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CLAUSEWITZ AND ITALY

Virgilio Ilari, with Luciano Bozzo and Giampiero Giacomello

«It took the cultural poverty of the most part of the philosophers, their dull hyper specialization, their parochial mentality, tell it like it is, to explain the apathy, the aloofness towards books as Vom Kriege».

(Benedetto Croce, Azione, successo, giudizio, 1934, p. 267.)

Military literature and Clausewitzian studies

Albeit cursory, the studies on Napoleon’s first Italian campaign (Der Feldzug von 1796 in Italien) and the 1799 campaign in Italy and Switzerland, as well as the 1828 short sketch of a War Plan against France, are proof that Clausewitz studied Italian strategy far more profoundly than Italian strategists had and have studied him. As John Gooch severely but righty states, Italy simply “disregarded” Clausewitz.

According to Brian Sullivan, Italy invented “the strategy of decisive weight”, playing her coalition power among the true Great Powers. This does not imply that Vom Kriege is useless for rulers whose unique concern is not to decide war but only to choose (or stress) allies. Chapter IX, the last chapter of the eighth book of the Treaty gives just a discerning and evergreen lesson on coalition warfare. From another point of view, the Italian example may support the Clausewitzian theory on moral factors, demonstrating “the disastrous consequences that can attend the use of force as the principal tool of national strategy without the union of people, military and government that Clausewitz described as necessary for the successful prosecution of war”.

The Italians, however, are not the only rulers and military leaders who planned and fought their wars without paying more than lip service to Vom Kriege. “The American military experience of the past 25 years clearly demonstrates the need for the senior military leadership to move away from the concept of war as a problem in management and organization, back to the study of war on its higher levels as an art and a problem of leadership in which the role of intuition is paramount”. Michael Handel wrote these naïve words (in reference to Vietnam and McNamara), in 1986, when Admiral William Owens was “lifting the fog of war” and preparing the American way to Blitzkrieg, i. e. the
way to impose oneself upon the enemy’s will so rapidly to be free of wage war
without both “adverse determination” and material, political or moral frictions.

This approach is not a mistake. The job of military establishments, in
all countries and times, is of course to attempt to limit war “to a single solu-
tion, or several simultaneous solutions”. Yet hardly, such a goal can be ob-
tained, even in temporary and relative terms. However, as Clausewitz warns,
reducing war to a single solution is only one of the three necessary conditions
reaching “perfection in war”: the other two being that “war [must] become a
completely isolated act, which arises suddenly and is in no way connected with
the previous history of the combatant States”, and that “it contains in itself the
solution perfect and complete, free from any reaction upon it, through a calcu-
lation beforehand of the political situation which will follow from it” (I, 1, 6).
The mistake that is so commonly made is to act as if the first condition, tech-
nically possible, could take the place of the other two, historically impossible.
Force cannot surrogate politics.

Adapting Alberico Gentili’s acute statement on jurisprudence (historia
non est cur legat juris interpres\textsuperscript{11}), we might say \textit{Vom Kriege non est cur legat miles}. In all
times and countries, the task of the military is to plan, fight and “win” wars,
ot to understand war. Planning requires concrete numbers, not uncertainty,
fight and victory (at least as they are seen from an armchair) require doctrines,
not fortune or genius. Faced with \textit{Vom Kriege}, military establishments cannot
but exclaim “God does not play dice!”, as did Einstein when facing the Hei-
senberg principle of uncertainty. The Jominian reaction against Clausewitzian
friction looks something like that of Bertrand Russell with regard to the in-
completeness theorems of Kurt Gödel\textsuperscript{12}. Once again Western military literature
applies Jomini’s concepts, thinking war as to be calculable and foreseeable
simply because its natural approach is practical, subjective, and auto-referential.
The concern here is not about war, however, but about warfare, “the art of
war”, “strategy”, i. d. about the office and art of the General Captain, or what
Wilhelm Rüstow called \textit{Feldherrnkunst}\textsuperscript{13}.

Perhaps the story could have turned out to be quite different had
Western military literature evolved from the idea of “ratio belli”\textsuperscript{14} instead of
“ars belli”. Had it done so, the Western concept of strategy would be quite
lose to the Chinese \textit{Zhan lüe xue} (战略学) or \textit{celue} (战略)\textsuperscript{15}. But the fact is that
\textit{Vom Kriege} is the only Western book that attempts to understand what
Clausewitz called the “nature” of war. Some of his detractors, indeed, believed
to scrap him arguing that nature of war has “changed”\textsuperscript{16}. The idea, however, that nuclear or asymmetrical\textsuperscript{17} war are not simply chameleonic variations, but a completely different archetype, is perhaps less argued than Stalin’s view that Clausewitz, insofar as he was “a representative of the industrial war age”, became obsolete in the coming “machine age of war”\textsuperscript{18}.

Physics and Mathematics had not yet found a way to incorporate the complications introduced by Heisenberg and Gödel in a “unified theory of everything”; they have nevertheless revolutionized research and technology. The “geometric” or Jominian-minded military literature is a dramatic, fascinating collective work, a river of knowledge evolving and renewing itself. But it differs from science. Not, as Clausewitz curiously wrote, because the science would be exerted upon “inanimate matter” and the art of war “against a living and reacting force” (II, 3, 4), but simply because military know-how is relative to particular historical conditions, and can’t generate cumulative knowledge beyond its epoch. Only the effects of the particular wars on the historical process are cumulative, as are, on a shorter scale of time, the improvements in military technologies (ultimately because they depend on the scientific progress). Cumulative is history: histories are only repetitive.

Yes, military literature likes to peruse histories extracting arguments to support or beautify doctrines. Yes, Admiral Owens’s label of “Revolution on Military Affairs” (RMA) is borrowed from a famous interpretation of the Renaissance art of war proposed in 1956 by Michael Roberts, which was refused by John Rigby Hale and revived in 1988 by Geoffrey Parker\textsuperscript{19}. Yes, to study American experiences against Aguinaldo and Pancho Villa’s guerrillas and to learn from Gillo Pontecorvo’s film on the battle of Algiers were part of the US Army preparation for the Iraq War. Yes, the ideology or self-representation of this war was perhaps partly influenced by statements Victor Davis Hanson made on the Athenian origins of the Western warfare\textsuperscript{20}. Yes, in \textit{Seven Pillars of Wisdom}, Lawrence of Arabia warns us that “with 2000 years of examples behind us we have no excuse, when fighting, for not fighting well”\textsuperscript{21}. But in the field of Mars we are not “dwarfs on the shoulders of giants”. Clausewitz warns us that historical examples may be deceptive (II, 6), that principles, rules and predicaments excerpted from military history should be learned only for self-education (II, 2, 27), that rules ignoring the moral factors “are not only made for idiots, but are idiotic in themselves” (III, 3). Yes, Clausewitz messed in the field, the day after Waterloo. But Jomini sentenced
that Russia would win the Crimean War; and to preserve his eternal principles he wished to stop the arms race as Joshua did the chariot of the sun.

Clausewitz deluded himself convincing himself to be able “to iron out many creases in the heads of strategists and statesmen”. In this he failed, as Wilhelm Rüstow wrote back in 1857. He succeeded in his subordinate objective, “at least to show the object of action, and the real point to be considered in War” (Introduction of 1827). What Scharnhorst and Gneisenau asked him was not to discuss their ideas, but to educate to war the philosophes – a task that was very hard to accomplish with warlike and bloody tribe as they are. And this was exactly what Clausewitz has done, even posthumously. He moved from sagata to togata militia, jubilated by his colleagues and welcomed by the savants, starting with Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz.

If in military literature Clausewitzians seem to be like Savonarolians in the Catholic pulpits, franc-penseurs unifluential upon establishments, they do have an edge as military historians. The outillage intellectuel deriving from Vom Kriege works better when writing the history of a war than for fighting it. The “culminating” or fateful point of a war can be detected more easily post than ante eventum: did Clausewitz realize that the victory of Smolensk was the culminating point of the Napoleon’s Russian campaign as sudden [εὐθύς, eythís] as Thucydides tells us he realized the magnitude of the coming Peloponnesian war? But this concept is a powerful key in the hands of historians. Trafalgar, f. e., may appear to be, as Alfred Thayer Mahan genially suggested, the true “culminating point” of the entire World War of 1792-1815 – as long as was the aftermath. The theory of the culminating point looks something like what Santo Mazzarino, the greatest Italian historian of the past Century, taught us to think as “a prophecy about the past”.

Secondly, Vom Kriege is not only a chapter of the history of military thought, but also a useful introduction to such a sophisticated discipline. One can leave aside the fact that Clausewitz, in few words, outlined the birth and development of military thought (II, 2, 1-11), but we are indebted to him for his key lessons on the logical methods used by military scholars and their intrinsic limitations, namely found in Vom Kriege’s Second Book that Raymond Aron considered “une sorte de commentaire méthodologique ou épistémologique de l’oeuvre entière”.

Military history and history of military thought are not the only fields Vom Kriege sowed. Philosophy and Political theory, Psychoanalysis and Ger-
manistics are as well: and these last four fields of study are by far preponderant in the Italian contributions. It is for this reason that Italian essays on Clausewitz continue to be separate from the studies conducted by the international mainstream, which pertain especially to military history. Italian essays form instead what Sextus Empiricus called a ἀμέθοδος ὕλη [améthodos hyle, “a forest without paths”] 27. The Italian contribution may be likened to a muddy river, in which, however, specks of gold may be found. The best contributions are “aspects of another ‘job’, of another intellectual praxis”, as Luciano Canfora frames the early Greek literature on history and geography 28. It means that they originate and circulate only in their own discipline, ignoring and being ignored by the rest.

However these are, if only, original lectures. But the améthodos hyle is mostly formed by naïve excursions stretching somewhat over the right of free examination. Some are valuable as private notes marking progress in self-education, but often the author simply ends up popularizing Vom Kriege, believing that, being the first among his friends or colleagues, he is too in his own country, if not in his century.

1875-1942: The reception of Clausewitz in Italy 29

One can find mention of Vom Kriege neither in Mariano d’Ayala’s Italian military bibliography (1854) 30 nor in the first and prominent treaty of military art published in Italy only two years after Vom Kriege was printed: written by Luigi Blanch (1784-1872) 31, the treatise was rather influenced by Jomini, whose books began to be translated in Italian as early as 1816 32. Bearing in mind that translation was not indispensible at the time, French being then well known not only in Piedmont 33, but in all the Italy. Therefore, the fact that Clausewitz was almost ignored in Italy during the Risorgimento may not be imputed to a linguistic barrier; Vom Kriege was translated in French back to 1849-52 (by Belgian Major Jean N. Neuens) and in 1853 the Commentaire sur le traité de la guerre de Clausewitz by Edouard Nicolas de La Barre Duparcq was printed; in 1860, this last published a treaty inspired namely to Blanch 34, whose Della scienza was in turn translated into French. In 1860 Carlo De Cristoforis (1824-1859), the next after Blanch among the most prominent military writers of Risorgimento, quoted Clausewitz seventeen times, while not including Vom Kriege in the list of books consulted (approximately forty). De Cristoforis,
however, took nothing from Clausewitz, being rather obsessed by the principle of the mass, which he believed to have discovered first.

Despite Wilhelm Rüstow served under Garibaldi, it seems he did not export *Vom Kriege* among Italian democrats of the Risorgimento. But in 1883 the Garibaldinian General Antonio Gandolfi quoted *Vom Kriege* for rejecting the criticism against the Two Worlds Hero, whose guerrilla generalship had been professionally discredited by dogmatic and Jominian-minded officers of the regular army.

As well known, the French-Prussian War was responsible for the fortune of *Vom Kriege*. In 1873 it was translated for the first time in English and in 1875 Niccola Marselli (1832-1899), an Italian officer educated in the Hegelian clubs of Naples, discussed the Clausewitzian ideas about moral factors in depth. Marselli, having abandoned idealism and converted to positivism, disagreed with the impossibility of creating a complete theory of war, and asserted his faith in a positive science of War. Nevertheless Marselli criticized the doctrinarism of Jomini and admired Clausewitz to the point where he considered him to be a precursor of positivism.

Despite the Prussian influence upon the Italian army and Italy being in the Triple Alliance, Marselli’s attempt at importing *Vom Kriege* into Italy’s military culture was far too forced and superficial to succeed. Italian Marxists also paid no attention to Marx and Engels’s Clausewitzian lectures that Franz Mehring (1846-1919) suggested them. It took half century before a new Clausewitzian wave to come forth into the Italian culture. And when that time came, it was the Axis time.

In 1925 Colonel Emilio Canevari (1892-1966), a brilliant officer from Viterbo who fell in disgrace during the Re-conquest of Libya, began a new life as freelance journalist, publishing an anthology *Marte* of great captains and military writers with Giuseppe Prezzolini (1882-1982). Then Canevari became the military columnist (under the pseudonym of “Maurizio Claremoris”) of *Il Regime Fascista*, the newspaper owned by Roberto Farinacci (1892-1945). In 1930 he published an essay on Clausewitz and Modern War (*Clausewitz e la guerra odierna*). It took four years, however, before a political detainee like Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) could read a notice of the book. He commented in his notebook that *Vom Kriege* was not yet translated in Italian, that the only book in circulation was that of Canevari, and that Admiral Sirianni, in a paper, misspelled the Clausewitz’s name writing «Clausewitz». Nevertheless the
entry “Clausewitz” of the 1931 *Enciclopedia Italiana*, written by General Alberto Baldini, director of *Esercito e Nazione*, is clever, analytic and supported by a good international as well as Italian bibliography, including Marselli and Canevari[^42].

One can only suppose that the book Canevari wrote also spurred the short intervention on Clausewitz written in the late 1933 by Benedetto Croce (1866-1952[^43]). The philosopher, however, does not quote Canevari: he indeed had a direct and better knowledge of *Vom Kriege* (in its 5th Edition of 1905) and of the relevant literature[^44]. Croce agrees with Roques about the influence Machiavelli had on Clausewitz, refusing the supposed Hegelian imprinting[^45]. According to him, the contrast between the “Generalstabs-Gelehrsamkeit” (staff pedantry) and “kräftige natürliche Denken” (thought naturally penetrant) made by Clausewitz in his study of the Russian campaign, brings to mind the superb Tolstoian picture of the Allied Council of War on the eve of Austerlitz, in which the Author contrasts the dozing of Hero Kutusov to the fatuous exposition of the plan made by the Austrian General Kalckreuth (“energetic and self-confident with his *marschiren, attackiren*”). According to Croce, “what Clausewitz states about the connection between theory and practice in war is the same in each other field; f. e. in poetry (just to take a distant example)”. But it is impossible to summarize such an essay. Croce wrote also two notes on a quotation of the Italian novel *I Promessi Sposi* made by Clausewitz[^46] and the influence the Kantian aesthetic had upon *Vom Kriege*[^47].

Despite the fact that Canevari was nearly to be seen as a star, considering the extreme modesty of Italian Interwar military thought, there was nothing original about his approach to *Vom Kriege*, in that it reflected the exploitation of Clausewitz as the *Völkisch* Hero of Tauroggen during the Interwar period in Germany, while the true geniality of Clausewitz referred to the German Staff as a collective entity[^48]. What Hew Strachan states about Walter Malmsten Schering, “the leading academic commentator of Clausewitz in Nazi Germany”, and General Friedrich von Cochenhausen, the major propagandist of the Reichswehr and then Wehrmacht, can also be said of Canevari. They all agreed that “absolute war was an ideal construct, not a reality”, and had some difficulty getting a handle on the new catchword of “total war”[^49]. Indeed, in December 1937 (see *La Vita Italiana*) Canevari polemized against the attempt philosopher Julius Evola made to found the totalitarian state, mixing the Schmittian *Begriff des Politischen* and the total war Erich Ludendorff had theorized. According to the rough Colonel, those are all
“Begriffi” (sic, in Italian) of German professors, which Hitler did not take seriously.

During the Second World War the old English translation of *Vom Kriege* was reprint in Great Britain, and a new translation was published in the United States, as well as three selections, a commentary and a West Point study on Jomini, Clausewitz and Schlieffen. Moreover the editors of Princeton *Makers of Modern Strategy* commissioned the chapter on Clausewitz to a true specialist, the German Jewish historian Hans Rothfels (1891-1976). These seminal Clausewitzian studies were part of the Western intellectual mobilization against the Axis. In Italy, instead, the contemporary Clausewitzian issues were part of an apparent and propagandistic Germanization of the Italian Army, and marked the change from the “Parallel War” to the “Axis War” in 1941.

Suspected to have inspired Farinacci’s reprimand which led Marshal Badoglio to resign, Canevari was pardoned by the new chief of staff Marshal Cavallero. He joined the Historical service of the Army Staff (“Ufficio storico”), led by General and Senator Ambrogio Bollati (1871-1950), to cooperate at the Italian translation of *Vom Kriege*. Bollati had experience translating, having already translated Hindenburg, von Bernardi and Falkenhayn, as well as many documents of the German State and Austrian War archives. Paradoxically enough, there would be no written documents about the translation: according to the oral tradition of the Ufficio storico, the true translator was actually an academician and Bollati and Canevari only revised the military terminology. Quite surprisingly, the Google-books list of the Clausewitzian works published in all languages during the Second World War does not include the Ufficio storico translation, perhaps because it did not circulate outside the Army Staff. There are, however, two partial translations on the google list that were both published by Le Monnier in 1942 and Sansoni in 1943. They are only Italian editions of propagandistic pamphlets published in the Third Reich (in the Google list they are eight, from 48 to 199 pages in length, with titles as *Brevier, Kathechismus, Grundgedanken* and so on).

**Italian contributions to the Clausewitz-Renaissance**

The political misfortune of Clausewitz reached bottom when Hitler named after him the desperate plan to defend Berlin. Werner Hahlweg (1912-89) was, with his 1952 critical edition and his 1957 short biography, to restore him to
the quietness of the military studies. In 1954 Gerhard Ritter (1888-1966) assessed the genesis of Clausewitzian thought from an historical perspective, and in 1961 General Ulrich de Maizière (1912-2006), the maker of the Bundeswehr, founded the Clausewitzian Society (Clausewitz-Gesellschaft). Initially, however, approval of *Vom Kriege* was limited to German scholars, as is proven by its anthological application to the nuclear era written by Gerd Stamp, a former ace of the Luftwaffe who was working for NATO at the time. In 1963, however, Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) brought Clausewitz back to the German tragic history, with his harsh comparison between the rebellion of General York at Tauroggen in 1812 and those of de Gaulle (1940) and Salan (1962) and his critic of the Clausewitzian “Prussianism”.

In these two auroral decades, when outside Germany only Peter Paret worked on Clausewitz in original way, Piero Pieri was to popularize *Vom Kriege* once more in postwar Italy, beyond the circle of uniformed scholars. His 1955 study on Italian military writers primarily regards the connection between war and politics, but in the chapter about Marselli the Clausewitzian epistemology of the military science is also discussed. In his 1962 *Storia militare del Risorgimento*, Pieri quoted, if only, some Clausewitzian *loci*, such as that “an attack exhaust itself in progressing” or the “result is proportionate to the risk assumed” (with regard to the Sardinian plans in 1848 and Garibaldi’s caution at the battle of Velletri). Furthermore, he summarized the pivotal ideas of *Vom Kriege*, in four pages (157-160), using them to criticize Blanch and De Cristoforis.

Clausewitz was also quoted in Raimondo Luraghi’s history of the American Civil War, one of the most valuable Italian contributions to military history, published in 1966. Despite the fact that the Unionist Army was largely influenced by Jominian Generals, Mahan and Halleck, Luraghi considered the supremacy of the political authority that characterized the Union’s high command to be “Clausewitzian”, albeit he reported with some caution that President Lincoln would have been among the few Americans to have actually read *On War*. According to Luraghi, whereas McClellan’s concern to avoid risk contradicted Clausewitz, the Grant’s concern for logistics brings to mind the idea of the war as an act of commerce, in which battle is the spot payment; and Grant at Pittsburg Landing incarnated the Clausewitzian genius of war.

In the Sixties, Ernesto Ragionieri (1926-75) and Clemente Ancona contributed to the studies on the Clausewitzian lectures of Marx and Lenin,
and Filippo Gaja, director of *Maquis*, the only military periodical of the Italian Left, published an integral translation of the Lenin notes on *Vom Kriege*\(^{63}\). In 1966 Gerhard Ritter’s *Staatskunst und Kriegshandwerk*\(^{64}\) and Gerd Stamp’s *Clausewitz im Atomzeitalter* were also translated in Italian. It must be noted, however, that the translation of the title of this last misspells Clausewitz’s name, “Clausewi*zt*”, an error that evidently was considered by publisher, if even noted, to be acceptable to Italian readers!\(^{65}\) Nevertheless it was just a popular magazine to publish a superb Clausewitzian bonsai of Lucio Ceva\(^{66}\). In 1969 *Politik und Strategie* by the Bundesmarine Admiral Ruge (1894-1985) was translated\(^{67}\): while the translations of the Glucksman potpourri\(^{68}\) and of the Hahlweg *Krieg ohne Fronten*\(^{69}\) were fall-outs of the Giangiacomo Feltrinelli’s revolutionary obsessions. This first wave of the renewed attention to Clausewitz in postwar Italy culminated in 1970 with the paperback reprint (by Mondadori, one of major Italian publishers), of the 1942 translation of *Vom Kriege*, thus guaranteeing for the first time its countrywide circulation\(^{70}\).

A century after the French-Prussian War, which secured the fortune of *Vom Kriege*, a new Western defeat, that of the United States in Vietnam, ensured the definitive foundation of the Clausewitzian studies. Just in 1976 the new English translation of Paret and Michael Howard, the two fundamental essays of Paret and Aron and a new essay of a student of Hahlweg\(^{71}\) were published.

Looking with admiration to the East German military mass education, Colonel Rodolfo Guiscardo opened back to 1974 the nationalistic cult of Clausewitz\(^{72}\). In 1975 a small Maoist group included Volksbewaffnung in a manual for resistance against a coup d’état\(^{73}\). Since 1976 Luigi Bonanate began quoting *Vom Kriege* in his essays on international system\(^{74}\) and the Italian military quarterlies echoed Clausewitzian wave starting in NATO colleges\(^{75}\). But it was only in 1978 that the then Lt Colonel Carlo Jean brought *Vom Kriege* to the Italian Army\(^{76}\). That was part of a cultural process, which in the next decade lead to the birth of the Military Center for Strategic Studies (CeMiSS).\(^{77}\) Jean started his academician career editing two books (*Il pensiero strategico* and *La guerra nel pensiero politico*), both published by Franco Angeli in 1985 and 1987. In 1985 Lt Colonel Ferruccio Botti, initially paired with Ilari, began his research for systematizing the Italian military literature\(^{78}\). Commenting on the Italian reception of *Vom Kriege* (pp. 288 ff.), the authors noted its political ambiguity. In fact, while affirming the supremacy of politics, the Prussian General transplanted, for the first time, the theory of war from political theory
to military literature. In so doing, he founded a new “strategic” - if not at all militaristic - vision of politics, thus legitimating rulers to subordinate the “political logic” to the “military grammar”\(^7^9\). In 1989 the Italian Army quarterly (*Rivista Militare*, then directed by Colonel Piergiorgio Franzosi, who, like Jean, was part of the Alpine troops) reprinted the 1970 edition of *Vom Kriege*, adding Jean’s 1978 essay as the introduction; Mondadori later kept this structure for its following reprints. In 1990-93 Franzosi published also nine Clausewitzian studies by Colonel Quinzio\(^8^0\), Generals Vittorio Bernard\(^8^1\) and Giulio Primicerij\(^8^2\), among others\(^8^3\). There were also some would be Clausewitzian guides for managers and traders\(^8^4\).

A Clausewitzian renaissance occurred also in the field of the Italian philosophical and political studies. This renaissance of sorts was initially a fall-out of the popularity that Carl Schmitt had in Italy’s Leftist culture at the time, and may be traced back to 1981, when *Theorie des Partisanen* was translated in Italian\(^8^5\). Umberto Curi\(^8^6\), Pier Franco Taboni\(^8^7\), Luciano Guerzoni\(^8^8\), Massimo Mori\(^8^9\), Ettore Passerin d’Entrêves\(^9^0\), Michele Barbieri\(^9^1\), Loris Rizzi\(^9^2\), Anna Loretoni\(^9^3\), Gianfranco Frigo\(^9^4\), Federico Dalpane\(^9^5\) followed. Mori, Barbieri, Rizzi, Loretoni, Jean and Luciano Bozzo held a seminar in 1988, at the Forum on Peace and War, Florence, on Clausewitz in the philosophical and political sciences\(^9^6\). Other Italian scholars discovered *Vom Kriege* through Aron\(^9^7\). In 1993 Nicola Labanca edited an abridged translation of the 1986 *Makers of Modern Strategy*\(^9^8\) and Angelo Panebianco the 1978 *Philosophers of War and Peace* by W. B. Gallie (1912-1998)\(^9^9\).

While Italian philosophers massacred *Vom Kriege*, the 1994 and 1995 essays of Christopher Bassford and Olaf Rose on its reception in English and in Russian\(^1^0^0\) inspired in 1996 Andrea Molinari, a candidate for the ephemeral Italian PhD in military history, to propose a research project on the Clausewitzian reception in Italy. The PhD board (formed by the Universities of Turin, Padua and Catholic), however, rejected the proposal by a majority, on the ground that it was not consistent with the Italian approach to military history. Accidentally, some “splinters” of international debate on strategy and military history reach Italy too, but in a way reminding flotsam picked up ashore by prying natives. When that occurs, Italian publishers generally apply Gresham’s law\(^1^0^1\). Therefore none of the fundamental contributions to Clausewitzian studies published in the last decade of the past\(^1^0^2\) and in the first of the new Century\(^1^0^3\) have been translated, with the only exception of some essays written by Andreas Herberg-Rothe\(^1^0^4\), of the Hew Strachan’s scholastic
biography of Clausewitz, and of two philosophical icons as *La guerre dans les sociétés modernes* by Julien Freund (1923-1993) and *Achever Clausewitz* by René Girard.

The Italian books the present decade that discuss Clausewitz, are two manuals of strategic studies, written by General Jean and Giacomello-Badialetti, a topic treaty of Admiral Sanfelice, a further reduced edition of *Vom Kriege*, and *excerpta* in two anthologies of political and military writers. Besides, Marco Menicocci unwittingly recycled the old thesis of Hegelian influence upon *Vom Kriege* that was rejected by Roques and Croce, Massimiliano Guareschi upended the *Fortsetzung* formula leveraging upon Foucault and Guattari, while Gian Mario Bravo quoted Clausewitz in a short history of militarism and pacifism that culminated in Norberto Bobbio as did Paolo Ceola in an essay on contemporary war as a “labyrinth.” According to Antonino Drago and Francesco Pezzullo the frequent recurrence of the double negative betrays the logical weakness of the Clausewitzian definitions. In 2010 the Farefuturo Foundation inaugurated its new quarterly publishing the 1967 essay of Carl Schmitt on Clausewitz as a political thinker.

**The most original among recent Italian lectures**

As seen, Italian lectures on Clausewitz relate to the philosophical and political sciences rather than to strategic studies or military history, and their qualitative standard appears to have declined in the last decade. Some contributions would none the less deserve the attention of the international community of Clausewitzian students. The best is still, in our opinion, Gian Enrico Rusconi’s essay on the collapse of the European balance in 1914, in which he defends, against Delbrück and Liddell Hart, the Clausewitzian rationality of the Schlieffen Plan, and attributes to German government rather than to German Staff the responsibility for the outbreak of the war. In 1999 Rusconi published a new, and larger contribution, which is not only a much more detailed and penetrant biography of the Prussian General than Strachan’s, but also a profound analysis of *Vom Kriege*, of its ideas and methods, as well as of its fortune and fate in historical perspective. Correcting the Schmittian vision of the Clausewitz’s Prussianism, Rusconi investigates the “Prussian syndrome”, which aimed to strengthen Germany without mining the European balance, and was absolutely incompatible with the Hitlerian subversion. Furthermore
Rusconi contributed a new, albeit partial, translation of Vom Kriege, with a wide and clever Introduction\textsuperscript{122}.

The comparison between the Chinese Seven Classics and Vom Kriege made in 1998 by General Fabio Mini was also noteworthy. According to him, when analyzed from an Oriental point of view, the opposition between Jominian and Clausewitzian legacies vanishes and the latter appears to truely be the focal point of Western military thinking. According to Mini, the implementation of Clausewitzian theories by the Western armies made them appear mechanical, stiff and static while the Chinese classics seemed more human, flexible and dynamic. Mini notes also that when the Japanese strategy referred to “Chinese” classics it was astonishing and successful, as in the Russian-Japanese War, while it was disastrous when following a “Clausewitzian” approach like in the Second World War\textsuperscript{123}.

Other good Italian texts included the 2006 Alessandro Colombo comparison between Clausewitzian and Grotian ideas of “limited war”\textsuperscript{124}, and the Clausewitzian interpretation that Jean made in 2002 of the War on Terror as “confrontation of strength” and “clash of wills”, and where the moral factor is that which is at stake (“to conquer hearts and minds”)\textsuperscript{125}. Not less important were, in the field of military history, the applications of Clausewitzian categories made by Luigi Loreto, namely in his 1993 essay on Caesar, in which, f. e., he employs the concept of friktion to interpret the Caesarian BG VI and BC III as “the books of the casus”\textsuperscript{126}. We owe him, in 2007, a masterpiece of the Italian military history (The Great Strategy of Rome in the First Punic War)\textsuperscript{127}, whose geniality aggravates his Liddell-Hartian sin. May Heaven forgive him!

Notes:

\textsuperscript{1} This article had been discussed with Luigi Loreto, the leading Italian specialist of ancient military history, and submitted to Prof. Gian Enrico Rusconi, the Italian specialist of Clausewitz, and to Generals Carlo Jean and Fabio Mini, the most prominent Italian uniformed scholars in the early XXI\textsuperscript{st} Century.

\textsuperscript{2} C. v. Clausewitz, Hinterlassene Werke, IV, 342. This essay has still not been translated into Italian. French translation by Jean Colin, La campagne d'Italie, Paris, 1901 (Paris, Pocket, 1999, with a prefatory note by Gérard Chaliand).

\textsuperscript{3} See Piero Pieri, Storia militare del Risorgimento, Torino, Einaudi, 1962, p. 788.
Machiavelli’s influence on Clausewitz is evident and well known, less so that of Montecuccoli. Elaborating on this topic is beyond the scope of this chapter, but we want to point out a particularly remarkable comparison of Clausewitz and Montecuccoli in Raimondo Luraghi, “Il Pensiero e l’Azioni di Raimondo Montecuccoli” in Andrea Pini (Ed.), *Raimondo Montecuccoli: Teoria, Pratica Militare, Politica e Cultura nell’Europa del Seicento*, Atti del Convegno, Modena, 4-5 October 2002, pp. 19-30.


See V. Ilari, “Guerre di coalizione e operazioni combinate”, in N. Ronzitti (Ed.), *Comando e controllo nelle Forze di pace e nelle coalizione militari: Contributo alla riforma della Carta delle Nazioni Unite*, Milano, Angeli, 1999 (full version on www.scribd.com/doc/10972013/Coalizioni). This is one of the points in *Vom Kriege* largely ignored: f. e., according to Franco Apicella, an Italian General who worked a long time both at NATO HQs and in international staffs, Clausewitz would never have examined the issue of the unity of command”; see Apicella’s “A proposito dell’unità di comando”, 28 August 2002, in www.paginedidifesa.it).

Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p. 307. On the other hand, General Jean suggests that the “Italian way in Peacekeeping”, so appreciated in recent international operations, which relays on the Italian tradition of “Commedia dell’arte” and “arte di arrangiarsi” (the art of improvising on the spur of the moment), may be seen as naturaliter Clausewitzian (paraphrasing Molière, to be “Clausewitzian without knowing it”; or Antonio Gramsci’s famous dictum: “the worker is a philosopher without knowing it”). For a substantially different view on Italy’s peacekeeping, see Piero Ignazi, Giampiero Giacomello and Fabrizio Coticchia. *Italy’s Military Operations Abroad: Just Don’t Call It War*, Palgrave, Basingstoke and New York, 2011.

Admiral Bill Owens with Edward Offley, *Lifting the Fog of War*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 2001. According to the Authors, the Network Centric Warfare, “this new revolution [in Military Affairs] challenges the hoary dictums about the fog and friction of war”.

See his V *dialogus de juris interpretibus*.


As Luigi Loreto pointed out, the Caesarian equivalent to our “strategy”, but also to our “warfare”, are *ratio et consilium* (*BG* 1, 40, 8-9; *BC* 1, 72, 2). *Belli ratio* meaning “conduct of operations”; *nova vincendi ratio*, *alia ratio*, *baec ratio* (*novus genus pugnae*) ”a new way to fight or to win” (“Pensare la guerra in Cesare”, in Diego Poli (Ed.), *La cultura in Cesare*, Roma, 1993, I, pp. 239-343). Caesar, *BC*, 1, *baec tum ratio* (*dimicandi* nostros perturbant, insuetos huius genus pugnae). However in two passages of the Tacitus’s Histories *ratio* seems to imply “logic” of war: *obstabat ratio belli* (*Hist*. 4, 63): *ulcisci ratio belli* (*Hist*. 3, 51). In Cicero and Livius, namely in the form *ratio belli gerendi*, means both the cause (or pretext) for waging war and the way it is fought (as *ratio belli bene gerendi*, *belli administratio*). Quite surprisingly, this expression was not developed by the literature on the “Ragion di Stato”, with the well known definition of war as the *ultima ratio regum*. Francesco Guicciardini uses it to mean “reason for war”: “Lost the castle, I confess that *mutata fuit ratio belli gerendi*” (Lettera CLXXXII al Protonotario Gambara, Piacenza, 9 November 1520).

Among his valuable contributions to Italian military culture, General Fabio Mini, former military attaché at Beijing, was to import the current international studies about Chinese strategic thought to Italy. See his *L'altra strategia. I classici del pensiero militare cinese dalla guerra al marketing*, Angeli, Milano, 1998. Id., *La Guerra dopo la guerra, Soldati, burocrati e mercenari nell’epoca della pace virtuale*, Torino, Einaudi, 2003; Id. *Guerra senza limiti*, (LEG 2001) his Italian editing of the work of the PLA Senior Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui who
were so Clausewitzian in their analysis of the Gulf war (1991) and so “oriental” in their prophecy about asymmetrical and terror wars.

16 I. Duyvesteyn and J. Angstrom (Eds.), Rethinking the Nature of War, Frank Cass, London 2005. The most prominent among the Italian “Kaldorians” is Nicola Labanca, (Guerre vecchie, guerre nuove). Comprendere I conflitti armati contemporanei, Pearson Paravia Bruno Mondadori, 2009). Instead, from a Schmittian perspective, the concept of “new wars” appears a naive mystification of the “Imperial peace enforcing”, and the “novelty” regards not the supposed “nature” of war, but the substantial shifting of the effective and formal War powers from the National States to the President of the United States, acting as the Roman universal emperor (see Ilari, “Debellare superbos”, in Palomar, VIII, No. 3, july 2008, pp. 6-76, and online in www.scribd.com).

long or he will ...", "adapt to your tactics", completes another soldier (from Wikipedia, “Carl von Clausewitz (…) in popular culture”).


19 See V. Ilari, “*Imitatio, restitutio, utopia: la storia militare antica nel pensiero strategico moderno*”, in Marta Sordi (ed.), *Guerra e diritto nel mondo greco e romano*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2002, p. 269-381.


21 In the film *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), General Allenby (Jack Hawkins) contends to T. E. Lawrence (Peter O'Toole) that “I fight like Clausewitz, you fight like (Maurice de) Saxe.” To which Lawrence replies, “We should do very well indeed, shouldn't we?” (from Wikipedia, “Carl von Clausewitz (…) in popular culture”).


25 Indeed, for however acute, the Clausewitzian observations in this field are not new. The reciprocal influence between tactics and fortification, f. ex., as it was developed by a French contemporary of Clausewitz, Commandant Jean-Baptiste Imbert, in a study on Vauban published in 1835, was more precise


27 “But, at last, would be that a limit? History can appear, to the classicist mind, as an améthodos hyle; and however it has a method and a sense, for Greek and Roman historians, method and sense differently depending the epochs and the authors (...) they consider the améthodos hyle dominated by fortune and virtue, and however they know how give a meaning and a soul to it” (Mazzarino, Il Pensiero, II2, pp. 376-77).


30 Mariano d’Ayala, Bibliografia militare italiana, Torino, Stamperia Reale, 1854.


32 L’arte della guerra: Estratto di una nuova istoria militare delle guerre della rivoluzione di Francia del Barone Jomini,. Tenente generale, ajutante di campo di S. M. l’Imperatore di tutte le Russie, Prima edizione italiana coll’ original e a fronte, Napoli, 1816. Vita politica e militare di Napoleone, raccontata da lui medesimo al tribunale di Cesare, Alessandro e Federico, Livorno, tip. Vignozzi, 1829. Sunto dell’arte della guerra o nuovo quadro analitico delle principali combinazioni della strategia, della grande tattica e della politica militare, del Barone de Jomini, Generale in capo Ajutante Generale di S. M. l’Imperatore di tutte le Russie, prima traduzione dal francese fatta sull’ultima edizione di Parigi 1838, considerabilmente accresciuta, C[arlo] B[ertini], Napoli, dalla Stamperia dell’Iride, 1855. The latter (i. e. the Précis) was reprinted in 1864 at Agrigento, but the next translation (Sommario dell’arte della guerra, 1837/1838) came to light not before 2008 (ed. Rivista Militare), and was interrupted by the death of Colonel Botti, who was able to translate and comment only the first three chapters.

33 In a sound and pro-Italian study on the Sardinian Army, the anonymous French author wrote: “toutes les écoles (d’artillerie) sont à l’arsenal, où il y a une Bibliothèque bien dotée et assez fournie d’ouvrages militaires, mais peu fréquentée” (“Notice sur l’Etat Militaire de la Sardaigne”, in Bulletin des Sciences Militaires, VIII, janvier-juin 1830, N. 150, p. 372). The progress, in contemporary times, is that the Italian Military Libraries had directly wasted their books.

34 Duparcq, Histoire de l’art de la guerre avant l’usage de la poudre, Paris, Ch. Tanera, 1860. The book includes (pp. 297-307) an essay of Blanch on the works of Duparcq (originally published in the monthly Diorama di Napoli) in which its Commentaire on Clausewitz is obviously mentioned.

35 Carlo De Cristoforis, Che cosa sia la guerra, 1860; 1894; 1925.


38 Niccola Marselli, La guerra e la sua storia, 1875.


40 Actually, this statement was not quite accurate, considering the excerpt from Vom Kriege chosen and translated by Colonel Oete Blatto (Della guerra. Pagine scelte, transl. by A. Beria and W. Müller, Torino, Schioppo, 1930).


epistemologico delle scienze militari”, pp. 171 ff.). Aron does not quote this essay in his Clausewitz of 1976, but in his Memories (p. 666 of the Italian edition) he reveals that he was stimulated to write on Clausewitz by the hard observation Croce made, which we have quoted as epigraph of the present study.


45 Suggested by Colonel Creuzinger, Hegels Einfluss auf Clausewitz, 1911.

46 Un ricordo dei “Promessi sposi” in una lettera del Clausewitz (comparison between the plague in Milan and the cholera epidemic in Poland), in La Critica, XXXII, N. 5 (III serie a. VIII) 20.9.1934, pp. 399-400 (= Pagine sparse, III, pp. 242-3).


51 Bollati was also the Author of one of the famous books (that his on the Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War) missed from the Einaudi’s Catalog after the fall of Fascism (Vittorio Messori, «Il giallo dei libri scomparsi», Corsera 11 luglio 1998).


On the point see Bassford, *Cl. in English*, *cit.*, p. 50.


Jean was supported by some young academician, who flavored these initiatives with naïve patriotism, and a megalomaniac idea to prussianize Italian Army, parroting Scharnhorst & Gneisenau. General Jean smiled, the Italian Staff did not even notice. See V. Ilari, “Gli studi strategici in Italia”, tracing inter alia the history of CeMiSS and of the insertion of the strategic studies and military history into the curricula of Italian universities (this study is online at the site www.scribd.com with the title “strategic studies in Italy”).


84 Mario Unnia, Della guerra aziendale: Clausewitz riletto dal manager: come sopravvivere e fare carriera nelle ristrutturazioni aziendali, Milano, Edizioni dell’Olifante, 1983; Antonio Bomberini, Lezioni di cultura strategica e psicologica dei mercati per managers e traders: una rilettura critica de L’arte della guerra di Sun Tzu e de Il libro dei cinque anelli di Miyamoto Musashi in compagnia del Della guerra di Carl Von Clausewitz, Desenzano del Garda, Borsari, 2003.


89 Mario Mori, La ragione delle armi. Guerra e conflitto nella filosofia classica tedesca (1770-1830), Milano, Il Saggiatore, 1984.

90 Ettore Passerin d’Entrèves, Guerra e riforme. La Prussia e il problema nazionale tedesco prima del 1848, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1985, pp. 37-50 (critics to Mori, nt. 20).


92 Loris Rizzi, Clausewitz. L’arte militare nell’eta nucleare, Milano, Rizzoli, 1987, a precise and exhaustive compte-rendu of the international Clausewitzian studies and their impact on the debate about the nuclear dissuasion.
According to her, the Clausewitzian political realism, insofar as it is based on structure rather than on experience, differs from neo-classic realism (as exempled by Morgenthau) and is more congruent with the neo-realism of Kenneth Waltz and the Rousseauvian internationalism.

94 Ed. of Clausewitz’s Letter on Machiavelli (1809) as an appendix to the Fichte’s essay, Gallo, Ferrara 1990, pp. 121-8.


98 Nicola Labanca, “I due makers of modern strategy”, in Peter Paret (cur.), Guerra e strategia nell'età contemporanea, Genova, Marietti, 1992, pp. 7-32


101 There are of course exceptions, as Gorizia’s LEG which called on the expertise of specialist General Mini, but there are not enough of such examples to fill the gap. F. e., despite his valuable critics to the Western conduct of the War
on Terror, James S. Corum is known in Italy only for his 1992 study on the roots of Blitzkrieg, translated and prefaced by General Mini in 2004 (Le origini del Blitzkrieg: Hans von Seeckt e la riforma militare tedesca: 1919-1933, LEG, Gorizia 2004).


Gastone Breccia (Ed.); _L’arte della guerra da Sun Zu a Clausewitz_, Torino, Einaudi, 2009, pp. cxxxvi-vii. After have told us that _Vom Kriege_ disappointed him when he was wargaming Raimondo Luraghi’s _American Civil War_, Prof. Breccia states that “is undoubtedly wrong to consider (Clausewitz and Jomini) two opposite poles of the 19th Century military thought”.

Posted the 20 October 2002 in www.recensionifilosifiche.it.

Massimiliano Guareschi, _Ribaltare Clausewitz. La guerra in Michel Foucault e Deleuze-Guattari_, Roma, Centro di Studi e Iniziative per la Riforma dello Stato, 2005.


121 Gian Enrico Rusconi, Clausewitz il Prussiano. La politica della guerra nell’equilibrio europeo, Torino, Einaudi, 1999.


126 Pensare la guerra in Cesare, I, cit., pp. 271-72.