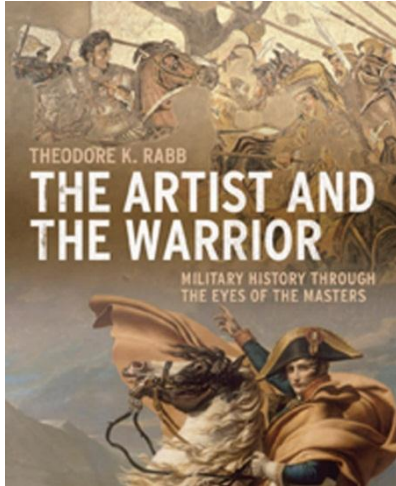


**The Artist and the Warrior: Military History through the Eyes of the Masters**, by Theodore Rabb. Yale University Press, January 2012. 288 p. ill. ISBN 9780300126372 (cl.), \$45.00; ISBN 9780300177510 (e-book), \$45.00.



Art and the military began their lock step march in the murky mists of oral traditions and emerged into visual history, coalescing around heroic legends and the search for communal identity. Even before opening this book, its cover illustrates this point. There is no more stirring image than the one Jacques-Louis David painted of Napoleon, astride his horse, following the footsteps of Hannibal and Charlemagne, crossing the Great St. Bernard Pass. In truncated form, he points the way forward on the bottom half of the cover seemingly towards Alexander the Great, the standard bearer for every general that came after him, in an image taken from a section of the mosaic in Pompeii. Emeritus professor of early modern Europe at Princeton University, Theodore K. Rabb begins his personal survey of war as seen through the eyes of artists in ancient times, ending in the present day.

Straddling the porous boundary between art history and history, sections of narrative history head each chapter, contextualizing the descriptive accounts of artworks and the artists that created them which follow each discussion. The narratives elucidate warfare's changing character, the nature of battles and weaponry used. Viewed through the prism of masters and masterpieces, Rabb's selected illustrations illuminate each narrative, hoping to not only show but answer the basic question of how artists responded to warfare across millennia.

Rabb's search for continuities in the art history of war runs throughout the book. Artists' emerging disenchantment with war, particularly with the advent of the modern era's idea of total, all-consuming war, went hand in hand with the movement towards abstraction, lending credence to John Keegan's notion of war as a cultural ritual where heroism and valor were celebrated until the twentieth century. Yet continuities are apparent. After finishing this book we journey backwards starting with Kubrick's use of Christian symbols linking him to the upraised arms in both *Guernica* and Rubens' *Horrors of War*, back to the figures of Eos and Memnon depicted on the Douris cup that could be a forerunner to medieval and Renaissance Pietás.

Geared towards the non-specialist and generalist, this eminently accessible volume is composed of a list of ninety-five figures illustrating the book, starting with an ancient Assyrian stone relief and ending with a still from Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*. Though the focus is European-centric, Japan, India, the Middle East, and United States are also covered. Eight chapters follow acknowledgments, and a forward explains the reasons behind Rabb's boundary setting criteria for this small publication. A discussion of film in the afterword, a bibliography, and index concludes the book.

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