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Conflicts, Coexistence and Cultural Contacts: Some Contributions to Early Modern History

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In 1566 Suleiman the Magnificent went to war for the final time, taking with him an army consisting of at least 150,000 soldiers and artillery. His advance towards Vienna came to a halt at the fortress of Szigetvár in Hungary, where Nikola Šubić Zrinski, together with a small force of loyal men, withstood the Ottoman attacks for five weeks. Although the Ottomans managed to take the fortress in the end, with Zrinski dying in a final charge against the attackers, Suleiman the Magnificent had died of natural causes during the siege, which put a stop to the Ottomans' advance. The heroic last stand of Zrinski and his men was praised all over Europe, and Vienna was not to be threatened again until 1683.

In 1825 the German painter Johann Peter Krafft (1780-1856) eternalised the moment of Zrisnki's valorous death in his historic painting *Nikola Šubić Zrinski's Charge from the Fortress of Szigetvár*, commissioned by the court in Vienna, but today owned by the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest.[1] Krafft's impressive piece is full of symbolism: astride a white steed, Count Zrinski charges over a bridge towards the Oriental Ottomans, followed by his Hungarian and Croatian men. The bridge here functions as a metaphor for the border between East and West, between two diametrically opposed cultures and nations, with Zrinski valiantly dying together with his men in defence of their ideals.

1 For Johann Peter Krafft, see Frodl-Schneemann 1984.

War history has always been exceedingly nationalistic, to a certain degree even before the birth of nationalism. However, this is slowly changing, partly due to the innovative approaches brought along by the new military history.[2] Great kings and commanders, battles, tactics and weapons are no longer the main concern of the historical study of war. Scholars are instead interested in integrating the study of war more closely with other kinds of history and in analysing how war interacts with society, economics, politics and culture. Concurrently, globalisation is leading to an ever-increasing focus on transnational and transcultural phenomena,[3] aspects of the past that never really received the attention they deserved in traditional nationalistic histories.

The perception of the Mediterranean as having been divided between east and west along a religious border was first contested by Fernand Braudel, who saw rather unity and coherence as the main characteristics of the sea.[4] Braudel's view has been further developed by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, who, in their masterly and monumental *The Corrupting Sea*, emphasise the dense networks or "connectivity" that make the sea into an arena of interaction, encounters and exchanges.[5] So, while at first glance the Venetian and Ottoman empires may seem to have embodied two opposing cultures, there was nonetheless a constant interaction between them, with processes of acculturation, creolisation and syncretism helping to create, in certain respects, a "shared world".[6]

2 For the New Military History, see e.g. Bourke 2006; Kroener 2000; Morillo 2006, esp. 37-43; or Villstrand 2008.

3 Transnational history also always implies a certain degree of comparative research. There is a vast theoretical literature on transnational history, histoire croisée and cross-national history, such as Werner and Zimmermann 2006; Clavin 2005; and Cohen and O'Connor 2004.

4 Braudel 1972-1973.

5 Horden and Purcell 2000. Cf. also Abulaifa 2011, who describes interactions between merchants, pirates, soldiers, refugees, missionaries, pilgrims and tourists on the Mediterranean throughout history.

6 For the shared or common world, see e.g. Greene 2000; Goffman 2002; Faroqhi 2004; Dursteler 2006; and, more recently, also Greene 2010, Rothman 2011 and Malcolm 2015. For the concepts of acculturation, creolisation and syncretism, see Burke 2002. According to Darling 1998, 246, the idea that the West was eternally opposed to the East belongs to those statements "once believed but no longer credible, like the flat earth,

The Mediterranean arena of interaction, encounters and exchanges that Horden and Purcell describe was typical of premodern frontier zones, which were characterised by cross-cultural contacts and conflicts, by economic opportunities and exploitation. Such frontier zones emerged, for example, in the Balkans and between the Russians and their nomadic neighbours.[7] Brigand communities often developed in such regions, taking advantage of the zones' intermediary position, and occasionally even raiding both sides.[8] However, the border's propensity for violence and conflict has been contextualised over the past twenty years by a growing body of research on the peaceful contacts between the differing cultural spheres. Special effort has gone into investigating those who crossed frontiers or who functioned as cultural intermediaries, and typically were mobile and multilingual,[9] such as renegades,[10] converts,[11] slaves,[12] merchants,[13] religious officials,[14] diplomats and dragomans.[15]

Nevertheless, seeds of conflict were inherent to cross-cultural coexistence and the cultivation of shared cultural contacts, resulting in the outbreak of large wars at regular intervals. Indeed, war was a natural part of life in Early Modern Europe. Recent research has placed ever-more emphasis on the importance of privatized military activity for Early

spontaneous generation, or the medical use of leeches".

7 For frontier zones during the Early Modern period, see in particular Power and Standen 1999; Sauzet 1992; and Khodorkovsky 2002. They are also discussed in many recent publications concerning the Balkans, such as Pedani 2002 or Strohmeyer and Spannenberger 2013, to name but two. For the Ottoman frontiers in general, see also Peacock 2009.

8 Typical examples are the Croatian Uskoks (Bracewell 1992) or the Cossacks (e.g. O'Rourke 2007).

9 Malcolm 2015 offers a masterly description of the fate of two Albanian families in the sixteenth century and with which ease the members of these families moved across boundaries and borders and adapted to new realities.

10 Bennassar and Bennassar 1989; Scaraffia 1993; and Graf 2017. For those who converted to Islam in the Balkans, cf. Krstić 2011.

11 Rothman 2006.

12 See e.g. Bono 1993; Bono 1999; Davis 2003; Davis 2009; Fiume 2009; Bosco 2014; or Hanss and Schiel 2014, which contain further references.

13 See e.g. Faroqhi and Veinstein 2009 for additional references, and, more recently, Faroqhi 2014.

14 Klein and Rohdewald 2014; and Rohdewald 2014.

15 E.g. Rothman 2009; Ortega 2014; or Krstić and van Gelder 2015.

Modern warfare.[16] Military enterprisers raised regiments and armies with the help of transnational networks consisting of rulers, bankers, diplomats, local politicians and recruiting agents. These communities of violence (Gewaltgemeinschaften) created a kind of transnational labour market, characterised by a social as well as a geographical mobility[17] Tens of millions of people migrated during the Early Modern period because of military enterprise, mixing different nationalities and thereby spreading ideas and influences from a farrago of cultures all over Europe.[18]

The military enterpriser could gain a lot, but the activity was not without its risks. He had to invest his own money in the enterprise, and the death or desertion of a large number of men could result in financial problems, even bankruptcy. The bulk of the troops enrolled to earn a better living (to which end looting could be particularly prosperous), to get away from home, to see new places, or to experience adventures.[19] Others, however, were forced to enrol: deserters, prisoners of war and criminals were sold to the recruiters to make up the numbers, and those who refused to cooperate were sold on to the galleys.[20] As a consequence, German or Swiss regiments, for example, tended to contain a large proportion of soldiers hailing from elsewhere, with the number of foreign soldiers sometimes even rising to over fifty per cent of the total force.[21]

This volume originates from an ongoing project studying Swedish subjects that took part whether as military enterprisers or as their men in the Venetian wars against the Ottoman Empire between 1645 and 1718. After

16 E.g. Wilson 1995; Hanlon 1998; Jaun et al. 2009; Parrot 2012; Fynn-Paul 2014; the articles in Rogger and Hitz 2014a; and Speitkamp 2017.

17 Rogger and Hitz 2014b.

18 According to Rogger and Hitz 2014b, 26, as many as 45 million people migrated between 1500 and 1800 due to military enterprise (this number does not include the Balkans). For more on this topic, see Asche et al. 2008.

19 Huntebrinker 2010; and Rogger and Hitz 2014b, 15-36, give good descriptions of the social realities facing military enterprisers and their men.

20 For the close connection between being sent to war or to the galleys, see e.g. Castan and Zysberg 2002, 109-113 or Pelizaeus 2014. After 1685, the French army punished deserters by sending them to the galleys (Lynn 1997, 407-412). For deportations from the Habsburg monarchy, see also Steiner 2014.

21 See e.g. the articles in Rogger and Hitz 2014a, where this fact is stressed several times.

the end of the Thirty Years' War, the main market for military enterprisers slowly moved southeast into the Balkans and the Mediterranean, as the relationship between the Ottomans and their Christian neighbours deteriorated into a more bellicose period. Venice and the Ottoman Empire had only waged war on each other for nine years between 1481 and 1645; between 1645 and 1718, they were at war for 43 years.[22] A similar trend can also be observed in the relationship between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs.[23] The wars not only became longer, but also ever-larger and more devastating, and their spiralling costs drove the Venetian Republic close to bankruptcy and accelerated the decline of the Ottoman Empire.[24]

There have been a lot of detailed studies on the organisation and function of military enterprise, as well as on the conditions the men involved had to endure, but such works have mostly concentrated on the Thirty Years' War,[25] or on certain late special cases, such as the Hessian regiments enrolled by the British to fight in the American Revolutionary War.[26] However, with the exception of general political-military overviews and research on the Ottoman-Habsburg Militärgrenze, there are few up-to-date studies on the wars in the Balkans during the seventeenth and eighteenth century.[27] The lack of modern research is most striking in respect of the German regiments that were sent to fight for the Venetians against the Ottomans.[28]

22 The wars of 1499-1503, 1537-1540 and 1570-1573 were followed by the Candian War (1645-1669), the Morean War (1684-1699) and the Second Morean War (1714-1718).

23 After the prolonged war between Suleiman the Magnificent and the Habsburgs ended in 1568, the latter went to war with the Ottomans for 12 years between 1568 and 1683 (1593-1604, 1663-1664) compared to 22 years between 1683 and 1739 (1683-1699, 1716-1718, 1735-1739).

24 For the effect of the wars on Venetian finances, see e.g. Perini 2005; for the Ottoman Empire, see e.g. Pedani 2005 or Darling 2006.

25 Redlich 1963-1964 is still the standard work on the importance of military enterprise during the Thirty Years' War. For later publications, see e.g. Rogger and Hitz 2014b.

26 See e.g. Atwood 1980; Auerbach 1993; Aumann and Gräf 2014 or Crytzer 2015 for further references.

27 For the best overviews of the wars, see Setton 1991 and Eickhoff 2009. More specifically on the Morean War and the Great Turkish War, see Wilson 1998, 68-100; Perini 1999; and Infelise and Stouraiti 2005. For the Ottoman-Habsburg Militärgrenze, see e.g. David and Fodor 2000; and Kaser 2004 for further references.

28 The dearth of research is best illustrated by the fact that we do not even know how many men were in the German regiments sent to fight for the Venetian Republic. Wilson 1998,

That these troops also contained a large amount of Swedish subjects among their number has been hitherto almost unknown.[29]

Thanks to the two first chapters of this volume we can now estimate that several hundred Swedish subjects fought for Venice against the Ottomans between the 1640s and 1718. Many of them were Swedish officers, often from the higher nobility, with an established military reputation, who received high positions with sizeable salaries in the Venetian forces. Younger men either enrolled as lower officers in the German regiments or volunteered for a campaign or two in order to gain experience; some had left Sweden after committing a crime or converting to Catholicism. The officers often brought ordinary soldiers or servants with them, many of whom we unfortunately do not know by name. During the Second Morean War (1714-1718) Swedish soldiers were especially badly treated: having been captured, hundreds were sold to Venetian recruiting officers by the Danes, in a way that resembles human trafficking.

The higher Swedish officers often had a transnational background, by which they were able to master several languages and establish transnational networks of rulers, bankers, diplomats and recruiting agents. Their suites typically consisted of people from different nationalities: for example, in von Königsmarck's court and life guard were persons of Swedish, German, French and Italian origin. Many of the Swedes survived the war and brought their knowledge and experience back home with them. However, a handful decided to stay in service, the most interesting case being Erik Carlsson Sparre, who created a Venetian branch of the Sparre family that existed until the early nineteenth century. He is also a good example of how

78, table 3.2, supports von Andler's (1922-1924) estimate of 18,500 persons (14,000 of whom died in service), but these estimates include only those regiments sent between 1685 and 1689, and probably also underestimate the number of replacement recruits. The total number of men sent as part of German regiments during the whole Morean War probably amounted to around 50,000.

29 The one exception is Otto Wilhelm von Königsmarck, whose Venetian service has already come to light through the diary and letters of Anna Agriconia, who followed along in the field as maid of honour for Königsmarck's wife Catharina Charlotta De la Gardie (see e.g. Åkerhielm 1970).

military enterprisers could successfully climb the social ladder with the help of their spoils of war. Henrik Kuyl, who served in the Venetian Navy, settled down even further afield than Sparre: having been taken prisoner and enslaved by the Ottomans, he converted to Islam, took the name Ali Pasha and settled down in Istanbul, where his descendants could still be found in the early nineteenth century.

The papers by Lars Ericsson Wolke and Kasper Kepsu in this volume serve to put the Swedish subjects fighting for Venice into a wider context. Lars Ericsson Wolke shows how common it was for Swedish officers to acquire both experience and money in the service of other rulers, especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Alongside Venice, the Netherlands, France, and the Habsburg Empire were the most attractive destinations, but Swedish officers also fought for many other states, including Great Britain, Prussia, Poland, Naples and even Russia. Sweden, in turn, also received foreign volunteers, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many of whom became naturalised. Most of the immigrants were German or Scottish, but there also arrived those of French, Polish and Hungarian origin, amongst others. Kasper Kepsu, in his article, examines a lesser-known example of such immigrants, namely the Russian bayors that were integrated into Swedish nobility in the seventeenth century.

The Russian bayors also return us to the frontier zones, in which the elite often functioned as intermediaries, moving easily between the opposing cultural spheres. The frontier zone between the Swedish realm and Russia resembles in many respects that on the border of the Habsburg Empire, which is considered in this volume in relation to the Poles and the Ottomans in articles by Dariusz Kołodziejczyk and Gisela Procházka-Eisl. Kołodziejczyk demonstrates the ease with which the elite moved across the multicultural and multireligious space that extended between St Petersburg, Warsaw and Vienna on the one side, and Istanbul and Baghchasaray (on the Crimea) on the other. The Catholic Pole Salomea Regina Pilsztynowa

provides a unique example of such unrestrained movement during the eighteenth century: she was, among other things, engaged in the slave trade, ransoming western officers taken as prisoners of war by the Ottomans.

Gisela Procházka-Eisl also deals with prisoners of war, focusing on the Turks that were captured by the Christians, especially after the siege of Vienna in 1683, most of whom were later baptised. She shows that, despite the hostility and fear that characterised the Ottoman-Habsburg relations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, lower-class groups like merchants, religious officials and frontier farmers maintained relationships across the political divide, spreading cultural and, to some extent, even religious influences. Her contribution is a good reminder of the fact that we should not overlook the role of ordinary people in promoting cultural transfer, even if they only seldom appear in our sources. As Kasper Kepsu demonstrates, a similar mobility among common farmers also existed at the Russian-Swedish frontier zones.

This volume offers some examples of the interaction, encounters and exchanges that were typical of the frontier zones in Early Modern Europe. Conflicts and coexistence were both at the heart of such regions, as was the spread of cultural influences. Thus, the beating of foreign drums did not only rally troops to fight abroad during periods of war, but also encouraged interaction across the frontier zones during times of peace, thereby offering plentiful opportunities for transnational experiences.

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