

Why We Want to Create Nuova Antologia Militare

The title of the Journal and the logo of the Italian Society of Military History (SISM) indicate an ideal continuity with *Antologia Militare*, the first Italian military journal which was published from 1835 to 1846 in Naples. NAM is the result of a “militant” and forty-year experience of the history and epistemology of military historiography and strategic studies, which began in the last decade of the Cold War, when in Italy the Defence Studies and Research Institute was founded (chaired by Senator Vittorelli), as well as the Interuniversity Centre for Military History Studies and Research (founded by Giorgio Rochat, Piero Del Negro and Filippo Frassati), the Italian Society of Military History (founded by Raimondo Luraghi, Virgilio Ilari, Mariano Gabriele, Massimo Mazzetti, Giuseppe Conti, Alberto Santoni, Antonio Pelliccia, Marco Grandi e Michele Nones), the Military Centre for Strategic Studies of the Ministry of Defence (founded by General Carlo Jean), the Chairs of the History of Military Institutions at the Catholic University of Milan (Ilari) and Strategic Studies at the Luiss (Jean), the Milan Military Library (by Angelo Pirocchi) and the *Limes* journal founded by Lucio Caracciolo. Developments were witnessed by the CeMiSS Research Series (ed. by *Rivista Militare*, the Italian Army Journal, then by FrancoAngeli), by the proceedings of national and international conferences held between 1969 and 1999, by the *Guida alla storia militare italiana* (ESI, Naples, 1997) edited by Piero Del Negro and from the doctoral research program in military history between the Universities of Turin (Rochat), Padua (Del Negro) and Cattolica of Milan (Ilari).

These early developments, contemporaneous and in part connected with analogous developments in the rest of the West, somewhat stalled in Italy however, whilst at the very same time, consequent to the end of the Cold War and the end of ideological prejudices, the social demand for the study and information on military matters and war increased. This demand, however, was not one that Italian academic and publishing structures were able to adequately respond to, with the consequence that the demand was above all met by amateurs and the media; Italian production was therefore not able to keep up with growing international standards of military historiography and strategic studies. The developments have been amply documented in the bibliographic essay “Per una epistemologia della storia militare” included in the volume *Clausewitz in Italia e altre lezioni di storia militare* (Roma, Aracne, 2019, pp. 241-276).

Beginning in 2010, academics of recognized military history specialization, albeit in an insufficiently coordinated manner, nevertheless began to produce a corpus of reference texts of a scientific nature, in particular: the CISRM series (Unicopli, edited by Nicola Labanca), the series of the new Centre for Studies on the Police and the Control of Territory (Centro Studi sulle Polizie e il Controllo del Territorio) (Rubbettino, edited by Livio Antonielli), the Sism series (Quaderni Sism, edited by Virgilio Ilari and financed by its members) and “Storia Politica, Costituzionale e Militare del Mondo Antico” (Jovene, edited by Luigi Loreto), and the *Rivista di Studi Militari* (Patron, edited by Giovanni Brizzi).

In particular, Sism (which is entirely financed by its 450 members and therefore immune to the sharp decrease in public funding for scientific research, as well as being well-established in international social networks for scientific sharing) – is equipped with a fundamental international bibliographic corpus (the 20k books Biblioteca Militare Italiana di Varallo Sesia and the 100k items Biblioteca Militare Digitale) that has allowed it to specialize its series of collective monographs (the “Quaderni Sism”) in the systematic treatment of avant-garde themes found in the international community of military historians, but which have been neglected in Italy. The *Quaderni Naval History* (2014), *War Films* (2015), *Future Wars* (2016), *Economic Warfare* (2017), *Over There in Italy* (2018) and *Italy on the Rimland* (2019), bring together a total of 305 articles (5k pages) by 250 authors, many of whom are foreigners (including Jeremy Black, Antulio Echevarria II, Christopher Bassford). The next projects concern *Geographic Warfare*, *Technology in War*, *Information Warfare*.

Antonello Biagini, Mariano Gabriele and Massimo De Leonardis have also constantly maintained the connection between military history research in universities and the activities of the Italian Commission for Military History (CISM), which was formed by the Uffici Storici degli Stati Maggiori, whose functions have recently been centralized in the Ufficio Storico dello SM Difesa. Numerous professors belonging to SISM have also maintained a connection with Defence education institutes as well as military, geopolitical, intelligence and security journals, including *Limes* and *Gnosis* (of AISI). Also significant is the growing Italian participation in the conferences of the International Commission for Military History, which resulted in the recent election of Massimo De Leonardis as president, the first Italian to hold the office.

Despite this, the lack of a serious debate on the epistemological status of military history in its multiple articulations (not only for “epoch”, but above all for “perspective” and “purpose”), has prevented the recognition by the Italian university system of the specific and necessarily interdisciplinary character of the scientific study of conflicts, wars, and the military. The effect of this lacuna in the Italian university system is the isolation of Italian research from the international community, leaving it entirely in the hands of the individual inclinations of autodidactic researchers, who are forced to compete in different disciplinary contexts and rarely able to evaluate their contributions due to a lack of specific competence and expertise.

This fragmentation is an obstacle to interdisciplinarity, which is indispensable for the recognition of the specificity of this field of study and for international co-operation. But it also a strong obstacle to knowledge-sharing and the collaboration of hundreds of scholars who, even outside of the academic system, conduct research mainly blindly.

The most immediate and dramatic consequence, however, is the impossibility of forming future military historians in Italian universities. The lack of tenured professorships and research doctorates condemns those who feel this is their vocation to eternal self-study, to the extreme difficulty in identifying teachers and orientations, and in the fear of not being really evaluated on their merit, as well as in scientific form. This forces many to move abroad, where not a few have established themselves, such as in the prestigious War Studies department of King's College in London.

Moreover, the demand for learning in military history has also begun to manifest itself in an organized manner through the ArsMilitaris group formed by undergraduates and PhD students at the University of Padua, which is also extending to the Alma Mater of Bologna. To meet this need for learning and qualifications, Sism has decided to specialize its new Aracne "Fucina di Marte" series in the free publication of the best doctoral theses, and to found an interdisciplinary academic journal that aspires to be "Grade-A", with the scope of offering authors, especially newcomers, a truly competent evaluation not only in relation to formal canons, but also to substantive ones.

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