



Beat

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Initially, we had initially considered discussing the word "battle" and its derivatives here, but it appeared to us that "beat", from which "battle" originated, took precedence. This is why we will talk about battle, combat, and battalion in a future issue of your magazine.

To beat comes to us from the Latin *battuere*, which means to strike, and most often repeatedly, as does the marshal who beats the iron while it is hot, but the cold beat that does not belong to him. It is the very principle of war and a good part of the warrior vocabulary at the same time, which gives it precedence.

The verb to beat is the principle of war as it designates its origin, its outcome and its goal. For hitting an adversary is the original act that turns any controlled conflict into violence that is by nature uncontrolled. It is also the smallest truly warlike activity, the most elementary action of battle, and the ultimate representation of war. One thinks of the furious melee of the German and French cuirassiers at Rezonville in Morot's painting (there are some who fight it cold in both senses of the word...).

To fight, in a second sense, also designates the objective pursued by each belligerent and the ultimate act by which always concludes the war. When one of the protagonists has to admit that, having received more blows than he was able to withstand, he is indisputably beaten, that is to say, defeated. Eminent orientalist will not have failed to observe all that this drift of meaning, of striking to be defeated, says about our warlike, strategic or tactical culture: In the West, to win consists in repulsing or overthrowing the enemy by beating him with blows, to butt him with a broken spear, a matter for a boxer and not for a judoka. Other terms have also undergone the same semantic evolution, such as *rosser*, which from the original meaning of hitting with a hard-on (from the Latin *rustia* which designates the hard-on) came to mean hitting in general and finally defeating, as well as the "to beat". The word of His Grace the Duke of Wellington is translated from the

Duke of Wellington's address to some ordinance officer on the morning of Waterloo morning, when he was deploying his army in the parades of the Forest of Soignes: "No doubt it will be said in London that we have been beaten..."

But beating is also the principle of the warrior vocabulary in that it has given combat, fight, beat down, battle and battle, battery, battalion, and all the expressions that result from it, and a quantity of expressions and warlike locutions or warlike inspiration : to beat the charge; to beat the chamade; to retreat; to retreat; to beat the woods, the thicket, the dais or the countryside, and so on.

It happens that one of the protagonists is clearly underneath and is beaten flat like a thick suit beaten and beaten up by the tailor to flatten the seams, or is beaten as a plaster as the plasterer does to ruin his plaster. Note what these expressions imply of inertia on the part of the defeated, either that he is not forced to face his opponent, or that the first blows have disempowered him. But since the man of war, unlike iron, stitching, plaster or earth, rarely lets himself be beaten without reacting, beating him almost always implies accepting to be beaten himself, to take blows in return, to exchange horions with him, in a word to fight each other. And it is obvious that fighting is not to be understood in a reflective sense, except in the case of the sentry of the third watch who slaps himself vigorously to escape the numbness while beating the sole in the hope of warming his feet.

The Elders did not have a high regard for violence any more than we do, even though they considered it a necessary evil, which is indicated by the words battery (like bickering, trickery, angry laughter, bed-wetting, etc.) which originally means the fact, or even mania, of fighting, or battle, which comes from the Italian battaglia, but whose ending in French takes on a slightly pejorative colouring (as in valetaille, marmaille, piétaille, boustifaille, etc.).

As hunters used to beat the bushes with sticks to flush out the game, it came to be said to beat to search a place and to beat down to designate the action of pushing someone with a loud noise in an opposite direction. Light infantry were sent to beat the wood, thicket, or edge (and as it became the custom to recruit these men from among the poachers, they were called hunters). The light cavalry was given the task of beating the dais, i.e., running the roads (from the Italian strada), or beating the countryside, in order to discover the enemy and intercept his defenders and dispatch carriers. As the comings and goings of the cavalry patrols evoke the seemingly erratic movements of the Sandman seeking the way, to beat the countryside and beat the dais eventually meant to wander aimlessly or to wander. And likewise, no doubt because scouts very often find nothing and pass by the enemy, the clumsy marksman came to be described as beating the countryside.

The meaning of the term evolved further with the progress of jet weapons and then firearms. Since beating an opponent meant hitting him, which is to say that the blows must reach a certain goal, it came to be said of a weapon whose projectiles—which were eventually called blows themselves—that it actually reached a goal or an objective, that it beat the objective. Then by further extension, the very possibility of hitting the target determined the meaning of the term and a field was considered beaten when weapons were positively capable of beating it. This is how a ground, a passage, an obstacle, were said to be beaten when no runner ran through it and no weapon fired at it, by the sole magic of the leader's will, who had skillfully placed shooters capable of effectively

beating any enemy that came along.

It is well understood that the principle according to which any obstacle must be beaten by fire does not imply that one is constantly shooting at the said obstacle.

Beating came to apply almost exclusively to the large-calibre fire hydrants which are described as heavy weapons. Hence the habit of calling the battery the group of guns, and then the very place that had to be set up to install these guns. So the battery was dug in and dug out after the trench was opened, and then you went in and out of the battery, which was a very difficult and perilous operation in those days when it took 8 to 12 horses to fire a siege piece. Since no one would just sit back and let them get beaten, they soon figured out a way to beat the enemy battery to prevent them from beating their objective, and so they counter-battered and counter-battered: and it was observed that counter-battery regained the original sense of action that was originally that of a battery.

Because of the modest ranges and the shape of the trajectories, the location of the first batteries was directly determined by the nature or purpose of the fire to be applied and the batteries were designated by their mission : So we had ricochet batteries, backhand, sling, enfilade, breach... The mission of the latter was to breach a curtain or more often still the face of a bastion, which in the seventeenth century was equivalent to sending a thousand balls at the foot of theThis operation usually led the governor to return the place, thus causing the chamade mentioned a little further on to be beaten.

Abattre, which at first meant to strike to the ground or to death, ended up meaning proudly simply to kill or to make fall, from where the verb drifted towards the prono minal in the sense of a voluntary and clearly aggressive fall: Thus the falcon fell on its prey and the Cossacks on the stragglers of the Grande Armée (figuratively because the Cossacks come out of the woods and do not fall from the sky), before, in the modern sky, the dive bombers shot down screaming sirens on the defenders of the Meuse bridges.

Percussion musical instruments play an eminent and universal role in psychology (or even neurology?).) warrior psychology, and since beating is synonymous with percussion, the drum was soon beaten and then, from the drum, the verb came to be applied directly to the music that was performed and used to animate the army. So they beat in the fields to announce the arrival of a general. The charge was beaten to initiate and encourage a rapid forward march to the main body. The battlefield was beaten to announce the intention to surrender the square or to bring the flag, and either the rapidity of the beat evoked the beating of the heart or the speed of the charge evoked the beating of the heart.The speed of the measure evoked the beating of the heart in love, or the surrender of the place evoked the end of the resistance of the beloved person, and the expression was passed on to the register of seduction. The diane was beaten at dawn to awaken the bivouac and the retreat in the evening to recall the patrols and chores sent outside the camp. They would retreat during the battle to order the army to give up the battlefield and, unlike Larousse, we don't think the expression meant "retreating" because it wasn't until the end of the 18th century that they could actually fight while retreating. Drums meant the very fact of beating, and the songs and signals played by the drums were soon called drums, and from there the word eventually came to mean the very people who were beating, and the drum corps became the drums. And because eggs were beaten very hard to make an omelette, and it took some dexterity, the soldiers called an omelette a very fast and powerful drum, and the drum corps became the drums.The

nickname remained with the famous Rigaudon d'honneur, a battery for virtuosos composed on the Emperor's orders to entertain the grunts during the long stay in the camp of Boulogne. To close this chapter, it should be noted that musical instruments are endowed with personality, and that the name of the instrument is given to the person playing it. This is how it is said that the invincible Mayençais came out of the square with drums beating and wicks lit as if, in a way, their drums had beaten all by themselves.

We close this section with the threshing and the verb to beat, which, like the drums, brings us back to considerations of noise and the transmission of orders. Shuffling always refers to the act of beating the ears, but to thresh is to advertise or advertise. But threshing also once referred to the ability of a gun to fire without obstacles, giving the threshing area, an angle within which no obstacle prevents pointing or firing. The relationship between the firing of the gun and the advertisement is not without question. Rabattre could give us a clue. After having been used in the sense of parrying a shot, folding came to mean pushing or pushing back in another direction. And as the retreaders beat the coppice with great noise in order to push the game towards the line of battle, sometimes a troop could be seen or heard for the sole purpose of attracting the enemy's attention or pushing him in the opposite direction. It often happened in the 17th and 18th centuries that the cavalry was given a mission to go out and make noise. And a frigate sent on reconnaissance would have to turn around in sight of the enemy and fall back on its squadron, announcing the enemy's arrival with cannon fire. This detail helps us to understand that the guns attached to the rear or forward detachments in the wars of the nineteenth century may not have been as effective as the guns attached to the front or rear detachments. It may have been the essential function of the guns attached to rear or forward detachments in the wars of the nineteenth century not to slow the enemy down or keep him at a distance, but to inform the command of the enemy's position much better and faster than a liaison officer could have done. In those days, marching to the gun was not only a way of speaking but an elementary act, and hooting was perhaps akin to giving the alert by cannon fire.

Where we see that the clash of arms is not only the effect of combat and battle, but often one of its essential goals when it is not the sole goal, which brings us back to the question of publicity on the one hand, and the nature of the battle on the other.

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