John Clarke’s *Military Institutions of Vegetius* and Joseph Amiot’s *Art Militaire des Chinois*: translating classical military theory in the aftermath of the Seven Years’ War

Submitted by Adam Parr to University College London as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
Declaration
I, Adam Parr, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract
Following the Seven Years’ War, John Clarke, a British Marine, and Joseph Amiot, a French ex-Jesuit missionary in Peking, translated two classical texts on military theory, respectively Vegetius’ *Epitoma Rei Militaris* and the *Sunzi bingfa*: the two texts that formed the model for subsequent writing on the art of war within their respective traditions. While the translators were half a world apart, their literary projects were a common response to inter-related events: in both cases, an attempt to bolster the author’s personal position, promote his profession and demonstrate the utility of both.

The connections between the men offer the opportunity for comparative historical and textual analysis that throws light on the military and political developments of the late Enlightenment. The translators selected the source texts for their relevance to their audience and to the strategic dilemmas faced by Britain and France. For Clarke, these included empire, the professionalization of the army and the strategic role of the monarch. For Amiot, social stability, the monarchy and France’s prestige.

Clarke’s personal goals were achieved but his thinking on the professionalization and use of the army was not to be heeded until after the American Revolution. Amiot’s work was co-opted into the narrative of political reform that led to the French Revolution. In view of these political, military and literary developments, it is no coincidence that the *Epitoma* and the *Sunzi* were brought together in France in the 1770s with the first attempts to articulate and define the term ‘strategy’.

This research combines textual readings, comparative analysis and consideration of new primary materials and existing scholarship. The resulting study proposes new insights into the way political, military and literary ideas and events coalesced in the aftermath of the first global war; and the role of translation in the genre of military theory.
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**Abbreviations, names and language**

I use the following abbreviations for the principal texts:


*Epitoma* The *Epitoma Rei Militaris* of Vegetius (386)


*Végèce* Claude-Guillaume Bourdon de Sigrais, *Institutions Militaires de Végèce* (first published in 1743, this edition Paris, 1758)

*Sunzi* *Sunzi bingfa* (‘Sun Tzu’s Art of War’)

I use recognised translations of the primary texts where possible and where none exists (as with the *Art Militaire* and *Végèce*) I have made my own. There are some extended extracts in the Appendix. I have not modernised the English or French and any emphasis is in the original unless otherwise indicated.

French terms that an English reader would usually pronounce as French I write in italics: e.g., *Parlement, philosophe*; but ‘Physiocrat’ as this is pronounced as an English word.

The Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France is abbreviated to BIF.

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Introduction

In 1766 a former Jesuit French missionary in Peking sent to a minister of state in Paris the first European translation of the *Sunzi*, the most influential Chinese classical text of military theory. In his covering letter – the first in a correspondence between the two men that would last until their deaths nearly 30 years later – the missionary wrote:

A Frenchman, transplanted for the past 15 years in the capital of the Chinese empire, offers as homage to your Excellency a segment of his literary works (travaux littéraires). This tribute, owed to you by virtue of your taste for all that concerns the Sciences and the Arts, would not be unworthy of you if it were offered by anyone other than a Jesuit. It is a note, a compilation, or a type of translation (espèce de traduction) of what has been written, least badly, in this extremity of Asia, on the military profession (art des guerriers).1

Within a few months of this letter, a half-pay British lieutenant of Marines dedicated his translation of the most influential Roman text of military theory to his king:

My presumption in offering this Work to Your Majesty proceeds solely from Devotion and Zeal for your Service. The established Merit of the Original, the only remaining System of ancient Discipline, and the distinguished Honor it received from the patronage of a Roman Emperor, seem to render it not wholly unworthy Your Majesty’s Notice, however it may have suffered in the Translation. And I flatter myself Your Majesty will be pleased to consider this Attempt as the Result of a Desire to contribute to the Advancement of the military Sciences ...2

My research will explore the relationship between the literary projects of these two men and the circumstances in which they came to translate classical military texts at the same moment. These are not the only translations of military theory in the eighteenth century, but they have been selected because of their timing and choice of source text.3 Through analysis of text and context, I will show that both men were responding to changes brought about by war and that they sought to shape their worlds through literary projects. They set out to demonstrate their utility and identity, turning to the classical world, authorship, the cataloguing of knowledge and to ideas of political reform and

1 Letter of Joseph Amiot to Henri Bertin dated 23 September 1766 (Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France (BIF), MS 1515, fol. 2). In the postscript, the author also describes it as ’a free translation (traduction libre) of the two most celebrated Chinese authors who have written on l’Art Militaire.’ BIF, fol. 3. See the Appendix for the full French text of this letter.

2 *Military Institutions*, pp. i-ii.

3 For example, French translations of Vegetius were published in 1743 by Sigrais and in 1772 by the Chevalier de Bongars, but de Bongars states that he completed his translation in 1741: *Traduction de Végèce* (Paris, 1772), p. v. Lancelot Turpin de Crissé’s *Commentaires sur Végèce* (Paris, 1783) is neither a translation nor within the right timeframe. Paul-Gédéon Joly de Maizeroy’s 1771 translation of the *Taktika* of the Byzantine emperor Leo is the closest candidate but was excluded on the grounds of both timing and the status of the source text. Nonetheless, this important text is discussed further at p. 197.
renewal. In so doing they applied the logic of the Enlightenment. In terms of ideology, they share the ideas articulated by their contemporary, d'Alembert, in 1751: the need to amass facts based on observation; to organize those facts in their natural order and to derive from them the underlying principles; and the application of this approach to the human as well as natural sciences. The comparative study of humanity – society, language, laws and government – is a means to understand oneself and one's own world.

The rigorous translation of classical works is, therefore, a comparative process that creates understanding, order and structure and demonstrates utility. In choosing these source texts, the translators were identifying with the authors of the Sunzi and Epitoma who, like them, had sought to bring order to their own worlds. They were also seeking to exploit the status enjoyed by works that had become the model for writing on the art of war respectively for over a millennium in Europe and two millennia in China. The translations set out lessons on military and political reform that were highly relevant to the strategic situations of Britain and France in this period before the American and French Revolutions. On a personal level, both men succeeded to some degree in securing the professional advantages they sought while their ideas had a greater impact on the subsequent development of the genre of military theory than has previously been recognised. I will also explore the function of language and translation in the genre of military theory, a subject that has yet to receive the attention it deserves.

Texts and contexts
The Seven Years’ War (1756–63) was the first global war: its theatres ranged from the coasts and continent of Europe to the West Indies, North America, West Africa, India

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4 ‘Enlightenment’ here denotes the intersection of three distinct dimensions: the historical period – broadly the eighteenth century; the geographical region of Europe centred on France; and, a unifying set of ideas or, perhaps better, the ‘intellectual energy’ and ‘enthusiasm with which [the Enlightenment] attacks all its various problems’ and which, more than the results of its work provides unity and ‘real systematic value’: Ernst Cassirer, The philosophy of the Enlightenment (Princeton University Press, 1951), p. v. The precise geographical and chronological boundaries of the Enlightenment are not relevant to this paper since it concerns the work of a Frenchman and Englishman writing in the 1760s: indisputable loci of the Enlightenment.


and the Philippines.\(^7\) More than the war itself, it was the peace settlement, the strategic responses to the war and even the next major war, in America, that defined its consequences.\(^8\) Nonetheless, it was immediately apparent that the strategic implications for France and Britain were immense. In Britain, the 23-year old George III (1738–1820), who had ascended the throne in 1760, found himself ruler of a new empire.\(^9\) There would be an intense debate about how to defend this new empire and the actions taken to do so would play a critical role in the events that led to the American Revolution in 1775. The financial impact of the war resulted in tension between George III and Parliament in Britain and Louis XV (1710-74) and the French Parlements. Thus, the strategic outcomes of the war and the strategic outlook for Britain and France in its aftermath had both short- and long-term consequences for Europe, Asia and North America.

John Clarke was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Marines on 14 January 1759, in the 71st Company of the Chatham Division. On 25 January 1761 Clarke was promoted to First Lieutenant in the 94th Company and in 1763 he was put on half-pay. In 1769, he was appointed to the Corps of Foot serving in the recently captured province of Senegambia in West Africa, and in 1771 he became Captain-Commandant of the Corps. He died in Fort Louis, Senegambia, in 1778.\(^10\) Clarke created a catalogue of military books and, between 1764 and 1777, built up a personal collection of 120 military books that was left to Jesus College, Cambridge by his mother and sister between 1790 and 1800. In 1767, Clarke published the *Military Institutions*, the third English translation of the *Epitoma*, and the last for over 200 years.\(^11\)

\(^7\) I acknowledge problems with the name, concept, dates, participants and nature of this war: Mark H. Danley, ‘Introduction: The ‘Problem’ of the Seven Years’ War’ in Mark H. Danley and Patrick J. Speelman (Eds), *The Seven Years’ War – Global Views* (Brill, 2012), pp. xxiii–lvi.

\(^8\) In a sense, Britain won the Seven Years’ War while it lost the peace, whereas the inverse was true of France and the American Revolution: Paul W. Schroeder, *The transformation of European politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 38.


\(^10\) Some confusion has been caused by the fact that another John Clarke joined the Marines as Second Lieutenant in 1757: p. 183 below.

\(^11\) ‘Few Latin authors have been so widely quoted and little read by modern scholars. Almost any general bookstore now will have attractive and accessible editions of the Chinese tacticians and Oriental military philosophers – and yet not a single paperback volume of Vegetius, who, far more than the latter writers, has influenced the tradition in which most armies of the world today organize and envision warfare.’ Victor Davis Hanson, ‘The Status of Ancient Military History: Traditional Work, Recent Research, and On-Going Controversies’ *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 63, No. 2 (Apr., 1999), 379-413, 386.
The second translator, Joseph Amiot, was born in Toulon in 1718, trained as a Jesuit, and shipped to Peking in 1749. Amiot’s first published work appeared in Paris in 1770 and for some 25 years he was the leading figure in the *correspondance littéraire* conducted between Paris and Peking under the auspices of Henri Léonard Jean-Baptiste Bertin (1721–92), Controller General and then Minister of State. However, the first work that Amiot dispatched to France was a translation of the *Sunzi* and a second classic military work. These manuscripts left China in 1766 and arrived in 1767 where, together with additional materials, they were edited by Joseph de Guignes (1721–1800) and published as the *Art Militaire* in 1772. Amiot continued a prolific literary work on Chinese subjects, and extensive correspondence, through to his death in Peking in 1793.

The two men’s situations may help to explain why they undertook their respective translations. Both men found themselves in the mid-1760s in uncertain professions of questionable status. Clarke may not have been an outsider in terms of personal wealth or background (we do not know) but he had joined a branch of the military service that could be characterised as outside the establishment. Although the Marines had performed well during the war, they enjoyed a lower social status than either Navy or Army and suffered the popular suspicion of any standing military force that had a role in the maintenance of internal order as well as imperial defence. The military achievements of the war were, in the opinion of many of Clarke’s contemporaries, squandered in the peace treaty. Thereupon, Clarke was discharged on half-pay.

Meanwhile, Amiot’s isolation in Peking was amplified when the Society of Jesus was expelled from France by the Paris *Parlement* in 1762, a decision finally ratified by Louis XV in 1764 in return for fiscal reforms that the King needed to balance his books. The French expulsion threatened the funding, status and autonomy of the French mission in Peking and was part of a longer-range campaign by Portugal, France and Spain to have

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13 Who named the work is not clear. De Guignes refers to the forthcoming work in his *Avis* to the *Eloge* where he states that Amiot has ‘translated another piece entitled *ancienne Tactique Chinoise* which will appear in the course of this year …’ (it actually took a further two years). De Guignes was a respected Orientalist and member of the Royal Society as well as the French Académie: see the Royal Society motion electing him on 6 February 1752: http://royalsociety.org/library/collections (accessed 26.03.15).
the Jesuit order suppressed entirely – which they succeeded in doing in 1773. Amiot’s correspondence shows him deeply affected by these events. Both men, therefore, had a motive for seeking to bolster their status and that of their professions. Both chose to translate military classics in order to demonstrate their usefulness as well as to provide their own insights (and those of the authors they translated) into the policy debates of the time. This study will seek to identify the ideas within their sources that they sought to highlight to their readers and the ideas that they introduced through prefaces, footnotes and more subtle techniques such as lexical choices, style and structure.

My reading will show that both Clarke and Amiot were engaged in primarily socio-political analyses of warfare, its relationship with the state, society, education, bureaucracy, ethics and civilian government. However, the approaches adopted by the two men necessarily reflect, as well as similarities, differences in their circumstances. Clarke’s work lies within a tradition of military writings by serving and retired soldiers; he appears to be writing of his own initiative and for an audience made up of his peers and he addresses himself to the king, his commander-in-chief. Clarke has chosen to translate from Latin, a language that he and his audience know well, and a text that is part of a recognised classical tradition. By contrast, Amiot is writing (by his own account) at the request of others and within a social framework that includes his Jesuit background, French politics and the Chinese court. Amiot chooses a more difficult text in two languages, one of which (Manchu) he has to learn as he goes along. He is not a soldier and therefore is not writing about his own profession – a point noted by Amiot and emphasised by his detractors. Whereas Clarke’s Vegetius is a Christian and incorporates Christian sentiments, Amiot’s text comes from a Chinese philosophical tradition that had deeply divided the Catholic Church and had contributed to the suppression of the Jesuits in France. For Clarke, the need for a professional standing army and its role in the defence of the new empire is the main question, whereas, for Amiot, it is the ethical and political duties of a ruler and the right of his subjects to revolt if he fails to discharge those duties. Amiot’s work is capable of being read as a political

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55 The familiarity of the classical tradition does not mean that there was a Roman strategic culture, or a British strategic culture or that the two were the same. The two most influential Roman authors, Caesar and Vegetius, offered entirely different approaches to warfare which one scholar believes created a strategic ambiguity that contributed to Britain’s defeat in the American Revolution: Don Higginbotham, Reconsiderations on the American War (Greenwood Press, 1978), pp. 22, 31.

56 Vegetius’ Christianity is, however, limited to the military oath and there is no suggestion that the supernatural plays a role in the outcomes of war: p. 52 below.
tract and was indeed interpreted as such by his reviewers. \(^7\) Notwithstanding these differences, both translations not only test the boundaries of military theory in the Enlightenment but also raise important political issues.

**Foundations**

The breadth of this research means that many areas of scholarship are relevant to it. In this section and the next I will discuss some of these areas, first to examine various ideas and methods that form the foundations of my work, and then with an overview of literature on the main topics that I will be exploring. These sections are not intended to be exhaustive surveys but set out to introduce and acknowledge the range of scholarship that I took as my starting-point.

At the heart of this study are four texts. I have tried to ‘surround these classic texts with their appropriate ideological context’ in order to ‘build up a more realistic picture of how political thinking in all its various forms was in fact conducted in earlier periods.’ \(^8\) The texts in question span China in the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), the Roman Empire in 400, and China, France and Britain in the eighteenth century. Inevitably, I cannot explore every aspect of this enormous range of subjects and my linguistic limitations allow me to work in English, French and Latin but not Chinese. I have tried to identify representative and established thinking as the basis for fact-building rather than attempt a complete survey of scholarly debate in each field and I cite my sources accordingly. There are several aspects of this research that are, I believe, also original contributions to scholarship: the comparison of the *Epitoma* and the *Sunzi*; the readings of the *Military Institutions* and the *Art Militaire*; the assessment of the historical and literary contexts; the exploration of primary materials relating to Clarke’s literary project and Amiot’s correspondence on the *Art Militaire*; and my research into the critical and political response to the *Art Militaire* together, culminating, in chapter 6, with my findings as to how these classical texts and translations influenced the emergence of the term ‘strategy’ in the 1770s. \(^9\)

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\(^7\) See below, p. 158.


\(^9\) The first use of the word in English in the Oxford English Dictionary dates to 1810: ‘C. James New Mil. Dict. (ed. 3) (at cited word), ‘Strategy differs materially from tactic; the latter belonging only to the mechanical movement of bodies, set in motion by the former.’ Definition of ‘strategy, n.’ in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, September 2015) accessed 03.11.15.
Consequently, although all four of the present works are concerned with strategy, the term itself did not exist when they were written. I use it nonetheless, as do many scholars regardless of their period, geography or language. It is therefore necessary to discuss its meaning briefly. Earle defines strategy as ‘the art of controlling and utilizing the resources of a nation – or a coalition of nations – including its armed forces, to the end that its vital interests shall be effectively promoted and secured …’ Earle also identifies a higher level of ‘grand strategy’ – a process of integrating ‘the policies and armaments of the nation’.\(^\text{20}\) The distinction, however, between strategy and grand strategy is not clear.\(^\text{21}\) Parker and Kennedy adopt the same definition as Earle but theirs could equally be studies of strategy under the contemporary American definition.\(^\text{22}\) Consequently, I use the term strategy in the broad sense that is synonymous with grand strategy.

My research also touches on issues raised by the idea of ‘strategic culture’. Johnston’s *Cultural Realism* asks whether the Chinese military classics offer a set of values that would determine strategic preferences and he also examines the actual strategic decisions of Ming China (1368–1644). Johnston concludes that the Chinese classics offer two distinct strategic cultures: one is a ‘Confucian-Mencian’ preference for non-violent strategies and rulership based on virtue; the other a realpolitik approach that calls for violent, offensive strategies.\(^\text{23}\) Johnston demonstrates that it is realpolitik that determined Ming strategic choices, a challenge since these choices are indistinguishable from the neo-realist thesis of international relations that sees no cultural content in such decisions.\(^\text{24}\) Johnston’s term for the effective strategic culture is a ‘parabellum paradigm,’ from the Latin ‘qui vis pacem, para bellum’. This aphorism derives from Vegetius and in


\(^\text{21}\) For example, when strategy is defined as a ‘prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.’ *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* 2010, p. 236 (www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf accessed 24.01.15.)

\(^\text{22}\) Geoffrey Parker, *The grand strategy of Philip II* (Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 1-2. Paul M. Kennedy, ‘Introduction’ in *Grand strategies in war and peace* ed. by Paul M. Kennedy (Yale University Press, 1991) p. 2. These studies demonstrate that ‘strategy’ can be used in studies relating to periods before the word itself was in use.


chapter 1 I will compare the strategic culture offered by the *Epitoma* with that of the *Sunzi*.\textsuperscript{25}

Whereas strategy may exist independently of literary production, strategic culture (if it exists) is derived from ‘early military experiences of the state’ and its ‘philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics’.\textsuperscript{26} Hence Johnston’s investigation of the Chinese military classics, which dominated military education and literature throughout imperial China. Whether a strategic culture influences actions directly, it may also have a symbolic function in providing justification for military action, identifying adversaries, creating social cohesion and political support.\textsuperscript{27} It is therefore politically significant that the two men who are the subject of this research both chose to translate classical military texts. In so doing they were connecting the strategic cultures in which they were writing with those in which their source texts were created. But, unlike the continuity in strategic culture affirmed by constant reference to one’s own past experience and classical tradition, these translations were of texts from different strategic cultures – even if early modern Europe had co-opted Greece and Rome as their own.\textsuperscript{28} Consequently, the translators are setting up an ambiguity or dialectic whereby the two strategic cultures need to be reconciled or synthesised.\textsuperscript{29} Thus my research explores the way personal strategies link to strategic culture and the strategy of the state through the medium of translation.

The connection of strategic cultures through translation could not have taken place in the absence of the ‘public sphere’ as it was developing in Britain and France during this period. My conceptual framework for the public sphere is that of Habermas but with two qualifications identified by Blanning: first, that the participants in both the British and French debates which are discussed below were not exclusively ‘bourgeois’ – they included nobles and priests; and second, that their engagement was politically heterogeneous. Notwithstanding either their critique or the effects of their work, Clarke,

\textsuperscript{25} Luttwak’s proposition that strategy is itself paradoxical is derived from the paradox in Vegetius’ aphorism. Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: the logic of war and peace* (Bellknap Press, 2001), p. 1.

\textsuperscript{26} Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, pp. 156–60.

\textsuperscript{28} The catalyst being the very event that Vegetius had sought to avert – the fall of Byzantium in 1453: Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads – A New History of the World* (Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 219.

\textsuperscript{29} Transmission from China ‘made possible the assimilation of new cultural elements that were to be involved in the remolding of patterns of thought and material culture there.’ Gregory Blue, ‘China and Western social thought in the modern period’ in *China and Historical Capitalism Genealogies of Sinological Knowledge* ed. by Timothy Brook and Gregory Blue (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 57–109, p. 69.
Amiot and many of the other figures discussed below were either supporters of the reigning monarchs or at least of absolutist monarchy. The public sphere that is described here is neither socially or politically homogeneous but it is the locus within which these translations, and the debates of which they formed part, took place.30

**Literature review**

Starting with Clarke, there is no scholarship on his translation of the *Epitoma* or biographical account of Clarke himself.31 There is a passing reference to Clarke’s authorship of the *Military Institutions* in a biographical essay on the John Clarke who wrote the first published account of the Battle of Bunker Hill on 17 June 1775.32 Clarke’s *Military Institutions* was reprinted by Phillips in 1943, without any comment other than that Clarke’s translation dated from 1767 and was ‘the best available in English’.33 Clarke is mentioned by Milner, Starkey, Houlding and Duffy.34 Clarke is also cited by Gruber as an author, but not as a collector.35 Amiot fares much better. There is a 1961 biographical essay, with a useful bibliography of Amiot’s works, by Davin, a 1915 study by de Rochemonteix and references in works by Cordier.36 Amiot features prominently in an essay by Lewis on the political and ideological objectives of Henri Bertin in which Lewis

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31 Michael King Macdona is researching Clarke’s life with interesting but as yet unpublished results which, with his permission, I cite where relevant.


identifies several of the themes discussed here, but notably not the Art Militaire or its impact. Waley-Cohen cites Amiot’s correspondence with Bertin in her studies of eighteenth-century Qing military culture. Amiot’s correspondence with Henri Bertin is deployed to support Waley-Cohen’s case that the Qianlong emperor (1711–99) was more interested in western technology than his later dismissive remarks to the Macartney Expedition (1793) might suggest; and also that the Jesuits played a much more significant role in support of the Chinese military than they or the Chinese cared to admit. Indeed, as Crossley observes, ‘For the Qianlong court, Jesuits were enablers of the imperial agenda, not teachers or debaters on philosophical issues’ and that agenda revolved around the strategic and ideological imperatives of all conquest regimes. The Art Militaire received a critical response in France and in Britain at the time, but is only cited by Waley-Cohen and Millar.

Amiot is briefly considered, and dismissed, as a translator of the Sunzi by Giles, who compliments Amiot for the breadth of his work and as a sinologue before stating that ‘his so-called translation’ is ‘little more than an imposture,’ a sentiment shared by Griffith.


38 Joanna Waley-Cohen, ‘China and Western Technology in the Late Eighteenth Century’ The American Historical Review, vol. 98, No. 5 (Dec., 1993), 1525-1544 and Culture of War in China: Empire and the Military under the Qing Dynasty (IB Tauris, 2006).

39 Both arguments are supported by the fact that Qianlong ordered a Jesuit, Felix da Rocha (? 1731–81), to the front to advise on artillery for an intractable siege during the Second Jinchuan War (1771–76): Waley-Cohen, Culture of War, p. 58 and ‘Western Technology’, pp. 1538–9. Qianlong, a Manchu, was the sixth emperor of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912). There is also relevant literature on Adam Smith and his views on China and Tartary: Ashley E. Millar, ‘Revisiting the sinophobia dichotomy in the European enlightenment through Adam Smith’s ‘duties of government” Asian Journal of Social Science, 38 (5) (2010), 716-737, p. 725 and Ryan Patrick Hanley, ‘The ‘Wisdom of the State’: Adam Smith on China and Tartary’ American Political Science Review 108.2 (2014): 371–82.


41 Amiot’s Life of Confucius received more attention. Cheuk-Woon Taam, ‘On Studies of Confucius’ Philosophy East and West, vol. 3, No. 2 (Jul., 1953), 147-165, p. 149 states that ‘it was used by many writers on Confucius after Amiot.’ Also: Lewis, Bertin, pp. 255, 269.

As a non-speaker of Chinese, I was conscious of the possibility that Chinese scholars had studied the *Art Militaire* but my enquiries suggest this is not the case.43

There is considerable scholarship on war and society that is directly relevant to the study of John Clarke, which is cited in chapter 2.44 Gruber’s study of British soldiers’ libraries in the eighteenth century spans both the social context in which Clarke was writing and the literary influence of texts including the *Epitoma*. There are also works on the Marines and on subjects such as military education in the period that describe the broad historical context and also help to link the author to that context through the intermediate concentric circles of his profession, his personal and social relations and the physical environment, be that Peking, Plymouth or a London coffee-house, on board a Royal Navy frigate or a trader of the French *Compagnie des Indes*.45 Many of these themes are brought together in Danley and Speelman’s essays on the Seven Years’ War which complement other studies ranging from Corbett to Baugh. Danley observes that there are strategic connections between the traditional theatres (Europe and America) and conflicts in the Asian sub-continent and Western China, for example through the lens of Russian strategy. These threads connect Europe and the military enterprises of Qianlong.46 As with Johnston’s study of Ming foreign policy, Waley-Cohen, Perdue and Hostetler comprehensively deconstruct the narrative of Qing China as a pacifist and defensively-oriented state. On the contrary, during the century Qianlong and his two predecessors doubled China’s territory through aggressive expansionism, and, from 1749, Qianlong sought to celebrate and promote his military achievements and culture in

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43 Professor Han Qi of the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, advised that the only Chinese language research on Amiot concerns the latter’s writings on Chinese music. (Han Qi to the author, e-mail dated 17 December 2014.) This was confirmed by Professor Bernhard Fuehrer of SOAS (14 May 2015).


China and internationally. The moment at which Amiot arrived in Peking marked a highpoint for military culture in China.

Amiot's social context brings in many different areas of study. These include the Jesuits in China, the French state's engagement with China from the end of the seventeenth century, the cultural exchange between France and China and French Enlightenment sinology generally. There is extensive research on the significance of China in the French and European Enlightenment and its influence on the philosophes and, to a much lesser degree, the Physiocrats. The recent collection of Burson and Wright on the Jesuit suppression develops several themes including the dispute between the French monarchy and the Parlement, and the intertwined conflict between the Jansenist and the Jesuits, previously considered by Swann and Van Kley. Vardi’s recent study of François Quesnay (1694–1774) and the Physiocrats does not explore the writings on China to a great extent although Vardi does see 1767 as a turning-point for the movement. In setting the scene for Amiot we shall develop the thesis that, like Amiot, the Physiocrats went beyond the traditional trope of using China in philosophical debate – typified by Oliver Goldsmith’s Citizen of the World (1762) or Voltaire’s sinophile works of 1755 and 1756 – to promoting a more radical agenda. Maverick’s works come closest to this approach but I will take the argument forward.

While I will examine the English press war of 1761-3 in some detail, time has not permitted a deep investigation of the public sphere in either Britain or France in the

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51 Lewis A. Maverick, China, a Model for Europe (Paul Anderson Company, 1946) and ‘Chinese Influences upon Quesnay and Turgot’ Claremont Oriental Studies, No. 4 (June 1942), 1-12.
In the 1760s, this subject is closely related to the question of the origins of the French Revolution, and while I stop short of this question both in time and in ambition, I will refer to some elements of the scholarship on this subject, notably, to the work of Roger Chartier, Keith Michael Baker and Colin Jones. I will also touch on Habermas’s positioning of the Physiocrats in relation to public opinion and absolutism.

There are also several studies of the history of military theory which help to place the ideas in the Sunzi, the Epitoma and the work of Clarke and Amiot within the genre. These works describe how ideas developed from one text or period to another but they do not consider how translations can inject (or re-inject) ideas from one society or period into another other. In order to understand the Epitoma and the Sunzi in their original context, it is necessary to read the introduction and commentaries of Reeve and Milner for the former and Ames, Sawyer and Minford for the latter. The Cambridge History of Ancient China and Wilkinson’s Chinese History: A New Manual contain relevant chapters. Pines’s study on the evolution of Confucian thought and language – which is contemporaneous with Sunzi – and Hui’s comparative work on state formation in early modern Europe and China provide further insights. For the Epitoma, we have Allmand’s study of Vegetius in the Middle Ages. Williams’s and Friell’s study of

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the emperor Theodosius I (347–95), to whom the *Epitoma* was most likely dedicated, and Matthews provide historical context for the period in which Vegetius was writing.  

Among translation studies, the work of most direct relevance is Burke and Po-chia Hsia’s collection of essays on cultural translation, which draws on the broader field but looks in particular at the translation of non-fiction in the early modern period, including the work of the Jesuits into and from Chinese. The editors’ own chapters emphasise the acts of translation undertaken by the missionaries and the fact that China’s status and significance to the mission resulted in a different (and more accommodative) approach than in other countries. ‘Translation’ meant not just books but even the dress and manners adopted by the Jesuits as they sought to establish themselves and their mission in China. Working in the other direction, China and the Jesuits feature in Elie Catherine Fréron’s (1718–76) essay on cultural translation with which he marked his assumption of the editorship of the *Journal étranger* from the Abbé Prévost in 1755. Fréron proposes a ‘*grande république littéraire*’ based on the view that all humans have the same sense of universal beauty, which is then expressed differently by different cultures. For Fréron, the work of the translator is to retain and convey the essence while changing the culturally specific. Maynard considers Jesuit approaches to, and objectives for, translation of Chinese texts. Davis’ study of the Augustan poets explores the ways in which the process of translation itself, as well as the choice of source text and author, reflect the translator’s life. Also useful are Cheung’s and St. André’s essays on Thomas

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60 ‘The concept of ‘cultural translation,’ ... has now become common currency to describe the process of adaptation through which items from one culture are domesticated in another. In the early modern period this process was often described as ‘accommodation,’ a concept well known to the Jesuits and their historians. When Ignatius, following St Paul, advised his own followers to be ‘all things to all people,’ *omnia omnibus*, he was recommending a policy of what we call the cultural translation of the Christian message. The career of Matteo Ricci neatly exemplifies what Ignatius meant. One might describe Ricci’s change of clothing on his arrival in China as an attempt to translate Christianity in the sense of dissociating it from its Western cultural baggage and searching for an ‘equivalent effect’ in the local culture.’ Peter Burke, ‘The Jesuits and the Art of Translation in Early Modern Europe’ in John W. O’Malley et al (Eds), *The Jesuits II: cultures, sciences, and the arts 1540-1773* (University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 24-49, p. 24.


Percy’s 1761 English translation of a Chinese novel, the Haoqiu Zhuan, and comparison with Sir John Davis’s translation in 1827. These studies show how the culture of the 1760s shaped the translation.  

Finally, both Clarke and Amiot were writing in the context of larger projects. In the case of Clarke, this was his programme to catalogue and later collect all significant books on the art of war. He created a library and a catalogue that show a deep and knowledgeable love for his subject that seems to have grown out of his 1767 book and continued until his premature death in 1778. This collection of books at Jesus College, Cambridge was the subject of an exhibition in 1999. Amiot’s broader project was to help produce an encyclopaedia of Chinese knowledge in the tradition of earlier Jesuits in China, but more comprehensive yet. Both of these projects need to be placed within the context of book history and libraries in the eighteenth century for which the Cambridge History of Libraries and Chartier’s Order of Books provide context.

Structure
There is inevitably a compromise required where a study seeks to analyse text and context. While recognising that the alternative structure would have been equally valid, I have opted to treat context first and then text.

Chapter 1 provides a description of the historical setting and ideology of the source texts, the Sunzi and the Epitoma. No detailed comparative analysis has been undertaken before and such references as there are to the two works have emphasised differences not similarities. I will argue that the core ideas, the form and some key phrases are highly comparable. I also wanted to avoid the danger of blurring the line between the ideas in

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the original and those in the translation, especially for Amiot whose sources are not transparent.

Chapter 2 considers certain key themes in the historical setting of the two translations. The first theme is the difference between war as presented by the military theorists of the 1700s and British writing during the Seven Years’ War. Through the connection of the Peace of Paris 1763 and the Duc de Choiseul I then consider the suppression of the Jesuits in France in the early 1760s. This leads to a study of the French mission in China, whose strategies, practices and ideology provide the reference for Amiot’s work. The Jesuits may have been in China as missionaries but their eyes were always on Europe and France at this time was at an inflection point. I therefore examine the state of French sinology at this time and the proposition that French interest in China reached its peak at the start of the war with Voltaire; and I argue that it was the Physiocrats who took sinophilia forward into new, bolder ground from the mid-1760s. Finally, Amiot moves to centre stage as I consider the correspondance littéraire conducted between Paris and Peking and its relation to political developments in Paris.

Chapter 3 presents Clarke’s Military Institutions while chapters 4 and 5 do the same for Amiot’s Art Militaire. The approach, though, is somewhat different. In the case of Clarke, we have his sources to hand and can track closely his translation decisions. In Amiot’s case, the sources are not clear but we have more material from the translator, his editor and reviewers from which to analyse his approach. I have divided the section on Amiot into two chapters, the first dealing with Amiot’s approach to his sources and the translation, the second with the text of the Art Militaire.

The final chapter 6 considers responses to the texts and other developments after their publication and how they fitted into the broader projects of the two men. This chapter examines whether the literary strategies of the two men can be regarded as having been successful in terms of the personal objectives of the writers and examines the way in which they influenced others, both in the literary and political contexts. This research leads to a re-examination of the concept and word ‘strategy’ in the 1770s.

Conclusions
This study is not about war or the history of war. Military history has been ‘reintegrated’ into mainstream history in recent years but I suggest that Clarke and Amiot’s works demonstrate that texts on the art of war deserve to be similarly integrated into literary
and historical studies, and for the same reasons. Clarke and Amiot’s conscious approach to translation demonstrates that they themselves are aware of the historicist and cross-cultural approach they are taking. Both men give primacy in their translations to function seeking clarity of ideas and retaining some of the ‘foreignness’ rather than seeking to integrate the original content into the target language. In Clarke this is visible in his use of Latin terms, his respect for Vegetius’ sense and the balance between these characteristics and his importation of contemporary themes such as professionalism. Clarke’s approach is thrown into further relief if one contrasts it with the Végèce by Sigrais which he used as a source. Sigrais places his notes as endnotes that are separate and concealed from his translation, modifies the original more to adapt it to French style and distances himself from Vegetius by sharp-edged humour, which at times becomes ridicule. Clarke’s commentary is integrated into the main text with footnotes and his occasional use of humour is more subtle, specific and self-deprecating. Amiot goes even further in seeking to convey Chinese ideas, names and phrases that border on the awkward and caused his readers some difficulties. Amiot stated that he had drawn the line at the point at which the French language would be ‘disfigured’ and asked his editor not to ‘disfigure’ his translation by seeking to mould it into a style more to the taste of a French reader. Amiot’s critics attacked his willingness to convey ideas that made no sense in French and he responded to them through a later supplement in which he reasserted his approach of fidelity to the original.

I hope that this survey of the field shows that the present study will cover new ground while making connections that draw on a broad range of historical research and literary analysis. For the first time, this study connects the Epitoma and the Sunzi and, again for the first time, provides a critical reading of their 1767 translations. The translations were undertaken by two men of a similar age at the same time and who chose the same subject-matter. They lived half a world apart, they belonged to nations that had just fought a war against each other and would do so again a few years later. Both men were being propelled towards revolutions that would transform their countries – and we will see that their writing demonstrates, if not a sense of what is to come, then at least a

67 Stephen Morillo and Michael F. Pavkovic. What is Military History? (Polity, 2006), p. 42. The authors argue this is because Geoffrey Parker puts military change at the heart of the genesis of the modern state and the origins of western dominance from 1800. At the same time, the methods of history and military history have converged around global and world historical approaches, and the role of culture in shaping military practice. ‘Cultural analysis and the theoretical insights developed for thinking about culture by other branches of history have thus become part of the historiography of military history, tying it more closely to mainstream historiography.’

68 Venuti, Translation, pp. 4-5.
desire to address issues that would be intimately related to those revolutions. Both men were writing from the margins, making choices that establish them, their professions and their ideas among policy-makers and opinion-formers. This study will seek to bring out both the ways in which their respective contexts defined the choices they made; and also the ways in which their shared world of the Enlightenment in the aftermath of the war defined the common choices they made. If successful, we will have gained new perspectives into the period between the Seven Years’ War and the American Revolution from two largely unexplored contemporary texts on the art of war. War changed the world around them and they sought in turn to re-shape the world by writing about war.
Chapter 1. The *Epitoma* and the *Sunzi*

Introduction

In this chapter I set out the first attempt to provide a comparative analysis of the historical setting, ideas and use of language in the two great classical works on the art of war: Vegetius’ *Epitoma* and the *Sunzi*. This is necessary in order to provide a solid and clearly-demarcated understanding of the source texts so that we may then effectively consider the translations. Rather than address first one text then the other, I have set the two side-by-side by topic – authorship; date; historical setting; principal ideas; and language. This exercise has not been undertaken before, although several historians have noted that the two texts occupied a similar position in their respective traditions. Needham and Yates, however, observe that ‘although a certain convergence can be found in the approach to some specific questions by Sun Tzu and Vegetius (4th century CE), their works are not really comparable’. Similarly, Parker cites the *Sunzi* and the *Epitoma* together, but as part of his broader argument that ‘every culture has its own way of war’. The popularity of Vegetius in Mediaeval and Early Modern Europe is seen as evidence of the continuity in the western way of war. I will challenge these views.

The rationale for this chapter is threefold. First, it was the standing, provenance and significance of these texts that provided Clarke and Amiot with a certain status as their translators. Amiot will always be the first European to have translated the *Sunzi*. Clarke is careful to note that *his* is the first proper translation of the *Epitoma* into English and it stood as such for over 200 years. Second, both translators were, of course, interested in the substance of the books – their treatment of strategy. Clarke and Amiot were well aware that so influential were these two original texts that they formed the model for subsequent writing on the art of war within their respective traditions. Finally – and perhaps more speculatively – there is the proposition that, when we look at the ideas and the historical contexts of the *Epitoma* and *Sunzi* together, we can gain an insight into how Clarke and Amiot may have viewed their own period of history and its own ideas. Given the premise of this study, that it is no coincidence that Clarke and Amiot set out in the aftermath of the Seven Years’ War to translate classical military texts, is it not also

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3 Of John Sadler’s 1572 translation, Clarke says, ‘The Author has often mistaken the Original, and his Work has little Value but that of Antiquity.’ *Military Institutions*: Preface, p. xvii.
relevant to consider the historical contexts and ideas of the two texts that they chose? If, as we shall see, these two works of military theory were created in response to specific historical events and set out ideas that overlap in material ways, then perhaps we can draw a tentative conclusion about how the two translators saw the strategic challenges of their own times. This proposition begs the question as to whether Clarke and Amiot had a sufficient understanding of the historical settings of these texts to be able to see them not only as part of a timeless canon but as documents that were produced at, and in response to, specific moments in history. In perceiving the historicity of the original works, the two translators would thus have been confronted with their own. This is particularly significant in the context of this genre of military theory where both writer and reader are seeking to look at how principles developed in one set of circumstances can be applied in another. The genre is, by its nature, a process of translation and the awareness of the historicity of both original and translation is what grounds the enduring aphorisms that form the bridge between them.

For the purposes of this study it is necessary to take a relatively robust, consensual view of the texts and contexts rather than look at the full range of possible interpretations. I will draw on Milner whose 1991 doctoral thesis and 1993 translation of the Epitoma contain a thorough analysis of the work, its setting and also the scholarly debate over its date and authorship. These are – as Milner has demonstrated – subjects in themselves worthy of a PhD. I do, however, seek to extend his analysis, in particular in my reading of the critical finale to Book III where Vegetius makes a powerful valedictory address to his emperor. In the case of the Sunzi, I have used Ames’ 1993 translation in general but also cite Mair, Minford and the Sawyers as the Chinese text is sometimes harder to fix than the Latin. Where appropriate I also highlight the views of Amiot and Clarke to show their positions relative to modern translations and in order to avoid repetition later.

Date and authorship
In the Historical Records (Shiji, c. 91 BCE), Sima Qian (c.145–86 BCE) describes Sun Wu (c.544–496 BCE) as a contemporary of Confucius, living at the end of the Spring and Autumn period (770–475 BCE) in the military service of King Ho-lu of the state of Wu. According to the historical accounts, ‘Sun Wu was not only a military tactician, but also

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4 N. P. Milner, Vegetius and the Anonymous De Rebus Bellicis (Doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 1991). This is a comprehensive study, elements of which can be found in N. P. Milner, Vegetius.

5 The passage from the Shiji is translated in full in Mair, Art of War, pp. 133-6; and the central story from the Shiji is repeated by Amiot.
a very capable strategist who was able to lead his state to victory.\(^6\) Ames, Sawyer and Amiot accept Sun Wu as an historical figure. But whereas, for Sawyer, ‘it seems likely that the historical figure existed and that he not only served as a strategist and possibly a general but also composed the core of the book that bears his name’, Ames concludes that ‘we can be quite sure that this 13-chapter document was not composed by Sun Wu, and was probably the product of some later disciple or disciples, probably several generations removed from the historical Sun Wu.’\(^7\) Mair follows Petersen in concluding that Sun Wu is a legendary figure.\(^8\) For Mair, the nature of warfare described (large, trained infantry armies led by a professional commander) is consistent not with the Spring and Autumn but the Warring States. The absence of any mention of cavalry in the Sunzi creates a *terminus ad quem* of around 307 BCE when cavalry was first introduced to a state in the East Asian heartland.\(^9\) For the purposes of this study, it seems reasonable to date the *Sunzi* to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.

The authorship and date of the *Epitoma* (together with the identity of the emperor to whom it is dedicated) are as keenly debated as those of the *Sunzi*. Clarke describes Vegetius as a ‘Person of High Rank ... a Roman by Birth, and a Christian’.\(^10\) Milner agrees, considering a number of possible offices and concluding that Vegetius was most likely *comes sacrarum largitionum*, a position responsible for extensive financial functions, including payments, procurement and operations of the Court; or, a larger role still, *praefectus praetorio*, which had broader budgetary responsibilities. In either case, Vegetius occupied a senior post in the administration of the Empire that gave him insight into the financial and organisational aspects of the military. Vegetius was probably Spanish and he was also the Publius Vegetius Renatus who wrote the *Digesta Artis Mulomedicinae*, a treatise on equine medicine.\(^11\) More important than the identity of the author per se is the fact that he is not a soldier. He has, according to the Preface,

\(^9\) Mair, *Art of War*, p. 41.
\(^10\) *Military Institutions*: p. v.
\(^11\) Milner, *Vegetius*, pp. xxxv, xxxi and *De Rebus*, pp. 14, 21; and Reeve, *Epitoma*, pp. vi-viii, note 1. The *Digesta* was translated into English and published in 1748 and John Clarke knew of it: see p. 188 below. Milner suggests the differing names could be explained by the fact that ‘Flavius’ was a title so his full name may have been Flavius Publius Vegetius Renatus. ‘Renatus’ – reborn – indicates Christianity: Milner, *Vegetius*, p. xxxii.
initially taken upon himself the duty of summarising ancient teaching on the art of war and then has been invited to continue his work and be the emperor’s ‘director of studies’.

The themes and polemical style of much of Vegetius’ original contributions strongly indicate a period of strategic and military crisis in the Empire and the date of the Epitoma is therefore important in understanding the immediate context in which Vegetius has taken on these tasks. Subsequent scholars have sought to demonstrate a date in the fifth century but Clarke sets the date of authorship as between the defeat of the Roman emperor Valens (r. 364–78) and his army at Adrianople in 378 and the Goths’ sacking of Rome in 410. Milner agrees, dating the book to 386.\(^1\)

**Historical setting**

The *Sunzi* cannot be dated to a specific year or location and therefore its historical setting must be approached in a different way to the *Epitoma*.\(^1\) Its positioning in Warring States China allows us to consider three ways in which the broad political and social developments of that period are visible in the text. First, the changing scale and nature of warfare generated the utility of establishing and documenting a systematic approach to warfare: this is one of the two foundational ideas of the *Sunzi* which I will examine in the next section. The second way in which historical context manifests itself in the text is through the political ideas that frame the military ones – the role and duties of the ruler and the commander, the definition of virtue and the imperative of state survival. These are the parameters within which the military commander must operate according to the *Sunzi*. The third is a progression from the first two. Combining the utility of a systematic approach with the political imperatives and cultural values of the time, the Warring States period produces a text that sees war without romance, heroism or any other possible benefit. It is simply a matter of survival and a rational approach is to avoid it as far as possible and to seek victory through other means.\(^1\)

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\(^{12}\) Military Institutions: Preface pp. v-vi and Milner, *De Rebus*, p. 141 and Vegetius, pp. xxxvii–xli. The main counter-arguments are for a later date but can Vegetius have been writing after the sack of Rome while three times describing it as an example of an inviolate city? Milner, *Vegetius*, p. xl.

\(^{13}\) Mair notes that this is a significant difference between the Chinese and European traditions. The absence of historical references in Chinese classical military texts ‘makes them seem as though they were operating in a historical vacuum.’ Mair, *The Art of War*, p. 45.

\(^{14}\) Regardless of whether imperial China can be said to have had a pacifist ethos, by the time Amiot arrived in China, Qianlong, whom he served, was engaged in creating and celebrating a military culture that was its antithesis. Qianlong undertook several major campaigns and a large programme to promote his military successes. By these means, he not only expanded his empire, but demonstrated his legitimacy and sought to forge a national identity that incorporated the Manchu, Chinese and other ethnic groups over whom he ruled: Joanna Waley-Cohen, ‘Commemorating War in Eighteenth-Century China’ *Modern Asian Studies* 30, 4 (1996), 869–899.
French readers of Amiot’s translation of the *Sunzi* both identified and in some cases objected to this ethos as alien to their heroic vision of warfare. This strategic ethos is the second foundational idea of the *Sunzi* and we will explore it also in the next section and consider how it compares to that of the *Epitoma*.

Turning to the first point, the dating of the *Sunzi* to the Warring States sets it in a period of constant and evolving warfare. Armies grew from 30,000 men at most in the Spring and Autumn to 100,000 and perhaps more in the Warring States. The chariot became obsolete, massed infantry became the dominant force and cavalry began to be introduced, although after the *Sunzi* was recorded. The introduction of iron-making meant new, mass-produced weapons and armour and the crossbow also appeared. Campaigns extended in time and space. Right through the potential range of authorship, China was in the process of consolidating into a single state unified by the Qin in 221 BCE. Hui draws an analogy between this period of Chinese state formation (which she dates from 656 to 221 BCE) and that which occurred in early modern Europe, concluding in 1815. China’s trajectory towards unification began with the division and then disintegration of the Western Zhou dynasty into multiple vassal states that then became increasingly autonomous from 722 BCE before beginning to consolidate again during the Spring and Autumn period. By the end of that period, in 475 BCE, more than 100 of these states had been absorbed. From the perspective of later historians, including Amiot, the unified Chinese state was a given and Amiot even refers to a contemporary Chinese view that some of the more extreme methods described in the

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5 Between 656 and 357 BCE, when the state of Qin began its rise to hegemony, there were 160 major wars, defined as wars with at least one major power on either side. Between 357 BCE and reunification under Qin in 221 BCE there were a further 96 such wars. Hui, *State Formation*, pp. 64-5 and Appendix 2.


7 Hui, *State Formation*, p. 5.

Sunzi are to be seen in the context of the state suppressing rebellions. There is no such idea in the original work itself, which is explicitly concerned with warfare between states, and implicitly between Chinese states, although there is no sense in the Sunzi that the combatants are ‘different’.

The changing scale and technical requirements of warfare and the social composition of armies all tended towards escalating consequences and therefore an intensity of warfare in which absolute victory was the goal and all means were explored. The utility of documenting military practice and theory increased and ‘correspondingly the Warring States period produced an important harvest of writers of Tactica’. Military works thereby became ‘among the first books written by private individuals for their own and their followers’ use, in their case to help them carry out their duties as military specialists in the strategy sessions and campaigns of fifth-century China’. Developments of this nature in the military sphere thus resulted in the creation of the literary genre which is the subject of this thesis. However, they also have implications for non-military history, as they affect state organisation and relations. Infantrymen are drawn away from agriculture, which puts a premium on agricultural productivity; professional armies need financing which brings to the fore fiscal efficiency and the need for a disciplined bureaucracy; and recruitment from the wider population changes the nature of the relationship between ruler and subjects. Hui concludes that the success of Chinese states during this period was a function of both reform and strategy: internally, the states that undertook self-strengthening reforms were able to sustain themselves and the military capabilities they needed. Externally, ruthless strategies were required to minimise risk and resources. The two reinforce each other: ‘fiscal and economic reforms generate more resources to finance the costs of expansion while administrative reforms allow states to raise and manage larger armies, mobilise more national resources for war, and

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19 The logic of Chinese unity is explored in Yuri Pines, The everlasting empire: The political culture of ancient China and its imperial legacy (Princeton University Press, 2012). In Amiot’s time, Qianlong is recorded as having wondered why Europe had not followed the same trajectory towards unity as had China. An undated letter of another Jesuit, Michel Benoist, from the late 1760s or early 1770s, records an audience in which Qianlong asked him why it was that one European monarch had not taken the title of emperor and maintained peace amongst all; and, similarly, why one state had not used its superior military force to rule Europe. C. Le Gobien, et al (Eds), Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, (Paris, 1702–1776, edition of 1819) vol. 13, pp. 427-8.

20 Needham and Yates, Science and Civilisation, p. 5. See also Sawyer and Sawyer, Military Classics, p. 5.


22 Hui, State Formation, p. 31.
alleviate logistical problems in long-distance campaigns'. The two spheres were not only interdependent but also intersected. For example, reform was required in the military as well as civil institutions and the introduction of meritocracy to replace aristocracy benefited both alike. In addition, the victorious state must be able to consolidate its rule over conquered territory and defend its expanding empire from internal and external attack. This required consideration of how war was to be conducted by the commander and how the ruler would establish a stable relationship with his new subjects.

This approach was perfected by the state of Qin, which ‘ultimately achieved universal domination by pursuing the most comprehensive self-strengthening reforms and the most ruthless strategies and tactics’. Depending on whether the Sunzi was written early or late in the Warring States period, its approach either anticipates or is descriptive of Qin’s strategy. Located on the western periphery of China, Qin played a passive and defensive role until 356 BCE and was ‘weaker than other great powers during the early decades of its ascendance’ thereafter. Qin was a late reformer (the State of Qi had initiated its reforms some 300 years earlier) but it undertook extensive military and civilian reforms under the rule of Duke Xian (r. 384–362 BCE) and the ministry of Shang Yang (390–338 BCE). At the same time, Qin pursued a policy of turning state against state, fomenting civil dissent and finally fighting only when it had established sufficient superiority. Its methods were unrestrained and included ‘lying and cheating, bribing corrupt kings and officials, and sowing dissensions between kings and commanders’. Qin’s rise demonstrates both the principles set out above and also that the Sunzi is grounded in the realpolitik of Warring States China.

The context in which the Sunzi was written was one in which states faced constant external, existential threats, from increasingly far afield as political strategies and military campaigns moved from addressing only one’s immediate neighbours to involving distant states. But statesmen had also to deal with domestic developments that

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23 Ibid, p. 33. Hui observes that Early Modern European states, some of which (for example, Britain and Holland) undertook self-strengthening reforms, did not adopt the strategies necessary for domination even though Machiavelli advocated them as clearly as the Sunzi: ibid, p. 35.

24 The philosophes regularly cited the Chinese examination system as demonstrating the meritocratic nature of its government. Marshal Saxe makes the same point in the military context and his final work concludes with a line on meritocracy in the Chinese military: see p. 157 below.

25 Hui, State Formation, p. 35.


27 Hui, State Formation, p. 67.
affected their thinking just as much. The Spring and Autumn period saw the rise of a new class of intellectuals who displaced the families of the overlords, not only serving as officials in government but, of more profound impact, also as cultural carriers who interpreted the meaning of life and ideals of society.  

For these men, whose duties were civil, military and diplomatic, and who sought to record and transmit their actions and ideas, it became apparent that the whole world order had to be stabilised in order for any state to enjoy peace and prosperity. Accordingly, they developed concepts designed to promote unity, stability and order which we can track through their occurrence in the three histories of the period. For our purposes, it is most interesting to note the introduction and increasing use of the terms dao (‘way’) and ren (‘benevolence’) during the Spring and Autumn as these terms not only become central to philosophical debate in the Warring States period but also to the Sunzi.

A significant development in Spring and Autumn period thought was the view that human affairs needed to be solved by humans and that any supernatural support for a ruler was conditional not on his sacrifices or rituals but on his political and personal conduct. On this view, the dao was not the way of heaven but of humanity. Ritual moved from a ceremonial role to a political one in which it was positioned as the characteristic of sound administration, the appointment of suitable people to office, the orderly ranking of officials and the equitable and consistent application of reward and punishment. But in this transition, ritual ceased to play a role in warfare or in preserving international order because those seeking power were not bound by ceremonial conventions that stood in the way of their strategies. Thus we can see an emerging distinction between the orderly, structured and ethically based approach to internal social relations and the complete absence of such values in the realpolitik of international relations. This dichotomy is central to the Sunzi and caused ethical difficulties for Amiot when he came to translate it.

The decline of ritual as regulating international relations and warfare was accompanied by the rise in the sixth century BCE of the idea that power, not virtue, was what was required of a hegemon. Military superiority was the only way to ensure a state’s survival.

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28 Hsu, ‘Spring and Autumn’ in Ancient China ed. by Loewe and Shaughnessy, p. 545.
29 ‘[Spring and Autumn] thinkers ... were not seeking ‘the truth,’ but rather ‘the way’ to restore political and social order. Pines, Confucian Thought, p. 2 paraphrasing Angus C. Graham, Disputers of the Tao (Open Court, 1989).
30 I will use ‘benevolence’ for ‘ren’ although this complex word is also often translated as ‘humanity’.
This position is, according to Pines, exemplified by the statesman Wu Zixu, a contemporary, fellow soldier and compatriot of Sun Wu in the state of Wu. In a notable speech, Wu Zixu called for the killing of the king of Yue, the state of Wu's traditional enemy, whose virtues he carefully noted: in light of the importance of virtue to good government and the strength of a state, the very fact that the enemy was virtuous was all the more reason to kill him.31

Finally, there is the ethics of the ruler and the minister – of which a military commander was a prime example. During the period as a whole, rulers were weak and ministers strong, the latter controlling not only political, military and economic power but also political thought. Over time, the ministerial class fashioned for itself a concept of the 'superior man' which (like the concept of nobility in Europe) evolved from indicating social status to being earned through virtue. At the same time, the ministerial class began to adopt virtues previously ascribed to the ruler. In particular, the superior man combines the ministerial virtues of trustworthiness and loyalty and the ruler's virtues of wisdom and courage. The highest virtue of all, ren, moves from the ruler to the minister to suggest a greater equality in relations; at the same time it becomes the virtue without which others are worthless: wisdom, courage and trustworthiness must be substantiated by humanity. We will see below that one of the first statements of the Sunzi is to define the qualities of the commander, including trustworthiness, wisdom, courage and humanity. In addition, the Sunzi deploys the virtue of ren in a manner that appears deliberately startling.

In conclusion, then, the historical setting of the Sunzi was one in which the technology, scale and methods of warfare were changing, but so were ideas about the relationships between states and, in particular, the role of military power, the relative power and roles of ruler and commander, and the virtues and vocabulary that captured these roles. It is these general ideas that the Sunzi explores and develops rather than addressing itself to a particular moment in time, individual or strategic situation.

By contrast, the dating of the Epitoma to 386 gives us a specific context for the work and also establishes a clear relationship between the author and the emperor to whom it is dedicated. Vegetius’ work was written some seven years into the reign of Theodosius I (r. 379–95) who, like Vegetius, was a Spanish aristocrat and a Christian, which may explain their relationship. Theodosius was the son of Flavius Theodosius, who was promoted to

Magister Equitum in the West in 369 and suppressed the Moorish usurper, Firmus, in a campaign in Mauretania that was characterised by ‘attrition, skill and ruthlessness.’ The elder Theodosius was executed in 375 following the sudden death of his patron Valentinian I (r. 364–75). The younger Theodosius by then was an accomplished soldier in his own right, having escorted his father on campaign from a young age, including to Britain in 367–8, where the son was able to ‘observe the combination of force and diplomacy with which his masterful father divided and pacified the enemy in Britain’.

According to the contemporary historian and soldier, Ammianus Marcellinus, in 374 the younger Theodosius, who later proved a most admirable emperor but at that time had barely reached manhood, inflicted several defeats on the Free Sarmatians ... who were invading our territory ... Though converging hosts put up an obstinate resistance, he crushed them so completely in one fight after another that birds and beasts of prey were surfeited by a regular banquet on the bodies of the slain. In consequence the remainder lost heart. They were afraid that a general of such obvious promptitude and valour would overwhelm or rout their invading bands on the very frontier, or else ambush them from the cover of the woods. So after many vain attempts to break through they abandoned hope of success, and sued for pardon and forgiveness of their past offences.

Upon Valentinian I’s death in 375, his younger brother Valens the Eastern Emperor became the senior emperor, while Valentinian’s son, Gratian became Western Emperor (r. 375–83). Theodosius, perhaps in danger himself, retired to the family estates where he remained for three years. The event that led to Theodosius being summoned by Gratian to take command of the Roman army in the east, and then to be proclaimed Eastern Emperor in 379, was the battle of Adrianople. Ammianus’ history of the later Roman Empire culminates with his account of the battle which is important here for several reasons: first, Ammianus provides a perspective on the period that is contemporaneous with Vegetius’; second, the battle, although not named, is central to the Epitoma; third, Ammianus’ description of the Roman army of the time provides evidence of the extent to which Vegetius supplemented the classical sources that, in general, form the substance of his epitome; and, fourth, Ammianus appears to share the views of Vegetius concerning leadership and strategy. This last point is significant because Vegetius’ stance on war is

32 Williams and Friel, Theodosius, p. 23. Ammianus provides a contemporary account in Book XXIX, chapter 5. The style of warfare exercised by the elder Theodosius is relevant to discussions below.
33 Ibid, p. 23.
34 Ammianus, p. 385 (Book XXIX). Theodosius’ ‘promptitude and valour’ are qualities on which Vegetius majors in the valedictory in Book III (see below at p. 53).
35 This assessment of Ammianus’ views on strategy are examined in N. J. E. Austin, Ammianus on warfare: an investigation into Ammianus’ military knowledge (Latomus, 1979), pp. 102–16.
not that of the tradition he is epitomising, and it shapes the content and structure of his book. Ammianus provides further evidence that Vegetius’ remarkable perspective was shaped by his own analysis of history and the strategic position of the Roman Empire and not by the literary tradition.

In 376 an embassy of Tervingian Goths visited the emperor Valens at Antioch. The Visigoths, as they later became known, had been driven from their lands north of the Danube by the Huns and Alans and were seeking land south of the Danube in the Roman diocese of Thrace. Valens decided to accept their request, according to Ammianus because of the opportunity to recruit the Visigoths into his army and the gold that would accrue to his treasury in lieu of troops now no longer required from the provinces. ‘Thus,’ observed Ammianus, ‘the tumultuous eagerness of those who urged on these proceedings led to the destruction of the Roman world’. The Visigoths were soon followed by another Gothic tribe, the Greuthingi (later the Ostrogoths) who were under the same pressure to emigrate. They were refused permission to cross the Danube but did so anyway. A botched attempt at treachery on the Visigoths by the Roman commander in Thrace, Lupicinus, resulted in the Goths routing the Roman army and the beginning of two years of inconclusive warfare and pillaging through Thrace. In 378, Valens appealed to his nephew Gratian for help and the latter led an army eastwards to reinforce his uncle.

The battle itself took place at the Visigoths’ camp outside the city of Adrianople which lies on the route from Constantinople to Rome on the borders of modern Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. Valens made a series of tactical errors: first, in failing to wait for Gratian to arrive, then in carrying out a forced march from his camp to the Visigoths on a hot August day, and finally in allowing the Visigoth leader to delay the engagement while he waited for reinforcements. Valens’ scouts had also underestimated the size of the enemy force. When, in the end, the battle started the Romans were hungry, thirsty and tired and in spite of great courage and discipline were routed. Two thirds of the field army of the Eastern Empire were killed, some 20,000 of Rome’s best soldiers, along with the emperor Valens. Ammianus’ verdict is that ‘No battle in our history except Cannae was

36 Ammianus, pp. 416-7 (Book XXXI.4).
37 Adrianople became Edirne. There, on the 1200th anniversary of the battle, the Ottomans completed the Selimye mosque, an architectural statement that they had overthrown and surpassed the Christian Roman Empire in culture and religion as well as in battle: Frankopan, Silk Roads, pp. 232-3.
such a massacre ...” The Goths then marched on Constantinople which, however, they were unable to take. Following his appointment to military command in the East, and then as emperor, Theodosius began a process of diplomatic and military engagement and integration with the Goths that brought the immediate threat under control but was highly controversial.

This is the context in which the *Epitoma* was written. It takes the form of an epitome of earlier Latin and Greek authors on the art of war including the lost *De Re Militari* of Cato. It is, however, best understood as a book about the reform of the Roman Empire’s military ethos and capabilities, a political tract that is highly critical of the state of the Roman army at the time of writing and polemical in its choice of topics and treatment of them. Vegetius only chooses topics where he sees deficiencies: ‘all four books were intended as a critique of the present’. Vegetius speaks optimistically, however, of the possibility of recovery and cites previous examples of Rome rebuilding its military capabilities. The apparent catalyst for his work is Valens’ comprehensive failure of leadership, and the resulting disaster at Adrianople. Vegetius appears to believe, however, that the decline in Rome’s military capabilities had longer-term roots and represented a more serious threat to the security of the Empire than even Adrianople would suggest. Therefore, he devotes the majority of the work to detailed instructions, drawn from earlier authors, for the rebuilding of Rome’s military capabilities. The most striking parts of the book are those in Vegetius’ own voice. He combines polemical analysis with an incisive and aphoristic style that we will examine in due course. For Vegetius it is the responsibility of the emperor to reverse this decline – but one he should relish.

**Structure and form**

Having established the historical context, I will now examine the ways in which they treat their subject, first looking at the content and layout and then in the following sections the core ideas of the two books. The received text of the *Sunzi* consists of 13 short chapters organised thematically in an arrangement that is ‘more linear, sequential,

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38 Ammianus, p. 437 (Book XXXI.13). Emphasis in the translation. Richard van Nort offers an entirely different analysis of the battle itself and provides a more positive evaluation of Valens’ leadership. He also considers Vegetius’ proposed reforms in the light of this analysis. However, his conclusion that Theodosius I and Valens pursued a similar (and equally unsuccessful) strategy towards the Goths is not inconsistent with the view that Vegetius’ work is ambivalent towards Theodosius as a strategist. Richard M. Van Nort, *The Battle of Adrianople and the Military Doctrine of Vegetius* (Doctoral thesis, City University of New York, 2007).


40 *Epitoma* II.xviii (Milner, p. 51).
and thematic than the *Analects*. Less than by the chapter groupings themselves, the text is shaped by a series of classifications. The opening chapter proposes five criteria by which to assess the opposing sides and thereby to gauge the likely outcome of war between them. Similarly, there are three ways in which a ruler can bring grief to his army (III); two sets of five factors to take into account when assessing which side will win (III, IV); nine contingencies and five traits that are dangerous in a commander (VIII); six guidelines governing the use of terrain, six situations that are the fault of the commander and six ways to certain defeat (X); nine kinds of terrain and five general methods of operation for an invading army (XI); five kinds of incendiary attack (XII); and five kinds of spy (XIII). These classifications form the backbone of the text, giving it structure and presenting information in a systematic way. In terms of the text, the *Sunzi* is, like the *Analects* and the *Daodejing*, ‘a collection of aphorisms without any extended argument in any one paragraph’ that shows ‘the Chinese beginning to learn and develop the techniques of writing continuous prose in which philosophical and political propositions are being advanced and defended through the use of an increasingly sophisticated literary style and logical structure’.

The *Epitoma* is divided into five books. Book I deals with recruitment and training; Book II with the organisation of the army, in particular the revival of the ancient Legion; Book III sets out the management of an army during operations and in battle, and a list of maxims; Book IV deals with fortifications and sieges; and Book V with the sea-going fleet. Reeve combines these last two books into one while Milner regards them as appendices to the first three. According to the Preface to Book III, the first two books were written spontaneously for the emperor who then asked Vegetius to prepare an abridgement of classical writings on the art of war. Regardless of its origins, the work broadly follows a recognised pattern of addressing the subject in three stages – before, during and after battle. Each of the five books begins with a dedicatory preface and contains passages of editorial content. The last chapter of Book III comprises the military aphorisms and ends with a valediction to the emperor.

The fact that both the *Sunzi* and the *Epitoma* make extensive use of aphorism is a significant point of connection and bears further research. In the case of the *Sunzi*, the aphoristic style of the original text may have been the result of limitations in the

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41 Ames, *Sun-tzu*, pp. 36-9, 24-5.  
techniques available to writers in this period, but the fact that it is also found in the
Epitoma suggests that form may also have been influenced by the subject-matter and the
function of the work. This is a manual designed for utility, it is intended to offer advice
that is organised into modules arranged by topic and presented so as to be accessible.
The utility of its ideas will be determined by the balance between generality and
specificity: not so general as to be meaningless and not so prescriptive as to guide the
user into a mechanistic routine that will both be unsuited to the circumstances and too
easily predicted by the enemy. The source of ideas will be the observation of human and
natural phenomena, rendered into principles that provide a departure point for future
application. This, I suggest, logically leads to the aphorism as an effective form for the
genre and it is not a coincidence that both the Sunzi and the Epitoma independently
make use of this form – sometimes with expressions that are remarkably similar. And it
is the aphoristic form of the Sunzi that has proven to be so critical to its lasting relevance
while it is the aphorisms of the Epitoma that were of such great interest in the
millennium after its appearance, were incorporated by the Byzantine emperor Maurice
(539–602) into his Strategikon (c. 600), by Machiavelli into his Arte della Guerra
(Florence, 1521) and struck Clarke so forcibly.44

The science and philosophy of strategy
The Sunzi and the Epitoma share a common ideological basis, built on two propositions.
The first is that military matters can be set out and studied in a systematic way. The
second is that this intellectual process creates a space in which alternatives to fighting
can – and must – be explored and exploited so as to reduce the risks and costs of warfare
and allow a country to achieve its political and military objectives without doing battle.
These two propositions are, in addition, mutually reinforcing and dependent: through
study, planning and preparation one creates time and opportunity; through time and
opportunity one is able to develop and implement strategic alternatives to war. To this
day, the Epitoma and the Sunzi retain an exceptional if not unique position in their
advocacy of a strategic approach that is not centred on battle.

The Sunzi establishes the need for study in its opening paragraph: ‘War is a vital matter
of state. It is the field on which life or death is determined and the road that leads to
either survival or ruin, and must be examined with the greatest care’.45

44 Maurice’s Strategikon: Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy (translated by George T. Dennis)
(University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984). Clarke observed, ‘His general Maxims are excellent.’
Military Institutions Preface, p. iii.
45 Sunzi I (Ames, p. 103).
classifications and lists described above not only makes the point that the work is a system of study, analysis and thought but also makes it easier to memorise and use – giving it practical relevance and utility. The language reinforces this quantitative approach by constantly referring to estimates, assessments and comparisons of distances, weights, numbers, speed, money and even inflation. The text also frequently uses words signifying discipline, law or method (fa), law and system (zhi). Both structure and language reinforce the first proposition of system and study.\(^{46}\)

Vegetius starts with the same premise of system and study built into the genre of epitome itself. As he says in his opening address to the emperor: ‘In ancient times it was the custom to commit to writing one’s studies in the liberal arts and offer them summarised in books to the Emperor’.\(^{47}\) The information is organised in stages and under headings that are logical and clear. The words \(\text{ars}\) and \(\text{scientia}\) appear 80 times in the work, with a notable peak in Book III (34 appearances against 17, 16 and 13 for the others). The primary meaning of \(\text{ars}\) here is ‘method, way or means’; of \(\text{scientia}\) ‘knowledge, skill, expertness’.\(^{48}\) Whereas, like the Sunzi, it is a central theme of the \(\text{Epitoma}\) that the science and study of military theory is essential to victory, the latter also suggests that it has been lost and needs to be revived – and it draws an analogy with Rome in the Punic wars: ‘So it was that after so many consuls, so many generals, so many armies lost, they only finally achieved victory, when they had been able to learn military science and training’.\(^{49}\) The \(\text{Epitoma}\) even goes so far as to argue that the process of recording military theory for future study is more valuable than victory itself:

> Cato the Elder, since he was unbeaten in war and as consul had often led armies, thought he would be of further service to the State if he wrote down the military science. For brave deeds belong to a single age; what is written for the benefit of the State is eternal.\(^{50}\)

The \(\text{Epitoma}\) identifies the Spartans as the originators of this science, its systematic analysis and then study. In so doing it describes the process which consists of the

\(^{46}\) Needham and Yates, \textit{Science and Civilisation}, pp. 13–14 suggest that the \textit{Sunzi} demonstrates ‘connections between military command and the growth of the scientific mentality’ founded on the shared need for ‘accurate factual knowledge and cool-headed calculation’ and they argue that the qualities of analysis required of military commanders were causes in the development of ‘rationality and objectivity in the approach to Nature and to man …’

\(^{47}\) \textit{Epitoma} I. Pr (Milner, p. 1).

\(^{48}\) Smith, \textit{Dictionary}, pp. 61 and 665. The ratio is about 3:1 in the appearance of \(\text{ars}\) and \(\text{scientia}\).

\(^{49}\) \textit{Epitoma} I.xxxviii. (Milner, p. 28) Vegetius uses \textit{condisco} – learn thoroughly – rather than \textit{disco}.

\(^{50}\) \textit{Epitoma} II.iii. (Milner, p. 33) Milner’s translation of \textit{res publica} as ‘State’ in the phrase \(\text{pro utilitate reipublicae}\) presents a narrower benefit to the alternative of ‘public good’ which Clarke prefers: below p. 131.
collection of evidence from war (\textit{experimenta proelium} – ‘actual proof from experience’); then its reduction to a \textit{disciplina} – ‘science’ for study under professional instructors (\textit{magistros armorum}). In this way, Vegetius notes with approval that the Spartans rejected the idea that the \textit{res militaris} consisted only of courage (\textit{virtus}) or at least (\textit{vel certe}) of good fortune (\textit{felicitas}).\footnote{Ibid, III.Preface (Milner, pp. 62-3). Clarke's translation is at p. 120 below.} The tension between the disciplined study and execution of strategy and reliance on either courage or luck is brought out twice more in this critical Preface to Book III: first in pointing out how a Spartan later helped the Carthaginians defeat Rome not by bringing his courage but by bringing his scientific understanding (\textit{non virtute sed arte solus ferret auxilium}) and then again in the final aphorism of the Preface ‘he who wishes for a successful outcome, let him fight with strategy, not at random’ (\textit{qui se cundos optat eventus, dimicet arte, non casu}).

This first proposition about the science of strategy is structured and presented in the \textit{Epitoma} in a way that strongly recalls the discipline of rhetoric and, while it is not explicitly mentioned, the ideas of Aristotle and Quintilian appear to influence and inform the author’s thinking. There are four ways in which the two disciplines intersect. First, the art of rhetoric was, together with the military art, one of the primary disciplines of the political leader and military commander: the means by which he devised and executed his strategy. In the case of rhetoric, the purpose might be to gain or sustain his position as a leader or to convince fellow citizens, subjects or soldiers to adopt a proposed course of action. Or it might be deployed in a mission to his allies or enemies to convince them to join his cause or to avoid war. Thus, rhetoric informed every step of the way for an emperor, statesman or commander even into battle itself. Second, rhetoric and military theory shared basic ideas: the process of \textit{inventio} involved analysing the strengths and weaknesses of each side and its arguments and then preparing one’s resources for the debate; the process of \textit{dispositio} involved deploying those arguments to best effect. The word \textit{dispositio} was used by both disciplines. Third, the skilful rhetorician relied on preparation, study and finding the right opportunity to engage. Finally, rhetoric involved the same fields of study as military theory: the natural and physical world provided the parameters and often metaphors for both, but above all these disciplines were concerned with human behaviour in a competitive environment.

At the heart of the two disciplines was the proposition that it was possible and necessary to develop and follow rules by which human behaviour could be predicted and influenced. This began with observation of past conduct and a careful of assessment of
what facts were known before moving to the unknown. Crowley and Hawhee conclude that in antiquity ‘the most famous argument from probability’ was that ‘A small weak person will not physically attack a large strong person’. 52 Compare this with Vegetius’ final sentence of the Preface to Book III:

Therefore, he who desires peace, let him prepare for war. He who wants victory, let him train soldiers diligently. He who wishes a successful outcome, let him fight with strategy, not at random. No one dares challenge or harm one who he realises will win if he fights. 53

It is not a coincidence that Vegetius founded his whole argument for preparation on this rhetorical commonplace – nor that it is presented as the reason why he who desires peace should prepare for war. As this paragraph illustrates, Vegetius deploys a powerful rhetorical style at critical moments in his argument. As we will see, Book III closes with a further, powerful use of the language and logic of the discipline of rhetoric to make the point that it is not manliness but strategy that makes a great emperor.

While it is embedded in its own system of rhetoric, the Sunzi does not appear to have a comparable frame of reference as rhetoric to inform its approach to the ideology of system and study. The author does reflect, however, upon the vital nature of preparation and puts particular emphasis on the value of being able to predict future human behaviour based on accurate understanding of present facts.

Thus the reason the farsighted ruler and his superior commander conquer the enemy at every move, and achieve successes far beyond the reach of the common crowd, is foreknowledge. Such foreknowledge cannot be had from ghosts and spirits, educed by comparison with past events, or verified by astrological calculations. It must come from people – people who know the enemy’s situation. 54

Just as the Epitoma sees no role for luck or good fortune in war, the Sunzi is entirely dismissive of supernatural methods. Instead, one must seek to establish the facts in any situation so that one has a solid basis for applying the guiding principles. This projection of probability based on a combination of fact and rules is common to both treatises.

Vegetius’ treatment of the second proposition has already been glimpsed in the first: the object of all this study and preparation is not to fight but to win. There is no assumption that winning requires fighting. This point is made in both books not only through text, but through structure also. Vegetius, writing for an emperor seeking to defend an

53 Epitoma III. Preface (Milner, p. 63).
54 Sunzi XIII (Ames, p. 169).
empire, the borders of which constantly need securing, offers the simple proposition that Rome’s visible strength will deter any of its neighbours from attacking. Even compared with other classical authors the *Epitoma* is strikingly defensive in its disposition.\(^{55}\) The *Sunzi* is even clearer. Chapter III opens as follows:

> Master Sun said: The art of warfare is this:

> It is best to keep one’s own state intact; to crush the enemy’s state is only a second-best. It is best to keep one’s own army ... intact; to crush the enemy’s army ... is only a second best. So to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles is not the highest excellence; the highest excellence is to subdue the enemy army without fighting at all.

> Therefore, the best military policy is to attack strategies; the next to attack alliances; the next to attack soldiers; and the worst to assault walled cities ...

> Therefore, the expert in using the military subdues the enemy’s forces without going to battle, takes the enemy’s walled cities without launching an attack, and crushes the enemy’s state without a protracted war. He must use the principle of keeping himself intact to compete in the world.\(^{56}\)

The sense of urgency and of existential threat is as powerful here as in the *Epitoma*, even if the specific context is not known. The imperative of conserving one’s strength is the driving force behind economy of effort but elsewhere, as we shall see, it is also the ethical foundation of legitimate and sustainable rule that requires the ruler not to waste the lives of his subjects.

For both the *Epitoma* and the *Sunzi* the problem with a strategy premised on fighting is the inherent risk, uncertainty and finality of battle. As the *Epitoma* describes:

> Whoever will deign to read these commentaries on the art of war abridged from authors of the highest repute, wishes to hear first and foremost the science of battle and the recommended tactics. But a pitched battle is defined by a struggle lasting two or three hours, after which all hopes of the defeated party fall away. That being so, every expedient must be thought of previously, tried out in advance and implemented before matters come to this final pass.\(^{57}\)

The original of this final sentence is dramatically constructed (emphasis added): *Ideo omnia ante cogitanda sunt, ante temptanda, ante facienda sunt, quam ad ultimum veniatur abruptum*. The repetition of *ante* followed by the word *ultimum* emphasises that steps must be taken while there is time and, together with the rhythm of the short phrases and the rhyming gerunds, drives the sentence to its fearful conclusion – the


\(^{56}\) *Sunzi* III (Ames, pp. 111-2).

\(^{57}\) *Epitoma* III.9 (Milner, p. 83).
ultimum abruptum literally meaning the final abyss or precipice – which is suspended to the end of sentence with hyperbaton (the inversion of normal word order).

This second proposition is not to be understood as meaning that a commander can ignore the possibility or even necessity of battle. On the contrary, a commander must understand every aspect of battle and how to prepare for and conduct it. Vegetius writes that ‘total victory depends upon the outcome of an open battle’. But he emphasises that there are always other options for the general:

But most important of all, he should deliberate whether it is expedient for the crisis to be prolonged or fought out more swiftly. For sometimes the enemy hopes that the campaign can be ended quickly, and if it becomes long-drawn out, is either reduced by hunger, or called back to his own country by his men’s homesickness, or through doing nothing significant is compelled to leave in despair.

If he finds himself superior in many particulars, let him be not slow to enter a battle favourable to himself. If he recognises that the enemy is stronger, let him avoid a pitched battle, because forces fewer in number and inferior in strength carrying out raids and ambushes under good generals have often brought back a victory.

The Sunzi, perhaps surprisingly, denies that protracted warfare is ever a viable strategy and, as we have seen, calls for decisive quick battles. However, the subsequent text shows that when it speaks of battle, what is actually required is a coup de grâce, not a symmetrical contest:

Therefore, the expert in battle takes his stand on ground that is unassailable, and does not miss his chance to defeat the enemy. For this reason, the victorious army only enters battle after having first won victory, while the defeated army only seeks victory after having first entered the fray.

Both authors, therefore, create an ideological basis for their work that is premised first, on the need to systematise and study military theory; and second, a philosophy that the objective of strategy is not fighting but winning. These foundations are laid out in the text and in the dramatic use of language such as we have seen in both treatises. They are also portrayed in the structure of the works themselves: both texts set up and then defer discussion of battle in a way that further accentuates the need for the strategist to exhaust all other options before fighting. Vegetius, having discussed the recruitment, training and organisation of the army in the first two books and then various aspects of campaigning and encampments in the first eight chapters of Book III, opens chapter III.9

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58 Ibid III.11 (Milner, p. 90).
59 Ibid III.9 (Milner, pp. 84, 86).
60 Sunzi IV (Ames, p. 116).
with the acknowledgement that his readers will now be anxious to get onto the subject of battles and tactics. Instead of then turning to this subject, however, Vegetius sets out his grave warning about the finality of battle. Then he takes two more chapters, one on the council-of-war to determine ‘whether it was actually a good idea to engage in this type of encounter,’ and one on the general’s duty ‘to make sure that his army was actually trained to the peak of efficiency whereby it was ready for this degree of danger.’

When, at last, Vegetius does address the subject of battle, he prefices his remarks with a warning that ‘After treating of the lesser skills of war, our analysis of military science invites us to consider the hazard of the general engagement, the fateful day for nations and peoples’.

The symbolic delay in the discussion of battle in the Epitoma occurs also in the Sunzi. After the first, introductory chapter, the second is known as ‘On Waging Battle’ but in fact the bulk of it describes the costs and the negative consequences for a state of undertaking protracted warfare. It concludes:

Hence, in war, prize the quick victory, not the protracted engagement. Thus, the commander who understands war is the final arbiter of people’s lives, and lord over the security of the state.

If, however, one was expecting the next chapter to set out how a commander should engage in battle, the Sunzi does not offer this – instead pausing with Chapter III, which serves a similar function to Chapters III.10 and III.11 of the Epitoma. The first part of Chapter III of the Sunzi is the section quoted above that argues that ‘the expert in using the military subdues the enemy’s forces without going to battle’. It then sets out an important analysis of the ways in which a ruler can ‘bring grief to his army’ – namely by interfering in the administration of the army, or setting assignments and giving orders without understanding the situation it is in. The final part of Chapter III concerns the need for a commander to know himself and know the enemy if he is to undertake battle.

Thus it is said:
He who knows the enemy and himself
Will never in a hundred battles be at risk;
He who does not know the enemy but knows himself
Will sometimes win and sometimes lose;
He who knows neither the enemy nor himself will be at risk in every battle.

61 Milner, De Rebus, p. 274.
62 Epitoma III.11 (Milner, p. 90).
63 Sunzi II (Ames, p. 109).
64 Ibid III (113).
It is highly significant that this hiatus created by Chapter III should begin with an injunction to avoid combat, include instructions to rulers on how to avoid undermining their armies and end with a warning that lack of self-knowledge and the humanity to understand others will lead to defeat. It is the perfect framing for the subsequent discussion and exploits the same rhetorical delaying device as Vegetius to ensure that readers are in no doubt as to its philosophy.

**Strategy as the combination of economic, political and technical dimensions**

Both the Sunzi and the Epitoma place great emphasis on the need for study and preparation and see combat as a sometimes necessary evil but not as the preferred pathway to victory. One would expect, therefore, that their understanding of what must be studied as falling within the purview of the military commander would be broader than simply military matters. This assumption is borne out by the books although the Sunzi goes further than the Epitoma in its scope. Military theory invariably looks at technical military issues such as the organisation and deployment of troops, equipment and tactics. The strategic breadth of such works is, therefore, defined by their expansion into political and economic questions which, in Warring States China and the Roman Empire, fell under a separate, civilian administration. Strategy requires the consideration of the political and economic capabilities of each side and of other potential participants as well as of their military strength. Let us look then at how the two works address these dimensions, starting with the economic, and then turning to the political.

The Sunzi speaks extensively of the economic impact of warfare and this is the primary reason why it discounts protracted warfare as a viable strategy.

A state is impoverished by its armies when it has to supply them at a great distance. To supply an army at a great distance is to impoverish one’s people. On the other hand, in the vicinity of the armies, the price of goods goes up. Where goods are expensive you exhaust your resources, and once you have exhausted your resources, you will be forced to increase district exactions for the military. All your strength is spent on the battlefield, and the families on the home front are left destitute. The toll to the people will have been some 70 percent of their property; the toll to the public coffers ... will be some 60 percent of its reserves.⁶⁵

We have seen already that the Warring States period was characterised by increasingly large armies composed mostly of infantry, deploying new technology and conducting campaigns deep into other territories. The funding of war therefore became a strategic imperative while the economic implications of war grew: the consequences of misjudgement were, as the Sunzi repeats, the extinction of the state. It is not surprising

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⁶⁵ Sunzi II (Ames, p. 108).
that the economic cost of war is presented graphically in the *Sunzi*. Thus Chapter XIII begins:

Master Sun said:

In general, the cost to the people and to the public coffers to mobilise an army of 100,000 and dispatch it on a punitive expedition of a thousand li, is a thousand pieces of gold per day. There will be upheaval at home and abroad, with people trekking exhausted on the roadways and some 700,000 households kept from their work in the fields. Two sides will quarrel with each other for several years in order to fight a decisive battle on a single day. If, begrudging the outlay of ranks, emoluments, and a hundred pieces of gold, a commander does not know the enemy’s situation, his is the height of inhumanity. Such a person is no man’s commander, no ruler’s counsellor, and no master of victory. Thus the reason the farsighted ruler and his superior commander conquer the enemy at every move, and achieve successes far beyond the reach of the common crowd, is foreknowledge. Such foreknowledge cannot be had from ghosts and spirits, deduced by comparison with past events, or verified by astrological calculations. It must come from people—people who know the enemy’s situation.  

Vegetius’ army was generally operating within the borders of the Empire but across vast distances and often with limited local sources of supply. Consequently, he calls for careful attention to logistics and supplies for the army when on campaign or in preparing to defend a siege. Maxim 17 is ‘He who does not prepare grain supplies and provisions is conquered without a blow’ while Book III.3 addresses procurement: ‘For armies are more often destroyed by starvation than battle, and hunger is more savage than the sword. Secondly, other misfortunes can in time be alleviated: fodder and grain supply have no remedy in a crisis except storage in advance’.  

Effective logistics are, however, not simply a factor to be got right – they can be used offensively. The *Sunzi* advises that ‘the wise commander does his best to feed his army from enemy soil. To consume one measure of the enemy’s provisions is equal to twenty of our own...’ For Vegetius, logistics are a weapon (*telum*) which can defeat the enemy without battle and are therefore the most powerful (*maximum*) weapon of all: ‘On any expedition the single most effective weapon is that food should be sufficient for you while dearth should break the enemy’. Similarly, Maxims 4 and 32: ‘It is preferable to subdue an enemy by famine, raids and terror, than in battle ...’ and ‘It is a powerful disposition to press the enemy more with famine than with the sword’.  

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66 Ibid XIII (Ames, p. 169). The first two sentences are the relevant ones here. I have continued the quote as this important passage will also be considered for its treatment of spies at p. 51 below.  
67 *Epitoma* III.26 and III.3 (Milner, pp. 117, 67).  
69 *Epitoma* III.3 and III.26 (Milner, pp. 67, 118).
The political dimension of the two works is developed differently, reflecting the different contexts. For Vegetius, all aspects of the political dimension of strategy are personified in the emperor: his dual role as commander-in-chief and head of state; and therefore his control over policy, diplomacy, religion and civil administration as well as the military. Consequently, it is in the person and office of the emperor that the Empire’s policy objectives are defined and its political, economic and military capabilities integrated and deployed. One would expect, and one finds, that Vegetius addresses himself to the emperor in respect of the political dimension of his work. By contrast, the Sunzi exists in a world in which the ruler and commander-in-chief are not the same person and therefore it is necessary to establish who does what and how they work together. This also involves defining their required qualities, and potential strengths and weaknesses.

In the next section, I will address the politics and ethics of rulership and military command. Here, however, I note the impersonal aspects of politics in the strategic thinking of the two texts. In particular, both identify the disruption of the enemy’s political stability as being a central objective. The key to doing this successfully is intelligence. Vegetius advocates the constant use of spies and urges that the intelligence activities be used to encourage treachery and desertion.70 Thus, as with logistics, intelligence has both a defensive and offensive purpose, becoming a positive weapon in the hands of the general. This is not simply a tactical issue – it is a strategic imperative. Vegetius believes that countries are destroyed from the inside by disunity rather than by external threat:

It is also the mark of the skilled general to sow seeds of discord among the enemy. For no nation, however small, can be completely destroyed by its enemies, unless it devours itself by its own feuding. Civil strife is quick to compass the destruction of political enemies, but careless about the readiness of the nation’s own defence.71

This aphorism is fundamental given that it suggests that sowing dissent amongst one’s enemies is not one way of completely defeating them but the only way to do so. It is significant, therefore, that it comes in the hiatus in Book III in which Vegetius has deferred discussion of battle. In addition, the next sentence is a reminder that ‘There is but one premiss to this work: let none despair of the possibility of doing that which was done in the past’.72 The implication is that the reader should not dismiss these indirect methods on the grounds that they are impossible and justify battle as being the only way

70 Ibid III.6 (Milner, p. 77).
71 Epitoma III.10 (Milner, p. 88). See the discussion on Amiot’s identical view: p. 172 below.
72 Ibid.
to defeat the enemy. On the contrary, the general should build his strategy starting with such an approach and regarding battle as a means to an end, not the end in itself.

The *Sunzi* is even more explicit than the *Epitoma*. Chapter I associates warfare with *a*, or the, *dao* (way) of deceit or deception.\(^73\) The choice of the word *dao* in Chapter I comes just a few lines after its more familiar use as the means by which the ruler may achieve alignment with his people through his political and personal conduct. Its usage here suggests the inversion of ethical norms in the context of war: the alignment of ruler and people becomes the complete deception of one state by another.\(^74\) This sense is further developed in Chapter XIII, which is devoted to dividing the enemy and using spies whose role includes the identification of targets for assassination.\(^75\) We have already seen that the *Sunzi* prioritises attacking alliances before armies. It also contains advice on such political matters:

Unless you know the intention of the rulers of the neighbouring states, you cannot enter into preparatory alliances with them... When the army of a King or hegemon attacks a large state, it does not allow the enemy to assemble his forces; when it brings its prestige and influence to bear on the enemy, it prevents his allies from joining with him. For this reason one need not contend for alliances with the other states in the empire or try to promote one’s own place vis-à-vis these states. If you pursue your own program, and bring your prestige and influence to bear on the enemy, you can take his walled cities and lay waste to his state ... Therefore, the business of waging war lies in carefully studying the designs of the enemy.\(^76\)

The *Sunzi*’s use of *dao* would have been notable to contemporary readers. The *Analects* position the way uncompromisingly as the course of action to be followed by the virtuous man:

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\(^73\) My tentative phrasing here reflects the various ways in which the *Sunzi* can be read. Ames has: ‘Warfare is the art (*tao*) of deceit. (p. 104). Sawyer and Sawyer: ‘Warfare is the Way [Tao] of deception. (p. 158). Minford: The Way of War is a Way of Deception. (p. 6). Mair: ‘Warfare is a way of deception. (p. 78).

\(^74\) This reading is not universally shared. Arthur Waldron takes the same view in the foreword to Mair, *Art of War*, p. xix where he writes that the *Sunzi* both establishes the traditional positioning of *dao* as ‘the moral way ... that gives rulers their legitimacy and society its cohesion’ and then ‘manipulates’ the term to ‘subvert the foundation upon which all society and human activity is believed, by Chinese philosophers, to rest. However, Mair himself translates the first instance of *dao* as ‘the Way’ and then the second ‘Warfare is a way of deception’ to suggest a distinction; while in his notes he does not suggest the inversion that Waldron describes. Ibid, pp. 77, 78 and notes 7 and 21 at pp. 138, 140. Of course, the Chinese word is not ‘capitalised’ so the reader can decide whether the two instances of *dao* are intended as having the same meaning and what is the significance (if any) of their juxtaposition.

\(^75\) Mair regards chapters XII and XIII as late additions that are ‘not integral to the main concerns of the *Sunzi*: Mair, *Art of War*, p. 8; although the length of chapter XIII and the way it is positioned appear to him to balance the work as a whole around ‘what it proffers as the most important ingredient in the art of war: military intelligence’: Ibid, pp. 36-7.

\(^76\) *Sunzi* I, XIII and XI (Ames, pp. 104, 170, 161).
The Master said, ‘Riches and honours are what men desire. If they cannot be obtained in the proper way, they should not be held. Poverty and meanness are what men dislike. If they cannot be obtained in the proper way, they should not be avoided.’

Similarly, while dao is an ‘ethical and cosmological construct’ in Confucian thought it is a ‘metaphysical entity’ in early Daoist discourse. The Daodejing is, as its traditional title suggests, an exploration of the dao, and is, again, broadly contemporary with the Sunzi. It contains important observations on warfare and, for Mair, the Sunzi is much closer to Daoism than it is to Confucianism. The term ‘dao’ was, as Waldron states, a key term in contemporary thought and one whose meaning in that context the Sunzi affirms. In also deploying the term in the alternative way as a description of how to conduct war, the Sunzi is making a strong statement. Both this text and the Epitoma, then, recognise the realpolitik of international relations and the need for any military initiative to be accomplished or assisted through indirect means. In this way, both texts address the political dimensions of warfare and move beyond a purely technical or tactical consideration of military theory.

The roles of the ruler and military commander
According to the Sunzi knowledge is the basis of strategic success: ‘Know the other, know yourself, and the victory will not be at risk’. The first of the five criteria for assessing oneself and one’s enemy is, again, ‘the way’ (dao). The fourth criterion is the commander, described in five words: wisdom, trustworthiness, benevolence, courage, discipline. As war is a vital matter of state, so the responsibility of the commander is severe – he is ‘the final arbiter of people’s lives, and lord over the security of the state’. As the ruler masters his subjects by adhering to the way, so does the military commander master victory and defeat by understanding and applying the way and safeguarding the law.

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77 The Analects IV.5.1 in James Legge (Tr), Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean (Dover Publications, 1971), p. 166.
78 Mair, Art of War, p. 138, n. 7.
80 This is also the reason why the Sunzi has been co-opted for non-military purposes.
81 Sunzi X and I (Ames, pp. 151, 103). Ames prefers integrity for trustworthiness and humanity for benevolence.
82 Sunzi II and IV (Ames, pp. 109, 116) – but for the latter I have provided a literal rendition of the words. The law (fa) is the same word that appears in the title of the Sunzi.
Once the commander has been appointed, then, his responsibility for the welfare of the state and his authority are comparable to those of the ruler and therefore the virtues required of him are essentially the same. His temperament is of also of importance: pride, compassion and temper all create opportunities for exploitation by the enemy. But once appointed, the commander must follow his own judgement, and not any orders given to him by the ruler, who cannot assess the situation as well as he can:

Thus if the way (dao) of battle guarantees you victory, it is right for you to insist on fighting even if the ruler has said not to; where the way (dao) of battle does not allow victory, it is right for you to refuse to fight even if the ruler has said you must. Hence a commander who advances without any thought of winning personal fame and withdraws in spite of certain punishment, whose only concern is to protect his people and promote the interests of his ruler, is the nation’s treasure.

Just as the commander must follow his judgement not his orders, so the ruler must respect the authority he has given to the commander.\(^\text{83}\) The Sunzi identifies three ways in which a ruler will confuse his army, lose the confidence of his soldiers and invite the aggression of his neighbours: ordering an advance or retreat when inappropriate; interfering with the administration of the army; or interfering with military assignments. ‘The side on which the commander is able and the ruler does not interfere will take the victory.’\(^\text{84}\)

The commander’s wisdom lies in a dispassionate assessment of the facts. For both the ruler and him, emotion is the antithesis of strategic effectiveness and its consequences are dire:

A ruler cannot mobilise his armies in a rage; a commander cannot incite a battle in the heat of the moment. Move if it is to your advantage, bide your time if it is not. A person in a fit of rage can be restored to good humour and a person in the heat of passion can be restored to good cheer, but a state that has perished cannot be revived, and the dead cannot be brought back to life. Thus the farsighted ruler approaches battle with prudence and the good commander moves with caution. This is the way (dao) to keep the state secure and preserve the army intact.

It is also notable that, in keeping with contemporary attitudes towards the supernatural, the commander must rely on foreknowledge gained through intelligence and not through any form of prognostication, ‘astrophysical calculations,’ or even undue reliance on the past – see the opening of Chapter XIII (quoted at p. 46 above).

\(^\text{83}\) The symbol of this duality was the ‘tiger-shaped tally of military command’ – see Lewis, ‘Warring States’ in Ancient China ed. by Loewe and Shaughnessy, p. 609.

\(^\text{84}\) Sunzi VIII, X and III (Ames, pp. 136, 150, 112-3).
In summary, the ruler and commander (once appointed) must both follow the way and exercise good judgement with a calm, dispassionate temperament. The commander must accept the responsibilities of leadership, regardless of the consequences, and the ruler must accept the consequences of delegation, resisting the temptation to interfere. The way itself has two meanings: a moral obligation to one’s own people; and an obligation to defeat the enemy through whatever means are expedient, including the use of espionage, deceit and assassination. Failure to apply the way is not a virtue but (in Ames’ translation of *bu ren*) ‘the height of inhumanity’. ‘Such a man is no man’s commander, no ruler’s counsellor, and no master of victory.’ Once again, we have a staple of contemporary ethical discourse – *ren* – now applied in a startling way: the definition of inhumanity is the failure to use human intelligence as the basis of one’s plans in war.

Vegetius’ commander is also emperor and his approach, therefore, is necessarily different, but he places a similar emphasis on the strategic role of the commander-in-chief and it appears that he had in mind both Theodosius and his predecessor Valens when he formulated his thinking. First of all, he acknowledges the risks of a general making a poor decision either through failing to take advice or through following the advice of flatterers.

An important art useful to a general is to call in persons from the entire army who are knowledgeable about war and aware of their own and the enemy’s forces, and to hold frequent discussions with them in an atmosphere from which all flattery, which does so much harm, has been banished ...

Second, he must also carefully evaluate his own strength, the dependability of his allies and all aspects of the enemy in order to determine the prospects of success and the right strategy.

It is also relevant to find out the character of the adversary himself, his senior staff-officers and chieftains. Are they rash or cautious, bold or timid, skilled in the art of war or fighting

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85 Sunzi VIII, XII and XIII (Ames, pp. 135, 166, 169).
86 The opening section of Chapter XII of the Sunzi (set out at at p. 46 above) appears similar to an important passage in the contemporary philosophical work, the Mozi. The Mozi contains a set of chapters traditionally grouped under the title ‘Against Offensive Warfare’. One passage begins ‘When a state which delights in aggressive warfare raises an army …’ and goes on to enumerate the scale of resources required, the time that a campaign will take and its devastating effect on the people and economy. However, unlike the Sunzi, the Mozi does not state this to illustrate the importance of preparation nor to offer advice – simply to condemn it. Burton Watson, *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu* Hsun Tzu and Han Fei Tzu (Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 54-5. See also David Shepherd Nivison, ‘The Classical Philosophical Writings’ in Ancient China ed. by Loewe and Shaughnessy, pp. 745-812, p. 763.
87 *Epitoma* III.9 (Milner, p. 84). Valens’ council of war before Adrianople was the opposite: he was surrounded by sycophants: Ammianus 31.12.7, 19.11.7 and 31.4.4.
from experience or haphazardly? Which tribes on their side are brave or cowardly? What is the loyalty and courage of our *auxilia*? What is the morale of the enemy forces? What is that of our own army?

Putting together the content and process for evaluating each side and developing a plan, Vegetius uses a judicial metaphor: ‘So let the general be watchful, sober and discreet. Let him call a council-of-war and judge between his own and the enemy’s forces, as if he were to adjudicate between parties to a civil suit.’  

A general who does this is in a strong position: ‘It is difficult to beat someone who can form a true estimate of his own and the enemy’s strength.’  

This analysis leaves no space for the supernatural. While Vegetius’ Christianity is expressed in his treatment of the military oath – which I will examine in relation to Clarke’s translation – he describes neither a Christian God nor the pagan *Fortuna* as playing any role in the course of war, other than in the chaos of the general engagement itself. No general should seek or depend upon supernatural aid. He must look to himself for success as is best expressed in Vegetius’ aphorism.

Vegetius does not appear to see any conflict between Christian ethics and his advocacy of secrecy, deception, subversion and the use of indirect methods to destroy the enemy. But he does portray the commander-in-chief as holding a post with great moral responsibility:

So the general who has bestowed on him the insignia of great power, and to whose loyalty and strength are entrusted the wealth of landowners, the protection of cities, the lives of soldiers and the glory of the State, should be anxious for the welfare not just of his entire army, but for each and every common soldier also. For if anything happens to them in war, it is seen as his fault and the nation’s loss.

This responsibility is to the soldiers themselves as well as to the State and therefore he must know each private soldier by name and capacity. Upon the ethics and personal discipline of the commander the fate of the nation depends, and in particular, therefore, he must study and practice every aspect of his duty:

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88 *Epitoma* III.9 (Milner, pp. 85-6).
86 III.26, Maxim 9 (Milner, p. 116). The idea and phrasing of this aphorism are very close to that of the *Sunzi* III as quoted at p. 44 above.
89 *Epitoma* III.26 (Milner, p. 116): Maxim 4 ‘... battle where fortune tends to have more influence than bravery’. On Vegetius’ Christianity see Milner, *De Rebus*, pp. 46-8.
90 *Epitoma* III Preface (Milner, p. 63). Igitur qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum; qui victoriam cupit, milites inbuat diligenter; qui secundos optat eventus, dimicet arte, non casu. Clarke’s translation is perhaps the best: ‘He, therefore, who desires Peace, should prepare for War: he who aspires to Victory, should spare no Pains to form his Soldiers: and he who hopes for Success, should fight on Principle, not Chance.’ *Military Institutions*, p. 89.
92 *Epitoma* III.10 (Milner, p. 87).
All arts and all works progress through daily practice and continual exercise. If this is true of small things, the principle should hold all the more true in great matters. Who can doubt that the art of war comes before everything else, when it preserves our liberty and prestige, extends the provinces and saves the Empire? The Spartans long ago abandoned all other fields of learning to cultivate this, and later so did the Romans.\(^93\)

All of these principles, then, together with the structure and chosen topics of the *Epitoma*, lead to the conclusion that the art of war is not a set of rules for battle but a means of achieving victory and that it is the duty of the commander-in-chief to study this principle and how to give it effect. This idea is addressed directly to the emperor, and thereby made personal and specific, at the end of Book III where Vegetius sets out his valedictory advice. I set this out in Latin first since it is not possible to do justice to the style of this single sentence in translation.

Digesta sunt, imperator invicte, quae nobilissimi auctores diversis probata temporibus per experimentorum fidem memoriae prodiderunt, ut ad peritiam sagittandi, ad equitandi scientiam vel decorum, quae Hunnorum Alarumque natio velim imitari si possit, ad currendi velocitatem, quam Saracenus Indusque non aequat, ad armaturae exercitationem, cuius campidoctores vel pro parte exampla intellexisse se gaudent, regula proeliiandi, immo vincendi artificium iungeretur, quatenus virtute pariter ac dispositione mirabilis reipublicae tuae et imperatoris officium exhiberes et militis.

I have set out, Invincible Emperor, the principles which the noblest authors handed down to posterity as having won the approval of different ages in the test of experience. To your skill [in the listed martial disciplines] may now be joined a Rule-book of Battle, or rather an Art of Victory, in order that by the valour coupled with the strategy of your glorious State, you may manifest your role of both Commander-in-chief (Emperor) and Soldier.\(^94\)

This sentence begins with a description of the book followed by a long enumeration of the exceptional military abilities of the emperor – his archery, horsemanship, speed and skill at exercises – which, given that he started active military service at a young age, no doubt represents an accurate description.\(^95\) However, Vegetius makes plain that these skills are not sufficient in themselves and that he has therefore written the epitome in order to supplement them with what the Emperor really needs in order to do justice to his office. Thus the extended list of skills comes between the digest of strategic knowledge and the reason why the emperor needs it. The long sentence contains a series of words that have complex, multi-layered meanings – *artificium, virtus, dispositio* – and they are placed in a structure that is at once formulaic and provocative. The particle *immo* that splits the rulebook for soldiers and the strategic requirements of the emperor is used to correct a foregoing statement in a rather rhetorical manner: *What you need is*...

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93 *Epitoma* III.10 (Milner, p. 86).

94 *Epitoma* III Valedictory (Milner, p. 119). Reeve, *Epitoma*, p. 120.

95 As we have seen in Ammianus, p. 34 above.
X – no actually Y ... Hence the author is telling the emperor that what he requires is not the rules for fighting (regula proeliandi) but an artificium of winning which is itself built on the virtus and dispositio of the empire – its moral, political and strategic capabilities. The Latin artificium carries the sense of ‘a contriving of means, workmanship, skill in handicraft’ which is only partly captured by the word ‘Art’. It describes the process of conceiving a product and then making it – in this case, victory. In addition, virtus means more than simply ‘valour’ – it carries the senses of moral excellence and strategic capability: it is not being used here to describe an individual but the Roman respublica.

Even the use of the term respublica to describe the Empire is thought-provoking in the context of a discussion of the revival of virtues and capabilities associated with the Roman Republic. For Vegetius, the emperor must ensure that Rome recovers the moral values and the military capability that it needs. Having done so, he must look to the strategic deployment of these capabilities, where dispositio carries the sense of military strategy but also, as we have seen, echoes the canons of Quintilian’s rhetoric in which dispositio is the process of laying out one’s arguments so that they can be put to best effect. Thus, in preparing the moral character and strategic capabilities of the Empire (its virtus) and devising how to deploy those capabilities to best effect (dispositio) the emperor is likened to an orator or a craftsman working iteratively at a process of conceiving and making victory. This image of the emperor is therefore contrasted with the running, shooting, riding and marching of the soldier, and his following of a rulebook for battle with which the passage opens. Indeed, Maxim 32 – Magna dispositio est hostem fame magis urgere quam ferro (it is a better strategy to press the enemy more with hunger than steel) notes that fighting itself is an inferior strategy. This is the penultimate of the maxims and appears only a few lines before the closing address to the emperor so the repetition of the word dispositio and the contrast between fighting and strategy could not be clearer.

To what extent is this passage critical of the emperor? I have already cited above the passages in Book III in which Vegetius states why it is so important that an emperor correctly understands his role: leading an army into battle puts the entire nation at risk. We have also seen that Ammianus made a point of praising the strategic insight of the elder Theodosius which, when confronted with the rebellion in Britain enabled him to apply diplomatic approaches as well as military; and to use guerrilla tactics when

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96 Proelior means to ‘join battle, engage or fight’, so this phrase leaves no doubt that it concerns physical not metaphorical combat: Smith, Dictionary, p. 582.

97 My translation. See also p. 46 above.
outnumbered by Firmus in Africa. Ammianus praises the younger Theodosius for his powerful series of victories against the Sarmatians and describes him as *dux virtutis, ut apparuit, expeditae* which suggests that his skill and courage are unfettered and quickly deployed. Is it possible to read into this, and into Vegetius’ words to Theodosius, that the emperor is perhaps too quick to rely on his own martial skills rather than thinking through the strategic situation and building Rome’s military capabilities for future challenges?  

There is also a troubling echo here of Sallust – one of Vegetius’ sources – who uses a similar phrase to distinguish between the physical attributes of the soldier and the strategic responsibilities of the general when he writes of Cataline that *strenui militis et boni imperatoris officia simul exsequebatur* – ‘he fulfilled at once the duties of an energetic soldier and a good commander-in-chief.’ This description, however, is of a man who was *imperator* in the sense of commander not emperor, and had no political responsibility for the welfare of the Roman people but was in fact a rebel against the Republic. Cataline was described by both Cicero and Sallust as unequivocally bad not only in his conspiracy against Rome but for the murder of his first wife, child and brother-in-law. It is hard to imagine that Vegetius intended to compare Theodosius to Cataline but doubtful that he could have adopted the phrase without importing the context to a well-educated reader.

Vegetius’ views on leadership are very close to those of his contemporary Ammianus. In Book 31, as Ammianus leads up to the battle of Adrianople, he makes frequent reference to the need for commanders to be prudent, to avoid haste, to avoid open battle when not prepared, and even refers to the need for guerrilla tactics. He notes of the Gothic leader Fritigern that he had ‘great foresight and dreaded the uncertainties of battle’. Of Valens himself, Ammianus presents a complex figure with several good qualities but one who failed militarily because of a lack of education (*nec bellicos nec liberalibus studiis eruditus*), a failure to take advice and also a susceptibility to allowing his emotions to determine important military decisions. As a result of these flaws, Valens did not wait for

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98 My analysis of this section is different to that of Milner, for whom what Vegetius ‘is really saying is that, by virtue of his book, the Emperor now had mastered various military skills, corresponding to matters dealt with in Books I-II (*disciplina militaris*), and Book III supplied the art of winning battles, adding the strategic skills of *imperator* to the tactical skills of the *miles*. There was, of course, in reality no question that the Emperor was not master of all aspects of the subject before the book was ever written, as V. was careful to point out. [Epit I.praef, II praef.]’ Milner, *De Rebus*, pp. 61, 65 n. 9.

99 Sallust *Bellum Catalinae* 60.4 cited in Milner, *Vegetius*, p. 119, n. 7.

100 Ammianus 31.12 (434).
Gratian’s arrival with the Western army because he was jealous of the successes of Sebastian. He conducted a forced march of his troops on the morning of the battle and failed to ensure they were fed, watered and rested before combat. He then delayed engagement in the vain hope of a peace because he underestimated the size of the enemy forces as a result of inaccurate intelligence. At his council of war he failed to listen to advice from an experienced officer that a quick engagement was essential for reasons that became all too apparent. 101 While Vegetius does not name Valens or Adrianople, he makes implicit references to both and he specifically addresses all of the aspects of poor leadership that Ammianus associates with the late emperor and the fateful battle in which he perished. The most striking is at Book III.11 when, at last, Vegetius turns to the day of battle:

Beware also not to force to a pitched battle soldiers who are tired after a long march ... This is something the ancients avoided, and in the recent past it was the armies, to say no more, who learned the lesson after Roman generals had through lack of expertise failed to provide against it. 102

This sentence uses hyperbaton and antithesis to contrast the ‘Romani duces responsible for the disaster, and the exercitus who learned the lesson.” 103

It appears overall that there is some ambivalence in Vegetius’ approach to his emperor. Putting to one side the formulaic flattery, there can be no question that Theodosius was an accomplished soldier, and that Vegetius recognizes this. The contrast with Valens could not be clearer, but it should be noted that the contrast that is drawn lies in tactical or practical matters like Valens’ error in fighting after a forced march. In terms of strategic skills, the valedictory passage at the end of Book III states that the emperor needs to acquire them rather than that he already enjoys them. And the echo of Sallust’s Cataline, if intentional, is not benign. Milner suggests that there may be a tension in that, after Adrianople, Theodosius undertook a policy of accommodation with the Goths and their allies, giving them both land within the Empire and allowing a ‘sudden and uncontrolled flux into the Roman army of thousands of Goths, Huns and Alans’. 104 Given Vegetius’ views on the revival of Roman military virtue and the need to recruit Romans

101 Ibid 31.12-14 (pp. 432-9).
102 Epitoma XXX.11 (Milner, p. 91).
104 Milner, De Rebus, pp. 153, 155.
into the army, it may well be that there was a substantial difference of opinion between Theodosius and him that is reflected in the climax to the *Epitoma*.

**Conclusions**

I conclude this chapter where it might have begun, with the titles of the original works and translations, but do so now because it is the foregoing analysis that provides the significance of the following observations. The two original works are known as *Sunzi bingfa* and *Epitoma rei militaris* or *Epitoma institutorum rei militaris*. The two translations are the *Art Militaire des Chinois* and *Military Institutions of Vegetius*. We may assume that Amiot and Clarke chose the titles of their translations, but the manner in which the titles attributed to the two original works were derived is not known. The authoritative manuscripts of Vegetius have the two different titles noted above.\(^{105}\) Nonetheless, the titles are in themselves interesting for what is not in any of them. The three Latin-based titles are all founded broadly on the idea of military matters.\(^{106}\) In the case of the *Sunzi*, the traditional English rendition is *Sun Tzu’s Art of War* but I suggest that this is more influenced by the European tradition of books entitled ‘Art of War’ than it is the Chinese title, which Mair renders *Sun Zi’s Military Methods*.\(^{107}\)

What unifies the titles attributed to the original works and the titles of the translations is, therefore, the fact that none of them is actually called ‘the art of war’. Instead, all have a title that suggests the systematic arrangement of a country’s military institutions. As Vegetius says, *qui desiderat pacem praeparet bellum*.\(^{108}\) The instruction is to be ready for war, not to wage it. War is, of course, necessarily associated with the military but these titles do not suggest that war *per se* is either the end of military institutions nor their only means. This is entirely consistent with the logic of the texts themselves and their historical settings as we have examined them in this chapter. The Warring States period was marked by internal and external political crises in which the many competing states needed to implement internal reforms while pursuing a foreign policy that maximised the prospects of survival. War became increasingly expensive as the geographical range of campaigns extended, armies grew and military technologies evolved. The consequences of war for internal stability and external strength reached the point where even the state of Qin that had ambitions for hegemony adopted strategies that avoided

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\(^{105}\) Reeve, *Epitoma*, p. vi.


\(^{107}\) Mair, *Art of War*, pp. 1, 55 notes 1 and 2.

war for as long as possible. The states that allowed themselves to be drawn into conflicts were steadily annihilated as were those whose leaders failed to reform their administrations. Consequently, the thinkers of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods developed values that promoted good administration and the alignment of sovereign and people. In doing so they co-opted existing terms and adapted them to new circumstances and the new governing class. Their goal was not truth but domestic stability and state survival. They also recognised that the new ethics applied only within a state: virtue in a foreign ruler and virtue in one’s own conduct of international relations were alike a strategic liability. In the Sunzi we see the promotion of this internal ethos of virtue and its corollary of external ruthlessness: the dao of deceit. The role of the commander – who is distinct from the ruler – is to achieve victory, not to squander the state’s resources in warfare, protracted or otherwise. To do so he must use all the moral, economic and political forces at his disposal to undermine the enemy’s plans and alliances. Victory in battle is no achievement, either because it is the sign of failure, or because by the time battle is joined the other side has been defeated by other means.

The Epitoma is set in a defined time and place with the Roman Empire recovering from the worst defeat in its history. The new emperor Theodosius has proved himself a brave and capable soldier but what is required in 386 is a statesman who can rebuild Rome’s strategic capabilities and deploy them to protect her borders from the predations of the Goths and other tribes. The ethos of the Epitoma is entirely defensive and, once again, exhorts the commander-in-chief to exhaust all other means before resorting to battle. In both the Sunzi and the Epitoma the authors use structure, vocabulary and style to reinforce their messages to the reader, and in both books rulers are presented with unambiguous and bold lessons as to the importance and limitations of their role. Whether as a ruler with generals in the field or emperor holding both civil and military command, the authors convey the need to rule ethically while conducting relations with neighbouring peoples so as to maintain peace, using military capability as a deterrent and war as a last resort.

The ideological foundations of the two classical texts are, therefore, a shared belief in the need to study strategy as a science and to achieve one’s policy objectives without the human, economic and political risks associated with war and certainly with combat itself. As the earliest surviving written works in their genre, these two texts also establish structure, vocabulary and form as means to promote their ideologies while the aphoristic form is deployed in order to demonstrate their scientific method and to maximise the utility, memorability and, no doubt, elegance of their work.
Chapter 2. The historical context of John Clarke and Joseph Amiot

Introduction
In this chapter I will consider the literary and historical contexts within which Clarke and Amiot were writing. I will start with a brief overview of how military theorists addressed their subject in the first half of the eighteenth century. This was the literary genre within which Clarke positioned his own work and was one reference point for Amiot, the other being the tradition of Jesuit literature about China. We will see that, while the military theorists writing immediately before Clarke and Amiot sought to put forward models of how war should be conducted based on scientific principles, their main focus was on administrative and tactical matters. This contrasts with the broader political, ethical and economic treatment of the subject that we have found in both the Sunzi and the Epitoma. However, when we turn to the Seven Years’ War, we will find that in Britain the more general themes of the Military Enlightenment were transformed by the intense political debate, conducted in public through a vast and partisan press, into a much more focused consideration of strategy generally and Britain’s ‘system’ in particular. From the perspective of both Clarke and Amiot, the Seven Years’ War created a significant gap between the eighteenth-century tradition of military theory and the strategic realities of the world which that tradition purported to define and describe – realities that were very palpable to them given the way in which the political developments had directly affected them. However, as the Epitoma and the Sunzi present an entirely different perspective on war to that of their eighteenth-century military theorists, these classical texts gave Clarke and Amiot the opportunity to explore the strategic challenges of the real world while appearing to operate within an established literary genre. The purpose, then, of this chapter is to set the context for the examination of Clarke and Amiot’s choice and treatment of these texts.

There is neither space nor reason to rehearse the events of the Seven Years’ War here but there is one aspect of it that connects Clarke and Amiot and has had surprisingly little attention. This is the role played by the Duc de Choiseul, first minister of France from 1759 to 1770, and arguably the principal actor in the war from 1761 through to the Peace of Paris. In 1761, Choiseul engineered the fall of the ministry of William Pitt (1708–78) –
an astonishing fact given Pitt’s achievements up to and during 1761. Pitt was strongly associated with the strategy that had seen the Marines flourish during the war, and the Marines felt keenly the fall of Pitt and what were seen as the poor terms achieved in the Peace of Paris. Choiseul successfully concluded the Pacte de Famille, introduced Spain into the war, and outmanoeuvred all parties in negotiating a Peace that was considerably better than France could have expected. At the same time, Choiseul played a central part in the events that led to the expulsion of the Jesuits from France and then their worldwide suppression. The stand-off between Louis XV and the Parlements had become critical from the late 1750s when the latter refused to support the King’s fiscal measures. The Parlements had become increasingly Jansenist, Gallicist and anti-Jesuit during the eighteenth century and, in 1763, Choiseul used the expulsion of the Jesuits from France to reach an accommodation with the Parlements, remove Henri Bertin from his post of Controller General and consolidate his own position at court. Choiseul then exploited his relations with Spain to lead a decade-long campaign for the worldwide suppression of the order. Thus, Choiseul’s domestic and foreign policies impacted on Amiot’s life from the early 1760s. French domestic politics also shaped the rationale and significance of Amiot’s work through other players. Henri Bertin and two other Controllers General, Etienne de Silhouette (1709–67) and Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1727–81), engaged in aspects of the correspondance littéraire between Paris and Peking in which Amiot was an important participant. The circle at the French end of the correspondance extended to the royal historian and propagandist Jacob-Nicolas Moreau (1717–1803), Academician Joseph de Guignes (1721–1800), political economist François Quesnay (1694–1774) and his circle of Physiocrats and ultimately senior military figures such as François-Jacques de Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur (1716–82) and Paul-Gédéon Joly de Maizeroy (1719–80).

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1 ‘All the [French] engines were set to deceive the new comers to court’ such that a change in both ‘ministry, and in measures’ was to be expected. By the end, ‘the French agent had dealt his abilities so well, that he left behind him an opposition so strongly formed against the continuation of the war, and against Mr Pitt’s administration, that about a fortnight before he resigned, [Pitt] had not interest enough to send four ships of the line to Newfoundland; though he urged and even insisted upon it.’ John Entick, The general history of the late war (London, 1763, references to the third edition 1775), vol. V, pp. 90, 184. Choiseul’s Mémoire Historique sur la négociation de la France & de l’Angleterre (September 1761) set out the official documents and blamed Pitt for the failure of the negotiations and influenced British public opinion: Zenab Esmat Rashed, The Peace of Paris, 1763 (Liverpool at the University Press, 1951).

2 Bertin, who was pro-Jesuit, unwittingly also played a role as it was his fiscal reforms that triggered the decisive confrontation with Parlement between 1761 and 1763: Swann, Politics, pp. 214–20 and H.M. Scott, ‘Religion and Realpolitik: The Duc De Choiseul, the Bourbon Family Compact, and the Attack on the Society of Jesus, 1758–1775’ The International History Review, vol. 25, No. 1 (Mar., 2003), 37-62, p. 48.

3 Choiseul’s reforms of the French army were profound and would in turn affect Britain again in the 1770s: Léonard, Émile G., L’Armée et ses problèmes au XVIII siècle (Plon, 1958), p. 239.
It should be apparent, even from this brief summary, that politics, economics and diplomacy were as significant in the Seven Years’ war, and the way in which it affected the lives of Clarke and Amiot, as any purely military considerations.

**The Military Enlightenment**

The eighteenth-century treatment of military theory has been termed the ‘Military Enlightenment’ by Starkey and the ‘Military School of the Enlightenment’ by Gat. Both historians point to a grouping of military theorists whose work was first published in the eighteenth century and whose ideas are interpreted by reference to the ‘all-encompassing ideas of the Enlightenment, which dominated all spheres of European thought and culture’. Other scholars have explored the extent to which the eighteenth century’s approach to military theory and military reform makes its authors *philosophes* alongside other writers and reformers. Speelman argues that denial of a Military Enlightenment is based on a mistaken historiography that ‘lacks reference to such an intellectual construct because it suffers from a traditional bias towards military affairs in general.’ Bien contends that even those French military reformers whose ideas were antithetical to the ideology of the Revolution nonetheless adopted a secularist and pragmatic approach to institutional reform that is comparable to that of the *philosophes*.

Starkey identifies three Enlightenment themes in this movement: classicism; war as a science, the attempt to identify rational and universal principles governing the conduct of war; and ‘the military spirit, what might be called the psychological foundations of war’. Aside from its ideology, the Military Enlightenment was also a product of the physical expansion of printed works during this period: the rate of publication of books on military theory grew alongside other subjects, although it also peaked around the time of Clarke and Amiot in the middle of the century. Military publications took several different forms, one of which was to provide officers with regulations for use in the training, drilling or operations of the army at a time when armies did not issue

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7 Starkey, *War*, p. 34. Conversely, Starkey does not see a cohesive view of warfare, or response to the Seven Years’ War, among the *philosophes*: Armstrong Starkey, “To Encourage the Others: the Philosophs and the war” in *The Seven Years’ War*, ed. by Danley and Speelman, pp. 23-45.
standard regulations. Such works are outside the scope of this study but it is important to note that the Military Enlightenment was diverse and that there were national variations. These genres overlapped, a good example of this being John MacIntire’s manual for the Marine officer which contains both specific guidance on the training and handling of Marines and some general maxims for their officers drawn from contemporary and classical sources including Vegetius. In spite of this variety, cohesion was created by the fact that Europe’s officer class collected military books, constantly cross-referenced within itself and across national borders. Translations of, and references to, classical works created a sense of a shared tradition. Around this time, however, books on the art of war overtook the classics in popularity – just before Clarke and Amiot set out translating their two classics.

I will consider four writers whose work was published up to the start of the Seven Years’ War: selected both for their influence and because they intersect with Clarke and Amiot. These are: Raimondo Montecuccoli (1609–80); Jacques-François de Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur (1655-1743); Jean-Charles, Chevalier de Folard (1669-1752); and Maurice de Saxe (1696-1750). I include Montecuccoli not as a writer of the Military Enlightenment – he died in 1680 – but because his influential works were published in the eighteenth century. Montecuccoli and Folard are the two ‘modern’ theorists cited by Clarke while Montecuccoli and Puységur were the two principal theorists in the Jesuit library in Peking. It was Puységur’s son who both published his father’s main work and co-authored the substantive response to Amiot’s Art Militaire. Saxe is included because he was the only European military theorist to have written on China before Amiot and

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9 For example, there was a ‘very pragmatic bent to the great bulk of English-language military texts and treatises.’ Houlding, Training, pp. 166–8.

10 John MacIntire, A Military Treatise on the Discipline of the Marine Forces (London, 1763). MacIntire’s book is listed in Clarke’s catalogue but he did not own a copy. In 1763, when MacIntire’s book was published, he was stationed in Plymouth while Clarke was at Chatham. While Clarke’s collection is biased towards earlier books, it is intriguing that he did not own the only treatise available on his own Corps. MacIntire quotes the French translation of Vegetius, but misnames it as Instructions instead of Institutions: p. viii.

11 John Childs, Armies and warfare in Europe, 1648-1789 (Manchester University Press, 1982), p. 99. ‘Intelligent officers knew far more about Classical military history than they did about the events of their own time. An acquaintance with Caesar’s Commentaries was part of the mental equipment of every well-read gentleman, and the writers defer constantly to the authority of figures like Polybius, Homer, Herodotus, Xenophon, and ‘our historian’ Thucydides.’ Duffy, Military Experience, p. 52.


13 There were several important English, French and German works published after the War that fall within the Military Enlightenment, three of whom (Guibert, Lloyd and Maizeroy) will be discussed further below.
he is the first military author to have been acquired by Clarke. These four writers collectively provide a good representation of the Military Enlightenment as it stood at the start of the Seven Years’ War and as Clarke and Amiot (if the latter availed himself of the library in Peking) might have understood the literary genre and intellectual tradition within which works on the art of war then existed.

The work of Raimondo Montecuccoli is generally seen as having shaped the subsequent tradition of the Military Enlightenment but, I suggest, actually throws into relief what is missing in Folard, Puységur and Saxe, namely a political framework. Montecuccoli was born in Modena and fought for the Habsburg Imperial Army in the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48) and enjoyed celebrated victories against the Turks at St Gotthard in 1664 and against the French general Turenne on the Rhine in 1673. Montecuccoli wrote several works but the Treatise on War (Trattato della Guerra), written when he was 32, sets out ‘his theoretical outlook and military conceptions, which underwent no further fundamental changes’. In 1767, Clarke acquired a collection of Montecuccoli’s works from 1756, while the Jesuit library in Peking owned a Latin volume entitled Commentarii Bellici. Juncto Artis Bellicae Systemate from 1718. While Montecuccoli describes the military works that influenced him, it is the general and non-military works that are more significant. The largest part of these are scientific (or proto-scientific) since Montecuccoli’s stated goal was to ‘reduce experience to universal and fundamental rules’ and ‘summarise methodically the exceedingly vast territory of this science’. In this sense, Montecuccoli was undertaking an enterprise characteristic of the Military Enlightenment. However, Montecuccoli had a much broader sense of his subject, citing a wide range of authorities including on the occult and alchemy. The other main category of works that influenced him is that of political authors and essayists, including Machiavelli and Bacon but dominated by the sixteenth century Dutch classicist and philosopher, Justus Lipsius. Lipsius’ Six Books of Politics (1589) offered Montecuccoli ‘a

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14 Saxe’s Mémoires sur l’infanterie, ou Traité des légions, composé, suivant l’exemple des anciens Romains (1753) was one of two books acquired in June 1764, the earliest military acquisitions in the collection.

15 Of many candidates, two figures might have been added to this analysis. The first is the Marquis de Feuquières (1648–1711) whose work was influential and who opens it with an almost Machiavellian survey of different types of prince. The second is Frederick II of Prussia (1712–86) who was widely acknowledged the greatest general of the period but whose writings only emerged towards the end of the Seven Years’ War. Jay Luvaas, Frederick the Great on the Art of War (Da Capo Press, 2009), p. 375. Clarke refers to at least one work of Frederick under the entry ‘Prussia, (K. of) Campaigns, 12, Lond. 1763’ and he has an entry ‘Instructions militaires. 12. Fig. Paris. 1753’ but he did not own these books and we do not know when he made these entries.

16 Gat, Military Thought, p. 15.

17 Ibid, p. 20.
comprehensive and systematic presentation of war within a political framework, derived from political motives and directed towards political aims’ of which the principal one was a favourable peace.\(^8\) Lipsius was himself a commentator on, and influenced by, Vegetius. Heuser, however, describes Montecuccoli (together with Puységur) as a writer who ‘concentrated to the exclusion of almost anything else on what the ‘perfect captain’ or general needed to prepare for war and conduct his campaigns and battles successfully. They hardly if ever touched on political issues.’\(^9\) In this, Heuser likens Montecuccoli and Puységur to Vegetius, whereas we have already seen that Vegetius takes a more political and strategic view of war than this suggests. But while Montecuccoli himself followed Vegetius and Lipsius in investigating the political framework of warfare, we can agree that the three eighteenth-century writers whom I will consider next did not.

The first of these was Puységur, whose *Art de la Guerre* was published posthumously by his son in 1749.\(^{10}\) Puységur served under Louis XIV (1638–1715) and ended his career as Marshal of France under Louis XV in the 1730s. He maintained the view that the classical canon provided enduring laws of war – the *principes et règles* of the title of his work. He had sought a universal system of warfare from among the classics and modern writers including Montecuccoli, but failing to find one, developed his own. His main contribution to the subject lay in his view that the mathematical and geometrical approach to the construction of fortifications, developed by Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban (1633–1707), and the art of siege warfare represented a scientific approach that could be emulated in field warfare.\(^{21}\) While this scientific approach was highly appealing to his contemporaries it also reinforced the idea of warfare as a technical (even mechanical) process. Understanding the science of war was, however, necessary to politicians as well as soldiers, and in the absence of modern schools for teaching the art of war, the only route was self-education from the classics. Puységur reviewed Vegetius, Thucydides and other Greek and Latin texts for what they offered to ‘form a soldier and a statesman’; of Plutarch he wrote, ‘the author teaches and makes known the conduct that

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\(^8\) Ibid, p. 16. Lipsius is found in both Clarke’s and the Jesuits’ Peking libraries. On Lipsius, see also Olaf van Nimwegen, ‘The Tactical Military Revolution and Dutch Army Operations during the Era of the Twelve Years Truce (1592-1618)’ in Randall Lesaffer, *The Twelve Years Truce (1609): Peace, Truce, War and Law in the Low Countries at the Turn of the 17th Century* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2014), pp. 121-51.


\(^{21}\) Gat, *Military Thought*, p. 23. The Beitang library contained more works on fortifications, artillery and their related mathematics than any other.
should be followed in war and in politics’. Puységur placed the process of planning for war at the peak of this scientific and historical approach – a process that was to be undertaken by statesmen with the participation of senior generals. This important idea will be explored further in the next section as we see how it was developed in England.

The third feature of the Military Enlightenment is the military spirit or psychological foundations of war, sometimes also described as the ‘moral factor’. This is exemplified in the work of Folard whose two main works, *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre* and *Histoire de Polybe* were published in the 1720s, before those of his senior colleague, Puységur. Folard served, like Puységur, in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14) and his writings are seen as a reaction to passivity of the French armies during that conflict and a decline in France’s ‘military spirit’. From 1715, Folard served Charles XII of Sweden (1682–1718) where he developed his principal idea, namely that deep formations and shock tactics could not only overcome the firepower and tactical advantage of the defense, but also better express and thereby revive France’s naturally military spirit. Folard, therefore, addressed psychological and political issues but only in the limited sense of how these national stereotypes affected fighting styles and therefore how tactics should be adapted. Nonetheless, his thinking proved to be highly influential at the time and perhaps encouraged too great a focus on tactical matters among contemporary French thinkers.

The last of the four writers is Maurice de Saxe, who served in the War of Spanish Succession but made his name defeating the British at Fontenoy in 1745 during the War of the Austrian Succession. It was a celebrated victory, in which the British army was commanded by the Duke of Cumberland (1721–65) while Louis XV was also on the field, perhaps at the high point in his reign, and the source of his nickname Le Bien-Aimé. Saxe’s best-known work was *Les Rêveries*, which was written in 1732 and published posthumously in 1756. In the title and in his claim to have written the work in 13 nights

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23 Ibid, p. 36.
24 Starkey, *War*, p. 34.
while suffering a fever, Saxe seems a proto-Romantic.\textsuperscript{27} Further, he affects to buck the Enlightenment genre by suggesting that no systematic study of war is possible:

This work was not born from a desire to establish a new method of the art of war; I composed it to amuse and instruct myself. War is a science replete with shadows in whose obscurity one cannot move with an assured step. Routine and prejudice, the natural result of ignorance, are its foundation and support. All sciences have principles and rules. War has none. The great captains who have written of it give us none.\textsuperscript{28}

Nonetheless, Saxe was highly innovative in his approach, which included ideas later universally adopted on entrenchments, uniforms, marching drill, armaments and tactics. He advocated the organisation of armies after the Roman model with legions and smaller units, the progenitor of the twentieth-century divisional structure. Notwithstanding his claims otherwise, Saxe’s work is, like those of his peers, an attempt to offer a comprehensive treatise on war based on reasoned analysis and offering a ‘definitive system’. Saxe’s casual style, therefore, belies an approach that is recognisably that of the Military Enlightenment, with its combination of classical reference, science and psychology (on which he generally praises Folard). Once again, however, Saxe has nothing to say on politics although his own life and position gave him plenty of insight.\textsuperscript{29}

If anything, he urged that it was the detail of the subject that formed the basis of study:

Although those who occupy themselves with details are considered to be men of limited capacity, it seems to me, nevertheless, that this part is essential, because it is the foundation of the profession, and because it is impossible to erect any edifice, or to establish any system, without first knowing the principles that support it.\textsuperscript{30}

This passage perhaps illustrates the dilemma presented to and by the Military Enlightenment up to 1756. The determination to apply scientific principles to warfare ended up reducing and limiting the subject to the technical and tactical level of operations, organisation and administration. These topics touched upon issues such as logistics, and thereby economics to some extent, but did not create a broader political and economic framework as posited by Montecuccoli in the previous century. The interest in mathematics and geometry introduced by Vauban to fortification, siegecraft and artillery exacerbated this problem by encouraging Puységur and others to pursue their application to other aspects of warfare. Thus, the trend was towards a mechanistic


\textsuperscript{28} Phillips, \textit{Strategy}, p. 100.

\textsuperscript{29} Apart from his own experience, Saxe’s father Augustus (1670–1733) was Elector of Saxony, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania.

approach which then extended to considering how different tactical doctrines (like shock tactics and column vs line) would harness and influence the mood and character of the troops.  

The scholarship on the question of whether, as I suggest, the Military Enlightenment addressed the broader political dimensions of warfare or restricted itself to specifically military, and even lower level tactical questions, raises interesting questions about the eighteenth century’s treatment of Vegetius. At one extreme, Heuser takes the view that ‘the reflections and recommendations made by the early modern writers on military matters tended to focus, in the tradition of Vegetius, on the craft of war, and generally mentioned few political considerations’.  

Gat, Starkey and Childs implicitly share Heuser’s position but do not address the topic directly. At the other extreme is Duffy whose view is that ‘the connection between war and politics was clearly understood in the Age of Reason, even if nobody summed it up quite as neatly as Clausewitz was going to do in the next century’. Interestingly, however, Duffy shares Heuser’s view as to the significance of Vegetius whose thought ‘was absorbed so completely by the Age of Reason that he became effectively an eighteenth-century author’. While I agree with Heuser’s view of the eighteenth century as being technical more than political in its perspective on war, the view that Vegetius was not a political writer is not sustainable in view of the evidence set out in the previous chapter. On the other hand, Duffy cites Friedrich Wilhelm von Zanthier (1741–83) as his authority for eighteenth-century interest in the political dimension rather than the more influential writers described here. Neill’s study on the influence of classical writing in the eighteenth century emphasises Saxe’s adoption of Vegetius but concerns itself only with the operational aspects of the Roman author: there is no reference to politics in this analysis. My conclusion is that while Vegetius was regarded as the leading and most complete author of Roman military

39 The contrast is even more stark when these writers are compared with post-war writers such as Henry Lloyd (c. 1729-83). Lloyd’s General Principles of War (1766) includes an analysis of the way different forms of government influence military effectiveness; while his Continuation of the Late War in Germany (1781) identifies ‘a prodigious difference in the duration and final success of [wars]; from whence I infer, that the difference of government contributed as much towards it, as the goodness of the troops, or the genius of the commanders.’ Patrick J. Speelman (Ed), War, Society and Enlightenment: The Works of General Lloyd (Brill, 2005), pp. 28, 458. See below, p. 202.  
33 Ibid.  
34 Duffy, Military Experience, p. 53.  
theory, the political dimension of his work was not the focus of interest in him in the eighteenth century as it had been in earlier centuries.\textsuperscript{37}

For the purposes of understanding the tradition of the Military Enlightenment, however, we can acknowledge that the mainstream was not concerned with the political, social or economic dimensions of warfare in the way that the \textit{Epitoma} and the \textit{Sunzi} were and that while the subject was not entirely absent it was not the main focus of Folard, Puységur and Saxe. While each of these writers had his own distinctive approach, it is fair to see the Military Enlightenment collectively as sharing a desire to offer a systematic, comprehensive and scientific analysis of warfare that related the subject much more to other sciences and (perhaps consequently) placed less emphasis on politics or economics. Significantly, as Karl Schweizer observes, the net effect of the Military Enlightenment was that ‘such changes as were implemented in tactics and strategy did not radically alter or revolutionize the nature of war’.\textsuperscript{38} On the contrary, it was political and social developments in the revolutionary era that transformed warfare.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{The Seven Years’ War}

Military theory is not the only genre and medium within which ideas about war are advanced. Consequently, in order to understand the context within which Amiot and Clarke undertook their translations, we must look at other forms of writing as well as other traditions. In the case of Amiot, this involves considering a range of traditions in France and China that collectively formed his literary and intellectual context. For Clarke, however, we take a different approach and consider the effect of the Seven Years’ War on military theory in Britain. The evidence for this research is drawn from a variety of genres. First, within military theory, we have books published by four British authors...

\textsuperscript{37} See p. 117 below on how Vegetius was co-opted by Machiavelli and mediaeval political thinkers.\textsuperscript{38} Karl W Schweizer, ‘Introduction’ in ‘Warfare and tactics in the eighteenth century: some recent research’, ed by Karl W Schweizer, \textit{Studies in History and Politics/Etudes d'Histoire et de Politique} Special Issue, vol. III 1983/1984, p. 10.\textsuperscript{39} Europeans were first able to see the potential of this new type of warfare during the American Revolution, when ‘an ideal system was achieved by a combination of the militia, who had meanwhile been disciplined and trained, and snipers who were not restricted to any set formation.’ These snipers ‘could take their time to cut down the English officers one by one, a procedure which could have the result of crippling the entire enemy line.’ Gerke Teitler, \textit{The Genesis of the Professional Officers’ Corps} (Sage Publications, 1977). The first account of this very phenomenon was relayed by the other John Clarke in his account of Bunker Hill, published in London shortly after the battle. Clarke notes the impact of an American ‘Marksman’ who killed 20 regular officers in the space of 12 minutes; and he describes as ‘remarkable’ the shocking ‘disproportion’ of dead to wounded in the battle. Clarke’s was the first account of the new style of warfare defined by Teitler. Clarke, \textit{Bunker’s Hill}, pp. 15–16.
during the course of the war – Thomas More Molyneux, James Anderson, John MacIntire and Campbell Dalrymple. Second, there is the very significant political pamphlet written by Israel Mauduit in 1760; and finally, the first English history of the war published in 1763 by John Entick. These various texts cover many aspects of Britain’s military and political situation during the war, but it is my suggestion that all of them share the common aim of presenting, examining or challenging in public a ‘system’ that is in some way fundamental to Britain’s strategic success in the war. I emphasise ‘public’ because the period from 1756 to 1763 marked a moment when politics, strategy, war and the press collided in an unprecedented manner. First, the scale of press activity was extraordinary – with 86 newspapers serving London alone by 1760. Second, the press and pamphleteers were deeply divided politically and were in some cases the mouthpieces of the opposing British factions. So, the pamphleteer Mauduit and the Briton newspaper were funded by the Earl of Bute (1713–92) in order to promote his position against that of Pitt; while Entick and the Monitor newspaper were funded by Lord Temple (Pitt’s brother-in-law) following Pitt and Temple’s resignations in 1761. Third, the press was even targeted for manipulation by the French government through its agent in London, François de Bussy, as part of the Duc de Choiseul’s strategy to divide the cabinet, bring down Pitt and secure a favourable peace. Thus, the British press was engaged not only in its metaphorical war, but in influencing the course of the real war and as an instrument of strategy for those directing the war in Britain and France.

Given what we have seen from the tradition of the Military Enlightenment it is no surprise that the word ‘system’ appears about 100 times in these texts. What is different is that the word is used with three distinct but related meanings which, I would suggest, reflect the specific circumstances and dynamics of Britain’s situation in the war, rather than an attempt to create a universal, generic system for the art of war as we have seen with the earlier writers. Thus I wish to demonstrate, through examination of this word, how the war created a new context within which John Clarke wrote, and we can read, his Military Institutions.


The first use of ‘system’ is the idea of a defined and consistent way of undertaking a particular type of military activity. This is Molyneux’s 1759 ‘littoral system’ for conducting joint army and navy expeditions against coastal targets. Molyneux’s work is an historical analysis of amphibious operations, written at a time when Britain was struggling to conduct such operations successfully. He draws on the widest range of classical and contemporary military theorists and historians, including the *Epitoma*, of which he owned a copy. The resulting book is in two parts, the first being an historical account of amphibious warfare and the second a description of what he calls his ‘new System’, designed to remedy his conclusion (from 150 years of failed expeditions), that ‘From first to last then there is no Perfection, no true System, or Regularity; but all random hits, just as it happen’d, whether Right or Wrong, Light or Darkness’.

Closely related logically and semantically to Molyneux’s is MacIntire’s system for the effective training and organisation of the Marines: ‘A System of Marine Discipline is peculiarly useful in an Island like this; where every Soldier may have Occasion to act by Sea as well as by land …’

The second usage is a broader idea of a ‘military system’, which embraces all of the ways in which the military of a particular country is organised, administered and deployed – but also underpinned theoretically. This is the type of system sought by earlier writers of the Military Enlightenment but with a national rather than universal perspective. In his earlier 1756 work, Molyneux states,

> There is no one science has a greater variety of parts than this … Wherefore, whoever treats at large of this art in general, should consider within himself, what reason he has to flatter himself, there will ever happen a war, or even an action, more conformable to his military system, (tho’ he should waste all his days in the execution) than to the theory and military system of those who are gone before him.

Similarly, Dalrymple offers a proposal for a professional standing army, saying that ‘some plan is the proper basis upon which to erect a military system for this country’. He also uses the phrase in respect of light-armed troops:

> The ancients studied the art of war too much, and understood it too well, not to acknowledge soon the utility of it, and had too much sense not to adopt, as an essential part of their military system, what had before been only considered as irregulars …

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44 Molyneux, *Conjunct expeditions*, vol. 2, p. 36.
The third sense of the word is the one that has come to be almost synonymous with warfare in the eighteenth century – ‘system’ in the sense of (grand) strategy. Mauduit, whose pamphlet was a critique of Britain’s strategy of fighting, directly and through a subsidised Prussia, a land war in Europe against France and her allies, describes this approach as the ‘present system’. This he contrasts with the ‘revolution system’ of William III:

[The] whole tendency of these Considerations has been to establish, and bring us back to the true revolution system: that the only enemy upon the continent, which Britain can be endangered by, is France ... [and that only when Europe is united against France, should Britain join] ... This is the principle which actuated our greatest statesmen for the first twenty years after the Revolution; and this was the sole principle, by which one of the best politicians, that ever sat on the English throne, governed himself through his whole reign.

Writing his history of the war from the opposite political perspective to Mauduit, Entick nonetheless uses ‘system’ in the same way. In the course of his five volumes, all of the main belligerents are described as having a system: ‘the system of the court of France;’ the ‘iniquitous system’ of Saxony; ‘the system of Vienna’; and, ‘the political system of the Bourbon Family’. For Entick, Britain’s own system is synonymous with William Pitt – only when Pitt is in the ministry, the system is sound. So, after Pitt’s first resignation in 1757, Entick writes that Britain is ‘engaged in a war with the most formidable enemy in Europe ... without any system in its councils for carrying the war to effect ...’ And, after Pitt’s re-appointment:

[Pitt’s] new system, resolution and activity convinced [the British people] that he would not be discouraged by the failure in his first attempt, however it had happened ... As for France, our natural enemy; she was not prepared to contend with a new power, that braved every danger, had totally changed its system, and was in a condition, and resolved to attack her with full vigour ... Division, the grand engine of the French system of politicks, by which they had so often disgraced us abroad and distracted us at home, was healed.

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48 On relations between the press, military practice and theorists, including Mauduit and Molyneux, see Mark H. Danley, ‘The British Political Press’ in The Seven Years’ War, ed. by Danley and Speelman, pp. 369–92.
49 Mauduit, Considerations, pp. 94, 112–3.
52 Ibid, p. 359.
Entick uses the expression ‘continental system’ but not to describe Pitt’s strategy, but that of an opposing faction (implicitly those favoured by King George II) who wanted a standing army and a navy used ‘in subserviency to the continental system’.53

What then unifies the use of the word ‘system’ in these texts? The answer is that all of them are based on a strategic hierarchy in which the base of the pyramid is determined by nature. Entick and Mauduit, in spite of their political differences, both posit a ‘natural’ British strategy that is a function of Britain’s geography. Mauduit writes:

Could we but be true to ourselves, and pursue the advantage which providence has put into our hands, and by seizing our enemy’s islands, make ourselves masters of that trade; we might then give France the offer of peace or war, as long as they pleased: for all the motives for our going to war with them, and all the means of them coming to war with us, would be at an end ... Britain may calmly look on in security ...54

Entick similarly writes that the continental system ‘neglects our natural strength’ and of the maritime system:

It was urged in defence of this system, That our situation, as an island, prescribes to us a conduct very different from all other nations: That our strength and our support is in our navy and trade; and that, as they mutually support each other, they ought to go hand in hand.55

So, Britain’s true (grand) strategy or system is founded on her insular geography, which makes it both natural and unique. The military writers apply this same principle in their development of more specific systems that are designed to give effect to Britain’s natural advantages. For MacIntire that is the Marine Corps, an army force transported by sea and able to participate in the littoral system of warfare described by Molyneux. But the military writers are not thinking solely in military terms.56 Molyneux’s ‘system’ is not merely a military or naval one – it is a political one:

We must tell our Countrymen, that a Military, Naval, Littoral War, when wisely prepared and discreetly conducted, is a terrible Sort of War. Happy for that People who are

53 Ibid, p. 171. Simms takes a different view, arguing that Pitt at all times placed continental considerations at the heart of his strategy and that he ‘emerged from the old Whig Continentalist tradition’ while his new system was ‘a restoration not a revolution in British strategy’. According to this view, even Pitt’s coastal raids on France were designed to provide the diversion demanded by Frederick II in support of the continental strategy rather than being the expression of a maritime system. Brendan Simms, Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714–1783 (Basic Books, 2009), pp. 424, 434.

54 Mauduit, Considerations, pp. 44–5.

55 Entick, General History, pp. 175, 172.

56 Gruber suggests that Molyneux intends an analysis independent of the French – although he cites French authorities extensively: Gruber, Books, pp. 18–19 and 100–103.
Sovereigns enough of the Sea to put it in Execution! For it comes like Thunder and Lightning to some unprepared Part of the World.57

Molyneux’ phrasing here, like Mauduit’s ‘Britain may calmly look on in security’, appears to echo Francis Bacon’s aphorism that ‘He that commands the sea is at great liberty and may take as much or as little of the war as he will, whereas those that are strong by land are many times nevertheless in great straits’.58 The controversy over Britain’s eighteenth-century strategy has its roots in Elizabethan England.59 Dalrymple, a soldier, also acknowledges the natural basis for Britain’s strategy, but argues that a standing army is also strategically vital in war and in peace (the latter being the ‘pacific system’):

A standing army is universally known to be contrary to law in this kingdom; however, the continuance of it from year to year, is, unfortunately for the advocates against it, as great a proof of the necessity of having it, as of its being unconstitutional. The navy is undoubtedly the chief strength of this nation, as much from the protection it yields to our trade abroad, as to our insular situation: yet, without the mutual support of a few good troops (comparatively speaking with France) we can neither boast of security at home, nor in the colonies ...

If it be not a maxim in politics, it is a known truth, ‘that the best security for a lasting peace, is the being in a condition to enter into war;’ and it is not to be doubted, but the same wise councils, which have of late braced up our relaxed, languid operations, will settle and conduct the pacific system, when it pleases Heaven to grant it ... The necessity of having a standing army for the above reasons, seems more indisputable than ever ...60

We will consider further the controversial nature of the standing army when we look at Clarke’s translation, but we can note here that Dalrymple is both citing Vegetius’ aphorism and drawing on what Simms describes as ‘the guiding axiom of British strategic culture throughout the first sixty years of the century ... that France would be more than a match for the Royal Navy if she had nothing to fear on land’.61 This is an axiom that derives not from a narrow military perspective but from a broad assessment of all the political, economic, geographical and military factors that would determine the relative strategic positions of France and Britain. The British perspective on strategy necessarily had a strong economic dimension since it was apparent to all participants that Britain was a fraction of the size of France alone. At the political level ‘systems’ are

57 Molyneux, Conjunct expeditions, part I, pp. 3–4.
61 Simms, Three Victories, pp. 510–11.
always accompanied by ‘measures’ – meaning the financial and other resources needed to carry out the agreed strategy. Following his accession, George III opened Parliament in November 1760 with a speech in which he appeared to endorse his grandfather’s support for Pitt’s ‘system, by which alone the liberties of Europe, and the weight and influence of these kingdoms can be preserved, and to have given life to those measures conducive to those important ends’. These measures were easily quantified since the ministry brought forward estimates to Parliament each year that set out the budget for the army and navy. These threw into relief the relative costs of the maritime and continental components of Britain’s strategy and other political issues. In March 1763, the military estimates presented to Parliament included funds to allow the King and Bute to double the size of the garrison in America to 10,000 men. This was opposed ‘as dangerous to liberty and as increasing the influence of the Crown’.

Thus politics, economics and strategy were inextricably linked, even in peacetime, both because of the role of the army in internal security (a particular problem in 1763 because of Bute’s unpopularity) and because of the scale of the military to the size of the state. During the war, around three-quarters of annual expenditure went on current spending on the army, navy and ordnance or to service debts incurred during earlier wars.

Britain’s economic productivity, and the relative efficiency of the British and Prussian armies, allowed her to take on France, a country with four-and-a-half times her population in 1700, as well as Austria, Russia, Sweden and ultimately Spain. Corbett attributes Britain’s strategic success to Pitt’s ability to integrate political and military objectives, underpinned as ever by the right economics: this was Pitt’s ‘system’.

The necessity, therefore, of broad strategic assessment is taken up by Anderson, whose narrative starts with Puységur’s concept of the general and particular plans of the war: ‘The most sublime part of the art military, says the Mareschal Puyssegur, is to know how

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63 Simms, Three Victories, p. 535.
65 The scale of manpower needed was exacerbated by endemic desertion. The Royal Navy lost 1,500 servicemen in battle during the war while losses to desertion amounted to 40,000. Imperial State, ed. by Stone, pp. 73, 89, 13-14. 80,000 Prussian, 70,000 French and 62,000 Austrian soldiers deserted during the war: Childs, Armies, p. 73. On efficiency, the French army had one officer to nine men, compared with 1:19 in the British army and 1:29 in the Prussian. Childs, Armies, p. 81-2.
66 Corbett, Seven Years’ War, p. 6. From this perspective, Pitt’s system was not defined by the outcome of a specific strategy but rather by the process of integration that created it.
to form the plan of the war. From this general plan result particular plans of operations, relative to the different countries where we would sustain or carry on the war’. 67

Anderson takes his theme further:

But the general Plan of a War we would undertake, or are obliged to sustain, belongs to Politics. The Prince’s Ministers want to examine the political System of other Powers: Whether they would interest themselves for or against us? What Advantages or Disadvantages may proceed from the War? Of what State we ought to preserve the Neutrality, or call for the Succour? What Means to be employed for the Attack or for the Defence? On this general Plan the Prince’s Council are to meditate, to combine all the Ways and Means, and foresee the Consequences. On this general Plan depends also the Kind of War we are to make: but the Choice of the Frontier where one sort of War ought to take Place, preferably to another, depends on the particular Plan, that is to say, the Situation and Constitution of the Country, and the readiest Means of Success. The general Plan is decided by the Prince’s Ministers. But the General Officers of most Ability ought to be consulted on the particular Plan. 68

Anderson is articulating a strategic assessment of the systems of the belligerents in the sense we have already discussed. As he states, this is a political process but one in which the most capable general officers are to be consulted. As obvious as it may seem today, this description of the division of responsibility in relation to strategic decision-making, and the way in which strategy straddles the political and military spheres, is (from my research) unique within the Military Enlightenment. While it may have been prompted in part by Puységur’s observation on plans of war, it is also the product of the intense debate over ‘systems’ that took place in Britain during the war and in particular from 1760. All of these writers were contributing to a public debate over Britain’s strategy in the war that was unprecedented. The effect that this debate had in changing the nature of political engagement for the British public has been acknowledged. 69 But, it also changed the narrative of the Military Enlightenment, at least in Britain, by fusing the political, economic, social and military spheres of politics. As we have seen in chapter 1, this understanding of war lies at the heart of the Epitoma and therefore it is significant that Clarke turned to this text in the aftermath of the war. In the opening words of his dedication to George III, Clarke describes the Epitoma as ‘the only remaining System of ancient Discipline’ and on the first page of his Preface as ‘the only continued and regular System of ancient military Discipline now extant’. 70 In whichever of the three senses Clarke is using the word ‘system’ here, the history of the re-establishment of the Marine Corps in 1755, its part in the war and the experience of its officers would have given him

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69 Schweizer, Statesmen, p. 176.
70 Military Institutions, Dedication and Preface, p. i.
an intensely personal perspective on the political and strategic developments described above.\textsuperscript{71}

We can infer from Clarke’s collection and catalogue of books after the war that it was this more strategic aspect of warfare that captured his imagination. In addition, the Marine Corps’ recent foundation had exposed the fact that its functions were highly politicised and that its operational doctrine was closely associated with Britain’s maritime strategy as described by Molyneux and MacIntire. The debates surrounding the foundation of the Marines in the 1730s focused on all of the usual concerns around standing armies as well as concerns specific to this branch of the military.\textsuperscript{72} The experience of the Marine regiments in the subsequent War of the Austrian Succession had highlighted problems deriving from the competing demands of Army and Navy over the Marines which left the Corps ‘in an ambiguous state over their authority, autonomy in action and existence’.\textsuperscript{73} Marine officers typically came from the lower-gentry and merchant classes and ‘of the 523 marine officers recorded as serving in 1759, a mere seven bore titles’.\textsuperscript{74} The inferior status of the Marines was explicit from the start. The initial batch of senior officers and the three Divisional Colonels appointed in 1755 were drawn from the Navy and it was not until 1770 that the ranks above Lieutenant-Colonel were opened to Marine officers.\textsuperscript{75} The limited career prospects of Marine officers caused an understandable grievance. Marines took their complaints to the public with letters printed initially in the \textit{North Briton}. The choice of this newspaper was political in itself as, with the \textit{Monitor}, it was the main voice for those who were antagonistic to Bute and the Government generally and specifically over the terms of Peace. The following letter in the \textit{North Briton} of 1763 illustrates how an ambitious Marine officer may have felt about his prospects of promotion, even without the immediate threat of half-pay, and the association with Pitt and Choiseul’s Peace of Paris:

\begin{quote}
‘The mal-treatment they have, nevertheless, met with, is almost inconceivable ... What crime had all the old experienced officers, the lieutenant-colonels and majors of the marines, committed, that they were thus deprived of all hopes of future preferment? Lost to ambition, that soul chearing [sic] balsam, which stimulates a soldier to encounter the dangers of war, and supports him amidst all its fatigues! The patriotic minister, Mr. Pitt, \\
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{72} Marini, \textit{Marine Forces}, pp. 171–6.

\textsuperscript{73} Zerbe, \textit{Marines}, p. 39.


\textsuperscript{75} Marini, \textit{Marine Forces}, p. 172.
had resolved do something for the officers of this much deserving corps (to whose services
he was no stranger) but the important negotiation ... and his removal from power
succeeding, utterly prevented it.\footnote{\textit{The North Briton}, No. 47, (London), Saturday, June 4, 1763, p. 11-13 cited by Zerbe, \textit{Marines}, pp. 61–2.}

From the little we know of this period of John Clarke’s life we can surmise that he would
have been highly attuned to the political and strategic dimensions of the war. First, there
was the intense press war over this subject that we have described above and which
could not have passed over the head of a man of his profession and education. Second,
the issues being discussed at a national level were ones that he had directly experienced
in the conduct of the war during his years of active service, in the short history of the
Marine Corps and in the relationship between the two. As the above letter demonstrates,
the Marines had a particular affinity to Pitt given their association with his successful
operations around the world. Like his fellow Marine officers, Clarke was well educated,
perhaps rather wealthier than some – but facing a bleak career outlook from 1763.

\textbf{The suppression of the Jesuits}

Choiseul was celebrated in France for the achievements of the Peace of Paris which was
signed in February 1763. France recovered valuable islands in the West Indies, Goree in
West Africa and fishing rights in Newfoundland. In India, Britain and France agreed to
return to the position in 1749. Spain recovered Manila and Havana and Choiseul gifted
his ally Louisiana west of the Mississippi to make up for the loss of Florida. Perhaps the
most remarkable characteristic of the Peace was that it left Britain in a very poor position
strategically while it gave France the basis for a future recovery.\footnote{Prussia, Britain’s only
continental ally in the war had been abandoned and alienated while France had been
able to demonstrate loyalty to her allies.} The Peace of Paris provided Choiseul with the
political capital to pursue his strategic goals for the remainder of the decade, and the
social capital in Madrid and Vienna to sustain France’s alliances and to pursue the Jesuits
internationally.\footnote{Rashed, \textit{Peace of Paris}, pp. 206–7.} It also left the Corps of Marines reduced and demoralised both as a
result of Pitt’s resignation and the surrender of so many islands won in Marine
operations.

\footnote{France’s rights in the Newfoundland fisheries were contentious because they were profitable
and provided France with an economic basis for a commercial fleet and for training seamen, the
foundations of a navy.}
\footnote{Burke wrote that ‘a security against that league ought to have been the fundamental point of a
Pitt may have been unlikely to work successfully with George III and Bute but, as we have seen, it was Choiseul who engineered his downfall; and it was not only Pitt who fell victim to Choiseul’s methods – so too did the Society of Jesus. Following the death of Marshal Belleisle (b. 1684) in January 1761, the strength of Choiseul’s relations with Austria and Spain and his handling of the Peace of Paris enabled him to extricate France from the war and begin the process of rebuilding. By the time of Choiseul’s dismissal in 1770, ‘French power stood high in Europe and was respected as it had not been since the exploits of Marshal Saxe in the War of the Austrian Succession’. Choiseul’s relationship with the Society of Jesus was complicated and took time to evolve into its final, unconditional determination to see the Order suppressed worldwide. His role in this is treated differently in the scholarship. Scott, for example, sees Choiseul as the architect of the whole, international programme of suppression while Van Kley is tentative about his role in the French expulsion, presenting him more neutrally as a figure without whose support the Jesuits could not have been suppressed in France. His first experience of the Society was as a student at the Jesuit college of Louis Le Grand in Paris. After his service in the War of the Austrian Succession, Choiseul endeared himself to the Marquise de Pompadour, which distanced him from the dévot faction led by Queen Marie (1703–68). On the opposing side to the dévots were the Jansenists.

At least some of the philosophes also opposed the Jesuits, and were aligned to the Parlements. D’Alembert (1717–83) claimed in 1765 that ‘It was properly Philosophy which by the mouths of the magistrates [of the Parlement of Paris] issued the decree against the Jesuits’. However, a complex set of ideas involving nationalism, Jansenism, the Parlement and the philosophes had been set off by the Papal Bull Unigenitus of 1713 (a measure engineered by the Jesuits and outlawing Jansenism) and grew over the subsequent 50 years. Choiseul was known to be sympathetic to the ideas of the

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82 A French Catholic religious movement from the 1640s but which, by the mid-eighteenth century, had a distinctly political aspect to it, ‘an ideological compound uniting elements of Jansenism, both religiously and theologically defined, ecclesiastical as well as parlementary Gallicanism, and parlementary constitutionalisms in a synthesis whose inherent instability only redoubled its force.’ Dale Van Kley, ‘The Jansenist Constitutional Legacy in the French Pre-revolution 1750–1789’ Historical Reflections/Réflexions historiques (1986), 393-453, p. 404.
philosophes but he was loyal to the King in respect of the Parlements.\textsuperscript{84} Perhaps the first sign of Choiseul’s break with the Jesuits came during his appointment at Rome between 1754 and 1757 when, working with Pompadour, he succeeded in obtaining a Papal Encyclical Ex Omnibus which was seen as benefiting the Jansenists at the expense of the Society of Jesus. However, when in 1759 Portugal’s chief minister expelled the Jesuits Choiseul was more concerned that a rupture between Portugal and Rome would lead to an alliance with Britain than pleased with this blow to the Jesuits. This suggests that Choiseul’s interests were pragmatic rather than ideological and he was only on the fringes when the Paris Parlement began its final campaign against the Jesuits in 1759, accusing the Jesuits above all of ‘despotism,’ a term which had already been deployed by Parlement to argue its constitutional role in relation to the Crown.\textsuperscript{85} In June 1760, however, there was a plot at court to have Choiseul dismissed in which, according to Scott, the Jesuits were implicated.\textsuperscript{86} This attempted coup may have affirmed in Choiseul’s mind that the order was his enemy at court and a threat to his position. In addition, anyone seeking to exert authority over the King or France was a threat to his power. Overall, the facts support a view that Choiseul played as active a role in the expulsion of the Jesuits from France as in their international suppression.

In August 1762, the Parlement issued a writ holding the French attorney-general of the Jesuits personally responsible for the order’s ‘despotism’ and its ‘anarchical, murderous and parricidal doctrines’ and closing the order in France.\textsuperscript{87} The King was reluctant to confirm this order but in May 1763 Bertin put forward a set of fiscal measures which the Parlement of Paris rejected on both substantive and procedural grounds. Choiseul negotiated a compromise which saw Parlement accept the King’s fiscal measures in return for his confirming, in 1764, the abolition of the Jesuits and the replacement of Bertin as Controller General by Clément Charles François de L’Averdy (1724–93), a Parlementaire who had built his reputation against the Jesuits. For Choiseul the next step was to persuade Charles III to take the same action in Spain and to lead an international movement for the suppression of the Society of Jesus. The Jesuits were expelled from Spain in 1767 and suppressed internationally by means of the declaration Dominus ac

\textsuperscript{84} Bertin, meanwhile, appears to have straddled all the parties: Scott identifies him as a \textit{dévot}, he was also a member of Pompadour’s circle while a supporter of the Jesuit mission in Peking and a patron of the cultural exchange with China that Voltaire and other \textit{philosophes} would have welcomed. Scott, \textit{Choiseul}, p. 48.

\textsuperscript{85} Van Kley, \textit{Expulsion of the Jesuits}, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{86} Scott, \textit{Choiseul}, pp. 48-9.

\textsuperscript{87} Jones, \textit{The Great Nation}, p. 249.
Redemptor, made in August 1773 by Pope Clement XIV (1705–74). During the controversy in France, the Jesuits had been described as dangerous aliens whose ‘enthusiastic’ obedience to their Italian superior precluded submission to the laws of the kingdom and allegiance to the king. Such ‘slaves,’ contended the attorney general of the Parlement of Rennes, ‘have no country’. ‘They will be citizens when they are no longer Jesuits’. 

From his very first letter to Bertin in September 1766, coming soon after his discovery that Louis XV had confirmed the dissolution of the Order in France, Joseph Amiot in Peking makes clear that he is deeply conscious of what has happened and its implications for him personally. In that letter he refers to the ‘malheur’ of events in France and the ‘disgraces’. In his second letter, a year later, he refers to France as his ‘ingrate patrie’. Interestingly, one insight into how Amiot viewed himself is how he signs his letters to Bertin. In 1766 through 1768 he signs off as ‘Amiot Miss. de la Compè de jés’. This then becomes abbreviated to ‘m.d.l.c.d.j.’ by 1771; but in 1774 – immediately after news of the final suppression – he uses both ‘Amiot Missionaire cy devant jesuite’ and ‘Amiot M’. By 1776, he has become ‘Amiot Miss. apost.’ although in a letter of 1780 to the new minister responsible for the French mission he exceptionally signs off as ‘Amiot Missionaire français’. Amiot had certainly lost the status and identity of being a French Jesuit, but it is less clear that he had regained his freedom and French citizenship. On the contrary, the abolition of the Order left its members in a precarious position as different groups sought to acquire authority over the Peking mission. These developments are reflected even in Amiot’s varying signatures.

The French mission in China

The history and strategies of the Jesuit mission in China heavily influenced those of Joseph Amiot, who was a significant actor in its final 40 years. The mission was in many ways typical of the work of the Society of Jesus and exemplified its doctrine and modus operandi. But it was also an exceptional project in that it combined European national

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89 Amiot to Bertin, 23 September 1766 (BIF, MS 1515, fol. 2).

90 Amiot to Bertin, 9 October 1767 (BIF, MS 1515, fol. 4).

91 Amiot to Bertin, 23 September 1766 (BIF, MS 1515, fol. 2), 9 October 1767 (MS 1515, fol. 4), 11 September 1768 (MS 1515, fol. 6), 5October 1771 (MS 1515, fol. 7), 15 September 1774 (MS 1515, fol. 67), 1 October 1774 (MS 1515 fol. 60) and 12 September 1776 (MS 1515, fol. 92); and Amiot to Sartines 8 December 1780 (MS 1516, fol. 266).
and church politics and economics and played a significant role in China under the Ming and then Qing dynasties as well as influencing cultural and political developments in France and across Europe.

If ever a religious order was designed to play such a dynamic role across the world then it was the Compañía de Jesús, whose founder was a former soldier and whose name, doctrine and organisation were military. In one assessment, this was ‘the most centralized and disciplined non-military body that has ever existed’. The Society’s combination of education, publication and missionary work enabled it rapidly to acquire a widespread and profound influence in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. One of the keys to the Order’s effectiveness was its practice of incessant and thorough communication across a network of 17,000 Jesuits by 1679.

Joseph Amiot, a voracious correspondent as well as author, was among the last Jesuits of the Order’s two centuries in China. From its origins with Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), the strategy of the Order in China developed three distinctive characteristics: (a) a policy of accommodation to Chinese culture based on tolerance and even admiration of Chinese values; (b) evangelisation from the top of society down; and, (c) the use of European science and technology as a means to serve and engage China’s elite and gain its patronage. From Ricci onwards, the Jesuits became masters of Confucianism and adopted the dress and status of Confucian scholars. It was the combination of these characteristics (which reflected an approach that could be seen elsewhere in their work)

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94 Jesuit authors produced some 6,000 works between 1600 and 1773; and in China some 437 works over a similar period, of which a third were in the sciences: Bejamin A. Elman, ‘Jesuit Scientia and Natural Studies in Late Imperial China, 1600–1800’ Journal of Early Modern history 6.3 (2002), 209–232, p. 211.
that alienated other orders, in particular the Dominicans, and triggered the Controversy of the Rites.\textsuperscript{97}

Over time the Jesuits’ strategy had developed further: a new wave of Jesuit scholars undertook extensive translation of religious and scientific writings; and they also focused their attention in Peking on the imperial court rather than upper-class literati. Adam Schall von Bell (1592–1666) was the first Jesuit to be appointed director of the Imperial Board of Astronomy and he also advised the Ming court on the production of artillery, in which his ‘principal contribution was the production of smaller and less unwieldy siege guns’.\textsuperscript{98} Schall von Bell’s influence continued into the third period which began with the fall in 1644 of the Ming dynasty to the Manchu. The Jesuits’ functional role in China was appreciated both there and in Europe. Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–88) succeeded Schall von Bell on the Imperial Board of Astronomy and continued the latter’s work as a military adviser – work for which he was praised in 1681 by Pope Innocent XI (1611–89) who said that he had ‘used the profane sciences for the safety of the people and the advancement of the Faith’.\textsuperscript{99} The military co-operation was not, however, something that either the emperor or the Jesuits sought to publicise, although it continued for another century. In 1774, Felix da Rocha (1713–81) was sent by the emperor to the commander-in-chief at the front of the Second Jinchuan war (1771–76). There, according to Chinese despatches, da Rocha advised on artillery tactics to help them take a mountainous stronghold that was proving resistant to siege. Jesuit accounts of da

\textsuperscript{97} While these strategies were consistent with Jesuit approaches outside China, it would be wrong to identify them as a Jesuit ‘corporate culture.’ In particular, the Jesuits’ approach to China evolved in response to the requirements imposed on them there, and to pre-existing interests: Nicolas Standaert, \textit{Jesuit corporate culture as shaped by the Chinese} in John W. O’Malley et al (Eds), \textit{The Jesuits: cultures, sciences, and the arts, 1540-1773} (University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 352–63.

\textsuperscript{98} Waley-Cohen, ‘Western Technology’, p. 1531.

\textsuperscript{99} Arnold H. Rowbotham, \textit{Missionary and Mandarin: The Jesuits at the Court of China} (University of California Press, 1942), pp. 98, 247 cited in Waley-Cohen, ‘Western Technology’, p. 1532. This was perhaps seen as an acceptable breach of the prohibition against ‘teaching the infidel the art of war’ because of the established European view of China as both militarily weak and strategically defensive: Waley-Cohen, ‘Western Technology’, p. 1537. Schall von Bell and Verbiest were among the most prolific of the missionary translators, authoring 25 and 20 works respectively: R. Po-chia Hsia, ‘The Catholic mission & translations in China, 1583-1700’ in \textit{Cultural Translations}, ed. by Burke and Po-chia Hsia pp. 39–51, 45. Verbiest applied the same strategy to the Russian court, sending an important manuscript to Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich from Peking in 1686, demonstrating ‘the achievements of science and technology to the tsar in order to introduce the Jesuit missions as useful in the modernization of the country.’ Efthymios Nicolaidis ‘Scientific exchanges between Hellenism and Europe: translations into Greek, 1400–1700’ in \textit{ibid}, pp. 180-191, 190.
Rocha’s mission, however, merely describe him as having travelled as part of a cartographic mission.\textsuperscript{100}

Map-making was an important activity of the mission from 1688, when a new wave of French Jesuits arrived in China, the Mathématiciens du Roy, financed by the French king.\textsuperscript{101} France’s approach to trade and cultural exchange with China had its roots in the mid-1660s with the mercantilism of the Minister of Finance, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–83), who was able to present the Asian trade in terms that won for it the support of Louis XIV. In 1664, Colbert set up the Compagnie Royale des Indes Orientales which, unlike its Dutch and English competitors was not embraced by a wider group of investors but was supported and funded by the King and his court.\textsuperscript{102} For this group the prime interest was the King’s dynastic claims in Europe, in particular his campaign against Spain and the United Provinces, and the Asian trade was an extension of this strategy.\textsuperscript{103}

The decision to send the first French mission to China was taken by Louis XIV in 1684 and would set the complex terms of reference for the remaining century of Jesuit involvement there as can be seen in Amiot’s correspondence and literary work. The French King had been petitioned to take over the Jesuit mission in Peking by Couplet on behalf of Verbiest who was concerned at the falling numbers of the mission. Until this point, it was Portugal that had authority over all missions in China, but this was


\textsuperscript{101} Standaert, ‘Jesuits in China’, pp. 169–70. ‘One of the greatest projects that the French Jesuits undertook was overseeing the imperial survey of the Chinese empire in 1708–17’ – p. 180. See also Paul W. Mapp, The elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713–1763 (University of North Carolina Press, 2011), Chapter 6 ‘Imperial Comparisons’, pp. 187ff. Mapp describes how the China project illustrates the relationship between cartography, politics and other cultural development – including to Amiot’s editor. ‘Jesuit Father Antoine Gaubil … was specifically instructed by Louis XV and the Duc d’Orléans to use missionary service in China to contribute to the progress of geographic science … [In 1755 Father Gaubil] used his familiarity with Chinese texts and history to refute the claims advanced by French scholar Joseph de Guignes that Chinese Buddhist priests had journeyed to ‘Californie’ (le ‘pays de Fou sang’) in 458 CE.’


changing on many fronts as a result of both Church and secular European politics. The *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (1687), by Philippe Couplet (1623-93) and others, played a tactical part in the Jesuits’ engagement of Louis XIV into the China mission and also in seeking to strengthen their position within the Church. With the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, Louis was positioned as the leading defender of Catholicism in Europe and the Jesuits sought his patronage. Couplet’s dedicatory letter to the French king was designed to show that ‘Louis XIV and the Jesuits were all engaged in the same fight against heresy, both in Europe and in China’. France’s ascendancy coincided with Portugal’s decline. The latter’s rights had been diminished both *de facto* by the loss of power and control along the trade routes to the Dutch and English, and also *de iure* to the Papacy, which had re-established its own direct authority over the Orient in the mid-1600s. For completeness, the third protagonist was the *Société des Missions étrangères de Paris*, established in 1663. The French Jesuits identified Portugal and Portuguese Jesuits as their rivals and considered that the latter had profited from the mathematical and scientific skills of the French. The French would achieve their aims in the short term as in 1700 their mission was formally established and given independence from the Portuguese crown. This rivalry between the Pope, Portugal and France, and their respective religious orders over territorial authority in China, re-emerged in the 1760s. Portugal, the Congregation of the *Propaganda* and the *Missions étrangères* all played for control over the Peking mission and which was one of the factors in Amiot and Bertin’s plan to find a new basis for its survival and independence and why it was so critical that Amiot demonstrate the continuing strategic logic and utility to the French crown in supporting the Peking Mission.

The programme in China had a strong scientific basis, but just as the Jesuits had an underlying mission for their faith and Order, so did the Crown have its own political and economic purposes. One of the missionaries, Father Jean de Fontaney (1643–1710),

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104 These rights to supervise missions in the Orient were known as the *Padroado* and were conferred by the Pope in the Treaty of Tordesillas 1494.
105 Meynard, *Confucius*, p. 23.
106 In 1622, the Pope established the missionary congregation *Propaganda Fidei* which got around the *Padroado* by establishing in 1677 six Apostolic Vicariates across the Orient, of which two were in China, that were directly accountable to the Pope independent of national churches.
107 They did not, however, manage to take over the prestigious Presidency of the Imperial Bureau of Astronomy which remained under Portuguese control until the last European in this post died in 1774. See also Isabelle Landry-Deron, ‘Les Mathématiciens envoyés en Chine par Louis XIV en 1685’ *Archive for History of Exact Sciences*, 55.5 (2001), 423-463, p. 440.
captured the various dimensions in recounting Colbert’s words to him in an interview in about 1681:

Science, Father, does not warrant by itself that you take the trouble of crossing the oceans and condemn yourself to living in another world, far from your own country and your friends. But as the desire to convert the infidels and to win souls for Jesus Christ carries your Fathers to undertake such voyages, I request that they make the most of the opportunity; and that in those moments when they are not too occupied with the promotion of the Evangelists, they take as many observations of these places which we want in order to perfect the sciences and arts.\(^\text{108}\)

The *Mathématiciens* reached Peking in 1688 and prospered under the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662–1722) but back in Europe they became embroiled in the ‘Rites Controversy’ over the Jesuits’ accommodation of Chinese religious beliefs. This led both directly and indirectly to their suppression and also to their confrontation with the Jansenists, since the Jesuits had hoped to use the Papal Bull *Unigenitus* to cover an unfavourable judgement on the Chinese rites issued by the Pope in 1704. The Kangxi emperor was enraged by the controversy and the Papal Legate’s handling of it. After his death the Order was expelled by the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1722–35) although many Jesuits continued to work for the emperors in Peking while others worked secretly elsewhere across China.

From the early seventeenth century onwards, the Jesuits transmitted Chinese knowledge to Europe. Martinio Martini’s (1614–61) account of the Manchu invasion marked the first time that Europeans read of contemporary events in China as news rather than as purely static descriptions of the country.\(^\text{109}\) Martini also affected the parabola of sinophilia to sinophobia by sowing the idea of China’s longevity and stability as a society.\(^\text{110}\) This idea initially served the purposes of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers but as the Enlightenment drew to a close continuity became stagnation, which was contrasted with Western ‘progress’.\(^\text{111}\) The *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* presented Confucianism to Europe while later works addressed other aspects of Chinese culture, geography and


Perhaps the most significant though for the Jesuits was Louis Lecomte’s (1655–1728) *Nouveau mémoire sur l’état présent de la Chine* (1696), which drew the Church’s attention to the Jesuit approach of accommodation in China and triggered the Rites Controversy. It was also condemned by the Jansenist Faculty of Theology at the Sorbonne in 1700 and later condemned to be burnt by the Paris Parlement in 1762. A second Mathématicien, Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730), played a more positive role in the development of European sinophilia through his correspondence with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716). In both Lecomte and Bouvet’s writings we can see the way in which the French mission and its actors set the framework for events in Europe and China that formed both positive and negative aspects of the context for Amiot’s work and life in Peking.

**French sinology at the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War**

The Jesuit accounts of China presented Europeans with an entirely new set of facts that could be deployed to support or undermine any theory concerning theology, the question of universal morality and the best way to organise a rational society, political economy and the scientific and pseudo-scientific questions of the day – the origins of human society and language and the Biblical account of history. At the start of the war, Voltaire, produced the play *L’Orpheline de Chine* (1755) and the historical work *Essai sur les mœurs* (1756). The mainstream view of scholars is that sinophilia reached its peak with the latter work and turned rapidly thereafter into sinophobia. Millar argues that the causes lay not only in European development but also in the way in which the Jesuits had portrayed China to Europe: the reductionism and propaganda of the Jesuit portrayal of China had created the possibility for that image to be deployed by sinophobes as well.

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112 See further discussion below at p. 162. The last of the Jesuit collections was Amiot’s *Mémoires concernant l’histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages, & c. des Chinois: Par les Missionnaires de Pékin* (Paris, 1776–1814).

113 By the time Amiot arrived in the early 1750s, the Jesuit mission was in decline. This was visible both in the decline of baptisms and the lower status of those being baptized. Remarkably, by 1752 68% of baptisms were of abandoned infants (92% if the children of Christians are excluded.) Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, ‘Twilight in the Imperial City: The Jesuit Mission in China, 1748–60’ in *Jesuits II* ed. by O’Malley, pp. 725-36, pp. 726-31.

114 See, for example, Basil Guy, *The French image of China before and after Voltaire*, SVEC vol. 21 (Institut et musée Voltaire, 1963) p. 244; Ho-fung Hung, ‘Orientalist Knowledge and Social Theories: China and the European Conceptions of East-West Differences from 1600 to 1900’ *Sociological Theory* 21.3 (2003): 254-280, p. 263; and, Blue, ‘China and Western social thought’ in *China* ed. by Brook and Blue, p. 70.
as sinophiles. Notwithstanding their position on the continuum of sinophilia/sinophobia, Europeans nonetheless ‘often displayed a sincere desire to understand how China’s political economy could be reconciled with – or even used to improve – their own theories …’

My suggestion is that by the outbreak of the war French sinophilia had become conservative, symbolic and literary; and that it was Amiot’s Art Militaire, combined with the work of a handful of individuals in Paris, that actually brought the movement to its peak in the late 1760s and 1770s. To demonstrate and emphasise the first point, I undertake a comparison of Voltaire’s Essai with the Historical Essay (1669) of John Webb (1611–72). This also serves the purpose of showing the ideas that were central to the Enlightenment’s positive view of China and how these formed a platform for the more radical interpretation that we will see in the works that emerged in 1767 among the Physiocrats and in Amiot’s Art Militaire.

Webb’s Dedicatory Epistle to King Charles II captures the sense of revelation in his discovery of another world, and its potential to transform human understanding, in particular in respect of China’s ‘Politique Rules for Government’. For Webb, both ‘Nature and [Chinese] Policy’ have prevented the discovery of China by the world. The stated intention of the book was to prove that the common, primitive language of

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[117] John Webb, An Historical Essay Endeavoring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language (London, 1669). There is no evidence that Voltaire drew directly from Webb’s work. Webb is not cited by Voltaire and does not appear in the catalogue of his library or correspondence. Voltaire’s sources on China are discussed in Song, Shun-Ching, Voltaire et la Chine (Université de Provence, 1989). Although the two men both drew from the common tradition of Jesuit accounts of China their direct sources were different. Voltaire cites his sources in the Essai and they are all written after Webb’s death. They include Lecomte’s Nouveau mémoire (1696) and Jean-Baptiste du Halde’s (1674–1743) history of China published in 1736, both of which are in Voltaire’s collection: Merle L. Perkins, Voltaire’s concept of international order, SVEC vol. 36 (Institut et musée Voltaire, 1965) p. 312.


Webb emphasises China’s ‘infinite multitudes of People, and perpetual flourishing in Peace, and all Arts and Sciences, whilst every Nation almost throughout the whole Universe besides, have more than once in time been over-run and conquered …’ Webb attributes the perfection of China’s arts and sciences to Noah’s role in founding China after the flood and the preservation of ‘the History of China in the Ark’ - a crucial point as it is the reliability and continuity of China’s written records that provide the evidence necessary for his theory.

Webb places great store by the similarity between Confucius’ ethical teaching and that of Christ: ‘To return then to Confucius, his usual saying, and wherein he concluded, the highest perfection to consist, was, Ne facias ulli, quod pati nolis, which is the Law and the Prophets. And as you would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise’. Webb reserves his highest praise for China’s political economy (‘Policy in government’): ‘if ever any Monarchy in the world was constituted according to political principles, and dictates of right reason, it may be boldly said that of the Chinois is’. Webb especially admires the ‘great order’ of Chinese society, the fact that it is administered by ‘Literati or wisemen’ and that these administrators can only attain high rank if they are ‘very richly learned in

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120 Ibid, Dedicationary Epistle. ‘The 1650s, 1660s and 1670s were high-water years for speculations about the Chinese language. Because the air was full of such thoughts, it was only natural that an attempt would be made to show that the language of China was the Primitive Language. The man who finally undertook this task was ... John Webb.’ Paul Cornelius, Languages in seventeenth and early eighteenth-century imaginary voyages vol. 60 (Librairie Droz, 1965), p. 68. One hundred years later this same topic was still being debated and the two leading protagonists were Amiot’s editor and leading critic: Joseph de Guignes and Cornélius de Pauw, discussed further below. Webb’s motives for writing the Historical Essay and the context of his work are addressed by Rachel Ramsey and David Porter while Rhodri Lewis examines the broader project of universal language and links Webb to John Beale, founder of the Royal Society. Rachel Ramsey, ‘China and the Ideal of Order in John Webb’s an ‘Historical Essay …” Journal of the History of Ideas vol. 62, No. 3 (Jul., 2001), 483-503. David Porter, ‘Writing China: Legitimacy and Representation 1606-1773’ Comparative Literature Studies, vol. 33, No. 1, East-West Issue (1996), 98-122. Rhodri Lewis, Language, mind and nature: artificial languages in England from Bacon to Locke, vol. 80 (Cambridge University Press, 2007). For a more general study of Webb’s contribution to sinology see Chen Shouyi, ‘John Webb: a forgotten page in the early history of Sinology in Europe’ in Adrian Hsia (Ed.), The vision of China in the English literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Chinese University Press, 1998), pp. 87-114.
their Letters and Sciences’. Echoing Plato, Webb summarises ‘In a word, their Kings may be said to be Philosophers, and their Philosophers, Kings’. 121

Webb notes that China’s economy is built on agriculture: ‘They delight in no Art more than Agriculture and Planting [and] exceed all people in the World, and are so indefatigably diligent, laborious and expert therein ...’ Confucian values that are instilled by means of an admirable system of public education for instruction in ‘Arts and Moral Vertues’ and a civil examination system for the governing classes which Webb considers more rigorous than the examinations in the English universities.122

Webb cross-references Greek classical philosophers as well as the Bible in order to validate his observations.123 The breadth of Webb’s inquiry means that he includes some passages on Chinese warfare that typify this referencing to the classical tradition – and which we will see in Amiot’s treatment of the same subject. Warfare is, however, a difficult subject for Webb as his thesis of Chinese pacifism, lack of aggression, continuity and stability was undermined by documented wars of expansion and then the recent Manchu invasion and overthrow of the Ming dynasty.124 Webb presents the Chinese as pacifists, being of the opinion that ‘nothing is more unworthy their Emperour, than to enter into armes unconstrained; nothing more inglorious, than to seek for glory in the slaughter of his subjects; nor more inhumane, than men by men to be cut in pieces’.125


123 ‘That which Aristotle hath delivered of the People of Asia, is verified in the nature of the Chinois: We Europeans exceed them in point of valour, They us in subtlety of invention. They are wise, politique, and upon suddain emergencies most acute and resolute...’ Webb, Essay, p. 95

124 On the debate in China itself between the pacifist tendencies of Confucian scholars and the militaristic realpolitik of other Imperial counsellors and commanders, see Jonathan Karam Skaff ‘Tang Military Culture and its Inner Asian Influences’ in Nicola Di Cosmo (Ed.), Military Culture in Imperial China (Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 165–91, and see below at p. 161.

125 Webb, Essay, pp. 124–5. The pacifist doctrine he describes is most strongly associated with the Mozi: see note 86 on p. 51 above. This passage, however, goes on to describe and justify the wars leading to the unification of China under the Qin in 221 BCE; and offensive wars into India and against the Tartars: p. 128.
He also notes the Chinese invention of gunpowder and observes ‘in the use of their Guns they have little skill and less delight; but in Fireworks are most curiously artificial’. But elsewhere he cites China as the birthplace of warfare and grants the Chinese ‘such Heroick valour, and stratagemical policy, as far surmounts all Macedonian, Punic, or any other known conduct in the World’. Webb concludes his Historical Essay with a discussion of the inherent quality of the Chinese language among which is its utility: Chinese offers lessons in religion, rhetoric and ‘Warlike Stratagems such as Hannibal and Fabius were, and the greatest Captains are to learn’. He continues:

Valour giving place to none ... Agriculture surmounting all: The Mathematiques; Mechaniques; Morality; I cannot have words for all unless from China ...for Policy in government, Rules for Magistrates, Lawes for the People, not executed negligently like ours (in Europe) as if no matter whether yea or no they were ever made, neither Empire, nor Commonwealth ever or at this day known, can be brought to stand in competition with the Monarchy of China.

With the Historical Essay, Webb integrates several Jesuit and other sources on China, sets them against the Biblical and classical traditions with which he and his readers were familiar, and defines for a lay English audience many of the parameters that will dominate philosophe writing on China over the coming century.

Webb’s entanglement in English politics and the early years of the Royal Society may have disguised the fact that his ideas were as outward-looking as those of any

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126 Webb, Essay, pp. 111, 133.
In particular, his exploration of China’s constitution, ethics, meritocratic and universal educational and examination systems, historical longevity and continuity, agricultural base and achievements in the arts and sciences sets the standard for future thinking. Further, Webb’s emphasis of the utility of China’s discovery is also significant and so is the fact that even in a book that is markedly self-serving he cannot avoid introducing historical information that undermines the theoretical positions he wishes to advance. Finally, it is a delicate matter for Webb, as it will be for Voltaire, to decide the extent to which he can praise the Chinese emperors without criticising his own monarchy – and his position is no less bold than Voltaire’s as he advances the accusation of ‘negligence’ against states other than China. The reference to the Commonwealth notwithstanding, Webb stops short of urging any form of political change but it is notable that he was writing in the aftermath of the English Civil War and the Restoration. When the second edition of his book came out posthumously in 1678 (under the title of The Antiquity of China) the Dedicatory Epistle to Charles II, who was still on the throne, was gone.

Voltaire’s Essai, begun in 1740, was first published in 1756 with a subsequent Introduction published under a pseudonym in 1765. China occurs in significant places – at the end of the Avant-Propos, in the first two chapters and at the end of the book. Voltaire’s project was to draw together a universal history of all civilisations in order to show how human progress correlated with freedom and the rule of reason. Voltaire’s global journey begins with China, a people ‘whose history is recorded in a language already fixed at a time when we could not even write’. Thus we have immediately a strong echo of Webb in the principal statement of Voltaire’s intent – the search for universal history, the

connection between east and west and China’s position through the longevity of its history and its language. This shared interest in written history and language directs Voltaire to establish, like Webb, firm foundations for any evidence he wishes to adduce from China’s history and his very first comments about China set out to demonstrate the reliability of Chinese recorded history (‘their records are confirmed by the unanimous witness of travellers from all the different orders Jacobins, Jesuits, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans …’).\(^{133}\) The written records of Chinese history are not to be challenged: ‘So, it is not for us, far away in the West, to challenge the records of a nation that was wisely governed (toute policiée) when we were mere savages’ and ‘Is it for us to challenge a chronology universally accepted by them?’\(^{134}\) The accuracy of the written record provides an incontestable chronology based on astrological observations. It therefore enables Voltaire to state with confidence the well-known facts about China, particularly emphasising its continuity and wise administration.\(^{135}\) Several of these ideas are immediately familiar from Webb. For example, on continuity, we are told that the overthrow of the Ming dynasty resulted in no change: ‘The country of the conquerors became part of the country they had conquered and the Tartars, masters of China, did nothing other than submit themselves, arms in hand, to the laws of the very country whose throne they had taken’.

\(^{136}\) Among China’s inventions is gunpowder – which they only use for fireworks.\(^{137}\) Nonetheless, Voltaire notes, as did Webb, that the lack of Chinese interest in military technology does not mean that they conducted war any the less. On the Confucian teaching of how to treat others, Voltaire notes that Confucius offers a positive injunction: ‘He does not say ‘Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you’ but ‘Do to others what you would like to be done to you’.’ This is the same as Webb’s formulation ‘And as you would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise’.\(^{138}\)

One aspect in which Voltaire necessarily differs from Webb is in the relative progress of the West compared with China during that period, something that Voltaire explains as a function of the country’s respect for tradition and the complexity of Chinese writing. While Voltaire generally praises his missionary sources he criticises them for describing

\(^{133}\) Ibid, p. 95.
\(^{134}\) Ibid, p. 277.
\(^{135}\) Ibid, p. 279.
\(^{136}\) Ibid, p. 281.
\(^{137}\) Ibid, p. 284.
\(^{138}\) Ibid, p. 292.
the monarch as a despot – for him this is an unambiguously negative term – and remarks on the mechanisms available for citizens to raise concerns to the emperor, a point that both contradicts the missionaries and undermines Montesquieu’s ‘vague criticisms’ in *L’Esprit des lois* (1748).\(^{139}\)

Even from this short comparison it is evident that Voltaire’s narrative of China is close to that of Webb and serves a similar purpose in using China to illustrate universal truths about human history, society, religion and ethics. These two essays, separated by nearly a century, show the dominant themes of European sinophilia in the long eighteenth century and that they were remarkably consistent from beginning to end. Ironically, given the striking similarities between Voltaire and Webb, Voltaire blames the confusion about Chinese beliefs on the fact that ‘In the last century we did not know enough about China.’\(^ {140}\)

**The Physiocrats**

The sinophile movement did, however, undergo a radical change as a result of the Seven Years’ War through the medium of the Physiocrats. While this group of late *philosophes* may seem far removed from military theory, in fact they set the scene for the reception of Amiot’s *Art Militaire* and shaped its political, military and literary impact. It is therefore necessary to consider the Physiocrats in some detail. My perspective on the progress of sinophilia in the 1760s starts with that of Maverick who argued in the 1940s that the true peak of Jesuit influence was François Quesnay’s *Le Despotisme de la Chine* (1767). Maverick’s position is that the Physiocrats, led by Quesnay, and associated with three Controllers General of France, Silhouette, Bertin and Turgot, had a much more profound influence in particular on the economic thought (and ethics) of Adam Smith and thereby modern economics, politics and society than has been acknowledged.\(^ {141}\)

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\(^{140}\) Ibid, p. 291.

\(^{141}\) Lewis A. Maverick, *China, a model for Europe* (Paul Anderson Company, 1946). Adam Smith wrote of Physiocracy: ‘This system, however, with all its imperfections, is perhaps the nearest approximation to the truth that has yet been published upon the subject of political economy; and is upon that account, well worth the consideration of every man who wishes to examine with attention the principles of that very important science.’ Quesnay was ‘the very ingenious and profound author of this system.’ Adam Smith, *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, The Harvard Classics vol. 10 (P. F. Collier & Son, 1909) book IV, chapter IX, pp. 442-3, 437, www.archive.org (accessed 28.03.15).
will show that the network of people and events was larger and more significant even than Maverick suggests.

It is no coincidence that this phase of sinophilia, so concerned with politics, economics and order, began with the actions of three Controllers General, whose principal responsibilities at the time were the finances of France. The first such action took place in 1764 when Silhouette published his *La Balance des Chinois*, a series of letters from an imaginary Chinese writer to French readers.\(^{142}\) At the same time Bertin took responsibility for two young Chinese Jesuits, Louis Ko (1732–80) and Etienne Yang (1733–87), who were in France to complete their education, and had been rendered homeless by the expulsion of their order. Bertin organised for the two men to undertake a tour of French cities, with a particular focus on French industries such as the porcelain works at Sèvres.\(^{143}\) Before leaving France in 1765, Ko and Yang were presented with a set of 52 questions about the Chinese economy by Turgot, who also wrote his most important treatise on economics, *Réflexions sur la Formation et la Distribution des Richesses*, as a manual for them to use in answering these questions.\(^{144}\)

The next set of events all occurred in 1767, with the publication of *L’ordre naturel* by Pierre-Paul Le Mercier de La Rivière (1720-93) and Quesnay’s *Despotisme de la Chine*, both in the periodical *Les Ephémérides*, and the arrival in France of the first materials for Amiot’s *Art Militaire*.\(^{145}\) There was also a considerable degree of activity amongst this group concerning the execution of an order by Qianlong for the engraving of a set of prints celebrating the emperor’s recent military victories. Qianlong had issued the edict for their engraving in July 1765 and the drawings arrived in France in the autumn of 1766,

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\(^{142}\) Thirty years earlier Silhouette had published his *Idée générale du gouvernement et de la morale des Chinois* (G.F. Quillau, 1731).

\(^{143}\) Amongst Bertin’s papers are 12 printed pages of a work entitled ‘Voyage et séjour en France, par ordre du Roi, de deux particuliers chinois, les Sieurs Kô et Yang’ which does not appear in the catalogue of the BnF and which I have not found cited in previous scholarship. This document starts with an autobiographical account by Ko and Yang of their time in France. They describe (at p. 10) how they attended on Bertin in early 1764 to organize their return to China, Bertin being the minister responsible at that time for the Compagnie des Indes. BIF, MS 1520, fols 50-55. Lewis gives an account of Ko and Yang in ‘Bertin’, in *Enlightenment and Revolution* ed. by Crook et al..


where Bertin was responsible for the project.\textsuperscript{146} In addition, the volume of physical items sent between Paris and Peking is attested to in the correspondence of Ko and Yang with Bertin from 1764 onwards.\textsuperscript{147} Collectively, this can be seen as a period of intense, human and practical exchange between a group of critical French figures in Paris, Chinese in Paris and Peking, and the Jesuit mission there. The exchange of literary and other cultural objects conforms to the pattern of the earlier east-west exchange between the Ottoman Empire and Renaissance Europe described by Jardine and Brotton: mutually recognisable visual and literary idioms of imperial power moving in an ‘undivided, seamless cultural sphere within which each distinct power centre recognised and responded appropriately to the items circulating’.\textsuperscript{148}

The fruits of this period became further apparent in the early 1770s when Turgot’s \emph{Réflexions} and Amiot’s \emph{Art Militaire} and translation of Qianlong’s \emph{Eloge de la ville de Moukden} (1770) were published. Turgot went on to become Controller General in 1774 in which role he implemented a core economic proposal of the Physiocrats – the free trade in grain – while the reaction to Amiot’s book was the identification of Chinese political and military theory with the radical political agenda set out by Quesnay in 1767. This combination of ideas, the debate around which played out in public, contributed to the idea that a country like France could rebuild itself from the ground up, breaking down the historical institutions (such as the nobility, the guilds, unfair taxes and the purchasing of offices) that restrained the economic and social opportunities of the country as a whole and the bourgeoisie in particular. While all of these texts on their face maintained Voltaire’s vision of enlightened despotism, the reality was that they submitted the monarch to natural law, reason and ethics, and Quesnay’s formulation gave express permission for the replacement of a regime that failed to respect these principles.\textsuperscript{149} These ideas, presented very publicly to a bourgeoisie frustrated by

\textsuperscript{146} Tanya Szrajber, ‘The ‘Victories’ of the Emperor Qianlong’ \emph{Print Quarterly}, vol. 23, No. 1 (March 2006), 28-47. Interest in Chinese military culture was also demonstrated in Silhouette’s \emph{La Balance} which included a (fictional) Chinese perspective on the art of war.

\textsuperscript{147} For example, Bertin to Ko and Yang, letter dated 31 December 1766, BIF, MS 1521 fol. 11 which refers to the engravings and describes articles in the physical exchange in detail.


\textsuperscript{149} ‘Only when the physiocrats ascribed it to the public éclairé itself did opinion publique receive the strict meaning of an opinion purified through critical discussion in the public sphere to constitute a true opinion ... The function of the monarch was to watch over the ordre naturel; he received his insight into the laws of the natural order through the public éclairé.’ Habermas, \emph{Structural transformation}, p. 95 and see discussion in Keith Michael Baker, ‘Defining the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century France: Variations on a Theme by Habermas’ in Craig Calhoun (Ed.) \emph{Habermas and the Public Sphere} (The MIT Press, 1992), pp. 181-211, pp. 190-5.
ineffectual government, intrusive taxation and a lack of opportunities for social mobility, contributed to the conditions in which can be found the roots of the revolution in France.

When, in the 1760s, the Physiocrats entered the debate on China, the main topic was the proposition that an absolute monarchy ruled by an enlightened despot is the best basis for a rational society and that the principal evidence for this lay in imperial China. This debate was of increasing significance in France with the constitutional and economic crises brought on by the Seven Years’ War and China was central to the argument: the French philosophes had – in Britain – a reasonable example of a contemporary constitutional monarchy but France itself did not offer a compelling example of absolute monarchy and enlightened despotism. China would serve the purpose. Until 1767, the position and perception of the Physiocrats was as ‘Economistes’ not politicians and it was through their exploration of the Chinese economy that the Physiocrats encountered the political significance of China. Their founder, François Quesnay, was a surgeon and physician to Madame de Pompadour. From a modest family, he had worked his way to the court through intelligence and ambition carefully controlled with discretion. He avoided court politics at all costs. His early writings on surgery, physiology and medicine ended in 1753 with a final work in which he stated his methodology:

No experimental science can be reduced to a true and correct system without the accumulation of all the information that can point us to the true principles of this science, for it is only in gathering this information that we can get at those principles.

By 1756, Quesnay had moved his intellectual enquiries from medicine to economics. He contributed three articles to the Encyclopédie (on evidence, farmers and grain) while two other articles (on population and taxation) were withdrawn as a result of Robert-François Damiens’ (1715–57) attempted assassination of Louis XV in 1757, which the King blamed on the Encyclopedists. By 1760, Quesnay had established a partnership with the Marquis de Mirabeau (1715–89) and the two of them had published the Tableau Économique, a diagram developed by Quesnay and explained by Mirabeau that set out the flows and equilibrium of the French economy. Quesnay’s focus was on the

150 Frederick II and his Prussia had been idealised earlier but could not now do so given Frederick’s militarism and then alliance with Britain against France.
151 This point was made by a contemporary: see p. 194 below.
152 Vardi, Physiocrats, p. 40 quoting François Quesnay, Traité des fièvres continues (Paris, 1753); and p. 114.
153 ‘Tableau économique et ses explications’ in Victor Riquetti, marquis de Mirabeau, L’Ami des hommes (Paris, 1759-60), vol. VI.
productivity of France’s agricultural sector, which he regarded as the natural and only source of a nation’s wealth. For Quesnay, government policy should be to encourage investment in agriculture while avoiding taxes and other measures that restrain productivity and abolishing the guilds and other corporate bodies that ‘the state had inappropriately created and that interfered with the natural reproduction of wealth’.154

The aristocrat Mirabeau, by contrast, regarded the nobility as being a class with a special role in society and, as landowners, an essential role in the economy. Both men, however, envisaged that the physiocratic economy was the necessary and intended result of natural law – ‘physiocracy’ or ‘rule by nature’. Unlike Adam Smith’s theory, Quesnay’s system depended not on individuals making self-interested choices instinctively, but on all of mankind making decisions that required a degree of self-abnegation in the interests of society as a whole. Without this recognition by every member of society, the system could not function as intended.155

Thus the Physiocrats may have begun as one of a number of groups dedicated to revitalising the French economy through agrarian reform, but from the beginning they saw their project as depending on moral virtue and a political order that was founded on natural law and comprehended through faith and revelation. The Creator had endowed mankind with science and reason so that it could understand what was required of it. But this was not a prescription for individuals to maximise their own wealth or benefit. Nature would provide enough for everyone, but not more, and people would accept this because, as Quesnay believed, ‘man’s greatest wish was for stability, not the satisfaction of urges or the accumulation of goods’.156 The Physiocrats’ economic system was, therefore, intrinsically moralistic, political and proselytising from the start. This, together with its complexity, was perhaps the reason why it failed to have much influence in its first decade. Bertin was sympathetic to many aspects of Physiocracy and instigated innovations such as the establishment of agricultural societies across France. But he also valued trade and manufacturing and did not have the reforming zeal necessary to implement Physiocratic principles to a greater extent. Choiseul had a much stronger grip on power and a greater capacity for reform than Bertin but he detested

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156 Vardi, Physiocrats, p. 275.
Quesnay and had an entirely different view of where France’s strategic priorities lay. Consequently, by the mid-1760s, when France’s economic and financial problems were even more severe than they had been in the run-up to the war, there was no sign of the Physiocrats’ policies being adopted.

The first volume of the *Ephémérides* in 1767 set out the manifesto of the Physiocrats as being concerned with the establishment of government, economics and society based on natural law. China was singled out as the ‘vast and fertile Empire of China, which rightly holds first place among civilized states’ and ‘this vast and magnificent Empire, maintained for forty centuries ... by the mere power of the philosophical spirit’. This is ‘the most absolute government, but the most just, the richest Monarch, the most powerful, the most humane and the most benevolent’.

Quesnay’s *Despotisme de la Chine* was published in volumes III to VI of the *Ephémérides* in 1767. As the title suggests, in this book Quesnay moves squarely from economics to politics and into the existing debate on enlightened despotism. Up until this point, Quesnay’s political thinking had been done in his critique of Mirabeau’s work, and in particular the unpublished *Traité de la monarchie* which they worked on soon after they first met. Fox-Genovese presents this collaboration as a dialectical process in which the two men ‘fought out their differences through the history of the French monarchy, [and] the resolution of their confrontation produced an ideology that implicitly repudiated that monarchy and the principles upon which it rested’. Unable to find a way to get the *Traité* past the censors, the two men decided ‘scrupulously [to] avoid any direct attack on the existing government’ in their subsequent work, even though they had determined that nothing short of a ‘social revolution’ was required to realise their programme. In fact, I suggest that it was Quesnay’s 1767 study that saw him articulate precisely the social and political revolution that was required, but under the guise of China. In it he describes various aspects of Chinese society from the perspective of good government based on an agrarian economy and enlightened philosophy. Chapter VIII of the *Despotisme* is described by the editor as the most important of all as it ‘sets out the

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57 Ibid, p. 186.
58 The journal was edited by Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours (1739-1817) until its suppression in 1772.
59 *Ephémérides* vol. I part 1 1767, pp. 11-14.
61 Ibid, p. 201. Fox-Genovese does not mention the *Despotisme de la Chine* in her study, although she does acknowledge the importance of China in Quesnay’s thought and his interest in the ‘dictionaries, geographies, and histories’ that made up half of his library: p. 96.
relationship between the natural Constitutions of Government of the best Empires and
the Principles of the Science that are taught and practiced in China. Here Quesnay
states that the interests of the sovereign are, if properly understood, identical to those of
the nation, as Mirabeau and he had already concluded in the Traité. He further
establishes a hierarchy that subjects both sovereign and people to natural law and makes
it the primary responsibility of the government to educate the people so that they are
able to understand and perform their natural duties which, as we know, is necessary in
order for the economy to function:

Men can master the natural law only by the light of reason (les lumières de la raison), which
distinguishes them from beasts. The prime object of the administration of a prosperous
and lasting government should then be, as in the Chinese Empire, the profound study and
the continual and general teaching of the natural laws, which in a high degree constitute
the frame of the nation.

It is therefore essential that those advising the Sovereign understand the natural law and
its economic effects but Quesnay condemns every country – including France – for failing to do so. The first political establishment of the government, then, will be the
instituting of schools for teaching this science. Every kingdom but China has been
ignorant of the necessity for this provision, which is the basis of government. However,
in a country where ‘all classes of citizens have sufficient enlightenment to know clearly
and to point out with certainty the order of laws most advantageous to the ruler and to
the nation’ there will be no despot who, ‘with the support of the military forces of the
state’ will subvert the law and thereby ‘incite an invincible and dangerous general
resistance’. Quesnay is emphatically arguing that a despot who fails to uphold the law
will inevitably and justly be removed from power.

For a nation, informed of the intentions and the irrevocable laws of the all-powerful, and
guided by the light of conscience, cannot assent to the violation of these divine laws ... the
shield of the nation. The ruler must not forget that his authority is instituted in order to
make these laws known and observed ... As the land on which we live refuses its support
when it is uncultivated, in the same manner, unenlightened nations can form only
transitory, barbarous and ruinous governments.

In summary, Quesnay’s manifesto condemns any monarch for failing to provide the
institutions necessary to give effect to the eternal laws of nature; such a king is failing in
his primary duty and depriving the nation of its shield; and such an administration is

\[163\] Quesnay Despotisme de la China (1767) VIII.10 in Ephémérides vol VI part 1 1767, p. 35.
Translation by Maverick, China, p. 281.
‘transitory’. Furthermore, any citizen can by the application of their reason see that this is so and is obliged to disown this violation of divine law. Given that these observations apply to all states but China, they must apply to France. It is hard to see how Quesnay is not setting out a manifesto for the demolition of France’s constitution and its re-establishment, from the ground up, according to natural law.\textsuperscript{165}

Quesnay’s ideas gained greater salience by virtue of the association of the Physiocrats with Turgot, whose political influence rose under the Duc de Choiseul and who provided a bridge between Paris and Peking, Choiseul and Bertin. Du Pont de Nemours later recalled:

We returned MM. Ko and Yang to their homeland, two young Chinese with plenty of spirit, who had been brought to France and raised by the Jesuits. We boarded them for Canton and charged them to do good and, supported by a royal pension, to maintain a correspondence to promote knowledge of Chinese literature and sciences. M. Turgot gave them books and valuable instruments and a large number of questions perfectly conceived on all aspects of the government and industries of China. He did more: for their instruction and to help them answer the questions regarding the culture, resources, finance, products, population and the different occupations that sell them, he composed the excellent book entitled Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses.\textsuperscript{166}

Ko and Yang left for Peking in 1765 with Turgot’s 52 questions, which show a detailed and practical interest in China’s economy.\textsuperscript{167} The questions were apparently answered although we no longer have those answers. Ko would be a significant contributor, with Amiot, to the first two volumes of the Mémoires published in 1776 and 1777.\textsuperscript{168}

Amiot’s authorship of the Art Militaire thus coincided with a moment in the mid-1760s in which the Physiocrats made a substantial shift from economics to politics, from theory to action, and from advocating agrarian and fiscal reform to calling for revolution; in doing this they broke into what had become an almost static and symbolic trope of the Enlightenment – China – and co-opted it to provide the model for the new France they wished to create. The stimulus for Quesnay’s move from economics to politics, and

\textsuperscript{165} De Tocqueville argued that the Physiocrats contributed to revolution in France: ‘They are less conspicuous in history than the philosophers; they exercised a less direct influence in causing the Revolution, but still I think its true nature can best be studied in their writings.’ Of Physiocratic attitudes to China, ‘They wanted all the nations of the world to set up exact copies of that barbarous and imbecile government …’ Alexis De Tocqueville, The Old Regime and the Revolution, trans. John Bonner (New York, 1856), pp. 192, 198.


\textsuperscript{167} Ching and Oxtoby, Discovering China, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{168} The two men also maintained an extensive correspondence with Henri Bertin both before and after their return to China, as discussed further below.
his interest in China, may have been an exchange with Ko and Yang. These two men knew Amiot before leaving Peking in 1755 and worked closely with him on their return in 1766. Whether intentionally or not, Amiot’s work provided sufficient grounds for it to be placed in this same narrative and linked both to the political economics of the Physiocrats and their call for revolutionary change in France. The known connections between Amiot, the two Chinese priests, the politicians Silhouette, Bertin and Turgot and the Physiocrats provided the physical network that reinforced the more obvious intellectual and literary one.

**The Correspondance Littéraire**

As du Pont notes in the above quote, part of the justification of the education and financing of Ko and Yang was to support a ‘correspondence that might promote knowledge of Chinese literature and sciences.’ This was the *correspondance littéraire* that we will now examine, suggesting that it represents the nexus of domestic French politics and Jesuit strategy, both of which took on a new and more intense significance in the 1760s as a result of the developments we have established earlier. The key figure in this is Henri Bertin, an almost exact contemporary of Joseph Amiot. A lawyer by training, Bertin served as Lieutenant General of the *police de Paris* between 1757 and 1759, a position that had a very broad range of duties. Bertin appears also to have been given the responsibility of managing Louis XV’s personal finances. Although regarded as a member of the *dévot* faction, and a supporter of the Jesuits, Bertin was also close to Madame de Pompadour and was regarded (at least by Voltaire) as one of France’s most enlightened and innovative ministers. Bertin was appointed Controller General in 1759 and held the post until December 1763 when he was replaced by L’Averdy.

Bertin’s predecessor as Controller General, Etienne de Silhouette, had recruited Jacob-Nicolas Moreau to the Finance Ministry as the anti-parliamentarian propagandist and then historiographer of the Crown. The *Parlement*’s propagandist was Louis Adrien Le Paige (1712–1802) whose works in 1753 and 1754 had thrown the Crown into crisis by

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claiming that Parlement was ‘as essential to the monarchy as the monarch himself ... [opposing] itself, like a wall of bronze, to everything that could diminish the authority of the traditions and laws that constitute the common security of the prince and the peoples’. It was Le Paige who also deployed the term despotisme so effectively against both the Jesuits (a reference to the hierarchy of the Society and the power of its General) and against a monarchy unrestrained by Parlement. Moreau saw the power of the Parlement’s narrative and he devoted the remainder of his career trying to establish an historical basis for defeating it. These endeavours were known as the travaux littéraires and their relevance to this study is that the underlying logic is the same as that of the cultural exchange Bertin sponsored with the French mission in Peking, known as the correspondance littéraire. Indeed, Henri Bertin used the names travaux littéraire interchangeably with correspondance littéraire for the Chinese programme, and in speaking of Ko and Yang. For both the Chinese and French projects, the goal was to establish the legitimacy and value of absolute monarchy through continuity and its sustained ability to protect the rights and economic interests of the people. In both cases, collective memory, as demonstrated through the continuity of historical records, was crucial. Addressing the new King Louis XVI (1754–93), whose tutor was Moreau, Bertin said:

> The history and public law of a nation are based on the records ... It has been necessary to collect them in order to know them, and it was necessary to know them before acting. In matters of government, the knowledge of facts was all the more important in that we have always seen great errors become the harbingers of great disorders, and those who have wished to trouble states have always begun by misleading peoples.

Here we see the abstract ideas of Webb and Voltaire on the significance of historical records being applied to a political strategy that Bertin regarded as ‘imperative for the crown to follow, given the political conditions with which it was now faced’. The role of Moreau, as French historiographer, was to establish the facts that supported the

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171 Louis-Adrien Le Paige, Lettres historiques sur les fonctions essentielles du parlement, sur le droit des pairs, et sur les loix fondamentales du royaume (Amsterdam, 1753), vol. 1, pp. 32-33 in Baker, ‘Memory and practice’, p. 139. Le Paige asserted that Parlement’s essential function was to constitute ‘the reciprocal tie between the Sovereign and the Subjects,’ which, if broken, brought ‘the most horrible confusion’ and ‘despotisme’ in its train. See vol. 1, pp. 224, 252; vol. 2, p. 133. Discussed in Van Kley, Expulsion of the Jesuits, p. 27.

172 ‘Vous aurez vu la distinction qui a été faite expressément entre ces secours et les pensions de MM. Ko et Yang, ou les sommes particulières que le Roi a fait payer à quelques-uns d’entre vous en indemnité de leurs travaux littéraires.’ Bertin to Bourgeois, 29 November 1776 in Cordier ‘La Suppression’ (1), p. 309.


174 Ibid.
crown’s legitimacy and sovereignty over the Parlements; while the role of Amiot and his fellow missionaries was (from Bertin’s perspective) to demonstrate through Chinese history and the character of its contemporary society that the values of the French monarchy were universal.

In the office of Controller General, Bertin was responsible for all aspects of France’s economy and he again demonstrated the breadth of his interests by promoting mercantilism through the Compagnie des Indes, French manufacturing and also agricultural reform. In this respect he was mentor to and predecessor of Turgot and on the periphery of the Physiocrats. When, in 1762, the Jesuit order was dissolved, Bertin arranged for the two stranded Chinese Jesuits to be placed in a suitable seminary. On leaving office in 1763, he was given the position of Minister of State with a diverse portfolio (for which he was mocked by some at the time) that included the funding and management of the French mission. Even when, in 1776, Bertin handed over responsibility for the Mission to the Naval Ministry, he retained his patronage of the correspondance, as he set out in a letter to the Mission dated 29 November 1776:

For my part, I am charged by the King with maintaining the correspondence with you, Ko and Yang and the other gentlemen in Peking in matters concerning the progress of the Sciences and Arts in Europe by means of requesting and receiving from them all the documents and notes of China that can serve this object.\(^{175}\)

Bertin was ultimately forced to resign from this office in 1780 as the result of a financial scandal involving his a long-serving subordinate who had himself played a significant role in the correspondance.\(^{176}\) Bertin’s public position on the correspondance littéraire and the mission in Peking are set out in a 1780 memorandum to the French ambassador in Rome, Cardinal de Bernis (1715–94), for submission to the Prefect of the Propaganda, Cardinal Antonelli (1730–1811). Bertin opens with a physical description of the mission

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\(^{176}\) This was Melchior-François Parent (?–1782), the administrator responsible for the French mission and a correspondent of Amiot. Joseph de Guignes praised his ‘enlightenment and zeal’ in the Art Militaire (p. v) while Amiot also praised Parent in a letter to him of 1 November 1774: ‘Le Roi, M. Bertin, et M. Parent sont d’accord pour nous secourir; ils ont des lumières bien au-dessus de celles du commun, et ils nous rendent la même justice que nous nous rendons intérieurement à nous-même.’ Quoted in Cordier, ‘La suppression’ (1), p. 300.
that demonstrates its unique combination of national, enlightenment and Christian objectives: 177

The Mission in Peking has been enriched by the generosity of France, and there one sees throughout the arms and other symbols of the French nation. It has a significant library and an Observatory well furnished with instruments and a very ornate Church … 178

The Mémoire continues that the cost of maintaining this mission is high because of the need to train the seminarians. This is the only way to sustain the mission’s (surreptitious) access to China:

It is only by means of a fraud against the laws of the country and the orders of the emperor that the Missionaries are able to penetrate into the interior of China, as they are admitted under the title of Artistes et de savants attachés au service de l’Empereur, who admires greatly the arts of Europe … 179

France is the best place to train the missionaries and the quality of the missionaries has resulted in their having a high standing in the court at Peking. The correspondance littéraire is presented in this public document so as to focus on the advantages it offers to Europe, France and Christianity. As a result of the importance of the Mission in Peking, Bertin continues, the French King has provided the funding destined for a ‘correspondance littéraire et des arts’ with the main missionaries in Peking, the purpose being:

… to send them books and works that will keep them abreast of developments and discoveries in Europe and to arrange that we receive from China matters of interest on the arts and sciences. This has the advantage of rendering these artists not only useful to their Patrie, but interesting and agreeable to the emperor and the men of letters and other grandees of his Court and thereby increasingly valuable for the promotion of Christianity in China. 180

Thus Bertin places the renamed correspondance littéraire et des arts within the traditional Jesuit approach of using scientific and educational exchange as the means of conversion, and he also describes the ‘top-down’ approach for which the Order was also

177 Quoted in Cordier, ‘La suppression’ (2), pp. 573ff. The purpose of this memorandum will be discussed below when we look at events after Amiot’s Art Militaire in chapter 6, as it concerned the establishment of a new French-run apostolic prefecture to include Peking, of which Amiot was to be the supervising prefect.

178 The Jesuit library in Peking is partly preserved. The surviving foreign language books are listed in Hubert Verhaeren, Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Pé-t’ang (Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1949).


180 Ibid. The original of this memorandum is in BIF, MS 1526, fol. 88 where Bertin has amended the draft to replace ‘Europe’ with ‘la Patrie.’
criticised. Speaking more personally, Bertin describes his motivation, and empirical method, to Ko and Yang in an earlier document:

The statesman embraces everything and overlooks nothing. He measures the greatness of a nation in the number, security, ease and work of its people. He penetrates the Cause and he seeks out the Source of this greatness even to the tips of its thinnest Branches...

We are fortunate that a great deal of evidence relating to the correspondance has been preserved in the Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France. While Bertin appears to have treated Ko and Yang as his principal channel to the mission, Amiot’s extensive letters to Henri Bertin provide insight into the correspondance and Bertin’s methods. Generally, Amiot’s letters were written between September and early December of each year to be shipped out from Canton. Bertin’s letters did not always arrive, and when they did it was generally a year after they had been written. Amiot complains at one point that he has not received copies of the Art Militaire and when they do arrive it is two years after they were dispatched. In his very first letter of 1766, Amiot acknowledges that the correspondance littéraire is Bertin’s project and indeed Bertin’s marginal notes (generally instructions) show a strong personal involvement in the programme and in the publishing of its materials. In the first letter, Amiot refers to a musical instrument he has sent and Bertin’s marginal note refers to it being suitable for his cabinet. In a letter dated 15 September 1778, in which Amiot is sending some additional materials on the Chinese military for possible inclusion in a supplement, there is an extensive marginal note with instructions for discussions with Nyon (the printer) over the reprinting of the original treatise together with the supplementary materials in ‘our Mémoires’. Bertin displays an interest also in the financial implications for printer and readers of different approaches to printing the various materials. In one letter, Bertin also demonstrates the economic dimensions of the relationship, asking Amiot to help improve the position of French

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181 Letter dated 2 December 1764, BIF, MS 1521, fol. 29.
182 Principally, a volume of 85 letters from Ko and Yang to Bertin (BIF, MS 1520); three volumes with 80 of Amiot’s letters to Bertin (MS 1515-17); four volumes with copies of Bertin’s letters to the Mission (MS 1521-24); and four other volumes with materials and correspondence (MS 1518-19 and MS 1525-26). Additional materials are MS 5401-5486 (Fonds Henri Cordier); MS 5409-5414 (Documents maritimes et coloniaux); MS 5409 ‘Deux mémoires du P. Joseph Amiot. Notes sur la correspondance de Henri Bertin et sur les missions catholiques; etc.’
183 Bertin’s exchange with Ko and Yang concerning military strategy is discussed below at p. 201.
184 Amiot to Bertin, 5 December 1779 (BIF, MS 1516 fol. 234).
185 Amiot to Bertin, 1 October 1774 (BIF, MS 1515 fol. 39 at fol. 42) and 15 September 1775 (MS 1515 fol. 69 at fol. 70).
186 BIF, MS 1515, fol. 214.
traders in Canton by addressing certain problems with the behaviour of customs officials.\textsuperscript{187}

While Bertin’s motives for the correspondance littéraire were cultural and personal, he was also concerned with domestic politics and this aspect is discussed directly and in more detail in a letter to another of the missionaries. It is necessary to quote this letter at length since its themes are relevant not only to Bertin’s political objectives, but also because it sets out a logic whereby excellent academic work, accurate translation and the widest possible access to information are seen as essential if the correspondance littéraire is to be politically effective.\textsuperscript{188} These points directly bear on our understanding of Amiot’s work.

Bertin first instructs the Missionaries to focus on Chinese works ‘be it treatises on morality, legislation or government, or history’ in particular and ‘writings on the arts and sciences’ more generally. While the translators may add their own notes, they must understand that it is the original Chinese that is not only interesting but also ‘infinitely more useful for the morals, government and happiness of peoples etc etc than anything that the missionaries could send us of their own composition’.\textsuperscript{189} ‘The emphasis on utility as well as aesthetic value will reappear in both Clarke and Amiot’s work. Bertin’s audience wants to hear the voices of ‘their painters, their critics, their orators, authors and artists’. He instructs the Missionaries not to indulge in ‘dissertations’ or opinions (however strongly held) that will in any way undermine the authority of the Chinese for French readers.’\textsuperscript{190} The translation must be faithful to the original, with any input from the translator kept separate and visible in the notes. Bertin reports that the more interpretative works have been criticised while those that have been more literal (including the Art Militaire) have not:

\begin{quote}
The translations themselves and their accuracy will be examined and criticised if their subservience to the original is not in a sense Pharisean and if anything contributed by the translator appears other than in the notes. The missionaries have experienced this as much as we have. You see how the [missionary who writes as l’Affligé tranquille] and M. Amiot have been criticised for their works on the antiquity of the Chinese. But the translation of the Golden Mean, the Great Learning and the Art Militaire des Chinois … have had greater impact without incurring such problems.
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{187} Amiot to Bertin, 25 January 1787 (BIF, MS 1516, fol. 425).
\textsuperscript{188} Bertin to Father Bourgeois, 30 November 1777. Quoted in Cordier, ‘La suppression’ (i), pp. 309-11.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid, pp. 309-10.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid, p. 310. As this was written after the Art Militaire Bertin may have in mind Amiot’s criticism of Yongzheng, and the reaction to it: see p. 193 below.
\end{flushright}
Bertin reveals his intent to influence public opinion in the next three paragraphs. ‘Europe is like a child,’ he says, ‘to whom medicine must be presented under the name and with the appearance of coffee. Under a Chinese mask we will give the child a taste for ‘le bon et l’utile’ much sooner than by tracts and evidence, however compelling, that are presented undisguised’. Bertin then reflects on how to shape the message so as to support his general thesis of both the continuity of Chinese society and the strong foundations provided by absolute monarchy. He suggests that the Missionaries should try to prove that the legendary Chinese character ‘Fo’ (Fu Xi) was Noah; and that Chinese society, law and government have always been unfavourable grounds for ‘la liberté de raisonner, du Plébicisme littéraire, du despotisme, &c., &c.’. His logic appears to be that as China is accepted to be a stable and prosperous country whose system of government, under an absolute monarch, is 4,000 years old, then anything that has been suppressed by that system must be considered incompatible with a good society. In spite of his image as an enlightened minister, he appears to regard freedom to reason as one of those ills along with ‘plébicisme littéraire’, a phrase presumably meaning a form of democracy stimulated by a free press and active public opinion. I have not been able to find a use of this expression immediately contemporary with Bertin but it is deployed by Antoine Faivre in 1819 when France was undergoing a parallel movement towards the revival of absolutism and Catholicism. In the course of a chapter entitled ‘De l’esprit de vaine curiosité et de son influence’ on the decline of civilisations caused by ‘plébicisme philosophique’ – a term he claims to have coined – Faivre includes a long footnote on China. Here, Faivre uses the term plébicisme littéraire to explain the collapse of the Song (960–1279) and Ming dynasties, describing how:

... the Song, failing to see that liberty to think and write leads to liberty to dare and act, did not take steps in time to protect their State from the confusion of ideas and the corruption of morals that had been produced by plébicisme littéraire, the fanaticism of opinions, and the hatred of any form of yoke ... [As a result the weakened State suffered from] despair that hastened its last crisis and produced the convulsions of revolt, the collapse of patriotism and the disorders that opened China to the Mongols.

Faivre is promoting, from the other side of the French Revolution, the same logic as Bertin in 1777 in seeking to show the link between plébicisme littéraire and revolution.

Ironically, as we shall see below, by 1777 the work of Amiot had already been incorporated into a 1770s narrative about despotism which used China to argue not for

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90 Antoine Faivre, Traité historique et dogmatique des fêtes principales et mobiles et des temps de pénitence de l’Eglise (Lyon, 1819), p. 211.
stability but for radical change. This dilemma is, in fact, implicit in Bertin’s own words where he refers to ‘la liberté de raisonner, du Plébiscisme littéraire, du despotisme’ as enemies of the Chinese state. It was well understood among French sinophiles that the emperor ruled by virtue of his submission to the laws and customs of China and therefore, they argued, he was not a despot in the negative sense used here by Bertin. But that also meant that once the case was made against an emperor that he had become despotic, his rule was no longer legitimate and it was this position that would be exploited by sinophile radicals. Bertin’s promotion of Chinese philosophy and political economics to the French public would prove counter-productive and as dangerous as anything he feared from his opponents.

Conclusions
This chapter has explored certain aspects of the literary and social context in which Clarke and Amiot wrote. Since both chose to translate texts on military theory I began by seeking to define the tradition of the Military Enlightenment. The main finding there was that the principal authors in this tradition were concerned with the development of a scientific set of universal principles that considered war in a relatively narrow and technical sense, excluding the political and economic dimensions that were so significant in the classical works discussed in chapter 1. However, during the Seven Years’ War, British military writers, together with pamphleteers and then historians, took the ideas of the period and applied them to the specific issues confronting Britain. This resulted in a much more integrated view of strategy, as expressed in their collective use of the word ‘system’ in its various, related meanings.

The Marine Corps which Clarke joined at the turning-point of the war exemplified the military dimensions of Britain’s ‘natural’, maritime strategy and any Marine officer would have been acutely aware of the political and social constraints on his service and career prospects as their standing first rose and then declined with Pitt. Choiseul’s rise also signalled the beginning of the French, and intensification of the international, suppression of the Jesuits, which affected Amiot on the other side of the world, in spite of the best efforts of Bertin to protect and promote the Mission. The correspondance littéraire with Peking was mirrored in France by Moreau’s project of travaux littéraire to demonstrate the historical justification for the absolute monarchy of the Bourbons. Voltaire’s Essai sur les mœurs represented the highest statement of French sinophilia before the Seven Years’ War. Voltaire shared Bertin’s ideological commitment to demonstrating the longevity of China’s government and the central role in this of historical records – such as those that Bertin was seeking through the travaux littéraire
in France and Peking. But, Voltaire's treatment of China was substantially based on the same ideas and even language as had been deployed a century earlier by John Webb, writing in a period which, for Voltaire, knew too little about China. The reality was that, by the outbreak of the war, sinophilia had stagnated and, if it was to be exploited further by the *philosophes* it needed an injection of fresh evidence from China and fresh interpretation in France. The same was true of the Military Enlightenment: its narrow focus had rendered it irrelevant to anyone seeking to understand how wars were conducted and won and it too needed an injection of fresh ideas. John Clarke’s translation of Vegetius in 1767 would be an attempt to use a classical text for just such a purpose. Meanwhile, it was the confluence of activities, networks and documents connecting China and France that created the opportunity for an even more significant breakthrough in thinking about politics, economics and strategy.
Chapter 3. Clarke’s *Military Institutions of Vegetius*

**Introduction**

We have seen that the fall of Pitt and the end of the Seven Years’ War represented a blow for the Marine Corps which had, since its inception, offered limited career prospects and low social status to its officers compared with the Army and Navy. The war itself had been a great success for the Marines but the government’s inept handling of the peace negotiations had resulted in the surrender of many of the gains won with Marine blood. *The North Briton*, the anti-government journal, was the mouthpiece for Marine officers to raise their frustrations about their own treatment. As Clarke moved onto half-pay in 1763 he would have been acutely aware of these issues. The King was seen to have inherited a very successful war ministry from his grandfather and replaced Pitt and Newcastle with his favourite Bute. In spite of her military success, Britain was exhausted by the length and scale of the war and, although in much better financial condition than France, she still had a substantial public debt. By 1763 a new and highly contentious issue had arisen: whether to maintain a garrison of British troops in America and how to finance it. Questions about empire, the monarch as political and military leader, the need for a standing army, and the professionalism and status of the military were all in the air.

We know nothing about John Clarke at this time, other than that, in 1764 he began to collect books on the art of war and that, by 1767, he had completed his translation of the *Epitoma* and had it published at his own expense.¹ This chapter involves a close reading of Clarke’s translation, my goal being to explore the way in which he uses the opportunity created by his source to promote themes that concerned him and his country at the time. I will show that while Clarke takes an approach that is recognisable as lying within the established boundaries of the Military Enlightenment, his choice of text and his approach to the translation imply a political agenda. In comparison with Joseph Amiot’s project, Clarke’s seems traditional and conservative, but it is more provocative than it first appears.

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¹ The Old Library at Jesus College, Cambridge has a handful of non-military books owned by John Clarke in the ‘F shelves’. The earliest of these is an edition of Petronius acquired in 1756. This group also includes an edition of Ammianus Marcellinus, acquired in 1766, which Clarke may have read in relation to his translation of Vegetius.
John Clarke’s sources and the choice of Vegetius

We have no correspondence or other direct documentary evidence as to John Clarke’s thinking when he began translating the *Epitoma*. For most soldier-authors, ‘the good of the service’ was the principal motive and ‘a great many of them either published anonymously or simply forwarded their ideas or manuscripts to the office of the Adjutant-General, for his inspection and use’.\(^2\) It appears that Clarke began his project in 1765 as, in April of that year, he acquired Schrijver’s edition of the Latin text, a French translation and the Latin commentary of Stewechius.\(^3\) Based on his collection and notes in the translation, these three books were his main sources.

**Figure 1. John Clarke’s sources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Description</th>
<th>Date Acquired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sigrais’ French translation (1759 edition)</td>
<td>6 April 1765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schrijver’s edition (1670)</td>
<td>8 April 1765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewechius’ commentary (1670)</td>
<td>8 April 1765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jesus College, Cambridge.

Stewechius’ commentary was well known but Clarke rejects it as being too academic, something he associates with its German authorship:

> Some Notes were necessary, but I have reduced them into as small a Number as possible: if the Reader has a Taste for grammatical Disquisitions, I can recommend him to Stewechius

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\(^3\) Flavii Vegetii Renati *Institutorum rei militaris*, Nicolas Upton, Wesel, 1670; and, Godolphus Stewechius, *Commentarius ad F. Vegetii Renati libros de Re Militari*. Wesel, 1670.
and Scriverius, where he will find them in the true German Taste. However, to give the
former Critic his due, his Commentary on our Author is full of Labour and Learning; but as
it is entirely in the style of the Grammarian, can be of little Use to the military Reader,
excepting several Customs of the Ancients in the different Branches of the Service
interspersed in it. In the Difficulties relative to military Affairs, which are not few in the
course of the Work, no Assistance can be expected from him.4

It was only after he had completed his translation in 1767 that Clarke began collecting
books on the art of war, but his introduction to the Military Institutions shows that even
before this he was familiar with a wide range of such books, broadly falling into three
categories – the classical (Aelian, Aeneas, Arrian, Caesar, Diodorus Siculus, Hyginus, Leo,
Livy, Maurice, Polybius, Thucydides, Virgil, Vitruvius and Xenophon); early modern
European (Folard, Montecuccoli, Praissac, Rohan and Turenne); and British (Barrisre,
Bland, Cruso, Elton, Kellie, Lupton, Moncke, Norton, Orrery, Rud, Sadler, Strafford,
Sutcliffe and Turner). Clarke positions himself within all three of these traditions, as a
classical scholar, a modern theorist and part of a British tradition which he regards as
lively and as valid as that in Europe. Referring perhaps to the quarrel of ancients and
moderns, Clarke puts himself in the camp that sees classical texts as highly relevant to
modern warfare:

> It is an Opinion too universally prevalent, that the difference between the Ancients and
> Moderns in the executive Part of the Art of War is such, that the Writings of the former on
> the subject can be but of little Service to the Latter. No one, I imagine, will deny that the
> Principles of War always have been, and always will be, the same invariably,
> notwithstanding the Alterations of particular Modes or Weapons: and many of the ancient
> Institutions are even applicable to these.5

Rejecting a statement by General Humphrey Bland (1686–1763) on the want of British
authors on the art of war, Clarke cites the above list of British authors but reaffirms the
primacy of classical authorities over them:

> Many military Treatises have been wrote in English since the Reign of Queen Elizabeth,
especially, as might be expected, during the civil Commotion in the time of King Charles
the first ... These Authors are mostly well worth examining: they tell us expressly that there
was no Want of military Books in their Time for the Assistance of those who desired
Information ... Here we may observe, that our early Writers on military Discipline had no
Thoughts of proposing other Models for Imitation than Greeks and Romans.6

To the extent that Clarke considered the merits of a free or a literal translation, his
general approach is towards the latter. But within this constraint, he has several ways of
 overtly and covertly expressing his own views, notably in his own Dedication and

4 Military Institutions Preface, xvi.
6 Ibid, pp. xii-xiii.
Preface, lexical choices and footnotes. In addition, there is the choice implicit in his
decision to publish a translation rather than an ‘original’ piece of writing, and his choice
of Vegetius as his source. By any standard, Clarke was well educated, both a classicist
and linguist of skill. Clarke quotes extensively in and from Latin texts other than
Vegetius and his Greek script appears attractive and fluent. He also admires the French
and reads their language. So, Clarke had a wide choice of texts that he could translate as
well as the possibility of either writing his own work or putting together some form of
abridgement of his own. There are several strong reasons why Clarke may have chosen
Vegetius – some subjective, some more objective. First, there was a strict hierarchy in the
minds of Clarke and his contemporaries with the ‘canonical works of Latin and Greek’
heading the list. If one’s purpose was, in part, to demonstrate the strong foundations of
one’s claim to professionalism then to translate a classical text on the ‘institutions’ of
such a profession would be the best start. This choice not only ensured that Clarke’s
skills as a classicist would enable him to do justice to the task but also allowed him to
show off skills which were valued in an officer. As Clarke’s sources include French he
was able to demonstrate his mastery of that language also. For any translator, the quality
of the original text is important given the time that must be spent with it, and Vegetius
is an engaging writer whose observations and ideas are made compelling by their own
logic and by the fact that the Roman Empire to which he addressed himself sustained
itself militarily for 1,000 years after his death. Finally, among the subjective reasons,
Vegetius’ text was sufficiently close thematically to Clarke’s own situation and that of
Britain in the 1760s that it could provide Clarke with a vehicle for what he wanted to say
with minimal interference.

Objectively, there were equally compelling reasons for choosing Vegetius given two of
the three dominant themes of the Military Enlightenment discussed in the previous
chapter: classicism and war as a science. This was a text that had been enormously
significant in the Middle Ages – Clarke’s catalogue includes mediaeval manuscripts of
Vegetius – and Early Modern Europe and still occupied a central position in the Military

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7 Milner observes: ‘[Clarke’s] was a good, accurate version, and I benefited from some of his ideas
and sometimes borrowed words or phrases when making my own translation. E-mail of N P
Milner, 24 April 2013.

8 Arnold Hunt, ‘Private libraries in the age of bibliomania’ in Giles Mandelbrote and K.A. Manley
(Eds), The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland Volume 2: 1640-1850 (Cambridge

9 James Wolfe to Thomas Townshend (18 July 1756) on a course of reading for Townshend’s
younger brother Henry who had recently enlisted, assumes that ‘Your Brother, no doubt, is
Master of Latin & French Languages & has some Knowledge of the Mathematicks ... urging him to
study mathematics further.’ Letter reproduced in Gruber, Books, p. 133.
Enlightenment. Vegetius’ significance in mediaeval Europe has recently been thoroughly re-examined by Allmand, who describes it as ‘almost synonymous with ‘war’av. Earlier scholars were equally emphatic about the *Epitoma*. Bliese describes it as ‘the standard military manual in the West for the entire Middle Ages’. Goffart as ‘the bible of warfare throughout the Middle Ages – the soldier’s equivalent of the Rule of St Benedict.’ MacCracken concludes that the authority exercised by it ‘over the principal occupation of mediaeval Christendom is among the wonders of literary history’. Scholars have been divided as to whether the main interest in Vegetius was antiquarian or practical. Nall has more recently looked at the ways in which Vegetius was read and studied, noting that it was not simply one of the ‘textual embodiments or representatives of those things that belong ‘to thorde of knyght’, but also a text to which the reader is ‘urged to ‘applie’ himself’ for the purposes of action. In the early modern period, the leading exponent of Vegetius was Machiavelli whose *Arte della Guerra* makes no acknowledgement of its source but adopts the structure and many of the themes of the *Epitoma* and sets out Vegetius’ general maxims in Book 7. Clarke later acquired Peter Whitehorne’s 1560 translation of Machiavelli, which was almost contemporary with Sadler’s translation of the *Epitoma*.

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10 Walter Goffart, ‘The Date and Purpose of Vegetius’ *De re militari* Traditio (1977), 65-100, p. 65.


12 Bernard S. Bachrach, ‘The practical use of Vegetius’ *De re militari* during the early middle ages’ *Historian*, 47.2 (1985), 239-255 contains a summary of the scholarship to that point, together with Bachrach’s analysis of the evidence relating to the Angevin dynasty. Also: Charles R. Shrader, ‘The influence of Vegetius’ *De re militari* Military Affairs: The Journal of Military History, including Theory and Technology (1981), 167-172. Perhaps the most influential sceptic regarding Vegetius’ influence is Hans Delbruck who both dismisses Vegetius’ work and argues that ‘Even in classical antiquity… military theory remained very rare. And all the less are we able to require something from the Middle Ages, where the class of warriors remained basically separated from that of the supporters of culture, the clerical class.’ Hans Delbrück, *Military Warfare* (Tr Walter J. Renfroe) (University of Nebraska Press, 1990), pp. 193, pp. 636-7.

13 Catherine Nall, *Reading and War in Fifteenth-century England: From Lydgate to Malory* (D.S. Brewer, 2012), p. 1. ‘Perhaps the most striking feature about the readership of *De re militari* is the proportion of owners who were men with military experience … Of the eleven identifiable owners of the English translations of *De re militari*, nine had experience in campaigns in France or Scotland, either in an active military capacity or diplomatically, experiences which one assumes they brought to bear upon their reading.’ pp. 29-31.

Vegetius had twice been printed in English before 1767. Christine de Pisan’s (c.1364–c.1430) *Boke of the Fayte of Armes and Chivalrye*, ‘made and drewe out of the boke named Vegecius de re militari’ was printed by Caxton in 1489 – the first book on warfare printed in English.⁷ The only other printed English translation of Vegetius was that of John Sadler (c.1512–c.1591) in 1572.⁸ Clarke says of Sadler that ‘the Author has often mistaken the Original, and his Work has little Value but that of Antiquity’. Clarke regrets that Vegetius has fallen into obscurity: ‘It is not a little surprising that that an Author of such Merit, so highly esteemed by the greatest Men of the Profession among the Moderns, and long since translated into most other European languages, should be so little known among us’.⁹ Data extracted from Gruber shows wide ownership of the *Epitoma* among the 42 officers in his study, suggesting that this was not the case:

**Table 1. Ownership of Vegetius’ *Epitoma***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edition (language)</th>
<th>Ownership and citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bologna, I A de Benedictus, 1505 (Latin)</td>
<td>In Dormer’s library, 1741.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris C. Wecheli, 1535 (Latin)</td>
<td>In Winde’s library, 1740.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris, C. Wechel, 1536 (French)</td>
<td>In General Officer’s library, 1773.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Schrijver, 1670 (Latin)</td>
<td>Stanhope owned in 1721, as did Winde in 1740 and Oglethorpe in 1785.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam, J. Wetstein, 1744 (French)</td>
<td>In 1773 General Officer owned and Parker purchased this book; Clinton reflected on an unspecified French translation c. 1775 (3 of 33).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Clarke, 1767 (English)</td>
<td>Ligonier and Oglethorpe owned in 1770 and 1785, respectively (2 of 21).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gruber adds that:

In addition another eight officers owned, recommended, cited, or quoted Vegetius without specifying an identifiable edition: Seton (1732) and Dury (1758) owned; Wolfe (1756) and Townshend (1776) recommended; Bever (1756), Molyneux (1759), and Dalrymple (1761) cited; and Donkin (1777) quoted his writings. Altogether, 38 percent of the officers (16 of 42) demonstrated some preference for Vegetius—placing him among the ten authorities on war that they valued above all others ...²⁰

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⁹ *Military Institutions* Preface: xvi-ii, i.

Gruber’s evidence places the *Epitoma* among the 10 most popular books among his officers and it is therefore hard to accept Clarke’s position as entirely straightforward. Clarke is justified, however, in his view that there had not been a printed English edition for 200 years, although we now know of one important manuscript translation made in the seventeenth century. While Clarke may not have been aware of this translation, there are common themes and it is of interest briefly to consider a Civil War text written at the mid-point between Sadler’s Renaissance version and the Enlightenment treatment of Clarke. This is especially so since it has only recently been uncovered and never previously analysed.\(^{21}\)

This seventeenth-century version was by Sir Thomas Fairfax (1612–71), first commander-in-chief of the New Model Army. Fairfax translated only Books I to III and he omitted the dedicatory passages and the valediction at the end of Book III. His work begins, however, with a discussion of recruitment practices in classical and modern times, and on the use of ‘strangers’ which contains the following:

> England only of al Estates in our time may chuse & take such as it please, the most part of Common wealths at this day are more grounded of policy then war endevoring rather to preserve then increase them w\(^{21}\) is the reason we se Letters flourish & armes decay so that such Estates w\(^{21}\) hath ther foundation in war gormadizeth the others the example of the Turks to the shame of Christians & the King of Spain to the prejudice of Germany & Italy are sow evident proofes the cause of this evel is that scolers are imployed almost through the whole government of Estates w\(^{21}\) is the reason souldiers are hated giving also this Counsill to be perused rather w\(^{21}\) strangers then the natural subjects which is a maxim most pernissious, but being nott here the place to treate of this we will speake only of the election of souldiers … \(^{22}\)

It is notable that Fairfax starts his own work with a political framework which, much like that of Vegetius, addresses the internal organisation of the state and its relation to external policy and security. However, his case is that the defensive stance of

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\(^{21}\) Sir Thomas Fairfax, *The Abridgement of Warre* and *Flavius Vegetius Renus his five books of the Romaine discipline, Engished*. c. 1651. British Library Harley MS 6761. Thanks again to the research of Michael King Macdona who located the manuscript which had been catalogued as *The Abridgement of Warre*.

\(^{22}\) Fairfax, *Vegetius*, pp. 1-2. The reference to commonwealths suggests that it may have been written during the period in which Andrew Marvell was Fairfax’s daughter’s tutor at Nun Appleton. Marvell’s *Upon Appleton House* (c. 1651), which contains an extended military metaphor in its description of nature in the gardens laid out by Fairfax, also describes Fairfax as one ‘Who, when retired here to peace, | Could not his warlike studies cease …’ Andrew Marvell, *The Complete Poems* (Ed. Elizabeth Story Donno) (Penguin 1985), p. 84. As Katherine Acheson describes, the poem is infused with an ethos that is resonant of the *Epitoma*: Katherine Acheson, *Visual Rhetoric and Early Modern English Literature* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013), pp. 43-4. Acheson studies both the military imagery in Marvell’s poem and the use of imagery in military works, of which she notes ‘Works of military strategy and tactics have one of the highest ratios of illustration to text in any Early Modern genre …’ (p. 15). Clarke’s book contains no illustrations but Amiot’s has many and these fall very well into the figurative framework described by Acheson.
commonwealths has led to weakness and a civilian government that not only fails to look after national security but is disposed against the military. Given his position and his experience of Parliamentary politics during the Civil War, it is not surprising that Fairfax holds and expresses such a view but it is interesting that Vegetius is so suitable a vehicle for his position. As we will see, Clarke holds similar views and has independently chosen the same text to express them.

That common ground is, therefore, the inherently political nature of both Fairfax and Clarke’s thinking about the role of the military. What was it about Vegetius that attracted both military and political theorists to him in mediaeval and Early Modern Europe? Vegetius described a state in which the emperor enjoyed the mandate of God and the soldier swore his allegiance to the emperor as the representative of God on earth.23 The nationalisation of military power and its use to promote internal and external security was an appealing theme for writers at times when their own countries were seen to be vulnerable, insecure and in need of strong and unifying rule. For example, the Polycraticus (1159) of John of Salisbury (c.1120–80) drew on the Epitoma ‘to float proposals which had less to do with war itself than with the means of achieving effective royal government …’ In John of Salisbury’s view, the law and armed force were the two ‘pillars of a peaceful society ruled by the king … the army was to be seen as the institution which, working with the king, would bolster the power and increasingly centralised authority of the royal office…’ From Polycraticus on, ‘Vegetius’ work would seldom be regarded simply as a mine of purely military wisdom’.24 Murray takes an even stronger view, offering an analysis that places the Epitoma at the heart of mediaeval political thought, sharing the period’s disposition towards prudence that is reflected in the manuals of government and personified in the character of Olivier in the Chanson de Roland. ‘Vegetius’ most characteristic precept, often repeated, is the very essence of the sapientia which epic set in contrast to fortitudo: the general, says Vegetius, should avoid

23 If, as Milner contends (Vegetius, pp. xli) and M. D. Reeve acknowledges (Epitoma, pp. viii–x) as most likely, Theodosius I is the addressee of the Epitoma rei militaris, then Vegetius was addressing a very Christian emperor who took unprecedented measures to crush both paganism and Christian heterodoxy during his reign. For a full discussion see Williams and Friell Theodosius, pp. 47–60.

24 Allmand, Vegetius, p. 91.
pitched battle if possible’. As we shall see, Sadler’s own translation is also politically nuanced to reflect the strategic perspective of Elizabethan England.

In view of this tradition, we must be sceptical about Clarke’s proposition that he is translating the Epitoma solely because of its technical advice; rather than (like earlier translators) using it also for political objects. Nor can we accept Clarke’s view that Vegetius had fallen into obscurity over the preceding two centuries, although it is correct that there was not a modern English translation in print. Even Fairfax’s version was over a century old and was not complete. In fact, the Epitoma could hardly have been bettered as a text for Clarke to translate considering his subjective interests and the objective facts that its popularity more than justified a new translation while its resonance with the times in which he was writing was as strong as it had been for Fairfax, Machiavelli and earlier interpreters.

The Profession

Clarke appears to have been strongly motivated by aspirations for his profession. This interest was not a new one within the Military Enlightenment or the longer Vegetian tradition. For readers in the Middle Ages it had also been a point of interest. First, it was clerics who, as Latin scholars, transcribed and transmitted the text. Second, it was perceived that there was an analogy between the clerical and military professions. ‘There were clear similarities between the roads which led to sanctity and those which enabled men to become good soldiers, those of self-discipline and constant training being but two of them’. In England, however, by the 1700s the standing of the clerical profession had been greatly reduced by the Reformation while the image of the military had acquired a similar ambivalence. From the mid-fifteenth century to 1688, England was not a major military power in Europe. Britain’s success in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14) did not result in a re-evaluation of the military profession and in the

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25 Alexander Murray, _Reason and Society in the Middle Ages_ (Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 128–9 and Chapter 5 ‘Reason and Power’ generally. The manuals referred to are the _Secretum Secretorum_ (c. 1135), Philippe de Beaumanoir’s _Coutumes de Beauvaisis_ (c. 1290) and Brunetto Latini’s _Li Trésors_ (1268).

26 A comparison of Clarke’s text and those of MacIntire, Anderson and Dalrymple shows that Clarke’s use of the word ‘profession’ is about average for the four. Clarke, however, uses ‘discipline’, ‘science’ and ‘art’ twice as frequently as the others. The cumulative effect is pronounced.


28 Whereas three-quarters of the peerage fought in Henry VIII’s (1491–1547) wars of the 1540s, at the outbreak of the civil war four out of five English aristocrats had no military experience at all. Brewer, _Sinews_, pp. 7, 9, citing Lawrence Stone, _The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641_ (Oxford, 1965).
first decades of the century the Army suffered both by its association with the Hanoverian dynasty (which deployed it to suppress revolutions in 1715 and 1723) and from the contrast with the ‘world-class, constitutionally pure naval armament’ that was so strongly supported by Parliament.29

From the perspective of the aristocracy and the emerging ‘middling sort’ the Army may also have been an unattractive employer because of poor financial rewards, the risk of overseas postings, demobilisations between wars and the associated and inadequate half-pay. The 1750s and 1760s saw a decline in the economic benefits of being an army officer as administrative reforms by George I (1660–1727) and II (1683–1760) reduced the opportunities for officers to speculate. Guy argues that these reforms did not contribute to the professionalisation of the military – in fact caused financial distress – but he notes that there was no shortage of demand for commissions. Indeed, ‘as a substitute for his waning proprietary interest, the regular officer developed a more exalted ethic of service and personal sacrifice’ so it may be that the reforms did provide an impetus towards the sorts of sentiments expressed by Clarke, albeit indirectly.30

Against the dislike of the Army must be set the broader trend in the rise of the professions and professionalism during the long eighteenth century, in which the Army, the Navy and the military bureaucracy that administered them were three of the largest aspiring new professions. Clarke needed to position the military as satisfying three contemporary criteria and characteristics for a profession: first, it must be a vocation, for life, and usually with its own hierarchy; second it should require if not a learned education then at least a ‘bookish’ one; and, third, it should provide a service to the community rather than being commercial.31 The most contentious of these was the educational criterion, with conservative resistance to the idea that a profession could be other than ‘learned’. The struggle for professional recognition and status was, as we have seen with the Marine Corps, also played out in different ways within the military.32 Clarke’s choice of Vegetius demonstrates the intellectual foundations of the profession as

30 Guy, Oeconomy, pp. 165-7.
31 Holmes, Professions, pp. 7-8. Not that these were necessarily new ideas: ‘Implicit in [a remark of Francis Bacon in 1605] are two ideas...One was that the profession presupposed a lengthy training, basically intellectual in nature, and a recognised qualification; the other, that the training was vocational and the profession itself a means of livelihood.’ Ibid, p. 1.
32 For example, the Duke of Cumberland tried in 1750 to procure army rank for military engineers but it was not until 1757 that commissions were given to serving engineers granting them military rank. Phillipson, Engineers, pp. 33-4.
a whole. I would position Clarke’s approach as an example of improvisation, in Holmes’ terms, his collecting and cataloguing of military books being another. In choosing Vegetius, however, Clarke is not confining himself to what Jones calls the vertical and horizontal models of professionalization: Vegetius’ vision of a professional army calls for both ‘expertise, internal discipline,’ and a ‘civic dimension’ that opened it to wider society.

Clarke opens his book with a clear statement of intent: the Epitoma is, he states in his Dedication to the King, ‘the only remaining System of ancient Discipline’. As we have discussed above, the word ‘system’ would have resonated in different ways amongst his readership. The word ‘discipline’, however, immediately captures the essence of a profession as it has the dual sense of a field of study, in particular for a profession or vocation and in this case linked to the classics, and rigorous adherence to a set of rules.

In the following translation of the Preface, Clarke uses Vegetius both to emphasise the educational aspect of his profession and to suggest that it satisfies one of the other defining characteristics, that of a commitment to public service.

The Lacedaemonians made War their chief Study. They are affirmed to be the first who reasoned on the Events of Battles, and committed their Observations to Writing, with such Success, as to reduce the military Art, before considered as totally dependant on Courage or Fortune, to certain Rules and fixed Principles: in Consequence whereof they established Schools of Tactics for the Instruction of Youth in all the Manoeuvres of War. How worthy of Admiration are these People, for particularly applying themselves to the Study of an Art, without which no other Art can possibly subsist. The Romans followed their Example, and both practised their Institutions in their Armies, and preserved them in their Writings.

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33 “The more sophisticated a society becomes, the greater the scope within it for the extension of professional services … but this is a process that, in the early stages at least, will generally be accompanied by a good deal of improvisation.’ Holmes, Professions, p. 9. This may not be limited to aspiring professions as the traditional French professional groupings were also becoming ‘increasingly entrepreneurial and publicity-minded’ during this period: Jones, ‘The Great Chain’, p. 34.


35 Military Institutions: Dedication, p. i. The word discipline already had a military meaning even without the epithet ‘military’: the OED gives discipline ‘Training or skill in military affairs generally; military skill and experience; the art of war’ and cites 1776 Gibbon Decline & Fall I. 297 ‘It was the rigid attention of Aurelian, even to the minutest articles of discipline, which bestowed such uninterrupted success on his arms.’ discipline, n.’ OED Online (Oxford University Press, September 2015) accessed 03.11.15. The attribute was especially associated with the army and this was one of the reasons given for the logic of recruiting soldiers as Marines. In 1739 Samuel Sandys told Parliament that Marines being ‘bred to military discipline, they will be better, and more useful for making Invasions and Incursions upon the Enemy at land, than the most expert Seamen.’ HCP, Speeches and Debates 1739, p. 154 quoted in Zerbe, Marines, p. 22.

Vegetius’ point is twofold: military virtue is the basis for the security of the state and therefore the basis for all other aspects of public life. It follows that not only does the military constitute a profession but, as all others depend on it, it is the profession of professions. Clarke’s translation diverges significantly from the French and illustrates how Clarke chooses at times to follow the Latin, at times the French, so as to bring out the meaning that best suits his ideas and purpose. First, Clarke emphasises the central point that the Romans ‘both practised their Institutions in their Armies, and preserved them in their Writings’. While both Clarke and Sigrais entitle their books ‘Institutions’ Clarke alone takes advantage of this passage to emphasise the word ‘Institutions’, which is present in the original Latin. Where Clarke has ‘Institutions’ Sigrais opts for the very different ‘un sistème de tactique’. Given what we have already described as the French fascination for tactical systems, it is notable that the two translations diverge in this way: one to suggest Vegetius is (like the French military authors) praising tactical systems and the other to promote the idea of professionalism and study. This passage is particularly important because it is leading to Vegetius’ aphorism, which is built on three stages that almost define professionalism: preparation, training and systemic thinking. Clarke follows the Latin: ‘He, therefore, who desires Peace, should prepare for War: he who aspires to Victory, should spare no Pains to form his Soldiers: and he who hopes for Success, should fight on Principle, not Chance’. All three stages reinforce the notion of professionalism which is further developed in Book II.24. Subtitled by Clarke ‘War compared with other Professions’, this section again introduces the word Profession that is not present in the Latin and applies it consistently where the French varies between profession and métier. This chapter addresses all three criteria for a profession: study, public service and the vocation offering a hierarchy of promotion:

Wrestlers, Hunters, Charioteers, for the sake of inconsiderable Rewards or the Favor of the Populace, make it their constant Study to attain Perfection in their several Professions. Much more incumbent is it on a Soldier, on whom the Preservation of his Country depends, to make himself Master of the Science of War, and perfect himself in all its Branches by continual Practice. He has before him the Incitements, not only of Victory, but also of considerable Booty; and may expect, by Seniority, and his General’s Attention to reward Merit, to rise to the most honourable and profitable Employment in the Service ... How much more should the Soldier ... engaged by Oath to the Service, labor indefatigably in the exercise of his Profession, as it is his Duty to fight both for his own Safety, and the Liberty of his Country ...?

Clarke is bold in introducing keywords that are not in his sources or which he develops to be impactful. Elsewhere in Book II, the Latin Neque enim longitudo aetatis aut

37 Végèce, p. 95.
annorum numerus artem bellicam tradit, sed, post quanta volveris stipendia, inexcercitatus miles semper est tiro is translated by Milner as 'For length of time or number of years does not transmit the art of war, but continual exercise. No matter how many years he has served, an unexercised soldier is forever a raw recruit'. Sigrais and Clarke respectively offer:

Les services et l’âge ne font point un titre pour savoir le métier de la guerre. Un vieux soldat qui n’a point été exercé, est toujours nouveau.

Length of Service or Age alone will never form a military Man; for, after serving many Years, an undisciplined Soldier is still a Novice in his Profession.39

Whereas Sigrais has introduced le métier, Clarke uses the stronger ‘in his Profession’, juxtaposed with ‘a Novice’ and placed so that the aphorism ends emphatically with ‘Profession’. Similar is Clarke’s treatment of the passage in Vegetius on the need for soldiers not to undertake non-military work, a theme relevant to public service, royal employment and professionalism. Sinecures were still commonplace in the 1760s but, as we have seen, the Marines suffered also from the appointment of Naval officers into senior Marine positions, reducing their chances for preferment and treating senior commissions in the Marines as political sinecures. Vegetius writes in Book II.xix:

Nec aliquibus milites instituti deputabantur obsequiis, nec privata eisdem negotia mandabantur; siquidem incongruum videbatur imperatoris militem, qui veste et annona publica pascebatur, utilitatibus vacare privatis.

Milner translates this:

Established soldiers were not seconded to any special service at all, nor were they employed for private business. It seemed incongruous that a soldier of the Emperor, maintained in uniform and pay and rations at public expense, should have time to serve private interests.40

Clarke again adapts the French métier and writes:

They then never suffered the Soldiers to attend any private Person, or to concern themselves in private Occupations; thinking it absurd and improper, that the Emperor’s Soldiers, clothed and subsisted at the public Expence, should follow any other Profession.41

Lest we are shy of reading too much into Clarke’s introduction of the word Profession he is, in fact explicit on this point in his own Preface:

39 Epitoma II.23 (Milner, p. 57); Végèce, pp. 86. Military Institutions, pp. 79-80.
40 Epitoma II.xix (Milner, p. 52).
41 Military Institutions, p. 74.
That my Intentions may not be mistaken, I think it proper to mention, that what I have said is in order to show that classical Learning is as necessary in the Profession of Arms as in any other whatsoever; and that the Study of the ancient military Writers is essentially requisite.\footnote{Ibid, x-xi.}

There is, however, one detail in Clarke’s translation that shows another side to his thinking about what professionalism entails, and also highlights a difference between Vegetius, Sigrais and Clarke. On three occasions, the Epitoma describes the qualities required of leaders in the Roman army: the prefect, centurion and general. These qualities are, respectively: ‘iustus, diligens, sobrius’; ‘vigilans, sobrius, agilis’; and ‘vigilans, sobrius, prudens’.

Sigrais does not translate sobrius but in each case his notes alert the reader to the original sense, stating that Vegetius ‘never separates sobriety from other military qualities’. He explains the omission in his translation on the ground that ‘sobriety no longer counts among our soldiers as a military quality’. The idea of a centurion being sober and agile he says, ‘would make people laugh, though that would be inappropriate’. Clarke, however, only makes one gesture towards the Latin, requiring of his centurion that he be ‘vigilant, temperate, active’.

With regard to the general and the prefect, no mention is made of sobriety. It is interesting to note therefore that Clarke appears to take the opposite view to that of Sigrais, both in respect of the centurion and generally in his handling of this subject. He has neither translated the Latin nor noted Vegetius’ insistence that a professional officer does not drink. Presumably, this is not because he disagrees with Vegetius but because he fears that it might prejudice the claims of the contemporary British military to professionalism.

Clarke’s belief in the need for the military to be regarded as a profession and to be professional was not simply self-serving and would in due course become public policy. First, it was indeed the capabilities of Britain’s rising military and civilian bureaucracy that enabled her to mobilise, equip and maintain her military forces through the endless, long-distance and multi-front wars of the eighteenth century. This was the function not only of growth and reform, but the efforts of individuals and ‘small-scale technical improvements and bureaucratic refinements that enhanced the efficiency of many
branches of the state apparatus'. 47 Second, we can see Clarke foreshadowing those who argued that the education and training of officers needed to be formalised, which resulted in the foundation of the Royal Military College at the turn of the century. Until then such professional development of officers as there was took the form of self-education through experience and through the reading of technical treatises and the more general books on military theory. Childs asks why an officer who was able to buy his commission, who had all the necessary skills of leadership by virtue of his social background and who could learn the simple trade of warfare in the frequent wars of his time should wish to 'waste an eighteenth-century gentleman’s time in the classroom'. However, officers did read quite extensively and 'intelligent officers knew far more about Classical military history than they did about the events of their own time'. 48 Clarke’s position on the need for the military to be recognised as professional and to become more so may have been stated forcefully in his Military Institutions but it reflected the views of his peers across Europe where there was a strong sense of profession and professional solidarity. This included a recognition of the need for education, if not formal, then through the reading of treatises in the classical and foreign languages. 49

The Monarch
An important extension of this professional theme – and also the concept of professions as serving the public rather than their own good – is the special relationship claimed with the King. Like the Epitoma, the Military Institutions is dedicated by the author to his monarch. In Clarke’s case this would have required the permission of the King which he often gave to soldiers in these circumstances, but there is no evidence that the King had a copy of the book in his library. 50

48 Childs, Armies, pp. 90, 98 on arguments against officer education; and pp. 91-2 on recommended reading, for example Wolfe to Henry Townshend in 1756, suggesting Vegetius and Puységur. Duffy, Military Experience, p. 52 on classical learning; and p. 283 and Houlding, Training, p. 201 on American officers. Both American and British leaders in the Revolution were exceptionally well-read on military theory: Higginbotham, Reconsiderations, pp. 16-17 and Sandra L. Powers, 'Studying the Art of War: Military Books Known to American Officers and Their French Counterparts During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century' The Journal of Military History 70.3 (2006), 781-814, pp. 793, 795.
50 The copy in the British Library is not from the Royal collection but may have been owned or donated by the prison reformer, John Howard (1726–90). BL General Reference Collection 8824.dd.47.
Vegetius’ emperor was the commander-in-chief of the Army. That remains officially so of the British monarch today, but was more than symbolic in 1767, when the king played an ‘essential and active role’ in an Army that had always been ‘peculiarly the royal instrument’ of the Hanoverian Kings.\textsuperscript{51} George III’s grandfather George II had been the last British monarch to lead his troops into battle – at Dettingen in 1743. George III’s uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, had fought in the same battle, commanded the British against Saxe at Fontenoy (1745) and against the Young Pretender at Culloden in 1746 and, as mentioned earlier, had played a role in attempts to reform the Army.\textsuperscript{52} Notwithstanding the questionable popularity of the Hanoverian dynasty and the army, the Hanoverians were acknowledged for their regard for ‘military efficiency, clarity of administration, frugality and discipline’.\textsuperscript{53}

On accession, George III played an active if not well-documented part in all aspects of the military, including their role in the 1760s in maintaining internal security.\textsuperscript{54} The King was a focal point for the public’s desire for peace but he also presented himself as commander-in-chief, including in Johan Zoffany’s 1771 portrait, in which the King, ‘wearing the general officer’s coat and the Garter, is presented as ready for action’.\textsuperscript{55} Patronage was the King’s prerogative and as the new American garrison was established in 1762 and 1763, the King took the opportunity to use it. It was the King and Bute who created the ‘Court Plan for the Army’ that involved stationing 10,000 regulars in North America and the West Indies, ‘a considerable expansion of royal patronage’ as of military expenditure.\textsuperscript{56} The main objection to the Court Plan was financial but Parliament was assured during the debate in March 1763 ‘by a hint from the administration that the cost

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{51} Indeed, they ‘jealously guarded this prerogative and actively pursued the duties and professional interests which it entailed.’ Houlding, \textit{Training}, p. 154.
  \item \textsuperscript{52} John Brooke, \textit{King George III} (Constable, 1972), pp. 70-71. See also Starkey, \textit{War}, pp. 109ff for discussion of Cumberland and Fontenoy (1745).
  \item \textsuperscript{53} Guy, \textit{Oeconomy}, pp. 19–22. ‘The King saw himself, not unlike his cousin the extraordinary Frederick-William I of Prussia, as a kind of \textit{primus inter pares} in his corps of officers. He prided himself on a close personal acquaintance with their characters and attainments, perfectly possible in an army which in time of peace had only about 2,000 officers, and he kept this information in a book close at hand when discussing preferments.’
  \item \textsuperscript{54} ‘There are in reality’, wrote the King in May 1768, ‘so few troops in the country that there is constantly a degree of difficulty in providing troops on the daily calls the civil magistrates are obliged to make in these very licentious days.’ Quoted in Brooke, \textit{George III}, p. 248.
  \item \textsuperscript{55} Plate 4, in Jeremy Black, \textit{George III: America’s last king} (Yale University Press, 2006). See also pp. 210-11 on the King’s involvement in the decision to garrison America. Simms, \textit{Three Victories}, plate 34 (p. 522) is another martial portrait of the king in uniform on horseback.
  \item \textsuperscript{56} Baugh, \textit{Seven Years War}, p. 653.
\end{itemize}
of these battalions would be borne by American colonists’. As he wrote, Clarke must have been aware of the growing American controversy and crisis, which highlighted the constitutional relationship between King and Army throughout the Empire and between the King and his subjects in America.

In his translation of the Preface to Book II, Clarke introduces the word ‘Profession’ as a translation of artis, thereby emphasising his general point but also making it clear that this is the King’s own profession.

Such a continued Series of Victories and Triumphs proves incontestably Your Majesty’s full and perfect Knowledge of the military Discipline of the Ancients; Success in any Profession is the most certain Mark of Skill in it.

Again we can see Clarke’s method and intent when we compare his approach to that of Sigrais. The French translation of course retains Vegetius’ praise of his emperor’s military triumphs but omits the last clause about success proving ability and makes no reference to profession. The high point of monarchism in the Epitoma is the sacred military oath, the militiae sacramenta, which illustrates the multi-faceted relationship between a soldier and his monarch: employer and patron, head of religion and ruler.

They swear by God, by Christ, and by the Holy Ghost; and by the Majesty of the Emperor, who, after God, should be the chief Object of the Love and Veneration of Mankind. For when he has once received the Title of August, his Subjects are bound to pay him the most sincere Devotion and Homage, as the Representative of God on Earth; and every Man, whether in a private or military Station, serves God in serving him faithfully who reigns by his Authority. The Soldiers, therefore, swear they will obey the Emperor willingly and implicitly in all his Commands, that they will never desert, and that they will always be ready to sacrifice their Lives for the Roman Empire.

But while a monarch may be the commander-in-chief, he has another role as the political leader of people and state. And, as such, he has to address a problem that neither the soldier nor the civilian politician does: which is to understand the distinction between these two professions and the primacy between them. This is where the concept and meaning of strategy are so significant.

57 Ibid.
58 Military Institutions: II Preface, p. 45.
59 ‘Les victoires et les triomphes continuels de votre majesté sont des preuves authentiques qu’elle possède parfaitement les ordonnances de l’ancienne milice, et qu’elle sait les faire executer avec succès ...’ Végèce, pp. 45, 117.
60 Military Institutions II.v, p. 54.
The nature of the profession

Having pressed home the point that the military deserves to be regarded as a profession, Clarke needs to define the nature of that profession and to do so in terms that reflect the Vegetian understanding of warfare. As we have seen, the Vegetian concept of war is the idea that military success does not lie in the hands of God or of Fortune but – as we have seen in his aphorism – in preparation through superior recruitment and training; and in achieving victory by means of a systematic approach based on an educated understanding of the purpose of war and a profound analysis of how to win. In other words, Clarke needs to show that to be successful in warfare requires the very characteristics that define professionalism.

To Clarke’s audience – whether military or among a more general readership – the idea that classical models were applicable in the eighteenth century would have been generally – although not universally – agreed. It could, however, be argued that the principles of classicism and science apply just as forcefully to Vegetius, and those who read and followed him, as they do to Folard and the eighteenth century. After all, Vegetius is drawing on what he describes himself as an ancient classical tradition as much as are the writers of the Military Enlightenment. The battle of Cannae, which informs so much writing on military tactics, took place in 216 BCE, six centuries before Vegetius wrote about it. And Vegetius is no less insistent either on the moral factors in war than he is on the possibility of scientific analysis. While there was a strong tradition of classicism in military thought, the introduction of firearms was seen from the 1500s onwards to present at least a strong argument that warfare had changed in ways that rendered classical analysis redundant. As Starkey observes, the debate about a military revolution was topical in Clarke’s time as much as it has been more recently. Clarke is a humanist who states his belief in the timelessness of the principles of war in the face of perceived opposition. Like Machiavelli he also sees modern weapons as incidental not fundamental to the enduring principles of war.

It is an Opinion too universally prevalent, that the Difference between the Ancients and Moderns in the executive Part of the Art of War is such, that the Writings of the former on the Subject can be of little Service to the Latter. No one, I imagine, will deny that the Principles of War have always have been, and always will be, the same invariably, notwithstanding the Alterations of particular Modes or Weapons: and many of the ancient Institutions are even applicable to these. The modern military Customs in almost every

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part of the Service are borrowed from the Greeks and Romans; many without any Change, others with such inconsiderable Alterations as scarce deserve mentioning.\textsuperscript{62}

As we have seen, however, Clarke needs this continuity not just so that he can explain the relevance of his translation of Vegetius, nor the principles contained in Vegetius, but also because the essence of the Vegetian approach is that it requires a professional army acting with professionalism. This may be one reason why Machiavelli does not cite Vegetius as a source even though he borrows extensively from his work. Machiavelli blames the very downfall of Rome on the fact that it had a professional army:

My Romans (as I have said), as long as they were wise and good, never permitted that their citizens should take up this practice as their profession ... [Then the Emperors] freely began to allow men chosen for those armies to practice soldiering as their profession. These men soon became arrogant so that they were dangerous to the Senate and harmful to the Emperor. The result was that many emperors were killed through the arrogance of the soldiers, who gave the Empire to whom they chose, and took it away; sometimes it happened that at the same time there were many emperors established by various armies. From these things resulted, first, division of the Empire, and finally its ruin.\textsuperscript{63}

Machiavelli’s sentiment would have resonated with many in Britain more strongly than Clarke’s advocacy of a professional army but it was incompatible with Vegetius’ whole premise.\textsuperscript{64} Vegetius was insistent that a permanent professional army was a necessity and his emphasis on daily training and continuing professional education were incompatible with a citizen militia or the mobilisations and demobilisations of eighteenth-century Britain. It would not have been possible to read Clarke’s \textit{Military Institutions} without recognising that they require a professional standing army. As if to promote such an army as built on a solid base, Clarke uses the word ‘Establishment’, and as translation of three different Latin words: \textit{constitutus} (ordered, arranged, fixed, established); \textit{ordinatio} (an orderly arrangement); and, \textit{institutio} (established custom, arrangement).\textsuperscript{65}

Having established that the principles of war are timeless, it follows that they are open to scientific study and Clarke uses the keywords ‘science’ and ‘art’ throughout his text. In

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Military Institutions}: Preface (vii).
\textsuperscript{63} Machiavelli, \textit{Works}, volume II, p. 578.
\textsuperscript{64} The Bill of Rights (1688) states: ‘That the raising or keeping a standing Army within the Kingdome in time of Peace unlesse it be with Consent of Parlyament is against Law.’ J. G. A. Pocock discusses the emergence of the notion of a standing army in England (in 1675) in the broader context of Machiavellian thought in John Greville Agard Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition} (Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 411-13. ‘The professional officer is the cause as well as the effect of this corruption [i.e., rule by military force], and his capacity to act in this baneful way arises from the fact that his decision to become a professional has rendered him the lifelong dependent of the state that can employ him.’ (p. 413).
\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Military Institutions}, pp. 47, 49, 53, 56, 59, 77, 79 and 90.
his dedication, Clarke writes: ‘And I flatter myself Your Majesty will be pleased to
consider this Attempt as the Result of a Desire to contribute to the Advancement of the
military Sciences...’ Furthermore, Clarke uses ‘science’ where Vegetius uses *ars*,
*disciplina* and *doctrina* and even *eloquentia* as well as *scientia* itself.

Table 2. The word ‘science’ in Clarke’s translation of Vegetius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>Clarke’s translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Dedication</td>
<td>Sic regnantium testimoniis crebuit eloquentia, dum non culpatur audacia (<em>Epitoma</em>, p. 5)</td>
<td>this Encouragement of the Sovereign made the Sciences flourish (<em>Military Institutions</em>, p. 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.24</td>
<td>studiosius oportet scientiam dimicandi usumque rei bellicae iugibus exercitiis custodire (p. 59)</td>
<td>Much more incumbent is it on a Soldier...to make himself Master of the Science of War, and perfect himself in all its Branches by continual Practice (p. 82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.Preface</td>
<td>Athenienses non solum rei bellicae sed etiam diversarum artium viguit industria (p. 63)</td>
<td>The Athenians excelled not only in War, but other Arts and Sciences (p. 87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.x</td>
<td>Hanc [<em>artem bellicam</em>] quondam relictis doctrinis omnibus Lacedaemonii et postea coluere Romani (p. 88)</td>
<td>The Lacedaemonians, and after them the Romans, were so sensible of this Truth, that to this Science they sacrificed all others (p. 120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.Valediction</td>
<td>regula proelandi ... vincendi artificum (p. 120)</td>
<td>Science of War ... Art of Conquest (p. 165)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would be wrong to suggest that Clarke’s is a uniform approach. For example, in the
sentence quoted above ‘How worthy of Admiration are these People, for particularly
applying themselves to the Study of an Art, without which no other Art can possibly
subsist’ Clarke could have followed Sadler in using ‘science’ but, like Sigrais, uses ‘art’.

We have already noted that Clarke and Machiavelli diverge on the question of the
professional standing army. A further lexical twist is the way that Clarke appears to avoid
the use of the word ‘virtue’ even when the Latin text presents it: for example, *Romana autem virtus praecipue in legionum ordinatione praepollet* becomes ‘The peculiar Strength of the Romans always consisted in the excellent Establishment of their Legions.’

Perhaps Clarke is merely following Sigrais’ ‘la force du peuple romain’ (p. 48/120).

66 *Military Institutions*: Dedication, p. ii.
67 Sadler uses ‘science’ which he describes as being developed from ‘experiments of fight’ – emphasising perhaps its empirical nature. This, perhaps, illustrates the conscious lexical choices of the translators. Sadler, *Vegetius*, p. 25.
68 *Military Institutions* II.i, p. 49.
Similarly, Clarke avoids the word ‘policy’ which Sadler deploys frequently. Clarke appears to wish to focus on the scientific nature of war and not to be drawn (overtly) into the moral or political philosophy of Machiavelli or his times.

**Empire**

For Vegetius, the empire as a political structure, if not as a state, is a given: he is writing in an empire that had already existed for 400 years. For Clarke, the context is more ambiguous, more unsettled and more linked to the other topics we have discussed. Whatever claims earlier British monarchs may have made, a British Empire and the King as emperor were a reality when George III took the throne in 1760. According to Stone, the acquisition of this Empire ‘turned the heads of London statesmen’ and resulted in a ‘policy revolution - a shift from a focus on [an Atlantic maritime empire based on trade] to a focus on control of territory and its inhabitants’. In addition to questions of physical territory and commercial logic, the Seven Years’ War had consolidated the idea that Britain and Britishness included the American colonies and colonists. Now there was a policy debate about the wisdom of retaining the new conquests in which Rome was a model for the dangers of excessive expansion. China even appeared as a model of the opposite strategy with Oliver Goldsmith’s deployment of a fictional Chinese philosopher to articulate the dangers of expansion:

The best English politicians, however, are sensible that to keep their present conquests, would be rather a burthen than an advantage to them ... The colonies should always bear an exact proportion to the mother country; when they grow populous, they grow powerful, and by becoming powerful, they become independent also; thus subordination is destroyed, and the country swallowed up in the extent of its own dominions.

Thomas Pownall articulated the opposing view that consolidation was required so that

... our kingdom may be no more considered as the mere kingdom of this isle, with many appendages of provinces, colonies, settlements, and other extraneous parts; but as a grand

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72 See Kostas Vlassopoulos, ‘Imperial Encounters: discourses on empire and the uses of ancient history during the eighteenth century’ in Mark Bradley (Ed.), *Classics and imperialism in the British Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 29–53.

Thus in 1763, George III found himself ruler of an empire that presented political, economic and cultural dilemmas. As he saw it, his immediate strategic need was to station and fund a garrison to defend his American territories. This was a complex issue given the scale of the territories in question, their distance from London and a constitution and military designed to attack and defend sea-borne commerce and coastal settlements rather than conduct continental war or defend such large areas. Perhaps because of the King's youth, his troubled relationships with both the House of Commons and his own successive Ministries during the first decade of his reign, no strategy developed to reconcile the new Empire with the Bill of Rights or the cultural dislike of the Army. In this strategic vacuum, the decision to garrison 10,000 soldiers in America was taken towards the end of 1762 and early 1763. Writing a decade after Clarke, Edward Gibbon (1737–94) used Rome to argue for the essential role of the Army in an Empire:

There is nothing perhaps more adverse to nature and reason than to hold in obedience remote countries and foreign nations, in opposition to their inclination and interest. A torrent of Barbarians may pass over the earth, but an extensive empire must be supported by a refined system of policy and oppression; in the centre, an absolute power, prompt in action and rich in resources; a swift and easy communication with the extreme parts; fortifications to check the first effort of rebellion; a regular administration to protect and punish; and a well-disciplined army to inspire fear, without provoking discontent and despair. Clarke evidently saw the necessity of a 'well-disciplined army' to maintain an 'extensive empire' and, although writing in a Parliamentary democracy, Clarke makes clear his position in his Dedication by comparing his King to Vegetius' emperor. The nuances of his translation are no less imperialist. For example, as we have seen above, he translates *pro Romana republica* with 'for the Roman Empire'. In Book II.iii, Clarke demonstrates that *res publica* is not a political structure.

Cato the Elder, who was often Consul, and always victorious at the Head of Armies, believed he should do his Country more essential Service by writing on military Affairs,

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74 The Administration of the Colonies (London, 1764) quoted in Conway, War, p. 235.
75 Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–8), Chapter 49, accessed digitally at http://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/volume2/chap49.htm#Lombardy (29.01.14). Conway, War, p. 13 notes that 'if the use of British regular troops in an imperial capacity was far from unprecedented in 1739, over the next quarter of a century it was to develop massively in scale. By 1762, nearly a third of the British army was expected to be based outside Europe.'
than by all his Exploits in the Field. For the Consequences of brave Actions are only temporary, while whatever is committed to Writing for public Good is of lasting Utility.\textsuperscript{77}

Clarke’s perspective on the sovereignty of the emperor over all his subjects was not limited to a loyal British soldier. Benjamin Franklin (1706–90), writing in the same year as Clarke, expressed the same view (although 1767 marked the turning-point in his position on independence):

Thus all the colonies acknowledge the King as their sovereign; his Governors there represent his person: Laws are made by their Assemblies or little Parliaments, with the Governor’s assent, subject still to the King’s pleasure to confirm or annul them: Suits arising in the Colonies, and differences between Colony and Colony, are determined by the King in Council. In this view, they seem so many separate little states, subject to the same Prince. The sovereignty of the King is therefore easily understood.\textsuperscript{78}

Returning to the role of the emperor and his army in preserving the Empire, Clarke is able to advise George III:

Nor let this Alteration and Loss of ancient Discipline any way affect Your Majesty, since it is a Happiness reserved for You alone both to restore the ancient Ordinances, and establish new ones for the public Welfare. Every Work, before the Attempt, carries in it an Appearance of Difficulty; but in this Case, if the Levies are made by careful and experienced Officers, an Army may be raised, disciplined, and rendered fit for Service, in a very short Time; for, the necessary Expences once provided, Diligence soon effects whatever it undertakes.\textsuperscript{79}

This paragraph perfectly illustrates how Vegetius provides Clarke with the opportunity to deliver a very contemporary and politically charged message to the King on his strategic obligations. This begs the question of how Clarke will treat the end of Book III which, as we have seen in chapter 1 (above, p. 53), is the most dramatic passage in Vegetius. Here Vegetius addresses his emperor with the proposition that the principles in his book have been digested from the great authors so that the emperor can add to his undoubted skills as a soldier those of an emperor ‘the rules of fighting, or rather, the art of winning’.\textsuperscript{80} By balancing courage (\textit{virtus}) with strategy (\textit{dispositio}) he will fulfil his

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\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Military Institutions} II.iii, p. 52. Allmand Vegetius, pp. 27-8 notes that this passage was heavily annotated and admired by mediaeval readers.

\textsuperscript{78} Benjamin Franklin to Lord Kames (11 April 1767). http://www.gutenberg.org/files/35508/35508-h/35508-h.htm\#TOLORDKAMES325 (accessed 26.10.15) Franklin continues to discuss the position of Parliament, recognizing that it has a practical function, but not one based on principle.

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Military Institutions} II.xviii, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{80} Sigrais is more explicit and perhaps ironic in stating in the body of the text that the emperor’s soldierly accomplishments have been demonstrated not on the battlefield but merely as exercises, a point that Clarke hints at more lightly in the footnote and which is not explicit at all in the original: \textit{Végèce} III Valediction, p. 202. Milner, \textit{Vegetius}, p. 119 note 6 also suggests that Vegetius may have exercises in mind. This seems improbable given Theodosius’ genuine accomplishments as a soldier.
duty/office as emperor as well as that of soldier. In other words, Vegetius is conveying that these soldierly skills are not appropriate to the function of emperor. An emperor, for Vegetius, needs to think strategically, not bravely, about the safety of his Empire – here the res publica, the welfare of its citizens. The problem for Clarke and his French source is that they cannot translate this for political reasons. Clarke uses the device, therefore, of not translating it – but highlighting and expanding in an adjacent footnote Vegetius’ point and thereby ensuring that it cannot possibly be overlooked. Clarke’s text and footnote are as follows:

This Abridgement of the most eminent military Writers, invincible Emperor, contains the Maxims and Instructions they have left us, approved by different Ages, and confirmed by repeated Experience. The Persians admire Your Skill in Archery; the Huns and Alans endeavour in vain to imitate Your Dexterity in Horsemanship; the Saracens and Indians cannot equal Your Activity in the Course; and even the Masters at Arms pique themselves on only Part of that Knowledge and Expertness of which You give so many Instances in their own Profession. How glorious* is it therefore for Your Majesty with all these Qualifications to unite the Science of War and the Art of Conquest; and to convince the World, that by Your Conduct and Courage, You are equally capable of performing the Duties of the Soldier and of the General!

* How glorious.] The Expressions in the Original seem to imply that nothing is wanting to complete the Character of Valentinian, but the Addition of the military Science to the above-mentioned Exercises of the Body, in which he already excels. But this would be too bad a Compliment to that Emperor, especially after what our Author has said in the Prefaces of the first and second Books. In the former he tells him he does not presume to offer him these military Institutions for his Instruction, but to show him how closely he follows the Examples of the great Founders of the Roman Empire. In the latter, he attributes his continued Victories and Triumphs, which he says surpass Antiquity itself, to his perfect Knowledge of War. I have borrowed this Remark from the French Translator, and followed him in giving this Passage a different Turn, as it is expressed oddly in the Original. 82

Sigrais acknowledges the problem in his footnote:

The Latin appears to say that Valentinian only needs to add to his physical exercises the art of tactics in which Vegetius has just given him a lesson. But, instead of being a compliment, this would be a very great impertinence and an awkwardness of which the author is not capable ... Whatever it is, if a translator can take liberties anywhere it is undoubtedly in paying a compliment and I am taking some here in order to get the right meaning. 83

81 Clarke is translating the French note here, but he translates art de la tactique as ‘military Science’. The use of ‘military Science’ in the footnote reinforces the main text and takes it beyond the Latin.
82 Military Institutions: III Valediction, pp. 164–5. This is an exceptionally long note for Clarke and it is (unlike the French whose notes are at the back of the book) juxtaposed with the main text therefore being read with the main text and qualifying it.
83 Végèce: Remarques, p. 43.
As he does often in his *Remarques*, Sigrais makes both a serious point and applies an ironic tone that distances him from the original. ’If a translator can take liberties anywhere’, he observes, ‘surely it is in a compliment’ – or in fact, turning an insult into one. Clarke suggests in his footnote that he is doing the same but what he does is subtly different. The way Clarke changes the sense of the Latin, so that it both reinforces his general messages about his profession while removing (at least in the main text) the suggestion that the emperor has shortcomings, demonstrates nicely his translation at work. Clarke’s solution is that the emperor will unite ‘the Science of War and the Art of Conquest’ whereas the Latin spoke of the latter as a correction of the former. Clarke makes several changes. The first is how he translates the phrase *virtute pariter ac dispositione mirabilis reipublicae tuae*. Milner translates this ‘by the valour coupled with the strategy of your glorious state’. Sadler by ‘through puissance and marvelous good ordering of your common wealth’. In both cases (but more strongly in Sadler’s) the emperor is to be judged by the characteristics of his realm. Clarke’s rendition of this as ‘by Your Conduct and Courage’ removes the state so that we are discussing the personal accomplishments of the emperor. By contrast, Sadler’s use of ‘common wealth’ – a literal translation of *res publica* – is even more forceful than Milner’s ‘state’ because of the etymology of the word – it is the collective good of the people as well as the political unit. More subtly, Clarke reverses the word order of Emperor and Soldier: Vegetius’ word order (*imperatoris officium exhiberes et militis*) suggests that the emperor *is* a soldier but *needs to be* an emperor. Clarke and Sigrais (but not Sadler) reverse this so that he is an emperor who also happens to be a soldier. In addition, the emperor is not being invited to show (*exhibere*) his office but to ‘perform’ it. Overall, Clarke’s devices to ameliorate the Latin are not convincing: since the long introductory sentence on the emperor’s soldierly skills remains in the translation, Clarke’s emperor is presented as already and obviously being an accomplished soldier. When combined with the footnote, the impression is that if the King needs to learn anything from studying ancient principles, it is not how to be a soldier, but how to convince the world that he is an emperor.

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84 Sadler is truer to the Latin in the order and treatment of this passage. *Dispositio* may have a military sense like Milner’s ‘strategy’ but Sadler’s ‘good ordering’ suggests this may be a civil not a military characteristic – as may Vegetius’ *virtus*. After listing the emperor’s soldierly accomplishments, Sadler writes, ‘(vnto all these thinges I saye) a rule or trade howe to fighte in battayle, yea, rather policie howe to gette the victorie, muste bee annexed: that as much as you can through puissance and marueilous good orderinge of your common wealth, you may shewe the office and perfourme the dutie, bothe of an Emperour and a souldiour.’ Sadler’s monarch was not a soldier and would have agreed that good government was her primary responsibility, not waging war. Sadler, *Vegetius*, p. 51.
Conclusions

Clarke’s treatment of the ending of Book III is the key to his position as soldier, strategist and translator. With his knowledge of Latin and of Vegetius, the French translation and Sadler’s, he would have appreciated that Vegetius’ ‘Turn’ in this passage was not ‘odd’ but intentional. He must also have been aware of three further points. The first is that the original text is confronting an issue that had not been addressed by Clarke’s immediate predecessors in the Military Enlightenment: that strategic success is determined more by the political, economic and diplomatic capabilities of the state than by its military or tactical competence. A decade after Clarke, Henry Lloyd would articulate this for the Military Enlightenment.85 The process of translation, while it may constrain the mode of expression, enables Clarke to draw the same conclusion. The Epitoma is a political tract and the phrase regula proeliandi, immo vincendi artificium is at its heart: the strategic objective of a state is not fighting but winning. A further benefit of translation, of which Clarke must have been aware, is the cover it affords for criticism. Vegetius challenges an emperor who considers his own physical bravery and combat skills to be more important than the res publica. When this happens (as with Valens) then not only is there the danger of tactical defeat, but long-term strategic failure if the Empire ignores the imperatives of prudent strategy and sound military administration. A good system had, after all, been the basis of Britain’s military success in the Seven Years’ War and its breakdown had resulted in the Peace of Paris. Finally, amid the press controversies of the period, Clarke knew that he was addressing a king who, in the first seven years of his reign, had done nothing to demonstrate strategic understanding or political intelligence, and his failures – his choice of ministers, their negotiation of the Peace of Paris, promotion of the Court Plan for America and subsequent legislation – had already caused great damage to Britain and were leading inexorably towards the loss of America. Clarke had in front of him the perfect text – pretext – on which to make this point and, in a subtle and effective way, he grasped the opportunity to highlight this highly political issue with the tools available to him as a translator.

85 ‘As our armies are armed and disciplined in the same manner, it is natural to conclude, that the final success of a war depends entirely on the goodness of the troops, and the abilities of the commanders. Though this may be true in general, there are, I think, other causes which must concur with those above-mentioned; for, in the history of various wars, I find that some very extensive and apparently powerful empires have been easily subdued; whereas other inconsiderable states have made an incredible, and often successful resistance … from whence I infer, that the difference of government contributed as much towards it, as the goodness of the troops, or the genius of the commanders.’ Henry Lloyd, Continuation of the History of the late War in Germany: Part III, The Policy of War: Of the Analogy between Military Operations and the Different Species Of Government (1781) in Speelman, Works of General Lloyd, p. 458. Lloyd cites a range of empires in evidence, including ‘the Tartars in China.’
Chapter 4. Amiot’s Art Militaire des Chinois

Introduction
Joseph Amiot’s Art Militaire des Chinois has a literary context that is at once more accessible and more complicated than that of John Clarke’s Military Institutions and it is necessary to examine this literary context before we can undertake a close reading of the French translation in order to identify the central ideas that it is seeking to transmit. While we know more about Amiot, his text and its reception, we cannot make a direct comparison of his translation with his sources, for reasons I will explore below. But Amiot, his editor and his critics explicitly consider questions concerning sources and translation and I examine these in the present chapter, before an analysis of the text in the next chapter.

Amiot’s texts
Amiot’s text was published twice during his lifetime, first in 1772 as a single volume, entitled ‘Art Militaire des Chinois, ou Receuil d’anciens traités sur l’art de la guerre, composés avant l’ère chrétienne, par différents généraux chinois – Ouvrages sur lesquels les Aspirants aux Grades Militaires sont obligés de subir des examens’. From 1776 onwards, a number of works by Amiot and his fellow missionaries in China were published in Paris as a form of encyclopaedia of Chinese knowledge. Volume 7 of these ‘Mémoires’ included a reprint of the 1772 work, together with some additional commentary; and Volume 8 of the Mémoires includes Amiot’s ‘Supplément à l’Art militaire des Chinois’.

The Art Militaire comprises translations of four of the Seven Military Classics (which I will refer to in their Hanyu pinyin forms) together with two sections devoted to military exercises and weapons, military dress and musical instruments. The book is prefaced with a translation of the Ten Precepts of the Yongzheng emperor, father of the reigning emperor, Qianlong. The four military classics are the Sunzi bingfa; the Wuzi bingfa; the Sima fa; and extracts from the Liutao. The book is prefaced with an Avis by the editor, Joseph de Guignes, a Discours du Traducteur by Amiot and a section of plates at the end. In his Avis, de Guignes explains that Amiot dispatched his translations of the Sunzi and Wuzi bingfa to France in 1766 and they arrived in 1767, the year in which Clarke’s Military Institutions was published. De Guignes says that the Sima fa arrived in 1769,

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1 The title immediately emphasizes two themes we have seen in Enlightenment sinology: the antiquity of Chinese culture and the role of the imperial examinations in its governance.
presumably with the extract from the *Liutao*. Of the two classical Chinese texts that arrived in Paris in 1767, the *Sunzi* was the more significant. Amiot says that the Chinese ‘make so much of this book that they regard it as the masterpiece in this genre, as a model, as a précis of all that can be said about the art of warriors’. Interestingly, however, while Amiot identifies the significance of the military classics, and specifically the *Sunzi*, and includes a text of Yongzheng, he makes no reference to the military writings of the reigning Qianlong emperor. As Amiot was aware, having translated one of the Emperor’s poems, Qianlong was a prolific writer, including some 1,500 poems and essays on warfare. Qianlong celebrated his military achievements both nationally and internationally as evidenced through the pictures sent to Paris for engraving in 1765 and the international audience who attended the ritual held in Peking in 1760 to celebrate the Xinjiang conquest of 1759. Further, as we have seen above, the Jesuits had a long association with both Ming and Qing military enterprises. We may speculate that the idea of a highly militarised and expansionist China did not sit comfortably with the Jesuit account of China as a pacifist, Confucian society that valued good government above territorial acquisition. Nonetheless, during the decade or so in which Amiot had lived in Peking, the military culture promoted by Qianlong must have been powerfully evident to Amiot and may, ironically, be one of the reasons why the idea of translating the Chinese military classics appealed to him and was (perhaps) acceptable to the Chinese court.

**Contemporary reviews**

Although I will consider the most significant aspect of the response to Amiot’s work in chapter 6, we do need to take notice here of various reviews that were published by Amiot’s contemporaries in London and Paris. While it would normally be anachronistic to consider these reviews as part of a reading of Amiot’s own work, there are special circumstances since in one case the authors were very close to Amiot’s editor and shed some light on his sources; while in the other, Amiot responded to the criticisms in the Supplement to the 1782 reprint of his work and his comments there are relevant to our study and cannot be understood without the reviews to which they relate.

The most significant of these works is a critique of Amiot’s text first published in a series of articles in four editions in 1771 and 1772 of *Éphémérides du citoyen*, the Physiocrats’ journal. The first article opens with a general essay on Chinese society and then

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3 *Art Militaire*, p. viii.

3 *Art Militaire*, p. 4.

continues with a review of Amiot’s work, chapter by chapter.” The articles were subsequently published as *État Actuel de l’Art et de la Science Militaire à la Chine* (London, 1773). The author of the first article is named as Colonel de Saint-Maurice de Saint-Leu. The anonymous author of the remaining articles was later identified in Volume 7 of the *Mémoires* (1782) as the Marquis de Puységur – the man who had published the *Art de la guerre* of his father, Marshal Puységur. That the *Science Militaire à la Chine* was written as a commentary on Amiot’s work by two senior members of the French military establishment is significant. No less so is the fact that they must have had access to the book before its publication since their first article was published in 1771, the year before Amiot’s book was published. This suggests that there was a pre-existing connection between these men, and this is borne out by my research, which shows that Saint-Maurice de Saint-Leu had been a contributor to the *Éphémérides* from 1765 onwards suggesting that he was a member of the Physiocrat circle. Puységur had his own history as a writer in the 1760s, which we will discuss further below.

Amiot’s work is also cited quite extensively in a contemporary book by Cornélius de Pauw (1739-99), whose central purpose was to advance his position in the contemporary controversy concerning the theory that the Chinese nation were of Egyptian origin. De Pauw is critical both of Amiot personally and of his work in the two volumes of *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Egyptiens et les Chinois*, published in 1773. Loosely linked to de Pauw is an anonymous English review published in the foreign articles

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6 Referred to hereafter as the *Science Militaire à la Chine*. Note that whereas Amiot and his civilian editor have entitled the work *art militaire*, the military authors of this work prefer the term *science*.


section of the *Monthly Review, or Literary Journal* of 1773 immediately before a review of de Pauw’s *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Egyptiens et les Chinois*.10

I have also identified seven contemporary French articles (some of which are derivatives of each other) containing reviews of the *Art Militaire*, all of which appeared in 1772.11 There is also a 1782 review of the *Supplément* published in Volume 8 of the *Mémoires*.12

These contemporary texts all seek to provide reasoned criticism of Amiot’s text to which Amiot then responds in the 1782 *Supplément*. Collectively, these texts allow a different approach to Amiot’s work than is possible with Clarke, whose text is not cited in contemporary writings.

**Amiot’s sources**

By contrast, whereas Clarke’s catalogue and references lead us to his Latin and French sources and the German commentary on the *Epitoma*, we have information on Amiot’s sources that is contradictory and inconclusive. Amiot himself provides the following description of how he discovered them:

Some Manchu lords of the highest quality, who held senior rank in the army, had attracted the displeasure of the sovereign. The confiscation of their possessions was one of the penalties they suffered. Their homes were stripped and their furniture was publicly sold. A person close to me, whom I had charged for more than a year to collect all the books he could find about war, having gone to the place where these kinds of sales are held, glanced at the books on sale there; he saw, among others, a manuscript, in which was a collection of good authors who have written on the art of war, with notes that were a kind of commentary, for the purpose of developing and giving a full understanding of the text; he remembered the commission that I had given him, and did not hesitate about the actions he had to take.13

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12 *Journal de Littérature* volume V, 1782, 88-114.

13 *Art Militaire*, p. 7. Here Amiot refers to the individual whom he had commissioned to find books on the art of war as ‘la personne’ and ‘elle’. The phrasing seems designed to sound mysterious and as if Amiot is protecting a source. Amiot’s relations with the Chinese are the subject of current research by Alexander Statman at Stanford University.
De Guignes notes that all of the Chinese military classics are in the Bibliothèque du Roi. In his preface to Amiot’s first published work, de Guignes refers to the King’s Chinese collection and Amiot’s attempts to augment it with new books from Peking:

The King’s Library, as we know, has a large collection of Oriental Books, but mainly Chinese Books. Last year, Father Amiot, Missionary to Peking, intending to increase this wealth sent M. Bignon, librarian of the King, a box that contains several very curious Books.

The Science Militaire à la Chine provides a more specific speculation on Amiot’s sources:

There are six ancient Works on war ... There are copies of these six books in Chinese at the King’s Library. M. de Guignes, who was the Editor of those recently published in French, does not say that there is also the translation into Manchu which the Kangxi Emperor commissioned to be printed in 1710, and which we believe is the source of the French translation. These six books are accompanied by some of their various Commentators ...

In the only modern academic analysis of Amiot’s text, Samuel B. Griffith concludes that ‘Amiot so inextricably mixed the words of the commentators with those of Sunzi that it is quite a task to disentangle the two. To further compound confusion, this pious priest occasionally injected ideas of his own into his text’. On this basis, Griffith condemns Amiot as a translator, but unfortunately he does not identify Amiot’s sources nor does he identify those ideas which he considers Amiot’s own.

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14 The Bibliothèque Nationale de France has a large collection of Chinese manuscripts with a section on the Art Militaire. Amongst these is a set of manuscripts (5055) dating to 1711: Maurice Courant, Bibliothèque Nationale Département Des Manuscrits Catalogue Des Livres Chinois, Coréens, Japonais, Etc. (Paris, 1910), volume 2, p. 78. This may be the set described by Saint-Maurice de Saint-Leu as it includes all six works included in the Art Militaire. The Chinese collection at the Bibliothèque du Roi at this time is described in Henri Cordier, La Chine en France au XVIIIe siècle (Paris, 1910), pp. 113-4.

15 Amiot, Mokuden, pp. iii-iv. This was Amiot’s translation of a Qianlong poem. De Guignes’ story continues that the case of books sent by Amiot was detained in Canton ‘parce que les Chinois ne veulent pas que les Etrangers s’instruisent de leur langue ni leur littérature’ (Ibid, p. iv).

16 Science Militaire à la Chine, p. 36. My attempts to locate the Manchu manuscript have been unsuccessful. The BNF has not been able to find the Manchu text: e-mail dated 09.03.15 from Nathalie Monnet, of the BNF’s Département des Manuscrits. A manuscript of the 1710 Manchu translation is held by the University of California Library and was transcribed in part by P. A. Boodberg: A Manchu Version of Sun Tzu, Hu-t’ien han-vu fang-chu 6 (Berkeley, 1933); see Stephen Durrant, ‘Manchu Translations of Chou Dynasty Texts’ Early China, vol. 3 (Fall 1977), 52-54, p. 53. Berkeley has been unable to locate Boodberg’s transcription or the manuscript: e-mail dated 19.03.15 from Jianye He of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library. Professor Victor Mair co-published a transcription and translation of a Manchu text of the Sunzi in Victor H. Mair and Hoong Teik Toh, Soldierly Methods - Vade Mecum for an Iconoclastic Translation of Sun Zi bingfa with a complete transcription and word-for-word glosses of the Manchu translation’ Sino-Platonic Papers Number 178 February, 2008, p. 193. E-mail from Professor Mair, 13.03.15.

This leaves a contradiction between Amiot’s account of his multiple sources and the suggestion in the *Science Militaire à la Chine* that Amiot had a single one. Amiot’s account of how he acquired these books is echoed, albeit less dramatically, in the *Supplément* published in 1782, where he describes how he acquired the supplementary materials:

A former soldier of these cantons, curious to know everything that was done in this genre wrote down everything that is found in the ancient and modern books he was able to read. His manuscript having been communicated to me, I found many things that seemed to me to deserve to be passed on to France. Perhaps someone will decide if I was mistaken.\(^8\)

There is something of Othello’s handkerchiefs in these accounts as Amiot variously states that he used the Manchu manuscript while emphasising that he used multiple sources for his first work on the subject. He describes with some enthusiasm his system of triangulation in which he used the Chinese and Manchu texts to help him overcome the difficulties of the languages:

You have a great advantage when you possess both languages, I mean the Chinese language and that of the Manchus. When you do not understand the Chinese, you turn to the Manchu, when you are struggling to find the true meaning in the Manchu, you open the Chinese book; or if you want to do it better, you have the one and the other both in front of you throughout.\(^9\)

However, this methodology had its limitations: in spite of the differences between Chinese and Manchu linguistically – the latter being much easier although newer to Amiot – the proximity of the two cultures and the faithfulness of the Manchu translators to the Chinese mean that Amiot at times finds no benefit in triangulation:

The Manchu Language, much clearer, without doubt, and methodical like our European languages nevertheless has its difficulties: it often explains some Chinese obscurities only by means of other obscurities, because most of Translators, faithful to the letter, do not bother too much about the meaning. As these two nations are today one and the same, their education, their way of thinking, of seeing and representing things, is almost the same; so that, what we did not understand in the Chinese, is sometimes not understood any better in the Manchu.\(^10\)

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\(^9\) *Art Militaire*, p. 9.

Approaching translation

Amiot’s technical approach to his work, using several sources to triangulate, leads to the question that faces all translators: is the translation designed primarily to reproduce the attributes of the original; or is it designed to create a new work that reflects the receiving culture and language? The most apposite contemporary discussion of this issue – which is described by Burke and Po-Chia Hsia as ‘cultural translation’ – is found in Fréron’s *Avertissement* to the *Journal étranger* of September 1755. Fréron’s essay is relevant on several fronts and is essentially his manifesto for cultural translation as he assumes the role of editor of the journal from the Abbé Prévost. Fréron was broadly royalist, pro-Jesuit and anti-*philosophe* but his position was more complex than this appears. For example, he was a strong supporter of the Physiocrats while less cosmopolitan in his outlook than the Jesuits. His essay appears to draw broadly on *philosophe* themes and is international in its outlook. The September 1755 edition came out just as Britain and France were heading to war, yet it opens with praise of the ‘beautés sublimes de la poësie dramatique des Anglois’. Fréron’s case is that he has agreed to take over the *Journal* because of the opportunity it presents for him to develop what he calls initially the ‘république littéraire’ but later the ‘monarchie universelle des lettres & des arts’ and then the empire of ‘le beau universel, le gout général’ that covers the whole face of the earth. Fréron explains that reason and the emotions are the same everywhere, the difference being only in the way in which they are expressed. Turning to the function of translators, he asks:

> When we say that a certain Poet has adapted (*accommodé*) for our theatre a Greek, English or other play, what do we understand by ‘adapted for our theatre?’ That the poet has adapted the play to our culture (*mœurs*), that is, he has let the universal beauty live (*subsister*), and that he has replaced the local aesthetics (*beautés locales*) of the other nation with the local aesthetics of his own.\(^{22}\)

Fréron is clearly advocating that the translator must adapt the source to the receiving readership. This is ‘accommodation’ – a word that we recognise as interesting from the controversial Jesuit missionary strategy – and, indeed, the essay specifically touches on the Jesuits and their role in cultural translation. Fréron says that he has written to the leading intellectuals of Europe seeking to establish a form of *correspondance littéraire* with them. ‘I have even spoken to several Jesuits who honour me with their friendship,’ he writes, ‘and they have promised to write to their missionaries in India and China, to

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\(^{22}\) *Journal étranger* (September 1755): *Avertissement*, p. 3.
engage them to send me literary pieces from those countries’. China is further represented in the main body of the Journal as it contains a discussion of Arthur Murphy’s *Orphan of China* and Voltaire’s *Orphelin de la Chine*: thus, as Pallares-Burke observes, an English imitation of a French imitation of a Chinese tragedy which in turn followed a French translation of a Chinese play.

In conclusion, Fréron’s manifesto for cultural translation presents a *doctrine* that at once embraces a pragmatic approach to translation; a set of values about culture; and what could be seen as a warm embrace of the strategies and utility of the Jesuit mission in particular in China. In so doing, Fréron provides an apposite political, historical and geographical perspective for what we will see in Amiot’s own approach.

Among modern translation studies, the framework that I have found most useful in addressing this question is Davis’s study of the Augustan poets, which addresses the issue at two levels. First, the extent to which Amiot is seeking to render a perfect translation of a classical text or, like Davis’s Augustan translators, is ‘weaving information from commentaries … into the fabric of their translations’ or ‘transplanting into a translation of one poet a memorable cadence or snippet of phrasing from a parallel scene in another’.

Second, the broader relationship between the translator and the process of translation, including the choice of texts. We have already seen evidence of Amiot’s approach in the last quote, where he draws a distinction between being faithful to the letter of a source text, and conveying its meaning. Accordingly, Amiot describes his intent for the *Art Militaire* as follows:

> So I undertook not to translate literally, but to give an idea of how the best Chinese writers write about war, to explain in their way *(d’après eux)* their military precepts, retaining their style as much as I was able, without disfiguring *(dé figurer)* our language, and shedding some light on their ideas when they were wrapped in the shadows *(ténèbres)* of metaphor, amphibology, riddle or obscurity. To do this, I used not only the Manchu manuscript of which I have spoken, but Chinese commentators, ancient and modern.

25 Davis, *Translation*. Davis’s relevance starts with the period he is considering and the fact that he is looking at translations from the classics; and continues with his interest in the relationship between the lives of the translators and those of the authors they are translating, and the way that this is reflected in their work. For a brief discussion of the wider field, see p. 20 above.
26 Ibid, pp. 2-3.
27 *Art Militaire*, pp. 8-9.
Where does this place Amiot relative to the first question we asked? At first glance, he is positioning himself, like an Augustan poet, away from literal translation towards the interweaving of different Chinese texts and commentaries and their Manchu translations. In his first letter to Bertin (quoted at the opening of my Introduction) Amiot refers to his work as a ‘traduction libre’. He uses the same phrase two years later to describe the latest instalment of the materials for the *Art Militaire*. When, in 1767, he writes that he will be sending materials in 1768, he says that he is going not to translate them (traduire) but ‘travertir à la françoise’ – an expression which perhaps suggests conversion more than translation.

But at the same time, Amiot states that he is not seeking to accommodate his French readers but to preserve (conservier) the style of the original authors as well as to explain their military precepts. Indeed, it is the French language which will have to compromise in this process, not the original, and the limit he sets himself is not to disfigure (défigurer) the French. This suggests that Amiot plans to promote his original texts at the expense of the French rather than the other way around and indeed he states that his readers ‘should remember from time to time that these are Chinese authors that they are reading, that it is the Chinese who are speaking in French to them: so they easily excuse the faults they may encounter’. On this basis, Amiot’s position is the opposite of the doctrine of accommodation articulated by Fréron – in spite of the fact that both are concerned with a *correspondance littéraire*. But Amiot is not describing a literal rendition, as is demonstrated when we compare his stated approach to the almost contemporary translation of the *Eloge de la ville de Moukden*:

> My main focus has been to follow the original as closely as possible: I have followed it page by page, sentence by sentence, line by line; I have said almost everything; but nonetheless I dare not flatter myself that my Translation is perfect.

It thus appears that Amiot’s approach varied according to the project and was designed primarily to achieve his objectives for the *correspondance littéraire*. In translating the

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28 Amiot to Bertin 23 September 1766 and 11 September 1768 (BIF, MS 1515, fol. 2 and 6).
30 Amiot to Bertin 9 October 1767 (BIF, MS 1515, fol. 4).
31 Ibid, 6.
32 Amiot, *Moukden*, p. iii. Another example of his belief in literal translation occurs in his late correspondence. In 1790, Amiot sends a letter written in Manchu to Father L’Angles, who was studying the language, and, separately, a literal translation of that letter to Bertin. He instructs that L’Angles must do his own translation and, if the two translations match, then L’Angles can be entrusted with such work in the future. Letter dated 4 October 1790 (BIF, MS 1517, fol. 132).
33 De Guignes seems to have shared this view: see following note.
Art Militaire he appears to have sought an approach that is neither literal translation nor accommodating to French style and vocabulary. Amiot even suggests that his long residence in Peking may have rendered both his culture and language alien to that of a resident Frenchman:

Would I know if, by virtue of the communication I myself have had with the Manchu and Chinese, and the assiduous reading of Works composed in their language, my ideas have not been adapted a little to the climate in which I have been living for so many years, and if my language is not a kind of unintelligible jargon for a Frenchman who has stayed in his homeland? If so, equitable Readers will excuse me easily, and say at least ‘laudo conatum’; that is all I ask of them.  

Amiot’s concept of a missionary and scholar becoming so involved in the language of his host country that his French has become ‘unintelligible jargon’ represents an extreme play on the idea of the translator who seeks fidelity to his original. But whether it is the result of deliberate or unconscious use of language, Amiot’s position is that the French language is to be all but disfigured because the Chinese and Manchu authors are speaking through him in a new French. This form of near-disfigurement is, on his terms, to be welcomed because it represents an expansion and adaptation of French to accommodate new ideas.

The right to defigure is, however, strictly limited to the translator in Peking, not the editor in Paris (who does not have the necessary information to judge the demands of the source and receiving languages). Thus, the word défigurer is used in de Guignes’ Avis to the Art Militaire where he conveys Amiot’s anxiety about his own text being disfigured. De Guignes quotes a note from Amiot in which the latter explains:

‘It has happened,’ Amiot says, ‘more than once that, under the pretext of correcting or giving a new form to the works we receive from so distant countries, we have truncated or disfigured them, be it by adding that which was not à propos, in removing what should have been kept, or indeed in trying to put the whole piece in a way we believe preferable to that of the authors; consequently, instead of transmitting safe and accurate knowledge, we have only multiplied errors or confirmed misconceptions that had previously been conceived on the basis of precipitous reports or ones that are insufficiently faithful: in any event, we have obscured things, rather than clarified them. I think we should conduct ourselves in regard to writings that come from far away, as we would towards works that

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33 Art Militaire, p. 6. De Guignes makes the same point in his Avis to Amiot, Moukden, pp. ix-x, where he states that Amiot has lived in China for twenty years and therefore should be forgiven for any negligence in his translation. He goes on to say that he would have liked to translate the names into French – and that Amiot has done so where possible – but that he could not for various reasons. Nonetheless, such details are intrinsic to the task: ‘D’ailleurs, le détail de toutes ces productions, est une partie essentielle de l’Ouvrage.’
are already outdated and which we wish to rejuvenate: we will not allow changes other than those which relate to particular expressions or to questions of style. Amiot is enjoining his editor not to second-guess the works he is being sent by amending them: such amendments would come from the editor’s preconceptions about ideas and style and would, therefore, obscure the intent of the original as faithfully reproduced by the translator. The distance between translator and editor, as well as that between the two cultures, will only serve to exacerbate the risk. In this case it is the original, not the French that would be défiguré and this passage conveys the sense that this would be more serious as Amiot’s role is to convey factual information that will allow the readers to form an accurate picture of the ideas that are being described. Amiot is asking that his editor and readers accept and try to understand the new jargon rather than seeking to make it conform to existing norms of language and ideas. They, like him, must learn a new language.

As we do not have Amiot’s sources, we cannot easily see how he applies this principle. But one example is his use in the Sunzi and in the final lines of the Wuzi bingfa of the word univers to refer to the Chinese world, a point which therefore requires him to explain its meaning. Amiot writes that ‘his victory was celebrated in the whole world (univers)’ and then (in a footnote) explains that ‘the whole world’ means ‘the whole of China’. The Science Militaire à la Chine notes that ‘It seems, consequently, that he attempts scrupulously to render the Chinese or Manchu words by means of equivalent words in French’. So, Amiot’s approach succeeds in conveying a scientific accuracy to his readers, but this appears to be at the level of phrases and vocabulary rather than texts as a whole. For when Amiot refers to ‘preserving the style’ he does not say ‘of the original text’ but the style of les meilleurs auteurs chinois. This plural could refer to the several individual authors of the texts added together; but it could also mean the various commentateurs chinois, anciens & modernes that he has used for each text. So, in Davis’s terms, Amiot is at once at the literalist end in his commitment to finding equivalent words or phrases that do not have the same meaning in French; while being happy to weave together materials from multiple sources.

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34 Ibid, p. vi. De Guignes adds, ‘This is how I have confined myself in the printing of this work.’
35 Amiot visits the same topic in his correspondence with Bertin. He states in a letter of 5 October 1771 that he has just learnt of Bertin’s decision to have the Art Militaire published how pleased he is that de Guignes has been chosen for this task as this reduces the risk of the original being ‘défiguré.’ (BIF, MS 1515, fol. 9)
36 Art Militaire Sunzi XI (p. 141 and note 1); and Wuzi bingfa VI (p. 224 and note 1). Saint-Maurice, Science Militaire à la Chine, p. 95.
This apparent contradiction reflects the very different task facing him to the one that faced Clarke. It is not simply that we do not have an easy line of sight to Amiot’s sources: because of the complexity of the source texts and limitations to his language skills, Amiot was not able to work from a single text and was, in fact, reconstructing the ideas and not simply translating them. Because of the cultural differences between China and France, Amiot could not undertake a literal translation even though his instinct is apparently to do so. As we shall see below from Amiot’s footnotes, there are passages where he explicitly follows one commentator while describing the choices he is making: but, unless he chooses to make them so, his choices are not evident to us. Whatever the reasons for it, however, this approach allows Amiot to appear impartial and forensic while in fact giving him the greatest possible flexibility to shape the text to convey whatever ideas he chooses. Amiot may have been constrained in some ways but he should not be seen as passively operating to these constraints: he exploited the process of translation to achieve aims external to the translation itself. 37

Language barriers

We have already seen in chapter 1 that there are intrinsic complexities in the Sunzi that make Amiot’s task challenging. In this chapter and the next, however, the question is not what the Sunzi says about war, but what we can understand from Amiot’s version of it. In this context, it is factors directly relating to Amiot that are relevant. What we can say is that anyone undertaking to translate these texts would have a significant challenge – but that Amiot’s task was further complicated by two problems: first, he started out with no Manchu; and, second, he was not a soldier, although that is not in itself a qualification for understanding these subjects. The Science Militaire à la Chine ruthlessly but elegantly summarises this as follows:

We might add that these Chinese-Military-Doctor-Scholars (Savants Docteurs-Militaires-Chinois) whom a Tartar-Manchu-Military-Doctor-Scholar first translated into his language, and then a Theology-Doctor-Scholar and Missionary translated into French without (as he himself admits) understanding a word; but only so as to comply with orders he had received from his superiors. And it appears that, because of the various versions of the commentaries, the Translator from Chinese into Tartar-Manchu might well have also admitted that he had struggled to understand his sources. 38

37 The Jesuits in China had long understood this distinction. This is exemplified by their approach to creating Chinese terms for Christian concepts. Here the goal was not simply to translate but to demonstrate the existence of the soul, a concept alien to Chinese culture: Qiong Zhang, ‘Translation as Cultural Reform: Jesuit Scholastic Psychology in the Transformation of the Confucian Discourse on Human Nature’ in Jesuits ed. by O’Malley, pp. 364–79.
38 Science Militaire à la Chine, p. 40.
Amiot’s lack of a military training means that he has a double language barrier to overcome, not only does he have to translate from a foreign language; but he has to translate technical ideas from that language into another language whose technical terms are also foreign to him.39 Professions have their own concepts and vocabulary and it was certainly the perception of Amiot’s military readership that he had struggled to overcome this problem. Amiot does not deny the challenges but seeks to address them by setting out to learn the language with an experienced Manchu soldier as his teacher:

This entire collection was translated into Manchu. So I learned that language. The person I had as teacher, the son and grandson of officers, a soldier himself, gave a big eulogy of the purchase I had made; he even wanted us to work on explaining it together, offering to give me all the necessary clarification on a profession (art) in which he had spent his life, assuring me furthermore that, the style being clear, pure and elegant, I would profit enormously from this reading.
I agreed readily to what he required of me. We learn to speak Latin, naturally with delicacy, reading Caesar’s Commentaries: why not learn to speak Tartar while studying the Commentaries written to train Manchu Caesars? Such was my thinking at the time.40

The analogy that Amiot draws with a student using Caesar to learn Latin is instructive, both because it makes use of the European classical tradition as a reference; but also because it shows him putting his Jesuit training in rhetoric to work. But the syllogism is false: Amiot is not using Sunzi to learn Manchu, he is learning Manchu to be able to translate from that language. If the underlying concepts that Caesar is describing are not comprehensible to you (in any language) then you will not learn to translate them by reading the Commentaries. On the other hand, having an experienced soldier who does understand them, and with whom one can communicate effectively, would help, but still leaves the problem of how to describe them in French. The subject that gives Amiot most trouble is military exercises and manoeuvres. It is no coincidence that Clarke encounters the same problem with Vegetius, notably on an exercise called armatura:

‘I have examined many Authors, to endeavour to find what Exercise is intended by it, but cannot meet with any satisfactory Explanation. Stewechius confounds it with the Palaria, says a great Deal upon it, and all he says, perplexes still more … The French Translator

39 A problem identified also by D.C. Lau in discussing (General) Samuel B. Griffith’s translation of the Sunzi: ‘The qualifications of the translator as an expert on the art of war may be taken for granted. At any rate, the present writer whose approach to the work is exclusively sinological is certainly not in a position to offer any criticisms on that score. But it would seem that the task of coping with the pitfalls inherent in the language of the Classical period and with genuine textual difficulties has proved too much for Griffith.’ D.C. Lau, ‘Some Notes on the ‘Sun tzu’ 孫子 ‘Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, vol. 28, No. 2 (1965), 319-335, p. 319.
40 Art Militaire, pp. 7-9.
seems to have been equally puzzled with this Term, and calls it our Author’s magic Word, which he uses to signify whatever he pleases …”

Clarke rarely deploys humour or irony in his writing, but when he does it is usually (as here) to distance himself from some form of complexity or awkwardness that he finds inelegant or undermining of the scientific professionalism he is trying to establish. Sigrais, by contrast, more readily applies humour, often to explain why he has amended or discarded some of the original text. This same topic of the incomprehensibility of Chinese military exercises gives rise to the only example in this book of Amiot deploying humour. The situation arises because de Pauw in his *Recherches Philosophiques* has lampooned the Chinese exercises in the *Art Militaire* as being like theatrical pieces or ballet, with the soldiers taking positions described as flowers, then ‘these clowns pretend to be Scythian Dragons … which then change from Dragons to Tigers … But what surpasses all, is the idea of the moon as a shield to the mountains’. De Pauw ends by saying that ‘Father Amiot has understood absolutely nothing himself’. It is clear from his correspondence with Bertin that Amiot was outraged by de Pauw’s criticism and it was this that compelled him to publish the *Supplément* in response. It is not surprising, Amiot says of de Pauw, that a writer who has spent his life on philosophical research, ‘understands no better than I the subject of war’ – whether Chinese or Prussian, ‘but what appears to me surprising is that a Philosophe is so attached to mere terms, to mere words, and that he should believe that the terms and words were to be taken so literally’. Amiot then points out that someone could well draw the same conclusions

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41 *Military Institutions* I.xiii (24-5). Clarke’s extensive note on this displays his scholarship and commitment to understanding the ideas he is translating. See Milner, *Vegetius*, p. 13 (Book I.13). The *armatura* is the exercise the emperor is said to have mastered in the climactic Book III Valediction.

42 Humour is hard to translate so the original is ‘ces bouffons contrefont … les Dragons Scythiques … après qu’ils ont été Dragons, ils deviennent tigres … Mais ce qui surpasse tout, c’est la projection de la lune qui sert de bouclier aux montagnes.’ De Pauw *Recherches*, pp. 335-6.

43 The anonymous English reviewer quotes de Pauw’s critique of Amiot on the basis that ‘it is possibly too severe: but we were willing to let our Readers know what opinion had been formed of this part of M. Deguignes’ publication, by a writer so ingenious and penetrating as M. de Pauw.’ *The Monthly Review, or Literary Journal* vol. 49 (June 1773-January 1774), p. 558.

44 Amiot to Bertin, 28 September 1777, is a very extensive letter that methodically examines and responds to de Pauw’s criticisms of China, the missionaries and Amiot himself. (BIF, MS 1515, fol. 92-166). A year later, he wrote, ‘What I have read in the *Recherches philosophiques sur les égyptiens et les chinois*, on the subject of the military art of the latter has determined me to put forward a supplement to what I have already sent on Chinese warfare (la tactique chinoise).’ Letter of 15 September 1778, BIF, MS 1515, fol. 241.

45 Amiot, *Supplément*, p. 328. The relevance of Prussia may be that de Pauw had served at the court of Frederick II, a point designed to further undermine de Pauw with a French audience.
when they were told of French *dragons* (meaning both Dragoons and dragons) and *grenadiers* (meaning both Grenadiers and pomegranate trees):

‘The French,’ he would conclude, ‘are most singular people. They make trees and flying serpents carry out military exercises; and what is even more wonderful is that they put some of these very same trees on a horse, and teach them how to attack and how to defend themselves.’

Amiot’s humour here reinforces the serious point that de Pauw has failed to grasp both the nature of metaphor and the nature of translation. It also neatly makes the point which goes to the heart of Amiot’s thinking, that there are both similarities and differences between European and Chinese language, people and culture and that the essence of translation is to capture both the similarities and the differences. Humour is the ideal way in which to mount this argument as it is particularly founded on the ability both to empathise with and examine people and the way they think, act and speak. Above all, we have to stand back from ourselves in order to understand others, as Amiot says:

To want to judge according to our prejudices, our morals and our ways, is to be a bad judge; it is to be unjust to them. We must not judge them until we have known them as well as it is possible to know a foreign people.

This statement goes beyond the boundaries of translation: it is a statement of Jesuit doctrine, the Molinism that taught tolerance and accommodation and which was not only the root cause of the Chinese Rites Controversy but also the theological difference between the Jansenists and the Jesuits. Amiot, speaking of a philosophy of translation, is surely speaking also of the philosophy and methodology of his now defunct Order. The Jesuits in China and elsewhere had taken upon themselves the transmission of this knowledge of other peoples and societies, a vast and important task that falls to ‘a small

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47 De Pauw was, however, attuned to the broader agenda of the French sinophiles, as evidenced in Frederick’s correspondence with Voltaire in 1776. Frédéric (le Grand), *Œuvres de Fréderic le grand* (Berlin, 1853), vol. xxiii, p. 377 quoted in Adolf Reichwein, *China and Europe: Intellectual and Artistic Contacts in the Eighteenth Century* (Barnes & Noble, 1968), pp. 93-4.
49 For the role of Molinism in the Jansenist-Jesuit dispute see Van Kley, *Expulsion of the Jesuits*, pp. 7–8, who further speculates that the Jesuits’ failure to deploy their missionary work in their defence against the Jansenists and *Parlement* in 1761 may have been because of the damage the Chinese Rites Controversy had done to their standing in France and elsewhere: p. 149.
number of translators who do not always have the science and accuracy necessary to perform properly such a difficult job’.\textsuperscript{50}

In his Preface to the Sima fa Amiot emphasises the utility of this work. He states ‘One might ask, ‘Why have you chosen to write about war?’ I would answer, ‘Because some persons of importance, whose wishes are my orders, wish me to do so’.\textsuperscript{51} Amiot has said that he wishes to be useful, now he is suggesting that he is following directions, presumably from Paris. However, this note considers the question of what he has been asked to translate, not how to do so. The conclusion still holds, therefore, that Amiot does not resolve the technical aspect of translation other than by finding a logic that positions translation as a means of communication and understanding between cultures and within the broader methods of the Jesuits. Literalism shows respect for the other while also creating a sound evidential basis for those with better or more technical knowledge to work. By contrast, too free a translation might satisfy a Fréron, but it would also present unreliable data and a false sense of understanding that merely reflected back to the reader their own prejudices. Amiot, unlike Clarke, does not laugh at complexity but at over-simplification. He is a Jesuit, not a soldier.

**The choice of texts and self-reference**

As we make the transition from relatively technical issues of texts, sources, and translation towards the author’s choice and treatment of the texts, Davis’s framework provides a useful bridge. Amiot and his readers are both conscious of the process of translation and how Amiot is positioned between his sources in China and his readers in Europe. Davis observes that the process of translation is inherently self-referential as ‘however involved a translator becomes with his original, he remains more external to it, and correspondingly more visible to himself, than he would be if engaged upon an ‘original’ composition.’\textsuperscript{52} The process is all the more so when the translator sees himself reflected in the writer he is translating and more still if the text addresses issues that literally or figuratively bear on his own life. The Augustan poets, several of whom experienced degrees of exile in Britain or abroad by virtue of politics or religion, saw in Ovid, for example, the voicelessness of the exile; and they chose to translate texts that ‘were, in a significant measure, poems about ‘the poet’s life’.\textsuperscript{53} Can we expect, then, that

\textsuperscript{50} Amiot, Supplément, p. 329.
\textsuperscript{51} Art Militaire Preface to the Sima fa, pp. 227-8.
\textsuperscript{52} Davis, Translation, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
Amiot’s choice of text will lead us to understand how he saw himself and the position he occupied? In the case of Clarke, we have seen that the choice of Vegetius’ *Epitoma* allowed him, by virtue of its subject-matter and its status in the classical canon, to express ideas about his profession and its strategic role in Britain the 1760s. The same, I suggest, is true of Amiot and in the following chapter we will look at the textual evidence for this.
Chapter 5. Amiot’s themes in the *Art Militaire des Chinois*

Introduction
Subject to the limitations described, this chapter offers the same kind of textual analysis as previously carried out with Clarke’s *Military Institutions* in order to determine what are the main ideas that Amiot is trying to convey in his presentation and translation of the *Sunzi*. Starkey’s three attributes of the Military Enlightenment were war as science, the classical model and the psychological dimension. Amiot starts with these three principal interests at the heart of his work, but he does not stay inside the established framework. He takes the tradition as his starting-point and develops or applies it in a new fashion. In tracing his way, Amiot is often tentative, even contradictory, and qualifies much of the radical thinking that he explores but, nonetheless, I hope to show in this chapter that he is presenting radical, new ideas to his readers and that his project, while recognisable as part of the Military Enlightenment, goes far beyond it.

Utility
Amiot defines his purpose as to be of use to his readers – but, unlike Clarke, Amiot is less specific about the target readership of his work and therefore who it is that will find it useful. Amiot’s first reference to utility is broadly-worded:

> However, if, against my expectations, it happened that the reader had some pleasure in conversing with these foreign Heroes and in receiving some of their teachings, I would feel great satisfaction; and I should be compensated for my work, if, together with this pleasure, the reader also found it useful. It is mainly with this last intention that I have undertaken a work so contrary to my taste, so far from the object of my profession.¹

The invitation to ‘converse with Chinese heroes’ could be extended to a general readership while ‘receiving their teachings' indicates a professional one. The question of which is his real audience is not made any clearer by the suggestion, already noted, that he has taken up this subject because he has been asked to do so. If this is a reference to the *correspondance littéraire* between Paris and Peking, then Joseph de Guignes, in his *Avis* to the *Art Militaire*, provides a more general and perhaps academic idea of utility in suggesting that the correspondence with Peking is ‘intéressante & utile aux Sciences & aux Arts’. However, in the later *Supplément*, Amiot clearly has in mind something more specifically concerned with professional development than general knowledge when he writes that “Those who have embraced the profession of arms must be instructed in everything that can provide them with insight (*lumières*) into an art that is unfortunately

¹*Art Militaire*, p. 6.
too necessary to know’. It seems that Amiot is working at three levels of utility. To the extent that he is describing Chinese culture and history, he is serving the more general purpose of increasing knowledge. Where he is describing the tactics, weapons and exercises of the Chinese military he is addressing a more technical reader. But the way in which Amiot translates these texts also introduces a third possibility – namely that he is addressing the political class and seeking to instruct them in both civil and military aspects of good government. This theme reflects both the European Enlightenment trope that we have seen in the work of Webb and Voltaire but also the work of earlier Jesuits in China, such as the authors of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*.

This last possibility appears to be the one that Amiot has most in mind, perhaps because (as he has made clear) he is not competent to judge the military value of his work, whereas he is more than capable of promoting China’s approach to government and civil ethics. This is further reinforced in the dedicatory letter to Bertin in which Amiot states that ‘China is a vast field in which one continues to find new sources of nourishment no less suitable to feed the political benefit of the enlightened statesman (*l’utilité politique de l’homme d’état éclairé*) than the sterile curiosity of the idle philosophe’. Hence by far the strongest message to emerge from this work is not a military one but the proposition that China is a model of good government which France needs to heed. This is most strongly stated in a footnote concerning the legendary ‘Fondateur de l’Empire Chinois’, the Yellow emperor, Huangdi, of whom Amiot states:

> Huangdi had all the qualities that make great princes: he was a skilful Statesman and a great Warrior. He is credited with precepts on the Military Art that are said to have been excellent but of which there remains no trace ... From then on, the Chinese lacked nothing to be the first nation in the world. The people were loyal, sincere and respectful; the Magistrates were just and fair; the Warriors were prudent, brave and bold; diseases were rare, and as the Chinese had the art of healing, such diseases did not last long, etc.

With these civil and military foundations, nothing stood in the way of China’s becoming the world’s leading nation and sustaining its success: ‘this nation, which has for nearly 4,000 years remained as we see it today, has always, or almost always, triumphed over its enemies; and when it had the misfortune to be defeated, gave its laws to the victors

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2 Amiot, *Supplément*, pp. 329-30. This statement is attributed to the *ancien militaire de ces cantons* who has set out to record everything he can on the subject and whose manuscript has been given to Amiot.

3 Amiot to Bertin, 23 September 1766 (BIF, MS 1515, fol. 2).

4 *Art Militaire* IX, p. 109, note 1. The capabilities of China’s medical profession would have struck Amiot’s readers. Jones describes good health as ‘one of the buzzwords of Enlightenment optimism.’ Jones, ‘The Great Chain’, p. 27.
themselves. The continuity in military doctrine is also explicit: ‘If there is a difference between today’s military and that of the ancient Chinese, it would lie in external policy, which should count for nothing’. This is a point taken a step further in the Supplément where Amiot argues that it is the unique longevity and continuity of Chinese culture that is the reason why China is different to other countries: ‘As the Chinese are the people of the earth who have best preserved the imprint of antiquity, they differ almost entirely from us and other modern nations, amongst whom almost everything has changed’.

In fact, it is the laws and the system of Government that have demonstrated longevity and continuity rather than individual rulers or dynasties since, as is made clear in the above quote, the country itself has been invaded and dynasties overthrown from inside and out. The Manchu overthrow of the Ming dynasty in the invasion and revolution of 1644 was evidence that no Chinese emperor was secure if he failed to govern well and, as we have seen, the Chinese saw military effectiveness as a function of good government.

In the revolution of 1644, the Tartar-Manchu took actions that showed wisdom, boldness and strategy (politique) that one would be tempted to imagine as so many fables, had they not taken place in a time so close to ours. But truth be told, it was in following the advice of the Chinese that the Tartars did all that we admire. I could another time give a more detailed history of this revolution.

The Manchu revolution of 1644 was well known to Amiot’s audience from Martini’s account and Martini had promoted the idea of continuity through the revolution as much as the Qing rulers themselves. Both Martini and Amiot’s acceptance of the Qing dynasty’s claims to continuity were self-interested but it is notable that whereas Martini sought to place a Christian interpretation on these events Amiot did not. Perhaps

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5 Art Militaire, pp. 1-2.

6 Art Militaire, p. 12. The meaning of police extérieure is not clear but an intriguing interpretation is that Amiot is hinting at the aggressive expansionism of the Qing compared with the supposed pacifism of earlier eras. Qianlong had expanded imperial China into Tibet, Xinjiang, and Mongolia. This expansionism was accompanied by what Waley-Cohen calls a ‘militarisation of culture’ Joanna Waley-Cohen, ‘Militarization of Culture in Eighteenth-Century China’ in Military Culture ed. by Di Cosmo, pp. 278-95, p. 278.

7 Amiot Supplément (1782), p. 329. Amiot’s English reviewer rejected the Chinese maxim that ‘the excellence of any custom is to be estimated by the length of time wherein it has been practised; believing that it would not have been so long adhered to, had not its utility been proved. In his view, the Chinese respect for tradition and rules was the very reason why they could never achieve the heroic heights of the greatest generals. The Monthly Review, p. 558.

8 Art Militaire, p. 3 (note).

9 Van Kley, ‘News from China’, p. 696. ‘[Martini] provided abundant evidence for the sinicization of the Manchu kingdom prior to the conquest. As Martini saw it, therefore, the Manchus at the time of the conquest were no longer barbarians. Martini’s description of the Manchus once they were established in Peking makes them appear like a traditional Chinese dynasty.’ Discussion above, p. 85.
because of the paradox of continuity and revolution the subject was of enduring interest after Martini: a recent and quite detailed account of the revolution had been written by Maurice de Saxe and published posthumously in France in 1762.\textsuperscript{10}

The study of these laws, then, and the emulation of China’s leadership, are commended to Amiot’s readers just as even China’s conquerors have studied and adopted them. While Amiot does not offer a comprehensive analysis of the features of China’s government and leadership that he considers instrumental in its success he does take the opportunity of his subject matter to promote three ideas that cross the civil-military boundary. These are first, that the ethics of good government and leadership apply to both civil and military worlds. Second, that strong administration requires a well-educated and meritocratic bureaucracy. And third, that good governments do not go to war unless as a necessity. I will look briefly at each of these.

First, Chinese society was, for Amiot, founded on Confucian values set out in the Confucian classics of which the Great Learning was perhaps the most important text for the Jesuits. These values are, in Amiot’s view, principles of moral conduct that concern knowing, and regulating, oneself and then seeking to apply in the government of others the core value of ren (benevolence). It follows that China’s military is developed on the basis that good soldiers must first be good men.\textsuperscript{11} This point was identified and commended by the English reviewer of the Art Militaire (underlining added):

\begin{quote}
This work will certainly be more admired by the European reader as a curiosity, than for the sake of any instruction which it may afford with respect to the art of war; yet there are in it particulars well worth our attention. The ten precepts by the Emperor, contain some good moral rules, according to the genius and manners of the Chinese. They are so general as to be no less useful in the civil than in a military life: they relate rather to the forming and discipline of troops considered as men than as soldiers. This is a point of infinite moment, and highly worthy of our imitation.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Amiot repeatedly praises individual leaders for their political as well as military skills. This is grounded in the country’s values, which are instilled by means of the civil and military examinations which ensure that promotion into and within any profession

\textsuperscript{10} Maurice de Saxe, Esprit Des Loix De La Tactique (Leipsig, 1762), vol. 2, pp. 83-190.

\textsuperscript{11} The same phrasing appears with a slightly different meaning in the context of later Enlightenment thinking about citizens as soldiers. ‘The military man was a citizen before he was a soldier: this basic message comes through in a whole host of writings from the 1770s onwards, rising in a crescendo, as one might expect, with the American War of Independence.’ Jones, ‘Bourgeois Revolution’ in Rewriting the French Revolution ed. by Lucas, p. 98.

should be based on merit. Amiot emphasises that the educational requirements are the same for civil and military careers:

Their doctors of the military (because the military has its doctors just as do the arts), their doctors of the military, I say, did not reach the rank that distinguishes them, without their having explained or commented on several military chapters, in the examination that they are required to sit before they are promoted.¹³

Marshal Saxe also notes the civil-military examination process and its effect on the promotion process and the very last words of his essay are that 'No one reaches the highest military ranks other than on his own merit. Social hierarchy (l’ordre du tableau) counts for nothing there.'¹⁴ The eighteenth century had seen considerable thought given by the Qing emperors to the relationship between the civil and military examinations and in particular the introduction of the civilian texts of the Analects and the Mencius into the military examinations. The Kangxi emperor had in 1710 reformed the military examinations to require prospective soldiers to explicate the Analects and he also praised the Mencius' thinking on war while questioning the military classics. In 1759, his grandson Qianlong reversed this decision on the basis that the Confucian classics were 'beyond the comprehension of military men.'¹⁵ Amiot must have been aware of these developments and perhaps reflects Qianlong's approach when he writes of the authors of the Sunzi and the Wuzi bingfa, 'These two authors, the Chinese say, are to their genre what Confucius and Mencius are to theirs. The latter form philosophers, virtuous men, and thinkers; the former create good soldiers, great captains, excellent generals.'¹⁶

A related idea of Amiot's – as opposed to the authors that he is translating or the reality of Qing China – is that China's Confucian values are pacifist.

Their prejudices or, if you will, good sense, do not allow them to contemplate other than with a kind of horror the sad necessity to which men are sometimes reduced, to take the lives of others. All this should help, in truth, make dutiful sons, good fathers, loyal subjects

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¹³ Art Militaire, p. 4.

¹⁴ ‘Military administrators (Mandarins d’armes) and officers must pass various examinations, just like civil administrators (Mandarins de Lettres) and demonstrate their strength, capability and experience in military art.’ Saxe, La Tactique, pp. 192, 196 from the essay ‘Des Forces de l’Empire, du Gouvernement militaire, des Forteresses & des Gens de guerre.’


¹⁶ Art Militaire, p. 5.
and excellent citizens, but would not, I imagine, inspire courage in a soldier, valour in an officer or vision in a general. ¹⁷

The anonymous reviewer of the Art Militaire in the Monthly Journal picked up on this national trait and the Sunzi’s emphasis on defensiveness:

We find here some good general rules for the management of an army; but caution and care are so recommended and inforced, almost in every line, that we may venture to pronounce, that an army guided by such rules, would never make a brilliant figure; and that such an education would never produce either a Caesar or an Alexander. A General entirely occupied by the care of preserving his army will ever be incapable of great actions. Something must frequently be risked ... ¹⁸

This reader, at least, has failed to find any utility in the strategic philosophy of the Sunzi.

Science, art and perspective
The idea of science is central to the Military Enlightenment, to the correspondance littéraire, and Amiot’s treatment of science defines the difference between Clarke’s traditional approach to his subject and Amiot’s extension of it. Like Clarke, Amiot starts with the Enlightenment premise that ‘war is a science’ and writing about it is an ‘attempt to identify rational and universal principles governing the conduct of war’. ¹⁹ He also positions his subject within the context of studies of classical history and warfare, listing several admired Chinese ‘Fondateurs de Dynastie’ and exclaiming:

What Statesmen! What Warriors! What Heroes! No, even the Alexanders and Caesars do not surpass them. Moreover, these great men, these powerful geniuses who made such beautiful laws for government and civil society (le politique & le civil), might they not have made laws equally beautiful for that which concerned the Military? It is not appropriate for me to set myself up as a judge on this matter; it is for our Warriors to pronounce on this. ²⁰

Unlike other contemporary writers, however, Amiot is neither a soldier nor part of a social circle populated by the French military and military theorists. As the above quote suggests, he is comfortable to judge and admire the ‘beauty’ of Chinese civil and political laws, but not their military laws, which he leaves to military readers. He describes the project as ‘a work so contrary to my taste, so far from the object of my profession’. ²¹

There is no direct evidence that Amiot had read any contemporary works on the art of war but he certainly had access to the substantial collection in the Jesuits’ library. It

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¹⁷ Art Militaire, pp. 1-2.
¹⁹ Starkey, War, p. 34 as discussed at pp. 61ff above.
²⁰ Art Militaire, pp. 3-4.
seems improbable that he read none of these works while working on this subject, especially as he states that he had been looking out for books on warfare for a year even before he obtained the texts that he subsequently translated. The library itself contained Vegetius, Lipsius, Montecuccoli and Puységur as well as numerous more technical treatises on artillery, fortification and other subjects. Amiot makes no reference to these, however, and his approach to his military subject-matter is similar to the way he approaches the other aspects of China about which he writes, such as its history, languages, music, culture and geography. These are the subjects for his correspondence with Paris that will ultimately be incorporated into the encyclopaedic Mémoires, and of which de Guignes writes,

This correspondence is becoming more and more interesting and useful for the sciences and the arts, with the mémoires that these scholars are sending every year, which the minister is happy to communicate through publication.\(^{22}\)

For Amiot, the logic in studying Chinese thought on the art militaire is to understand the subject as a whole. This is an ‘Art known to all nations, but executed differently by each’ and furthermore ‘All men have roughly the same ideas; but each Nation has its own way of developing, always according to its character (genie) and consequently according to the nature of the language they speak’.\(^{23}\) The science consists of the constant and universal laws that apply to warfare but the art is the application and expression of those laws. One can better understand the science by studying the different perspectives visible in the art. This process is analogous to the triangulation described by Amiot in relation to the task of translation: having the Chinese and Manchu versions enables him to understand better the underlying ideas that he is translating. It is broader than the task described later in Chapter IV of the Sima fa, which requires the soldier to familiarise himself with the scientific principles and then learn the art of applying them:

The science of war is reduced to certain principles, those principles to certain rules, and those rules to certain specific uses. Science reveals the principles and teaches the art of applying them: from the application and knowledge of the principles, military laws are formed and the disciplinary rules: the military laws and disciplinary rules, which can be infinitely varied, are fixed into customs whose practice appears to offer the greatest convenience and utility. Thus, knowledge of the principles is required in order to apply them; knowledge of the military laws and disciplinary rules is required in order to observe them; familiarity with customs is necessary in order to comply with them unreservedly.\(^{24}\)

\(^{22}\) Art Militaire: p. v.

\(^{23}\) Ibid, pp. 6, 9.

\(^{24}\) Ibid, p. 280 (Sima fa).
This injunction is addressed to a soldier within a country and a single culture. For a Chinese soldier, the scientific principles are laid out in the *Sunzi* and the *Wuzi bingfa* to be studied and are also the subject of the imperial military examinations. Amiot’s justification for this translation is to provide a French soldier with a new and different exposition of both the science and the art of warfare so that he can develop a perspective on the subject that is not open to someone immersed within a single tradition. This perspective is fundamental to Amiot’s estimation of the value of knowledge and of his role in conveying it from China to France. It also means that Amiot’s approach to the Chinese classics is quite different to the application of classical models described by Starkey. For his contemporaries, such as Clarke, the classical world provided ‘a model for modern military institutions’ – in other words what interested them was the similarities offered by Roman and Greek approaches to the art of war. For Amiot, it is the differences that are of interest, and these can be differences in the science, the art and their linguistic expression.

Amiot brings together these themes of comparison, translation and adoption in a footnote to the *Ten Precepts* in which he describes how the invading Manchu evaluated and then adopted and translated Chinese military theory along with Chinese civil government:

The Manchu Emperors who ruled China after the destruction of the Ming, did not feel able to treat of the theory of war better than had the Chinese they had conquered; that is why they were content to translate with the utmost care, their most essential works: they have appropriated to themselves all they found among the defeated Nation which could suit them; and by adopting the form of their Government, in its principal elements, they did not consider it unworthy of them also to adopt most of their military precepts.

Thus, the overthrow of the Ming dynasty was not due to the failings of China’s civil and military laws, but the failure of the Ming to abide by them.

**Grande Science and grand Art**

Thus far, as we have seen, the meaning of the terms ‘science’ and ‘art’ in Amiot’s *Art Militaire* would have been consistent with contemporary usage in France and Britain even if his intent for the ‘utility’ (de Guignes’ word) of the information may be different.

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25 The other texts are not mandatory: ‘Sima and the others who have written on the art of war, also have merit; they are nevertheless of a lower rank, and one can achieve the rank of Bachelor and even Doctor in military science, without knowing or without having read them.’ *Art Militaire*, p. 5. The examinations appear in the subtitle of the *Art Militaire*.

26 *Art Militaire*, p. 12. The fact that the Manchu have translated the military works ‘with all possible care’ is an essential requirement in his view to the effective transmission of knowledge between cultures.
However, the *Art Militaire* also sets up an entirely different meaning for both science and art and conveys a tension between the existing European tradition and the Chinese tradition that goes to the heart of *Sunzi* and its subsequent popularity. This tension lies in the relationship between civilian, and perhaps pacifist, Confucian values and their application in military culture. Without the ability to compare Amiot’s translation with his sources, we cannot see the internal mechanism of what he is doing, but we can see in certain phrases and footnotes evidence that it is a tension that he not only conveys but develops further.

Amiot introduces the principle that Chinese military culture is founded on the civil ethics of Confucianism at the very start of his work and does this by placing a modern text in front of the *Sunzi* as the opening piece of the book. This text is *‘Les dix préceptes adressés aux gens de guerre par Yong-tcheng, troisième empereur de la dynastie régnante’*. The Ten Precepts was a sacred edict issued by Yongzheng in 1727 in which he sets out and applies Confucian principles such as loving one’s parents and respecting one’s elders to the military life. Amiot records the principle that ‘The first care of a Chinese emperor is to work to create good citizens; he then endeavours to make good soldiers’ and he says that he has included it because he expects his readers to see *‘avec quelque plaisir’* such a doctrine presented to soldiers. Amiot explains also that although the Ten Precepts was written last of all the works, and has least to do with warfare, he has put it first because it was written by an emperor for his soldiers. The fact that Amiot explains his decision to put the Ten Precepts ahead of the recognised military classics indicates that he has given it careful thought and suggests that he is conscious that the effect is to frame the whole book in a Confucian context. It was designed to, and did, catch the attention of Amiot’s readers and offered them a key to the subsequent texts.

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27 The tension I describe is related, but different from, that explored by Jonathan Karam Skaff in *Military Culture* ed. by Di Cosmo, pp. 172ff; and in Johnston, *Cultural Realism*. Skaff and Johnston are discussing the political actions of the state and its foreign policy – for example, whether China should use military force against its Inner Asian neighbours, or other diplomatic measures to address the threat they represent. Court officials on one side of the policy debate sought guidance from and deployed arguments based on the pacifist Confucian literary tradition while on the other side they relied on *realpolitik* in presenting their case for or against war. Here, we are looking at the ethos and expectations of the military’s conduct. The cross-over lies in the fact that a general, once appointed, would have both military and diplomatic options available as he conducts the war and therefore has to consider options that are comparable to those of the State in declaring war in the first place. The distinction is noted by Hans J. Van der Ven, ‘Introduction’ in *Warfare* ed. by Hans J. Van der Ven, p. 8.


29 *Art Militaire*, p. 11.
It is in this way that Amiot introduces a specific meaning of ‘science’. In his Preface, Yongzheng writes that ‘I have always applied myself to acquire the Great Learning (la grande Science) ...’ and Amiot offers the following definition of this term:

*La grande Science* is a Work composed by Confucius ... The purpose of the grande Science is, (1) to regulate one’s own heart before wanting to regulate others; (2) it sets out the precepts of good government; and (3) it teaches how to practice what is good and constantly to uphold what is good, so as to enjoy peace of mind and a restful heart.

The work to which Amiot refers is *Daxue* (Great Learning), one of the *Sishu* (the Four Books) alongside the *Lunyu* (Analects), *Zhongyong* (Doctrine of the Mean) and the *Mengzi* (Mencius). The *Daxue* was one of the three of the Four Books included in the influential *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* published in Latin in Paris in 1687. As described above at pp. 85ff, the Jesuits had specific political objectives with this work, relating both to the Rites Controversy and to the engagement of Louis XIV as a patron in China. However, the *Sinarum Philosophus* also sets out important aspects of Jesuit thinking: the idea that there is a universal scientia – identical structures of thought that exist beyond language and across cultures – which can be uncovered through reason; that China has its own expression of this, a Chinese scientia; and that there is a ‘primordial unity’ between the two. Further, the *Daxue* was presented as the ‘first book of the Chinese scientia,’ the most rational and the one that the Jesuits studied most. Finally, the Jesuits followed at least one Chinese tradition in regarding the *Daxue* as a treatise for monarchs, ‘first addressed to Princes and Great Men who ruled over subjects and kingdoms’. Meynard considers that the Jesuits were influenced not only by the emerging Chinese evidential research movement but also by the European revival of political treatises, such as Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1519).

Just before the publication of the *Sinarum Philosophus* in France, the education of Louis XIV’s son and the choice of his teacher were at the center of discussions. A few treatises on the education of future rulers were published during this time ... For Couplet, the Confucian teaching was useful both for Chinese and Western rulers. In his letter to Louis XIV, Couplet presented the Confucian political program as completely realized in the figure of the French King. The first page of the *Sinarum Philosophus* bears the emblem of French monarchy, the *fleurs de lys*.

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31 This was not the first translation into Latin and an English translation was published in London just a few months before the *Sinarum Philosophus*. Jenkinson, *Vincent*; Meynard, *Confucius*, pp. 5–6, n. 10.
33 Ibid, p. 62, quoting *Daxue*, 1. The *Daxue* was seen as a mirror for princes: Jenkinson, *Vincent*, p. 42.
For Amiot, then, the *Daxue* was a highly significant text on several levels: it went to the heart of the Jesuit understanding not only of Chinese philosophy, but of their thinking about reason, culture and knowledge. Through the *Sinarum Philosophus* it was linked to the Rites Controversy, to the patronage of Louis XIV and to the positioning of China and Chinese philosophy as an example and tool for the French monarchy.\(^{34}\) While his European readers would not have had such an intimate relationship with it as did Amiot, the success of the *Sinarum Philosophus* was established and the *Daxue* is recognised, for example, in the *Encyclopédie* and the *Éphémérides*.\(^{35}\)

In the context, however, of the *Art Militaire* a European reader who was not a keen sinophile would, in the absence of Amiot’s note, have assumed that ‘*la grande Science*’ to which Yongzheng refers here is the science of warfare not that of civilian government or ethics. Not only is this the subject of the book but also because the epithet ‘*grande*’ could very properly be applied to the science of warfare in view of its importance, reflected a few pages earlier when Amiot opens his translation of the *Sunzi* with the statement that ‘*Les troupes sont la grande affaire de l’état*’.\(^ {36}\) Amiot, however, directs the reader to a different and unexpected meaning: that this ‘*grande Science*’ is not a general term for the art of war but is the title of a canonical work of Confucian philosophy. He then explains that the *Daxue* sets out principles that are, on their face, the antithesis of martial attributes. Nonetheless, the text of the *Ten Precepts* confirms that Yongzheng is speaking of Confucianism and he states that study of the Confucian classics is required of a soldier. For example, ‘even though you are engaged in the profession of Arms, and though the study of the Sacred Books and Books of History may keep you busy, you must

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\(^{34}\) Amiot’s translation of *The Great Learning* appears a decade later as *La Grande Science* in volume 1 of the *Mémoires*. Amiot 1776: 432-58. See further below at 175.  
\(^{35}\) Diderot and d’Alembert, *Encyclopédie*, pp. 3, 342. The collection published in Paris in 1687 by the PP. Intorcetta, Hendrick, Rougemont, & Couplet, first presents the *Da Xue or scientia magna*, a work of Confucius published by one of his disciples, Zensi. The Chinese philosopher here proposes to instruct the masters of the world in the art of governing well, which he describes as knowing and acquiring the qualities required in a sovereign, of being master of oneself, knowing how to appoint one’s council and court, and bringing up one’s own family. The *Éphémérides* refers to it twice in 1767, but as a philosophy not as a book: ‘*La Science*, for this is what in China they call the combination of ethics and politics (*la morale & la politique combinées*) are not well known ...’ The second instance occurs in the *Despotisme de la Chine* which describes it as ‘*Daxue or grande science*, because it is destined for the education of Princes in all aspects of Government. *Éphémérides* 1767, vol. I pt 2, p. 207; and vol. III pt 1, p.86. 

\(^{36}\) *Art Militaire* I, p. 57. The same phrase occurs early in each of the *Wuzi bingfu* I, p. 171 and note and the *Sima fa* II, p. 248. Compare Sadler’s rendition of *Vegetius’* axiom this is the ‘science, without the whiche, other sciences are altogether nothing.’ Sadler, *Vegetius*, p. 25.
not neglect the main and the most essential of your duties [i.e. to respect your parents].  

These opening sections of the *Art Militaire* establish that both the emperor, as commander-in-chief, and the soldiery are required to base their military conduct on the civil ethics of Confucianism; and to study the Confucian classics in order to be better soldiers and generals. This proposition might well appear to sit comfortably with Amiot both as a missionary and as a Jesuit. As a religious man, he would welcome the idea that even in the army ethics should be respected. And as a Jesuit in China, he had inherited a 200-year-old tradition that positioned the Jesuits as Confucian scholars, translators and, in the eyes of their detractors, apologists. Amiot, however, does not put forward this proposition as simplistically as this tradition might suggest: he presents the reader with two qualifications. The first of these qualifications is that the theoretical position of Confucian ethics was not necessarily reflected in practice. The second is that the term ‘grande Science’ does indeed have an alternative, military meaning which Amiot uses and which suborns the language of Confucianism.

The first qualification is the more explicit. The second of the emperor’s Precepts is to respect one’s elder brothers. In a footnote, however, Amiot writes that this was a difficult subject for Yongzheng: ‘The way he came to the throne is not above suspicion, and the manner in which he behaved towards his brothers fell far short of the commendable. He slew many, mistreated others, at least those who could overshadow him.’ Amiot repeats a story told to him by ‘someone familiar with stories from the previous court’ that the drafting of this Precept cost the lives of two men who failed to deal with this difficult subject to the satisfaction of the emperor. Amiot directly questions the character of the emperor, not only by suggesting that he murdered and mistreated his family in order to gain the throne, but that he then murdered men whom he had asked to set out these very Precepts because they had ‘put a little too much emphasis, it is alleged, on the reciprocal duties of brothers among themselves, especially of the younger towards his elders’. Amiot presents the emperor as particularly devious: ‘He was too good a politician to let anyone see what shocked him: as he was very vindictive, the two Manchu lords were not long without being found guilty of some crime that caused them to lose their heads on the scaffold’. Although these events took place about 40 years before Amiot’s

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37 *Art Militaire*, p. 17. Amiot’s footnote explains the Five Classics and the Confucian canon.
38 At least, under the Yonzheng emperor, since the position had recently changed under his successor, as Amiot presumably knew: see discussion below at p. 156.
39 The quotes in this paragraph are all from the *Art Militaire*, p. 21, note 2.
writing, they describe the accession and conduct of the then reigning emperor’s father. Amiot must have weighed the advisability of recounting court gossip utterly damning of the former emperor and considered the likely effect of his footnote on the reader. Nonetheless, there is nothing else in the Art Militaire (and certainly nothing in the Jesuit tradition) to support the idea that Amiot set up the emperor’s Ten Precepts with the intention of ridiculing the principles set out in it. A more likely conclusion is that Amiot was comfortable with the distinction between the ideal and the reality and saw this type of commentary as adding colour and depth to the original text. Quite possibly, he also wished to show himself an impartial observer and transmitter of Chinese culture and not its apologist. Whatever his motives, Amiot’s description of the emperor’s ambivalent relationship with his Confucian doctrine represents a material qualification.

The second qualification concerns the existence of an alternative meaning for ‘grande science’. This occurs only once in the text, but it is presented as an important principle in Chapter VI of the Sunzi, which Amiot entitles ‘Of fullness and emptiness’. This chapter concerns the use of deception and is, as we have seen, central to the ideas of the Sunzi. In it, Amiot states that in relation to an enemy ‘la grande science is to make him do whatever you want him to do, and to provide him, without his noticing, all possible means to support you’. It is inconceivable that Amiot uses this expression in such an important passage without being aware that these words are also the title of the Confucian classic and the very phrase that frames the entire Art Militaire.

Further evidence of his attentiveness to the specific words and the ideas they convey is to be found on the following page. Here Amiot uses the phrase ‘le grand art’ for the only time in the Art Militaire: ‘Le grand art of a general is to ensure that the enemy never knows where he will have to fight, to steal carefully from him his understanding of the positions he needs to defend’. Following so close on the phrase ‘la grande science’, echoing that formulation and reflecting such similar ideas around influencing and weakening the enemy through deception and indirect means, and in fact echoing the

40 As Amiot knew, French readers might well have been familiar with Yongzheng. The story of Yongzheng’s persecution of a Christian Manchu and his family had captured ‘the imagination of Catholic Europe, the fate of Sounou and his sons inspired at least nine tragedies performed in the Jesuit colleges of the German provinces between 1731 and 1754.’ Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, ‘Twilight’, pp. 725-6.

41 ‘The chapter is so named because key paragraphs advance the concept of striking and exploiting any voids or weaknesses in the enemy’s deployment. The substantial should always be avoided rather than confronted ... Controlling others, rather than being controlled by others, is one of Sun-tzu’s fundamental principles, and many of his tactical measures are devoted to appropriately manipulating the enemy.’ Sawyer and Sawyer, Military Classics, p. 443.
title of the *Art Militaire* itself, the expression *‘le grand art’* cannot be accidental either. We shall consider shortly why these expressions are used here, but first, there is one more marker of Amiot’s approach. The description of *‘le grand art’* continues: ‘If he achieves the ultimate and can conceal even the minutest of his actions, he is not just a clever General, he is an extraordinary man, he is a wonder’.\(^42\) Amiot notes that the Manchu commentator had included additional words comparing such a general to a spirit – which words Amiot has removed from his translation because he dislikes their reference to the supernatural world. This is one aspect of Chinese culture that he cannot tolerate – both because it offends his own beliefs but also because the Jesuits had always sought to distance and distinguish Confucianism from any form of superstitious practice.\(^43\) This was necessary so that they could maintain their position (against the Dominicans in particular) that Confucianism was consistent with Christianity and that the Chinese observation of Confucian rites was permissible. What is more notable than the fact that Amiot deletes or excludes this Manchu interpolation is that Amiot *records* his action: he is seeking to demonstrate his intolerance, not simply to cleanse the text of potentially offensive or damaging (to the Jesuits as well as the Chinese) content, but to show his readers his good faith as a Christian and as a translator. As we have seen with his commentary on Yongzheng, Amiot is an interventionist translator who is willing to compromise the reception of his text in order to promote a bigger cause – but, at least in the way he seeks to present himself, he does so (like Clarke) and as recommended by Bertin with transparent footnotes rather than covertly within the text.

The introduction of the term *‘grande science’* is, therefore, no accident and, together with the term *‘grand art’* presents the reader with a concept of military excellence that is founded on deception and dissimulation: the *‘great science’* is to be able to make the enemy conform to your wishes, while the *‘great art’* is the application of this *science* to deceive the enemy as to your own plans, in this instance requiring him to spread his forces too thinly and making him vulnerable to attack. This alternative meaning of *‘grande science’* is not inconsistent with the Confucian model set out at the start of the *Art Militaire* but is a development and application of it.\(^44\) The essence of the *Great Learning* as described by Amiot is the self-knowledge, calmness and ability to control oneself and others that becomes the basis not only for civilian government but for military effectiveness. Even though Confucianism was, no less than Christianity,

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\(^42\) *Art Militaire* VI, p. 87.

\(^43\) This point will be explored further in the following section on ‘Doctrine’.

\(^44\) In the hierarchy set out in the *Sima fa*: see above, p. 159.
fundamentally pacifist in its ethics, it can be applied in war in a way that Christianity cannot. Both are based on principles of treating others the way you wish to be treated and both promote a passive submission to insult requiring followers to ‘turn the other cheek’. But Confucian self-knowledge is also concerned with good government and this is the reason it can become the means to know how your enemy thinks and thereby destroy him. Hence, the ‘grande science’ of warfare is a projection of, or shadow thrown by, the ‘grande Science’ into a world whose morality is based solely on the necessity of victory. Amiot’s choice of the same phrase in this context qualifies the apparently straightforward description of Confucianism presented by Yongzheng to an even greater extent than the emperor’s own conduct. The emperor undermines Confucianism by not living up to its values. The successful general undermines – or perhaps extends – Confucianism by applying it to deceive, dissimulate and destroy.

**La Doctrine – the Way**

The foregoing discussion of ‘grande Science’ and ‘grande science’ proposes an implicit link between Confucianism and the art of warfare created by the translator’s use of the same French phrase. However, this analysis raises the question of what, if any, explicit link exists in Amiot’s Sunzi between the two. In this section, I will argue that the link is explicit and that it lies in Amiot’s interpretation of the reference in the original text to ‘la Doctrine’ – ‘the Way’. According to the Sunzi (see chapter 1, p. 51ff), the way is followed to obtain victory through good leadership of the people and good administration of one’s country (the normative, Confucian sense) but also through the systematic deception of the enemy (the dao of deceit). How does Amiot capture and transmit these ideas? He begins by introducing the Way as one of five things that should be ‘the object of continuous meditation and of all our care’ and which determine success: ‘If we wish glory and success to follow our arms, we must never lose sight of the Way (la Doctrine), Heaven, Earth, the General and Discipline (la Discipline)’ on which he notes:

> By the Way (la Doctrine) one may understand here ‘religion’, since the Way is in fact the entire religion of the Chinese, at least those that the ridiculous superstitions of idolatry

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45 The Third Precept states ‘... pardonnez sans peine les insultes que vous croyez avoir reçues. Un seul affront supporté patiemment suffit pour établir votre réputation. Telle est la doctrine que je vous propose.’ *Art Militaire*, p. 24.
have not infected. This Way to which the author refers, is the one that teaches men a
morality dictated by the light of reason (les lumières de la raison).\footnote{Art Militaire 1, p. 58. I have translated Amiot’s la Doctrine as ‘the Way’ because Amiot is
translating dao and capitalises the proper noun (unlike Clarke he only capitalises selected nouns).
The term occurs again in Amiot’s Wuzi bingfa (p. 172). In his 1787 letter on Daoism, he provides a
long description and definition of the word dao and again translates it as ‘doctrine’ although, in
this case, not capitalised. Amiot’s scepticism towards Daoism is evident in both the Sunzi and this
later letter. Mémoires vol. XV, p. 209. See note 48 below. The term is not capitalised in my
references to the original Sunzi.}

The way is described as the religion of those who have \textit{not} been affected by superstition:
a remarkably bold statement of the Jesuit position that had, ultimately, been condemned
by the Pope and contributed directly to the suppression of the Society. Amiot presents
the Way as a religion, one that is not theistic but which teaches people an ethics based
on reason. The expression ‘lumières de la raison’ reflects both the metaphor and the
philosophy of the French Enlightenment. Amiot’s footnote on the meaning of ‘Ciel’
maintains the same logic by emphasising that it does not have the religious connotation
of ‘Heaven’ but concerns ‘solely natural’ phenomena and is part of the Chinese science of
physics rather than theology.\footnote{’Par le Ciel, l’auteur entend la connaissance des choses
purement naturelles que le Ciel offre à
nos yeux sous les différents climats, dans les différentes saisons & sous les différentes
températures de l’air. Il entend aussi la connaissance des deux principes \textit{Yin} & \textit{Yang}, par
lesquels toutes les choses naturelles sont formées & par lesquels les éléments reçoivent leurs différentes
modifications. En général l’\textit{Yin} & l’\textit{Yang} sont, dans \textit{le système de la physique chinoise}, les deux
principes qui, mis en action par un principe supérieur, qu’ils appellent \textit{Tai-ki}, peuvent produire
tout ce qui compose cet univers.’ Art Militaire 1, p. 58.}

This footnote, therefore, can be seen to be of
fundamental importance to Amiot, setting out his beliefs about the nature of Chinese
religion, its grounding in a moral philosophy that is strongly associated with the values
of the Enlightenment, and compatible with Christianity through its absence of a
competing theology.

How then to follow the original and present this same way as being the ‘\textit{dao of}
deception’ in almost the next breath? Amiot does not. While he follows the original
Chapter 1 in discussing at some length the need for dissimulation and deception in the
conduct of warfare, unlike the original he avoids any expression suggesting that ‘warfare
is the Way of deception’. Again, when he comes back to the subject in Chapter IV, he
includes the discussion around following the Way to secure victory, but he does not refer
to the Way itself.\footnote{Amiot’s views on Daoism were set out much later in his life (indicating some reluctance or
distaste?) in a letter of 16 October 1787 that is reproduced in the Mémoires volume XV (1791) pp.
208–59. Far from associating the successful revolutions carried out by the Shang and Zhou
dynasties with their deployment of a military Way, Amiot associates the decline of the Xia and
Shang dynasties with their abandonment of Confucianism and adherence to Daoism: pp. 225–7.}
The principle which he sets out is that victory is not to be secured by
fighting, but by defeating the enemy without fighting. He argues that trying to outshine the masters by acts of great generalship on the battlefield is in fact to fall well below them:

... because this is a case where being better than good is actually not to be good. To achieve victory by means of battle has for all time and throughout the world been regarded as something good. But I dare to tell you that this is a case where being better than good is often worse than being bad.49

The ancient generals were brilliant not because they fought and won against great odds, but because they never needed to – such that their victories looked so easy that the generals appeared to be of mediocre quality. In the Sunzi, their approach is described as ‘the way’. Amiot’s omission, in Chapters I and IV, of the link between the Sunzi’s discussion of the way and the use of the expression ‘the way’ to describe these practices contrasts with Amiot’s willingness to connect the Confucian Great Learning with deception and dissimulation. However, la grande Science and la Doctrine are not the same. The former is a text on government and ethics; the latter is Amiot’s term for the religion of China, which, for the Jesuits, is a monotheism compatible with Christianity. For Amiot, presenting the art of war as an extension and application of Confucian teaching on government and ethics was acceptable. Presenting the enlightened religion of the Chinese as in some way associated with a dao of deception was not. The last thing a Jesuit of the Peking mission would ever do deliberately was to raise questions about the compatibility of Chinese religious beliefs with Christianity. In spite of his intentions, however, Amiot has created the link by bringing the Great Learning into the subject at all. It is he who has introduced the link of the Sunzi to the Ten Precepts and then echoed la grande Science with la grande science. There is no reference to the Great Learning in the original. Connecting ‘grande Science’ and ‘grande science’ is deliberate, but has had the effect of indirectly linking la Doctrine to the same theme of victory by means of division and deception.

Benevolence

In the last two sections we have looked at the presence of la grande Science and la Doctrine in Amiot’s translation. In respect of the former, we have explored how Amiot wrestles with the problem that principles that are attractive to him, and which he wishes to promote to his readers, are also applied in a manner that is at best amoral and, from

49 Art Militaire IV, p. 77, ‘car c’est ici où ce qui est au-dessus du bon, n’est pas bon lui-même. Remporter des victoires par le moyen des combats a été regardé de tout temps par l’Univers entier comme quelque chose de bon: mais j’ose vous le dire, c’est encore ici où ce qui est au-dessus du bon est souvent pire que le mauvais.’
Amiot’s perspective, immoral in the *Art Militaire*. In the case of the latter, Amiot attempts to avoid the contamination of Chinese religion with the ethos of the *Sunzi* but cannot entirely do so because of the association he has created. This section examines one last example of the same problem, this time concerning the core value of Confucianism: *ren* (benevolence).

Among the five principal subjects for study in war is ‘the General’. The *Sunzi* lists five qualities required of a general (p. 49 above), which Amiot translates as follows (emphasis added):

> The Way; fairness and love for those in particular who are subject to us and for all men in general; the science of resources; courage and value – these are the qualities that should characterise the one who is clothed with the dignity of the General; necessary virtues, for the acquisition of which we must omit nothing: only they can equip us to march at the head of others. 50

Consistent with the analysis above, the first attribute of leadership is ‘the way’. This is not an accurate translation of the original in which the way is not one of the five attributes although the *Sunzi* does elsewhere say that the ‘expert in using the military builds upon the way’. 51 The third attribute is benevolence (*ren*) which Amiot glosses with the long phrase underlined above. 52 In the *Sunzi*, *ren* appears only here and then in the final Chapter XIII, which uses the term twice in relation to the essential need for spies and the quality needed to manage them. This passage (quoted at p. 46 above) in the original explains that war is too important to leave to chance – the general must gather as much information as he can and must use spies to do so. It is the antithesis of humanity to fail to do so. It requires humanity to be able to do so. If the essence of humanity is treating others the way one wishes to be treated, then this characteristic is applicable in two different senses: first, going to battle ill-prepared is to expose one’s subjects to evils through one’s own recklessness. Second, the use of spies requires a deep understanding of other people (*again ren*) – so as to extract knowledge from them and not to be deceived by them oneself. Just as we saw in the use of the way, the *Sunzi* uses a

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50 *Art Militaire* I, p. 59.

51 *Sunzi* IV (Ames, p. 116).

52 Amiot’s translation of the *Se Ma* begins with an Article ‘De l’Humanité &c’ which describes ‘benevolence’ as the ‘principe universel qui devoit faire agir les hommes’ and discusses this and the other four cardinal virtues in the context of war. The *Se Ma* makes the point that as these cardinal virtues co-existed with war, war must be justified if it is unavoidable: ‘But before we come to this extreme, we must be well assured that we have benevolence as our principle, justice as our object, and righteousness as our rule.’ *Art Militaire, Sima fù* I pp. 230-1.
core term of contemporary Chinese philosophy in a powerful and perhaps even shocking sense by extending and applying it in a completely new and arguably controversial way.

Amiot's approach very much reflects the pattern observed in his treatment of 'the way'. His presentation of the ideas from the original is faithful but he does not explicitly associate these ideas with the specific Confucian term. In fact, while presenting this theme Amiot explicitly distances himself from, and rejects, the original sense. This starts with the title where, almost uniquely, we can see that Amiot has made a choice in his translation between two options which he sets out. Amiot's Chapter XIII is entitled 'Of the manner for employing dissension and sowing discord' but he also acknowledges the alternative title 'On the use of spies' and notes that the proponents of the two titles claim respectively that causing dissent among an enemy or using spies is the most useful of military arts:

One of the commentators, trying to explain the title says: To make war with advantage, it is necessary to use dissension and discord: you have to know how to conceive and nurture them; you must take advantage of them with skill. This is the most useful of arts, but it is full of difficulties; there is none like it in the trade (métier) of war; there is nothing to which a General should pay closer attention. Some other commentators have entitled this Chapter, 'The way to use Spies', claiming that in the Military Art, knowing how to manage spies is the most useful thing of all for a General.

This idea is picked up in the review of the Art Militaire in the Journal des Sçavans of January 1772. The review in fact contains little commentary and is mostly a précis of Amiot's translation of the Ten Precepts and the Sunzi but the reviewer does note:

In the thirteenth and last Chapter, the Author describes 'the manner of employing division and of sowing discord'. He prefers these means to the use of arms, because it is the least dangerous. When these two approaches are combined, wars are shorter and less costly.

The text of Chapter XIII appears to be a mix of different themes from the original, with a strong opening section on the cost and consequences of war being used to demonstrate,  

53 Another example occurs in Chapter XI where the text advises that the enemy general must be taken dead or alive. In his footnote, Amiot admits that the original took a stronger line, which is justified on the grounds that the Chinese were fighting what they regarded as rebels – a justification that is also cited and rejected at the end of Chapter XIII as we shall see below. The note reads: 'The text specifically says, 'Have their General killed'; but some commentators soften the expression somewhat; moreover, this maxim is still in great credit today among the Manchu and Chinese. From the beginning of the campaign, they attempt to become masters of the leaders of the enemy party, and to take them dead or alive, by force or artifice. The reason they offer to excuse this custom is, they say, that they only ever fight against rebels. That's the name they call all their neighbours who do not want to acknowledge the Emperor as their legitimate sovereign.' Art Militaire XI (142, note 2).

54 Art Militaire XIII, p. 151.

first, how bad extended warfare is, second, the necessity of using spies and, third, of
sowing dissension among the enemy to avoid the need for battle. Amiot’s discussion of
the use of spies and the use of discord is spread between Chapters VIII and XIII. He
presents the underlying ideas in clear and robust language – promoting seduction,
blackmail and whatever means are necessary:

Omit nothing that could debauch whoever the enemy has that is good.
Bribes, gifts, caresses, nothing is to be omitted; trick if necessary. Engage
people of honour in his camp into shameful actions that are unworthy of
their reputation, actions that will make them blush when they are known,
and make sure they become known.

Go through their government, sow dissension among their leaders, provide
reasons for them to be angry with one another, make them whisper against
their officers ... send them women to corrupt them, make them come out of
the camp when they should be inside, and stay in camp when they should be
out and about; let them forever give false alarms and bad advice; attract the
governors of their provinces to your side. This is what you have to do if you
want to wrong-foot the enemy using skill and ruses.

The great secret of overcoming all consists in the art of knowing how to
create division ... He who knows how to do so is a man truly worthy of
command – the treasure of his sovereign and the defender of the empire. 56

While Amiot presents these ideas with great force he also qualifies them with unusual
footnotes. 57 In the first he disassociates himself from the ethics of the policy; in the
second he argues for Chinese exceptionalism:

There is no need for me to say here that I disapprove of all that is said by the author on the
subject of artifice and trickery. This policy, bad in itself, should have no place in a well-
regulated army.

The benefits which are described as the necessary outcome and effect of the artifices set
out here are real; one could prove that with a host of examples from Chinese history, but
that proves nothing, it seems to me, for the other parts of the world, where each kingdom
appears to be a separate nation. Most wars that the Chinese have conducted were against
other Chinese; it was one part of the nation that fought against another: as a result, it often
seemed a matter of indifference to the whole body of the same nation, whether victory was
declared on one side or the other ... 58

Once again Amiot is carefully positioning himself and China: while disassociating
himself from the opinions set out in the Sunzi he clearly relishes recounting them while

57 The final section of Chapter XIII, including Amiot’s footnotes, is in the Appendix.
58 Art Militaire VIII, p. 104 and XIII, p. 156. The principle that countries are brought down by civil
dissent not external threat is also central to Vegetius: see p. 47 above.
he also emphasises again the uniqueness of nations and the continuity of Chinese history.

The end of Chapter XIII brings Amiot’s translation of the Sunzi to a close. It is a complex, subtle and multi-layered piece of writing which, I suggest, serves a similar function to the climactic end of Book III in the Epitoma. At one level it is based on a classical rhetoric that was shared by Vegetius, Clarke and Amiot from their shared education in Cicero and the Latin authors. But rhetoric was more for the Jesuits than a mode of structuring expression: it was ‘the creative driving force of their ethics, spirituality, exegesis, anthropology, and theology’ – ‘their ‘way of proceeding’ – oriented and unified the extreme diversity of their undertakings and research.’ Amiot’s choice of subject, selection and interweaving of source materials, structuring and framing of the works, references to and representations of Chinese, French and Jesuit ideologies, and positioning of himself are all forms of rhetoric. This rhetoric culminates in a eulogy of the two great exponents of Chinese strategy – two men who are identified as traitors and rebels, who betrayed reigning dynasties in order to establish new ones. These men are, however, not remembered as traitors but as heroes, saints even (des héros, des princes vertueux, de saints personnages) because their actions were justified by the immorality of the regimes they betrayed. Then, with characteristic style, Amiot qualifies the Chinese with his own critique and perspective.

Finally, a good general must take advantage of everything; he should not be surprised at anything, whatever happens. But above all, most importantly of all, he must practice the five kinds of division. If he really masters the art of using division, I dare affirm that there is nothing he cannot achieve. Defend the States of his sovereign, enlarge them, make new conquests every day, exterminate his enemies, even found new dynasties, all this will be the inevitable effect of the use of artifice. The great Yin, did he not live in the time of the Xia? However, it was through him that the Shang Dynasty was founded. The celebrated Lu was he not a subject of the Shang when, by means of him, the Zhou Dynasty ascended the throne? Which one of our books is it that does not praise these two great men? Has history given them the names of traitors to their homeland, or rebels to their Sovereigns? Far from it, history always speaks of these men with great respect. These, history recounts, are Heroes, virtuous Princes, and saintly men.

That is all that can be said in substance on how to use division, and this is where I end my reflection on the Art of Warriors.

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[Note] Most of the maxims that are prevalent in this Chapter on division, are to be condemned, as contrary to probity and against all the other moral virtues which the Chinese themselves profess; but these same Chinese believe that everything is permitted, when it comes to oppressing enemies that they regard as rebels. However, they are not all of one mind in this regard.

Thus the final lines of Amiot’s translation of Sunzi juxtapose a climactic, rhetorical description of a military culture that leads to heroism, virtue and even sainthood with a counterposed note that describes the same culture as the antithesis of the very ethics professed by the Chinese. This then is Amiot’s conclusion on the concept of virtue presented in the Sunzi: he fully explores the way in which the original applies these core ethical values to warfare, creating a Chinese military culture that uses and extends the language and logic of Confucianism to define and justify a ruthless pragmatism; but at the same time he cannot accept or promote these values and he avoids associating them with the specific Chinese terms for the Way and for the Confucian virtue of benevolence. In so doing, Amiot enjoys the best of both worlds – he transmits a tradition that he knows will be novel and engaging to his readers while promoting his own value as translator and interlocutor and values that are independent of those he is describing.

A second reading

The reading set out above presents a reasonably conservative view of Amiot’s intentions. Before closing this chapter, however, I offer the possibility of a more radical reading both in the sense of its evidential basis and of what it suggests about Amiot. This reading is based on the following principles: first, that Amiot’s ending to Chapter XIII is his own and is not derived from either the Sunzi or the commentaries available to him; second, that Amiot is drawing on and promoting the Chinese concept of legitimate revolution which is most deeply explored in the Mencius; and third, that Amiot flags this intent with the deployment of the legends of the foundation of the Shang and Zhou dynasties and the symbolically interesting date of the latter event.

Turning to the first point, as mentioned above, we do not know precisely what sources Amiot had in front of him, but we can reasonably assume that the annotated Chinese version of the Military Classics in the Bibliothèque du Roi and dating to 1711 was

61 Art Militaire XIII (158-9). The original French is set out in the Appendix.
representative of such texts. The manuscript consists of the received 13-chapter text of the Sunzi together with commentary. The sense of the original, which is reflected in the 1711 commentary, is that the Yin (also Shang) and then the Zhou dynasty which replaced it, were both assisted in their successful revolutions by leading ministers from the dynasties they were overthrowing. The Sunzi does not describe in what way these two men assisted the revolutions. Amiot, however, describes the men as masters of the use of division, by which means they were able to help their (new) masters to establish new dynasties. For this, history remembers them not as traitors but as ‘saints’ – as we have seen. Amiot then goes into some detail to describe the history of these two men and how they came to serve and assist in the destruction of their rulers and their replacement.

These legends were well known to a Chinese reader from the history of Sima Qian, which describes the rise and fall of the Three Dynasties, the Xia, Shang and Zhou. In the Shiji (Records of the court scribe), the legend of their rise and fall symbolises the inevitable deterioration and cyclicity of empires. Amiot would have been aware of the positioning of these also in the commentary to the Daxue and he himself connects the legends of the fall of the last emperors of the Xia and Shang dynasties to their military failures. But within the Confucian tradition, these legends and themes are particularly strongly represented in the Mencius which is referred to twice in the Art Militaire. Mencius was an historical figure who can be dated to the fourth century BCE – at around the same time as the Sunzi is believed to have been written down.

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63 De Guignes specifically cites two works in Chinese (references 353 and 354), the second of which dates from the reign of the Kangxi emperor, who died in 1722: Art Militaire, p. ix. Saint Maurice refers to the Chinese commentaries and to the fact that there is also a Manchu translation of a Chinese commentary which the Kangxi emperor ordered to be printed in 1710: Science Militaire à la Chine, p. 36. See the discussion at note 14 on p. 140.

64 ‘The governing of the Xia dynasty [ca. 2205–1766 BCE] was distinguished by good faith, but over time it deteriorated … Therefore, the men of the Shang dynasty [ca. 1766–ca. 1045 BCE], who took over rule from the Xia, emphasized respect. But respect deteriorated into ritual … For that reason, the people of the Zhou dynasty [ca. 1045–256 BCE], who succeeded the Shang, turned to knowledge of literature as a tool for governing … What was needed … was a return to good faith, for the way of the Three Dynasties is cyclical: The end comes back to the beginning.’ Thomas R. Martin, Herodotus and Sima Qian: The First Great Historians of Greece and China: a Brief History with Documents (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 104.

65 Amiot’s translation of the Daxue in vol. 1 of the Mémoires (1776) states of these two kings that, ‘The first was not able to persuade his people to take up arms on his behalf. The second was abandoned by his army.’ p. 452.

66 At p. 5, where Amiot describes the authors of the Sunzi and Wuzi bingfa as the military equivalents of Confucius and Mencius; and p. 17 (note) where the Mencius is described as one of the sacred Confucian canon.

repeatedly states the principle that a ruler lacking benevolence may justly be overthrown – and he uses the Three Dynasties to illustrate this: 'If a ruler ill-uses his people to an extreme degree, he will be murdered and his state annexed' and 'The Three Dynasties won the Empire through benevolence and lost it through cruelty. This is true of the rise and fall, survival and collapse, of states as well.' 68 Mencius refuses to condemn those who overthrow and kill a ruler who has lost the mandate of heaven.69 When asked if the overthrow of the last Shang emperor Zhòu was regicide, Mencius answered:

He who mutilates benevolence is a mutilator: he who cripples rightness is a crippler; and a man who is both a mutilator and a crippler is an 'outcast'. I have indeed heard of the punishment of the 'outcast [Zhòu]', but I have not heard of any regicide.70

The Mencius also refers on several occasions in particular to the Xia minister Yin, who is described by the Sunzi and Amiot as instrumental in the overthrow of the Xia dynasty. Mencius is asked, 'When a prince is not good, is it permissible for a good and wise man who is his subject to banish him?' He replies: 'It is permissible ... only if he had the motive of a Yin; otherwise, it would be usurpation'.71 The Mencius speaks extensively of war and condemns it in principle, while citing Confucius as authority that a benevolent ruler will effortlessly overcome his enemies. 'What need is there for war?'72

While the Mencius was not alone in condemning war, nor in proposing that a benevolent ruler could defeat his enemies with ease, it shares with the Art Militaire a particular focus on the question of whether a subject may rebel against his own ruler.73 Amiot's rendition of the final section of the Sunzi is close to the Mencius in its extended reference to the Three Dynasties and to the overthrow of the first two of these by heroes. This begs the question of whether Amiot purposefully concludes his account of the Sunzi with a

69 Of course, the Mencian doctrine was not the only authority for this phenomenon: both Greece and Rome had tyrannicide cults and these were revived in the twelfth century by John of Salisbury, who as we have seen (p. 117), had adopted Vegetius within his political thought.
70 Lau, Mencius, p. 23 (1.B.8).
72 Mencius said, 'There are people who say, 'I am expert at military formations; I am expert at waging war. This is a grave crime. If the ruler of a state is drawn to benevolence he will have no match in the Empire.' Lau, Mencius, p. 158 (7.B.4); Confucius said, 'Against benevolence there can be no superiority in numbers. If the ruler of a state is drawn to benevolence, he will be matchless in the Empire.' Ibid, p. 80 (4.A.7).
73 As we have seen above, the Laozi condemns war and the Mozi 'offensive war'. The latter also argues that a war waged against an unjust ruler is 'punishment' not 'attack' and therefore not 'offensive war'; and it cites the downfall of the Xia and Shang dynasties. However, the emphasis here is on the justification of war, not the issue of regicide or treachery which appears in the Mencius. Watson, Mo Tzu, pp. 54–61.
passage that is designed to invoke the Mencian doctrine of justified regicide and revolution against a ruler who is not benevolent. 74 This was a live subject under the Qing as it had been for their predecessors and there is circumstantial evidence that Amiot would have been conscious of what he was doing given that both earlier Jesuits and contemporary Chinese scholars were examining it. 75 The ‘evidential research’ (kaozheng) movement of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Chinese scholars sought to apply empirical methods to the reading of the Confucian classics, stressing that ‘valid knowledge must be corroborated by external (textual or otherwise) facts and impartial observations’. 76 Their approach led to a questioning of the authority of the Confucian Classics and to the imperial orthodoxy associated with it: they were acutely aware of ‘the millennial connection between the Confucian Classics and Chinese political discourse and the power these texts had over political behavior in traditional China’. 77 The Jesuits had played a significant role in the evidential research movement through their introduction of European mathematics, astronomy and geography to Ming China, which stimulated questions about why Chinese scholars had focused on moral and philosophical problems at the expense of mathematics. The link between the Jesuit-influenced revival of natural studies and the new textual criticism was explicit and thus it

74 Amiot must also have been aware of the regicide narrative surrounding the Jesuits in France. This had been rekindled with Damiens’ attempt on Louis XV: ‘Damiens had been a pupil at the Jesuit college in Arras ten years earlier. It was much too easy to conclude that he was another Jacques Clement, who murdered Henri III, or another Jean Chastel, who tried to murder Henri IV, or another Francois Ravaillac, who succeeded in 1610. Was it not the moral theology of the Jesuits to advise and condone the assassination of so-called unjust kings? This Jansenist thesis received widespread assent.’ Marc Fumaroli, ‘Between the Rigorist Hammer and the Deist Anvil: The Fate of the Jesuits in Eighteenth-Century France’ in Jesuits II ed. by O’Malley, pp. 682-90, p. 685. Also, Dale K. Van Kley, ‘Plots and Rumors of Plots: The Role of Conspiracy in the International Campaign against the Society of Jesus, 1758–1768’ in Jesuit Suppression ed. by Burson and Wright, pp. 13-39, p. 13.

75 Amiot’s near-contemporary, the Qing scholar Quan Zuwang (1705–55) transmitted a short account of Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–98), the founding emperor of the Ming, faulting the Mencius for promoting insurrection and subversive teachings. Zhu Yuanzhang took the unprecedented step of having an expurgated version of the Mencius written. This edition became, for a short period, the set text for the civil service examinations but such was the Ming emperor’s faith in the education and examination system that the traditional text was not suppressed. Bernhard Fuehrer, ‘State Power and the Confucian Classics Observations on the Mengzi jiewen and Truth Management under the First Ming Emperor’, forthcoming, pp. 7-8, 10, 12-13 and 15.


is beyond doubt that the Jesuits in Peking were aware of this movement and their own interaction with it.\textsuperscript{78}

The leading evidential scholar of Amiot’s time, Dai Zhen (1724–77), took the movement further with his 1777 work, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* (Evidential analysis of the meanings of terms in the Mencius), which was a vehicle for social criticism.\textsuperscript{79} At the time of writing, Dai Zhen was engaged in the *Siku quanshu* project, launched by Qianlong in 1772 to create a complete (but censored) collection of all Chinese literature. The *Siku quanshu* project was heavily dominated by evidential scholars and was led by a patron of the movement, Ji Yun (1724–1805).\textsuperscript{80} Amiot was the first to notify Europe of the *Siku quanshu* project.\textsuperscript{81} While the *Siku quanshu* project and the publication of Dai Zhen’s *Mencius* occurred after the writing of the *Art Militaire* (although before its publication in the *Mémoires* with Amiot’s *Supplément*) they are further evidence of Amiot’s interest in contemporary Chinese activity in this field.

The Jesuits had faithfully conveyed this tradition to Europe with their introduction of the *Mencius*, first published in Europe in 1711 by François Noël (1651–1729).\textsuperscript{82} Sometimes criticised (like Amiot) for having interspersed the translation of the original text with commentarial material, Noël nonetheless conveys the Mencian sentiment regarding regicide. For example, on the question of whether the overthrow of the last Shang ruler, Zhòu, was regicide, Noël has Mencius reply as follows:

> Emperors and Kings are established in order to administer the piety and justice of the Empire. If therefore an Emperor inhumanely (immisericors) strips off all sense of piety, that Emperor is said to be a disgrace and a plunderer; if, in greed, he overturns all just laws, then he is said to be the ruin and destroyer of the Empire. A person who is in truth a disgrace and the plunderer, ruin and destroyer of the Empire, is not assessed as an

\textsuperscript{78} A possible example of the reverse influence is the Jesuit approach to the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. The Jesuits set out to show an authoritative Confucian canon against which Europeans could assess Confucianism; and specifically to rebut accusations that Confucianism was ‘incomplete and inferior to Christian ethics, along with other pagan philosophies.’ This project to create an authoritative translation required an ‘academic apparatus of philological and historical notes and with a detailed chronology.’ Meynard, *Confucius*, pp. 20–22.

\textsuperscript{79} Conversely, Dai Zhen was aware of the Jesuits’ introduction of western scientific methods to China although he ‘sought to show that in fact Western astronomers had acquired their knowledge of the sun and its path about the celestial North Pole from ancient Chinese sources.’ Ann-ping Chin and Mansfield Freeman, *Tai Chen on Mencius: Explorations in Words and Meaning: A Translation of the Meng Tzu tsu-i shu-cheng, with a Critical Introduction* (Yale University Press, 1990), p. 8 and footnote.

\textsuperscript{80} Elman, *Philosophy to philology*, pp. 17–19, 27–8.

\textsuperscript{81} Amiot describes the *Siku quanshu* project in letters dated 13 July 1778 and 5 September 1779, which are reproduced in volume XV (1791) of the *Mémoires*, pp. 289 and 347ff.

\textsuperscript{82} François Noël, *Sinensis imperii libri classici sex* (Prague, 1711).
Emperor, but as a private man. Therefore, I have heard of a private citizen Zhòu receiving his just punishment at the hands of Prince Wu, but I have never heard of an Emperor Zhòu being killed by a prince owing him loyalty.  

Unlike the Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, the Qing appear to have been tolerant of the Mencius and Dai Zhen’s use of it. The doctrine of justified regicide served the Qing’s purposes since it justified the invasion of 1644 as the overthrow of a Ming regime that had lost the mandate of heaven. Amiot embraces this interpretation. Thus, ironically, the position of Noël and Amiot in promoting the Mencian doctrine was not a threat to the contemporary Chinese regime in the way that it might be to regimes elsewhere that had nothing to gain from it.

What, then, are we to make of the fact that, in the course of the Art Militaire, Amiot refers five times to the overthrow of the Xia dynasty and five times to the date of this revolution, which he renders four times as 1766 BCE and once as 1770 BCE – in the final words of the Sunzi? The year 1766 BCE was the traditional date for the overthrow of the corrupted Xia and the foundation of the enlightened Shang dynasty. The year 1770 BCE appears to be a mis-statement of that date. It seems improbable that Amiot was unaware that he was dispatching his book to Europe in 1766 and that it would likely be published around 1770, in which case the millennial sense that these dates project was no accident. It may be that his thinking on this was not explicit – perhaps he had in mind the very recent revolution (from his perspective) that had brought about the demise of the Jesuit order in France and would do so internationally in 1773. Or perhaps these events had given Amiot a sense that the French regime that had allowed this to happen – indeed had played an active role in bringing it about – had, so to speak, lost the mandate of Heaven and was therefore putting itself at risk. Perhaps he intended a warning rather than a prediction. But, whatever his motivation, Amiot’s repetition of these dates in the context of the subject of regicide and revolution is open to such an interpretation.

How far should we take this more radical reading? What is clear is that Amiot’s rendition of the final section of the Sunzi emphasises the theme of revolution and locates it in time

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83 Ibid, I.ii.34 (p. 239) – my translation. Lau’s translation of 1.B.8 is above at p. 176.
84 Elman, Philosophy to philology, p. 18.
85 ‘In the revolution of 1644, the Manchu undertook acts of wisdom, bravery and policy that one would consider fabulous if they had not taken place so near to our own times.’ Art Militaire, p. 4.
in a way that the Sunzi does not. In addition, Amiot was fully aware of the significance of the legends of the Three Dynasties in particular in Mencian teaching, and that for Mencius the doctrine of lawful revolution is a central theme. Amiot’s own description of the Manchu revolution of 1644 is highly favourable to the revolutionaries; and his description of the Xia and Shang rebels as ‘saints’ is striking. Finally, Amiot on five occasions refers to the date of that historical revolution which is, at the very least, provocative.

We have to acknowledge that Amiot’s editor, de Guignes, and the Ministry of Bertin either did not read the text in this way or they did not object to its publication. However, as we shall see, there is evidence that others did. We also know that one of the reasons why dissident writers in France at this time wrote about China was precisely that they were permitted to criticise their own country indirectly by so doing. On this reading of Amiot, his translation of the Sunzi has a political dimension that must be considered alongside his desire to shore up his own position and that of the Jesuit mission in China in the face of the uncertainties of the 1760s.

Conclusions

The first reading set out above of Amiot’s translation of the Sunzi shows a man strongly influenced by the tradition of Jesuit scholarship, in China and beyond. Amiot presents himself publicly as a translator who attempts to present the original material as accurately as possible. Nonetheless, the work is structured (with the Ten Precepts and Discours du traducteur at its head and frequent notes that are juxtaposed with the text) to ensure that he sets his translation within a defined framework and guides the reader through the text. The main object of the structure is to frame the Sunzi in terms of the ethics of Confucianism and to demonstrate the continuity of Chinese culture by putting the precepts of a recent emperor alongside instructions that date back two millennia. The footnotes provide a mechanism whereby Amiot can impress upon the reader the quality of his scholarship, the fidelity of his translation and also the value and values that he brings to the work. Value in that he is the bridge between two cultures; and values in that he occasionally asserts his independent moral code by distancing himself from that of the Sunzi. Amiot’s morality is never oppressive, however, and he echoes the long-

87 See, for example, Walter W. Davis, ‘China, the Confucian Ideal, and the European Age of Enlightenment’ Journal of the History of Ideas, vol. 44, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1983), 523-548, p. 548. Jones, ‘The Great Chain’, p. 37 links the praise of foreign rulers’ philanthropy with ‘the development of the notion of civic benevolence, or bienfaisance.’ It would be satisfying to be able to link Amiot linguistically to this trend, but he prefers l’humanité to bienfaisance to translate ren. The sentiment, however, is the same.
standing and controversial ethos of the Jesuits that cultures are to be respected and not judged. Indeed, in his handling of the Way Amiot makes a bold statement that Chinese religion (not just ethics) is not superstition but founded on enlightenment, a word he uses to great effect.

In this reading, Amiot's most striking message is about the importance of ethical leadership, good government, efficient and meritocratic administration and a defensive and just policy towards war. He supports his method with classical rhetoric and with his own vocabulary: introducing the title of the Confucian *Daxue* (*la grande Science*) by the device of the *Ten Precepts* and then playing off that phrase with his own terms the *la grande science* and *le grand art* of warfare. Whereas Confucian *grande Science* is the art of good government through self-regulation, self-knowledge and treating others the way one wishes to be treated, the *grande science* of war uses those same qualities in order to manipulate, divide and destroy one's enemies. While apparently amoral, if we accept that one of the attributes of good government is defending the state, and this is the means to do so with the minimum loss of life and treasure, then it is arguably not amoral. But Amiot does not make this case explicitly and appears to avoid bringing the term *dào* into play as the *Sunzi* does, presumably as he wishes to avoid any negative association for this term which he has defined as Chinese religion. Instead Amiot ends his translation of the *Sunzi* with a powerful and subtle statement that the application of the *grande science* (or is it *grande Science*) enabled two of China's greatest statesmen to betray their sovereigns – and still be remembered as saints because they have helped to establish morally-renewed dynasties. Amiot's technique is similar in this to Clarke's handling of the valedictory speech to the emperor in Book III of the *Epitoma*. 
Chapter 6. Responses

Introduction
In this, the final, chapter we will consider responses to Clarke’s *Military Institutions* and Amiot’s *Art Militaire*: first, the extent to which the personal objectives of the two men were achieved; second, the translations in the context of broader literary projects of the Enlightenment; third, in the case of Amiot, we will see how his intervention – whatever his intentions – in European sinology contributed to the new and radically different phase that the Physiocrats and their circle had begun to initiate in the mid-1760s. I will then examine the effect that the confluence of the European and Chinese military classics had on the final stage of the Military Enlightenment and, in particular, how Amiot’s introduction of the ethical narrative of Chinese military theory to the European tradition threw into relief the need for the art of war to be seen in its broader, political context and to be given the new name – strategy. Finally, we will see how the correspondance littéraire came full circle, with Bertin’s deployment of contemporary French military theory (including the *Science Militaire à la Chine*) back to China in the face of an anticipated invasion of that country by Russia.

Biographical developments – Clarke
There is no contemporary review of Clarke’s *Military Institutions* but there is some evidence that it was well regarded. In Joseph Phipps’ *A System of Military Discipline for His Majesty’s Army* (1777) there is an advertisement inserted by its publisher, John Millan, listing nineteen ‘books for an officer’s portable library’.¹ This list ends with ‘Clarke’s Translation of Vegetius’ ancient Art of War’, a book that was not published by Millan himself which would suggest a degree of impartiality by London’s leading publisher of military books.² However, Millan does claim to be the publisher of ‘Vegetius’ antient Art of Warre, with Notes, by Capt. Clarke, 5s.’ in a catalogue at the back of the Army List of 1773 – of which Millan was also publisher.³ Clarke’s inclusion in this list is significant: Gruber’s study of soldiers’ collections of military works in this period shows that the collectors were ‘most likely to prefer books published in the 1740s and 1750s and to neglect those published in the 1760s, 1770s, and 1780s’.⁴ Military writers enjoyed considerable success through their work – not financial but in their military careers. The

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³ National Archives, WO65, 1773, pp. 221-2.
⁴ Gruber, *Books*, p. 11.
Hanoverian Kings, all three of whom permitted several soldier-authors to dedicate their works to them, rewarded their efforts with the ‘encouragement’ due to zeal and merit – and Houlding suggests that Clarke was among them.\(^5\)

A curious piece of circumstantial evidence supports Houlding’s otherwise unsubstantiated claim about Clarke. Throughout John Clarke’s career in the Marines he was not the only Marine lieutenant by that name. A second John Clarke served at the same time and this man appears to have emulated Clarke’s literary project, and perhaps even borrowed his identity, in order to supplement his income and salvage his career. The other John Clarke arrived in Boston just as the fighting in Lexington and Concord broke out. On the morning of 20 April 1775 he was arrested and on 7 June 1775, he was court-martialled for drunkenness, being unfit for duty and grossly abusing and challenging a fellow Marine to fight. He was dismissed from the service just 10 days before the Battle of Bunker Hill.\(^6\) He was on the first ship back to England after the battle and before the end of the year he had published a short book on the battle. He wrote as John Clarke, First Lieutenant of Marines, a position that he was no longer entitled to use and which was potentially to be confused with the (Marine) Lieutenant John Clarke who had by now achieved some recognition with the *Military Institutions*.

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\(^6\) The Court Martial is recorded in ADM 12/23 at the National Archives.
There is some mystery about the events of June 1775, Clarke’s account of Bunker Hill and subsequent events. Whether or not Clarke did participate in the battle, his book includes an eye-witness account of the bayoneting of Dr Joseph Warren (1741–75), the senior American at the battle, as he lay fatally wounded at the end of the battle. The book was quickly republished in a second edition. We have no evidence as to whether the author of the *Military Institutions* was aware of his *alter ego* but the account of the

7 From the fact of the court martial, and a failed appeal by Clarke to have his dismissal remitted, French concluded that Clarke did not fight at Bunker’s Hill and that he wrote his account based on stories he heard aboard the *Cerberus* as she sailed back to England a week after the battle. French refers to a letter dated 27 August 1930 from the Admiralty to him in which the Admiralty sets out some biographical information: French, *Bunker Hill*, p. 364. French’s papers are kept by the Massachusetts Historical Society but research so far has failed to uncover this letter. The two John Clarcke’s contemporaries may not have been misled but Allen French believed that they were one and the same.

battle of Bunker Hill did not make it into John Clarke’s catalogue or collection before he died.

Returning to the John Clarke of the *Military Institutions*, we can follow the remainder of his career quite briefly. The Army List of 1769 shows him as a Lieutenant on half pay, while that of 1770 records him as Lieutenant John Clarke in the Corps of Foot Serving in Africa under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Charles O’Hara (1740–1802). This unit was based at Fort Louis in the newly formed province of Senegambia. Clarke’s appointment is recorded as 17 March 1769. Clarke was promoted to Captain on 16 December 1771 and to Captain Commandant on 28 December 1776.9 In his position of commander in Senegambia, Clarke had to deal with considerable controversy between the previous commander and British slave traders. Correspondence concerning this is recorded in the National Archives. Clarke had just been promoted to Colonel Commandant of the Africa Corps when he died on 10 September 1778.10 His death is described by a Mr Johan Peter Schotte (dates unknown), a member of the Council of Senegambia, and presumably a doctor, who arrived in Senegal in 1775.11 Schotte gives two accounts of a bad outbreak of yellow fever in 1778, in one suggesting that he may have infected Clarke and, in the other, Clarke him. Schotte gives us some insight into Clarke’s character – cautious, punctilious and regular:

The cessation of this contagious disease may be dated from about the middle of September [1778]. Governor Clarke, who died the 18th of this month, concluded the dreadful scene. He had avoided any communication with all sick people, but did not hesitate in admitting my company. I was the only one who dined with him for several weeks; and as I was continually among the sick in the hospital, and on the island (of the former of which I gave him a return every morning), I might probably have conveyed the infection to him in my clothing, although I was not affected myself.

I think, that I caught it from the Governor*, to whose breath I had been too nearly exposed, the day before he died; for while he was speaking very inarticulately, and in a low tone, I

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9 NA WO65, 1769, p. 179. The following page shows the other John Clarke as a Second Lieutenant also on half-pay. NA WO65, 1770, p. 126. He still appears as a First Lieutenant of Marines on half-pay on p. 180 as does his *alter ego* Second Lieutenant on p. 181. NA WO65 1771, p. 126. Second Lieutenant John Clarke has been recalled onto full pay (p. 173) as a result of the remanning of the Marines Corps as a result of the Falklands Crisis of 1770-1. NA WO65 1778, p. 131.

10 NA CO 268/4. NA CO 267/18 contains a letter dated 13 February 1779 which brings news of Clarke’s death and contains a list of all the officers and soldiers who died in Senegal in the epidemic.

11 Johann Peter Schotte, *A treatise on the synochus atrabiliosa, a contagious fever: wich raged at Senegal in the year 1778, and proved fatal to the greatest part of the europeans, and to a number of the natives ...* London, 1782, p. 74. This book includes a paper read to the Royal Society on 11 May 1780. A second paper was read in 1782: *A Description of a Species of Sarcocele ...* By J. P. Schotte MD; communicated by Sir Joseph Banks, Bart. PRS. Read December 19, 1782. Schotte took his surgeon’s examination to become a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in March 1780, and was entered in their register as ‘surgeon to a regiment’.
was obliged to approach my face very near to his, in order to understand what he said; and
that I might not increase his uneasiness, I omitted using my smelling bottle, which I
otherwise always did ... When I went away from him, I found myself chilly, and in a few
hours after I had a slight shivering.

* Governor Clarke lived very regular in every respect; he took the tincture of bark and
bitters three times a day, and used every other precaution to avert the disease, but
ineffectually.12

Clarke’s broader literary project consists of a significant collection of military books and
a manuscript Catalogue of Military Books, ancient & modern. Both are kept at the Old
Library at Jesus College, Cambridge. The collection was donated to the College by
Clarke’s mother: ‘A library account book now in the college archives (LIB 1.1) records that
4s. 6d. was paid out by the Librarian for the ‘Carriage of Mrs Clerke’s books’ at some time
during 1791’.13 The will of a Mrs Elizabeth Clarke of Tooting, Surrey (with a daughter
Frances) was proved on 14 November 1791. One of the books is the translator’s proof of
Clarke’s Military Institutions with the inscription: ‘Presented to the Library of Jesus
College Camb: by Frances Clarke the Translators sister. 1800.’ The will of Frances Clarke,
‘formerly of Lower Tooting but now residing at Great James Street, Bedford Row’ was
proved on 22 June 1830.14

There are some 120 books in the John Clarke collection, the oldest being Ascham’s
Toxophilus of 1545 acquired by Clarke in 1775. The scale of Clarke’s collection positions it
amongst the largest of the period based on Gruber’s study although it is not included by
Gruber. The median number of military books in the forty-two collections was only 24.
Three collectors had very similar size collections, numbered in the 120s, while only one
had a larger collection of 220 books. Gruber’s collectors included senior officers such as
Field Marshal Earl Ligonier who was commander-in-chief in the Seven Years’ war, Major
General James Wolfe and writers such as Humphrey Bland, Campbell Dalrymple and
Thomas More Molyneux. Clarke’s was, therefore, a significant collection reflecting an
ambitious – and, of course, incomplete – project.15

The following figure plots the publication and acquisition dates of the collection to show
the pattern of Clarke’s purchases. Of those books with a date of acquisition, 30 were
dated between 1764 and 1770 and 74 from 1771 onwards. No books were dated in 1774.

12 Schotte, Treatise, pp. 15, 156.
13 Frances Wilmoth, Arte of Warre – Military books from the collection of John Clarke (d. 1778),
Jesus College, Cambridge 1999 (exhibition catalogue).
14 NA Prob 11/1210 and 11/1772.
Amongst the earliest are those he bought in April 1765 for his work on the *Military Institutions*; after that his project changed to more general collecting but he started buying older books: all but one of the sixteenth century books were acquired in 1771 or later. There would have been a close correlation between the age of a book and the cost of acquisition so this suggests a new-found wealth consistent with a change in his circumstances.

**Figure 3. Comparison of dates written and dates acquired in the John Clarke collection**

The year 1771 is also significant in that Clarke’s inscription changed in that year. The last two inscriptions in 1771 show the transition from a cursive, italic script with serifs to a blocky signature with an ‘I’ instead of ‘J’. This became the norm from then onwards. We know that Clarke was promoted to Captain on 16 December 1771 but whether he came into an inheritance or for some other reason felt better off, his rate of acquisition increased, as did the age and cost of the books and the inscription changed: was this for aesthetic reasons or perhaps someone else inscribed his name?
Clarke’s Catalogue of military Books, ancient & modern has two sections. The first consists of Latin and Greek authors (including Vegetius) with a neatly handwritten list of editions of their works. The second section is headed ‘Catalogue of Military Books’ and then has a list of authors, ancient and modern, listed under an A-Z index. At the back Clarke includes some notes on his planned library and collection:

Look over, & examine, & repair, all Books, myself, before bound.
Red & black spotted Bindings – like Vegetius de re Veterin:
Blue Leaves - & blue Paper within – & –
Consult Libraries where referred to. - M.G.B.L.C.T. &c, &c –
Bind up together, Tracts of same Writers Walhausen, Smythe, Rich &c
(...)
Two Indexes ready made. Contrivance for
Vellum Books, when in good Condition only gilt, letterhead, &c.
Half bd. Books, if worth it, backed wth Leather, gilt & lettered & green or yellow Leaves.16

Clarke adds a small neatly-drawn design for his book spines. Note that the dummy title has the year 1771 one on it – suggesting that this was the year in which he was thinking about this project and further evidence of his new circumstances.

16 The reference to the binding of ‘Vegetius de re Veterin’ is to the other work of Vegetius on equine health. There was a 1748 translation that Clarke may have seen but neither it nor another edition in the British Library is bound in the way he describes. Vegetius Renatus of the Distempers of Horses (London, 1748), British Library General Reference Collection 1489.s.17.
Clarke's vision for his library reflects both the ideas and the tastes of his times, but also anticipates future developments. There is also an interesting collision between the world of an English collector at the time of Clarke and the events shaping the world of Joseph Amiot in that books from Jesuit libraries flowed into England from the continent in this period, coinciding with rising bibliomania. But Clarke was no bibliomaniac: he began collecting in earnest only after he wrote the *Military Institutions* and the most likely explanation for that collection was not a love of books – although he certainly shared that with other collectors – but the idea that a professional soldier required an education in ancient and modern military theory, one that was at least bookish and therefore that needed a military library – an idea that may have come to Clarke through his thinking about his profession as worked on Vegetius. Indeed, a library was itself symbolic of a profession. Thirty years after Clarke, his profession would follow Clarke's lead when

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18 Joanna Innes, ‘Libraries in Context: social, cultural and intellectual background’ in *Libraries* ed. by Mandelbrote and Manley, pp. 283-300, p. 294 observes that the ‘learned professions’ like law and medicine were ‘particularly book-dependent’, so a library was also the mark of a profession.
Henry Fox Brownrigg established a military library to record ‘the causes which have led to former success, or which may have occasioned the failure of Military Operations’. ¹⁹

The life and premature death of John Clarke leave many questions. For one, it is not known why Clarke’s collection was left to Jesus College, Cambridge with which he had no known connection. ²⁰ Clarke’s legacy is his collection of military books, his vision for a catalogue of all such books, ancient and modern, and a very capable translation reflecting his deep knowledge of his subject and of classical and modern languages. His version of the Epitoma managed at once to be loyal to the original, to address his own times and to remain the only English translation for over two centuries. Clarke wrote conservatively but uncompromisingly for his King and in the interests of his profession and of the new Empire in whose service he died. In his treatment of Vegetius’ central address to the emperor at the end of Book III Clarke chose not to translate, but nonetheless to transmit in stark terms, Vegetius’ powerful formulation of the strategic role of the emperor. As timely and pertinent as it was, there is no evidence that the King or other readers appreciated the significance of the advice. Thus Clarke left the Military Enlightenment as he found it. We will have to look to Amiot and to the response to the Art Militaire to see the Military Enlightenment taken beyond its normal boundaries and into more radical territory although we will find the Vegetius also playing a significant role. Nonetheless, Clarke’s choice of this text to translate and transmit was forward-looking as was his commitment to a standing army with an educated officer class and led by a strategic and prudent commander-in-chief.

Biographical developments – Amiot
Amiot’s literary project through the 1760s and 1770s had two significant personal benefits. The first was the patronage and advocacy of Bertin in Versailles and in Rome. The second was that Bertin was able to use the correspondance littéraire as part of his argument for securing the support of Louis XVI to maintain the funding of the Mission. When Bertin was dismissed from his last ministerial post in 1780 he retained

¹⁹ Phillipson, Engineers, p. 116: a ‘Lieutenant-Colonel Lindenthal was recommended for the role of a ‘Scientific and intelligent Assistant’ as being a ‘Scientific Officer well versed in Continental Languages’.

²⁰ Michael King Macdona speculates that: ‘In the last year of her life, 1791, Clarke’s mother lived in Tooting but, before that, she had lived in Bartlow, Cambridgeshire. The adjoining parish, across the county boundary in Essex, is Hadstock. The two villages are only a couple of miles apart. The rector of Hadstock from 1786 to 1838 was the Rev. John Addison Carr, whom Clarke’s youngest sister, Sophia, described in her Will as ‘our dear friend’. John Addison Carr was a graduate of Jesus (BA 1783, MA 1786). It seems possible that, when she was looking for a home for her son’s books, Mrs Clarke took advice from her friends and that Carr may have suggested that his old college might be interested.’ E-mail dated 14 October 2014.
responsibility for the *correspondance littéraire* and, as the Portuguese and the sacred Congregation of the Propaganda sought to assert their authority over the Peking Mission, Bertin developed a plan – suggested by Amiot – to establish a bishopric or apostolic prefecture in Manchuria that would encompass the Manchu capital Mukden (Shenyang) and the Imperial Palace in Peking. Bertin had in mind Amiot to be the apostolic prefect and his plan was to connect this bishopric to the *Missions Etrangères* in Paris. In return for the right to appoint the bishop, the King of France would fund the prefecture and he further asked that its bishop report directly to the Holy See. Bertin’s plan to divide China into two zones of influence was a further challenge to Portugal’s already diminished authority there: up until that point the Queen of Portugal appointed the bishops in the three Chinese bishoprics of Peking, Nanjing and Macau. The Pope’s response first of all rejected any such division or reduction of the powers of Portugal. However, it went on to identify the proposal as a potential reversal of the suppression of the Jesuits and therefore as representing a threat to the peace established by that act. Putting all the former Jesuits in Peking under a Bishop reporting directly to Rome would recreate a Jesuit unit and structure ‘formed of individuals of this extinct Company, which would be exempt from the jurisdiction of the Ordinary against the provisions of the Brief of Clement XIV, *Dominus ac Redemptor* ...’ He added that the Brief, which brought the former Jesuits within the normal hierarchy ‘has preserved the peace without our losing the benefit of the endeavours of so many good workers’.

The Pope’s response includes a repetition of the expression ‘*les çi-devant Jésuites*’ (‘the former Jesuits’) which first appears – perhaps with some irony – in the opening sentence where the Pope commends the French King for ‘the always constant zeal of His Most Christian Majesty for the conservation of the Mission which the former Jesuits have served in China,’ The Pope wishes to make it quite clear that he will not tolerate any recidivism by Louis XVI on the fate of the Jesuits and that the national interests of France would not be allowed to upset the tentative and temporary peace established by the *Dominus ac Redemptor*. Amiot was aware of the significance and risks of what he was proposing. In a letter to Bertin setting out his ideas immediately following the suppression of the Jesuits, Amiot writes:

> If your excellency thinks differently, or does not wish to get involved in any way in an affair of this nature, I beg you to burn this letter and to ensure that nothing in it comes out. It

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may be that something bad could happen to me. I fear more one or two men, however lowly they may be, carrying spiritual weapons, which they only show from a distance, than I do an army of soldiers advancing towards me, bayonets fixed to the ends of their rifles.  

Whether Amiot’s idea was to re-establish a form of Jesuit society or whether it was merely an attempt to resolve the difficult circumstances in which he found himself, the correspondance littéraire enabled him to align the interests of the French former-Jesuit missionaries with the national interests of France and this had in turn won him the highest level of advocacy from the French king. He came as close as was then possible to changing the structure of European engagement in China and to re-establishing, albeit on a small scale, the exceptional organisation of the Society of Jesus. Some Jesuits, including Amiot, survived the banning of Christians from China in 1784 and they continued to seek ways to re-establish their Order and their influence. In 1814, the Society was restored by the Papal bull Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum issued by Pope Pius VII (1742–1823). On a personal level, Amiot’s reputation was such that Lord Macartney (1737–1806) wrote to him during his mission to China in 1793, but Amiot wrote back regretting that he was too unwell to visit the Ambassador.

Responses to the Art Militaire

We have already noted in chapter 4 (p. 137), some of the reviews of Amiot’s Art Militaire des Chinois and discussed them as part of our consideration of Amiot’s text, sources and approach to translation. The Art Militaire was widely reviewed. Voltaire owned and appears to have read it and a copy was obtained for the library of George III. In this section and the next we will consider how Amiot’s work came to be co-opted into the

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23 Amiot to Bertin, 1 October 1774 (BIF, MS 1515, fol. 56). Later in the same letter (fol. 59), Amiot quotes Horace (Odes 3.3.7–8) ‘Si fractus illabatur orbis impavidum ferient ruinae.’ Ode 3.3 refers to the just man standing up to a despot.


25 E.H. Pritchard, ‘Letters from Missionaries at Peking Relating to the Macartney Embassy (1793-1803)’ Toung Pao, Second Series, vol. 31, No. 1/2 (1934), 1-57, p. 16. Father Grammont, a former French Jesuit, was quick to offer his services to the British whom he described to Macartney in terms reminiscent of the correspondance littéraire: ‘In the face of cries of envy and ignorance, I have already had many occasions — and continue — to praise your great nation, her power, wealth, trustworthiness and generosity and her love of science the arts and all useful knowledge (connoissances utiles).’ Grammont also showed himself aware of the importance of British trade with China, illustrated by the fact that of 56 vessels in Canton in 1792, 23 were British and just two French.

political thought and military theory of the 1770s from which, I would suggest, we can judge its longer-term significance. The key texts were written by military authors and in both cases what is of greatest interest is the relationship between politics and the military which emerges – a relationship notably absent from the mainstream Military Enlightenment.

The first text is the review published in 1773 of the Art Militaire by Saint-Maurice de Saint-Leu and Puységur under the shortened title Science Militaire à la Chine. This book was published by Didot l’aîné, who was also the publisher of the Ephémérides. It starts with a traditional but uncompromising statement that ‘The deeper we examine China’s history, the more we are convinced that of all peoples that exist, the Chinese are the best-governed people, and therefore the happiest’.  

It then proceeds with a sarcastic and vitriolic attack on Montesquieu which lays the blame at his feet for French sinophobia: ‘All is a question of fashion for the frivolous French. Montesquieu set the tone; soon a crowd of Writers was slandering the Government of China …’ Just at the time, the authors continue, when everyone was amusing themselves at the expense of the Chinese, Quesnay’s ‘reflections on the despotism of China appeared [in the Ephémérides of 1767 and] fully avenged the Chinese’.

It should by this point be clear that this is not simply a review of the Art Militaire nor indeed a discussion limited to military technique: it is a restatement of Quesnay’s case on the pretext of, and with the reinforcements provided by, Amiot’s text. The review is, however, not uncritical of the Chinese nor of Amiot: for example, the authors see ‘in the Chinese art of war that they had in ancient times a false idea of human rights which are still not quite right today’. The authors also disapprove of Amiot’s treatment of Yongzheng with the Jesuit’s rehearsal of the court rumours about him, which they attribute to resentment of the emperor’s treatment of the mission. ‘How can one who does not like the missionaries be a great man in their eyes?’ But in spite of the shortcomings of China and the ‘bias’ of Amiot on this point, the book is a hymn to a country which is not only the best there is but is also in the process of perfecting itself.

This emphasis on progress is designed to contradict one of the main thrusts of sinophobic argument, namely that the very stability, respect for the past and continuity

\[27\] Science Militaire à la Chine, p. 3.
\[28\] Ibid, p. 5.
\[29\] Ibid, p. 7.
\[30\] Ibid, p. 10.
vaunted by the sinophiles was proof that China had stagnated. On the substantive issues of the book – government and warfare – we see the same highly charged and political language that marked Quesnay’s 1767 text:

We will not cease to put the Chinese forward as an example to a Europe that needs to enlighten itself (s’éclairer) … Would that the Sovereigns of our small part of the world offer us examples worthy to be compared with the Chinese? May they read attentively the work which we are analysing here! They will learn that defensive war is the only one permitted by natural law, and that a Prince who makes use of his power only for the pursuit of vain glory, or to oppress his neighbors, is a crowned monster whom we ought to put in chains like a wild beast.  

European leaders are enjoined to read a book in which those who abuse their power may justly be overthrown. Equally provocative – especially coming from senior members of the military establishment – is the description of the way soldiers are treated in Europe compared with China. This passage illustrates how tone and content go beyond an academic treatise and, I suggest, invite action by juxtaposing the appalling state of contemporary France with an alternative that is real and realisable. The following passage could be taken from the speech of a general seeking to raise his troops in a coup d’état:

Here, they are wretched souls … serving their country sometimes against their own wishes, always poorly fed, clothed and uneducated; most without morals, without any standing in society … and having no prospects other than an old age of suffering accompanied by all the horrors of poverty. There, in China, they are citizens, owners of land, recognised and of honest birth; well-fed, well-dressed … loved and respected by their Nation … and looking forward to old age without fear, because their fate will become even happier as they get older. 

The radical agenda reaches its highest pitch when the authors come to consider Amiot’s presentation of la grande Science. Quoting the passage of Yongzheng beginning ‘I have always applied myself to acquire the Great Learning (la grande Science) …’, the authors state that they cannot pass over this section in silence – it is too important. They then quote Amiot’s explanation that the object of la grande Science is to know oneself, to set out precepts for good government and to maintain one’s balance and calm. The commentary continues:

This grande science of the Chinese, in short, is the knowledge of the rights and duties of mankind united in society. This is precisely what the Philosophes who work tirelessly for the education of the people, and consequently for their happiness, have called the science économique, from which they were given, I not know why, the name ‘Economists’ … [Economic truths] germinate, above all in France, in the heart of a generous and frank

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nobility, which never forms a desire other than for the happiness and glory of the patrie of which it has always been the foundations, even in these unhappy times whose memories still make humanity shudder. Already these eternal truths begin to be known in several states of Europe ... May they soon be universally adopted!

Fortunately everything tells us that this great revolution is not far off! A general fermentation is rising in our souls; the light of reason (lumières) spreads, error flees, political prejudices are in their death throes; and we can finally hope that the Sovereigns whose states these errors have enfeebled will not long delay before they ban entirely these destructive prejudices; because no one, at heart, wants to rule over ruins and deserts.

So, without doubt, la science économique may, as in China, be everywhere called la grande Science and every Prince say, with the Emperor Yongzheng, 'I have always applied myself to acquire la grande Science ...' 33

This text takes Quesnay's 1767 manifesto to the next level, identifying Physiocracy with Confucianism. The call for revolution in France and across Europe is explicit and the prediction is made that blessed times will come 'sooner or later' uniting humanity in a state of political, moral and economic enlightenment as determined by the laws of nature. The references to the good will and positive role of the noblesse in this revolution, and the reference to the 'unhappy times' suggest that the authors have in mind the struggle of the Parlement against the alleged despotism of Louis XV and the decision, in 1771, by Chancellor René-Nicolas-Charles-Augustin de Maupeou (1714–92), to abolish the Parlement of Paris. Saint-Maurice de Saint-Leu was, as we know, a contributor to the Ephémérides from 1765 and therefore closely associated with Quesnay and the Physiocrats. My research, however, indicates that Puységur was even more radical.

Apart from the work of his father, which he edited, he was the author of several works and pamphlets, including notably, *Discussion intéressante sur la prétention du clergé d'être le premier ordre d'un État*; Paris, 1767, in-8° which was banned by order of the council of state (arrêt du conseil d'État); and *Du droit du souverain sur les biens du clergé et des moines*; ibid., 1770, in-8°. These two works in which the boldness of a rebellious spirit (esprit frondeur) free of prejudice, all but sent the author to the Bastille. 34

In the first of these two works, Puységur refers to despotisme arbitraire and despotisme légal and cites the Ephémérides of 1767. 35 The term 'despotisme', aside from its use by the philosophes was deployed to great effect by Parlement against both Jesuits and monarchy in the related struggles over the constitutional role of Parlement and the expulsion of the

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33 *Science Militaire à la Chine*, pp. 14–16. The original is in the Appendix.


Jesuits in the Seven Years’ War and again in response to Maupeou’s actions in 1771.\textsuperscript{36} The description of Puységur as ‘frondeur’ is a reference to the revolutionary and civil wars led by Parlementaires and nobles during the regency of Louis XIV in the mid-1600s. The 1770s saw the emergence of a frondeur press that was recognised as radical by contemporaries.\textsuperscript{37} Moreover, the setting of these themes in a book on military science, addressed by soldiers to soldiers, and promoted to the public, reinforces that it is not just a political manifesto but also a call to arms. A military- and noble-led revolution, in the spirit of the fronde, was not an idle question at this time. In 1771 three Marshals of France, respectively the commandants of Brittany, Normandy, and Languedoc, had refused to follow the King’s orders to take steps against their local Parlements.\textsuperscript{38} If, in addition, a reader were to follow the logic of Amiot’s original, they would discover the second meaning of la grande Science, discussed above at p. 160, namely that of using those principles of self-knowledge, humanity and the ability to regulate oneself and others for strategic ends. The ultimate application of this science was manipulating one’s enemies and sowing dissent in order to carry out a revolution, overturn a dynasty and establish a new moral order – for which one would be remembered as a saint.\textsuperscript{39} Within the Mencian tradition, as conveyed by earlier Jesuits as well as Amiot, tyrannicide was explicitly permissible in such cases.\textsuperscript{40} This idea had its counterpart in France from 1757 onwards, when some who saw Louis XV as having failed to fulfil in his paternal duties towards his subjects, went so far as to regret Damiens’ failed attempt on the king’s life.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{36} See p. 102 above.
\textsuperscript{37} Censer, French press, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{38} Swann, Parlement, p. 358: ‘When senior military officers refuse to obey orders, it is usually a sign that a regime is in trouble, and the crisis of 1771 in France was no exception.’ The men were: Emmanuel-Félicité de Durfort, Duc de Duras (1715–89, also an Academician), Anne Pierre Duc d’Harcourt (1701–83) and Charles Juste de Beauvau-Craon, prince de Beauvau (1720–93).
\textsuperscript{39} Another intriguing and potentially radical cultural reference to China involves the Duc de Choiseul following his dismissal from office. The exile of Choiseul to his estates at Chanteloup was turned into what one historian of the period has called a ‘mini-Fronde’, as more than 200 nobles demonstratively visited the disgraced minister to show their solidarity, having their names inscribed on a column especially erected for the purpose. Blanning, The Culture of Power, p. 400 and Swann, Parlement, p. 51. However, this ‘column’ was in fact the Chinese pagoda, which remains there today. Did the pagoda symbolise friendship – or something more subversive?
\textsuperscript{40} In an interesting juxtaposition of China, the Jesuits and regicide, Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet (1736–94) has his mandarin Oei-Tching raise and dismiss the idea of the Jesuits as assassins guilty of lèze-Majesté in the Lettre du Mandarin (Paris, 1762), pp. 6–7.
\textsuperscript{41} ‘In 1757 and 1758 a fair number of men and women of the people, without necessarily grasping the arcane complexities of parlementary or Jesuit politics, deplored the fact that Damiens’s blows had missed their target and proclaimed that they would have done better.’ In 1768, the same sentiments were associated with Choiseul’s freeing of the grain trade. Thus, the Jesuits and Physiocrats can be seen in this narrative. Chartier, The French Revolution, pp. 117-8.
Thus, Amiot’s text becomes the pretext for a resetting of Quesnay’s already radical ideas into a military and revolutionary manifesto. The *Science Militaire à la Chine* takes Amiot’s exploration of the political, economic and ethical dimensions of warfare (his *grande science*) to develop the basic premises of the Military Enlightenment – a scientific approach, the use of classical authority and the psychological dimension of war. This approach breaks down the boundaries between political economics, ethics and military science that had previously limited the Military Enlightenment. Furthermore, as revolution is portrayed by Amiot and other Jesuits as a means by which the Chinese state renews itself, maintains its Confucian values and restores the mandate of heaven to the monarchy, revolution is presented as the solution to France’s internal problems not as a means of international expansion. Amiot’s *grande science* was used to achieve revolutionary change in Three Dynasties China. Saint Maurice and Puységur reflect on the possibility that revolution could bring about *la grande Science* – the political economy envisaged by the Physiocrats.43

**Strategy**

As these authors explore the relationships between politics, economics and the military, they are, for the first time in the European art of war tradition, beginning to articulate a concept of ‘strategy’. This word is documented by scholars as first appearing in Europe in the 1770s in the work of Paul-Gédéon Joly de Maizeroy.43 My research shows that Maizeroy read and cites Amiot’s *Art Militaire* as Maizeroy develops his thinking at this critical moment. The route by which Maizeroy may have been exposed to the *Art Militaire* was probably the *Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*.44

Maizeroy was a lieutenant-colonel in the French army when his first works appeared in 1766, and was recognised as the leading expert of his time on the art of war in antiquity.45

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42 This configuration appears consistent with the revolutionary political culture identified by Baker, not only in its themes (his judicial, political and administrative discourses) but in its intensity: ‘revolutionary actors were indeed particularly conscious of the power of language. They struggled constantly to institute a new social and political order by framing, deploying, and attempting to control a radically new discourse of human association. And the more explicitly language was at issue, the more highly charged it became.’ Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, pp. 9, 25-6.

43 The two works referenced here by the scholars are: Paul-Gédéon Joly de Maizeroy, *Institutions militaires de l’empereur Léon le philosophe ...* (Paris, 1771); and, *Théorie de la guerre ...* (Lausanne, 1777).

44 Maizeroy became an associate member of the Academy in 1775, the year in which his essay on war as a science (see below) was presented to the Académie. Joseph de Guignes and Henri Bertin were already members and were, as we know, familiar with the *Art Militaire* as its editor and patron respectively.

This was a period when works on the art of war flourished in France although the dominant writer of the period was Maizeroy’s contemporary, Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte de Guibert (1743–90). Heuser, who is followed by Freedman, associates the term ‘strategy’ with Maizeroy’s 1771 work:

Shortly after the publication of Guibert’s General Essay, the Byzantine use of the term which pertains even today was introduced in the West. In 1771 [Maizeroy] translated Leo’s Taktiká into French. He still hesitated to translate Leo’s term ‘stratégia’ into French, and used ‘the art of the general’ in his translation itself, and ‘stratégique’ in his commentary ... But here, for the first time in the West, the two terms ‘strategy’ and ‘tactics’ were used in a hierarchical sense, strategy denoting the higher level, tactical the lower, of warfare.

According to Gat, whose is followed by Strachan, it was a later book of Maizeroy that is relevant:

The conduct of operations was the second branch of the art of war [after tactics]. Maizeroy gave this branch a new technical term, ‘strategy’, whose origins in modern military theory also seem to have been lost. Maizeroy, who translated the Byzantine military classics into French, was the one who introduced the concept that derived from the Greek word for general and was used by Emperor Maurice as the title for his military treatise Strategicon. Maizeroy employed it for the first time in 1777 in his later work Théorie de la guerre.

These two accounts are not incompatible but neither provides the whole picture. As Heuser says, Maizeroy sets out the idea that tactics is a branch of the ‘science universelle de la guerre’ which is the science of the general. This, he says, is what the Greeks called ‘stratégique’ after their word for a general. But Maizeroy’s general must have regard not simply to military matters but also that ‘Philosophy, Ethics (la Morale), Politics and History must all lend him their understanding (lumières)’. Politics will teach him about the various interests he has to manage, how to win allies, use intelligence, manipulate emotions, be prudent and dissemble. History will help him to understand causes and invite him to reflect. ‘It will furnish him with maxims and enable him to form a plan of action in an infinite number of circumstances’. La Morale will inspire modesty, humanity, generosity, self-negation and love of order and of frugality. In addition, Maizeroy does use the word ‘stratégie’ in the 1771 work when he translates an aphorism

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46 Maizeroy is listed among several writers by Léonard while Guibert enjoys several pages of discussion: Léonard, L’Armée, p. 252.


of the emperor Maurice in which it is defined as the use of time, place, deception and all other means to overcome one’s enemies without risking battle.  

Thus it is correct that it was Maizeroy’s knowledge of the Byzantine military handbooks of the emperors Maurice and Leo VI (c. 895–908) (the Strategikon and the Taktiká) that led him to deploy the word stratégie. Maizeroy was using the word precisely to describe the ideology of both the Epitoma (which itself influenced Maurice and Leo) and the Sunzi. Although this did in fact occur in his 1771 work there are two further developments in his 1777 work. In 1777, Maizeroy writes that, while no general can be the ‘absolute master of events’, he can by his wisdom and skill (sagesse & habilité) address any problems that arise.

This should make us aware of the difference between what is correctly called ‘tactics’ and what the Greeks called strategy (stratégique) which is specifically the science of the general, even the statesman (homme d’état).

Maizeroy has identified here that strategy lies in a realm between the military commander and the political leader. Maizeroy also introduces the idea that strategy is a dialectical process:

To form its projects, strategy combines time, place, resources, different interests, and takes into consideration all I have said here to be the material of dialectics, that is to say the most sublime faculty of the mind (esprit) – reason.

Whereas tactics can be reduced to a set of rules (Vegetius’ regula proeliandi) strategy cannot, because it deals with an infinite set of circumstances, physical, political and moral, which are never the same and which belong completely to the mind (‘génie’). In the surrounding discussion, Maizeroy in particular focuses on the human dimension of war and the importance of good leadership. On this he says that modern practice is

49 Maizeroy, Institutions militaires, vol. 1, pp. 7-8., where Maizeroy cites Maurice’s Strategikon Book II.1. The French is: ‘La Stratégie fait mettre à profit les tems, les lieux, employe à propos les incursions, les retraites, les fuites simulées, & tout ce que l’adresse peut suggérer pour surmonter les ennemis, sans risquer un combat général.’ This is very similar to the grand art described in Amiot’s Sima fa: p. 159 above.


51 Maizeroy, Théorie de la guerre, pp. lxxxv-lxxxvii.

52 Ibid. Luttwak’s preferred definition of strategy is ‘the art of the dialectics of wills that use force to resolve their conflict’ from André Beaufré, Introduction à la stratégie (Librairie Armand Colin, 1963), p. 16 cited in Luttwak, Strategy, p. 269. See also Thierry Widemann’s discussion of Maizeroy’s dialectical approach in Thierry de Montbrial and Jean Klein (Eds), Dictionnaire de stratégie (Presses Universitaires de France, 2000), pp. 324-5.
‘much further from perfection than we imagine’ and it is Vegetius whom he cites as the authority on this point (in a paraphrase that sounds remarkably like the *Sunzi*):

‘The science of war,’ says Vegetius [III.3], ‘is the art of managing the lives of men and of achieving victory.’ The latter does not mean only winning in combat. It is winning by reducing to nothing the plans of the enemy, obliging him to abandon an advantageous position, or to retire, without one’s being obliged to take the risk of combat itself.\(^53\)

While the Byzantines may have given Maizeroy the word ‘strategy’, the philosophy of strategic leadership and of winning without fighting is also associated in his mind with Vegetius as is the proposition that strategy is a science and should be the subject of study. The cover of the *Théorie de la guerre* carries Vegetius’ aphorism *Qui secundos optat eventos, dimicet arte non casu*. But these ideas are also the central subject of the *Sunzi*. Previous scholarship has not acknowledged that Maizeroy places the European and Chinese classical traditions side by side as the inspirations for his thinking on strategy. This occurs not in the *Introduction* to the 1777 work, where others have focused, but in the *Définitions* section later in his book where he uses the word ‘*stratégie*’ itself rather than ‘*stratégique*’ as we have seen in the quotes above. Under the definition of ‘*Guerre*’ he writes:

La conduite de la guerre est la science du Général, que les Grecs nommoient *stratégie* (*στρατηγíα*), science profonde, vaste, sublime, qui on renferme beaucoup d’autres, mais dont la base fondamentalle est la Tactique.\(^*\)

* Les Chinois la nomment la grande affaire, comme la morale, la grande Science. *Art militaire des Chinois.*\(^54\)

This reference to the *Art Militaire* appears to work on two levels: first, that the science of war is for the Chinese analogous to their philosophy or ethics; but second, as we have seen, *la Morale* is not something outside strategy but (together with politics, philosophy and history) one of the disciplines of whose insights, understanding and reasoning (*lumières*) he must make use. Further, it is not possible that Maizeroy had read Amiot and focused on the expressions *grande affaire* and *grande Science* – which were in addition strongly developed in the *Science Militaire à la Chine* by Maizeroy’s fellow officers, Saint Maurice and Puységur – without appreciating that Amiot’s *grande science* is precisely the same as the one he had himself articulated in 1771: the use of ethical

\(^53\) Maizeroy, *Théorie de la guerre*, p. lxxxiv.

\(^54\) Ibid, 2. ‘The conduct of war is the science of the General, what the Greeks called ‘strategy’, (*στρατηγíα*) a science that is deep, vast, sublime which incorporates many others, but whose fundamental base is Tactics. The Chinese call this ‘the great matter’ as [they call] ethics ‘the great Science.’ See the *Art Militaire des Chinois*.\]
qualities and insights to manipulate and divide the enemy so as to defeat it without the risks of battle.

So, between Maizeroy’s first use of the term ‘strategy’ in 1771 and his treatment of the same subject in 1777 we find some significant developments. First, he has shifted to a tentative view that strategy is not exclusively the province of the general but that it is also the responsibility of the statesman; second, he seeks to explain that the process by which one synthesises all of the multiple dimensions of strategy into a course of action is dialectical; and third, that the idea of strategy and its broad relations with other disciplines can be rooted in both European and Chinese classical traditions. It is highly significant that the first attempt to synthesise the European and Chinese traditions of military theory coincides with the first modern exploration, and use, of the term ‘strategy’.

**Bertin’s correspondance militaire**

My research into the archives of the Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France has revealed another significant development in the correspondance littéraire that intersects with the broader developments in French military theory, strategy and foreign policy. It also closes the circle between the translation and transmission of Chinese military theory from Peking to Paris.

Henri Bertin did not receive Amiot’s *Art Militaire* immediately. In a letter dated 9 October 1767, Amiot referred to the materials he had sent a year earlier with his first letter to the minister. On receiving Amiot’s second letter, presumably in 1768, Bertin noted to M. Parent, ‘I have not yet seen the mémoires on the *art militaire des Chinois*.’ In 1772, however, Bertin sent five copies of the printed *Art Militaire* to Ko and Yang who were his main channel to the mission in Peking. And it appears that following publication of the *Art Militaire* and the *Science Militaire des Chinois* in 1771 and 1772, Bertin became very interested in the relative military doctrines of France and China and how these positioned the two countries strategically, as is revealed in a letter dated 1 January 1774 to Ko and Yang. This long letter, which contains an extensive addendum handwritten by Bertin, was designed to warn the Chinese Emperor of an imminent risk.

55 BIF, MS 1520, fol. 176.
56 Letter dated 18 December 1772, BIF, MS 1521, fol. 150.
57 The Institut has a draft dated 1773 (BIF, MS 1522 fols 3-16) and the letter (MS 1522 fols 17-40). The letter is cited in Lewis, ‘Bertin’ in *Enlightenment and Revolution* ed. by Crook et al, pp. 83-4.
of invasion by the Russians, assisted by Britain or at least by some British subjects. The letter is fascinating for many reasons.

The first is the logic behind Bertin’s concerns. These stem from intelligence apparently gathered in St Petersburg, China and England to the effect that Russia, resentful of the way its traders have been treated since the 1720s, was amassing troops and materials on the border with China – Bertin claims that Russia is paying grenadiers to settle with their families in Siberia. He accurately notes several points of dispute between Russia and China, including over trade and China’s claim that Russia had granted asylum to the Zunghars and had refused to hand over the body of their leader Amursana, who had died in 1757. The immediate cause of Bertin’s concern is the mass migration of ‘600,000’ Torghuts from the banks of the Volga to the now ‘empty’ Zunghar lands on border of China. While Qianlong had celebrated this migration as testament to his qualities as an enlightened monarch, Bertin is concerned that the Torghuts could ally themselves with the Russians in an invasion.

Bertin adverts to Russia’s practice of strategic division to cause revolution – a concept that he may have felt, in light of the Art Militaire, was suggestive to Peking:

Finally, I attach to this dispatch a collection of the Gazette de France since Russia has fomented the astonishing revolution that has dismembered the Kingdom of Poland. China can read there what it can expect from an enterprising power that seems to have long ago resolved not to put its sword back into its scabbard.

While Russia is the puissance ennemie against which Bertin is writing, he at least hints at British involvement. The letter names three British men. Two, an officer of the East India Company and the captain of a merchantman, are identified as sources of intelligence to Russia on how easy it would be to attack Peking by sea and river. The third is ‘un officier Anglois nommé Loyd’ whom Bertin says was charged with commanding an expedition being prepared for Kamchatka in the Russian Far East. Bertin describes Loyd as ‘connu’ and this must presumably be a reference to Henry Lloyd, a soldier of fortune who had served Austria at the start of the Seven Years’ War before switching sides, and

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58 See Perdue, China Marches West, pp. 270-89, on the fate of the Zunghars and the dispute with Russia.

59 Some contemporary Chinese accounts share this view, and it was certainly not the intention of the Torghuts to submit to Qing rule, although they ultimately did so: Perdue, China Marches West, p. 491.

60 BIF, MS 1522, fol. 36.

61 The trader is called ‘Frink’ while the captain ‘Floïn’. BIF, MS 1522, fols 25 and 28.
who became a significant writer of the late Military Enlightenment after the war. Bertin’s intelligence was accurate: Lloyd was serving the Russians against the Turks and, according to Speelman, had been pressing for an expedition against the Qing that Catherine II (1729–96) had approved. Bertin refers to the reliability of his intelligence (‘éclaircissements’) as being from an assured source and in his handwritten notes he refers to ‘mon correspondant de petersbourg homme sûr.’

Bertin is not simply concerned to provide intelligence and a warning to China. He tells Ko and Yang that he also wants to ‘furnish you with whatever means of defense are possible.’ Accordingly he has sought the advice of a ‘wise and educated officer, who loves you and respects your nation’ both in assessing the intelligence and in recommending the steps that China should take to defend itself. This unidentified soldier provides a mémoire setting out his advice that China should pay attention to Russia’s defeat of the Ottoman empire (in the war of 1768–74) in spite of the superiority of Turkish numbers, because of the latter’s failure to study European tactics. The way Bertin describes the various materials that he sends to Ko and Yang makes it difficult to identify them all, but they certainly include four books. First, the latest French ordonnance militaire in order that the Chinese can study European tactics and learn how to manoeuvre troops more effectively. The second is the Essai général de tactique (1770) of Guibert, cited above, and which Bertin describes as the best work since the Art de la guerre of Puységur – which he also sends. The fourth is a work he describes as ‘a very short but essential essay about Chinese military institutions based on the information set out in your last work.’ Since Bertin has already sent copies of Amiot’s Art Militaire, this must be a reference to the Science Militaire à la Chine. In view of this choice of texts,

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62 See n. 31, p. 67 above.
63 ‘Lloyd boasted if given command of 20,000 soldiers he could invade Mongolia, ransom Chinese cities beyond the Great Wall, and return with enough booty to assuage Russia’s financial difficulties and solve its lingering border problem with China.’ Speelman, Henry Lloyd and the Military Enlightenment, p. 83. See also, Gat, Military Thought, pp. 67–78.
64 BIF, MS 1522, fols 18 and 38.
65 Ibid, fol. 18.
66 Ibid, fol. 18: ‘un militaire qui vous aime et qui respecte votre nation.’ The implication of this phrasing is that the officer knows Ko and Yang.
67 BIF, MS 1522, fol. 34.
68 Ibid, fol. 35: ‘un mémoire très court mais nécessaire sur le militaire Chinois d’après les connaissances que votre dernier ouvrage nous a données.’
69 Of the works Bertin appears to have sent to Peking, only that of Puységur is listed in Verhaeren, Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Pé-l’ang. As the edition in the catalogue is that of 1748, it may be a copy sent earlier.
and the officer’s connection with China, it seems likely that the officer whose advice Bertin has obtained was one of the two authors of the *Science Militaire à la Chine*: Puységur or Saint Maurice de Saint Leu. Both of these men moved in the right circles to have met Ko and Yang before they left for China in 1765 as suggested by Bertin’s description of his officer.

Bertin suggests to Ko and Yang that:

> The most valuable favour that we could render the Chinese would perhaps be to translate these works. In them, they will find enlightening principles and actions that are easy to implement if discipline is observed, a point on which China leaves nothing to be desired.\(^{70}\)

The *correspondance littéraire* had always been a two-way process in which translation was needed to bridge the gap between languages and cultures. However, here we see a complete circle in which Bertin offers China not only works from the French Military Enlightenment, but also an assessment of the ‘present state of the military art in China’ based on information from the *correspondance littéraire*. The reference to Russia’s strategy in Poland illustrates in a contemporary context the radical reading of the *Art Militaire* that is so forcefully presented in the *Science Militaire à la Chine*. Finally, this may not be the only example of a statesman urging the translation of military theory from one language to another for strategic purposes, but it perfectly illustrates the relationship between theory and practice, the role of translation and the concept of strategy emerging as Bertin writes.

The response of Yang to Bertin’s letter illustrates another point: the difference between the two strategic cultures of China identified by Johnston and discussed above.\(^{71}\) Bertin is writing to a China that he envisages as a state ruled by an absolute monarch, but one in which both people and monarch are subject to natural laws based on reason. This is the Confucian ethos of government promoted for two centuries by the Jesuits and adopted by European sinophiles as the model of enlightenment. As we have seen in both Webb and Voltaire’s accounts, this tradition emphasises China’s peaceful, defensive culture that places good administration as a higher strategic and security priority than external adventurism. For Bertin, the assistance he is now offering for China is the ultimate

\(^{70}\) BIF, MS 1522, fol. 35: ‘Le service le plus important peut-être qu’on pourrait rendre aux chinois seroit de leur faire une traduction de ces [?] ouvrages, ils y trouveront des principes lumineux et une exécution facile quand la discipline sera bien observée, or la Chine n’a rien à désirer [?] sur ce point.’

\(^{71}\) See p. 13.
expression of the correspondance littéraire because the very survival of China is at risk and, its 'utility' to the Mission is correspondingly heightened. He writes:

It only remains for me to wish that all of these materials will prove useful to you personally and increase the regard in which you are held; and that the latter effect will help you achieve the greatest good in the work that you are carrying out; and enable you to bring ever closer two nations that, although separated by the great geographical distance between them, are such that they should easily find themselves in agreement by virtue of the feelings of humanity and civilisation that both profess.\footnote{BIF, MS 1522, fol. 37. ‘Il nous reste à désirer que tous ces matériaux vous deviennent personnellement utiles qu’ils vous servent à augmenter votre considération [?] et celle-ci à vous faciliter les moyens de faire le plus grand bien dont vous êtes occupé et à rapprocher autant qu’il est possible deux nations éloignées par les espaces immenses qui les séparent, mais bien faites pour se convenir par les sentiments d’humanité et d’urbanité dont elles font profession.’}

The response from Yang undermines almost every assumption on which Bertin’s approach is based, as regards the emperor, the culture of government, China’s external ambitions and conduct, and the perceived utility of the missionaries’ assistance.

Monseigneur,

The warning given to the Missionaries concerning the enterprises of the Russians has greatly alarmed me … I wrote to the Portuguese president of the Imperial tribunal of mathematics, who alone could bring this to the attention of the Emperor. It has now been a year without any response from the Portuguese or the French who forwarded the memoir to us. This leads me to believe that they have not dared to make this bad news public. They still remember that it is less than three years since a French missionary took it upon himself to present a plan for fortifications to the Emperor, and that he was badly treated by all of the great men of the Court. The current state of affairs in China makes them even less brave: the Emperor has just exterminated to the last person (‘exterminer ad unum’) greater and lesser Tibet. This country is indeed quite different to others. Sometimes something that merits a reward is the cause of terrible punishment … For myself, I can only tremble at the ill fortune that threatens us. I pray to God that perhaps the Russians in Peking, knowing of the victories in Tibet, will advise their compatriots to drop their designs upon a country that is beginning to be warlike (guerrier)…\footnote{Letter dated 8 December 1775. BIF, MS 1520, fols 228-9.}

Yang’s letter presents the realpolitik of China’s court and foreign policy that bears little relation to the public narrative of the Jesuits, or the interpretation of the Physiocrats, but which would have been highly recognisable to those who followed Montesquieu’s opposing view of Chinese despotism. The Art Militaire had helped bring French sinophilia to its high point in the early 1770s, but Bertin’s further engagement in this subject had revealed the limitations of the correspondance littéraire, and a very different China to the one idealised by some in Europe.
Conclusions
In this chapter I have explored the way in which the subject texts circulated: as books to be published, catalogued, collected and transported through time and space; as ideas to be translated, reinterpreted, co-opted, transmitted and employed by the author or his reader; and, as currency to demonstrate the utility and prestige of an individual, a profession or a state. In the act of translation, languages, ideas and contexts must merge. In the act of publication, they diverge as readers choose to criticise or adopt them for their own purposes.

I have shown how the process of translating caused Clarke to fuse Vegetius' aspirations for Rome's military revival with contemporary ideas of what constituted a profession, and thereby inspired him to capture all classical and modern knowledge of warfare in a library. For Clarke, this library symbolised professionalism, public recognition of which would lead to acceptance of the Army's utility in preserving the British empire. Meanwhile, Amiot, similarly motivated to demonstrate utility through the cataloguing and transmission of Chinese knowledge, created an interpretation of classical Chinese military thought intended vigorously to promote Jesuit ideology and utility at a time when the order was in deep crisis.

Regardless of these intentions, the impact of their texts was determined in their reception. The English publisher Millan, the other Clarke, the critic De Pauw, Bertin, Saint Maurice and Puységur and Maizeroy all used these texts for their own, divergent purposes as much as did Vegetius, the author(s) of the Sunzi, Amiot and Clarke themselves. Clarke's potentially radical text was not interpreted as such by his audience who simply saw it as a standard translation of a classical work, whereas Amiot's became part of a radical discourse being explored by military men in the Physiocrat circle. Meanwhile, Bertin, to whom the work was addressed, appears to have received Amiot's translation, and the Science Militaire à la Chine, as apolitical, technical treatises. Dispatching the Science Militaire à la Chine, together with other military materials, to China, Bertin anticipated that this 'technical assistance' would be warmly received by his Chinese correspondents and the imperial court. Unfortunately, Bertin's strategic initiative lacked political understanding and failed to 'translate'. Hence, the importance of Maizeroy's work in the 1770s, where we see, articulated for the first time, the idea which unifies the work of Vegetius, the Sunzi, Clarke and Amiot: that 'strategy' is a hierarchy in which military considerations must be seen in the framework of policy and the political and economic capabilities of the state.
Conclusions

This research began as an exploration of two translations made in the mid-1760s of classical works on the art of war and so I will start my conclusions with the texts themselves. My purpose in this respect has been to demonstrate the value of textual analysis in the field of military theory and the potential for better understanding the genre of military theory by means of literary as well as historical study. Books on strategy tend to focus on ideas not language but I suggest that a better understanding of the language can reveal more about the ideas – both their significance in their contemporary contexts, and in ours.

In the course of my research, I have undertaken the first comparative analysis of the two source texts, the *Epitoma* and *Sunzi* – the earliest surviving, and most influential, books on military theory in the European and Chinese classical traditions – as well as the first critical analysis of the two translations, Clarke’s *Military Institutions* and Amiot’s *Art Militaire des Chinois*. The comparative analysis of the source texts has shown that they share an ideology that warfare is a science that can and must be studied and, above all, that its purpose is to win – not to fight. Both classical authors posit that no enemy can be defeated other than from within and that undermining his will and ability to fight by means of political, diplomatic and economic measures is the superior way to achieve one’s policy objectives. There are differences in style: the *Epitoma* uses the terms *ars* and *scientia* to promote the scientific nature of its subject-matter while the *Sunzi* conveys this message in the use of lists and classifications and words such as ‘system’, ‘law’ and ‘discipline’. The Latin text is presented as a treatise with extended argument punctuated by memorable aphorisms; while the Chinese is largely constructed from aphorisms. Both texts, however, have a logical sequence and use structure to accentuate their ideological points. There are also differences: the *Epitoma* sees protracted warfare as a useful strategy whereas the *Sunzi* regards it as offering no benefits for either side. The differences in style and substance can be related to the social and linguistic as well as the political and military contexts in which they were written. What is more striking is the fact that these two works, so far part in time, space and context, converge in their ideology, structure, vocabulary, rhetorical devices and through the aphoristic form with which this genre has since become associated.

My textual analysis of the two translations shows the authors claiming (at least sometimes) to offer faithful and accurate renditions of the originals. However, impelled by their own perspectives and objectives, they modify the originals by overt and covert
means. In the case of the *Art Militaire*, this means in the framing of the work with the *Ten Precepts* of Yongzheng which enables Amiot to position Confucianism and *la grande Science* at the centre of his text, and then play on the paradox when he uses the expressions *la grande science* and *le grand art* to describe the methodology of using the Confucian qualities of self-knowledge and benevolence in order to manipulate, deceive, divide and conquer. In so doing Amiot emphasises the moral aspect of government and takes a subject that would otherwise be alien to a Jesuit and positions it within the sphere of moral philosophy in which he is on safer ground. He also promotes the quintessentially Jesuit ideology that different cultures must be respected for what they are, that scientific investigation and cultural comparison provide perspective and insight into the world and that politics is an appropriate subject for a priest. According to a more radical reading of the final section of his treatment of the *Sunzi*, Amiot goes further and places before his readers the Mencian doctrine of legitimate revolution together with references to the date on which the first such revolution in Chinese legend occurred – 1766 BCE – and one to 1770 BCE, when it did not.

In the case of Clarke, the covert pattern is the way in which he introduces the word ‘profession’ and multiplies the use of the word ‘science’ in order to underline the claims of the military to professional status. Further, these word changes, combined with his choice of the *Epitoma*, allow Clarke to make the broader and more political claim that Britain needs a professional, standing army to defend its new empire and to affirm, through the sacred military oath, that the king is both head of state and commander-in-chief. The more overt means deployed by the translators are their use of prefaces and footnotes positioned adjacent to the text to frame the reader’s approach and to modify the meaning of the original by superimposing the translator’s ideas and separating his identity. In both cases this technique is designed to support their positioning of themselves as reliable and faithful translators but also as scholars who are independent, open and trustworthy. In addition, by purporting to offer faithful translations and to limit their own opinions to their commentary their covert interventions are all the more effective.

The purpose of the translators is, therefore, overtly to demonstrate their utility, both to their professions and to their countries, while covertly also directing the reader’s ideas in directions that support their ideological positions. This technique is exemplified in the translators’ treatment of the climactic passages at the ends of Book III of the *Epitoma* and Chapter XIII of the *Sunzi*. In both, a highly rhetorical and impassioned translation is juxtaposed with an extensive footnote that superficially questions – while in fact
highlighting and extending – the meaning of the original while purporting to distance the translator from it. The effect is to underline the significance of the passage and to draw the reader’s attention to the ideological proposition being put forward. This position, in both cases, is that great leaders must study military theory in a broad, political and ethical sense in order to achieve victory without submitting their people to the human and economic costs of war. In these passages the leader is not abstract but personalised – by reference to the emperor in the *Epitoma* and by reference to two legendary Chinese heroes in the *Sunzi*.

The textual analysis of the source texts has shown that two completely independent works, separated by half the world and a millennium, share the same ideology of war and express it using structures, forms, rhetoric and vocabulary that also have common elements. It is significant that the two translators chose these texts at the moment they did, and deployed similar strategies to convey both their ideological positions and their utility to their readers. The four texts are unique but there are recognisable patterns in the common intent of the two original texts and the common intent of the two translations. And, since there are also common contextual attributes between the four texts there are also patterns that are shared between all four. So, for example, it is not just Clarke and Amiot who emphasise their utility, but it is also the authors of the *Epitoma* and the *Sunzi*.

I have also found that form follows function in this genre; and that ‘translation’ is not simply a question of language or culture, but of time. This genre presents specific challenges to writer, reader and translator. Most fundamental is the problem of how to ensure that the enduring principles of warfare that such books invariably seek to capture and transmit are presented in a way that is relevant to the different settings in which they are written, translated, read and to be applied. These are books written and studied for action: how then to transmit or receive principles in such a way as to acknowledge that they must always be applied (or ignored) based on prevailing circumstances and bearing in mind the fact that the enemy is generally conscious of the same principles?
The form that emerges in all of the texts is the aphorism and further research on this would be justified.¹

The translators lived at the same time and it was the combination of the increasingly global character of, and conflicts between, European powers and the global ambitions of the doctrine and methods of the Society of Jesus from its foundation that forged the connections between London, Paris and Peking. The Seven Years’ War was the culmination of these trends as it represented a truly global conflict; its effects threw into relief the tension between the national identity and ambitions of the European states and the transnational ambitions and character of the Jesuits. Clarke and Amiot faced difficult circumstances in the aftermath of the war and both men turned to literary projects to seek to change their situations. Amiot addressed himself to Bertin from 1766, leading the correspondance littéraire with a prolific series of works, the first of which was the translation of the Chinese military classics, notably the Sunzi. Clarke acquired in 1765 a copy of the Epitoma as well as a French translation and a German commentary and undertook a translation that stood alone in English print for a period of 400 years. Both men’s work can be cited within the traditions of the Military Enlightenment with its concepts of science, classicism and the human aspects of warfare. Clarke positions his work squarely within that tradition since it is his purpose to draw legitimacy from it. For Amiot it is the norms of the receiving culture and language that must be ‘disfigured’ where necessary, but we have seen how Amiot adapts his translation strategy to suit his project. Both of the original texts, however, treat their subject of warfare in a way that goes beyond the norms of the Military Enlightenment. Both are self-consciously political works that use structure, vocabulary and rhetorical styles to establish fundamental principles that were alien to the tradition of the Military Enlightenment: first that the art of war is about winning, not fighting; second that strategy has political and economic dimensions and that the political element is built on ethics and is superior to the

¹ The work of Francis Bacon is of particular interest because he both studies the aphorism as a form and applies it to the fields of civil history and civics, which are closely related to the subject of strategy. For his analysis of the form see: Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning in Bacon, Major Works, pp. 120, 146, 234-5 and note at p. 643. Political theory, the highest branch of civics, is discussed in the essay Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates which includes some military observations that echo Vegetius. Francis Bacon, Essays or Counsels, Civil or Moral (1625) in Bacon, Major Works, pp. 341–456, p. 397 and see the discussion in Lisa A. Jardine, Francis Bacon, Discovery and the Art of Discourse (Cambridge University Press, 1974). For Bacon the aphorism is associated with intellectual supremacy – “all the ancient wisdom and science’ chose this medium. It is also associated with observation of the real way that people behave and therefore a solid base for predicting their future behaviour – in particular in a field where errors of judgement would have the most severe consequences.’ Brian Vickers, Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose (Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 63–4, 71.
military. Both men had cause to be acutely aware of the political dimensions of the recent war because of the way in which the political fallout of the war had affected them personally.

Whereas Clarke chose a reasonably well-known Latin text about a subject familiar to him and addressed to a Christian emperor, Amiot chose a text in Chinese, together with a translation of this text in Manchu – a language he had to learn for (and through) this project – and from an entirely different culture. The greater risk that Amiot took earned him some criticism but also attracted more positive attention. It initiated his near-30-year association with Bertin, who embodied the court establishment. It was also embraced, however, by two leading soldiers, one the son of Puységur, whose own work on the art of war had made him a leading authority of military theory. The Science Militaire à la Chine was published almost simultaneously with Amiot’s Art Militaire by the publisher of the Ephémérides, the journal of the Physiocrats, a small group of philosophes who enjoyed great influence in the late 1760s and early 1770s. My research has shown that one of the authors, Saint Maurice de Saint-Leu had, in fact, been a contributor to the Ephémérides since 1765, while Puységur was a Parlementaire with a radical agenda (described later as ‘frondeur’ in nature). Thus, the sinophile movement, which had barely evolved between John Webb’s Historical Essay (1669) and Voltaire’s Essai sur les mœurs (1756), now acquired fresh impetus in the aftermath of the war. This impetus derived from a new and more engaged interest in China by men who had a practical interest in applying the economic and political lessons that it offered. My research, through a close reading of the Science Militaire à la Chine (1773) and François Quesnay’s Despotisme de la Chine (1763) shows the connection between them for the first time, and how they represent a powerful manifesto for radical change and even revolution. What connects them is Amiot’s presentation of Confucian doctrine – the Great Learning or grande Science – in his unique interpretation of the Sunzi. In this way I have also added to existing scholarship on French sinology in the 1760s and in particular the way in which the Physiocrats grasped and developed this important theme of the Enlightenment in the aftermath of the Seven Years’ War.

Finally, in considering how both classical texts and translations treat the subject of strategy, I have also developed our understanding of the term ‘strategy’ and its origins. It has been argued that the word first appeared in modern Europe in 1777 with the publication of Maizeroy’s Théorie de la guerre but, as I have shown, the word is actually used in his 1771 translation of Leo’s Taktika. Between 1771 and 1777, Maizeroy’s thinking evolved and in the later work he presented a further development of his analysis. First,
strategy is moved into the political realm and is no longer purely military. Second, Maizeroy concluded that strategy is a dialectical process in which multiple ideas and disciplines are synthesised; articulating the relationship between the three meanings of system, in the strategic sense, that we have seen forged among British political and military writers during the Seven Years’ War. Maizeroy appears to have recognised – with his reference to the terms *grande affaire* and *grande Science* from the *Art Militaire* – that the idea of strategy that he has defined and articulated finds its roots in both a Chinese and a European strategic culture.

A study as broad as this inevitably cannot pursue every line of questioning to its conclusion. My goal has been to explore two Enlightenment texts that have received almost no critical analysis, while connecting them to each other, to their source texts and to their historical contexts. There are three topics in particular which warrant further study. First, as mentioned, the relationship between form and function in the literary genre of military theory: part of the function being translation. I have already touched on aphorism as a form strongly associated with this genre, but there is also the question of vocabulary – for example, the words that were used before the term ‘strategy’ was available. I have been struck, for example, by the difference between Sadler’s lexical choices and those of Clarke. Second, a more detailed study of Maizeroy’s work (and correspondence if such exists and can be located) in the 1770s could reveal more of how his thinking evolved. If, for example, Maizeroy had seen the *Art Militaire* ahead of its publication (as did the authors of the *Science Militaire à la Chine*) then perhaps the Chinese tradition influenced his 1771 work as well as that of 1777. Finally, I hope that a sinologist (ideally with Manchu language skills) will analyse Amiot’s translation of the Chinese military classics. It has been a frustration to me that it has not been possible to reconstruct his lexical and other choices in the way that I have done for Clarke.

Strategy matters – not only in military affairs but in all endeavours to solve significant problems. Language plays a crucial role in how strategy functions. I have shown how Clarke and Amiot sought, through translation, to contribute to the development of the concept of strategy in Europe and I believe that the contributions of Amiot and Maizeroy can be explored further.
Appendix: Selected original texts

The closing paragraphs of Amiot’s Sunzi with Amiot’s notes

Enfin un bon général doit tirer parti de tout; il ne doit être surpris de rien, quoi que ce soit qui puisse arriver. Mais par-dessus tout, préféramment à tout, il doit mettre en pratique les cinq sortes de divisions. S’il a le véritable art de s’en servir, j’ose l’assurer, il n’est rien qu’il ne puisse. Défendre les États de son souverain, les agrandir, faire chaque jour de nouvelles conquêtes, exterminer les ennemis, fonder même de nouvelles dynasties, tout cela peut n’être que l’effet des artifices employés à propos. Le grand Y-yn ne vivait-il pas du temps des Hia? c’est par lui cependant que s’établit la dynastie Yn. Le célèbre Lu-ya n’était-il pas sujet des Yn, lorsque, par son moyen, la dynastie Tcheou monta sur le trône? Quel est celui de nos livres qui ne fasse l’éloge de ces deux grands hommes? L’histoire leur a-t-elle jamais donné les noms de traîtres à leur patrie, ou de rebelles à leurs souverains? Bien loin de là, elle en parle toujours avec le plus grand respect. Ce sont, dit-elle, des héros, des princes vertueux, de saints personnages.

Voilà tout ce qu’on peut dire en substance sur la manière d’employer les divisions, & c’est par où je finis mes réflexions sur l’art des guerriers.

1. Y-yn, qu’on appelait aussi Y-tche, était ministre du dernier des empereurs de la dynastie Hia. Cet empereur était l’objet de l’exécration de tous ses sujets. Le sage Y-yn l’avait exhorté souvent à changer de conduite, mais toujours inutilement. Rebuté de voir que malgré tous ses soins & tout son zèle, tant pour le bien public, que pour l’honneur & la gloire de son prince, l’empire allait toujours en décadence, il se retira de la cour, pour ne mener désormais qu’une vie privée. Il passait ses jours à la campagne, où il cultivait la terre de ses propres mains. Ce fut dans cette solitude que Tcheng-tang, prince du pays de Chang, lui fit savoir ses intentions pour le bien de l’empire, & l’engagea à retourner à la cour, où il travailla efficacement à la fondation d’une nouvelle dynastie, qui est celle de Chang, du nom de la Principauté où régnait Tcheng-tang. Cette révolution arriva l’an 1770 avant Jésus-Christ.

2. Lu-ya, plus connu sous le nom de Tai-koung, était un des principaux officiers de l’empire sous Tcheou, dernier empereur de la dynastie Yn, laquelle fut entièrement éteinte vers l’an 1112 avant Jésus-Christ. C’est aux conseils à la prudence, à la sagesse &

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1. *Art Militaire* XIII (158-9).
aux vertus de ce Tai-koung que Ou-ouang doit la gloire qu’il eut d’avoir réuni en sa faveur tous les cœurs des sujets de la dynastie qu’il éteignit.

3. Un des commentateurs explique cette phrase de la manière suivante: Que les noms de fourbe, de traître ou de rebelle ne vous épouvantent point; tout dépend de vos succès. Quelque bonnes que soient vos intentions, si vous avez du dessous & que vos desseins échouent, vous serez en horreur à la postérité, vous passerez pour un ambitieux, pour un perturbateur du repos public, & pour quelque chose de pis encore, pour un rebelle; mais au contraire si vous réussissez, on vous préconisera comme un sage, comme le père du peuple, comme le restaurateur des lois & le soutien de l’empire; Y-yn & Lu-ya en sont une preuve. Mais, à l’exemple de ces grands hommes, n’ayez que des intentions droites, n’entreprenez rien que de conforme à la justice, &, comme eux, vous vous ferez une réputation qui ne mourra jamais, &c. La plupart des maximes qui sont répandues dans cet article des divisions, sont condamnables, comme contraires à la probité & aux autres vertus morales dont les Chinois eux-mêmes sont profession; mais ces mêmes Chinois se croient tout permis, quand il s’agit d’opprimer des ennemis qu’ils regardent comme des rebelles. Cependant ils ne sont pas tous du même avis à cet égard.

Extract from the État Actuel de l’Art et de la Science Militaire à la Chine

Cette grande science des Chinois, en un mot, est la connaissance des droits & des devoirs des hommes réunis en société; c’est précisément ce que des Philosophes qui travaillent sans relâche & l’instruction des peuples, & par conséquent à leur bonheur, ont appelé la science économique, d’où on leur a donné, je ne sais pourquoi, le nom d’Economistes ... [L]es vérités économiques gagnent de proche en proche. Elles germent, sur-tout en France, dans le Cœur d’une noblesse généreuse & franche, qui ne forma jamais de vœux que pour le bonheur & la gloire de la patrie dont elle fut toujours le soutien, même dans ces temps malheureux dont le souvenir fait encore frémir l’humanité. Déjà ces vérités éternelles commencent à être connues dans plusieurs Etats de l’Europe ... Puissent-elles être bientôt universellement adoptées!

Heureusement tout nous présage que cette grande révolution n’est pas éloignée! Une fermentation générale s’élève dans tous les esprits; & les lumières se répandent, l’erreur fuit; les préjugés politiques se débattent en expirant; & l’on peut enfin espérer que les Souverains dont ils ont affoibli les Etats n’attendront pas longtemps à bannir

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2 Science Militaire à la Chine, pp. 14–16.
entièrement ces préjugés destructeurs; car personne au fond n’aime à régner sur des ruines & dans les déserts.

Alors, sans doute, la science économique pourra, comme à la Chine, être partout appelée la grande Science ... Alors chaque Prince qui aimera la vraie gloire, dira comme l’Empereur Yong-tcheng: Je me suis toujours appliqué à acquérir la grande Science ...

Joseph Amiot’s letter to Henri Bertin, Peking, 23 September 1766

A Monseigneur De Bertin Ministre et Secrétaire d’état &c &c

Monseigneur

Un français, transplanté depuis quinze ans dans le capitale de l’empire chinois, fait hommage à votre Excellence d’une partie de ses travaux littéraires. Ce tribut, dû à votre goût pour tout ce qui a rapport aux Sciences et aux Arts, ne seroit peut être pas indigne de vous, s’il vous étoit offert par tout autre que par un jésuite. C’est une notice, une compilation, ou une espèce de traduction de ce qu’on a écrit de moins mal, dans cette extrémité de l’Asie, sur l’art des guerriers. Je souhaitterois de tout mon cœur, qu’il s’y trouvât quelque chose qui pût vous être agréable. Cela m’enhardiroit à continuer mes hommages, dans l’espérance que vous ne dédaigneriez pas de les accepter.

On a beaucoup écrit, depuis un siècle, sur cette portion de la terre qui a été si long-temps inconnue à notre Europe; mais il s’en faut bien que la matière ne soit épuisée. La chine est un vaste champ dans le quel on trouve sans cesse quelque nouvel aliment, non moins propre à nourrir l’utile politique de l’homme d’état – éclairé, que la stérile curiosité du philosophe oisif.

Ceux de mes compatriotes qui, comme moi, font leur séjour à Péking, sont prêts, ainsi que moi, à vous donner, dans toutes les occasions, des preuves du zèle, respectueux que nous avons tous pour tout ce qui regarde le service de votre Excellence. Nous n’attendons, Monseigneur, que votre consentement pour tâcher de mériter votre protection, en réduisant aux effets une partie du sentiments dont nous sommes pénétrés.

Nous osons nous flatter que le malheur, arrivé en France à notre Compagnie, ne vous empêchera pas de nous regarder d’un œil favorable. Si c’est le propre des grandes âmes de se déclarer pour les malheureux, que n’avons-nous pas droit d’attendre de vous,

3 BIF, MS 1515, fols 2–3.
Monseigneur, puisque, par la noblesse de vos sentiments, vous êtes autant au dessus du commun, que nous en sommes au dessous par le genre de nos disgrâces?

Les motifs qui nous ont engagés à passer les mers dans un temps où nous pouvions vivre tranquillement dans le sein de notre Patrie, sont de nature à intéresser une cour comme la votre. La gloire de Dieu et le salut des âmes furent notre unique but. Nous ne nous en sommes point écartés jusqu’ici; et par la manière dont nous nous conduisons, soit à la cour, soit à la ville, soit en remplissant les fonctions de notre ministère, soit en nous rendant utile, pour nous en procurer le libre exercice, nous avons, je ne crains pas de le dire, quelque droit à la protection d’un homme d’état, qui ne veut pas moins la gloire de notre Sainte Religion que celle de la nation française.

Ceux de mes confrères qui travaillent à répandre les lumières de la foi dans l’intérieur des Provinces de ce vaste Empire, ne sont pas moins dignes de vos bontés. Ce sont des françois, qui par leur conduite édifiante, et digne des premiers Apôtres; qui par les maux qu’ils endurent et par toutes les peines qu’ils se donnent, tant pour grossir le troupeau de jésus christ, que pour ramener, dans le bercaill, les brebis timides que la crainte des tourments en fait sortir quelque fois, dans les tems de persécution; qui par tout ce qu’ils souffrent d’inquiétudes et de perplexités, dans la seule pensée que, s’ils venoient à être découverts, on ne les enlevât à leurs chers néophytes; qui enfin par les fatigues de toute espèce qu’ils sont obligés d’essuyer, et qu’ils essuyent avec cette paix du cœur et cette joie toute sainte, seule, mais digne récompense de tant de travaux, n’honorent pas moins la nation française que la sainteté de la Religion qu’ils prêchent.

Mais à quoi bon, Monseigneur, mendier, auprès de votre Excellence, une protection que nous avons toute entière, et dont vous nous avez déjà donné des marques si éclatantes? La manière également honorable et obligeante dont vous avez contribué au retour de nos deux jésuites chinois, les bien faits dont vous les avez comblés, et ceux que vous leur avez procurés de la part de notre glorieux monarque Louis le bien aimé, sont des preuves non équivoques de votre bienveillance pour nous. Nous tâcherons, Monseigneur, de nous en rendre dignes, si ce n’est par nos services, du moins par notre bon volonté, et par notre exactitude à exécuter, suivant nos forces, et nos foibles lumières, tous les ordres dont vous voudrez bien nous honorer. En attendant, nous ne cesserons d’offrir des vœux au ciel pour la conservation et la prospérité de votre Excellence. Nous engagerons nos chrétiens de ces contrées à joindre leurs prières aux nôtres: nous solliciterons pour vous le secours de tant d’âmes innocentes aux quelles nous avons procuré le baptême, et de toutes celles aux quelles nous procurons la même grâce,
chaque jour : nous supplerons le Roi des Roix, ce divin maitre, qui a daigné nous choisir pour travailler, avec le secours de sa grâce, au salut des pauvres chinois, nous le conjurerons de vous inspirer à vous même le noble désir de concourir à cette bonne œuvre, en faisant passer jusqu’ici ceux de notre compagnie qui voudront bien venir partager nos travaux.

S’il est bon, Monseigneur, s’il est grand, de travailler avec les plus brillants succès à la gloire et à la splendeur de l’état, comme vous le faites à la face de toute l’Europe, il ne sera pas moins grand, il ne sera pas moins glorieux pour vous, de contribuer à la propagation de la foi d’une manière à la place que vous occupez si dignement. La plupart des grands Ministres, qui vous ont devancé dans cette carrière, ont été les protecteurs de nos Missions; notre Mission de la chine en particulier a reçu plus d’une foi des marques de leur tendre affection et de leurs pieuses libéralités. Ils n’ont pas cru qu’il fut indigne d’eux de s’abaisser jusqu’à nous. Ils ont regardé cette petite portion de la nation française, qui a arboré l’étendard des Lis avec celui de la croix, dans l’enceinte même du Palais du plus puissant Monarque de ces contrées, comme méritant quelque attention et quelques regards favorables de leur part. Nous abandonneroit-on dans un temps et dans des circonstances où nous avons plus besoin de Secours que jamais. Non, Monseigneur, nous nous attendons aux mêmes faveurs, et à de plus considérables encore, de la part de celui qui compte dans sa famille, de Saints et illustres Prélats, qui ne sont pas moins les Apôtres que les fermes appuis et les défendeurs zélés de notre sainte Religion. J’espère, en mon particulier, que vous ne dédaignerez pas mon hommage, ni le profond respect avec le quel je suis

Monseigneur
De votre Excellence

à Péking le 23e Septembre 1766

Le très humble et très obeissant serviteur
Amiot Miss. de la Comp° de jés.

[Post script] Ce que je prens la liberté d’offrir, cette Année, à votre Excellence consiste en 4 cahiers. Le 1° grand in folio contient 12 planches où sont désignées les évolutions des troupes chinoises qui n’ont pour armes que le sabre et le bouclier. Le 2° est un in quarto contenant 16 planches où sont désignées les évolutions générales des 6 corps de troupe chinoises. Le 3° est un in quarto contenant 38 planches qui désignent les habillements, armes, instruments &c des guerriers chinois. Le 4° est une traduction libre des deux plus célèbres auteurs chinois qui ont écrit sur l’Art militaire, avec une explication détaillée de tout ce qui est contenu dans les 3 autres cahiers. Je joins à cela 1° un instrument de
musique que les chinois appellent Siao. Il est en vernis du japon. Ce sera une curiosité qui ne déparera pas votre cabinet. 2° 4 bâtons d'encre. 3° une boîte contenant 10 pastilles d'odeur. 4° 2 talles avec leurs couvercles sur les quels sont des vers faits par l'Empereur lui même, la 11e Année de son regne, et que j'ay traduits en français le moins mal que j'ay pû.

**Extract from Bertin's letter to Father Bourgeois, Versailles, 30 November 1777**

Quant à la correspondance littéraire, je vous prie de soutenir et de favoriser le travail de nos ouvriers, tant que l'objet capital, le bien de la mission, n'en souffrira point. Je vous prie même de les engager, en tant que vous le pourrez, à prendre des ouvrages chinois et à les traduire, soit traités de morale, législation ou gouvernement, soit en histoire; si par exemple ils pouvoient se partager les douze livres qui contiennent l'histoire des relations que les Chinois ont eues avec d'autres peuples, et qu'ils en entrepriennent la traduction, ce seroit s'occuper d'un objet vraiment intéressant; en général, comme je l'ai déjà marqué, les ouvrages des Chinois, soit les traductions ou les extraits de leurs écrits, sur l'histoire, sur les sciences et les arts, accompagnés si l'on veut de notes de nos missionnaires, soit les productions de leurs arts et leurs monuments physiques, peints ou autrement décrits, toute partie en un mot et toute chose dont l'original sera des Chinois, réussiront mieux en Europe, auront pour nous plus de piquant, et seront ici infiniment plus utiles pour les mœurs, le gouvernement, le bonheur des peuples, &c., &c. que tout ce que les missionnaires pourront nous envoyer de leur composition. Ce sont les Chinois mêmes que l'on veut voir, ce sont leurs peintres, leurs critiques, leurs orateurs, auteurs ou artistes. De plus cela ne fait et n'occasionne aucunes dissertations opposées qui atténuent toujours dans l'esprit du public, l'autorité des assertions, quelque sûres qu'elles soient, et en empêche l'effet. Les traductions même et leur fidélité seront vues et critiquées si leur asservissement scrupuleux à l'original, n'est pas en quelque sorte judaïque, et si tout ce qui sera du traducteur n'est pas placé seulement en notes. Les missionnaires en ont ainsi que nous l'expérience. Vous verrez combien l'Affligé tranquille et M. Amiot ont eu de critiques sur leurs dissertations relativement à l'antiquité du peuple chinois. L'ouvrage même du P. de Mailla, quoique traduction, est dans le même cas. Mais la traduction du Juste Milieu et de la Grande Science, l'Art militaire des Chinois, l'Histoire et le monument des Tartares Tourgouths, etc., ont eu plus d'effet, sans essuyer ces combats. Les extraits faits par l'Affligé tranquille sur la Piété filiale réussiront mieux sur nos mœurs, que le meilleur ouvrage de lui où il n'auroit fait que les développer, &c., &c.

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L’Europe est à cet égard, un enfant à qui il faut présenter la médecine sous le nom et l’apparence du café. Sous le masque chinois nous ferons goûter le bon et l’utile, beaucoup plus et beaucoup plus tard, que par les dissertations et les démonstrations les plus évidentes faites à visage découvert.

Je ne prétends pas non plus réduire les ouvriers de la mission au métier de rédacteurs ou de compilateurs. Ceux de leurs ouvrages qui sont déjà connus font du bien et il s’en faut que je craigne les critiques des Européens, ni même les variétés ou contradictions qui pourraient se trouver entre les missionnaires eux-mêmes; tant mieux en général pour la vérité, et par conséquent pour le bien. Il est même des matières où il ne suffirait plus de traduire et d’extraits tel est le Système musical de M. Amiot, mais il faut, autant qu’il est possible, entremêler un genre avec l’autre et donner surtout des extraits ou traductions des ouvrages chinois.

Il y a peut-être une combinaison qui serait la meilleure. Veut-on par exemple, prouver que Fo pourrait-être le patriarche Noé; que les anciennes notions des Chinois sur la divinité se rapprochent de la vérité, que la législation, le gouvernement et la nation chinoises se sont mal trouvés de la liberté de raisonner, du Plébiscisme littéraire, du despotisme, &c., &c. On peut prendre et rapprocher les passages des auteurs, des historiens qui parlent de ces objets, donner ces passages en chinois dans une colonne ou dans un volume, et le français à côté ou dans un autre volume, et accompagner le texte de notes qui contiendraient des faits ou des réflexions, soit de quelques auteurs qu’on croit inutile de faire entrer dans la composition du texte, soit du traducteur lui-même; on pourrait encore faire une dissertation sur la chose, mais y joindre comme pièces probantes les extraits en chinois et en français, en marge ou à la fin.

Sur les dangers du plébiscisme littéraire, il y a peut-être deux ou trois époques fameuses à recueillir, et à chaque époque l’extrait des auteurs contemporains, &c., &c.

Je sens que pour cet effet il faut rassembler des livres, et beaucoup. Il y a bien d’autres embarras. C’est ce qui me fait réduire, après vous avoir dit ma réponse, à demander au surplus ce qu’on pourra bonnement, et non au delà.
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