

Multilingualism in military education of the 16th and 17th centuries in the German language area

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In the 1520s, the first printed military manuals focusing on modern warfare appeared in the German language area. After mid-century, the quantity of new books of this genre began to increase, but the real boom of military manuals did not occur until the 1590s. The development of the genre was slowed down by the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). In the German language area, military manuals were usually published in German, with French or occasional Franco-German editions being not unusual. Even primarily German military manuals, however, contained many terms in Romance languages, which is also evident in manuscript manuals from this period. The curriculum of the Siegen Military Academy (founded in 1617) and the period texts that promoted the school help to explain this phenomenon. One of the principal subjects taught at the academy was French, as period military practice made use of French terminology in certain aspects. Furthermore, the armies of the time were multinational, therefore officers' knowledge of French was a welcome skill to use when communicating with soldiers.