

Vulcan

Aims & Scope

Vulcan is a peer-reviewed, international, interdisciplinary journal which aims to cover all aspects of the social and cultural contexts of military invention and innovation. It focuses on questions such as: how do the social and cultural environments within the military itself or in the larger society affect military technological change? And the indispensable corollary: how does changing military technology affect other aspects of society and culture? Articles will address military technology as both agent and object of social change.

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Vulcan (ISSN 2213-459X, e-ISSN 2213-4603) is published twice a year by BRILL, Plantijnstraat 2, 2321 JC Leiden, the Netherlands, tel +31 (0)71 535-3500, fax +31 (0)71 531-7532

Editorial Introduction

Academic and public interest in the history of military technology has always been substantial, but has usually been expressed in terms of weaponry, warships, fortifications, or other physical manifestations of warfare, with emphasis mainly on how they were made or how they worked, often in antiquarian detail. Historians have also tended to assume a strictly utilitarian and rational basis for military technological invention and innovation. However indispensable such approaches may be, they largely ignore some very important questions. What are the contexts of social values, attitudes, and interests, non-military as well as military, that shape and support (or oppose) these technologies? What are the consequences of gender, race, class, and other aspects of the social order for the nature and use of military technology? Or, more generally: How do social and cultural environments within the military itself or in the larger society affect military technological change? And the indispensable corollary: How does changing military technology affect other aspects of society and culture? In brief, this is a forum that addresses military technology as both agent and object of social change.

We propose to cast a wide net, taking a very broad view of technology and its wider ramifications that encompasses not only the production, distribution, use, and replacement of weapons and weapon systems, but also communications, logistic, medical, and other technologies of military relevance. We seek papers about representations of weapons as well as weapons themselves, about ideas as well as hardware, about organization as well as materiel. We seek articles that range widely in time and space to explore ways in which social class, race, gender, culture, economics, or other extra-military factors have influenced and been influenced by the invention, R&D, diffusion, or use of weapons or other military technologies.. In particular, we welcome papers on non-Western and premodern topics. We seek papers that address the roles that military technologies play in shaping and reshaping the relationships of soldiers to other soldiers; soldiers to military, political, and social institutions; and military institutions to other social institutions, most notably political and economic. We also welcome papers on historiographical or museological topics that discuss how military technology has been analyzed, interpreted, and understood in other fields, other cultures, and other times.

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