein Königtum der Widersprüche* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), pp. 102-3, 106, 112, 114, 123, 125-6, 285-6.

²⁶ Andreas Pečar, ‘Friedrich der Große als Autor: Plädoyer für eine adressatenorientierte Lektüre seiner Schriften’, in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große – eine perspektivische Bestandsaufnahme: Beiträge des ersten Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 28./29. September 2007* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-bestandsaufnahme/pecar_autor, last accessed 27 November 2017); Andreas Pečar, *Die Masken des Königs: Friedrich II. von Preußen als Schriftsteller* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2016).

²⁷ Biskup, Thomas, *Friedrichs Größe: Inszenierung des Preußenkönigs in Fest und Zeremoniell, 1740-1815* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2012).

Frederick has changed so far that William Hagen in 2013 expressed himself ‘surprised’ that any historian still ‘feels the need to fence with the ghosts of Leopold von Ranke, J.G. Droysen, Heinrich von Treitschke, Reinhard Koser, Otto Hintze and Gerhard Ritter’.²⁸ The present work would not go quite so far, and makes substantial use of the older historiography where appropriate: particularly the works of Becker, Berney, Bratuschek and Koser on Frederick’s youth.²⁹ The most important area not touched by the new research is the operational military history of Frederick’s reign, and the present work uses new perspectives to re-interpret it substantially.

The new works, however, only present new information *about Frederick*: they do not use a re-examination of Frederick to change our understanding of his time more broadly. Moreover, despite replacing nationalistic hero-worship of Frederick with a more critical perspective, they retain a fascination with the person of the king, described by contemporaries as ‘Frederick the Unique’.³⁰ Even Franz Szabo’s ferocious criticism of Frederick’s generalship followed this trend, as his entire book on the Seven Years War focused primarily on attacking the reputation of the Prussian king.³¹ This focus on Frederick as an individual is surprising, since it is also a commonplace among military historians that Frederick’s generalship perfected the normal practices of his time rather than introducing any marked innovations.³² The only exception to this pattern is Blanning’s *The culture of power and the power of culture*, which placed Frederick firmly at the heart of the transformation of European monarchy in response to the rise of the public sphere.³³

²⁸ William W. Hagen, ‘Discussion: Prussia of the Senses’, *German History* 31 (2013), p. 407.

²⁹ Paul Becher, *Der Kronprinz Friedrich als Regiments-Chef in Neu-Ruppin von 1732-1740* (Berlin, 1892); Arnold Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse: Entwicklungsgeschichte eines Staatsmannes* (Tübingen, 1934); Ernst Bratuschek, *Die Erziehung Friedrichs des Großen* (Berlin, 1885); Reinhold Koser, *Friedrich der Grosse als Kronprinz* (Stuttgart, 1886).

³⁰ Clark, *Iron kingdom*, pp. 225, 230. On the focus of research on Frederick alone, see Peter-Michael Hahn, *Friedrich II. von Preußen: Feldherr, Autokrat und Selbstdarsteller* (Stuttgart, 2013), p. 15.

³¹ Franz A.J. Szabo, *The Seven Years War in Europe, 1756-1763* (Edinburgh, 2008); Andrew C. Thompson, ‘Franz A. J. Szabo, The Seven Years War in Europe, 1756-1763’, *European History Quarterly* 40 (2010), p. 564.

³² Kunisch, *Mirakel des Hauses Brandenburg*, p. 82; Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg*, pp. 103-5; Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 434-6; Jay Luvaas, ed. and trans., *Frederick the Great on the art of war* (New York, NY, and London, 1966), pp. 19, 26; Peter Paret, *Yorck and the era of Prussian reform, 1807-1815* (Princeton, NJ, 1966), p. 13; Parker, *Military Revolution*, pp. 147-8.

³³ T.C.W. Blanning, *The culture of power and the power of culture: old regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford, 2002).

Frederick's Time

This dissertation shows Frederick as operating within two temporal envelopes. Broadly, Frederick saw his 'time' as being the long eighteenth century: the period 1648-1789 that followed the European religious and civil wars (the Thirty Years War in Germany, the French Wars of Religion, the Fronde, and the English Civil Wars). The determination to prevent a repetition of the chaos of these wars shaped both the domestic and international political structures of the long eighteenth century.³⁴ The term 'absolutism' has been criticised as a description of the governmental system in Europe at this time. Clearly, it refers more to an *ambition* of rulers to be the only source of law in their states, or their *representation* of themselves as such, rather than to any totalitarian control they exercised. Instead, the political culture of these states could be described as 'post-Westphalian', not in the discredited sense of a 'Westphalian' system that supposedly enshrined state sovereignty, but because, after the disasters of religious and civil wars, they promised above all to bring order through a strong state, whether or not this was actually achieved.³⁵

Within this broader context, Frederick as a young man located himself specifically in the period from the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century that was dominated by the example of King Louis XIV of France. Militarily, this was the age of uniforms (introduced in the late seventeenth century) and of the linear tactics

³⁴ Thomas Biskup, 'The Enlightenment', in Miriam Griffin, ed., *A companion to Julius Caesar* (Chichester, West Sussex, 2015), pp. 400, 408; Clark, *Iron kingdom*, pp. 30-7; Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. vii-viii, 7-8, 131, 234, 265-71; Gerhard Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat bei Justus Lipsius (1547-1606): der Neustoizismus als politische Bewegung*, ed. Nicolette Mout (Göttingen, 1989), p. 41; Martin Rink, *Vom "Partheygänger" zum Partisanen: die Konzeption des kleinen Krieges in Preußen, 1740-1813* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Brussels, Vienna, New York, NY, 1999), pp. xviii, 31-3, 36-7; Peter H. Wilson, 'War in German thought from the Peace of Westphalia to Napoleon', *European History Quarterly* 28 (1998), p. 18.

³⁵ Ronald G. Asch and Heinz Durchhardt, 'Einleitung: Die Geburt des "Absolutismus" im 17. Jahrhundert: Epochenwende der europäischen Geschichte oder optische Täuschung?' in Ronald G. Asch and Heinz Durchhardt, eds., *Der Absolutismus – ein Mythos? Strukturwandel monarchischer Herrschaft in West- und Mitteleuropa (ca. 1550-1700)* (Köln, Weimar, Wien, 1996), pp. 3-24; Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: the courts of Europe's dynastic rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 10-11; Andreas Osiander, 'Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth', *International Organization* 55 (2001), pp. 251-87; Guy Rowlands, *The dynastic state and the army under Louis XIV: royal service and private interest, 1661-1701* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 2-9; Peter H. Wilson, *Absolutism in central Europe* (London and New York, NY, 2000), pp. 15-22, 52-3, 60-1, 69; Peter H. Wilson, *Europe's tragedy: a history of the Thirty Years War* (London etc., 2009), pp. 807-11.

inaugurated by the invention of the flintlock musket and the bayonet, but before the transformation in the power of artillery at mid-century.³⁶ Politically, this period saw the start of the transition from concepts of monarchy sacralised by secrecy to an increasing focus on the emerging public sphere.³⁷ Intellectually, this period saw the beginnings of the Enlightenment but not yet its more strident anti-monarchist forms (in Frederick's case, 'the Enlightenment' meant almost exclusively the French Enlightenment, as he showed little interest in developments in Germany).³⁸ It also preceded the big improvements in administrative systems, both civil and military, which in the later eighteenth century saw the much greater use of statistics in government, better cartographic data, and the appearance of divisions, corps and formal staff systems to help generals to command.³⁹ This gave the earlier period a different attitude to knowledge. It is well known that the traumatic experience of the Seven Years War, 1756-1763, deeply changed Frederick, altering his self-representation, his military tactics and strategy, and the organisation of his army, and

³⁶ Jeremy Black, *A military revolution? Military change and European society, 1550-1800* (London, 1991), p. 93; Jeremy Black, 'A revolution in military cartography?: Europe 1650-1815', *The Journal of Military History* 73 (2009), p. 52; John Childs, *Armies and warfare in Europe, 1648 – 1789* (Manchester, 1982), pp. 106-8, 109-10, 122; Bernard R. Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau und das Kriegswesen in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte Dessau et al, eds., *Fürst Leopold I. von Anhalt-Dessau (1676-1747) >> Der Alte Dessauer<<: Ausstellung zum 250. Todestag* (Dessau, 1997), pp. 17-22; Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa*, pp. 160-75, 183-5; Hew Strachan, *European armies and the conduct of war* (London, 1983), pp. 16, 23, 32-4.

³⁷ Blanning, *The culture of power*; Andreas Gestrich, *Absolutismus und Öffentlichkeit: politische Kommunikation in Deutschland zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1994), pp. 11-15, 24-8, 34-74.

³⁸ Claudius R. Fischbach, *Krieg und Frieden in der französischen Aufklärung* (Münster and New York, NY, 1990), pp. 51-7, 94-5, 98-9; Peter Gay, *Voltaire's politics: the poet as realist* (Princeton, NJ, 1959), pp. 98-101, 110-4, 144-79, 184, 329; Catherine Volpilhac-Augier, 'Voltaire and History', in Nicholas Cronk, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Voltaire* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 139, 145-6. On the variety of enlightenments in different countries, see Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 2005), pp. 3-10; Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, eds., *The Enlightenment in national context* (Cambridge, 1981); Franco Venturi, *Italy and the Enlightenment: studies in a cosmopolitan century*, ed. Stuart Woolf, trans. Susan Corsi (Plymouth, 1972), pp. 2-32.

³⁹ Black, 'Revolution in military cartography', pp. 65-8; Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 146-9; Harm Klueting, *Die Lehre von der Macht der Staaten: das außenpolitische Machtproblem in der "politischen Wissenschaft" und in der praktischen Politik im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1986), pp. 312-6; Martin van Creveld, 'Napoleon and the Dawn of Operational Warfare', in John Andreas Olsen and Martin van Creveld, eds., *The evolution of operational art: from Napoleon to the present* (Oxford, 2011; online edn., 2011), pp. 14, 16, 19-24, 30-2.

Hamish Scott has referred to the period 1763-86 as Frederick's 'second reign'.⁴⁰ This dissertation treats the second half of the eighteenth century as a distinctly different period, in which the meanings of war changed. It focuses on the warfare of Frederick's youth, illuminating the liminal phase in which the Louisquatorzean paradigm interacted with new intellectual, cultural and administrative developments.

Military Ideas

This dissertation uses Frederick as a central clearing-house to examine concepts of war in the early eighteenth century. It cannot hope to cover all the meanings of war in this period, but focuses on those meanings highlighted by what Frederick read, wrote and did. The books Frederick read about war – not just military treatises but also literary fiction – provide evidence not only of the development of his own ideas but of broader views within the (overwhelmingly French) literary culture he identified with. Similarly, Frederick's correspondence, particularly with his generals, is important as evidence not only of his ideas but also of those of the wider circle of generals and ministers around him, providing the 'Prussian' perspective to match the 'European' perspective of the books he read. Since, as noted above, Frederick's writings were all aimed at particular audiences, the king's words are themselves powerful evidence of the views of those whom he expected would read them. In examining what Frederick wrote about war, this work traces military ideas not just in his famous treatises but also his poetry and history writings. Anthony Grafton has noted that ideas are not just expressed in written texts but can be 'embodied in texts, images, buildings, songs,

⁴⁰ Dennis E. Showalter, *The wars of Frederick the Great* (London and New York, NY, 1996), pp. 321-52; H.M. Scott, '1763-1786: the second reign of Frederick the Great?', in Philip G. Dwyer, ed., *The rise of Prussia, 1700-1830* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 177-200. On self-representation, see Luh, *Der Große*, pp. 70-6. On tactics, see Jürgen Luh, 'Military action and military reflection: some thoughts on Frederick's "éléments de castramétrie et de tactique" of 1770', in *Friedrich300 – Studien und Vorträge: Studien und Vorträge zur preußischen Geschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts der Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten* (http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/friedrich300-studien/luh_action, last accessed 24 November 2017); Christopher Duffy, *The army of Frederick the Great* (2nd edn., Chicago, Ill, 1996), pp. 229-32. On military organization, see Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs: Netzwerke und Patronage in der preußischen Armee, 1713-1786* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich, 2013), pp. 208-14. On diplomacy and grand strategy, see Frank Althoff, *Untersuchungen zum Gleichgewicht der Mächte in der Außenpolitik Friedrichs des Großen nach dem Siebenjährigen Krieg (1763-1786)* (Berlin, 1995), p. 268.

films, and other media’, and this dissertation also examines the practical expression of ideas through the training of troops and the movements of armies.⁴¹

Despite exhaustive discussion of Frederick’s reading habits, the question of how his reading of military history influenced his generalship has been strangely neglected. Historians have noted Frederick’s interest in the classical histories of Rollin, Montesquieu and Caesar, and in Voltaire’s works on French history and on Charles XII of Sweden, and have used this to inform debates about Frederick’s philosophy of history writing and his ideas about greatness.⁴² The German General Staff identified in 1899 the key works of military history and military science that Frederick read – principally those of the Marquis de Feuquières, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, the Marquis de Quincy, the Chevalier de Folard, the Marquis de Puységur, Maurice de Saxe, and the *Memoires* of the great French general Turenne. However, since the General Staff claimed that Frederick recognized principles far beyond the ideas of his time, they criticized the works of Feuquières, Santa Cruz, and Quincy as presenting only the conventional wisdom of their age.⁴³ Their conclusion that ‘Frederick towered so much above his contemporaries that . . . after 1745, he only occasionally taught them and no longer learned from them’ left little scope for discussing what Frederick learned from books.⁴⁴ Karl Linnebach, writing in 1936, claimed Frederick as a proponent of the ‘breakthrough’ tactics that were then popular, and argued that he was fundamentally influenced by Folard, despite admitting that Frederick left the column out of his *Extract* of Folard’s work, and never employed columns in battle.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Anthony Grafton, ‘The power of ideas’, in Rublack, *Concise companion*, p. 359.

⁴² Paul Becher, *Der Kronprinz Friedrich als Regiments-Chef in Neu-Ruppin von 1732-1740* (Berlin, 1892), p. 21; Arnold Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse: Entwicklungsgeschichte eines Staatsmannes* (Tübingen, 1934), pp.9, 61, 64-6, 276-7; Jürgen Luh, *Der Große: Friedrich II. von Preussen* (Munich, 2011), p. 12; Ullrich Sachse, *Cäsar in Sanssouci: die Politik Friedrichs des Großen und die Antike* (Munich, 2008), pp. 28-9, 91-3, 191-6, 292; Theodor Schieder, *Friedrich der Große: ein Königtum der Widersprüche* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), pp. 103-8.

⁴³ Großer Generalstab, *Friedrich deß Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege*, pp. 231, 233, 298-9, 377-9 (quotation, p. 378: ‘keine Spezialwerke’). On the works read by Frederick, see also Ullrich Marwitz, ‘Friedrich der Große als Feldherr’, in Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt, ed., *Friedrich der Große und das Militärwesen seiner Zeit* (Herford, Bonn, 1987), p. 75.

⁴⁴ Großer Generalstab, *Friedrich deß Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege*, p. 231 (quotation: ‘Friedrich überragte eben seine Zeitgenossen so sehr, daß er, . . . seit 1745, nur noch gelegentlich an ihnen, nicht mehr von ihnen lernte.’).

⁴⁵ Karl Linnebach, ‘Friedrich der Große und Folard: ein Blick in die geistige Werkstatt des Feldherrn’, *Wissen und Wehr* 17 (1936), pp. 522-43 (quotation, passim: ‘Durchbruch’).

Johannes Kunisch wrote three dedicated chapters on Frederick as general in successive books, but did not mention in any of them the influence of books Frederick had read upon his generalship.⁴⁶ Kunisch noted that Frederick extensively read military literature, but the only specific work he named was Voltaire's history of Charles XII.⁴⁷ Christopher Duffy's military biography noted Frederick reading Rollin and the campaigns of Charles XII, but did not mention any of the key contemporary works of military science or military history. Duffy noted Frederick's education in fortification and siege warfare from Major Senning and Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, however, and some instances where this played a role on campaign.⁴⁸ Duffy went considerably further in his updated *The army of Frederick the Great* in 2000, noting that Frederick drew directly on Santa Cruz for his 1757 'Parchwitz Address' before the battle of Leuthen, and in his disgrace of the Regiment of Anhalt-Bernburg after its flight in front of Dresden in July 1760.⁴⁹ Duffy did not, however, go beyond these two examples to establish broader conclusions about how Frederick's reading influenced his military actions and military writings. The present work will use the works Frederick read to illuminate the diverse meanings of war in this period, and to show how the king interacted with them.

It is possible to establish fairly clearly which books of contemporary military science Frederick read. The catalogue of his library lists numerous titles, but we cannot assume Frederick read all of them.⁵⁰ Bogdan Krieger researched the king's reading habits in detail, but the best evidence for whether Frederick read a book is whether he mentioned it in his writings.⁵¹ Even when Frederick mentioned a work, however, this is no guarantee that he actually read it. In his 1781 *Instruction for the inspectors of infantry*, Frederick recommended that his officers read Gustaf Adlerfeld's *Military*

⁴⁶ Kunisch, *Mirakel des Hauses Brandenburg*, pp.78-89; Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg*, pp. 83-106; Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 431-41.

⁴⁷ Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 181-2.

⁴⁸ Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great: a military life* (London, 1985), pp. 9, 12-13, 18, 54.

⁴⁹ Duffy, *The army of Frederick the Great*, pp. 19-20, 297.

⁵⁰ On the pitfalls of assuming that particular books were actually read, see Timothy W. Ryback, *Hitler's private library: the books that shaped his life* (New York, 2008), pp. xvii-xx.

⁵¹ Bogdan Krieger, *Friedrich der Große und seine Bücher* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1914), pp. 2-38.

history of Charles XII King of Sweden.⁵² The present author has examined the copy of this work formerly held in the Potsdam City Palace, and found that it was not even bound, casting some doubt on whether it was in fact read.⁵³ The other copy was held in the library of Schloss Charlottenburg, which the king never used.⁵⁴ It is therefore unclear whether Frederick had read Adlerfeld before recommending it to his officers.

Frederick's favourite work of military science was the *Memoires* of Antoine de Pas, Marquis de Feuquières, a French general of the time of Louis XIV.⁵⁵ Frederick clearly read the work as crown prince in the 1730s, mentioning Feuquières in December 1738 in a letter to his friend, Colonel Camas.⁵⁶ In June 1740, Frederick listed Feuquières's work as one of the two books to be read aloud to the cadets of the Berlin cadet school at mealtimes.⁵⁷ In November 1741, he sent 25 copies to Hereditary Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, ordering him to distribute them to his officers.⁵⁸ The work was clearly widely known, as Frederick referred to it casually in letters to Voltaire and the Marquis d'Argens.⁵⁹ In October 1745, the only military works which Frederick requested be sent to him after the plundering of his personal library by the Austrians at Soor were Feuquières's *Memoirs*, Nicholas Deschamps' *Memoir of the two last campaigns of Monsieur de Turenne in Germany* and Voltaire's *Fontenoy poem*.⁶⁰ It may be assumed from this that Frederick kept a copy of Feuquières constantly with him.

⁵² Gustave Adlerfeld, *Histoire militaire de Charles XII Roi de Suede: depuis l'an 1700, jusqu'à la bataille de Pultowa en 1709* (4 vols., Amsterdam, 1740); *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss (30 vols., Berlin, 1846-56), XXX, p. 399.

⁵³ The volumes of Adlerfeld were examined at Charlottenburg Palace on 9-11.3.2015 and 16-17.3.2015.

⁵⁴ Hans-Joachim Giersberg, 'Die Schloßbibliotheken Friedrichs II.', *Studien zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesen* 8 (1993), pp. 64-5; Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, p. 140.

⁵⁵ *Memoires de M. le Marquis de Feuquiere, lieutenant general des armées du Roi: contenant ses maximes sur la guerre; & l'application des exemples aux maximes* (new edn., London, 1736).

⁵⁶ *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 172.

⁵⁷ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁸ Leopold von Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege nach original-Quellen* (2 vols., Berlin, 1841), I, pp. 400-1. See also *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 170.

⁵⁹ *Œuvres*, XIX, p.17; *Œuvres*, XXIII, p. 407.

⁶⁰ *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 323.

Beyond this, Frederick was very fond of the works of the Marquis de Quincy, another general under Louis XIV.⁶¹ He had a special edition made in octavo format to read them more easily, published a German edition in 1771 for which he wrote the foreword, and recommended the work to his officers again in 1772 and 1775.⁶² Early evidence of Frederick's reading of Quincy can be seen from his description of Prince Eugene's 1702 attempt to surprise Cremona (one of his favourite battles) in his 1740 *Refutation of the Prince of Machiavelli*, which included details mentioned by Quincy but not by Feuquières, such as the name of the detached Imperial commander, the Prince de Vaudémont.⁶³ Similarly, during the Prussian planning for the surprise attack on the Austrian-held fortress of Glogau in February 1741, Frederick emphasized the importance of properly guarding the gate through which the cavalry would enter, perhaps reflecting Quincy's description of the crucial importance of Eugene's similar provision at Cremona, which saved his troops from being cut off when the French counter-attacked (again a detail not mentioned by Feuquières).⁶⁴ Frederick also referred frequently, although often critically, to the ideas of the Chevalier de Folard, whom he tried in 1748 to contact.⁶⁵ In 1753, he published an *Excerpt* of Folard's work, with an introduction that criticized Folard and picked out Feuquières, Quincy and the Spanish Marquis of Santa Cruz as the most important military authors.⁶⁶ Frederick's emphasis specifically on Feuquières, Quincy and Santa Cruz – all authors from the turn of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century – is indicative of how fundamentally his war-making was rooted in this period.

⁶¹ *Œuvres*, XXII, p. 330; Charles Sevin, Marquis de Quincy, *Histoire militaire du regne de Louis le Grand, Roy de France* (7 vols., Paris, 1726).

⁶² *Œuvres*, XXIX, pp. 79-80; Hannelore Röhm and Sabine Scheidler, 'Die Bibliotheken Friedrichs des Grossen' in Generaldirektion der Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin Brandenburg, ed., *Friederisiko – Friedrich der Grosse: die Ausstellung* (Munich, 2012), pp. 324, 327.

⁶³ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 227-32; *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 170-1, 321; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, pp. 612-28.

⁶⁴ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 390-1; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, pp. 618, 623-4.

⁶⁵ *Œuvres*, I, p. 184; *Œuvres*, VII, p. 29; *Œuvres*, X, p. 97; *Œuvres*, XIII, p. 114; *Œuvres*, XXVI, p. 126; *Œuvres*, XXVII_I, p. 292; *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, ed. J.G. Droysen et al (46 vols., Berlin, 1879-1939), VI, pp. 28, 38-9, 53, 121.

⁶⁶ *Extrait tiré des commentaires du Chevalier Folard sur l'histoire de Polybe, pour l'usage d'un officier* (Sans Souci, 1753), pp. 3-4.

Two tracts were prepared for Frederick in the 1730s by Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau: on the duties of each military rank, and on siege warfare.⁶⁷ Frederick clearly read the text on siege warfare, as he wrote to his friend Colonel Camas discussing it, and copied it almost verbatim during his own siege of Brieg in April 1741.⁶⁸ Frederick also spoke of Maurice de Saxe with enormous respect.⁶⁹ He was present at the exercises de Saxe conducted, based on Folard's ideas, at Mühlberg in 1730, and described them in his *Memoires to serve as the history of the House of Brandenburg*.⁷⁰ Frederick conducted a lively correspondence with de Saxe from late 1745, in which they discussed appropriate methods for conducting military operations and analyzed de Saxe's 1746 victory at Rocoux.⁷¹ De Saxe also visited Berlin and Potsdam in July 1749, and could conceivably have given Frederick a copy of his *Reveries*, written in 1732 but first published in 1756.⁷² The *Memoires* of the Imperial field marshal Raimondo Montecuccoli were another important contemporary work of military science, and Frederick certainly discussed Montecuccoli's campaigns, although he only explicitly mentioned Montecuccoli's *Memoires* once in his writings.⁷³ There were several editions of Montecuccoli's work in Frederick's libraries, and the 1756 edition in the Breslau library was likely bought for reading on campaign during the Seven Years War.⁷⁴ Frederick wrote contemptuously in February 1753 of Jacques-Francois de Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur's *Art of war*

⁶⁷ LASA, Z 44, A 9e Nr.9; LASA, Z 44, A 9e Nr.10.

⁶⁸ Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen: erster Theil: der Erste Schlesischer Krieg, 1740-1742* (3 vols., Berlin, 1890-3), II, p. 27; *Œuvres*, XVI, pp. 159-60.

⁶⁹ *Œuvres*, IX, pp. 219, 265; *Œuvres*, X, p. 283; *Œuvres*, XXII, p. 232; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 296; *Œuvres*, XXIX, p. 121.

⁷⁰ Jean-Jacques Langendorf, "Des diamants au milieu du fumier", Folard en Allemagne (1750-1800)', in Economica, ed., *Combattre, gouverner, écrire: études réunies en l'honneur de Jean Chagniot* (Paris, 2003), p. 476; Jürgen Luh, 'Feinde fürs Leben: Friedrich der Große und Heinrich von Brühl', *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 85 (2014), pp. 282-4; *Œuvres*, I, p. 184.

⁷¹ *Œuvres*, XVII, pp. 335-45; *Politische Correspondenz*, IV, pp. 327-8; *Politische Correspondenz*, V, pp. 161, 215-6, 231-2, 291-2, 553; *Politische Correspondenz*, VI, pp. 10, 23, 38-9, 119-21.

⁷² Jean-Pierre Bois, 'Le marquis de Feuquière, stratège au temps de Louis XIV' in *Combattre, gouverner, écrire*, p. 152; Gat, *Origins of military thought*, pp. 29-33; *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 344; Maurice de Saxe, *Les reveries ou memoires sur l'art de la guerre*, ed. de Bonneville (The Hague, 1756).

⁷³ Gat, *Origins of military thought*, pp. 13-24; Raimondo Montecuccoli, *Memoires* (new edn., Paris, 1746); *Œuvres*, I, pp. 80, 82, 85; *Œuvres*, VII, p. 100; *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 19-20; *Œuvres*, X, p. 277, 283; *Œuvres*, XV, p. 130; *Œuvres*, XXVI, pp. 135, 350.

⁷⁴ Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, p. 145.

by *principles and rules* as containing ‘much boredom and pedantry’, describing Puysegur as a mere ‘school master’.⁷⁵ His contempt for Puysegur was just as important for his art of war as his admiration of Feuquières, Quincy and Santa Cruz. The present work will show, in contradiction to the claims of Gat and Engberg-Pedersen, that Frederick, and the authors he favoured, did not seek to establish mathematical ‘principles and rules’ for war.

The Operational Perspective

War, however, is a practical activity, and historians studying ideas about war must be able to show not just that they existed on the theoretical plane but also whether they found practical expression. Indeed, the practical context often shows that military ideas were not intended to have a direct practical purpose but instead reflect power struggles within the military or its political leadership. Matthew Ford showed, for instance, that the choice of firearms in the British and American armies in the First and Second World Wars was the result not of objective calculations of their effectiveness but of competition between different groups and different institutional cultures within each army.⁷⁶ Tom Ricks portrayed the development of the United States Army’s doctrine in the 1970s not as a response to the operational lessons of the Vietnam War but rather an attempt to strengthen the army as an institution, countering attempts at political control and restoring institutional pride.⁷⁷ Fred Kaplan argued that the United States’s new manual for counterinsurgency in 2006 was not only a response to battlefield conditions in Iraq but also represented one faction within the US armed forces trying to achieve dominance for their ideas.⁷⁸ While, in all these cases, ideas (or the weapons which expressed them) were not developed solely to achieve military effectiveness, it is only possible to understand the real intentions of those developing them when the practical (operational military) context is understood.

⁷⁵ *Politische Correspondenz*, IX, p. 340 (quotations: ‘plus d’ennui et de pédanterie’, ‘un maître d’école’); Jacques François de Chastenet de Puysegur, *Art de la guerre par principes et par règles* (2 vols., Paris, 1748).

⁷⁶ Matthew Ford, *Weapon of choice: small arms and the culture of military innovation* (Oxford, 2017; online ed., 2017), pp. 31-50.

⁷⁷ Thomas E. Ricks, *The generals: American military command from World War II to today* (New York, NY, 2012), pp. 336-50.

⁷⁸ Fred Kaplan, *The insurgents: David Petraeus and the plot to change the American way of war* (New York, NY, 2013).

The practical context is also a rich field – indeed, an essential one – for revealing the meanings of war. While the cultural history of war has blossomed in recent years, operational military history – the details of battles – still remains neglected by the broader historical profession. Crouch, in her fascinating cultural history of the Seven Years War in French Canada, emphasized that she ‘limit[ed] . . . descriptions’ of ‘the myriad battles’, ‘minimizing the distortions caused by focusing exclusively on marches, campaigns, and strategic schemes’ and ‘privileging the reconstruction of the context of military camps (as opposed to battles) in the winter quarters of . . . cities (as opposed to those in besieged forts)’.⁷⁹ The present work takes precisely the opposite view. It shows that battles, and the details of military campaigns, are rich in cultural meaning, and it uses the decisions of generals and the manoeuvres of their armies as powerful evidence of ideas about war.

The wealth of detailed research on the operational military history of the reign of Frederick the Great – conducted particularly before 1914, by historians associated with the General Staff – means that Prussian military history is particularly well placed to provide the perspective of military operations on culture and thought. The General Staff histories have been rightly criticized for their present-mindedness, imposing the dogma of the battle of annihilation onto the military history of the eighteenth century.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, while the more recent works of Duffy, Kunisch and Showalter have overcome the nationalist hero-worship of the General Staff histories, they cannot match the detail of the General Staff works and, since they are not based on archival research, are in little position to reinterpret the existing narrative. This can be seen, for instance, from the example of Frederick’s 1758 Zorndorf campaign.⁸¹ The present work uses the operational narrative provided by

⁷⁹ Crouch, *Nobility lost*, p. 10.

⁸⁰ Sven Lange, *Hans Delbrück und der >Strategiestreit<: Kriegführung und Kriegsgeschichte in der Kontroverse, 1879-1914* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1995), pp. 73-9; Martin Raschke, *Der politisierende Generalstab: die friderizianischen Kriege in der amtlichen deutschen Militärgeschichtsschreibung, 1890-1914* (Freiburg, 1993). For the focus of the German General Staff on the concept of the battle of annihilation, see Jehuda L. Wallach, *The dogma of the battle of annihilation: the theories of Clausewitz and Schlieffen and their impact on the German conduct of two world wars* (Westport, CT, and London, 1986).

⁸¹ Duffy, *Frederick the Great*, pp.162-72; Großer Generalstab, *Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen. Dritter Theil: Der Siebenjährige Krieg*,

the earlier works as key evidence for illuminating the intellectual and cultural history of the Prussian army.

The View of the Generals

By making extensive use of archive sources, however, this work challenges existing assumptions about the operational military history of Frederick's reign, and at the same time uses Frederick's relations with his generals to show the development of military ideas. A wealth of printed primary source material exists for Frederick's campaigns, but almost all of it was written by Frederick himself. The published *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand* included three volumes of his military writings, while the German General Staff printed many of Frederick's orders in its multi-volume *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen*.⁸² Reinhold Koser lamented in 1904 that the huge *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen* published only letters written by Frederick, not the replies of his generals.⁸³ This has created a situation comparable to that which for many decades applied to research on Winston Churchill. Churchill was allowed to publish large numbers of his own wartime papers in his *History of the Second World War*, but barred from publishing any of the responses. Readers were therefore unaware that Churchill's military ideas had often been dismissed by his experienced generals. For Churchill, later research has corrected this impression, but Prussian operational military history has continued to focus overwhelmingly on 'Frederick the Unique'.⁸⁴

The present work builds on the pioneering work of historians of what could be called 'the Potsdam school', who have demonstrated that, despite the destruction of the

1756-1763 (13 vols., Berlin, 1901-14), VIII, pp. 117-54; Otto Herrmann, 'Zur Schlacht bei Zorndorf', *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* 24 (1911), pp.547-66; Max Immich, *Die Schlacht bei Zorndorf am 25. August 1758* (Berlin, 1893); Kunisch; *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 386-92; Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great*, pp. 211-21.

⁸² *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss (30 vols., Berlin, 1856), XXVIII-XXX; Großer Generalstab Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen* (18 vols., Berlin, 1890-1913).

⁸³ Reinhold Koser, 'Die preussische Kriegsführung im Siebenjährigen Kriege', *Historische Zeitschrift* 92 (1904), p.266; *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, ed. J.G. Droysen et al (46 vols., Berlin, 1879-1939).

⁸⁴ David Reynolds, *In command of history: Churchill fighting and writing the Second World War* (London etc., 2004), pp. xxii-xiv, xxvi, 117, 255, 315-6, 497, 499-500, 503-5, 515-21.

Prussian War Archive in 1945, royal and princely correspondence still provides a wealth of primary sources for Prussian military history.⁸⁵ The letters written to Frederick by his generals reveal a much more contested relationship than has been recognised in the existing military histories of Frederick's reign. Only a tiny proportion of these letters have been published. Field Marshal Kurt Christoph von Schwerin, for instance, was the most senior soldier accompanying Frederick in his invasion of Silesia, and overall commander during Frederick's absence from late January until early February 1741.⁸⁶ Yet the *Politische Correspondenz* published not one single letter from Frederick to Schwerin during the period from the invasion up to the battle of Mollwitz in April 1741, and only four of Frederick's letters to Schwerin for the whole of the First Silesian War.⁸⁷ The *Œuvres* published one, very short missive from Frederick to Schwerin on 10 January 1741, presumably chosen because it included an injunction to, 'look after your person, if you love me; it is more precious to me than ten thousand men' and, 'for the love of God, look after my soldiers and your person'.⁸⁸ The *Politische Correspondenz* also published no letters from Frederick to Schwerin between the wars or during the Second Silesian War.⁸⁹

For Field Marshal Prince Leopold of Anhalt Dessau, a substantial number of Frederick's letters were printed in the *Politische Correspondenz*, and Leopold von Orlich's 1841 *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege nach original-Quellen* printed substantial portions of Frederick's correspondence with him, although again only Frederick's letters, not the responses. The House of Anhalt-Dessau was still an independent dynasty in the mid-nineteenth century, and held copies of Frederick's letters in its own archives.⁹⁰ In contrast, it was only after the fall of the Hohenzollern monarchy that Schwerin's descendent, Dettlof von Schwerin, was able to publish a

⁸⁵ Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, pp. 23-5.

⁸⁶ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, pp. 215-96.

⁸⁷ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 290-3, 302-3, 426-7, 432-3.

⁸⁸ *Œuvres*, XXV, p. 625 (quotation: 'Ménagez votre personne, si vous m'aimez; elle m'est plus précieuse que dix mille hommes.' 'Pour l'amour de Dieu, ménagez mes soldats et votre personne.').

⁸⁹ *Politische Correspondenz*, II-IV.

⁹⁰ Leopold von Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege nach original-Quellen* (2 vols., Berlin, 1841).

biography of his predecessor which printed excerpts from at least some of the critical letters the field marshal had written to Frederick.⁹¹

This is not to say that historians have not had access to the letters of Frederick's generals. The user sheets in the relevant files in the Secret State Archive read like a roster of the great names of Prussian military history: Koser, Herrmann, Volz, Kessel, and numerous officers of the General Staff.⁹² These historians were, however, constrained by an assumption that Frederick was a military genius, and that conflicts with his generals simply represented the latter's failure to recognise this. Major General von Bonin's 1878 examination of Frederick's relationship with Prince Leopold, based on the correspondence in both the Berlin and Dessau archives, noted the king frequently seeking Leopold's advice, and even admitted that, in mid-1741, Leopold had to teach Frederick about cavalry tactics.⁹³ Bonin, however, ultimately upheld the view of Frederick as a military genius, summarising his account of Frederick learning from the Old Dessauer with the comment that, 'even genius could not completely dispense with a practical preparatory education in war'.⁹⁴ He concluded that the quarrels between the two men 'cannot be blamed on the king' but resulted from the experienced field marshal's unwillingness to accept his position as 'apprentice to a great master'.⁹⁵ Thus, even having noted the evidence that Frederick had to learn from one of his generals, Bonin felt unable to draw the conclusion that the king was not such a genius as had been claimed. The General Staff, noting that Frederick learnt about war from his generals, nevertheless maintained that this was only of limited relevance: 'even Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau seems never to have exercised a particular influence'.⁹⁶ The present work will change this view substantially, demonstrating the collective production of military knowledge.

⁹¹ Dettlof Count von Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin: ein Lebensbild aus Preußens großer Zeit* (Berlin, 1928).

⁹² See GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1, Q2, R and S; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 A-F.

⁹³ U.v. Bonin, 'Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold I. von Anhalt-Dessau', *Beiheft zum Militär-Wochenblatt* 2 (1878), pp. 61-6.

⁹⁴ Bonin, 'Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold', p. 63 (quotation: 'Auch das Genie einer praktischen Vorschule für den Krieg nicht ganz entrathen könne.').

⁹⁵ Bonin, 'Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold', p. 78 (quotation: 'Nicht dem Könige zur Last fallen', 'Lehrling eines größeren Meisters').

⁹⁶ Großer Generalstab, *Friedrich des Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege*, p. 231 (quotation: 'Selbst Fürst Leopold von Dessau scheint niemals besonderen Einfluß geübt zu haben').

The neglect of operational military history in recent decades has meant that the earlier works on Frederick's generalship were never revised, despite their recognized flaws.⁹⁷ Bernhard Kroener argued that Frederick's conflicts with Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau resulted from different concepts of war-making: Frederick's bold and decisive campaigns as against the Old Dessauer's more methodical approach. This view was not without some foundation, but it ignored Frederick's great reliance on Leopold's military expertise.⁹⁸ Christopher Duffy criticized Frederick's generalship, noted his reliance on Prince Leopold's advice in mid-1741, and his acrimonious conflict with Field Marshal Schwerin earlier that year. He did not, however, recognise that disputes between Frederick and his generals continued throughout the First and Second Silesian Wars, nor did he note how frequently Frederick was obliged to delegate to his generals responsibility for issues where he lacked the necessary expertise.⁹⁹ The present work will take the case study of Frederick's relations with Schwerin and Prince Leopold during the First Silesian War, balancing this with the perspective of his peacetime interactions with his officers 1746-1756. It will dismiss hero-worship, but also temper the excessive criticism of scholars like Szabo, showing that Frederick had a good understanding of many aspects of war. It will show the campaigns as a process of intellectual collaboration between king and generals, and of conflict between ideas of royal power and the reality of limited knowledge. In the process, it will attack the 'great man' theory of history that has remained strong in operational military history even as it has been discarded by the rest of the historical profession.

Culture, Ideas, and Time

The first chapter of this dissertation – 'Order' – will set Frederick in his broader temporal context, looking at how warfare in the long eighteenth century was shaped by the promise of post-Westphalian states to bring order after the chaos of religious and civil wars. It will show how war reflected the duty of the state to ensure the

⁹⁷ Daniel Hohrath, 'Spätbarocke Kriegspraxis und aufgeklärte Kriegswissenschaften: neue Forschungen und Perspektiven zu Krieg und Militär im "Zeitalter der Aufklärung"', in Hohrath and Gerteis, *Kriegskunst im Lichte der Vernunft*, II, p. 14; Bernd Wegner, 'Wozu Operationsgeschichte?', in Thomas Kühne and Benjamin Ziemann, eds., *Was ist Militärgeschichte?* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich, 2009), p. 110.

⁹⁸ Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau', pp. 17-25.

⁹⁹ Duffy, *Frederick the Great*, pp. 25-74, esp. pp. 29, 34, 41-4, 51-2, 55, 66.

welfare of its subjects, and how concepts of war were shaped by (changing) ideas about government and economics. The second chapter – ‘Glory’ – will begin to reveal the towering influence of Louisquatorzean France, showing that Frederick’s famous dispute with his father was expressed through a clash of masculinities, with Frederick adopting the masculinity of the court of Louis XIV. The third chapter – ‘Knowledge’ – will investigate the ideas of Eichberg, Gat, Engberg-Pedersen and Kunisch that Newtonian physics and the Enlightenment led to attempts to make warfare a calculated science. It will show that war in the early eighteenth century remained first and foremost the domain of glory-seeking nobles, and that military knowledge in the early eighteenth century was seen not as a science but as depending on the personal ability of the nobleman or ruler who commanded an army. The fourth chapter – ‘History’ – will present war as the reflection of contemporary understandings of history, showing that Frederick primarily located his war-making temporally in the age of Louis XIV, while reaching back to classical history for examples of conquerors who could change the face of a states system. The fifth chapter – ‘Power’ – will examine war as a reflection of the exercise of political power, noting that military knowledge was itself a form of power. The sixth and final chapter – ‘The Military Laboratory’ – will delve deeper both into the negotiated way in which power is exercised and the collective way in which knowledge is often created, showing the Prussian high command as comparable to the collaborative work of scientists in a laboratory.

Order

This chapter shows that warfare was fundamentally shaped by the long-eighteenth-century idea of the ordered state. Although such ideas did not achieve the level of control they aimed for – whether of states, societies or armies – it is also not correct to dismiss them as merely rhetoric and representation: they strongly shaped patterns of military behaviour. Even Frederick, who had little interest in the routine of military life, came fully to understand and apply ideas of how to order troops, and order was so highly prized that contemporaries genuinely saw it as a key measure of military effectiveness. Similarly, ideas that the ordered state should ensure the welfare of its subjects and soldiers were more than mere rhetoric, and were seen as practically beneficial, although they were also balanced against other considerations. This chapter also examines concepts of how order should be administered, showing that concepts of the state as comparable to the ruler's household led to a focus on the small details of war, at the level of the regiment. This was a phenomenon peculiar to the early eighteenth century, as the later part of the century would increasingly conceive of states (and armies) in much broader terms.

A key claim to legitimacy of 'absolutist' (or 'post-Westphalian') states in the long eighteenth century was the promise to ensure order and security after the chaos of religious and civil wars.¹ Frederick's favourite book, Voltaire's *Henriade*, exemplified this emphasis on monarchical authority to ensure order.² Mark Raeff argued that this promise of order was translated into a 'well-ordered police state'

¹ Ronald G. Asch and Heinz Durchhardt, Einleitung: Die Geburt des "Absolutismus" im 17. Jahrhundert: Epochenwende der europäischen Geschichte oder optische Täuschung? in Ronald G. Asch and Heinz Durchhardt, eds., *Der Absolutismus – ein Mythos? Strukturwandel monarchischer Herrschaft in West- und Mitteleuropa (ca. 1550-1700)* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1996), p. 14; Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. vii-viii, 7-8, 131, 234, 265-70; Gerhard Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat bei Justus Lipsius (1547-1606): der Neustoizismus als politische Bewegung*, Nicolette Mout (ed.) (Göttingen, 1989), p. 41; Peter H. Wilson, *Europe's tragedy: a history of the Thirty Years War* (London etc., 2009), pp. 807-11.

² Arnold Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse: Entwicklungsgeschichte eines Staatsmannes* (Tübingen, 1934), p. 61; Peter Gay, *Voltaire's politics: the poet as realist* (Princeton, NJ, 1959), pp. 42, 48, 98-9, 240; *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss (30 vols., Berlin, 1846-56), VIII, pp. 59-61; *Œuvres*, XXI, p. 10.

regulating society.³ Recent research has shown, however, that ‘absolute’ rulers did not have absolute power, the ‘police state’ could be ‘disordered’, and even military regulations were often not in practice enforced. Instead, scholars have stressed the use of order as a rhetorical device, and an element of monarchical display.⁴ There was, for instance, a persistent topos describing the state as a perfectly-functioning machine.⁵ Andre Wakefield has shown that German cameralist writers were valued not because their supposed scientific methods for government could actually be implemented, but because they presented a positive image of the well-ordered princely state.⁶ Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer showed that the experimental method in science was welcomed because it promised intellectual order comparable to the political order sought in Restoration England.⁷ Similarly, Jürgen Luh has argued that military methods in Europe after 1650 aimed not so much to achieve military efficiency but to display princely power and present princely armies as paragons of order. While the muskets carried by infantrymen were next to useless, their drill over-complicated, and their complex battle formations fell into confusion under battlefield conditions, their smart uniforms, upright bearing and precise movements

³ Marc Raeff, *The well-ordered police state: social and institutional change through law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1983).

⁴ Ilya Berkovich, *Motivation in war: the experience of common soldiers in old-regime Europe* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 55-127, 228-30; Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: the courts of Europe's dynastic rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 10-11; Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, pp. 259, 261-4; H.M. Scott, ‘Introduction: the problem of enlightened absolutism’ in H.M. Scott, ed., *Enlightened absolutism: reform and reformers in later eighteenth-century Europe* (London, 1990), p.21; Keith Tribe, *Governing economy: the reformation of German economic discourse, 1750-1840* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 32; Andre Wakefield, *The disordered police state: German cameralism as science and practice* (Chicago, IL, and London, 2009); Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire* (2 vols., Oxford, 2012), II, pp. 187-91, 195.

⁵ Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (2nd edn. Cambridge, 2005), pp. 28, 36; Johannes Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg: Studien zur bellizistischen Disposition des absoluten Fürstenstaates* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), pp. 139-40; Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Der Staat als Maschine: zur politischen Metaphorik des absoluten Fürstenstaats* (Berlin, 1986).

⁶ Wakefield, *Disordered police state*, passim (esp. pp. 4, 6-20, 25, 137-44). See also Philipp R. Rössner, ‘Kameralismus, Kapitalismus und die Ursprünge des modernen Wirtschaftswachstums – aus Sicht der Geldtheorie’, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 102 (2015), pp. 437-71, esp. 468-9.

⁷ Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the air-pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the experimental life* (Princeton, N.J., 2011), pp. 341-2.

on the parade ground gave an impression of the ordered warfare promised by states in this period.⁸

This chapter will engage with Luh's work, and use the military example to shed light on the interaction between theories of ordered administration and practice. It will show that, although the 'well-ordered military state' was not achieved completely, ideas of order and concepts of administration were more than mere rhetoric, and substantially influenced the behaviour of soldiers.⁹ Despite claims that he was uninterested in the routine of regimental business, Frederick himself was fully inducted into, and practiced, the precepts of the ordered military world. Moreover, the example of the Prussian cavalry shows that contemporaries saw order not just as rhetoric or self-representation but actually *as* military efficiency. Concepts of administration that considered 'economics' to be household administration, and equated both with the ruler's household or court, also shaped war, leading to a focus on the regiment (the military household, and the place for acquiring royal favour). While such concepts did not produce either a society or an army that worked like clockwork, they did produce a view of armies centred on regiments and their companies, and an idea of soldiering focused on small details. Such concepts were an expression of early eighteenth-century ideas of administration, but their enduring importance for the Prussian army had serious practical consequences over time. By the later eighteenth century, the reviews that were the proud expression of its 'absolutist' order looked increasingly out of place, and in 1806 the Prussian senior commanders would fail to develop proper strategy as they continued to follow a regimental-based idea of war that reflected now very out-dated ideas of administration.¹⁰

⁸ Jürgen Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa, 1650-1800* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2004), pp. 149, 177, 194-208, 216-21. See also Johannes Kunisch, *Der kleine Krieg: Studien zum Heerwesen des Absolutismus* (Wiesbaden, 1973), pp. 6, 80; Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, pp. 270-1. On the discrepancy between parade-ground drill and its practice in combat, see for example, John Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe, 1648 – 1789* (Manchester, 1982), p. 126; Christopher Duffy, *The military experience in the age of reason* (London and New York, NY, 1987), pp.203-4, 210, 212-3; Martin Rink, 'Vorbild für die Welt oder exakter Schlendrian? Die spätfriederzianischen Manöver', *Militärgeschichte* NF 8 (1998), pp. 59-60.

⁹ This point is made for civilian 'police' ordinances by Karl Härter, ed., *Policey und frühneuzeitliche Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), pp. vii-x.

¹⁰ On the failings of Prussian strategy in 1806, see Claus Telp, 'The Prussian army in the Jena campaign', in Alan Forrest and Peter H. Wilson, eds., *The bee and the eagle: Napoleonic France and the end of the Holy Roman Empire, 1806* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 155-60.

Rulers also had a long-standing duty to ensure the welfare of their subjects, and in the long eighteenth century this included ending the depredations of soldiers against civilians and limiting conflict only to the uniformed soldiers of states, thus bringing the same order to warfare as they promised to bring to society at large.¹¹ Recent research has shown that eighteenth-century warfare continued to be destructive for civilians, but Erica Charters has argued that, at least in the case of Britain, the ‘fiscal-military state’ really did take measures to ensure the welfare of soldiers, because demonstrating that it was ‘caring’ was essential for its legitimacy.¹² Luh argued that other European states certainly did not achieve this.¹³ The final section of this chapter will demonstrate that Frederick and his generals did recognize that it was in their interests to ‘conserve’ both soldiers and civilians, and made practical efforts to achieve this, but that such ideas were also balanced against other factors, and might be set aside if military or political necessity pointed in a different direction.

Concepts of Order

‘Wherever there are troops’, said Santa Cruz, ‘justice is respected and subjects obey.’¹⁴ This reflected the consensus among the military authors read by Frederick. Montecuccoli, from the perspective of the later seventeenth century, stated bluntly

¹¹ T.J. Hochstrasser, *Natural law theories in the early Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 36, 168-9; Michael Howard, *War in European history* (Oxford, London, New York, NY, 1976), pp. 54-5, 62-70, 72; Kunisch, *Der kleine Krieg*, pp. 1 39-40, 46; Stephen C. Neff, *War and the law of nations: a general history* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 87-8; Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, pp. 7-8, 131, 236, 265-7; Tribe, *Governing economy*, pp. 19-20, 30-2; Keith Tribe, ‘Camerarism and the sciences of the state’ in Mark Goldie and Robert Wokler, eds., *The Cambridge history of eighteenth-century political thought* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 530-1 539; Whaley, *Holy Roman Empire*, II, pp. 193-4, 197, 199-200, 485-6, 495; Peter H. Wilson, ‘War in German thought from the Peace of Westphalia to Napoleon’, *European History Quarterly* 28 (1998), pp. 7, 9-10.

¹² Erica Charters, ‘The caring fiscal-military state during the Seven Years War, 1756-1763’, *The Historical Journal* 52 (2009), pp. 921–3, 936-41; Erica Charters, Eve Rosenhaft and Hannah Smith, ‘Introduction’, in Erica Charters, Eve Rosenhaft and Hannah Smith, eds., *Civilians and war in Europe, 1618-1815* (Liverpool, 2012), pp. 2-8; Erica Charters, *Disease, war, and the imperial state: the welfare of the British armed forces during the Seven Years’ War* (Chicago, IL, and London, 2014), pp. 1-5; Childs, *Armies and Warfare*, pp. 2-27.

¹³ Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa*, pp. 13-80, 219-23.

¹⁴ Marquis de Santa Cruz de Marzenado, *Reflexions militaires et politiques*, trans. de Vergy, (4 vols., The Hague, 1739), I, p. 290 (quotation: ‘Par tout où il y a des troupes la justice est respectée, & le sujets obéissent.’).

that ‘order was born with the world’.¹⁵ He also explicitly stated the role of armies in ensuring this order:

No state can be at rest, nor repel injuries, nor defend the law, religion or liberty without arms . . . Without them His Majesty the prince cannot be respected, either by his subjects . . . or by foreigners, which is the source of wars.¹⁶

Feuquières similarly argued that, even for a ‘peaceable prince’, it was necessary to have strong military forces so that his neighbours should ‘not trouble the tranquility of the state’.¹⁷ It is well known that the Hohenzollern monarchs followed such ideas of a strong army as a guarantee of respect from other powers, and thus of order in the international system. Frederick William I’s ambition to achieve ‘great respect in the world’ is well known.¹⁸ His son clearly understood this at an early age, as his 1732 Natzmer letter also looked forward to a time when ‘the King of Prussia would be able to make a fine figure among the great rulers of the earth and play one of the major roles’.¹⁹

Feuquières, who had served under the famous drillmaster Jean Martinet, also emphasized, however, that armies themselves must be ordered:²⁰

¹⁵ Raimondo Montecuccoli, *Memoires* (new edn., Paris, 1746), p. 69 (quotation: ‘l’ordre est né avec le monde’).

¹⁶ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, p. 68 (quotation: ‘Aucun Etat ne peut être en repos, ni repousser les injures, ni défendre les Loix, la Religion & la liberté sans armes . . . Sans elle la Majesté du Prince ne peut être respectée, ni par les Sujets, . . . ni par les Etrangers, ce qui est la source des guerres.’).

¹⁷ *Memoires de M. le Marquis de Feuquiere, lieutenant general des armées du Roi: contenant ses maximes sur la guerre; & l’application des exemples aux maximes* (new edn., London, 1736), pp. 9-10. (quotations, p. 9: ‘Prince paisible’, ‘ne trouble la tranquillité de son Etat’).

¹⁸ Richard Dietrich, ed., *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern* (Cologne, Vienna, 1986), pp. 224, 233 (quotation, p. 233: ‘ein grohs respeck in die welt’); Fritz Hartung, ‘Die Politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern’, in Otto Büsch and Wolfgang Neugebauer, eds., *Moderne preußische Geschichte 1648-1947: eine Anthologie* (3 vols., Berlin, New York, NY, 1981), p. 1496; Carl Hinrichs, ‘Preußen als historisches Problem: zur heutigen Auffassung Friedrich Wilhelms I.’, in Carl Hinrichs, *Preussen als historisches Problem: gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. Gerhard Oestreich (Berlin, 1964), p. 32.

¹⁹ *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 5.

²⁰ On Feuquières’s service under Martinet, see Jean-Pierre Bois, ‘Le marquis de Feuquière, stratège au temps de Louis XIV’, in Economica, ed., *Combattre, gouverner, écrire: études réunies en l’honneur de Jean Chagniot* (Paris, 2003), p. 149.

On the maintenance and the exact observation of military discipline depends the conservation of the army, that of the country, and the success of enterprises . . . Without the subordination of the humble to the great, no obedience. Without obedience, no execution . . . The exact observation of military discipline is a means without which war in the long term can neither be waged nor sustained.²¹

Montecuccoli agreed:

Order is a disposition or situation of all things in the place, rule and manner suitable to them. All of these things give birth to happy success and, in contrast, disorder gives birth to misfortunes and confusion . . . The histories are full of examples where very great armies without order were entirely ruined by small ones in good order.²²

Quincy agreed: ‘there is not a state where order, discipline and subordination are so necessary, and where they need to be more regularly observed, than in war, where faults are always considerable, and of a dangerous consequence.’²³ Santa Cruz argued that ‘the disciplined soldier is valiant because, knowing what he has to do, he is more audacious’.²⁴ Maurice de Saxe did not go quite so far, but nevertheless affirmed that, ‘discipline . . . is the soul of the whole military race’.²⁵ His letters to Frederick emphasized the value of discipline for the effectiveness of an army.²⁶

²¹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 62-3 (quotation: ‘Du maintien & de l'exacte observation de la discipline Militaire dépend la conservation de l'Armée, celle du païs, & le succès des entreprises.’ ‘Sans la subordination du petit au grand, nulle obéissance. Sans obéissance, nulle exécution.’ ‘L'Exacte observation de la discipline Militaire est un moïen sans lequel une guerre ne peut être long-tems ni faite, ni soutenuë.’). See also *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 11.

²² Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 3-4 (quotation: ‘L'ordre . . . est une disposition ou situation de chaque chose dans le lieu, la regle, & la maniere qui lui conviennent. De toutes ces choses naissent les heureux succès, & du désordre au contraire, naissent les malheurs & la confusion . . . Les histoires sont pleines d'exemples, où de très-grandes armées sans ordre ont été entierement ruinées par de petites en bon ordre.’). See also Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. ix, 188.

²³ Charles Sevin, Marquis de Quincy, *Histoire militaire du regne de Louis le Grand, Roy de France* (7 vols., Paris, 1726), VII_II, p. 21 (quotation: ‘il n’y a aucun Etat ou l’ordre, la discipline, & la subordination soient plus nécessaires, & où elles doivent être plus régulièrement observées qu’à la guerre, où les fautes sont toujours considérables, & d’une dangereuse conséquence.’).

²⁴ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 319 (quotation: ‘le soldat discipliné est vaillant; parce que sachant ce qu’il doit faire, il a plus de hardiesse’).

²⁵ Maurice de Saxe, *Les reveries ou memoires sur l’art de la guerre*, ed. de Bonneville (The Hague, 1756), pp. 39-40, 102-3, 177-8, 180, 213 (quotation, p. 102: ‘la Discipline est . . . l’ame de tout le genre militaire’).

²⁶ *Œuvres*, XVII, pp. 335-6, 340.

As the visible expression of this ordered war, authors emphasized excellence in the execution of drill movements. Montecuccoli stated that, ‘the men . . . must exercise. Without this it will not be an army but a confused mass of big men’, and Feuquières emphasised the importance of frequent exercises to maintain discipline.²⁷ Moreover, both for tactical purposes and to protect civilians, authors called for soldiers to be kept constantly in their ranks, whether on the march or on the battlefield.²⁸ These authors – from France, Spain and the Habsburg Empire – demonstrate that ideas of ordered warfare were a common phenomenon across Western Europe.

Neuruppin

Frederick’s relationship to the ordering of the military world has subject to some dispute. While Frederick’s advocacy of strict discipline *in general* is well attested, his personal involvement in the details is less clear.²⁹ Countering the claims of some pre-1914 historians, Jürgen Luh has argued that Frederick as crown prince did not involve himself in regimental business during his period as regimental colonel-proprietor (‘Inhaber’, or ‘Chef’) of Infantry Regiment No.15 at Neuruppin, 1732-1740, preferring literary ideas of military glory to the routine of regimental administration.³⁰

Certainly, Frederick’s correspondence with his father’s minister Grumbkow shows a sharp drop-off in mentions of his regiment after the early years of his rehabilitation, as Frederick focused on issues of European power politics that were clearly of much greater interest to him.³¹ In a 1738 letter to Voltaire, Frederick referred to May as ‘that season which is for me the semester of Mars’, implying that it was only during

²⁷ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 10; Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, p. 19 (quotation: ‘Les hommes . . . doivent s’exercer, sans quoi ce ne feroit pas une armée, mais une foule confuse de gens ramassés.’).

²⁸ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 285; Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, p. 99; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 13-15, 68.

²⁹ See for instance, *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, ed. J.G. Droysen et al (46 vols., Berlin, 1879-1939), XVII, p. 204; Gustav Berthold Volz, ed., *Die politischen Testamente Friedrichs des Grossen* (Berlin, 1920), pp. 86-7.

³⁰ Paul Becher, *Der Kronprinz Friedrich als Regiments-Chef in Neu-Ruppin von 1732-1740* (Berlin, 1892), pp. 21-22; Jürgen Luh, *Der Große: Friedrich II von Preussen* (Munich, 2011), p. 30.

³¹ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 72, 75-9; Reinhold Koser, ed., *Briefwechsel Friedrichs des Großen mit Grumbkow und Maupertius (1731-1759)* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 98; *Œuvres*, XVI, pp. 53, 75, 96, 98.

the period of preparation for the annual review that he focused his attention on his regiment.³² Even when writing to Frederick William, Frederick sometimes said that he had merely been informed of something by the colonel-commandant, or had ‘found’ measures being taken (presumably on the initiative of the commandant).³³ The second chapter will show Frederick’s preference for military glory, inspired by French literature, in contrast to his father’s emphasis on the punctilious performance of duty, as an example of the competing masculinities of the period. Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence that Frederick came to understand the mechanics of drill better and better during his years in Neuruppin, and this shows the practical influence of such ideas of order.

Crucially, Frederick’s proprietorship of his regiment was ‘audience-oriented’.³⁴ It was part of his rehabilitation after his attempted flight in 1730, and Frederick administered his regiment to the degree necessary to impress his father and those close to him.³⁵ Frederick’s activity as regimental proprietor therefore stressed the elements of military life that his father considered most important, focusing especially on the annual reviews, held in Berlin in May or June each year, when Frederick William personally inspected the regiments.³⁶ Frederick’s correspondence with his intimates, describing his anxiety about each upcoming review and his relief upon successfully completing it, made clear its importance.³⁷ The 1735 review, where Frederick William embraced his son in front of the troops and promoted him to major general, represented the culmination of Frederick’s personal rehabilitation.³⁸ The *general reviews*, and the *special reviews* which often followed them, where Frederick

³² *Œuvres*, XXI, p. 225 (quotation: ‘cette saison, qui est pour moi le semestre de Mars’).

³³ *Friedrichs des Großen Briefe an seinen Vater: geschrieben in den Jahren 1732 bis 1739* (Berlin, 1838), pp. 27, 49, 95.

³⁴ For the concept of an ‘audience-oriented’ approach to Frederick’s writings, see Andreas Pečar, ‘Friedrich der Große als Autor: Plädoyer für eine adressatenorientierte Lektüre seiner Schriften’, in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große – eine perspektivische Bestandsaufnahme: Beiträge des ersten Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 28./29. September 2007* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-bestandsaufnahme/pecar_autor, last accessed 27 November 2017).

³⁵ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 27; *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. iv-v.

³⁶ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 1, 12, 26, 38-9, 50, 78, 123-4, 147; Carmen Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs: Netzwerke und Patronage in der preußischen Armee, 1713-1786* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich, 2013), p. 171.

³⁷ *Œuvres*, XVI, pp. 163, 179, 290-1, 360; *Œuvres*, XXI, p. 225.

³⁸ Becher, *Regiments-Chef*, p. 14.

William would pick out tall soldiers for his Giants Guard, stressed smart uniforms, excellence in drill movements, and impressive-looking soldiers: all part of the *appearance* of order as a reflection of princely power highlighted by Luh.³⁹

Achieving smart uniforms was relatively straightforward. Frederick at one point described the effect of ‘a little flour thrown on the heads of the soldiers’, and it may be assumed that he was able to leave this to his company officers and NCOs.⁴⁰ In contrast, like all regimental proprietors, Frederick went to great efforts, and expense, to acquire impressive-looking soldiers.⁴¹ The frequent mentions of recruitment in Frederick’s letters to his father show that it was important for him to show evidence of working assiduously at it.⁴² In July 1732, Frederick protested at being instructed to provide 30 men for the regiment of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, lamenting that he did not have as much money to recruit ‘big men’ and make his regiment ‘beautiful’ as the ‘Old Dessauer’ had.⁴³ At a time when Frederick had very little room for manoeuvre indeed, it is noticeable that he saw the retention of attractive soldiers within his regiment, and the means to recruit more, as justifiable grounds for complaint. He also clearly saw recruitment as a good pretext for asking to borrow money, as he did from his father’s intimate, the Austrian ambassador Seckendorff, also in July 1732.⁴⁴

Drill movements were a much more complex matter, and it seems that Frederick’s learning process here was slow. His letters to his father even as an eight-year-old described watching his proprietary company of Infantry Regiment No.18 at Cöpernick exercising and performing firing practice.⁴⁵ One of the first steps in Frederick’s rehabilitation was to request his father, repeatedly, in December 1731 and January

³⁹ Becher, *Regiments-Chef*, pp.18-9. For similar developments in Britain, see Matthew McCormack, *Embodying the militia in Georgian England* (Oxford, 2015; online edn., 2015), pp. 88-9.

⁴⁰ *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 360.

⁴¹ Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great: a military life* (London, 1985), p. 11.

⁴² *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 16, 24, 25, 29, 31, 61, 65, 77-8, 88, 99, 107, 125, 136, 152, 159, 163, 165; *Œuvres*, XVII_III, pp. 6, 69-70, 71, 87-8, 103, 128, 133-4.

⁴³ Becher, *Regiments-Chef*, pp. 47-8; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 197 (quotations: ‘grosse Kerls’, ‘schön’).

⁴⁴ *Œuvres*, XVI, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁵ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 6-8.

1732, to send him a copy of the *Regulation for the royal Prussian infantry* of 1726.⁴⁶ Writing to Grumbkow in 1732 and 1733, however, Frederick described exercising the troops only in general terms, although his letters to his father in 1733 and 1735 mentioned the component elements of drill.⁴⁷ Although Frederick visited the Potsdam exercises, which set the standard for the rest of the Prussian army, he also brought officers from his regiment with him or indeed sent them in his place, showing that he relied on them to spread good practice to the regiment.⁴⁸

Frederick's letters in later years, however, showed the ability to describe drill in increasing detail. In 1734, while campaigning with Prince Eugene's army on the Rhine, Frederick described at length how the Duke of Bevern drilled the Hessian troops, noting such details as the way their grenadiers were deployed, how they loaded their muskets, and the fact that they were unable to fire by divisions.⁴⁹ Frederick also described the exacting standards of Prince Eugene, exercising the Habsburg troops for three hours a day.⁵⁰ By 1739, in a series of letters over the course of April, Frederick was able to describe to his father each stage in the preparation of his regiment for the annual review. First the men were exercised 'by rank'.⁵¹ Then they were exercised as whole battalions, 'by divisions', before moving on to firing practice.⁵² On 27 April 1739, only 23 days after his letter describing the first steps of the process, Frederick was reporting that his regiment was now ready for the review, and he would investigate to see if there were any final details missing.⁵³ No doubt the regimental officers played a large role in actually conducting the training, but it seems clear that Frederick at least understood the stages in theory.

Perhaps the most eloquent testimony to Frederick's developing understanding not just of the mechanics of drill but the effect it was intended to have on soldiers can be seen from his letter to the Count of Schaumburg-Lippe on 4 May 1739 at the end of the

⁴⁶ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 44-5, 52, 54-5.

⁴⁷ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 16, 40, 44; Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, p.98; *Œuvres*, XVI, pp.53, 75, 96, 98.

⁴⁸ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 18, 32, 130-1.

⁴⁹ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 92-3.

⁵⁰ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 202.

⁵¹ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 149, 152.

⁵² *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 154, 159.

⁵³ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, p. 160.

process of preparation just described, in which he told him that, ‘we are here occupied in creating men out of creatures who have no more than the shape of them’.⁵⁴ Ilya Berkovich has shown that the key aim of basic training, including drill, was to socialize soldiers in a separate military identity, inculcating a sense of differentness from the civilian population.⁵⁵ Frederick went on to describe the process as specifically aimed at placing men within the ordered structure of princely war-making:

Military legislators, we are none the less charged with the art of driving men. It is a continual study of the human spirit, whose goal is to render very coarse souls susceptible of glory, to reduce beneath discipline mutinous and unquiet spirits, and to cultivate the morals of dissolutes, libertines, and villains. Ungrateful as this work appears, it is done with pleasure; this phantom called glory . . . animates and encourages one to render a disordered troop capable of order and susceptible to obedience.⁵⁶

Frederick continued to follow such ideas as king. His statement in his *General principles of war*, written for the benefit of his officers, that ‘the fortune of states is due to the discipline of armies’, was entirely in line with contemporary military literature.⁵⁷ In orders issued both during Silesian Wars and the period of peace 1745-56, Frederick emphasized the importance of exact and swift drill movements.⁵⁸ One of his guard officers, von Oelsnitz, produced a 1753 tract on quartermaster-sergeants, which focused on addressing the various causes of ‘disorders’ in the alignment of the troops and in the setting-up of camps.⁵⁹ Moreover, it is clear that Frederick was not only focused on the practical value of drill but also considered it important that the troops should maintain a good appearance. In his *Instruction* to Field Marshal Schwerin on 24 January 1741, in which Frederick gave Schwerin command in Silesia

⁵⁴ *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 233 (quotation: ‘Nous sommes ici occupés à rendre hommes des créatures qui n'en ont que la figure.’).

⁵⁵ Berkovich, *Motivation in war*, pp. 166-9.

⁵⁶ *Œuvres*, XVI, pp. 233-4 (quotation: ‘Législateurs militaires, nous n'en sommes pas moins chargés de l'art de conduire les hommes. C'est une étude continuelle de l'esprit humain, et dont le but tend à rendre des âmes très-grossières susceptibles de gloire, à réduire sous la discipline des esprits mutins et inquiets, et à cultiver les mœurs de gens dissolus, libertins et scélérats. Tout ingrat que paraît ce travail, on le fait avec plaisir; ce fantôme qu'on appelle la gloire . . . anime et encourage à rendre une troupe dérégulée capable d'ordre et susceptible d'obéissance.’)

⁵⁷ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 100.

⁵⁸ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 32, 103; *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 126, 181, 198.

⁵⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 C Nr.41, pp. 72r – 74v: Oelsnitz to Frederick, 31.3.1753 (quotation: ‘Unordnungen’).

in his absence, the king considered it important, alongside giving dispositions for the newly-won province, to order changes to the style of hats worn by two of the cavalry regiments.⁶⁰ Frederick's June 1742 *Regulation for the cavalry and dragoons*, alongside prescriptions for the swift and exact performance of drill movements, ordered officers to ensure 'that their cavalymen always have their hats sitting well on their eye-line'.⁶¹ Despite his preference for dreams of glory over the routine of regimental business, Frederick had absorbed the contemporary emphasis on the importance of impressive-looking soldiers, and now practised it himself.

Order as Military Efficiency

Jürgen Luh, noting that the Prussian infantry's feats on the drill square were crucial in establishing their reputation as the best in Europe, argued that the ordered *appearance* of soldiers could have greater political impact than their actual achievements on the battlefield.⁶² The case of the Prussian cavalry shows, however, that contemporaries saw order not only as an element of representation but actually as crucial for effectiveness in battle.

The famous reorganisation of the Prussian cavalry, which Frederick himself hailed as one of his greatest military achievements, was primarily focused on the imposition of order among them.⁶³ Although, as will be described in the last chapter, there was an adjustment of the cavalry's tactics – with an emphasis on charging at the gallop, sword in hand – the reorganisation primarily involved the imposition of more rigorous drill: a reflection of the search for order.⁶⁴ As the last chapter will emphasize, Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau was actually the most influential figure in the reforms, and both he and Frederick responded to the cavalry's defeat in the skirmish at Baumgarten on 27 February 1741 primarily by stressing the more rigorous imposition of order.

⁶⁰ Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen. Erster Theil: der Erste Schlesischer Krieg, 1740-1742* (3 vols., Berlin, 1890-3), I, pp. 96*-97*.

⁶¹ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 118-9 (quotation, p. 119: 'dass die Reiter allemal ihre Hüte gut in die Augen sitzen haben').

⁶² Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa*, pp. 207-8.

⁶³ *Œuvres*, I, p. 221; *Œuvres*, II, p. 87.

⁶⁴ On the tactical changes, see Dennis E. Showalter, *The wars of Frederick the Great* (London and New York, NY, 1996), pp. 71-3.

Leopold wrote to Frederick recommending that two officers who had not done their duty should be punished ‘with the greatest rigour’.⁶⁵ Frederick similarly wrote to Lieutenant General Schulenburg, proprietor of the regiment which had been broken, that:

The regiment lacked the proper order and subordination: the whole misfortune has happened because the men are talking back and there is a lack of subordination from the officers, since if everyone had done what Lieutenant Colonel Diesfort ordered . . . it would have been easy to repel the rabble of hussars . . . Since I have myself to an extent been present and seen on other occasions that, when you have ordered something, the officers have argued with it, or when the officers have said something to the dragoons, the latter have dissented from it and done what they wanted, so I recommend you once again most strongly to introduce good order, subordination and discipline in the regiment.⁶⁶

The General Staff noted that much of the reorganisation of the cavalry after the April 1741 battle of Mollwitz simply involved enforcing proper observance of the regulation issued for the cavalry in 1727.⁶⁷ On 25 May 1741, Frederick wrote to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau that, ‘in particular, the cavalry still in many cases lacks the proper subordination’. He was therefore requiring that it exercise five times a week for at least an hour.⁶⁸ Leopold wrote back acknowledging the need for the cavalry to be better drilled, and by late August 1741 Frederick was also able to write with satisfaction that ‘my cavalry is . . . in such an order as I would wish’.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 3.3.1741 (quotation: ‘nach der größten Rigueur’).

⁶⁶ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 106*-107* (quotation: ‘es bey dem Regiment an gehöriger subordination und Ordre fehlte, da durch das raisonniren derer Kerls und durch den Mangel der subordination von denen Officiers dies gantze Unglück entstanden, indem wann einjeder gethan hätte was Ihn der Obr. Lieut. v. Diesfort befohlen, . . . so wäre ein gar leichtes gewesen, das Husaren Gesindel abzuweisen . . . Und da Ich bei anderen Gelegenheiten zum Theil selbst gegenwärtig gewesen und gesehen, daß wan Ihr was befohlen, die Officiers dagegen raisonniret, oder wann die Officiers denen Dragonern was gesaget, diese viele Decentes dagegen gemachet und gethan, wie sie gewolt; So recommendire Ich Euch noch mahlen auf das Allerhöchste, bei dem Regiment noch eine gute Ordre, subordination und Disciplin einzuführen’).

⁶⁷ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, II, p. 46.

⁶⁸ Leopold von Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege nach original-Quellen* (2 vols., Berlin, 1841), I, p. 334 (quotation: ‘es sonderlich bei der Cavallerie an gehöriger Subordination noch in vielen stücken fehlet’).

⁶⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 9.6.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 348 (quotation: ‘ist, [sic] Meine Cavalerie . . . anjezo in Solcher ordnung als ich Sie Wünsche’).

‘Order’ did not just mean a good appearance and the proper alignment of hats. In an instruction to all his cavalry regiments on 1 March 1741, after Baumgarten, Frederick specifically described order in terms of tactical effectiveness:

All that the [enemy] hussars can do is to break a squadron’s composure and order, pursue those who flee, and cut them down. Thus, the only and surest defence against them is to maintain close ranks and stay in order, so that they are not able to achieve anything.⁷⁰

Moreover, order was not just seen as giving tactical advantages over light cavalry. In June 1741, when Frederick ordered that the cavalry regiments in Brandenburg be dispersed in cantonments, Leopold opposed this on the grounds that, by threatening the cavalry’s discipline, this also threatened the adoption of their new tactics:

Because of how far apart their quarters will be, *it will not be possible to hold the regiments in the proper discipline*, and whereas they are currently beginning to [master] the drill exercises and how to attack according to Your Majesty’s order, this would in a short time be forgotten [italics mine].⁷¹

Order (or discipline), closely connected to drill, was therefore seen as key to battlefield effectiveness. By late July, after three months of drilling, Leopold was assuring Frederick that ‘the . . . cavalry regiments are . . . in such a condition that Your Royal Majesty can expect good service from them’.⁷² The emphasis on order was seen in a slew of orders and regulations from Frederick for his cavalry over the following years, emphasizing that the troopers should be able to mount and dismount and execute all drill movements quickly, and charge in tight formations.⁷³

⁷⁰ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 108*-110* (quotation, p. 109*: ‘alles was die Husaren thun könnten darin Bestände, daß sie eine Esquadron aus der Contenance und Ordnung brächten und alsdann denen Feld-Flüchters nachsetzen und sie nieder hauten, und also wäre die einzige aber auch sicherste Defension gegen sie sich geschlossen zu halten um in Ordnung zu bleiben, sodann sie nichts ausrichten könnten’).

⁷¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick 18.6.1741 (quotation: die Regimente wegen Weitläufigkeit der Quartier in gehöriger disciplin nicht erhalten werden können, und selbige da sie beginnen, nach Ew. Königl. Majestät befehl das Exercium und zur attaque wohl zu ____, solches in sehr kurzen Weile in Vergessenheit kommen würde.’).

⁷² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 31.7.1741 (quotation: ‘die . . . Cavallerie Regimente sind gewiß . . . in solchen Stande, daß Ew. Königl. Majestät von denenselben guthe dienste zu erwarthen haben.’).

⁷³ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 32; *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 63, 117, 182-3, 198.

Assessing the value of this imposition of order and discipline for battlefield effectiveness lies beyond the scope of this work, which examines the meanings of war, not the mechanics of combat. Nevertheless, John Keegan and Rory Muir have shown that combat in the long eighteenth century depended most importantly upon moral factors. While the effectiveness of infantry musket fire in line may be doubted, cavalry charges depended on breaking the enemy psychologically, and the value of order and cohesion for achieving this should not be under-estimated.⁷⁴ Frederick, Maurice de Saxe and Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau all described the superb discipline of the Prussian troops as an important part of their superior combat effectiveness.⁷⁵ Whatever the actual truth, order was at least *thought* to be of vital importance in achieving victory in battle.

The expectation that irregular – disordered – troops would be less militarily effective is clearly seen in Frederick’s correspondence with Leopold during the latter’s command of Prussian forces in Upper Silesia from April to June 1742. Leopold himself, describing the situation on his assumption of command, opined that, if the Habsburg Hungarian irregular forces were ‘not reinforced with German regiments [i.e. regiments who fought in the disciplined western-European style], one cannot believe that they will be in a condition to attempt anything against Your Royal Majesty’s corps’, or to attack through the mountain passes.⁷⁶ These were ‘more robbers than soldiers’.⁷⁷ The field marshal was soon forced to change his opinion, however, as he found the Habsburg irregulars swarming all over the country, harassing ship traffic on the Oder and making it extremely difficult for the Prussians

⁷⁴ Duffy, *Military experience*, pp. 215, 228-9; John Keegan, *The face of battle* (London 1991), pp. 149-50, 155-161, 170-192; Rory Muir, *Tactics and the experience of battle in the age of Napoleon* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1998), pp. 75-6, 80, 88-9, 91-102, 106-7, 109, 114-5, 122-4, 127, 130-7.

⁷⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 24.12.1741; *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 335, *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 7-8, 92.

⁷⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742 (quotation: ‘nicht mit teutsche Regmtr. renforciret werden solten: So ist wohl nicht zu glauben, daß diese was gegen Ew. Königl: Mayl: Corps zu entreprenniren solten in Stande seyn.’).

⁷⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 13.5.1742 (quotation: ‘eher Räuber als Soldaten’).

to bring supplies to their forces in Upper Silesia.⁷⁸ By occupying the mountain passes, the irregular troops also made it impossible to gather any information on Habsburg forces in Moravia.⁷⁹

Frederick, however, dismissed the field marshal's lamentations, telling him again and again that 'the mountains of Upper Silesia are occupied by nothing more than 'tolpatschen' [Hungarian infantry] and comparable rabble'.⁸⁰ 'You have nothing more than hussars, Vlachs and pandours to worry about'.⁸¹ 'Your Honour will have nothing particular to expect of the enemy, apart from hussars and comparable rabble'.⁸² The enemy were, 'nothing but hussars, farmers and *tolpatschen*'.⁸³ Even as he began to recognise the threat posed by these irregular troops to the Prussian lines of communication, Frederick expressed his confidence that Leopold would 'reduce this motley rabble to respect'.⁸⁴ Frederick's words here were part of a wider dispute with Leopold over strategy, as will be described in the final chapter, but they also speak to a genuine inability to believe that soldiers who were not disciplined would be able to achieve anything.

As discussed below, Frederick actually raised large numbers of light cavalry during the First Silesian War. In a question that touched at the heart of contemporary ideas of ordered states creating ordered warfare, King George II of Great Britain asked the Prussian Field Marshal Schwerin in June 1743, 'for what purpose Your Majesty [Frederick] wanted such a quantity of hussars'. Schwerin, understanding that this question implied criticism of such irregular troops, hastened to reply not only 'that

⁷⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 14.5.1742, 18.5.1742, 23.5.1742, 2.6.1742, 11.6.1742.

⁷⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 4.5.1742, 8.5.1642, 11.5.1742, 21.5.1742, 23.5.1742.

⁸⁰ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 358 (quotation: 'das Gebürge nach Ober-Schlesien hin mit nichts als mit Tolpatschen und dergleichen Gesindel besetzt wäre').

⁸¹ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 359 (quotation: 'haben Sie nichts als von huzaren, Walachen, und Panduren zu besorgen').

⁸² Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 360 (quotation: 'Ew Liebden von dem Feinde nichts sonderliches zu gewärtigen haben werden, außer was etwa von Husaren oder dergleichen Gesindel').

⁸³ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 363 (quotation: 'nichts als huzaren bauren und Talpatschen'). See also GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 27.5.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 365.

⁸⁴ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 367, 372 (quotation: p. 367: 'dieses liederliche Gesindel in respect zu halten.').

experience had shown that one could get good service from them, . . . [but] that Your Majesty would surely get the best from his because . . . with the application with which he works and the regular payment that he would furnish to them, *he would discipline them better than the Hungarians were*’ [italics mine].⁸⁵ Schwerin thus maintained that the Prussian hussars followed the expectations of ordered warfare, *and that they would be militarily more effective for it*. In December 1741, as he advanced into Moravia, Schwerin had told Frederick that he was keeping the uhlan cavalry which the Prussians had recruited close to his infantry ‘to discipline a little these tricksters who do nothing but steal, scout, and commit a thousand disorders.’⁸⁶

Thus, the conventional wisdom of the age, which Frederick had learnt in Neuruppin, saw the ordering of soldiers as important not only to display the power of their rulers but actually to ensure their effectiveness on the battlefield. Frederick applied this as soon as he went on campaign, and continued to do so for the rest of his reign. In the later eighteenth century, the Prussian army’s obsession with drill would come to seem increasingly out-dated, mocked by Clausewitz as an ‘exact inefficiency’. Some historians have argued that the trauma of the Seven Years War led Frederick to abandon operational flexibility in favour of the minutiae of drill.⁸⁷ It seems clear, however, that, as in so much else, Frederick’s attitude to the importance of drill was formed in the 1730s and 1740s and was representative of the ideas of the early eighteenth century.⁸⁸ As Martin Rink noted, the Prussian reviews represented the apogee of ‘the absolutist army’. What changed was not the king’s approach but the

⁸⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 S: Schwerin to Frederick, 18.6.1743 (quotation: ‘a quel usage Vôte Majesté vouloit un si grand nombre d’Husars’, ‘l’experience faisoit voir, qu’on en pouvoit tirer bon service, et que Vôte Majesté tireroit surement des reilles des siens puisque . . . avec l’application qu’Elle travaille et le payement regulier qu’Elle leurs fourmissoit Elle les disciplineroit mieux que n’etoient les Hungrois’).

⁸⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 21.12.1741 (quotation: ‘pour discipliner un peux cette Engenie, qui ne fait que voler et se fouler, com mettent miles desordres’).

⁸⁷ Rink, ‘Exakter Schlendrian’, pp. 59-63; Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The art of warfare in the age of Napoleon* (Bloomington, IN, and London, 1987), p. 19. Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great*, pp. 330-2 notes Frederick’s focus on drill after 1763 but also that this was reflected previous practice.

⁸⁸ On, for instance, Frederick’s detachment from the French Enlightenment after the early 1750s, see Bogdan Krieger, *Frederick the Great and his books* (New York, NY, 1913), pp. 9-10.

intellectual context, as the ordered soldiers of ‘absolutist’ rulers were no longer seen as the key to battlefield effectiveness.⁸⁹

The Regimental Economy

The idea of the ordered state, however, meant more than just orderly lines of soldiers. It also involved ideas of administrative practice, and these similarly influenced the military. In the German lands in the early eighteenth century, the financial aspects of the state were seen primarily as an extension of the ruler’s household, with household and government together part of a ruler’s court. Contemporary authors described the well-ordered household as a machine just like the well-ordered state (or army). Only gradually, in the course of the eighteenth century, did the science of government turn from being primarily ‘Kameralwissenschaft’ – the administration of the ruler’s domains – to ‘Staatswissenschaft’ – the administration of a whole state.⁹⁰ This shift was mirrored in the military sphere, where it has been argued that the concept of ‘strategy’ as a level of activity above the tactical movements of units did not appear until the latter part of the eighteenth century, and divisions – permanent units above the level of the regiment – only slowly started to appear in the course of the century.⁹¹ This section will demonstrate that King Frederick William I saw the army as a military household, and bequeathed this approach to his son.

In August 1731, a year after Frederick’s failed attempt at flight, Frederick William I wrote responding to his son’s request to be re-admitted into the army. After emphasising the need for a soldier to show ambition and toughness, and castigating Frederick’s interests in the effeminacies of French culture, Frederick William moved on to the importance of good ‘Wirthschaft’ (sic), a term that in modern German

⁸⁹ Rink, ‘Exakter Schlendrian’, pp. 60-1 (quotation, p. 60: ‘das absolutistische Heerwesen’).

⁹⁰ Keith Tribe, ‘Cameratism and the science of government’, *The Journal of Modern History* 56 (1984), pp. 264, 267-71; Tribe, *Governing economy*, pp. 19-28; Keith Tribe, ‘Cameratism and the sciences of the state’, pp. 529-35; Keith Tribe, *The economy of the word: language, history and economics* (Oxford, 2015; online edn., 2015), pp. 21-45, 53-5, 59-60. On the connections between household and government within the court, see Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, pp. 3-7, 62; Rainer A. Müller, *Der Fürstenhof in der frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1995), pp. 37, 40-1.

⁹¹ Azar Gat, *The origins of military thought from the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 40-2, 73-6; Hew Strachan, *European armies and the conduct of war* (London, 1983), pp. 23, 34-7.

means economics, but which at the time meant the administration of house, property and other necessities of life, and which was sharply divided from ‘commerce’, meaning trade for profit. The king also used the word ‘Haushaltung’, which had a similar meaning.⁹² He told Frederick:

I do not know . . . whether you are really serious about applying yourself . . . to *Wirthschaft* . . . I will therefore observe whether you become a good *Wirth* (sic) and whether you no longer manage your own money in such a dissolute way as you have done before; for a soldier who is not a *Wirth* and cannot manage money, who saves nothing and accrues debts, is an utterly useless soldier. For King Charles XII of Sweden was otherwise a brave and hearty soldier, but he was no *Wirth*. When he had money, he threw it away. Afterwards, since he had no more, the army perished and was bound to be totally defeated . . . This can also be seen in many officers, as you yourself know. For example, the captains who are good *Wirthe* and have no money from their families usually nevertheless have the best companies among the infantry. But the captains who have money to spend but are not *Wirthe* mis-spend everything and still have bad companies. The one who has money to spend and is also a good *Wirth*, their company is always the best. Therefore I tell you that you should busy yourself earnestly with your own household (‘Menage’) and householding (‘Haushaltung’), give your own money the most careful, diligent attention . . . When I will see that you are a good *Wirth* and learn to manage your own household sensibly, . . . I will make you a soldier again.⁹³

⁹² *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 20-3; Tribe, ‘Cameralism and the sciences of the state’, p. 533-4; Tribe, *Economy of the word*, pp. 33-5.

⁹³ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 21-3 (quotation: weiss Ich nicht . . . ob es Dein aufrichtiger Ernst sei, Dich . . . zur *Wirthschaft* zu appliciren . . . Also werde Ich erst zusehen, ob Du ein guter *Wirth* werden wirst, und ob Du mit Deinem eigenen Gelde nicht mehr so liederlich umgehen wirst, als Du vordem gethan; denn ein Soldat, der kein *Wirth* ist, und mit dem Gelde nicht auskommen kann, sondern nichts sparet und Schulden machet, dieses ist ein recht unnützer Soldat. Denn der König Carl XII. von Schweden war sonst ein braver und herzhafter Soldat, aber er war kein *Wirth*; wenn er Geld hatte, schmiss er solches weg; darnach, da er nichts mehr hatte, crepirte die Armee und musste totaliter geschlagen werden, . . . wenn er bei guten Zeiten sein Geld zu Rathe gehalten hätte, so würde er seinen Feinden nicht die Oberhand haben lassen müssen, und wenn er schon geschlagen wäre, würde er sich doch bald haben herstellen können. Es ist auch an vielen Officieren solches zu sehen, wie Du solches selbst weissest. Also, zum Exempel, die Capitains, so gute *Wirthe* sind und nichts von Hause haben, haben doch meistens die besten Compagnien bei der Infanterie. Aber die Capitains, welche zuzusetzen haben, aber dabei keine *Wirthe* sind, verdepensiren Alles und haben doch schlechte Compagnien. Wer aber Mittel zuzusetzen hat, und dann auch ein guter *Wirth* ist, dessen Compagnie ist allezeit die beste. Also vermahne Ich Dich, dass Du Dich recht auf Deine eigene *Menage* und *Haushaltung* befleissigest, Dein Geld wohl handthierest, fleissig Acht giebest, . . . Alsdann wenn Ich sehen werde, dass Du ein guter *Wirth* wirst, und selbst mit Deinen Sachen vernünftig haushalten lernest, . . . so werde Ich Dich wieder zum Soldaten machen.’).

Frederick William thus compared the administration of a company to the administration of a whole war effort, and compared both to the administration of a household. Tim Blanning has argued that Frederick William I's political testament reveals an attitude to the government of a state comparable to 'an English squire totting up his estates', and this focus on the small scale clearly applied to the military sphere as well.⁹⁴ Famously, the king chose never to take a rank higher than regimental colonel.⁹⁵ The present work will demonstrate, however, that, at least in the first part of his reign, Frederick himself envisaged the army in similar terms.

It is well known that all western European armies in this period were based around the institution of the regiment.⁹⁶ Historians have long noted the existence of a 'company economy', under which captains took responsibility for keeping their companies equipped and up to strength, keeping un-spent funds for their own profit but also sometimes obliged to contribute their own money.⁹⁷ The financial management involved in the company economy can be seen from Schwerin's praise for the future hussar commander Hans Joachim von Zieten for being thrifty ('haushälterisch') as an ensign.⁹⁸ Otto Büsch portrayed a nobleman's management of a company as directly comparable to the management of his estate.⁹⁹

Alongside the company economy, focused on the finances of captains, there was a 'regimental economy', in which regiments were important pieces of royal patronage, and colonel-proprietors were not only responsible for maintaining regiments in good

⁹⁴ T.C.W. Blanning, *The culture of power and the power of culture: old regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 195-6.

⁹⁵ Tim Blanning, *Frederick the Great King of Prussia* (London, 2015), pp. 27-8.

⁹⁶ Duffy, *Military experience*, pp. 144, 191; Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, p. 62.

⁹⁷ Peter-Michael Hahn, 'Aristokratisierung und Professionalisierung: der Aufstieg der Orbisten zu einer militärischen und höfischen Elite in Brandenburg-Preußen von 1650-1725', *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* NF 1 (1991), p. 176; John A. Lynn, *Battle: a history of combat and culture* (new edn., Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 137-9; Fritz Redlich, *The German military enterpriser and his workforce: a study in European economic and social history* (2 vols., Wiesbaden, 1964-5), II, pp. 77-88, 272-3; Guy Rowlands, *The dynastic state and the army under Louis XIV: royal service and private interest, 1661-1701* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 200-31, 239-41, 243-54, 257-66; Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, pp. 22, 71.

⁹⁸ Friedrich-Karl Tharau, *Die geistige Kultur des preußischen Offiziers von 1640 bis 1806* (Mainz, 1968), p. 85.

⁹⁹ Otto Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im Alten Preußen, 1713-1807: die Anfänge der sozialen Militarisierung der preußisch-deutschen Gesellschaft* (Berlin, 1962).

condition but also possessed substantial patronage of their own through the appointment of regimental officers, even where these appointments had to be confirmed by the ruler. Guy Rowlands has examined this for the French army.¹⁰⁰ Regimental proprietors also used their own patronage networks to recruit soldiers and officers.¹⁰¹ Here, as Peter-Michael Hahn has noted, the army intersected not with economics but with the role of the court: another part of the ruler's household, attractive to nobles as a place to access prestige and royal patronage.¹⁰² Frederick, describing in his *Refutation of the Prince of Machiavelli* how a prince should command his army personally, stated that he 'must . . . preside over the army as if over his residence'.¹⁰³ Carmen Winkel has emphasized that the praise Prussian regimental commanders received if their regiments performed well at reviews was important 'symbolic and economic capital', and invitations to Frederick's autumn manoeuvres at Potsdam were treated as valuable gifts.¹⁰⁴ If the company economy was a cash economy, the regimental economy was – to borrow Andreas Pečar's description of courts – an 'economy of honour'.¹⁰⁵

Frederick William thought in terms of the regimental economy. In his *Instruction* to his successor, he expressed the size of the army in terms of battalions. Describing how it should be increased, he listed the numbers of infantrymen to be recruited by each of the existing regiments, and the number of new regiments these soldiers would form. For the cavalry, Frederick William descended to the level of companies, proposing the recruitment of 10 additional cavalymen per company.¹⁰⁶ Frederick, in contrast, expressed the size of the army not only in battalions but also in the total number of soldiers under arms: evidence of the shift Blanning identified from Frederick William's view of his territories and army as his personal patrimony to

¹⁰⁰ Rowlands, *Dynastic state and the army*.

¹⁰¹ Hahn, 'Aristokratisierung und Professionalisierung', pp. 174-5, 177-8, 180-1; Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, passim, esp. pp. 22, 70-1, 75, 171-5, 191-2, 194-5, 227, 244-53, 285-6.

¹⁰² Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of power: Norbert Elias and the early modern European court* (Amsterdam, 1995), p. 181; Hahn, 'Aristokratisierung und Professionalisierung', pp. 177-8; Müller, *Fürstenhof in der frühen Neuzeit*, pp. 32-5;.

¹⁰³ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 113, 244 (quotation: 'doit . . . rester dans son armée comme dans sa résidence', 'doit . . . présider dans son armée comme dans sa résidence!').

¹⁰⁴ Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, pp. 124-6, 171, 286 (quotation, p. 171: 'symbolischen und ökonomischen Kapitals').

¹⁰⁵ Andreas Pečar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre: der höfische Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711-1740)* (Darmstadt, 2003).

¹⁰⁶ Dietrich, *Politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, pp. 225-6.

Frederick's larger view of a state.¹⁰⁷ Carmen Winkel has demonstrated, however, that the patronage network represented by the regimental 'economy of honour' remained hugely important for Frederick.¹⁰⁸ Even on campaign, Frederick's correspondence with Prince Leopold in particular, and to a lesser extent Schwerin, focused not just on the larger military operations for which both were responsible but also on their respective regiments: especially recommendations for promotion or requests on behalf of officers.¹⁰⁹ Leopold, in particular, often remarked on the condition of particular regiments and the work of their colonel-proprietor or colonel-commandant in training and maintaining them.¹¹⁰

The regimental economy, however, involved more than simply visualising the army as a collection of regiments. It also encouraged a focus on certain activities. As noted above, the regimental 'economy of honour' focused on success at the annual review, where colonels needed well-drilled and impressive-looking soldiers to secure royal accolades. The importance of drill has already been discussed, but the regimental economy also taught Frederick to focus on recruiting soldiers, even where he lacked clear ideas about their use.

As crown prince, Frederick made substantial efforts to secure each recruit, enlisting the help of his friend Colonel Camas and even the French ambassador La Chetardie.¹¹¹ The Saxon diplomat Suhm, whose value to Frederick was primarily for his intellectual achievements, translating Christian Wolff's work into French, was also put to considerable trouble providing Turk and Bosniak recruits (captured by the

¹⁰⁷ Volz, *Politischen Testamente*, pp. 12, 66, 100.

¹⁰⁸ Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*.

¹⁰⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Frederick to Schwerin, 17.2.1741, Schwerin to Frederick, 3.1.1741, 7.2.1741, 10.2.1741; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 A: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 10.12.1740, 24.12.1740; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 30.11.1741, 5.12.1741; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 17.2.1741, 18.2.1741, Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 8.1.1741, 15.1.1741, 23.1.1741, 6.2.1741, 16.2.1741, 23.2.1741, 29.3.1741, 14.5.1741, [undated] 6.1741, 15.6.1741, 22.6.1741, 27.6.1741, 6.7.1741, 11.7.1741, 22.7.1741, 24.7.1741, 18.8.1741, 21.9.1741, 6.11.1741, 29.11.1741, 3.12.1741, 10.12.1741, 24.12.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 290-2, 298-9, 301.

¹¹⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 25.1.1741, 13.4.1741, 21.5.1741, 30.5.1741, 3.6.1741, 15.6.1741, 6.7.1741, 12.7.1741, Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 8.7.1741.

¹¹¹ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 48; *Œuvres*, XVI, pp. 139-41, 146, 151, 157-8, 168.

Russians) for Frederick in 1739.¹¹² Frederick recorded the acquisition of recruits from as far afield as Sweden, Hungary, Italy, Holland and Denmark.¹¹³ Even Voltaire noticed the efforts made to secure each tall recruit, remarking – in jest – that, ‘if on the road I meet a big lad of six feet, I will tell him, “come quickly to serve in the regiment of my prince”.’¹¹⁴ As king, Frederick continued to maintain his own personal regimental economy, taking an active interest, even while on campaign, in the acquisition of new soldiers for his own regiment.¹¹⁵

Frederick, however, also clearly imbibed his father’s concept of the whole army and war effort as an enlarged company/regimental economy. This included the king intervening personally in recruitment issues, even when it related only to a single tall recruit. In a series of letters in September 1732, Frederick proposed to his father that his officers violate Mecklenburg sovereignty to kidnap a particularly tall shepherd who grazed his flocks near the border.¹¹⁶ In 1733, he asked his father to intervene to protect recruiters who had received the permission of the Duke of Lorraine to recruit in his lands but had been arrested in the territories of the King of France.¹¹⁷ Again, in 1737, Frederick asked his father to intervene when one of his officers, recruiting in Schaffhausen in Switzerland, absconded with the money given to him.¹¹⁸ On one occasion, Frederick told his father that he had acquired a soldier who had previously deserted from the King’s Regiment. He reported that the man was ‘healthy’ and 5’ 10 ½” tall, and asked whether the king would like him back or whether he would give him to Frederick.¹¹⁹

Frederick famously expanded the Prussian army on his accession, although this reflected decisions taken beforehand.¹²⁰ He also intervened in the small details of

¹¹² *Œuvres*, XVI, pp. 394, 397, 399-400, 403-4, 406-7, 409, 411, 415-7, 420.

¹¹³ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 9, 53, 94, 139-40, 142, 143; *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 168; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 132.

¹¹⁴ *Œuvres*, XXI, p.347.

¹¹⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 30.5.1741, 30.6.1741, 13.7.1741, 10.9.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 332, 335.

¹¹⁶ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁷ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, p. 18.

¹¹⁸ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 106-7.

¹¹⁹ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, p.133.

¹²⁰ Walther Hubatsch, *Frederick the Great of Prussia: absolutism and administration*, trans. Patrick Doran (London, 1973), pp. 128-9; Curt Jany, *Geschichte der Preußischen Armee vom*

recruitment, just as his father had done.¹²¹ From the first days of his reign, he was negotiating to enable Prussian recruitment in Poland, the Empire, and the Habsburg lands.¹²² He also oversaw arrangements for the recruitment of dragoons.¹²³ Once Silesia had been occupied, Frederick ordered the Prussian units there to make up their strength through local recruitment, and also to gather additional recruits for the rest of the army.¹²⁴ He received regular reports on this.¹²⁵ On 1 March 1741, he emphasized to Schwerin that the regiments should make particular efforts to find ‘attractive’ recruits, reflecting again the aesthetic aspects of order.¹²⁶ In 1749, trying to please Frederick after incurring his displeasure, Schwerin described how he had recruited ‘six beautiful men’ for his company as an ‘example . . . to my captains to maintain their companies well’.¹²⁷

Most notably, despite his contempt for irregular troops, Frederick from the beginning emphasized the importance of recruiting them. He augmented his hussars, and this was a decision taken on his accession, not a response to the practical difficulties of dealing with Austrian hussars in Silesia.¹²⁸ On 24 January 1741, he ordered Schwerin to raise a free company from the mountainous duchy of Teschen at the eastern extremity of Upper Silesia, and to recruit Hungarians, and Schwerin also recommended the recruitment of French and Walloon light troops.¹²⁹ Frederick

15. Jahrhundert bis 1914 (3 vols., Osnabrück, 1967), II, pp. 3-8; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 296.

¹²¹ For Frederick’s involvement with recruitment, see GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 21.6.1741, 1.12.1741, Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 25.1.1741, 19.3.1741, 29.3.1741, 6.4.1741, 25.5.1741, 11.6.1741, 15.6.1741, 24.6.1741, 19.7.1741, 22.7.1741, 24.7.1741, 18.8.1741, 24.8.1741, 29.11.1741.

¹²² *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 5-6, 14-5, 18.

¹²³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 8.1.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 296, 301.

¹²⁴ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 97*.

¹²⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 23.2.1741, 26.2.1741.

¹²⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 1.3.1741 (quotation: ‘recht hübsche’).

¹²⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 O: Schwerin to Frederick, 13.8.1749 (quotation: ‘Exemple . . . á mes Capitenes de bien entretenir leur Compagnies . . . 6 beau homes’).

¹²⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 5.3.1741, 29.3.1741 9.9.1741, 29.9.1741, 4.10.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 304, 341-2, 350-1.

¹²⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Frederick to Schwerin, 23.2.1741, Schwerin to Frederick, 10.2.1741, 23.2.1741, 1.3.1741; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 3.3.1741, 5.3.1741; Schwerin to Frederick, 1.3.1741; Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 98*.

responded positively when Polish volunteers proposed to establish a light cavalry unit in his service, ordering Schwerin to recruit not just a company but a whole regiment.¹³⁰ He also hoped to recruit many hussars from Poland.¹³¹ He made efforts to recruit further light troops from Wallachia.¹³² Even in May 1742, at the same time as expressing scorn for irregular troops, Frederick was still trying to recruit Polish uhlans, and he explicitly recognised that light cavalry was needed to defeat Habsburg irregulars.¹³³

This assiduous recruitment activity was all the more surprising given that Frederick did not set out a doctrine for how the Prussians should actually use light troops. Although he issued wartime *Instructions* for his hussars, his inter-war military treatises only mentioned the threat posed by *enemy* light troops.¹³⁴ Just as the imposition of order on the heavy cavalry was equally or even more important in their reorganisation than any changes in tactics, so his grounding in the regimental economy clearly led Frederick to engage fully in the recruitment of light troops, even without having much idea of how to use them tactically.

Conversely, however, Frederick was interested in light troops only in so far as they were able to integrate into ordered warfare and the Prussian army's regimental economy. In 1742, it was order and economy which Frederick praised when commenting on the development of the Natzmer Hussars: 'the proprietor and officers of this regiment are no longer as neglectful as before, and are introducing a better order and economy ('Haushaltung') in the regiment'.¹³⁵ Even the embarrassing defeat of Prussian cuirassiers by Austrian hussars at Kranowitz in May 1742, which should

¹³⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 3.3.1741, 5.3.1741, 10.3.1741; Schwerin to Frederick, 1.3.1741.

¹³¹ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp.311-2. Peter Paret, *Yorck and the era of Prussian reform, 1807-1815* (Princeton, NJ, 1966), pp. 25-6 notes Frederick's recruitment of hussars from diverse sources.

¹³² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 3.4.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 314

¹³³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 27.5.1742, Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 6.5.1742.

¹³⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 64-6, 119-20; *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 61-74.

¹³⁵ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 371 (quotation: 'der Cheff und die Officiere dieses Regiments sich nicht mehr so sehr als bis her negligiren und eine bessere ordre und haußhaltung bei dem Regiment einführen'). On the ordering of the Prussian light cavalry in this period, see also GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 9.5.1742, Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 13.5.1742.

have demonstrated the effectiveness of irregular cavalry, was instead seen primarily in terms of the regimental economy: Prince Eugen of Anhalt-Dessau was dismissed from Prussia service because he had caused prestigious cuirassier regiments to be damaged, and his dismissal itself had serious implications within Frederick's patronage network.¹³⁶ In 1755, Frederick was still writing wistfully about the theoretical advantages of establishing several permanent regiments of light infantry, but then concluded that it would be easy enough to recruit them from deserters once war started.¹³⁷ Whereas a ruler who had been taught to see running a war as analogous to running a company was well-used to recruiting troops of many kinds, in a military system that saw the army as part of the courtly 'economy of honour', there was little place for units which could not be distributed as prestigious objects of royal patronage. Fritz Redlich has noted the exclusion of light troops from the company/regimental economy as a common feature across Europe in this period, Rink noting that they ranked lowest among the regiments.¹³⁸ Peter Paret has noted that the swift evolution of the Prussian hussars into battle cavalry rather than skirmishers was primarily an attempt to match the prestige of the other line regiments, and the Habsburg army's reform of its Croat units before the Seven Years War to make their weapons and tactics comparable to those of the line regiments may well have been similarly motivated.¹³⁹ This did not reflect a failure on the part of either army to recognise the importance of light troops: the Habsburgs pioneered light infantry and, as emphasised above, Frederick went to considerable lengths to recruit light cavalry. Rather, it showed the pre-eminent importance of the company/regimental economy, which led all generals and even kings to focus on developing the economic and symbolic capital of their troops through assiduous recruitment, but had little place for units that did not have symbolic capital in the 'economy of honour' of the ruler's household/court.

¹³⁶ Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, pp. 277-80.

¹³⁷ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 142, 148.

¹³⁸ Redlich, *Military Enterpriser*, II, pp. 273-4; Martin Rink, *Vom "Partheygänger" zum Partisanen: die Konzeption des kleinen Krieges in Preußen, 1740-1813* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Brussels, Vienna, New York, NY, 1999), p. 128.

¹³⁹ Christopher Duffy, *Instrument of War* (Rosemont, IL, 2000), pp. 395-7; Kunisch, *Der kleine Krieg*, pp. 40-1, 43-5; Paret, *Yorck and the era of Prussian reform*, pp. 26-8.

The Military Household

This view of war focused primarily on the regiment involved an attempt to regulate the army like a household. In his 1748 *Instruction for the infantry major generals*, Frederick explicitly stated that the regimental economy meant a focus on the small details of military life:

In times of peace and in garrisons, the general is actually only a colonel [proprietor of a regiment]. I will, however, always give the greatest consideration to those who busy themselves with all the small details, since it is better that an officer maintains his craft. If he takes his eye off something, he forgets it totally and completely, and if he cannot exercise a company or a regiment and march it away, how does he hope to manage with a brigade or corps? In cities, however, where there are large garrisons, or where a corps comes together, there the colonel must be set aside and only the general considered.¹⁴⁰

Frederick went on to describe the duty of a major general in the field, regulating the military society as if it were a regiment. Notably, just like the ambitions of the civilian ‘police state’, this included not only maintaining order but also intervention in the morals of the soldiers.¹⁴¹

Every general who receives a . . . brigade must imagine that he is just as responsible for it as he must be for his own regiment . . . He must pay great attention to all the small things, namely order in drill exercises, . . . likewise that everything is alert and vigilant among the sentries, that the officers do not gamble, do not take special leave from their brigades, and also that the lads do not step out of their battalions or out of their regiments.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 167-8 (quotation: ‘Bei Friedenszeiten und in Garnisonen ist der General eigentlich nur Oberst; es werden Mir jedoch allemal diejenigen zum angesehensten sein, welche sich auf alle kleine Details befleißigen, indem es besser ist, dass ein Officier bei seinem Handwerke bleibt; denn lässt er solches aus den Augen, so verlernet er es ganz und gar, und kann er nicht eine Compagnie oder ein Bataillon exerciren und abmarschiren lassen, wie will er mit einer Brigade oder mit einem Corps zu recht kommen? In Städten aber, wo grosse Garnisonen liegen, oder aber wo Corps d’armée zusammenkommen, da muss der Oberst bei Seite gesetzt und nur an den General gedacht werden.’).

¹⁴¹ Tribe, ‘Cameratism and the science of government’, pp. 273-7.

¹⁴² *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 168 (quotation: ‘Ein jeder General nun, der . . . Brigade bekommt, muss sich vorstellen, dass er für solche eben so responsible ist, als wie er es für sein eigenes Regiment sein muss . . . Acht haben muss, nämlich auf die Ordnung im Exerciren . . . imgleichen dass auf den Wachen alles alerte und vigilant ist, dass die Officiere nicht spielen, nicht sonder Urlaub aus ihren Brigaden gehen, auch dass die Bursche nicht ausser den Bataillons, noch ausser den Regimentern laufen’).

Frederick was encouraging his generals to apply the principles of a colonel-proprietor, managing a regiment, to regulating the larger household formed by a brigade.

Frederick repeated this in his *Instruction for the cavalry major generals*. ‘In peacetime or in garrison, the cavalry major general does only the duty of a colonel. Nevertheless, they have the opportunity to distinguish themselves if they keep their regiment in good order’.¹⁴³ ‘The major general commanding a brigade must have a very careful eye for each and every thing necessary to the service and must be answerable that everything takes place with exactitude’.¹⁴⁴ ‘Everything which good order demands must be observed with the greatest accuracy’.¹⁴⁵ ‘A detached corps’, said Frederick, ‘should be looked on as just like a general’s own regiment, and he should look after it in the same way.’¹⁴⁶

Frederick’s *General principles of war* expressed the same concept of the regimental economy as an inspiration to intervene to regulate the details of military society.¹⁴⁷ Discussing the provision of supplies for troops in winter quarters, Frederick, writing in French, stated that, ‘the commander in chief should involve himself in all of this economy (‘*économie*’) . . . If the commander in chief has time, he would do well to visit several quarters himself, to look after the economy (‘*économie*’) of the troops.’¹⁴⁸ Frederick thus espoused the military *Wirtschaft* whose importance his father, writing in German, had impressed upon him back in 1731, and emphasised that it involved intervention in details. The first words of the first article of the *General principles* stated: ‘the institution of our troops demands an infinite application from

¹⁴³ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 181-2 (quotation: ‘Bei Friedenszeiten und in Garnisonen thun die General-Majors von der Cavallerie eigentlich nur Obersten-Dienste; jedennoch haben sie auch in Friedenszeiten Gelegenheit sich zu distinguiren, wenn sie nämlich ihre Regimenter in sehr guter Ordnung halten’).

¹⁴⁴ *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 183 (quotation: ‘der General-Major von der Brigade muss auf alle und jede Stücke, so der Dienst erfordert, ein sehr wachsames Auge haben und dafür repondiren, dass alles mit Exactitude geschehe.’).

¹⁴⁵ *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 193 (quotation: ‘alles was die gute Ordnung erfordert, mit der äussersten Accuratesse beobachtet werden müsse’).

¹⁴⁶ *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 196 (quotation: ‘das detachirte Corps eben so wie des Generals sein eigenes Regiment anzusehen ist, so muss derselbe auch auf selbige Art dafür sorgen.’).

¹⁴⁷ For Frederick’s emphasis on small details, see Jay Luvaas, ed. and trans., *Frederick the Great on the art of war* (New York, NY, and London, 1966), p. 20.

¹⁴⁸ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 103 (quotation: ‘Le général en chef doit se mêler de toute cette économie . . . Si le général en a le temps, il fera bien de visiter lui-même quelques quartiers, pour voir après l’économie des troupes’).

those who command them'.¹⁴⁹ Describing the qualities of a good commander, Frederick emphasised the importance of 'not neglecting, as if they were beneath him, those little details which hold so strongly to great affairs'.¹⁵⁰

This focus on the small details of military life was clearly not just restricted to Prussia, as the military works which Frederick read were aware of it, even though they were generally critical.¹⁵¹ Maurice de Saxe was most forthright, criticising generals 'who only know how to . . . lead troops methodically'. 'Very few people occupy themselves with the great matters of war', he said: 'officers spend their lives exercising their troops and believe that the art of war consists only of this element'.¹⁵² This phenomenon was clearly not limited only to the eighteenth century: commentators have also noted a tendency in modern armies for general officers to continue to be anchored in the processes associated with regimental business.¹⁵³ Santa Cruz reflected on the tendency of commanders to focus on small details when he declared that 'nothing shocks the officers of an army more than continually seeing the general interfering in the functions of subordinates'.¹⁵⁴ He recommended that generals should 'think only of important duties regarding the army, and . . . pass the lesser ones onto subordinates'.¹⁵⁵ Although Santa Cruz produced a work setting out the complex calculations necessary for appropriate supply arrangements, he did not think it necessary to include these in his *Military and political reflections*, as it was unnecessary for a commanding general to concern himself with this.¹⁵⁶ However,

¹⁴⁹ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 4 (quotation: 'L'institution de nos troupes exige de ceux qui les commandent une application infinie').

¹⁵⁰ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 44 (quotation: 'ne négligeant pas comme étant au-dessous de lui ces petits détails qui tiennent si fort aux grandes choses.').

¹⁵¹ For the British case, see McCormack, *Embodying the militia*, pp. 113-7.

¹⁵² Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 212-3 (quotation, p. 213: 'qui ne savent faire que . . . mener des troupes methodiquement . . . très-peu de gens s'occupent des grandes parties de la guerre . . . les Officiers passent leur vie à faire exercer des troupes & croient que l'art militaire consiste seul dans cette partie').

¹⁵³ Christopher L. Elliott, *High command: British military leadership in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars* (London, 2015), pp. 65-7, 232-4; Thomas E. Ricks, *The generals: American military command from World War II to today* (New York, NY, 2012), pp. 347-53, 359-60.

¹⁵⁴ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 77 (quotation: 'Rien ne choque davantage les Officiers d'une armée, que de voir continuellement un Général se mêler de l'emploi & des fonctions des subalternes').

¹⁵⁵ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 79 (quotation: 'penser uniquement aux devoirs importants de l'armée, & . . . se décharger des moindres sur les subalternes.').

¹⁵⁶ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 200-1.

Santa Cruz also urged generals to take great care to determine the number of their effective troops, and to intervene in the regimental economy, ensuring that colonels did not claim to have more men in their regiments than they actually had.¹⁵⁷ De Saxe noted the need for a general to administer his army, using the word ‘menager’ just as Frederick William had used the German word noun ‘Menage’.¹⁵⁸

Just as the ‘police state’ was ‘disordered’, or had merely representative purposes, so the degree to which this ‘infinite application’ for ‘each and every thing necessary to the service’ was actually achieved is open to some question. As will be described in chapter three, military treatises of the time frequently called on generals to take account of every detail on campaign, but this was more a hope than an expectation.¹⁵⁹ Certainly, Frederick’s intervention in a wide variety of small details of military life has been noted by scholars.¹⁶⁰ In his *Directive* to Schwerin on 24 January 1741, Frederick like a good regimental officer, discussed the provision of new equipment for the units in Silesia, noting the need for tents for the summer campaigning.¹⁶¹ Whereas, as will be noted in a later chapter, the instruction said little about supply arrangements for the forces in Silesia, it entered into many small tactical details, specifying for instance that the units watching the Austrian-held fortress of Neisse should build palisade fences, and should be relieved every eight days to keep them fresh. Frederick ordered all the regiments to build spiked defences, and described how they should be laid out. He discussed a number of measures for encouraging Prussian soldiers to feel hatred and contempt for the Austrians.¹⁶² Moreover, just as Frederick William I had required Frederick to send him the monthly lists of his regiment, so Frederick required his generals to send him the monthly lists of the regiments under their command.¹⁶³ This was in accord with Santa Cruz’s advice, demonstrating that Frederick and his father here reflected not a specifically Prussian

¹⁵⁷ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 191-3.

¹⁵⁸ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 211.

¹⁵⁹ Peter-Michael Hahn, *Friedrich II. von Preußen: Feldherr, Autokrat und Selbstdarsteller* (Stuttgart, 2013), p. 132.

¹⁶⁰ Duffy, *Frederick the Great*, p. 9; Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great*, p. 51.

¹⁶¹ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 96*-97*.

¹⁶² Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 94*-96*.

¹⁶³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 31.12.1740, 2.1.1741, 3.1.1741, 5.1.1741, 7.1.1741, 8-9.1.1741; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 3.6.1741, 6.7.1741, 2.8.1741, 9.9.1741, 2.10.1741, 27.12.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 304.

focus on efficient administration, but rather the broader administrative culture of the early eighteenth century.¹⁶⁴

After 1763, reflecting the transition from *Kameralwissenschaft* to *Staatswissenschaft*, Frederick would move somewhat away from the regimental economy, centralising the recruitment process, and introducing inspectors who acted as intermediaries between the king and most of the regiments.¹⁶⁵ The Prussian army, however, did not introduce a system of corps, or even permanent divisions.¹⁶⁶ Peter Paret has noted that, in 1806, ‘the army was run like a platoon’. At the battle of Auerstädt, senior officers went to the front line rather than maintaining overall command, so that the Duke of Brunswick was killed while ‘acting like a regimental officer’ in trying to ‘bring [his troops] forward’.¹⁶⁷ Dennis Showalter has argued that the focus of Prussian officers primarily on the minutiae of regimental business was part of the decay of the Prussian army in the later eighteenth century, but in fact this was an accurate reflection of what had been the common approach in Europe in the early eighteenth century: a concept of administration (whether of a state or an army) as household management.¹⁶⁸ As with its continued emphasis on precision in drill movements, the Prussian army of Frederick the Great was representative of its time, and showed that theoretical concepts of order and regulation had direct practical impacts.

Conservation

Protecting their subjects from the ravages of war was a key plank of the legitimacy of states, and Erica Charters has emphasized that, at least in Britain, this extended to ensuring the welfare of soldiers as well. Scholars have argued that eighteenth-century soldiers were valuable commodities, and that commanders sought to preserve them as

¹⁶⁴ On concepts of Prussian efficiency, see ‘Wer wir sind’ (2015) *Deutschland Saga*, episode 6. Directed by Gero von Böhm and Sebastian Scherrer. Hosted by Christopher Clark. First broadcast 2015; Richard L. Gawthrop, *Pietism and the making of eighteenth-century Prussia* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 1-2, 7-8, 10-13, 237, 246, 270-80; Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, pp. 118-9, 125, 127.

¹⁶⁵ Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, pp. 72-3, 208-13, 247.

¹⁶⁶ David G. Chandler, *The campaigns of Napoleon* (13th edn., London, 1995), p. 455; Telp, ‘The Prussian army in the Jena campaign’, pp. 160, 163-4.

¹⁶⁷ Peter Paret, *The cognitive challenge of war: Prussia 1806* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2009), pp. 25, 29.

¹⁶⁸ Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great*, pp. 335-7.

much as possible.¹⁶⁹ Jürgen Luh, in contrast, has argued that, apart from Britain, states demonstrably failed to ensure proper supplies and medical care for their troops.¹⁷⁰ The final section of this chapter will show that not only did states need to be *seen* to care for the welfare of subjects (including soldiers) but there were good practical reasons for doing so, and that, as Charters has shown in the British case, Prussian commanders *did* make genuine efforts to care for their soldiers. It will also emphasize, however, that such arguments should not be taken too far. Ensuring the welfare of subjects and soldiers could be important for both practical and reputational reasons, but other practical considerations might also override this.

Frederick's rhetoric about ensuring the welfare of his subjects is well known. His 1738 *Considerations on the present state of the European body politic* criticised princes for neglecting 'that multitude of men whose salvation is entrusted to them . . . those thousands of men who are entrusted to them'.¹⁷¹ Frederick looked toward a world where, 'rather than continually planning conquests, [rulers] . . . are working only to ensure the good of their people'.¹⁷² In his 1740 *Refutation of the Prince of Machiavelli*, Frederick stated that 'it is . . . the good of the people who he governs which [a prince] should prefer to all other interest'.¹⁷³ Subjects were 'an infinity of men whom it should be their [rulers'] duty to protect and make happy'.¹⁷⁴ His history works from the inter-war period also emphasized that a ruler should look after 'the good of his people' and 'the welfare of his subjects'.¹⁷⁵ These texts were propaganda, written for public consumption.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁹ Charters, *Disease, war and the imperial state*, p. 5; Großer Generalstab, *Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, Friedrich deß Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege in ihrer Entwicklung von 1745 bis 1756* (Berlin 1899), p. 299-302; Michael Howard, *The invention of peace: reflections on war and international order* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2000), pp. 22-3.

¹⁷⁰ Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa*, pp. 219-23.

¹⁷¹ *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 28 (quotation: 'cette multitude d'hommes dont le salut leur est commis . . . ces milliers d'hommes qui leur sont commis').

¹⁷² *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 28-9 (quotation, p. 29: 'Au lieu de projeter sans cesse des conquêtes, . . . ne travailleraient qu'à assurer le bonheur de leur peuple').

¹⁷³ *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 190 (quotation: 'c'est . . . le bien des peuples qu'il gouverne qu'il doit préférer à tout autre intérêt').

¹⁷⁴ *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 335 (quotation: 'une infinité d'hommes que leur devoir serait de protéger et de rendre heureux').

¹⁷⁵ *Œuvres*, I, p. 166 (quotation: 'le bonheur de ses peuples'; *Œuvres*, II, p. viii (quotation: 'le bien de ses sujets').

¹⁷⁶ Andreas Pečar, 'Friedrich der Große als Autor', paragraphs 5-30; Andreas Pečar, 'Selbstinszenierung auf Kosten der Dynastie? Friedrich II. als Autor der "Denkwürdigkeiten

Beyond such enlightened idealism, however, the military authors read by Frederick also emphasized that generals should ensure the welfare of their soldiers. Santa Cruz quoted Vegetius that ‘a general should take care of the whole army, and of each soldier individually’. ‘Your position as a general obliges you to interest yourself’ ‘for . . . [the] reasonable comfort of your troops’, he said. ‘Above all . . . they should be well cared-for in the hospitals’.¹⁷⁷ He described at some length how the soldiers should be properly provided for.¹⁷⁸ Maurice de Saxe and Puységur also emphasised the importance of officers looking after their soldiers.¹⁷⁹

Frederick’s *Orders for the generals of infantry and cavalry and of the hussars, as well as for field officers and battalion commanders*, issued on 23 July 1744 as the army marched off for the Second Silesian War, reflected such ideas:

Military service consists of two parts: in the conservation of the troops and in ordering them. Each is inseparable from the other. How does it help a corps to be complete if it is without order, and what does it help a corps weakened and melted by attrition if it is also ordered?¹⁸⁰

The order listed proper food, the prevention of desertion, and good recruitment as the component parts of conservation, and specified how marches were to be ordered and recruitment undertaken.¹⁸¹

des Hauses Brandenburg”, in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große und die Dynastie der Hohenzollern. Beiträge des fünften Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 30. September / 1. Oktober 2011* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-dynastie/pecar_geschichtsschreibung, last accessed 1 December 2017); Andreas Pečar, *Die Masken des Königs: Friedrich II. von Preußen als Schriftsteller* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2016), pp. 51-68.

¹⁷⁷ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 195 (quotation: ‘une raisonnable commodité de vos troupes, pour lesquelles votre qualité de leur Général vous oblige de vous intéresser . . . un Général doit avoir soin de toute l’armée, & de chaque soldat en particulier . . . surtout qu’elles soient bien soignées dans les Hôpitaux’).

¹⁷⁸ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 195-9.

¹⁷⁹ Jacques François de Chastenot de Puységur, *Art de la guerre par principes et par règles* (2 vols., Paris, 1748), II, p. 71; Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 9-14, 19.

¹⁸⁰ *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 129 (quotation: ‘Der Soldatendienst besteht in zwei Stücken, nämlich in der Conservation der Truppen und in der Ordnung. Eines ist von dem andern inséparable. Was hilft ein completes Corps ohne Ordre, und was hilft ein durch Abgang geschwächtes und geschmolzenes Corps, wenn auch Ordre darin ist?’).

¹⁸¹ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 129-31, 133

Certainly, Prussian commanders in the Silesian Wars loudly stated their adherence to such ideas. In February 1741, defending himself against furious accusations from Frederick that his orders for provisioning of the troops in Lower Silesia had not been followed, Schwerin maintained:

All that Your Majesty said to me on that point was to recommend me to take care of the troops as his dear children and as the apple of his eye. I have made all my dispositions on this basis, so that they should not lack anything necessary.¹⁸²

In 1743, Schwerin boasted to King George II of Great Britain of how the Prussians had been able to campaign in Silesia in December 1740 and January 1741 without suffering excessive desertion or sickness: a *tour de force* of conserving valuable troops.¹⁸³ As the Prussians began to advance into Moravia in December 1741, Frederick told Schwerin, ‘take a few precautions . . . for the security and subsistence of the troops’, and later, ‘I hereby recommend to you most heartily the security and conservation of my troops’.¹⁸⁴ In the early stages of the 1744 campaign in Bohemia, Schwerin assured Frederick that ‘I will take all the care imaginable so that the troops want for nothing’.¹⁸⁵

This, however, was more than mere rhetoric. Frederick had learnt the conservation of soldiers as part of the regimental economy, following the principles of his father, who, in his concern to protect his valuable soldiers, once required civilians to remove powder from the Potsdam magazine during a fire, while keeping his Giants Guard under cover.¹⁸⁶ The two greatest threats to the retention of soldiers were desertion

¹⁸² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 26.2.1741 (quotation: ‘Tout ce que V^{otre} Majesté m’a dit sur cet article, est, qu’Elle me recommande d’avoir soin de ses troupes comme de ses cheres enfants, et comme de la prunelle de ses yeux j’ai fait la dessus toutes mes dispositions, pour qu’Elles ne manquassent pas du necessaire.’)

¹⁸³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 S: Schwerin to Frederick, 18.6.1743.

¹⁸⁴ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 427, 432 (quotations: ‘Prenez un peu vos précautions . . . pour la sûreté et subsistance des troupes’, ‘Die Sicherheit und die Conservation Meiner Truppen recommandire Ich Euch hierbei bestens’).

¹⁸⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 S: Schwerin to Frederick, 30.8.1744 (quotation: ‘j’aurée tout le Soins imaginable pour que rien ne manque á ses troupes.’).

¹⁸⁶ Peter-Michael Hahn, ‘Pracht und Selbstinszenierung: die Hofhaltung Friedrich Wilhelms I. von Preußen’, in Friedrich Beck and Julius H. Schoeps, eds., *Der Soldatenkönig: Friedrich Wilhelm I. in seiner Zeit* (Potsdam, 2003), p. 93.

and sickness, and the frequent mentions of both of these in Frederick's letters to his father throughout the 1730s show that he learnt the importance of preventing them.¹⁸⁷

Ilya Berkovich has shown that, despite some exemplary punishments, preventing desertion involved negotiation rather than compulsion.¹⁸⁸ Frederick's understanding of the motives of deserters can be seen from a March 1738 letter in which he mentioned that, 'a warrant officer who has been with the regiment for twelve years and has always followed orders well has deserted'. This was indeed a strange occurrence, and Frederick commented, 'I cannot understand what could have motivated this'.¹⁸⁹ Frederick followed contemporary practices of conciliation in response to desertion, on several occasions asking for 'pardon letters' to persuade Prussian deserters to re-enlist, a practice clearly encouraged by his father, as Frederick William provided even more letters than were requested.¹⁹⁰ Frederick also tried to attract deserters from other armies.¹⁹¹ A March 1739 letter showed Frederick also reflecting typical contemporary ideas of balancing clemency with exemplary punishment: no doubt on the advice of his experienced regimental officers. He reported a desertion plot organised by a man who had already previously deserted once. Frederick told his father that, 'since the lad has aggravating circumstances, it is to be expected that [the court martial] will sentence him to death. This example will be not unhelpful, and will, I hope, deter other even worse offenders from their plans'.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ For reports on sickness, *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 4, 8, 28, 37, 43, 49, 60, 64, 66, 72-3, 76-7, 79-80, 88-9, 91-5, 102, 104, 107, 118, 120, 125, 131, 134, 137-41, 144, 149-51; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 75, 80, 120, 124-6, 129, 132, 135-6. For reports on desertion, see *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 103, 109, 125; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 65, 71, 103.

¹⁸⁸ Berkovich, *Motivation in war*, pp. 55-127, 228-30.

¹⁸⁹ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 133-4 (quotation: 'ein unter oficir so über 12 jahr unterofisir bei dem Regiment ist, und sich jederzeit guht auf geführet von Commando Desertiret ich Kan nicht begreifen woher solches zugehet').

¹⁹⁰ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 9-10, 13-14, 178; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 67.

¹⁹¹ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, p. 174; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 81, 131.

¹⁹² *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 130 (quotation: 'weilen der Kerl sehr graviret ist, so glaube, dass sie ihm das Leben absprechen werden. Dieses Exempel wird nicht undienlich sein und will ich hoffen, dass dardurch andere schlimme Gemüther von ihrem Vorhaben mögen gestöret werden.').

It is well known that generals in the long eighteenth century were concerned to conserve the lives of their valuable soldiers in battle.¹⁹³ On 2 May 1741, for instance, during the Prussian siege of the Austrian fortress of Brieg, Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau wrote to Frederick emphasizing the importance of avoiding casualties to ‘Your Royal Majesty’s very brave infantry’.¹⁹⁴ In response, Frederick boasted afterwards that the Prussians ‘did not lose a single man’ in digging the entrenchments, and suffered only five killed and two wounded during the siege in total.¹⁹⁵ When congratulating Frederick for his 1742 victory at Chotusitz, Leopold also lamented ‘that Your Royal Majesty . . . has lost so many brave officers and soldiers’. In the same letter, the field marshal had the great embarrassment of having to describe the losses of the prestigious Cuirassier Regiment of Prince Friedrich in the skirmish at Kannowitz: ‘Your Royal Majesty can well imagine how sharply this wounds me to the heart that this regiment has lost so many’.¹⁹⁶

Conservation also included the provision of sufficient food and medical supplies. In December 1736, Frederick wrote to his father concerned about the scarcity of grain and its high price, asking for supplies to be issued cheaply to his soldiers.¹⁹⁷ In November 1738 he acknowledged an order from his father to ensure that his regiment was properly supplied with meat in case of a march.¹⁹⁸ In March 1739, reporting the march of the second battalion of his regiment from Nauen to Neuruppin, Frederick said, ‘I am concerned . . . that the bad weather and bad roads they have had on the march will give them many sick’.¹⁹⁹ Frederick followed such principles as king when he for instance ordered bread to be distributed free of charge to the corps of Leopold

¹⁹³ Duffy, *Military experience*, p. 11.

¹⁹⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick 2.5.1741 (quotation: ‘Ew. Königl. Mayl. sehr brave Infanterie’).

¹⁹⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: ‘Journal vor das Fürsts v. Anhalt Durchlt’ (‘keinen Mann verlohren haben’).

¹⁹⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 23.5.1742 (quotations: ‘daß EW: Königl: Mayl: . . . so Viel brave officiers und Soldaten Verlohren haben’. ‘EW: Königl. Mayl: können leicht erachten, wie nahe mich dieses in meinen Herten Kränket, daß dieses benante Regiment so Viel Verlohren hat.’). See also GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 2.6.1742.

¹⁹⁷ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 76-7.

¹⁹⁸ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 127.

¹⁹⁹ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, p. 148 (quotation: ‘ich besorge . . . das das Schlime Wetter und den Schlechten Wek so sie auf den Marsch gehabt haben noch Kranken geben wirdt.’).

of Anhalt-Dessau in Brandenburg in April 1741.²⁰⁰ Letters from Frederick to Schwerin described how regiments should care for their wounded, and Frederick's generals regularly expressed concerns about the availability of regimental surgeons.²⁰¹ At one of the most fraught moments of the First Silesian War, described in detail in chapter five, Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau justified his decision, on 20 April 1742, to disobey Frederick's orders and take a different march route into Bohemia on the grounds that he acted 'for the conservation of Your Royal Majesty's regiments', which could only find the necessary supplies on the route he was taking.²⁰²

Cavalry, with its valuable horses requiring special care, was seen as requiring particularly careful conservation. Frederick's January 1741 *Directive* to Schwerin had entered into considerable detail on this matter, ordering that, 'every squadron commander must take the greatest precautions for his horses, so that these are properly watered and fed', adding that the horses should be ridden every second day to keep them in shape.²⁰³ The work of regimental officers in maintaining their horses in the right condition was a frequent topic of correspondence.²⁰⁴ In one case, Frederick lamented the failure of a lieutenant colonel to ensure the 'conservation' of his company, whose horses he had allowed to get into particularly bad condition.²⁰⁵ The discussion between Frederick and Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau in summer 1741 over whether it was necessary to send the cavalry regiments of Leopold's corps in Brandenburg into cantonments revolved around the question of how best to 'conserve' the soldiers. Leopold repeatedly stated that he was sure Frederick's intention was to ensure the 'conservation of the cavalry': his argument, which he ultimately persuaded Frederick to accept, was that sending them into cantonments

²⁰⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 13.4.1741.

²⁰¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Frederick to Schwerin, 21.1.1741, 25.1.1741; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 12.6.1741, 15.6.1741, 6.7.1741.

²⁰² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 20.4.1742 (quotation: 'zu conservation Ew: Königl: Mayl: Regimenter').

²⁰³ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 96* (quotation: 'Jeder Kommandeur von der Esquadron soll große Vorsorge für die Pferde haben, damit diese wohl gewartet und gefuttert werden.').

²⁰⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 21.5.1741, 30.5.1741, 3.6.1741, 15.6.1741, 30.6.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 333-4.

²⁰⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 8.7.1741.

would not achieve this.²⁰⁶ He assured him on 6 July that the cavalry were ‘in excellent condition, and will be properly conserved . . . here in the camp’.²⁰⁷

Contemporaries also saw it as essential to hold soldiers in discipline to prevent them from alienating civilians, or from destroying supplies that would be useful to the army. Feuquières emphasized the need for discipline to ensure that soldiers took their firewood from woods rather than destroying valuable houses, and noted the danger of ill-disciplined soldiers alienating the subjects of newly-conquered territories.²⁰⁸ Campaigning on the Rhine in 1703, the Duke of Villars forbade his troops on pain of death to damage the country as they marched through it, as they would have need of it for sustenance when they returned.²⁰⁹ Montecuccoli noted that, ‘without . . . [discipline], the troops are more pernicious than useful, more dangerous to their friends than to their enemies.’²¹⁰ Frederick’s cavalry general Robert Scipio von Lentulus brought out the thin line between ‘foraging’ – the ordered taking of supplies by a disciplined army – and individual theft by ill-disciplined soldiers when he noted in his 1753 tract on foraging that any soldiers who might ‘plunder and maraud’ should be arrested and ‘must be punished’.²¹¹ Lentulus described foraging as a process carefully supervised by officers.²¹² Quincy described marauding – which destroyed valuable supplies for the army as well as impoverishing the countryside – and desertion as comparable threats to the conservation of the army, both to be met through strict discipline.²¹³ He claimed that, when French troops entered the allied duchy of Mantua in 1701:

Prohibitions were published . . . [warning] the officers and soldiers, on pain of cashiering and death respectively, to demand nothing from the

²⁰⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 9.6.1741, 18.6.1741, 21.6.1741, 26.6.1741, 16.7.1741 (quotation, 18.6.1741: ‘Conservation der Cavallerie’).

²⁰⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 6.7.1741 (quotation: ‘in recht guten Stande befinden, auch sämtlich als hier im Lager . . . wohl conserviren werden’).

²⁰⁸ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 71-2, 89.

²⁰⁹ *Memoires du duc de Villars* (3 vols., The Hague, 1734-6), II, pp. 57-8.

²¹⁰ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, p. 49 (quotation: ‘discipline: sans elle les troupes sont plus pernicieuses qu’utiles, plus formidables aux amis qu’aux ennemis.’).

²¹¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 C Nr.41, p. 63r (quotation: ‘plündern und marodiren . . . bestraft müssen werden.’).

²¹² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 C Nr.41, pp. 65r – 65v.

²¹³ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 13-16.

inhabitants [of the city of Mantua] nor from the other subjects of the Duke of Mantua, but to live in an exact discipline with their pay.²¹⁴

Feuquières summed up this consonance of discipline and conservation when he noted that a general must be, ‘wise, to maintain discipline in his corps, and so that an allied prince should make no complaints against him; and far-sighted, so that the troops do not suffer from any shortage of sustenance.’²¹⁵

Frederick clearly absorbed the notion that there was a link between ‘conservation’ – both of troops and of valuable civilians – and the maintenance of ‘order’. During his time as a volunteer with the army of Prince Eugene on the Rhine from July to September 1734, during the War of the Polish Succession, Frederick’s diary often referred contemptuously to the ‘typical confusion’ of Eugene’s army on the march. Frederick lamented to Camas that, ‘the present campaign is a school from which one may profit from the confusion and disorder which reigns in this army’.²¹⁶ In contrast, after a march by his regiment in June 1738, he expressed pleasant surprise that ‘we have had almost no marauding’.²¹⁷

To prevent marauding, Frederick issued orders on 4 December 1740, just before the invasion of Silesia, that no soldier should step out of ranks on the march without permission, and that any stepping out of ranks with permission must be accompanied by an NCO.²¹⁸ This was in accord with the recommendations of Quincy.²¹⁹ On 13 March 1742, ordering Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to march his troops through Silesia (now a Prussian province), Frederick, emphasized that the prince must keep the

²¹⁴ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, p. 464 (quotation: ‘‘On publia . . . des défenses aux Officiers & aux soldats sous peine pour les uns d’être cassés, & pour les autres, de la vie, de rien exiger des habitans ni des autres sujets du Duc de Mantoüe; mais de vivre dans une exacte discipline avec leur paye.’’).

²¹⁵ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 94 (quotation: ‘Sage, pour maintenir la discipline dans son Corps, & que le Prince Allié ne fasse point de plaintes contre lui: & prévoiant, pour que ses Troupes ne tombent point dans aucun befoin pour leur subsistance’).

²¹⁶ Reinhold Koser, ‘Tagebuch des Kronprinzen Friedrich aus dem Rheinfeldzuge von 1734’, *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte* 4 (1891), pp. 223-5, 219-22 (quotation, p. 225: ‘confussion ordinaire’); *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 142 (quotation: ‘La campagne présente est une école où l’on a pu profiter de la confusion et du désordre qui règne dans cette armée’); *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 88-9.

²¹⁷ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, p. 136 (quotation: ‘wier haben fast Keine Marode darbei gehabt’).

²¹⁸ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 89*-90*.

²¹⁹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p.14

regiments to the set march route, ‘so that during the march very good and exact order will be maintained and no excesses occur’.²²⁰ He followed it with an order on 27 March to ‘look after [‘menagiren’] my Lower Silesian lands on your march’.²²¹ Like so many others, the 13 March order intertwined many issues of the conservation of both troops and civilians, discussing supply arrangements, ordering Leopold to avoid the city of Neisse to spare the soldiers the epidemic there, and noting that following the assigned march routes would reduce not only marauding but also desertion.²²² Similarly, Frederick’s December 1740 order also described in detail the duties of officers to look after the welfare of their men, once again emphasizing the connection between order and welfare.²²³

Unsurprisingly, the December 1740 order does not seem to have been exactly observed, leading Frederick to issue a further order on 4 January 1741, expressing his anger that, ‘notwithstanding the fact that I have ordered all regiments marching to Silesia . . . to maintain the most exact order on the whole march’, the regiments were not only taking all the food from the villages but pressing money from the places where they were quartered, and taking corn and bread to carry with them. He emphasised that Silesia was a ‘land that I absolutely want to preserve’, and that over-foraging meant that there would not be enough food left for the other Prussian regiments following behind. He therefore repeated his orders ‘that you should at once . . . introduce the sternest order so that they maintain exact order on the march’.²²⁴ Schwerin, worrying in November 1741 about Prussian exactions on the people of Upper Silesia, emphasized that, ‘if we have to live until the month of March in these

²²⁰ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 353 (quotation: ‘damit während dem Marche sehr gute und genaue ordre gehalten werde und keine Excesse geschehen’).

²²¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 27.3.1742 (quotation: ‘auf den Marche Meine Nieder Schlesische Lande zu menagiren.’).

²²² Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 351-4.

²²³ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 88* -90*.

²²⁴ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 91*-92* (quotation: ‘ungeachtet Ich allen nach der Schlesie marschierenden Regimentern . . . befohlen, auf den ganzen Marsch die exacteste Ordre zu halten’, ‘Land, welches Ich doch absulument conserviret wissen will’, ‘daß Ihr sofort . . . die ernstlichste Ordre stellen sollt, damit solches auf dem Marsch exacte Ordre halten’).

cantons, we must live with economy and order’, and that antagonising the local population would also prevent the Prussians from recruiting.²²⁵

Schwerin appealed to such principles of conserving valuable subjects in November 1741, when he argued that establishing a new fortress on the confluence of the Neisse and Oder rivers would, among other things, ‘conserve the bourgeois and the people’ of the existing fortresses of Brieg and Neisse, who were already heavily burdened with the numbers of soldiers that they had quartered in their houses.²²⁶ He also wrote with concern that the inhabitants of Upper Silesia were fleeing to Poland and Moravia because of Prussian demands for supplies and labourers.²²⁷ Schwerin stressed that this was damaging to the Prussians: ‘this very much reduces the payment of rations and portions [of forage], because the money they provide to these people [the labourers] and then the loss of subjects itself completely disrupts their economy.’²²⁸ ‘If this continues, I foresee that the regiments there will suffer, which, in my opinion, ought to be the principal consideration, along with their conservation’.²²⁹

Concepts of the ‘conservation’ of valuable soldiers and productive citizens were balanced, however, against other political and military objectives. In August and September 1741, Frederick, keen to show his concern for the welfare of his men, asked whether the high rates of sickness in Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau’s camp reflected inadequate doctors. Leopold explained to him that the sickness was caused by the army remaining in the same place for too long: five months.²³⁰ He sent increasingly urgent letters asking for permission to move to a different camp, repeatedly appealing to this on the basis of ‘conservation’ of the troops and the maintenance of ‘good order’.²³¹ Frederick, however, was most concerned with the political role of Leopold’s corps, which had been established to deter Saxony from

²²⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 30.11.1741 (quotation: ‘Sy nous devons Subsister jusque au moins de mars dans ses Cantons, il faut que nous vivions avec oeconomie et ordre’).

²²⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 30.11.1741 (quotation: ‘conserverait les Bourgeois et les peuples’).

²²⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 30.11.1741, 5.12.1741, 8.12.1741.

²²⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 8.12.1741

²²⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 30.11.1741.

²³⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 18.8.1741.

²³¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 24.8.1741, 29.8.1741, 9.9.1741 (quotations, 29.8.1741: ‘conservation’, ‘guter Ordnung’).

entering the war against him.²³² He acknowledged that moving the camp was ‘necessary for the conservation of the people’, but was concerned not to alarm the Elector of Saxony, and insisted that any movement should be away from the Saxon border.²³³ Leopold had to assure him that the proposed new camp at Grüningen was no closer to the Saxon border than the current one, and promise to explain the reasons for the move to the Saxon and Hanoverian governments, before Frederick gave the required permission.²³⁴

Further evidence that the welfare of Frederick’s soldiers could be trumped by other objectives, was seen in May and June 1742, during Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau’s tenure of command in Upper Silesia. Frederick repeatedly emphasized that ‘Your Honour will take every care that the troops are properly conserved (‘conserviret’), ‘so that no particular may be lacking which contributes to their maintenance and conservation’, ‘Your Honour will make the most express arrangements so that my regiments are supplied with the proper subsistence’.²³⁵ He also expressed great concern for the many Prussian sick, ordering the establishment of a hospital at Ottmachau.²³⁶ As will be described in detail in chapter six, however, when Leopold repeatedly reported that it was not in fact possible to supply the regiments in such positions, that they were being ‘totally ruined through lack of subsistence’, and that conditions for the sick were dreadful, Frederick saw the retention of Upper Silesia as too important to permit the troops to withdraw to better-supplied positions.²³⁷ While

²³² Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 297-9; *Politische Correspondenz*, I, p. 174.

²³³ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 345-8 (quotation, p. 346: ‘zur Conservation derer Leuthe nothwendig sey’).

²³⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 24.8.1741, 29.8.1741, 4.9.1741, 9.9.1741, 13.9.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 345-7.

²³⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 27.5.1742, Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 13.5.1742, 21.5.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 359-60, 362-5, 367, 369-72 (quotations, pp. 359-60, 364: ‘Ew Liebden alle Sorge tragen werden daß die Trouppen wohl conserviret werden’, , damit es in kein stücke was zu deren unterhalt und conservation diene, fehlen möge’, , Ew Liebden die nachdrücklichste veranstaltung machen, damit Meine Regimente mit der behörigen Subsistence besorgt werden’).

²³⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 27.5.1742, Frederick to Deutsch, 28.4.1742, Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742, 13.5.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 361-3, 369.

²³⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742, 4.5.1742, 6.5.1742, 8.5.1742, 11.5.1742, 13.5.1742, 18.5.1742, 20.5.1742, 23.5.1742,

this was clearly the appropriate decision in strategic terms, it showed that the conservation of his soldiers was only one consideration in his mind, and had to be balanced against the political objects of the war.

Such attitudes were not restricted only to Frederick. When Schwerin in September 1741 proposed a plan for a Prussian advance into Upper Silesia, he proposed that the Prussians bring their supplies with them along the Oder, noting that, ‘if one takes only forage from the inhabitants and does not pillage the towns’, they would gladly sell the Prussians beer and schnapps, ‘and, so that they can deliver these to the army, one must leave them their carts’. He made clear, however, that these efforts to conserve the inhabitants were entirely for a practical purpose, as one would ‘take them and plunder them, if one wants, if one is going to quit the country’. On the other hand,

If one wants to winter there, one must look after (‘menager’) them [the inhabitants] as much as possible, so that the people do not quit their habitations and can furnish the maintenance of the troops during the winter.²³⁸

When Schwerin marched on into Moravia in December 1741, he issued an order to his troops that, whereas in Silesia they had to pay for their food in cash, ‘in Moravia . . . they can allow themselves a few days of free forage and good food for recreation. Robbery and plundering is, however, forbidden on pain of disgrace, corporal or capital punishment.’²³⁹ While thus paying lip service to the need for order, Schwerin essentially permitted his troops to take food as they wished.

While Schwerin recognised the need to conserve Moravia in order to live off it, he noted that it might also become necessary to do the opposite. Calling on 9 January

2.6.7142 (quotation, 11.5.1742: ‘wegen Mangelden Subsistence totalier ruiniret werden’); Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 363-4, 367, 369, 371-2.

²³⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 14.9.1741 (quotation: ‘pourvû qu’ on ne prenne que les fourages aux habitans, et qu’ on ne pille les villes . . . et pour qu’ ils le puissent transporter à l’ armée il faut leur laisser leurs attellages, sauve à la leur enlever et les piller si l’ on veut, lorsqu’ on quittera le país. Mais si on veut y hiverner, il faut le menager tant qu’ il sera possible, affin que le peuple ne quite ses habitations, et puisse fournir à l’ entretien des troupes pendant l’ hiver.’).

²³⁹ Dettlof Count von Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin: ein Lebensbild aus Preußens großer Zeit* (Berlin, 1928), pp. 161-2 (quotation, p. 162: ‘in dem Mährischen . . . können sie sich wohl auf einige Tage freie Fourage und Hausmannskost zur recreation reichen lassen. Räuberei und Plünderung aber werden bei Ehre, Leib- und Lebensstrafe nicht statuiret.’).

1742 for further advances to the frontiers of Austria, Schwerin argued that this territory:

Would allow His [Majesty's] army to subsist at its ease all of next summer if this country is managed ('en menageant ce paÿs) during the winter, *while ruining and despoiling it when He retires his troops, if He finds this appropriate to his interests* [italics mine]. Until now, as long as one thinks to live with an army, even though it is in enemy country, it is always appropriate to conserve the country to one's rear, since the forage and bread magazines are not alone sufficient to allow an army to subsist.²⁴⁰

Again, the conservation of a country was an entirely practical issue, and Schwerin was happy to refer in passing to its destruction if this was militarily appropriate. Frederick and Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau took an even less scrupulous view, both favouring the rigorous exploitation of Upper Silesian money and labourers to build the new Prussian fortifications at Neisse.²⁴¹

Thus, not only was it important for Frederick (just like the British state of the period) to present himself as ensuring the welfare of his subjects and his soldiers, but contemporaries recognised that it was practically advantageous for armies to maintain the numbers of their soldiers and keep them supplied, and this principle was so important that Prussian generals even used the concept of 'conservation' in debates *with each other*. Frederick and his commanders genuinely took steps to try to provide for their soldiers and to protect the lands they fought in, whose produce was of practical value to them. The Prussian example, however, is a reminder that such ideas should not be taken too far: other strategic considerations were also in play, and in certain circumstances they might be considered more important than conserving subjects or soldiers.

²⁴⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 9.1.1742 (quotation: 'feroit subsister son arméé à son aise tout l'étéé prochaine, en menageant ce paÿs pendant l'hyver, faut à le ruiner et l'abimer si Elle trouve le convenir à ses interets lors-qu'Elle en retirera ses Troupes; jusque la et tant qu'en pense vivre avec une arméé dans un Pays quoiqu'ennemie il convient toujours de se le conserver sur ses derrieres, car les magazins de fourages et de Pain ne suffisent pas seul pour faire subsister une arméé').

²⁴¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 4.5.1742, 13.5.1742, 2.6.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 372.

Conclusion

The Prussian example demonstrates the huge influence of concepts of the ordered state – regulating the lives of its subjects and ensuring their welfare – upon warfare during the long eighteenth century. Such ideas were not just used for representative purposes or as part of monarchical display. Even Crown Prince Frederick, more interested in military glory than in the routine of regimental business, acquired a good understanding of military drill during his time as regimental proprietor. The impressive drill movements of Prussian soldiers certainly played an important role in contemporary impressions of the strength of the Prussian state, but Frederick and his commanders also genuinely considered the imposition of order and discipline upon the Prussian cavalry as important to ensuring their effectiveness in battle, and research on combat in the long eighteenth century suggests that there may have been substantial truth in this. Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau genuinely believed, until events brutally disabused him, that irregular Habsburg forces would be little threat to his forces in Upper Silesia in 1742.

Moreover, the conceptualization of states as like the households of rulers gave warfare in the early eighteenth century a distinctive character. Frederick William I described the administration of a household, a company of soldiers, and a whole war effort as all following the same principle. He taught Frederick to see the army as a collection of regiments, with the king expected to intervene directly in each of them – focusing on a mass of small details – to ensure the smooth regulation of the military household. Only gradually, during the eighteenth century, did concepts of administration move to consider the state as a larger entity beyond the household, and this could be seen in the military sphere with the establishment of divisions and corps and, in the Prussian case with Frederick's centralisation of recruitment and creation of inspectors to oversee the regiments.

Not only should the early eighteenth-century army be administered like a household, but, as Carmen Winkel and Guy Rowlands have shown, the patronage 'economy of honour' was central to the functioning of armies, and the army was thus comparable to that most important of all households, the ruler's court. The various concepts of 'regimental economy' had the contradictory effect that, on one hand, Frederick was well versed in methods of recruitment, and enthusiastically recruited even irregular

troops. On the other hand, since regiments of irregulars had no value in the 'economy of honour', Frederick only retained those units that were able to adapt themselves to the standards of ordered warfare.

As part of bringing order, it was indeed important, as Erica Charters has argued, for states in this period to show themselves as 'caring', whether of soldiers or civilians, and Frederick used this as an important part of his propaganda. Jürgen Luh's criticism of the failure of states in this period to provide for their soldiers should be moderated: Prussian commanders wanted to have as many soldiers as possible, and in the best possible condition, and took practical steps to achieve this. However, both the reputational and practical aspects of caring for soldiers had to be balanced against other practical considerations that might lead in a different direction. Disease or hunger among the troops, and exactions against civilians, might be acceptable to serve broader strategic objectives. Ideas of the ordered state were not mere rhetoric and display, and following them was often considered to have practical benefits, but there were also other 'meanings of war' in the early eighteenth century.

Glory

‘Warfare’, John Keegan claimed in 1993, ‘is an entirely masculine activity’.¹ This may jar on modern ears, and Keegan’s claim that ‘women . . . never, in a military sense, fight men’ has been disproven by more recent research.² Nevertheless, it is clear that war is deeply connected to constructions of masculinity.³ This chapter explores these connections, using them to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between eighteenth-century warfare and noble culture, a subject that has been increasingly contested by historians. It uses the example of Frederick the Great and his father to show that there were multiple elite ‘masculinities’ in the early-eighteenth century, creating a similar diversity within ‘noble war-making’, and that the most important model was that of King Louis XIV of France.

Noble values were a crucial code of behaviour underlying eighteenth-century warfare: they even inspired common soldiers.⁴ There has, however, been considerable dispute among historians as to how precisely these values shaped war. Johannes Kunisch portrayed noble glory-hunting as fundamentally reckless, standing in contradiction to calculated and mechanistic methods of waging war. He portrayed Frederick’s bold risk-taking as inspired by traditions of noble glory-hunting.⁵ David Bell, in contrast, argued that noble values led not to irrational violence but to restraint and calculated

¹ John Keegan, *A history of warfare* (London, 1993), pp. 75-6 (quotation, p. 76).

² Emerald M. Archer, *Women, warfare and representation: American servicewomen in the twentieth century* (London etc., 2017); Klaus Latzel, Franka Maubach, Silke Satjukow, eds., *Soldatinnen: Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis heute* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich, 2011); Keegan, *History of warfare*, p. 76.

³ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. xv, xx, 83.

⁴ Ilya Berkovich, *Motivation in war: the experience of common soldiers in old-regime Europe* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 165-8, 229; John A. Lynn, *Battle: a history of combat and culture* (new edn., Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 139-42; Martin Wrede, ‘Einleitung: die Inszenierung der mehr oder weniger heroischen Monarchie: zu Rittern und Feldherren, Kriegsherren und Schauspielern’, in Martin Wrede, ed., *Die Inszenierung der heroischen Monarchie: Frühneuzeitliches Königtum zwischen ritterlichen Erbe und militärischer Herausforderung* (Munich, 2014), p. 25.

⁵ Johannes Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg: Studien zur bellizistischen Disposition des absoluten Fürstenstaates* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), pp. 3-6, 19-21, 28-31, 36-7, 72-3, 81, 138-42, 156-9; Johannes Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse: der König und seine Zeit* (Munich, 2004), pp. 106-8, 123, 167-8, 173, 176, 182, 209-10, 219-21.

methods in war.⁶ Jürgen Luh similarly noted that points of noble honour considerably impeded the movement of armies.⁷ James Whitman played down the role of the nobility entirely, arguing that eighteenth-century warfare saw the triumph of royal sovereignty over the aristocratic tradition of the duel.⁸

This chapter will refute the arguments of Whitman, showing that winning noble glory in battle was also crucial for ruling princes, who employed writers to narrate their brave deeds. However, ideas of noble manliness were deeply contested between aristocrats, and even ideals of courage in battle varied. Whereas Matthew McCormack has argued that eighteenth-century battle tactics led to fundamentally passive concepts of courage, based on bravely enduring fire in the restrained manner described by Bell, this chapter will show that there was an alternative tradition which celebrated aggressive attacks, sword in hand.⁹ Frederick, inspired by the French courtly masculinity of the age of Louis XIV, initially tried to adopt the almost super-human masculine courage described in pre-novel fiction, and to lead his men from the front. Such ideals proved to be beyond him, however, and he was forced to restrict himself to stoically exposing himself to danger, in a manner closer to the ideas of his father.

Masculinities

Frederick provides a powerful example of the contested elite masculinity of the early eighteenth-century. Frederick's famous dispute with his father had many dimensions, and has even been explained as a straightforwardly political dispute.¹⁰ There was,

⁶ David A. Bell, *The first total war: Napoleon's Europe and the birth of warfare as we know it* (New York, NY, 2007), pp. 42-5, 50, 82-3, 136, 190-1, 215, 241, 254, 280, 302-4.

⁷ Jürgen Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa, 1650-1800* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2004), pp. 208-18.

⁸ James Q. Whitman, *The verdict of battle: the law of victory and the making of modern war* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2012), pp. 135-71.

⁹ Matthew McCormack, 'Dance and drill: polite accomplishments and military masculinities in Georgian Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 8 (2011), pp. 321-2.

¹⁰ Benjamin Marschke, 'Vater und Sohn: Friedrich der Große und die Dynastie der Hohenzollern', in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große und die Dynastie der Hohenzollern: Beiträge des fünften Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 30. September / 1. Oktober 2011* (http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-dynastie/marschke_vater, last accessed, 29 November 2017).

however, also a strong gendered element to it and this had important military dimensions, which should lead us to alter commonly-held evaluations of the Hohenzollern rulers.

R.W. Connell has noted that a wide variety of different masculinities exist at any one time and that comparatively few men meet a specific norm of masculinity. Indeed, it is argued that ‘men are not permanently committed to a particular pattern of masculinity . . . [but] make situationally specific choices from a cultural repertoire of masculine behaviour’.¹¹ Historians should therefore be cautious about defining particular ‘types’ of historical masculinity. This chapter will refer to two competing masculinities, but will do so in the knowledge that others existed, and that even the two referred to here were no more than repertoires of behaviour, from which individuals could pick.

An influential pattern of elite masculinity in Europe, especially in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, was what Wolfgang Schmale has called ‘baroque masculinity’: associated with the court of Louis XIV of France and those who emulated him. While celebrating male strength, it involved civility of manners and delighted in the company of women, often in order to sire children. Reflecting the increasing commercial wealth of parts of Europe, ‘baroque masculinity’ involved conspicuous consumption and display, including impressive clothes.¹² Typical of this is Guy Rowlands’s description of French junior officers of the late seventeenth century:

Many of them got heavily into debt to acquire fancy periwigs, waistcoats and coats with huge sleeves. To put on a good show for their fellows and

¹¹ Connell, *Masculinities*, pp. xviii-xx, 36-7, 77-81 (quotation, pp.xviii-xix). See also Marian Füssel, ‘Studentenkultur als Ort hegemonialer Männlichkeit? Überlegungen zum Wandel akademischer Habitusformen vom Ancien Régime zur Moderne’, in Martin Dinges, ed., *Männer – Macht – Körper: hegemoniale Männlichkeit vom Mittelalter bis heute* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2005), pp. 85-7; Benjamin Marschke, ‘Competing post-baroque masculinities: pietist masculinity and Prussian masculinity in the early eighteenth century’, in Pia Schmit, ed., *Gender im Pietismus: Netzwerke und Geschlechterkonstruktionen* (Halle (Saale), 2015), pp. 197-9.

¹² Marschke, ‘Competing post-baroque masculinities’, pp. 199-204; Wolfgang Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa (1450-2000)* (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar, 2003), pp. 123, 126-33, 148.

attract a reputation as a good man they also indulged in excessive eating and drinking.¹³

This form of masculinity was explicitly seen by contemporaries as French. It was opposed by those who advocated less civil forms of male behaviour, involving course manners and excessive drinking, and who thought that conspicuous consumption and fine clothes weakened tough manly virtues. Such critics called those who followed French fashions ‘effeminate,’ ‘fops’, and ‘*petit maîtres*’.¹⁴

The clash between these competing masculinities was seen in many countries throughout the eighteenth century. Marian Füssel described the conflicting styles of masculinity among German students in the late eighteenth century, some of whom favoured the courtly fashion of fine dressing and gallantry – with Parisian dancing masters and silk stockings – while others saw this as unmanly, and favoured fighting in the streets and hard drinking.¹⁵ Matthew McCormack noted competing masculinities expressed in the debate over the militia in Britain. British commentators of both the late seventeenth and mid eighteenth centuries criticized the alleged ‘luxury’ brought by commercial wealth, which they claimed was degenerating English martial virtues and making men effeminate. ‘Fopperies and fashions’ – conspicuous consumption and fine clothes – were explicitly described as reflecting French culture, and ‘polite’ manners were criticised. On the other side, McCormack noted voices advocating the value of civility in a commercial society.¹⁶ This chapter argues that Frederick followed French courtly ‘baroque’ masculinity, and that clashing ideas of masculinity were an important element in his conflict with his father. It accepts that Frederick was probably homosexual, but expressly does not argue that his *sexuality* influenced the form of *masculinity* he embraced.¹⁷

¹³ Guy Rowlands, *The dynastic state and the army under Louis XIV: royal service and private interest, 1661-1701* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 228. See also *Ibid*, pp. 227-8, 232-4, 239-41, 263-4, 339. See also Lynn, *Battle*, pp. 117-8, 124-5, 141.

¹⁴ Marschke, ‘Competing post-baroque masculinities’, pp. 199-207; Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeit*, pp. 123-4, 130.

¹⁵ Füssel, ‘Studentenkultur als Ort hegemonialer Männlichkeit?’, pp. 87-94.

¹⁶ Matthew McCormack, *Embodying the militia in Georgian England* (Oxford, 2015; online edn. 2015), pp. 13-28 (quotations, pp. 14, 16, 24).

¹⁷ On Frederick’s homosexuality, see Reinhard Alings, ‘“Don’t ask – don’t tell” – War Friedrich schwul?’, in Generaldirektion der Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin Brandenburg, ed., *Friederisiko – Friedrich der Grosse: die Ausstellung* (Munich, 2012), pp. 238-47; Tim Blanning, *Frederick the Great King of Prussia* (London, 2015), pp. 176-180,

On 28 August 1731, King Frederick William I wrote to Frederick responding to his request to be readmitted into the army. The king's furious letter, written in German, was interspersed with frequent expressions in French which highlighted the deeply cultural and gendered nature of the famous conflict between father and son: a conflict which revolved fundamentally around the crown prince's fitness to be a soldier.

You . . . write to me that you now want to be a soldier, but I believe that this does not really come from your heart . . . For I have got to know you well from your youth on, and also made every effort to inspire in you an appropriate ambition, desire and inclination for the craft of a soldier. But I did not succeed because you have perverted the ambition into arrogance . . . As I have told you a thousand times, a soldier who has ambition and honest desire for the profession must also have an inclination to everything that is manly and not to that which is effeminate ('weibisch'). He should not spare himself but rather expose himself at once, and should always be present when there are occasions for proving himself. Further, he should not complain about cold weather or heat, nor about hunger or thirst, and should gladly bear the greatest fatigues that there can be. But . . . on hunts, journeys and other occasions you have always sought to spare yourself, and preferred to seek out a French book, *des bons mots*, a comedy book or flute playing rather than duty or fatigues . . . But what is it worth, if I really tickled your heart? If I have a *maître de flûte* come from Paris with several dozen pipes and music books, likewise a whole band of comedians and a great orchestra, if I prescribe loud Frenchmen and French women, also a couple of dozen dance masters along with a dozen *petits-mâîtres* and have a large theatre built, you would certainly like this better than a company of grenadiers; for the grenadiers are, in your opinion, only riff-raff, but a *petit-mâitre*, a little Frenchman, a *bon mot*, a little musician and a little comedian, that appears something nobler, that is royal, that is *digne d'un prince*. These are your sentiments, if you will truly examine yourself; at least this is what was introduced to you from childhood on by rogues and whores.¹⁸

445-8; Wolfgang Burgdorf, *Friedrich der Große: ein biografisches Porträt* (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna, 2011), pp. 23-4, 76-103.

¹⁸ *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss (30 vols., Berlin, 1846-56), XXVII_III, pp. 20-1 (quotation: 'Du schreibst mir . . . , dass Du itzund lieber ein Soldat sein wollest; doch glaube ich, dass Dir dieses nicht recht von Herzen gehe . . . Denn Ich Dich von Jugend auf wohl habe kennen lernen, auch Alles angewandt habe, Dir eine rechtmässige Ambition, Lust und Inclination zum Soldatenhandwerk zu inspiriren. Ich habe aber nicht reussiret, weil Du die Ambition in Hoffart verkehret hast . . . ein Soldat, der Ambition und rechtschaffene Lust dazu hat, wie Ich Dir tausendmal gesaget habe, auch eine Inclination haben muss zu Allem dem, was männlich ist und nicht zu dem, was weibisch ist; dass er sich selbst nicht schonen, sondern sich sogleich exponiren und einfinden muss, wenn es Occasionen giebt, sich zu zeigen; der ferner nach keiner Kälte noch Hitze was fraget, noch nach Hunger und Durst, und die stärksten Fatiguen, die da sein können, gerne ausstehet . . . aber . . . wenn es auf Jagden, Reisen und andere Occasionen angekommen, hast Du alle zeit gesucht, Dich zu schonen,

Frederick William thus firmly positioned the famous dispute with his son within the competing masculinities of the eighteenth century. Christopher Clark has described Frederick William's ascent to the Prussian throne as inaugurating a 'cultural revolution': 'a comprehensive reversal of values and styles' 'in the sphere of representation and culture', away from 'the 'baroque' style of monarchy inaugurated by [King] Frederick I'.¹⁹ Whereas Frederick I had aped the court of Louis XIV, Benjamin Marschke has noted that Frederick William introduced a style of masculinity that stressed hard drinking, swearing and brutal hunting events. Frederick William and his associates despised those who followed Baroque fashion, calling them fops ('petit-mâtres') and women ('Weiberleben').²⁰ In 1727, Frederick William removed dance lessons from the curriculum at the cadet academy (although he restored them in 1730). This decision was taken on religious grounds, and Marschke has noted that Pietism's own (separate) form of masculinity was also opposed to baroque conspicuous consumption and display.²¹

The king made substantial efforts to involve Frederick in his definition of manliness, bringing him to the Tobacco College – the main meeting place for his inner circle – and demanding regular reports of his hunting activities.²² In 1728, Prince Leopold of

und lieber ein französisches Buch, des bons mots oder ein Komödien-Buch, oder das Flötenspiel gesucht, als den Dienst oder Fatiguen . . . Aber, was gilt es, wenn Ich Dir recht Dein Herz kitzelte, wenn Ich aus Paris einen maître de flûte mit etlichen zwölf Pfeifen und Musique-Büchern, imgleichen eine ganze Bande Komödianten und ein grosses Orchester kommen liesse, wenn Ich lauter Franzosen und Französinen, auch ein paar Dutzend Tanzmeister nebst einem Dutzend petits-mâtres verschriebe, und ein grosses Theater bauen liesse, so würde Dir dieses gewiss besser gefallen, als eine Compagnie Grenadiers; denn die Grenadiers sind doch, nach Deiner Meinung, nur Canailles, aber ein petit-mâitre, ein Französchchen, ein bon mot, ein Musiquechen und Komödiantchen, das scheint was Nobleres, das ist was Königliches, das ist digne d'un prince. Dieses sind Deine Sentiments, wenn Du Dich recht prüfen willst; zum wenigsten ist Dir dieses von Jugend auf von Schelmen und Huren eingeflösset worden').

¹⁹ Christopher Clark, *Iron kingdom: the rise and downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (London etc., 2006), p. 84. See also Christopher Clark, 'When culture meets power: the Prussian coronation of 1701', in Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms, eds., *Cultures of power in Europe during the long eighteenth century* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 26-7.

²⁰ Marschke, 'Competing post-baroque masculinities', pp. 199, 204-5.

²¹ Marschke, 'Competing post-baroque masculinities', pp. 199-204; Friedrich-Karl Tharau, *Die geistige Kultur des preußischen Offiziers von 1640 bis 1806* (Mainz, 1968), p. 71.

²² Paul Becher, *Der Kronprinz Friedrich als Regiments-Chef in Neu-Ruppin von 1732-1740* (Berlin, 1892), pp. 57-8; Arnold Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse: Entwicklungsgeschichte eines Staatsmannes* (Tübingen, 1934), p. 5; Blanning, *Frederick the Great*, p. 29; *Friedrichs*

Anhalt Dessau gave Frederick a gift of a horse and set of hunting dogs.²³ When, in the 1720s, young Frederick wore his hair long, wore gloves, used a silver fork (all aspects of baroque conspicuous consumption and display), and failed to engage in hunting and hard drinking, Frederick William called him ‘effeminate’, another popular contemporary accusation thrown at baroque fops.²⁴

Alongside his well-known interest in French culture, Frederick also fully embraced conspicuous consumption and display. Thomas Biskup has shown that the long-held image of Frederick’s spartan court is false: the king certainly used impressive display when it suited him.²⁵ Christopher Duffy has noted Frederick’s love of diamond rings and embroidered coats as crown prince, and his long hair.²⁶ Blanning has noted that this taste for luxury and extravagance continued after Frederick’s accession. It is seen for instance in his huge collection of snuffboxes. Given Frederick’s homosexuality, Blanning depicted this enjoyment of display as a form of ‘camp’.²⁷ It is, however, questionable whether this modern term can be applied to the eighteenth century. Rather, Frederick was practising typical baroque conspicuous consumption.²⁸ An example of this in the military sphere took place during Frederick’s 1734 campaign with Prince Eugene’s army on the Rhine, after his father had to return to Berlin early due to illness. The Bavarian secretary Barth noted that:

Immediately after his father’s departure, the Crown Prince of Prussia equipped himself with new clothes, smart beyond all measure. Since the King’s departure, he has also given his servants a completely new, very rich livery.²⁹

des Großen Briefe an seinen Vater: geschrieben in den Jahren 1732 bis 1739 (Berlin, 1838), pp. 8, 10, 20, 24, 35-8, 72-3, 128; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 7, 9, 24, 28, 30, 32-3.

²³ Leopold von Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege nach original-Quellen* (2 vols., Berlin, 1841), I, pp. 287-8; Dieter Radtke, *Friedrich der Große und der Alte Dessauer: des Königs Verhältnis zum Fürsten* (Hildesheim, 2015), p. 5.

²⁴ Blanning, *Frederick the Great*, pp. 33 36-7; Wolfgang Burgdorf, *Friedrich der Große: ein biografisches Porträt* (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna, 2011), pp. 36-8; Marschke, ‘Competing post-baroque masculinities’, p. 205 (quotation: ‘effeminirt’).

²⁵ Biskup, Thomas, *Friedrichs Größe: Inszenierung des Preußenkönigs in Fest und Zeremoniell, 1740-1815* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2012); Peter-Michael Hahn, *Friedrich II. von Preußen: Feldherr, Autokrat und Selbstdarsteller* (Stuttgart, 2013), p. 14.

²⁶ Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great: a military life* (London, 1985), p. 6.

²⁷ Blanning, *Frederick the Great*, pp. 448-451.

²⁸ Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeit*, pp. 126-9.

²⁹ Reinhold Koser, ‘Tagebuch des Kronprinzen Friedrich aus dem Rheinfeldzuge von 1734’, *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preußischen Geschichte* 4 (1891), p. 226 (quotation:

These new clothes on campaign were an investment in baroque display, defiantly undertaken as soon as his father's back was turned. They were also about soldiering, as Frederick tried to stand out more on campaign.

Indeed, soldiering was often associated with the extravagant display of 'baroque masculinity'. Matthew McCormack noted British commentators arguing that Frederick William I's own emphasis on the fine appearance of his soldiers amounted to 'fopperies'. In his conspicuous consumption, the king supposedly 'spared no expence [sic]' in equipping his troops, who 'were to him . . . ornamental china'.³⁰ Such criticism reflected the fluidity of eighteenth-century masculinities, and showed how closely war-making in the long eighteenth century was connected to ideas of extravagant display, even when practised by those who affected to despise such 'foppery'. Indeed, it has been noted that impressive uniforms were a major reason why common soldiers enlisted.³¹

McCormack argued that, in the competing masculinities of mid eighteenth-century Britain, the British regular army followed concepts of polite civility (reflecting Schmale's 'baroque masculinity'), in contrast to the more emotional approach of the militia.³² If this is true for the British, it was certainly not the case for the Prussians. Richard Gawthrop claimed that the strict sense of duty that came to be associated with Prussian society reflected Frederick William's enforcement of the religious values of Pietism, and Marschke has argued that Frederick William's adoption of Pietist values, rejecting luxury and stressing the fulfilment of duty, reflected not just religion but also Pietism's opposition to the masculinity of the baroque court.³³ The reports of Prussian spies during the 1750s show that they internalised ideas of competing

'Der Kronprinz von Preußen hat sich gleich nach der Abreise seines Papa ganz neu und über die Maßen propre equipirt, auch seit des Königs Abreise seiner Dienerschaft eine ganz andre, sehr reiche Livree gegeben.')

³⁰ McCormack, *Embodying the militia*, p. 89.

³¹ Berkovich, *Motivation in war*, pp. 134-5, 139, 145-6.

³² McCormack, *Embodying the militia*, pp. 118-9.

³³ Richard L. Gawthrop, *Pietism and the making of eighteenth-century Prussia* (Cambridge, 1993); Marschke, 'Competing post-baroque masculinities', pp. 199-204. See also Tharau, *Geistige Kultur des preußischen Offiziers*, p. 57. For reservations on Gawthrop's work, see Benjamin Marschke, *Absolutely Pietist: patronage, factionalism, and state-building in the early eighteenth-century Prussian army chaplaincy* (Tübingen, 2005), p. 5.

military masculinities, and celebrated Frederick William's concept of soldierly manliness based on the rigorous performance of duty. General Winterfeldt, reporting on the Hanoverian infantry in 1755, told Frederick, 'one cannot imagine anything as ponderous and neglectful as they really are', thus contrasting them with punctilious Prussian attention to duty.³⁴ A report a few months later noted the weak Austrian defences at Olmütz, lacking magazines and provisions, and with very few cannon, so that the fortress would fall in a few days if attacked, but remarked that, 'in general, the good Austrians, as is their wont, are unconcerned, and live in laughter'.³⁵ This contrasted Austrian levity with Prussian sobriety. In contrast, when asking for an increase in the garrison of the fortress of Glatz, Heinrich August de la Motte Fouqué assured Frederick that his soldiers would be hard-working: 'this . . . corps would not be free of duty from one day to another'.³⁶ The first chapter has shown, however, that Frederick William's focus on the maintenance of order within regiments reflected not just Pietist masculinity but also concepts of the well-regulated post-Westphalian state. Just as Frederick William's Giants Guard embodied precisely the concepts of baroque display that he affected to despise, so stern Prussian devotion to duty was both a reflection of absolutist political thought and, contradictorily, a reaction to the effeminacy of the baroque court. This suggests that a variety of different masculinities were represented within armies, just as they were in noble society in general, and that it would be unwise to claim that any one masculinity was dominant. The interaction of different masculinities within eighteenth-century officer corps would be a valuable topic for further research.

French Culture

It is well known that French literature was one of the most important battlegrounds in the culture war between father and son. In a letter on 3 May 1731, Frederick William told his son that it was the books he read that had led him astray.³⁷ Friedrich-Karl

³⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 F: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 16.6.1755 (quotation: 'Mann kann sich so was shweres und nachläßiger nicht vorstellen, als Sie würlk seyn.').

³⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 F: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 19.11.1755 (quotation: 'überhaupt sind die guten Oestreicher nach ihrer Gewonheit unbekümmert, und leben ins Gelach hinein.').

³⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.603 C: Fouqué to Frederick, 8.7.1753 (quotation: 'dieses . . . corps würde nicht länger dan einen Tag um den anderen frey vom dienste bleiben').

³⁷ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 15.

Tharau has shown, however, that Frederick William and his associates were by no means opposed to education: they promoted many officers who had been to university, and Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau specifically sought out students from the University of Halle for his regiment. Tharau argued that Frederick William simply believed that education should have a practical application.³⁸ Tharau recognised, however, that Frederick William's preferences for certain cultural and intellectual activities over others also reflected a rejection of French culture, and Marschke has shown that this culture war reflected competing masculinities.³⁹ In his instructions for Frederick's education, Frederick William emphasized that the prince should be kept away from 'operas, comedies and other worldly vanities'.⁴⁰ In 1728, Frederick William considered it important enough to emphasize in his political testament that 'my dear successor must also not admit that any comedies, operas, ballets, masquerades, or balls be held in his lands and provinces', and he specifically related these entertainments to questions of appropriate male behaviour by comparing them to the keeping of mistresses.⁴¹ As noted above, it was also Frederick's interest in comedies and music – the entertainments of the baroque court – that his father picked out in his 1731 letter as examples of his lack of soldierly manliness. This was not opposition to education but rather to a particular culture, understood in terms of masculinity.

Jürgen Luh has noted that Frederick's long struggle with his father led him to do many things simply because they were the opposite of what Frederick William wanted, and clearly this was an important reason for Frederick's interest in books.⁴² He famously assembled a clandestine library as a teenager, even though it is unlikely that he read many of the books in it: the point was to oppose his father and, as Blanning has noted, the considerable debts Frederick incurred in this period (another

³⁸ Tharau, *Geistige Kultur des preußischen Offiziers*, pp. 57-60, 64-5, 68-9, 73-5, 78, 80-4, 87-8.

³⁹ Tharau, *Geistige Kultur des preußischen Offiziers*, pp. 58-9; Marschke, 'Competing post-baroque masculinities', pp. 197-9, 204-5.

⁴⁰ Friedrich Cramer, ed., *Zur Geschichte Friedrich Wilhelms I. und Friedrichs II. Könige von Preußen* (3rd edn., Leipzig, 1835), p. 10 (quotation: 'Opern, Comödien und andern weltlichen Eitelkeiten').

⁴¹ Richard Dietrich, ed., *Die politische Testamente der Hohenzollern* (Cologne, Vienna, 1986), p. 222 (quotation: 'Mein lieber Successor mus auch nicht zugehen das in seine Lender und Prowincen keine Komedien, Operas, Ballettes, Masckerahden, Redutten gehalten werden').

⁴² Jürgen Luh, *Der Große: Friedrich II. von Preussen* (Munich, 2011), pp.114-128, 133-4.

form of conspicuous consumption) were also a rejection of his father's ostentatious parsimony.⁴³

Frederick's choice of reading material was a direct identification of himself with the culture of Louis XIV of France: Frederick William I's opposite both culturally and in his model of masculinity. Frederick's favourite literature – classical literature, and French literature of the seventeenth century (the '*grand siècle*') – and his favoured authors such as Boileau, Bossuet, Corneille, Molière and Racine, had all been used to support the glory of the Sun King.⁴⁴ Voltaire also contributed to the glorification of Louis XIV through his works on Louis and his grandfather, Henry IV.⁴⁵ It is well known that Frederick modelled himself on Louis XIV in many respects, especially in cultural terms, and this dissertation demonstrates that Frederick's war-making was primarily oriented toward the era of the Sun King.⁴⁶ In reading the literature of the French *grand siècle*, Frederick was associating himself with Europe's dominant monarchical and cultural tradition: one that also celebrated glory in war.

Much of this literature actually propounded similar values to those of Frederick William. Racine's Iphigenia, for instance, exemplified ideas of dutifulness, filial piety and obedience to kings when she willingly offered herself as a sacrifice in obedience to her father.⁴⁷ It was not the content of these 'operas and comedies' to which Frederick William was opposed, but their association with French baroque

⁴³ Blanning, *Frederick the Great*, p. 34; Bogdan Krieger, *Friedrich der Große und seine Bücher* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1914), pp. 6-7.

⁴⁴ On Frederick's interests in Classical literature and French seventeenth-century literature, see: C. Dantal, *Les délassemens littéraires ou heures de lecture de Frédéric II* (Elbing, 1791), pp. 15-27, 29-33, 35, 37, 42-4; Gonthier-Louis Fink, 'Die literarischen Beziehungen Friedrichs zu Frankreich', in Jürgen Ziechmann, ed., *Panorama der fridericianischen Zeit: Friedrich der Grosse und seine Epoche: ein Handbuch* (Bremen, 1985), pp. 244-7; Hans-Joachim Giersberg, 'Die Schloßbibliotheken Friedrichs II.', *Studien zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesen* 8 (1993), p. 62; Wolfgang J. Kaiser, *Die Bücher des Königs: Friedrich der Grosse: Schriftsteller und Liebhaber von Büchern und Bibliotheken* (Berlin, 2012), pp. 27, 37-8, 45, 57-60; Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, pp. 7, 11, 15-18, 37-8; Bogdan Krieger, *Frederick the Great and his Books* (New York, NY, 1913), pp. 9, 12, 18-19, 21. On the use of the Classical tradition and literature of the *grand siècle* by Louis XIV, see: Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe*, pp. 69-71; Peter Burke, *The fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1992), esp. pp. 9, 28, 31, 35, 66, 68-9, 75-8, 82-3, 104-5, 131, 175, 177, 195; Wrede, 'Inszenierung der mehr oder weniger heroischen Monarchie', pp. 24, 27.

⁴⁵ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 62, 65; Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe*, p. 81.

⁴⁶ On Frederick's attempt to ape Louis XIV culturally, see Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe*, passim.

⁴⁷ *Œuvres de Racine* (new edn., 2 vols., Amsterdam, 1741), II, pp. 221-2, 236, 240.

courtly culture. Indeed, there was a political dimension to this, as Frederick William worried that Frederick would be too friendly to France when he became king.⁴⁸ Earlier historians suggested that Frederick's interest in reading implied a preference for peaceful and cultural activities over war-making.⁴⁹ Friedrich Meinecke and Theodor Schieder therefore presented Frederick's wars as reflections of a fundamentally contradictory personality.⁵⁰ It has been noted, however, that intellectuals of the time (including many figures of the early Enlightenment) took an ambiguous attitude to war. While seeing it in principle as wrong, they accepted that princes would inevitably want to engage in it, and sought to encourage them to do so in as humane a way as possible.⁵¹ Arnold Berney and Johannes Kunisch have noted that the works of Voltaire, Racine and Corneille all helped to inspire Frederick's ambitions for military glory.⁵² The French tradition could combine sensitivity and appreciation of literature directly with military virtues, seen for instance when the great general Condé allegedly cried at a verse by Corneille.⁵³ Rather than running counter to his father's ambitions for him to be a soldier, Frederick's literary interests were a means for building a separate masculine identity following the tradition of Louis XIV of France, which celebrated glory in war.

⁴⁸ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 81-2; Reinhold Koser, ed., *Briefwechsel Friedrichs des Großen mit Grumbkow und Maupertius (1731-1759)* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 169-70.

⁴⁹ Such views are characterized in Derek McKay and H.M. Scott, *The rise of the great powers, 1648-1815* (London and New York, NY, 1983), pp. 163-4.

⁵⁰ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 104-5; Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: the doctrine of raison d'état and its place in modern history*, trans. Douglas Scott (London, 1957), pp. 275-7, 290-1, 297, 301, 308-9; Theodor Schieder, *Friedrich der Große: ein Königtum der Widersprüche* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), pp. 102-3, 106, 112, 114, 123, 125-6, 285-6.

⁵¹ Bell, *First total war*, pp. 30, 50-1; Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in warfare: the modern history of the international law of armed conflicts* (London, 1980), pp. 40-7; Claudius R. Fischbach, *Krieg und Frieden in der französischen Aufklärung* (Münster and New York, NY, 1990), pp. 48-57, 99; Peter Gay, *Voltaire's politics: the poet as realist* (Princeton, NJ, 1959), pp. 159-61; Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 106-14; Stephen C. Neff, *War and the law of nations: a general history* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 85, 88-92, 131-58; Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum* (Cologne, 1950), pp. 112-9; James Q. Whitman, *The verdict of battle: the law of victory and the making of modern war* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2012), passim (esp. pp. 10-23, 248-251, 256-7).

⁵² Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 28; Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg*, pp. 28-31.

⁵³ *Œuvres*, XXV, p. 129.

Literary War

If Frederick's preference for French literature reflected Louisquatorzean masculinity, how did this literature (and masculinity) then shape his approach to war? As noted above, the literature of the French *grand siècle* was an element of royal representation. This section will describe how Frederick used the plays of Racine and Corneille to present his military activities to his family members and to French intellectuals, inviting them to compare him with these famous literary figures. It is well known that French intellectuals were crucial to Frederick's public relations and ambitions for posthumous fame, but the examples below show that such literary examples were also important for other German princes.⁵⁴ Many examples come from the Seven Years War, but it is clear that they are also representative of the earlier period. Beyond representation, there is also evidence that these literary heroes genuinely inspired Frederick's military actions.

The plays of Racine were among Frederick's favourite works.⁵⁵ He attended many performances of *Iphigenia*, and used it as the model for his libretto *Iphigenia at Aulis*.⁵⁶ The play was very critical of the destruction of war fought for princely glory, but Frederick chose instead to focus on Racine's description of the military prowess of Achilles.⁵⁷ Twice during the Seven Years War, writing to his sister Amalia in September 1758, then to Voltaire in the dark days of March 1760, Frederick defiantly maintained that Prussia's prospects remained good, quoting Achilles' assurance to Clytemnestra that he would save Iphigenia from sacrifice by force of arms: 'this oracle is more sure than that of Calchas'.⁵⁸ Frederick thus compared himself to Achilles, while expressing contempt for organised religion and justifying the resort to war. French literature here provided a narrative for his war-making.

⁵⁴ On the importance of French intellectuals for Frederick, see Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe*, pp. 79, 95.

⁵⁵ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 61-2; Fink, 'Beziehungen Friedrichs zu Frankreich', pp. 244-5; Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, pp. 11, 37-8; Krieger, *Frederick the Great and his Books*, p. 12.

⁵⁶ *Œuvres*, X, p. 200. For Frederick attending performances of the play, see *Œuvres*, XXIV, pp. 85, 224.

⁵⁷ *Œuvres de Racine*, II, pp. 174, 179-180, 185-189, 197, 206-7, 222, 224-5, 228-231, 236.

⁵⁸ *Œuvres*, XXIII, p. 81; *Œuvres*, XXVII_I, p. 454; *Œuvres de Racine*, II, pp. 214-6. (quotation: 'Cet oracle est plus sûr que celui de Calchas.')

Racine's *Mithridates* was performed at Rheinsberg in 1736.⁵⁹ Days before risking everything at the battle of Leuthen in 1757, Frederick referred, in a letter to Prince Henry, to the dramatic scene where Mithridates laid out his plan to surprise the Romans, who had brought him near defeat, by invading Italy itself.⁶⁰ Henry had criticised Frederick's generalship, and Frederick used *Mithridates* to illustrate his hopes for a turn of fortune.⁶¹ During the Seven Years War, *Mithridates* became useful to Frederick as an example of a stoic hero fighting on in spite of defeats, reflecting the Prussian king's shift to portraying himself bravely facing adversity.⁶² In March 1760, Frederick told the Marquis d'Argens that, in the case of disaster, he would know how to 'end it like Mithridates' (commit suicide).⁶³ In winter 1758-9, just months after he had compared himself to Achilles, Frederick repeatedly used *Mithridates*'s impassioned recounting of his defeat by Pompey, declaiming the passage to his reader de Catt after his October 1758 defeat at Hochkirch.⁶⁴ He thereby showed himself to de Catt as able to find the appropriate literary quotation even for a defeat. In his *Discourse of the Emperor Otho to his friends after the loss of the battle of Bedriac*, written to d'Argens at the lowest point of Frederick's whole career, on 5 January 1762, just before he learnt that the death of the Tsaritsa had saved him from destruction, Frederick opened by echoing the opening words of *Mithridates*'s plan for the invasion of Italy.⁶⁵ While the work claimed to admit that all was lost, Frederick, then negotiating with the Tartar Khan and Ottoman Empire to intervene on his side, was inviting d'Argens to remember (and remind others) that *Mithridates* – bold king and stoic – had similarly planned to distract his Roman enemies by allying with Parthia.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 368; *Œuvres*, XX, p. 135.

⁶⁰ *Œuvres*, XXVI, p.188; *Œuvres de Racine*, II, pp. 117-120. See also *Œuvres*, XIX, pp. 51-2.

⁶¹ Blanning, *Frederick the Great*, p. 439.

⁶² For the change in Frederick's self-presentation during the Seven Years War, see Luh, *Der Große*, pp. 70-6.

⁶³ *Œuvres*, XIX, pp. 145-6 (quotation, p. 146: 'La terminer ainsi que Mithridate').

⁶⁴ Blanning, *Frederick the Great*, pp. 232-4; *Œuvres*, XVIII, p.132; *Œuvres de Racine*, II, pp. 105-6.

⁶⁵ *Œuvres*, XII, p.237. Franz A.J. Szabo, *The Seven Years War in Europe, 1756-1763* (Edinburgh, 2008), pp. 364-5, 369-73, 380-4 describes the parlous Prussian position before the death of Tsaritsa Elizabeth.

⁶⁶ Szabo, *Seven Years War*, pp. 368-9, 372-3.

Corneille's play *El Cid* was similarly helpful for Frederick's representation. In August 1761, as it seemed he might again escape any lasting damage from his Austro-Russian opponents, Frederick wrote to the Marquis d'Argens hoping that, 'the combat will end for lack of combatants'.⁶⁷ The phrase came from Corneille's description of the hero Rodrigo's victory over the Moors, when he captured two of their kings and was named 'El Cid'. The combat ended because all the Moors had fled or been killed or captured.⁶⁸ Frederick surely did not see his perilous survival as comparable with this resounding victory, but he nevertheless tried to associate his own military reputation with Corneille's hero, 'the support of Castile and the terror of the Moor'.⁶⁹

While the examples cited above were directed at Frederick's siblings, and at French intellectuals who might pass his comparisons on to their literary contacts, Frederick also used examples from the literature of the French *grand siècle* to represent his military successes to other German princes, and there is evidence that these literary examples had importance for Frederick beyond their use for representative purposes. In February 1744, flushed with his conquest of Silesia in the First Silesian War, and just about to enter the lists against Austria for a second time, Frederick wrote a *Mirror of princes* for young Duke Karl Eugen of Württemberg on his departure from Berlin to become reigning duke. Frederick hoped the rest of Europe would echo his view of the duke that, 'his virtue exceeds the number of his years'.⁷⁰ This was a reference to the scene in Corneille's *El Cid* where Rodrigo told Count Gomes that he would fight him even though the count was the greatest warrior in Spain, whereas Rodrigo was scarcely of age. 'Courage ignores the number of one's years', he declared.⁷¹ This scene had been on Frederick's mind for some years. In July 1735, responding to his sister Wilhelmine's news that she had been hunting, Frederick joked that, 'your first efforts will be master strokes'.⁷² This had been Rodrigo's response to the count's taunt that he, 'who we have never seen with arms in his hands', would never be able

⁶⁷ *Œuvres*, XIX, p.278 (quotation: 'Le combat finira faute de combattants'); Szabo, *Seven Years War*, pp.363-4.

⁶⁸ *Le Theatre de P. Corneille* (new edn. 5 vols., Paris, 1738), II, pp. 285-6, 289-92.

⁶⁹ *Theatre de P. Corneille*, II, p. 288 (quotation: 'Le soutien de Castille, & la terreur du More').

⁷⁰ *Œuvres*, IX, p. 3 (quotation: 'en lui la vertu précédait le nombre des années').

⁷¹ *Theatre de P. Corneille*, II, pp. 243-6, 254-6 (quotation, p. 255: 'La valeur n'attend pas le nombre des années').

⁷² *Œuvres XXVII_I*, p.34 (quotation: 'vos coups d'essai seraient des coups de maître').

to ‘measure up to me’.⁷³ We may imagine Rodrigo’s words resonating greatly with Frederick in the 1730s, given his father’s accusations that he lacked manliness. When Frederick, in letters to Grumbkow in 1737 and 1738, promised that he would show ‘temerity’, vivacity’ and ‘impetuosity’ when he came to the throne and ‘make glorious use’ of the ‘preparations’ made by his father, this was directly comparable to Rodrigo’s promise to the count that, ‘I will attack recklessly’.⁷⁴ By 1744, having risen to the greatest glory through his first action, just as El Cid had done in Corneille’s play, Frederick was able to tell the young duke that he too should aspire to become the young man whose first blow astounded the world, while reminding him and his family that they should maintain good relations with the man who now represented himself as Germany’s El Cid.⁷⁵

The strongest evidence of direct influence from French theatre on Frederick’s military plans comes from *Mithridates*. The scene from Racine’s play which Frederick quoted to Prince Henry in 1757 included a description of the Italian peninsula, ‘empty of legions which might defend it’, with the Roman forces engaged in the east, that was eerily comparable to the state of Silesia when Frederick invaded in 1740; stripped of troops through the campaigns on the Danube.⁷⁶ While Frederick could not have known this in the 1730s, a 1737 letter he wrote to Grumbkow predicting the decline of the Hapsburgs on Charles VI’s death, and the opportunity he would have to profit from it, also quoted Racine’s *Athaliah*, showing that the French playwright was in his mind when thinking about grand strategy.⁷⁷ Frederick’s call for a confederation of German princes against the ‘despotism’ of Austria and France in his 1738 *Considerations on the present state of the European body politic* may have been inspired by Mithridates’s plan in this same scene to enlist allies, including ‘proud

⁷³ *Theatre de P. Corneille*, II, p. 255 (quotations: ‘qu'on n'a jamais vu les armes à la main’, ‘mesurer à moi’).

⁷⁴ *Theatre de P. Corneille*, II, p. 255 (quotation: ‘J'attaque en téméraire’); Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, pp. 170, 176 (quotations: ‘témérité’, ‘vivacité’, ‘faire l’usage glorieux de ces préparatifs’, ‘l’impétuosité’).

⁷⁵ For the political importance of the Württemberg connection for Frederick, see Carmen Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs: Netzwerke und Patronage in der preußischen Armee, 1713-1786* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich, 2013), pp. 171-5.

⁷⁶ Christopher Duffy, *The wild goose and the eagle: a life of Marshal von Browne, 1705-1757* (London, 1964), p. 35; *Œuvres de Racine*, II, p. 119 (quotation: ‘Vuide de légions qui la puiffent défendre’); Peter H. Wilson, *German armies: war and German politics, 1648-1806* (London, 1998), pp. 234-41, 248.

⁷⁷ Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, p. 154.

Germany, . . . against the tyranny’ of Rome.⁷⁸ Frederick’s familiarity with these works, and his use of them to represent his war-making, makes it conceivable that the feats of the fictional El Cid and Mithridates helped inspire his own military enterprises. French literature of the *grand siècle* was and always had been primarily of representational importance for those monarchs who modelled themselves on the baroque court of Louis XIV. There is evidence, however, that monarchs found in what Frederick William I called ‘operas, comedies and other worldly vanities’ direct inspiration for martial feats. Differing masculinities thus directly shaped approaches to war.

Christopher Clark, following the ideas of Jonathan Steinberg, has argued that there were two types of Hohenzollern monarch: ‘type-A’: ‘expansive and expensive, ostentatious, detached from the regular work of state, focused on image’, and ‘type-B’: ‘austere, thrifty, workaholic.’ He argued that Frederick the Great followed his father’s pattern, establishing a similarly homo-social court and becoming a ‘type-B’ monarch. When it came to war-making, however, it was to the ‘expansive and expensive’ traditions of baroque monarchy that Frederick turned to inspire his bid for military glory.⁷⁹ Frederick rebelled against his father by associating himself with Europe’s dominant monarchical and cultural tradition; one which allowed him to express warlike ideas literally in a different language, in terms expressly abhorrent to Frederick William, and using a different symbolic vocabulary. This Francophone vocabulary was then of enormous use when presenting his war-making to the European public sphere. The competing masculinities of the early eighteenth century thus offered different concepts of how to be a man, a king and a war leader.

⁷⁸ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 8, 12-14, 16-17, 21-7 (quotation, p.12: ‘despotisme’); Andreas Pečar, ‘Friedrich der Große als Autor: Plädoyer für eine adressatenorientierte Lektüre seiner Schriften’, in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große – eine perspektivische Bestandsaufnahme: Beiträge des ersten Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 28./29. September 2007* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-bestandsaufnahme/pecar_autor, last accessed 27 November 2017), paragraphs 6, 8-10; *Œuvres de Racine*, II, pp. 118-9 (quotation, p.118: la fière Germanie, . . . contre la tyrannie’).

⁷⁹ Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 84.

Heroes

Beyond general warlike ideas, the French fiction that Frederick read articulated a specific concept of manly courage in battle. The comparison with Napoleon is instructive here. David Bell, building on the ideas of Stephen Englund, has argued that ‘Napoleon saw himself . . . as . . . a character in a novel’, and Frederick also clearly compared himself with fictional heroes like Corneille’s El Cid, and Racine’s Achilles and Mithridates.⁸⁰ For Napoleon, the development of the novel, with its much more detailed and realistic depiction of characters, enabling readers for the first time to relate to literary characters like normal people, was important for the creation of his personality cult. Bell called him ‘the first who could speak to his audiences in familiar, personal terms and be accepted as a man of the people even while presenting himself as an extraordinary genius.’⁸¹ Frederick as a young man, however, was reading works whose characterization of their subjects was generally much more limited: these were ‘romances’ (the term is used advisedly), presenting not believable stories of ordinary people but mythical tales of princes and unreachable paragons of virtue (and military prowess).⁸² When Frederick took the field in the image of these heroes, he was trying to match up to truly superhuman standards, including on the battlefield.

The portrayals of heroic manliness in these works demonstrate that there were not only several different elite masculinities in Europe in the early eighteenth century but also a variety of concepts of how to display manliness on the battlefield. It has been argued that the long eighteenth century had a ‘battle culture of forbearance’, reflecting both the restraint imposed by ‘civilised’ manners and the linear tactics of the age of the socket bayonet, which required troops to stand in line and endure enemy fire.⁸³ The first chapter has shown that such tactics were the product of concepts of order

⁸⁰ Bell, *First total war*, p. 203.

⁸¹ Bell, *First total war*, pp. 201-6 (quotation, p. 206). On the general quality of characterization in novels, see Ian Watt, *The rise of the novel: studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (London, 1957), pp. 17-22, 60, 175-7, 194-6, 201-3, 207.

⁸² Bell, *First total war*, pp. 59-61, 201-2, 205; Jean-Claude Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon: essai sur le culte des grands hommes* (Paris, 1998), p. 40; English Showalter, Jr., *The evolution of the French novel, 1641-1782* (Princeton, NJ, 1972), pp. 3-4, 21-3, 27-31, 33-4, 49, 51, 56; Watt, *Rise of the novel*, pp. 202, 207, 240, 245-6, 254-5. For similar comments about seventeenth- and eighteenth-century battle paintings, see Peter Paret, *The cognitive challenge of war: Prussia 1806* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2009), p. 68.

⁸³ Bell, *First total war*, pp. 24, 42-4, 50; Lynn, *Battle*, pp. 115, 128-9; McCormack, ‘Dance and drill’, pp. 321-2.

that aimed to reduce levels of violence just as civility did, and for the same reason.⁸⁴ The superhuman characters in the works of fiction read by Frederick, however, just like the works of contemporary military historians, presented examples of reckless feats which showed a much more active form of courage.

Voltaire's *Henriade* was probably Frederick's favourite book. Frederick's writings show a deep familiarity with the work, demonstrated by numerous quotations from almost all of its ten songs.⁸⁵ The *Henriade* was critical of the destruction wrought by war, for instance in the appalling episode when the hero D'Ailly accidentally killed his own son.⁸⁶ However, it also lauded the achievements of the heroes fighting on the side of the right, and in particular described the heroism of Henry IV himself.⁸⁷ Song IV described Henry returning from England at the point when his army was being attacked:

At the mere name of Henry the French rally,
...
In that moment Henry appears among them,
Shining like the thunderbolt at the height of the tempest,
He flies to the first ranks, he advances at their head,
He fights, the enemy flee, he changes the destiny of battle,
Lightning is in his eyes, death is in his hands.
All the commanders rally around him,
Victory returns, the Leaguers disperse,⁸⁸

Song VI described how, when his soldiers approached the walls of Paris, Henry, 'armed with a bloody steel, covered with a shield, / . . . flew at their head, and

⁸⁴ For civility as the social reflection of the establishment of political order, see for instance Rowlands, *The dynastic state and the army*, p. 8.

⁸⁵ For quotations from every song of the *Henriade* except X, and references to song X, see *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 57-60; *Œuvres*, X, pp. 66, 70, 151-2, 181, 263, 295, *Œuvres*, XIV, p. 46; *Œuvres*, XVI, pp. 288, 302; *Œuvres*, XVII, pp. 302-3; *Œuvres*, XVIII, pp. 24-5; *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 12, 19, 50, 60, 71, 179, 226, 234, 323, 399; *Œuvres*, XXVI, pp. 110, 238; Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, p. 125.

⁸⁶ Voltaire, *La Henriade* (new edn., London), 1730, pp. 248-9, 257-8.

⁸⁷ On the *Henriade*'s attitude to war, see Fischbach, *Krieg und Frieden*, p. 55.

⁸⁸ Voltaire, *Henriade*, pp. 112-3 (quotation, p. 113: 'Au seul nom de Henry les François se rallient. / . . . / Henry dans le moment paroît au milieu d'eux, / Brillant comme l'éclair au fort de la tempête, / Il vole aux premiers rangs, il s'avance à leur tête, / Il combat, on le fuit, il change les destins, / La foudre est dans ses yeux, la mort est dans ses mains. / Tous les Chefs ranimez au tour de lui s'empresent, / La Victoire revient, les Ligeurs disparaissent,').

mounted first', then eagerly pursued the fleeing enemy when the outer defences were captured.⁸⁹

In Song VIII, describing the climactic battle of Ivry, Voltaire told how, in the thick of battle, 'Henry pushes, advances and makes a route.' Henry not only saved the life of his friend Biron, who was surrounded and on the point of death, but killed one of the enemy commanders, Count Egmont, in single combat.⁹⁰ This was precisely the kind of military glory that Frederick was writing poems about in the 1730s, and it was a notably active form of heroism: Henry did not merely endure danger, but personally dealt out death.⁹¹

Voltaire's other major work of the 1720s about a modern monarch, his *History of Charles XII*, was in a similar vein. In contrast to the *Henriade* – an epic poem with poetic licence – this was a factual work of history, yet it described Charles's deeds in even more heroic, not to say fantastic terms. Charles always led his troops from the front, sword in hand.⁹² At the Battle of Narva in 1700, he was wounded in the arm and had two horses killed under him, yet still continued to fight.⁹³ In 1701, when his army used boats to attack the Saxon-Polish army on the far bank of the Duna River, Charles, 'was mortified to be only the fourth to step ashore.'⁹⁴ At Hołowczyn in 1708, (by Voltaire's account) his Russian opponents were entrenched on the far side of a marsh, yet 'Charles surmounted all obstacles', and was so confident that he did not even bother to wait for all his infantry to arrive: 'he threw himself into the water at the head of his footguards, he crossed the river and the marsh, often having the water above his shoulders.' Having acquired a horse during the combat, the king

⁸⁹ Voltaire, *Henriade*, pp. 180-192 (quotations, p.187: 'Armé d'un fer sanglant, couvert d'un bouclier, / Henry vôle à leur tête, & monte le premier.').

⁹⁰ Voltaire, *Henriade*, pp. 243-268 (quotation, p. 256: 'Dans d'épaisses Forêts de lances hérissées, / De Bataillons sanglans, de Troupes renversées, / Henry pousse, s'avance, & le fait un chemin.').

⁹¹ *Œuvres*, XI, pp. 98-101.

⁹² For instance when attacking the Danish entrenchments at Copenhagen in 1700: Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII. Roi de Suède* (new edn., 2 vols., Amsterdam, 1739), I, pp. 58-60.

⁹³ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, pp. 72-3.

⁹⁴ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, pp. 83-4 (quotation, p.84: 'fut mortifié de ne sauter à terre que le quatrième.').

insisted that a wounded Swedish officer mount it instead, while he continued the fight on foot at the head of his infantry.⁹⁵

As well as showing courage at the head of his men, Voltaire's Charles XII also demonstrated the kind of stoic endurance of pain and privation which Frederick William was referring to when he told Frederick that 'a soldier . . . must . . . expose himself'.⁹⁶ While pressing the siege of Poltava in 1709, shortly before the famous battle, Charles was wounded in the leg. As Voltaire described the incident, 'one did not remark on his face the slightest change that could lead one to suspect that he had been wounded: he continued calmly giving his orders.' Only when Charles's servant noticed his whole leg covered with blood, and the pain became overwhelming, did he allow himself to be carried to his tent, where a skilled surgeon saved his leg.⁹⁷ During the defence of Stralsund in 1715, the house where Charles was working was hit by a shell and half of it destroyed, yet the king continued dictating letters without appearing to notice.⁹⁸ He gave audience to the French ambassador in the area most exposed to enemy fire, so that Voltaire remarked, 'to send a man to the trenches or on an embassy to Charles XII, it was the same thing.'⁹⁹

Such tales reached their apogee with the description of Charles's 1718 campaign against the fortress of Fredericksahl, in scenes evocative of Frederick William's admonition that a soldier should 'not complain about cold weather or heat, nor about hunger or thirst'.¹⁰⁰ On this campaign, conducted in Norway in December, 'several . . . soldiers were falling dead of cold at their posts, and others were almost frozen'. Yet for Charles:

⁹⁵ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, pp. 221-3 (quotation, pp.221-2: 'Charles surmonta tous les obstacles . . . il se jette dans l'eau à la tête de ses Gardes à pied, il traverse la Rivière & le Marais, ayant souvent de l'eau au-dessus des épaules.').

⁹⁶ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 20 (quotation: 'ein Soldat . . . sich . . . exponiren . . . muss').

⁹⁷ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, pp. 245-6 (quotation, p. 245: 'On ne remarqua pas sur son visage le moindre changement qui pût faire soupçonner qu'il étoit blessé: il continua à donner tranquillement ses ordres.').

⁹⁸ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, II, pp. 136-7.

⁹⁹ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, II, pp. 137-8 (quotation, p. 137: 'Envoyer un homme à la tranchée ou en Ambassade auprès de Charles XII. c'étoit le même chose.').

¹⁰⁰ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 20 (quotation: 'nach keiner Kälte noch Hitze was fraget, noch nach Hunger und Durst').

His constitution hardened by eighteen years of punishing travails had fortified itself to the point that he slept in the open field in Norway in the heart of winter on straw or a sheet, covered only with a coat, without his health being affected.¹⁰¹

The Charles depicted in this passage was a superman: an unreachable example.¹⁰²

Voltaire's work was not intended to be hero-worship, but to contrast Charles – representing traditional martial virtues – with Peter the Great of Russia, who actually developed his land.¹⁰³ Voltaire said that his purpose was to show 'the folly of conquests', since even such a successful king as Charles ended up 'so unfortunate'.¹⁰⁴ It is clear that Frederick understood the purpose of Voltaire's work, as he discussed the contrast between Charles and Peter in correspondence with Voltaire in 1737-8.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, he still sought to associate himself with Charles's glory.¹⁰⁶ Frederick had a map of the Swedish siege works at Frederickshall among his papers, complete with precise details about where, when and how Charles had met his death: testimony to his abiding interest in the Swedish king.¹⁰⁷

Fénelon's *Telemachus* had also been among Frederick's favourite works from relatively young childhood.¹⁰⁸ Although vocally pacifist, fiercely condemning war waged for princely glory, Fénelon's work, like those of Voltaire mentioned above,

¹⁰¹ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, II, pp. 177-8 (quotation: 'Sa constitution éprouvée par dix-huit ans de travaux pénibles s'étoit fortifiée au point, qu'il dormoit en plein champ en Norwège au coeur de l'Hyver sur de la paille, ou sur une planche, enveloppé seulement d'un Manteau, sans que sa santé en fût altérée. Plusieurs . . . Soldats tomboient morts de froid dans leurs postes; & les autres presque gelés').

¹⁰² On Voltaire's depiction of Charles' qualities, see Éric Schnakenbourg, 'Le regard de Clio: l'Histoire de Charles XII de Voltaire dans une perspective historique', *Dix-huitième siècle* 40 (2008), pp. 454-6, 458, 460-3.

¹⁰³ Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, p. 182; Schnakenbourg, 'L'Histoire de Charles XII de Voltaire', pp. 451-4, 463-7; Catherine Volpillac-Augier, 'Voltaire and history', in Nicholas Cronk, ed., *The Cambridge companion to Voltaire* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 145.

¹⁰⁴ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, 'Discours sur l'Histoire de Charles XII', un-paginated (quotation: 'la folie des Conquêtes . . . si malheureux'). See also Fischbach, *Krieg und Frieden*, pp. 50-1; Schnakenbourg, 'L'Histoire de Charles XII de Voltaire', pp.456, 460-7.

¹⁰⁵ *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 92-3, 127-9, 153-4.

¹⁰⁶ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 28 notes Frederick's admiration for Charles' heroism.

¹⁰⁷ GStA PK, IHA Rep.96 C Nr.41, pp. 106-7.

¹⁰⁸ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 91-2, 98, 102; Wolfgang Biesterfeld, 'Der Fürstenspiegel', in Ziechmann, *Panorama der fridericianischen Zeit*, p. 499; Fink, 'Beziehungen Friedrichs zu Frankreich', p. 243; Kaiser, *Die Bücher des Königs*, p. 37; Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, p. 38; Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 107.

also celebrated martial virtues.¹⁰⁹ Telemachus and Mentor were both capable of leading their soldiers sword in hand, as demonstrated when Mentor led the soldiers of King Acestes to defeat the invading Himérians.

Mentor shows in his eyes a daring that astonishes the proudest combatants. He takes a shield, a helmet, a sword, a lance: he deploys the soldiers of Acestes, he marches at their head . . . I am close to him, but I cannot equal his valour . . . Death runs from rank to rank everywhere beneath the blows . . . Mentor, having succeeded in putting the enemy to flight, tears them to pieces, and pursues the fugitives as far as the forests.¹¹⁰

Telemachus achieved similar feats of martial strength, for instance when his counter-attack routed the troops of King Adrastes and he killed many of their commanders in hand-to-hand combat.¹¹¹

Fénelon's heroes not only demonstrated courage sword in hand but also qualities of fortitude. During the campaign against Adrastes:

Telemachus showed himself indefatigable in the rudest travails of war; he slept little . . . The army having few supplies in this camp, he decided to silence the murmurs of the soldiers by voluntarily suffering the same hardships as them. His constitution, far from weakening through such a hard life, fortified itself and became tougher every day.¹¹²

This was not quite comparable with Charles XII's almost supernatural resilience to cold and hunger, but it was certainly an exhortation to withstand the rigours of

¹⁰⁹ François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, *Les aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse* (new edn., Amsterdam and Rotterdam, 1734), pp. 160-2, 164-5, 169, 184, 289-290; Paul Schuurman, 'Fénelon on luxury, war and trade in the Telemachus', *History of European Ideas* (2012), p. 181, 184-8.

¹¹⁰ Fénelon, *Avantures de Télémaque*, pp. 14-15 (quotation: 'Mentor montre dans ses yeux une audace qui étonne les plus fiers combatans. Il prend un bouclier, un casque, une épée, une lance: il range les soldats d'Aceste; il marche a leur tête . . . Je le suis de plus près: mais je ne puis égaler sa valeur . . . La Mort courait de rang en rang partout sous les coups . . . Mentor ayant achevé de mettre les ennemis en désordre, les tailla en pièces, & poussa les fuyards jusque dans les forêts.').

¹¹¹ Fénelon, *Avantures de Télémaque*, pp. 287-8.

¹¹² Fénelon, *Avantures de Télémaque*, p. 297-8 (quotation: 'Télémaque se monroit infatigable dans les plus rudes travaux de la guerre; il dormoit peu . . . L'armée ayant peu de vivres dans ce campement, il jugea à propos d'arrêter les murmures des Soldats, en souffrant lui-même volontairement les mêmes incommoditez qu'eux. Son corps loin de s'affoiblir dans une vie si pénible, se fortifioit & s'endurcissoit chaque jour.').

campaigning. Despite its pacifism, therefore, *Telemachus* was another work setting out for Frederick, from a very early age, the image of a heroic king at war (although Frederick did not mention the figure of Telemachus in his writings about war or in his correspondence while on campaign, so Fénelon's hero cannot be seen as a specific model for his war-making).¹¹³

Noble Glory

Such concepts of military heroism, however, were not limited only to the 'operas and comedies' of the French *grand siècle* but reflected a much wider noble culture. Military history writing of the time focused on recounting the feats of individual noble officers, and especially sovereign princes, sometimes in terms scarcely less fantastical than in works of fiction. Voltaire, who was very critical of such battle-history, explained that his *History of Charles XII* was not like the kind of gazette that people were used to, and that, 'if one has omitted several small combats given between the Swedish officers and the Muscovites, this is because one has not pretended to write the history of these officers but only that of the King of Sweden'.¹¹⁴ A classic example of what Voltaire meant was one of Frederick's favourite works, Quincy's *Military history of the reign of Louis the Great, King of France*: essentially the French official history of the wars of Louis XIV.¹¹⁵ Focused particularly on the War of the Spanish Succession, which was described in five of its seven volumes, it described equally the strategies of generals, the movements of armies and the tactical events of battles. However, it also recounted at length tales of the individual heroism of particular officers and generals, and especially members of ruling families. After describing a battle, Quincy frequently listed by name the noble

¹¹³ This is in contrast, for instance, to the claim of Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 107, that *Telemachus* was entirely anti-war.

¹¹⁴ Volpilhac-Auger, 'Voltaire and History', pp. 140-1, 143-4; Voltaire, *Charles XII*, I, 'Discours sur l'histoire de Charles XII', un-paginated (quotation: 'Si l'on a omis plusieurs petit combats donnés entre les Officiers Suédois & Moscovites, c'est qu'on n'a point prétendu écrire l'Histoire de ces Officiers, mais seulement celle du Roi de Suède'); Voltaire, *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (2 vols., Berlin, 1751), I, pp. 8-9.

¹¹⁵ Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Friedrich des Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege in ihrer Entwicklung von 1745 bis 1756* (Berlin 1899), p. 378; Charles Sevin, Marquis de Quincy, *Histoire militaire du regne de Louis le Grand, Roy de France* (7 vols., Paris, 1726).

officers killed, wounded and captured.¹¹⁶

Describing the 1701 battle of Carpi, Quincy described the French general the Count de Tessé attacked by an enemy officer armed with two pistols, but refusing to take any weapon other than his cane.¹¹⁷ Describing the hopeless French attacks on well-protected Imperial positions at the following battle of Chiari, Quincy nevertheless praised the courage of the French commanders, describing ‘a combat of four hours during which the Duke of Savoy exposed himself like a common soldier . . . Marshal Villeroi exposed himself much during this action, as did Marshal Catinat’.¹¹⁸

Quincy’s account of the 1706 battle of Turin also described the commanders on both sides – Prince Eugene, the Duke of Orleans and Marshal Marsin – fighting at the head of their men, with Marsin killed and Orleans hit three times in the cuirass and dangerously wounded in two places, while Eugene led the cavalry of his right flank to rout the French.¹¹⁹ At Malplaquet in 1709, Quincy described the courage of the Old Pretender, James Francis Edward Stuart, who charged at the head of the Gardes du Roi in spite of suffering from fever at the time: ‘he exposed himself to the fire of cannon and musketry with great *sang froid*, and charged the enemy with an . . . extraordinary intrepidity’.¹²⁰ Such tales of courage were clearly part of the self-representation of rulers and high nobles.

Prominently described in Quincy’s work were the feats of the most successful French commander of the War of the Spanish Succession, the Duke of Villars. As well as describing Villars’s successful campaigns, particularly his defeat of Eugene at Denain in 1712, Quincy described numerous occasions of Villars showing his courage, and his ability in close combat.¹²¹ Describing the 1701 campaign in Italy, Quincy noted that Eugene organised an ambush of the party escorting Villars and the Prince of

¹¹⁶ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, pp. 469-71, 478-482, 619, 622; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, V, pp. 166-7, 169, 500-1; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VI, pp. 193-205; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_I, pp. 73-4.

¹¹⁷ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, p. 470.

¹¹⁸ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, pp. 478-9 (quotation: ‘un combat de quatre heures dans lequel le Duc de Savoye s’expose comme un simple soldat . . . Le Maréchal de Villeroi s’exposa beaucoup dans cette action aussi bien que le Maréchal de Catinant’).

¹¹⁹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, V, pp. 166-7.

¹²⁰ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VI, pp. 196-7, 202 (quotation, p. 202: ‘Il s’expose au feu de canon & de mousqueterie avec un grand sang froid., & chargea les ennemis avec une intrepidité . . . extraordinaire’).

¹²¹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_I, pp. 62-78.

Vaudemont as they travelled to join the main French army in Italy. Villars, however, led the cavalry escort so vigorously that the attackers were defeated and their detachment almost destroyed.¹²² Quincy's account of Malplaquet, where Villars was joint commander of the French forces, described how he repeatedly led his troops in counter-attacks until wounded in the knee by the furious enemy fire and forced to retire.¹²³ As Quincy described it:

Marshal Villars . . . remedied with much prudence and *sang froid* all the disadvantages caused by the great number of enemies which he had to fight. He placed himself personally at the head of his troops, charged the enemies with his typical valour and, knowing that there are occasions when there is no longer a question of preserving oneself, he exposed himself so much that he was dangerously wounded.¹²⁴

Villars's own *Memoires*, which Frederick apparently read in the 1730s, as he referred to them accurately in his 1738 *Considerations on the European body politic*, went even further than this, describing the marshal's feats in terms comparable to Voltaire's fictional heroes.¹²⁵ The second volume of the *Memoirs* (published after Villars's death) described his impressive 1703 campaign first to manoeuvre Louis of Baden away from the Rhine and then nearly destroy the Imperial army of Count Styrum at the first battle of Höchstädt.¹²⁶ It also described Villars's daring attack at the head of his cavalry to capture the enemy entrenchments at Kinzig covering Kehl, noting that this was very risky: 'it is certain that . . . a few squadrons of enemy cavalry . . . would have been able to capture Marshal Villars, but they feared to be captured themselves'.¹²⁷

¹²² Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, pp. 480-481.

¹²³ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VI, pp. 193-5.

¹²⁴ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VI, p. 201 (quotation: 'Le Maréchal de Villars . . . remedia avec beaucoup de prudence & de sang froid à tous les désavantages que causa le grand nombre des ennemis qu'il avoit à combattre. Il se mit lui-même à la tête de ses troupes, chargea les ennemis avec sa valeur ordinaire, & sachant qu'il y a des occasions où il n'est plus question de se ménager, il s'exposa si fort qu'il y fut blessé dangereusement').

¹²⁵ *Memoires du duc de Villars* (3 vols., The Hague, 1734-6), I, pp. 309, 312, 321, 453-4; *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 7.

¹²⁶ *Memoires de Villars*, II, pp. 52-127.

¹²⁷ *Memoires de Villars*, II, pp. 61-2 ('Il est certain que . . . quelques troupes des Escadrons ennemis . . . auroient pû enlever le Maréchal de *Villars*; mais ils craignoient d'être enlevés eux-mêmes').

The account of Malplaquet in the third volume of the *Memoirs* gave only the barest account of the tactical course of the battle, but went into great detail about Villars' courage. It referred to his 'martial air, which one has always seen in the most perilous actions'. Villars at one point rushed to support his threatened left flank: 'at his arrival, all was restored . . . one saw him several times fly like a Mars between the greatest fire of the two armies'.¹²⁸ The description of Villars's 1733-4 campaign in Italy – when he was 80 years old – included feats of single combat that would have been impressive in a person half his age.¹²⁹ In May 1734, responding to an Austrian attack across the Po, 'Marshal Villars, whose age and infirmities had not been able to slow the ardour with which he had always marched against the enemy, took 80 grenadiers and marched at the front.' Accompanied by the King of Sardinia and his garde du corps, he pressed on so quickly that they outstripped the troops behind and 'suddenly found themselves surrounded by 400 men of the enemy . . . The King of Sardinia . . . expose[d] himself willingly to the greatest dangers', and Villars told him, 'true valour finds nothing impossible'. Villars repeatedly charged the enemy at the head of his men, 'and took himself to all the most perilous points to inspire everyone, having at the same time always an eye on the King of Sardinia to ensure his safety and to admire the valour of that prince, which was much in evidence on that occasion.' By the time French reinforcements arrived, Villars had already put the enemy to flight.¹³⁰ Such feats, from a general who died a month later, were almost as incredible as those of Voltaire's Henry IV and Fenelon's Telemachus.¹³¹ The reckless feats ascribed to Villars put ideas of restrained eighteenth-century concepts of courage sharply into focus. The achievements of the King of Sardinia at his side also make it clear that James Whitman's claims of a distinction between noble war-making and the wars of sovereign princes is not correct: sovereigns were just as keen to win glory

¹²⁸ *Memoires de Villars*, III, pp. 144-8 (quotations, pp. 145-6: 'air martial qu'on lui a toujours vû dans les actions les plus péfilleuses', 'à son arrivée tout fut rétabli . . . on le vit plusieurs fois comme un Mars voler entre le plus grand feu des deux Armées').

¹²⁹ *Memoires de Villars*, III, pp. 272-308.

¹³⁰ *Memoires de Villars*, III, pp. 299-301 (quotation: 'Le Maréchal de *Villars*, dont l'âge & les infirmités n'avoient pû ralentir l'ardeur avec laquelle il avoit toujours marché à l'Ennemi, prit 80. Grenadiers & marcha en avant . . . ils se trouverent tout d'un coup envelopés par 400. hommes des Ennemis . . . Le Roi de *Sardaigne* . . . s'expose volontiers aux plus grands dangers . . . "la vraie valeur ne trouvoit rien d'impossible" . . . se porta à tous les endroit les plus périlleux pour animer tout le monde, ayant en même tems toujours les yeux sur le Roi de Sardaigne pour veiller à sa sûreté, & pour admirer la valeur de ce Prince, qui en fit paroître beaucoup en cette occasion.')

¹³¹ *Memoires de Villars*, III, p. 320.

through exposing themselves on the battlefield and, for this reason alone, war in the long eighteenth century was not solely about securing ‘the verdict of battle’.¹³²

Heroic Generalship

Moreover, the contemporary authors Frederick read – mostly French, of course – not only associated such conspicuous courage with high nobility but specifically described it as one of the duties of a general. The *Memoirs* described Villars exposing himself during the 1703 siege of Kehl, and referred to his courage as characteristic both of a hero (‘héros’), fighting bravely in the front line, and a captain (‘capitaine’): a skilled general.¹³³ The contemporary *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* noted that ‘the ancients would particularly give the title of *héros* to those who distinguished themselves from other men by an extraordinary valour . . . The military virtues, bravery, firmness, intrepidity characterise the *héros*’.¹³⁴ It defined a *capitaine* as a ‘man of war who understands war and who wages war well: a great warrior.’ It went on: ‘*Capitaine* also speaks in relation to the qualities necessary for command’, saying for example, ‘this general was more soldier than *capitaine*.’¹³⁵ The military literature read by Frederick often used *capitaine* in the sense of a general, with Quincy particularly emphasizing the difference between an ordinary general or *capitaine* and a truly great commander, a ‘grand capitaine’.¹³⁶ The *Memoirs of Villars* mentioned both the *héros* and *grand capitaine* in the same passage, describing how:

¹³² Whitman, *Verdict of battle*, pp. 135-71.

¹³³ *Memoires de Villars*, II, pp. 65-6.

¹³⁴ *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin, vulgairement appelé dictionnaire de Trévoux* (6th edn., 8 vols., Paris, 1771), IV, p. 808 (quotation: ‘les Anciens donnoient particulièrement le titre de *Héros* à ceux qui se distinguoient des autres hommes par une valeur extraordinaire . . . Les vertus militaires, la bravoure, la fermeté, l’intrépidité caractérisent le *Héros*.’).

¹³⁵ *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*, II, p. 234 (quotation: ‘Homme de guerre, qui entend la guerre & qui fait bien la guerre, grand guerrier . . . CAPITAINE se dit encore par rapport aux qualités nécessaires pour le commandement . . . Ce Général étoit plus soldat que *Capitaine*.’).

¹³⁶ *Extrait tiré des commentaires du Chevalier Folard sur l’histoire de Polybe, pour l’usage d’un officier* (Sans Souci, 1753), pp.6, 7, 13, 55, 61, 154; Raimondo Montecuccoli, *Memoires* (new edn., Paris, 1746), pp. ix, x, 74; Jacques François de Chastenot de Puysegur, *Art de la guerre par principes et par règles* (2 vols., Paris, 1748), I, p. 37; Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, p. 32; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, 18-19, 51, 60, 99; Maurice Comte de Saxe, *Les reveries ou memoires sur l’art de la guerre*, ed. de Bonneville (The Hague, 1756), pp. 1, 3, 18.

The presence of Marshal Villars, who passed the night in the trench, contributed much there, since he would make it a pleasure and indeed a glory to find himself there and to expose himself at the most dangerous places, to animate and encourage others by his example, and in this he followed the maxim of a *grand Capitaine*, who would say that ‘a general must expose himself as much as he exposes others’. One can say further that, in all the battles and all the sieges, one has seen him face the greatest perils with that martial audacity which is the character of the greatest *Héros*.¹³⁷

In his account of the 1705 battle of Cassano, Folard, while picking out the typical examples of noble valour (with lists of the noble officers killed), particularly stressed the importance of the courage of generals in inspiring their troops, noting for instance that two particular brigades ‘were a great assistance due to the intelligence and courage of their commanders’.¹³⁸ At the height of the battle, Folard described how the Imperial troops were ‘sustained by the courage and good conduct of their general [Prince Eugene], but he could not long animate them with his presence and good grace in the greatest perils: he was injured by a bullet which obliged him to retire’. He added, however, that ‘our general [the Duc de Vendôme] was no less *grand Capitaine*’.¹³⁹

There was enough disorder to have disconcerted any other man than Monsieur de Vendôme, who exposed himself as if he were an adventurer whose life is without consequence. He had several officers killed alongside him, also several of his domestics.¹⁴⁰

Folard described how ‘the presence of Monsieur de Vendôme, who was adored by the

¹³⁷ *Memoires de Villars*, II, p. 65 (quotation: ‘La présence du Maréchal de *Villars*, qui passa la nuit à la tranchée, y contribua beaucoup; car il se faisoit un plaisir & même une gloire de se trouver & de s’exposer aux endroits les plus dangéreux, pour animer & encourager les autres par son exemple; & il suivoit en cela la maxime d’un grand Capitaine, qui disoit qu’*un Général* doit s’exposer autant qu’il exposoit les autres.

L’on peut dire aussi que dans toutes les Batailles & à tous les Sièges on la vû affronter le plus grands perils avec cette audace martiale, qui est le caractère des plus grands Héros.’)

¹³⁸ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 82, 86, 92 (quotation, p. 82: ‘ces deux . . . brigades nous furent d’un très grand secours par l’habileté & le courage de leurs Chefs.’)

¹³⁹ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 87 (quotation: ‘soutenu du courage & de la bonne conduite de leur Général, mais il ne peut longtems les animer de sa présence & de sa bonne grace dans les plus grands périls; il fut blessé d’un coup de feu qui l’obligea de se retirer . . . Notre Général n’étoit pas moins grand Capitaine.’).

¹⁴⁰ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 87-8 (quotation: ‘Il y eu même assez de désordre pour déconcerter tout autre homme que M. de Vendôme qui s’exposoit comme eût peut faire un aventurier dont la vie est sans consequence. Il eut plusieurs Officiers tués auprès de lui, plusieurs aussi de ses domestiques.’).

troops, made them forget the peril which he shared with them'.¹⁴¹ Such tales – often of generals 'exposing' themselves to danger rather than more reckless feats sword in hand – presented Frederick with numerous examples of courageous leadership in battle.

The Hero King

Frederick's 1740-1 invasion of Silesia demonstrates the influence of these literary ideals of heroism on how he conducted his campaigns, right down to the movement of individual units. The *Henriade* was clearly the most important work of literature in Frederick's mind during the twelve months leading up to the invasion. He wrote an introduction for a new edition of the work, then composed the *Refutation of the Prince of Machiavelli* avowedly in imitation of Voltaire's epic.¹⁴² In a November 1740 letter to his friend Algarotti, Frederick hoped that his invasion of Silesia would give him a place in the Palace of Destinies described by Voltaire in his book, showing that he was specifically trying to emulate the glory of Voltaire's Henry IV.¹⁴³

In December 1740, as Johannes Kunisch has said, 'everything that [Frederick] now undertook in the field appears as a reflection of literary figures'.¹⁴⁴ On 23 December, just seven days after his troops had crossed into Silesia, Frederick wrote to Voltaire comparing himself to 'Charles XII's chess king'.¹⁴⁵ It was a reference to Charles' puppet King of Poland, Stanislas Leszczyński, but was surely in fact an invitation to compare Frederick with Charles himself, who had reached the peak of his power when he pursued the retreating Saxon armies through Silesia in 1706. The following

¹⁴¹ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 92 (quotation: 'la présence de M. de Vendôme, qui étoit adoré des troupes, leur en faisoit oublier le péril, qu'il partageoit avec eux.').

¹⁴² For discussion in Frederick's correspondence of the new edition of the *Henriade*, see *Œuvres*, XVII, pp. 33-5, 64; *Œuvres*, XVIII, pp. 5, 8, 11, 13, 15; *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 299, 301, 307-8, 312, 319, 321, 323-4, 327, 329, 333, 336, 351, 353, 358, 363, 367, 369, 381, 401, 405, 409, 427, 433. For discussion of the *Anti-Machiavel* as comparable with the *Henriade*, see *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 317, 334, 338, 363, 376, 381.

¹⁴³ *Œuvres*, XVIII, pp. 24-6; Voltaire, *Henriade*, pp. 200-33.

¹⁴⁴ Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 176 (quotation: 'Alles, was er jetzt hier auch im Felde unternahm, erscheint wie eine Spiegelung literarischer Denkfiguren.').

¹⁴⁵ *Œuvres*, XXII, pp. 64-5 (quotation: 'Le roi d'échecs de Charles XII'). On the date of the Prussian invasion, see Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen. Erster Theil: der Erste Schlesischer Krieg, 1740-1742* (3 vols., Berlin, 1890-3), I, p. 229.

day, Jordan reported news in Berlin of the capture of Breslau, saying, ‘circumstances have never been better described in a romance than they are in this report.’¹⁴⁶ Jordan, one of Frederick’s intimates, surely knew what his master wanted to hear. Frederick was acting out his own work of literature and emulating the deeds of the literary characters he had read about, especially Voltaire’s hero kings.

On 28 December 1740, having blockaded Glogau, the first Austrian fortress in Silesia, Frederick left Field Marshal Schwerin with the bulk of his forces to secure the territory to the south up to the Bohemian border, and himself struck out on his own at the head of an elite force of grenadiers, hussars, the Bayreuth Dragoons and his squadron of royal guards Gensdarmes, racing to get to the Silesian capital of Breslau and occupy it before Austrian troops could arrive.¹⁴⁷ Already on 23 December he had written to his sister Wilhelmine that, ‘we will soon advance on Breslau . . . the gates will be open to me, and we will find too little resistance to dare pretend to real glory.’¹⁴⁸ Probably he remembered Song VI of the *Henriade*, where Henry IV’s army had stormed the walls of Paris and the king himself, ‘armed with bloody steel, covered with a shield’, had mounted first on the parapet.¹⁴⁹ Instead, the citizens of Breslau sensibly declared their city neutral, so that Frederick was forced to emulate another aspect of the *Henriade*: Henry’s generous agreement for the voluntary surrender of Paris to his troops. This was less to his taste, as seen from his defiant statement in the 1746 draft of his *History of my own times* that he would have been prepared to take the city by storm if necessary.¹⁵⁰ Frederick’s taste for storming cities was seen again three years later in his orders to Field Marshal Schwerin before the advance into Bohemia in 1744, Frederick telling him that he intended ‘to attack . . .

¹⁴⁶ *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 85 (quotation: ‘Jamais circonstance n’a mieux été étoffée dans un roman que ne l’était cette nouvelle.’).

¹⁴⁷ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 235-241, 249-250.

¹⁴⁸ *Œuvres*, XXVII_I, p. 109 (quotation: ‘Nous avancerons bientôt vers Breslau . . . Les portes m’y seront ouvertes, et nous trouvons trop peu de résistance pour oser prétendre à la vraie gloire.’).

¹⁴⁹ Voltaire, *Henriade*, p. 187 (quotation: ‘Armé d’un fer sanglant, couvert d’un bouclier’).

¹⁵⁰ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 242-4; Voltaire, *Henriade*, pp. 333-346.

[Prague] with a storming hand'.¹⁵¹ Only force of circumstances forced him to conduct a regular siege.¹⁵²

Frederick's dash to Breslau showed not just his desire for glorious battle, but also his personal leadership of his troops, from the front. Frederick had famously told Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau that 'this expedition I reserve for myself alone'.¹⁵³ In capturing Breslau, Frederick showed that he reserved for himself not just overall command of the campaign but leadership of the elite spearhead itself, in the style of Henry IV, Charles XII, and Villars. This reached its apogee at the battle of Mollwitz on 10 April 1741. There, Frederick chose not to take up the normal position of an army commander in the centre, where he could have overseen the whole battle, but rather the time-honoured position of honour on the right flank, again in the company of an elite unit: the Grenadier Battalion of Winterfeldt. When the Austrian cavalry attacked, Frederick tried to put himself at the head of the elite Karabiner regiment of cavalry, but was instead swept along in the rout of his horsemen. Frederick's attempt to follow the idea that of a warrior king who would attack 'at the head of his guards' and 'mount first' on the parapet in the style of Henry IV and Charles XII, left him not in command of any unit above the level of a regiment, and it was General Schulenburg, commander of the Prussian right flank, and Schwerin and Hereditary Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, commanding the Prussian infantry, who oversaw counter-measures to repel the Austrian attack.¹⁵⁴

As is well known, Frederick's attempt to become a hero king miscarried so badly that he had to be persuaded to flee the field of Mollwitz so that Schwerin and Prince Leopold could win the battle in his absence.¹⁵⁵ He had already been in such a position on 27 February, when his attempt to carry out a personal reconnaissance along the

¹⁵¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 S: 'Instruction vor den Gen. Felt-Marschall Schwerin, wegen der Colonne womit er beordert wird in Böhmen einzudringen' (quotation: 'mit stürmender Hand . . . zu attaquiren').

¹⁵² Dettlof Graf von Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin: ein Lebensbild aus Preußens großer Zeit* (Berlin, 1928), p. 196.

¹⁵³ *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, ed. J.G. Droysen et al (46 vols., Berlin, 1879-1939), I, p. 117. 'Diese Expedition reservire ich mir alleine.'

¹⁵⁴ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 396-404, 456-7; Voltaire, *Henriade*, p. 187 (quotation: 'monte le premier'); Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, p. 222 (quotation: 'à la tête de ses Gardes').

¹⁵⁵ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 405-6, 457-8.

Bohemian border with a tiny escort led him to be nearly captured by Austrian hussars at Baumgarten.¹⁵⁶ After the experience at Mollwitz, Frederick was forced to give up trying to emulate the sword-in hand heroics of Voltaire's super-heroes and of Marshal Villars. At the following battle at Chotusitz, on 17 May 1742, he was notably cautious, holding back the infantry of his corps behind that of Hereditary Prince Leopold, whose troops were allowed to bear the brunt of the Austrian attack before Frederick came in at the end to scatter the enemy and bring victory.¹⁵⁷ While Frederick intervened in future battles to rally fleeing units, he never again tried to lead an attack sword in hand: leadership of the advance guard was always delegated to a general.¹⁵⁸ Writing to Maurice de Saxe in November 1746, Frederick already reflected wistfully that, 'in the first flush of youth, . . . one sacrifices everything to brilliant actions'.¹⁵⁹ Instead, Frederick reverted to the other more passive contemporary idea of courage: 'exposing' himself stoically to danger. When Field Marshal Schwerin met King George II of Great Britain in 1743, for instance, he described Frederick's tough endurance during the 'harsh season' of the initial Prussian invasion of Silesia in December 1740. He said the British king was amazed, asking 'how it was possible that, working with such constancy, he [Frederick] had been able to sustain such fatigues'.¹⁶⁰ Frederick's general thus portrayed him as 'not sparing himself', and withstanding the rigours of winter campaigning.

Frederick specifically used references to French literature, and particularly the works of Voltaire, to express his discomfort at not being able to achieve the heroic feats he aspired to. In his *Epistle on the employment of courage and on the true point of honour*, glorifying Prussian feats in the Silesian Wars, Frederick referred to the charge of the Bayreuth Dragoons at Hohenfriedberg in terms similar to Voltaire's description of the attack of Henry IV's army against Paris.¹⁶¹ It was a defiant attempt to compare his own campaigns with those of Voltaire's heroes, but Frederick now

¹⁵⁶ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 316-20.

¹⁵⁷ Duffy, *Frederick the Great*, pp. 42-4.

¹⁵⁸ Christopher Duffy, *The army of Frederick the Great* (2nd edn., Chicago, Ill, 1996), pp. 241, 249, 254-9, 265-7, 271, 277-80.

¹⁵⁹ *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 342 (quotation: 'Dans les premiers bouillons de la jeunesse, . . . on sacrifie tout aux actions brillantes').

¹⁶⁰ GSTA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 S: Schwerin to Frederick, 18.6.1743 (quotation: 'saison si Rude . . . comment il étoit possible que travaillant avec tant d'assiduité, Elle ait pû soutenir tant de fatigues.').

¹⁶¹ *Œuvres*, X, pp. 151-2; Voltaire, *Henriade*, pp. 180-196.

referred only to his soldiers, not to himself. Unlike Napoleon, whose novels had provided him with realistic depictions of normal people, Frederick's imagination had been filled by literary characters who were unreachable paragons, and by allegedly factual literature which glorified and exaggerated the feats of nobles and princes. Such models were more than human, and emulating them proved to be beyond him.

Frederick's discomfort was most clearly seen in his *Reflections on the military talents and character of Charles XII, King of Sweden*. Written in November 1759, after Frederick's disastrous defeat at Kunersdorf in August of that year, this work was a coded recognition to his generals that he had made mistakes in previous campaigns. Frederick had repeatedly compared himself to Charles in his historical writings, both in his *History of Brandenburg* and his *History of my own times*, and his description of Charles' defeat at Poltava was closely modelled on Kunersdorf.¹⁶² Indeed, Frederick's entire description of Charles' military career can be seen as a comparison with his own.

The only occasion when Frederick mentioned Voltaire in his work on Charles XII was in the aftermath of Poltava, when Charles and his men found themselves trapped against the Dnieper river, and the king saved himself with a small force of cavalry. Voltaire said:

Almost all the officers believed that they would await the Muscovites on dry land, and that they would conquer or die on the banks of the Dnieper. Charles would without doubt have taken this decision, if he had not been overcome by weakness.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Eberhard Kessel, 'Eintleitung', in Friedrich der Große, *Betrachtungen über die militärischen Talente und den Charakter Karls XII. Königs von Schweden* (Berlin, 1936), pp. 5-11; *Œuvres*, II, p. 65; Pečar, 'Friedrich der Große als Autor', paragraphs 40-46; Andreas Pečar, 'Selbstinszenierung auf Kosten der Dynastie? Friedrich II. als Autor der "Denkwürdigkeiten des Hauses Brandenburg"', in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große und die Dynastie der Hohenzollern. Beiträge des fünften Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 30. September / 1. Oktober 2011* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-dynastie/pecar_geschichtsschreibung, last accessed 1 December 2017), paragraph 33; Richard Nürnberger, 'Friedrichs des Grossen Réflexions sur Charles XII', in Konrad Repgen and Stephan Skalweit, eds., *Spiegel der Geschichte: Festgabe für Max Braubach zum 10. April 1964* (Münster, 1964), pp. 591, 593.

¹⁶³ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, p. 259 (quotation: 'Presque tous les Officiers croyoient qu'on attendroit-là de pied ferme les Moscovites, & qu'on périroit ou qu'on

Frederick, tellingly, took grave offence at this, calling Voltaire, ‘an author . . . who got his military education from Homer and Virgil.’¹⁶⁴ He continued:

Sovereigns must certainly despise danger, but their character obliges them at the same time carefully to avoid being taken prisoner, not for their own sake but for the disastrous consequences that would result for their states.¹⁶⁵

The vitriol of Frederick’s rebuttal was telling. He could have criticised many points in Voltaire’s history of Charles. Voltaire, for instance, did not question Charles’s mistaken decision to turn toward Ukraine in 1708, whereas Frederick drew on his 1752 political testament to analyse possible routes in detail.¹⁶⁶ Voltaire’s description of the battle of Poltava was inaccurate, and Frederick, drawing on the personal experience of Field Marshal Keith to analyse the Russian position, could have pointed this out.¹⁶⁷ The Prussian king took issue with Voltaire on this one point only, and his purpose was to justify to his generals his own flight from the battlefield of Mollwitz, emphasizing that Charles himself had also once fled from the battlefield.

Pečar has argued that Frederick’s literary life involved playing a series of roles, and the intellectual history of his wars shows that this extended to his military life and perhaps his reign as a whole.¹⁶⁸ In the military sphere, however, acting the part of the literary hero involved more than fine words and clever self-portrayal: it had to be played out on the battlefield, preferably sword in hand. This Frederick attempted to do in 1740-41, and in the process the French literature which he embraced as a

vaincroit sur le bord de Boristhène. Charles eut pris sans doute cette résolution s’il n’eût été accablé de foiblesse.’)

¹⁶⁴ *Œuvres*, VII, p. 97 (quotation: ‘Un auteur . . . qui a fait son cours militaire dans Homère et dans Virgile.’)

¹⁶⁵ *Œuvres*, VII, p. 98 (quotation: ‘Les souverains doivent sans doute mépriser les dangers; mais leur caractère les oblige en même temps d’éviter soigneusement d’être faits prisonniers, non pour leur personnel, mais pour les conséquences funestes qui en résulteraient pour leurs États.’)

¹⁶⁶ *Œuvres*, VII, pp. 89-91; Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, pp. 219-21, 227-9, 232-3; Gustav Berthold Volz, ed., *Die politischen Testamente Friedrichs des Grossen* (Berlin, 1920), pp. 64-5.

¹⁶⁷ *Œuvres*, VII, pp. 96-7; Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, pp. 248-56.

¹⁶⁸ Andreas Pečar, *Die Masken des Königs: Friedrich II. von Preußen als Schriftsteller* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2016), pp. 9-17.

rejection of his father's masculinity had a direct impact on the way he waged war, right down to the level of which units he chose to command.

Conclusion

Thus, despite the claims of Whitman, the noble search for glory substantially shaped early eighteenth-century warfare, including for sovereigns like Frederick. Disputes among historians about whether noble culture fostered aggression (as Kunisch argued), or restraint (as Bell maintained) are no surprise, since the early eighteenth century saw competing elite masculinities, with a variety of ideas of how to display noble courage. Frederick's dispute with his father illustrated this, the crown prince adopting the masculinity of the French court of Louis XIV in opposition to his father, who rejected both the politeness and the flamboyant display associated with such 'baroque masculinity'. Frederick William I espoused masculinity that involved tough endurance of privations and the punctilious performance of duty, and Prussian officers in the 1750s proudly distinguished themselves from the officers of other armies, who allegedly neglected their duty. All contemporary armies, however, wore uniforms that reflected 'baroque' concepts of display, and no one army (or individual) can be defined as following one particular masculinity. Rather, individuals adopted aspects from the various competing masculinities of the time.

Frederick the Great followed the model of masculine courage laid out in French literature of the *grand siècle*. This espoused not only passively 'exposing' oneself to danger (portrayed by McCormack as the eighteenth-century ideal of courage) but aggressively attacking the enemy, sword in hand. The extraordinary feats of the heroes Frederick read about reflected not only the style of pre-novel fiction, which presented exemplary models rather than believable characters, but also the exaggerated terms with which contemporary military histories and memoirs celebrated the heroism of nobles and princes. Not only was Frederick's strategy inspired by French literature but he also sought directly to emulate his literary heroes on the battlefield, personally leading the spearhead that captured Breslau in December 1740, and attempting to lead the Prussian right wing at Mollwitz in April 1741. His literary models were super-human, however, and he was unable to emulate them, shifting instead to 'exposing' himself to danger as his father had described, rather

than leading his men sword in hand. The competing masculinities of the time thus offered Frederick, too, a variety of models for displaying courage in battle.

Knowledge

This chapter examines the relationship between warfare in Western Europe in the early eighteenth century and its intellectual context. It argues that numerous previous historians have misunderstood the relationship between war in this period and the intellectual and scientific movements of the time. Despite a superficial connection between the two, the example of Frederick the Great, his generals, and the military authors he read, shows that the well-ordered warfare of the period was *not* a product of geometry or Newtonian physics, as has been claimed. Claims of a radical break from ordered eighteenth-century warfare to Napoleonic warfare that recognised the complexities of terrain and the play of chance are also incorrect. The earlier period certainly sought perfect knowledge, but recognized the existence of uncertainty and the need to respond to it. Its solution to both was to rely on outstanding qualities from the sovereigns and great noblemen who commanded armies. It therefore relied overwhelmingly on *personal* knowledge. In contrast, not only would advances in statistics and cartography in the later eighteenth century offer generals (and states) more scientific information to control their environment, and not only would the Romantic movement embrace uncertainty, but the development of large staffs would give generals *institutions* to provide them with knowledge, reflecting the increasing growth of more powerful states. In contrast, the early eighteenth-century approach to military knowledge focused on the figure of the ‘military absolutist’ general, who was expected to unite all knowledge in their own person.

A recurring trope among historians for many decades has been that the eighteenth century tried to reduce war to mathematical calculation. Johannes Kunisch and Bernhard Kroener argued that the eighteenth century as a whole saw a mechanistic approach to war, reflecting ideas of the state as a machine.¹ Henning Eichberg argued

¹ Johannes Kunisch, *Fürst-Gesellschaft-Krieg: Studien zur bellizistischen Disposition des absoluten Fürstenstaates* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), pp. 139-43, 156-9, 162-3; Johannes Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse: der König und seine Zeit* (Munich, 2004), pp. 176-9; Bernhard R. Kroener, ‘Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau und das Kriegswesen in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts’, in Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte Dessau et al, eds., *Fürst Leopold I. von Anhalt-Dessau (1676-1747) >> Der Alte Dessauer<<: Ausstellung zum 250. Todestag* (Dessau, 1997), pp. 18, 20, 23.

that both fortification and drill in this period reflected an obsession with geometry and a mechanical view of the world.² Azar Gat, reflecting the earlier ideas of Robert Quimby, identified a ‘military school of the Enlightenment’. He argued that it was inspired particularly by neo-classicism and Newtonian physics, and that it tried to identify universal principles underlying war comparable to those which Newton had identified underlying the universe. Gat argued that these ideas were already visible in military thought in the late seventeenth century.³ John Lynn made similar arguments.⁴ Anders Engberg-Pedersen argued that, ‘in the eighteenth century military theory was guided by geometry . . . and a disciplined choreography of troops’, and that this reflected a search for a universal order of things.⁵ He argued that military thinkers of the period tried to eliminate both *chance* in war and the varieties of *terrain*, creating ‘flat media inscriptions of the space of war’.⁶ Jürgen Luh similarly argued that Frederick the Great did not appreciate the importance of terrain until after the Seven Years War.⁷ Jay Luvaas claimed that Frederick favoured the principles of siege warfare as a guide for strategy and tactics.⁸ Stephen Neff argued that statecraft as a whole in this period was characterised by ‘calculation . . . in the spirit of the new sciences of mathematics and mechanics, with the goal being the maximisation of the national interest.’⁹

While these works present interesting interpretations, they suffer from attempting to make generalizations for the whole period. The value of a more detailed case study

² Henning Eichberg, ‘Geometrie als Barocke Verhaltensnorm: Fortifikation und Exerziten’, *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 4 (1977), pp. 17-50.

³ Azar Gat, *The origins of military thought from the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (Oxford, 1989), pp. ix, 9, 20-1, 24, 26-9, 41, 43, 46-8, 53, 55-6, 58, 70-4, 78, 81-3, 93-4, 99-102, 106, 122-3; Robert S. Quimby, *The background of Napoleonic warfare: the theory of military tactics in eighteenth-century France* (New York, NY, 1957), p. 4.

⁴ John A. Lynn, *Battle: a history of combat and culture* (new edn., Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 114-5, 119-20, 124-6, 129-31, 143-4.

⁵ Anders Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance: the Napoleonic Wars and the disorder of things* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2015), pp. 4-5, 39-41.

⁶ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 7-36, 43-6, 50-3, 160-2. Quotation, p.7.

⁷ Jürgen Luh, ‘Military action and military reflection: some thoughts on Frederick's "éléments de castramétrie et de tactique" of 1770’, in *Friedrich300 – Studien und Vorträge: Studien und Vorträge zur preußischen Geschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts der Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten* (http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/friedrich300-studien/luh_action, last accessed 24 November 2017), Paragraphs 2-3, 5, 8-17, 21-2.

⁸ Jay Luvaas, ed. and trans., *Frederick the Great on the art of war* (New York, NY, and London, 1966), pp. 25-6.

⁹ Stephen C. Neff, *War and the law of nations: a general history* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 90.

can be seen from Harm Klueting's work on the role of statistical calculation in statecraft in the period. By setting theoretical texts alongside the practical activities of statesmen, Klueting was able to show the very limited direct influence that theoreticians of 'political algebra' actually had on government in this period. Moreover, he emphasized change over the period, with a move from qualitative categories of analysis in the earlier eighteenth century to an increasing use of statistics by governments from around 1760 onwards.¹⁰ Erik Lund, focusing on the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, showed that generals needed a broad range of skills and experience, with the methods of the scientific revolution only one element.¹¹ This chapter follows such approaches, focusing on the period before the growth of statistical approaches, and questioning claims of the influence of academic ideas on warfare that was still dominated by nobles.

Engberg-Pedersen's work makes important contributions to our understanding of the Napoleonic Wars, but his characterisation of eighteenth-century warfare is problematic. Firstly, his portrayal of the eighteenth century's geometric approach to war, and its flattening of the landscape, relied heavily on texts on siege warfare. Indeed, Engberg-Pedersen claimed that, in the age of Vauban 'the defensive fortifications [and] . . . the offensive works used in the attack of a fortress' constituted 'the entire field of war.'¹² As this chapter will show, while siege warfare in the long eighteenth century did involve mathematical calculation, texts on siege warfare written not by engineers but by noble generals (and kings) did not make calculations to the same degree. Indeed, Engberg-Pedersen himself conceded reservations to his thesis. He noted that siege warfare 'gradually began to decline' 'after Vauban's death in 1707', raising significant questions about his claim that, 'eighteenth century military theory was guided by geometry'.¹³ He also entered a reservation to his claim that it was the Napoleonic Wars that saw 'the appearance of the third dimension in the form of the terrain'.¹⁴ He admitted that, already during the War of the Spanish

¹⁰ Harm Klueting, *Die Lehre von der Macht der Staaten: das außenpolitische Machtproblem in der "politischen Wissenschaft" und in der praktischen Politik im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1986), pp. 15-16, 21-2, 29, 304-16.

¹¹ Erik A. Lund, *War for the every day: generals, knowledge, and warfare in early modern Europe, 1680-1740* (Westport, CT, London, 1999).

¹² Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 10-27. Quotation, p. 15.

¹³ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 4, 20, 30, 32 (quotations, pp. 4, 20).

¹⁴ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, p. 7

Succession, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, there was ‘the beginnings of a shift from a geometrically ordered space to a space that is conceived geographically and topographically’, so that ‘knowledge of the terrain became essential to the conduct of war’.¹⁵ This chapter will show that it is not correct to see military thought in the long eighteenth century as unable to recognise and respond to the play of chance or to the varieties of terrain. The value of Engberg-Pedersen’s work is its emphasis on the different *response* of the later period, embracing uncertainty, in contrast to absolutism’s attempt to reduce the world to order.

Azar Gat also qualified his claim of a search for fundamental rules of war in the eighteenth century, noting that military thinkers of the mid to late eighteenth century recognized a distinction between elements of war amenable to rules and, on the other hand, a ‘sublime’ element that depended on individual genius.¹⁶ The example of Frederick reveals a much more significant limitation on Gat’s claims, as Frederick’s favourite military authors almost all belonged to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries – broadly speaking, the era of Louis XIV – whereas the authors whom Gat designated as the ‘military school of the Enlightenment’ belonged overwhelmingly to the mid and late eighteenth century.¹⁷ Not only the Marquis de Feuquières but also the Marquis de Quincy and the Chevalier de Folard were all generals under Louis XIV. The Marquis of Santa Cruz had served in the Spanish army in the same period, while the Imperial Field Marshal Raimondo Montecuccoli belonged to the mid seventeenth century. Although Gat discussed the work of Montecuccoli, and later Maurice de Saxe, he did not mention Feuquières and Santa Cruz, and mentioned Quincy only in passing.¹⁸ These books – the key theoretical works influencing Frederick in the period before the Seven Years War – can be seen as representing a ‘military school of high absolutism’, which sought to achieve perfect control over war, but did not attempt to achieve this through mathematical calculation, if only because techniques of quantification had not yet developed sufficiently to enable this. Reflecting the nature of states in this period – especially their attempts to bring order to the infinite unpredictability of the world, and their

¹⁵ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 30-2, 39, 43-6 (quotation, p. 32).

¹⁶ Gat, *Origins of military thought*, pp. 39-43, 70.

¹⁷ Gat, *Origins of military thought*, pp. 25-53, 70-94.

¹⁸ Gat, *Origins of military thought*, pp. 13-24, 29-33, 58.

limited capacity to achieve this in practice – military authors tried to regulate war much like contemporary police ordinances, with maxims covering all possible situations. Ultimately, however, their only solution to the complexities of war was to call for a superhuman ability from commanders, with a perfect knowledge of the country, anticipating everything and taking advantage of opportunities. This reflected the way in which warfare before the age of Napoleon was limited to the optical-acoustic presence of the commander, but it also reflected the focus of contemporary states on the person of the ruler, and ideas of war as primarily an activity where nobles won glory.¹⁹ In cases where the general was unable to anticipate everything, contemporary authors were much more willing than has thus far been recognised to accept the play of chance in human affairs, and they urged generals to take advantage of this as much as possible.

Calculation

The military treatises of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries read by Frederick were primarily practical manuals on how to conduct the different elements of war. Much like the attempts of contemporary police ordinances to regulate society, they tried to set out how commanders should act in almost any given situation.²⁰ These, however, were maxims, rather than fundamental rules. It is hard to detect Newtonian physics in them, or the rules of geometry. Montecuccoli for instance set out maxims for offensive and defensive warfare, as well as describing how to march, how to besiege a fortress, how to fight a battle etc.²¹ The Marquis de Quincy's *Maxims and Instructions on the Military Art*, part of his French official history of the wars of Louis XIV, described how to march, how to camp, how to forage, how to cross a river etc.²² A particularly large section set out maxims for fighting battles,

¹⁹ On war limited to the optical-acoustic presence of the commander, see Martin van Creveld, 'Napoleon and the Dawn of Operational Warfare', in John Andreas Olsen and Martin van Creveld, eds., *The evolution of operational art: from Napoleon to the present* (Oxford, 2011; online edn., 2011), pp. 9-32.

²⁰ On police ordinances, see Marc Raeff, *The well-ordered police state: social and institutional change through law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1983).

²¹ Raimondo Montecuccoli, *Memoires* (new edn., Paris, 1746), pp. 86-91, 96-106, 135-153, 188-205.

²² Charles Sevin, Marquis de Quincy, *Histoire militaire du regne de Louis le Grand, Roy de France* (7 vols., Paris, 1726), VII_II, pp. 25-51, 111-4.

including how to deploy the army, how to deploy a cavalry squadron and an infantry battalion, and how to conduct a retreat.²³ The Marquis of Santa Cruz made little mention of rules at all, beyond emphasising the value of learning from books alongside practical experience.²⁴ Folard certainly claimed a mathematical basis for his theories on columns, but Frederick specifically removed these sections from the *Extract* he produced of Folard's work, so that this work had only vague references to commanders acting in 'accordance with the rules of war'.²⁵

The same pattern can be seen even in thinkers identified by Gat as belonging to the 'military school of the Enlightenment'. Maurice de Saxe, who described war as at least potentially a science and praised the attempts of Folard to make it one, delineated scarcely any fundamental rules.²⁶ He emphasised Montecuccoli's 'principle' that infantry, cavalry and artillery should support each other, and said that commanders should 'always observe as a rule' the need to send detachments in front and on the flanks when marching through close country.²⁷ De Saxe also emphasized that, 'one must never want that which [the enemy] wants. This is a principle in war except in those extraordinary cases that admit of no rules'.²⁸ While such ideas were sensible, they certainly did not represent an attempt to establish fundamental rules on the basis of geometry.

²³ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 51-108.

²⁴ Marquis de Santa Cruz de Marzenado, *Reflexions militaires et politiques*, trans. de Vergy, (4 vols., The Hague, 1739), I, pp. 22-9.

²⁵ *Extrait tiré des commentaires du Chevalier Folard sur l'histoire de Polybe, pour l'usage d'un officier* (Sans Souci, 1753), pp. 3, 69 (quotation, p. 69: 'conforme au règles de la guerre'); Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Friedrich deß Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege in ihrer Entwicklung von 1745 bis 1756* (Berlin 1899), p. 241; Jean-Jacques Langendorf, "'Des diamants au milieu du fumier": Folard en Allemagne (1750-1800)', in Economica, ed., *Combattre, gouverner, écrire: études réunies en l'honneur de Jean Chagniot* (Paris, 2003), pp. 478-9; Karl Linnebach, 'Friedrich der Große und Folard: ein Blick in die geistige Werkstatt des Feldherrn', *Wissen und Wehr* 17 (1936), p. 529; *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss (30 vols., Berlin, 1846-56), XXVI, p. 126; Quimby, *Background of Napoleonic warfare*, pp. 27-37.

²⁶ Maurice Comte de Saxe, *Les reveries ou memoires sur l'art de la guerre*, ed. de Bonneville (The Hague, 1756), pp. 1-3, 22.

²⁷ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 81-2, 162-3 (quotation, p. 162: 'toujours observer comme une Regle').

²⁸ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 173-4 (quotation: 'il faut bien se garder de vouloir jamais ce qu'il veut; c'est un principe à la guerre excepté dans des cas extraordinaires qui n'admettent point de regles.').

Alongside such caution about setting firm rules for all circumstances, many military officers in this period were simply not well enough versed in mathematics to be able to turn war into mathematical rules. King Frederick William I of Prussia had certainly emphasized that Frederick's education should include mathematics, especially for military purposes.²⁹ It is well known, however, that mathematics remained a blind spot for Frederick throughout his life.³⁰ Quincy noted the importance of mathematics for an officer, but only for besieging a fortress or entrenching a camp, saying, 'he must at least have sufficient cognisance of that science [mathematics] to be able to judge if *those who are charged with these functions* [carrying out sieges and entrenching camps (i.e. engineers)] acquit themselves with the necessary capacity' [italics mine]. Quincy laid considerably more stress on knowledge of geography.³¹ Puységur similarly made a distinction between the mathematically-minded engineers who actually conducted a siege and the noble officers in command.³² Although long-eighteenth-century texts on fortification and siege warfare were, as Engberg-Pedersen has noted, heavily mathematical, the example of Frederick shows that, when noble generals produced texts on siege warfare, they envisaged it in much less mathematical terms.

In the (noticeably short) section on 'The attack and defence of places' in his *General principles of war*, Frederick said, 'I do not pretend to repeat that which the Prince of Anhalt and Vauban have said. They are our masters, and are those who have reduced to precepts a science which was otherwise known only by very few people.'³³

Frederick thus named the two tracts on siege warfare which had most influenced him: Vauban's *On the attack and defence of places* and the *Complete and detailed description of how a city should be besieged* written for him by Prince Leopold of

²⁹ Ernst Bratuschek, *Die Erziehung Friedrichs des Großen* (Berlin, 1885), pp. 1-11; Friedrich Cramer, ed., *Zur Geschichte Friedrich Wilhelms I. und Friedrichs II. Könige von Preußen* (3rd edn., Leipzig, 1835), pp. 14-15, 23-4.

³⁰ Bogdan Krieger, *Friedrich der Große und seine Bücher* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1914), p. 2.

³¹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 19 (quotation: 'Il faudrait au moins qu'il eût assez de connoissance de cette science, pour juger si ceux qui sont chargez de ces fonctions, s'en acquitterent avec la capacité nécessaire.').

³² Jacques François de Chastenet de Puységur, *Art de la guerre par principes et par règles* (2 vols., Paris, 1748), II, p. 64.

³³ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 73-6 (quotation, p. 74: 'Je ne prétends point répéter ce que le prince d'Anhalt et Vauban ont dit; ce sont nos maîtres, et ce sont eux qui ont réduit en préceptes une science qui n'était connue autrefois que par très-peu de personnes.').

Anhalt-Dessau in August 1737.³⁴ As scholars have recognised, Frederick copied Leopold's text almost verbatim in his own April 1741 dispositions for the siege of the fortress of Brieg.³⁵

Frederick's and Leopold's texts on siege warfare were notable for the absence of mathematical or geometrical details. Rather, the focus was on ordered warfare and the regimental economy, with precise details of the numbers of soldiers of different kinds and ranks who were to be used for each part in the operation. Even the body positions of the soldiers were specified: for instance how they should wait on sentry duty, and whether they should lie down on the ground.³⁶ Leopold's text laid out the password and watchword for each day.³⁷ Leopold emphasized, however, that the engineers should make the actual decision as to where the city was to be attacked.³⁸ Frederick also apparently left such issues to the chief engineer, Walrave, whom he promoted to major general for his work conducting the siege of Brieg.³⁹

Whereas Vauban's text described how to calculate mathematically the distance from the walls where artillery batteries should be set up, Frederick admitted in his own journal of the siege of Brieg that the Prussians set up their battery too far from the fortress, robbing its cannon of some of their effect.⁴⁰ Neither he nor Prince Leopold concerned themselves with the calculation of such details. Whereas Frederick had clearly taken the time to read Leopold's text (since he copied it), his orders were, for instance, very different from Vauban's descriptions of how trenches were to be dug and batteries were to be prepared, suggesting that he had not read the French text in much detail.⁴¹ The siege of Brieg therefore casts grave doubt on whether noble

³⁴ LASA, Z 44, A 9e Nr.10: 'Deutliche und Ausführliche Beschreibung Wie eine Stadt soll belagert, und nachero die Belagerung mit guten Success biß zum Über gabe geführt, Auch was dabey alltäglich muß commandiret, und für genommen werden'; Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban, *De l'attaque et de la defense des places* (2 vols., The Hague, 1737-42).

³⁵ Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen. Erster Theil: der Erste Schlesischer Krieg, 1740-1742* (3 vols., Berlin, 1890-3), II, p. 27.

³⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B, 'Journal vor des Fürsten v. Anhalt Durchlt'; LASA, Z 44, A 9e Nr.10, pp. 31-9, 246 v – 253v; *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 40-5.

³⁷ LASA, Z 44, A 9e Nr.10.

³⁸ LASA, Z 44, A 9e Nr.10, pp. 30, 246 r – 246 v.

³⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B, 'Journal vor des Fürsten v. Anhalt Durchlt'.

⁴⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B, 'Journal vor das Fürsts v. Anhalt Durchlt'; Vauban, *De l'attaque et de la defense*, I, pp. 36-8, 69.

⁴¹ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 40-5; Vauban, *De l'attaque et de la defense*, I, pp. 39-44, 71-2.

officers and rulers – who sought to win *glory* in war, and naturally expected to enforce *order* upon it – were in fact interested to enter into the *calculation* beloved by siege engineers and emphasized by writers like Engberg-Pedersen. During Frederick’s sieges, the Prussian artillery more than once opened fire at too great a distance due to royal interference, showing that, even in the one area of the art of war in the long eighteenth century that followed mathematical and geometrical rules, these could be set aside by noble commanders who lacked the mathematical literacy to apply them.⁴²

The one author read by Frederick before 1756 who claimed to provide mathematically-based rules was Puysegur, who repeatedly described his work as ‘based on the principles of geometry and geography’.⁴³ He stated at the beginning of his treatise:

I . . . undertake to show that without war, without troops, without army and without being obliged to leave one’s home, solely through study, with a little geometry and geography, one can learn the whole theory of war in the field.⁴⁴

And later:

The basis and the foundation of the whole body of the art of war is to know how to form good orders of battle and make them move and act according to the most perfect rules of movements. The one and the other of these two operations take their principles from geometry, and officers must know these principles in order to form their troops.⁴⁵

⁴² For the case of the Prussian siege of Olmütz in 1758, see Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great: a military life* (London, 1985), p. 159. For apologist accounts of the siege blaming problems on engineer Colonel Balbi, see Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen. Dritter Theil: Der Siebenjährige Krieg, 1756-1763* (13 vols., Berlin, 1901-14), VII, pp. 79-81; Curt Jany, *Geschichte der Preußischen Armee vom 15. Jahrhundert bis 1914* (3 vols., Osnabrück, 1967), II, p. 482.

⁴³ Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, I, p. 38 (quotation: ‘fondée sur des principes de géometrie et de géographie’).

⁴⁴ Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, I, p. 2 (quotation: ‘J’entreprends . . . de faire voir que sans guerre, sans troupes, sans armée, & sans être obligé de sortir de chez soi, par l’étude seul, avec un peu de géometrie et de géographie, on peut apprendre toute la théorie de la guerre de campagne’).

⁴⁵ Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, I, p. 47 (quotation: ‘La baze et le fondement de tout le corps de l’art de la guerre est de sçavoir former de bons ordres de bataille, & de les faire mouvoir & agir dans les regles les plus parfaits des mouvemens; l’une & l’autre de ces deux opérations

He talked of working ‘with ruler and compass on paper, before applying this to the terrain,’ and of ‘rules’ and ‘principles’ of war.⁴⁶ He described these as ‘a theory according to which I have always directed all the movements of the largest armies and generally all the operations of war’.⁴⁷ Puységur described his ‘rules and principles’ and ‘theory’ for war in the field as comparable to Vauban’s rules for siege warfare.⁴⁸ He specifically described Vauban’s work as a ‘science’ based on mathematics, and described his own principles as a ‘science’ of war.⁴⁹ He admitted, ‘one can form no just disposition of cavalry and infantry if one does not know the nature of the place where one is fighting. Nevertheless, this diversity of situations can be reduced to certain general maxims.’ Puységur argued that an army should be seen as a ‘moving fortress’ and its order of battle based on the principles of fortification. He argued that an ‘irregular fortification’ followed the same principles as one built on flat ground, and claimed to provide ‘principles . . . to enable us to comprehend the most perfect manner of ordering an army for fighting in all irregular terrain’.⁵⁰ It is therefore hardly surprising that Puységur was, alongside de Saxe, the *only* military theorist read by Frederick before the Seven Years War whom Engberg-Pedersen cited.⁵¹ Among Frederick’s pre-1756 reading material, only Puységur reflected the attempt to reduce war to mathematical principles that Gat has said exemplified the ‘military school of the Enlightenment’.

tirent leurs principes de la géométrie, & il faut que tous les officiers sçachent ces principes pour y former leurs troupes.’).

⁴⁶ Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, p. 47 (quotation: ‘avec la règle & le compas sur le papier, avant d’en faire l’application sur le terrain’); Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 118-9, 191, 197 (quotations: ‘principes’, ‘règles’).

⁴⁷ Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, p. 2 (quotation: ‘une théorie suivant laquelle j’ai toujours dirigé tous les mouvemens des plus grandes armées, & généralement tous les opérations de la guerre’).

⁴⁸ Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, pp. 2, 37, 146, 157 (quotations: ‘regles & . . . principes’, ‘théorie’, ‘principe’); Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, p. 62-4 (quotation: ‘règles & principes’).

⁴⁹ Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 32, 64 (quotation: ‘science’).

⁵⁰ Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, p. 146 (quotations: ‘on ne peut faire aucune disposition juste de cavalerie & d’infanterie, qu’on ne connoisse la nature du lieu où l’on va combattre. Néanmoins cette diversité de situations peut se réduire à de certaines maximes générales’, ‘fortification mouvante’, ‘fortification irrégulière’, ‘principes . . . à pouvoir comprendre la manière la plus parfaite d’ordonner une armée pour combattre dans tous les terrains irréguliers’).

⁵¹ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 39-40, 53. Engberg-Pedersen’s bibliography does not include Montecuccoli, Feuquièrre, Quincy, Santa Cruz or Folard: pp. 317-24.

Jürgen Luh has argued that Frederick's *General principles of war* were an attempt to establish enduring rules for the conduct of war.⁵² As will be emphasized in the fifth chapter, and as Andreas Pečar has noted, Frederick's inter-war military treatises were indeed primarily an assertion of his royal authority.⁵³ The *General principles* talked of presenting 'maxims', and of his tactical 'system . . . founded on the swiftness of all movements and on the necessity of attack'.⁵⁴ He presented his oblique line as one method for winning victory, although he explicitly described 'the ordinary order of battle' as also part of his system.⁵⁵ Frederick espoused the idea of precepts to guide actions in war when he praised Maurice de Saxe's account of his 1746 victory at Rocoux, saying 'I believe it can serve as an instruction for everyone who is charged with the conduct of an army. You provide precepts that you support through your own examples'.⁵⁶ Frederick also called for using the principles of fortification to judge advantageous terrain on the battlefield and the weaknesses of an enemy position.⁵⁷

The passages quoted above came from the original, 1748 version of the *General principles*, written the year Puysegur's work was published and therefore presumably not influenced by it. Frederick's *Thoughts and general rules for war*, however, written in 1755, took the concept of rules for war considerably further. With strong echoes of Puysegur, Frederick described the logistical aspects of campaigning as comparable to a siege, saying:

The place where the army assembles . . . [is] like the first parallel . . .
When one advances into enemy territory, in order to proceed according to
the rules, one must, after the first victories and captures of towns,
establish a second parallel.⁵⁸

⁵² Luh, 'Military action and military reflection', Paragraph 7.

⁵³ Andreas Pečar, *Autorität durch Autorschaft? Friedrich II. als Militärschriftsteller* (Halle-Wittenberg, 2012), pp. 16-20.

⁵⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 99-100 (quotations: 'maximes', 'système . . . fondé sur la promptitude de tous les mouvements et sur la nécessité de l'attaque').

⁵⁵ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 83-4, 99-100 (quotation, p. 99: 'l'ordre de bataille ordinaire').

⁵⁶ *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 342 (quotation: 'je crois qu'elle peut servir d'instruction pour tout homme qui est chargé de la conduite d'une armée. Vous donnez des préceptes que vous soutenez par vos exemples').

⁵⁷ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 28.

⁵⁸ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 117 (quotation: 'L'endroit où l'armée s'assemble . . . comme une première parallèle . . . Lorsqu'on avance dans le pays ennemi, pour procéder en règle, il faut, d'abord après les premières victoires et prises de villes, s'établir une seconde parallèle').

He repeated the metaphor later, again arguing for the importance of meticulous logistical preparations: ‘in a siege, no one would advise commencing with the third parallel but with the first’.⁵⁹ Frederick also set out seventeen ‘general rules which one must observe’ for battle tactics, although he ended with the somewhat less ambitious claim that they were ‘rules which one must . . . make use of when the occasion presents itself’.⁶⁰ After presenting a series of case studies of different tactical situations, Frederick summed up that ‘the principal point is always to support one arm [of service] with another’.⁶¹ Later in the work, he gave precepts for how to attack an enemy on the march.⁶²

Frederick, however, presented no mathematical or geometrical calculations in either work to support the proposed rules or ‘maxims’. Later sections of this chapter will show that Frederick was also fascinated by the need for a general to respond to the uncertainties of terrain and the play of chance. Barbara Stollberg-Rillinger has noted that Frederick expressed a variety of opinions on chance in different texts, and this is a reminder that, as Andreas Pečar has noted, Frederick’s writings were primarily written to have an effect on particular audiences rather than being the expression of any fundamental principles.⁶³ Pečar has noted that, as Frederick stated repeatedly, the *General principles* were primarily addressed to his officers, and included many admissions of his own previous faults.⁶⁴ Frederick presented ‘rules which I have learnt to my cost’ and ‘precepts which I have not followed myself’.⁶⁵ Here, the

⁵⁹ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 139 (quotation: ‘Dans un siège, personne ne s'avise de commencer par la troisième parallèle, mais par la première’).

⁶⁰ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 123-4 (quotations: ‘règles générales que l'on doit toujours observer’, ‘règles qu'il faut . . . en faire usage lorsque l'occasion s'en présente’).

⁶¹ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 125-31 (quotation, p. 131: ‘Le point principal est de soutenir toujours une arme par l'autre’).

⁶² *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 133-4.

⁶³ Andreas Pečar, ‘Friedrich der Große als Autor: Plädoyer für eine adressatenorientierte Lektüre seiner Schriften’, in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große – eine perspektivische Bestandsaufnahme: Beiträge des ersten Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 28./29. September 2007* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-bestandsaufnahme/pecar_autor, last accessed 27 November 2017), Paragraphs 2-4, 48-9; Barbara Stollberg-Rillinger, *Der Staat als Maschine: zur politischen Metaphorik des absoluten Fürstenstaats* (Berlin, 1986), pp. 66-7.

⁶⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 4, 94, 106-7; Pečar, *Autorität durch Autorschaft?*, passim, esp. p. 34.

⁶⁵ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 8, 94 (quotations: ‘règles que j'ai apprises à mes dépens’, ‘préceptes . . . que je n'ai pas suivis moi-même’).

concept of ‘rules’ was not a claim to establish universal truths but a promise that he would behave differently in future. Thus, although the very title of Frederick’s work claimed to present ‘general principles’ on which war could be fought, and although Frederick proposed rules based on siege warfare, particularly in response to the work of Puységur, this cannot be described as a consistent attempt to reduce warfare to mathematical calculation.

Judgement

The lack of mathematical rules for the conduct of war in the military literature of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries is most clearly shown by the Marquis de Feuquières, Frederick’s favourite author. Feuquières shows how authors of this period responded to their limited ability to regulate war by laying great stress on the mental abilities of the general.

Feuquières certainly described ‘rules’ and ‘maxims’ of war, just as Frederick did in his inter-war treatises, and he analysed the wars of Louis XIV in light of them.⁶⁶

Discussing the general phenomenon of defensive war, however, he stated that ‘it would be difficult to prescribe by general maxims the manner of sustaining that war. It is entirely in the prudence and spirit of foresight of the one who conducts it.’⁶⁷ He repeated: ‘that nature of war, in its conduct, consists entirely in the capacity of the general who sustains it’.⁶⁸ And again: ‘it is difficult to say anything that should be a certain rule: the action to take depends absolutely on the constitution of the country’.⁶⁹ Discussing war between equally-matched powers, Feuquières opined that:

One cannot justly prescribe anything on the conduct of such a war. As far as its rules, it conforms to all the others. One can only place as a constant

⁶⁶ *Memoires de M. le Marquis de Feuquiere, lieutenant general des armées du Roi: contenant ses maximes sur la guerre; & l’application des exemples aux maximes* (new edn., London, 1736), pp. 92, 98-100, 103-4, 106, 108-10, 359 (quotations: ‘maximes’, ‘règles’).

⁶⁷ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 83 (quotation: ‘Il feroit bien difficile de prescrire, par des maximes générales, la manière de soutenir cette guerre. Elle est toute dans la prudence & l’esprit de prévoiance de celui qui la conduit.’).

⁶⁸ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 84 (quotation: ‘cette nature de Guerre dans sa conduite, consistoit entièrement dans la capacité du Général qui la soutient.’).

⁶⁹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 85 (quotation: ‘il est difficile de rien dire qui soit une règle certaine, la conduite à tenir dépendant absolument de la constitution du païs.’).

maxim in the present case that the most sharp-witted and perceptive general will always win in the end over the one who does not possess these qualities to the same degree, because he finally multiplies small advantages by his activity and penetration, so that in the end his small successes procure him a large and decisive one.⁷⁰

Discussing this with practical examples from the Dutch War and Nine Years War, Feuquières repeated that ‘war . . . between equal powers . . . resides entirely in the ability (‘capacité’) of the general who is in charge, and in the superiority of his genius over that of the general who is opposed to him’.⁷¹ He praised the ‘ability (‘capacité’) and good conduct’ of Marshal Crequi in turning the 1677 campaign to France’s advantage.⁷² While Feuquières argued that France’s loss of almost the whole Rhine in 1689 reflected a failure to execute ‘the rules of a defensive war judiciously’, his discussion of the following campaign of 1690 stressed not rules but the individual genius of the Duke of Luxembourg.⁷³ ‘In that year 1690, Marshal de Luxembourg made plain to see that a skillful (‘habile’) general can find the means to change the constitution of a war.’⁷⁴ With reference specifically to the battle of Fleurus, he added, ‘only the superior genius of Luxembourg over [the Count of] Waldeck decided that great day.’⁷⁵ Luxembourg had been Feuquières’s patron, so the fulsome praise given to him was no surprise.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Feuquières clearly emphasised the mental abilities of the commander rather than claiming to offer certain rules.

⁷⁰ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 93 (quotation: ‘l'on ne peut rien prescrire de juste sur la conduite d'une pareille Guerre. Elle est, pour les régles, conforme à toutes les autres. On peut seulement poser pour maxime constante dans la présente espèce, que le Général le plus vif & le plus pénétrant l'emporte toujours à la longue, sur celui qui ne possède pas ces qualités au même degré, parce qu'il multiplie tellement les petits avantages par son activité & sa pénétration, qu'à la fin ces succès legers lui en procurent un grand & décisif.’).

⁷¹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 110 (quotation: ‘Guerre . . . entre Puissances égales . . . réside entièrement dans la capacité du Général qui en est chargé, & dans la supériorité de son génie sur celui du Général qui lui est opposé’).

⁷² *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 113-5 (quotation, p. 114: ‘capacité & . . . bonne conduite’).

⁷³ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 115-8 (quotation, p. 116: ‘les régles d'une Guerre défensive judicieusement’).

⁷⁴ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 117 (quotation: ‘Dans cette année 1690. M. le Maréchal de Luxembourg fit bien voir, qu'un habile Général peut trouver les moïens de changer la constitution d'une Guerre.’).

⁷⁵ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 312 (quotation: ‘La seule supériorité du génie de M. de Luxembourg sur M. de Waldec, fit la décision de cette grand journée.’).

⁷⁶ Jean-Pierre Bois, ‘Le marquis de Feuquière: stratège au temps de Louis XIV’, in *Combattre, gouverner, écrire*, pp. 149-51, 154.

Indeed, contemporary military authors were unanimous that the most important maxim of war was that the general should have a perfect knowledge of the circumstances, and take account of every eventuality. Santa Cruz described how, on arriving to take command of an army, a general should inform himself about every factor: the geography of the country, the condition of his troops, and the supply arrangements and hospitals necessary for them.⁷⁷ Puysegur noted that any shortage of supplies resulting from ‘a lack of foresight’ on the part of the commander was ‘a great fault, and worthy of blame’.⁷⁸ Quincy noted that, ‘generals, if they are skilful, neglect nothing which merits the slightest consideration, and must profit from everything advantageous which presents itself’.⁷⁹ He spoke at length of the need for a general to be ‘prudent’, saying:

Prudence makes him penetrate the designs of his enemy, . . . it leads him to make the first move and cause projects contrary to his interests and designs to fail. It makes him take all precautions so as to be always in a state to fight and to never be surprised.⁸⁰

He furiously criticised the French commanders at Oudenarde in 1708 for their ‘negligence’ in failing to anticipate the forced march of the allied forces, noting that the defeat ‘put France on the verge of its ruin’.⁸¹ On the other hand, trying to excuse the failures that led to French defeat at Turin in 1706, Quincy maintained that at least they ‘had forgotten nothing in providing an abundance of everything which was necessary’ for the siege.⁸²

⁷⁷ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 190-212.

⁷⁸ Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, p. 33 (quotation: ‘un manquement de prévoyance . . . une grande faute, & est digne de blâme’).

⁷⁹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 9 (quotation: ‘Généraux, s’ils sont habiles, ne négligent rien qui mérite la moindre considération, devant profiter de tout ce qui se présente d’avantageux’). See also Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 52, 81.

⁸⁰ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 21-2 (quotation: ‘La prudence lui fait pénétrer les desseins de son ennemi, . . . elle lui fait prendre les devans, & fait échouer les projets contraires à ses intérêts & à ses desseins. Elle lui fait prendre toutes les précautions pour être toujours en état de combattre, & pour n’être jamais surpris.’). See also Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 63.

⁸¹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, V, pp. 501-2 (quotations, p. 502: ‘négligence’, ‘mirent la France à deux doigts de sa perte’).

⁸² Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, V, p. 89 (quotation: ‘n’avoit rien oublié pour faire trouver en abondance tout ce qui étoit nécessaire’).

Folard similarly stated that, when planning a campaign, ‘our imagination must work constantly’, considering all possibilities.⁸³ ‘It is always good to foresee events’, he said, ‘however imaginary they may be.’⁸⁴ And again: ‘Foresight against accidents . . . is the foundation of great enterprises’.⁸⁵

‘Enterprises of great importance merit being weighed up and considered long before they are brought to execution. There is none which cannot be subject to some accident . . . There is not a single [factor] which one can ignore, at least of those which one can avoid through precautions taken in advance.’⁸⁶

Even military historians extolled this philosophy. La Moussaye described Condé’s bold move to threaten the Imperial army’s line of communications after the 1644 battle of Freiburg, noting the risks of the manoeuvre, which involved passing through a narrow mountain valley, and emphasizing that it was nevertheless successful because, ‘the Duke of Enghien took all the precautions which the disadvantage of the terrain and the presence of such a vigilant enemy demanded.’⁸⁷

Thus, rather than offering mathematical formulae for victory, military thought of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries placed huge emphasis on the mental abilities of the army commander, who was expected to compute everything in their own head. This reflected the focus of warfare in the long eighteenth century upon individual noble heroism, as discussed in the second chapter. It also reflected war’s nature, discussed in the fifth chapter, as the assertion of power by rulers.

⁸³ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 15 (quotation: ‘il faut que notre imagination travaille constamment’).

⁸⁴ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 77 (quotation: ‘il est toujours bon de prévenir les évènements quelque imaginaires qu’ils puissent être’).

⁸⁵ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 57 (quotation: ‘la prévoyance contre les accidens . . . est la fondement des grandes entreprises’).

⁸⁶ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 96 (quotation: ‘Les entreprises de grande importance méritent d’être pesées & méditées longtems avant que de venir à l’exécution. Il n’y en a aucune qui ne puisse être sujette à quelque accident . . . Il n’y en a pas un seul qu’on puisse ignorer, du moins de ceux qu’on peut éviter par des précautions prises d’avance.’).

⁸⁷ Matignon François de Goyon, Marquis de la Moussaye, *Relation des campagnes de Rocroi et de Fribourg, en l’année 1643 et 1644* (Paris, 1673), pp. 128-30 (quotation, pp. 129-30: ‘Le duc d’Enguien y aporta toutes les précautions que demandoient le desavantage du lieu & la presence d’un ennemi si vigilant.’).

Frederick clearly started learning this need to anticipate everything early on in his military career. Telling Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, on 28 August 1741, of his intention to attack Neipperg's Habsburg army, Frederick said, 'I can assure you that all the evil that human caution can provide for has been averted'.⁸⁸ Whether or not Frederick actually took such precautions, he clearly understood that Leopold expected him to ensure this. Similarly, in December 1741, noting the strong Austrian forces at Olmütz, he told Schwerin that, 'you must be wary and be on your guard', 'take good precautions to avoid any affront' and again later 'you . . . must take measures against any affront'.⁸⁹

Frederick's writings fully reflected this pattern. His *Art of war* noted how:

The mother of successes, wise distrust,

...

Says often to you: fear your opponent,
Consider everything he does and all he can do⁹⁰

Minerva requires more than a prudent general.

His mind, guided by wisdom,

Must be sharp without wandering and prudent without weakness;

So that he acts appropriately . . .

...

So that, as a far-sighted warrior, he prepares in advance

All the diverse assistance the army needs;

So that . . .

Destiny never overwhelms him through his fault

So form the mind, especially the judgment,

Expect everything of yourself and nothing from circumstances.⁹¹

After the battle of Rocoux, Frederick told the victorious Maurice de Saxe:

⁸⁸ Leopold von Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege nach Original-Quellen* (2 vols., Berlin, 1841), I, p. 348 (quotation: 'ich Ihnen versichern kan das alles übel das die Menschliche vohrsichtigkeit vohrkehren kan abgewandt ist').

⁸⁹ *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, ed. J.G. Droysen et al (46 vols., Berlin, 1879-1939), I, pp. 426-7, 432 (quotations: 'so müsset Ihr Euch sehr in Acht nehmen und wohl auf Eurer Hut sein', 'prenez de bonnes précautions pour éviter tout affront', 'Ihr . . . Eure Mesures wider allen Affront nehmen müsset').

⁹⁰ *Œuvres*, X, p. 304 (quotation: La mère des succès, la sage méfiance, / . . . / Souvent elle lui dit: Craignez votre adversaire, / Pesez tout ce qu'il fait et tout ce qu'il peut faire').

⁹¹ *Œuvres*, X, p. 310 (quotation: 'Minerve exige plus d'un général prudent. / Il faut que son esprit, guidé par la sagesse, / Soit vif sans s'égarer et prudent sans faiblesse; / Qu'il agisse à propos, . . . / Qu'en guerrier prévoyant il prépare de loin / Tous les secours divers dont l'armée a besoin; / Qu . . . / Par sa faute jamais le destin ne l'accable. / Formez-vous donc l'esprit, surtout le jugement, / Attendez tout de vous, rien de l'événement').

The great art of war is to foresee all events, and the great art of the general is to have prepared all the resources beforehand, in order not to be embarrassed on his part when the decisive moment to take [advantage of] events has come. . . . You [de Saxe] prepare events with such caution that the results cannot fail to respond. The chapter of events is vast, but foresight and skill ('habileté') can correct fortune.⁹²

The *General principles* also emphasized that the general should be on his guard, continually imagining what the enemy might do: 'he is the sentinel of his army, he must see, hear, foresee and prevent all the ill that could befall it.'⁹³ Frederick also described at length the different factors a general must take into consideration:

One must be well acquainted with the country, with the general with whom one has to deal, the places where he has his magazines, the towns that are most important to him, and the places from which he takes his forage. Combine all these things and create projects on that basis, after having well meditated the matter. The one of the two generals who will calculate the most blows in sequence will in the long run gain all the advantage over his rival . . . It is also necessary to ensure very carefully that the marches you are going to make and the camps you are going to take up will not throw you and the army into great embarrassment.⁹⁴

The *Thoughts and general rules for war* contained many similar prescriptions.⁹⁵

Everything must be calculated in advance, and one must have taken account of everything that the enemy could do, for it is the mark of a man

⁹² *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 343 (quotation: 'Le grand art de la guerre est de prévoir tous les événements, et le grand art du général est d'avoir préparé d'avance toutes les ressources, pour n'être point embarrassé de son parti lorsque le moment décisif d'en prendre est venu . . . Vous préparez les événements avec trop de prudence pour que les suites ne doivent pas y répondre. Le chapitre des événements est vaste; mais la prévoyance et l'habileté peuvent corriger la fortune.')

⁹³ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 45-6 (quotation: 'il est la sentinelle de son armée, il doit voir, entendre, prévoir et prévenir . . . tout le mal qui pourrait lui arriver.')

⁹⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 66-7 (quotation: 'il faut bien connaître le pays, le général auquel on a affaire, les endroits où il a ses magasins, les villes qui lui importent le plus, et les lieux dont il tire son fourrage, combiner toutes ces choses, et faire là-dessus des projets *après* avoir bien médité la matière. Celui des deux généraux qui calculera le plus de coups de suite gagnera à la longue tout l'avantage sur son rival . . . il faut aussi examiner bien soigneusement si les marches que vous allez faire et les camps que vous allez prendre ne pourraient pas vous rejeter avec l'armée dans de plus grands embarras').

⁹⁵ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 138, 148.

superficial or ignorant in the art of war if he is obliged to say 'I would never have believed it'.⁹⁶

The result of all these attentions and different cares is that the general of an army must be indefatigably vigilant, think of everything, foresee everything and observe even the slightest steps of the enemy. If he neglects the smallest attention in the world during the whole course of the campaign, he can be sure that the enemy will soon make him repent it.⁹⁷

Moreover, after describing how to plan the initial campaign of a war, Frederick said that later campaigns 'depend on so many circumstances that it is impossible to prescribe general rules'.⁹⁸ He thus specifically recognized circumstances where the general's skill replaced firm rules. The words of Feuquières, Frederick and others make clear that the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries did *not* claim to lay down mathematical rules for achieving victory. Rather, they expected aristocratic (or royal) generals to compute everything in their own heads, as a reflection of nobility or royal power.

Chance

Moreover, rather than trying to reduce war to mathematical certainties, military thinkers of the long eighteenth century, as the General Staff noted, were well aware of the existence of chance, despite Engberg-Pedersen's claims to the contrary.⁹⁹ The difference from later periods was that the Napoleonic Wars and Romantic Revolution saw a willingness to embrace the unpredictability brought by friction and chance, whereas thinkers of Frederick's time called for all-knowing generals, able to respond to chance events and turn them to their advantage.

⁹⁶ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 140 (quotation: 'Il faut que tout soit calculé d'avance, et que l'on ait compté sur tout ce que l'ennemi peut faire; car c'est la marque d'un homme superficiel ou ignorant dans le métier de la guerre, lorsqu'il est obligé de dire: Je ne l'aurais pas cru.').

⁹⁷ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 144 (quotation: 'Il résulte de toutes ces attentions et soins différents qu'un général d'armée doit être d'une vigilance infatigable, songer à tout, prévoir tout, et observer jusqu'aux moindres démarches des ennemis. S'il néglige le moins du monde de ces attentions pendant tout le cours de la campagne, il peut compter que l'ennemi ne tardera pas à l'en faire repentir.').

⁹⁸ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 140 (quotation: 'se règlent sur tant de circonstances, qu'il est impossible de prescrire des règles générales').

⁹⁹ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 4, 50-2; Großer Generalstab, *Friedrich des Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege*, pp. 319-23.

A whole section of Frederick's *General principles* was dedicated to 'The chances and cases of fortune that occur in war'. 'I pretend here', said Frederick, 'to talk of those unfortunate events over which foresight and counsel have no empire': that is, events belonging to Engberg-Pedersen's 'empire of chance'.¹⁰⁰ Frederick noted that bad weather, a bad harvest, illness among the troops, the death of a good subordinate general, the failings or negligence of subordinates, the discovery of a spy, or outright treason could all throw out the best laid plans.¹⁰¹ 'In sum', said Frederick:

However lucky one may be, one must never confide in fortune, nor be puffed up by one's success, but think that our little wisdom and prudence often becomes the plaything of chance and of those fortuitous cases by which I know not what fate pleases to humiliate the pride of the presumptuous.¹⁰²

Frederick appealed to a similar principle in late 1759, when he suggested to his generals, in his *Reflections on . . . Charles XII, King of Sweden*, that Charles's failure to protect the vital supply convoy brought by his subordinate Lewenhaupt in late 1708 – an incident which was clearly meant to parallel Frederick's own failure adequately to protect the convoy bringing supplies to support his siege of Olmütz in June 1758 – might be the result of 'inevitable fatalities'.¹⁰³

Frederick's interest in the concept of chance in the military sphere is well known.¹⁰⁴ What has not been recognised is that this reflected a general trend of contemporary military thought. Frederick's most important discussion of this subject was his *Epistle on chance*, written in 1759-60 at the height of the Seven Years War. A deeply self-serving document, it lamented Frederick's woes at the hands of the enemy coalition facing him, noted that even great generals like Prince Eugene of Savoy had

¹⁰⁰ *Œuvres*, XVIII, p. 96 (quotations: 'des hasards et des cas fortuits qui arrivent à la guerre', 'Je prétends parler ici de ces événements malheureux sur lesquels la prévoyance et le conseil n'ont aucun empire').

¹⁰¹ *Œuvres*, XVIII, pp. 96-8.

¹⁰² *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 98 (quotation: 'Enfin . . . quelque heureux que l'on soit, il ne faut jamais se confier à la fortune, ni se bouffir de ses succès, mais penser que notre peu de sagesse et de prudence devient souvent le jouet des hasards et de ces cas fortuits par lesquels je ne sais quel destin se plaît à humilier l'orgueil des présomptueux.')

¹⁰³ *Œuvres*, VII, p. 92 (quotation: 'fatalités inévitables'). On Domstadt, see Christopher Duffy, *The military experience in the age of reason* (London and New York, NY, 1987), p. 276; Großer Generalstab, *Der Siebenjährige Krieg*, VII, pp. 93-104; Jany, *Geschichte der Preußischen Armee*, II, pp. 483-4.

¹⁰⁴ Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 130, 170.

sometimes suffered ill fortune, gave examples of kings who had lost their thrones, and ended by saying that, since chance could foil the best-laid plans, Frederick would simply submit himself to whatever vicissitudes fate might hold. The work was clearly propaganda, as seen by the fact that Frederick sent it to Voltaire: no doubt so that the latter would share it with the French enlightened public.¹⁰⁵ However, the examples Frederick chose of the play of chance in warfare, and the views expressed on them by other contemporary writers, are revealing.

The examples of the play of chance in battle that Frederick presented in the *Epistle on chance* all related to Prince Eugene of Savoy. Frederick described Eugene's victory at Belgrade in 1717 as an example of a general who 'appeared to confide his successes too much to chances'. He then went on to discuss the failure of Eugene's attempts to surprise the French army at Luzzara and Cremona, both in 1702.¹⁰⁶ Neither of these latter battles have attracted much notice from modern military historians, and it is therefore instructive that Frederick found them of such significance.¹⁰⁷ Feuquières's description of Luzzara noted the carelessness of the French approach march, and in contrast the careful preparations of Eugene to ambush them. As Feuquières described it, the surprise was complete, but hedges between the two armies prevented the Imperials from coming to grips with the French, leaving the battle undecided. Feuquières remarked that:

This project of Prince Eugene was a good one, and it lacked only the good fortune of being executed as happily as it had been judiciously organised. It was indeed only a chance, which Prince Eugene could not have foreseen, which saved the army of the king [of France] on this occasion.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ *Œuvres*, XII, pp. 64-79. On Frederick's use of French intellectuals to spread his message, see Thomas Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe: Inszenierung des Preußenkönigs in Fest und Zeremoniell, 1740-1815* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2012), pp. 79, 95.

¹⁰⁶ *Œuvres*, XII, pp. 70-2 (quotation, p. 70: 'Parut trop confier ses succès aux hasards').

¹⁰⁷ See the relatively brief mentions in John A. Lynn, *The wars of Louis XIV, 1667-1714* (London and New York, NY, 1999), pp. 270-1, 276-7, 280.

¹⁰⁸ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 260, 336-40 (quotation, p. 337: 'Ce projet de M. le Prince Eugène étoit beau, & il ne lui a manqué que le bonheur d'être exécuté aussi heureusement, qu'il avoit été judicieusement concerté. Ce n'a même été qu'un hazard, que M. le Prince Eugène ne pouvoir prévoir, qui a sauvé l'Armée du Roi dans cette occasion').

Thus, Feuquières noted that even the best-laid plans could be derailed by chance. Indeed, Frederick seems to have followed Feuquières's ideas on luck and judgement already in the *Refutation of Machiavelli*, when he presented the Franco-Bavarian decision to seek battle at Blenheim in 1704 – a decision that Feuquières had strongly criticised – as an example where greater circumspection would have worked better.¹⁰⁹ Contemporary military historians routinely referred to the effects of chance, La Moussaye for instance noting that, during the 1644 battle of Freiburg, ‘an unforeseen accident (as very often happens in the wisest undertakings in war) upset all the orders of the Duke of Enghien, and saved the Bavarians from a general defeat.’¹¹⁰ The *Memoirs* of the Duke of Villars, describing Villars's plan to attack the Count of Styrum at Höchstädt in 1703, noted that ‘these measures well planned and well executed would have caused the total loss of the army of the Count of Styrum, but by an unforeseen circumstance it was not as total as it should have been’.¹¹¹ Clearly, contemporaries were well aware of the role of chance in war.

The attempted surprise of Cremona was of particular importance to Frederick, and intimately connected to his ideas of the role of chance in warfare. He had first described it in 1739, using it as the first example in the chapter of the *Refutation of Machiavelli* discussing the role of chance.¹¹² He went on to refer to it again and again throughout his life, more often than any other battle, and in impressive and accurate detail: in a July 1745 letter to Podewils, in his *General principles of war*, in his *Thoughts and general rules for war*, in the *Epistle on chance*, and in his 1775 *Reflections on projects for campaign*.¹¹³ Cremona was a colourful operation, which saw the Imperial army enter the town at night via a sewer and capture the French commander, Villeroy, only to be driven back in fierce fighting when the French realised what was happening. Feuquières stated that the attack only failed because

¹⁰⁹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 345-6, 349-54; *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 168-75, 318-26 (esp. pp. 173-4, 324-5).

¹¹⁰ Moussaye, *Campagnes de Rocroi et de Fribourg*, p. 120-1 (quotation: ‘un accident impreveu (comme il arrive tres-souvent dans les plus sages entreprises de la guerre) renversa tous les ordres du duc d’Enguien, & sauva les Bavaois d’une défaite generale.’).

¹¹¹ *Memoires du duc de Villars* (3 vols., The Hague, 1734-6), II, p. 124 (quotation: ‘Ces mesures bien prises & bien exécutées auroient causé la perte totale de l’Armée du Comte de Stirum; mais par un cas imprévû, elle ne fût pas aussi entiere qu’elle devoit être’).

¹¹² *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 170-1, 321.

¹¹³ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 42, 72, 141; *Œuvres*, XXIX, p. 88; *Politische Correspondenz*, IV, pp. 216-7.

several French units happened to be under arms before dawn and because, by his account, two Imperial generals charged with crucial instructions were killed.¹¹⁴ ‘An incident which Prince Eugene could not have foreseen caused a project so well-devised and so happily conducted to fail just at the moment when one thought it had been executed’, said Feuquières.¹¹⁵ It was ‘chance alone’, he said, which saved the French.¹¹⁶ Frederick’s mention of Cremona and Luzzara in works intended for the enlightened public (the *Refutation of Machiavelli* and *Epistle on chance*) shows the contemporary resonance of both battles as examples of the limits of calculation and the role of what Clausewitz would later call ‘friction’ in warfare.¹¹⁷

Moreover, the accounts Frederick read of Cremona also mentioned another factor that contemporaries saw as upsetting careful plans. Quincy – representing the official French position, and therefore much less critical of the French leadership – reflected with some amazement how ‘Prince Eugene failed in an enterprise so well concerted and which had such favourable beginnings. All the glory is owed to the general officers and to the [French] troops in general, who all performed prodigies of valour.’¹¹⁸ ‘This prince [Eugene]’, Quincy went on, ‘took such appropriate measures that one can be assured that his project would have succeeded without the valour of the troops who composed the garrison of that town.’¹¹⁹ Folard similarly noted Cremona as a case where valour had upset careful calculations, remarking in the context of the 1702 capture of Ulm that, ‘if the garrison of Ulm had shown as much vigour and courage as that of Cremona, I do not know what would have happened’.¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 230-2.

¹¹⁵ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 230 (quotation: ‘un incident que M. le Prince Eugène n'avoit pû prévoir, a fait manquer un projet si bien concerté, & si heureusement conduit jusqu'au moment de le croire exécuté’).

¹¹⁶ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 232 (quotation: ‘le hazard seul’).

¹¹⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On war*, eds. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (London, 1993), pp. 138-40.

¹¹⁸ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, p. 628 (quotation: ‘le Prince Eugene manqua une entreprise si bien concertée, & qui avoit eû de si favorables commencements. On en doit toute la gloire aux Officiers Généraux & aux troupes en général, qui firent toutes des prodiges de valeur’). For Feuquières’s much more critical attitude to Villeroy, see Bois, ‘Le marquis de Feuquières’, pp. 151, 154.

¹¹⁹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, p. 612 (quotation: ‘ce Prince avoit pris de si justes mesures, qu’on peut assurer que son projet auroit réussi, sans la valeur des troupes qui composoient la garnison de cette ville.’).

¹²⁰ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 144-6 (quotation, p. 146: ‘si la garnison d’Ulm eût marqué autant de vigeur et de courage que celle de Crémone, je ne sai ce qu’il en feroit arrivé’).

Feuquières agreed, praising the French troops for counter-attacking on their own initiative, after almost all their generals were captured.¹²¹ He echoed this theme in his discussion of the 1706 battle of Ramillies where, noting the disastrous dispositions once again made by Villeroy, he remarked that ‘the individual officer and soldier were not capable of redressing by their sole valour an affair lost by his poor disposition’.¹²² Thus, even in a case of defeat, Feuquières noted the potential for courage to turn fortune. Frederick expressed similar ideas in his own writings. When describing William of Orange’s surprise of Luxembourg at Steenkirk in 1692, he noted that ‘without prodigies of valour, [the French] army would have been totally defeated.’¹²³ Discussing siege warfare, Frederick noted that it was normally possible to calculate exactly when a town would fall, ‘if extraordinary circumstances do not bring some impediment, or a commander of great merit does not stop the besiegers by the stubbornness of his tricks.’¹²⁴ He thereby presented chance alongside the skill of a commander as two factors capable of altering the course of even the most predictable military operations. He expressed the same message more succinctly in the German edition of his *General principles of war*, saying: ‘I want . . . to show that both skill and also luck are necessary in war.’¹²⁵

Among the authors whom Frederick read, Montecuccoli, who had served primarily in the mid-seventeenth century, was perhaps the most comfortable with the play of chance. Among his principles for how to make dispositions for an army, he urged a general to ‘give something to chance’.¹²⁶ When forming dispositions for battle, he urged generals to remember that ‘unforeseen accidents occur’.¹²⁷ Montecuccoli emphasized the need to take counsel before making a decision.¹²⁸ He went on,

¹²¹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 231.

¹²² *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 360-3 (quotation, p. 363: ‘L’Officier particulier & le Soldat, n’étoient pas capables de redresser par leur seule valeur une affaire perduë par sa mauvaïse disposition’).

¹²³ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 52 (quotation: ‘Sans des prodiges de valeur, leur armée aurait été totalement défaite’).

¹²⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 73-4 (quotation: ‘si des circonstances extraordinaires n’y apportent quelque empêchement, ou qu’un commandant d’un mérite distingué n’arrête les assiégeants par l’opiniâtreté de ses chicanes.’).

¹²⁵ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 96 (quotation: ‘ich will . . . zeigen, dass sowohl Geschicklichkeit, als auch Glück bei dem Kriege erfordert wird.’).

¹²⁶ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, p. 70 (quotation: ‘donner quelque chose au hazard’).

¹²⁷ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, p. 191 (quotation: ‘il arrive des accidens imprévus’).

¹²⁸ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 70, 75, 92.

however (in a passage which Frederick quoted directly when marching off for the Seven Years War):¹²⁹

After a decision is once taken, do not listen any more either to doubts or scruples. Take the view that all the ill which might occur does not always occur, whether because the divine mercy deflects it, or because our address avoids it, or the carelessness of our enemies does not profit from the occasion . . .

After having employed all of your courage, followed in full all the rules of the art, and been oneself convinced that one has not forgotten anything which might contribute to the happy success of an enterprise, one must commend the issue to Providence.¹³⁰

He added:

Human prudence . . . is nothing more than the rays of that supreme Providence . . . One must therefore have a spirit at rest regarding that which it pleases God to ordain . . . This is why one should not repent, nor distress oneself, over an enterprise which has failed.¹³¹

Santa Cruz similarly said that, when making a decision, ‘if you do not find more reason to follow one sentiment more than another, commend your resolution to divine Providence.’¹³² Quincy, trying to excuse the French defeat at Turin in 1706, claimed that all necessary preparations had been made, sufficient troops gathered and they had fought bravely. Therefore, ‘one . . . must . . . attribute [the defeat] . . . to the supreme will of the master of empires, who sets limits, when he pleases, on the progress of the

¹²⁹ *Œuvres*, XXVI, pp. 135-6.

¹³⁰ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 92-3 (quotation: ‘Après la résolution une fois prise, ne plus écouter ni doutes, ni scrupules, & supposer que tout le mal qui peut arriver n’arrive pas toujours, soit que la miséricorde Divine le détourne, ou que notre adresse l’évire, ou que l’imprudence de nos ennemis ne profite pas de l’occasion. . . . Après avoir employé tout son courage, suivi en tout les regles de l’art, & s’être convaincu soi-même qu’on n’a rien oublié de ce qui pouvoit contribuer à l’heureux succès d’une entreprise, il en faut recommander l’issu à la Providence’).

¹³¹ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, p. 93 (quotation: ‘la prudence humaine . . . n’est autre chose qu’un rayon de cette Providence suprême . . . Il faut donc avoir l’esprit en repos sur ce qu’il plaira à Dieu d’ordonner . . . c’est pourquoi l’on ne doit pas se repentir, ni s’affliger d’une entreprise qui a mal réussi’).

¹³² Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 153 (quotation: ‘Si vous ne trouvez pas plus de raison pour suivre un sentiment plutôt qu’un autre, recommandez votre résolution à la divine providence’).

arms of princes.’¹³³ Folard, noting the extraordinary turnaround in fortunes of the 1712 Denain campaign, wondered ‘if Providence had wanted to make known to the world . . . that courageous and steadfast virtue in the face of the most overwhelming misfortunes, far from falling into despair, on the contrary rouses . . . new vigour’.¹³⁴ Thus, courage was again seen as capable of tipping the scales of chance. Reflecting on the battle afterwards, Folard quoted Prince Eugene saying that:

The gods . . . play with the foresight of humans and deceive both their hopes and their fears. They cut short events that everyone would expect, open unknown passages and roads, and cause designs that appear impossible to succeed.¹³⁵

The divine was thus shorthand for the play of chance in war.

At the heart of unpredictability in war was battle. Military thinkers recognised that it was the most difficult element to bring under the control of the ordered state. Montecuccoli noted that, ‘battles give and take away crowns, decide between sovereigns without appeal, finish the war and immortalise the victor.’¹³⁶ Quincy called battles ‘the most brilliant of all the actions of war, whose consequences sometimes decide the loss or the aggrandizement of states’.¹³⁷ Voltaire excoriated Marshal Villeroi for having engaged in the ill-fated 1706 battle of Ramillies against the advice of his generals, simply for ‘the blind desire for glory’ (an insufficient

¹³³ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, V, p. 89 (quotation: On . . . doit . . . l’attribuer . . . à la volonté suprême du maître des Empires qui met des bornes, lorsqu’il plait, au progrès des armes des Princes.’).

¹³⁴ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 56 (quotation: ‘si la Providence eût voulu faire voir au monde . . . que la vertu courageuse & constante dans les approches des maux les plus accablans, loin de tomber dans le désespoir, tire au contraire . . . une nouvelle vigueur’).

¹³⁵ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 59 (quotation: ‘Les Dieux . . . se jouent de la prévoyance des hommes, & trompent également leurs espérances & leurs craintes. Ils coupent court aux événemens que tout le monde attendoit, ouvrent des passages & des chemins inconnus, & font réussir des desseins en apparence impossibles.’).

¹³⁶ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, p. 188 (quotation: ‘Les Batailles donnent & ôtent les Couronnes, décident entre les Souverains sans appel, finissent la guerre, & immortalisent le vainqueur.’).

¹³⁷ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 51 (quotation: ‘la plus brillante de toutes les actions de la guerre, dont les suites décident quelquefois de la perte ou de l’agrandissement des Etats’).

reason).¹³⁸ Santa Cruz noted that, in battle, ‘neither the superiority of troops in quality and number, nor the advantages of terrain are always a guarantee against the diverse accidents which could cause a rout’.¹³⁹ His response to the dangers of chance was first to set out how generals should protect themselves in advance from being blamed in case of defeat.¹⁴⁰

I assume that, to determine you to give battle, you either have the express order of your sovereign or permission to act according to circumstances. In the latter case, before fighting, assemble the council of your general officers and let those who have the greatest reputation approve your resolution, so that their opinion serves to justify you in case the result should be unfortunate.¹⁴¹

He noted that, if a general had specific orders from their sovereign not to fight, they should follow this even to the extent of not engaging when there were very favourable circumstances.¹⁴² Frederick was just as aware of such risks as anyone else, warning in his poem *The art of war*: ‘never engage without strong reasons / in those combats where death makes horrible harvests / [for] the forces of the state are in your power’.¹⁴³

Christopher Duffy has noted that contemporary authors frequently composed lists of reasons for engaging in battle, with the hope of winning rarely high among them.¹⁴⁴ These lists, and the advice they gave, were an attempt to control the risk inherent in battle. The golden rule, as Duffy noted, was to fight if one had more to gain from

¹³⁸ Voltaire, *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (2 vols., Berlin, 1751), I, p. 386 (quotation: ‘le désir aveugle de la gloire’).

¹³⁹ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, pp. 275-6 (quotation: ‘la supériorité des Troupes en qualité et en nombre, ni les avantages du terrain, ne sont pas toujours une sûreté contre les divers accidens, qui peuvent causer une déroute.’).

¹⁴⁰ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, pp. 275-7.

¹⁴¹ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, p. 276 (quotation: ‘je suppose, que pour vous déterminer à livrer le combat, vous en avez l’ordre exprès de votre Souverain, ou la permission d’agir selon les occurences. Dans ce dernier cas, avant de combattre, assemblez le Conseil de vos Officiers Généraux, & faites que ceux, qui ont le plus de réputation, approuvent votre résolution; afin que leur sentiment serve à vous justifier, si le succès étoit malheureux.’). See also Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, p. 310.

¹⁴² Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, p. 277.

¹⁴³ *Œuvres*, X, p. 311 (quotation: ‘. . . n’engagez jamais sans de fortes raisons / Ces combats où la mort fait d’a reuses moissons. / Les forces de l’État sont dans votre puissance.’).

¹⁴⁴ Duffy, *Military experience*, pp. 189-90. See *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 282-3; Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 188-90; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 52-3, 87, 89, 97.

winning than to lose from defeat.¹⁴⁵ Authors advised fighting in order to invade the enemy's territory or to prevent the enemy invading one's own, in order to relieve a fortress or protect one's own siege works, or in the worst case where one's army was cut off from supplies and there was nothing to lose from defeat. If allied troops with the army were leaving soon, or if the enemy were expecting reinforcements, authors recommended fighting before this happened.¹⁴⁶ Frederick's *General principles* followed convention in including such a list, with similar reasons to those of other contemporary authors.¹⁴⁷

Beside such cautious advice, however, contemporary authors also recognized that there were 'occasions when it is appropriate to attack the enemy'.¹⁴⁸ Feuquières, listing 'reasons for seeking out the enemy and fighting them', included: 'the disunion among those who command the [enemy] army, or their different interests, the incapacity of the enemy generals, their negligence in making camp or marching'.¹⁴⁹ Quincy, Feuquières and Santa Cruz noted that one should fight if the enemy army was weaker or was commanded by a general of little ability, if one had the advantage of terrain or weather, if one had superior artillery, or if one had a psychological advantage over the enemy troops.¹⁵⁰ Even de Saxe – not particularly in favour of fighting battles – advised attacking if circumstances were advantageous.¹⁵¹ Santa Cruz described how to *create* advantageous circumstances for battle through surprise attacks and ambushes (something Quincy also noted), and how to use ruses to bring

¹⁴⁵ Duffy, *Military experience*, p. 190; *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 283, 359; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 104; Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, pp. 287-8.

¹⁴⁶ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 282-3; Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 75, 205; Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, p. 5; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 52-3, 88-9, 97, 104, 109-10; Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, pp. 277-82, 287.

¹⁴⁷ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 94.

¹⁴⁸ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, p. 283 (quotation: 'de certaines Occasions ou il est à a propos d'attaquer les ennemis').

¹⁴⁹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 282-3 (quotation: 'Les raifons pour chercher l'Ennemi & le combattre', 'la désunion entre ceux qui commandent l'Armée, ou leurs intérêts différents; l'incapacité des Généraux ennemis; leur négligence dans les campemens ou les marches').

¹⁵⁰ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 282-3; Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, pp. 283-5, 288-9; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 104.

¹⁵¹ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 174, 214-6.

the enemy to battle.¹⁵² Reflecting this, Frederick's *Thoughts and general rules for war* included a whole section on the use of 'ruses' to gain advantage.¹⁵³

Most importantly, the military authors read by Frederick emphasized that generals should be able to respond to chance events and take advantage of them. Another of Montecuccoli's principles for deploying an army for battle was: 'profit from circumstances'.¹⁵⁴ Maurice de Saxe emphasized that a general should 'know how to profit from the favourable moment which occurs in battles and decides their success', and be 'in a state to profit from the situations the enemy find themselves in during the course of a combat'.¹⁵⁵ He added, 'I say nothing about . . . how this should be done, because the varieties of places and positions that battle produces should reveal it: the whole thing is to see and to know how to profit.'¹⁵⁶ 'I repeat', he said, 'that it needs only discernment to know how to profit from the thousand different kinds of situations which present themselves to us'.¹⁵⁷ Quincy noted that 'experience teaches that the greatest advantages that one wins in war often depend only on an opportunity which merely appears and escapes at the same instant.'¹⁵⁸ He noted the disgrace that accrued to an officer when he suffered a defeat through 'having neglected the advantages from which he could profit'.¹⁵⁹ Feuquières, Quincy and Santa Cruz listed such brief advantages which could lead a general to give battle: if the enemy had not yet had the chance to reconnoitre the terrain, if the enemy were exhausted by a long march, their forces temporarily divided, if they had not yet had the chance to entrench or to train their troops, and if two armies could be united to give a temporary

¹⁵² Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 104; Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, pp. 285-6, 290-6, 298-300-43.

¹⁵³ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 144-8.

¹⁵⁴ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, p. 70 (quotation: 'profiter des conjonctures').

¹⁵⁵ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 211-2 (quotations: 'savoir profiter du moment favorable qui se trouve dans les Batailles et qui decide de leur succès', 'en état de profiter des situations où se trouve l'ennemi pendant la durée de Combat').

¹⁵⁶ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 212 (quotation: 'Je ne dis point . . . comment cela doit se faire, parceque la varieté des lieux & celle des positions que le Combat produit doivent se demontrer: le tout et de voir & de savoir en profiter.').

¹⁵⁷ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 177 (quotation: 'je repete qu'il ne faut que du discernement pour savoir profiter de mille sortes de Situations qui se presentent à nous'). See also Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 206.

¹⁵⁸ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 22 (quotation: 'l'expérience apprend que les plus grands avantages que l'on remporte à la guerre, ne dépend souvent que d'une occasion qui ne fait que paroître, & qui s'échappent au même instant').

¹⁵⁹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 51 (quotation: 'avoir négligé les avantages dont il pouvoit profiter').

advantage over the enemy.¹⁶⁰ Even in defeat, Santa Cruz recommended a surprise counter-attack while the enemy was in disorder.¹⁶¹ Praising Franz von Mercy's retreat from Freiburg in 1644, La Moussaye said that Mercy retreated like 'a great captain who wishes never to be compelled to fight, and to be able to take his advantages when he is given the opportunity.'¹⁶²

Contemporary authors particularly stressed the need to take advantage of mistakes by the enemy. Quincy talked of fighting 'to profit from an advantage or from the disunions of the enemy, or from some fault that they have committed'.¹⁶³ Folard similarly talked about opportunities for taking advantage of the enemy's mistakes when they used the terrain wrongly.¹⁶⁴ Voltaire, having described the many mistakes of Villeroi's deployment at Ramillies, noted that 'Marlborough, who remarked all of these faults, arranged his army so as to profit from them.'¹⁶⁵ In the German version of his *General principles* – presumably in response to books he had read or to advice from his generals – Frederick added to his list of reasons for giving battle that one should fight 'to punish [the enemy] for a mistake he has made'.¹⁶⁶

Feuquières, Frederick's favourite author, particularly emphasized this. Presenting the advantages of a bold offensive at the start of a war, he stated that 'the advantages of this disposition reside entirely in the mistakes which an enemy may make at the beginning of an unexpected war, in the capacity of the general who knows how to profit from them, and in that of the general officers'.¹⁶⁷ Discussing the 1674 battle of Seneffe, Feuquières noted the negligence of the allies in leaving their rear guard

¹⁶⁰ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 283; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp.108-9; Santa Cruz, III, pp. 284, 287-9, 297-8.

¹⁶¹ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, pp. 289-90.

¹⁶² Moussaye, *Campagnes de Rocroi et de Fribourg*, p. 137 (quotation: 'un grand capitaine qui veut n'estre jamais forcé de combatre, & pouvoir prendre ses avantages quand on lui en donne l'ocasion.').

¹⁶³ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 104 (quotation: 'pour profiter de quelque avantage, ou de la desunions des ennemis, ou de quelque faute qu'ils ont faite').

¹⁶⁴ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 19.

¹⁶⁵ Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, p. 386 (quotation: 'Marlborough, qui remarquait toutes ces fautes, arrange son armée pour en profiter.').

¹⁶⁶ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 94 (quotation: 'um ihn wegen eines Fehlers zu strafen, welchen er begangen hat.').

¹⁶⁷ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 91 (quotation: 'Les avantages de cette disposition résident tous dans les fautes, que dans un commencement d'une Guerre imprévûë, un Ennemi peut faire; dans la capacité d'un Général qui sçait en profiter; & dans celle des Officiers Généraux').

exposed to French attack on the march, and asked: ‘how could one imagine that such a trivial precaution [of supporting the rear guard] would be neglected by presumption or by ignorance?’ He presented this as an example of the importance of being watchful for chance opportunities since, in such a case, one could not know that the enemy would make a mistake until they had made it.¹⁶⁸ Frederick in his *General principles* followed Feuquières directly, noting that, ‘sometimes, one does not premeditate an action but one is invited to engage by the faults of the enemy, which one must profit from to punish him.’ The German version of the work added that Seneffe was the best example of ‘how to punish an enemy for the faults he has committed’.¹⁶⁹ Frederick’s *Thoughts and general rules* applied the same principle to another Feuquières theme, the transition from a position of disadvantage to one of advantage.¹⁷⁰ It described how, when on the defensive, a skilled general, ‘must only give the enemy the opportunity to commit two faults, from which he must first profit and thereby change the state of the war.’¹⁷¹

That other Prussian officers had similar views can be seen from Major General Hans Karl von Winterfeldt’s fawning praise of Frederick’s *Thoughts and general Rules*. Winterfeldt flatteringly claimed that:

Whoever simply follows these instructions – which on one side instruct how one can profit more from the advantages one procures than was ever seen in a war, but also show, in the case of difficulty, how one should help oneself in the worst situations – they can be certain of the right thing to do on all possible occasions and likewise not be embarrassed in critical circumstances. This work is a protection to keep oneself fortunate and a universal medicine to cure all difficulties.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 291-2 (quotation, p. 292: ‘comment imaginer, qu’une précaution aussi triviale seroit négligée par présomption, ou par ignorance?’).

¹⁶⁹ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 95 (quotations: ‘Quelquefois on ne prémédite pas une action, mais on est invité de l’engager par des fautes de l’ennemi, dont il faut profiter pour l’en punir’, ‘Was endlich noch die Art betrifft, einen Feind wegen seiner begangenen Fauten zu strafen’).

¹⁷⁰ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 84, 93, 112-5.

¹⁷¹ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 142 (quotation: ‘il ne faut que donner lieu à l’ennemi de ne faire que deux fautes dont il faut profiter d’abord et changer ainsi l’état de la guerre’).

¹⁷² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 C Nr.2: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 11 November 1755 (quotation: ‘Wer dießen instructiones nur folgt, als welche auff der einen Seite anweißen: Wie mann von die avantaen, so mann sich dadurch verschaffen kann, mehr als jemahls, in einem Kriege geshen, profitiren; auff den difficilen fall aber auch zeigen, wie mann sich in denen shweresten [sic] Vorfällen helfen soll. Der Kann in allen möglichen Gelegenheiten seiner guten probablen Sache gewiß, als auch zugleich in critischen begebenheiten nicht ambarassirt

While Winterfeldt claimed that the king's work prescribed what to do in every situation – seeming to support the claims that eighteenth-century military thinkers tried to develop absolute rules – he in fact praised it primarily as providing a guide for how to react to *circumstances*: both positive and negative. This was the long eighteenth century's relationship to chance.

Most prized of all, as the General Staff noted, were manoeuvres that profited from circumstances while exposing the general to little or no risk.¹⁷³ De Saxe was unusual in arguing that it was not in fact necessary to fight battles.¹⁷⁴

I do not pretend to say on this point that, when one finds the occasion to crush the enemy, one does not attack them and profit from the false moves they may make, but I want to say that one can wage war *without giving anything to chance* [italics mine], and that is the highest point of perfection and of the skill of the general.¹⁷⁵

'In how many places one can attack the enemy without risking anything', noted de Saxe, 'but all these things are as diverse as the situations which produce them; it comes down to having intelligence, knowing the terrain, and daring, since you risk nothing'.¹⁷⁶ He gave a number of examples of such situations, noting that 'there are an infinity of . . . ruses in war which one can employ without committing oneself too much and whose consequences are of as much importance as that of a complete victory'.¹⁷⁷ Quincy, discussing Eugene's successful campaign in the Duchy of Mantua in December 1701, noted that, 'the contacts that the Imperials had in the country meant that they undertook no action or enterprise without the assurance . . . of

seyn. Es ist dieße beylage ein präservative umb sich glucklig zu erhalten, und eine Universal Medicin, umb alle Verlgheiten zu Curiren.').

¹⁷³ Großer Generalstab, *Friedrich deß Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege*, p. 323, 346.

¹⁷⁴ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 214-5.

¹⁷⁵ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 215 (quotation: 'Je ne pretends point dire pour cela, que lors que l'on trouve l'occasion d'ecraser l'ennemi qu'on ne l'attaque & que l'on ne profite des fausses demarches qu'il peut faire: mais je veux dire que l'on peut faire la guerre sans rien donner au hazard, & c'est le plus haut point de perfection & de l'habilité d'un General.').

¹⁷⁶ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 90 (quotation: 'en combien d'endroits ne peut-on pas l'attaquer sans rien risquer', 'mais tous ces choses sont aussi diverses que les situations qui les produisent, il ne s'agit que d'avoir de l'intelligence, connoître le terrain & oser; car vous ne risquez rien').

¹⁷⁷ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 174, 176, 209 (quotation, p. 209: 'Il y a une infinité de . . . ruses à la guerre que l'on peut emploïer sans trop se commettre & dont les suites sont d'une aussi grande consequence que celles d'une Victoire complete').

certain success.’¹⁷⁸ Similarly, Feuquière’s praise of Luxembourg’s 1690 campaign not only noted that his patron had been ‘always attentive to procure an advantage which would change the constitution of the war’ (i.e. ready to react to chance circumstances), but also presented it as an example of how ‘a skilful general with a genius superior to that of his enemy can, *without committing himself to the caprice of fortune* [italics mine], and solely by his own capacity, find the means to change the embarrassing state of that war to an offensive on his part.’¹⁷⁹

Frederick exemplified this approach to the play of chance, based on commanders being ready to respond to unexpected circumstances, and ideally avoiding risk to their own side, in his *Thoughts and general rules for war*:

The beauty of a project in war is that, *in risking little* [italics mine], you place the enemy in danger of losing all, for example: the surprise of Cremona, the battles of Luzara and Cassano, the passage of Thann and Belfort by Turenne, etc.¹⁸⁰

Frederick’s mention of the 1705 battle of Cassano in this passage (once again alongside Cremona and Luzzara) is reminiscent of Feuquières’s discussion of this battle. Feuquières described how the French army of Vendôme became separated as it tried to prevent Eugene crossing the river Adda, and Eugene took advantage by attacking the French troops near Cassano. He was defeated only due to Vendôme’s good fortune, as French reinforcements arrived just at the right time.¹⁸¹ ‘The project of Prince Eugene would have been very good’, remarked Feuquières. Eugene’s forces had for years been weaker than his opponents, ‘nevertheless he sought always to attack. He attacked effectively, but in a manner that he was never committed to an action that could be decisive against him . . . This talent is not one of the least

¹⁷⁸ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, pp. 484-8, 513 (quotation, p. 513: ‘Les intelligences que les Impériaux avoient dans le païs, furent cause qu’ils ne firent aucune démarche ni aucune entreprise qu’avec assurance . . . d’un succès certain.’).

¹⁷⁹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 117- 8 (quotations: ‘toujours attentif à se procurer un avantage qui changeât la constitution de la Guerre’, ‘un Général habile & d’un génie supérieur à celui de son Ennemi, peut sans se commettre au caprice de la fortune, & par sa capacité seule, trouver les moïens de changer la constitution embarrassante de cette Guerre en une offensive de sa part.’).

¹⁸⁰ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p.141 (quotation: ‘Le beau d’un projet de guerre est que, en risquant peu, vous mettez l’ennemi en danger de perdre tout; exemples : surprise de Crémone, batailles de Luzara, de Cassano, passage de Thann et Belfort, Turenne, etc.’).

¹⁸¹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 356-9.

important for a general and needs a continual attention'.¹⁸² In the case of Cassano too, therefore, Frederick had absorbed contemporary views which recognised that chance could upset careful calculations, but sought to take advantage of the opportunities created by chance events, preferably while not exposing one's own army to risks. Frederick's *Art of war* expressed similar views when describing Montecuccoli's campaign against Turenne: 'He must regulate his actions on the enemy / . . . seize his advantage / Retire without loss'.¹⁸³

Terrain

A key element in the uncertainties of war was the infinite variety of terrain on the battlefield and on campaign. The example of Frederick shows that the claims of Engberg-Pedersen that military thinkers of the long eighteenth century envisaged a 'flat space of war', devoid of terrain, and Jürgen Luh's claims that Frederick himself did not recognise the importance of terrain in war, must be set aside. Although cartographic surveys provided some better maps in the Napoleonic period, the concepts of war to which Frederick was exposed reveal more continuity than difference in the way space was perceived, and in the use made by commanders of representations of space.¹⁸⁴ What distinguished the long eighteenth century, particularly the earlier part of it, was that, rather than embracing the uncertainties of terrain as the later period would do, it tried to master them by calling for perfect knowledge on the part of generals.

Contemporary military thinkers were unanimous in emphasizing the vital importance of a commander having a detailed knowledge of the country in which they were campaigning. Quincy, Santa Cruz, Folard and Puységur all emphasized the vital importance of knowing the country, and Feuquières devoted an entire chapter of his

¹⁸² *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 357 (quotations: 'Le projet de M. le Prince Eugène étoit fort beau.' 'Cependant il cherchoit toujours à attaquer. Il attaquoit effectivement; mais c'étoit de maniere qu'il n'étoit jamais commis à une action, qui pût être décisive contre lui . . . Ce talent n'est pas du nombre des médiocres dans un Général & marque une attention continuelle').

¹⁸³ *Œuvres*, X, p. 277 (quotation: 'Il faut sur l'ennemi régler ses actions, / . . . saisir son avantage, / Se retirer sans perte.').

¹⁸⁴ Jeremy Black, 'A revolution in military cartography?: Europe 1650-1815', *The Journal of Military History* 73 (2009), pp. 65-8; Gat, *Origins of military thought*, pp. 74-5.

work to this.¹⁸⁵ The Habsburg Field Marshal Browne gave a practical example when he personally reconnoitred the mountains on the Silesian border in the 1750s.¹⁸⁶ Discussing both defensive and offensive warfare, Feuquières noted that ‘it is difficult to say anything which is a certain rule, since the course to follow depends absolutely on the nature of the country’.¹⁸⁷ Both theoretical texts and generals in the field particularly emphasized the huge role terrain played on the battlefield. Writing in the later seventeenth century, Montecuccoli stressed the need to take advantage of terrain in battle and the importance of deploying the different arms on terrain suited to them, and described different methods of deployment to suit different terrain.¹⁸⁸ Feuquières provided exhaustive examples from the wars of Louis XIV of how generals had benefitted from good knowledge of the terrain, and suffered from lack of understanding of it.¹⁸⁹ Quincy, Folard and de Saxe similarly described the tactical uses of terrain in battle.¹⁹⁰ Even Puysegur, despite his claims of introducing rules based on geometry, repeatedly emphasized that deployment in battle should be based on the terrain in a particular situation.¹⁹¹ He noted that, in some cases, mistakes resulting from misunderstandings of the terrain could lead to the loss of a battle.¹⁹²

Whereas Frederick’s apprenticeship as regimental commander had only encompassed the imposition of order upon war on the parade ground, once he began active campaigning in the Silesian Wars his generals quickly began to impress upon him that theoretically clever tactics were secondary to making proper use of the terrain. On 26 March 1741, responding to a proposal from the king that, due to the Austrian superiority in cavalry, ‘our cavalry should be strengthened with infantry in the order of battle’, Field Marshal Schwerin emphasized that ‘in a battle, one should primarily

¹⁸⁵ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 12-16; *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 131-74; Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, I, p. 48; Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 114-6; Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 190-1, 204-5; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 19, 22, 36, 46-7.

¹⁸⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 E: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 17.4.1754.

¹⁸⁷ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 85-90 (quotation, p. 85: ‘il est difficile de rien dire qui soit une règle certaine, la conduite à tenir dépendant absolument de la constitution du país.’).

¹⁸⁸ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 23, 44-6, 74, 96-7, 176, 190-1, 198-9.

¹⁸⁹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 131-74.

¹⁹⁰ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 17-22, 50, 70-1, 149-50.

Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 9, 32, 52, 87-8, 105; Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 174.

¹⁹¹ Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, I, pp. 48, 146, 148, 160-1, 165; Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 115-6, 128-9.

¹⁹² Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 61-2.

reflect on the terrain: the experienced generals who I have known have always had to make their dispositions on this basis.¹⁹³ Frederick's military treatises of the inter-war period fully accepted this principle, repeatedly noting the importance of generals knowing the terrain and taking advantage of it.¹⁹⁴ His *General principles of war*, his poem *The art of war*, and his more practically-focused *Instructions for the major generals of cavalry* all stressed the importance of deploying troops on terrain appropriate to them.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, Frederick's comments on terrain put his claims of presenting fundamental rules for war sharply into context. Directly after claiming, in the *General principles*, that he was providing rules for how to fight, Frederick emphasized knowledge of the country as one of the crucial prerequisites for planning a campaign.¹⁹⁶ Later in the work, Frederick was even more explicit. Describing how the Prussians could use his oblique order to defeat enemies superior in number, he said 'my first rule concerns the choice of terrain, the second the deployment for battle itself'.¹⁹⁷ His *Thoughts and general rules for war* similarly stated: 'the terrain is the first oracle one must consult, after which one can divine the disposition of the enemy through the cognisance that one has of the rules of war'.¹⁹⁸ Directly after his section laying out 'general rules' for battle tactics, Frederick said:

The great art of a general consists in knowing the ground well, in profiting from all that is favourable to him, in knowing how to make his disposition suitable for every occasion . . . one must . . . regulate oneself on that of the enemy and on the ground where one wishes to fight.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 26 March 1741 (quotation: 'daß unsere Cavallerie mit der Infanterie zuspicken sey, bey einer zuformirenden Ordre de Bataille', 'bey einer Bataille hauptsächlich auf das terrain zureflectiren ist, worauf die erfahrene Generals so ich gekant, allemahl ihre dispositions zumachen gemußet.').

¹⁹⁴ *Œuvres*, X, pp. 274-7; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 8, 30, 61, 66, 77, 124, 131-2, 134, 137; *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 131, 170, 176-7, 185, 187-90, 196.

¹⁹⁵ *Œuvres*, X, p. 274; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 29-30; *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 196-7.

¹⁹⁶ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 8.

¹⁹⁷ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 83 (quotation: 'ma première règle tombe sur le choix du terrain, la seconde sur la disposition de la bataille même').

¹⁹⁸ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 122 (quotation: 'Le terrain est le premier oracle que l'on doit consulter, après quoi on peut deviner la disposition de l'ennemi par la connaissance que l'on a des règles de la guerre').

¹⁹⁹ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 122-32 (quotation, p. 123 'règles générales'. Quotation, p. 131-2: 'le grand art d'un général consiste à bien connaître le terrain, à profiter de tout ce qu'il a de favorable pour lui, à savoir faire sa disposition convenable pour chaque occasion . . . il faut . . . qu'on se règle sur celle de l'ennemi et sur le terrain où l'on veut combattre.').

This was by no means a claim to have a mathematical formula for victory, nor was it a depiction of a ‘flat space of war’.

The importance that Frederick attached to a deep knowledge of terrain can be seen from the investigations particularly of the geography of Saxony undertaken by his military intimate, Winterfeldt, and the latter’s subordinate, Major Kalben, in the 1750s.²⁰⁰ Using the excuse of taking the waters at Carlsbad in July 1754, Winterfeldt made a detailed study of possible invasion routes into Saxony and thence over the Saxon mountains into Bohemia. He visited both the defensive position at Pirna and the precipitous Königstein fortress, built on a rock above the Elbe. Winterfeldt and Frederick clearly considered these the most important strategic positions in Saxony, and both were natural, not geometrical fortresses and the polar opposites of Engberg-Pedersen’s ‘flat space of war’.²⁰¹ In 1755, Kalben again examined the routes between the Saxon mountains and Bohemia, and reporting on their quality.²⁰² Winterfeldt’s reports referred to conversations he had had with Frederick on these subjects, showing that both king and general were well aware of the need to understand the infinite varieties of terrain.²⁰³ Such personal attentions would have been less necessary if Frederick had followed the even more far-reaching proposal of Field Marshal Schwerin in 1747, who argued for the formation of a permanent corps of guides commanded by ‘officers expert in geography’. They should ‘take cognisance of all the roads, paths, fords of rivers and streams, whether in the plains, undergrowth, forests, mountains, lakes etc.’, producing ‘maps as exact as they are able to’.²⁰⁴ Schwerin’s proposal pointed toward the large staff that Napoleon would later use to collect topographical and reconnaissance information and thus to an extent master the uncertainties of knowledge.²⁰⁵ In rejecting this suggestion, Frederick revealed

²⁰⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 C: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 10.7.1750; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 D: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 22.8.1753.

²⁰¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 E: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 28.6.1754, 14.8.1754.

²⁰² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 F: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 30.8.1755.

²⁰³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 E: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 14.8.1754.

²⁰⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 O: ‘Chapitre concernant les guides et les espions’, 18.5.1747 (quotations: ‘les officiers Experts dans la geographie’, ‘prissent Connoissances, de tous les chemins, sentiers, Ponts, guets des rivieres et ruisseaux, soit dans les Plains, Broussailles, forets, montagnes, marais, Lacs etc.’, ‘des Cartes aussi exacte qu’il leur sera possible’).

²⁰⁵ Van Creveld, ‘Napoleon and the Dawn of Operational Warfare’, p. 24.

another difference between the early eighteenth century and the later period.²⁰⁶ Not only did it try to control uncertainty rather than embracing it, but it rejected administrative systems to provide military knowledge, focusing instead on the individual noble commander and their close intimates.

This emphasis on understanding terrain through the personal knowledge of the noble commander was exemplified by the importance placed on ‘coup d’oeil’: the ability of a general to read terrain visually. In the *Extract* he commissioned the work of Folard, Frederick specifically inserted a 21-page section on coup d’oeil – one seventh of the whole work – in place of Folard’s treatise on columns.²⁰⁷ Folard recommended hunting as a good way to develop coup d’oeil.²⁰⁸ Feuquières also repeatedly praised the coup d’oeil of his patron the Duke of Luxembourg at the battle of Fleurus in 1690, which enabled him to identify the opportunity for making an outflanking movement unnoticed by the enemy, and to judge perfectly the time it would take to complete.²⁰⁹ Frederick himself devoted a separate section of his *General principles of war* to coup d’oeil.²¹⁰ In his *Art of war* Frederick described how a commander ‘must reconnoitre everything’ and could thereby win ‘by a masterful coup d’oeil’, citing Condé’s 1744 victory at Freiburg and Maurice de Saxe’s 1747 victory at Lauffeld as examples.²¹¹ Describing the qualities of a great general, Frederick listed ‘the political skill of Marlborough’ alongside his ‘coup d’oeil’.²¹²

Engberg-Pedersen argued for a transformation in the visualisation of terrain by the end of the eighteenth century, with improvements in map-making technology turning the map into ‘a useful tool for the management of space’.²¹³ He argued that the Napoleonic period was the first time when it was possible to plan out operations in

²⁰⁶ Dettlof Graf von Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin: ein Lebensbild aus Preußens großer Zeit* (Berlin, 1928), pp. 211-2, 414.

²⁰⁷ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 5-25; Langendorf, ‘Folard en Allemagne’, p. 478.

²⁰⁸ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 10-12.

²⁰⁹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 137, 311-3.

²¹⁰ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 27-8.

²¹¹ *Œuvres*, X, pp. 314-5 (quotations, p.315: ‘il doit tout reconnaître’, ‘par un coup d’œil de maître’).

²¹² *Œuvres*, VII, p. 100 (quotation: ‘le coup d’œil et la politique de Marlborough’).

²¹³ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 146-62 (quotation, p. 162).

advance on the map.²¹⁴ Such an approach had, however, already existed since the time of Louis XIV at least: Feuquières, Quincy, and Santa Cruz all proposed the use of maps to understand the terrain.²¹⁵ Quincy, Folard and Puységur called for tracing out campaigns on a map in advance, either as a pedagogical tool or as a stage in planning.²¹⁶ Moreover, as Engberg-Pedersen has noted, even in the later period, it required skill to fit maps to the actual terrain.²¹⁷ During the 1812 Russian campaign, French forces still used sketched maps comparable to those of previous eras.²¹⁸ The military authors read by Frederick also described how to supplement maps with personal observation, as well as conversations with those who knew the country, Santa Cruz in particular noting that maps were not always reliable.²¹⁹ Puységur included a specific section on how to interrogate local guides.²²⁰ De Saxe noted that particular mountain passes might be unknown even to the local inhabitants, who had no need of them, and that a general should therefore scout them himself.²²¹ Frederick himself, in his *General principles of war*, argued that, to acquaint oneself with a country, one should start from the map, saying that this provided a good understanding of flat country, but that wooded and mountainous terrain needed to be examined personally.²²²

Such ideas of the need to use both maps and personal observation were not just confined to theoretical texts. On 3 January 1741, as the Prussian forces advanced across Silesia, Field Marshal Schwerin wrote to Frederick that he had ‘neither local officials nor maps’ for the territory he was about to enter. Anticipating that Frederick

²¹⁴ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp.151, 158-9.

²¹⁵ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 131; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 7-8, 19, 22; Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 209-12.

²¹⁶ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 16; Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, p. 47; Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 114-5, 186; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 7-8.

²¹⁷ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 163-6.

²¹⁸ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 171-5. For the limitations of Napoleonic-era maps, see van Creveld, ‘Napoleon and the Dawn of Operational Warfare’, p. 16. For a famous example of a sketched military map, see Geoffrey Parker, *The army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567-1659: the logistics of Spanish victory and defeat in the Low Countries’ wars* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 2004), pp. 76-8.

²¹⁹ Feuquière, pp. 131, 137; *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 16-7; Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, pp. 194-6; Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 115-6, 118-9; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 19, 22, 53-4; Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 210-12.

²²⁰ Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 116-7.

²²¹ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 160-1.

²²² *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 25-7.

might have acquired good maps from his recent capture of Breslau, Schwerin wrote, 'I beg [you] . . . most humbly to . . . send me a couple [of maps] of each duchy . . . for I foresee that, in the provinces where there are enemy troops about, I will never have local officials to guide me.'²²³ He explained two days later that local maps of the individual duchies would be particularly valuable because they were so exact. 'I am in great need of them for the direction of my marches, as the local officials report that they are restrained by the troops who are with them, so that I am obliged to march directed by the general map, which is appalling.'²²⁴ Thus, not just in theoretical treatises but also in practical campaigning, maps were seen as varying in quality, but nevertheless important in the interaction of generals with the uncertainties of the terrain, and a possible replacement for local experts where the latter were not available.

Thus, there was no lack of awareness in this period of the military importance of terrain. While map technology would certainly develop toward the end of the century, maps were already established as a method of visualising the military world, operating in an intimate relationship with personal observation. What distinguished the long eighteenth century's approach to space in the military world was not an attempt to flatten it, but rather the claim that commanders could reduce its recognised complexities to order through perfect knowledge. Folard perfectly expressed the search for perfection which was embodied in these expectations, and the way in which they were bound up in ideas of bringing order to war, when he declared: 'It is almost impossible for the general of an army to regulate the state of the war well and judge the designs of his enemy . . . if he is not perfectly instructed on the country in which he is waging war'.²²⁵ Quincy similarly talked of the need not just for geographical knowledge in general but for 'a perfect knowledge of the country where

²²³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 3.1.1741 (quotations: 'ni commissaires, ni cartes', 'je . . . supplie tres humblement de . . . m'en envoyer une couple de chaque Duché, . . . car je prevoir, que dans des provinces, ou il y a des troupes ennemis, je n'en aurai jamais des commissaires pour me guider.').

²²⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 5.1.1741 (quotation: 'j'en aurai un très grand besoin pour la direction de mes marches, car les Commissaires me mandent tous qu'ils sont arrêtés par les troupes qui sont chez eux, ainsi qu'il faut que je marche en me dirigeant par la carte generale, qui est tres vitieuse.').

²²⁵ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 14 (quotation: 'il est presque impossible à un Général d'armée de bien régler l'état de la guerre, & de juger les desseins de son ennemi . . . s'il n'est parfaitement instruit du pays où il fait la guerre.').

he wages war', saying that without it, 'one misses important opportunities'.²²⁶ Knowledge of the terrain was thus intimately connected to mastering the play of chance in war. Quincy referred again and again to the need for 'perfect knowledge' of the country.²²⁷ In the case of a battlefield, this meant that a general should, 'not ignore the smallest defile, nor the streams, woods, marsh, ravines, heights etc.' This was to be achieved through personal reconnaissance.²²⁸ Puysegur similarly said, 'it is . . . necessary that in order to issue the appropriate orders the general should have in his head an exact knowledge of the whole country which his army occupies.'²²⁹ Moreover, he expected that the general would use knowledge of the terrain to anticipate every possibility:

To learn to put into practice the operations of war on any terrain whatsoever . . . there are two elements that one must possess. The first is knowledge of the country in which you want to carry out your operations . . . The second necessary element is that, having achieved the most exact knowledge that one can of a country, one conceives of all the advantages and disadvantages which it can cause for the operations which one wants to undertake.²³⁰

This search for perfection could be seen for instance in the eighteenth century's definition of *coup d'oeil*. For the Napoleonic period, Engberg-Pedersen equated *coup d'oeil* with 'the tact of judgment (sic)' – an instinctive reaction to circumstances 'in opposition to rational deliberation' – which he described as developing in this period.²³¹ In contrast, Folard defined 'military *coup d'oeil*' as 'the art of recognising the nature and the different situations of the country where one wages and where one

²²⁶ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 19, 22 (quotations, p.19: 'une connoissance parfaite du pays où il fait la guerre', 'on a manqué d'occasions importantes').

²²⁷ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 22, 33-4, 54 (quotations: 'connoissance parfaite').

²²⁸ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 53 (quotation: 'n'ignore pas le moindre défilé, ni les ruisseaux, bois, marais, ravines, hauteurs, &c').

²²⁹ Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 72 (quotation: 'il est . . . nécessaire que pour donner ses ordres justes, le général ait dans sa tête une connoissance exacte de tout le pays qu'occupe son armée'). See also Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, p. 186.

²³⁰ Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 118-9 (quotation: 'pour apprendre à mettre en pratique sur quelque terrain que ce soit des opérations de guerre . . . il y a deux parties nécessaires qu'il faut posséder. La première est la connoissance du pays sur lequel vous voulez faire vos opérations. . . . La seconde partie nécessaire, est qu'ayant pris d'un pays la connoissance la plus exacte qu'on aura pû, l'on conçoive tous les avantages ou desavantages qu'il peut causer aux opérations que l'on veut faire').

²³¹ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 7-8, 76-82, 88-102, 165-7 (quotations, pp. 7, 166-7).

wants to carry the war, the advantages and disadvantages of the camps and posts one wants to occupy, and those which could be favourable or unfavourable to the enemy . . . It is solely by this knowledge of the whole of the country where one carries the war that a great captain can foresee the events of a whole campaign and render himself . . . the master'.²³² This ambition to achieve 'knowledge of the whole of the country' was clearly different from the Napoleonic willingness to accept limits on the rational. Frederick similarly defined coup d'oeil as not only 'the talent of knowing on the field how many troops can be contained in the terrain', but also 'that of judging from the first moment *all the advantages that one can draw from the terrain*' [italics mine].²³³

A practical example of this attempt to achieve perfect knowledge of the terrain, which went far beyond the actual capacities of the time to achieve them, could be found in Frederick's *Directive* to Schwerin when leaving him in command in Silesia on 24 January 1741. Among other things, Frederick ordered that, 'the engineers with the army must plot the whole land from Upper Silesia . . . to the Moravian border and if possible to Jabluncka and Teschen, and have an exact map made of it'.²³⁴ Reflecting the relationship between maps on paper and personal knowledge of space, Frederick ordered that 'exact and reliable information must be obtained from the people of the land as to whether and at what time of year the rivers flood'.²³⁵ While these were in theory very sensible measures, and Quincy had in fact noted the importance of just such information, the Prussian engineers were in no position to achieve this in a matter of months in the middle of winter.²³⁶ Frederick's order was an attempt to

²³² *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 5-6 (quotation, p. 6: 'coup d'oeil militaire . . . l'art de connoître la nature & les différentes situations du pays où l'on fait & où l'on veut porter la guerre, les avantages & les désavantages des camps & des postes que l'on veut occuper, comme ceux qui peuvent être favorables ou désavantageux à l'ennemi . . . C'est uniquement par cette connoissance de tout un pays où l'on porte la guerre, qu'un grand Capitaine peut prévoir les événemens de toute une campagne & s'en rendre . . . le maître').

²³³ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 27-8 (quotation: 'le talent de juger sur-le-champ le nombre de troupes que peut contenir un terrain . . . celui de juger dès le premier moment de tous les avantages que l'on peut tirer du terrain').

²³⁴ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 94* (quotation: 'die . . . bey der Armee seyende Ingenieurs das gantze Lande von Ober-Schlesien . . . bis nach der Mährenschen Grentze auch wo nur mögl. ist nach Jabluncka und das Teschensche hiedurch accurat aufnehmen und eine exacte Charte davon fertigen laßen').

²³⁵ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 94* (quotation: 'Von denen Leuthen des Landes muß genau und zuverlässige Kundschaft eingezogen, ob und zu welcher Jahres-Zeit die Flüße aufschwellen').

²³⁶ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 94.

reduce the territory of Silesia to order: whether in the literal sense of controlling it with armed force or in the intellectual sense of reducing it to exact maps. The *Instruction* for instance included orders that local farmers should be employed to build bridges and dams so that the artillery and baggage could cross, and that hussar units should ‘swarm’ around the borders of Silesia, ‘so that not the smallest thing comes through without it being reported in good time’.²³⁷ As later chapters will describe, in the following months the Prussians were by no means able either to control the borders of Silesia in this way or to achieve cooperation from the inhabitants, and the difficulties they experienced reflected the vain attempts of eighteenth-century warfare not to flatten the space of war but rather to reduce it to order.

Conclusion

Thus, arguments that warfare in the long eighteenth century was substantially shaped by Newtonian physics or by a neo-classical search for fundamental patterns, or that it sought to reduce the uncertainties of space and chance to mathematical or geometrical calculation, must be treated with caution, at least for the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. While specialist engineers undoubtedly used mathematical calculation, the rulers and high nobles who made up the bulk of generals, military authors and indeed infantry and cavalry officers did not see it as necessary to engage with such approaches. Even when undertaking sieges, the form of warfare most governed by calculation, noble commanders with limited mathematical literacy could set such calculations aside. Quite in contrast to the claims of Engberg-Pedersen, commanders and military writers in this period were painfully aware of the uncertainties both of terrain and chance. The difference from the Napoleonic period lay not in their awareness of this but in their response to it. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars would see an embrace of uncertainty, and Napoleon would use a large staff to provide the topographical and reconnaissance information he needed (something prefigured by Schwerin’s proposal for the establishment of a permanent corps of guides). Frederick’s rejection of Schwerin’s proposal reflected the values of

²³⁷ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 94*-5* (quotation, p. 95*: ‘herumschwärmen, damit nicht das geringste durchkan, wovon man nicht in Zeiten benachrichtiget wäre’).

the world of nobles and monarchs that still dominated warfare. Rather than using either scientific calculation or administrative infrastructure to provide knowledge, the early eighteenth century focused on the personal knowledge of the royal commander-in-chief and his close intimates, turning the general into a kind of military despot, who was expected to compute everything in their own head, bestriding the recognized complexities of terrain and chance through perfect knowledge and judgement. Knowledge in warfare in the early eighteenth century meant not science but military absolutism.

History

This chapter examines how the understanding of history shaped warfare in the early eighteenth century. It also uses the military perspective to shed light on contemporary concepts of time. It shows that Frederick, and many of his contemporaries, saw themselves as living in an era defined by the system of ordered states created after the European religious wars, and as practising a new form of warfare shaped by this order. Alongside this *political* concept of post-Westphalian order, the dominant *cultural* model (for Frederick at least) was France under Louis XIV, while the wars of Louis XIV (and the War of the Spanish Succession in particular) were enormously important in the emotional *memory* of European noble officers. Frederick's military methods were particularly oriented toward the examples of great generals of these wars, and French generals in particular. On the other hand, the classical world also remained important for historical consciousness in the early eighteenth century. Frederick's focus on the 'Century of Louis XIV' meant that he laid less stress on classical examples than some other contemporary writers. In particular, he made virtually no mention of classical battle tactics. Instead, the classics were important in helping Frederick articulate his strategic ideas, and particularly his ambitions for territorial expansion. The concept of the 'conqueror' was of key importance here. While also used for contemporary figures, it was most associated with the classical examples of Alexander and Caesar, and with conquests that did not just take place within the existing states system but actually challenged it.

Frederick's use of such currents of thought was also shaped by his own personality. It is well known that Frederick was temperamentally inclined to take risks, an inclination surely stemming from his violent upbringing.¹ The aggressive tactics – based on shock rather than firing – that many authors described as typically French therefore also appealed to him for emotional reasons, and he eagerly oriented his tactical doctrine in the first part of his reign toward them. The concept of the

¹ Tim Blanning, *Frederick the Great King of Prussia* (London, 2015), p. 266; Wolfgang Burgdorf, *Friedrich der Große: ein biografisches Porträt* (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna, 2011), pp. 7-11, 23; Johannes Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse: der König und seine Zeit* (Munich, 2004), p. 173-4.

conqueror was similarly associated with risk-taking at the strategic level, and Frederick embraced this, too. In contradiction to claims that eighteenth-century warfare was fundamentally cautious – with Frederick often portrayed as an exception – this chapter will show that there were various currents of thought on risk within eighteenth-century war-making. Ideas of risk-taking at the strategic level were particularly associated with certain generals and military thinkers of Louisquatorzean France, and some writers laid out plans for surprise attacks which precisely paralleled Frederick’s invasions of Silesia and Saxony. The fundamental influence of French examples on Frederick’s war-making shows that claims of Frederick as part of a ‘German way of war’ must be set aside.²

There has been little systematic analysis of how warfare in the long eighteenth century was shaped by contemporaries’s understanding of the past. Johannes Kunisch emphasized the promise of states in the long eighteenth century to bring order and to civilize warfare. Citing Frederick’s introduction to his *Excerpt* of the work of Folard, where Frederick questioned the relevance of ancient warfare for his own time and claimed that modern generals had nothing to learn from warfare before the Dutch Revolt, Kunisch argued that this reflected ‘the self-satisfied certainty that his century, so proud of its intellect, had been the first successfully to produce an art of war bounded by reason.’³ In contrast, numerous authors have noted the influence of classical history on military practice in the long eighteenth century (although Thomas Biskup has noted the absence of work on the eighteenth-century reception of a figure like Julius Caesar).⁴ The fundamental importance of neo-stoicism, and its influence on military drill, is well known.⁵ It has also been noted that Enlightenment ideas

² Robert M. Citino, *The German way of war: from the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence, KS, 2005).

³ *Extrait tiré des commentaires du Chevalier Folard sur l'histoire de Polybe, pour l'usage d'un officier* (Sans Souci, 1753), p. 4; Johannes Kunisch, *Der kleine Krieg: Studien zum Heerwesen des Absolutismus* (Wiesbaden, 1973), pp. 39-40, 45-8 (quotation, p. 48: ‘der selbstzufriedenen Gewißheit, daß erst sein geistesstolzes Jahrhundert einer durch den Intellekt gebändigten Kriegskunst zum Siege verholfen habe’).

⁴ Thomas Biskup, ‘The Enlightenment’, in Miriam Griffin, ed., *A companion to Julius Caesar* (Chichester, West Sussex, 2015), pp. 399-400, 409; John A. Lynn, *Battle: a history of combat and culture* (new edn., Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 126-7.

⁵ Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the early modern state* (Cambridge, 1982), passim (esp. pp. 4-9); Gerhard Oestreich, *Antiker Geist und moderner Staat bei Justus Lipsius (1547-1606): der Neustoizismus als politische Bewegung*, ed. Nicolette Mout (Göttingen, 1989), pp. 39-41.

about war – for instance those of Rousseau and Guibert – idealised ancient Rome as a model of military virtue and universal military service by citizens.⁶ Azar Gat argued that the first break from this was the revolutionary and romantic period, which saw only the recent past as valuable for guiding future action.⁷

As with so much of the literature on warfare in the long eighteenth century, such previous work has much truth in it, but the detailed case study of Frederick offers a much more subtle picture. This chapter will demonstrate that Frederick certainly saw his warfare on a *tactical* level as overwhelmingly the product of the post-Westphalian period. Although, as has been seen, the imposition of order on war was an important part of this, the cultural – and particularly military – legacy of King Louis XIV of France also played a key role. Frederick followed the contemporary culture of ordered warfare, and sought glory in the tradition of French ‘baroque’ masculinity, but he was also keen to advertise himself as following in the glorious tradition of the great generals of the Sun King. He avidly read about their campaigns, sought to ape their tactics, and took care to describe for posterity how he was doing this. Moreover, Frederick as a young man followed the particularly French tactical tradition based on attacking with the bayonet.

While Frederick – in common with several key authors of the military school of high absolutism – downplayed the *tactical* relevance of ancient warfare for his own time, this chapter will show that, on the strategic level, the early eighteenth century embraced classical examples as offering an alternative model of war: one that involved conquests that changed the shape of a states system, and that was willing to take great risks. This enables a new perspective on the persistent claim that eighteenth-century warfare at the strategic level was limited, with practical constraints and the search for order and perfection generally leading *ancien régime* commanders to seek only modest operational objectives.⁸ David Bell typified this view, arguing

⁶ David A. Bell, *The first total war: Napoleon's Europe and the birth of warfare as we know it* (New York, NY, 2007), pp. 78-81.

⁷ Azar Gat, *The origins of military thought from the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 8-9.

⁸ John Childs, *Armies and warfare in Europe, 1648 – 1789* (Manchester, 1982), pp. 102-4, 111-5, 131-41; Christopher Duffy, *The military experience in the age of reason* (London and New York, NY, 1987), pp. 3, 11-13, 16-18, 156, 189; Michael Howard, *War in European history* (Oxford, London, New York, NY, 1976), pp.70-2; Johannes Kunisch, *Das Mirakel*

that eighteenth-century war was restrained by noble culture, and that the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, in contrast, introduced ‘a style of rapid movement and decisive clashes, linked to an acceptance of massive political risks.’⁹ Frederick the Great has frequently been presented as an exception to this rule – launching large offensives, frequently seeking battle and taking huge risks – but even the German General Staff concluded that he was ultimately forced to restrict himself within the limits of contemporary warfare.¹⁰

This chapter will show both that Frederick was broadly representative of his time and that there was a considerable range of opinion within eighteenth-century military thought at the strategic level. Eighteenth-century military operations were indeed often limited both in practice and in theory, but there was a significant body of contemporary opinion that conceived of them in much more ambitious terms, and Frederick’s concept of taking risks to achieve ambitious political objectives reflected the literature and political and military thought that he read. Such ideas were symbolized by the concept of the ‘conqueror’, drawing above all on examples from classical literature and the political thought of Machiavelli, but also from modern examples: King Charles XII of Sweden above all, but also to an extent Louis XIV

des Hauses Brandenburg: Studien zum Verhältnis von Kabinettpolitik und Kriegführung im Zeitalter des Siebenjährigen Krieges (Munich, 1978), pp. 56-75; Johannes Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg: Studien zur bellizistischen Disposition des absoluten Fürstenstaates* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), pp. 89, 94-5; Johannes Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse: der König und seine Zeit* (Munich, 2004), pp. 176-81; Jürgen Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa, 1650-1800* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2004), pp. 222-3; Hew Strachan, *European armies and the conduct of war* (London, 1983), pp. 8-22.

⁹ Bell, *First total war*, pp. 24-51, 136, 302-4 (quotation, p. 136).

¹⁰ Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe*, pp. 26, 44, 104, 114-5, 141; Hans Delbrück, *Die Strategie des Perikles erläutert durch die Strategie Friedrichs des Großen: mit einem Anhang über Thucydides und Kleon* (Berlin, 1890), p. 4; Anders Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance: the Napoleonic Wars and the disorder of things* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2015), pp. 30-3; Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Friedrich des Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege in ihrer Entwicklung von 1745 bis 1756* (Berlin 1899), pp. 231, 298-9, 323, 341-53, 372-6; Reinhold Koser, ‘Die preussische Kriegführung im Siebenjährigen Kriege’, *Historische Zeitschrift* 92 (1904), pp. 257-63; Kunisch, *Der Kleine Krieg*, pp. 47-8; Kunisch, *Mirakel des Hauses Brandenburg*, pp. 75, 77-82; Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg*, pp. 95-6, 100, 102-5; Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 432-7; Jürgen Luh, ‘Military action and military reflection: some thoughts on Frederick’s "éléments de castramétrie et de tactique" of 1770’, in *Friedrich300 – Studien und Vorträge: Studien und Vorträge zur preußischen Geschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts der Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten* (http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/friedrich300-studien/luh_action, last accessed 24 November 2017); Andreas Pečar, *Autorität durch Autorschaft? Friedrich II. als Militärschriftsteller* (Halle-Wittenberg, 2012), pp. 31-4; Strachan, *European Armies*, pp. 11-12.

himself. Frederick's personality made him an unusually strong adherent of this view, but he was no more than representative of a general trend.

The Century of Louis XIV

The first chapter demonstrated that Frederick reflected the long eighteenth century's search for order. He also thought of and portrayed himself as historically situated in the era inaugurated by the Peace of Westphalia. While Frederick's *History of the House of Brandenburg* started with the earliest Brandenburg rulers, Frederick's first detailed analysis of his predecessors began with the Thirty Years War, and this conflict clearly marked the start of what Frederick understood to be his own time. Frederick stressed the devastation of Brandenburg during the war, and the humiliation of Elector George William. Succeeding Hohenzollern rulers were portrayed steadily rebuilding Brandenburg-Prussia and giving it the strength to compete in great power politics.¹¹ Andreas Pečar has argued that Frederick portrayed himself as the culmination of this process.¹² Christopher Clark's argument that Frederick described his state as not part of any progress through history – merely a continual rise and fall of states in competition with each other – underlines Frederick's portrayal of himself as living in an unchanging post-Westphalian world.¹³

Similarly, Frederick William I warned his successor to 'tolerate' 'the Catholic religion . . . as far as the Westphalian peace requires it', showing that he too was

¹¹ *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss (30 vols., Berlin, 1846-56), I, passim, esp. pp. 36-64. Christopher Clark, *Iron kingdom: the rise and downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (London etc., 2006), pp. 19-37 analysed the significance of the Thirty Years War for Brandenburg-Prussia in similar terms.

¹² Andreas Pečar, 'Selbstinszenierung auf Kosten der Dynastie? Friedrich II. als Autor der "Denkwürdigkeiten des Hauses Brandenburg"', in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große und die Dynastie der Hohenzollern. Beiträge des fünften Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 30. September / 1. Oktober 2011* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-dynastie/pecar_geschichtsschreibung, last accessed 1 December 2017), passim, esp. paragraphs 12, 34-5.

¹³ Christopher Clark, "'Le roi historien" zu Füßen von Clio', in Bernd Sösemann and Gregor Vogt-Spira, eds., *Friedrich der Große in Europa: Geschichte einer wechselvollen Beziehung* (2 vols., Stuttgart, 2012), I, p. 173.

aware of the need to avoid the dreaded spectre of religious war.¹⁴ Frederick William instructed Frederick's tutor only to teach him in detail the history of the past 150 years, and in 1717 gave similar instructions for the education of the orphaned son of Major General von Albe, saying that the boy should learn the history of the past hundred years (i.e. since the outbreak of the Thirty Years War).¹⁵ Despite Frederick's supposed contempt for the Holy Roman Empire, Peter Wilson has shown that he engaged in imperial politics on numerous levels.¹⁶ During the War of Austrian Succession, Frederick repeatedly placed his military operations within the framework of imperial institutions, in the service of the Bavarian Emperor Charles VII. Frederick's 1744 invasion of Bohemia, undertaken notionally on behalf of the Emperor, and reliant on the cooperation of Saxony to secure his supply lines, made little practical sense, but reflected Frederick's awareness of the advantages of conducting his war-making within the post-Westphalian states system.¹⁷

Alongside the *political* programme of a stronger state ensuring order and religious peace, the central *cultural* programme of Frederick's reign, as Thomas Biskup has shown, was to emulate the cultural achievements of Louis XIV as set out in Voltaire's *Century of Louis XIV*, drafts of which Frederick had already read in the 1730s, and which portrayed Louis as important because of his patronage of the arts. The 1750 Berlin carrousel was the climax of this programme, but Biskup noted that even Frederick's 1780 tract *On German literature* aimed to defend the literature of the French *grand siècle*, the 'Century of Louis XIV', whose promotion had been central to Frederick's cultural endeavours.¹⁸ Indeed, it specifically referred to the 'Century of

¹⁴ Richard Dietrich, ed., *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern* (Cologne, Vienna, 1986), p. 235 (quotation: 'Wahs die Kattolische Religion anlanget, müßet Ihr sie tolleriren soweit als der westfällische fride mit sich bringet').

¹⁵ Friedrich Cramer, ed., *Zur Geschichte Friedrich Wilhelms I. und Friedrichs II. Könige von Preußen* (3rd edn., Leipzig, 1835), p. 14; Tharau, *Geistige Kultur des preußischen Offiziers*, pp. 66, 73-4.

¹⁶ Peter H. Wilson, 'Prussia's relations with the Holy Roman Empire, 1740-1786', *The Historical Journal* 51 (2008), pp. 337-371.

¹⁷ Christopher Duffy, *The army of Frederick the Great* (2nd edn., Chicago, IL, 1996), pp. 51-2; Wilson, 'Relations with the Holy Roman Empire', p. 348.

¹⁸ Thomas, Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe: Inszenierung des Preußenkönigs in Fest und Zeremoniell, 1740-1815* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2012), pp. 10-12, 29, 69-72, 74-6, 78-81, 95-7; Jürgen Luh, *Der Große: Friedrich II. von Preussen* (Munich, 2011), pp.41-44; Voltaire, *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (2 vols., Berlin, 1751), I, pp. 1-9. For Frederick reading the *Siècle* in the 1730s, see *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 89, 111, 206, 216, 222-3, 232, 270, 287.

Louis XIV'.¹⁹ Frederick clearly sought to achieve a comparable 'Century of Frederick' – d'Alembert specifically used the term to him in 1767 – and not only in cultural but also military terms.²⁰ Frederick did not only want to emulate the king who presided over such cultural patronage but also the glorious generals who served him. As the fifth chapter will emphasize, Frederick consciously saw and described himself as out-doing Louis by commanding his armies personally, rather than simply letting his generals win battles for him, as the French king had done. In 1774 and 1775, Voltaire, flatteringly evoking the 'Century of Frederick', referred not to Louis himself but to his great generals and ministers, saying, 'Europe is no longer in the time of Condé and Turenne, but in the time of Frederick', 'Colbert, Louvois and Turenne were not worth as much as the one whose name begins with an F.'²¹ Frederick similarly called Friedrich Wilhelm von Retzow, one of his favourites, 'my little Colbert'.²²

Alongside the *political* significance of the post-Westphalian period and the *cultural* importance of a 'Century of Louis/Frederick', the wars of Louis XIV had great *emotional* importance in the memory of the European military aristocracy. Frederick's father, Frederick William I, regarded his participation in the 1709 battle of Malplaquet as the best day of his life, and celebrated it every year with his old comrades.²³ The memory of these wars was scarcely less important for Frederick's generation, as seen from the gallery of great generals that his brother, Prince Henry, created at Schloss Rheinsberg in 1778. Alongside contemporary Prussian commanders, all the other generals memorialised there were French commanders

¹⁹ *Œuvres*, VII, pp. 136-7 (quotation, p. 137: 'siècle de Louis XIV').

²⁰ *Œuvres*, XXIV, p. 469.

²¹ *Œuvres*, XXIII, pp. 336, 356 (quotations: 'L'Europe n'est plus au temps des Condé et des Turenne, mais elle est au temps des Frédéric.' 'Colbert, Louvois et Turenne ne valent pas celui dont le nom commence par un F').

²² Friedrich-Karl Tharau, *Die geistige Kultur des preußischen Offiziers von 1640 bis 1806* (Mainz, 1968), pp. 80-1.

²³ Tim Blanning, *Frederick the Great King of Prussia* (London, 2015), pp.13-14, 28; Bernhard R. Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau und das Kriegswesen in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte Dessau et al, eds., *Fürst Leopold I. von Anhalt-Dessau (1676-1747) >> Der Alte Dessauer<<: Ausstellung zum 250. Todestag* (Dessau, 1997), p. 23; *Œuvres*, XXV, p. 550; Carmen Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs: Netzwerke und Patronage in der preußischen Armee, 1713-1786* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich, 2013), p. 201.

from the age of Louis XIV: Turenne, Condé, Luxembourg and Catinat.²⁴ When the colonel of Field Marshal Schwerin's regiment flatteringly congratulated Frederick in 1753 on his *General principles of war*, he claimed that, 'the great masters named in it, such as Caesar, Condé, Turenne, Eugene and Luxembourg, would themselves not be ashamed to use much from it.'²⁵ Clearly, Colonel Zastrow saw these figures, overwhelmingly from the age of Louis XIV, as the most important yardstick against which to measure military commanders. Writing to his brother August Wilhelm in April 1756, Frederick praised the Duke of Luxembourg as one of the 'superior men of the past century'.²⁶ He thus emphasized the period since the mid-seventeenth century – and the great men of this time – as the key models to follow.

Several of Frederick's favourite works of military science also focused on 'the past century'. Feuquières, Frederick's favourite military writer, specifically began his survey of European power politics, illustrating the reasons why states went to war, in 1666, thus examining only the era of Louis XIV.²⁷ Whereas Frederick made the Thirty Years War the curtain raiser for his account of the building of the Hohenzollern state, Feuquières stated that he would not discuss the French Wars of Religion or the Fronde at all. He preferred to cite the English Civil War, which had not been a threat to the ordered stability of Louisquatorzean France.²⁸ Quincy went even further, as his work espoused not just the practice of 'the past century' but specifically that of the era of the socket bayonet, whose introduction at the turn of the eighteenth century had led infantry to be deployed in long lines to maximise firepower.²⁹ Discussing the deployment of an army, Quincy stated that, 'one places . . . the infantry in the centre and the cavalry on the flanks according to the current

²⁴ Jürgen Luh, *Heinrichs Heroen: die Feldherrengalerie des Prinzen Heinrich im Schloss Rheinsberg* (Berlin, 2007), pp. 10-35.

²⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Zastrow to Frederick, 17.2.1753 (quotation: 'Die großen Meister so darinnen genant werden als Casar, Condé, Turene, Eugene, Luxenbourg würden sich selbst nicht schämen vieles daraus anzuwenden.').

²⁶ *Œuvres*, XXVI, pp. 129-30 (quotation, p. 130: 'hommes supérieurs du siècle passé').

²⁷ *Memoires de M. le Marquis de Feuquiere, lieutenant general des armées du Roi: contenant ses maximes sur la guerre; & l'application des exemples aux maximes* (new edn., London, 1736), pp. 11-12.

²⁸ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 123.

²⁹ On the shift in warfare brought about by the flintlock musket and socket bayonet, see Jeremy Black, *A military revolution? Military change and European society, 1550-1800* (London, 1991), p. 93; Childs, *Armies and warfare in Europe*, pp. 106-8, 122; Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau', pp. 17-22; Strachan, *European armies*, pp. 16, 23.

usage, to which one is obliged to conform.’³⁰ He noted that Turenne and Montecuccoli (who, although he did not state this explicitly, belonged to the age before linear tactics) had intermingled infantry, cavalry and artillery, and quoted Montecuccoli arguing that such combined arms ‘are as it were invincible’. He concluded, however: ‘in spite of such reasoning, which is perfectly good, since all of Europe currently observes the usage of putting the infantry in the centre and the cavalry on the flanks, one is obliged to conform to it.’³¹ Feuquières and Quincy thus exemplified an approach to war anchored explicitly in the era of Louis XIV, and the War of the Spanish Succession in particular.

Most of the works of military history or military science in Frederick’s library were about the wars of Louis XIV, and Frederick approached the post-Westphalian world primarily through the medium of French history-writing.³² For instance, Frederick’s treatment of Louis XIV’s great opponent, William III of Orange, followed the view of Voltaire, who helped him write the *History of Brandenburg*.³³ Voltaire repeatedly noted William’s frequent defeats in battle, calling him, ‘always beaten, but always to be feared’, and saying he ‘always conducted fine retreats’.³⁴ Frederick disparaged William’s generalship in very similar terms, saying that ‘he was almost always beaten’, and was like a ‘hydra . . . which continually regenerates itself’.³⁵ Voltaire’s ultimate judgement of William was in many ways positive, but also noted that William had ‘acquired a kingdom through no right of nature’ and ‘governed Holland

³⁰ Charles Sevin, Marquis de Quincy, *Histoire militaire du regne de Louis le Grand, Roy de France* (7 vols., Paris, 1726), VII_II, p. 56 (quotation: ‘on met . . . l’Infanterie dans le centre & la Cavalerie sur les aîles, selon l’usage présent, auquel on est obligé de se conformer’).

³¹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 56 (quotation: ‘font en quelque forte invincibles . . . Malgré ce raisonnement, qui est parfaitement bon, comme tout l’Europe fuit présentement l’usage de mettre l’Infanterie dans le centre & la Cavalerie sur les aîles, on est obligé de s’y conformer.’).

³² Bogdan Krieger, *Friedrich der Große und seine Bücher* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1914), pp. 15, 140-2, 173-4; Hannelore Röhm, and Sabine Scheidler, ‘Die Bibliotheken Friedrichs des Grossen’, in Generaldirektion der Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin Brandenburg, ed., *Friederisiko – Friedrich der Grosse: die Ausstellung* (Munich, 2012), pp. 324, 327.

³³ Pečar, ‘Selbstinszenierung auf Kosten der Dynastie?’, paragraph 10.

³⁴ Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, pp. 291, 293 (quotations: ‘toujours vaincu, mais toujours à craindre’, ‘fit toujours de belles retraites’). See also *Ibid*, pp. 287, 330.

³⁵ *Œuvres*, I, pp. 115-6 (quotations: ‘presque toujours battu’ ‘hydre . . . qui se reproduisait sans cesse’).

despotically'.³⁶ He called him, 'the soul and chief of half of Europe', and Quincy accused William of having schemed to bring about the War of the Spanish Succession: 'King William, as clever and as great a politician as he was, would not have let such a favourable opportunity to take up arms again escape him'.³⁷ Frederick echoed all these sentiments, describing William's takeover of the British throne as 'usurpation', saying that he 'governed Europe by his intrigues' and that 'everyone was armed at war in order to preserve the despotism with which he ruled the United Provinces'.³⁸ Frederick's criticism was no doubt primarily intended to belittle a potential rival to his own glory. He compared William with his own grandfather, Frederick I: another monarch whose achievements he successfully discredited.³⁹ Nevertheless, Frederick's debt to the French works that provided his main historical education is notable. He also referred to Turenne in very similar terms to Voltaire, noting his frugality and simplicity of life, the fact that he had sometimes been defeated, and his betraying of a state secret to his mistress.⁴⁰ Frederick was thus representative of the French view of recent history.

Frederick's interest in the great generals of the age of Louis XIV can be seen in his many references particularly to Turenne, Condé and Luxembourg. Interpreting these references requires some care, since many offered no detailed commentary on the military achievements of these generals, merely citing them as examples of 'great men' and great commanders.⁴¹ To evaluate the influence of these figures on

³⁶ Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, pp. 329-31 (quotation, p. 330: 'acquis un royaume sans aucune droit de la nature . . . gouverné despotiquement la hollande').

³⁷ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, III, p. 514 (quotation: 'Le Roy Guillaume aussi habile & aussi grand politique qu'il étoit, n'eut garde de laisser échaper une si favorable occasion de reprendre les armes.');

Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, p. 330 (quotation: 'l'ame & le chef de la moitié de l'europe').

³⁸ *Œuvres*, I, p. 115 (quotations: 'usurpation', 'il gouvernait l'Europe par ses intrigues . . . Le monde était armé et en guerre, pour lui conserver le despotisme avec lequel il gouvernait les Provinces-Unies').

³⁹ *Œuvres*, I, p. 116; Pečar, 'Selbstinszenierung auf Kosten der Dynastie?', paragraphs 22-5.

⁴⁰ *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 269; *Œuvres*, X, pp. 223, 278; Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, p. 213.

⁴¹ For general references to Turenne, see *Œuvres*, II, p. 148, *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 122, 257; *Œuvres*, X, p. 283, 309; *Œuvres*, XII, pp. 14, 256; *Œuvres*, XIX, p. 385; *Œuvres*, XXII, p. 232; *Œuvres*, XXIV, p. 701; *Œuvres*, XXVI, p. 362; *Œuvres*, XXVII_I, p. 238; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 43; *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 399; *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, ed. J.G. Droysen et al (46 vols., Berlin, 1879-1939), II, pp. 208, 270; *Politische Correspondenz*, III, p. 208; *Politische Correspondenz*, VI, p. 119; *Politische Correspondenz*, XIV, p. 525; *Politische Correspondenz*, XVII, p. 20; *Politische Correspondenz*, XX, p. 207. For general references to Condé, see *Œuvres*, VII, p. 100; *Œuvres*, X, p. 283; *Œuvres*, XII, p. 256;

Frederick's generalship, one must examine what he wrote about their campaigns, and in how much detail.

The most important figure in Frederick's attempt to achieve his own 'Century of Louis XIV' in the military sphere by imitating the generals of the French *grand siècle* was Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne, Viscount of Turenne. Frederick clearly wanted to be seen as Turenne, because Voltaire specifically used the comparison to flatter the king, telling him in June 1742 that people were comparing his generalship with that of Gustav Adolph and Turenne, and in November 1757 that he was being compared with Turenne and Condé.⁴² Voltaire's use of French military heroes as comparisons for Frederick – Gustav Adolph having also fought in the French cause against the Emperor – underlined that Frederick wanted to impress the French salons through such comparisons.⁴³

The only campaigns of Turenne which Frederick described in a level of detail that suggested real understanding were his 1672 campaign against the Great Elector, the 1674 devastation of the Palatinate, and the brilliant campaign from November 1674 to January 1675 in which Turenne, having seemingly gone into winter quarters in Lorraine, executed a surprise march through the mountains to fall upon the Imperial forces in Alsace (the Great Elector among them), defeating them at Belfort and Turckheim and driving them back across the Rhine.⁴⁴ Here again, Frederick's particularly detailed descriptions of Turenne's campaigns against the Great Elector perhaps aimed to honour his ancestor by association. He also used the Belfort and Turckheim campaign as a rhetorical device, both to praise the achievements of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick and when urging George II of Britain, in October 1757, to

Œuvres, XV, p. 184; *Œuvres*, XIX, p. 385; *Œuvres*, XXIV, p. 701; *Œuvres*, XXVI, p. 362; *Politische Correspondenz*, II, p. 208; *Politische Correspondenz*, XIV, p. 525; *Politische Correspondenz*, XVII, p. 20. For general references to Luxembourg, see *Œuvres*, IV, p. ix; *Œuvres*, X, p. 309; *Œuvres*, XI, p. 302; *Œuvres*, XII, pp. 14, 85; *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 207-8; *Œuvres*, XXIV, p. 701; *Œuvres*, XXVI, pp. 131, 362; *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 399; *Politische Correspondenz*, III, p.208.

⁴² *Œuvres*, XXII, p. 112; *Œuvres*, XXIII, p. 17.

⁴³ On French salons as Frederick's most important audience, see Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe*, pp. 79, 95.

⁴⁴ For the 1672 campaign and devastation of the Palatinate, see *Œuvres*, I, pp. 80-3; *Œuvres*, XI, p.97. For the Turckheim campaign, see below.

imitate Turenne's 'courage and vigour' by intervening in the European war to throw the French out of Germany, as Turenne had thrown the Germans out of France.⁴⁵

Frederick, however, also referred to the Belfort and Turckheim campaign repeatedly and in detail in writings intended not for the public but for his officers. Indeed, he picked out two separate aspects of it. At the strategic level, Frederick repeatedly praised the 'ruse' of Turenne's surprise march, by which he 'fell in an improvised way on [his enemies] in their quarters'.⁴⁶ At the tactical level, Frederick in his *General principles of war* declared his admiration for:

How Turenne did at Colmar [Turckheim], where he presented his first line to the front of the Elector Frederick William and the second slipped by hidden roads onto the flank of that prince, whom he attacked and put to flight.⁴⁷

Frederick also noted both Turenne's bold march and his outflanking manoeuvre on the battlefield in the *History of Brandenburg*.⁴⁸

There is clear evidence of which book Frederick read about Turenne: Nicholas Deschamps's *Memoir of the two last campaigns of Monsieur de Turenne in Germany*.⁴⁹ Frederick first referred to the work in a March 1744 letter to his envoy Chambrier in Paris, in which he said that Marshal Belle-Isle had sent it to him, but that Frederick had 'casually lost it'. He told Chambrier to ask the marshal to send him another copy.⁵⁰ As noted in the introduction, the work was (alongside Feuquières) one of only three military books that Frederick asked Duhan to send him after his personal library was captured by the Austrians at Soor in October 1745.⁵¹ By

⁴⁵ *Œuvres*, IV, p. 210; *Politische Correspondenz*, XV, p. 424 (quotation: 'du courage et de la vigueur').

⁴⁶ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 104, 141; *Œuvres*, XXIX, pp. 93, 121 (quotation, p. 93: 'par sa ruse . . . en tombant à l'improviste dans ses quartiers').

⁴⁷ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 42 (quotation: 'Comme Turenne le fit à Colmar, où il présentait sa première ligne vis-à-vis du front de l'électeur Frédéric-Guillaume, et où sa seconde ligne se glissa par des chemins creux sur le flanc de ce prince, qu'elle attaqua et qu'elle fit plier').

⁴⁸ *Œuvres*, I, p. 84.

⁴⁹ Nicolas Deschamps, *Memoires des deux dernieres campagnes de monsieur de Turenne en Allemagne: et de ce qui s'est passé, depuis sa mort, sous le commandement du comte de Lorge* (2 vols., Strasbourg, 1734).

⁵⁰ *Politische Correspondenz*, III, p. 55 (quotation: 'ce livre s'étant casuellement perdu').

⁵¹ *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 323.

the end of his life, Frederick had five editions of the two volumes of Deschamps's work, including in his favourite libraries at Sans Souci and the Potsdam City Palace, as well as in Breslau (convenient for campaigning).⁵² In his introduction to the *Excerpt* he commissioned of Folard's work, Frederick said that Turenne's 'two last campaigns, which he wrote himself, are counted among our greatest classic books.'⁵³ Frederick was here confusing Deschamps's work with the *Memoires on war taken from the original of M. de Turenne*, a much briefer work, which did not describe the Turckheim campaign in detail, and of which Frederick had only one edition, in the Potsdam New Palace.⁵⁴ Frederick's last reader, Dantal, recorded that in 1786 he read Frederick a number of works about Turenne, including, alongside Deschamps's work, *The life of Turenne* (presumably Ramsay's 1736 *History of the Viscount Turenne*, of which Frederick had several editions) and the *Memoires of Turenne* (presumably the *Memoires on war*).⁵⁵ The General Staff claimed that Deschamps's work was 'simply narrative', and argued that, in the *Extract*, Frederick was surely praising the *Memoires*, because they offered broader principles for war.⁵⁶ Frederick's persistent focus on the 'narrative' of the 1674-5 campaigns, however, and his lack of detailed comments on Turenne's other campaigns, makes it reasonable to assume that Deschamps's two short volumes, dealing only with 1674 and 1675, were the key book on Turenne that he read. Feuquières, for instance, did not describe Turenne's tactics at Turkheim in detail, although he described Turenne's successful surprise at the strategic level.⁵⁷

Frederick clearly sought to apply Turenne's methods in his own campaigns. Deschamps described how the allies, in January 1675, took up a position near Colmar that was impossible to attack. Turenne, however, slipped his left wing behind hills to capture the unoccupied village of Turckheim. Thereby, 'Monsieur de Turenne . . .

⁵² Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, p. 141.

⁵³ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 4 (quotation: 'ses Deux dernières campagnes, écrites par lui-même, sont comptées parmi nos meilleurs livres classiques').

⁵⁴ Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, p. 174; *Memoires sur la guerre tirés des originaux de M. de Turenne avec plusieurs memoires concernant les hôpitaux militaires, présentés au conseil en l'année 1736* (2 vols., The Hague, 1738).

⁵⁵ C. Dantal, *Les délassemens littéraires ou heures de lecture de Frédéric II* (Elbing, 1791), pp. 36-7; Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, p. 145.

⁵⁶ Großer Generalstab, *Friedrich der Große Anschauungen vom Kriege*, p. 377 (quotation: 'einfach erzählend').

⁵⁷ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 296-8.

found himself on the enemy's flank, and rendered useless all the precautions that they had taken to their front.⁵⁸ Turenne's right flank, under the Comte de Lorge, placed itself in front of the enemy but some way back, safe from attack. 'By this disposition, he put himself in a state to profit from the movements that the enemy would be obliged to make'.⁵⁹ The battle of Turckheim, as described by Deschamps, thus bore a striking similarity to the Frederickian oblique line, used at Prague, Kolin, Leuthen, Kunersdorf and Torgau to try to defeat enemies in un-attackable positions. Finck at Kundersdorf and Zieten at Torgau were both assigned the diversionary role of the Comte de Lorge, while Frederick of course reserved for himself that of the great Turenne.⁶⁰

During the inter-war period, Frederick repeatedly emphasized the importance of Turenne as a model. The sections of his *General principles* on ruses and on the use of detached forces both cited the Turckheim campaign as an example.⁶¹ 'Read the last two campaigns of Turenne and study them often: this is the masterpiece of modern ruses', Frederick told his officers.⁶² In late 1756, when Schwerin expressed concerns that he would not be able to cover both Upper and Lower Silesia against a possible Austrian attack, Frederick replied that 'Marshal Turenne often had corps weaker than yours, with which he stopped stronger armies.'⁶³ The significance of the Turkheim campaign in particular for Frederick can be seen from its use by Schwerin and Winterfeldt in March 1757 to convince Frederick to accept their proposals for the invasion of Bohemia, saying that it would enable him to avenge 'what . . . happened to our great Frederick William in Alsace for the sake of Austrian interests'.⁶⁴ It was a contrived comparison, since the Great Elector's defeat had been at the hands of the

⁵⁸ Deschamps, *Deux dernieres campagnes*, II, pp.144-7 (quotation, p. 147: 'Monsieur de Turenne . . . se trouvoit dans leur flanc, & rendoit inutiles toutes les precautions qu'ils avoient prises à leur tête.').

⁵⁹ Deschamps, *Deux dernieres campagnes*, II, pp.146, 148 (quotation, p.148: 'Par cette disposition, il se mettoit en état de profiter des mouvemens, que les ennemis seroient obligez de faire').

⁶⁰ Dennis E. Showalter, *The wars of Frederick the Great* (London and New York, NY, 1996), pp. 197-8, 243-8, 253, 288-96.

⁶¹ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 40-3, 48-51.

⁶² *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 50 (quotation: 'Lisez les deux dernières campagnes de Turenne, et étudiez-les souvent; c'est le chef-d'œuvre des ruses modernes.').

⁶³ *Politische Correspondenz*, XIII, pp. 174-5. (quotation, p. 174: 'le maréchal Turenne a eu souvent des corps moins forts que le vôtre, avec lesquels il a arrêté des armées supérieures.').

⁶⁴ *Politische Correspondenz*, XIV, p. 442 (quotation: 'Was . . . unserem Grossen Friedrich Wilhelm vor das Wohl des österreichischen Interesses im Elsass arrivirte').

French, but clearly the generals were aware of the resonance of the 1674-5 campaign for Frederick.

Frederick's tactics of outflanking movements were also influenced by the *Memoires* of Feuquières. His writings indicate a familiarity with many of Feuquières's descriptions of the French campaigns in the Netherlands in the 1670s and 1690s. Frederick, for instance, apparently followed Feuquières when he criticized William of Orange for fighting the battle of St. Denis in 1678 after the peace of Nijmegen had already been signed.⁶⁵ Even Voltaire drew on Feuquières's work for his own *Century of Louis XIV*.⁶⁶ The 1674 battle of Seneffe, where Feuquières fought, was a particular favourite of Frederick's. Feuquières repeatedly criticised the negligence of William of Orange in exposing his rearguard to attack by the Prince de Condé on the march, and Frederick similarly presented this again and again as an example to learn from: first in his *General principles of war*, then in his 1770 *Elements of castramentation and tactics* and again in his 1777 text *On the marches of the army and what must be observed in this regard*.⁶⁷ Moreover, immediately after his description of Seneffe, in his *General principles*, Frederick referred to Luxembourg's victory at the battle of Leuze in 1691 as an example of the same principle.⁶⁸ Leuze was a small and little-known battle, and it is therefore striking that Feuquières had also paired precisely these two battles, one after the other, as examples of the importance of covering the retreat of a rearguard through a defile.⁶⁹ It seems highly likely that Frederick simply cribbed this material directly when writing his own work.

As noted previously, Feuquières particularly lauded the achievements of his patron the Duke of Luxembourg, and it is therefore no surprise that Frederick, who particularly liked Feuquières's work, was also strongly influenced by Luxembourg.⁷⁰ Frederick was not the only one, as the officers of the Zieten Hussars also bought

⁶⁵ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 309; *Œuvres*, I, p. 93.

⁶⁶ Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, pp. 208, 297-8.

⁶⁷ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. xvii, 258-9, 291-2; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 95; *Œuvres*, XXIX, pp. 36, 114.

⁶⁸ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 95.

⁶⁹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 258-9.

⁷⁰ Jean-Pierre Bois, 'Le marquis de Feuquières: stratège au temps de Louis XIV', in Economica, ed., *Combattre, gouverner, écrire: études réunies en l'honneur de Jean Chagniot* (Paris, 2003), pp. 149-51, 154.

copies of a book on Luxembourg's campaigns.⁷¹ Both in his *General principles* and later, Frederick described in detail Luxembourg's victory at Neerwinden (or Landen) in 1793, praising his success in causing William of Orange to weaken his army through detachments.⁷² While the Seven Years War falls outside the scope of the present work, it may be suggested that Frederick's attempts during the second half of this war to cause Field Marshal Daun to weaken his army through detachments represented an attempt to learn from Luxembourg.⁷³ Much more relevant to Frederick's tactics during the inter-war period was his description in the *General principles* of Luxembourg's victory at Fleurus, in 1690, where 'he passed a corps of infantry around the flank of the Prince of Orange, favoured by the very high wheat'.⁷⁴ The account in the 1748 version of the work contained numerous errors, incorrectly describing the battle as having been Neerwinden/Landen, and Luxembourg's opponent as the Prince of Orange. Only in the 1753 German version of the work did Frederick change this to name the battle correctly as Fleurus, fought against the Prince of Waldeck.⁷⁵ Such confusion over details was not unusual for Frederick: in his writings he twice confused the facts of Luxembourg's 1677 victory at Mont-Cassel.⁷⁶ As noted in chapter three, Feuquières heaped praise on Luxembourg at Fleurus for his 'wise and judicious movement, which could not have been thought of except by a *grand homme* ('great man') whose coup d'oeil was so accurate that he knew he would have precisely enough time to make the movement without the enemy being able to have cognisance of it'. Feuquières noted that it would have been very hazardous if the enemy had noticed what Luxembourg was doing.⁷⁷ Frederick presented Fleurus alongside Turkheim – in the same paragraph – as examples of the value of detaching a force to outflank the enemy. Whereas Feuquières described the outflanking movement at Fleurus as made by cavalry, Frederick's statement that it was made by infantry may be seen as a Freudian slip: he was using the battle as an

⁷¹ Tharau, *Geistige Kultur des preußischen Offiziers*, p. 86.

⁷² *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 51; *Œuvres*, XXIX, pp. 94-5.

⁷³ Duffy, *Frederick the Great*, pp. 227-8, 232.

⁷⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 42 (quotation: 'à la faveur du blé, qui était fort haut, il fit passer un corps d'infanterie sur le flanc du prince Guillaume d'Orange').

⁷⁵ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 42.

⁷⁶ *Œuvres*, II, p. 20-1; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 296.

⁷⁷ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 312 (quotation: 'sçavant & judicieux mouvement, qui n'a pû être pensé que par un grand homme, dont le coup d'oeil fut si juste, qu'il sçut qu'il auroit précisément le tems de faire ce mouvement, sans que son Ennemi en pût avoir la connoissance').

example to support his tactic of outflanking the enemy, and he may unconsciously have substituted the Prussian infantry for the French cavalry.⁷⁸ At Leuthen in 1757, Frederick would himself succeed in moving his forces around the enemy flank, concealed by the terrain, and thereby be able to claim that he also had coup d'oeil comparable to a *grand homme* like Luxembourg.

The humbling experience of the Seven Years War, however, which forced Frederick to apologize for his rash generalship, left him few opportunities for boasting about his successful outflanking manoeuvres.⁷⁹ Rather than comparing himself with Turenne and Luxembourg, Frederick's post-war comparisons of Leuthen with the wars of Louis XIV were more subtle. In a February 1779 letter to his brother Henry referring to the incompetence of the French Marshal Villeroi at Ramillies in 1706 – deploying his left wing behind a marsh where it was unable to fight and thus leaving his right wing to be defeated (a deployment whose folly was fully dissected by Feuquières) – Frederick argued that such an error could be compared with that of the Austrian commander Charles of Lorraine at Leuthen.⁸⁰ Similarly, having noted in 1748 that Villars at Malplaquet in 1709 was outflanked because he was not aware that the marsh on his left flank was fordable, Frederick enlarged on this after the Seven Years War by saying that the Austrians at Leuthen had there been undone by the same mistake.⁸¹ He thus compared Leuthen with the victories of Marlborough and Eugene. In his key work of apology for his rashness during the Seven Years War – his 1759 *Reflections on Charles XII*, in which Frederick compared himself to the Swedish king – Frederick stated that Charles XII was 'at no time comparable with Turenne, nor as admirable as he was on the days of Gien, The Dunes near Dunkirk, Colmar, and above all during his last two campaigns.'⁸² This was apparently an admission that Frederick, too, was not a general of the calibre of Turenne. It may also, however, have been a sly suggestion that Frederick, who had emphasized Turenne to his officers as a model to follow (and his last two campaigns in particular), and whose victories through outflanking manoeuvres were so similar to Turenne's success at

⁷⁸ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 42.

⁷⁹ *Œuvres*, IV, pp. x-xi.

⁸⁰ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 360-3; *Œuvres*, XXVI, p. 537.

⁸¹ *Œuvres*, VI, p. 110; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 37-8.

⁸² *Œuvres*, VII, p. 100 (quotation: 'en aucun temps comparable à Turenne, ni aussi admirable qu'il le parut aux journées de Gien, des Dunes, près de Dunkerque, de Colmar, et surtout durant ses deux dernières campagnes.').

Turckheim, could in fact be compared with the famous French commander, even if his alter ego Charles XII could not.

It cannot be said with certainty how much military history – rather than military science, or practical experience – influenced Frederick’s preference for outflanking tactics.⁸³ In his *General thoughts and rules for war*, Frederick did not present any historical examples alongside the series of tactical diagrams in which he set out the oblique line tactic.⁸⁴ The only historical example that Frederick cited in his inter-war works in direct connection with the oblique line was his own victory at Soor in 1745. He described how, just as the broken terrain at Soor had prevented the Saxons and Austrians from using their superior numbers, so the oblique line was a clever disposition to achieve the same effect.⁸⁵

The tactic of concentrating force against a weak point in the enemy position was a relative commonplace in the military literature of the time. Even Feuquières, who did not emphasise any one particular tactic, noted that one might need to move troops from one area, ‘to make a greater effort where the enemy appears to be weakest’.⁸⁶ Santa Cruz similarly said, ‘you should use your best corps against that part of the enemy line where you know that their worst soldiers are’.⁸⁷ Among his ‘general maxims for battles’, Quincy advised:

Start the battle on the side where [your] best troops are, and on which you feel strongest. Amuse the enemy on the weakest side, either by not engaging in combat for a long time on that side, or by making use of the advantages of the terrain.⁸⁸

⁸³ For the influence of practical experience, see Jay Luvaas, ed. and trans., *Frederick the Great on the art of war* (New York, NY, and London, 1966), p. 13.

⁸⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 122-32.

⁸⁵ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 83-4.

⁸⁶ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 284 (quotation: ‘pour faire un plus grand effort où l’Ennemi paroîtra le plus foible’).

⁸⁷ Marquis de Santa Cruz de Marzenado, *Reflexions militaires et politiques*, trans. de Vergy, (4 vols., The Hague, 1739), III, pp. 284-5 (quotation, p. 285: ‘il faut vous servir de vos meilleurs Corps contre cette partie de la Ligne des ennemis où vous savez, que sont leurs plus mauvais soldats.’).

⁸⁸ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 106 (quotation: ‘commencer la bataille par le côté où sont les meilleures troupes, & par où on se sent le plus fort; amuser l’ennemi dans la partie la plus foible, ou en n’engageant pas le combat sitôt de ce côté-là, ou en s’aidant des avantages du terrain’).

Montecuccoli also described how a commander could reinforce one wing of his army, placing the best troops there, and have it attack the enemy first, while the other wing held back, or merely occupied the enemy's attention without engaging at all.⁸⁹

Maurice de Saxe described several plans for holding one flank of the enemy in position while concentrating force against the other.⁹⁰ 'His right having been beaten, the rest will be quickly taken in front and rear by my two wings of cavalry and in flank by all of my infantry.'⁹¹ He described how a diversionary force could hold the enemy in place while the rest of the army marched by night around their flank.⁹² In general, he emphasized the importance of being able to 'attack with the largest party of your troops the smaller party of [the enemy]'.⁹³ Puységur specifically described an 'oblique' order, noted the tactics of the Theban general Epaminondas, and noted the general value of concentrating against a weak point in the enemy line.⁹⁴ Several works of military science were first mentioned by Frederick after 1745, suggesting that he may only have read them in the inter-war period. The first explicit mentions of the works of Santa Cruz and Montecuccoli in Frederick's writings were in 1753 and 1756 respectively, while Puységur's work was only published in 1748.⁹⁵

Frederick's correspondence with de Saxe also started only in 1745, and it was also in this period that he engaged with the works of Folard.⁹⁶ The greater detail with which Frederick described the oblique line in his 1755 *Thoughts and general rules* compared to his 1748 *General principles* therefore perhaps reflected greater reading of military science in the intervening years.

Irrespective of the precise inspiration for the oblique line, it is clear that Frederick tried to associate his generalship with the great generals of the age of Louis XIV, both

⁸⁹ Raimondo Montecuccoli, *Memoires* (new edn., Paris, 1746), pp. 46-7, 199.

⁹⁰ Maurice de Saxe, *Les reveries ou memoires sur l'art de la guerre*, ed. de Bonneville (The Hague, 1756), pp. 172, 174.

⁹¹ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 172 (quotation: 'cette droite étant battue le reste feroit bientôt prise en tête & en queue par mes deux ailes de Cavalerie, & en flanc par toute mon Infanterie.').

⁹² Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 174-5.

⁹³ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 174 (quotation: 'attaquer avec la plus grand partie de vos troupes la moindre partie des siennes').

⁹⁴ Jacques François de Chastenot de Puységur, *Art de la guerre par principes et par règles* (2 vols., Paris, 1748), I, pp. 161-5 (quotation: 'ordre . . . oblique').

⁹⁵ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 4; *Œuvres*, XXVI, pp. 135.

⁹⁶ *Œuvres*, VII, p. 29; *Œuvres*, X, p. 97; *Œuvres*, XIII, p. 114; *Œuvres*, XVII, pp. 335-45; *Œuvres*, XXVI, p. 126; *Œuvres*, XXVII_I, p. 292; *Politische Correspondenz*, IV, pp. 327-8; *Politische Correspondenz*, V, pp. 161, 215-6, 231-2, 291-2, 553; *Politische Correspondenz*, VI, pp. 10, 23, 28, 38-9, 53, 119-21.

when presenting himself to the European public sphere and to his own officers. His focus on famous generals, and the much lesser attention he gave to lesser-known commanders, can be seen in the virtual absence in Frederick's writings of any mention of the 1706 battle of Calcinato, another engagement perfectly suited for comparison with the oblique line. Faced by an enemy position that Quincy described as 'un-attackable', Marshal Vendôme marched his men by night, using a diversionary action to the enemy's front to hold them in place while moving the rest of his troops around the Imperial army to seize ground overlooking its left flank, and routing the Imperials when they tried to counter-attack.⁹⁷ Perhaps Frederick had simply not read about Calcinato in any detail. Perhaps, since the Imperials were commanded by General Reventlov rather than the famous Eugene, and none of the more famous French commanders was present, the battle was not a prestigious comparison for Frederick's own achievements and plans. Calcinato showed that, even when dealing with 'the past century', Frederick focused on battles involving famous commanders. When it came to clever tactics, this meant particularly Turenne and Luxembourg.

The French Way of War

Alongside this interest in emulating the achievements and tactics of particular French generals, Frederick's tactical approach during the inter-war years involved a preference for shock tactics that was particularly associated with the French.⁹⁸ Representative of this was Quincy, reflecting the French official view on the wars of Louis XIV.

It is known, as it has been proved in several actions of that war [the War of the Spanish Succession], that the best manner of leading the infantry against the enemy is to prevent a battalion from firing and to permit only the grenadiers and pickets on the flanks to fire, to have the battalion endure the fire of the enemy and march vigorously forward with fixed bayonets. There is no shortage of examples where a comparable manoeuvre has succeeded, principally when one is leading French troops, whose first blow is so much to be feared that few corps can resist it.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, V, pp. 80-6 (quotation, p. 82: 'inataquable').

⁹⁸ For Frederick's emphasis on attack in the inter-war period, see for instance *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 86, 99-100.

⁹⁹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 76 (quotation: 'L'on connoitra comme on l'a éprouvé dans plusieurs actions de cette guerre, que la meilleure maniere de mener l'Infanterie aux ennemis, est d'empêcher de tirer un bataillon, & de ne permettre qu'aux Grenadiers & aux

Quincy portrayed such tactics as particularly suited to the French character, arguing that French armies should deploy with the first line stronger than the second ‘because, among the French, the first advantage or disadvantage often causes the gain or loss of a battle’.¹⁰⁰ He stated that, in battle, one should try to attack before the enemy could, ‘especially when one is commanding French troops’.¹⁰¹ When describing how a battalion should be deployed, Quincy emphasized that, ‘one must above all prepare them not to fire, and to endure the fire of the enemy, since a battalion is normally beaten once it has fired and the one opposed to it still has its own [fire]’.¹⁰² In his ‘Recapitulation of the General Maxims for Battles’, Quincy again stated:

In an action, one must anticipate the enemy and charge them, if possible, before they have deployed . . . The troops should march slowly and proudly, . . . the infantry with fixed bayonets and the cavalry with sabre in hand: endure the first fire of the enemy and charge vigorously sword in hand.¹⁰³

As is well known, this approach remained strong throughout the eighteenth century, based explicitly on the idea that it reflected the French national character, and this approach was fully reflected by Frederick’s own favourite military authors.¹⁰⁴

Maurice de Saxe followed exactly the same view as Quincy when he noted that ‘the

Piquets qui sont sur les flancs de faire feu; de laisser essayer à un bataillon le feu de l’ennemi, & de marcher vivement dessus la bayonette au bout du fusil. Il n’est guere d’exemple qu’une pareille manoeuvre n’ait réussi, & principalement lorsqu’on mene des troupes Françaises, dont le premier coup de main est si fort à craindre, qu’il y a peu de corps qui y puisse résister.’).

¹⁰⁰ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 58 (quotation: ‘parce que le premier avantage ou désavantage, parmi les François, cause souvent le gain ou la perte d’une bataille’).

¹⁰¹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 59-60, 105 (quotations: ‘principalement lorsqu’on mene des troupes Françaises’, ‘principalement quand on conduit des François’).

¹⁰² Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 67 (quotation: ‘On doit, sur tout, les préparer à ne point tirer, & à essayer le feu des ennemis; attendu qu’un bataillon est d’ordinaire battu quand il a tiré son feu, & que celui qui lui est opposé a encore tout le sien’).

¹⁰³ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 106 (quotation: ‘Dans l’action il faut prévenir l’ennemi, & le charger, s’il se peut, avant qu’il soit en bataille; . . . les troupes marchent lentement & fièrement; . . . l’Infanterie la bayonnette au bout du fusil, & la Cavalerie le sâbre à la main; essayer le premier feu de l’ennemi, & le charger vivement l’épée à la main’).

¹⁰⁴ Gat, *Origins of military thought*, p. 38; John A. Lynn, *Giant of the grand siècle: the French army, 1610–1715* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 465, 487-8, 513, 547, 568; Lynn, *Battle*, pp. 120-1, 127-8; Strachan, *European Armies*, pp. 23-24. For British concepts of natural French impetuosity, see Matthew McCormack, *Embodying the militia in Georgian England* (Oxford, 2015; online edn., 2015), p. 25.

first shock of the French is terrible'.¹⁰⁵ It is well known that both de Saxe and Folard advocated troops attacking with edged weapons rather than stopping to fire.¹⁰⁶ Like Quincy, de Saxe, writing in 1732, looked back to the War of the Spanish Succession as pointing toward this development.¹⁰⁷

If the last war had lasted a little longer, both sides would without doubt have used cold steel, because one would have begun to recognise the abuse of firing, which creates more noise than harm, and which always leads those who use it to be beaten.¹⁰⁸

Both de Saxe and Quincy described how, at the 1706 battle of Castiglione, the French troops routed the Imperials by attacking them without stopping to fire.¹⁰⁹ De Saxe also noted the Swedish king Charles XII as an adherent of such tactics.¹¹⁰

Folard was even more committed to shock tactics than de Saxe. Describing his proposed disposition for an attack in three columns, Folard claimed that 'it is impossible that an army deployed in the ordinary manner, however superior one may suppose it to be . . . can ever resist the shock of these three corps'.¹¹¹ Like Quincy and de Saxe, Folard described this model of aggressive action as typically French, and rooted it in examples from the War of the Spanish Succession.¹¹² A large element of the *Extract* was Folard's description of the 1705 battle of Cassano, where he had served.¹¹³ Describing the French counter-attack, Folard told how, 'inspired by that incredible impetuosity so natural to their nation, [they] threw [the enemy] into the

¹⁰⁵ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 178 (quotation: 'le premier choc des François est terrible').

¹⁰⁶ Jeremy Black, *Warfare in the eighteenth century* (London, 1999), pp.193-5; Robert S. Quimby, *The background of Napoleonic warfare: the theory of military tactics in eighteenth-century France* (New York, NY, 1957), pp. 33-4, 44-5; Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 28-32.

¹⁰⁷ For the date when de Saxe wrote, see Bois, 'Le marquis de Feuquière', p. 152.

¹⁰⁸ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 28 (quotation: 'Si la dernière guerre avoit duré encore quelque tems l'on se feroit battu indubitablement de part & d'autre à l'arme blanche, parce que l'on commençoit à connoître l'abus de la tirerie qui fait plus de bruit que de mal, & qui fait toujours battre ceux qui s'en servent.').

¹⁰⁹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, V, pp. 83-4; Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 30.

¹¹⁰ Saxe, *Reveries*, p. 43.

¹¹¹ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 62-3 (quotation, p. 63: 'Il n'est pas possible qu'une armée, quelque supérieure qu'on veuille la supposer, disposée selon la manière ordinaire . . . puisse jamais résister au choc de ces trois corps').

¹¹² See for instance *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 68.

¹¹³ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 64-101.

most dreadful disorder'.¹¹⁴ Folard said that 'firing does not suit the French nation'.¹¹⁵ He claimed that the Duke of Vendôme had told him that 'there would not have been a great need if one had ordered the soldiers to engage those gentlemen with fixed bayonets, the only effective means of setting them to rights.'¹¹⁶ Folard also described how Maurice de Saxe himself, on campaign in Poland, defeated a superior enemy, who had trapped him in a house, by boldly attacking them 'sword in hand'.¹¹⁷ The *Memoirs* of the Duke of Villars expressed similar ideas of French natural impetuosity when describing Villars's address to his men before the 1712 attack on Denain: 'the enemy are stronger than us and they are entrenched, but we are French. This is about the honour of the nation, and today we must conquer or die'.¹¹⁸

Frederick had an important practical example for such aggressive tactics during the immediate post-war years in the form of Maurice de Saxe himself, whose victories at Roucoux in 1746 and Lauffeld in 1747 were achieved through repeated frontal attacks.¹¹⁹ As noted in the introduction, Frederick maintained an excited correspondence with de Saxe 1745-9, entertaining him in Potsdam in 1749.¹²⁰ He wrote specifically to d'Argens in July 1747 commenting on Lauffeld:

It must be admitted that Monsieur Cumberland [the allied commander] is a great idiot, and something worse. These animals have seen the loss of three battles [Fontenoy, Roucoux and Lauffeld] . . . *for having let themselves be attacked in their positions* [italics mine], and they fall always into the same faults, for which they will be reprov'd by the Caesars, the Condés, the Turennes and the Montecuccolis and bood by

¹¹⁴ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 84 (quotation: 'fondent avec cette incroyable impétuosité si naturelle à la nation, les mettent dans le désordre le plus affreux').

¹¹⁵ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 90 (quotation: 'tiraillement ne convient pas à la nation Française').

¹¹⁶ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 92 (quotation: 'il n'en eût pas eu grand besoin, si l'on eût ordonné aux soldats de joindre ces Messieurs-là la bayonette au bout du fusil, le seul moyen efficace d'en avoir raison.').

¹¹⁷ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 138-41 (quotation, p. 140: 'l'épée à la main').

¹¹⁸ *Memoires du duc de Villars* (3 vols., The Hague, 1734-6), III, p. 172 (quotation: 'les Ennemis sont plus forts que nous, ils sont même retranchés, mais nous sommes François: il y va de l'honneur de la Nation, il faut aujourd'hui vaincre ou périr').

¹¹⁹ Quimby, *Napoleonic warfare*, p. 57.

¹²⁰ *Œuvres*, XVII, pp. 335-45; *Politische Correspondenz*, IV, pp. 327-8; *Politische Correspondenz*, V, pp. 161, 215-6, 231-2, 291-2, 553; *Politische Correspondenz*, VI, pp. 10, 23, 28, 38-9, 119-21.

the Feuquières and, if it pleases God, damned in the other world as incorrigible animals.¹²¹

The copious praise given by Frederick to de Saxe in his writings shows that he considered the French general an impressive example to emulate, or at least to compare himself to for representative purposes.¹²² Frederick's letter to d'Argens shows that he also saw de Saxe as standing in a line of famous generals and military thinkers – mostly French – who advocated aggressive tactics.

Frederick's July 1757 *Reasons for my military conduct* was written to excuse his decision to attack the Austrians at Kolin, and sought to demonstrate the importance of going out to fight a relieving army in the open field in order to protect a siege (in this case, Frederick's siege of Prague). Frederick listed a series of great generals, mostly from the wars of Louis XIV, who had done this: Turenne at The Dunes in 1658, Luxembourg at Cassel (although Frederick confused the circumstances, saying that it was fought to protect the siege of Mons in 1691, rather than that of St. Omer in 1677), de Saxe at Fontenoy in 1745, Eugene's successful decision to leave his siege lines and fight at Belgrade in 1717, as well as the failure of the French generals La Feuillade and Marsin to leave their siege lines at Turin in 1706 and engage Eugene's relieving army in battle. 'France lost Italy in 1704', said Frederick (getting the date wrong, as he so often did), 'solely because the French remained shut up inside their entrenchments and did not oppose the progress of Prince Eugene.'¹²³ The French decision to remain on the defensive – taken on the specific orders of Versailles – and its disastrous consequences was one of the best-known stories of the wars of Louis XIV. As Voltaire put it, 'that order, given in Versailles,

¹²¹ *Œuvres*, XIX, p. 17 (quotation: 'Il faut avouer que M. de Cumberland est une grande pécore, et quelque chose de pis. Ces animaux ont vu perdre trois batailles . . . pour s'être laissé attaquer dans des postes, et ils retombent toujours dans les mêmes fautes, pourquoi ils seront réprouvés des Césars, des Condés, des Turennes, des Montécuculis, et hués par les Feuquières, et, s'il plaît à Dieu, damnés dans l'autre monde comme des animaux incorrigibles.').

¹²² *Œuvres*, IX, pp. 219, 265; *Œuvres*, X, p. 283; *Œuvres*, XXII, p. 232; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 296; *Œuvres*, XXIX, p. 121.

¹²³ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 295-6 (quotation: 'la France perdit l'Italie, l'année 1704, uniquement parce que les Français restèrent renfermés dans leurs retranchements, et ne s'opposèrent point aux progrès du prince Eugène.').

caused 60,000 men to be dispersed.¹²⁴ Even Quincy, who tried to justify the court's orders, admitted that the French would certainly have won if they had left their defences to fight.¹²⁵ Feuquières, living in embittered retirement, made Turin a key piece of evidence in a section that argued against the use of lines of circumvallation in general, favouring a covering army to protect a siege instead.¹²⁶ Frederick was apparently influenced by this passage, as he said the same thing in his *General principles*, using one of the same examples as Feuquières: Turenne's forcing of Condé entrenchments at Arras.¹²⁷ Years before his rash decision to fight at Kolin, Frederick had repeatedly cited Turin as an example of the dangers of awaiting the enemy inside defensive positions. His detailed description of the battle in the *History of Brandenburg* noted that, 'the French, who would have had outnumbered the allies two to one if they had attacked them outside their entrenchments, were instead inferior to them everywhere, because of the many different positions which they had to defend.'¹²⁸ He made a similar comment in his *Art of war*, noting that 'Marsin . . . defended too great a perimeter'.¹²⁹ Frederick thus used the famous mistake of the French commanders at Turin to justify the doctrine of boldly seeking battle that came naturally to him in any case.

While Frederick's account of Turin clearly followed the French historiography, the prominent mention of Prince Eugene at both Turin and Belgrade is a reminder that aggressive tactics were by no means the sole preserve of the French. Moreover, Frederick's own tactics seem to have been primarily inspired by practical experience rather than academic study. Despite Frederick's later advocacy of bayonet attacks, the last chapter will show that he did not originally understand the value of edged weapons, and that Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau had to explain to him the importance of cavalry attacking the

¹²⁴ Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, pp.393-6 (quotation, p.393: 'Cet ordre, donné dans versailles, fut cause que soixante-mille hommes furent dispersés.').

¹²⁵ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, V, pp. 161-78.

¹²⁶ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 279-82.

¹²⁷ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 35.

¹²⁸ *Œuvres*, I, p. 131 (quotation: 'Les Français, qui auraient été du double supérieurs aux alliés, s'ils les avaient attaqués hors de leurs retranchements, leur furent inférieurs partout, à cause que les quartiers différents qu'ils avaient à défendre').

¹²⁹ *Œuvres*, X, p. 285 (quotation: 'Marsin . . . défendait une trop vaste enceinte').

enemy rather than waiting to be attacked. Frederick's 1742 *Seelowitz instructions* showed him quickly learning this lesson.¹³⁰ The 'Old Dessauer' was himself a well-known exponent of aggressive, even reckless, infantry attacks, with even Folard remarking on the Prussian attack at Cassano: 'throwing themselves bravely into the water quite rashly for Germans, without thinking that they needed to preserve their . . . cartridges'.¹³¹ Such tactics were therefore certainly not the preserve of the French. Frederick's own tactics were partly inspired by the practical example of his own victories in 1745 at Hohenfriedberg and Soor, in which the Prussians successfully attacked with fixed bayonets.¹³² The second chapter showed that Frederick's ideas of attacking sword in hand reflected contemporary concepts of glorious manliness. As noted above, Frederick was in any case temperamentally inclined to take risks. The influence of French military literature on Frederick's aggressive tactics must therefore not be over-stated.

Nevertheless, whatever the degree to which Frederick's tactical approach during the inter-war years was in fact modelled on them, he clearly saw such historical examples, and the French tactical approach in general, as very useful for representing his generalship to a wide variety of audiences. Frederick's poem *The art of war*, for instance, was not meant for a technical military audience but belonged to the *Works of the philosophe of Sans Souci*, which were distributed to his intellectual inner circle.¹³³ Its final song was devoted to the subject of battles, and listed four examples of battle tactics, all of them aggressive attacks: Blenheim/Höchstädt (1704), Almansa (1707), Lauffeld, and Condé's 1644 victory at Freiburg. Frederick cited the former two as examples of frontal attacks, and described the latter two as examples of an attack on a wing of the enemy army deployed in a defensive position on high ground, a

¹³⁰ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 59, 63-4, 69, 80.

¹³¹ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 84 (quotation: 'se jettent bravement à l'eau assez étourdimment pour des Allemands, sans penser qu'ils avaient leurs . . . cartouches à conserver'); Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau', pp. 21-2, 25.

¹³² Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great*, pp. 110-1.

¹³³ Andreas Pečar, 'Friedrich der Große als Autor: Plädoyer für eine adressatenorientierte Lektüre seiner Schriften', in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große – eine perspektivische Bestandsaufnahme: Beiträge des ersten Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 28./29. September 2007* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-bestandsaufnahme/pecar_autor, last accessed 27 November 2017), paragraphs 33-35.

manoeuvre that exactly paralleled Frederick's own hard-fought victory at Soor in 1745. It is clear from this that Frederick saw Eugene (whom he named as the victor of Blenheim), the Duke of Berwick, Condé and de Saxe as suitable examples of generals with tactics similar to his own, which he could present to his inner circle.¹³⁴ Frederick's use of Condé as a model for the bold approach to war that he favoured as a young man will be discussed in more detail below.

As well as using examples of famous generals to justify his generalship to enlightened opinion, Frederick's decision to publish an *Extract* of the work of Folard for the use of his officers was clearly intended to justify to them his tactical system. Frederick stated specifically in the introduction to the *Extract* that he had removed Folard's technical section on the use of columns:

One has conserved only the manoeuvres of war for which he gives a just description, his wise critique of the conduct of certain French generals, certain tactical rules, examples of singular and ingenious defences, and several projects that furnish material for reflections.¹³⁵

The *Extract* was thus *not* an invitation for Prussian officers to learn from Folard's tactical system. Although it did contain sections setting out Folard's column system, the passages quoted earlier in this chapter show that it was primarily a profession of faith in the spirit of all-out attack which Frederick in the inter-war years sought to instil as the precept for battlefield victory.¹³⁶ Clearly, in seeking justification for a philosophy that came naturally to him in any case, and which was heavily influenced by Louisquatorzean concepts of military manliness, Frederick found it helpful to draw on the rich seam of French military thought that espoused such tactics.

¹³⁴ *Œuvres*, X, pp. 314-5.

¹³⁵ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 3 (quotation: 'on n'a conservé que les manœuvres de guerre dont il donne une description juste, la critique sage qu'il emploie sur la conduite de quelques Généraux Français, certaines règles de tactique, des exemples de défenses singulières et ingénieuses, et quelques projets qui fournissent matière à des réflexions').

¹³⁶ On columns, see *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 62-3.

The Classics

Alongside Frederick's huge interest in 'the past century', it is well known that he read broadly on the history of the ancient world.¹³⁷ Alongside actual Classical authors, he particularly liked the works of Vertot and Montesquieu on Roman history and the ancient histories of Rollin.¹³⁸ Comparisons with classical figures like Marcus Aurelius or Caesar were very important for Frederick's self-presentation.¹³⁹ The contemporary idealisation of classical virtues has already been noted and, among the authors read by Frederick, Montesquieu, Rollin and Vertot all looked to the classical world for moral examples and admired the military virtues of toughness and discipline.¹⁴⁰ With the exception of the almost entirely present-minded Feuquières and Quincy, the military literature read by Frederick – for instance Montecuccoli – similarly looked to Classical military organisation and discipline and Classical examples of heroism.¹⁴¹ Vegetius – the classic source on ancient methods of military organisation – was considered particularly important.¹⁴² De Saxe proposed to organise his model army into legions.¹⁴³ Folard compared the French soldiers at Cassano with Homeric heroes, or Caesar's famous Tenth Legion.¹⁴⁴ Puységur noted

¹³⁷ Luvaas, *Frederick the Great*, p. 26.

¹³⁸ Dantal, *Délassemens littéraires*, pp. 15-27, 29-32, 35, 42-4; Gonthier-Louis Fink, 'Die literarischen Beziehungen Friedrichs zu Frankreich', in Jürgen Ziechmann, ed., *Panorama der fridericianischen Zeit: Friedrich der Grosse und seine Epoche: ein Handbuch* (Bremen, 1985), pp. 243-4, 246; Hans-Joachim Gehrke, 'Klassische Studien: Paradoxien zwischen Antike und Aufklärung' in Bernd Söseman and Gregor Vogt-Spira, eds., *Friedrich der Große in Europa: Geschichte einer wechselvollen Beziehung* (2 vols., Stuttgart, 2012), I, pp. 113-26; Wolfgang J. Kaiser, *Die Bücher des Königs: Friedrich der Grosse: Schriftsteller und Liebhaber von Büchern und Bibliotheken* (Berlin, 2012), pp. 57-60; Reinhold Koser, ed., *Briefwechsel Friedrichs des Großen mit Grumbkow und Maupertius (1731-1759)* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 127, 132; Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, pp. 11, 15, 17-18, 37-8; Bogdan Krieger, *Frederick the Great and his books* (New York, NY, 1913), pp. 9, 12, 18-19, 21; *Œuvres*, II, p. 42; *Œuvres*, VII, p. 124; *Œuvres*, XIX, p. 105.

¹³⁹ For comparisons with Caesar and Marcus Aurelius from the 1730s and 1740s, see *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 301; *Œuvres*, XVIII, pp. 15, 33, 36, 41; *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 66, 173, 195, 218, 287, 304, 319, 320, 331, 339, 340, 369, 412, 428, 431-2; *Œuvres*, XXII, pp. 66, 77, 85, 87, 307.

¹⁴⁰ Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *Considerations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur decadence* (2nd edn., Amsterdam, 1735), pp. 14-19; Charles Rollin, *Histoire ancienne des Egyptiens, des Carthaginois, des Assyriens, des Babyloniens, des Medes et des Perses, des Macedoniens des Grecs* (12 vols., Amsterdam, 1734-6), VI, pp. 179, 209-10, 212-5; René Aubert de Vertot, *Histoire des révolutions arrivées dans le gouvernement de la république Romaine* (3rd edn., 3 vols., The Hague, 1724), I, pp. ii-viii, xxii; Vertot, *Histoire de la République Romaine*, II, pp. 295, 301, 305, 364-5.

¹⁴¹ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 8-10, 21.

¹⁴² See for instance Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 237, 309, 314, 319.

¹⁴³ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 8, 19, 23-6, 34-40, 53, 89.

¹⁴⁴ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 88-90.

the valour of the Spartans at Thermopylae.¹⁴⁵ Frederick followed such trends, citing Vegetius and claiming that the Prussians were the only modern soldiers to embody Roman military discipline, while also comparing them to the courageous Spartans at Thermopylae.¹⁴⁶

When it came to the tactics of ancient battles, however, Frederick's writings had astonishingly little to say. He said nothing at all, for instance, about the tactics used in the battles of the Greco-Persian Wars, the campaigns of Alexander the Great, Hannibal or Scipio Africanus.¹⁴⁷ This was despite the fact that these battles potentially offered numerous lessons for Frederick's own tactics, and examples which could justify them to others: in particular the use of outflanking manoeuvres, and the aggressive use of cavalry to deal decisive blows.¹⁴⁸ The most striking omission was of the Theban general Epaminondas and his victory at Leuktra in 371 B.C., won using precisely the oblique line tactic that Frederick came to favour.¹⁴⁹ Apart from one reference to Folard's preference for the Theban column formation, Frederick scarcely referred to Leuktra at all, and certainly not to support his own tactical ideas.¹⁵⁰

This silence on the tactics of ancient battles certainly did not reflect a lack of knowledge on Frederick's part. While it is impossible to know whether he read Rollin's detailed descriptions of Alexander's battles, or Polybius's descriptions of the battles of Hannibal and Scipio, he certainly quoted many anecdotes from Alexander's campaigns, noted Hannibal's use of a diversion when crossing the Rhone in 218 B.C., and discussed in detail the Roman siege of Syracuse 214-212 B.C. and Hannibal's use

¹⁴⁵ Puysegur, *Art de la guerre*, II, p. 125.

¹⁴⁶ *Œuvres*, I, p. 223; *Œuvres*, VI, p. 105; *Œuvres*, V, p. 54; *Œuvres*, IX, p. 154; *Œuvres*, XI, p. 99; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 3, 100.

¹⁴⁷ For Frederick's references to the battles of Marathon, Salamis, Plataea, Granicus, Gaugamela, Cannae and Zama, see *Œuvres*, II, p. xiii; *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 20, 97, 222; *Œuvres*, IX, pp. 155, 262, 266; *Œuvres*, X, p. 268; *Œuvres*, XII, pp. 3, 65; *Œuvres*, XVIII, p. 135; *Œuvres*, XX, p. 152; *Œuvres*, XXIII, p. 165; *Œuvres*, XXVI, pp. 201, 449; *Politische Correspondenz*, XX, p. 509. The battles of Issus, Trebbia and Trasimene were not mentioned at all.

¹⁴⁸ On Frederick's use of cavalry, see Childs, *Armies and warfare in Europe*, pp. 126-7; Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa*, p. 155; Strachan, *European Armies*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴⁹ For Leuktra, see John Buckler, *The Theban hegemony, 371-362 B.C.* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1980), pp. 62-5; Peter Connolly, *Greece and Rome at war* (London, 1988), pp. 50-1.

¹⁵⁰ *Œuvres*, XIII, pp. 113-14; *Œuvres*, XXV, p. 275; *Œuvres*, XXVII_I, p. 438.

of Capua as a base during the latter part of the Second Punic War.¹⁵¹ In 1736, the Saxon diplomat Count Manteuffel had told Frederick in detail about the Roman general Fabius Maximus, and Frederick clearly understood Fabian tactics sufficiently to use the comparison to mock his opponent Leopold von Daun during the Seven Years War.¹⁵² Most importantly, Frederick gave detailed descriptions of several battles during the Roman Civil War, reflecting his particular interest in Caesar's commentaries.¹⁵³ The numerous modern soldiers who have been eager to present their achievements as emulating Classical examples, despite the vastly different military technology employed, demonstrate that technological changes are also not a sufficient explanation for Frederick's neglect of ancient battle tactics.¹⁵⁴

Rather, Frederick's almost complete silence on the tactics of ancient battles, in contrast with his very detailed engagement with tactical examples from the wars of Louis XIV, demonstrates that, for him, battle tactics were located temporally in the world of ordered post-Westphalian states (exemplified, as discussed in the first chapter, by the parade ground of Neuruppin).¹⁵⁵ As noted above, Frederick declared in his introduction to the *Extract* he commissioned of Folard's work that the art of war had been totally reinvented during the Dutch Revolt, particularly by Maurice of Nassau, making all previous works useless. Reiterating similar comments from his *General principles of war*, Frederick said that, 'in his *Commentaries*, Caesar teaches us scarcely more than what we would see in a war of pandours'.¹⁵⁶ This was an explicit expression of the concept that 'the last century' represented a distinct era,

¹⁵¹ *Œuvres*, I, pp. 12-13; *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 97; *Œuvres*, X, pp. 40, 71, 290, 306-7, 316; *Œuvres*, XI, p. 61; *Œuvres*, XIX, p. 405; *Œuvres*, XXIII, p. 309; Rollin, *Histoire ancienne*, VI, pp. 183-9, 215-30, 317-8, 322-34. For Frederick reading Polybius, see Dantal, *Délassemens littéraires*, p. 18.

¹⁵² *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 173, 324; *Œuvres*, X, pp. 276, 279, 283; *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 343; *Œuvres*, XIX, p. 116; *Œuvres*, XXIII, p. 72; *Œuvres*, XXV, pp. 476-7; *Œuvres*, XXVII_I, p. 347; *Œuvres*, XXVII_II, p. 68; *Politische Correspondenz*, XVII, pp. 235, 257.

¹⁵³ For battles of the Roman Civil War, see *Œuvres*, X, pp. 276-7, 290; *Œuvres*, XII, p. 115. For Frederick reading Caesar's *Commentaries*, see *Œuvres*, I, p. xlvi, *Œuvres*, II, p. xvii, *Œuvres*, VII, p. 119, *Œuvres*, XII, p. 258; *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 175; *Œuvres*, XIX, pp. 403-4; *Œuvres*, XX, pp. 29-30; *Politische Correspondenz*, V, p. 234.

¹⁵⁴ See for instance Roger Cohen and Claudio Gatti, *In the eye of the storm: the life of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf* (London, 1991), pp. 69-70.

¹⁵⁵ On this phenomenon, see Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa*, pp. 149, 177, 194-208, 216-21.

¹⁵⁶ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 4 (quotation: 'César dans ses commentaires ne nous apprend guères autre chose que ce que nous voyons dans la guerre des Pandours'); *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 50.

totally separate from previous ages and, crucially, more *ordered*. Frederick emphasized the difference between the armies of his own time, contained by ‘discipline and good order’, and the ‘mass of bandits’ of the time of Machiavelli.¹⁵⁷ While Folard’s work was a commentary on Polybius, the *Extract* primarily focused on Folard’s personal experiences of the wars of Louis XIV (for instance the large section on Cassano noted above).¹⁵⁸

As noted above, Kunisch argued that Frederick’s words were typical of the claims of post-Westphalian states to have introduced a more restrained and calculated form of warfare after the chaos of the religious wars.¹⁵⁹ The first and third chapters have shown that it would be more correct to describe it as ‘ordered’, rather than mathematically calculated. The military authors read by Frederick, however, by no means shared Frederick’s disinterest in classical battle tactics. Santa Cruz specifically stated his opposition to ‘the ridiculous opinion . . . that ancient histories have little relevance for the war of today’.¹⁶⁰ He made scarcely any distinction between recent times and earlier ones, presenting Moses, Holofernes, Cyrus the Younger, Xenophon’s Ten Thousand, Philip of Macedon, Alexander the Great, Aemilius Paulus, Julius Caesar, Hernan Cortes, Gustav Adolph, the Swiss victory at Novarra in 1513, Rocroi in 1643, the War of the Spanish Succession and the modern Ottomans, Poles and Tartars alongside each other as examples to illustrate particular tactical and strategic principles.¹⁶¹ He used examples from Hannibal and the Persian emperor Darius III to illustrate decisions to engage in battle that reflected the customs of his own time, and cited Hannibal’s victory at Lake Trasimene in 217 B.C. as an example of attacking the enemy on the march.¹⁶² Folard’s interest in ancient battle tactics is well known, and he made frequent reference to ancient examples in a tactical context.¹⁶³ Puységur explicitly stated that his work drew both on ancient and modern sources, and argued that the military theory of his own day had still not equalled that

¹⁵⁷ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 78, 197 (quotations: ‘la discipline et le bon ordre . . . amas de bandits’).

¹⁵⁸ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, passim.

¹⁵⁹ Kunisch, *Der kleine Krieg*, pp. 34-48.

¹⁶⁰ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 28 (quotation: ‘l’opinion ridicule . . . que les Histoires anciennes servent bien peu pour la guerre d’aujourd’hui’).

¹⁶¹ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 206-9, 214, 218-24.

¹⁶² Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, pp. 278, 280-1, 293.

¹⁶³ Quimby, *Napoleonic Warfare*, p. 27.

Folard, pp. 6-9, 11-13, 119-21.

of the Greeks and Romans.¹⁶⁴ He made plentiful use of tactical examples from the classical period, and structured his discussion of battle formations around the precepts of Vegetius.¹⁶⁵ Montecuccoli and Puységur noted the difference in arms between their own time and the classical world, but argued that one could still draw tactical lessons from them.¹⁶⁶ The pike remained in use in Montecuccoli's time, and de Saxe argued for its reintroduction.¹⁶⁷ De Saxe explicitly proposed to equip contemporary troops with ancient weapons, and discussed the use of ancient tactics in his own day.¹⁶⁸ As noted above, only Feuquières and Quincy, the archetypal representatives of Louisquatorzean warfare, eschewed classical examples.¹⁶⁹ That Frederick did so too underlines the degree to which he oriented his tactics toward the tradition of the 'Century of Louis XIV'.

Caesar

There was, however, one exception to Frederick's neglect of ancient battle tactics. In his introduction to Folard's work, he maintained that the only lesson to be learned from Caesar's campaigns was the deployment of his cavalry at the battle of Pharsalus.¹⁷⁰ Caesar's innovation at Pharsalus had been to support his cavalry with infantry, including interspersing foot-soldiers among the horsemen: a technique learnt from the Germanic tribes. This enabled him to rout Pompey's superior cavalry.¹⁷¹ Famously, at his first battle at Mollwitz in 1741, Frederick also employed infantry units interspersed among his cavalry.¹⁷² Indeed, he had written to Schwerin

¹⁶⁴ Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, pp. 3, 35-8, 50; Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, p. 192.

¹⁶⁵ Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, pp. 159, 161-6; Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 125-9, 197.

¹⁶⁶ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 10-13, 24-5, 191-2; Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, I, p. 3; Puységur, *Art de la guerre*, II, pp. 196-7.

¹⁶⁷ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 27-8; Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 43-4.

¹⁶⁸ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 29, 42, 82, 187-94.

¹⁶⁹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II. For a rare reference to classical history in Feuquières's work, see *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 30-1.

¹⁷⁰ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 4.

¹⁷¹ Lawrence Keppie, 'The Roman army of the later republic', in John Hackett, ed., *Warfare in the ancient world* (London, 1989), p. 188; John Warry, *Warfare in the classical world*, ed. Philip de Ste. Croix (London, 1980), pp. 170-2.

¹⁷² Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen: erster Theil: der Erste Schlesischer Krieg, 1740-1742* (3 vols., Berlin, 1890-3), I, pp. 399-400, 419.

the month before the battle, proposing that ‘our cavalry should be strengthened with infantry’.¹⁷³

Frederick claimed in the 1775 edition of his *History of my times* that he had adopted the tactic from King Gustav Adolf of Sweden, but an examination of his library and writings makes this extremely unlikely.¹⁷⁴ Whereas Frederick’s *History of Brandenburg* described in detail Gustav’s humiliations of Elector George William of Brandenburg – a crucial element in his argument that Brandenburg needed the protection of the strong state built by his dynasty – he scarcely described Gustav’s famous battles at Breitenfeld (1631) and Lützen (1632) at all.¹⁷⁵ Frederick’s description of Breitenfeld did not even mention it by name, merely saying that ‘Gustav Adolf . . . fell upon the imperials, whom he defeated totally.’¹⁷⁶ He did not describe Gustav’s campaigns in southern Germany, saying, ‘we will not follow the Swedes in the course of their triumphs’.¹⁷⁷ On Lützen, he said only, ‘the King of Sweden . . . arrives, wins the famous battle of Lützen, and loses his life in the fighting.’¹⁷⁸ Such sparse references stand in total contrast to Frederick’s repeated and detailed descriptions of battles like Turckheim and Cremona, and provide no evidence that Frederick had any understanding of Gustav’s tactics. Montecuccoli commented on the Swedish use of musketeers and artillery interspersed among the cavalry, but dated this after the battle of Nordlingen in 1634 (after Gustav’s death) and described it as not particularly successful.¹⁷⁹ Boussuet’s *Universal history*, known to be among Frederick’s favourite books, gave scarcely more details about Breitenfeld and Lützen than Frederick did.¹⁸⁰ The catalogue of Frederick’s library contains no books

¹⁷³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 26.3.1741 (quotation: ‘unsere Cavallerie mit der Infanterie zuspicken sey’).

¹⁷⁴ *Œuvres*, II, p. 81.

¹⁷⁵ On George William’s humiliations, see *Œuvres*, I, pp. 45-51.

¹⁷⁶ *Œuvres*, I, p. 49 (quotation: ‘Gustave-Adolphe . . . fond sur les Impériaux, qu’il défait totalement’).

¹⁷⁷ *Œuvres*, I, p. 50 (quotation: ‘Nous ne suivrons point les Suédois dans le cours de leurs triomphes’).

¹⁷⁸ *Œuvres*, I, p. 51 (quotation: ‘Le roi de Suède . . . arrive; il gagne la fameuse bataille de Lützen, et perd la vie en combattant.’).

¹⁷⁹ Montecuccoli, *Memoires*, pp. 192-3.

¹⁸⁰ Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, *Discours sur l’histoire universelle: pour expliquer la suite de la religion & les changemens des empires* (13th edn., 3 vols., Amsterdam, 1738), II, pp. 379, 381; Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, pp. 15, 38.

acquired before the Seven Years War that discussed Gustav's campaigns.¹⁸¹ Two books in Frederick's collection on the Thirty Years War and on the history of northern Europe were published only in 1757 and 1762 respectively.¹⁸² While Galeozo Gualdo Priorato's *History of the war of the emperors Ferdinand II and Ferdinand III and King Philip IV of Spain against Gustav Adolf, King of Sweden, and Louis XIII, King of France, 1630-1640*, written in Italian, had been published in 1640 and 1661, it was in the library of the Potsdam New Palace, whose books were installed only 1769-1771. Prince Henry had a French translation of Gualdo Priorato's *History of the last campaigns and negotiations of Gustav Adolf in Germany* produced in 1772, copies of which Frederick obtained for both the New Palace and Potsdam City Palace libraries, and it may have been here that he read about Gustav Adolf's tactics, thus enabling him to refer to them in the 1775 version of the *History of my times* (they were absent from the original version).¹⁸³ It is, however, highly unlikely that Frederick had read about Gustav's tactics before his 1740 invasion of Silesia, and the Swedish king can therefore be ruled out as an influence for the combination of infantry and cavalry at Mollwitz.

In contrast, it is well known that Frederick was inspired by the example of Julius Caesar, saw his invasion of Silesia as comparable with Caesar's destruction of the Roman Republic, and was particularly fascinated by the battle of Pharsalus.¹⁸⁴ In late October 1740, he wrote excitedly to Algarotti about the death of Emperor Charles VI and the possibilities it opened up for him, then referred to the production of Voltaire's *The death of Caesar* that he was putting on with his friends, saying, 'here were are all quietly playing Caesars and Anthonys, in the expectation that we will be able to imitate them in fact.'¹⁸⁵ A few days later, he declared that one of Algarotti's recent letters was 'close to that which Anthony would have written to Caesar, at the time

¹⁸¹ Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, pp. 137-46, 173-4.

¹⁸² Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, p. 138.

¹⁸³ Krieger, *Friedrich der Große*, p. 141; Max Posner, ed., 'Frédéric II. histoire de mon temps (Redaktion von 1746), *Publicationen aus den K. preussischen Staatsarchiven* 4 (1879), p. 226; Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, *Königliche Bücher: Bucheinbände des Hauses Hohenzollern: Ausstellung 16. Mai bis 26. Juli 1986* (Berlin, 1986), pp. 27, 31.

¹⁸⁴ Luh, *Der Große*, pp. 12-13, 53; *Œuvres*, XXII, pp. 130, 146; Sachse, *Cäsar in Sanssouci*, pp. 191-6; Theodor Schieder, *Friedrich der Große: ein Königtum der Widersprüche* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), p. 356; Vogt-Spira, 'Das antike Rom im geistigen Haushalt eines Königs', pp. 137-9.

¹⁸⁵ *Œuvres*, XVIII, p. 22 (quotation: 'Nous faisons ici tout doucement les Césars et les Antoinnes, en attendant que nous puissions les imiter plus réellement.').

when the latter was conquering England'.¹⁸⁶ He famously described his invasion of Silesia to Podewils as 'cross[ing] the Rubicon', thus explicitly comparing it with Caesar's seizure of power in the Roman Civil War.¹⁸⁷ By January 1741, as he prepared to bombard the Austrian fortress of Neisse, Frederick was telling his librarian Jordan, 'I will be your Caesar'.¹⁸⁸ Algarotti duly compared Frederick repeatedly to Caesar during the First Silesian War.¹⁸⁹ Given this evidence, it seems highly likely that Frederick hoped to make Mollwitz his own personal battle of Pharsalus, to be won through combining the Prussian cavalry with infantry (and with the king himself taking post on this flank).

As is well known, Frederick's attempt to learn from classical tactics was disastrously unsuccessful, as the Austrian cavalry at Mollwitz routed the stationary Prussian horsemen and swept the king along with them. Persuaded to flee the battlefield, Frederick sent a message to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau that all was lost.¹⁹⁰ Over the following days, he wrote a series of letters to Leopold justifying his conduct of the battle, in which he emphasized contemporary concepts of order and careful judgement in war.¹⁹¹ Reflecting the idea that one should only fight a battle if one had more to gain from winning than to lose in the event of defeat, Frederick emphasized that the danger of the Austrians capturing his artillery and magazine at Ohlau had meant that 'no other means was left to me than to attack the enemy'.¹⁹² He also thankfully noted 'the conservation of the . . . army', reflecting ideas of the 'conservation' of troops as an element of well-regulated war.¹⁹³ Frederick never tried to intersperse infantry with cavalry again. His letters, and his courteous acceptance of advice from Leopold over the coming months, described in chapter six, reflected an acceptance of the tactical norms of post-Westphalian warfare.

¹⁸⁶ *Œuvres*, XVIII, p. 24 (quotation: 'Près telle qu'Antoine l'eût écrite à César, dans les temps que ce dernier faisait la conquête de l'Angleterre').

¹⁸⁷ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, p. 147 (quotation: 'passerai le Rubicon', 'passé le Rubicon').

¹⁸⁸ *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 92 (quotation: 'Je serai ton César').

¹⁸⁹ *Œuvres*, XVIII, pp. 33, 36, 41.

¹⁹⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 14.4.1741; Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I., p. 406.

¹⁹¹ Leopold von Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege nach original-Quellen* (2 vols., Berlin, 1841), I, pp. 324-9.

¹⁹² Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 325 (quotation: 'war kein ander Mittel vor mich übrig als den Feind anzugreifen').

¹⁹³ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 329 (quotation: 'die Conservation der . . . armée').

The Conqueror

Frederick's desire to emulate Caesar was indicative of a broader tendency. Perhaps the most commonly remarked-upon feature of Frederick's war-making was his success in directing military means toward specific political objectives.¹⁹⁴ As noted above, Frederick was also temperamentally inclined to take risks. Whereas, after his early experiment, he stayed *tactically* rooted in the age of Louis XIV, Frederick used classical history to express his bold ideas about military operations and their use to achieve *political* objectives. He explicitly described his 1757 invasion of Bohemia as intended to bring about another Pharsalus – a decisive battle which would end the war – and notably it was in this context that he mentioned Leuktra: not for its tactical significance, but as an example of a decisive battle.¹⁹⁵ Thomas Biskup has argued that Caesar, while admired in the eighteenth century for his military abilities, was seen as suspect for his usurpation of power, an example that threatened post-Westphalian order.¹⁹⁶ Frederick in his *Refutation of the Prince of Machiavelli* looked toward a 'universal revolution' that would overturn the established states system.¹⁹⁷ Clearly he saw the crossing of the Rubicon and the battle of Pharsalus as parables for overturning the *international* order, not the order within his own state, and it was therefore Caesar's very usurpation of power that made him attractive to Frederick.

Alongside Caesar, Frederick found numerous other examples from Classical history to inspire the bold moves he favoured at the operational level. In contrast to the total absence of discussions of the battle tactics of the Second Punic War, Frederick loved to describe the boldness of Scipio Africanus, who, 'From the Tiber desolated by the demon of war / Carries to the regions of the guilty land / Carnage and horror', and to tell 'by what blow Scipio saved Rome in Africa / Attracting Hannibal to frightened Carthage'.¹⁹⁸ He similarly described the boldness of Hannibal in crossing the Alps to

¹⁹⁴ Kunisch, *Mirakel des Hauses Brandenburg*, pp. 75, 77-80; Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg*, pp. 33-6, 83, 99, 106; Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 438.

¹⁹⁵ *Œuvres*, XVIII, pp. 117, 119; *Œuvres*, XXVII_I, p. 438.

¹⁹⁶ Biskup, 'The Enlightenment', pp. 400-8.

¹⁹⁷ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 179, 330 (quotation: 'révolution universelle').

¹⁹⁸ *Œuvres*, VII, pp. 84-5; *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 169, 319; *Œuvres*, IX, pp. 85, 167, 262; *Œuvres*, X, pp. 283-4 (quotation, p. 283: 'Par quel coup Scipion sauva Rome en Afrique, / A Carthage effrayée attirant Annibal'); *Œuvres*, XII, pp. 2-3 (quotation, p. 3: 'Du Tibre désolé le démon de la guerre / Transporte aux régions de la coupable terre / Le carnage et l'horreur'); *Œuvres*, XIII, pp. 152-3, 160; *Œuvres*, XIX, p. 59.

carry the war into Italy.¹⁹⁹ Whereas Frederick made no mention of Hannibal's tactics of envelopment at the battle of Cannae in 216 B.C., he repeatedly criticised the Carthaginian general's failure to exploit his victory properly by immediately capturing Rome, quoting Maharbal's alleged criticism of Hannibal that 'you know how to win a victory but not how to use it'.²⁰⁰

The contemporary term for using war to achieve large political objectives was that of the conqueror. The *Dictionary of Trévoux* defined 'conquérir' as 'to make oneself master of a country or kingdom with an armed hand', and 'conquérant' as 'one who makes great conquests'.²⁰¹ This was distinct from a *héros* ('hero') – winning glory – or a *capitaine* ('captain') – a skilled general. The conqueror was not just located in the post-Westphalian world of disciplined armies, the *Dictionary of Trévoux* citing Alexander, Timur the Lame and Mehmet the Conqueror as examples of conquerors.²⁰² Frederick described Gustav Adolf, Louis XIV, Eugene and Marlborough – all contemporary figures – as conquerors, but also Cyrus the Great, Genghis Khan and Timur.²⁰³ Most of all, Alexander, Caesar, and King Charles XII of Sweden appeared again and again in Frederick's writings as examples of those who had made a decisive mark on their times through great conquests.²⁰⁴

Contemporary authors primarily examined the concept of the conqueror from a moral perspective. Conquerors were seen negatively as warmongers, but also as potentially positive figures if they developed the countries they conquered.²⁰⁵ In describing

¹⁹⁹ *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 169, 319; *Œuvres*, IX, p. 262; *Œuvres*, X, pp. 304-5.

²⁰⁰ *Œuvres*, III, p. 41; *Œuvres*, X, p. 40; *Œuvres*, XI, p. 61; *Œuvres*, XVIII, p. 135 (quotation: 'Tu sais vaincre, etc.'). On Cannae, see Connolly, *Greece and Rome at war*, pp. 184-8.

²⁰¹ *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin, vulgairement appelé dictionnaire de Trévoux* (6th edn., 8 vols., Paris, 1771), II, p. 817 (quotation: 'se rendre maître d'un pays, d'un Royaume à main armée', 'qui fait de grandes conquêtes').

²⁰² *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*, II, p.817.

²⁰³ *Œuvres*, X, p. 285; *Œuvres*, XII, p. 72; *Œuvres*, XIII, pp. 128, 135; *Œuvres*, XIV, p. 287; *Œuvres*, XXIII, p. 266; *Œuvres*, XXIV, p. 310; *Œuvres*, XXVI, p. 553.

²⁰⁴ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 150, 297; *Œuvres*, IX, p. 223; *Œuvres*, X, pp. 22, 306; *Œuvres*, XIII, pp. 96, 134-5; *Œuvres*, XXIV, p. 310; *Œuvres*, XXVI, p. 553.

²⁰⁵ Jean-Claude Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon: essai sur le culte des grands hommes* (Paris, 1998), pp. 33, 38-40, 45-6; Antoine Lilti, *Figures publiques: l'invention de la célébrité, 1750-1850* (Paris, 2014), pp. 124-6; J.-M. Moureaux, 'La mythologie du héros dans les rapports de Voltaire et Frédéric de 1736 à 1741', in Peter Brockmeier, Roland Desné, Jürgen Voss, eds., *Voltaire und Deutschland: Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Rezeption der französischen Aufklärung* (Stuttgart, 1979), p. 223; *Œuvres*, XXIV, p. 405; Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII. Roi de Suède* (new edn., 2 vols., Amsterdam, 1739), II, p. 117

Charles XII as such, Voltaire placed conquerors in an intermediate category ‘between tyrants and good kings’.²⁰⁶

It is clear, however, that the concept of the conqueror also had relevance specifically for military thought, and Frederick emphasised this in his *Refutation of Machiavelli*. While, for the benefit of the enlightened public, Frederick criticized conquerors from a moral perspective, he also spoke of ‘two sorts of temperaments, that of bold vivacity and that of cautious slowness’.²⁰⁷

There are centuries that favour the glory of conquerors and of those bold and enterprising men who seem to have been born for action and for effecting extraordinary changes in the universe . . .
There are other times, . . . less agitated, . . . when only prudence and circumspection are needed.²⁰⁸

Frederick contrasted the boldness of Hannibal with the caution of Fabius, arguing that both had their place, depending on the circumstances. To please his enlightened audience, Frederick stated: ‘rashness is brilliant . . . but . . . it is full of dangers . . . the strength of the rash is conquests; the strength of the prudent is their conservation.’ He therefore concluded that, ‘a people risk much with a rash prince’.²⁰⁹ Thus, even while criticising conquerors from a moral standpoint, Frederick clearly articulated a connection between bold risk-taking and the conquest of territory. That this reflected a general contemporary view, not just that of Frederick in particular, can be seen from a letter by King Frederick William’s minister Grumbkow to Frederick in 1736, where he said with reference to Pyrrhus that, ‘we must excuse these kinds of conquerors: they follow their temperament without consulting their reason. They follow only the

²⁰⁶ Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I, pp. *4 recto - *4 verso, ‘Discours sur l’histoire de Charles XII’ (unpaginated) (quotation, p. *4 recto: ‘Entre les Tyrans & les bons Rois’); Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, II, pp. 117, 183.

²⁰⁷ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 75-6, 87-9, 151, 153, 192-5, 210, 212, 299, 301-4, 323-4 (quotation, p. 323: ‘deux sortes de tempéraments, celui d’une vivacité hardie, et celui d’une lenteur circonspecte’).

²⁰⁸ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 323-4 (quotation, p.323: ‘Il y a des siècles qui favorisent la gloire des conquérants et de ces hommes hardis et entreprenants qui semblent nés pour agir et pour opérer des changements extraordinaires dans l’univers . . . Il y a d’autres temps . . . , moins agité . . . où il ne faut que de la prudence et de la circonspection’).

²⁰⁹ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 173-4, 324-5 (quotation, p. 325: ‘La témérité est brillante . . . mais . . . elle est féconde en dangers . . . un peuple risque beaucoup avec un prince téméraire . . . Le fort des téméraires, ce sont les conquêtes; le fort des prudents, c’est de les conserver.’).

instinct of their heart, without wanting to put their mind to work.²¹⁰ Thus, contemporaries saw the conqueror as driven on by emotion rather than prudent judgement.

The distinction between warfare conducted within the scope of the post-Westphalian states system and on the other hand the expansive scope of conquerors was best articulated at the end of Chapter XXIV of the *Refutation of Machiavelli*, which discussed the use of fortresses. Frederick argued that:

Alexander, Caesar, Charles XII owed their glory to the fact that they found few fortresses in the country they conquered. . . . Eugene, Villars, Marlborough, Luxembourg were quite different captains from Charles and Alexander, but fortresses to a certain degree blunted the brilliance of their success.²¹¹

In arguing that his three favourite conquerors had achieved their successes because they did not face the limits of contemporary western-European warfare, Frederick was apparently following the argument made by Vauban in the dedication of his *On the attack and defence of places*. Vauban noted that, due to the numerous fortresses there, ‘a battle in the Low Countries often has few consequences’ and ‘one has often seen conquerors halted in the middle of their course’. In contrast,

In the vast countries where there are none or very few fortified places, the victorious pursue the defeated army until it is entirely dispersed. This is normally followed by the sack of the provinces, which are forced to accept the law of the conqueror. This is precisely what Alexander did, rendering himself master of the redoubtable monarchy of the Persians by means of just three battles, and one sees the same thing with Caesar . . . or Tamerlane, the famous conqueror of Asia . . . The same thing has happened to all conquerors who have found themselves in the same position.

²¹⁰ Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, p. 134 (quotation: ‘Il faut excuser ces sortes de conquérants, et ils suivent leur tempérament, sans consulter leur raison; ils ne suivent que l’instinct de leur coeur, sans vouloir mettre de la partie leur esprit.’).

²¹¹ *Œuvres*, VIII, p. 297 (quotation: ‘Alexandre, César, Charles XII, devaient leur gloire à ce qu’ils trouvèrent peu de places fortifiées dans les pays qu’ils conquièrent; . . . Eugène, Villars, Marlborough, Luxembourg, étaient bien d’autres capitaines que Charles et qu’Alexandre; mais les forteresses émoussèrent en quelque manière le brillant de leurs succès’).

Vauban argued that ‘this proves the necessity of fortified places’.²¹² In promising sovereigns that fortresses would ‘assure their states against enemies without and within’, Vauban was presenting fortresses as guarantors of the existing states system, preventing the overthrow of monarchies by conquerors.²¹³

Whether Frederick had read this work by 1740 is not certain. The first volume, published in 1739, was dedicated to him, but the second volume of this work, containing Vauban’s original dedication, only appeared in 1742.²¹⁴ It is, however, conceivable that Frederick might have read the dedication in another form. Santa Cruz similarly described Gustav Adolf as expressing jealousy for the ancient conquerors, saying that the advent of firearms and the new fortresses had made such conquests no longer possible.²¹⁵ He also described Eugene complaining that Alexander would never have made such great conquests if he had had to get permission from the Dutch deputies before undertaking anything.²¹⁶ Thus, even Santa Cruz, who made scarcely any distinction between different periods of history, still emphasised a difference between the expansive conquests of the ancients and the more restricted scope of campaigns in his own time. His words, and those of Vauban, demonstrate that contemporaries recognized an alternative way of war, freed from the constraints of ordered warfare and prudent judgement, and rooted primarily in classical antiquity: a world where decisive battles enabled the conquest of large areas.

²¹² Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban, *De l’attaque et de la defense des places* (2 vols., The Hague, 1737-42), II, ‘Preface’ (unpaginated original dedication) (quotations: ‘on a souvent vû les Conquerans arrêtez au milieu de leur course’, ‘une Bataille dans les Païs-Bas n’a pour l’ordinaire que peu de suite’, ‘dans ces vastes Païs où il n’y a point, ou que fort peu de Places fortes, les Victorieux poussent l’Armée vaincue jusqu’à ce qu’elle soit entièrement dissipée; ce qui est ordinairement suivi du saccagement des Provinces, qui se trouvent par là forcées à recevoir la loi du Conquerant. C’est précisément ce que fit Alexandre, qui moyennant trois Batailles se rendit maître de la redoutable Monarchie des Perses; & on voit la même chose en César . . . ou Tamerlan, ce fameux Conquerant . . . Pareille chose est arrivée à tous les Conquerans qui se sont trouvez dans le même cas: ce qui prouve . . . la nécessité des Places fortes’).

²¹³ Vauban, *De l’attaque et de la defense*, II, ‘Preface’ (unpaginated original dedication) (quotation: ‘assurer leur Etats contre leurs Ennemis du dedans & de dehors’).

²¹⁴ Vauban, *De l’attaque et de la defense*, I, pp. *2 recto - 3* verso.

²¹⁵ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 27-8.

²¹⁶ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 253.

De Saxe made a comparable distinction between ordered west-European warfare and more mobile extra-European methods in a 1745 letter to Frederick, saying:

There have been two methods of conducting war, both of which have their advantages. The Romans followed the one and all the peoples of Asia and Africa the other. The former assumes an exact discipline, and secures solid conquests; the second involves an incursion that is only momentary.

De Saxe's praise for both methods of war – he portrayed Hannibal as having practised both, citing the example of his Numidian light horsemen – reflected his extensive use of light troops in his own campaigns.²¹⁷ Despite his aggressive battle tactics, and his interest in classical examples, de Saxe favoured the more methodical of these two approaches, with disciplined troops enabling secure conquests.²¹⁸ His words are nevertheless further evidence of contemporary awareness of an alternative method of war: one based on mobility rather than discipline.

The outstanding contemporary example of such an alternative approach to war was King Charles XII of Sweden. As emphasized in chapter two, Charles was, alongside Henry IV of France (and, as demonstrated above, Caesar), one of the three key figures in Frederick's mind when he invaded Silesia in 1740. As well as emulating the glory of Henry and Charles at the head of their men, and conquering Silesia as Caesar had conquered the Roman world, Frederick also clearly wanted to emulate Charles's campaigns of conquest, including those in Silesia itself. As noted above, Voltaire classed Charles as a conqueror, and Charles's methods of waging war were seen as astonishingly direct. A British diplomat in 1708 reflected how Charles deviated from contemporary norms in his continued search for total military victory when he remarked that the Swedish king,

seems to undervalue all subordinate means of proceeding with success and to rely wholly on the goodness of his army and justice of his cause, by

²¹⁷ *Œuvres*, XVII, p. 336 (quotation: 'il y a eu deux méthodes sur lesquelles on s'est conduit pour faire la guerre, qui ont toutes deux leurs avantages. Les Romains ont suivi l'une, et tous les peuples de l'Asie et de l'Afrique, l'autre. La première suppose une discipline exacte, et assure des conquêtes solides; la seconde se fait par incursion qui n'est que momentanée.'). On de Saxe's use of light troops, see Francis Henry Skrine, *Fontenoy and Great Britain's share in the War of the Austrian Succession, 1741-48* (Knighton, Powys, 1997), pp. 154, 161, 186, 215, 226-9.

²¹⁸ Saxe, *Reveries*, pp. 123-5, 214-6.

which he has hitherto carried on a prosperous war, contrary to all ordinary rules of acting.²¹⁹

Both Charles's bold battle tactics – based on speed and shock – and his aggressive strategy of invading other states and seeking battle reflected longstanding Swedish traditions and the structure of the Swedish military state. Personal leadership of the army sword in hand was an important element in the self-presentation of the Swedish kings, shock tactics on the battlefield reflected the experience of war against the Poles, while the need to carry the war to other states reflected Sweden's very limited resources, which were not capable of sustaining a long defensive struggle.²²⁰ Thus, Charles was primarily responding to practical circumstances, not theoretical ideas. It is clear, however, that not only Frederick but also the contemporary authors whom he read saw Charles as following in the tradition of the classical conqueror, and specifically of Alexander the Great. Voltaire called Charles 'half Alexander, half Don Quixote', Folard also made the comparison, and Rollin actually *compared Alexander to Charles* (rather than the other way around), naturally naming both as 'conqueror[s]'.²²¹ Frederick called Charles 'the Alexander of the North', and described him as having been inspired by Quintus Curtius's history of Alexander.²²² Thus, whatever the practical inspiration for Charles's strategy, Frederick and his contemporaries saw it as part of a broader pattern of risk-taking conquest, for which comparisons could primarily be found in the classical world.

Frederick's *Reflections on the character and military talents of Charles XII, King of Sweden* also used the topos of a difference between the warfare of the contemporary world and previous ages. His claim here that the change could be dated to 'the invention of powder' – in contrast to his claim in 1753 that Maurice of Nassau marked the turning point – showed that this was not a change tied to any precise point

²¹⁹ Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: state, war and society in Northeastern Europe, 1558-1721* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 277-9 (quotation, p. 278). See also Gunnar von Proschwitz, ed., *The complete works of Voltaire: histoire de Charles XII* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 4-5.

²²⁰ Frost, *Northern Wars*, pp. 166, 214-5, 273-7, 280-3, 290-2, 314-7.

²²¹ Gustave Adlerfeld, *Histoire militaire de Charles XII Roi de Suede: depuis l'an 1700, jusqu'à la bataille de Pultowa en 1709* (4 vols., Amsterdam, 1740), IV, p. 16; *Œuvres*, XXI, p. 80 (quotation: 'moitié Alexandre, moitié Don Quichotte'); Rollin, *Histoire ancienne*, VI, pp. 305-6 (quotation, p. 306: 'Conquérant').

²²² *Œuvres*, I, pp. 125, 165 (quotation, p. 125: 'Alexandre du Nord'); *Œuvres*, VII, pp. 68, 84; *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 97, 222; *Œuvres*, X, pp. 255, 306-7.

in time or any precise technology.²²³ Rather, this was a distinction between what Frederick here called ‘the rules that the system of modern war furnishes’ (that is, the war of ‘the last century’), and ‘the audacity’ inspired by ‘the desire to imitate Alexander’.²²⁴ Frederick thus once again described the warfare of former times as characterised by audacity and risk-taking. Reflecting de Saxe’s distinction between slow and ordered warfare, which offered secure conquests, and the alternative method of ‘momentary incursions’, Frederick repeatedly criticised Charles’s alleged failure to make proper logistical arrangements to secure his conquests, arguing that he should have followed ‘the slow method’ and ‘reduced war to rules’.²²⁵ As is well known, the *Reflections on Charles XII* were written by Frederick as an apology to his generals for his own mistakes.²²⁶ The criticism of Charles’s impetuosity therefore primarily reflected Frederick himself. Nevertheless, Frederick use of the topoi of a change in the nature of warfare, and of a contrast between disciplined and carefully-judged as against bold and risky ways of war, implies that he expected his generals to recognise these topoi. Here he wrote a text disclaiming the bold methods of the conqueror, and promising to abide by the rules of ordered warfare.

Like Charles, Frederick’s ambitions for conquest were grounded in Hohenzollern tradition and his own awareness of the realities of Prussia’s position. His father, despite his opposition to unjust war, had made the pursuit of new ‘territory and population’ (*Lande und Leute*) a key plank of his foreign policy, and repeatedly stressed the importance of upholding Hohenzollern legal claims to other territory.²²⁷ The territories Frederick identified as targets for expansion in his first weeks on the

²²³ *Œuvres*, VII, p. 83 (quotation: ‘l’invention de la poudre’). See also *Œuvres*, X, pp. 290-1; *Œuvres*, XXIV, p. 327.

²²⁴ *Œuvres*, VII, pp. 83-4 (quotations: ‘l’audace . . . le désir d’imiter Alexandre . . . les règles que le système de la guerre moderne fournit’).

²²⁵ *Œuvres*, VII, pp. 87-8, 92 (quotations, pp.87-8: ‘la méthode . . . lente’, ‘réduisait la guerre en règle’).

²²⁶ Pečar, ‘Friedrich der Große als Autor’, paragraphs 40-46.

²²⁷ Jürgen Angelow, ‘Die formidable Armee: der Mythos des “Soldatenkönigs”’, in Friedrich Beck and Julius H. Schoeps, eds., *Der Soldatenkönig: Friedrich Wilhelm I. in seiner Zeit* (Potsdam, 2003), p. 189; Dietrich, *Politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, pp. 237-42, 247 (quotation, pp. 238, 241: ‘landt und leutte’); Carl Hinrichs, ‘Preußen als historisches Problem: zur heutigen Auffassung Friedrich Wilhelms I.’, in Carl Hinrichs, *Preussen als historisches Problem: gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. Gerhard Oestreich (Berlin, 1964), pp. 33-5; Gustav Berthold Volz, ‘Friedrich Wilhelm I. und die preußischen Erbensprüche auf Schlesien’, *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte Band 30* (1918), pp. 59-67.

throne were the same ones on which his father had focused: Jülich and Berg, Mecklenburg, and East Frisia.²²⁸ Nevertheless, alongside these practical calculations, and his own desire for glory, Frederick clearly also had examples of conquerors in mind. Frederick's 1732 Natzmer Letter was a naive document, written only at the beginning of Frederick's period of intensive reading during the 1730s.²²⁹ Nevertheless, Frederick already imagined how 'I advance always from country to country, from conquest to conquest, seeing always, like Alexander, new worlds to conquer'.²³⁰ Clearly, the example of Alexander as a conqueror of vast territories was already well established in Frederick's mind.²³¹ Frederick frequently turned to classical metaphors to describe warfare at the operational level. Discussing Turenne's Turkheim campaign Frederick described how, with his surprise attack, Turenne, 'after having withdrawn like Fabius, attacked like Hannibal'.²³² In his *Reflections on Charles XII*, comparing the Swedish king with the Prussian one, Frederick combined two conquerors together, comparing Charles' daring attack on Copenhagen as an 18-year-old in 1700 with Scipio's invasion of Africa.²³³ This was an invitation to his generals to remember the success of Frederick's own daring invasion of Silesia, also at a young age, soon after he came to the throne. Frederick portrayed his invasion as being in the style not only of Charles but of Scipio.

Risk

Concepts of bold moves at the strategic level to conquer large areas were not only limited to the classical world. Indeed, Louis XIV could claim to be a *conquérant* – although certainly not a *capitaine* – and some of the French military literature that favoured attacks with the bayonet on the battlefield also often favoured strategic boldness to achieve conquests. Indeed, contemporary authors expressed a clear

²²⁸ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 2, 3-4, 7-8, 16, 18.

²²⁹ Arnold Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse: Entwicklungsgeschichte eines Staatsmannes* (Tübingen, 1934), pp. 32-3; Luh, *Der Große*, p. 46.

²³⁰ *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 4 (quotation: 'J'avance toujours de pays en pays, de conquête en conquête, me proposant, comme Alexandre, toujours de nouveaux mondes à conquérir').

²³¹ Berney noted this: *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 31.

²³² *Œuvres*, I, p. 84 (quotation: 'après avoir reculé comme Fabius, il avança comme Annibal').

²³³ *Œuvres*, VII, pp. 84-5.

concept of taking great risks to reap associated rewards, and several contemporary generals were considered to exemplify this.

As a product of the reign of Louis XIV, Feuquières described in detail how a prince should make conquests, and how other princes typically reacted to a conqueror.²³⁴ As Robert Quimby has noted, despite his recognition of the risks of battle, Feuquières was a firm advocate of strategic offensives and of seeking decisive battles to end wars.²³⁵ Among his '[maxims] of the ambitious prince', Feuquières advised:

He must profit from the divisions that he will know how to sow adroitly among his neighbours, make use of all the pretexts that they provide to get into conflict with them, however specious these pretexts may be, so long as they are useful to him. After that, he must take measures in such a way that his other neighbours do not have the time to declare war on him before he has made some conquest, which he can hold onto through a peace treaty.²³⁶

Feuquières noted that, if he had made peace with the Dutch in 1672, Louis XIV could have used some pretext to invade the Spanish Netherlands, at a time when the Emperor was in no state to oppose him.²³⁷ Frederick – who had read Feuquières in the 1730s – acted in precisely this way in the first two Silesian Wars: profiting from divisions among his neighbours, launching invasions on spurious pretexts, and then quickly concluding peace treaties to hold onto his gains.

In his 1740-1 invasion of Silesia, Frederick followed almost to the letter the lessons identified by Feuquières's analysis of the 1668-9 War of Devolution. Feuquières noted the need to publish a manifesto justifying one's actions, and to raise additional troops to strengthen the invasion forces, both of which Frederick did.²³⁸ More

²³⁴ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 11-12, 14-16, 84, 88-9, 98-9.

²³⁵ Quimby, *Napoleonic Warfare*, pp. 15-16.

²³⁶ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 10-11 (quotations: 'Du Prince ambitieux', 'Il doit profiter des divisions qu'il aura sçu adroitement semer parmi ses voisins; se servir de tous les prétextes qu'ils lui donnent de se broüiller avec eux, pour peu que ces prétextes soient spécieux, & puissent lui être utiles; enfin il doit prendre ses mesures de manière que ses autres voisins n'ayent pas le tems de lui déclarer la guerre, avant qu'il ait fait quelque conquête qu'il puisse garder par un Traité de paix').

²³⁷ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 127-8.

²³⁸ Walther Hubatsch, *Frederick the Great of Prussia: absolutism and administration*, trans. Patrick Doran (London, 1973), pp. 128-9; Luh, *Der Große*, p. 52; *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 97, 127.

specifically, Feuquières furiously criticised Louis XIV's focus on besieging the frontier fortresses of the Southern Netherlands instead of pushing on to Brussels.²³⁹

The Spanish had very few troops, their fortresses were in a very bad state and shorn of munitions of war. The king was master of the countryside. Therefore, it was essential to bring the army before Brussels. That capital, in no state to sustain a siege, would have opened its gates. The other big towns without defence would have done the same . . . What would the troops who were shut up in the fortresses have been able to do, other than surrender one after the other? Thus, the conquest of the whole Netherlands would have cost the king no more time than he already had.²⁴⁰

This was precisely how Frederick would occupy Silesia, advancing quickly across the scarcely defended province, capturing the capital, Breslau, and blockading the enemy garrisons in their fortresses of Glogau and Brieg rather than stopping to capture them. As will be noted in chapter five, he did this in defiance of the cautious advice of Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, although with the full agreement of Schwerin. Feuquières reflected angrily that stopping to capture the border fortresses gave time for the formation of an alliance against France.²⁴¹ His summary of Louis' failures read like an account of Frederick's success:

It would have been easy to conquer the whole Catholic Netherlands in the campaign of 1667, and that which had been conquered would have been just as easily held through the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle as the small part of the country which he [in fact] occupied, because during that time there would have been no power in a state to force him to abandon his new conquest. But all the attentions useful to a prince who wishes to conquer were neglected.²⁴²

²³⁹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 97-8, 131-2.

²⁴⁰ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 97 (quotation: 'Les Espagnols avoient fort peu de troupes, leurs places étoient en fort mauvais état & dégarnies de munitions de Guerre. Le Roi étoit maître de la Campagne. Il falloit donc pçrter l'Armée devant Bruxelles. Cette Capitale hors d'état de souûtenir un siégé, auroit ouvert ses portes. Les autres grosses Villes sans défense en auroient fait de même . . . Qu'est-ce qu'auroient pû faire les Troupes qui se seroient enfermées dans les Places de Guerre, que de les rendre toutes les unes après les autres? Ainsi la conquête de tous les Païs-Bas n'auroit pas plus coûté de tems au Roi, que ce dont il se rendit le maître.').

²⁴¹ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 98.

²⁴² *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 127 (quotation: 'Il lui auroit été facile de conquérir tous les Païs-Bas Catholiques dans la Campagne de 1667. & ce qu'il auroit conquis, il l'auroit aussi aisément gardé par le Traité d'Aix-la-Chapelle, que la petite partie de ce païs qu'il occupa; parce qu'il n'y avoit dans ce tems-là aucune Puissance en état de le forcer à abandonner sa

The Prussian conqueror would follow Feuquières's prescriptions, concluding peace treaties to secure his gain before any power was in a position to take it from him. Frederick's famous concept of 'short and lively' wars, involving preemptive strikes, exactly followed Feuquières's 'maxims of offensive war', 'which must never be undertaken except to achieve some profit and to finish it [through a peace treaty] before being forced to see this offensive war degenerate into one waged between equal powers.'²⁴³

Feuquières also firmly advocated the use of battles to decide campaigns or even entire wars, or at least to change their course substantially.²⁴⁴ 'A battle at the commencement of a war, given in the right way, almost always decides its success', he said.²⁴⁵ When a general was acting on the defensive, said Feuquières, 'his objective . . . is . . . the ruin of the enemy army, in which case he will change the nature of the war and make it an offensive, which should be the great objective of his prince.'²⁴⁶

While there were clearly also other factors at play, there are good grounds for portraying Feuquières – the epitome of the aggressive French way of war, temporally rooted entirely in the 'Century of Louis XIV', fully espousing the concept of the *conquérant*, and whose book Frederick read in the 1730s – as the father of Frederick's famous strategy of 'total war for limited objectives'.²⁴⁷ When he distributed the work to his officers in late 1741, Frederick was inviting them to reflect on the conquest of Silesia as achieved precisely in the spirit of Feuquières.²⁴⁸

nouvelle conquête. Mais toutes ces attentions utiles à un Prince qui veut conquérir, furent négligées').

²⁴³ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 98-9 (quotations: 'maximes de la Guerre offensive', 'qui ne doit jamais être entreprise que pour en tirer un profit, & la faire finir, avant que d'être forcé à voir dégénérer cette Guerre offensive en celle qui se fait entre Puissances égales.');

Œuvres, XXVIII, p. 95 (quotation: 'courtes et vive'). See also *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 106.

²⁴⁴ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, pp. 111-3, 117-9.

²⁴⁵ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 91 (quotation: 'Une bataille dans un commencement de guerre donnée à propos, en décide presque toujours le succès.').

²⁴⁶ *Memoires de Feuquiere*, p. 93 (quotation: 'son but . . . est . . . la ruine de l'Armée ennemie; auquel cas il changera la nature de cette Guerre, & en fera une offensive; ce qui doit être le grand objet de son Prince.').

²⁴⁷ Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great* (noted on back cover).

²⁴⁸ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 400-1.

Folard, whose philosophy of war – although not his system of columns – Frederick so firmly espoused, was even more voluble in advocating boldly seeking battle. He for instance described how even an army inferior in both infantry and cavalry could still win through a surprise attack. ‘It is on such occasions’, he said, ‘that audacity and apparent recklessness surmount and overcome all obstacles of number and position.’²⁴⁹ Folard imagined:

A clever and enterprising general who finds himself at the head of a small army accustomed to all occasions and completely full of esteem for and confidence in the one who commands it . . . , who is hardened to the most extraordinary enterprises, and who by his conduct and his intelligence succeeds in everything that he undertakes, however insurmountable the thing appears to common spirits and to the most pure valour.²⁵⁰

This was precisely the model of victory through bold aggression that Frederick put forward in the inter-war years and tried to follow during the early years of the Seven Years War.

Folard particularly praised the boldness of the Roman general Marcus Claudius Marcellus.²⁵¹ Besieged by the Carthaginians and Syracusans in Messina, ‘Claudius did not believe that there was any other course for him to follow than to sortie out in front of the enemy . . . a great feat is the only remedy that one can employ in these sorts of conjunctures.’²⁵² Folard went on to use Marcellus to set out precisely the doctrine of all-out attack that Frederick would employ so memorably:

²⁴⁹ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 62 (quotation: ‘c’est dans ces occasions que l’audace & la témérité apparente surmontent & aplannissent tous les obstacles des nombres & des lieux.’).

²⁵⁰ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 64 (quotation: ‘un Général habile & entreprenant qui se trouve à la tête d’une petite armée accoutumé aux occasions, & toute remplie d’estime & de confiance pour celui qui la commande . . . qui l’aguerrit aux entreprises les plus extraordinaires, & qui par sa conduite & son intelligence réussit en tout ce qu’il entreprend, quelque insurmontable que le chose paroisse aux esprits communs & à la valeur la plus épurée.’).

²⁵¹ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 147-50.

²⁵² *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, p. 147 (quotation: ‘Claudius ne crut pas qu’il y eût pour lui d’autre parti à prendre que de sortir au devant des ennemis . . . : un coup d’éclat est l’unique remède qu’on puisse employer dans ces sortes de conjunctures.’).

. . . In the most extreme and pressing situations, one must not attach oneself to the exactitude of the rules of prudence. On the contrary, one must push resolution beyond the bounds of audacity . . . I do not at all want to infer by that one must not make a difference between the possible and the impossible. In a word . . . one must give everything to chance . . . if there is nothing better to do.’²⁵³

Folard fiercely criticised timorous generals.²⁵⁴ He described Marcellus as one of ‘these sorts of military intelligences [which] see the possibility in designs which seem insurmountable to the most audacious recklessness’, and went on: ‘Rashness and imprudence may be worthy of blame if they are deprived of all appearance of reason, but . . . the necessity to attempt everything which is not impossible justifies the general.’²⁵⁵ The French way of war thus involved not only aggressive tactics but also the willingness to take risks.

Such plans for daring strategic offensives were, however, by no means confined to French thinkers. The Marquis of Santa Cruz described at length how to launch surprise attacks to take territory from enemy states before they had a chance to respond.²⁵⁶ ‘Even if the enemy have equal or superior forces’, he said, ‘you may act without opposition during all the months that you . . . put yourself on campaign before them.’²⁵⁷ He recommended making secret preparations, using a range of pretexts and other ruses to gain an advantage over an enemy state, and maintaining large numbers of troops ready for action.²⁵⁸ ‘The prince who conserves a superior corps of troops during the peace is not only assured of carrying the first blow to the enemies: he

²⁵³ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 147-8 (quotation: ‘Dans les affaires extrêmes et pressantes l’on ne doit pas s’attacher à l’exactitude des règles de la prudence: il faut au contraire pousser la résolution au-delà des bornes de la hardiesse . . . Je ne veux pourtant pas inférer de là qu’il ne faille pas faire une différence entre le possible et l’impossible. En un mot . . . il faut donner tout à la fortune . . . lorsqu’il n’y a rien de mieux à faire’).

²⁵⁴ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 148-9.

²⁵⁵ *Extrait des commentaires du Chevalier Folard*, pp. 148, 151 (quotations: ‘ces sortes d’intelligences militaires voyent de la facilité dans les desseins qui semblent insurmontables à la témérité la plus audacieuse’. ‘La témérité & l’imprudence peuvent être blâmables, si elles sont dépouillées de toute apparence de raison; mais . . . la nécessité de mettre en jeu tout ce qui n’est pas impossible, justifie le Général.’).

²⁵⁶ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 287-91.

²⁵⁷ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 288 (quotation: ‘quoique les ennemis aient les égales, ou supérieures; vous agirez sans opposition pendant tous ces mois, que vous . . . vous mettre en campagne avant eux.’).

²⁵⁸ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, pp. 288-302.

takes entire provinces from them before they find themselves in a state of defense.’²⁵⁹ While, as noted above, there is no evidence that Frederick read Santa Cruz’s work before the first two Silesian Wars, his invasions of Silesia in 1740-1 and Saxony in 1756 were precisely this kind of surprise attack. Santa Cruz’s advice, supplemented by historical examples, that, ‘you may arm under the pretext of a different enterprise from that which you project’ was also directly comparable with Frederick’s use in 1740 of his claims to Julich and Berg to cover his real plans against Silesia.²⁶⁰ One of Santa Cruz’s historical examples was uncannily similar to Frederick’s 1740 intervention in the Austrian succession:

Don Alfonso VII, King of Castile, . . . set himself on campaign with an army of Castilians as soon as Don Alfonso, King of Aragon, had died and before Don Ramirez, his heir, had forces ready to hold onto the conquests of his predecessor. Having thus profited from this favourable moment, Alfonso recovered without opposition Naxera, Logrogno, Arnedo, Viruega and all the country between Vilorao and Calahorra.²⁶¹

This example from medieval history reflected Santa Cruz’s lack of distinction between different historical periods. However, he also noted Louisquatorzean France as a model for this kind of approach, referring to Spain’s unhappy experiences when, ‘several times . . . the French would take large numbers of fortresses from us while our kings would be making their alliances and raising their troops.’²⁶² This surely referred to the War of Devolution in particular. As noted in chapter three, Santa Cruz

²⁵⁹ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 289 (quotation: le Prince: qui conserve un corps supérieur de troupes pendant la paix, est non seulement assuré de porter le premier coup aux ennemis; il leur enleve même des Provinces entieres, avant qu’ils se trouvent en état de deffense.’)

²⁶⁰ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 295 (quotation: vous pourrez armes sous prétexte d’une autre entreprise différente de celle que vous projettez’); Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great*, pp. 40-1.

²⁶¹ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 289 (quotation: ‘Don Alfonse VII. Roi de Castille, . . . se mit en campagne avec une armée de Castillans, des que Don Alfonse, Roi d’Aragon, fut mort, & avant que Don Ramire son héritier eût des forces prêtes pour conserver les conquêtes de son prédécesseur: Alfonse aiant ainsi profité de ce tems favorable, recouvra sans opposition Naxera, Logrogno, Arnedo, Viruega, & tout le païs depuis Vilorao jusqu’à Calahorra.’).

²⁶² Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, I, p. 289 (quotation: ‘plusiers fois . . . les François nous prenoient quantité de Places, pendant que nos Rois formoient leur alliances & faisoient leurs levées.’).

also advocated using battles to achieve a decisive success over an enemy army, or to change the political situation outlook of a war.²⁶³

As noted above, Frederick had always been inclined toward aggressive risk-taking, and this can be seen from his correspondence with Grumbkow in the 1730s.²⁶⁴ In February 1737, Frederick described to Grumbkow a plan for a surprise attack using dragoons and hussars to capture Jülich and Berg, while concentrating the rest of the Prussian army in Brandenburg ‘in case anyone should act as if to oppose my designs’.²⁶⁵ He would employ both elements of this plan during the First Silesian War, establishing a corps in Brandenburg to cover his invasion of Silesia.

In his writings, Frederick particularly picked out the Prince de Condé as an example of a courageous commander who took risks to turn the course of a war, for instance when describing the 1643 Rocroi campaign:

Here the great Condé, cherished son of Bellona
Assures the crown of astonished France.
By lightning blows he must stop
The continual success of the fortunate enemy
At that decisive day for Spain and France.
A more circumspect commander
Would not have risked this important combat;
Spain, encouraged by timid France,
Would have pushed its fortune rapidly toward Paris.²⁶⁶

Frederick expressed similar sentiments in a 1743 letter to Louis XV, advising him that ‘sometimes boldness astonishes the enemy and gives the opportunity to gain advantages over him. It was in this way that the great Condé, Monsieur de Turenne,

²⁶³ Santa Cruz, *Reflexions militaires*, III, pp. 288-9.

²⁶⁴ For Frederick’s bold plans, see Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, pp. 170, 176-7. For Grumbkow’s caution, see Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, pp. 155, 177-80.

²⁶⁵ Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, p. 149-50 (quotation, p. 149: ‘dès que quelqu’un fit semblant de vouloir s’opposer à mes desseins’).

²⁶⁶ *Œuvres*, X, p. 284 (quotation: ‘Ici, le grand Condé, fils chéri de Bellone, / De la France étonnée assure la couronne; / Il fallait arrêter par des coups éclatants / D’un heureux ennemi les succès trop constants. / Dans ce jour décisif pour l’Espagne et la France, / L’audace du héros fit plus que la prudence; / Un chef plus circonspect et moins entreprenant / N’aurait point hasardé ce combat important; / L’Espagnol, enhardi par ce Français timide, / Vers Paris eût poussé sa fortune rapide.’).

Monsieur de Luxembourg, and Monsieur de Catinat acted.’²⁶⁷ Even Quincy, who repeatedly emphasized the need for a general to be prudent, nevertheless conceded that:²⁶⁸

One has sometimes seen generals succeed on important occasions without [previous experience] . . . , which a small number of extraordinary men, above the rules, have made up for by great natural talents and strong application, as the Prince de Condé did at Rocroi, [although] it is certain that these examples are . . . rare.²⁶⁹

Above all, Frederick used Prince Eugene as an example of a general who had taken great risks to reap associated rewards. His repeated discussion – in texts from all periods of his life – of Eugene’s 1702 attack on Cremona has already been noted. Even in his later military writings, after the Seven Years War had taught him the value of greater caution, Frederick cited Eugene’s campaigns – Cremona, Turin, Blenheim/Höchstädt and Belgrade – as examples of ‘decisive blows that decide the fates of thrones and nations’. ‘I always cite Prince Eugene to you as the greatest warrior of the century’, said Frederick in his 1775 *Reflections on projects of campaign*, and argued that the attack on Cremona (which he mentioned once again) would have driven the French out of Italy if it had been successful.²⁷⁰ He said the same in his 1775-6 *Exposé on the Prussian Government*:

War itself should be conducted according to the principles of politics, to strike the bloodiest blows against the enemy. It was on these principles that Prince Eugene acted, which rendered his name immortal through the march and battle of Turin, those of Höchstädt and of Belgrade. Big projects of campaign do not always succeed but, when they are vast, they

²⁶⁷ *Politische Correspondenz*, III, p. 208 (quotation: ‘Il vaut toujours mieux agir offensivement, quand même l'on est inférieur en nombre. Souvent la témérité étonne l'ennemi et donne lieu à remporter des avantages sur lui; c'est ainsi que le grand Condé, M. de Turenne, M. de Luxembourg et M. de Catinat ont agi’).

²⁶⁸ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp. 21-2, 24, 52, 55, 63, 69, 104.

²⁶⁹ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 24 (quotation: ‘on ait quelques fois vû des Généraux réüssir dans des occasions d'importance sans . . . auquel un petit nombre d'hommes extraordinaires & au-dessus des règles, a supplée par de grands talens naturels & par une forte application, comme fit le Prince de Condé à Rocroy; il est certain que ces exemples sont . . . rares.’).

²⁷⁰ *Œuvres*, XXIX, pp. 88-9 (quotations: ‘des coups décisifs . . . qui décidassent du destin des trônes et des nations’. ‘Je vous cite toujours le prince Eugène comme le plus grand guerrier de ce siècle.’).

always result in more advantages than small projects where one limits oneself to the capture of a shack on the frontier.²⁷¹

He wrote frequently about the daring march of Prince Eugene around the French army in Lombardy in 1706 to relieve Turin.²⁷² He also mentioned the daring concentration of the allied armies for the Second Battle of Höchstädt in 1704.²⁷³ Quincy, too, admitting that there were occasions when ‘one risks all to [win] all’, picked out:²⁷⁴

The example that Prince Eugene gave before Belgrade in 1717, when he left his lines to fight the army of the Turks, who, thinking only of making their dispositions for attacking the Imperials, were surprised and beaten, although they had a stronger army. By this blow of desperation, that prince saved the army of the Empire, which was to be attacked two days later, would apparently have been defeated, and would have found it difficult to retreat, having the Danube and the Sava behind it.²⁷⁵

Quincy also noted other instances of successful daring. The defensive lines created by Villars in 1711 would, for instance, have kept the allied armies impotent for the whole campaign, ‘if Lord Marlborough had not succeeded in passing them near Arleux, an undertaking all the more reckless in that he put himself in a situation which would have caused the loss of the whole allied army’.²⁷⁶ In particular, Quincy picked out Villars’s 1712 victory at Denain as ‘an action . . . which changed the face of affairs in a single day and whose consequences were so advantageous for

²⁷¹ *Œuvres*, IX, pp. xi, 219 (quotation, p. 219: ‘La guerre même doit être conduite sur les principes de la politique, pour porter les coups les plus sanglants à ses ennemis. C’était sur ces principes qu’agissait le prince Eugène, qui a rendu son nom immortel par la marche et la bataille de Turin, par celles de Höchstädt et de Belgrad. Les grands projets de campagne ne réussissent pas tous; mais quand ils sont vastes, il en résulte toujours plus d’avantages que par ces petits projets où l’on se borne à la prise d’une bicoque sur les frontières.’).

²⁷² *Œuvres*, IX, pp. xi, 219; *Œuvres*, X, p. 285; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 68, 141; *Œuvres*, XXIX, p. 88. *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 68 refers to the 1700 campaign, but the context makes it clear that it was actually the 1706 campaign.

²⁷³ *Œuvres*, IX, p. 219; *Œuvres*, XXIX, pp. 88-9.

²⁷⁴ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 53 (quotation: ‘on risque le tout pour le tout’).

²⁷⁵ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 60 (quotation: ‘l’exemple que donna le Prince Eugene devant Belgrade en 1717. lorsqu’il sortit de ses lignes pour aller combattre l’armée des Turs, lesquels ne songeant qu’à faire leurs dispositions pour attaquer les Impériaux, furent surpris & battus, quoiqu’ils eussent une armée plus forte. Par ce coup de désespoir, ce Prince sauva l’armée de l’Empire, qui devant être attaquée deux jours après, auroit été apparemment défaite, & auroit eû de la peine à se retirer, ayant le Danube & la Save derriere elle.’).

²⁷⁶ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, p. 85 (quotation: ‘si Milord Marlborough ne fût venu à bout de les passer près d’Arleux; entreprise d’autant plus téméraire, qu’il se mit dans une situation qui auroit causé la perte entiere de l’armée des Alliez’).

France'.²⁷⁷ Therefore, not only did a number of contemporary military authors lay out concepts of bold risk-taking at the operational level, but they found a number of commanders of 'the last century' who exemplified such an approach: particularly Condé and Eugene.

Conclusion

Frederick primarily situated his war-making temporally in 'the last century': the 'Century of Louis XIV'. This was most important on a tactical level, where Frederick repeatedly reaffirmed his commitment to the ordered warfare of the post-Westphalian period, in opposition to the 'war of pandours' and 'mass of bandits' of earlier periods. After some initial attempts to imitate Julius Caesar's tactics, Frederick turned completely away from the classical world as a source of tactical models, instead modelling himself on the great generals of the age of Louis XIV. In particular, he celebrated the outflanking tactics of Turenne and Luxembourg at the battles of Turckheim and Fleurus. While these historical examples were not the only inspiration for Frederick's famous oblique line tactic, the generals of the age of Louis XIV were clearly of great importance to him, particularly for his self-representation. In the first part of his reign, Frederick also readily adopted the bold French style of war of this period – based on attacks with the bayonet – as the basis for his own tactical doctrine.

At the operational and strategic level, Frederick made much greater use of classical examples, particularly because the concept of the conqueror – which contemporaries often located temporally before the post-Westphalian period, and spatially outside of Europe – offered him a model for large conquests which would achieve the kind of 'revolution' in the European states system that he wrote about in his *Refutation of Machiavelli*. Contemporaries also explicitly associated conquerors with bold risk-taking, and this appealed to Frederick's natural inclination to take risks. Even in this area, however, Frederick found substantial contemporary literature that espoused such views, and he was able to draw, once again, on the French way of war. Louis XIV was also seen as a conqueror, and writers like Feuquières and Santa Cruz described exactly the kind of surprise attacks at the strategic level that Frederick so famously

²⁷⁷ Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_I, p. 73 (quotation: 'l'action . . . qui fit changer de face aux affaires dans un seul jour, & dont les suites furent bien avantageuses pour la France').

employed. Like other contemporary writers, Frederick also used commanders like Condé and Eugene as models for taking risks to achieve great results. Frederick's war-making thus underlines the focus of his horizons (and those of a substantial portion of his contemporaries) primarily on his own time. The crucial importance of Louisquatorzean France for him both in cultural and military terms also makes it completely inappropriate to refer to Frederick as the representative of a 'German way of war'. Whatever their precise inspiration, the invasions of Silesia and Saxony, and the oblique line, reflected the playbook of Feuquières, Turenne and Luxembourg.

Power

‘War’, said Clausewitz, ‘is an act of force designed to compel the opponent to do one’s will.’¹ The present work makes clear that Clausewitz’s definition is much too restrictive: war is frequently, although not always, an act of violence, but this violence may have purposes quite unconnected to any ‘opponent’ (presenting an image of order, for instance, or winning glory). Nevertheless, Clausewitz’s words are a reminder that power – the capacity to compel someone to do one’s will – is seldom far from war’s meanings. The first chapter of this dissertation investigated war as a reflection of ideas of the ordered state. Christopher Clark has commented, however, that ‘the relationship . . . between discourses of power and its actual practice has always been far from straightforward’: ‘Power and consent are endlessly intertwined’, and the power of eighteenth-century monarchs was negotiated, not absolute.² With generals mostly senior nobles, and Frederick both sovereign and commander in chief, discussions of military tactics and strategy became another form of political interaction. As noted in the introduction, the development of military ideas is frequently a reflection at least of internal politics, with a particular course of action favoured not because it is militarily effective but because it advances the position of a particular individual or group. This chapter will examine early eighteenth-century warfare as the assertion of ‘political’ power according to its broadest possible definition, and also use war as a prism to show the rapidly evolving nature specifically of royal power in the early eighteenth century.

Ideas of royal power in this period reflected the rapidly evolving intellectual landscape of the eighteenth century. While, as emphasized in the preceding chapters,

¹ Carl von Clausewitz *On War*, eds. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (London, 1993), p. 83.

² Ronald G. Asch and Heinz Durchhardt, Einleitung: Die Geburt des “Absolutismus” im 17. Jahrhundert: Epochenwende der europäischen Geschichte oder optische Täuschung?’ in Ronald G. Asch and Heinz Durchhardt, eds., *Der Absolutismus – ein Mythos? Strukturwandel monarchischer Herrschaft in West- und Mitteleuropa (ca. 1550-1700)* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1996), pp. 3, 7, 9-11, 18-20, 24; Christopher Clark, ‘Power’, in Ulinka Rublack, ed., *A concise companion to history* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 132, 136, 138-40, 144-6, 148-9 (quotations, pp. 132, 148-9); Guy Rowlands, *The dynastic state and the army under Louis XIV: royal service and private interest, 1661-1701* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 2-9.

Frederick's military activities were overwhelmingly oriented toward the example of Louis XIV of France, and reflected the absolutist states of the long eighteenth century, his intellectual activities engaged with the newer ideas particularly of the French Enlightenment.³ As has been noted, many early *philosophes* hoped to achieve change from above through enlightened rulers.⁴ Whereas the practical exercise of political power remained as negotiated as it had always been, *concepts* of the ruler (and *practical expectations* of them) changed radically from 1648 to 1789, and with them concepts of the ruler's position as military commander.⁵ This chapter will chart the transition from theoretically 'personal' rule by monarchs who in fact legitimated themselves as unreachable, sacred figures, to increasing expectations that monarchs should legitimate themselves through merit, demonstrated in the new public sphere. The early eighteenth century was the hinge point of this transition, and Frederick's personal command of his army showed the involvement of both older and new ideas.

The very personal nature of royal power meant that it offered a particularly sharp example of the interaction between ideas and practice. Whereas the first chapter has shown that the idea of the ordered state, broadly accepted by contemporaries, shaped the underlying structures of war-making, and whereas the final chapter will discuss the development of military ideas in a practical setting, the arena of personal royal command saw rapidly changing ideas clash headlong with practical limitations. Frederick's relations with his generals here illuminated not just the nature of

³ T.C.W. Blanning, 'Frederick the Great and enlightened absolutism', in H.M. Scott, ed., *Enlightened absolutism* (London, 1990), pp. 274-87; Andreas Pečar, *Die Masken des Königs: Friedrich II. von Preußen als Schriftsteller* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2016), pp. 19-32, 145-82; Theodor Schieder, *Friedrich der Große: ein Königtum der Widersprüche* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), pp. 284-92.

On the widely-differing enlightenments in different regions, see T.C.W. Blanning, *Reform and revolution in Mainz, 1743-1803* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 2-38; Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, eds., *The Enlightenment in national context*, (Cambridge, 1981); Franco Venturi, *Italy and the Enlightenment: studies in a cosmopolitan century*, ed. Stuart Woolf, trans. Susan Corsi (Plymouth, 1972), pp. 2-32.

On Frederick's focus on impressing the French salons, see Thomas Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe: Inszenierung des Preußenkönigs in Fest und Zeremoniell, 1740-1815* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2012), pp. 95-7.

⁴ Claudius R. Fischbach, *Krieg und Frieden in der Französischen Aufklärung* (Münster and New York, NY, 1990), pp. 94-5; Peter Gay, *Voltaire's politics: the poet as realist* (Princeton, NJ, 1959); pp. 98-111; Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 2005), p. 34; Pečar, *Masken des Königs*, pp. 20-1, 171-2.

⁵ On changes particularly in the legitimation of rulers, see Brendan Simms, *The struggle for mastery in Germany, 1779-1850* (London, 1998), p. 32.

eighteenth-century monarchy but the processes by which ideas were developed. Matthew Ford has noted that military ideas are frequently the product not of considerations of military efficiency but of power structures within the military, with groups using, for instance, the introduction of a particular weapon to buttress their position within the institution.⁶ T.C.W. Blanning has argued that Frederick was adept at employing ‘the power of culture’ to legitimate his rule to the public sphere. This chapter will show that in Frederick’s relations with his generals ‘the power of knowledge’ was crucial and, on both sides, knowledge was used first and foremost to achieve authority, and only secondarily to achieve military efficiency.⁷ Crucially, Frederick’s military education had taught him about military affairs at the tactical level of the regiment, but not the logistics of moving armies. This gap in his knowledge was a significant threat to his authority, and a series of clashes resulted as the king attempted to assert this position.

Personal Rule

Frederick’s December 1740 invasion of Silesia saw him assert his position as sole commander of the Prussian army in the most blatant way possible. He famously explained to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau that he could not allow him to accompany him on campaign, ‘so that the world should not think that the King of Prussia takes the field with his court chamberlain’.⁸ When Leopold suggested that Frederick was thereby placing him in command of the regiments remaining in Prussian territory, Frederick disabused him of this, too, and with specific reference to the political context for royal military command: ‘this cannot be done, in so far as the nature and art of government seems to make it necessary that the regiments should be and remain only under *my* orders’ [*italics mine*].⁹ When the Old Dessauer

⁶ Matthew Ford, *Weapon of choice: small arms and the culture of military innovation* (Oxford, 2017; online edn., 2017), pp. 12-13, 17-23.

⁷ T.C.W. Blanning, *The culture of power and the power of culture: old regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 2-4, 195-6, 211-32.

⁸ *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, ed. J.G. Droysen et al (46 vols., Berlin, 1879-1939), I, p. 117 (quotation: ‘Dass die Welt nicht glaube, der König in Preussen marschire mit einem Hofmeister zu Felde.’).

⁹ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, p. 136 (quotation: ‘Es sich nicht thun lassen werde, inmassen es die Natur und Art der Regierung zu erfordern scheint, dass alle Regimente Mir allein angewiesen sind und bleiben.’).

complained at officers being taken from his regiment for service elsewhere, Frederick replied sharply that, 'the officers are mine'.¹⁰

Frederick had made clear before he came to the throne this concept of a ruler taking personal command of his troops. His *Refutation of the Prince of Machiavelli* set this out explicitly:

What should prevent a prince from taking on himself the conduct of his troops and presiding over his army as if over his residence? . . . Just as he is the chief distributor of justice, so he is equally the protector and defender of his peoples, and he should regard the defence of his subjects as one of the most important objects of his ministry and one which he must, for this reason, confer on no-one but himself. His interest seems to require necessarily that he should be found in person with his army, so that all the orders emanate from his person and because therefore the counsel and execution follow each other with an extreme rapidity. Among other things, the august presence of the prince puts an end to the misunderstandings of the generals, so dreadful for armies and so prejudicial to the interests of their master . . . and since it is the prince who gives battle, . . . it will also be for him to direct their execution . . .

All these reasons together must . . . oblige princes to charge themselves with the conduct of their troops . . .

But, one will say to you, not everyone is born a soldier, and many princes have neither the spirit nor the experience necessary to command an army. This is true, I avow, however, . . . there are always able generals in an army, and the prince has only to follow their counsels; the war will always go better than when the general is under the tutelage of the ministry, which, not being with the army, is out of reach of judging things, and which often stops the most able general from being in a state to give evidence of his ability.¹¹

¹⁰ U. v. Bonin, 'Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold I. von Anhalt-Dessau', *Beiheft zum Militär-Wochenblatt* 2 (1878), p. 59; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 A: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 10.12.1740 (quotation: 'Die Offiziere sind meine').

¹¹ *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss (30 vols., Berlin, 1846-56), VIII, pp. 244-5 (quotation: 'Qu'est-ce qui ne doit point engager un grand prince à prendre sur lui la conduite de ses troupes et à présider dans son armée comme dans sa résidence! . . . Comme il est chef de la justice distributive, il est également le protecteur et le défenseur de ses peuples; et il doit regarder la défense de ses sujets comme un des objets les plus importants de son ministère, et qu'il ne doit, par cette raison, confier qu'à lui-même. Son intérêt semble requérir nécessairement qu'il se trouve en personne à son armée, puisque tous les ordres émanent de sa personne, et qu'alors le conseil et l'exécution se suivent avec une rapidité extrême. La présence auguste du prince met fin, d'ailleurs, à la mésintelligence des généraux, si funeste aux armées et si préjudiciable aux intérêts du maître . . . et comme c'est le prince qui fait livrer les batailles, il semble que ce serait aussi à lui d'en diriger l'exécution . . .

Frederick reaffirmed this approach in his 1752 political testament.¹²

Frederick's approach here was grounded in recent European history. His reference to following the counsels of generals reflected the long-standing European monarchical tradition that expected the ruler to take counsel from their subjects but reserve the final decision for themselves.¹³ Louis XIV had demonstrated this most dramatically with his assumption of personal rule in 1661. Emperor Leopold I had done similarly, and the Austrian government became so dependent on direct orders from the Emperor that significant problems resulted when these were not forthcoming.¹⁴ Frederick's 1752 political testament was in the spirit of Louis XIV when it emphasized 'that a sovereign must rule personally'.¹⁵ Contemporaries were aware of such comparisons, and the French ambassador in Berlin specifically compared Frederick's style of government with the Sun King's personal rule.¹⁶ In extending personal rule to the military realm, Frederick was simply stretching the normal principles of contemporary statecraft to the greatest extent possible.

Indeed, Frederick specifically positioned the subordination of generals to monarchs as a political issue when, in his *Memoires to serve as a history of the house of*

Toutes ces raisons réunies doivent, ce me semble, obliger les princes à se charger eux-mêmes de la conduite de leurs troupes . . .

Mais, dira-t-on, tout le monde n'est pas né soldat, et beaucoup de princes n'ont ni l'esprit ni l'expérience nécessaire pour commander une armée. Cela est vrai, je l'avoue; cependant . . . il se trouve toujours des généraux entendus dans une armée, et le prince n'a qu'à suivre leurs conseils; la guerre s'en fera toujours mieux que lorsque le général est sous la tutelle du ministère, qui, n'étant point à l'armée, est hors de portée de juger des choses, et qui met souvent le plus habile général hors d'état de donner des marques de sa capacité.'). See also, *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 113-4.

¹² Gustav Berthold Volz, ed., *Die politischen Testamente Friedrichs des Grossen* (Berlin, 1920), pp. 78-80, 82, 84, 87-8.

¹³ Jean Bérenger, 'The demise of the minister-favourite, or a political model at dusk: the Austrian case', in J.H. Elliott and L.W.B. Brockliss, eds., *The world of the favourite* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1999), pp. 261-2, 266; Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: the courts of Europe's dynastic rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 3; J.H. Elliott, 'Introduction', in Elliott and Brockliss, *World of the favourite*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁴ Bérenger, 'The demise of the minister-favourite', pp. 256-60.

¹⁵ Volz, *Politischen Testamente*, p. 37 (quotation: 'qu'un souverain doit gouverner lui-même').

¹⁶ H.M. Scott, 'Prussia's royal foreign minister: Frederick the Great and the administration of Prussian diplomacy', in Robert Oresko, G.C. Gibbs, H.M. Scott, eds., *Royal and republican sovereignty in early modern Europe: essays in memory of Ragnhild Hatton* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 504-5.

Brandenburg, he said of Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau: ‘with many great qualities, he had scarcely any good ones’.¹⁷ This was a direct quotation of Voltaire’s description of the Duke of Guise, the leader of the Catholic League, chief villain of the *Henriade*, and greatest threat to the ordered stability of France: ‘who, having more great qualities than good ones, seemed born to change the face of the state in this time of troubles’.¹⁸ Frederick enlarged on this substantially in his description of the 1715 siege of Stralsund, which he noted was actually conducted by Leopold since, although both the Danish and Prussian kings were present, neither took direct command of their troops. Frederick called Leopold, ‘fortunate warrior, bad citizen, and capable of all the enterprises of Marius and Sulla, if fortune had favoured his enterprises as much as those of these Romans’.¹⁹ He thus clearly positioned generals who usurped the personal command of the absolute sovereign over the army as a threat to the ordered post-Westphalian state.

Frederick’s comments in the *Refutation of . . . Machiavelli*, however, also drew directly on both the Prussian and French experiences in the Nine Years War (1689-1697) and War of the Spanish Succession (1700-1714). Frederick’s reference to the problems created by cabinets attempting to control armies from a distance reflected in particular the French experience in the later years of Louis XIV, for instance their disastrous defeat at Turin in 1706, discussed in chapter four.²⁰ Similarly, Frederick William I’s emphasis in his *Instruction* to his successor that ‘you must . . . take sole and personal command of the army’ reflected the difficulties (‘dreadful’ indeed, and ‘prejudicial to the interests of their master’, as Frederick termed them) which the Prussian army experienced in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, as

¹⁷ *Œuvres*, I, p. 216 (quotation: ‘avec beaucoup de grandes qualités, il n’en avait guère de bonnes’).

¹⁸ Voltaire, *La Henriade* (new edn., London, 1730), p. xi (quotation: ‘qui aiant de plus grandes qualitez que de bonnes, sembloit né pour changer la face de l’État dans ce tems de troubles’).

¹⁹ *Œuvres*, I, p. 154 (quotation: ‘heureux guerrier, mauvais citoyen, et capable de toutes les entreprises des Marius et des Sylla, si la fortune avait favorisé son ambition de même que celle de ces Romains’).

²⁰ For contemporary views on Turin, see *Memoires de M. le Marquis de Feuquiere, lieutenant general des armées du Roi: contenant ses maximes sur la guerre; & l’application des exemples aux maximes* (new edn., London, 1736), pp. 279-82; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 79; Charles Sevin, Marquis de Quincy, *Histoire militaire du regne de Louis le Grand, Roy de France* (7 vols., Paris, 1726), V, pp. 161-78; Voltaire, *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (2 vols., Berlin, 1751), pp. 393-6. But note Rowlands, *The dynastic state and the army*, pp. 275-95 on the actual autonomy given to French generals under Louis XIV.

noble generals refused to accept the authority of commanders of lower noble rank. Often this could only be resolved by the personal intervention of the king or crown prince.²¹ In his 1752 political testament, Frederick put the matter starkly:

Only the sovereign can put that admirable discipline into an army and support it, because he must often use his authority, severely reprimand some without consideration for their [noble] quality or rank, recompense others liberally . . . It is therefore a necessity that a King of Prussia should be a soldier.²²

Frederick's plan to assume personal command was therefore in many ways a practical response to a practical problem.

Frederick had been educated to assert authority as a royal know-it-all through his inspections of troops as crown prince. From the 1720s onwards, Frederick accompanied his father on tours of inspection, particularly visiting the regiments around Stettin and in East Prussia.²³ In 1735, he was sent on his own to inspect the East Prussian regiments.²⁴ Frederick reported on the condition of the Prussian units, including identifying deficiencies in them, which Frederick William issued orders to rectify.²⁵ Irrespective of the accuracy of Frederick's letters, they show that this is what Frederick William wanted to hear. Despite his son's relatively limited military experience, Frederick William clearly considered it appropriate for Frederick to inspect regiments commanded by experienced soldiers, and expected him to point out deficiencies and recommend how to make them good. In a letter to his father's

²¹ Richard Dietrich, ed., *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern* (Cologne, Vienna, 1986), pp. 223-6 (quotation, p. 224: 'müset Ihr . . . das Kommando der Armée selber und allein bestellen'); Peter-Michael Hahn, 'Aristokratisierung und Professionalisierung: der Aufstieg der Orbisten zu einer militärischen und höfischen Elite in Brandenburg-Preußen von 1650-1725', *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* NF 1 (1991), pp. 178-80; Jürgen Luh, *Kriegskunst in Europa, 1650-1800* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2004), pp. 208-11.

²² Volz, *Politischen Testamente*, p. 80 (quotation: 'il n'y a que le souverain qui puisse mettre cette discipline admirable dans une armée et la soutenir, à cause qu'il faut souvent user d'autorité, réprimander sévèrement les uns sans considération de la qualité ni du grade, récompenser libéralement les autres . . . Il faut donc de nécessité qu'un roi de Prusse soit militaire').

²³ Arnold Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse: Entwicklungsgeschichte eines Staatsmannes* (Tübingen, 1934), p. 14; Wolfgang Burgdorf, *Friedrich der Große: ein biografisches Porträt* (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna, 2011), p.36; *Friedrichs des Großen Briefe an seinen Vater: geschrieben in den Jahren 1732 bis 1739* (Berlin, 1838), pp. 12, 50, 78, 147.

²⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 106-7.

²⁵ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 109-11.

minister Grumbkow in November 1735, after his return from East Prussia, Frederick specifically referred to his tour of inspection as an exercise of royal power, quoting a passage in Marquis Le Franc de Pompignan's *The farewell of Mars* describing the Emperor Julian:

‘The emperor wanted to be no more than a phantom covered by the purple, which could appear at the head of the armies and travel from town to town as the image of the sovereign.’ Reading this, I beg you to reflect on my journey, on the intentions causing me to undertake it, and on the figure that I cut in Prussia: have I not served as precursor and rumble of thunder, both for the army and the civil servants, for that sentence which their living king will shortly deliver, either to strike them down or to absolve them?²⁶

Frederick's tours of inspection prepared him for ‘passing sentence’ over his soldiers, and to this extent his assumption of personal command followed both European monarchical tradition and the lessons of recent Prussian military history.

The *Grand Homme*

Personal command was also, however, a response to changing ideas of the role of the sovereign. In the early seventeenth century, monarchs like Henry IV of France and Gustav Adolph of Sweden had used ministers like Sully and Oxenstierna to handle the increasing complexity of government, allowing them to focus, for instance, on traditional displays of monarchical heroism in battle.²⁷ In the post-Westphalian period, despite the advent of personal rule, the focus was on representation, with monarchs depicted as unreachable figures, so that a king like Louis XIV could present himself as a great war leader without ever commanding an army or engaging in

²⁶ Reinhold Koser, ed., *Briefwechsel Friedrichs des Großen mit Grumbkow und Maupertius (1731-1759)* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 123 (quotation: “L’Empereur n’en voulait faire autre chose qu’un fantôme revêtu de pourpre qui pût figurer à la tête des armées et promener de ville en ville l’image du souverain.” En lisant cela, faites – je vous prie – réflexion à mon voyage, aux intentions en me la faisant faire, et à la figure que j’ai faite en Prusse: n’ai-je pas servi de précurseur et n’ai-je pas fait tonner, tant à l’armée qu’aux collègues, cette sentence que leur roi vivait, qu’il viendrait dans peu ou pour les foudroyer ou pour les absoudre?’).

²⁷ L.W.B. Brockliss, ‘Concluding remarks: the anatomy of the minister-favourite’, in Elliott and Brockliss, *World of the favourite*, pp. 283-95.

combat.²⁸ Despite his admonitions about taking personal command, Frederick William I never in fact did this in war, and in his *Instruction* to his successor Frederick William conceded limits to personal rule, advising his successor, ‘not to decide anything in foreign affairs before you . . . have considered everything properly with your ministers’.²⁹

The Enlightenment and the rise of the public sphere, however, placed new demands on monarchs. Frederick took part in both the traditional value system of European aristocracy, which celebrated glory in war, and the new ideas of the French Enlightenment, which, while not condemning war under all circumstances, placed other actions that contributed to the public good substantially above it. As Thomas Biskup has noted, Frederick saw his reputation among French intellectuals as crucial to ensuring his posthumous fame, and Ulrich Sachse has noted that this meant Frederick had to legitimate himself using Enlightenment values.³⁰ The key concept was that of the ‘great man’ (*grand homme*), whose greatness thinkers like Fénelon and Voltaire defined as based on merit and service to humanity, not on birth and military glory.³¹ This definition of *grand homme* was an innovation, as military glory had been a prime criterion for greatness as recently as the age of Louis XIV.³² Feuquières for instance described Turenne and Luxembourg as ‘*grandes hommes*’, the editor of de Saxe’s work referred to him, Turenne, Condé and Eugene as such, and

²⁸ Ronald G. Asch, *Sacral kingship between disenchantment and re-enchantment: the French and English monarchies, 1587–1688* (New York, NY, 2014); Blanning, *Culture of power*, pp. 32-77; Brockliss, ‘Anatomy of the minister-favourite’, pp. 293-6; Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of power: Norbert Elias and the early modern European court* (Amsterdam, 1995), p. 195; Peter H. Wilson, *Absolutism in central Europe* (London and New York, NY, 2000), pp. 50-1, 69-70; Martin Wrede, ‘Einleitung: die Inszenierung der mehr oder weniger heroischen Monarchie: zu Rittern und Feldherren, Kriegsherren und Schauspielern’, in Martin Wrede, ed., *Die Inszenierung der heroischen Monarchie: Frühneuzeitliches Königtum zwischen ritterlichen Erbe und militärischer Herausforderung* (Munich, 2014), pp. 26-8.

²⁹ Dietrich, *Politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, p. 242 (quotation: ‘in stahssachen nichts zu Resolviren, bevor Ihr alles wohll mit eure Ministris . . . wohl überlehget habbet’.

³⁰ Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe*, p. 95; Ulrich Sachse, *Cäsar in Sanssouci: die Politik Friedrichs des Großen und die Antike* (Munich, 2008), p. 23.

³¹ Jean-Claude Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon: essai sur le culte des grands hommes* (Paris, 1998), pp. 30-49; Thomas W. Gaetgens and Gregor Wedekind, ‘Le culte des grands hommes – du Panthéon au Walhalla’ in Thomas W. Gaetgens and Gregor Wedekind, eds., *Le culte des grands hommes, 1750-1850* (Paris, 2009), pp. 1-2; Thomas W. Gaetgens, ‘Du Parnasse au Panthéon: la représentation des *hommes illustres* et des *grands hommes* dans la France du XVIIIe siècle’, in Gaetgens and Wedekind, *Le culte des grands hommes*, pp. 135-8.

³² Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon*, pp. 10, 30-1; Gaetgens and Wedekind, ‘Le culte des grands hommes’, pp. 1-2; Gaetgens, ‘Du Parnasse au Panthéon’, p. 135.

Quincy urged young officers to read about the exploits of military *grands hommes*.³³ As Martin Wrede has noted, this new, enlightened definition of the concept of *grand homme* set new standards for monarchs. Whereas the baroque had celebrated secrecy as conferring power and authority, making *representation* of monarchical achievements (often through allegory) more important than the real thing, the growth of the public sphere placed a premium on the public performance of monarchical achievements.³⁴ Trying to achieve in practice the merely represented achievements of previous monarchs was a herculean endeavour, seen for instance in Joseph II's attempt personally to answer tens of thousands of petitions.³⁵ The pressures inherent in this fundamentally shaped Frederick's relations with his generals.

Frederick had been exposed to the concept of the *grand homme* in the 1730s. The Saxon diplomat Manteuffel referred to Cimon of Athens and Plato as '*grandes hommes*' in letters to Frederick in March 1736, and his colleague Suhm in the same month described the philosopher Christian Wolff to Frederick as such.³⁶ Voltaire gave the same appellation to the emperor Julian in a letter to Frederick later that year, and historians have recognised that such ideas of civil glory were very appealing to Frederick.³⁷ Already in March 1737, Frederick was writing to Voltaire saying that, 'I am . . . neither a *grand homme* nor even a candidate to be one'.³⁸ This was an invitation for Voltaire to assure him that he was indeed one, which Voltaire did repeatedly over the following months.³⁹ As king, Frederick sought to achieve immortality in the enlightened public sphere – and the status of *grand homme* – by becoming both a patron of culture and a writer in his own right.⁴⁰

³³ *Memoires de M. le Marquis de Feuquiere*, pp. 297-8; Quincy, *Histoire militaire*, VII_II, pp.10-11; Maurice de Saxe, *Les reveries ou memoires sur l'art de la guerre*, ed. de Bonneville (The Hague, 1756), pp. vi-vii.

³⁴ Andreas Gestrich, *Absolutismus und Öffentlichkeit: politische Kommunikation in Deutschland zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1994), pp. 34-6, 41-74; Wrede, 'Inszenierung der mehr oder weniger heroischen Monarchie', pp. 28-34.

³⁵ James J. Sheehan, 'Introduction: culture and power during the long eighteenth century', in Hamish Scott and Brendan Simms, eds., *Cultures of power in Europe during the long eighteenth century* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 12.

³⁶ *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 273; *Œuvres*, XXV, pp. 472, 490.

³⁷ *Œuvres*, XXI, p. 10; Luh, *Der Große*, pp. 37-8.

³⁸ *Œuvres*, XXI, p. 49 (quotation: 'Je ne suis . . . ni une espèce ni un candidat de grand homme').

³⁹ *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 55, 74, 105, 107, 138. This point is made by Luh, *Der Große*, pp. 41-3.

⁴⁰ Blanning, *Culture of power*, pp. 3-4, 227-32; Luh, *Der Große*, pp. 23-7.

The role of the concept of *grand homme* in a military context offers the opportunity to re-examine Frederick's relationship to the Enlightenment. As noted in the introduction, historians have shown that Frederick was not genuinely committed to Enlightenment principles but simply used them as part of his public relations.⁴¹ Quentin Skinner has noted, however, that 'the principles which [an individual] chooses to profess' will strongly influence their actions even if they do not actually live up to these principles, since 'any course of action is inhibited from occurring if it cannot be legitimated'.⁴² He called for examining cases where an individual's behaviour violates accepted norms and where they seek to alter commonly held understandings of words and concepts to justify that behaviour.⁴³ It is therefore worth examining what effects Frederick's *attempt to be seen as following the principles of the Enlightenment* had on his war-making, and how he tried to manipulate Enlightenment principles to make them fit with his military ambitions.

As noted above, the new definition of a *grand homme* as serving humanity was not the only one. There were even attempts to appropriate the Enlightenment cult of the *grand homme* to support the *ancien régime*. The Count of Angiviller, Louis XVI's Director of Buildings, in the 1770s commissioned a series of statues of 'celebrated men', including great generals, to glorify the Bourbon dynasty.⁴⁴ Indeed, there was an ambiguity even within the works of enlightened proponents of the concept of *grand homme*, reflecting the contemporary intellectual consensus that opposed war but accepted that it was inevitable and focused on trying to limit it.⁴⁵ Diderot,

⁴¹ Luh, *Der Große*, passim, esp. pp. 10-12, 23-5, 33-8, 78, 80-2; Pečar, *Masken des Königs*, pp. 171-82.

⁴² Quentin Skinner, 'Some problems in the analysis of political thought and action', *Political Theory* 2 (1974), pp. 299-300.

⁴³ Skinner, 'Political thought and action', pp. 277-303.

⁴⁴ Gaehtgens, 'Du Parnasse au Panthéon', pp. 139, 154-66 (quotation, p. 154: 'Homme[s] célèbre[s]').

⁴⁵ David A. Bell, *The first total war: Napoleon's Europe and the birth of warfare as we know it* (New York, NY, 2007), pp. 30, 50-1; Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in warfare: the modern history of the international law of armed conflicts* (London, 1980), pp. 40-7; Claudius R. Fischbach, *Krieg und Frieden in der französischen Aufklärung* (Münster and New York, NY, 1990), pp. 48-57, 99; Peter Gay, *Voltaire's politics: the poet as realist* (Princeton, NJ, 1959), pp. 159-161, 167; Johannes Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse: der König und seine Zeit* (Munich, 2004), pp. 106-114; Stephen C. Neff, *War and the law of nations: a general history* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 85, 88-92, 133-8, 147-58; Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum* (Cologne, 1950), pp. 112-9; James Q. Whitman, *The verdict of battle: the law of victory and the making of modern war* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2012), passim (e.g. pp. 10-23, 248-251, 256).

Montesquieu and others realised that pure morality tales would not attract readers, and were forced to use strong figures to get the public's attention. Montesquieu, for instance, praised Alexander, and Voltaire used heroes like Charles XII and Peter the Great, who did not fit the strict definition of Enlightenment *grandes hommes*.⁴⁶ In a January 1738 letter, Voltaire described Frederick exemplifying the qualities of a *grand homme* even when ensuring that his regiment had sufficient supplies: 'The *grand homme* neglects nothing; he will win battles as the occasion demands; he will see to the welfare of his subjects with the same hand with which he rhymes truths.'⁴⁷ Voltaire's purpose was not genuinely to endorse victory in battle as an element in becoming a *grand homme*, but to encourage Frederick to combine peaceful achievements (poetry, and the welfare of his subjects) with his military ones. It showed, however, that the concept of *grand homme* could also be applied to military figures.

That Frederick followed such ideas can be seen from a September 1739 letter in which he told Voltaire excitedly, 'if Paris has the taste for pleasures . . . here we have the taste for *grandes hommes*'. Frederick said that, 'Alexander was not great, nor Caesar', and instead offered the names of Condé, Turenne, Marlborough and Eugene.⁴⁸ Frederick's political writings in this period also described successful generals as *grandes hommes*. The *Refutation of Machiavelli* celebrated two classic *grands hommes* in Lorenzo de Medici and Marcus Aurelius, but stressed not only their cultural but also their military achievements, calling the former 'pacifier of Italy' and the noting that the latter was 'no less successful warrior than sage philosopher'.⁴⁹ Frederick's 1738 *Considerations on the present state of the European body politic* went much further, directly celebrating political and military leaders like Cromwell, William III, Tilly, Montecuccoli, Eugene, Marlborough and Villars as *grandes hommes*.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon*, pp. 38-40.

⁴⁷ *Œuvres*, XXI, p. 157 (quotation: 'Le grand homme ne néglige rien; il gagnera des batailles dans l'occasion; il signera le bonheur de ses sujets, de la même main dont il rime des vérités.')

⁴⁸ *Œuvres*, XXI, p. 359 (quotation: 'Si l'on est à Paris dans le goût des plaisirs, . . . on est ici dans le goût des *grands hommes* . . . Alexandre n'était pas grand, César non plus').

⁴⁹ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 156, 305 (quotation: 'le pacificateur de l'Italie . . . non moins heureux guerrier que sage philosophe').

⁵⁰ *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 7, 19-20; *Œuvres*, XXI, p. 216.

The key work on the concept of the *grand homme* that influenced Frederick was Voltaire's *Century of Louis XIV*, drafts of which he had read already in the 1730s.⁵¹ Voltaire extolled Louis's patronage of the arts, and Frederick's efforts to achieve recognition as a *grand homme* were primarily focused on living up to this Voltairean ideal of monarchical cultural patronage.⁵² Voltaire was also, however, very critical of Louis XIV's efforts as soldier and general, noting that the Sun King's military victories were overwhelmingly the work of his generals and ministers, and his famous sieges of cities were conducted for him by Vauban, with Louis merely taking credit for the work of his subordinates.⁵³ Thus, Voltaire not only presented Louis as an example of cultural patronage for Frederick to emulate, but also as an example of how *not* to be a war leader. The Prussian minister Grumbkow expressed a similar opinion in 1736, when he wrote to Frederick that Louis had never recovered from the loss of able generals and ministers like Turenne, Condé, Luxembourg, Créqui, the le Telliers, Louvois, and Colbert.⁵⁴

That Frederick understood this message and took it to heart can be seen from his *History of Brandenburg*, which was not only a joint literary effort with Voltaire but also written in conscious emulation of the *Century of Louis XIV*, as part of the effort to promote the 'Century of Frederick', and which specifically accepted the idea of fame as not heritable but earned, and conferred by the public.⁵⁵ Frederick compared the Great Elector (who was presented as a less successful version of Frederick himself) favourably with Louis XIV.⁵⁶ While praising Louis for having 'protected all the talents [cultural patronage]', Frederick said that the Great Elector, 'held by

⁵¹ *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 89, 111, 206, 216, 222-3, 232, 270, 287-8.

⁵² Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe*, pp. 10-12, 69-72, 75-6, 78-81, 95; Luh, *Der Große*, pp. 41-44; Voltaire, *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (2 vols., Berlin, 1751), I, pp. 1-9.

⁵³ Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, I, pp. 178-180, 197, 202-3, 279.

⁵⁴ Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, p. 137.

⁵⁵ Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe*, pp. 82-4.

⁵⁶ Andreas Pečar, 'Selbstinszenierung auf Kosten der Dynastie? Friedrich II. als Autor der "Denkwürdigkeiten des Hauses Brandenburg"', in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große und die Dynastie der Hohenzollern. Beiträge des fünften Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 30. September / 1. Oktober 2011* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-dynastie/pecar_geschichtsschreibung, last accessed 1 December 2017), paragraphs 16-20.

himself the position of minister and general'.⁵⁷ He repeated the message by comparing the wise policies of Richelieu with the alleged treachery of Elector George-William's minister Schwartzberg: 'the French monarch is worthy of praise for having followed the path to glory prepared for him by Richelieu. The German hero did more: he opened the path himself.'⁵⁸ Frederick then moved into the military sphere, making his claim for the Great Elector (and himself) as having achieved what Voltaire had criticised Louis for failing to achieve.

Both of these princes commanded their armies: one having beneath him the most celebrated captains of Europe, relying for his success on the likes of Turenne, Condé and Luxembourg . . . The other, scarcely having troops, and lacking wise generals, supplied what he lacked through his own powerful genius: he formed projects and executed them; if he thought like a general, he fought like a soldier.⁵⁹

Reflecting Voltaire's view, Frederick's work described Louis as 'conducting campaigns through grandeur; he besieged towns, but avoided battles'.⁶⁰ In a passage that in places quoted Voltaire's book almost verbatim, Frederick's work described how Louis 'encouraged his troops by his presence while they crossed the Rhine', thereby specifically emphasizing that the crossing was achieved by the French troops, not through Louis' personal merit.⁶¹ Frederick described the swift French conquests of the 1667-8 War of Devolution in a way directly comparable to his own lightning conquest of Silesia in 1740-1, but contemptuously described Louis as only 'assisting' in the campaigns.

⁵⁷ *Œuvres*, I, p. 106 (quotation: 'protégea tous les talents, . . . se tint lui seul lieu de ministre et de général').

⁵⁸ *Œuvres*, I, p. 107 (quotation: 'Le monarque français est digne de louange, pour avoir suivi le chemin de la gloire que Richelieu lui avait préparé: le héros allemand fit plus, il se fraya le chemin seul.').

⁵⁹ *Œuvres*, I, pp. 107-8 (quotation: 'Ces princes commandèrent tous deux leurs armées: l'un, ayant sous lui les plus célèbres capitaines de l'Europe; se reposant de ses succès sur les Turenne, les Condé, les Luxembourg; . . . L'autre, n'ayant qu'à peine des troupes, et manquant de généraux habiles, suppléa lui seul par son puissant génie aux secours qui lui manquaient: il formait ses projets et les exécutait; s'il pensait en général, il combattait en soldat').

⁶⁰ *Œuvres*, I, p. 108 (quotation: 'Il faisait des campagnes par grandeur; il assiégeait des villes, mais il évitait les batailles.').

⁶¹ *Œuvres*, I, p. 108 (quotation: 'Il encouragea ses troupes par sa présence, lorsqu'elles passèrent le Rhin'); Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, I, pp. 180, 190, 200. See also *Œuvres*, I, p. 82.

He [Louis] assisted in the famous campaign during which the generals captured all of the fortified towns of Flanders from the Spaniards, and in the beautiful expedition by which Condé subjugated Franche-Comté for France in less than three weeks.⁶²

To make sure the comparison with his invasion Silesia was not missed, Frederick had already referred to the 1667-8 campaigns once before, describing how, ‘Louis XIV seized part of the Spanish Netherlands almost without resistance; the following winter, he took Franche-Comté’.⁶³ Readers surely remembered that Frederick had also captured an almost undefended province through a winter campaign. Frederick thus staked his claim to military achievements comparable with Louisquatorzean France. At the same time, readers would have been aware that, in contrast to Louis, Frederick had actually commanded his troops in person, and could thus claim to have demonstrated the personal merit required of a *grand homme*.

Frederick returned to this theme in his July 1757 *Reasons for my military conduct*, in which tried to justify his decision to attack the Austrians at Kolin. Arguing that it was perfectly justifiable to fight to protect a siege, Frederick cited, among other examples, ‘that, when Louis XIV besieged Mons, his brother the Duke of Orleans, or rather Monsieur de Luxembourg, who actually commanded the army of observation, beat the Prince of Orange, who wanted to aid the town, near Mont-Cassel’.⁶⁴ Frederick (who had fought at Kolin to protect his siege of Prague) thus portrayed himself as emulating not Louis XIV but Luxembourg, and emphasised that, whereas he commanded the army himself, even Louis’s brother was only titular commander of the army that made Louis’s siege possible.

Thus, Frederick not only adopted the concept of monarchical cultural patronage that Voltaire celebrated in the *Century of Louis XIV* but also responded to Voltaire’s criticism of Louis’s military leadership. Frederick emphasized that he was out-doing

⁶² *Œuvres*, I, p. 108 (quotation: ‘Il assista à cette campagne fameuse dans laquelle ses généraux enlevèrent toutes les places de Flandre aux Espagnols; à la belle expédition par laquelle Condé assujettit la Franche-Comté, en moins de trois semaines, à la France.’).

⁶³ *Œuvres*, I, p. 78 (quotation: ‘Louis XIV s'empara d'une partie de la Flandre espagnole presque sans résistance; l'hiver d'après, il prit la Franche-Comté’).

⁶⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, p. 296 (quotation: ‘Que, lorsque Louis XIV assiégeait Mons, le duc d'Orléans son frère, ou plutôt M. de Luxembourg, qui commandait l'armée d'observation, battit auprès de Mont-Cassel le prince d'Orange, qui voulait secourir la ville’).

the French monarch by not just ‘accompanying’ and ‘encouraging’ his armies but commanding them personally. Although he mentioned his father’s presence at Malplaquet in 1709, Frederick’s account of the 1715 capture of Stralsund made clear that the actual fighting was done by Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau (‘the soul of all the operations’), with Frederick William I little more than an observer.⁶⁵ Martin Wrede noted that, in his *History of my times*, Frederick praised the courage of George II when he fought in the front rank at Dettingen in 1743, but emphasized that the British king did not actually direct his troops, or influence the battle beyond his personal example.⁶⁶

Not only did the Enlightenment concept of the *grand homme* influence Frederick to take personal command of his army but the military glory which Frederick won at the start of his reign led him to try to shape the meaning of *grand homme* through his own writings, so that it also applied to his military victories and achievements as statesman. He used the term in the first months after his accession to flatter both Marshal Münnich and Cardinal Fleury.⁶⁷ In particular, Frederick used the appellation *grand homme* to enhance the reputation of the leader of the war party at the French court, the man best able to get him French support for his war with Austria: Count Belle-Isle.⁶⁸ Writing to Voltaire, his most important French propagandist, in May 1741, Frederick called Belle-Isle, ‘a very great man. A Newton, at least when making war, . . . who does honour to France, his nation, and to the choice of his master.’⁶⁹ Newton was precisely the kind of cultural figure celebrated in the pantheon of *grands hommes*, and Frederick’s reference to him marked this as an attempt to place Belle-Isle in the same category.⁷⁰ Frederick also referred to Belle-Isle as a *grand homme* in a May 1741 letter to his envoy in St. Petersburg, and in December 1741 he wrote plaintively to Fleury asking him, ‘for the most pressing reasons, to send Monsieur de

⁶⁵ *Œuvres*, I, pp. 137, 154-9 (quotation, p. 154: ‘l’âme de toutes les opérations’).

⁶⁶ Wrede, ‘Inszenierung der mehr oder weniger heroischen Monarchie’, pp. 28-9.

⁶⁷ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 135, 419.

⁶⁸ On Belle-Isle, see Johannes Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg: Studien zur bellizistischen Disposition des absoluten Fürstenstaates* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), pp. 14-16; Derek McKay and H.M. Scott, *The rise of the great powers, 1648-1815* (London and New York, NY, 1983), p. 165.

⁶⁹ *Œuvres*, XXII, p. 79 (quotation: ‘un très-grand homme. C’est un Newton pour le moins en fait de guerre, . . . qui fait un honneur infini à la France sa nation, et au choix de son maître.’).

⁷⁰ Eveline G. Bouwers, *Public pantheons in revolutionary Europe: comparing cultures of remembrance, c. 1790 – 1840* (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 32-3, 35, 38.

Belle-Isle to the army in Bohemia’, saying, ‘the weight of the reputation of that *grand homme* already decides, in part, the success of the enterprise.’⁷¹ Frederick, of course, did not actually admire Belle-Isle, and the latter would not be remembered even as a great general or statesmen, still less as comparable to Newton. Frederick’s praise for Belle-Isle was a transparent attempt to encourage greater French involvement in the war against Austria. Significantly, however, he chose to use the concept of *grand homme*, and one of the great figures of its pantheon, to achieve this.

Frederick’s attempt to enlist the term *grand homme* to justify his own behaviour could also be seen in a September 1743 letter to Voltaire. Frederick lamented the decline of French power since the days of Louis XIV, blaming it on the ‘weakness of the generals and timidity of the counsels’.⁷² He added, however, that ‘a king worthy of command, who governs wisely and who acquires the esteem of the whole of Europe, could restore [France’s] ancient splendour’.⁷³ Frederick went on to tie such a ‘*grand homme*,’ as he called him, specifically to the military sphere, saying, ‘a sovereign can never attain more glory than when he defends his peoples against their furious enemies and when, changing the state of affairs, he finds the means to reduce his adversaries humbly to demanding peace.’⁷⁴ Frederick was here clearly referring to himself. He certainly could not be accused of timidity, he could claim to be ‘worthy of command’, and he could proudly point to having changed the map of Europe significantly, and forced Austria to make peace with him. Frederick was inviting Voltaire to present him to enlightened public opinion in Paris as the king who could restore France’s glory. This reached its climax with his 1750 carrousel, where Frederick claimed to have reincarnated the age of Louis XIV in Berlin. Noticeably, Frederick’s words to Voltaire depicted such a ruler (himself) as a *grand homme*, and portrayed his military achievements as the most important element in his greatness. The carrousel itself was a military event, and was accompanied by a military review

⁷¹ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 238, 436 (quotation, p. 436: ‘. . . par les motifs les plus pressants de rendre M. de Belle-Isle à l’armée de Bohême . . . le poids de la réputation de ce grand homme décide en partie du succès de vos entreprises.’).

⁷² *Œuvres*, XXII, p.157 (quotation: ‘La faiblesse des généraux et la timidité des conseils’).

⁷³ *Œuvres*, XXII, p. 158 (quotation: ‘Un roi digne de la commander, qui gouverne sagement, et qui s’acquiert l’estime de l’Europe entière, peut lui rendre son ancienne splendeur’).

⁷⁴ *Œuvres*, XXII, p. 158 (quotations: ‘Jamais souverain ne peut acquérir plus de gloire que lorsqu’il défend ses peuples contre des ennemis furieux, et que, faisant changer la situation des affaires, il trouve le moyen de réduire ses adversaires à lui demander la paix humblement.’ ‘Grand homme’).

on the Tempelhofer Feld.⁷⁵ The new Frederick that had emerged from the invasion of Silesia could no longer claim greatness solely in cultural terms, and Frederick's correspondence shows a clear effort to emphasize concepts of the *grand homme* that also celebrated military achievements.

Frederick's inter-war writings set out a clear vision of generals as worthy of the title of *grand homme*. For instance, he consistently described Maurice de Saxe as such.⁷⁶ Frederick's *History of Brandenburg* described how King Sigismund of Poland planned to invade Sweden, but 'Gustav Adolf, . . . more active, more *grand homme* than his adversary, pre-empted this', invading Poland 'while Sigismund was preparing to make war', and forcing the Poles to agree peace.⁷⁷ Frederick presented Prince Eugene as a *grand homme* both in the *Thoughts and general rules for war* and the *History of my times*.⁷⁸ Noting Imperial defeats in Italy in 1705-6, the *History of Brandenburg* commented that, 'Prince Eugene may have been beaten, but he knew how to repair his losses like a *grand homme*, and the check of Cassano was soon forgotten with the gain of the famous battle of Turin'.⁷⁹

That Frederick genuinely attempted, in the 1740s and 1750s, to get military victories accepted as achievements worthy of the status of *grand homme* can be seen from the bitter tracts he published in the 1770s lamenting the frustration of these hopes. The most explicit of these documents, his 1773 *Dialogue of the dead between Prince Eugene, Milord Marlborough and the Prince von Liechtenstein*, specifically lamented the failure to recognise the achievements of great generals.⁸⁰ 'Why this fierceness against the most noble of professions?' demanded Frederick's Marlborough, referring to late Enlightenment criticism of war.⁸¹ Frederick's Liechtenstein noted that, 'Queen Anne without Marlborough and Charles VI without Eugene would have cut pretty

⁷⁵ Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe*, pp. 10-11, 69-75, 78-81.

⁷⁶ *Œuvres*, X, pp. 226-7.

⁷⁷ *Œuvres*, I, p. 42 (quotation: 'Gustave-Adolphe . . . , plus actif, plus grand homme que son adversaire, le prévint . . . pendant que Sigismund se préparait à lui faire la guerre . . .').

⁷⁸ *Œuvres*, II, p. 3; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, p. 148.

⁷⁹ *Œuvres*, I, p. 131 (quotation: 'Le prince Eugène pouvait être battu: mais il savait réparer ses pertes en grand homme; et l'échec de Cassano fut bientôt oublié par le gain de la fameuse bataille de Turin').

⁸⁰ *Œuvres*, XIV, pp. 284-97.

⁸¹ *Œuvres*, XIV, p. 295 (quotation: 'Pourquoi cet acharnement contre la plus noble des professions . . . ?').

poor figures. It is to you two alone that these two monarchies owe their consideration and their glory'.⁸² Reacting indignantly to the news that Marlborough was being criticised in Britain, Frederick's Prince Eugene demanded, 'What! Can Höchstädt, Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet not serve as shield to the name of this *grand homme*?'⁸³ It was a specific claim that victory in battle should confer the status of *grand homme*.

In his 1770 *Examination of the essay on prejudices*, Frederick had already emphasised the 'merit' of great generals and their service to society. He celebrated Scipio as having saved Rome from Hannibal, Gustav Adolf as the protector of German liberty, Turenne as 'shield and sword of your country' and Marlborough as having maintained the balance of power. The work also argued, however, that glorious heroism in war should be worthy of celebration for its own sake, presenting Eugene and de Saxe straightforwardly as 'strength and glory of Austria' and 'last hero of France!'⁸⁴ The *Letters on the love of the fatherland* of 1779 included a similar message. As part of his claim that all kinds of states could produce patriotic citizens, Frederick lauded the 'grands hommes' (sic) of France, England and Germany, among them numerous soldiers and statesmen: the Seigneur de Bayard, Bertrand de Guesclin, Bernhard of Weimar, and the typical cannon of Turenne, Condé, Luxembourg, Villars and Marlborough.⁸⁵ Frederick then mentioned Eugene and de Saxe alongside Colbert, Newton and Leibniz, naming all of them as *grandes hommes*. Among Prussia's own *grandes hommes*, he included the generals Schwerin and Winterfeldt alongside the chancellor Cocceji.⁸⁶ Once again, he was mixing generals with cultural figures, claiming that both deserved the title of *grand homme* (and implicitly himself as well).

Frederick's philosophical works of the 1770s reflected a sharply different climate, in which French intellectuals were much more hostile to princes and their war-making

⁸² *Œuvres*, XIV p. 290 (quotation: 'La reine Anne sans Marlborough et Charles VI sans Eugène auraient joué un triste rôle. C'est à vous deux seuls que ces deux monarchies doivent leur considération et leur gloire').

⁸³ *Œuvres*, XIV p. 288-90 (quotation, p. 289: 'Quoi! Höchstädt, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, n'ont pu servir de bouclier au nom de ce grand homme').

⁸⁴ *Œuvres*, IX, p. 167 (quotation: 'mérit . . . le bouclier et l'épée de ta patrie . . . la force et la gloire de l'Autriche; . . . le dernier héros de la France!').

⁸⁵ *Œuvres*, IX, pp. 260-3.

⁸⁶ *Œuvres*, IX, p. 265.

than they had been in the 1740s and 1750s. Frederick's attempt to portray the *roi-connétâble* as a *grand homme* was representative of the early Enlightenment and its willingness to compromise with princes.⁸⁷ It was, however, more than mere representation. Frederick's assumption of personal command over his armies followed the long-standing European monarchical tradition that rulers should take counsel from their subjects but reserve the final decision for themselves. It also reflected the real practical value of monarchical command, emphasized by the experiences of the Brandenburg-Prussian army in the Nine Years War and War of the Spanish Succession. Clearly, however, Frederick was also responding to the new concept of the *grand homme* that required monarchs to earn their image of military greatness through demonstrated personal merit. This involved the monarch not simply being present on campaign to ensure the obedience of the generals but actually exercising command himself. Frederick was particularly influenced by Voltaire's criticism of Louis XIV's merely representative form of military leadership. In responding to the influences both of monarchical tradition and of new ideas, and following the inspiration of the key figure of the early French Enlightenment, Frederick highlighted the early eighteenth century as a transitional period in monarchical authority. His attempt to take not just titular but actual command of his armies placed huge strains on his relations with his generals, and these strains were the direct result of the pressure on him to legitimate himself according to the new values of the Enlightenment.

Royal Authority

In trying to exercise personal command of his army, Frederick set himself in opposition to his senior generals, who would have liked to exercise command themselves. The First Silesian War saw a struggle for authority, as both Frederick and his generals sought to demonstrate their own fitness for sole command. In this struggle, knowledge and understanding of war were simply tools used by both sides to establish their own positions. Relations followed the peaks and troughs of Prussian fortunes. During periods of success, or at least of calm, the Prussian king was happy

⁸⁷ Fischbach, *Krieg und Frieden*, pp. 51-7, 94-5, 98-9; Gay, *Voltaire's politics*, pp. 98-101, 110-4, 144-79, 184, 329; Catherine Volpilhac-Augier, 'Voltaire and History', in Nicholas Cronk, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Voltaire* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 139, 145-6.

to work collaboratively with his generals. During periods of crisis, the king's position as personal commander in chief and *grand homme* came under severe strain, and he was obliged to defend it in a series of increasingly ferocious rows with his generals.

As noted above, Frederick's assertion of his authority in the first days of his reign was focused against Prince Leopold. Leopold was not only his father's intimate but also Prussia's most distinguished soldier, with a military career stretching back to the Nine Years' War.⁸⁸ Frederick had called him, 'the greatest general of the century' in a 1737 letter to Suhm, and this phrase was clearly in common currency, as Frederick addressed the field marshal in the same terms in October 1740, and Wilhelmine used the same words in her memoirs.⁸⁹ It was, however, rarely said with affection.⁹⁰

While Frederick's early letters thanked Leopold for his long service to the House of Hohenzollern, he also took steps to reduce the privileged position of the family of Anhalt-Dessau in the Prussian army's patronage structure.⁹¹ He removed the Prussian Hussar Corps from the proprietorship of Leopold's third son, Eugen. Eugen retained his proprietorship of Cavalry Regiment No.6, but was removed from his uniquely privileged position as proprietor of two regiments.⁹² Similarly, Frederick refused to make Leopold's fourth son, Prince Moritz, colonel-proprietor of an old regiment, requiring him instead to raise soldiers from Dessau to form a new regiment, with officers taken from Leopold's own regiment.⁹³ Although he promoted Moritz to major general, Frederick emphasized that he thereby passed-over other officers of greater seniority.⁹⁴ When, in September, Leopold told Frederick that he had just been

⁸⁸ Bernhard R. Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau und das Kriegswesen in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte Dessau et al, eds., *Fürst Leopold I. von Anhalt-Dessau (1676-1747) >> Der Alte Dessauer<<: Ausstellung zum 250. Todestag* (Dessau, 1997), pp. 20-24; Carmen Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs: Netzwerke und Patronage in der preußischen Armee, 1713-1786* (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich, 2013), pp. 201-2.

⁸⁹ Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau', p. 23 (quotation: 'die größten Heerführer seines Zeitalters'); *Œuvres*, XVI, pp. 366-8 (quotation, p. 367: 'le plus grand général du siècle'); *Politische Correspondenz*, I, p. 80 (quotation: 'der grösste General Unserer Zeiten).

⁹⁰ Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau', pp. 23-4; *Œuvres*, I, pp.154, 216; Dieter Radtke, *Friedrich der Große und der Alte Dessauer: des Königs Verhältnis zum Fürsten* (Hildesheim, 2015), p.6

⁹¹ Leopold von Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege nach original-Quellen* (2 vols., Berlin, 1841), I, pp. 290-1.

⁹² Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, pp. 274-6.

⁹³ Bonin, 'Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold', p. 60.

⁹⁴ Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, p. 277.

on a long hunt to prove that he was still fit, Frederick replied by wishing him ‘many years of good health, since brave and well-deserving generals like you do not die easily’: a reference to Leopold’s advanced age!⁹⁵

Frederick’s exclusion of Leopold from command during the initial invasion of Silesia has already been noted. Following the death of Emperor Charles VI on 20 October 1740, Frederick withdrew to Rheinsburg to plan his response in secret, entrusting the military planning not to Leopold but to Schwerin, newly promoted field marshal by Frederick and a patron of Frederick’s intimate, Colonel Camas.⁹⁶ Notwithstanding Pečar’s criticism of this decision, it was sensible, as Leopold was deeply committed to the Austro-Prussian alliance. Godson of Emperor Leopold I, he was proprietor of an Austrian regiment as well as a Prussian one, and benefitted from patronage from both monarchs.⁹⁷ As expected, Leopold argued vehemently against the impending break with Vienna, and it was therefore natural that the invasion of Silesia should not be entrusted to him.⁹⁸

The first attempt to use military knowledge to achieve authority was seen when the Old Dessauer wrote to Frederick on 27 December 1740, within days of the invasion of Silesia. Leopold commended Frederick’s plans to spread his forces out along the Katzbach river in order to gather supplies, but warned that Habsburg reinforcements were being dispatched from Hungary and emphasized the danger posed by their hussars, saying that the area around the Bober and Katzbach offered them advantageous terrain for harassing the Prussians. He also warned Frederick of the danger that the corps of the Duke of Holstein might be cut off on the other side of the Oder. The Old Dessauer’s reason for offering this advice became clear as the letter continued by stressing his ‘firm and undoubted hope . . . that Your Royal Majesty will

⁹⁵ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 292 (quotation: ‘noch viele Jahre eine ferme Gesundheit, weil dergleichen brave und verdiente Generals billig nicht sterben’).

⁹⁶ *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 172; Radtke, *Friedrich der Große und der Alte Dessauer*, p. 11; Scott, ‘Prussia’s royal foreign minister, pp. 507-8. J. Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse. Der König und seine Zeit* (Munich, 2004), pp. 183-4 notes Schwerin’s good relationship with Frederick.

⁹⁷ Kroener, ‘Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau’, p. 24; Andreas Pečar, *Autorität durch Autorschaft? Friedrich II. als Militärschriftsteller* (Halle-Wittenberg, 2012), pp. 13-14; Radtke, *Friedrich der Große und der Alte Dessauer*, p. 40; Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*, pp. 263, 282-3.

⁹⁸ Bonin, ‘Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold’, pp. 60-1; *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 83, 111, 117.

have the grace to order me as soon as possible to come to him. In such a case, there would be no question that anyone could think that I would or could lead Your Royal Majesty on this expedition, or even suggest anything'.⁹⁹ Leopold's letter was an attempt to convince Frederick that his advice would be worthwhile. Unfortunately for the field marshal, Frederick's campaign moved much faster than he had expected, and by the time Frederick answered Leopold's letter, on 3 January 1741, he had already captured Breslau and was a long way beyond either the Katzbach or the Bober. The king no doubt took pleasure in replying that he was 'much obliged' for the advice, 'and will not fail to make use of it, as much as the circumstances have greatly changed in the meantime'. He assured Leopold that he would be glad to see him . . . on his return to Berlin, thus again rejecting his request to join the field army.¹⁰⁰ Bernhard Kroener has argued that Leopold's methodical methods were at odds with Frederick's bold style of war-making, and certainly in this case the king's winter offensive produced results which the Old Dessauer had not expected.¹⁰¹

Schwerin was in a different position, newly installed as royal favourite and most senior general under the king, but he also sought to assert his greater experience, in his case by praising Frederick, telling him that his resolution to capture Breslau was 'that of a great captain', and later that 'the measures that your Majesty is taking are correct, and the most experienced captain could not do better.'¹⁰² Frederick, however, was equally capable of using his own knowledge to exert authority, demonstrated his mastery of the small details of the regimental economy by issuing orders for how the

⁹⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 A: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.12.1740 (quotation: 'feste, und ungezweyffelte Hoffnung, . . . daß Eure Königl: Majt: mir, . . . mir gnädigst beordern werden, sobald möglich zu deroselben zu kommen, indem wohl nicht zu glauben stehet, daß Jemand die Opinion haben sollte, daß Ich bey dieser Expedition Eur: Königl: Majt: könnte oder würde führen, oder etwas vorschlagen'). For Frederick's original letter, see Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 296.

¹⁰⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 A: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 3.1.1741 (quotation: 'sehr obligiret, werde auch nicht ermangele meines gebrauch davon zu machen, so viel se die inzwischen sich etwas geänderte Umstände').

¹⁰¹ Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau', pp. 17-25.

¹⁰² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 27.12.1740 (quotation: 'd'un gran Capitene'), 1.1.1741 (quotation: 'Les Mesures que Vôtre Maj. prant sont justes et le plus expérimenté Capitaine ne sauroit mieux fair').

units should behave on the march and how regiments should care for their wounded.¹⁰³

By late January 1741, the swift and successful Prussian conquest of Silesia had given Frederick a series of victories to boast of. Letters to Leopold celebrated the capture of Breslau, Ohlau, Namslow and Ottmachau, and Leopold gracefully acknowledged his king's achievements.¹⁰⁴ These successes gave Frederick the self-assurance to enter upon perhaps his most productive period of relations with his two principal generals. The following chapter will examine how Frederick collaborated with both Schwerin and Prince Leopold to develop the two orders which shaped Prussian strategy for the following months, his 24 January 1741 *Directive to Field Marshal Count Schwerin regarding the establishment of winter quarters* (which set out Prussian dispositions in Silesia) and his 16 February *Instruction on that which His Honour Field Marshal the Prince of Anhalt must attend to regarding the command given to The Same over the corps d'armée which His Royal Majesty particularly wishes to have formed* (which arranged for the creation of a Prussian corps of observation in Brandenburg).¹⁰⁵

Despite their collaborative development, however, both orders explicitly emphasized royal authority. The opening passage of the 24 January *Directive* emphasized that Frederick gave Schwerin 'full command' of the troops in Silesia in his absence, and 'rel[ie]d completely on you, as a cautious and experienced man'. Frederick somewhat retracted this, however, when he added that, 'at the same time I wanted also to provide you with the following order and instruction regarding your conduct.'¹⁰⁶ In the final paragraph, while repeating that he 'rel[ie]d completely on your . . . well

¹⁰³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Frederick to Schwerin, 17.12.1740, 21.1.1741, 25.1.1741; Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen: erster Theil: der Erste Schlesischer Krieg, 1740-1742* (3 vols., Berlin, 1890-3), I, pp. 88*-90*.

¹⁰⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Surrender document of the garrison of Ottmachau, 10.1.1741, Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 8.1.1741, 23.1.1741; Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 243-63; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 300-1.

¹⁰⁵ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 93*-99*; *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 13-24.

¹⁰⁶ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 93* (quotation: 'das völlige Commando . . . zugleich aber auch wegen Eures Verhaltens mit nechstehender Ordre und Instruction versehen wolllen . . . verlasse ich mich gänzl. auf Euch, daß Ihr wie ein vorsichtiger und erfahrener Man').

known loyalty and dexterity’, Frederick also emphasized that he expected his orders to be followed in every detail:

You must follow the foregoing [instruction] most exactly, make the generals and their regiments aware in good time of its contents and ensure that they follow it properly, so that all and every thing is done according to my will. I expect to be informed often by you of everything that happens and of the state of execution of the orders I have given you.¹⁰⁷

In the following weeks, when ordering Schwerin to hold the mountain passes along the Bohemian and Moravian border, Frederick stressed that this should be done ‘in accordance with my plan’.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Schwerin several times graciously invited Frederick to instruct him on how he would like dispositions to be made, particularly for the defence of the Jablunka Pass in the eastern duchy of Teschen, thereby again submitting himself to Frederick’s authority.¹⁰⁹

The same themes could be seen in the *Instruction* of 16 February, which stated that, ‘in all things where necessity demands prompt execution and where there would be danger in delay’, Leopold was authorised to act on his own initiative without asking Frederick first.¹¹⁰ It then went on to require, however, that Leopold should maintain ‘a continual and exact correspondence’ with Frederick and ‘maintain a regular diary describing everything that happens to the corps’.¹¹¹ Leopold was given complete authority over issues of civil or criminal law, but required to refer any matters regarding execution of common soldiers, or serious punishments of officers, to

¹⁰⁷ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 99* (quotations: ‘Reponire Ich Mich im übrigen völlig auf Eurer . . . sehr bekandte Treue und dexterité’. ‘Ihr habt Euch demnach nach vorstehendem allerexactest zu achten, der Generalitaet und denen Regimentern dasjenige, so ihnen daraus angehet, in Zeiten bekandt zu machen und wohl darauf zu halten, damit alles und jedes nach Meinem Willen und Intention engerichtet werde. Und da Ich von Euch zum öffteren von allen dem, so hier vorgehet, auch welcher gestalt Meine hinterlaßene Ordres zur Execution gebracht werden Bericht erwarte’).

¹⁰⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Frederick to Schwerin, 28.1.1741 (quotation: ‘nach dem Plan’), 2.2.1741 (quotation: ‘bey der von mir gemachten Disposition’).

¹⁰⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 15.2.1741, 23.2.1741.

¹¹⁰ *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 18 (quotation: ‘In allen Sachen, wo die Nothwendigkeit eine prompte Execution erfordert und wobei *periculum in mora* wäre’).

¹¹¹ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 18-9 (quotations: ‘eine beständige und genaue Correspondance unterhalten’. ‘Ueber alles und jedes, was bei diesem Corps passiret und vorgenommen wird, muss ein ordentliches Diarium gehalten’).

Frederick.¹¹² In closing, the instruction stated that ‘anything else not expressly mentioned in this instruction’, Frederick ‘leaves to Your Honour’s prudence and well known military experience’.¹¹³ Thus, the instruction set out the limits of Leopold’s authority right down to which criminal cases he had jurisdiction over, and ensured that Frederick would be kept minutely informed of developments. Leopold, dutifully kept a diary of events at his camp, and a letter of 3 April 1741 emphasized that his corps would not move without Frederick’s order.¹¹⁴ Royal authority thus remained ever-present, and the king continued to require that his ideas be followed.

Mollwitz

Up to February 1741, easy Prussian victories against token resistance had encouraged harmonious cooperation in the Prussian high command. The months that followed, however, were much more difficult.¹¹⁵ By March 1741, the mounting crisis caused a furious argument between Frederick and Schwerin over the appropriate position of the Prussian main force: an argument that ultimately came down to Schwerin’s claim to a better understanding of logistics.

The first clash occurred when Frederick, returning to Silesia from Berlin, was furious to discover on his arrival at Schweidnitz on 24 February that various dispositions he had made had been changed.¹¹⁶ Schwerin, however, was quickly able to turn the tables when Frederick was nearly captured by Austrian cavalry at Baumgarten on 27 February while inspecting the border defences with far too small an escort. No doubt enjoying his monarch’s discomfort at the consequences of his own rashness, Schwerin sent a series of worried letters asking Frederick to let him know his whereabouts, so he could provide an escort.¹¹⁷

¹¹² *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 19.

¹¹³ *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 19 (quotations: ‘Was sonst in dieser Instruction nicht express angeführet worden, . . . überlassen . . . Seiner Liebden Prudence und bekannten Kriegserfahrenheit’).

¹¹⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 3.4.1741, ‘Journal, was den 5^{ten} april 1741 im Lager bey Gethin vorgfallen ist’.

¹¹⁵ Dennis E. Showalter, *The wars of Frederick the Great* (London and New York, NY, 1996), p. 44.

¹¹⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Frederick to Schwerin, 24.2.1741; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 1.3.1741.

¹¹⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 27.2.1741; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 1.3.1741, 4.3.1741, 5.3.1741, 6.3.1741, 7.3.1741.

Much more serious was the steady growth of Austrian strength. While Lower Silesia was strongly held by the Prussians, the fortress of Neisse was still in Austrian hands, and in the course of March it became impossible for the Prussians to hold the pass of Zugmantel, which provided access to Neisse from Moravia. The Austrian cavalry infiltrated into the countryside in such numbers that it became difficult for the Prussians even to venture out of their quarters, and they withdrew their exposed forces in the duchy of Teschen.¹¹⁸ Having captured Glogau with a daring night attack on 9 March, the Prussians focused on Neisse.¹¹⁹ Schwerin had built up a strong position in Upper Silesia, east of Neisse, based on magazines at Troppau, Jägerndorf, Neustadt and Ratibor, built up over January and February, but Frederick saw these positions as too exposed. On 7 March 1741, he ordered Schwerin to abandon the position at the Jablunka pass, concentrate his troops, move his magazines back to Oppeln on the Oder while devastating the countryside of Upper Silesia, and encircle Neisse.¹²⁰ In his response on 9 March 1741, Schwerin took the unprecedented step of enlisting Frederick's First General Adjutant, Colonel Johann Count von Hacke, along with Lieutenant General Schulenburg, his next-highest-ranking officer, to support him in saying that Frederick's order was impossible. He obeyed the order to evacuate Jablunka, but said it would be impossible to move all the supplies back to Oppeln, and that as soon as the Prussians evacuated their positions the Austrians would occupy them. Commissaries reported that neither Oppeln nor Ottmachau (near to Neisse) were suitable for magazines of the size needed to besiege Neisse, and the Prussians would not have sufficient supplies to hold positions around it. Schwerin predicted that obeying Frederick's order would force the whole army to withdraw across the Neisse river. The field marshal stated that he would delay execution of the order until 16 March to give Frederick an opportunity to re-think.¹²¹

The challenge to Frederick's authority represented by this extraordinary letter (which in itself explains why Schwerin's correspondence could not be published while the

¹¹⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 1.3.1741, 7.3.1741, 9.3.1741.

¹¹⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 11.3.1741, 12.3.1741, 13.3.1741; Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 334-42, 349; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 312-4.

¹²⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 7.3.1741, Schwerin to Frederick, 9.3.1741.

¹²¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 9.3.1741.

Hohenzollern dynasty remained in power) can be seen from the king's complete reversal of his position, within a day. On 10 March, Frederick wrote to Schwerin that he had sent Hacke with orders and, 'once again, I want you to . . . pull the troops back from there.'¹²² On 11 March, Frederick sent further instructions for Schwerin to deploy battalions in fortified positions around Neisse.¹²³ Later that same day, however, he wrote a second letter saying that he had now received Schwerin's letter of 9 March, and 'that [the troops] at Troppau and Jägerndorf should remain in their quarters as before'.¹²⁴ Frederick's anxiety to avoid the calamitous consequences predicted by Schwerin if the latter obeyed his original orders could be seen in a following letter from Frederick on 13 March, in which he enclosed a second copy of his letter of the 11th, in case, 'through one fatality or another', Schwerin had not received the first version.¹²⁵

Despite accepting his field marshal's advice, Frederick was acutely aware that the Austrians were gathering their strength at Olmütz, and that only small numbers of troops connected Schwerin's main force in Upper Silesia with the rest of the Prussian army holding Lower Silesia.¹²⁶ He pressed Schwerin to gather better intelligence on Austrian strength.¹²⁷ Schwerin, however, apparently favoured concentrating as many troops as possible around the magazines he had built up, and waiting out the winter there.¹²⁸ He maintained that the Austrians were still too weak to pose threat, and that the only danger was to his own positions around Troppau and Jägerndorf.¹²⁹ He called again and again for Frederick to send him reinforcements.¹³⁰

¹²² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 10.3.1741 (quotation: 'Will ich nochmahls daß Ihr die . . . Truppen von daher zurück ziehen sollet').

¹²³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 11.3.1741.

¹²⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 11.3.1741 (quotation: 'Daß Ihr zu Troppau u. Jägerndorf, noch . . . in seine Quartieren nach wie vor stehen bleiben').

¹²⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 13.3.1741 (quotation: 'durch eine od: andere fatalité').

¹²⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 2.3.1741, Schwerin to Frederick, 16.3.1741, 25.3.1741.

¹²⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 5.3.1741, Schwerin to Frederick, 9.3.1741.

¹²⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 7.3.1741, 9.3.1741, 13.3.1741, 16.3.1741, 17.3.1741, 18.3.1741, 21.3.1741, 25.3.1741, 26.3.1741.

¹²⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 7.3.1741, 9.3.1741, 13.3.1741, 28.3.1741.

¹³⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 16.3.1741, 21.3.1741, 23.3.1741, 24.3.1741, 25.3.1741, 26.3.1741, 28.3.1741.

Frederick quickly reverted to his previous plan, telling Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau on 12 and 15 March that he intended to concentrate his forces to besiege Neisse.¹³¹ Schwerin was supportive of such a plan, on the assumption that he would hold his existing magazines to support it.¹³² Frederick, however, issued Schwerin a renewed order on 25 March to evacuate Ratibor and Troppau, sending the supplies to Oppeln and concentrating the troops at Jägerndorf, then join him at Neustadt with the whole force, ‘since it is no longer the time for us to be separate from each other’. Frederick finished with the firm admonition, ‘this is my order.’¹³³ Even this made little impression on the field marshal, who responded on 28 March that bad roads and lack of boats made it impossible to move the supplies from the Troppau and Ratibor magazines. Instead, Schwerin told Frederick how he should deploy the various battalions and squadrons under his command so as both to besiege Neisse from the south and reinforce Schwerin’s positions.¹³⁴ At this point, Frederick gave up trying to convince his obstreperous general. On 29 March, he joined him at Neustadt.¹³⁵

Within days, the Austrian Field Marshal Neipperg showed that Frederick’s concerns were fully justified. Crossing the Giant Mountains on 1 April, he reached Neisse and pushed northwards. The Prussians in Upper Silesia were finally obliged to concentrate their forces and march back across the Neisse river. All the territory which Schwerin had warned would be lost in his 9 March letter was now given up in any case, and by the time the Prussians joined battle, at Mollwitz on 10 April, the Austrians were across their lines of communication, threatening dire consequences if the battle had been lost.¹³⁶ A 5 April note from Schwerin to his king reported, too late, news that the enemy were marching toward Neisse.¹³⁷ Frederick declared in his *History of my own times* that he had followed his general’s advice against his better judgement, and historians have agreed with his verdict that Schwerin’s insistence on

¹³¹ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 314-6.

¹³² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 24.3.1741, 25.3.1741, 28.3.1741.

¹³³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Frederick to Schwerin, 25.3.1741 (quotations: ‘Denn es nicht mehr zeit ist, von einander zu bleiben.’ ‘Dieses ist meine ordre.’).

¹³⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q2: Schwerin to Frederick, 28.3.1741.

¹³⁵ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 357-8.

¹³⁶ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 368-85.

¹³⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 5.4.1741.

remaining in Upper Silesia had placed the Prussians in a very dangerous position.¹³⁸ The dispute is an illustrative case study of the struggle for authority within the Prussian high command, and of the power of knowledge: in this case specifically a knowledge of logistics. Schwerin became fixated on the positions he had developed in Upper Silesia, and was unwilling to relinquish them. He used his understanding of supply issues to assert his view – successfully – against his young king.

Two years later, after being entertained by King George II of Great Britain, Schwerin reported to Frederick that, ‘I frankly admitted the mistake that I made in being too late gathering together our quarters in Upper Silesia’. Schwerin, however, also described George as amazed ‘that the troops had been able to sustain themselves in such a tough season. He asked if we had not had desertion and many sick’. This could be read as a reminder to his king of the importance of the proper supply arrangements that Schwerin had championed. Schwerin’s description of George asking ‘if Your Majesty [Frederick] also had the taste for *grands hommes*’ was a reminder of the importance of this concept for many monarchs in this period. King George’s questions were a test of Frederick’s success as royal *grand homme*, and Schwerin reported that he had emphasized how ‘skilfully’ Frederick had responded to Neipperg’s attack, ‘how Your Majesty made the dispositions on the eve of the battle of Mollwitz, and how he executed them happily on the following day’.¹³⁹ He thus explicitly affirmed that his king had taken personal command, using his own knowledge.

¹³⁸ Duffy, Christopher, *Frederick the Great: a military life* (London, 1985), pp. 28-9; Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 361-2, 364; *Œuvres*, II, p. 77; Max Posner, ed., ‘Frédéric II. histoire de mon temps (Redaktion von 1746), *Publicationen aus den K. preussischen Staatsarchiven* 4 (1879), p. 224.

¹³⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 S: Schwerin to Frederick, 18.6.1743 (quotations: ‘Je lui avouais franchement la faute que j’avois faite, en ce que j’avois trop tardé à ramasser nos quartiers dans la haute Silesie’, ‘que les troupes avoient pû soutenir, dans une saison si Rude, Elle s’informa, si nous n’avions pas eû de la desertion, force malades’, ‘Si Vôtre Majesté étoit aussi dans le gout des grands hommes?’ ‘habilement . . . Comment Vôtre Majesté avoit faite ses dispositions la veille de la bataille de Molwitz, et comment Elle avoit été executer heureusement le Landemain.’).

As noted in chapter four, the experience of Mollwitz distinctly unnerved Frederick, who wrote a series of letters justifying his conduct of the battle.¹⁴⁰ The final chapter will describe how, as a result, Frederick in the following months eagerly sought the advice of Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau. As noted in chapter three, Frederick's April 1741 dispositions for the siege of the fortress of Brieg copied almost verbatim Leopold's August 1737 *Complete and detailed description of how a town should be besieged*.¹⁴¹ Frederick not only copied Leopold's work but sent the dispositions to the prince, who gratefully acknowledged the king's use of his ideas. Frederick did this, however, only on the day *after* the trenches had been opened.¹⁴² He was not asking Leopold to advise him: he was demonstrating that he had already made use of Leopold's advice. This was followed by an extraordinary *Journal for his Highness the Prince of Anhalt*, which described the activities of Frederick's army every day from the battle of Mollwitz until the fall of Brieg.¹⁴³ There was no operational reason why Leopold should need such information: the only explanation is that Frederick wanted to prove to this experienced soldier, who had so recently received a panicked letter from him, that he was nevertheless capable of leading the army (in this case besieging a fortress properly). It was a reminder that the most important audience for Frederick's military ordinances was his own officers.¹⁴⁴

The Moravian Campaign

Frederick's cautious development of plans in collaboration with Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau during the spring, summer and autumn of 1741 will be described in detail in the final chapter. His armistice at Klein-Schnellendorf in October, however, and the departure of Neipperg's army to face the French and Bavarian invasion of the Habsburg lands, opened up much greater opportunities. During November and December he frequently discussed strategy with Schwerin, now restored to favour and

¹⁴⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 14.4.1741; Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 406; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 324-9.

¹⁴¹ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, II, p. 27.

¹⁴² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 7.5.1741; *Œuvres*, XXX, p. 39.

¹⁴³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: 'Journal vor das Fürsts v. Anhalt Durchlt'.

¹⁴⁴ Pečar, *Autorität durch Autorschaft*, pp. 12, 16-20, 24-34.

commanding the Prussian forces in Upper Silesia.¹⁴⁵ The relationship remained delicate, Schwerin saying at one point, ‘I hope that Your Majesty will excuse the frankness and cordiality with which I express myself. My objective will never be anything other than to advance solidly His interests and glory.’¹⁴⁶ Frederick seems to have accepted Schwerin’s advice, given in a letter of 5 December, to capture the remaining Habsburg positions in Upper Silesia.¹⁴⁷ On 14 December, he ordered him to advance into Moravia.¹⁴⁸ On 27 December 1741, Schwerin captured Olmütz, a feat the Prussians would never achieve again.¹⁴⁹ From this promising start, however, in the face of negligible regular Habsburg opposition in the field, the Prussian position degenerated to the point where Frederick ultimately accepted a negotiated peace that not only gave up all his gains in Moravia but did not even secure control of the whole of Silesia, creating a division of the province which has persisted to this day.¹⁵⁰ The train of events that led to this, and how Frederick responded to them, are of great interest for showing the role of military knowledge in Frederick’s royal authority.

The Prussian campaign in Moravia was a bold land-grab typical of Frederick as a young man (and of the French way of war he favoured). Schwerin’s ambitions were at least as great as Frederick’s, and he looked forward excitedly to the capture of Brünn, Pressburg (modern Bratislava) and even Vienna itself.¹⁵¹ It was Frederick who was more cautious, rejecting Schwerin’s proposal to advance on Pressburg and Vienna.¹⁵² Once again, Schwerin emphasized logistics, telling Frederick in January that he was ‘impatiently awaiting the orders of Your Majesty . . . regarding the

¹⁴⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 8.12.1741, 17.12.1741, 20.12.1741, 21.12.1741; Dettlof Count von Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin: ein Lebensbild aus Preußens großer Zeit* (Berlin, 1928), pp. 160, 164-5.

¹⁴⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 30.11.1741 (quotation: ‘j’espere que V. M. excuseroit la franchise, et cordialitet avec la quelle je m’en Explique: mon but ne sera james qu d’avancer Solidement ses interes et Sa gloire’).

¹⁴⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 5.12.1741; *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 426-7.

¹⁴⁸ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, p. 432; Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin*, p. 161.

¹⁴⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 27.12.1741. The Prussian forces did not even capture Olmütz after the battle of Königgrätz in 1866, see Geoffrey Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War: Austria’s war with Prussia and Italy in 1866* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 274-6.

¹⁵⁰ On the peace of Breslau, see Duffy, *Frederick the Great*, p. 46.

¹⁵¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 9.1.1742, 14.2.1742; Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin*, pp. 165-9.

¹⁵² Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin*, p. 169

magazines . . . I beg Your Majesty to honour me with his orders on this subject without delay'.¹⁵³ This time, however, Frederick substantially turned the tables on his field marshal by giving him personal responsibility for the army's supplies, leaving him behind at Olmütz while he pushed southwards.¹⁵⁴ Like the Old Dessauer the previous winter, Schwerin lamented the 'chagrin of seeing Your Majesty on campaign without being able to accompany him'.¹⁵⁵

The Prussian position deteriorated in the course of February and March 1742, as Moravia turned out to have insufficient resources to sustain their forces, and Habsburg irregulars from Hungary harried the Prussian lines of communication from the east. The latter threat was emphasized on 9-10 March, when Habsburg hussars captured Frederick's own baggage, in the outskirts of Olmütz. Schwerin's descendant, Dettlof von Schwerin, showed how Schwerin consistently warned Frederick about the difficulty of raising enough supplies in Moravia, and proposed measures to guard the frontier to Hungary. On 18 March 1742, however, a ferocious letter from Frederick blamed Schwerin for the lack of supplies and the successes of the Habsburg light troops, and soon Schwerin was allowed to leave the army in Moravia and return home.¹⁵⁶ As noted above, the exposed Prussian position was not only Frederick's fault: Schwerin had himself urged an ambitious advance, even in the same letter where he expressed concerns about the lack of supplies.¹⁵⁷ Dennis Showalter has argued that the Prussian supply shortages were no more than might be expected in the circumstances.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, this was the second time when an over-extended Prussian advance had led to a clash between Frederick and his general, with the argument expressed primarily in terms of Frederick's logistical blind spot.

Frederick responded to these difficulties by emphasizing the area of warfare where his period as regimental commander in Neuruppin had left him well versed: the tactical

¹⁵³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 3.1.1742 (quotation: "J'attends avec impatience les ordres de Votre Majesté . . . touchant les magasins'. . . je supplie Votre Majesté de m'honorer de ses ordres la dessus sans delai.').

¹⁵⁴ Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin*, p. 168.

¹⁵⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 14.2.1742 (quotation: 'Le chagrin de voir Votre Majesté en Campagne sans pouvoir l'accompagner'), 23.2.1742.

¹⁵⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Frederick to Schwerin, 18.3.1742; Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin*, pp. 163, 166-80.

¹⁵⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 14.2.1742.

¹⁵⁸ Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great*, pp. 57-8.

movements of an army on the parade ground or battlefield. Precisely at the time of his clash with Schwerin (17 – 25 March 1742), Frederick produced the famous *Seelowitz instructions*. At a moment when Frederick was aghast at his army's shortage of supplies, it is noticeable that he chose to devote his time to producing treatises two of which were specifically stated as being 'for the case of a battle': one for the cavalry and one for the infantry.¹⁵⁹ The instructions frequently stressed the ordered warfare Frederick had learnt at Neuruppin, with the infantry instruction emphasizing proper alignment of battalions in battle, closed ranks, and maintenance of the proper distance between lines, specifying the position of officers, making provisions for organization of the regimental baggage and care of the wounded, and including several articles on the importance of obedience to orders.¹⁶⁰ The cavalry instruction also required regiments to 'form up quickly' when deploying for battle, maintain exact distances between squadrons, and reform as soon as the enemy was defeated.¹⁶¹ Even the instruction for the hussars began by stressing the need for 'order', saying the hussars should dress their ranks 'as well as the dragoon regiments' and, 'most of the time, attack . . . with closed ranks'.¹⁶² Frederick also stressed 'conservation' of the horses, and demanded rigorous obedience to his instruction.¹⁶³

Frederick's mention in his cavalry instruction of an 'oblique' attack with one wing, and his discussion of the use of cannon to support infantry attacks, and of how the infantry should repel cavalry, showed that the instructions reflected genuine consideration of how the army might fight effectively on the battlefield.¹⁶⁴

Requirements for the cavalry to charge home in closed ranks without stopping to fire reflected what Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau had taught Frederick about cavalry tactics (discussed in detail in the final chapter).¹⁶⁵ A separate instruction for the hussars was a clear recognition of the Prussian army's urgent need to counter the Habsburg light cavalry. It discussed how to conduct scouting missions, surprise attacks and attacks

¹⁵⁹ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 55-60, 75-86 (quotations, pp. 55, 75: 'für den Fall einer Bataille', 'bei der . . . Bataille').

¹⁶⁰ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 77-85.

¹⁶¹ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 57-60 (quotation, p. 59: 'geschwinde formiren').

¹⁶² *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 63-4, 69 (quotation, p. 63: 'Ordnung . . . als wie die Dragoner-Regimenter . . . die mehreste Zeit wohl geschlossen . . . attaquiren').

¹⁶³ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 70, 72 (quotation, p. 70: 'Conservation').

¹⁶⁴ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 57, 79-80 (quotation, p. 57: 'schräge').

¹⁶⁵ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 57-60.

on convoys, how to set pickets, and the need to use spies.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Frederick clearly found such battle tactics a much more comfortable topic, where he could affirm his military knowledge and achieve what Pečar called ‘authority through authorship’ at a time when the crisis in logistics and lines of communication had placed his authority under considerable stress.¹⁶⁷

‘Cleverer than Caesar’

Frederick’s huge confidence during the initial invasion of Moraiva can be seen from the fact that he stopped asking Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau for advice on the conduct of operations, their correspondence in this period dwindling to discussions only of the regimental economy.¹⁶⁸ This quickly changed as the Prussian position deteriorated, inaugurating another period when Frederick found himself dependent on Leopold’s military knowledge. Once again, the king’s limited understanding of logistics would be exposed, and it would be seen that he was much more comfortable in the world of classical heroes.

On 13 March 1742, Frederick for the first time entrusted Leopold with an active field command, ordering him to bring his corps to defend Upper Silesia, now increasingly under pressure from Hungarian irregulars.¹⁶⁹ At first, relations between Frederick and Leopold followed the collaborative approach seen between them for the previous year and more and described in the final chapter, with Frederick leaving the field marshal to coordinate supply arrangements for his corps with the General Directory, and asking him to travel ahead of his soldiers to give his opinion on the fortifications at Neisse.¹⁷⁰ Frederick’s deteriorating position in Moravia, however, the difficulties of his allies in Bohemia, and hopes of obtaining permanently the Bohemian circles of

¹⁶⁶ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 64-73.

¹⁶⁷ Pečar, *Autorität durch Autorschaft*.

¹⁶⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 11.1.1742, 14.1.1742, 22.1.1742, 26.2.1742, 18.3.1742. Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 351 contains no correspondence between September 1741 and March 1742.

¹⁶⁹ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 351-4. On the situation in Upper Silesia, see GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr. 84 R: Frederick to Schwerin, 13.2.1742, 18.3.1742, Schwerin to Frederick, 15.2.1742 16.2.1742.

¹⁷⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 21.3.1742, 24.3.1742, 2.4.1742, Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 27.3.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 353.

Pardubitz and Königgrätz, led him to shift his strength west.¹⁷¹ On 2 April 1742, he ordered Leopold to bring his corps across the Silesian mountains into Bohemia.¹⁷² The family of Anhalt-Dessau at this point held almost all the important Prussian military commands, as Hereditary Prince Leopold was given responsibility for the army's supplies and his younger brother Prince Dietrich took command in Upper Silesia.¹⁷³ The military situation, however, was putting Frederick under great pressure, and this soon became clear from his relations with the elder Prince Leopold. Leopold's greater military knowledge had been perfectly acceptable at a distance, and even Frederick's order for him to march into Bohemia was an attempt to maintain this distance, emphasizing that they would 'remain two separate corps'.¹⁷⁴ Frederick went much further on 15 April, in an order 'For the avoidance of all tiresome misunderstandings between Myself and Your Honour'. This extraordinary document required Leopold not to make common cause with any other officers in the army, not to get involved with the command of the army except on Frederick's order, only to look after his own corps when on the march, not to visit any posts without Frederick's order, not to correct any officer without Frederick's order, not to contradict anything any officer said at table, and do everything he could to hinder the creation of factions within the army.¹⁷⁵ While the military situation seemed to make Leopold's presence in Bohemia essential, this order showed Frederick's awareness of the threat Leopold's military knowledge posed to his own authority in the army.

As Schwerin had done the previous year, Leopold quickly began to expose Frederick's limited understanding of the logistics of moving armies. Already in his response to Frederick's order to march to Bohemia, Leopold wrote to him that, 'as Your Royal Majesty knows best of all, due to the permanent fallen snow and frequent rain, it is not practicable to cross the mountains between Silesia and Bohemia at this time'. He was therefore negotiating with the Saxon court to cross through Saxon

¹⁷¹ Duffy, *Frederick the Great*, p. 39; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 6.4.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 354-5.

¹⁷² Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 354-5

¹⁷³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 2.4.1742, 6.4.1742.

¹⁷⁴ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 354-5 (quotation, p. 355: 'zwey separate Corps bleiben.').

¹⁷⁵ Bonin, 'Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold', p. 68; Radtke, *Friedrich der Große und der Alte Dessauer*, pp. 13-14 (quotation: 'Zur Verhütung alles besorglichen Mißverständnisses zwischen Mir und E. Liebden').

territory.¹⁷⁶ Frederick was certainly *not* sufficiently aware of the conditions in the Silesian mountains in April to have made provision for this in his original order.¹⁷⁷ It must have been particularly galling for Frederick, who had a personal grudge against the Saxon minister Count Brühl, that Leopold, in order to make his royal master's orders workable, had specifically written to Brühl to request passage.¹⁷⁸ Leopold also explained to Frederick that several of the cavalry regiments would not be able to reach Bohemia as quickly as he had ordered.¹⁷⁹ On this occasion, Frederick was able to 'approve' the actions of his general, who responded with repeated promises 'most punctiliously' to 'follow Your Royal Majesty's orders'.¹⁸⁰ On 17 April, however, in one of the same letters where he promised strict obedience, Leopold reported that Hereditary Prince Leopold had told him that it would be better if he did not bring his regiments into Bohemia immediately, so as to give time for the magazines there to be fully stocked. He reported, however, that the Saxons were anxious for them to leave Saxony, and invited Frederick to solve the conundrum created by his orders: 'Your Royal Majesty will be most graciously pleased to impart to me how I should act with these regiments'.¹⁸¹

On 19 April, Frederick sent Leopold a new route by which his corps was to advance from the Elbe through Bohemia, drawn up this time not by Hereditary Prince Leopold but by Colonel Schmettau.¹⁸² Leopold replied on the same day that the new route did not pass through the places where Hereditary Prince Leopold had collected supplies for his men. He asked to delay the march of his troops to allow supplies to be moved

¹⁷⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 10.4.1742 (quotation: 'wie Ew: Königl: Majt: zum besten bewust, wegen des beständig gefallenen Schnees, und offenen Regen Wetters, das Gebürgen Zwischen Schlesien und Böhmen, amitzo Zupassieren, fast nicht practicabel ist').

¹⁷⁷ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 355.

¹⁷⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 10.4.1742, 15.4.1742; Jürgen Luh, 'Feinde fürs Leben: Friedrich der Große und Heinrich von Brühl', *Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte* 85 (2014), pp. 277-84.

¹⁷⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 10.4.1742, 17.4.1742.

¹⁸⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 15.4.1742, 17.4.1742. (quotation, 15.7.1742: 'auff das ponctuilste gehorsamst nachgelebt werden'; quotation, 17.4.1742: 'EW: Königl: Mayl: hohe Ordre . . . approbiren . . . EW: Königl: Mayt: Ordres punctuel nachzukommen').

¹⁸¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 17.4.1742 (quotation: 'So werden EW: Königl: Mayl: wie gnädigst anzubefehlen belieben, wie ich mir mit diese Regimente werde ZuVerhalten haben').

¹⁸² Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 355.

to the new route.¹⁸³ On 20 April, Leopold reported that he had shown the new route to the Bohemian commissaries, and they had told him that it would be impossible to provide supplies there, and that the new route through the mountains was impassable to heavy waggons. Following the king's new route would be, 'a pure impossibility'. In a repeat of Schwerin's tactic on 9 March 1741, Leopold enclosed the written report of the Bohemian commissaries to confirm what he said. He reported that lack of forage meant that it was also not possible to remain in their current position any more, and therefore, 'against my will, I must resolve' to march at once along the original route. While in Brandenburg, Leopold had asked Frederick to 'approve' actions after he had taken them, and he finished his letter with a similar formulation: 'I hope and am firmly assured that Your Royal Majesty will be graciously pleased to agree to this'.¹⁸⁴ With the two now serving in the same theatre, however, the challenge to the king's authority was too much. Frederick's response on 21 April told the field marshal to continue his march on the route he had chosen, 'since it cannot be changed', but exercised itself furiously on the principle of obedience to royal orders. The official letter written for Frederick by his secretary expressed the king's 'disconcertment', saying, 'it very much surprises me that my orders are not followed'. A hand-written post-script from the king himself went much further: 'even if you were cleverer than Caesar, that still doesn't help me if my orders aren't strictly and accurately obeyed!'¹⁸⁵ Frederick's mention of Caesar (in what was ostensibly a discussion of military logistics) showed how closely his ideas of generalship were bound up with the concept of becoming a great historical figure. His fury at Leopold's disobedience showed that, whatever manoeuvre might be militarily correct, it was of paramount importance to him that his authority as king 'personally ruling' in the field be upheld. Within days, he removed Leopold from command in Bohemia, and moved him to command in Moravia and Upper Silesia.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 19.4.1742.

¹⁸⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 20.4.1742 (quotations: 'gegen meinen Willen resolviren müssen', 'eine pure unmöglichkeit', 'hoffe und bin fest versichert, daß EW: Königl: Mayl: dieses so zu aggreiren gnädigst belieben werden').

¹⁸⁵ Bonin, 'Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold', p. 69; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 357 (quotation: 'Befremden . . . Es wundert Mich dieses sehr daß Meine ordres nicht gefolgt werden . . . da es nun nicht zu ändern . . . Wan Sie noch habiler als Cesar weren und Meine ordres nicht acurat und Strikte nachleben so hülft mirh das übrige nichts.');

¹⁸⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to his generals, 26.4.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 357-8.

Military Knowledge as Royal Patronage

It is well known that patronage was a key element in the relations between rulers and their subjects in early modern Europe, as well as a key motivation for service in the eighteenth-century Prussian army.¹⁸⁷ The final section of this chapter will show that it also played a substantial role in the ‘power of knowledge’. A powerful example can be seen from the aftermath of Frederick’s 1744 campaign in Bohemia. In October 1744, with his proposals for the operations in Bohemia rejected by Frederick, and with the campaign degenerating into disaster, Schwerin essentially abandoned the Prussian army, returning precipitately to his estates on the grounds of illness.¹⁸⁸ Frederick had similar disputes with Prince Leopold not only in 1742 but also in 1745, and was each time forced by the military situation to employ Leopold again.¹⁸⁹ With the end of the war in December 1745, however, Frederick no longer needed generals so urgently. Moreover, Schwerin was no independent sovereign prince, able to live without royal patronage. He was horrified when, in the following years, Frederick essentially banished him to his estate, refusing to see him. He was forced to make repeated and grovelling apologies, desperately seeking to regain Frederick’s favour.¹⁹⁰ The incident showed that, even in disputes over military knowledge (in this case, the strategy to follow on campaign), Frederick’s control over patronage was ultimately decisive – at least for Prussian subjects.

Existing literature, however, has not properly recognised that the Prussian army’s knowledge economy was also part of its patronage system. This can be seen clearly from Frederick’s correspondence with his generals regarding his *General principles of war*. The work was important not because of its contents, but for the huge honour done to the generals in receiving a book written personally by their king, and in being allowed to share in its secret.

¹⁸⁷ Duindam, *Myths of power*, pp. 177-9; Andreas Pečar, *Die Ökonomie der Ehre: der höfische Adel am Kaiserhof Karls VI. (1711-1740)* (Darmstadt, 2003), pp. 297-301; Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs*.

¹⁸⁸ Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin*, pp. 199-207; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 S: Schwerin to Frederick, 28.10.1744, 16.11.1744.

¹⁸⁹ Radtke, *Friedrich der Große und der Alte Dessauer*, pp. 16-20.

¹⁹⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 S: Schwerin to Frederick, 17.4.1745; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 O: Schwerin to Frederick, 27.1.1746, Frederick to Schwerin, 7.10.1747; Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin*, pp. 208-15; Gustav Berthold Volz, ‘Graf Kurt-Christoph Schwerin’, *Hohenzollern Jahrbuch* 14 (1910), pp. 69-70.

To be sure, Frederick took considerable pains over the text of the *General principles*. His original draft from 1746 was not shared at all, and the version completed in 1748 was initially shared only with his brother, August Wilhelm. Only in 1752 did he have a German translation made, which was distributed to his generals in 1753.¹⁹¹ The German edition included substantial corrections and in particular numerous additional historical examples compared to the 1748 version, as Frederick sought to justify himself with reference to famous generals of the wars of Louis XIV.¹⁹² Pečar has noted that the text admitted Frederick's mistakes in earlier campaigns, and even invited the generals to express their own opinions.¹⁹³ Frederick told his generals:

If . . . you have doubts about some of these articles [of the *General Principles*], you would do me pleasure to present them to me, so that I can explain my reasons more amply or to place me in line with your opinion, if I have fallen into error . . . I will consider myself not to have wasted my time if this work gives my officers the space to make reflections on . . . [their] profession'.¹⁹⁴

Several generals certainly told Frederick that they had or would read the work carefully.¹⁹⁵ Lieutenant General Count Dohna promised that he would 'conserve this precious deposit with a secrecy which will be revealed only through the proofs I hope to give through my conduct in all the occasions of war'.¹⁹⁶ Major General Schorlemer similarly promised to use it to inform himself about 'many things', and Frederick's intimate Balthasar Friedrich von der Goltz promised to 'try with all my powers to make myself thereby more skilful'.¹⁹⁷ However, only one officer actually used the

¹⁹¹ Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Friedrich deß Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege in ihrer Entwicklung von 1745 bis 1756* (Berlin 1899), pp. 236-8.

¹⁹² *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 22, 25-6, 28, 30, 33, 35, 38, 42, 48, 51, 54, 56, 60-3, 76, 79, 91, 94-6, 101, 104. Historical examples, *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 35, 38, 42, 51, 95, 104.

¹⁹³ Pečar, *Autorität durch Autorschaft*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁹⁴ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 106-7 (quotation: 'Si . . . vous avez des doutes sur quelques-uns de ces articles, vous me ferez plaisir de me les exposer, pour que je puisse vous déduire mes raisons plus amplement, ou pour me ranger de votre avis, si je suis tombé en défaut . . . je ne croirai point avoir perdu mon temps, si cet ouvrage donne lieu à mes officiers de faire des réflexions sur . . . métier').

¹⁹⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Hrantz to Frederick, 2.2.1753; Hautcharmoy to Frederick, 10.3.1753; Treskow to Frederick, 13.3.1753.

¹⁹⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Dohna to Frederick, 6.3.1753 (quotation: 'conserverai ce prétius depot avec un secret qui ne transpirera que par les temoignages que j'espere donner dans ma conduite a toutes les occasions de guerre').

¹⁹⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G. Schorlemer to Frederick, 9.3.1753 (quotation: 'mehr Sachen'); GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.603 D Bd. 2: Von der Goltz to Frederick, 1.2.1753 (quotation: 'mich auch auf allen Kräfte bestreben, dadurch geschickter zu machen.').

General principles to suggest a change to the Prussian army's practice. Colonel Zastrow, of Schwerin's regiment – the only officer who mentioned specific sections of the work in his response, demonstrating that he had actually read it carefully – suggested that it would be helpful to increase the number of lance corporals in each regiment.¹⁹⁸ Frederick briefly responded that the regiments already had more NCOs than they needed, and that it was the courage and ability of officers and NCOs, not their number, that was most important.¹⁹⁹ This was the only tactical debate contained in the king's correspondence regarding the *General principles*.

Frederick clearly did not want actual discussion of his military treatises, as can be seen most visibly in the response of his intimate, Major General Winterfeldt, to the king's 1755 *Thoughts and general rules for war*, which Frederick sent to him alone. Winterfeldt's reply did not discuss the contents of the work at all, but simply gave a fawning affirmation of his royal master's wisdom:

I tried to imprint the incomparable rules learnt from it into my memory . . . so that Your Majesty's gracious efforts to instruct me and make me skilled for His service should not have been made in vain but rather that, through strictly following and practicing them, I should be worthy of them . . . It is . . . a universal medicine to cure all difficulties . . . I give thanks to this invaluable field apothecary, which I will always keep sensibly by me so that the strongest enemy poison cannot harm me.²⁰⁰

Schwerin had actually sent Frederick a 'Chapter concerning Guides and Spies' in 1747 and, while Frederick acknowledged it, his *General principles* showed no evidence of having been influenced by it.²⁰¹ As noted in chapter three, Frederick's prescriptions for how to acquire knowledge of the country were completely different from those of Schwerin, and Frederick's discussion of spies was also very different.

¹⁹⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Zastrow to Frederick, 17.2.1753, 13.3.1753.

¹⁹⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Frederick to Zastrow, 16.3.1753.

²⁰⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 C Nr.2. Winterfeldt to Frederick, 11.11.1755 (quotation: 'habe ich dagegen die daraus gelernte incomparable Regeln . . . meinem Gedächtniß zu imprimiren gesucht; damit Eure Majestät gnädige bemuhungen, umb mich zu instruiren, und zu dero dienst geschickt zu machen, nicht vergebens angewendet, sondern ich sollte durch einer Stricten folge und ausubung wurdig seyn möge. . . . Es . . . eine Universal Medicin, umb alle Verlgeneheiten zu Curiren . . . danke ich mich bey dießer unshatzbahren feldt Apotheck, als welche ich allezeit sinnlich bey mich fuhren werde, so sicher: daß mir auch der stärckste feindliche Gifft nicht shaden kann.').

²⁰¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 O: Schwerin to Frederick, 18.5.1747 (pencil annotation records Frederick's response).

Whereas Schwerin described bailiffs, hunters and priests as appropriate spies, Frederick dismissed such ‘small people’, saying that they ‘cannot be employed except to know the location of the enemy camp’. Schwerin noted that the minister of an enemy would be a particularly good spy, but Frederick apparently considered it unnecessary to deal with such political issues when writing for his generals. He instead talked of the use of double agents. Whereas Schwerin repeatedly stressed the need to pay and treat spies well, Frederick included a whole paragraph on how one could force a wealthy townsman to become a spy by threatening to kill their wife and children and destroy their house.²⁰² At least in this case, Frederick’s *General principles* were certainly not part of a dialogue with Schwerin.

Frederick’s correspondence with his generals makes clear that what was important was not the content of the work but the great honour done to the generals through the gift of a text written by the king himself, and the great trust shown to them through being entrusted with a secret document. Many generals emphasized the ‘favour’ (‘Gnade’) shown to them by the gift of the work, and promised to keep it secret. They also acknowledged Frederick’s power with promises of strict obedience to the orders it contained: an acknowledgement of Frederick’s royal authority, rather than a promise of independent thought.²⁰³ The work was referred to as ‘a treasure entrusted to me’, ‘a shrine’, and ‘the most precious treasure that an officer can receive.’²⁰⁴ Major General Driesen expressed it most eloquently when he said:

I readily recognise Your Royal Majesty’s particular love toward his most humble generals, since when has there ever been a king in the world who has given himself the great trouble . . . to show his generals war . . . in such a gracious and painstaking way.²⁰⁵

²⁰² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 O: ‘Chapitre concernant les guides et les espions’, 18.5.1747; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 51-3 (quotations, pp. 51-2: ‘petites gens . . . ne peuvent être employés qu’à savoir l’endroit où l’ennemi campe’).

²⁰³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Hrantz to Frederick, 2.2.1753; Katte to Frederick, 8.2.1753; Zastrow to Frederick, 17.2.1753; Driesen to Frederick, 4.3.1753; Treskow to Frederick, 13.3.1753; Buddenbrock to Frederick, 7.3.1753; GStA PK, I.HA Rep 96 Nr.603 D Bd. 2: Von der Goltz to Frederick, 1.2.1753.

²⁰⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Letter to Frederick, 6.2.1753 (quotation: ‘anvertrauten Schatz’); Kreytzen to Frederick, 8.12.1754 (quotation: ‘ein Heiligthum’); GStA PK, I.HA Rep 96 Nr.603 D Bd. 2: Von der Goltz to Frederick, 1.2.1753 (quotation: ‘den allerköstbarsten Schatz eines jeden Officiers gehalten werden kan’).

²⁰⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Driesen to Frederick, 4.3.1753 (quotation: ‘Ich erkenne zugleich Ew. Königl Majestet besondere liebe gegen dero allerunterthänigste

Winterfeldt's response to the *Thoughts and general rules* showed precisely the same features. Firstly he emphasized that he was 'aware of the grace . . . done to me' in sending the work to him. Secondly, he affirmed its secrecy, saying, 'everything will remain buried in my heart . . . I . . . tried to imprint the incomparable rules learnt from it into my memory in the 24 hours that I had'.²⁰⁶ This pattern had already been seen in 1748, when Schwerin responded to the gift of Frederick's *Instructions for the major generals of infantry* and *Instructions for the major generals of cavalry*. He also emphasized the unprecedented nature of the works: 'all the generals . . . cannot thank Your Majesty enough for the effort he has taken to instruct them. These are the first works of this kind that I have ever read'. He also promised not discussion but obedience: 'not only have I read them with an infinite pleasure but I am re-reading them with great attention to imprint them solidly in my mind and observe them with exactitude'.²⁰⁷ When sent the *General principles*, Schwerin similarly promised to 'conform punctiliously to the orders sent with them'.²⁰⁸

Several generals did not immediately acknowledge receipt of the work, and had to be reminded to do this by the king. In answering the letters of his apologetic generals, Frederick again showed his stress on secrecy rather than on debate with his officers, telling them that he only wanted 'to know that it [the book] had not fallen into any strange hands'.²⁰⁹ All he wanted was for his generals to acknowledge that they had received the gift.

Generals darauf, dann vor ist doch je ein König in der Welt gewesen, welche Sich die besondere Mühe gegeben, . . . Generals den Krieg . . . auff eine so gnädigste und Mühsame Weise zu zeigen'). For cases of generals noting that the work was written by Frederick personally, see GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Zastrow to Frederick, 17.2.1753; Kreytzen to Frederick, 7.3.1753.

²⁰⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 C Nr.2: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 11 November 1755 (quotation: 'mir dadurch erzeigte Gnade . . . alles dießes in meinem hertzen vergraben bleiben wirdt . . . habe ich . . . die daraus gelernte incomparable Regeln, in die 24 Stunden da es gehabt, meinem Gedächtniß zu imprimiren gesucht').

²⁰⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 O: Schwerin to Frederick, 4.9.1748 (quotation: 'tous ses Generaux . . . ne peuvent assé rémersier Votre Majestet des Soins qu'Elle se donne pour Les instruire, ce sont les premiers piesses dans ce genre que j'aye james lû, . . . Sire je les ay non seulement lués avec un plaisir infini, mais je les rélirer avec grande attention, pour me les imprimer bien solidement, et les faire observer avec Exactitude').

²⁰⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 O: Schwerin to Frederick, 10.2.1753 (quotation: 'conformeres puntuellement aux Ordres y jointes').

²⁰⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Frederick to Driesen, 8.3.1753 (quotation: 'zu wißen, daß solches in keine fremde Hände gekommen sey'); Frederick to Bonin, 10.3.1753.

The importance of the royal trust and favour shown by the gift of the *General principles* can be seen from the example of Margrave Karl of Brandenburg-Schwedt, who wrote to Frederick that he was:

Very sensible . . . that Your Majesty considers me alone, of all the generals of the garrison, not sufficiently deserving to be initiated into the mysteries of the *Military instruction* which he is in the process of distributing to the commanders of the regiments of Berlin, each of which is authorised, as I learnt, except for Colonel Bardeleben, to show the book to their colonel-proprietors. For the latter told me . . . that he does not dare show it to me and that he was very expressly prohibited from revealing it to anybody, but that Major Eckert has been ordered to communicate it to Field Marshal von Kalckstein. This is an evident proof of the mistrust that it pleases Your Majesty to show . . . to my person.

The Margrave complained, 'I would have expected to have merited by the fervour of my service . . . the return of His [Frederick's] graces and confidence', and added, 'I cannot conceal that it is harder than death itself to serve alongside my two cousins at a time when I consider myself to have merited a better destiny'.²¹⁰ Margrave Karl emphasized the trust shown by being allowed to read the secret work, and the disfavour implied by exclusion from this trust.

Several incidents demonstrated that Prussian officers wanted to have a copy of the work. On the death of Lieutenant General Hacke, Frederick ordered Major General Meyerinck to recover Hacke's copy of the *General principles*.²¹¹ Meyerinck, however, reported that Hacke had given his copy to Lieutenant Colonel Münchow,

²¹⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Margrave Karl to Frederick, 31.1.1753 (quotation: 'Je comtois avoir mérité par la ferveur de Mon Service . . . le retour des Sés graces et de Sa confiance . . . bien sensible . . . que Vôtre Majesté me tientes seul peu mérités des tous les Generaux de la garnison d'être initiés dans les Misteres de l'instruction Militaire, qu'Elle vient de distribuer aux comendeurs des Regiments de Berlin, un chacun d'eux étant même autorisés come je l'apprends hormis le Colonel de Bardeleben, de faire part de la Livre à leurs chefs, car le dernier m'est . . . dire de Son propre, qu'il n'osoit me le montrer, et qu'il lui était est très expressement defendu d'en rien reveler a persone; Mais que le Major d'Eckert avoit ordre de le comuniquer au feldt marechal de Kalckstein. Une preuve aussi evidante de la mefiance marquée qu'il plait a Vôtre Majesté de m'être . . . ma persone . . . je ne saurais disimuler, qu'il m'est plus dur que le mort même, de servir en paralele avec més deux Cousins, dans le tems que je tiens avoir mérités une meilleure destinée').

²¹¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Frederick to Meyerinck, 20.8.1754.

and he persuaded Frederick to let Münchow keep it.²¹² Lieutenant Colonel Bülow also gladly took over Colonel Bardeleben's copy on the latter's death.²¹³ Colonel Asseburg reported in a May 1755 letter that his colonel-proprietor, Lieutenant General Bonin, had died and that, in accordance with the standard secrecy precautions laid down by Frederick, he had at once recovered the book on the general's death. Since he 'had never read through it entirely', however, Asseburg asked whether he could keep the book rather than sending it back.²¹⁴

The importance of the work as a secret and a mark of trust rather than a stimulus for discussion can be seen in a letter from Winterfeldt in December 1754, nearly two years after the *General principles* had been distributed, reporting that:

Major Eckert of [the Regiment of] Kalckstein keeps it always on the window . . . [when] he reads it, so that those who walk by (that is, people who were not told about it) can see it and thereby be convinced that he is also a member of this secret society.²¹⁵

Frederick responded immediately with a letter to all those who had received a copy of the work, reminding them that it had been sent only to 'trusted officers', and that they had been told to keep it secret.

So I hereby repeat my order . . . that . . . you never leave this book lying around, nor ever read it in the presence of anyone else or of your servants, but rather, when you want to do that, you should be completely alone. Also, as soon as you have read it, you should at once seal it again . . . you should also not speak about it with anyone or say anything to them.²¹⁶

²¹² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Meyerinck to Frederick, 21.8.1754; Frederick to Münchow, 23.8.1754; Frederick to Meyerinck, 23.8.1754.

²¹³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Frederick to Bülow, 25.4.1754; Bülow to Frederick, 25.4.1754.

²¹⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Asseburg to Frederick, 3.5.1755 (quotation: 'noch nicht einmahl gantz durchgelesen').

²¹⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Winterfeldt, 2.12.1754 (quotation: 'der Major Eckert von Kalckstein allezeit am Fenster damit stellet . . . er es lieset, damit die vorbei gefunden, also von welchen es nicht erzählt worden, solches sehen, und damit überzeugt werden sollen, daß er auch ein Mitglied dieser secretten Gesellschaft sey').

²¹⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Frederick 2.12.1754 (multiple versions of the same letter to different generals) (quotation: 'vertrauten Officiers . . . So wiederholle Ich hierdurch Meine Ordre . . . daß . . . Ihr dieses Buch niemahls frey und offen herum liegen laßen, noch auch einmahl selbst in jemandes anderen oder Eure Domestiques Gegenwart darin lesen, sondern wann Ihr solches thun wollet, allemahl gantz alleine seyn, auch so bald nur daraus

These were no empty words. General Kreytzen wrote back saying he was shocked at the breach of trust. He had:

Seen with great consternation that, in spite of the most gracious trust that Your Royal Majesty has had in some of your most trusted officers, in most graciously communicating to them the secret of the printed book on tactics, some of them have not taken the slightest precaution most humbly to obey the attached most gracious royal order of 30 January 1754.

For my part, falling at your feet, I tender once again my most humble gratitude that His Royal Majesty sets his most gracious trust in me and wants to make me one of the officers entrusted with this incalculable treasure, which I . . . will tend most carefully as a temple, and therefore obey both his first and second most gracious orders in all parts in the most exact way.²¹⁷

Similarly, General Bredow assured Frederick that ‘I value the trust with which Your Royal Majesty has honoured me far too high, and . . . His favour is far too precious to me’ that he would risk disobeying his orders.²¹⁸ Dohna also hoped, ‘through my exact attention, . . . to become more and more worthy of the trust and royal grace’.²¹⁹ Many generals emphasized that they would ‘obey most exactly’ the renewed royal order.²²⁰

geleßen habet, solches sogleich wiederum versiegeln . . . Wie Ihr dann auch mit keinen Menschen etwas daraus sprechen noch davon sagen sollet.’)

²¹⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Kreytzen to Frederick, 8.12.1754 (quotation: ‘mit größter bestürzung ersehen, daß vor das Aller gnädigste Vertrauen, So Ew. Königl Majestet, zu Einigen von dero geträuesten officiers gehabt, und Ihnen das Secret des gedruckten Buchs die Tactique gewandt allergnädigst Cumuniciret nicht geringfachen precaution gebrauchet, der königlichen allergnädigsten beÿgefügten ordre vom 30ten Januarÿ 1754 aller untherhänigst nach zu leben.

Als vor mein Part statt nochmahlen meine gantz Unterthänigste Danksagung fußfallig ab, daß Er. Königl Majestet, das Aller gnädigste Vertrauen in mich gesetzt, und mich damahlen danebst an den geträuen officiers dieses unschätzbahren Trehsors mit haben Theilsassig machen wollen, Welches Ich . . . ein Heiligthum auffs sorgfältigste verwahren, und zu folge so wohl der Erster als Zweÿten allergnädigsten ordre befohlermaßen in allen Stücken auffs aller exacteste aller untherhänigst nach leben werde.’)

²¹⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Bredow to Frederick, 6.12.1754 (quotation: ‘ich das Vertrauen, deren mich Eur Königlichen Majestät hierbey gewürdiget, viel zu hoch schätze, und . . . mir Dero Gnade viel zu precieus . . . ist’).

²¹⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Dohna to Frederick, 10.12.1754 (quotation: ‘durch meine genaue Achtung . . . das Vertrauens und die Königliche Gnade, je mehr und mehr würdig zu werden hoffe’).

²²⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Pfuhl to Frederick, 4.12.1754 (quotation: ‘in allen Stücken nach lebe’); Forcarde to Frederick, 4.12.1754 (quotation: ‘auf das genauste

The emphasis on the secrecy of the work rather than its use to guide tactics was underlined in the prelude to the Seven Years War, when Frederick ordered all his generals not to take the book with them on campaign but to keep it sealed in a secure place.²²¹ While it was certainly sensible to avoid the work falling into enemy hands, the instruction was consistent with Frederick's emphasis throughout on the secrecy of his gift, rather than on its actual use as a guide to military operations.

As Andreas Gestrich has noted, secrecy had been highly valued in the early modern period as a legitimation not just of princely power but of the whole stratified social order, in which only certain privileged groups understood the hidden meaning of cultural emblems and allegories. It began to be sharply criticised, however, with the rise of the public sphere.²²² Frederick's use of secrecy to help bind his noble officers to him was a reminder that, in asserting his royal authority through war, Frederick was facing in two directions: both presenting himself as an enlightenment *grand homme* – earning his position through demonstrated merit – and as a traditional monarch in the style of Louis XIV, not only ruling personally but also giving favoured nobles the privilege of sharing in the secrets of power.

Conclusion

In the course of the long eighteenth century, the nature of royal authority changed more radically than at any time before or since. In 1660, monarchs like Louis XIV and Leopold I not only claimed absolute and personal control of government but based their authority on the *representation* of their sacred power. In the course of the eighteenth century, the new demands of the public sphere, and of expectations that rulers should earn their position through demonstrated merit, forced rulers like Joseph

observiret'); Zastrow to Frederick, 6.12.1754 (quotation: 'die befehlen meines Königs . . . sorgfältig'); Oertzen to Frederick, 9.12.1754 (quotation: 'n allen Stücken, auf das genaueste allerunterthänigst nachleben'); Katte to Frederick, 10.12.1754 (quotation: 'Sorgfelt besorget syn nachzuleben'); Schorlemer to Frederick, 10.12.1754 (quotation: 'auf daß exacte nach gekomm auch ferner hin nachleben werde'); Schwerin to Frederick, 16.12.1754 (quotation: 'nachzuleben'); Blanckensee to Frederick, 16.3.1755 (quotation: 'auf das genaueste zu achten').

²²¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.600 G: Frederick to his generals, 14.8.1756.

²²² Gestrich, *Absolutismus und Öffentlichkeit*, pp. 34-74.

II to make huge efforts to live up, in practical terms, to the self-representation of their ancestors. By the nineteenth century, monarchy would start to become more and more ceremonial, as specialists took over the varied and complex elements of government.²²³

Frederick's assumption of personal command over his army simultaneously reflected both long-standing European monarchical tradition (exemplified by the personal rule of Louis XIV and Leopold I) and the new definition of the concept of *grand homme* advanced by Voltaire and other enlightened thinkers, which required rulers not simply to *represent* themselves as ruling personally but actually to do this in fact, and thus prove their merit. Inspired by Voltaire, Frederick genuinely tried to get his military achievements recognized as according the status of a *grand homme*. His real (rather than just represented) 'personal rule' of his army, however, ran up against the practical difficulty of his limited knowledge of military affairs. Frederick's use of 'the power of culture' to legitimate himself politically was generally successful (although not always, as Pečar has noted).²²⁴ His key means of legitimation in the military sphere was 'the power of knowledge', and this was much more contested, from the very beginning of his reign.

The development of military ideas is frequently the product not of considerations of military efficiency but of power structures within the military, and this was certainly true in the Prussian case. Field Marshal Schwerin's determination to maintain his magazines in Upper Silesia in March 1741 exposed the Prussian army to great risk, but it enabled the field marshal to maintain his authority over Frederick, who lacked Schwerin's understanding of logistics. Frederick's March 1742 *Seelowitz instructions*, written primarily to prepare the Prussian army for a battle, were of little relevance in a strategic situation that was dominated by the collapse of the Prussian lines of communication, but they serve to buttress the king's shaky military authority by emphasizing the kind of tactical issues that he had learnt on the drill square at

²²³ On the increasingly ceremonial role of Hohenzollern military leadership after 1786, see Thomas Stamm-Kuhlmann, 'Militärische Prinzenziehung und monarchischer Oberbefehl in Preußen, 1744–1918', in Martin Wrede, ed., *Die Inszenierung der heroischen Monarchie: Frühneuzeitliches Königtum zwischen ritterlichen Erbe und militärischer Herausforderung* (Munich, 2014), pp. 443–67.

²²⁴ Pečar, *Masken des Königs* pp. 147, 165–70.

Neuruppin. Finally, Frederick's vaunted *General principles of war*, supposedly his great contribution to military thought, were important not for the ideas they contained – which Frederick did not encourage his generals to discuss – but rather as an element in the patronage economy of the Prussian army: a much-valued symbol of proximity to the monarch for those fortunate enough to be entrusted with their secret. They are also a reminder that the early eighteenth century was a transitional period. Even while acting as a military *grand homme* for the benefit of the public sphere, Frederick continued to practice forms of royal legitimation that prized the secrecy characteristic of late seventeenth-century monarchy. Indeed, the secret work strengthened Frederick's authority in both areas, as its capture by the Austrians in 1760 and swift publication in numerous languages became another element of Frederick's self-representation in the public sphere.²²⁵

²²⁵ Großer Generalstab, *Friedrich deß Großen Anschauungen vom Kriege*, p. 238.

The Military Laboratory

In his book *In command of history*, David Reynolds discussed Winston Churchill's attempts personally to direct the British war effort in the Second World War. He noted:

Churchill's impatience with the generals reflected his real yet limited experience of war – both adjectives should be weighted equally . . . He had fought and killed, . . . but he did not command any formation larger than a battalion, he had never attended Staff College and learned to plan operations, and he had no interest in logistics – that essential science of supply. In other words Churchill knew battle but did not really understand modern war.¹

This passage could equally well be applied to Frederick the Great. Frederick went to war in 1740 familiar with military affairs at the level of the regiment (tactics, or at least infantry tactics), and well-versed in the political affairs of Europe (which in military terms meant grand strategy) but, as discussed in chapter five, he had had no significant preparation at the operational level: the art of moving armies. Frederick was therefore reliant on his generals for advice, particularly on logistics.

Historiography on Frederick's generalship has frequently tended toward extremes. Until very recently, those German historians who published on the subject agreed that, as Theodor Schieder put it: 'no one can deny that he [Frederick] was a general of genius'.² Johannes Kunisch, long the most prominent military historian of Frederick's reign, concluded that Frederick's generalship had been crucial in Prussia's survival during the Seven Years War, and argued that his military innovations were limited only because his officers were too deeply embedded in the existing military culture!³ A host of other authors also took for granted Frederick's 'genius' as a

¹ David Reynolds, *In command of history: Churchill fighting and writing the Second World War* (London etc., 2004), p. 244. For further discussion of Churchill's lack of understanding of logistics, see *ibid.*, pp. 318-9, 394-5.

² Theodor Schieder, *Friedrich der Große: ein Königtum der Widersprüche* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), p. 123 (quotation: "Geniales Feldherrtum kann ihm niemand absprechen.").

³ Johannes Kunisch, *Das Mirakel des Hauses Brandenburg: Studien zum Verhältnis von Kabinettspolitik und Kriegführung im Zeitalter des Siebenjährigen Krieges* (Munich, 1978), pp. 78-82; Johannes Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg: Studien zur bellizistischen*

general.⁴ Responding to this adulation, several recent historians have attacked Frederick's reputation with iconoclastic fervour. Franz Szabo attacked Frederick's record in the Seven Years War so ferociously that Michael Hochedlinger noted that 'even an Austrian reviewer' found Szabo's 'unconcealed anti-Prussian stance' 'excessive'.⁵ Jürgen Luh and Andreas Pečar also made strident criticisms of Frederick's generalship.⁶ The best works offering a path between such extremes have been those of Christopher Duffy and Dennis Showalter, which recognized the king's undoubted military abilities while also noting his equally clear failings.⁷

Even Duffy and Showalter, however, remained focused overwhelmingly on the person of Frederick himself. The present chapter will show the potential for re-evaluating Frederick's military reputation in a way that avoids both nationalist hero-worship and polemical iconoclasm, using the methods of the history of science. Pamela Smith has noted that, rather than scientific discoveries being made by particular individuals, they are typically 'the result of collective and collaborative processes.'⁸ Robert Merton argued for a 'sociological theory of genius in science', recognising that scientific discoveries could arise from the collective work of many thinkers just as much as from the contributions of individuals of genius, while John Lienhard has argued that individuals credited with particular 'inventions' represent only 'a large flash in a long arc of creative light': part of accumulated work by many

Disposition des absoluten Fürstenstaates (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), pp. 103, 105-6; Johannes Kunisch, *Friedrich der Grosse: der König und seine Zeit* (Munich, 2004), pp. 432-6, 437-8.

⁴ John Childs, *Armies and warfare in Europe, 1648 – 1789* (Manchester, 1982) p. vii; Azar Gat, *The origins of military thought from the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (Oxford, 1989), p. 38; Peter Paret, *Yorck and the era of Prussian reform, 1807-1815* (Princeton, NJ, 1966), p. 13

⁵ Michael Hochedlinger, 'Franz A. J. Szabo, The Seven Years War in Europe, 1756-1763', *The American Historical Review* 113 (2008), p. 1224; Franz A.J. Szabo, *The Seven Years War in Europe, 1756-1763* (Edinburgh, 2008).

⁶ Jürgen Luh, 'Military action and military reflection: some thoughts on Frederick's "éléments de castramétrie et de tactique" of 1770', in *Friedrich300 – Studien und Vorträge: Studien und Vorträge zur preußischen Geschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts der Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten* (http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/friedrich300-studien/luh_action, last accessed 24 November 2017), paragraphs 4, 8-10, 13-15, 23-4; Andreas Pečar, *Autorität durch Autorschaft? Friedrich II. als Militärschriftsteller* (Halle-Wittenberg, 2012), pp. 15-16, 20-31.

⁷ Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great: a military life* (London, 1985); Dennis E. Showalter, *The wars of Frederick the Great* (London and New York, NY, 1996).

⁸ Pamela H. Smith, 'Science', in Ulinka Rublack, ed., *A concise companion to history* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 273-4

people over many years.⁹ The development of military strategy may at first glance seem far removed from science, but science also includes medicine and technology, both of which involve learning from practical experience. Indeed, the experimental practice first developed from craftsmen's workshops.¹⁰ If soldiers are seen as craftsmen, developing military ideas from practical experience, and if it is remembered that ideas are generally produced collectively (if not collaboratively), it is no surprise to find that the direction of the Prussian army during the First Silesian War was a collaborative effort by the several craftsmen in the Prussian military laboratory.¹¹

In this respect, Prussian military history has much to learn from the conclusions of Hubert Johnson, who noted in 1975 that 'Frederick governed in cooperation with his senior officials', often relying on them for ideas, and giving them substantial latitude to work outside his direct control.¹² The analogy with Churchill is also helpful, and can be extended not just to Churchill's clashes with his generals but also to the production of his book *The Second World War*. David Reynolds emphasized that, although the book was written with the help of numerous assistants, this did not make it any less Churchill's work:

[Churchill] was running a large . . . research group on a par with the barons of modern science. He did not do all the work personally, but he set its parameters, guided its direction and sustained its momentum – aware of the political timetable governing the whole.¹³

Frederick's stewardship of the Prussian army up to 1755 was by no means as masterly as Churchill's literary achievement (though one may argue that his intervention in the military sphere was much more successful). Through all the disputes, however, the

⁹ John H. Lienhard, *How invention begins: echoes of old voices in the rise of new machines* (Oxford, 2006), passim (quotation, p. 238); Robert K. Merton, 'Singletons and multiples in science', in Robert K. Merton, *The sociology of science: theoretical and empirical investigations*, ed. Norman W. Storer, (Chicago, IL, and London, 1973), pp. 345-70.

¹⁰ Smith, 'Science', pp. 275, 287-91.

¹¹ Such ideas are expressed by Erik A. Lund, *War for the every day: generals, knowledge, and warfare in early modern Europe, 1680-1740* (Westport, CT, London, 1999), pp. 4-7, 67, 198.

¹² Hubert C. Johnson, *Frederick the Great and his officials* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1975), pp. 2-4, 270-2, 281-2 (quotation: p. 2).

¹³ Reynolds, *In command of history*, pp. 498-500.

different members of the Prussian military research group contributed enough to win the First Silesian War, and ultimately benefitted from their king's awareness of the political context.

Politics and Logistics

Frederick was substantially self-taught in international relations, his father not really having given him an education as a statesman before his own near-fatal illness in 1734.¹⁴ The evolution of Frederick's political ideas can be seen particularly from his 1735-8 correspondence with his father's minister Grumbkow. His writings of the 1730s showed a development from naive beginnings to a very realistic appreciation of European power politics.¹⁵ As Arnold Berney noted, Frederick's 1731 Natzmer letter recognized how exposed Prussia's scattered provinces were to attack, and set out targets for expansion, but openly admitted that it did not describe how this should actually be achieved, nor consider the reactions of other states to such plans for expansion.¹⁶ Bellicose May 1732 letters welcoming the prospect of war over Jülich and Berg similarly celebrated the power of the Prussian army without considering the international combinations that might be raised against it, beyond noting the importance of Austrian support.¹⁷ The Natzmer letter showed that Frederick's history lessons as a child had taught him the geographical exposure of the Prussian lands and the humiliation of Brandenburg caught between the armies of the Thirty Years War.¹⁸ The contempt expressed by Frederick and his father for small German princes and their puny armies reflected their assumption that Prussia must be independently able to defend itself.¹⁹ Whatever Prussia's own strength, however, its repeated

¹⁴ Arnold Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse: Entwicklungsgeschichte eines Staatsmannes* (Tübingen, 1934), pp. 13-14, 21, 23, 26, 30, 37, 52-3, 68, 284; *Friedrichs des Großen Briefe an seinen Vater: geschrieben in den Jahren 1732 bis 1739* (Berlin, 1838), pp. 37.

¹⁵ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 72, 75-9.

¹⁶ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 32-3; *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss (30 vols., Berlin, 1846-56), XVI, pp. 3-6.

¹⁷ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 36; *Œuvres*, XVI, p. 53.

¹⁸ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, p. 9; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 8-9. For the exposed nature of Brandenburg, see Christopher Clark, *Iron kingdom: the rise and downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (London etc., 2006), pp. 19-20, 26-7, 30-36; Reinhold Koser, ed., *Briefwechsel Friedrichs des Großen mit Grumbkow und Maupertius (1731-1759)* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 162; Brendan Simms, *Europe: the struggle for supremacy, 1453 to the present* (London etc., 2013), pp. 45-8.

¹⁹ *Briefe an seinen Vater*, pp. 64-5, 107, 114; *Œuvres*, XXVII_III, pp. 117-20.

humiliations during the Jülich Berg dispute of the 1730s emphasized to Frederick Prussia's weakness in the face of international combinations against it, something the Austrian ambassador Seckendorff explained to him as early as September 1732.²⁰ The War of the Polish Succession taught Frederick the faithlessness and amorality of interstate relations, something he expressed fully in his 1738 *Considerations on the present state of the European body politic*.²¹ Grumbkow emphasised that, 'all of this proves that money and soldiers are like a badly-mounted diamond when they are not accompanied by a proper system and wise counsel.'²² Indeed, Frederick clearly learnt, as early as 1735, the importance of judging the right moment to make his move: when the great-power constellation was most favourable.²³ During the 1730s, he also came to understand the increasingly glaring Austrian weakness, and how exposed they were to attack.²⁴ Thus, in contrast to his military education, whose gaps had to be filled through hard experience in war, Frederick's observation of events in the 1730s had given him a firm understanding of European power politics even before he came to the throne, and during the First Silesian War he showed a strong awareness of the political context for military action.

As the invasion of Silesia got underway, Schwerin and Frederick were agreed on the broader strategy, aimed at capturing the key towns and fortifications and completely clearing Silesia of Austrian troops.²⁵ Indeed, Schwerin supported measures of the

²⁰ Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, pp. 59, 144, 146-9, 173-6, 180-1; *Œuvres*, II, pp. 56-7.

²¹ Berney, *Friedrich der Grosse*, pp. 71-2, 84-90, 103-4; *Briefe an seinen Vater*, p. 48; *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 3-30; *Œuvres*, XXI, pp. 216, 244-7, 256-9; Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, pp. 114-8, 120-5, 158-160, 162; Andreas Pečar, 'Friedrich der Große als Autor: Plädoyer für eine adressatenorientierte Lektüre seiner Schriften', in Michael Kaiser and Jürgen Luh, eds., *Friedrich der Große – eine perspektivische Bestandsaufnahme: Beiträge des ersten Colloquiums in der Reihe „Friedrich300“ vom 28./29. September 2007* (http://www.perspectivia.net/content/publikationen/friedrich300-colloquien/friedrich-bestandsaufnahme/pecar_autor, last accessed 27 November 2017), paragraphs 5-6, 8-10.

²² Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, p. 145 (quotation: 'Tout ceci prouve que de l'argent et des troupes ressemblent à un brillant mal enchâssé, quand cela n'est accompagné d'un système suivi et conseil sage'). See also *ibid.*, pp. 139-40, 172, 177.

²³ Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, pp. 117-8, 178-9; *Œuvres*, II, p. xxiii; *Œuvres*, III, p. 29; *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 3-4, 263, 273-4 291 323. 329.

²⁴ Koser, *Briefwechsel Friedrichs mit Grumbkow*, pp. 154, 156, 158-9, 163-4, 180; *Œuvres*, VIII, pp. 5-7, 18, 20, 25.

²⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Frederick to Schwerin, 1.1.1741; Schwerin to Frederick, 1.1.1741, 3.1.1741, 5.1.1741, 8-9.1.1741; Schwerin to Camas, 6.1.1741. Leopold von Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege nach original-Quellen* (2 vols., Berlin, 1841), I, pp. 296-8.

utmost boldness to secure the whole of Silesia.²⁶ Schwerin's disagreements with Frederick focused on logistical details: he remonstrated on 23 December 1740 that Frederick's insistence on not separating the army was causing supply difficulties.²⁷ On 31 December and in early January, he complained that Frederick's orders for particular units contradicted arrangements he had originally made for them, and that Frederick was demanding marching achievements the soldiers were not capable of.²⁸ Such logistical complaints would be a growing pattern in the months to come.

As noted in chapter five, the swift Prussian conquest of Silesia December 1740 to January 1741 gave Frederick the self-assurance to enter upon perhaps his most productive period of relations with his two principal generals: one in which he invited them to put forward their own proposals for the coming operations. This period saw the production of two orders from Frederick, later immortalised through publication by nineteenth-century historians. Frederick's correspondence with his generals, however, shows these orders to be not examples of Frederickian genius but rather of the collective production of military ideas.

Already on 2 December 1740, as he once again told the Old Dessauer that he would not take him on the Silesian expedition, Frederick indicated that his services would be needed in the spring, to face the likely threat of Saxon intervention.²⁹ He ordered Leopold to have the regiments that remained in Prussian territory ready to march, and on 9 January instructed him 'to form a plan according to which one can raise a corps of 24,000 men and if necessary invade Saxony with it, before that court is in a position to put its aggressive intentions into action.'³⁰ Leopold replied on 16 January with a detailed plan for the creation of a magazine at Coswig in Anhalt-Zerbst, very close to Wittenberg. From such a position, he said, the Prussians would not only be

²⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 5.1.1741, 8-9.1.1741; Schwerin to Camas, 6.1.1741.

²⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 23.12.1740.

²⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 31.12.1740, 3.1.1741, 5.1.1741, 7.1.1741.

²⁹ *Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*, ed. J.G. Droysen et al (46 vols., Berlin, 1879-1939), I, p. 117.

³⁰ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 297-9; *Politische Correspondenz*, I, p. 174 (quotation: 'einen Plan zu formiren, welchergestalt man allenfalls ein Corps von 24,000 Mann aufbringen und nöthigen Falls damit in Sachsen gehen könne, bevor solcher Hof seine böse Intentiones in das Werk zu setzen im Stande kommet.').

able to undertake offensive operations into Saxony but also threaten the flank of any Saxon advance on Berlin.³¹

Frederick responded gratefully on 22 January, merely providing a list of which regiments he would actually assign to this corps.³² His eventual *Instruction*, sent on 12 February, was considered so important as an example of his military art that it was included in Preuss's *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*.³³ Its contents however, when compared with Leopold's proposals of a month previously, revealed the different perspectives of the young king compared to his experienced generals. Leopold had gone into great detail about the logistical arrangements to be made, even noting the mills along the Elbe which could be used to grind corn for the magazine, and setting out which troops could be used to escort the ships bringing supplies and artillery up from Magdeburg. His choice of Coswig also reflected an intimate knowledge of the local geography and how it could be used.³⁴ Frederick, who had never campaigned in the area, was naturally in no position to comment on this. His order devoted only a few words to the actual position that the corps was to take up, saying that it should be, 'in the local area [the order was written in Berlin], or wherever else the circumstances may make it necessary'.³⁵ Similarly, despite emphasizing that Leopold was responsible for the 'well-being and conservation' of the corps, and again further down that 'the corps should not lack the necessary subsistence', the instruction did not say anything about how this was to be achieved.³⁶ In contrast, Frederick's instruction provided much more detail on the connection between the political situation and the military. Frederick noted the danger of either Saxony or Hanover intervening in support of Austria, and ordered Leopold to be ready for an attack by either side. Minister Podewils was ordered to pass all relevant communications on to the field marshal, so he would be fully aware of the political context. Noting the possible combinations of enemies, Frederick ordered Leopold to 'attack the weaker part of

³¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 16.1.1741.

³² Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 301-2.

³³ *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss (30 vols., Berlin, 1846-56), XXX, pp. 13-24.

³⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 16.1.1741.

³⁵ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 15, 20 (quotation, p. 15: 'In den hiesigen Gegenden, oder woselbst es sonst die Umstände erfordern möchten').

³⁶ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 15-6 (quotations: 'Die Wohlfahrt und Conservation'. 'Es diesem Corps d'armée an der benötigten Subsistance nicht fehle').

their forces and thereby prevent these troops from joining together.’³⁷ On the level of grand strategy, Frederick’s instructions were well-suited to the circumstances.

Circumstances ultimately meant that Leopold’s corps took up a much more defensive position, not on the Saxon border but near the town of Brandenburg, where it could also react to Hanoverian movements. It was, however, Leopold who selected the position, after undertaking a personal reconnaissance.³⁸ When Leopold asked Frederick to intervene to ensure sufficient supplies for his corps, Frederick told him to arrange it himself with the relevant officials, and it was with them that Leopold prepared the routes by which each regiment marched to the camp, and made arrangements for the cantonments.³⁹ Sending the plan to Frederick, Leopold asked for his approval, enabling Frederick to write back that he ‘very well approve[d]’.⁴⁰ Frederick went further, and asked Leopold to take on responsibility for moving supplies to Silesia. Frederick had emphasized that the regiments needed tents for spring and, when Schwerin reported that these were lacking, Frederick had Leopold arrange their collection and transport.⁴¹ Similarly, when, on 1 March, in the wake of his unnerving experience at Baumgarten, Frederick ordered additional cavalry to march to Silesia, he asked Leopold to hurry them along.⁴² Thereby, the Old Dessauer oversaw logistical issues that Frederick neither understood nor found interesting.

Late January 1741 also saw a similar exchange of views between Frederick and Schwerin regarding arrangements in Silesia. This exchange was also immortalized in

³⁷ *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 17-8 (quotation, p. 18: ‘den schwächern Theil von ihnen zu attaquiren und dadurch zu verhüten, dass diese Truppen sich nicht conjungiren können.’).

³⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 16.2.1741, 28.2.1741.

³⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 18.2.1741; Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 16.2.1741, 28.2.1741, 2.3.1741, 12.3.1741.

⁴⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 9.3.1741 (quotation: ‘sehr gut approbire’); Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 2.3.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 316.

⁴¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 31.1.1741; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 23.2.1741, 28.2.1741; Großer Generalstab, Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung II, *Die Kriege Friedrichs des Großen: erster Theil: der Erste Schlesischer Krieg, 1740-1742* (3 vols., Berlin, 1890-3), I, p. 97*; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 305.

⁴² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 5.3.1741 12.3.1741, 18.3.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 309-11.

a *Directive* from Frederick, published by the General Staff.⁴³ Again, Frederick's instruction, though impressive on its own, takes on a different aspect when viewed in the context of a *Project on the coming campaign* prepared by Schwerin in mid-January.⁴⁴ Like that of Leopold, Schwerin's proposal was a mixture of strategy and the logistical bedrock underpinning it. Following ideas which both he and Frederick had expressed since the beginning of the campaign, he saw the first priority as the capture of the remaining fortified places in Silesia: first Troppau, Brieg and Glogau, then a siege to capture Neisse.⁴⁵ In spring and summer, he expected either to defeat the Austrian army as it entered Silesia or, having captured the fortresses, to invade Moravia and end the war. Underlying these plans for troop movements, however, were proposals for a fundamental system of magazines: near Glogau; at Ohlau, Grottkau and Oppeln to support the siege of Brieg; at Ottmachau to support the siege of Neisse; at Troppau, Jägerndorf, Neustadt and Ratibor to support the main army. Schwerin proposed, 'following the example of France, England and Holland', to appoint specific contractors to provide supplies, with officers assigned to ensure these were delivered. He argued that the army should not have too much cavalry, as it would be hard to provide enough forage and the terrain was unsuitable for their use.⁴⁶

Frederick responded first on 23 January, acknowledging receipt of Schwerin's plan and setting out '*my plan for the coming campaign*' [italics mine]. He also spoke of capturing Glogau, Brieg and Neisse, with magazines at Ohlau, Ottmachau and Oppeln. As Schwerin had done, Frederick spoke of gathering his forces in May to meet the Austrians when they entered Silesia. He was able to find one point on which he could disagree with the field marshal, saying that he wanted to have as many troops available as possible, including cavalry.⁴⁷

The letter of 23 January was short: by no means as detailed as Schwerin's plan. Frederick went into much more detail the following day, informing Schwerin that he

⁴³ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 93*-99*.

⁴⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: 'Project zur künftigen Campagne', mid-January 1741.

⁴⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: 'Project zur künftigen Campagne', mid-January 1741; Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 220.

⁴⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: 'Project zur künftigen Campagne', mid-January 1741 (quotation: 'nach dem Exempel von Frankreich, Engeland und Holland').

⁴⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Frederick to Schwerin, 23.1.1741 (quotation: 'meinen Plan zur künftigen Campagne').

was returning to Berlin and leaving Schwerin in command in Silesia in his absence. It was this *Directive* that the General Staff published, and the document bore striking resemblances with the order that would be issued to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau a few weeks later. In contrast to the Saxon theatre, where he had no experience of the terrain, Frederick's practical experience in Silesia over the previous six weeks left him well placed to discuss the appropriate dispositions of Prussian troops to defend the province, and this he did, specifying which general should be in command at each point.⁴⁸ The *Directive* to Schwerin was comparable to the order to Leopold, however, in that it said little, in comparison to the original plan from the general, about logistics. Frederick specified that siege materials should be gathered at Ohlau and Ottmachau and that, as Schwerin had set out in his plan, supplies should be transported by river. Frederick wrote, however, that, 'regarding the magazines . . . you should correspond assiduously with the field commissariat', thus leaving the matter to Schwerin. He accepted Schwerin's proposal to appoint specific contractors, saying, 'you and the field commissariat should look for entrepreneurs who can deliver meat'.⁴⁹

The General Staff, reviewing both Frederick's *Directive* and the plan from Schwerin that preceded it, proclaimed Schwerin's work 'a laborious document, in which the key point disappeared behind a mass of less important details.' The General Staff claimed that 'Frederick's plans agreed with those of the field marshal', without recognising that Frederick's document, written after Schwerin's, was actually *influenced by it*.⁵⁰ Their claim that Schwerin's logistical proposals were 'less important details', and criticism later in the campaign that 'the operations [were] made dependent on supply measures', spoke volumes for the nature of Imperial Germany's military leadership at

⁴⁸ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 93*-94*.

⁴⁹ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 97*-98* (quotations, p. 98*: 'Was die Magazins . . . anlanget, so sollet Ihr desfalls mit den F.C. [Feld-Kommissariat] fleißig correspondiren'. 'Ihr sowohl als das F. C. sollet Euch fleißig nach entrepreneurs umsehen, welche Euch Fleisch liefern').

⁵⁰ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 312-3 (quotations: 'Ein umständliches Schreiben, worin die Hauptsache hinter einer Masse von weniger wichtigen Einzelheiten zurücktritt.' 'Stimmen die Ansichten des Königs mit denen des Feldmarshalls').

the time of writing.⁵¹ It is no surprise that those who adopted such a cavalier attitude to logistics later led Germany to defeat in the First World War.⁵²

The same process, whereby Frederick passed logistical issues off onto his generals as much as possible, continued in the following months, the king telling Schwerin on 17 February that, ‘regarding the field commissariat, I would be very grateful if you would organise the winter quarters with them . . . as you have proposed.’⁵³ Schwerin, setting out his proposals for supply arrangements on 10 February, emphasized that, ‘although I am persuaded that Your Majesty thinks for himself on all of these issues, I nevertheless thought it my duty to present my little ideas on the subject, of which he will be able to make whatever use he considers appropriate for his service.’⁵⁴ The field marshal’s assertion of his own logistical arrangements was thus masked by the fiction that these were the king’s own ideas. Similarly, Schwerin referred to the work establishing magazines as ‘executing the orders of Your Majesty’.⁵⁵

The Old Dessauer

After the crisis of March 1741 and the battle of Mollwitz, the spring and summer of 1741 saw Frederick more willing than ever before or afterwards to seek the advice of Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau in particular. As noted in the third and fifth chapters, Frederick’s April 1741 dispositions for the siege of the fortress of Brieg, later immortalised through publication in his collected works, copied almost verbatim Leopold’s 1737 *Complete and detailed description of how a town should be*

⁵¹ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 364 (quotation: ‘Die Operationen . . . von den Maßnahmen für Verpflegung abhängig gemacht werden’).

⁵² See Hew Strachan, *The First World War volume I: to arms* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 239-42 on the logistical weakness of the Schlieffen Plan.

⁵³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Frederick to Schwerin, 17.2.1741 (quotation: ‘Was das Feld-Comissariat anbetrifft, so würde es mir sehr lieb gewysen seyn, wenn Ihr mit solche die Regulierung der Winter-Quartiers . . . auf den von Euch gemeldeten Fuß . . . bringen können’).

⁵⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin 10 February 1741 (quotation: ‘Quoique je sais persuadé, que Vôtre Majesté pense d’Elle même à tous ces articles, j’ai crû neanmoins de mon devoir de Lui presenter la dessus mes petites idées, dont Elle fera tel usage, qu’ Elle croira convenir pour Son service.’).

⁵⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 Q1: Schwerin to Frederick, 10.2.1741 (quotation: ‘executer les ordres do Vôtre Majesté’).

besieged.⁵⁶ Frederick's replication of Leopold's work extended to the tiniest details, as Frederick's orders specified the same numbers of officers of different ranks to command the digging of parallels as in Leopold's text, the same number of sections for the troops to be divided into for digging, the same proportion of spades to be carried compared to axes, the same dispositions for grenadier companies and other detachments covering the digging of parallels, the same orders for the positioning of regimental surgeons and the same division of troops for digging artillery batteries. Frederick's orders even named the same officer to command the siege artillery as in Leopold's theoretical plan: Lieutenant General von Linger.⁵⁷ Frederick's slavish obedience to Leopold's dispositions is reminiscent of his later, similarly slavish acceptance of Voltaire's changes to his poem *The art of war*.⁵⁸ Both works were intended to *represent* the king as knowledgeable in their respective fields, even though he was actually obliged to rely on experts.

Indeed, the reorganisation of the Prussian cavalry, which Frederick himself hailed as one of his greatest military achievements, was primarily the work of the Old Dessauer.⁵⁹ The historical understanding of this transformation, which saw the Prussian cavalry go from a laughing stock to becoming the most feared battle cavalry in Europe, has been somewhat confused. The general staff historians before 1914 had noted that Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau was deeply involved in the reorganisation, but they did not go further in recognising it as a process largely inspired by him and not by Frederick, and this has misled some more recent historians into accepting Frederick's own claims of having achieved the whole transformation himself.⁶⁰ Bernhard Kroener for instance credited the development of the Prussian cavalry to

⁵⁶ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, II, p. 27.

⁵⁷ LASA, Z 44, A 9e Nr.10, pp. 31-2, 38-9, 246 v – 249 r, 252 v – 253 v; *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 40-5.

⁵⁸ Theodore Besterman, 'Voltaire's commentary on Frederick's *L'art de la guerre*', *Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century* 2 (1956), pp. 61-205 (esp. pp. 61-7).

⁵⁹ *Œuvres*, I, p. 221; *Œuvres*, II, p. 87.

⁶⁰ For the work of the general staff historians, see U.v. Bonin, 'Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold I. von Anhalt-Dessau', *Beiheft zum Militär-Wochenblatt* 2 (1878), pp. 63-5; Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, II, pp. 46-51.

For recent historians who credit the reforms entirely to Frederick, see Childs, *Armies and warfare in Europe*, p. 127; Brent Nosworthy, *The anatomy of victory: battle tactics, 1689-1763* (New York, NY, 1992), pp. 163-71; Dennis E. Showalter, *The wars of Frederick the Great* (London and New York, NY, 1996), p. 51.

Frederick, arguing that Leopold did not understand cavalry tactics.⁶¹ Frederick's correspondence after his near capture by the Austrians in the skirmish at Baumgarten on 27 February 1741, wrongly stating that the cavalry should protect their rear when fighting hussars by placing themselves in front of villages, shows that at this early point in his career he did not yet understand that cavalry should not receive a charge standing on the defensive but always charge forward to meet it.⁶² This lesson had evidently still not yet been absorbed at Mollwitz a month later, when Frederick's attempt to intersperse infantry with his cavalry led them again to be caught stationary.⁶³ After Mollwitz, Leopold wrote that he was teaching his cavalry in Brandenburg to attack at a steadily faster pace from trot to gallop, and Frederick introduced similar measures for the troops in Silesia, apparently in response.⁶⁴ Leopold emphasized to Frederick that the cavalry would perform just as well as the infantry providing it did not let itself be attacked but instead attacked the enemy, first at the trot and then the gallop.⁶⁵ As noted in the first chapter, Frederick made good use of his existing experience to improve the cavalry's standards of drill. To learn the principles of cavalry tactics, however, he had to rely on the Old Dessauer.

At the strategic level, Frederick continued to show a keen awareness of international political conjunctions and the role of military affairs in them (the level of grand strategy), while struggling to understand the logistical practicalities underlying military operations. Even in the anxious days following Mollwitz, Frederick's primary concern – beyond justifying his own conduct – was with the possible effects of the battle upon the intentions of the Saxons and British.⁶⁶ This was appropriate. Mollwitz has never been celebrated as a masterpiece of tactics: its significance was that the Habsburgs were unable immediately to crush the upstart Prussians as they had

⁶¹ Bernhard R. Kroener, 'Fürst Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau und das Kriegswesen in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte Dessau et al, eds., *Fürst Leopold I. von Anhalt-Dessau (1676-1747) >> Der Alte Dessauer<<: Ausstellung zum 250. Todestag* (Dessau, 1997), pp. 18, 20-1, 24.

⁶² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 8.3.1741; Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, p. 109*.

⁶³ Großer Generalstab, *Erste Schlesischer Krieg*, I, pp. 399-400, 419.

⁶⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to 31.5.1741; Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick 25.5.1741.

⁶⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick 3.6.1741, 15.6.1741.

⁶⁶ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 221-2, 229-30.

done with previous German princes who rose up against them.⁶⁷ In the following months, Frederick again and again discussed the latest movements by the Saxons, Hanoverians, Hessians, Danes and Swedes, and Leopold sent him a stream of intelligence on the movements of the Saxons in particular.⁶⁸ Frederick had always seen Leopold's corps in Brandenburg primarily in grand-strategic terms: deterring intervention by other powers while the king won glory in Silesia.

Frederick, however, continued to rely heavily on Leopold when it came to the operational (and especially logistical) achievement even of such limited and defensive grand-strategic goals. He well understood the basic principle of concentrating decisively against one enemy before they could combine with others, telling Leopold on 12 April (the very day when he returned to his army after his flight from Mollwitz) that, 'should . . . England really stand against me in concert with my enemies, then it would be best to act preventatively and fall upon Saxony before it can join with the Hanoverians.'⁶⁹ Contemporary warfare, however, was primarily based on occupying *positions* from which potential or actual advantage over the enemy could be obtained – the use of potential rather than kinetic energy – and here Frederick was dependent on Leopold's understanding of the landscape of Brandenburg and its western and southern environs, and of the logistics of maintaining troops in these positions. On 15 July, Frederick asked Leopold to draw up a plan for how his corps should react to possible moves by the Hanoverians and Saxons. Leopold recommended positioning the army on the Elbe near Magdeburg, or on the Saale near Bernberg, to prevent the

⁶⁷ Peter H. Wilson, *German armies: war and German politics, 1648-1806* (London, 1998), p. 249.

⁶⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 24.9.1741; Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 29.4.1741, 2.5.1741, 14.5.1741, 21.5.1741, 25.5.1741, 30.5.1741, 24.6.1741, 6.7.1741, 7.7.1741, 11.7.1741, 12.7.1741, 16.7.1741, 19.7.1741, 6.8.1741, 15.8.1741, 18.8.1741, 4.9.1741, 29.9.1741, 2.10.1741, 4.10.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 346-7; *Politische Correspondenz*, I, pp. 257, 272, 274-5, 280, 283-4

⁶⁹ *Politische Correspondenz*, I, p. 222 (quotation: 'sollte . . . Engelland in Ernst wider Mich mit Meinen Feinden in Concert stehe, so wird das beste sein, das Praevenire zu spielen und auf Sachsen loszubrechen, ehe es sich mit denen Hannoveranern conjungiren könne.')

two forces linking up.⁷⁰ In case Saxony alone declared war, Leopold recommended, as he had done before, the swift capture of Wittenberg.⁷¹

Frederick had clearly come to understand the importance of good supply arrangements, but still did not understand how to achieve them. On 10 May, proposing that he take his army into the Giant Mountains toward Glatz and Frankenstein, Frederick noted that he would draw his supplies from the magazines at Brieg, Breslau and Schweidnitz, but Leopold had to explain that these were actually too far away for bread and fodder to be delivered easily, and that the cavalry in particular would suffer greatly.⁷² As noted in chapter one, Frederick in June proposed that the cavalry of Leopold's corps should be dispersed in cantonments in the nearby villages rather than being concentrated in his camp at Gethin. The plan reflected Frederick's awareness of the need to 'conserve' his horsemen, but Leopold, drawing also on the assurances of Secret Councillor Deutsch, had to explain to Frederick that this would in fact have the opposite effect, as it would be impossible to provide sufficient supplies or forage in the villages, the local economy would be devastated, and the cavalry would not be able to train as it had done over the previous months.⁷³ The first chapter has also noted Frederick's dispute with Leopold in August and September 1741, as the Old Dessauer's desire to move his troops from their campsite, where sickness was spreading, conflicted with Frederick's concerns that this would bring about conflict with Saxony.⁷⁴ Desperate to move his increasingly sickly troops, Leopold wrote on 29 August and again on 9 September that, if he did not receive orders from Frederick, he would shift the camp even on his own initiative, hoping that Frederick would 'agree' after the fact. In the end, Frederick graciously gave the

⁷⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 19.7.1741; *Politische Correspondenz* I, pp. 280, 283.

⁷¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 16.1.1741, 19.7.1741; *Politische Correspondenz* I, pp. 217.

⁷² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 14.5.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 331.

⁷³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 9.7.1741, 27.8.1741; Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 9.6.1741, 18.6.1741, 21.6.1741, 26.6.1741, 6.7.1741, 16.7.1741, 18.8.1741.

⁷⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 18.8.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 345-6.

required permission.⁷⁵ The incident saw military knowledge grating against the military hierarchy, but was ultimately a successful case of plans being developed collaboratively, as Frederick's understanding of the political elements of strategy interacted with Leopold's understanding of logistics.

In a complete change from his headstrong independence during the initial invasion, Frederick in mid-1741 also repeatedly invited Leopold to advise him on operations in Silesia.⁷⁶ Leopold on 14 May recommended that Frederick cross the Neisse river and outflank the Austrian position at Neisse from the east, assuring him that Neipperg would not be able to draw sufficient supplies to maintain himself in this position, and would have to retreat to Moravia.⁷⁷ Frederick agreed with this plan, but then drew back from it, thinking the enemy's position too strong.⁷⁸ The Old Dessauer repeatedly assured Frederick that, after his defeat at Mollwitz, Neipperg would not engage in battle again, and therefore that the king could expect to manoeuvre relatively unmolested.⁷⁹ In August, Leopold again fully supported Frederick when he proposed to attack the Austrians around Neisse.⁸⁰ By late August, as both Frederick and Leopold noted, the political time was right, as Bavaria joined the war, forcing the Habsburgs to transfer forces to protect their heartlands. Frederick finally prepared to carry out Leopold's original plan, and a 14 September proposal from Schwerin made the same recommendation.⁸¹ Frederick crossed the Neisse on 26 September, bringing Neipperg to an agreement at Klein-Schnellendorff on 9 October whereby the Austrians surrendered Neisse in return for an armistice.⁸² In this case, the

⁷⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 24.8.1741, 29.8.1741 (quotation: 'aggreiren'), 4.9.1741, 9.9.1741, 13.9.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 345-7.

⁷⁶ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 331, 340, 343-5, 348.

⁷⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 14.5.1741.

⁷⁸ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 333-5. For Frederick's caution in this period, see Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great*, p. 53.

⁷⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 14.5.1741, 30.5.1741, 19.7.1741.

⁸⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 15.8.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 340.

⁸¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.84 R: Schwerin to Frederick, 14.9.1741; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 B: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 20.8.1741, 4.9.1741; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 348. Dettlof Count von Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin: ein Lebensbild aus Preußens großer Zeit* (Berlin, 1928), pp. 156-7 notes that Frederick followed Schwerin's advice. On the political context, see Showalter, *Wars of Frederick the Great*, p. 56.

⁸² Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 144-6.

collaborative work of Prussia's military craftsmen secured possession of Silesia, and Frederick took Leopold on a joint tour of inspection.⁸³

The Political Dimension

If the conquest of Silesia was ultimately achieved through harmonious cooperation between Prussia's senior commanders, the province was defended against the Habsburg counter-attack in the following year through a much more fractious relationship between the king and Prince Leopold. To speak of amicable collaboration in this case is certainly not correct: indeed their relations reflected the conflict based around military knowledge described in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, Prussia secured possession of Upper Silesia at the peace of Breslau in June 1742 because of the differing, and complimentary, skills of Frederick and Leopold: the one able to make the logistical arrangements necessary to maintain the Prussian forces in this difficult theatre of war, the other much more aware of the political context, and of the urgent need to maintain a Prussian presence in the region despite the huge practical difficulties of doing so.

The breakdown of Frederick's relationship with Schwerin in early 1742, and his explosive clash with Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau in April 1742, has been noted in the previous chapter. After the last incident, Frederick sent Leopold to command in the detached but nevertheless vital sector of Upper Silesia. The Upper Silesian theatre seemed to offer the perfect opportunity to put things right. Frederick – who was far more interested in glory on the battlefield, and whose *Seelowitz instructions* had shown that he had little willingness to engage in the details of logistics – was happy to give Leopold – who had so recently demonstrated his much better understanding of logistics – to some extent a free hand in mountainous Upper Silesia, repeating in letter after letter that he left it to him to manage the supply and deployment of the Prussian troops there.⁸⁴ He also issued explicit orders to all those responsible for Prussian

⁸³ Dieter Radtke, *Friedrich der Große und der Alte Dessauer: des Königs Verhältnis zum Fürsten* (Hildesheim, 2015), pp. 12-13.

⁸⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 28.4.1742; Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742, 8.5.1742, 18.5.1742; *Œuvres*, XXX, pp. 89, 93, 95-7; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 359-60, 363, 370, 372.

supplies in the province to comply with any instruction Leopold gave them.⁸⁵ ‘My trust in Your Honour’s *savoir faire* and dexterity is so great’, said Frederick, ‘that I cannot but hope that he will find means, through all possible and serious arrangements, to sustain my troops there. I give him a free hand regarding the means necessary, and there should be no money lacking’.⁸⁶ ‘I repose myself in this matter solely on Your Honour’s dispositions’.⁸⁷

Frederick’s furious letter of 22 April 1742 had, however, deeply wounded Leopold.⁸⁸ This underlying dissatisfaction was evident from Leopold’s first letter to Frederick on taking command, when he complained that he did not have enough troops.⁸⁹ Leopold persistently presented difficult situations to Frederick, leaving it to ‘Your Royal Majesty’s high insight and order’ as to how to respond to them.⁹⁰ Frederick responded by demonstrating his own knowledge of the details of the regimental economy, quoting the numbers of troops injured and sick in each regiment.⁹¹ In particular, Leopold from the beginning raised concerns about whether it would be possible to keep his troops supplied in Upper Silesia at all, ‘because, as is known, the past autumn the enemy . . . has foraged everything away’.⁹² He doubted that sufficient waggons and horses were available to transport the necessary supplies to the troops, the low level of the Oder made it difficult to transport supplies by water,

⁸⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Deutsch, 28.4.1742; Frederick to Linger, 28.4.1742; Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742, 4.5.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 360, 364, 369.

⁸⁶ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 364 (quotation: ‘Mein Vertrauen gegen Ew Liebden *savoir faire* und dexterité ist zu groß, als daß Ich nicht hoffen sollte dieselben werden Mittel finden durch alle möglichste und serieueste Veranstaltungen. Meine trouppen dort zu souteniren; wegen der dazu benöthigten Mittel laße Ich Ihnen freye Hände und soll es an keinem Gelde fehlen’).

⁸⁷ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 368-9 (quotation, p. 368: ‘reposire Ich Mich darunter lediglich auf Ew Liebden dispositiones.’).

⁸⁸ Bonin, ‘Friedrich der Große und Fürst Leopold’, p. 69.

⁸⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742. For further requests for more troops, see Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 4.5.1742, 6.5.1742.

⁹⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742 (quotation: ‘Ew: Königl: Mayl: hohen Einsicht und Befehl’), 14.5.1742, 21.5.1742, 2.6.1742, 11.6.1742.

⁹¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742.

⁹² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742 (quotation: ‘weilen wie bekant, den verwichenen Herbst, der feind . . . fast alles so weg fouragiret hat’), 4.5.1742, 6.5.1742, 13.5.1742, 2.6.1742.

and convoys were in any case under frequent attack from Habsburg irregulars.⁹³ ‘Given the shortage of forage, I do not see how Your Royal Majesty’s regiments will be able to subsist in Upper Silesia in the long term.’⁹⁴ ‘According to my little insight, due to shortage of sustenance, it is not possible to maintain these regiments here in Upper Silesia according to Your Royal Majesty’s intention . . . it is not in my power to do that which is impossible’.⁹⁵ He repeatedly demanded ‘a positive order’ as to whether he should pull back behind the Neisse river.⁹⁶

Frederick maintained that there were no significant enemy forces in the area.⁹⁷ He first responded to Leopold’s concerns about the lack of supplies by reiterating his confidence that ‘Your Honour will do everything in the world so that I achieve my objectives here, on which my whole enterprise depends’.⁹⁸ This was precisely the point: whatever the practical difficulties involved, Prussian troops had to maintain possession of the territory of Upper Silesia if Frederick were to secure permanent cession of it to Prussia. As John Keegan noted regarding the allied infantry at Waterloo, ‘since [it] . . . was . . . the only force with which ground could . . . be held (physical occupation being ten points of the law in war . . .), it could never be withdrawn from ground whose possession was held vital simply to avert loss of life.’⁹⁹ Like Schwerin the year before, Leopold focused on the logistical difficulties that his sovereign did not understand. Frederick, however, retained a much better awareness at the grand-strategic level, and continued to urge Leopold to do his best to

⁹³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 27.4.1742, 14.5.1742, 18.5.1742, 20.5.1742, 23.5.1742, 2.6.1742, 11.6.1742.

⁹⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 11.5.1742 (quotation: ‘ich nicht absehe, wie daß Ew: Königl: Mayl: Regimenten wegen Mangelung der Fourage werden hier in Oberschlesien lange subsistiren können’), 18.5.1742.

⁹⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 2.6.1742 (quotation: ‘nicht wird möglich seyn, nach EW: Königl: Mayl: hohe Intention, meiner wenigen Einsicht nach, diese Regimenten hier in Ober Schlesien, wegen Mangel der Subsistenz Zu Mainteniren . . . wohl in Keines Mayhen pouvoir ist, was ohnmöglich ist, möglich zumachen’).

⁹⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 11.5.1742 (quotation: ‘positiv auzubefehlen’), 14.5.1742, 2.6.1742.

⁹⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 27.5.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 358-62, 364-6, 373.

⁹⁸ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 363-4 (quotation, p. 363: ‘Ew Liebden werden auch alles von der welt thun, damit Ich Meine absichten hier unter, worauf Meine ganze Sache jetzo ankommt, erreiche.’).

⁹⁹ John Keegan, *The face of battle* (London, 1991), p. 162.

keep the troops supplied.¹⁰⁰ Playing on Leopold's own claims of long experience, Frederick refused to transfer him to command elsewhere, saying 'I consider it most necessary to leave a properly experienced commander, whose renown has been established over so many years, with the corps there, as the conservation of Upper Silesia is particularly important to me'.¹⁰¹ Finally losing patience, Frederick on 9 June told Leopold that, since he could not supply his troops properly, and since there were no regular enemy troops threatening him, he should send much of his force to Bohemia. Ceasing to leave matters to Leopold's discretion, Frederick now simply ordered him where to position particular units.¹⁰² Four days later, he was able to report an armistice, and on 19 June the permanent conclusion of peace.¹⁰³ He ordered Leopold to send most of his regiments home.¹⁰⁴ The campaign saw the firm assertion of Frederick's political power over Leopold's military knowledge, and (as noted in chapter one) a disregard for the conservation both of soldiers and of the king's new subjects. It also showed, however, that the Prussian military laboratory included craftsmen with different knowledge and different skills. Frederick's strong political awareness ultimately delivered the right strategic result.

Post-War

While it might be argued that Frederick was particularly inexperienced during the First Silesian War, and therefore particularly reliant on the advice of his generals, the years of peace between the Second Silesian War and the Seven Years War saw a continuation of the same pattern. Frederick continued to be reliant on advice in areas where he lacked the requisite technical knowledge, although he was now able to use trusted subordinates, who were not a threat to his authority, to provide this. On the other hand, as the previous chapter has noted, Frederick certainly did not encourage

¹⁰⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 27.5.1742, 4.6.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 367, 371-2.

¹⁰¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 21.5.1742, 23.5.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, p. 369 (quotation: 'Ich höchst nöthig fände, bey dem dortigen Corps d'Armée einen wohl experimentierten Cheff, dessen Renomé seit so vielen Jahren etabliret worden, zu laßen, da Mir an der Conservation von Ober-Schlesien besonders gelegen').

¹⁰² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 9.6.1742; Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 374-5.

¹⁰³ Orlich, *Geschichte der schlesischen Kriege*, I, pp. 375-6.

¹⁰⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.97 C: Frederick to Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, 17.6.1742; Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau to Frederick, 30.6.1742.

wider debate with his officers on areas like tactics, where he felt secure in his knowledge. The importance which Frederick placed on exact knowledge of the terrain has been discussed in chapter three, and the work above all of Hans Karl von Winterfeldt in gathering the necessary information made Winterfeldt important for the development of Frederick's strategic plans

Frederick's use of his circle of intimates to help him with technical details could be seen for instance in June 1747, when he thanked Major General Georg Konrad von der Goltz for 'the cares you have given regarding the . . . instruction for the commandant of the invalids. I will not fail to make use of it'.¹⁰⁵ In 1753, Frederick entrusted Heinrich August de la Motte Fouqué, an intimate since the 1730s, with developing a plan for the defence of the fortress of Glatz, of which he was governor.¹⁰⁶ Fouqué went into every possible detail, covering the number of troops needed (including miners, engineers and even cavalry) and where they would be quartered, the likely way in which the enemy would approach, the use to be made of artillery, the quantity of ammunition they would need. He even noted the need for hand mills for milling grain when the watermills would be unusable during a siege. He also raised a wider logistical point (though also one advantageous to him as fortress governor), noting that, 'if His Royal Majesty wishes to provision Gratz as a border fortress so that it should . . . supply His Royal Majesty's army on military expeditions', he would need double the amount of cannon ammunition.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, in February 1756, in response to Frederick's requirement that his troops should be able to march in two columns between Wartha and Glatz, Fouqué oversaw the necessary repairs to the roads.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, in February 1749, Winterfeldt drew up a 'most humble suggestion, . . . if Your Majesty finds it appropriate,' for the Silesian hussar regiments to acquire replacement horses.¹⁰⁹ He duly received royal orders to arrange this, and followed with further recommendations, later intervening to protect

¹⁰⁵ GStA PK, VI. HA, Nl. v. d. Goltz I, Nr.2: Frederick to von der Goltz, 19.6.1747 (quotation: 'Je Vous Sais bon gré des Soins que Vous Vous êtes donné par rapport au projet d'Instruction pour le Commandant des Invalides, Je ne manquerai pas d'en faire usage').

¹⁰⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.603 C: Fouqué to Frederick, 2.7.1753.

¹⁰⁷ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.603 C: Fouqué to Frederick, 8.7.1753 (quotation: 'Solten aber Er. Königl Majt. Glatz als eine Gränz Vestung dergestalt provisionieren wollen, das es . . . Er. Königl Mayt Armée zu Krieges expeditions zu felde Versehen sollte').

¹⁰⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.603 C: Fouqué to Frederick, 5.2.1756.

¹⁰⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 C: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 23.2.1749 (quotation: 'Allerunterthänigsten Vorschlag . . . im fall es Euer Majestät a propos finden').

an important Jewish horse merchant.¹¹⁰ In 1755 it was Frederick who passed on to Winterfeldt, for further transmission to the hussar regiments, news from a Prussian diplomat of the opportunity to buy horses in Podolia.¹¹¹ Frederick gladly left such logistical details to his subordinates.

The king also relied on advice on technical issues. In October 1753, he tasked Winterfeldt, alongside the engineer colonel Balby, with meeting the artillery lieutenant Wiedemann and assessing the quality of the cannon that his father was founding for the Habsburg army, and the possibility of them doing the same in Prussia. In this case, he accepted Winterfeldt's enthusiastic endorsement of Wiedemann's 12-pounder cannon, agreeing to its production, but cautiously rejected Winterfeldt's recommendation that he provide Wiedemann's initial costs and also commission him to found light 3-pounder cannon.¹¹² The development of Prussian military ideas thus remained a two-way process, to which both Frederick and his trusted subordinates contributed.

In contrast to this reliance on technical knowledge in certain areas, Frederick's surviving inter-war correspondence with a number of distinguished generals shows no evidence of discussion of military ideas, at least in written form, and to this extent his relations with them followed the hierarchical structure of the assertion of royal power, rather than the collaboration of the military laboratory. Frederick's surviving letters exchanged with Colonel Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz (later to be so distinguished) and with Colonel Rohr referred only to courts martial: the assertion of the royal monopoly on punishment.¹¹³ Frederick's correspondence with Major General Friedrich Wilhelm Forcade de Biaix and Major General August Friedrich von Itzenplitz extended to lists of the men, and requests for leave: the regimental economy of the ordered Prussian state.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 C: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 11.3.1749, 16.3.1749; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 E: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 5.2.1754.

¹¹¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 F: Frederick to Winterfeldt, 25.5.1755.

¹¹² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 D: Frederick to Winterfeldt, 16.10.1753; Winterfeldt to Frederick, 13.10.1753, 14.10.1753.

¹¹³ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 H; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 Q.

¹¹⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.603 B; GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.603 K1.

Lieutenant General Count Christoph zu Dohna, on the other hand, was grateful for the opportunity to attend the manoeuvres at Stargard in 1754, and his correspondence with Frederick preserves plans for exercises at both the tactical and operational levels.¹¹⁵ Although the letters of Field Marshal James Keith do not directly show him discussing military matters with Frederick, the king did use him to contact the Chevalier de Folard.¹¹⁶ As noted in the previous chapter, the written record shows little evidence of Frederick discussing military issues with Schwerin.¹¹⁷ The field marshal was, however, moved to ask Frederick for input on his dispositions for the 1753 manoeuvre. He considered the position of Frederick's force 'un-attackable', and asked Frederick to 'correct' 'the disposition that I have prepared for the attack tomorrow'. 'I confess my ignorance of any parallel case, having never seen anything comparable to the position in which Your Majesty is placed so advantageously'.¹¹⁸ In this case, Schwerin's input apparently did not influence the development of Prussian military ideas, as the Seven Years War repeatedly saw the Prussians attacking very strong defensive positions.

A number of Prussian officers during the inter-war years produced military tracts that they thought the king might take an interest in. In 1753, Robert Scipio Lentulus sent Frederick a tract on foraging and on the use of cavalry, asking that 'Your Majesty the greatest king and the greatest master of the art of war would deign to correct the faults he finds there'.¹¹⁹ Frederick had discussed the protection of foragers in his *General principles of war*, and Lentulus' ideas did not cause him to elaborate on this in his 1755 *General rules and principles of war*.¹²⁰ Similarly, the *General principles* had already emphasized, as Lentulus did in his tract five years later, that the cavalry should be ready to attack the enemy infantry in the flank and rear, and that they should pursue unrelentingly after victory. Indeed, Frederick was able on the former

¹¹⁵ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.602 S. See esp. Dohna to Frederick, 15.5.1754.

¹¹⁶ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.603 T: James Keith to Frederick, 8.2.1748.

¹¹⁷ For an exception to this, see Schwerin, *Feldmarschall Schwerin*, p. 416.

¹¹⁸ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.605 O: Schwerin to Frederick, 11.9.1753 (quotation: 'La disposition que j'ay projeté pour L'attaque de demain . . . corriger . . . je confesse mon ignorance sur un pareille Cas, n'ajent james vô quelque chose de pareilles, á La position dans La quelle Vôtre Majestet, s'est mise Sy avantagusement . . . inactacable').

¹¹⁹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 C Nr.41: pp. 61r – 71v, Lentulus to Frederick, 10.7.1753 (quotation: 'Votre Majesté le plus grand Roi, et le plus grand maitre dans l'art de la guerre voudrais daigner de corriger les defaults qu'ell y trouvera').

¹²⁰ *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 23-5, 121-2.

point to draw on his own experience of the successful charge of the Bayreuth Dragoons at Hohenfriedberg in 1745, calling for squadrons of dragoons to be posted behind the infantry line to repeat this success, just as Lentulus did in his own later text.¹²¹

As noted in chapter three, however, Frederick considered an exact knowledge of the country where he expected to campaign to be vital, and he employed Winterfeldt in particular to scout invasion routes. In his 1754 report on the military geography of Saxony and the Bohemian border, Winterfeldt frequently referred to discussions he had had with Frederick about the defensibility of the Saxon position at Pirna, and about the routes that the Austrians might use to advance into Saxony. He laid out detailed options for operational plans to counter such a move, and promised further explanations in person. He also described plans from a Lieutenant Colonel Pflug for a preventative war against Saxony in case Austria gathered a coalition against Prussia.¹²² This bespoke a detailed discourse between king and general, and it is well known that Winterfeldt was involved in the planning of Frederick's pre-emptive strike in 1756.¹²³ Similarly, the only military discussion in Frederick's surviving correspondence with Hans von Lehwaldt, whom he promoted to field marshal in 1752, was a 1752 request from Frederick for news of what was happening in Courland.¹²⁴ Frederick was reliant on skilled subordinates to bring him information, and this sometimes involved developing his ideas in cooperation with them.

Conclusion

Frederick's correspondence with his generals during both the First Silesian War and the inter-war period makes clear that his military abilities were both 'real' and 'limited'. Alongside what he had learnt on the drill field at Neuruppin, Frederick had a keen awareness of European power politics, which ensured that he fitted military measures well to political goals. As noted in chapter four, Frederick's lightning

¹²¹ GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 C Nr.41: pp. 69v – 71r Lentulus to Frederick, 10.7.1753; *Œuvres*, XXVIII, pp. 88-91.

¹²² GStA PK, I.HA Rep.96 Nr.601 E: Winterfeldt to Frederick, 14.8.1754.

¹²³ Wolfgang Petter, 'Hans Karl von Winterfeldt als General der friderizianischen Armee' in Johannes Kunisch, ed., *Persönlichkeiten im Umkreis Freidrichs des Großen* (Cologne, Vienna, 1988), pp. 81-3.

¹²⁴ GStA PK, I.HA Rep 96 Nr.604 F. See esp. Frederick to Lehwaldt, 3.2.1752.

invasion of Silesia reflected a significant strand of contemporary military thought, and Field Marshal Schwerin fully supported this aggressive strategy. Existing historiography has, however, failed to recognize the degree to which Frederick's military leadership was a collective endeavour by several craftsmen in the Prussian military laboratory. From the very beginning, and still during the inter-war period, Frederick delegated to subordinates responsibility for technical aspects of war that he did not understand: above all logistics. In 1741, after the humbling experience of Mollwitz, he recognized that he needed advice even on tactics, and it was Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, not Frederick, who introduced the changes in cavalry tactics which Frederick would later claim (and be celebrated for by historians) as one of the great military achievements of his reign. Both Leopold and Schwerin then advised Frederick on the outflanking manoeuvre that allowed him finally to secure possession of Silesia. In Upper Silesia in spring 1742, however, it was Frederick whose political nous made the decisive contribution, as he insisted that the Prussian forces continue to hold their positions in spite of the difficulty of supplying them, and thus secured permanent cession of most of Upper Silesia to Prussia at the peace of Breslau. The concept of Frederick as a born military genius must be discarded, but nor does the Prussian king deserve some of the iconoclastic criticism directed more recently at his military abilities. His generalship was part of a collective endeavour within the Prussian military laboratory, and his example should make military historians wary of depicting military operations as the work of a single 'great man' commander.

Conclusion

Frederick the Great of Prussia was a French military aristocrat who, as a young man, went to war in the military tradition of the ‘Century of Louis XIV’, following French military practice of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This reflected the towering influence of Louisquatorzean France in the early eighteenth century, as a model not only of monarchical government but also of a particular kind of masculinity and a literary culture associated with it, and of ruthless military conquests. Johannes Kunisch has noted noble glory hunting as a major motivation for eighteenth-century warfare, but the perspective of gender history provides a much more subtle picture, showing *competing* military masculinities.¹ Frederick’s father set himself against the ostentation of Louisquatorzean monarchy, which he decried as effeminate, espousing instead a dour, brutish masculinity that stressed the disciplined performance of military duty and the stoic endurance of danger and privation. In reaction to this, Frederick specifically modelled himself on the Sun King, adopted French ‘baroque masculinity’, which emphasized glory in war, and eagerly embraced the literature of the French *grand siècle*, which Louis had patronized. The conflict between father and son was therefore expressed to a large degree as a clash of masculinities. Frederick went to war in the ‘expansive and expensive’ tradition of the baroque, disproving Christopher Clark’s claim of a distinction between ‘ostentatious’ Hohenzollern monarchs, ‘detached from the . . . work of state’, and ‘thrifty . . . workaholic[s]’.² The perspective of military operations illustrates this dramatically, as Frederick tried at the battle of Mollwitz to lead his troops sword in hand in the style of the heroes of French literature.

Frederick saw himself as operating in two temporal envelopes, an attitude that reflected the liminal period of the early eighteenth century. On one hand he belonged to the long eighteenth century (1648-1789), dominated by the search for order after

¹ Johannes Kunisch, *Fürst – Gesellschaft – Krieg: Studien zur bellizistischen Disposition des absoluten Fürstenstaates* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), pp. 3-6, 19-21, 28-31, 36-7, 72-3, 81, 138-42, 156-9.

² Christopher Clark, *Iron kingdom: the rise and downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (London etc., 2006), p. 84.

the chaos of the religious wars. Despite claims by Luh that Frederick was uninterested in regimental routine, his apprenticeship in Neuruppin 1732-40 taught him not only the mechanics of drill but also its wider purpose of placing men into the ordered world of princely war-making.³ The military operations of the First Silesian War show that order was seen as a crucial element in military efficiency. The famous reorganisation of the Prussian cavalry in 1741 primarily involved the imposition of order upon them, and the Prussian high command in 1742 genuinely found it difficult to believe that disordered Habsburg irregulars would be any threat to them. The operational perspective also shows that Frederick and his generals genuinely tried to live up to the promises of long-eighteenth-century states to ensure the welfare of their subjects and soldiers, although Erica Charters's concept of a 'caring fiscal military state' must be tempered by the evidence that military and political objectives sometimes overrode such considerations.⁴

Concepts of order also fundamentally influenced ideas about armies, showing order as a hugely important 'meaning of war' in this period. Contradicting Blanning's claim that Frederick was distinct from his father in visualising Prussia as a state, not just the ruler's dominions, Frederick, at least in the first half of his reign, followed his father's view of the army as a collection of regiments, a product of early eighteenth-century ideas seeing the ruler's household (of which the court was a part) as the model for the state (or even the same as it).⁵ This led to a focus on the small details of military life. At the battle of Auerstädt in 1806, the Duke of Brunswick would be mortally wounded while trying to lead a regiment, instead of exercising his proper function as commander of the Prussian forces, and this has been portrayed as symbolizing the decay of the Frederickian army into small-mindedness.⁶ In fact, Brunswick's actions were a faithful reflection of the regimental economy or military household of the early eighteenth century. They looked strange only in the context of new concepts of

³ Jürgen Luh, *Der Große: Friedrich II von Preussen* (Munich, 2011), p. 30.

⁴ Erica Charters, 'The caring fiscal-military state during the Seven Years War, 1756-1763', *The Historical Journal* 52 (2009), pp. 921-3, 936-41; Erica Charters, *Disease, war, and the imperial state: the welfare of the British armed forces during the Seven Years' War* (Chicago, IL, and London, 2014), pp. 1-5.

⁵ T.C.W. Blanning, *The culture of power and the power of culture: old regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 195-6.

⁶ Peter Paret, *The cognitive challenge of war: Prussia 1806* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2009), pp. 25, 29; Dennis E. Showalter, *The wars of Frederick the Great* (London and New York, NY, 1996), pp. 335-7.

economies at the level of whole states, and of a higher level of military activity called strategy.

Alongside the broader envelope of the long eighteenth century, Frederick saw himself specifically as living in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, which were dominated by the example of Louis XIV's France. After a brief flirtation with classical battle tactics, which came brutally to grief at Mollwitz, Frederick emphasized again and again that only tactical examples from the previous century – the era of ordered troops – were worth imitating. Thomas Biskup has noted that Frederick aimed to emulate the 'Century of Louis XIV' celebrated by Voltaire.⁷ This, however, was not only a cultural but also a military project, in which Frederick sought to emulate not only Louis but also the great generals of his age. The present work, for the first time, properly examines the works of military science and military history that Frederick read, comparing them with the operational and tactical details of his battles and campaigns. It shows that Frederick specifically associated his famous tactic of outflanking the enemy with the examples of Turenne and Luxembourg. Frederick also eagerly adopted the tactics of attacking with the bayonet that were seen by contemporaries as typically French, and which reflected his risk-taking personality.

Frederick's ambitions, however, extended considerably beyond the states system that he found on his accession: he had made clear in his 1740 *Refutation of the Prince of Machiavelli* that he aimed at a 'revolution' in the current power structure. Frederick found intellectual inspiration for this firstly in the concept of the conqueror, which was rooted most of all in classical history but was in general located temporally outside of the post-Westphalian states system, and often spatially outside of Europe. The great French engineer Vauban specifically identified the great fortresses of his day as protecting states from such conquerors. Alongside this, historians like David Bell, who argued that eighteenth-century warfare was cautious, and fought for limited aims, have failed to recognize that there was an alternative school within post-Westphalian military thought – inspired (once again) primarily by Louisquatorzean

⁷ Thomas, Biskup, *Friedrichs Größe: Inszenierung des Preußenkönigs in Fest und Zeremoniell, 1740-1815* (Frankfurt am Main and New York, NY, 2012), pp. 10-12, 29, 69-72, 74-6, 78-81, 95-7.

France – which envisaged aggressive and daring moves at the strategic level to conquer territory.⁸ Frederick’s favourite military author, the Marquis de Feuquières, made proposals for surprise attacks to conquer a province and then secure it at a quick peace settlement which were so similar to Frederick’s 1740 invasion of Silesia, and his strategy of ‘total war for limited objectives’, that it seems likely Frederick, who read Feuquières in the 1730s, was directly inspired by them. The Marquis of Santa Cruz (who specifically referred to the French use of this practice) also recommended a surprise attack on the succession of a new ruler, exactly as Frederick did in 1740. Frederick’s approach to war was therefore deeply shaped by his understanding of his own time, and primarily followed French practice. Attempts to portray Frederick as part of a ‘German way of war’ must therefore be dismissed.⁹

The early eighteenth century, however, was a transitional period. Frederick’s assumption of personal command of his army partly reflected the practical experience of the Brandenburg-Prussian army in the Nine Years War and the War of the Spanish Succession, where disputes among generals over precedence could only be settled through the ruler or crown prince taking personal command. It also reflected the long-standing monarchical tradition that a ruler, after taking counsel, should reserve the final decision for himself, a tradition exemplified by Louis XIV’s ‘personal rule’. In the course of the eighteenth century, however, the steady growth of the Enlightenment and the public sphere challenged the Louisquatorzean paradigm. Voltaire criticised Louis for merely accompanying his armies while his generals won battles for him. Frederick not only followed Voltaire’s idea of the ‘Century of Louis XIV’, but also responded to the French author in seeking to out-do Louis as a general. Frederick conspicuously compared Louis’s conquests with his own, and loudly emphasized that he had far out-done the French monarch by commanding his armies personally. Frederick was further inspired by Voltaire to try to cast his military achievements as worthy of the Enlightenment title of *grand homme*, whose greatness was measured by personal merit, not birth. Indeed, Frederick made sustained efforts to alter the enlightened definition of *grand homme* to include military achievements.

⁸ David A. Bell, *The first total war: Napoleon’s Europe and the birth of warfare as we know it* (New York, NY, 2007), pp. 24-51, 136, 302-4.

⁹ Robert M. Citino, *The German way of war: from the Thirty Years’ War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence, KS, 2005).

Whereas, in the later seventeenth century, monarchs had achieved authority through representing themselves as unreachable, sacred figures, the public sphere now required them to prove this in fact. Frederick's 'personal rule' of his army as military *grand homme* thus looked not only backwards toward the age of Louis XIV but also forwards toward the Enlightenment and the public sphere. That Frederick tried simultaneously to emulate Louis XIV and to live up to enlightened values typifies the liminal stage of the early eighteenth century, and Voltaire, who inspired all of these endeavours, can be seen in similar terms.¹⁰ Trying to embody in fact qualities that their predecessors had merely represented themselves as possessing placed huge strains on monarchs of the mid-eighteenth century, and this can be seen in the serious difficulties Frederick experienced in asserting his military authority over his experienced generals. Whereas Blanning has described Frederick successfully using 'the power of culture' to maintain his authority in the public sphere, Frederick's attempt to legitimate his personal command of his army using 'the power of knowledge' was much more contested.¹¹

The interaction between the post-Westphalian idea of order – exemplified by Louis XIV – and the changing cultural and intellectual currents of the later eighteenth century was also seen in the contemporary response to uncertainty in war. Contrary to long-held ideas expressed, for instance, by Henning Eichberg, Johannes Kunisch, Azar Gat, and Anders Engberg-Pedersen, warfare in the early eighteenth century was *not* dominated by ideas of exact calculation influenced by geometry or Newtonian physics.¹² Specialist engineers certainly used mathematics, but armies were led by nobles, whose mathematical literacy varied and whose aim was to win glory. Rather than using calculation to eliminate chance in war, or to 'flatten the space of war', as Engberg-Pedersen has claimed, military thought of the early eighteenth century

¹⁰ John A. Lynn, *Battle: a history of combat and culture* (new edn., Cambridge, MA, 2004), p. 137 also notes this phenomenon.

¹¹ Blanning, *The culture of power*, pp. 2-4, 195-6, 211-32.

¹² Henning Eichberg, 'Geometrie als Barocke Verhaltensnorm: Fortifikation und Exerziten', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 4 (1977), pp. 17-50; Anders Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance: the Napoleonic Wars and the disorder of things* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2015); Azar Gat, *The origins of military thought from the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (Oxford, 1989), pp. ix, 9, 20-1, 24, 26-9, 41, 43, 46-8, 53, 55-6, 58, 70-4, 78, 81-3, 93-4, 99-102, 106, 122-3; Johannes Kunisch, *Fürst-Gesellschaft-Krieg: Studien zur bellizistischen Disposition des absoluten Fürstenstaates* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 1992), pp. 139-43, 156-9, 162-3.

focused on the individual noble or royal commander, who was expected to anticipate everything that might occur, and make provision for every eventuality.¹³ This was not science: it was military absolutism. Only as the century progressed would the steady growth of state and military bureaucracies provide generals with staffs to gather information for them, divisional and corps commanders to take part in the decision-making, and cartographic surveys whose maps made it less necessary for generals to have seen the ground personally. The early eighteenth century's personal concept of military knowledge would be slowly replaced by institutional knowledge.

Power, however, is typically negotiated, rather than absolute, and the history of science has shown that the production of knowledge is itself a collective exercise. Using Frederick's unpublished manuscript correspondence with his generals, and detailed examination of the operational history of the First Silesian War, the present work shows that Frederick was substantially dependent on advice from his generals in areas where he lacked expertise. He persistently left the details of logistics to subordinates, and in 1741 Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau had to teach him the tactical principles for the reform of the Prussian cavalry. Frederick's reliance on the personal knowledge of individuals for geographical information – rather than the permanent corps of guides proposed by Field Marshal Schwerin – made Hans Karl von Winterfeldt important for Frederick's strategic planning in the inter-war period. On the other hand, Frederick had a very good understanding of the political context for military action, and his awareness of the political need to keep possession of Upper Silesia in spring 1742, at a time when Leopold declared it logistically impossible, was crucial to Prussia securing the territory through the peace of Breslau. The development of Prussian military ideas was a collective effort. The king was in many ways able, and some recent criticism of his military reputation goes too far. The military histories of Frederick's reign, however, still overwhelmingly focus on the king himself, and this must be corrected. Generals are not 'great men', and their campaigns typically reflect the work of many hands. Operational military history would benefit in future from exploring this collective production of military knowledge.

¹³ Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of chance*, pp. 7-36, 43-6, 50-3, 160-2. Quotation, p.7.

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