

EDITED BY ERICA CHARTERS
MARIE HOULLEMARE, AND
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A GLOBAL HISTORY *of* EARLY MODERN VIOLENCE



A global history of early
modern violence

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A global history of early modern violence

Edited by

*Erica Charters, Marie Houlemare,
and Peter H. Wilson*

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Introduction: violence and the early modern world

Erica Charters, Marie Houlemare, and Peter H. Wilson

The history of violence and its restraint has been crucial to definitions of Western civilization and the modern world, often by contrasting them with barbaric predecessors and the cultures that they claim to have tamed. Yet, evidence for the restraint of violence varies according to one's viewpoint: the sharp decline of homicide in seventeenth-century north-west Europe, for example, diverges from the simultaneous rise in violence of Atlantic colonial societies. As histories of violence and restraint are usually written from national and nationalist perspectives, this volume brings global approaches to the study of violence to probe historical assumptions about the limits of violence and its decline during the early modern period. It thereby also questions narratives of the inexorable rise of the nation state alongside historical periodization of the 'early modern' and 'modern'.

The study of violence offers a way to connect otherwise potentially disparate historical themes, since it relates to so many other aspects of human existence and its motives, acts, and effects all have social, economic, cultural, religious, moral, and military dimensions. Using social and cultural historical approaches, scholars have analysed the nature and frequency of violence in history, considering crimes such as homicides as well as their punishments, or examining the cultural context of practices such as duelling.¹ These histories of interpersonal violence generally exist alongside – rather than as part of – the plethora of military histories. A key aim of this volume is to integrate methodologies of the study of violence into the history of war, thereby extending the historical significance of both areas of study.² Likewise, by expanding the geographical scope of the history of violence and war, this volume challenges both Western and state-centric narratives of the decline of violence and its relationship to modernity, highlighting instead similarities across

early modernity in terms of representations, legitimations, applications of, and motivations for, violence. Instead of a global synthesis, this volume offers thirteen case studies that outline the myriad ways in which violence was understood and used throughout the early modern period. These detailed examinations demonstrate that the early modern world was not a random collection of barbarous brutalities, but rather a period in which violence was used brutally as well as rationally.

Defining the early modern

The concept of the early modern as a distinct epoch is deeply embedded in the widely held view that violence either diminishes or escalates as humanity marches into modernity. Many accounts are highly technologically determinist, presenting what amounts to a progress of destruction from ‘the slingshot to the megaton bomb’.³ Others emphasize revolutionary and radical violence of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the capacity of industrialized mass death in the case of the Holocaust.⁴ The alternative view is that violence has declined through some kind of ‘civilizing process’, as argued most famously by Norbert Elias.⁵ Though each arguing the opposite, both perspectives share broadly similar assumptions about change over time which are in turn related to Western concepts of historical time, especially interpretations developed since early modernity which see human history as a *progressive* process towards a ‘modern’ end point. In short, mainstream interpretations of violence are rooted in Western narratives of human development following essentially linear paths to modernity. The inclusion of non-Western histories in this volume calls into question the Western categorization of what is modern and pre-modern.

This volume defines early modernity as the period between the mid fifteenth and early nineteenth centuries, while recognizing that all such attempts to delineate epochs face the difficulty of imposing a single framework on something as complex as the history of the world.⁶ Even with this important caveat, scholars have outlined historical models that permit comparisons across cultures within the early modern period. One such framework is the spread of ‘gunpowder empires’. First coined by Marshall Hodgson, this term was expanded to compare the Mughal, Ottoman, and Safavid empires by arguing that their success and longevity derived from the early adoption of gunpowder weaponry, especially artillery.⁷ The causal link between the use of firearms and imperial expansion appears convincing only in the case of the Mughals, while gunpowder technology spread far beyond empires and its adoption did not produce the same results everywhere. For example, as Richard Reid points out in this volume, the adoption of firearms by African armies ended a period characterized by close-order tactics and encouraged the use of looser, skirmishing formations. Yet even critics of the concept of ‘gunpowder empires’ still embrace it to describe the reliance on handguns and artillery in both land and sea warfare, and the way this encouraged the spread of permanent forces, sustained by

state structures and fiscal systems, across the early modern period.⁸ Historians have highlighted such transformations in naval gunnery, pointing out that – as with land warfare – these developments were organizational and institutional, as much as technological or tactical. Early modern naval power frequently required the coordinated capacity to construct, crew, and maintain warships, and to provide dockyards and operational bases.⁹

Early modernity can also be defined politically, rather than technologically. The world had known large empires before, notably those of the Chinese, Romans, and Mongols.¹⁰ However, the period from the late fifteenth century was characterized by the emergence of seaborne empires like those of the Portuguese and Spanish, as well as continued overland imperial expansion, including by the Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals, Chinese, Russians, and several in Africa connected with the development of the slave trade. Early modernity is customarily identified with the consolidation of more stable, centralized, and institutionalized states and empires, a process which is deeply embedded in Western historiography and which has profoundly affected studies of violence.¹¹ Following Max Weber, the modern state is conventionally defined as the exercise of a legitimate monopoly of power (*Gewalt*) over a defined territory.¹² ‘Power’ is often translated from the original German as ‘violence’, though early modern Europeans in fact distinguished between *Gewalt* as legitimate authority, power (*Potestas*), and physical and symbolic *Violentia* that was often condemned as illegitimate.¹³

This definition makes the state the arbiter of legitimate force and illegitimate violence and assigns it a crucial role in what Western historiography has generally regarded as a linear modernization process: the state tames violence, curbing its ‘illegitimate’ manifestations and channelling its ‘legitimate’ form as effective policy instruments to punish domestic malefactors and wage war on external enemies. In the classic narrative, a strong state was necessary to quell ‘anarchic’, feudal ‘robber barons’ and impose order among the population whose natural state, as Thomas Hobbes claimed in *Leviathan*, was ‘war of all against all’. Europe was ravaged by the extreme violence of an age of allegedly ‘religious wars’, from the Reformation until the Peace of Westphalia (1648), before *bellona* could finally be tamed by the rise of centralized, ‘absolutist’ states, epitomized in the ideology and representations of Louis XIV.¹⁴ The processes of eradicating armed non-state actors, disarming large sections of the population, and imposing discipline on the state’s own forces was directly connected to other social disciplinary efforts to compel subjects to be more pious, obedient, and thrifty. Gradually – according to this historical narrative – external coercion gave way to self-discipline as official norms were internalized, a process most influentially expressed by Elias and which has been claimed as the necessary precursor to industrialized modernity.¹⁵ Finally, the classic state-centred modernization narrative concludes by emphasizing the upheavals of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era (1789–1815), spawning new forms of politicized revolutionary violence and, allegedly, the birth of total war.¹⁶ Having disciplined

its inhabitants and monopolized warfare, the nation(al) state proceeded to police the international order, curbing extraterritorial violence and stamping out piracy, slavery, and other activities it deemed illegitimate.¹⁷

As with gunpowder empires, the statist definition of early modernity reflects a Western narrative and Western fields of interest. Indeed, this pattern works only for Europe (if it works at all), at a time where these European states expanded their military theatres of action all around the world and sent violent adults to use violence to conquer ultramarine spaces and to administer growing colonial formations.¹⁸ Furthermore, the notion of the rise of centralized, absolutist states is often challenged by modern historical scholarship, in which even France under Louis XIV is defined through crucial collaboration with local elites.¹⁹ After all, warlordism and anarchy were also part of an imperial repertoire that associated strongly controlled zones with a large spectrum of spaces under indirect rule. Moreover, this state-centred analysis does not preclude the existence of other less-constraining polities outside the reach of imperial states. European expansion created a new global geography of violent empires that generated new frontier and buffer zones. These 'zones of violence' were complementary (and even instrumental, it can be argued) to the pacified state and imperial spaces.²⁰ They were constitutive of a more constraining interimperial order that did not suppress what were often lawless oceans.²¹ Building on these works that question Western narratives about the advent of modernity, this volume applies the practice and concept of large-scale violence to the early modern period. It suggests that the prevalence of violence, and the efforts to restrain it, are central to the definition of a global early modern chronology.

Defining violence

Discussions of violence diverge as to how far non-physical and non-lethal forms should be included in a definition. Approaches to this issue vary widely, according to how contemporaries – and historians – perceive, define, and measure violence. For example, recent influential claims that long-term trends show a decline in violence are based on a narrow definition prioritizing lethality.²² By contrast, this volume endorses the broader view that violence includes both physical actions and coercive threats of physical action. As key theorists of violence point out, because 'threats of violence may be used to limit the use of actual physical violence, there is no simple way to measure the level of violence in a society'.²³ From the perspective of coercion, people who are threatened with physical violence are similarly influenced by violence as those who are subjected to actual physical force. Violence is, in this respect, highly subjective. It is a social interpretation of a painful gesture directed against someone's bodily integrity; it is likewise directed against one's dignity and cultural beliefs. Neither the mere expression of instinct of emotions nor a purely rational construct, violence should thus be understood as a transgression that is socially defined. Indeed, historical analyses of violence draw on cultural

anthropology, which highlights the central issue of legitimacy in understanding violence.²⁴ Descriptions of violence are particularly insightful in revealing categories and understandings of violence that can vary between perpetrator, victim, and observer.²⁵ Historical analyses of violent situations thus locate the boundaries between behaviours deemed legitimate and illegitimate, and can question the validity of aggressive actions according to the actors themselves.

Building on this social and cultural methodology, this volume focuses on accounts of large-scale, or communal, violence. Large-scale violence can be distinguished from the interpersonal form by a measure of coordination and a clear group pattern, involving something approaching coherence and a certain degree of durability. The rationality of ‘crowd violence’, for example, has been fruitful in framing the discussion on the difference between organized and spontaneous violence.²⁶ Large-scale or collective violence is not so much a factor of the scope of the acts or size of a violent group, but of the organized patterns on display.²⁷ For instance, as Alexander Osipian’s study of violence on trade routes in the steppe in this volume outlines, banditry is an accumulation of small-size non-state violence that reveals a broad pattern. Likewise, as Trevor Burnard’s chapter on Atlantic slave systems demonstrates, slave societies relied on large-scale violence that was socially organized but inflicted mostly at an individual level.

Large-scale violence should thus be understood as a societal act. It conveys a communal message to those inflicting it and to those on whom it is inflicted. It includes both lethal and non-lethal physical harm, as well as the coercive threat of force and symbolic violence. At the same time, reports, descriptions, and representations of violence are also arguments about lawfulness and legitimacy. Uncovering early modern meanings of violence provides insight into the structural and cultural worlds of early modern communities, while resisting the temptation to fit them into anachronistic narratives of modernity. Categories of large-scale violence – for example, whether something is a rebellion or a war – can serve as justification pre- or post-conquest. Such categories also capture cultural differences in styles of warfare, as well as differences in political protests. As the legitimacy of violence is dependent on context and perspective, historians need to be sensitive to how subsequent generations have classified and re-classified large-scale violence to suit their own agendas.

Many of the chapters here thus tackle analytical categories – such as notions of massacres, crime, and war – in their history of violence. For example, while war clearly requires organization and coordination, scholars disagree on whether it is distinguishable from other forms of large-scale violence.²⁸ Distinctions often rest more on questions of legitimacy than the scale, level, or forms of violence employed, with ‘war’ being reserved for actions by states and other organizations claiming exclusive powers. Such polities, in turn, employ terms like ‘armed conflict’, ‘insurgency’, ‘rebellion’, and ‘banditry’ to categorize violent actions of individuals and organizations they deem illegitimate.²⁹ This hierarchy of legitimacy persists

even within war, in which some forms of violence have been thought more honourable than others. For example, early modern Europeans distinguished between 'major war' centred on pitched battles and formal sieges intended to bring conflicts to a decisive conclusion, and 'small war' consisting of raiding and skirmishing.³⁰ The former was typically supposed to be fought by regular troops directed by states, whereas the latter was waged by irregulars, partisans, and guerrillas, all of whom were regarded as militarily, socially, and culturally inferior.³¹ Early modern imperialism often made use of this distinction between legitimate violence, in the form of war, and illegitimate violence, characterized as rebellion, atrocity, or crime, to justify colonial imposition – described, for example, as bringing law and order to pacify barbarian resistance or suppress local warlords. Western claims of civilization frequently integrated a discourse of violence with discourses of pacification, law, and religion. Histories of interpersonal violence are thus linked to histories of state warfare and collective violence, and can highlight how claims about one form of violence explained and justified the application of another, as a form of legitimate force.³² This volume builds on scholarship that increasingly focuses on studying violence as part of political and imperial narratives, considering it an element of political rhetoric and claims to dominion, particularly colonial authority.³³

Similarly, postcolonial histories use violence to undermine imperial claims of humanitarian or benevolent governance. Many of the more recent critiques of Western imperialism argue that Europeans exported their own violence, disturbing more pacific or balanced conditions among the peoples they encountered.³⁴ For example, direct links have been drawn between the interethnic and religious conflict of late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe, and the often extreme violence of early imperialism. A frequently cited case is the Spanish *Reconquista* of the Moorish kingdom of Grenada, which concluded in 1492 – the year Columbus's voyage initiated the *Conquista* of Central and Southern America.³⁵ However, we should not overemphasize Europeans' propensity to violence, nor overlook it among their opponents. A close examination of the context, such as offered by the local case studies in this volume, reveal that problems often stemmed from misunderstandings, if not prejudicial interpretations, of specific violent acts. Rather than assessing legitimacy, this volume analyses how violence was described, defined, and measured across the early modern world, eschewing Western categories and narratives and applying a global approach in their stead. By focusing on large-scale violence, it highlights the fundamental relationship between violence and growing interconnectedness across the early modern world.

Defining global

Global history is often used as shorthand for non-Western histories. Yet, global history does more than simply broaden geographical scope. Primarily, it pushes historians to rethink perspectives, categories, and units of analysis.³⁶ This volume

uses global history as a methodology to analyse large-scale violence more precisely by providing detailed case studies of violence in a range of local contexts, and to articulate the significance of violence in narratives of state- and empire-building, as well as in narratives of decline and fall.

Much of global history has been concerned with identifying transnational linkages and exchanges. As a result, scholars have correctly noted that the field has often neglected the role of conflict, war, and violence.³⁷ This volume brings together local case studies of large-scale violence in an effort to demonstrate how a global methodology can shape one's understandings of the early modern period and its relationship to violence. By highlighting the complex and sophisticated nature of early modern violence, it suggests continuities with the modern period and questions broad narratives of either progress or decline. Our contribution to global history is to address the general challenge that violence is, and to reflect on the many ways communities, states, and empires used and responded to violence.

In the field of global history, detailed case studies offer fine-grained analysis of complex interactions that help to refine what might otherwise be broad-brush narratives or even structural generalizations that focus on transformations over the long term. For instance, where global histories of early modern Eurasia tend to highlight intellectual and cultural exchanges between Asia and Europe, detailed examination of particular encounters can uncover violent dynamics. Europeans often intruded in violent – but structured – international relationships in Asian seas, before imposing their own violence on other polities.³⁸ More broadly, localized case studies help to disrupt simplistic narratives, of either progress or decline, offering instead historical examples that can question such entrenched generalizations.³⁹

As outlined, violence and the definition of violence – often circling around Western definitions of war – have been central to Western narratives of progress and the inexorable march towards the modern and orderly nation state. As the subtitle of Geoffrey Parker's seminal monograph on early modern war and state formation indicates, this narrative of violence explains not only the formation of states, but also the rise of the West.⁴⁰ The contribution of global history to this field is not in identifying parallel 'military revolutions' across the world, but in demonstrating that such narratives are products of Western political structures, scholarly interests, and historical periodization. As Wayne Lee's chapter in this volume reminds scholars, even categorizing political organization as 'non-state' presupposes state-centric historical explanations.⁴¹

Historians have thus revised traditional accounts of non-Western warfare and violence to highlight how representations, definitions, and categories of violence have been shaped by European assumptions and imperial frameworks. One of the more fruitful areas of analysis has been Anglophone scholarship on warfare in North America during the early modern period. Various studies have outlined the fluid nature of American colonial warfare, in which opponents responded to previously unknown forms of violence and adapted enemy tactics, often in escalating

cycles.⁴² Such analyses lay bare cultural assumptions about violence, showing how easily definitions of barbarous ‘crimes’ overlap with legitimate warfare, depending on perspective. Moreover, given that American colonists’ own revolt against British imperialism had its origins in what were deemed rebellious riots, scholarship on colonial America has outlined the crucial role of rhetoric and legitimacy in the protean nature of large-scale violence. As with all rebellions, it was of immense importance whether a confrontation was categorized as a treasonous riot or a war.⁴³

Considerable discussion surrounds the place of a permissive ideology freeing the imperial space from the normal constraints on violence because enemies were ‘savages’ who did not adhere to accepted rules or had no rules at all.⁴⁴ This argument actually masked an inability to understand local norms of violence, but its significance has perhaps been exaggerated. The rhetoric of exceptional circumstances was often a legitimization strategy to justify extreme force borne of necessity.⁴⁵ Most societies had concepts of exception which they employed to justify violence against their own members – for example by the French revolutionaries against the Vendean rebels.⁴⁶ It was almost always possible to think of ethnic, religious, political, or other distinctions, real or alleged, to underpin arguments that opponents were so heinous that extreme measures were necessary.

The volume

This volume is structured through thematic, rather than geographic, approaches. It provides a meaningful geographical framework for rethinking Western histories of violence, with leading scholars of African, Atlantic, Asian, European, American, and maritime history. It does not intend, nor attempt, to be comprehensive. Instead, it provides detailed cases from a variety of locations, methodologies, and scholars. Histories of the role of violence on land and at sea, in war, slavery, state justice, massacres, and popular resistance outline the various ways in which violence was expressed, articulated, and used. A range of approaches to violence are also included: whether of its representation through visual material, its manipulation in intellectual discourse, or methods to measure its extent. The thirteen chapters are grouped thematically into three sections, the first of which examines the role of warfare, banditry, and other forms of large-scale violence in promoting or retarding power structures, including local and regional networks, as well as sovereign states. The second part examines the ideological, cultural, and practical limits to the use of violence, as well as what forms of violence have been considered as excessive by different cultures and societies. The final part investigates the role of large-scale violence in defining communities and in distinguishing who belongs and who is considered an outsider, as well as how this anthropological process shapes control over human and material resources.

The first section, ‘Coherence and Fragmentation’, opens with Richard Reid’s overview of the crucial role of violence and its rhetoric in early modern Africa. It

traces how violence was shaped by global forces: the militarization of Africa had a significant but ambiguous impact on local dynamics, as interstate, intercommunal, and interpersonal violence were intertwined. Likewise, the chapters by Michael Charney and Vũ Đức Liêm illustrate how efforts by central authorities to monopolize violence cannot be reduced to a simple clash between centre and periphery. State formation in precolonial Burma, as outlined by Charney, resulted in administrative violence imposed by provincial officials on local communities, especially in frontier or non-state areas, but the prevalence of violence was invisible to the royal centre of the kingdom. By contrast, the Vietnamese emperor was aware of the endemic rural violence across the early nineteenth century. However, his attempts to tackle militia by categorizing them as bandits increased local violence instead of reducing it. Indeed, such efforts could inadvertently fuel armed conflict and encourage warlordism, even if caused by the ambition of those at the centre to extend their authority into the parts of the realm previously largely beyond their reach – a common feature of many early modern states.⁴⁷ Manu Sehgal's re-examination of the East India Company, on the other hand, emphasizes the way this corporate state, a military actor in South Asia from early on, expanded its ambitions for sub-continental conquest during the eighteenth century, thus itself becoming a violent colonial state. Likewise, Brian Sandberg identifies the preponderance of raiding warfare in sixteenth-century France by unbundling raiding from so-called primitive war. He thereby links changing patterns of organized economic devastation through 'small wars' to a type of violence that was found throughout many other parts of the early modern world.

The second section, 'Restraint and Excess', examines the attitude of large polities towards violence, analysing how they responded to and used violence, as well as how they tried to channel, organize, and limit it. Anthony McFarlane transposes the idea of *Pax Hispanica* to Spanish America to frame the colonial period. Following a very violent conquest, he argues, violence was less prevalent than in early modern Europe. Only the early nineteenth-century imperial crisis led to insurgencies that swept away Spanish rule and favoured violence through the militarization of communities and the fragmentation of authority. Likewise, Pratyay Nath's close examination of Mughal imperial ideology highlights its ambivalent attitude towards military violence: the sovereign, who was responsible for maintaining peace among his subjects, could use violence against civilians who resisted his rule – yet his responsibilities also included mercy and forgiveness. The universal ideology of his sovereignty meant that such ambivalence shaped policies towards all within – or potentially within – his empire. By contrast, the chapters by Alexander Osipian and by Adam Clulow and Xing Hang examine the nature of raiding economies, though in two very different contexts. By analysing brigandage on the Ottoman–Russian buffer zone, Osipian shows how non-state violence was encouraged by local authorities that engaged in the raiding economy. Similarly, Clulow and Hang outline how the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC), though sanctioned by the state,

acted on its own account, wielding violence as a policy instrument while seeking to curb its excesses, at least where these conflicted with their own interests.⁴⁸ The case of piracy demonstrates how the oceans were (and partly still are) liminal spaces where the boundaries between war and peace were blurred, while jurisdictions and the legality of certain acts were hotly contested.⁴⁹

In the final section, 'Differentiation and Identification', Trevor Burnard underscores the centrality of violence to the Atlantic slave system, but also how sensationalist accounts of violence shaped abolitionist literature and modern-day scholarship. Contemporary sources – whether written or visual – often say more about the authors' and readers' understanding of violence than about the events themselves. As Michael van Duijnen shows, representations of Ottoman troops and violence were not necessarily intended as realistic, but assumed an allegorical value, employing the symbol of the 'terrible Turk' to critique less-than-perfect Christian morality.⁵⁰ Joseph Clarke demonstrates how French revolutionary soldiers transposed ideas formed through fighting the Catholic Vendean rebels onto Muslim opponents during Napoleon's Egyptian campaign in 1798. In both cases, violence served to sharpen a sense of a clear divide between civilization and barbarism.⁵¹ Wayne Lee similarly compares a range of modes of conquest, outlining how mutual misunderstandings of military violence played a crucial role in early modern conquest. Unlike the previous focus on representations, Lee takes a structural approach, making use of archaeological and economic data to compare and contrast a range of types of societies, thereby suggesting a rational and material basis for a global understanding of violence.

Lee suggests that the early modern period saw increased contact between societies, thus encouraging both cross-cultural connections and conflict. Indeed, warfare frequently crossed so-called civilizational boundaries which were in fact porous and blurred, such as that between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe. While caution is always useful in suggesting global characteristics of historical periods – especially given that 'early modern' can be as Western-centric as 'modernity' – the emergence of more centralized states is an indicative feature of early modernity and one that was not restricted to Europe.⁵² However, as the chapters that follow demonstrate, this did not necessarily result in the constraint of violence. Such states were often the most potent wielders of force, capable of using violence on a far greater scale than any other actors. This volume offers cases that supplement established state-centric perspectives with accounts of large-scale violence by non-state actors, since these were also defining features of the global early modern.

Collectively, the contributions to this volume underscore the importance of local contexts. But they also point out the significance of global structural similarities, such as the raiding tactics noted by Sandberg and Lee. Trading companies have been rightly identified as agents of European, especially seaborne, imperialism, but other armed non-state actors were more universal throughout the early modern world. Equivalents of the Burmese and Vietnamese militias feature in

the discussion by Sandberg of early modern France and by McFarlane of Spanish America, respectively, while the highwaymen studied by Osipian can be compared to those who preyed on the Saharan caravan routes. As outlined by Clulow and Hang, the piratical activities of the Chinese Zheng cartel in the South China Sea had their equivalents on other oceans. Likewise, the slave trade involved multiple different armed actors, as indicated by Burnard and Reid. Indeed, as Clulow and Hang remind us, efforts to regulate violence were not restricted to states, but could emanate from local and regional actors. Armed non-state actors were not invariably opposed to states, while state claims to their inhabitants' obedience and resources were backed up by the threat of force, encouraging some commentators to compare them to protection rackets.⁵³ Early modern non-state actors were not wholly indiscriminate in their use of violence which, like that employed by states, was situational, guided by ideas of restraint, function, and legitimacy.

Across the early modern period, violence remained endemic, even if its intensity and form varied significantly over time and place. De-escalation and restraint hinged on how far it was possible to establish (or restore) mutuality. As several of the contributions to this volume make clear, negotiations were essential to limiting violence, but violence was itself a component of negotiations. In fact, violence was a form of communication, used to intimidate enemies into giving ground and to demonstrate the futility of their continued armed resistance. Measures such as destroying crops or homes were not necessarily immediately lethal, but could become so if they destroyed opponents' means of existence. The emergence of a relative balance of forces could foster restraint, as it became obvious that neither side held a clear advantage. Above all, the credible belief that opponents could retaliate could encourage restraint.⁵⁴

Early modern violence was more complex than suggested by simple narratives of conquest and resistance. Moreover, key features of imperial violence apply equally to large-scale violence within societies. As the contributions to this volume indicate, violence was a continuum, ranging from small-scale, local actions to full-blown war. The latter was privileged legally and increasingly associated with states during early modernity, but its legitimacy was frequently contested and many of its violent forms, such as raiding and destruction of buildings and crops, could be found in activities not officially classed as war. As these chapters demonstrate, violence in the early modern world could take many forms, ranging from slavery and massacres to banditry and diplomatic threats. Examining these cases within wide-ranging regional contexts challenges narratives of both decline and increase in violence, suggesting instead continuities in the nature and frequency of violence across the early modern and modern period.

Notes

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Part I

Coherence and fragmentation

1

‘None could stand before him in the battle, none ever reigned so wisely as he’: the expansion and significance of violence in early modern Africa

Richard Reid

Mwezi and Mirambo

The quotation in the title belongs to the nineteenth-century explorer and journalist Henry Morton Stanley, who was writing in the context of the Nyamwezi people, in north-central Tanzania, in the 1870s.¹ Stanley’s larger concern was Mirambo (c.1840–84), who was either, depending on one’s perspective, a great warrior and would-be state-builder, or an outright bandit and emblem of Africa’s savage, backward condition. What is clear is that this was a period of profound political, economic, and military upheaval, a transformative moment for the Nyamwezi and one replicated across the continent in the course of the nineteenth century. But the Stanley quotation is not in reference to Mirambo himself: rather, it reflected local memories of Mirambo’s supposed distant ancestor, an ‘ancient ruler’ called Mwezi, and thus represented a desire on the part of the revolutionary Mirambo – and on the part of the Nyamwezi in an age of revolution – to discern historical gravity and continuity in turbulent times. Mwezi may or may not have been an actual historical figure; but more importantly, in many ways, he was interpreted by Stanley’s informants as embodying two critical characteristics – the unstoppable warrior with the ability to wield maximum force on the field of combat, and the wise, judicious ruler. On the one hand, Mirambo himself was keen not to be seen as a mere upstart with newly acquired firearms, but rather as the modern incarnation of an illustrious predecessor, his violence restorative and aimed at the re-creation of unity and stability. More broadly, however, Mwezi exemplified, in the midst of a turbulent epoch, the ineffable connection between violence and sagacity and the need to frame founding ancestors as the armed founts of the political and moral order.²

It was no coincidence that in the course of the nineteenth century a host of warriors and practitioners of violence, diverse in provenance and context, looked backward into the deeper past for sources of succour and constancy. The nineteenth century was a violent epoch – of change, rolling crisis, and anxiety, in part brought on by mounting external threats³ – and Africans sought reassurance from histories in which violence was seen to have moral meaning, was characterized by righteous fervour, and was practiced by those motivated by loftier ambitions. But this was no mere exercise in historical reinvention, although there was certainly something of that too. Nineteenth-century Africans looked back several generations to a period, broadly between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries, in which the exercise of violence had begun to change dramatically, and in which the deployment of violence was critical to the emergence, consolidation, and expansion of new political and cultural orders.

The concept of the ‘early modern’, around which this volume has largely been organized, might raise some eyebrows in the Africanist academy. I do not propose to dwell at length on this issue, though there is a discussion to be had about what ‘early modern’ means in the African context.⁴ It is, of course, a primarily Eurocentric notion, but this does not mean therefore that it has no validity elsewhere. It is true that most Africans would not recognize the terminology: ‘precolonial’ remains a popular, generic term for much of what happened before c.1880. But perhaps any objection is a question of nomenclature, rather than of periodization itself.⁵ What is clear is that by the second half of the fifteenth century, much of the continent was on the threshold of a new and violent era, and the ensuing four centuries would see innovative forms of military organization, new wars, as well as new ways of fighting them, and novel cultures of militarism underpinning such systems. Certainly the evidence – though necessarily fragmentary, as I explain below – suggests that the early part of our period was a foundational ‘moment’ in modern African history. To the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be dated the emergence of some of the continent’s most robust and enduring polities and cultures, underpinned by new technologies, deployments, and understandings of violence. Along the coastal forest of southern Nigeria and Ghana, across the West African savannah, in the Great Lakes region of East Africa, and in the central and northern Ethiopian Highlands, there was a widening use of violence to underpin political expansion early in the second millennium – prior to the age of global interaction – and new political cultures forged around security and protection. The point at which the ‘early modern’ became the ‘modern’ in Africa is perhaps a subject for discussion, though there is no question, again, that the nineteenth century was a transformative period which exhibited some continuity from the deeper past, but also a marked degree of rupture.

More broadly, of course, the reconstruction of Africa’s military history is rendered particularly difficult as a result of methodological challenges. The operation and the impact of the Atlantic slave trade is relatively well documented,⁶ but even

here, of course, assessment of the relevant source material is routinely attended by a great deal of intuition and speculation. The key point is that we rely overwhelmingly – if by no means exclusively – on European accounts, which are often problematic for all sorts of reasons, not least in terms of the profound racism and cultural miscomprehension which invariably characterizes these texts. But use is also made of African accounts, broadly under the somewhat unsatisfactory term ‘oral traditions’, many of which were put in writing in the early twentieth century. In general terms, the volume of source material increases as time goes on – the nineteenth century, notably, is comparatively well documented, although there is dramatic imbalance in coverage within the continent – which does not necessarily mean an increase in the *quality* of the material (quite the opposite, sometimes), though it does often enable corroboration.

Finally, what are we dealing with in thinking about ‘violence’? In many ways, the most visible indication of levels of violence is warfare, and the practice of war forms a central plank of our discussion here. But this cannot be about warfare alone, and in any case it could be argued that war is not necessarily indicative of levels of violence more generally. However, it is argued here that military transformations and increases in the scale and intensity of armed conflict are paralleled – indeed, made possible – by a growth in the ability of ruling elites to exercise violent control over subjects, and to develop and support internal cultures of political violence. In other words, this is not just about military violence but the spread of ideas around violence against the undeserving individual or community. At the same time, however, well-armed, ostensibly violent societies also offer possibilities for restraint and protection for those who adhere to evolving systems and processes: in a sense, a form of social contract, or ‘elite bargain’. It is also worth noting that much of sub-Saharan Africa was historically underpopulated – the direct control of people, crudely put, was often more important than the direct control of land⁷ – which meant that killing, for example, was not necessarily sensible, or desirable. This placed something of an intrinsic constraint on extreme violence, although an important caveat is in order: killing is only the end point of a spectrum and violence is exercised in all sorts of ways designed to instil fear, subdue, suppress, and enforce loyalty. This was certainly how Mirambo remembered Mwezi.

A world of violence? From ‘pre-contact’ to external intrusion

The term ‘pre-contact’ is, of course, hugely problematic. What does it even mean? In this exposition, we are concerned with relative scale: in the African context, there are communities which are *relatively* self-contained – at least until the nineteenth century – and which are the product of largely *endogenous* dynamics, including the utilization of land, population growth, and regional migration. Pure indigeneity is not a concept in which I would normally trade, but for the purposes of this chapter – and of the larger collection of papers, focused as these are on the

global parameters of violence – I consider it significant, insofar as the overriding purpose is to assess the extent to which Africans experienced violence in a global context and as the result of external influences, in the early modern period. And so I begin with the stark idea that some parts of the continent, notably eastern Africa, were *not* influenced by external intrusions until quite late in our timescale. So what does the available evidence suggest about such communities?

In some cases, again, it is the evidence for broadly *military* change which is revealing. The linguistic, archaeological, and ethnographic evidence for west-central Africa, for example, suggests shifts in the practice and culture of violence which predates the external slave trade: a process of militarization is discernible over several centuries, doubtless driven by gradual population increase and the attendant expansion in political and economic scale, involving greater military cooperation across wider areas, larger armies, and greater levels of destruction and bodily harm. By the fifteenth century, young men were commonly organized into age sets (discernible in coastal Angola, for example), pointing towards the heightened social significance of organized violence – or the threat of it – in underpinning political cohesion, while an increasingly diverse array of weaponry (throwing and stabbing spears, throwing knives, battleaxes, and, unsurprisingly, body armour) is indicative of increasing *levels* and more destructive *forms* of bodily violence.⁸

In the Great Lakes region of East Africa, political entrepreneurs in the first half of the second millennium CE used violence to build new states and societies and developed ideologies rooted in the notion that violence was necessary to the securement of ‘peace’ and social cohesion, as well as in the drive for economic expansion and exploitation of factor endowments.⁹ In Bunyoro, and later Buganda and Nkore, founding fathers were men of war, but simultaneously builders of coalitions and guarantors of collective security. In these new communities, created in the swirl of population movement across some of the most fertile land in the region, morality was central to the exercise of violence, as well as in its restraint. In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a string of small but potent territorial states between lakes Tanganyika and Victoria – Bunyoro, Buganda, Nkore, Toro, Rwanda, Burundi – boasted a capacity for rapid military mobilization and built traditions of martial prowess into their social and moral edifices. Kings needed to be war leaders, capable of protecting their peoples from outside attack, but equally able to command regular campaigns aimed at territorial expansion and resource extraction.¹⁰ The connection between external armed adventurism and cohesion at home was robust: in eighteenth-century Buganda, for example, war itself underpinned a thriving military culture at home, and a set of martial values according to which ‘good citizenship’ was measured.¹¹ In a political equation familiar in our own era, security against outside aggression meant handing over to governing elites the right to exercise a degree of violence at home against dissidents and malcontents, real or imagined. The expansionist Ganda state was directed by an increasingly powerful kingship which, in the course of the eighteenth century, was

able to reward military loyalty and prowess with land and political appointments. At the same time, the violence exercised by kings – both random and punitive – was tolerated among the broader populace, even expected.¹² Later, nineteenth-century European accounts were certainly at pains to describe a society seemingly inured to suffering, and in which violence could befall anyone within reach of the king's whim.¹³ These accounts, of course, are problematic, and in any case the ruler who overreached himself might expect serious repercussions, up to and including armed ouster. There may well have been considerable tolerance of violence on the part of the populace, but only up to a point, as oral tradition relating to the punishment of wayward kings indicates.¹⁴

So much for those regions in which we can identify some measure of endogenously driven practice and cultures of violence. The fact remains, however, that the predominant driver of violence – in politics, in military practice, and in social relations – across swathes of the continent in the early modern era, was interaction with global forces. This is emphatically not to suggest that violence on multiple levels was an external invention; that would be ludicrous. It *is* to argue that cultures of violence changed rapidly as a result of external exchange and led to new ideas about the value and the limitations of violence as a political and social process. Two examples from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries illustrate the dynamics at work, if in distinctive ways. The first, Ethiopia, certainly needed no external stimulus to violence, as its remarkable earlier history demonstrates. Political entrepreneurs were at work in the Ethiopian Highlands – frequently seen in terms of exceptionalism¹⁵ – where the Solomonic state rested on an overtly ideological and religious deployment of violence in both subduing external enemies and moulding an internal, 'national' identity. Christian Ethiopia was particularly adept at mobilizing a dramatic historical vision – centrally, the notion that it was the New Zion, with a covenant with God – legitimizing both an expansion in the scale of war and new forms of violence against internal dissenters and backsliders.¹⁶ The politicization of violence was spurred, too, by an influx of migrants into the highlands from the south in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: these were the Oromo, depicted in terms of fear and loathing by contemporary Ethiopian chroniclers who portrayed them as the embodiment of primordial savagery, intent on the destruction of highland Christian civilization.¹⁷ But the early modern period also witnessed new external irruptions. Ethiopia was threatened by an increasingly aggressive Muslim presence in the Horn, emanating from the eastern lowlands and the Somali plains, and often bolstered by influences from Arabia. Notably, the jihad of Ahmad ibn Ibrahim in the 1530s brought the kingdom almost to the point of destruction, avoided in part by the arrival of several hundred Portuguese musketeers.¹⁸ The latter formed part of an expanding presence in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, slowly but surely encompassing this vast region within a frontier of global violence. It was frequently the case in Ethiopia that an upsurge in violence – both externally, in the form of wars against encroaching antagonists,

and internally, against non-believers and the culturally unassimilated – was driven by a revival of religious consciousness. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Jesuit missionaries infiltrated the highlands, won a number of converts to Catholicism from Orthodox Christianity, and instigated a crisis for the state which culminated in a bloody civil war in the 1620s.¹⁹

The second example is the central African kingdom of Kongo, an early participant in the slave trade following the arrival of the Portuguese in the 1480s. The scholarly consensus is that a wide area was exposed to the predations of slave-raiding armies equipped with muskets (sometimes accompanied by contingents of Portuguese soldiers), while Kongolesse political culture incorporated an aggressive strand of militarism centred on the king. As provinces rebelled to protect themselves from the ravages of royal armies, violence ultimately consumed the old kingdom in the course of the sixteenth century.²⁰ Kongo demonstrates the early impact of the slave trade, and in no arena is the transformation in violence more clearly demonstrable than in Africa's Atlantic zone – defined here as stretching between Senegambia in the north and the Angolan coast in the south – for this vast region, encompassing a considerable hinterland, was transformed by the slave trade to the Americas between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. There is considerable evidence that across key zones of global engagement – most obviously in Atlantic Africa including Senegambia and points further east, the Slave Coast states on the Bight of Biafra, the Kongo kingdom, present-day Angola, and as far south as the Cape of Good Hope, site of eventual European settlement – violence escalated dramatically and was used to both commercial and political ends.

Central Africa, again, illustrates a particular pattern. In the area of present-day Angola, a more or less direct outcome of external engagement was the emergence of new forms of violence, driven in large part by private armies under entrepreneurial warlords. The Imbangala, possibly originating from a subversive faction of a local Ovimbundu army and certainly arising out of slave-raiding violence in the late sixteenth century, were mobile bands of professional warriors who attacked and invaded the Atlantic coast in the 1570s and 1580s. In the decades that followed, they came to dominate much of the Ovimbundu region, and by the mid seventeenth century there were several areas under the control of Imbangala bands stretching across central Angola. Imbangala armies themselves had a ferocious reputation – theirs was a form of total war, involving widespread pillaging as well as the capture of people for sale – and were organized along complex lines of command; boys were taken when young and trained up to be fed into the system.²¹ Again, evidence from the military sphere is worth noting: the Imbangala frequently served as mercenaries in others' armies, and indeed the use of mercenaries was increasingly common across the Atlantic zone through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, another indication of growing military professionalism as well as of the privatization of violence itself and the opportunities for a career in violence. Smaller coastal polities such as Allada and Whydah, for example, made use of Akwamu soldiers from the

neighbouring Gold Coast region in the late seventeenth century.²² All of this certainly suggests heightened levels of destruction, as well as profound changes in the perception of violence – i.e., that it was ‘normal’, was seemingly tolerated, and had clear economic and political rationality.

The Imbangala exemplified a new kind of restless, predatory military culture, one generated by the slaving violence of the age. But other, no less predatory, political forms emerged with direct links to the external slave trade, in particular new territorial states with increasingly complex military systems and ideological approaches to the organization and interpretation of violence: the states of Oyo,²³ Asante,²⁴ and Dahomey, most notably. Dahomey, in particular, was a dynamic and expansionist state, its roots in the slave trade and organized around a predatory militarism. Dahomey’s army comprised a series of well-drilled regiments equipped increasingly with firearms, in particular flintlock muskets. Each regiment made use of emblems and was sustained by a system in which young boys were assigned to soldiers for rigorous training. The kingdom fought wars for slaves, large numbers of whom were earmarked for export. Just as important were those needed for internal consumption, including for the sustenance of the domestic economy, but also, according to somewhat titillating contemporary European accounts, for sacrifice in public ceremonies exhibiting royal power and assuaging ancestors. Certainly such sources depicted a deeply violent, blood-soaked society – an increasingly common trope in European discourse about Africa in the early modern period. But, as in the eighteenth century, there was a distinction between those who – as part of the campaign to abolish the slave trade – depicted Dahomey as the *product* of that nefarious commerce, and those accounts written by slave traders who sought to describe a kingdom which was *naturally* violent and which needed no external stimuli to be so. Still, there is little doubt that the authority of Dahomean kings was to a significant extent rooted in their ability to command armies, to capture people, and above all to inflict violence, up to and including death itself.²⁵ Dahomey exemplifies the expansion of centralized, militarized political power, in other words, which was attended by the increase in the capacity of that authority to wield various forms of personal violence; the rise of new military states, inextricably linked to the commerce in human beings, involved the increase and normalization of acute forms of interpersonal violence in the ‘domestic’ sphere, and Dahomey illustrates the pattern.

Meanwhile, the widening and increasingly skilful use of firearms – especially in coastal states and societies – undoubtedly facilitated new levels of violence. But caution is needed here: interestingly, there is some evidence that, on battlefields at least, the close military formations of the seventeenth century sometimes gave way to more open, fluid deployments in the eighteenth, often involving smaller and more mobile units. A number of African armies now sought to avoid close combat altogether and amassed musketeers at vantage points from which fields of fire were designed to overwhelm enemies at distance. Exceptions to this loosening up of battlefield formation were to be found in the frontier zones between forest

and savannah, where infantry armies were accustomed to facing enemies on horseback. Guns could unquestionably inflict horrific bodily injury, and the increasing frequency of gunshot injuries must have shaped, in very profound ways, perceptions of the power of such weapons over bodies and enhanced the threat value intrinsic to centralizing political and military authority. Still, it was just as often the sound and smoke of guns – when they worked – which generated an aural and visual violence just as critical to the success of armies and political elites: this was in many ways psychological warfare based on a *fear* of much greater violence than was sometimes realistically possible, even if – and the point is an important one – guns did not generally do any manifestly greater damage to bodies than existing, very sharp, very poisonous, very effective weapons. More broadly, in an increasingly competitive political and economic environment, the size of armies expanded and the nature of war itself changed. A general trend across the Atlantic zone was the deployment of archers as skirmishers in support of soldiers equipped with short spears, clubs, and knives, whose main aim was to close on the enemy and engage the latter in hand-to-hand combat.²⁶ The close-range nature of much physical combat suggests the increasing prevalence of ideas about bodily destruction as necessary to the achievement of political and economic objectives. With military and political change, in other words, came implications for levels and forms of interpersonal violence, which in turn served as both representation and extension of the personalized power of kings and warriors.

At the same time, it is important to note that while slave raiding undoubtedly involved targeted killing – especially of the old and infirm – its primary objective was to take captives alive and relatively unharmed. Dead or badly injured slaves were wasted assets.²⁷ In that sense, it might be suggested – counterintuitively, perhaps – that the very nature of the slaving economy meant *constraints* on the infliction of violence. Slavery and slaving, in other words, also involved the exercise of *restraint* – notwithstanding the immediate and accurate association of slavery with a particularly odious and relentless form of physical violence. But, beyond a certain point, it was not economically advisable to inflict too much damage on slaves, and certainly not to kill them, although a certain death toll was evidently regarded as acceptable in the course of military operations. This of course relates to an earlier point – namely, the economic and demographic rationale for restraint. In historically underpopulated sub-Saharan Africa, people were more valuable than land, and in this context violence must be understood in more nuanced terms. Overt violence needed restraint and was selective, because it was vitally important to tie people to you as a political leader; land was plentiful, and therefore other institutions of implicit violence – slavery, polygamy – were necessary. African ideologies and religions made much of fertility and reproduction.²⁸

The heightened and increasingly central role of militarism, cultures of arms, and the exercise of violence in West and Central African states and societies, were at least in part the outcome of sustained engagement with external dynamics – specifically,

the commercial and industrial societies of the North Atlantic. Innovations in violence in these vast regions intersected with Europe's own revolutions in the exercise and culture of violence. The European military revolution facilitated the emergence of the nation state system, involved close linkages between trade and war, and was characterized by the deployment of violence for the purposes of both internal cohesion and external expansion.²⁹ There can be little question that African societies' engagement with this violent revolution was at least in part, if not wholly, responsible for processes of militarization and widening deployment of violence in those societies. An equally interesting dynamic – though not one for which there is space to explore here – is the degree to which Africans' use of violence influenced Europe's own unfolding transformation: for it most certainly did, whether in terms of military tactics or of cultures of violence.

Much of the Atlantic zone can be considered a frontier of global interaction with major repercussions for the uses and cultures of violence. But that frontier was altogether more tangible at Cape Colony, established by Dutch settlers in 1652 and rapidly becoming one of the most violent and militarized of African–European frontiers. Here, Dutch settlers' seizure of Khoisan cattle prompted Khoisan counterraids and led to significant conflicts in 1659–60 and in the mid 1670s. Armed initially with matchlocks and then with flintlocks, the Dutch, or Boers ('farmers'), expanded onto Khoisan land from the late seventeenth century onward, compelling dispossessed Khoisan into a life of hunting and raiding. The Boers themselves would counter the growing Khoisan threat by forming militia units known as *commandos*, in what represented an escalation of frontier violence.³⁰ Across the eastern borderlands of Cape Colony, too, the Boers were engaged in cyclical conflict with the Xhosa, who represented a rather more robust obstacle to their seemingly inexorable advance than the Khoisan. Prolonged warfare, waged between Boer and Xhosa raiding parties, was fought over the *Zuurveld*, Xhosa grazing land, began in the 1770s and 1780s and periodically erupted throughout the nineteenth century.³¹ Along and within the expanding frontiers of the Cape, the growing racialization of violence was a harbinger of what was to come, in southern Africa and elsewhere on the continent, whether in terms of the settler approach towards supposedly genetically inferior enemies, or in the quotidian deployment of violence towards conquered and subject populations.³² To the north-east, in the Zambezi valley, Portuguese *prazos* – land grants, originally created for white settlers – were increasingly dominated by African-Portuguese warlords, or *prazeiros*, the product of local intermarriage and a hardy, militarized frontier culture. In the course of the eighteenth century, these warlords led armies of slave-soldiers (known as *chikunda*), not dissimilar in form and ethos to those of the West African hinterland, who spent much of their time feeding off burgeoning global trade, raiding neighbours for tribute, and hunting.³³ Here, too, was an emerging frontier of global interaction which brought with it opportunities for the fortunate and the brave – not least in terms of the fulfilment of new material aspirations – but one

of whose essential characteristics was also the exercise of unprecedented levels of physical and psychological violence. It was the age of commodities, but it was also the age of heightened anxiety and entrepreneurial might.

The memory of violence

These dynamics became all the more potent across the continent in the course of the nineteenth century, an era of military revolution and violent sociopolitical transformation. A military revolution during this epoch involved the centrality of power over violence on the part of rulers, with violence underpinning political and religious authority. In that sense, the expanded deployment of violence was both 'personal' and state-level. This is the period, above all, when these dynamics converge across the continent: whatever differentiation in drivers, purpose, and levels of external/global influence there may have been between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, there is no doubt that 'globalized' dynamics, especially in the realms of commerce but in more general contact too, bred heightened levels of both interstate/intercommunity and interpersonal violence. New political orders were organized around new forms of violence, which was ever more central to social and cultural cohesion, as well as access to new forms of weaponry. Across Africa, there was a clear correlation between expanding warfare and the use of violence within societies. In an age of heightened economic competition which necessitated the creation of new means of social control, the internal and external uses of violence were indelibly intertwined.³⁴

Yet this was not purely about naked coercion: violence was also moral, and the most common means of asserting that morality was in the construction of historical narratives to legitimize the use of force at home and abroad; states and societies in an age of violent upheaval sought historical gravitas by rooting themselves in the earlier era, seeking stability and legitimacy in antiquity. Instances of this proliferate across the continent – in neo-Solomonic Ethiopia;³⁵ among the Ganda and Nyoro of the Great Lakes region;³⁶ among the Zulu in the wake of Shaka's rise;³⁷ in the intellectual organization of the Sokoto Caliphate and other jihadist states in West Africa;³⁸ and, as we noted at the outset, among the Nyamwezi under the insurgent warlord Mirambo. We cannot know for certain whether 'Mwezi' actually existed; what we do know is that Mirambo sought ancestry for his violence and identified figures in the deeper past who had supposedly governed extensive polities with teeming (but united) populations.³⁹ The hunger for political and moral lodestars is evident in Buganda, too, where nineteenth-century kings ruled in the shadow of mythical founding father Kintu, who in most traditions had recourse to armed force to conquer the area for civilization, but who then became the exemplar of peaceable and moral governance.⁴⁰ Ultimately, the historicization of violence reflected the ideological core of polity-building in the nineteenth century: the creation of political order, now as in the deeper past, was a moral process and involved

righteous violence exercised by pioneers and entrepreneurs who embodied certain ideal characteristics. They were spiritually righteous, morally sound, politically astute, physically courageous. In an era in which the expanding scale of warfare and numerous state-building projects, driven in large part by rapid economic change, involved rising levels of interpersonal and social violence, it was critical to believe that violence ultimately had pure and virtuous goals in the deeper past – that kinship, citizenship, and ‘peace’ itself were guaranteed by the righteous warrior and his loyal adherents.

Something of a historical revolution attended social, political, and economic transformation in the nineteenth century. However, in the course of the twentieth century, the trend was towards the steady foreshortening of Africa’s past on the part of colonial strategists and African elites alike, driven in large part by discomfort around the idea of violence in the deeper past and the eschewal of such histories in favour of a more positivist vision of the future based on ‘modern’ economic development.⁴¹ Violence in Africa during the nineteenth century, in particular – but in fact throughout the era under examination – was consistently misunderstood by European observers and was used, ultimately, to justify European imperialism. Perceptions of African warfare, notably, became increasingly racialized; outside observers did not see the sociopolitical creativity, or the developmental potential, of African war, but only violent disorder which was symptomatic of racial backwardness and which needed to be brought to an end. As European discourse around the continent became increasingly couched in the language of race and progress, and as the European ‘civilizing mission’ took shape, centred on ideas about development and primitiveness, the ‘savage barbarity’ which was espied everywhere in Africa – not least the persistence of the ‘illegal’ slave trade – was used to validate armed intervention.⁴² It may not have been a direct *cause* of the partition, but it provided the essential cultural and moral framework within which imperialism was deemed not merely possible but necessary. This was a chronic misapprehension of what had been momentous events and processes across Africa, and it is a view which has persisted to the present, in various ways. The late nineteenth-century interpretation of much African violence as fundamentally barbaric and illegitimate has proven robust and has frequently prevented more nuanced understanding of the role and practice of warfare in the continent’s early modern history. Modern memory is problematic: while nineteenth-century military rulers often reached into the past and imbued violence with moral value and a deep sense of temporality, their twentieth- and twenty-first-century counterparts have had a more diffident relationship with histories of violence. In some ways, a trend towards forgetting is wholly understandable, even desirable, as has been argued eloquently by David Rieff.⁴³ Historical remembrance, he suggests, is sometimes burnished with a value which is in fact undeserved, and which in any case can go badly wrong – witness any number of atrocities in recent times which have been somehow justified by a particular version of collective historical

memory.⁴⁴ Given the traumas facing Africans over the past two centuries, a bout of amnesia might be regarded as wholly fitting. Perhaps it is. However, in modern Africa the problem has been not so much one of forgetfulness, but rather of distortion and misremembering.

Postcolonial African leaders certainly foreshortened historical memory, especially in terms of warfare and ideas about violence more generally. Such histories were eschewed in favour of more positivist, economic visions of the future – couched in ideas about modernity which was (ironically) conceived of in terms of peace and prosperity, in sharp distinction to the realities unfolding across postcolonial Africa. In the postcolonial age, builders of nations became altogether wariest of the violent past – in large part because of their own violent present. Uganda illustrates the theme, with a president, Yoweri Museveni, who was vocal and forthright in his belief that ‘The Past’ was a problem to be left behind, that the precolonial age had seen no significant achievements in Africa but only ‘backward tribes’, and that history in any case was a ‘useless subject’.⁴⁵ Museveni was wont to point towards the sectarian bloodletting which had characterized much of Uganda’s deeper past, and in so doing he effectively repackaged Dark Continent mythology for a local audience. He was not alone among early twenty-first-century African leaders in exhibiting nervousness about imbuing past violence with too much positive significance.⁴⁶ But leaders such as Museveni could have taken comfort, had they looked more closely, from the utility of violence over *la longue durée* and from the fact that their predecessors’ aims were much in line with their own. Violence in early modern Africa was denied a developmental role, and indeed its place, as a critical part of human experience – not only in terms of the actual exercise of violence, but also in terms of restraint, which was such an essential part of unfolding experimentation in relationships between governed and governing. The rehabilitation of violence in Africa’s deeper past is a necessary part of ongoing political struggles and culture wars, though without question it is a challenging project and one fraught with risk.

Conclusions: a continent neither ‘merrie’ nor ‘dark’

The assessment of violence in African history is fraught with difficulty. On the one hand, the argument made in this chapter – that the continent in the early modern period was a pretty violent place, and increasingly so – is not one which will go down well in certain quarters. On a superficial level, it seems to reinforce a set of well-established tropes around a ‘Dark Continent’ which first emerged in Europe during the eighteenth century, hardened during the age of high imperialism in the second half of the nineteenth century, and which persist still in various popular interpretations of Africa in the Global North.⁴⁷ I hope it goes without saying that this is not the intention of the argument here. It is, rather, my intention to inject a greater degree of sophistication into the analysis of violence in Africa’s history,

and to recognize the purposes it served. Often, those who would deny the idea that Africa has indeed experienced significant levels of violence in its deeper past tend towards the depiction of what Tony Hopkins once termed a 'Merrie Africa'⁴⁸ – a kind of idyll, before the intrusions of grasping foreigners.⁴⁹ The external was clearly of enormous significance in some regions. But a reasoned, evidence-based approach disproves both 'Dark Continent' and 'Merrie Africa' mythology. Like many other parts of the world in the early modern period, Africa's political, social, and economic development was intimately linked to profound shifts in the culture and practice of violence. In many ways this was 'organic', a natural part of population movement, settlement, and attendant political evolution; but it was also often, and by the nineteenth century almost everywhere, connected to global relationships which facilitated new – and in many respects more brutal – forms of violence.

Several years ago, the cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker argued that violence was in decline: this was the thesis presented in a mighty tome published in 2011,⁵⁰ and often cited by those who believe in the exorable march of progressive modernity. It represents a kind of disturbingly Eurocentric optimism. Nonetheless, the argument represents something of a 'new orthodoxy', as termed by John Gray, who has also delivered one of the most devastating critiques of the book.⁵¹ In Africa, meanwhile, it can be demonstrated that violence has steadily *increased* in scale and expanded in purpose over the last half-millennium or more. It should not be the job of historians – and many others, including those with their hands on the levers of political power – to disguise this fact, or represent it as something other than what it is. The problem, rather, is that this broad trend has been *mis*-represented and *mis*understood, packaged within a set of racialized tropes current in Europe and the Global North since the nineteenth century about the intrinsic backwardness of African violence; or represented as imposed on a maligned continent by outside forces. Again, indeed, an Afrocentric audience would balk at the idea of framing such violence in terms of political and economic *development*, or as something perfectly normal or understandable, and scholars who point to histories of violence in Africa *at all* are likely to be drowned out by cries of derision and accused of perpetuating old stereotypes about the continent.⁵² Yet violence attends change, generally, whether 'good' or 'bad' change, and it is rarely one or the other.⁵³ In some ways, the righteous, putatively revolutionary violence of the mid and late twentieth century threw into shadow the notion that violence in the deeper past could be equally utilitarian and constructive in aim (if not necessarily in outcome).

The outcome of the process in motion between c.1500 and the late nineteenth century was an expansion in military scale, the professionalization of soldiery, the adoption of new weaponry, and the militarization of the polity – whether 'state-based' or otherwise. The militarization of African polity and society was an ongoing process between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries, a period which in many ways witnessed the foundations being laid of modern African political systems. This

would culminate in a veritable military revolution in the nineteenth century, a transformation in the organization and culture of violence, without which Europe's later partition of the continent cannot properly be understood. The early modern era, in sum, witnessed the heightened use of violence internally and externally in pursuit of social cohesion and political consolidation; new forms of war and uses of violence were at the heart of many states, communities, and identities forged during the fertile, foundational era of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There were often different factors at work, and the key distinction between Atlantic Africa and the rest of the continent is the presence in the former of clear external drivers. But the organization of violence across early modern Africa had much in common, in terms of the aim to control factor endowments, to maximize population, and to construct enduring ideological systems, whether territorially or culturally defined.

One of the key concerns of this chapter has been the changing patterns and aims of war and the scope and scale of organized violence. But it is clear that this cannot be considered in some form of 'military isolation': we must also pay attention to the relationship between war and military organization on the one hand, and wider sociocultural and political norms and values around the exercise of violence on the other. Expanding political power meant militarization and expanding cultures of military command, which led to new ideas about what violence *meant* and how widely it could be exercised or controlled. Military transformations and escalations in war were paralleled by the growth and ability of ruling elites to exercise violent control over subjects and to develop internal cultures of political violence. At the same time, militarily organized societies also offered possibilities for restraint and protection to those who adhered to evolving systems and processes: the ultimate social contract. Of course, this relationship could be seen in more ambiguous terms: for example, did increasing militarization and military professionalism *actually* mean greater collective and individual security? Or was it in fact symptomatic of wider insecurity and of an increasingly indiscriminate use of violence (and celebration of violence) across society as a whole? Perhaps it is never quite so simple in terms of cause and effect; both scenarios are valid and can be valid simultaneously. Moreover, the infliction of bodily injury and punishment changed over time – not least because weapons themselves changed. But alongside this, cultures and representations of such acts of violence altered too; in other words, levels of tolerance, or indeed intolerance, of certain forms of violence shifted according to circumstances and contexts. Political and military leaders commanded armies. But political and military authority increasingly extended into the exercise of interpersonal and individual violence and the right, as well as the power, to inflict death and injury. What is also clear, of course, is that this was as much about fear, anxiety, and imagined threat, as burgeoning scholarship in the realms of emotions history indicates.⁵⁴

Yet equally important was the moral rationale: reciprocal and collective security and cohesion, underwritten in many ways by the fear of sanction. Thus there emerged idealized visions of kingship. Yet potent interpretations of the past in

the nineteenth century – a time of creative if violent energy – contrasted with the rather more diffident, selective, and even anxious visions of historical violence in the twentieth. In more recent decades, developmental agendas have generally precluded more nuanced, sophisticated, and robust discussions of the historical role of violence over Africa's *longue durée*.

Notes

- 1 H. M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone* (London, 1872), p. 517.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 517–18; also London Missionary Society Archives, London (LMS): Central Africa, Incoming, Box 3: Southon to Thomson, 28 March 1880, encl., 'History, Country and People of Unyamwezi'.
- 3 I explore this in 'The Fragile Revolution: Rethinking War and Development in Africa's Violent Nineteenth Century', in E. Akeampong, R. H. Bates, N. Nunn, and J. Robinson (eds), *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 2014).
- 4 For a discussion of the broader issues, see P. Manning, 'Africa and World Historiography', *Journal of African History*, 54:3 (2013).
- 5 The editors of the *Cambridge History of Africa* (8 vols, Cambridge, 1975–86), for example, chose 'c.1600' as the cut-off point between volumes 3 and 4 and 'c.1790' between volumes 4 and 5.
- 6 See for example J. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa 1500–1800* (London, 1999); R. Smith, *Warfare and Diplomacy in Precolonial West Africa* (London, 1976).
- 7 J. Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge, 2007), chap. 1.
- 8 J. Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (London, 1990), pp. 80, 82, 106–7.
- 9 See for example D. Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, a Good Place: Agrarian Change, Gender and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region* (Oxford, 1998).
- 10 This is the focus of local texts based on oral tradition: for example, A. Kagwa, *The Kings of Buganda*, ed. and trans. M. S. M. Kiwanuka (Nairobi, 1971); J. Nyakatura, *Anatomy of an African Kingdom: A History of Bunyoro-Kitara*, ed. G. N. Uzoigwe (New York, 1973); H. F. Morris, *The Heroic Recitations of the Bahima of Ankole* (Oxford, 1964).
- 11 R. J. Reid, 'War and Militarism in Pre-Colonial Buganda', *Azania*, 34:1 (1999).
- 12 See for example L. Mair, *Primitive Government* (London, 1962).
- 13 J. H. Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (Edinburgh and London, 1863).
- 14 It is a theme which pervades Kagwa, *Kings of Buganda*, for example.
- 15 J. Sorenson, *Imagining Ethiopia: Struggles for History and Identity in the Horn of Africa* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1993).
- 16 The *Kebra Negast* – 'Chronicle of the Glory of the Kings' – is the Ethiopian national epic, assembled in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and provides ideological justification for the righteous deployment of violence. See for example M. Brooks (ed. and trans.), *A Modern Translation of the Kebra Negast (The Glory of the Kings)* (Lawrenceville, NJ, 1995).
- 17 It is a view associated particularly with a monk, Abba Bahrey, whose 1593 chronicle 'History of the Galla' described the Oromo in terms of fear and loathing, but also with

- some admiration: see C. F. Beckingham and G. W. B. Huntingford (eds), *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593–1646* (London, 1954).
- 18 These wars are described in a contemporary chronicle written by a Yemeni supporter of Ahmad, Shihab Al-Din Ahmad Arabfaqih: *The Conquest of Abyssinia: Futuh Al Habasa*, ed. and trans. P. L. Stenhouse (Addis Ababa, 2005). The events were also the focus of nineteenth-century European writing: for example S. Gobat, *Journal of Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia* (New York, 1969; 1st ed. 1851), p. 6off; A. Bulatovich, *Ethiopia Through Russian Eyes: Country in Transition 1896–1898*, ed. and trans. R. Seltzer (Lawrenceville, NJ, 2000), pp. 92–4.
 - 19 Father J. Lobo, *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, trans. S. Johnson (London, 1789), p. 107; Gobat, *Journal*, pp. 81–3. See also D. Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia: From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century* (London, 2000).
 - 20 J. Thornton, *The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition, 1641–1718* (Madison, WI, 1983); L. Heywood, 'Slavery and its Transformation in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1491–1800', *Journal of African History*, 50:1 (2009).
 - 21 D. Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and their Neighbours under the Influence of the Portuguese 1483–1790* (Oxford, 1966), p. 66ff; J. Thornton, 'The Art of War in Angola, 1575–1680', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30:2 (1988).
 - 22 R. Norris, *Memoirs of the Reign of Bossa Ahadee, King of Dahomy* (London, 1789), p. 137; R. Law (ed.), *Further Correspondence of the Royal African Company of England relating to the 'Slave Coast', 1681–1699* (Madison, WI, 1992), p. 55, entries 69 and 70.
 - 23 By Robin Law, for example, see: 'A West African Cavalry State: The Kingdom of Oyo', *Journal of African History*, 16:1 (1975); 'Horses, Firearms and Political Power in Pre-Colonial West Africa', *Past and Present*, 72 (1976); *The Oyo Empire, c.1600–c.1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford, 1977).
 - 24 I. Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1975).
 - 25 A selection of valuable contemporary accounts would include W. Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea* (London, 1734); W. Smith, *A New Voyage to Guinea* (London, 1744); and A. Dalzel, *The History of Dahomy* (London, 1789). See also R. Law, 'Dahomey and the Slave Trade: Reflections on the Historiography of the Rise of Dahomey', *Journal of African History*, 27:2 (1986).
 - 26 These trends are explored in Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa*; on guns, see for example R. Kea, 'Firearms and Warfare on the Gold and Slave Coasts from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries', *Journal of African History*, 12:2 (1971) and more recently, G. Macola, *The Gun in Central Africa: A History of Technology and Politics* (Athens, OH, 2016).
 - 27 The degree of violence and destruction involved in the slave trade had long been a matter of dispute, not least among contemporary apologists for and critics of the trade itself: see for example Dalzel, *History of Dahomy* and T. F. Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy* (London, 1967; 1st ed. 1839–40).
 - 28 J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and Portsmouth, NH, 1990).
 - 29 P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London, 1988); C. Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990–1992* (Oxford, 1992); G. Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and*

the Rise of the West, 1500–1800 (Cambridge, 1996); M. Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford, 2009).

- 30 J. van Riebeeck, *The Journal of Jan Van Riebeeck*, ed. H. B. Thom (3 vols, Cape Town, 1952–58); and R. Ross, 'Khoesan and Immigrants: The Emergence of Colonial Society in the Cape, 1500–1800', in C. Hamilton, B. K. Mbenga, and R. Ross (eds), *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, vol. 1, *From Early Times to 1885* (Cambridge, 2010).
- 31 N. Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (London, 1992); R. Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge, 2008).
- 32 This is movingly captured in Rian Malan's memoir, *My Traitor's Heart* (London, 1991).
- 33 E. A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa* (London, 1975).
- 34 See R. J. Reid, *Warfare in African History* (New York, 2012), chap. 5.
- 35 Emperors Tewodros and Yohannes both historicized their own struggles to a marked degree, especially for foreign audiences: National Archives of the UK (UKNA) FO 881/1609 Rassam to Lord Stanley, 1 September 1868; UKNA FO 1/27B Yohannes to Queen Victoria, 10 August 1872.
- 36 H. M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent* (2 vols, London, 1878), I; see also D. Henige, "'The Disease of Writing": Ganda and Nyoro Kinglists in a Newly Literate World', in J. Miller (ed.), *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradition and History* (Folkestone, 1980).
- 37 L. Mphande, 'Heroic and Praise Poetry in South Africa', in F. Abiola Irele and S. Gikandi (eds), *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2004).
- 38 For example, M. Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London, 1967).
- 39 LMS Central Africa, Incoming, Box 3: Southon to Thomson, 28 March 1880, encl., 'History, Country and People of Unyamwezi'.
- 40 Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, I, pp. 276–81; J. Yoder, 'The Quest for Kintu and the Search for Peace: Mythology and Morality in Nineteenth-Century Buganda', *History in Africa*, 15 (1988).
- 41 This philosophy underpins F. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh and London, 1923).
- 42 J. Chamberlain, 'The True Conception of Empire (1897)', in E. Boehmer (ed.), *Empire Writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature 1870–1918* (Oxford, 1998); and in the same collection, R. Kipling, 'The White Man's Burden' (1899).
- 43 D. Rieff, *In Praise of Forgetting: Historical Memory and its Ironies* (New Haven, CT and London, 2016).
- 44 M. Macmillan, *The Uses and Abuses of History* (London, 2009).
- 45 Author's fieldwork and informal interviews, Kampala, Uganda, August 2012; Yoweri Museveni, speech at the opening of a political seminar for NRC members, 6 September 1989, reproduced in Y. Museveni, *What is Africa's Problem?* (Minneapolis, 2000), p. 163; M. Mulondo, 'For the sins of Uganda, I repent – Museveni', *New Vision* (Kampala) (18 Oct. 2012).
- 46 R. J. Reid, 'States of Anxiety: History and Nation in Modern Africa', *Past & Present*, 229 (2015).

- 47 I explore this in 'Horror, Hubris and Humanity: The International Engagement with Africa, 1914–2014', *International Affairs*, 90:1 (2014).
- 48 A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (Harlow, 1973), p. 10.
- 49 See for example M. K. Asante, *The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony* (New York, 2007).
- 50 S. Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature: A History of Violence and Humanity* (London, 2011).
- 51 J. Gray, 'Steven Pinker is wrong about violence and war', *Guardian* (13 Mar. 2015).
- 52 This was a key theme in a recent panel discussion to launch the new *Journal of African Military History* at the African Studies Association, Chicago, November 2017.
- 53 For a more nuanced discussion of civil wars, for example, as in some ways necessary, cleansing, and even constructive, see D. Armitage, *Civil Wars: A History in Ideas* (New York, 2017).
- 54 For example: K. M. Fierke, 'Emotions in IR: the "Dog that did not Bark": www.e-ir.info/2015/02/20/emotions-in-ir-the-dog-that-did-not-bark/ (accessed 10 Mar. 2020); R. Jeffries, *Reason and Emotion in International Ethics* (Cambridge, 2014); K. Booth and N. Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics* (Basingstoke, 2008); O. Lowenheim and G. Heimann, 'Revenge in International Politics', *Security Studies*, 17:4 (2008).

2

Both benevolent and brutal: the two sides of provincial violence in early modern Burma

Michael W. Charney

During a Buddhist festival in Rangoon at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in 1809, the viceroy of Pegu (Min-Hla-Nawrahta), intent on providing a lesson that would prevent disloyalty spreading among his troops, had given orders for the execution of a number of men and their families. Four families were arrested: five men, four women, and three children. They were to ‘suffer cruel death’, having their bellies slit open and their legs removed at the knees. Although the viceroy would soon reduce the number to be killed, two men were taken out for execution anyway, as were their wives, ‘both young girls’ and one of them several months pregnant, as well as the three year-old daughter of one of the men. The viceroy believed only a ‘severe execution’ would provide a serious enough example for his men.¹ The two men were stretched out on the ground before a crowd. Their arms and legs were tied to stakes that had been pounded into the ground. In order to make the cutting easier, a thick board was placed under the back of each man. The women were now to be tied down in the same way, and similar boards were prepared to stretch them out as well and flatten their bodies to make things easier for the executioner, who stood above them. It was decided that the body of the three year-old girl was too small to need such a board or to be tied down at all. Presumably any blow would be sufficient.²

A British East India Company officer, Captain John Canning, acting on the request of the *Ye-wun* (deputy governor) of Rangoon, persuaded the viceroy to spare their lives, and the latter agreed to a pardon which had to be brought to the place of execution by messengers. The viceroy’s wrath was only half of the story behind the display of violence. The viceroy had warned that his own people in the crowd were so enraged against these men that they ‘would not only kill them, but eat

them'. In actuality, a great many in the audience were family members and friends. After the pardon arrived, an impending execution was still acted out. The executioner spent over a half hour after learning that the intended victims had been freed sharpening a knife as if about to execute them, and in a great burst of theatrics leapt over the men tied prostrate beneath him. Meanwhile the viceroy's men, officers of the government, moved through the crowd gathering contributions from terrified friends of the victims to secure their release. One of those collecting this bribe money was the messenger who had brought the pardon. When 300 tickals had been collected and it was clear nothing more could be gained, the prisoners were untied and brought back to the jail where they were kept, along with the prisoners who had been pardoned earlier in the morning, until their friends and family paid more bribe money, which took them days to do. We are told that due to fright, presumably the constant fear that they were about to be executed, some of these women, who had already been ordered freed, went delirious. Only then was everyone freed.³ The viceroy is reported to have commented several times that the Burman population could only be kept under control through such 'extreme severity'.⁴

Historians of the non-Western world might easily dismiss such observations by Company officials as the misinterpretations of Europeans who misunderstood indigenous culture and would not have been able to understand, at least fully, what they saw. Such early nineteenth-century accounts might also be taken as being influenced by a tendency to view Asian governments as tyrannical. Such thinking often accompanied colonial conquests by Europeans who believed that they were 'releasing' the general population from unfair servitude in favour of the more egalitarian opportunities afforded by rational Western rule and the introduction of capitalism.

Nevertheless, documentation for such episodes of violence, often including those found in European accounts, can also be found in the indigenous sources. Violence was an everyday part of living (and dying) in parts of early modern Burma, and this violence appeared to increase in many areas of the kingdom as this period progressed. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of violence per se in precolonial Burmese everyday life has not drawn much attention in the historiography. Nor has anyone explicitly used precolonial violence as a measure of Burma's transition towards modernity. Instead, early modern Burma is seen as a period characterized by developments that would seem to have reduced violence, including increasing political centralization, and the introduction and enforcement of laws and central standards on behaviour that worked to stabilize society under the umbrella of the king's protection of the practice of Buddhism and enforcement of the dharma, the moral law that sustains the Buddha's dispensation. It looked, from the veranda of the royal palace, which itself was a metaphor for universal harmony, as if everything was under control.

The present chapter looks at early modern violence in Burma by decentering its historiographical lens away from the view of the court. Burmese chronicles mainly discuss developments in the royal court and the trials and tribulations of centrally

dispatched military expeditions to suppress rebellions in the provinces or to conquer foreign kingdoms. Most daily events outside of the royal centre are not discussed.⁵ We do have numerous other sources, including first-hand accounts and a fairly dense set of royal edicts from the period, which confirm why and when some of the episodes of violence occurred. Bringing sources together in this way can provide information and raise questions that relying on either indigenous source material or European source material alone cannot. But differences in perspectives regarding these episodes of violence also indicate that provincial violence was viewed one way from the court and another in the province; the king saw in the execution of measured violence only the enforcement of royal will and the dharma, while provincial appointees saw in the threat of extreme violence a means of monetary gain. The coexistence of two perspectives on early modern violence in Burma were due to a particular irony of state formation in precolonial Burma – political centralization did not bring the village community closer to the court (or vice versa), but made the village more distant and autonomous from the royal court. This process involved the replacement of local royal and noble families with temporary, centrally appointed officials. The officials lacked the local networks, the ritual roles, and the traditional loyalties that had bonded local royal and noble families and the village together in the past. Yet these officials were also burdened with huge demands by the state for manpower and revenues. Moreover, these officials remained under threat by other rivals in the provinces who constantly sought to unseat them by causing problems between their rivals and the royal court. Temporary and insecure, outlying officials pushed local village communities to their limits for reserves of men and other resources, in ways that did not register with how just royal rule was maintained in the royal imaginary. Violence and the conspicuous threats of violence proved the only means that worked. Personal, bodily violence, whether merely threatened or actually inflicted, thus became an increasing feature of early modern state formation in outlying, frontier areas – the non-state spaces of the Burmese state.

This chapter will first examine the phenomenon of administrative violence in the Konbaung state's outlying provinces, in particular the two ways in which the state viewed the place of violence in the kingdom and why this has obscured the significance of everyday violence and its increasing prevalence in late early modern state administration in Burma. The second section looks at how the relationship between the state and the village changed over the course of the early modern period in ways that encouraged the use of violence. Finally, the chapter will examine how the application of administrative violence provoked the mobilization of collective violence against the state.

Two Burmas beneath one king

Despite well-documented state expansion and centralization, by the early nineteenth century the court's reach and capacity in different parts of the kingdom was

extremely uneven. Recent scholarship has dispelled the myth of oriental despotism at the beginning of the early modern period in favour of relatively weak regimes that developed administrative apparatus and relied on various additional structures for ruling the kingdom and collecting revenues. These structures ensured that, by the late early modern period, in the major lowland kingdoms of mainland Southeast Asia at least, royal rule did not have to depend on physical force in what might be called the state's 'political core' close to the centre of power.

In Burma's case, by the end of the early modern period, this core consisted of the lowlands north of the Lower Burma Delta. By 1830, as demonstrated by Victor Lieberman, the state template for modern Burma – that which would reconfigure itself under British colonial rule, and then as an independent state after 1948 – had been set.⁶ Like Lieberman, on whose work he draws, James Scott views the state's expansion over lowland Burma as fairly complete by the end of the early modern period, forming an example of what he calls the 'padi state', because it was possible here to concentrate grain production. Scott uses 'state space' to refer to areas that are easily governable. Burmese state space paralleled the relatively easily traversable and governable lowlands of the Burmese dry zone.⁷ Here there was a concentration of extensive pockets of closer central administrative scrutiny; the royal court was a powerful force that exerted an immense influence over daily political, economic, social, and religious life. This was where most of the wealth of the kingdom, the major monastic centres, the main agricultural reserves of the kingdom, and most of the royal bondspeople (*ahmudans*) were concentrated. Here, much of the population lived and remained relatively poor, pressured to till the land through various forms of what Johan Galtung has described for more recent states as structural violence in which the essential element is that 'the power to decide over the distribution of resources is unevenly distributed'.⁸ Governing institutions in precolonial Burma were devised to extract revenues and manpower and to keep people, if they were free, tied to the land to raise crops or, if they were service-people, to hold them to assigned occupations for the king or the other elites who owned them. Villages were assigned to the landed gentry for the latter to 'eat' the resources of the former. Anyone who had other aspirations in life found it impossible to move beyond their station in life, except in times of political collapse.

In the royal imaginary, the king sat at the centre of the world and maintained universal harmony. The king was the earthly equivalent of Indra, the king of the City of the Gods and the protector of the religion. The king maintained peace and harmony and supported the Sangha so that monks could keep accruing merit and continue on their path to enlightenment. Good kings succeeded and bad kings failed in this task. It was the explicit purpose of U Kala's chronicle, the chronicle on which all others that come after it are based or informed by, to show the current and future kings the differences between bad and good rulership and the consequences of both. In this imaginary, the only story lines of relevance were those that were directly relevant to the court; when outlying provinces entered into the story

they remained in focus only so long as they were relevant to the king's own story. It should be no surprise that (1) mundane episodes of daily administration outside of the court rarely show up in the chronicles, and (2) that historiography which allows the chronicles to frame their discussions have a tendency to emphasize the stability of the court as the measure of stability in the kingdom. Certainly, few historians, after the colonial period, relied solely on the chronicles for their accounts, but usually extra-chronicle evidence was merely used to verify the information in the chronicles. In terms of its spatiality, from the perspective of the court, the royal imaginary was supremely inclusive; in some utterances, the king was said to rule the world, but in more practical daily administration, merely the entire kingdom. Court histories are, as Scott has suggested, to a certain degree 'histories of state spaces' and they 'neglect or ignore altogether' non-state spaces.⁹

There was also another Burma characterized by land that was less easy to govern and where it was also difficult to concentrate grain production that Scott identifies as non-state space. In the Burmese context, highland areas, part of the larger Southeast Asian massif, are non-state space.¹⁰ Scott admits that other terrains, including 'swamps, marshes, mangrove coasts, deserts, volcanic margins, and even open sea, like the ever-growing and changing deltas of Southeast Asia's great rivers', can be non-state space for the same reason, but they do not attract his attention to the same degree as do the highlands, no doubt because they are not presented this way in the state sources or the resulting historiography.¹¹ To steal a phrase from J. C. Van Leur, the early modern Burmese state presence in these areas was 'never more than a thin, flaking glaze'.¹² Lower Burma, like many parts of the kingdom, remained outside the immediate economic, social, and cultural life of the royal capital. To be sent out to the provinces meant a gap in time and space that made regular interaction other than written correspondence impossible.

In reality, the Burmese state could only claim dominion and depute men with royal grants of authority and a mandate to govern over these non-state space areas. Such appointees had a significant challenge before them, for the structures that overlapped to ensure popular submission to the state in the centre of the kingdom were nearly wholly absent in the non-state spaces. There were agricultural and trading colonies, and villages along rivers or in clearings in the delta, for example. Here, state demands were made with a lighter touch because villagers might rebel if they faced what were considered excessive demands, as they did in 1740, requiring a costly military expedition and possibly costing the local governor his head. Or, more commonly, a village would just move further out of reach of the local governor who was unwise enough to demand too much. This situation began to change in the 1790s due to the bloody wars of King Bodawhpaya (r. 1782–1819) against neighbouring Siam, and a great famine in the central dry zone (1805–12) that contributed to labour flight. Combined, these two crises forced the court to find additional sources of manpower and foodstuffs.¹³ A light administrative touch in the delta area was no longer possible; the payment of taxes, the levying of troops, the securing of

food supplies and the like in outlying parts of the kingdom could only be achieved at the point of a sword.¹⁴

Despite their physical distance from the royal court, central appointees were the solder behind the royal imaginary that connected the royal centre to the provinces through daily administrative practice. On the one hand, these officials saw their main identity as appointees of the royal court and never identified too much with the local population. Once dispatched to the provinces, central appointees remained concerned primarily with court politics and their respective positions within court factions in ongoing power struggles. They saw their appointments as dependent on ever-changing court politics, which they kept tabs on and influenced through their wives and allies who remained at the court. Appointments were temporary, often of short duration, and usually viewed as a stepping stone on the path to a higher position somewhere else. Whether they achieved this or not mainly involved their success in gathering revenue and manpower, not the happiness of the local population, success in war when called upon, and, above all, their continued support by a strong faction in the court. When in the provinces local rivalries reflected court factional infighting, and local official competition was interpreted in this context.¹⁵

The main events examined in the present chapter occurred within the course of less than a year, beginning in about May 1809 in south-eastern Burma. The viceroy enjoyed, we are told, a status second only to the king and his heir apparent, with the powers of a king in the lower half of Burma.¹⁶ In May 1809, another official, the Atwinwun, was dispatched by the king with 'broad powers' to go to Tavoy, build up resources for a military expedition, and then lead an attack on Siam.¹⁷ Their rivalry set off a series of acts of violence that contributed to the near collapse of the kingdom.

The political contest between the two officials was partly waged through letter-writing campaigns to the royal court. This began when the viceroy of Pegu and the governor of Martaban had challenged the Atwinwun's right to gather resources in the area for the expedition because they had apparently outdated royal orders suggesting the Atwinwun lacked such powers. The latter then wrote a letter to the king accusing the officials of obstruction. Other members of the Atwinwun's faction in the court, mainly princes of the royal family, now sent a letter to the Atwinwun indicating that he was safe as the king had received his complaint and was going to remove the viceroy and the governor of Martaban from their positions. Moreover, the king had appointed as their replacements the Ye-wun of Rangoon as the new governor of Martaban and the king's grandson as the new viceroy of Pegu.¹⁸

The viceroy and the governor of Martaban got wind of this and sent their own letters to the king in the hopes of changing his views. These letters recast the events in Lower Burma so that they would find context in the royal imaginary and thus capture the king's attention and command his intervention. The Atwinwun, they claimed, was not acting as military commander or administrator as had been

ordered by the king, but instead was preparing to make himself king instead. The stockades were really more like the walls of a royal city and significantly included the twelve buildings that represented the cardinal points, a symbolic motif of the royal palace, and in the performance of duties, the Atwinwun had begun to use royal words for his own comings and goings. As the two men had expected, Bodawhpaya was enraged and saw these activities as threatening himself and his place at the centre of the royal imaginary. The king now ordered the viceroy to prepare for an attack on the Atwinwun by sending men to Martaban.¹⁹

The main underlying tensions between the officials in the provinces were actually issues regarding personal control over local reserves of men and the resources necessary to support it. In a low population country, it was difficult to keep bondspeople from fleeing to the service of another patron who offered a better deal. Local elites competed fiercely locally for control of manpower, but lacked the royal court's range of mechanisms to keep them in place. All the officials discussed here sought personal bondspeople and needed the money extorted through violence and the threat of violence to maintain growing retinues. In the opening example, the cause of the viceroy's unhappiness was that four of the men sentenced to death had been his bondspeople who had deserted to the service of long-time rival the Ye-wun. Canning's intervention in the execution was motivated not only by his personal distaste, but a request from the Ye-wun to do so.²⁰ In this case, violence was not only a means of extortion, but also what Stuart Carroll calls vindictory violence,²¹ in the context of a feud between the viceroy and the Ye-wun. The Atwinwun now wrote to the king, promising to establish the truth of the matter once his military campaign was finished. The king agreed, ordered the troops who had been sent to Martaban recalled, and the Atwinwun moved against Siam, took the town and island of Phuket, and was rewarded by the king with the title 'Maha-Thiha-Thura', inscribed on a gold nameplate, and seven scarlet-coloured victory drums.²²

With the Ye-wun's help, the Atwinwun now had his revenge on the viceroy. They did so not by pointing to the viceroy's local transgressions of administrative propriety, but by, like their rivals earlier, depicting the viceroy as being guilty in ways that would register as violating the royal imaginary. The Atwinwun and the Ye-wun wrote letters to the Bodawhpaya accusing the viceroy of being unfit to command by claiming he did not maintain discipline among the royal troops. Worse, the viceroy violated royal orders by allowing them to smoke opium and drink alcohol publicly. By contrast to the king's concern earlier that the Atwinwun was putting too many people to death, these letters accused the viceroy of not executing enough people. As they claimed, the viceroy had 'taken off few or no heads since his arrival', indicating that no discipline must have been enforced at all. According to palace sources, when the king received the letters 'he grasped his sword and spear (the usual signs of fury)'.²³ The viceroy was removed from office and all other dignities, as was his brother, the governor of Bassein, both were ordered to come to the court with chains around their necks, and the governorship of Martaban was now finally given

to the Ye-wun.²⁴ In order to ensure that the viceroy obeyed the royal order, the Ye-wun took the precaution of first arresting all of the viceroy's 'principal vassals and adherents ... together with their families'. The slightest resistance, the Ye-Wun warned, would bring the 'immediate destruction of these people'.²⁵ The Atwinwun now received all of the viceroy's old powers, in addition to retaining those already possessed as the commander of the army in the south, as well as other powers and honours.²⁶

Changed obligations

Demonstrating why the enforcement of state demands on local populations relied increasingly on violence in places like Lower Burma requires a look at how the relationship between the village and the state changed between the fifteenth and early nineteenth century. Although the royal imaginary remained a superficial overlay, changes occurred in the outlying parts of the kingdom that made it possible for local officials to abuse their charges. Provincial violence demonstrated some of the ways in which early modern state formation changed everyday life. Political centralization ended the presence and the patronage of local families with claims to royal status and a place in local rites. In the fifteenth century, for example, the counterparts of eighteenth-century centrally appointed officials were local royals, members of independent royal or noble families, or branches of the main royal family. These people undertook the expectations of royalty and nobility in society, providing for festivals, patronizing monks and pagodas, and heeding the basic tenets of good rulership by not pushing their charges to the point of starvation, because they were more susceptible to being overthrown by local rebels or displaced by a neighbouring 'small king' who could easily legitimate his campaign as one of restoring peace and ensuring universal harmony.

Under the Konbaung dynasty, however, centrally appointed officials in the provinces owed their posting instead to the court, which monopolized all royal and ceremonial functions, performed on behalf of the kingdom as a whole in the royal capital, out of sight and mind of much of the rural population. If they chose to do so, central appointees might patronize the local religion on behalf of the community, sponsor great festivals, or conduct their rule with a view to the tolerance of the local population. The two problems of this path were its inherent political dangers and its certain ineffectiveness. First, while acting as patron to local communities and religious life might induce villagers to meet the central court's military and financial demands, it also risked arousing suspicions that the official was either endangering resource-extraction by growing too close to the population, or that he might have pretensions to the throne. From the court's perspective, its officials in the provinces were to do the king's bidding in the provinces, not to become patrons of village communities. Second, many provincial appointees were not in place long enough to develop the kinds of loyalties and degree of patronage that would be necessary to

win local cooperation. These pressures forced them to pursue the most immediate and effective means to fulfil the court's expectations.

As the Konbaung state centralized, it effectively pushed provincial villages further away, rather than pulling them closer to the court. The limited development and clarification of provincial administrative organization in Burma, even by the early nineteenth century, meant that in several cases where officials were dispatched to prepare for especially important military campaigns or administrative charges, the authority granted them to meet their responsibilities remained vague. Worse, it could be dangerously extensive in order to allow them the freedom to deal with any obstacle that lay in their way. These assignments were often uncoordinated and created a range of problems, including everything from jealousy among other officials to genuine jurisdictional issues. Lacking credentials backed by anyone other than a distant royal court, and without access to networks that transcended local village communities (as discussed further below), Konbaung officials depended on regular, spectacular, and local displays of violence, both to obtain resources and to reconfirm their authority – and these displays grew fiercer as demands of state were placed more heavily on themselves. As Martin Thomas has observed regarding colonial policing, 'coercive policing ... was a powerful indicator of the colonial state's limited reach'.²⁷ This could also be asserted for provincial administrators in the early modern Burmese state for the reason that they had few other means at their disposal.

Such officials were thus often merciless in their imposition of demands for soldiers for royal campaigns, but in particular for revenue.²⁸ Those who could not pay the taxes or provide the supplies were sold off as debt slaves.²⁹ In terms of remuneration, there were no limits to what Konbaung officials in the outlying provinces could wring from local populations so long as nothing occurred that would challenge the harmony and royal benevolence emphasized in the royal imaginary. Using the threat of execution in this way offered a perfect means of doing so. Those threatened with execution were charged with crimes, and thus criminalized, and within the Buddhist context that informed the royal imaginary; releasing someone from captivity or death, or securing this release, accrued merit. In addition to securing funds, an official could also present himself to the king as a benevolent administrator whose actions helped to contribute to the field of merit that sustained the religion in the kingdom. By sending funds to the court, the official could also represent that they were an effective administrator as well, so long as once in a while someone was actually executed for an offence.

Going too far did indeed bring royal suspicion that something was amiss. Viewed from the royal court, the Atwinwun was a royal army commander who had been sent to south-eastern Burma to raise troops and build an army that would then attack the Siamese, secure the frontiers of the kingdom, and hopefully also deliver booty to the royal court. The Atwinwun appears to have gone through the motions of acting out this role, but prioritized the enhancement of his political strength through the

acquisition of manpower and wealth to support it.³⁰ When opposed, the Atwinwun was also fairly violent in his response. The Atwinwun charged twenty opponents with attempted assassination and had them put to death. In fact, the Atwinwun was putting so many people to death that it roused the concern of the royal court. The king finally intervened when the Atwinwun began to execute soldiers who had been defeated in battle. He gave orders for all of the Atwinwun's prisoners to be released, and ordered an investigation into why so many executions were taking place.³¹

Early modern Burma differed from Europe where the church transformed gender relations, and where female violence came to be regarded as a male responsibility.³² Burmese women were legally the equal of men, and were as responsible for the behaviour of their husbands as their husbands were for theirs. This provided much incentive for women to play major roles at the court in promoting the careers of their husbands sent out to the provinces, and to participate in court intrigue and act as negotiators on their behalf. In his initial moves to punish the Atwinwun, for example, Bodawhpaya had also arrested and imprisoned the Atwinwun's wife, who had remained in the royal court and who would play a key role in the collection of money and the payment of bribes to the right people to save both their skins.³³ Violence also further reinforced equality between men and women in the provinces. Burmese peasant women were, like men, expected to work in the fields, in addition to responsibilities in the home and in the marketplace. They had equal rights under the law to property and inheritance, and equal responsibility for taxes. Violence by officials – legal and extralegal – directed against the village, also had to put men and women (whether adults or children) on an equal footing regarding *corvée* labour impositions and taxation demands because it was mainly women who remained in the village. Additional abuses included rape and the forced enslavement of the children of households that could not pay their tax.³⁴

Violence or its threat were also used to extract wealth from the extended families of the soon-to-be-punished. The Atwinwun had secured some bribe money from the families of men defeated in battle and sentenced to death as a result, before the royal orders contravening their death sentences arrived. In the case of the officer Zeya Suriya Kyaw, his wife paid the bribe to the Atwinwun's wife back at the royal court.³⁵ But had these death sentences remained only threats, they would have lost their power of persuasion very quickly. What made them so frightening and persuasive was that such punishments were indeed frequently carried out. In February 1810, the royal court issued orders that anyone caught using golden umbrellas, the peculiar appurtenance of royalty, should be arrested and brought back to the capital.³⁶ As one account describes the execution of several men apprehended for this crime:

we went to the spot and saw the bodies of three men who had been beheaded lying at full length, their bellies, which had been ripped open, being next the ground, with stakes driven into it through their left sides, the viscera also appearing between the

bodies. The heads were laced to their respective necks, the faces being upwards as if *staring* at you, having also a stake driven through the mouth and throat into the ground. In this state they are to continue three days, exposed to the action of the sun, which will greatly add to the horridness of their appearance.³⁷

Observers commented that what was more shocking than the scene described was the 'indifference with which the Burmans regarded this tragic scene'.³⁸ Such violence then was probably a normal part of everyday life in such outlying parts of the kingdom.

Popular responses: flight and fight

Collective violence was an increasingly popular response to the application of violence in administration in Lower Burma. It is difficult to identify where a line can be drawn between the quotidian violence and collective violence in Lower Burma at the end of the early modern period. Periodic displays of violence represented one way to bridge the chasm between the village and the centrally appointed official, but while this violence was accepted as legal, it was not considered legitimate, provoking entire villages to move further out of the reach of the state (and by this period, this meant leaving the kingdom altogether) when they could, or turn to banditry and rebellion. As Konbaung administration in the outlying provinces was 'light touch', unofficial low-level violence between villages was fairly common as a means of working out local disputes, but when it turned on the royal centre (against the state) it threatened the stability of the kingdom. Either course indicated the weak subscription that villages in places like Lower Burma maintained to the royal imaginary.

As mentioned, Konbaung state administration in the provinces represented only a thin layer over a countryside dotted with self-contained villages.³⁹ The basic units of social organization remained village communities. It was the village headmen who answered the demands of the state and local state officials, but who came from the village, owed their position to it, and always saw the village and its survival as their first priority. Even at this late stage of early modern Burmese state development, headmen's reports remained the primary source of information which filtered through other centrally appointed officials to the court, when the king wished to know how much manpower, resources, and revenue remained in the kingdom to be tapped.⁴⁰ Further, by the early nineteenth century, the king commanded that each headman in the kingdom send a report directly to the court, giving them two to three months to fill out specific royal forms to do so, the difference in time depending on the distance of the village from the royal court.⁴¹ The village headmen's report was also an imaginary of the village and what it could offer the state. This made it possible for the headman to protect the village from excessive state demands, by understating its resources. The state could get around this by simply

placing increasing demands on it, regardless of what its stated resources were, until the village could tolerate no more.

Unhappy bondspeople and overstretched villages were different phenomena that worked themselves out in different ways. Bondspeople sought personal refuge by fleeing the service of one master for another, the occurrence of which was frequent and well documented, including the examples discussed here. Despite suggestions that the villages themselves were porous and always changing,⁴² so far as we have documentation, villagers did not generally flee local areas on their own, as this would entail leaving family and friends. Instead, village communities moved together out of areas with excessive demands into areas on the frontier further out of the reach of state officials, which gave them more autonomy. As the Konbang state's reach expanded over the full extent of the Irrawaddy Delta, fleeing (as opposed to resisting) excessive demands of outlying officials increasingly required fleeing the kingdom altogether, leaving numerous villages along the Irrawaddy River abandoned or depopulated.⁴³

Without much direct management of local affairs, provincial appointees had few incentives to intercede in local conflicts between villages. Although intervillage conflict might be rare in the kingdom's core area, in the outlying provinces it was fairly common as villages fought out issues regarding everything from access to particular forests, control over spirit shrines, and water rights. Various forms of raiding of other villages occurred even in good times, but especially in bad times. In the period examined here, villagers moved out of areas in the face of excessive exactions by Konbaung officials, and looked further afield. When delta villagers pushed north into the dry zone closer to the royal centre they found security measures much weaker than they had in the delta. The Irrawaddy River that connected Upper Burma, the central dry zone, and the southern delta together, no longer remained a safe channel of communication, requiring the appointment of a special officer – the town officer in charge of the 'nine towns' – with an armed force to patrol the river and protect important shipping. Within the first four months in the post he had publicly executed over seventy captured river pirates.⁴⁴ As mentioned, members of dacoit bands who were caught were punished with death, unless redeemed at the place of execution.⁴⁵

The rolling effect of administrative violence in the south had thus rippled back towards the royal centre as towns on the edge of the royal city now succumbed to the depredations of 'numerous bands of dacoits, robbers, [and] insurgents' in the 1809–10 period.⁴⁶ There is substantial evidence that this violence, as it turned back against the royal centre, shattered the royal imaginary and caused a crisis of kingship. Manifest violence within the kingdom was taken as a sign that the religion was in crisis, and that the current king had an insufficient store of merit and thus would have been viewed as unsuitable to remain on the throne. In 1811, the king sought to distance himself from the bad karma of the existing royal capital by building a new one at Mingun, as well as constructing what, if it had been

finished, would have been an unprecedented work of merit, the Mingun Pagoda, followed in 1812 by defrocking the monastic leadership and declaring himself the next Buddha. Although the king would abandon this effort in 1817, and die in 1819, the resulting instability of the kingdom was not reined in, and Burma succumbed to British arms in the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824–26), waged over the issue of punitive expeditions against rebel villagers in two other difficult Burmese frontiers – Arakan and Assam.

Conclusion

Burma's early modern experience with violence was profoundly shaped by the distinction between the core and the provinces. The former depended on experienced administrative rationalization, economic growth, the homogenization of culture and language, the adoption of orthodox observances of Buddhist practices, and pursuit of the ideals of Buddhist kingship, all of which contributed to compliance with state demands and a greater ability to meet the latter. By contrast, in the provinces the demands of early modern state formation drove officials to grind down local communities for resources with ever more conspicuous displays of violence, both threatened and real. As a result, the kingdom experienced population dislocation and collective violence that were more consistent with disintegrating societies than political stability.

Villagers obeyed state officials because of the threat of execution and its implementation, presumably fluctuating in the density of its occurrence. In especially bad times, when central demands were heaviest and officials in the provinces were hard-pressed to both deliver resources to the court and pocket a sizeable portion themselves, the frequency of execution and threat of it must have been extreme. But even in periods of lighter central demands, coercive violence probably remained an important part of the everyday life of the early modern Burmese state in the provinces,⁴⁷ however much its enactment and the threat of its imposition was invisible to, or misunderstood by, the royal centre. In the royal court, the king watched over the people and judged the good and the bad, and the eyes of all in the kingdom were upon the throne. This royal imaginary gave cohesion to the kingdom within a moral system that emphasized unity, harmony, and peace. This imaginary blinded the court to the everyday activities of centrally appointed officials who abused the local populations under their charge for their own benefit. Abuse led to resistance and flight, which led to more violence and, in the end, undermined the security of the royal imaginary. Political centralization in early modern Burma, by replacing locally responsible royal and noble families with temporary central appointees, encouraged, at least to some degree, increasing violence of this kind over time.

Notes

- 1 India Office Records [IOR]: IOR/F/4/310: John Canning to Company, 29 Nov. 1809, pp. 68–9, 73–4; IOR/F/4/333 Canning Report, 8 May 1810, p. 120, n. 20.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 IOR/F/4/310 Canning to Company, 29 Nov. 1809, pp. 74–5.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- 5 F. N. Trager and W. J. Koenig (eds), *Burmese Sit-Tans 1764–1826: Records of Rural Life and Administration*, with the Assistance of Daw Yi Yi (Tucson, AZ, 1979), p. 1.
- 6 See V. Lieberman, *Strange parallels*, vol. 1, *Integration of the Mainland Southeast Asia in Global Context, c.800–1830* (Cambridge, 2003); V. Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles: Anarchy and Conquest, c.1580–1760* (Princeton, 1984).
- 7 J. C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT, 2009), p. 13.
- 8 J. Galtung, 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 6:3 (1969), p. 171.
- 9 Scott, *Art of Not Being Governed*, p. 34.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 J. C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian and Economic History*, trans. James S. Holmes and A. Van Marie (The Hague, 1955).
- 13 M. W. Charney, *Powerful Learning: Buddhist Literati and the Throne in Burma's Last Dynasty, 1752–1885* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2006), p. 102.
- 14 IOR/F/4/333 Canning Report, 8 May 1810, p. 36.
- 15 W. J. Koenig, *The Burmese Polity, 1752–1819: Politics, Administration and Social Organization in the Early Konbaung Period* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1990), p. 155.
- 16 *Ibid.* William Koenig says that in 1809 the official's jurisdiction had expanded to include all of the land that was to the east of the Irrawaddy River and South of Prome.
- 17 Anon., 'Wung-gyi-hmu-gyi-mya Akyauung', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, 45:2 (1962), p. 149; Koenig, *Burmese Polity*, p. 155.
- 18 C. S. Skinner (trans.), 'The Interrogation of Zeya Suriya Kyaw: A Burmese Account of the Junk Ceylon (Phuket) Campaigns of 1809–1810', *Journal of the Siam Society*, 72:1 (1984), p. 65.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 65–6.
- 20 IOR/F/4/310 Canning to Company, 29 Nov. 1809, p. 75.
- 21 S. Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2006), p. 83.
- 22 *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 69.
- 23 IOR/F/4/333 Canning Report, 8 May 1810, pp. 119–21.
- 24 *Ibid.*, pp. 121–2; Royal Orders of Burma [ROB], 26 Feb. 1810, in T. Tun (ed.), *The Royal Orders of the Kings of Burma* (10 vols, Kyoto, 1983–90), VI, p. 193.
- 25 IOR/F/4/333 Canning Report, 8 May 1810, pp. 162–3.
- 26 ROB 26 Feb. 1810, in Tun, *Royal Orders*, VI, pp. 193–4.
- 27 M. Thomas, *Violence and Colonial Order: Police, Workers and Protest in European Colonial Empires, 1918–1940* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 75.

- 28 As Canning described the situation in Lower Burma, 'the people are exposed to the unrestrained violence and exactions of [the governor of Hanthawaddy's] Ministers and followers of every description. This system of uninvited rapine finds its excuse in the nature of the Burman Government, which allowing no salary to any of its officers and exacting on the contrary from the high in office and they again from those under them, considerable sums every year of the privation of their respective situation all from the Governor of a province to the lowest writer in service to plunder indiscriminately whenever power or opportunity exists.' IOR/F/4/310 Canning to Company, 29 Nov. 1809, p. 64.
- 29 IOR/F/4/333 Canning Report, 8 May 1810, p. 36.
- 30 Koenig, *Burmese Polity*, p. 155.
- 31 Skinner, 'Interrogation of Zeya Suriya Kyaw', pp. 70–1.
- 32 J. R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 4.
- 33 Skinner, 'Interrogation of Zeya Suriya Kyaw', p. 66.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- 36 ROB 9 Feb. 1810, in Tun, *Royal Orders*, VI, p. 182.
- 37 B. R. Pearn (ed.), 'A Burma Diary of 1810', *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, 27:3 (1937), p. 292.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 Scott refers to these as 'the elementary units of political order': Scott, *Art of Not Being Governed*, p. 36.
- 40 Trager and Koenig, *Burmese Sit-Tans 1764–1826*, p. 5.
- 41 ROB 8 Feb. 1810, in Tun, *Royal Orders*, VI, p. 179.
- 42 Scott, *Art of Not Being Governed*, p. 37.
- 43 IOR/F/4/333 Canning Report, 8 May 1810, p. 160; the depopulation caused by people fleeing excessive demands for soldiers and taxes is independently confirmed by Felix Carey in Pearn, 'A Burma Diary of 1810', p. 293.
- 44 IOR/F/4/333 Canning Report, 8 May 1810, pp. 37–8; ROB 6 May 1810, in Tun, *Royal Orders*, VI, p. 241.
- 45 Pearn, 'A Burma Diary of 1810', p. 300.
- 46 IOR/F/4/333 Canning Report, 8 May 1810, pp. 146–7.
- 47 A. White (ed.), *The Everyday Life of the State: A State-in-Society Approach*, foreword by J. S. Migdal (Seattle, 2013).

3

Village rebellion and social violence in early nineteenth-century Vietnam

Vũ Đức Liêm

Ban cung sinh dao tac.
Misery creates banditry.
(Vietnamese proverb)

In summer 1834, Nguyen Khac Hai, the lieutenant governor of Bac Ninh province (forty kilometres to the north of Hanoi), led a mission to inspect local dykes. In the middle of the tour, Hai was ambushed by armed men who came to be known in the imperial records as ‘bandits’ (*phi*).¹ Taken by surprise, most of Hai’s escort of officials and troops were killed before he retreated to a nearby village to summon help. Contrary to his expectations, the villagers not only refused, but closed the gates, trapping Hai outside where he was killed. Minh Menh (r. 1820–41), the second emperor from the Nguyen dynasty ruling unified Vietnam since 1802, was furious that his imperial subjects had ‘sat and watched’ while Hai, a third-grade mandarin (on the nine-point scale) appointed by himself, had been butchered. Imperial retaliation was swift: of the ‘bandits’ and village gatekeepers, twenty were executed and ten exiled.²

The monarch’s fury deserves an explanation. Ruling the realm as emperor and regarding himself as ‘Son of Heaven’ (*thien tu*), Minh Menh was born with the belief that ‘under the Heaven there is no land that is not the emperor’s land; there are no subjects who are not the emperor’s subjects’.³ In that world, opposing the state was a severe act of rebellion subject to severe legal penalties.⁴ The 1834 incident, however, was among many that haunted Hue’s rule over thousands of villages in northern Vietnam. The influx of landless peasants and hungry migrants into the region generated waves of social violence, undermining the dynasty’s

control over villages, the basic form of social organization. The violence sweeping the empire in the mid 1830s posed the first truly existential crisis since the dynasty's foundation, and prompted military retaliation on a massive scale.⁵ After seemingly endless pacification campaigns, the emperor demonstrated his determination to end all further treasonous behaviour by 'cultivation' (*giao hoa*) of his subjects. One month after the Bac Ninh's assault, the lengthy and carefully drafted Ten Moral Maxims were disseminated to every village to serve as a benchmark for proper behaviour.⁶ The Instruction showed Hue's awareness of the epidemic violence in the Red River Delta and potential threat of further uprisings across this densely populated region.⁷

This is a story of local militarization, social violence, and deterioration of central power in early modern Vietnam. It demonstrates how human mobilization, facilitated by the development of regional militias, weakened the central state and provided a breeding ground for social disorder and violence. Local gentry exploited the state's Achilles heel of administrative and military weakness and built up trans-regional networks across twelve provinces in northern Vietnam. The situation was more complex than Charles Tilly's formulation that 'war made the state and the state made war'.⁸ In this story, the state's attempt to arm itself against social revolt impaired the traditional centralized authority and encouraged gentry-led fragmentation on the eve of Western colonialization.

In illuminating these developments, this chapter examines the role violence plays in shaping human organization. It argues that local militarization, as the most significant sociopolitical phenomenon in early nineteenth-century Vietnam, severely challenged the Nguyen state and fuelled violence across the realm. Aiming to reduce the scale of insurrection, Hue mobilized troops to suppress rebellions and exile captured rebels. The strategy proved counterproductive as social discontent spread to involve the highland communities, rural peasants, coastal Christians, and Lower Mekong Khmer.⁹

Among the dynasty's key failures were the loss of control over local militias and shifting demographic geography. The interaction between 'human mobility', 'violence', and 'state-power devolution' transformed Vietnamese politics, undermining traditional-style statecraft during the 1830s. Minh Menh's projection of administrative centralization, territorialization, and cultural assimilation stirred tremendous local hostility towards the central elite. The local gentry were drawn into politics, shifting the balance of power between the centre and localities and threatening the survival of both dynasty and state. By focusing on the militias and local violence, this chapter offers new insights into the social and political character of early modern Vietnam. In doing so, it reappraises the role of coercion in the decline of traditional political structures as part of a longer-term social and political change linking the early Nguyen to the broad trends of Vietnam's modern history.

The modern state, as defined by Max Weber, is 'a human community that

(successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory'.¹⁰ The Nguyen certainly claimed a monopoly of legitimate coercion by labelling all others who used violence as 'bandits'. This assertion of authority by no means came close to the dynamic nature of the actual violence. 'Calling someone or some group a bandit lays bare a political language that otherwise dresses violence in the drag of civilization.'¹¹ However, 'until the lion can tell his own stories, tales of the hunt will be told by the hunter'.¹²

This chapter is a search for the lion's lost voice. It looks for the village's way of making violence in response to a waning state. The dominant state-centric narratives generally see 'banditry' as a defined and homogeneous form of social insurgency. By contrast, this chapter investigates the role violence plays as a form of human interaction. The more Hue attempted to assert its monopoly, the further violence spread across the Red River Delta. Here, this chapter challenges the conventional nationalist interpretation of villages' historical role. Inspired by nostalgia and romanticism, the rural landscape is presented as a harmonious, peaceful world, and a reservoir of beautifully traditional values. The labouring peasants are depicted as kindly, peace-lovers who supported revolutionaries against an oppressive elite. In contrast, the following pages reveal the 'rebellious' character of that rural world and recognize that the countryside was a major source of social violence.

State and village in Vietnam, 1500–1800

The king's law bows to the village's rules.
(Vietnamese proverb)

The French scholar Paul Mus argues that 'Since time immemorial, these villages have become the key to the social structure of the country and to its outlook on life.'¹³ The Nguyen rulers clearly thought the same. Emperor Gia Long declared, 'the state is constituted by villages'.¹⁴ The countryside was where most of the population dwelled, most taxes were collected, and most soldiers were conscripted.

The relatively low level of economic exchange and limited human mobility encouraged past historians to voice two firmly held views. First, that Vietnam's villages protected their country's identity throughout a thousand years of upheaval because no 'foreign influence' could penetrate their firmly self-contained structure. Second, that the villages could be turned into effective military fortresses to oppose foreign invaders. In other words, they were invincible foundations of culture and the source of social security, where the best Vietnamese values resided. This conventional view accords with the scholarly emphasis on socio-economic durability. Empires and dynasties came and went, but the villages remained in the same place with the same name. These conclusions underpin the historical asser-

tion that ethnic Viet prevailed in eastern mainland Southeast Asia because of the power of their villages that allowed Vietnamese colonization of Central Vietnam and Lower Mekong between 1400 and 1850s. The villages' way of social formation and economic production qualified the Vietnamese who 'flowed across Indochina like a flood carrying off other peoples wherever they occupied lowland rice fields or where it could be put under rice'.¹⁵

In reality, villagers' behaviour, however, was not always peaceful and constructive. Shifting demography, natural disasters, and political suppression spurred frequent unrest across the rural world. The Red River Delta during the last eight centuries witnessed considerable human mobility. Three million people left the basin in the fifteenth century alone.¹⁶ However, the region remained among the most densely populated deltas in the world.¹⁷ Village structure and its relationship to the state were also dramatically transformed. The decline of nobles' estates in the fourteenth century changed the rural economy by creating a market in which communal land could be bought or sold, and thus turned into private property.¹⁸ The spread of private land ownership and the emergence of influential regional families clashed with the state's agenda of turning villages into administrative institutions by maintaining a good ratio of communal to private land to support taxation, *corvée* labour, and military conscription. Such balance was the foundation of state stability and social security.¹⁹ The growing concentration of rural land in the hands of local elites broke the state-village balance, triggering a decline in the central authority based in Hanoi, and prompting incessant warfare between 1527 and 1802. The coincidence of division in the political centre and militarization of the countryside through rural militias turned 'the capital into fishing zone and hunting ground', as stated by the dynastic chronicle.²⁰

The Nguyen family, which ruled after 1802, began their rise to power as loyalists of the Le dynasty ruling Vietnam from 1428 to 1788. Internal conflict divided the Nguyen and one member left to found the autonomous Cochinchinese state in Central Vietnam.²¹ From that domain, however, one of its rulers, Nguyen Phuc Anh, finally claimed supremacy over all Vietnamese and declared himself Gia Long emperor (1802–20). As a southern warlord, he viewed the hostile north with suspicion. Northerners, meanwhile, regarded the Nguyen as frontier officials who had rebelled against the Hanoi-based Le emperors. Furthermore, the Nguyen army arrived in Hanoi when the delta inhabitants had already tasted the bitterness of many bad governments and therefore opposed all state power.²² As the chief victims of the turbulence between 1750 and 1802, villagers increasingly regarded the state as an 'enemy' rather than a 'protector'. Under the Tayson period (1770–1802), for instance, the delta was ruled by a non-local and military-oriented regime whose extraction of soldiers, *corvée* labour, and resources exhausted the river basin. However, worse was to come as the Nguyen era heralded further misery, flooding, famine, and violence.²³

Village bullies, local strongmen, and rural militarization

At the root of rural violence were two social archetypes who were not necessarily mutually exclusive: ‘village bullies’ (*hao*) and ‘local strongmen’ (*tho hao*). Their possession of political and economic power dominated rural society through direct manipulation of peasant life and their authority ranged from organizing village defence to creating surtaxes and conducting land-grabbing. They were very familiar with violence. In 1485, Le dynastic records already mentioned ‘epidemic local bullying’ and ordered those responsible to be subjected to the law.²⁴ Hue’s failure to govern the villages after 1802, however, led to unprecedented hardship.

The unique nature of Nguyen administration allowed early nineteenth-century local gentry more space to exercise their dominance over the countryside. First, the state law code enforced in 1813 was largely based on that of the Qing, which was designed for the Manchu’s minority rule over the majority Han ethnics.²⁵ That legal framework offered considerable autonomy to villages. Gia Long’s son, Emperor Minh Menh (r. 1820–41), realized the danger and ordered the Code revised, but this was never fully completed.²⁶ Secondly, both rulers treated northern Vietnam lightly, fearing its disloyalty, hostility, and military threat. Based in the capital Hue, a relatively small city occupying a narrow coastal strip, Gia Long was poorly placed to manage the two economic and demographic powerhouses of the Red River Delta and Mekong basin, which were 700 km to the north and a 1,000 km to the south respectively.²⁷ The most obvious challenge was to mobilize resources and troops for administrative operations and military campaigns.

The power vacuum opening in the countryside was immediately exploited by local chiefs across the northern delta where the office of governor-general (*tong tran*) was established. Militias had emerged between the 1780s and 1800 to protect northern villages during the constant shifts of power in Hanoi. Regardless of whether they supported or opposed the Nguyen, all quickly exploited the new imperial dynasty’s weakness to squeeze more resources from the rural population. After 1802, some cooperated with Hue in suppressing revolts and banditry. They came to be known as ‘local chiefs’ (*tho hao*). Their followers were hired as local troops (*tho binh*), guarding posts, traffic roads, and protecting villages.²⁸ By the 1810s, local militias took great responsibilities for the delta’s security, both along the coasts and the highland corridor stretching from Nghe An to Son Tay, and after Gia Long’s death (1820) they were ordered to assist metropolitan troops, station strategic traffic routes, and monitor vulnerable villages.²⁹

Those opposing the state were officially castigated as ‘bandits’ (*phi*). It is clear that the state saw the ‘local bullies’ controlling these militias as their greatest competitor in the rural world.³⁰ In an edict issued in 1827, following the Phan Ba Vanh rebellion (1821–27), Hue analysed the violent nature of the Red River Delta where rural bullies were accused of manipulating local officials and exercising coercion

over poor villagers.³¹ Yet the state simultaneously depended on local militias to provide security, collect taxes, and fight Chinese pirates.³²

This strategy had serious unforeseen consequences in allowing local soldiers to play a bigger role, while legitimating the militarization of the delta villages and fuelling the growth of decentralized, autonomous warfare. The move immediately alarmed provincial officials who saw legitimate local militarization as threatening state security. There was, however, little they could do, particularly after the accession of Minh Menh. The menacing prospect of violence remained, including the emergence of those claiming loyalty to the displaced Le dynasty.³³ In Thanh Hoa and Ninh Binh, between 1816 and 1836, several groups proclaimed loyalty to the dethroned family and recruited thousands of armed men along a 250 km corridor of midland from Nghe An to Son Nam. For instance, the so-called 'bandit' leader Nguyen The Chung, the son of a doctoral-degree holder, proclaimed himself 'commander general' of Son Nam in 1822.³⁴

The alarming violence was also fuelled by the collusion between corrupt officials and rural law-breakers. One prefect from Son Tay reportedly provided money to the outlaws who kidnapped villagers and placed them outside the city's wall. Pretending the victims were rebels, the official went on to execute them and reported to Hue for promotion.³⁵ The active and practical mandarin, Nguyen Cong Tru (1778–1858), was aware of the linkage between local bullies and social violence. From 1826, he was authorized by Minh Menh to pacify the delta. As governor-general of Hai Duong, the delta's flooding hub, Tru was greatly concerned by the villagers' economic condition and saw the danger posed by the untamed local bullies and militias. In a long and carefully analysed memorial, he suggested that regional chiefs and their hired men should be replaced by metropolitan troops for security duties.³⁶ Three months later, the Board of Revenue initiated new discussions on military expense and questioned local forces' efficiency in economic and security terms.³⁷ Unfortunately, Hue lacked any viable alternative to the local forces and was forced to continue its policy of sanctioning rural militarization.

The Phan Ba Vanh insurgency demonstrated how the interaction of rural militarization and local power struggles could encourage the escalation and spread of violence. During his rebellion against Minh Meng in 1826, Phan Ba Vanh, a native of Minh Giam village, mobilized 5,000 men from the rim of the river basin.³⁸ This midland area of Thai Nguyen, Hung Hoa, Son Tay, Ninh Binh, and Thanh Hoa, sandwiched between the lowlands and mountains, had experienced a rapid growth in militias and local bullies who received monthly payments of copper coins and grain from the court.³⁹ Unsurprisingly, the same area was also the cradle for most of the revolts between 1832 and 1837. In 1835, Minh Menh finally ordered a comprehensive inspection of the delta's militias. Only fifty-three local guard posts were retained, and their garrisons were limited to fifty armed men each.⁴⁰ This measure was intended to extend monarchical authority over the local forces by merging

them with the metropolitan army, with the militia leaders receiving official titles and the armed men becoming state soldiers.⁴¹

The source of weaponry

Rising social violence was fuelled by new sources of modern weapons pouring into rural communities. The highlanders played important roles in this supply chain providing locally made muskets (*dieu thuong*) and gunpowder. Alarmed by this lowland–highland weapon exchange, Minh Menh declared that the number of confiscated guns had reached tens of thousands by 1837.⁴² The increasing availability of modern firearms had been a steady trend since the Tayson regime, however. Local militias along the coastline, for instance, had been heavily armed since the late eighteenth century when they encountered Chinese pirates operating from the maze of islands and costal terrain stretching from Fukien (China) to the Gulf of Tonkin.⁴³ There they received the Tayson’s protection, whose patronage encouraged piracy penetration into the delta’s porous coastline.⁴⁴

The regional network of weapon exchange was a major source of the arms used by local forces to attack the state’s own army. The number of confiscated firearms gives some indication of the rebel armaments. In 1837, 1,500 muskets and six cannons were reportedly handed over voluntarily after a campaign in Ninh Binh, indicating just how prevalent firearms were in the delta and its surrounding highlands.⁴⁵ Phan Ba Vanh was able to capture large numbers of weapons from the government, as well as gather up to 200 ships and construct a fortress to resist a major court army’s siege.⁴⁶

The spread of Western-style weapons prompted Minh Menh to ban firearm sales in summer 1837, arguing that muskets were useful military equipment, but were harmful if they fell into civilian hands. Knowing that most of these weapons were made locally, he warned local officials to remain alert to gunmaking in their jurisdiction and threatened producers with the death penalty.⁴⁷ The measures were extended to gunpowder later that year, when all sulphur and saltpetre mines along the Sino-Vietnamese border were closed. The gunpowder trade was banned in the northern region, and those owning more than 600 grams were threatened with severe penalties.⁴⁸

Human mobility and rural militarization

Northern Vietnam experienced considerable demographic fluctuations during early modernity, with a significant exodus of peasants from the provinces along the Red River’s northern bank due to natural disasters and seasonal migration.⁴⁹ These movements spread not only hunger and disease, but violence too. Whether a product of state design (displacement of native soldiers and exiled prisoners) or involuntary waves of starving famers, migration facilitated both regional conflicts and

opportunities for transregional insurrection. In this environment, local militias became both highly mobile and trans-provincial.

The state's practice of forcible relocation complicated the demographic picture. One form was the posting of large numbers of troops recruited in the north to duties in the south.⁵⁰ Many of these troops were former rebels or bandits. Another was the growing use of exile to punish criminals and outlaws. The Nguyen legal code offered five categories of punishments, with exile (*luu*) placed second after the death penalty. The practice offered provincial officials a seemingly easy way of ridding themselves of troublemakers and thus boosting the numbers into the thousands each year. However, it simply shifted the problem to other regions, while unintentionally forging transregional networks among displaced former outlaws.

A third form was the impressment of captured rebels and bandits. Ringleaders were generally executed, but their followers were commonly drafted into the state army. Ostensibly, this strategy asserted control over thousands of non-registered males and outlaws who were now legible to the state radar. In reality, it furthered the process of political decentralization, because the loyalties of those former bandits and rebels shifted not to the state, but to the general who pardoned them and tolerated their continued wicked behaviour. Their deployment to remote provinces provided opportunities for them to spread violence elsewhere, especially if they later deserted.

This practice developed in two stages, beginning with the drafting of local men, including outlaws and convicts, to make up for the lack of conscripts. Dispatched to Nghe An and Thanh Hoa to suppress rebels, Hue's most powerful generals, Le Van Duyet and Le Chat, saw an opportunity to expand their own forces. Nine hundred 'bandits' turned themselves in at Duyet's camp in 1819 and were promptly formed into four new divisions optimistically titled 'Thanh Hoa-obedience', 'Northern obedience', 'Nghe An-obedience', and 'Returning to goodness'.⁵¹ Chat even pardoned criminals and encouraged local militias to recruit men and join his army directly by awarding titles to local leaders according to how many men they could find.⁵² Such exercises offered ambitious generals a quick route to victory and the chance to win favour and reward at court.

Despite these obvious problems, Minh Menh pressed ahead with this practice after 1820 and sent Duyet's new divisions to the Lower Mekong. However, the complication of maintaining such troops soon became apparent as many simply ran away.⁵³ As Minh Menh's adviser noted, the policy was unfeasible because the bandits were the 'neighbours and relatives' of the people where they had been posted.⁵⁴ By 1824, Minh Menh decided to station all soldiers outside their home area. Subsequently, dislocation of the exiled and surrendered bandits became a crucial part of Hue's pacifying strategy. Although the king was aware of the potential risks when moving those 'rebels' around, his officials believed they could monitor them by threatening deserters with death. Results fell far short of expectations. Insurgency returned to Thanh Hoa, Ninh Binh in 1826, 1827, 1828, 1833,

1835, and 1836. The Le Van Khoi rebellion in the Lower Mekong in 1833 amply demonstrated the problem: thousands of Christians, Chinese, highlanders, exiled prisoners, and deserters gathered within a week and controlled the southern administration for three years, before being brutally suppressed.⁵⁵ By 1834, facing empire-wide insurrection, Minh Menh called on provincial officials to change their practices and blamed his generals for recruiting and patronizing treacherous troublemakers.⁵⁶ Much of the emperor's complaint was true, but Hue was to a large extent itself responsible for initiating the policy.⁵⁷

Lack of conscripted men was a major factor behind this.⁵⁸ When Le Chat requested permission to collect local male residents in Hung Hoa, Minh Menh had no choice but to approve.⁵⁹ Despite official efforts, many dodged the draft, including those who were not registered or had become outlaws.⁶⁰ Even men who were recruited often subsequently decamped, with the desertion rate reaching an alarming 50 per cent by late 1826.⁶¹ This put more pressure on conscription and the need to maintain southern troops in the north. The state treasury was the first to feel the effects when the Board of Revenue reported insufficient grain for the soldiers' salary and asked provincial officials to provide assessments of those local troops' efficiency.⁶² The demand was certainly not the last, but the dynasty was unable to find a better solution, and again in 1835 southern soldiers were transferred to maintain social order in the north.⁶³

Military and judicial reforms were introduced in the early 1830s in response to violent escalation and with the aim of boosting administrative efficiency. As turbulence spread across the Lower Mekong in 1833, Hue had no idea where to send northern prisoners. In fear of popular rebellion, Minh Menh first ordered them carefully guarded and then distributed among northern provinces. Aware of new uprisings in Thanh Hoa, Ninh Binh, Son Nam, Hung Hoa, and Cao Bang, the monarch was cautious with the treatment of prisoners and captured bandits. Blaming the chaos on his deceased generals (Duyet and Chat), he called for military reforms, including a reduction of flagbearers and purchasing Western gunpowder.⁶⁴ More importantly, he proclaimed, 'recruitment of soldiers should focus on the real number' of those capable, not a collection of vagrants and outlaws.⁶⁵ By limiting the recruitment of hired militiamen, non-registered males, and captured bandits into the army, Hue unintentionally drove many of these men into insurgency across the northern delta as it could neither exile them to the south, nor draft them into the army. Haunted by the prospect that hundreds, if not thousands, of them were concentrating in provincial prisons, Minh Menh constantly sent confidential edicts to acquire information, give instructions, and finally exile them in small groups to various northern provinces.⁶⁶

This was a disaster. Infectious violence turned the river basin into a fertile breeding ground and sparked a new wave of uprisings from 1833 to 1837, which will be discussed further below. Transregional militias established lowland-highland networks, particularly around the 'ring of insurgency' stretching from Thanh

Hoa, Hung Hoa, Thai Nguyen, and Quang Yen. By 1834, Minh Menh decided that recruitment of vagrants and non-registered men was counterproductive and blocked his officials' proposals to draft more of them into the army.⁶⁷

The waves of starving migrants flooding across the delta reflected another aspect of social conflict. The great 1824 famine displaced huge numbers from Hai Duong, Thai Binh, to Nam Dinh.⁶⁸ Unsurprisingly, the Phan Ba Vanh uprising sprang from this region. At its peak (1827), reports from Hai Duong showed that 108 villages had suffered demographic displacement, leaving 12,200 *mau* (1 *mau* = 0,36 ha) of rice fields abandoned.⁶⁹ This indicates a profound relation between natural disasters, famine, demographic dislocation, and coercion. In autumn 1832, Thanh Hoa officials reported that groups of northerners asked for food and that 'many died along the way'. By the winter, 10,000 people travelled 150 km south from the delta's flooding centres.⁷⁰ In the same year, 3,000 people fled to Hai Duong. By the time the second memorial arrived in Hue, the number was 27,000. Officials were unable to feed this multitude and reported that many 'died along canals and rivers'.⁷¹

Village rebellions and the deterioration of state power

Despite official relief efforts, the annual waves of displaced villagers spurred various forms of crime, banditry, and militarization across the northern delta. Land flight from the low-lying provinces became common during periods of frequent seasonal flooding.⁷² Failures in water management accounted for twenty-seven floods between 1803 and 1861, the highest incidence in the millennium following Vietnamese control of the delta.⁷³ These environmental and social factors ensured that the Nguyen's military victory over rival political elites in 1802 did not necessarily translate into their dominance over the countryside. Reliance on rural militias to exert authority over the villages unwittingly transferred control of taxation and army recruitment to the local gentry, who now pocketed a large share of taxation.⁷⁴ Rather than centralizing and consolidating power, Nguyen policies contributed to social turmoil and signalled state deterioration, while the widespread withholding of taxes by villages, coupled with local militarization, indicated just how difficult it was for the central authorities to reach into the countryside.

The impact can be gauged by assessing how the state's judiciary and army responded to the two waves of violent unrest during the 1820s and 1830s. The early 1820s saw a sharp rise in harsh punishments, with 450 new court cases in 1824 and 740 individual death sentences pending, including some who had been imprisoned since 1821.⁷⁵ By winter 1826, 800 prisoners in the north were awaiting the death penalty, while 200 were executed in 1828.⁷⁶ Alarmed, Emperor Minh Menh instructed local mandarins to treat his subjects more gently, and ordered those not already condemned to immediate execution to be held until his final verdict at the Autumn Assizes (*thu tham*).⁷⁷ This failed to stem the growing use of the death penalty.⁷⁸ The reliance on imprisonment and confinement pending execution resulted in

overcrowded gaols, adding challenges to provincial administrations. Sixty convicts seized and destroyed Son Nam prison in 1830.⁷⁹ Further riots followed in Thai Nguyen and Bac Ninh, responsible for Hue's order of prison inspections. The results were nevertheless disappointing and encouraged the damaging use of exile which, as we have already seen, contributed to the numbers of displaced persons joining the insurgents.⁸⁰ Punitive measures also failed to rectify the judiciary's own problems. An imperial commission had executed one department chief and impeached ten officials for corruption at the Hanoi-based regional administration in 1827.⁸¹ However, demoralized by underfunding and dysfunctional administration, the judiciary continued to crumble during the 1830s.⁸²

An examination of the Hue army underscores the central state's vulnerability. At first sight, Nguyen military power appeared impressive. According to some Western reports, the standing army numbered 50,000 men, rising to a peak of a 115,000 in the 1820s.⁸³ Military 'innovation' was part of Hue's strategy to suppress its subjects and claim regional supremacy. Several dozen Western-style citadels were built in key towns. In 1824, Le Chat, as regional commander, ordered two constructed in Bac Ninh and Hai Duong.⁸⁴ Chat then recruited 15,000 more troops, who were deployed in the provinces threatened by banditry.⁸⁵ The most visible signs of Westernization appeared in soldiers' appearance and armament: by 1822, nearly half of the line troops were dressed in English woolen uniforms, carried European-style muskets, and were trained according to European manuals.⁸⁶

French handguns and British gunpowder, however, were not the right answer to the turbulence. Security management in the delta's core was falling into local hands.⁸⁷ Many of Gia Long's bandit-suppression campaigns were joined by regional strongmen who were encouraged to raise their forces.⁸⁸ Hue launched multiple campaigns between 1802 and 1826 across the northern region against a wide range of opponents, comprising Tayson remnants, Le claimants, and rural militias. In 1808, Le Chat led a long operation against 3,000 insurgents in Ninh Binh.⁸⁹ In that year alone, thirty engagements were fought from Thanh Hoa to Kinh Bac.⁹⁰ The scale of these operations posed serious logistical and command challenges. Hue lay 700 km south of the northern delta – the main operating theatre – while rice and troops were collected from the Mekong Delta located roughly 1,700 km to the south of Hanoi. The state's armies marched back and forth to Thanh-Nghe in 1819 and 1824 against the Le claimants led by Duy Hoan, who had expanded into the delta through Ha Nam after 1816 by rallying support from local strongmen.⁹¹ Seventeen years after Hoan's execution in 1817, his son Duy Luong led a new revolt from the mountains of Thanh Hoa-Ninh Binh into the delta, where he rallied local supporters.⁹² When Luong was killed, another Le claimant, Duy Hien, rebelled in 1836, underscoring Hue's inability to defeat its opponents.

Military modernization failed to address the underlying causes of rural revolts, which included corrupt officials and seasonal flooding. Hai Duong and Hung

Yen provinces were badly affected by the Thai Binh and Red rivers, but official malfeasance concealed the consequences from Hue and hindered effective countermeasures. The court remained unaware that all nine counties of Hai Duong were suffering from famine and peasant displacement during 1824–27.⁹³ The catastrophic flood of 1827 forced starving peasants to abandon hundreds of villages.⁹⁴ Most moved east and south-east into the coastal region, already infamous as a bandit haven, where they swelled the number of insurgents to 5,000. Having defeated a Nguyen army on the coast, the insurgents allied with Chinese pirates, causing the first delta-wide crisis for the Nguyen since 1802.⁹⁵

Haunted by the possibility that northern provincial citadels would be taken by the rebels, Emperor Minh Menh dispatched 2,000 troops to reinforce strategic garrisons and sent another force of 300 musketeers to confront the insurgents.⁹⁶ Officials were instructed to communicate directly and confidentially with Hue rather than the Hanoi regional administration.⁹⁷ The reinforcements enabled the Nguyen army to capture the rebel stronghold of Nam Dinh, taking 760 prisoners, of whom 160 were beheaded and 400 sentenced to forced labour.⁹⁸ Although Minh Menh attempted to relieve the consequences of famine and flooding by sending reputable officials to each village to placate peasants, the countryside was far from quiet: investigations revealed a list of 800 rebels, immediately prompting renewed punitive measures.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, several thousand insurgents gathered in Bac Ninh and a pirate fleet of fifty ships launched attacks in Quang Yen.¹⁰⁰ Hue responded by constructing a series of military posts, each manned by 30 to 100 soldiers along the 300 km of coastline from Nam Dinh to Quang Yen, to protect local communities from the pirates, prevent rice smuggling to China, and manage demographic mobility.¹⁰¹ Far from reassuring people, the increased military presence sowed growing discontent among the rural population who interpreted Hue's actions as another form of coercive centralized control. The court now demanded quarterly reports on rice price and the security situation, and requisitioned sixty war elephants to enforce the delta.¹⁰² It also sent 1,476 cannons and 11,000 handguns to twelve provinces, representing a scale of arms distribution not seen since Vietnamese unification.¹⁰³

A second wave of violence followed between 1832 and 1837, caused partly by the continued efforts of Le claimants, but mainly by the government's failures in water management. Following flooding in 1825 and 1827, considerable resources were invested to improve flood defences, and 952 km of dykes were built by 1829, representing the bulk of all construction under the first two Nguyen emperors.¹⁰⁴ However, these endeavours failed to prevent serious floods in 1833 and 1835. In frustration, Minh Menh deposed the dykes commission and summoned an empire-wide discussion on the hydraulic problem. Then, thousands of coolies were deployed in 1835–36 to dig a 20 km canal through the most low-lying area. The project proved disastrous, bringing more water into the delta and submerging Hung Yen and Hai Duong provinces to a depth of 2 m.¹⁰⁵

This time the crisis was empire-wide. A military insurrection erupted in 1833, and the biggest citadel of the Lower Mekong, Phien An, was captured and held for three years. These rebels were assisted by five Siamese invading armies crossing the Vietnamese–Cambodian and Lao frontiers.¹⁰⁶ In the north, around 650 insurgents reassembled in Son Tay and established close contact with discontented groups in the delta's rimland during the summer of 1834.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, 100 km to the south, a new Le claimant gathered thousands of followers in Ninh Binh and Thanh Hoa, and ethnic highlanders attacked provincial offices along the Sino-Vietnamese borders. This time, the rich, populous northern delta was threatened from three directions.

Sensing trouble, Minh Menh sent confidential requests to all senior provincial officials to provide information on bandits and outlaws.¹⁰⁸ Regular troops and reserves in Ha Tinh and Hai Duong received orders to train and deploy in early 1834, while trusted southern troops were mobilized north to the delta.¹⁰⁹ The emperor even took the rare step of summoning key ministers to establish a Privy Council to debate military matters.¹¹⁰ The Nguyen had clearly learned their lesson from 1825–27, and proceeded to isolate the delta from the hostile ethnic minorities in the surrounding highlands. The gunpowder trade was banned, and the sulphur and saltpetre mines were closed to cut the flow of arms and munitions to the delta. New networks of military posts and communications were set up along the coastline and the western corridor stretching from Son Tay to the south, blocking intruders from entering the lowland.¹¹¹ Finally, in 1836–37, some of the most capable generals were sent to pacify rural communities and display imperial sympathy for local inhabitants. These hand-picked commissioners not only conducted counter-insurgency operations, but also reorganized local administration, deposed corrupt officials, and boosted people's confidence.¹¹²

Conclusions

Although the Nguyen regime outwardly defeated both waves of rebellion, its apparent victory entailed relinquishing much of its authority in the countryside to the gentry and other armed 'bullies'. This encouraged a decentralizing cycle, placing tax revenues and army conscripts further from its reach. Hue remained an underfunded state relying on old-fashioned institutions and political philosophy to address the modern age's dynamic agenda. Like Qing China, Nguyen Vietnam failed to develop as a 'fiscal-military state' based on effective resource extraction for bureaucratic and military modernization.¹¹³

This chapter has argued that the idea of a society of stable villages projected by imperial political belief has deceived us about the Vietnamese state's ubiquitous control of violence and its ability to coerce at will. Certainly, the Nguyen state claimed a monopoly of legitimate violence, but we must look beyond central institutions to test this. The conventional interpretation portrays Asian 'rural communes' as small, static, and stagnant in time and space.¹¹⁴ As part of the narrative,

modern Vietnamese nationalist historiography romanticizes the rural landscape with peace-loving residents and a reservoir of tradition. These approaches underestimate the role villages played in generating social violence and their durable capacity for violent resistance against the state. Early nineteenth-century Vietnam's villages indicate how vibrant human mobility and local militarization can provide counter-evidence to mainstream Western historical thought, including notions of Oriental despotism championed by Montesquieu, Hegel, Marx, and Wittfogel, as well as theorists of state-making, notably Max Weber and Charles Tilly, who, in both cases, place legitimate coercion in the hands of despots and state-builders. In these views, both violence and state-making are aligned as a common top-down process.

Local militarization in the Red River basin suggests that villages played a significant role in challenging a declining state in early modern East Asia, especially in densely populated deltas where peasant society was not, by any means, 'an inert sackful of potatoes',¹¹⁵ but a highly interconnected and volatile social space. Vietnam's experience was far from unique. In rural China, the rise of local gentry-led militias between the 1790s and 1860s prepared the ground for the Qing's downfall.¹¹⁶ As Sidney Tarrow argues, there was a 'broad nineteenth-century' global disturbance which saw dynamic local forces 'organize their relations with the state, reconcile or fight out conflicts of interests and attempt to adapt politically to wider social pressures'. Jack Goldstone presents this as waves of state failures.¹¹⁷

Vietnam's experience is thus part of a wider pattern across the early modern world. Although, by the early nineteenth century, village rebellion was not a new phenomenon, the scale of violence soared to unprecedented levels. In the absence of urban centres, a burgeoning peasant mobility and growing rural market network made villages central to the generation and dissemination of conflict. By declaring war on the state, the countryside played an essential role in defining the violent culture of the age in their own terms. By grounding rural violence in its broader socio-economic and cultural context, this chapter has revealed the boundaries between physical resistance as a daily 'weapon of the weak' and violence as a social collective response.¹¹⁸ The notion of rural violence not only demonstrates peasant economic and political behaviour, but also provides a window into their popular ideology, countryside politics, ideas of social order, law, and legitimacy during Vietnam's age of 'village rebellion'.

The violent deterioration of state-village relations not only weakened the Nguyen militarily, but forced central authority to partially retreat from rural areas, creating a vacuum filled by local chiefs and bullies who seized control of resource extraction. These local strongmen vividly illustrated that the state was not always able to monopolize violence in a world where coercion could be claimed by varied social forces to advance their own political visions. Dynastic decline from the 1790s interrupted a long-standing if tense balance between state and society, and disrupted the restoration of order. As the state 'stepped back', villages acquired new

roles to play on the political stage. They were neither ‘peaceful’ nor ‘isolated’. They showed great capacity to generate collective violence and inflict damage on the central authority’s foundations. Their use of violence was not simply a response to state repression but reflected a great historical transformation when the ruled themselves confronted the crisis of the times and fought for their own sociopolitical visions. The result was one of the most turbulent times in Vietnam’s history. The Nguyen state survived the turmoil, but its continued failure to modernize would cost the Vietnamese dear over the following decades.

Notes

- 1 The author would like to thank Peter H. Wilson, Marie Houllé, and Erica Charters for their thoughtful support and insightful comments over the course of writing and editing this chapter. The errors and deficiencies are my own. *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (Primary compilation of the Veritable Records of Imperial Vietnam) [hereafter *DNTL*] (Tokyo, 1963), II, 127: 20b.
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- 3 *Shijing* (Book of Poetry): <https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/decade-of-bei-shan> (accessed 10 Mar. 2018).
- 4 Out of 398 articles of the Nguyen Law Code, 50 concerned violent acts against the state and coercive crimes; 20 others involved murder. Vietnam National Library, *Hoàng Việt Luật Lệ* (Laws and Decrees of Imperial Vietnam), 1813, books 12–15, nos R.735, 738, 741, 743.
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- 29 *Ibid.*, I, 25: 13b; I, 28: 10b. Local chiefs in Kien Xuong (Thai Binh), for instance, offered themselves as guides for the court army to launch a night's attack on the rebels on 17 January 1827. *Châu bản triều Minh Mệnh* (Nguyen Vermilion records, Minh Menh reign) [hereafter *MMCB*], Trung tam Lưu trữ Quốc gia I, vol. 20, p. 248.
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- 31 *Ibid.*, II, 45: 26a.
- 32 *Ibid.*, I, 22: 12b.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 34: 5a.
- 34 *Ibid.*, II, 13: 23a–24b.
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- 59 *DNTL*, II, 18: 10a.
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- 61 *Ibid.*, 37: 20a–b.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 95: 16b.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 142: 14b.
- 64 Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, p. 283.
- 65 *DNTL*, II, 125: 24a; 142: 12a–b.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 114: 14a–b.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 121: 12a.
- 68 *MMCB*, 9: 18, 30; *DNTL*, II, 89: 3a.
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- 90 *Ibid.*, 34: 4b; 35: 10b.
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4

Towards a political economy of conquest: the changing scale of warfare and the making of early colonial South Asia

Manu Sehgal

Continuity and change in colonial war- and state-making

War-making and state-making have been understood to be closely interrelated and have been studied as such for the early modern period. The ‘bellicist’ origins of the modern nation state have continued to attract cross-disciplinary attention following Charles Tilly’s influential formulation ‘war made the state and the state made war’.¹ The case of early colonial South Asia is particularly significant for these long-standing debates, especially given the scale of military activity towards the close of the eighteenth century. This rapidly changing scale of warfare, already impressive in itself, exercised a consequential impact on the career of the colonial state across South Asia’s long nineteenth century (1817–1919).² Furthermore, the changes in the scale of warfare necessitated qualitative changes that in turn enabled an intensification and expansion of military violence. Ideological justifications for territorial conquest as the engine of colonial expansion were fashioned to expand the scale of colonial war-making. Taken together – ideological structures, political justifications of territorial conquest, economic restructuring of the state apparatus, and a regime of laws that normalized prolific state-authored violence – these elements came to constitute a distinct early colonial order for South Asia.

Conquest as a violent transformation of territory has generally not received attention from historians of South Asia. The study of colonialism and the historiography of colonial South Asia are riddled with several unexamined verities. At least two of these deserve to be highlighted at the outset – the extractive nature of colonial rule and the violence inherent to the colonial project – both of which were essential to the process of territorial conquest.³ In examining the changes in and potential limits to large-scale violence in the early modern world, the case of early

colonial South Asia is particularly instructive. The discussion that follows interprets large-scale violence through the prism of state-authored violence as represented by a series of military campaigns that came to characterize colonial rule towards the final quarter of the long eighteenth century (c.1775–1807). It is argued that colonialism marked a violent and sharp break in the historical trajectory of South Asia and that careful analysis of colonial warfare is the most sensitive register from which these profound changes can be observed. Across the wider early modern world, inflicting large-scale violence was hardly the exclusive domain of the state. The emergence of a territorially acquisitive company regime testifies to the usefulness of the bellicist origins of the modern state thesis. The relationship between the fabrication of state-like structures within the commercial edifice of a private joint-stock company and its need, or ability, to organize large-scale violence deserve to be explored in much greater depth, towards which with this chapter seeks to provide an initial contribution.

Historiographical debates about the eighteenth century in South Asian history have stabilized along two opposing positions which can be neatly summarized as those characterizing colonial rule as a sharp, violent, and disruptive break, and a revisionist thesis arguing for broad continuity between the precolonial and colonial periods.⁴ The revisionist thesis has gained wide scholarly approval, though its claims of economic rejuvenation accompanied by creative political realignments and cultural efflorescence have by no means gone unchallenged. It does offer an appropriate corrective to a presentation of the eighteenth century as an era of dismal post-Mughal imperial decline leading to unmitigated political chaos and economic enervation. The arguments in favour of retaining continuity as the dominant mode of understanding historical developments across the eighteenth century can be summarized as operating along two axes. The first traces the importance of late Mughal influences into the early colonial period, especially in terms of bureaucratic technologies of revenue extraction and political norms of governance, while the second analyses the ebbs and flows of economic activity below the substratum of political strife and violent transactions between competing state formations.⁵

Another line of revisionism addressed continuities in colonial practice, criticizing the earlier interpretation of the East India Company (EIC) as exclusively committed to 'quiet trade' and scrupulously maintaining itself above temptations of territorial acquisitiveness before the mid-century collapse of the Nawab of Bengal in the 'Plassey Revolution' (June 1757). Philip Stern has argued for understanding the 'Company-state' as a manifestly early modern formation, which engaged with the entire spectrum of political behaviours that are conventionally reserved for a later period of 'high' colonialism.⁶ This argument posits continuities between a late seventeenth-century company regime and its politically interventionist, militarily aggressive hegemonic avatar in the latter half of the eighteenth century, with the latter being understood as an important element of continuity that would

further undermine any sharp watersheds in mid-century Bengal. It is further argued that a range of political characteristics most closely identified with the late eighteenth-/early nineteenth-century progeny of the Company regime were present in an embryonic form as early as the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century, including pretensions of exercising political sovereignty, tensions inherent to a post-1689 Revolutionary arrangement of civilian control of the military, proclivity to entangle the EIC within political disputes, and an ideological edifice that justified garrisoning of its fortified settlements (the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay that constituted the territorial possessions of the Company). Understood as an early modern political animal, the Company-state presents itself as exhibiting many of the defining characteristics attributable to a much later period. However, such claims to continuity between a seventeenth-century early modern Company-state and what followed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, while generally persuasive, need to be qualified. The revisionist position itself needs further revision in order to better understand the scope and nature of violence that birthed the colonial regime.

The shift to a territorially based warfare state

Over the long eighteenth century, the Company emerged as a prolific author of a specific form of state-authored violence which can most accurately be described as colonial warfare. Relying on a large mass of military labour which had provided the ballast for state-formation during much of the medieval and precolonial periods, the EIC was able to mobilize ever larger pools of military materials by perfecting an extractive regime of coercive rule.⁷ Towards the end of this period (c.1807), the EIC could claim a hegemonic status over its indigenous rivals, many of whom had sought to emulate its military-fiscalist procedures to contest territorial claims made by an expanding colonial state-formation.⁸ By the final quarter of the eighteenth century, the EIC rested on the culmination of a number of important transformations. The most significant of these was its overwhelming reliance on territorial revenues as the main source of income. From the 1780s onwards, the political relationship between territory, conquest, and revenues was clearly changing. The origins of this change can be traced back to earlier debates about the legitimacy of the Company demanding revenues from subjugated political state formations.⁹ As late as 1783–84, governors, like George Macartney at Madras, were still insisting on returning territories which had been acquired by the Company to pay for the rising costs of fighting the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780–84).¹⁰ Yet, a mere decade later, the enactment of the Permanent Settlement (1793) presented itself as a bold experiment in creating a market in agrarian property, while generating a stable income for the EIC's largest and most resource-rich presidency of Bengal.¹¹ Despite its significance, the link between revenues extracted from the agrarian produce of eastern India and the Company's desperate search for a stable, predictable source

to fund its increasingly expensive military campaigns, has not been studied.¹² In short, the colonial regime by the 1790s had become an expensive, expanding, and insatiable war machine, and the primary concern of both the Company and its critics was how to sustain it. It will be argued here that earlier attempts to explain and sustain colonial warfare were replaced by new arguments prioritizing resources for war. This was a change that was sufficiently dramatic for it to be observed, commented on, and debated among contemporaries, and it is here located as the basis of a distinctly early *colonial* formation. This characterization of the eighteenth-century Company-state as a colonial state formation is to be contrasted with efforts to study the Company as merely another early modern entity.¹³

Historians have struggled vainly to identify a series of ‘turning points’ to trace the transformation of the EIC from an armed merchant to an imperial hegemon. Interminable debates attest to the unprofitable nature of this exercise – no such point of departure has been identified, nor perhaps can be clearly established. Searching for such a turning point is asking the wrong question. Instead, we should recognize that the tensions between extracting surplus revenue for commercial purposes or using it to fund warfare were perennial sources of contention. Territorial conquest in the final quarter of the eighteenth century not only aroused metropolitan anxieties about the scandalous rapacity of empire-building in South Asia, but also caused growing alarm about the ruinous cost of such territorial acquisitions.¹⁴ The EIC’s voluminous, yet opaque, financial records notoriously prevented any realistic assessment of its fiscal operations, especially as its original character as a joint-stock profit-seeking venture declined successively with each of its military campaigns.¹⁵ Scrutiny of the Company’s financial records was a necessary prerequisite of any metropolitan hopes of maintaining oversight and control over its military adventurism in India. The ‘India Budget’ was an important part of the response to the anxieties – moral and economic – about the rapidly changing complexion of the Company’s political presence in South Asia. Henry Dundas unequivocally signalled a profoundly important change in metropolitan attitudes towards accepting expensive territorial conquests when he presented the East India Budget for 1787. In his private correspondence, Dundas communicated this to the new governor-general, Charles Cornwallis, that the ‘investment’ (resources reserved for the annual export trade with Britain) would receive support from the EIC’s surpluses in times of peace,

but in the event of War, the whole would be applied to the purposes of War and no part to Investment ... if War necessarily comes upon you, from the restlessness of our European Rivals, apply the whole Revenues to the purposes of War and let Trade and Investment take care of themselves.¹⁶

The changes embodied in Dundas’s statement were to have a lasting impact on the political economy of conquest in South Asia, even if they did not mark a watershed in terms of the EIC’s political career as a state formation.

The acceptance of the costs of conquest was an important step towards the broader British embrace of a colonial empire founded on military violence.¹⁷ For political actors in South Asia, the readiness to accept the cost of war acted as an accelerant fuelling the growth of violence. As a prolific author of war, the EIC was already engaged in military campaigns for nearly half of the half century since its victory at Plassey (1757–1807). Each campaign raised the cost of maintaining, fielding, and even demobilizing the large standing armies of its three presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, culminating in the most expensive and ambitious military project – the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–05). This conflict embodied many of the features of earlier struggles, while exemplifying a new paradigm for how the Company would marshal resources in its pursuit of territorial hegemony over the subcontinent.

The disproportionate historical attention paid to the Second Anglo-Maratha War can largely be explained by the fact that its campaigns included celebrated military victories of Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington.¹⁸ Behind these are two rather more significant points: the Company achieved complete domination of the Indian littoral and, unlike previous military campaigns, this war was above all a subcontinental project.¹⁹ Local administrations and complex hierarchized chains of civilian/military command interlocked to a level that was unprecedented in terms of mobilizing resources for warfare. Transcontinental campaigns in the last quarter of the eighteenth century were characterized by the movement of detachments sent out from different corners of the subcontinent, with materials of war and retinues of camp followers, bullion, and cattle following in their train. These spatial extensions of power and resources were riven with political contradictions and fissiparous exchanges between civilian officials and military officers as the latter were often deployed across legally shifting territorial zones of jurisdictional control. Fractious exchanges over defraying the costs of military expenses, and legal disputations over civilian control of the military were, in the case of the Maratha war, replaced by sweeping political cover for military operations, a transcontinental mobilization of resources, and an unprecedented commitment of resources to feed the Company's ever more ravenous war machine. Thus, to paraphrase Tilly, the Second Anglo-Maratha War remade the Company-state which now made war on a subcontinental scale.

The emergence of war on an expanded, subcontinental scale was distinctive enough for contemporaries to comment on its transformative impact on colonial warfare. For an earlier generation of Company directors, the rising cost of military adventures in India was much more than a cause for serious concern – it was understood as an existential threat to the Company's political clout and financial solvency. Prominent among the critics of the inexorable privileging of the military in the Company's political and financial calculations was the figure of Jacob Bosanquet, who was elevated to chair the EIC's Court of Directors on the eve of the Maratha war.²⁰ Engaged in a detailed statistical examination of two decades

of commercial and political policy, Bosanquet reviewed the fluctuating fortunes of the Company by asserting that ‘the total Debt in India ... have been intailed [*sic*] upon the Company chiefly by territorial and not Commercial Pursuits’.²¹ The EIC had come full circle, from Henry Dundas assuring the governor-general that in times of war the revenue surpluses of the Company should be exclusively directed away from the trade of the Company, to two decades later when military expenditure was cited as the pre-eminent source of its burgeoning debts. The Maratha war was a political success in terms of territories acquired by the Company. In terms of its financial impact, the war was an unmitigated disaster.

Feeding Leviathan: the Second Anglo-Maratha War

For contemporary Company officials, success in colonial warfare was essentially predicated on the state’s ability to extract and channel an increasing volume of resources towards military expenditure. Since land revenues constituted the principal source of state income, the acquisition of territory – from which revenues were extracted – was deemed to be essential in order to sustain the expanding military apparatus that came to characterize colonial rule in nineteenth-century South Asia.²² Thus emerged a quintessential logic of colonial rule/warfare – territories yielded revenues which sustained the military apparatus of coercion even as the acquisition of territory wreaked havoc on the colonial state’s fiscal health. For contemporaries and historians alike, the Second Anglo-Maratha War may have been a political success in defeating the Company’s last major political opponent, but equally, for critics of the EIC’s military expansionism, war was synonymous with fiscal collapse.

The most visible, public symptom of the fiscal imprudence of colonial warfare was the EIC’s exploding interest-bearing debt. In a little over a decade (1793–1804), the Company’s interest-bearing debt more than doubled – from £15 million to £31 million.²³ The criticism in Parliament about expensive war-making was echoed in a scathing review of the relationship between colonial warfare and the EIC’s worsening financial state:

It is difficult to conceive, what new pretences [*sic*] can be set up for absorbing the immense revenues of India in extra military charges ... Tippoo Sultan is destroyed, the Mahratta empire is subdued and dismembered, the French are extirpated and the whole peninsula laid under contribution to the power of Great Britain. The hacknied [*sic*] plea of unexpected war and unforeseen expenses must fail at last in a country, in which an enemy in arms is not to be found and where it is impossible for an European power to attack us.²⁴

Immediately below the surface of a hostile exchange in official dispatches and polemical pamphleteering was a complex world of financial strain which attested to the innovations that characterized the colonial regime’s capacity to organize

violence. Bosanquet calculated that by 1793 the EIC incurred a deficit between its financial resources and its territorial and commercial expenditure of £4 million. He emphatically pointed to how in the decade between the defeat of Mysore (in 1793) and the beginning of the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–04), the Company's deficit had halved from £4 million to £2,104,621. By 1807, this deficit had again grown to £10.7 million. The inescapable conclusion was that, despite the acquisition of additional revenue-yielding territories, the Second Anglo-Maratha War had worsened the Company-state's deficit by £8,661,443 – a fivefold increase in three years (1804–07), making this the most expensive as well as most extensive conflict in South Asia. Bosanquet averred that the expenditure on the Maratha war had absorbed any surpluses generated by the acquisition of territories.²⁵ Verging on bankruptcy, the Company had to seek financial assistance from the British government each year between 1806 and 1810, prompting Parliament to appoint a select committee to investigate.²⁶ The question was not that war had ruined Company finances, but why this particular war had proved so expensive.

The Marathas – a complex political agglomeration of four ruling families and a titular head – has conventionally been described as a 'confederacy'.²⁷ The ruling families of Sindhia, Holkar, Bhonsle, and Gaekwad, owing nominal obeisance to the court of the Peshwa at Poona, dominated a territorial mass that, at its zenith, stretched from Delhi in the north to the edge of the kingdom of Mysore in the south. The war against the chiefs did not proceed along any evident rules of a confederated alliance – with Sindhia and Bhonsle fighting the Company in the first phase of the war (August to December 1803), followed by a desultory second phase (April 1804 to December 1805) which pitted Holkar against a shifting alliance that at various points included the Company, Gaekwad (who had stayed neutral in the preceding phase), and Sindhia. The Company fielded the largest military force assembled in South Asia – divided among two theatres of war – under Lieutenant General Gerrard Lake in the Gangetic plains of northern India, and a southern detachment under the command of Major General Arthur Wellesley. Wellesley's nearly 10,000 strong force would subsume another detachment operating from the territories of the Company's ally, the Nizam of Hyderabad.²⁸ The main force serving in the Deccan under Wellesley required such extensive material and political resources that the term 'logistics' does not sufficiently convey the complexity of the extractive exercise.²⁹ Reflecting the kind of painstaking attention to detail that would characterize his successful career against Napoleon in Europe, Wellesley had begun commandeering resources across peninsular India as early as January 1803. The forces under his command advanced north from Mysore into hostile territory in central India, supported by the treasuries and granaries of the southern peninsular tip of the Madras presidency. It was both logical and desirable that Wellesley should obtain resources locally from the western territories of the Bombay presidency and the cotton-rich province of Gujarat (ruled by the Maratha court of the Gaekwad of Baroda).

Away from the celebrated battlefield victories and below the surface of military manoeuvres,³⁰ the Maratha war can be presented as a story of a contentious restructuring of the Company's administration in Madras and Bombay as it desperately sought to mobilize resources on an unprecedented scale. It is here we can see the validity of Tilly's dictum: the pressures of war compelled the Company to adapt as its higher political and military authorities commandeered resources across the jealously maintained jurisdictional boundaries of its hitherto disjointed possessions. This transformation was sanctioned legally through the delegation of complete political authority to military commanders, further militarizing the Company and encouraging the expansion in the scope of its campaigns. By June 1803, Governor-General Richard Wellesley had decided to disengage from the dilatory negotiations with Sindhia and Bhonsle and to commit the Company to war. The military commanders – Lake and Arthur Wellesley – were given sweeping political powers to operate independently of all civilian authorities – including the 'superior' government of Bengal and the local administrations of Madras and Bombay.

This delegation of unqualified political authority addressed a persistent problem that had hobbled the Company's ambitions of territorial aggrandizement – commanders resented their theoretical subordination to civilian control in wartime, causing disputes and contributing to military disasters.³¹ The new, sweeping delegation of power extended down to local military officers who could requisition resources and ignore civilian officials, to whom they were no longer answerable, and contributed directly to the burgeoning scale of resource extraction.

Logistical planning for Wellesley's main force had begun in earnest as early as January 1803. Less than a month after his arrival in the Peshwa's capital at Poona, Wellesley was complaining about the inadequacy of the resources allocated to him.³² Four months before open hostilities began, the Bombay presidency was struggling to sustain its military guests, with the garrison storekeeper Edward Moor defending himself by claiming that, while his 'means are sadly cramped, half by scarcity of men and money', he had scoured the hinterland to meet the army's substantial demands.³³ Such was the scarcity of resources that the governor of Bombay, Jonathan Duncan, admitted to being 'alarmed at our growing difficulties in procuring Money and for your Wants'. The civilian administration scrambled to corral financial resources to fund military operations, including appropriating £28,000 in silver dollars originally meant for the Madras presidency. Desperate measures like this impacted adversely on the Madras treasury's ability to meet its own obligations to the army, Duncan advising Wellesley to directly draw on the Bengal treasury instead.³⁴

The effect of war on the regional economies of western-central India underscores the more general point that conflict always has specific regional, political, commercial, and financial constraints. Lakshmi Subramanian's work on the indigenous networks of moneylending and mercantile exchange has illuminated a sophisticated

interregional matrix of relationships in which the Bania moneylenders (referred to as *shroffs* in contemporary records) played a crucial role in remitting capital across the peninsular landmass.³⁵ By drafting *hundis* or bills of exchange drawn on the Bengal treasury, the main source of capital, the shroffs of Surat and Bombay could safely convey money to specified locations in a given local currency. Remittance of funds through this network obviated the need to rely on the hazardous alternative of moving bullion either by sea or by unsecured overland routes, and provided what armies operating in India needed most: ready cash. Reliance on these networks of exchange was inevitable, especially during periods of intense financial strain wrought by war. As an anonymous correspondent complained to the governor of Madras, Edward Clive, 'it was known in the Black Town that the money was absolutely required for the Pay of the Army ... the state of our Treasury is always known in the money market which gives the lender an evident advantage which he naturally converts to his own benefit and to the loss of the Public'.³⁶

Thus, the growing scale of the Company's military operations depended directly on local agents and financial networks. The difference in the values of local currencies gave additional, near permanent advantage to indigenous moneylenders, whose importance during periods of extreme financial distress was all too obvious to desperate Company administrators and military commanders alike. However, even after acknowledging this axiom to the political economy of colonial warfare, Subramanian's assertion that 'the ability to provide credit to the ruler made the banker the most important functionary in the politics of transition in the eighteenth century' needs to be qualified.³⁷ Untimely demands on the paymasters of a military force, the recalcitrance of an Indian moneylender, and the mutinous sullenness of Indian recruits impatiently awaiting pay, undoubtedly added up to the difference between a glorious military victory and a humiliating outcome.³⁸ However, more significantly, it was the Company's ability to extract and marshal resources in service of its war machine that was ultimately determinative of the outcome of all contests against their Maratha foes. It is being argued here that, while the importance of the availability of cash and assured transmission of capital cannot be overstated, the true significance of how the Company differed from its South Asian opponents only emerges when we consider other war-making resources as well.

Among the long-drawn-out acrimonious exchanges about the inadequate supply of *arrack*, cattle, fresh meat, iron, and coolies to carry supplies, the example of rice in particular illustrates how the Company drained resources from well beyond its territories to increase its war-making capacity and defeat its opponents.³⁹ Rice was essential to war as the principal foodstuff of all armies in India. As early as March, well before the arrival of the Company's force from Madras, the Bombay garrison storekeeper admitted to his inability to provide supplies on the scale demanded. On the eve of his arrival at Poona, Wellesley had revised his estimates for the stores required just by his force alone to encounter protests from the governor of Bombay that the civil administration simply could not cope with

the increased demand.⁴⁰ Over the summer of 1803, while hostile forces manoeuvred across the Deccan, the rice scarcity induced by military demands worsened. The civilian population and administration of Bombay hosting the concentrated military forces already faced collapse by the time open hostilities commenced (6 August 1803). The growing supply crisis runs through official and private correspondence in dissonance to the news of military victories. Governor Duncan of Bombay was compelled to defend his administration by explaining that the army's demands had already exceeded the capacity of his rice and grains store by April. The acute shortage of rice was further exacerbated when, as early as May, Duncan admitted that his treasury had run out of money and issued rice in lieu of pay to the Bombay garrison. Reports of crop failures and a sharp increase in rice prices forced Bombay to send two ships to beg for rice from the south (Mangalore) and east (Bengal).⁴¹

Crop failures and steeply increasing prices were familiar challenges for the EIC's bureaucracies, but the unprecedented scale of the new war began to dawn on the civilians. A mere month into the war, the Bombay government noted with alarm that there were 'ground[s] to apprehend a very speedy and severe scarcity in the article of Rice, at a time when not only the local consumption is to be provided for, but ample supplies of this indispensable article required for the use of the armies under the command of the Hon'ble Major General Wellesley'.⁴² The beleaguered garrison storekeeper, Edward Moor, admitted he could not procure the seven months' supply of rice demanded by Wellesley, and even if he could do so the scale of the necessary purchase would have destabilized the grain market.⁴³ Dismal reports on the grain markets alarmed the governor sufficiently for him to admit that western India would suffer a famine unless the *Elphinstone* returned with rice from Bengal.⁴⁴ Just as news of Wellesley's stunning victory over the combined forces of Sindhia and Bhonsle at Assaye (23 September 1803) reached Bombay castle, Governor Duncan attributed 'the present scarcity of grain in the market' to 'the quantity purchased ... for General Wellesley's Army in the months of April and May last, which would have been our stock for the Rains'.⁴⁵ The acute scarcity of resources was not restricted to rice as the custom master starkly recommended that 'unless a total Prohibition is put to ... [the] Exportation [of rice]; an inevitable Famine will be the Consequence. I would also recommend an entire stop to the export of Ghee, Wheat, and every other sort of grain for the present'.⁴⁶ The subsequent bans on the export of wheat, coarse grains, and rice disrupted an extended network of trade in these commodities extending to Muscat and Basra across the Arabian Sea and to Madras in the Indian Ocean.⁴⁷

The famine-inducing shortage of rice was symptomatic of a much wider and more serious problem – the complete exhaustion of the Company's financial ability to transact warfare on a subcontinental scale.⁴⁸ By the beginning of the next phase of the war against Malhar Rao Holkar (April 1804 onwards), the financial distress of both the Bombay (a theatre of war) and Madras presidencies (far removed from the

war) was crippling the Company's overall ability to continue fighting. Already by January 1804, well ahead of the renewed hostilities, the governor of Madras, William Bentinck, abjectly confessed to his inability to 'disguise ... the very great embarrassment, in which I have found myself involved ... [with] a treasury entirely empty, as well as from the prospect of a very large Deficit in our Resources'. Wellesley's force in the Deccan was raised and partially financed by the Madras presidency, which estimated that a quarter of its annual deficit was due to the exigencies of funding the first phase of the war. The Madras administration's efforts to raise a loan to meet its increasing financial expenses had already failed in September 1803.⁴⁹ By March 1804, Bentinck was warning Bengal that the 'the Military Expenses will be found to be underrated'.⁵⁰ Less than three months into the renewed war, Madras was willing to follow Bombay's example of ignoring orders and appropriating bullion aboard ships carrying £200,000 in specie from New York and Norfolk, originally destined for Bengal. Bentinck argued that, given that he had 'discretion with regard to the money to be landed at Fort St George', he was not in a position to judge whether, 'a supply of bullion will be more urgently required at Bengal than at this presidency in the early part of 1804/s'. Madras argued that, since the abrupt outbreak of war against Holkar was not budgeted, 'the distance of the Theatre of War, [made it] necessary that ... [the detachment in the Deccan] should be supplied very much in advance'.⁵¹

The financial crisis in Madras in 1804 struck before Bombay had recovered from its experience as the main theatre of devastation the preceding year. Financial exhaustion drove the Bombay council to due expedients, such as selling the Company's cotton meant for export to Canton to a private company (Bruce, Fawcett & Company) and to buy two months' food for the force operating in Gujarat.⁵² That force was currently embroiled in a protracted dispute over the authority to extract resources from the revenue-rich territories of the Gaekwad ruler of Gujarat. The local military commander, Colonel John Murray, insisted on operating independently of the Company's local political agent and the civilian administration at Bombay, thus contributing to the incremental loss of civilian control of military operations. Murray complained that monies needed to maintain his troops were being diverted to paying arrears of the Gaekwad's army.⁵³ Governor Duncan defended his administration by detailing its efforts to create a 'well-replenished Military Chest' for the force in Gujarat.⁵⁴

Like the Bombay presidency's search for money in 1803, Murray's dispute with its council in 1804 reveals the significant role of indigenous financiers in the Company warfare state; in this case, the influential Surat-based Brahman banker Tarwady Arunji Nathji.⁵⁵ Murray's problems also demonstrate the importance of distinguishing between the supply of money as opposed to its immediate availability. Finally, this episode underscores the need to qualify the prevailing assumption that 'even before the British prevailed over the Marathas in the military struggle, they had won in the financial struggle'.⁵⁶ The secret of the Company's success

lay in how it responded to the crisis of its own making by using private banking networks not just to remit cash payments to troops in the field, but to extend its financial reach to the distant corners of its rapidly expanding territorial empire and beyond. The importance of bankers like Tarwady is evident from his ability to negotiate substantial contracts to exchange money and supply cash to the Company's forces in the field at markedly favourable terms by using networks connecting the Gangetic pilgrimage centre of Benares and the western port of Surat. Tarwady's activities attracted complaints from the Bengal administration and Murray in Gujarat, indicating the continued friction between the different parts of the Company administration, as well as the ongoing civil–military tensions.⁵⁷ As late as December 1803, Murray believed that he could negotiate a more favourable contract independent of Tarwady's dominance of the local money market of Gujarat.⁵⁸ The plan to replace the Surat banker failed, but it nevertheless reveals the confidence with which the Company's military was now willing to operate across western India. Contrary to Subramanian's assertion, Tarwady's problems with the Bombay council do not provide evidence of the former's unassailable clout in prefiguring the outcome of the military contest that would follow, but rather indicate how the Company was expanding its ability to tap resources across much of India.⁵⁹

Conclusions

The problems of mobilizing resources for territorial conquest encountered by the Bombay and Madras presidencies during the Second Anglo-Maratha War were not entirely new, but they were on an unprecedented scale and they forced a new level of innovation and political development within the Company-state as a whole. This is to be contrasted with historiographical claims for broad continuities between seventeenth-century late/post-Mughal regimes and the EIC as yet another 'successor state' to the Mughals. Conquest and the warfare that created a distinctive colonial regime in the final decade of the long eighteenth century was in marked contrast to its early/mid eighteenth-century predecessors and its contemporary Indian rivals. Much of the administration's response was ad hoc and expedient, such as diverting bullion meant for other presidencies, selling export cotton to private traders, and sending begging expeditions to stave off famine. But beneath these contingent and often panicky measures, the underlying shift was unmistakable: the Company had become a territorial hegemon dependent on violent conquests to sustain itself. As Murray's underfunded contingent conquered the principality of Godhra (in Gujarat) from Sindhia, the colonel gestured towards the ultimate bedrock of the colonial warfare state: its ability to conquer districts 'in the highest state of cultivation' and then to urgently generate 'every information relative to the revenue to be collected'.⁶⁰ At a much higher level, the governor-general was keen to assure his metropolitan overseers that:

The rapid and brilliant success of the British arms in the present War has already added to our Possessions in India the Fortress and District of Ahemdnagar; the Fortress of Barroach with the adjoining Districts the Territory heretofore possessed by Dowlut Rao Scindia in the Dooab of the Jumna and Ganges, the City of Delhi and adjacent Territory and the valuable Province of Cuttack in Orissa and no doubt can be entertained that a Revenue will be derived from these acquisitions in the present year, whatever portion of the Conquered Territories may be retained at the conclusion of Peace.⁶¹

The political economy of conquest operated by conquering revenue-yielding territories and rapidly incorporating these into the state cadaster as the most aggressively pursued source of state income. This was supplemented by the manipulation of indigenous financial networks to ease cash-flow problems during crises. The Company had become trapped in a loop of continued violent expansion and permanent financial crisis from which the only escape seemed to be to plunge forward into a fresh campaign of conquest.⁶² The logic of colonial war- and state-making expanded the scale and scope of warfare on the subcontinent. To paraphrase Tilly – much like its early modern peers, war made the Company-state, but more importantly it transformed it into a distinctive early colonial state formation.

Notes

- 1 C. Tilly, 'Reflections on the History of European State-Making', in C. Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975), p. 42.
- 2 D. M. Peers, 'State, Power and Colonialism', in N. Gooptu and D. Peers (eds), *India and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2012).
- 3 For a recent and original attempt to theorize violence as conquest in the folk memory of medieval North India see S. Amin, *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan* (Chicago, 2016).
- 4 For a cogent summary see P. J. Marshall, 'Introduction', in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 1–49.
- 5 For a representative sample see C. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge, 1983) and P. J. Marshall, *The New Cambridge History of India*, vol. 2.2, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead, Eastern India 1740–1828* (Cambridge, 1987).
- 6 P. J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, 2011).
- 7 For the influential formulation of a 'military labour market' see D. H. A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market of Hindustan, 1450–1850* (Cambridge, 1990). For a long-range study of changing modes of inflicting military violence in South Asia see J. J. L. Gommans and D. H. A. Kolff (eds), *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia 1000–1800* (Oxford, 2003).
- 8 Historiographical notice of eighteenth-century Indian rivals competing against the Company in a bid to emulate its practices was acknowledged as early as B. Stein, 'State Formation and Economy Reconsidered', *Modern Asian Studies*, 19:3 (1985).

- 9 H. Bowen, *Revenue and Reform: The Indian Problem in British Politics, 1757–73* (Cambridge, 1991).
- 10 T. G. Fraser, 'India 1780–6', in P. Roebuck (ed.), *Macartney of Lissanoure, 1737–1806: Essays in Biography* (Belfast, 1983).
- 11 As late as 1798 a newly incumbent governor-general, Richard Wellesley, would describe the resources of Bengal as 'the General Treasury and Bank of our Indian Empire': University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections, Nottingham, Bentinck Papers, Portland (Welbeck) Collection [hereafter Bentinck Papers, Portland Collection], PwJb 52, p. 33: Governor-General's Minute on Finance, 12 June 1798.
- 12 For a tentative link between revenue settlements and paying for expensive military adventures see S. Ahmed, *The Stillbirth of Capital: Enlightenment Writing and Colonial India* (Stanford, 2012), pp. 161–88.
- 13 See discussion of Philip Stern's *The Company-State* above.
- 14 T. Nechtman, *Nabobs: Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2010) and N. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Harvard, 2006).
- 15 M. Mann, 'From Ledger to Budget: British Fiscal Imperialism, 1750–1800', *Internationales Asienforum*, 33:3–4 (2002).
- 16 National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, Melville Papers, MS. 3387, pp. 23–4: Henry Dundas to Charles Cornwallis, 29 Jul. 1787.
- 17 Peter Marshall has convincingly traced these changed attitudes of metropolitan society to the 1790s following the defeat of Tipu Sultan's Mysore in the third and penultimate Anglo-Mysore War in "'Cornwallis Triumphant": War in India and the British Public in the Late Eighteenth Century', in L. Freedman, P. Hayes, and R. O'Neill (eds), *War, Strategy and International Politics: Essays in Honour of Sir Michael Howard* (Oxford, 1992).
- 18 A. Bennell, *The Making of Arthur Wellesley* (Hyderabad, 1997); J. Weller, *Wellington in India* (London, 1972); R. Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India: The Struggle for Control of the South Asian Military Economy* (Cambridge, 2003); H. Davies, *Wellington's Wars: The Making of a Military Genius* (New Haven, CT, 2012).
- 19 The EIC conquered contiguous territories from Gujarat in the west to Orissa in the east.
- 20 For his career as the descendant of the Huguenot merchant family of Jacob Bosanquet I, see H. Bowen, *Business of Empire* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 122–3.
- 21 John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, Manchester, Melville Letters and Papers [hereafter Melville Papers, Manchester], GB 133 Eng MSS 673, n.p.: Jacob Bosanquet to Robert Dundas, Private 28 May 1807, no. 203.
- 22 For a thorough exposition of the EIC's militarized regime for a later period see D. M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in India 1819–1835* (London, 1995).
- 23 'Substance of Lord Castlereagh's Speech delivered in the House of Commons ... relating to the finances of the East-India Company in India and Europe, for the last ten years, 1804', in *Heads of Speeches delivered in the House of Commons by the several presidents or members of the right honourable the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India, relative to the Finances of the East India Company* (2 vols, London, 1809), II, p. 1411.

- 24 Anon., *Observations on Lord Castlereagh's Speech ... 19th of July 1804 and on the State of the East India Company's Affairs* (London, 1805). William Cobbett speculated that given the technical sophistication of the pamphlet, it was probably authored by the veteran Whig critic Sir Philip Francis: W. Cobbett, *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, vol. 7, 23 Mar. 1805 (London), p. 431.
- 25 Melville Papers, Manchester, GB 133 Eng MSS 673, n.p.: Jacob Bosanquet to Robert Dundas, Private 28 May 1807, no. 203.
- 26 A. Tripathi, *Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency, 1793–1833* (Bombay, 1956), pp. 111–16.
- 27 S. Gordon, *The New Cambridge History of India*, vol. 2.4, *The Marathas, 1600–1818* (Cambridge, 1993).
- 28 By recruiting a much larger proportion of 'native' sepoys the three presidency armies had swollen in the first year of the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–04) from 52,853 to 78,743 (Bengal), 72,278 to 81,907 (Madras), and 15,010 to 18,063 (Bombay) – a 27 per cent increase in the first year of the war itself.
- 29 The problem of reducing the supply of an army to a technical problem of provisioning a military force without engaging with the wider implications of extracting resources and committing these in service of colonial war-making is evident in R. Cooper, 'Beyond Beasts and Bullion: Economic Considerations in Bombay's Military Logistics, 1803,' *Modern Asian Studies*, 33:1 (1999).
- 30 These feats of arms continue to dominate narrative retellings of what has essentially become a glowing chapter in the South Asian military career of the future Duke of Wellington. See Weller, *Wellington in India*; Davies, *Wellington's Wars*, pp. 40–75.
- 31 G. Bryant, 'Civil–Military Relations in Early British India, 1750–85,' *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 83:334 (2005), pp. 142–3; and J. Lees, 'A "Tranquil Spectator": The District Official and the Practice of Local Government in Late Eighteenth-Century Bengal,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 38:1 (2010).
- 32 A. Wellesley, *Supplementary Despatches and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur, Duke of Wellington* (15 vols, London, 1858–72), IV, pp. 75–8: Arthur Wellesley to Jonathan Duncan, 11 May 1803, no. 1556 and Arthur Wellesley to Jonathan Duncan, 16 May 1803, no. 1563.
- 33 Hartley Library, University of Southampton, Southampton, Wellington Papers [hereafter WP, HL], WP3/3/32 pp. 35–35A: Capt. Moor to Arthur Wellesley 14 May 1803.
- 34 HL, WP3/3/18, pp. 19–19A: Jonathan Duncan to Arthur Wellesley, 9 May 1803. Even as Duncan admitted to the financial inadequacy of his resources he continued to assure Arthur Wellesley of the elaborate schemes for providing supplies for the detached force: WP, HL, pp. 25–28A: Jonathan Duncan to Arthur Wellesley, 14 May 1803.
- 35 L. Subramanian, *Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion: Bombay, Surat and the West Coast* (Delhi, 1996), pp. 253–316.
- 36 Bentinck Papers, Portland Collection, Pw Jb 52, pp. 136–7: Anon. to Lord Clive, 12 Nov. 1799.
- 37 L. Subramanian, 'Arms and the Merchant: The Making of the Bania Raj in Late Eighteenth-Century India,' *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 24:2 (2001), p. 26.

- 38 As the Resident at the court of the Gaekwad of Baroda, Col. Alexander Walker, imploringly reminded the governor of Bombay, the Maratha allies would not even consider taking the field in aid of a local detachment until their arrears were settled: WP, HL, WP3/3/18, p. 627: Alexander Walker to Jonathan Duncan, 14 May 1804.
- 39 For a representative example of the complexity of amassing resources to sustain a military force marching across peninsular India see WP, HL, WP3/3/18, pp. 25–28A: Jonathan Duncan to Arthur Wellesley, 14 May 1803.
- 40 For details of his request for supplies see Arthur Wellesley to the Secretary of Government of Bombay, 18 April 1803, in J. Gurwood (ed.), *The Dispatches of Field Marshall the Duke of Wellington* (London, 1834–38), I, pp. 447–50.
- 41 WP, HL, WP3/3/18, pp. 288–91A: Minute of Governor in Council [GC], Pol. Dept., 18 Oct. 1803.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 304A: Extract from Progs. of GC of Bombay, 18 Sept. 1803, letter from Secy., Bombay Govt. to Collector of the Southern Division.
- 43 For the garrison storekeeper, the price of rice was already so high that he could not even purchase a modest quantity of it to meet the army's demand: WP, HL, WP3/3/18, pp. 314–14A: Edward Moor, Garrison Storekeeper to Francis Warden, Secy., Mil. Board, 18 Sept. 1803.
- 44 The results of the begging expedition to Bengal were not expected till December, by which point the two Maratha chiefs had already been defeated and signed peace treaties: WP, HL, WP3/3/18, pp. 309–9A: Secy., Bombay Govt. to Chief Secy., Bengal Govt., 23 Sept. 1803.
- 45 *Ibid.*, pp. 306–7A: Extract from Progs. of GC of Bombay, 23 Sept. 1803.
- 46 Extract from Progs. of GC of Bombay, 16 Sept. 1803; letter from the Custom Master to Secretary to Government, 10 Sept. 1803, WP, HL, WP3/3/18, pp. 304–4A.
- 47 Estimates of the daily consumption for the island of Bombay pointed to its stock sustaining the civilian population for a mere twenty-five days: WP, HL, WP3/3/18, pp. 306A: Extract from Progs. of GC of Bombay, 23 Sept. 1803.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 309: Secy., Bombay Govt. to Chief Secy., Bengal Govt. 23 Sept. 1803.
- 49 Bentinck Papers, Portland Collection, Pw Jb 52, pp. 39–47: Bentinck to Governor-General [hereafter G-G] Richard Wellesley, Private, 6 Jan. 1804.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 69: Bentinck to G-G Richard Wellesley, Private, 2 Mar. 1804.
- 51 *Ibid.*, pp. 95–7: Bentinck to G-G Richard Wellesley, Private, 6 Jun. 1804. Ultimately only a quarter of the bullion landed at Madras was kept, with the rest being forwarded to Bengal: *Ibid.*, p. 102: Bentinck to G-G Richard Wellesley, Private, 10 June. 1804.
- 52 WP, HL, WP3/3/18, p. 613: Jonathan Duncan to Arthur Wellesley, 20 May 1804.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 635A: Col. Murray to Maj. Gen. Nicholls, 17 May 1804.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 669A: Jonathan Duncan to Arthur Wellesley, 6 June 1804.
- 55 L. Subramanian, *Three Merchants of Bombay: Business Pioneers of the Nineteenth Century* (Gurgaon, 2012), pp. 47–87.
- 56 Subramanian, *Indigenous Capital*, p. 321.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 299.
- 58 WP, HL, WP3/3/18, p. 636: Col. Murray to Maj. Gen. Nicholls, 17 May 1804.
- 59 Subramanian, *Indigenous Capital*, pp. 299–301.
- 60 WP, HL, WP3/3/32, p. 60: Col. Murray to Maj. Gen. Nicholls 9 Oct. 1803.

- 61 Melville Papers, Manchester, GB 133 Eng MSS 696, p. 134S: Memorandum relating to the Finances of Bengal Extracted from the G-G's Letter to the Secret Committee, 20 Oct. 1803.
- 62 Not unlike its British contemporary, the characterization of the Company-state as a 'warfare state' relies on David Edgerton's *Warfare State: Britain, 1920–1970* (Cambridge, 2005). This characterization has been used instead of Douglas M. Peers's equally insightful 'garrison state': Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*.

5

Ravages and depredations: raiding war and globalization in the early modern world

Brian Sandberg

'A raid is hardly more of a war than is modern burglary.'¹ So argued anthropologist Harry Holbert Turney-High in his influential book, *Primitive War: Its Practice and Concepts*, published in 1949. Turney-High portrayed raiding as the defining characteristic of conflicts between hunter-gatherers of the prehistoric past and indigenous peoples in isolated regions of the modern world. He drew a sharp distinction between the 'primitive war' that hunter-gatherers practiced and the 'true war' that 'civilized' states and societies waged. A 'military horizon', Turney-High theorized, separated the 'primitive' raiding from the 'true' military strategy and tactics that 'civilized' armies utilized. The political scientist Quincy Wright, also writing during the 1940s, developed a parallel analysis of 'primitive war' as a stage in the historical evolution of warfare. In his classic work, *A Study of War*, Wright presents 'primitive war' as governed by cultural mores and distinguishes it from 'civilized war', which he claimed operates based on international systems.² The general success of Wright's study of warfare ensured that the concept of 'primitive war' garnered a broad audience, while Turney-High's theorization of 'primitive' raiding strongly influenced the anthropology of war.³

The characterization of raiding as 'primitive' reinforced modernization narratives of 'civilization' and guided anthropological studies of warfare and social violence throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Anthropologists who studied violence among indigenous peoples portrayed raiding as a communal activity and an aspect of 'traditional' culture. Anthropological studies of indigenous warfare in Papua New Guinea and the Amazon, including the much-criticized ethnographic film *Dead Birds*, reinforced characterizations of 'primitive war' as ritualized, symbolic, and low-casualty.⁴ The PBS documentary *War*, and

its companion book, helped popularize the 'primitive war' notion of raiding for a broad public audience in the United States in the 1980s. Gwynne Dyer, author of the companion volume for the documentary, asserts that 'though precivilized warfare served various ritual and magical purposes and may have had broader social functions, it was predominantly a rough male sport for underemployed hunters, with the kinds of damage-limiting rules that all competitive sports have'.⁵ Many scholars, analysts, writers, and documentary film-makers have extended this characterization of prehistoric and 'traditional' raiding activity to describe small-scale armed violence in pre-modern and modern historical contexts. As a result, raiding activity is often depicted as rough play, organized crime, or clan violence, and – in more modern contexts – as guerrilla warfare, low-intensity conflict, unconventional war, or terrorism.

More recent anthropological, archaeological, and historical studies of prehistoric and indigenous societies have dismantled modernization narratives of 'civilization' and radically altered our understanding of raiding activity. Lawrence H. Keeley uses archaeological evidence to argue that prehistoric warriors utilized highly organized tactics in raiding warfare that could be quite vicious.⁶ Recent studies in conflict archaeology have demonstrated that pre-modern societies engaged in pervasive raiding for captives, including the seizure of women to serve as wives.⁷ Raiding warfare seems to have often played a significant role in the process of ethnogenesis, defining ethnic communities and their demographic boundaries.⁸ This new body of work on pre-modern raiding warfare has not completely displaced the concept of 'primitive war', however, even though the modernization narratives of 'civilization' that supported it have been abandoned.

Increasing evidence from the early modern period (c. 1500–1800) demonstrates that raiding activities were often highly organized, employing tactical systems and strategic objectives that suggest military organization. Anthropologists and historians have found numerous cases of indigenous societies reorganizing their military systems in response to commercial developments and colonial incursions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁹ Further, raiding warfare was hardly confined to indigenous societies in the early modern period. I have argued in *War and Conflict in the Early Modern World* that historians need to investigate 'the new forms of raiding warfare that emerged in response to global commerce and imperialism during the late sixteenth century'.¹⁰ In that book, I identify a transitional period between the 1580s and 1640s in which raiding warfare on land and sea increasingly intersected with the dynamics of imperialism, colonization, and globalization in diverse military systems and societies.

This chapter builds on my previous work on raiding warfare in the early modern world by considering French experiences of raiding violence, in detail, during this transitional period in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. During this period, pirates and privateers launched repeated raids along the French coastlines, while soldiers, militia bands, and bandits engaged in significant raiding

activities in the countryside and woodlands of the interior. These raiding parties inflicted violence and destruction that left traces in manuscript sources conserved in archives in Paris, Marseille, Montpellier, Toulouse, Bordeaux, and other cities. These sources include: provincial and municipal government records; reports of French consuls in Algiers, Tunis, and Malta; ambassadorial correspondence from Istanbul; correspondence and records of the city of Marseille; records of the *Chambre de commerce de Marseille*; papers of the *admiral des mers de Levant*; correspondence of the Knights of Malta; and other manuscripts.¹¹ Many of these sources concern southern France in particular, but printed pamphlets, treatises, and rare books provide additional insights into the dynamics of raiding throughout early modern France.¹² Although there is not space here to fully explore all of these sources, early modern French evidence of raiding practices allows us to consider how we might reconceptualize the notions of raiding war and globalization in the early modern period.

Raiding seems to have been pervasive in France during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, representing an important aspect of everyday life for many French communities. Early modern French evidence of raiding suggests that we should abandon the ‘primitive war’ conception of raids completely and instead investigate the complex dynamics of raiding practices and their social and military organization. I aim to develop an alternative model of raiding warfare that considers raiding activity transculturally and examines connections between raiding activities and other forms of organized violence. The chapter considers three major dimensions of early modern raiding warfare: *borderlands raiding*, *economic devastation*, and *maritime raiding*.¹³ These three forms of raiding violence were organized by diverse individuals and institutions and involved distinct practices of raiding warfare on land and sea that were constantly evolving. Different forms of raiding warfare often overlapped and intersected in particular regions during specific conflicts. I will argue that early modern French raiding practices did not represent a distinct ‘way of war’, but instead exhibited broader global patterns of raiding in this transitional period, suggesting new ways of conceptualizing raiding war throughout the early modern period.

Confessional boundaries and borderlands raiding in southern France

Catholic and Calvinist armed forces engaged in pervasive raiding in the confessionally mixed regions of France during the French Wars of Religion (1562–1629). Although Huguenot (French Calvinist) communities existed in various regions of France, southern France may arguably be considered a confessional borderlands region in this period due to the high concentrations of Calvinists living there. Indeed, the vast majority of the entire Huguenot population of France (perhaps 80 per cent of the kingdom’s Protestants) lived in the southern provinces of Guyenne, Languedoc, and Dauphiné. The Catholic and Huguenot populations

in these provinces often lived in neighbouring towns within confessionally mixed regions, or even in *mi-partie* (divided) communities. Many towns and villages in the rugged mountains and forests of the Cévennes adopted Calvinism, creating localized confessional boundaries. Cities such as Bordeaux, Toulouse, Albi, and Béziers served as Catholic bastions and refuges for nearby Catholic villages. The close proximity and interspersed nature of Calvinist and Catholic communities created confessional borderlands regions. Catholic and Huguenot raiding warfare in confessional borderlands regularly targeted communities that were controlled by opposing confessions for attack.

Cavalry forces carried out much of the pervasive raiding in the borderlands of *mi-partie* southern France. Catholic and Huguenot nobles were the main organizers of this form of raiding warfare, since they had the clientage relationships and economic means to raise and maintain cavalry companies of *gendarmes* (armoured heavy cavalry), *chevaux-légers* (light cavalry), and *carabins* (mounted carabineers). These military and social elites engaged in cavalry skirmishes and duelling over confessional disputes. Nobles could also act as military entrepreneurs in organizing raiding warfare.¹⁴ Southern French nobles directed confessionalized raiding warfare in ways that seem to parallel the violence organized by military elites in some other borderlands regions, where field armies and state administrations intervened intermittently.¹⁵

Catholic and Huguenot infantry garrisons also waged perpetual *petite guerre*, or small war, along confessional boundaries during the religious wars. Garrisons posted in nobles' châteaux conducted raiding warfare within the religiously mixed regions of France, sometimes attacking the châteaux of their enemies. Garrison soldiers posted in town fortifications forayed into the surrounding countryside to raid villages inhabited by members of another confession or occupied by opposing forces. These garrison soldiers sometimes operated in tandem with town militias to conduct more expansive raiding operations against confessional opponents.

While confessional raiding was probably the most intensive form of borderlands raiding in France during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, residents of southern France experienced other forms. French, Spanish, Basque, and Navarrese bandits operated in the Pyrenees mountains along the Franco-Spanish frontier. Anne de Lévis, duc de Ventadour, who served as *lieutenant-général* of the province of Languedoc, worried constantly about this border region, and received frequent reports of incursions by armed bandits in the early seventeenth century.¹⁶ Some of these bandits engaged in livestock raiding, attacking farming villages on both sides of the Pyrenees mountains. Complaints of goat- and sheep-raiding reached provincial officials, raising questions about the relationship between this raiding activity and the transhumance practices studied by Fernand Braudel.¹⁷ Bandits also stole horses, prompting comparisons with horse-raiding patterns in Eurasia, Arabia, North Africa, and the Americas. Cattle ranching was less prevalent in southern France than in Andalusia, but bandits seem to have

sometimes been cattle rustlers. This form of banditry may be compared with cattle raiding in Africa and the Americas, which have been studied by anthropologists and historians.¹⁸ Similar forms of borderlands raiding apparently existed in the mountainous regions of south-eastern France, along the border with Savoie, leading French officers to position *carabinier* companies near mountain passes to prevent incursions.¹⁹

Economic devastation in French war zones

Raiding warfare was not confined to borderlands regions of France, however. Field armies and military units inflicted economic devastation on civilian communities through systematic pillaging and plundering in war zones during civil conflicts and foreign wars. Military officers demanded contributions from selected towns and villages that lay in the path of their armies, raising money, food, and supplies to support their operations. Profit motives could be present in all forms of raiding, but financial dimensions of raiding war were most pronounced in targeted economic devastation that disrupted urban and rural society, sometimes forcing civilians to flee as refugees.²⁰

Garrisons conducted organized *petite guerre* from their bastioned fortifications, gathering food, drink, supplies, and forage from villages in the surrounding countryside. Early modern field armies could orchestrate small war in conjunction with broader strategic goals.²¹ In such cases, the small war that we encountered with garrisons in confessional borderlands could take on a broader strategic significance. For example, raiding parties devastated the villages surrounding Châlons in 1593, and peasants and workers reported that they ‘suffered daily from great losses from seizures of their horses, cows, goats, and other animals’ that were seized by enemy garrisons at Vitry-le-François and several nearby châteaux.²² The same year, the *échevins* of Troyes complained that soldiers had ‘chased, pillaged, and ravaged the poor labourers and merchants’ working outside their city’s walls.²³ These descriptions are typical of correspondence from towns and cities suffering from sustained raiding warfare during the religious wars.

Field armies organized broader raiding campaigns to devastate the countryside around blockaded or besieged cities during the French Wars of Religion. Prolonged sieges of cities such as Orléans (1563), Chartres (1568), La Rochelle (1573), Sancerre (1573), Paris (1590), Rouen (1591–92), Amiens (1597), Montauban (1621), Montpellier (1622), and La Rochelle (1627–28) prompted sustained raiding campaigns in the surrounding countryside. Field armies sometimes launched dedicated campaigns of widespread economic devastation, burning crops and villages across an entire region.²⁴

Methods of economic devastation gradually evolved during the early seventeenth century. French raiding parties had long extorted money and goods from communities, but the construction of royal roads and *étapes* (way stations) systems

in the early seventeenth century seems to have developed in conjunction with the use of formal contributions systems. Military units manoeuvring along road systems forced villages and towns to provide soldiers with food, lodging, supplies, and money.²⁵ John A. Lynn has argued that French field armies and military contingents imposed a 'tax of violence' on provincial communities in war zones and along *étapes* routes during the Thirty Years War.²⁶ Formal contributions systems become even more elaborate by the mid-seventeenth century, as military entrepreneurs and munitions contractors operated on an increasingly large scale across Europe.²⁷ Much more research is needed on this pervasive form of raiding war in the early seventeenth century, since the patterns of small war in the period of Louis XIV's wars are better understood, thanks to the work of John Lynn, George Satterfield, Jamel Ostwald, and others.²⁸

Maritime raiding in the Mediterranean and Atlantic

Maritime raiding warfare was part of everyday life for coastal communities in southern France during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Royal officials and municipal leaders alike complained frequently of maritime threats. French ambassador François Savary de Brèves complained in 1603 of 'the ravages that the English and Barbary corsairs inflict on His Majesty's [Henri IV's] subjects in the seas of the Levant'.²⁹ Around the same time, Charles de Lorraine, duc de Guise, was trying to ensure the coastal defences of Provence against pirate and Savoyard maritime raids. Records from early seventeenth-century Bordeaux reveal local administrators' attempts to respond to raids along France's Atlantic coast. Communities along the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts routinely faced pirate attacks, privateer raids, and armed incursions from amphibious landings. Numerous archival sources discuss the preparation of maritime defences in response to raids in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

These sources might give the impression that southern French communities were merely the victims of raids by Turkish and North African corsairs, English and Dutch privateers, and Spanish and Savoyard galleys. Yet French privateers, galleys, and naval ships frequently engaged in raiding expeditions of their own. French maritime raiding practices were already well developed by the late sixteenth century, even if the *guerre de course* (commerce raiding) waged by the French royal navy during Louis XIV's wars are better documented.³⁰

French galleys conducted frequent maritime raids across the western and central Mediterranean by the late sixteenth century. Some of this raiding activity was sponsored directly by the French king and his admirals, facilitated by the gradual emergence of royal naval authority in France during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which Alan James has traced.³¹ The French king and royal officials orchestrated naval expeditions, conducted peace negotiations, and formulated trade agreements. Royal family members periodically intervened in ransoming

negotiations, as when Louis XIII wrote to the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta regarding a 1619 case of slave taking by a French nobleman who had seized some Turks and left them at Malta.³²

Maritime raiding warfare was largely organized by provincial military officers and city councils, even if they claimed to be operating under royal authority. Port cities such as Marseille supported French privateering and legitimized raiding warfare in the Mediterranean. Marseille officials played a significant role documenting maritime seizures of French vessels and organizing responses to maritime raids. In 1632, a *commissaire* drew up a list of Provençal ships seized between 1613 and 1632, lamenting 'the seizures and depredations inflicted by the Turkish pirates and the corsairs of Tunis, Algiers and Tripoli on Barbary Coast'.³³ French slaves in Algiers appealed directly to the consuls of Marseille, urging them to act against the 'bloody vipers' of Algiers.³⁴

Algerian and Tunisian corsairs retaliated, often targeting specific regions and ports in southern France that launched raiding vessels. For example, Amurat Bey complained to the consuls of Marseille in 1597 about a certain Pierre Pascal, who had allegedly stolen a number of horses from him. Pascal had travelled to Algiers, claiming that he was a domestic in the service of Henri I de Montmorency, duc de Montmorency, the powerful governor of the province of Languedoc. Amurat Bey threatened to punish slaves from Languedoc in Algiers unless Pierre Pascal was brought to justice.³⁵

French maritime raiding activities and the policy documents they generated reflected the expanding global trading networks and long-distance raiding operations of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Consular records often note ships' port of origin, as when one document reported the names and ports of origin for four ships whose crews had been taken slave by Algiers and later released. The ships hailed from Marennes, St Malo, and Calais, but reportedly had mixed French and 'Flemish' crews.³⁶ French merchants and privateers navigated fluidly between Atlantic and Mediterranean waters, prompting complex legal challenges and contributing to early writings of international maritime law by Alberico Gentili and Hugo Grotius.³⁷

In the Atlantic, French vessels engaged in extensive coastal raiding and attacks on Spanish shipping. The port city of La Rochelle emerged as a major base for Huguenot privateers, who sometimes operated along with English and Dutch privateers.³⁸ Huguenot privateers were heavily engaged in the French Wars of Religion, although the Dutch privateers known as the 'Sea Beggars' and their operations in the Dutch Revolt are better known.³⁹ Henri de Bourbon, king of Navarre, served as admiral de Guyenne from 1563–90, granting legitimacy to Huguenot privateering through letters of marque.⁴⁰

Huguenot privateers contended with Catholic privateers, who targeted English, Dutch, and Huguenot ships in the Atlantic Ocean and English Channel. Members of the Montmorency and Guise families served as admiral de France or admiral

de Guyenne during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, allowing them to organize naval expeditions and authorize maritime raids.⁴¹ Catholic privateers could claim legitimacy for their attacks along the Atlantic coast by preying on Huguenot, English, and Dutch shipping.

Mediterranean raiding focused significantly on the seizures of captives, who were enslaved as galley slaves or sold off in ports for urban or agricultural labour. Much of the existing historiography on Mediterranean raiding warfare concentrates on the Barbary corsairs, portraying their maritime raids as blatant piracy.⁴² Yet the Knights of Malta organized intensive raiding campaigns in the central Mediterranean that seized Turkish, North African, and Greek slaves, as Molly Greene has shown.⁴³ Anne Brogini demonstrates that the galleys of the Knights of Malta actually included many French *chevaliers* and volunteers in their crews.⁴⁴ Mediterranean slavery studies centre on the conditions of captivity and the ransoming processes, rather than raiding warfare and slave taking, in part due to the prevalence of captivity narratives and the literary studies of them.⁴⁵ Surviving manuscript sources sometimes reinforce this focus on French subjects in captivity due to the extended epistolary campaigns to obtain their release. French officials in Algiers regularly reported on the status of French captives, and one consul lamented 'the state of the poor French slaves in this city' in 1623.⁴⁶

Mediterranean slavery allowed for eventual release through ransoming agreements and prisoner exchanges, which were often negotiated for individuals or groups of slaves on an ad hoc basis. For example, François Savary de Brèves negotiated a treaty with Tunis in 1605 for the exchange of Muslim captives in Provence for French subjects held in Tunis.⁴⁷ French religious orders became involved in ransom negotiations, gradually systematizing the ransoming process, as Gillian Weiss has demonstrated.⁴⁸

Prisoner exchanges or resales of slaves were not easy to accomplish in practice, however. The *Sainte-Anne*, a *polacre* from Marseille, sailed for North Africa in February 1613, carrying merchandise and a number of *moriscos* who had been captured along the coast of Provence. As the *Sainte-Anne* navigated the island of San Pietro, off Sardinia, it encountered a corsair *polacre* from Algiers, who seized the ship and its entire cargo.⁴⁹ Arnaud Blanc, the captain of the *Sainte-Anne*, had apparently intended to trade his captive *moriscos* for French slaves in Algiers, but now he and his entire crew were instead captives, in need of ransom.

Mediterranean cities and states could organize dedicated raiding fleets with broader strategic aims. In May 1621, the French consul at Algiers reported 'the incredible armament' of the Algerian corsairs, marvelling at 'their plans, their grievances', and referred to organized raiding fleets.⁵⁰ Another French consul at Algiers advised the consuls of Marseille in 1623 to 'beware of Turks who have frequently taken refuge at Marseille' and then later 'mocked us'. He claimed that 'since the descent of the fleet from La Rochelle, [the Algerians] are in some fear of fleet's arrival and of making themselves seen in these waters'.⁵¹ The proximity

of galleys and their visibility was vital to winning the release of French slaves and renegades 'who are waiting every day for a hand from heaven', according to the consul.⁵²

Ambassadors, municipal officials, naval captains, and other agents attempted to manage maritime raiding warfare. Marseille officials attempted to limit excessive violence, as when municipal officials in Marseille considered complaints in 1620 of the 'depredations' carried out by the *Saint-Victor*, which was allegedly operating out of their port.⁵³ Algiers officials conducted frequent peace negotiations with the French, Dutch, and English involving slave exchanges and ransom payments. The complex relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Algiers was sometimes mediated by French ambassadors and consuls. The French ambassador in Istanbul reported that the Ottoman sultan was sending a representative to North Africa in 1620 to renew peace agreements. But, he argued that 'I have always believed that rumours of arming ships under the command of monsieur de Guise or of the interdiction of commerce would have a good effect'.⁵⁴ Two years later, he sought to promote French–Algerian peace in 1622, indicating that the Ottoman sultan would treat North African tributaries who violated the peace as 'rebels'.⁵⁵

French experiences generally mirror patterns of maritime raiding warfare across the Mediterranean in the early modern period, but with some particularities. French privateers and naval raiders maintained close relationships with the Knights of Malta in the central Mediterranean and could rely on them for maritime, logistical, and diplomatic support.⁵⁶ Spanish intervention in the Catholic League wars affected French shipping in the Atlantic and western Mediterranean in the 1580s and 1590s, but the relative peace between France and Spain from 1598 to 1635 allowed for more expansive French maritime raiding operations.

Conclusion

These French perspectives offer insights on an important transitional period in raiding warfare in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Borderlands raiding along confessional boundaries was often small-scale and localized, but could also be highly organized and militarized. Campaigns of economic devastation organized by field armies and regular garrisons could be more systematic and expansive. Maritime raiding involved seizures of ships and cargos in the Atlantic, as well as captive taking and enslavement in the Mediterranean. These brief examples of 'ravages' and 'depredations' from early modern France demonstrate that raiding constituted an organized, sustained, and targeted form of warfare, rather than a haphazard series of robberies by marauding soldiers and sailors. Early modern French raids on land and at sea hint at much broader patterns of raiding warfare throughout the early modern world.

Catholic and Huguenot militants conducted pervasive *borderlands raiding* across confessional boundaries in southern France during the religious wars,

but raiding was also pervasive in other borderlands. Religious reform movements produced confessional boundaries and borderlands in a number of regions of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But confessional conflict was hardly confined to Christian regions, since confessional borderlands also existed within other religious communities. Raiding occurred along the Sunni–Shia divide within the Muslim world, which was reinforced by Ottoman–Safavid rivalry in this period.⁵⁷ Incessant raiding also occurred along the interreligious borderlands, such as the Habsburg–Ottoman military frontier in Hungary, which attracted Catholic and Muslim raiding parties. Early modern borderlands raiding is often associated with the Iroquois raiding in the Great Lakes region, eloquently portrayed in Richard White’s *The Middle Ground*.⁵⁸ Borderlands raiding took on numerous forms in frontier regions and borderlands around the world, usually involving captive taking, enslavement, and ransoming. Notable examples of early modern borderlands raiding include Iroquois ‘mourning war’, English colonial militia operations in North America, Portuguese *bandeirantes* forays in Brazil, Cossack cavalry marauding, Balkans irregular warfare, and Arakanese slave raiding. James C. Scott’s landmark *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* provides a model for examining stateless societies in these borderlands regions.⁵⁹ By focusing on non-state historical actors, early modern studies can reveal the raiding activities of peasants and herders operating in localized pillage economies. Early modern French evidence of borderlands raiding reminds us that religious and confessional borderlands should be considered in comparison with colonial and imperial borderlands.

Early modern *economic devastation* involved pillaging and foraging by regular military units, small war conducted by fortress garrisons, and systematic contributions levied by field armies.⁶⁰ French raiding parties and field armies conducted localized economic devastation throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, suggesting broader patterns of raiding during the European Wars of Religion (1560s–1640s). Military elites, mercenaries, and soldiers frequently organized plundering campaigns in war zones across Europe during this period. Some of these forms of economic devastation suggest comparisons with patterns of raiding warfare in other world regions. For example, the *zamīndārs* (rural nobles) in Mughal India similarly engaged in raiding warfare and plundering expeditions in seventeenth-century South Asia.⁶¹ In addition, recent research suggests that village disputes in Mughal India often prompted peasant militias to retaliate.⁶² Indeed, many peasant revolts across the early modern world may have been responding to raiding campaigns that inflicted economic devastation on the countryside and exacerbated climatic changes, subsistence crises, and famines.⁶³

French patterns of *maritime raiding* provide compelling evidence of the organization of commerce raiding, slave taking, and piracy defence by nobles and port

cities during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Better-known examples of early modern maritime raiding include the activities of English privateers, Maltese galleys, North African corsairs, Dutch East India Company warships, Chinese mariners, and Japanese 'sea lords' – all of whom could be accused of the crime of piracy. Privateering and piracy research has often focused on Caribbean buccaneers as freebooters, yet maritime raiding could be highly organized and expansive in this period. The Uskoks developed 'raiding economies' that altered commercial patterns in the Adriatic Sea in the sixteenth century.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, maritime raiding became pervasive in the Indian Ocean, South China Sea, East China Sea, and the Sea of Japan. Adam Clulow demonstrates that the Japanese port of 'Hirado was at the centre of a great wave of Sino-Japanese piracy' in the 1550s'.⁶⁵ Localized maritime raiding was becoming increasingly linked to global commercial patterns that incorporated long-distance shipping routes and colonial trading post networks. Ship captains of the Dutch West India Company raided Spanish shipping mercilessly in the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean in the early seventeenth century.⁶⁶

The various forms of raiding warfare in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were too complex, organized, multilayered, and deliberate to be described as 'primitive' or 'traditional'. Many of the historical actors involved in early modern raiding warfare utilized multiple forms of raiding violence – and sometimes during a single campaign. Rethinking early modern raiding war requires engaging with interdisciplinary methods and several distinct lines of research in order to locate the relationships between these diverse raiding activities. Military and paramilitary forces that conducted retaliatory raids on each other can be described as 'raiding clusters'.⁶⁷ Raiding war zones can be categorized as 'raiding economies', or 'pillage economies', in which plundering became endemic and embedded in local peddling and market exchanges.⁶⁸ For example, new commercial networks and armed competition transformed the Melaka Straits into a contested space of maritime raiding in the late sixteenth century.⁶⁹ Some early modern raiding practices might be effectively described using the insights from studies of small wars, insurgencies, civil wars, and revolutionary wars.⁷⁰

Current research on raiding warfare is beginning to consider the processes of early modern globalization in the context of sweeping changes in the scale, scope, and practice of raiding warfare in the early modern period. New states and empires utilized urban credit, artisan labour, and protoindustrial production to produce artillery, maintain bodyguards, recruit mercenaries, raise permanent forces, and mobilize resources. Maritime voyages in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans expanded the dimensions of commercial exchange, social interaction, colonial development, and global conflict. A global examination of the intersections of raiding war, culture, and society in the early modern period may be able to show how nobles, soldiers, militias, and privateers interacted with armies, navies, governments, and colonial administrations to reshape models of warfare worldwide.

Notes

- 1 Research for this chapter was made possible by the generous support of a sabbatical from Northern Illinois University, a Fulbright Research Fellowship, and a residential fellowship from the Institut d'Etudes Avancées de Paris. H. H. Turney-High, *Primitive War: Its Practice and Concepts* (Columbia, SC, 1949).
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Part II

Restraint and excess

6

Breaking the Pax Hispanica: collective violence in colonial Spanish America

Anthony McFarlane

Historians have long been familiar with the concept of a Pax Imperial, a long period of peace and stability following the violent imposition of imperial rule. It is usually attributed to the ability of a large, dominant state to eliminate war among smaller polities and to impose hegemony over subjugated peoples through a combination of coercion and legitimacy. Such a claim might, indeed, be made for Spanish rule in the Americas, where, after the conquests of the early sixteenth century, Spain appears to have inaugurated a 'Pax Hispanica' that endured, with only local interruptions, until the wars of independence in the early nineteenth century. Concepts of imperial peace of this kind are of course vulnerable to many criticisms, not least of which is the fact that, within any 'imperial peace', colonial rule generates multiple forms of violence.¹ The notion of a Pax Hispanica is nonetheless a useful starting point for discussion of collective violence in Spanish America, since it prompts us to enquire into the forms of coercion and violence associated with Spanish colonial rule, to consider how the American experience of violence resembled or differed from that of early modern Europe, and to trace changes in the character and incidence of collective violence over time.

The Pax Hispanica

The Pax Hispanica in Spanish America originated in the overseas extension of forms of violence that were common in early modern Europe, as Spaniards deployed European techniques of warfare to subjugate American peoples and polities whose resources they coveted. Indeed, in the Americas, armed violence – invariably organized by individuals who acted in the monarch's name, rather

than directly by the state – was crucial to the foundation of Spain’s empire. First, European weaponry and tactics, unknown to indigenous peoples, gave Spaniards a military edge that enabled them to assert control and establish permanent colonies of settlement, built on systems of coerced labour. Secondly, the economic resources won by Spaniards fed back into Europe, where they provided the means to build state power, finance war, and found a transatlantic empire. This was accomplished with surprising speed: Spaniards overturned the major indigenous states in little more than a generation, and after the ‘age of conquest’ (c.1500–50) the levels of violence generated by the Spanish rush for riches receded. Spaniards rapidly consolidated their control over the main areas of indigenous civilization and embarked on transforming their inhabitants into Christianized participants in a European-style money and wage economy. This inaugurated the American Pax Hispanica, the long period of Spanish rule (c.1550–1780) in which Spain’s colonies were generally free from significant outbreaks of internal rebellion or warfare.²

Explanations of the transition from violent conquest to peaceful domination must take account of several factors, including divisions between indigenous peoples and the compliance of native peasantries accustomed to tribute payment. However, one great transformation made the Pax Hispanica possible: the catastrophic collapse of indigenous populations. The large, peasant-based societies of Meso-America (especially modern Mexico and Guatemala) and South America (principally modern Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia), all suffered from vertiginous demographic decline during the sixteenth century, caused by successive epidemics of Old World diseases to which native Americans had no immunity. And, as native numbers fell, resistance to Spanish rule was weakened by the deconstruction of indigenous communities, the elimination of traditional leaders, and the willingness of native elites to accommodate to Spanish rule and accept Christianity.³

The accommodation between European invaders and native peoples was facilitated by the politico-legal system developed by the Spanish Habsburgs. Rather than allowing conquerors and early settlers to turn themselves into a quasi-feudal nobility, the crown sought to establish itself as ruler and arbiter of two civil spheres: the *república de españoles* and the *república de indios*. In the latter, the ‘indios’ were treated as natural subordinates, who had to pay tribute, adopt Christianity in place of their own beliefs and customs, and accept a subordinate position in the Spanish political and social order. However, ‘Indians’ were also given compensating rights: they held their own community lands, came under the authority of their own *caciques* (indigenous community leaders), and could appeal to the Spanish judicial system for protection and justice.

This royal policy of seeking to preserve indigenous societies within an ‘Indian commonwealth’, segregated from that of the ‘Spanish commonwealth’, was imperfectly realized. By the early seventeenth century, the indigenous people were increasingly integrated into the Spanish world of commerce and production,

while whites and mestizos encroached on indigenous communities. Nevertheless, the persistence of indigenous communities with their own resources and autonomous forms of government was a vital element of the Pax Hispanica. For, although Native Americans continued to endure coercive exploitation from expansive Hispanic settler societies, the implicit 'colonial pact', by which they accepted royal government and Christianity, provided a strong basis for social peace.

This stood in strong contrast to conditions in early modern Europe. For, at a time when popular unrest took on unprecedented proportions in Europe – in protests against landlords, seigneurial dues, and church tithes, further fomented by the effects of war and growing religious divisions⁴ – social and political frictions in Spanish America were restrained by both the effects of demographic disaster on indigenous societies and their leaders' acceptance of a 'colonial pact'. Moreover, the Habsburg monarchy not only secured loyalty among indigenous societies by providing some protection against unrestrained settler exploitation, it cultivated stability by other means too. By blocking the formation of a seigneurial nobility in America, the crown forestalled the development of a sociopolitical group that was a frequent cause of disruption and violence in European societies; by actively supporting the Christianization of Amerindian peoples, it further strengthened the foundations of social peace. For, while forced conversion was sometimes a source of conflict, the ability of Indian converts to adapt their own beliefs to a Christian framework, and clerical toleration of such syncretism, allowed the Catholic Church to impose an overarching religious unity, without the sectarian divisions of Reformation Europe. Indeed, the Church was central to the Pax Hispanica: the village church was a more characteristic feature of the landscape than forts or walled towns, and the parish priest a more effective agent of domination than the Spanish soldier or urban official.⁵

Violence within the peace

The Pax Hispanica was, however, always incomplete. For, while rare in Spain's colonial heartlands, war and rebellion persisted on frontiers where independent Amerindians resisted settler encroachment. Resistance was particularly robust among peoples who had not been previously conquered, were not accustomed to paying tributes to a ruling elite, and/or had a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle that made them less susceptible to attack and subjugation. Such peoples mounted powerful resistance in several regions (northern Mexico, on the Colombian and Venezuelan coasts, in the Amazon basin, the eastern Andes, and southern Chile), where new groupings emerged over the long term, in 'tribes' formed by peoples who changed their social organization in response to the European invasions, chiefly by becoming more organized for war.⁶

Violence on frontiers was never eradicated from Spanish America. It continued throughout the colonial period, particularly in the Mexican north and on

Amazonian and Patagonian frontiers, where indigenous groups rebelled against Spanish settlement and engaged in raiding wars. On the whole, however, frontier wars tended to become less frequent where the Spanish state encouraged strategies of accommodation with indigenous societies, often using missionaries as intermediaries, or accepted coexistence with independent peoples who were sufficiently strong to resist domination or assimilation. Across the eighteenth century, Bourbon ministers encouraged such strategies throughout Spanish America, particularly in areas where they feared that native peoples might form offensive alliances with foreigners, and their approach tended to curb violence on several important frontiers.⁷

If the emergence of a 'colonial pact' was one crucial element of the *Pax Hispanica*, the impermeability of Spain's colonial heartlands to war with foreign powers was another. The competition among dynastic states that was such a potent cause of war in Europe had some repercussions in the Americas, especially when the Dutch and other Europeans sought to capture Spanish-American trade and follow Spain's colonizing example. However, because they generally moved into regions where Spanish settlement was thin or non-existent, their intrusions did not necessarily lead to war with Spain's American subjects. Indeed, although foreign colonies were sometimes used as platforms for assaults on Spanish-American territories, French and English settlers were generally more likely to go to war with indigenous peoples than with Spanish colonials. Even in the eighteenth century, when war between European powers increasingly spread across the Atlantic, Spanish America was far less exposed to the destructive effects of war than the British and French colonies in North America and the Caribbean. Concentrated mainly in the continental interiors of North and South America, most of Spanish America's peoples were safely insulated from the effects of external attack, thanks to the protections of geography and the inability of foreign enemies to penetrate inland.

What of violence within Hispanic colonial societies, away from its frontier peripheries? Our knowledge of the forms of intra-community and interpersonal violence is sparse, but sufficient to suggest that it was endemic in peasant communities, where local authorities commonly used physical punishment and where disputes between individuals and within families often involved force.⁸ It was also common in urban communities, especially among the poor in large cities, which had high rates of mendicity and vagabondage. Violence against women was widespread too, given the tendency to regard domestic violence as normal and for only rare cases to face legal prosecution.⁹ Given the weakness of the state and the absence of effective policing, Spanish-American societies were no doubt violent places, though no more so than their European contemporaries. In fact, Spanish-Americans were less exposed to some of the kinds of violence prevalent in early modern European societies, where conflict among aristocracies, deep religious divisions, and exposure to rapid social change generated greater social frictions.

With regard to collective violence, most of our evidence comes from historical writing in two areas. One, not surprisingly, is the history of slavery, for violence was

intrinsic to slave trading and slave societies.¹⁰ Such violence varied, however, with the scale and character of slave regimes. It was most intense in the large-scale plantations of the Caribbean, where slaves were subject to paramilitary discipline and constant intimidation, and occasionally goaded into violent retaliation. In Spanish America, slavery was on a smaller scale: these were 'societies with slavery' rather than 'slave societies', with slaves dispersed as domestics and artisans in cities and in relatively small concentrations in agriculture and mining. Given these conditions, Spanish-American slavery tended to be less overtly violent than the slave regimes of the Caribbean export monocultures, with their much larger and more volatile slave populations. And, where slaves resisted, they rarely joined in violent insurrections. They rebelled and ran away and sometimes established maroon communities in frontier areas; but they also turned to the king's courts and, in matters of ill-treatment and manumission, frequently appealed to the law against their owners.¹¹

Another, much larger context for collective violence was found among the indigenous peasantries and *castas* (people of mixed ethnic origins), who formed the majority populations in most Spanish colonies. Where there were large indigenous peasantries, as in Mexico and Peru, their communities were subject to a predatory triad of *caciques*, landowners, and government officials, who competed for access to their resources, backed by the use or threat of physical force. Villagers defended themselves against abuses in ways comparable to the rural communities of early modern Europe (and other parts of the world), using legal and extralegal means to defend the local 'moral economy'. Such peasant protests typically consisted of small-scale, highly localized riots or revolts which did not challenge government or seek social change, and inflicted limited damage to persons or property.¹² They rarely developed into regional rebellions comparable to those of European regions, mainly because social and political conditions were better. Spanish America did not experience rapid population growth, and agricultural commercialization on the scale of early modern Europe and its peasantries consequently suffered fewer of the stresses found in European societies; Spanish America had no great territorial nobilities to lead rebellion against the king, and its urban patriciates had little cause to disturb a political and social order where they dominated and manipulated crown policy in their own interests. Spanish-American societies were, moreover, largely untouched by the depredations of war and unaffected by the deep religious divisions introduced by the Protestant Reformation in Europe, where competing communities of belief justified violence as a religious duty.¹³

Late eighteenth-century challenges

The Pax Hispanica became more brittle during the eighteenth century, when population growth placed more pressure on village lands. Incidents of village riot and rebellion seem to have multiplied, particularly among the indigenous communities of Mexico and Peru from the 1760s to the 1780s.¹⁴ Such protest generally remained

within the familiar pattern of local riots of the 'moral economy' kind, but in some regions large-scale rebellions challenged the ruling authorities on a broader front. The rebellion of the city of Quito (1765) and the Comunero rebellion in New Granada (1781) were reactions against moves to impose higher taxes and curb local autonomy – in line with Bourbon centralization – and both blended patrician and popular grievances. The rebellion of Tupac Amaru in Peru (1780–82) was also triggered by Bourbon fiscal and administrative reforms, but merged several strands of regional revolt into a great rebellion which spread over a large area of the southern Andes (in modern Peru and Bolivia).

Did these late colonial rebellions challenge the colonial system in an upsurge of collective violence? Not necessarily. Neither the Quito nor the Comunero rebellions involved significant casualties or damage, and both demobilized peacefully. This restraint is best explained in terms of the rebels' limited goals, leadership, and social composition. Their avowed aim was to restore the political and fiscal status quo and their rebellions were conceived within the conceptual framework of traditional Hispanic political culture. Creole leaders used rebellion to defend their political interests against Bourbon reform of the 'unwritten constitution' that allowed them to shape crown policies. Peasant and artisan participants understood their rebellions as defence of a 'moral economy', where targeted violence was permissible in pursuit of legitimate grievances and where escalation was curbed by local patriciates through social networks. The rebels were, moreover, mostly whites and mestizos who accepted Spanish hegemony, rather than imagining an alternative order. Government violence to curtail rebellion was also very restrained, partly for political reasons (Spanish officials sought to conciliate creoles) and partly for practical considerations (military weakness forced officials to negotiate peaceful solutions).¹⁵

A larger and more violent threat to the stability of the Pax Hispanica emerged in regions where anti-Spanish feelings were aggravated by ethnic and cultural enmities and where Indian leaders offered alternatives to the Spanish system. The rebellion launched by Tupac Amaru in 1780 was the outstanding moment of indigenous anti-colonial resistance in late colonial Spanish America, for, as it developed, it not only ruptured the Pax Hispanica throughout the Southern Andes but also aimed to overturn the existing structures of Spanish rule. Tupac Amaru (an acculturated, mixed-race cacique who claimed direct descent from Inca kings) was at the heart of the insurrection, as both an actual and symbolic leader, but the rebellion had several distinctive regional strands, involving indigenous communities in different socio-economic and cultural environments. One, led by Tupac Amaru himself, was of Quechua-speaking peoples in the region of Cuzco, the historic centre of the Inca state; the second, led by Tupac Katari, involved Aymara-speaking communities around La Paz; the third, led by Tomás Katari, was among Aymaras around Chayanta.¹⁶

These rebellions vividly exposed the potential for widespread violence in societies where native peoples were conscious of ethnic identities and had a tradition

of asserting community rights against intruders. Tupac Amaru initially aimed to impose his authority by making alliances with creoles and mestizos in Cuzco and capturing the existing system of government; when this failed, he emphasized his right to kingship, invoked myths of the Inca past, and encouraged his followers to violence aimed specifically against Spaniards and related enemies.¹⁷ The upsurge in violence was particularly marked in the rebellion led by Tupac Katari, who drew on Tupac Amaru's symbolic authority but went much further. He and his followers explicitly aimed at the extermination of 'Spaniards' (anyone deemed Spanish by language, dress, and custom); they justified killing on the grounds that Spaniards were impure Christians or heretics; and they used methods of violence (ritual beheading, drinking of victims' blood, mutilation of bodies) that departed from European norms of war.

These extremes of violence reflected deep cultural divides. Like the peoples of the Cuzco region, the Aymaras had a long history of cultural resistance to Hispanic domination and their rebellion reflected an ongoing struggle to defend their local communities against Spanish and mestizo encroachments on their resources and systems of leadership. They were, however, more inclined to violence against whites and mestizos for social and cultural reasons. As their communities were often isolated from Hispanic society and culture, they preserved more of their own cultural norms, including rules which justified unrestrained violence in war. This cultural separation made it easier to regard whites and mestizos as aliens rather than neighbours, and, together with different rules for war, led peasant insurgents to demonize and exterminate those they regarded as 'Spaniards'. Nevertheless, despite its apparent ferocity and unusual features, such violence was not shaped solely by Aymara culture; it was also retaliatory, imitating Spanish use of murder, massacre, torture, and public execution to instil fear among the enemy.¹⁸ Indeed, the rebellions all showed the degree to which indigenous communities had absorbed Christian religious beliefs and European ideas of governance and aimed to turn Spanish institutions to their own advantage, rather than merely tearing them down.

If the Spanish-American rebellions of the early 1780s suggests that the Pax Hispanica was becoming more fragile, they did not develop into secessionist civil wars – unlike the concurrent American Revolution (1776–82) – nor did they inflict lasting damage on the monarchy. However, although restored to equilibrium after the great rebellions of the early 1780s, the Pax Hispanica was increasingly threatened by the repercussions of 'globalized' European war, especially after the Seven Years' War, when Spain suffered the humiliating loss of Havana to British attack in 1762. To cope with the threat, ministers tried to reinforce American defences by reforms designed to enlarge and improve Spanish-American defences.¹⁹ These were, however, more impressive on paper than in practice. American defences were manned by ill-trained, inexperienced regular troops, supported by a system of militias that was rarely activated and had no culture of arms comparable to those

found in early modern European societies. When British military forces invaded Buenos Aires in 1806–07, they were ejected, not by the regular army or disciplined militias under government orders, but by forces spontaneously organized by urban corporations.²⁰ Here, then, was a situation where the Pax Hispanica, however stable internally, was highly vulnerable to external shocks emanating from European interpower rivalry.

The disintegration of the Pax Hispanica and the propagation of collective violence

The situation in which Spain's American subjects were mostly unaffected by war began to change around the turn of the century, as Spain was drawn into the convulsions caused by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. At first, American loyalty seemed strong. There were few signs that the empire faced any serious internal threat; indeed, British-backed attempts to provoke uprisings in Venezuela and Buenos Aires in 1806–07 failed to attract local support. International conflict was, nonetheless, to overturn the Pax Hispanica. In 1808, Napoleon's invasion of Spain and usurpation of the Spanish throne caused massive upheaval on both sides of the Atlantic, in a series of political and military shocks that generated violent conflict throughout Spain's realms.

In Spain itself, the shock was felt immediately, as Spaniards rallied to the deposed King Fernando VII, established juntas (regional provisional governments which claimed sovereignty in the king's absence), and mobilized troops against the French occupation. Repercussions soon registered in Spanish America too, as colonial elites turned towards self-government to escape from the collapsing Spanish state, first in 1809, then much more widely in 1810, when the demand that royal officials transfer their power to juntas became widespread. Royal governments were pushed aside throughout much of South America (in New Granada, Venezuela, Chile, and Río de la Plata, but not Peru) and replaced by juntas which proclaimed their autonomy. In Mexico, political pressure to establish a junta in Mexico City failed, but then shifted to the provinces, where creoles incited popular insurrection to secure their goal.

Throughout Spanish America, the widespread rejection of Spain's authority in 1810 was the result of imperial crisis rather than its cause, and at first the Pax Hispanica seemed set to survive the convulsion at the monarchy's centre.²¹ In most South American cities, members of the social and political elites used the ancient institution of the *cabildo* (town council) as a vehicle for taking power from royal officials, and they generally achieved this in 'velvet revolutions', where force played little part. Their juntas did not immediately declare secession from Spanish rule; many creoles hoped for a peaceful realignment, in which they would exercise greater power while retaining connections to Spain. Spanish governments, too, hoped to preserve peace in the colonies, and when the Cádiz Cortes convened in

late 1810, it sought to win creole loyalty by promising representation for Americans in the elected parliament of a constitutional monarchy.

This situation contrasts sharply with the circumstances of British American rebellion in 1776. When North American rebels challenged Britain, they declared independence, founded a unified government, and declared themselves a sovereign power with a right to make foreign alliances against Britain; they also immediately set about creating an army and navy to fight the British on land and sea. The Spanish-American juntas were more tentative. They claimed sovereignty in 1810, but were not openly or unequivocally committed to independence and had no reasons to see war as the inevitable outcome of their break with Spain.²² The creole elites might have harboured enmity towards European Spaniards and dislike of the Bourbon monarchy, but many were reluctant to enter on a path to civil war, given they saw themselves as belonging to a shared Hispanic political and religious culture in which reconciliation was both desirable and possible. Indeed, the Spanish-American elites had grown accustomed to negotiation with the royal authorities during the long *Pax Hispanica*, and this tradition encouraged belief in a negotiated resolution of political differences. Moreover, they had little to fear from Spain's military power in 1810. Unlike the Anglo-American rebels of 1776, who had confronted Europe's leading naval power, capable of shipping large field armies across the Atlantic, imposing blockades and moving troops between theatres of war, the Spanish-American rebels of 1810 faced a metropolitan power enfeebled by international and internal war, with an inadequate navy and defeated armies.

Spain's military weakness did not, however, preclude colonial war. For, although Spain lacked the means to launch military expeditions across the Atlantic, warfare broke out in regions where the defenders and opponents of Spanish rule both had the means to fight each other. In both Mexico and Peru, the viceroys retained control of regular forces and militias and used them as a base for building counter-revolutionary armies. In other places – Venezuela, Upper Peru, the River Plate, and southern New Granada – small regular forces divided between opposing sides, and both royalists and juntas sought to supplement them by wider recruitment among citizens.²³

In the opening stages of the internal wars that began in 1810–11, the contenders adopted conventional military methods and their violence was restrained. The first wars in Venezuela and New Granada were driven mainly by the juntas of leading cities (Caracas, Bogotá, Cartagena), which mobilized forces to impose their authority on the regions where they claimed to inherit sovereignty from the old regime. Similarly, the junta of Buenos Aires sought to extend its authority over the regions of the former viceroyalty of Río de la Plata, by internal military operations aimed at winning provincial support for the repudiation of Spanish rule. Commitment to violence tended to be cautious in these early stages, when the contestants were clashing with their own kind. The juntas' early military campaigns were essentially 'civic wars', based on forces raised in rival cities, rather than wars of secession aimed

directly against the metropolitan power. These were wars where force was deployed to project power and win support, rather than to destroy the enemy.²⁴

Urban collective violence was rare, as it had been under the *Pax Hispanica*. In some cities the 'mob' played a part in removing royal authorities when the advocates of *juntas* brought crowds onto the streets. Crowd activities of this kind were, however, usually choreographed by leading citizens who sought to pressure royal officials into resigning, while also showing that they acted in the name of the 'people'. This never involved the kind of violence associated with urban crowds during the French Revolution, where leaders used terror as an instrument for political mobilization and radicalization. In fact, if violence affected cities, it was more likely to result from attacks from outside the urban precinct than from uprisings within it.²⁵

Restraints on collective violence weakened, however, where popular rebellion occurred in rural areas, among Indian and mixed-race peasants for whom political conflicts provided opportunities to express their own grievances and defend their own interests. The outstanding example of popular violence springing from the crisis of Spanish government was the Hidalgo rebellion in Mexico (1810–11), which erupted in the Bajío, a region afflicted by both short- and long-term economic problems. Hidalgo and his creole co-conspirators planned to raise provincial militias against the viceroy's government in Mexico City, but, on failing to win sufficient support, sought to build a popular 'army' by raising rural insurrection. Hidalgo marshalled tens of thousands of followers (perhaps as many as 60,000) for an assault on the capital, but when it failed, his forces were crushed by a royalist army. Violent insurrection was not erased, however, for it retained a strong following among Indian villagers, and under other leaders turned into a decentralized rural insurgency that continued to challenge the authorities for another decade.

The insurgency revealed the fragility of the *Pax Hispanica* in Mexico in much the same way that Tupac Amaru's rebellion had in Peru, decades earlier. At its heart lay peasant rebellion, driven by Indian villagers intent on defending the economic and cultural integrity of their local communities and who behaved in ways familiar from traditional local riots and revolts.²⁶ Nonetheless, like the Andean rebellion, the Mexican insurgency differed significantly from the protests of the past. In size and geographical reach, it was on a new order of magnitude; its social impact was also unprecedented, as both insurgents and royalists drew on support that cut vertically through the social hierarchy. Mexico's insurgency was, moreover, a war which blended conventional and guerrilla warfare, particularly under Morelos, who managed to build an army and an alternative government and, albeit briefly, to create a revolutionary situation.²⁷

If internal war was new to Mexico, so too was the character of the violence that it propagated. As rebellion spread through the countryside, peasant rebels not only deposed local authorities and attacked property, but also gave vent to a violent Hispanophobia, expressed in assaults, murders, and at times massacres of whites,

especially the hated *gachupines* (European Spaniards). This Hispanophobia was fuelled partly by economic grievances against landowners and merchants, but also drew on a deep sense of cultural difference. Like the Tupac Amaru rebels, Mexican peasant insurgents perceived Spaniards as different beings, who were true to neither king nor religion and were therefore justly attacked and slaughtered.²⁸ This created a climate of fear, fuelled by government propaganda that portrayed the rebels as a horde of ignorant and brutal 'indios' who threatened to overturn the social order.²⁹ Thus the lines were drawn for war between not only political opponents, but also between 'civilized' urban Mexico and the 'barbarous' indigenous countryside, a combination which made for a particularly violent counter-insurgency. And, of course, the very nature of rural insurgency and guerrilla war lowered inhibitions on violence. Insurgents and bandits raided towns, estates, and trade routes from bases in inaccessible terrain, attacking civilians as well as soldiers, and draining local economies of men and supplies. Royalist commanders retaliated by conducting campaigns of terror among civilian populations in order to isolate insurgents and starve them of supplies, while organizing campaigns, reminiscent of those used by French troops against Spanish guerrillas, to hunt them down with 'flying columns' of dragoons who gave and received no quarter.³⁰

The wars of the Mexican insurgency were deeply disruptive, socially and politically. For the first time in its history, the viceroyalty of New Spain was swept by forces that not only unleashed armed violence, but also disrupted economic life, cut communications, and turned cities into places of refuge. The spread and destructive potential of such violence was limited by the 'localocentric' character of village insurgency and the inability of creole leaders to create an effective army, but it was, nonetheless, very difficult to eradicate. Deeply rooted in some areas, the rural insurgency persisted under leaders for whom it became a way of life, along with a government counter-insurgency which also became embedded. While the insurgents continued to raid and plunder, soldiers in royal armies, who were often unpaid and poorly supplied, lived off the towns where they were stationed. Indeed, in an increasingly militarized society, royalist officers used their power for personal profit, turning royal government in the provinces into corrupt military satrapies, where the law of force carried greater weight than the force of law.³¹

In the Spanish viceroyalties of New Granada, Río de la Plata, Peru, and their adjoining territories, war and its accompanying violence had their own local dynamics and characteristics, some resembling, some differing from, those of Mexico. An obvious difference was that there were no rural insurrections comparable to Mexico's Hidalgo revolt. Instead, political conflicts were initially played out among the social elites, who aimed to avoid disturbance to the social hierarchies they dominated. Nevertheless, where royalist and autonomous governments took up arms against each other, violence assumed an increasingly central role in political life and tended to escalate as each side promoted militarization (i.e. the mobilization of men for war) as the only way to defend or advance their position.³²

Militarization

The first steps towards militarization took place when both royalist and independent governments sought to strengthen their military capacity, drawing on both existing and unused resources. Some had a core of professional soldiers, inherited from colonial governments, but the opposing forces consisted mainly of men new to military service. And, while political leaders might prefer recruits from the white population, military necessity encouraged them to mobilize among indigenous communities and free people of colour. When Buenos Aires' armies entered Upper Peru, for example, they not only sought to rally whites and mestizos to their cause; their commanders also sought to persuade indigenous communities to reject royalist rule, both by ceasing to provide the royal government with resources and by joining in the fight against it.³³ Elsewhere, the mobilization and militarisation of the populace followed other ethnic contours. Creole leaders in Caracas and Cartagena, for example, engaged *pardos* and free blacks against royalism, while their royalist opponents did much the same, exploiting antagonisms against the rich creoles where they could, even in slave communities.³⁴

These processes not only underpinned the establishment of new armies controlled by contending governments, but also stimulated the development of informal forces under local leaders with their own ambitions. An early example of this phenomenon is found in Venezuela, where embattled Spanish officials sought support across a spectrum of social and ethnic groups and harnessed it to counter-revolutionary ends. On the coast, they recruited among poor white farmers, especially Canary Island immigrants who resented rich creoles; they also found allies among free coloureds and slaves who believed they would gain more from loyalty to the king than allegiance to the creoles of Caracas. In the interior, royalists gathered support in the llanos, the tropical plains where mixed-race *llaneros* on cattle-ranching frontiers joined in a royalist insurgency organized by José Tomás Boves, and fought republican armies with devastating effect. Neighbouring New Granada had enclaves of popular royalism, too, notably in the south, where Spanish commanders created forces from slaves and *castas* on the frontiers of Popayán, and where indigenous peasant communities took the city of Pasto in the name of the crown. Though smaller and less militarily capable than the *llaneros* of Venezuela, the rebels who chose loyalism as a means of defending the identities and interests of their communities played a key role in keeping royalism alive in these regions.

Informal forces were equally important to Spain's enemies. While some groups of *llaneros*, led by Boves, fought under royalist banners in Venezuela, others, under José Antonio Paéz, played a crucial part in turning the war against Spain. In the south of the continent, where Buenos Aires engaged in a long war against royalist Peru, frontier areas were also potent incubators of armed mobilization and irregular warfare.³⁵ Cattle frontiers – where the presence of government, the rule of law, and

the customs of Hispanic urban society were at their weakest – were places that supplied ready recruits for armed conflict. In the Banda Oriental (modern Uruguay) and on the Argentine plains, the communities of cattle drovers and pastoralists known as *gauchos* were soon drawn into Buenos Aires' wars. Successive governments in Buenos Aires sought to militarize these frontier communities in order to defend their borders against Portuguese armies from Brazil and Spanish armies from Peru, and found willing allies. The recruitment of such forces was a double-edged sword, however, for, under leaders like José Artigas and Martín Güemes, they moved from fighting against royalist Spain to fighting for local causes, including independence from government in Buenos Aires.³⁶

Slaves were another subordinate group for whom war provided unprecedented opportunities to fight for themselves, especially in areas where pressures from political conflicts destabilized existing structures of power and property.³⁷ In coastal Venezuela, for example, slaves from cacao plantations responded to royalist commanders who encouraged them to rebel against their masters; on Colombia's Pacific coast, slaves fought to improve their condition by fighting with royalist leaders to secure protections from royal law; in the Banda Oriental and the Venezuelan llanos, on the other hand, slaves were also found among forces fighting against Spain. Wherever slaves fought to change their position in society, they tended to act in consort with others. Those who sided with royalism in New Granada's southern provinces sought connections with royal authorities, offering their allegiance in the expectation that loyalty to the crown would be rewarded by the concession of a legal status comparable to that of Indian communities.³⁸ Others were pressed into army service by coercion or recruited by promises of freedom: such, for example, were those who formed units of infantrymen in the 'armies of liberation' led by Bolívar and San Martín in their campaigns to end Spanish rule throughout South America.

Elsewhere, slaves were drawn into wars by local leaders and joined informal forces alongside Native Americans and *castas*. Like the maroons, they aimed at escaping from slavery rather than overturning the institution. Nonetheless, where news of the Haitian revolution circulated, radical ideas followed. In Venezuela, for example, it was said that the mulatto leader Manuel Piar intended to use his guerrilla force of blacks and free coloureds to fight for their own purposes, rather than those of the whites, and perhaps even to create an anti-slavery republic on the Haitian model. Slave rebellion of the Haitian kind was, however, hampered by the very different conditions of continental Spanish America. There were no Spanish-American equivalents to the French colony, with its very large population of plantation slaves, its many first-generation Africans (including some with military skills and experience of war in Africa), and its consequent capacity to fuel large-scale rebellion, to produce autonomous forces of slaves and free people of colour, and to find allies among neighbouring foreign powers looking for advantage over France.³⁹ The contribution made by slaves to Spanish America's wars differed considerably from that made by slaves in Haiti's revolution. Consonant with

the character of Hispanic slavery, it was more localized, less violent, less physically destructive, and, though it eroded the foundations of slavery, did not bring it to a sudden end.

Where leaders on both sides were able to recruit among the 'people', from whites and 'free coloureds' to 'Indians' and slaves, they enlarged the theatres of war and unlocked reserves of violence which had been contained under the Pax Hispanica. The removal of restraints stemmed in part from the character of conflict as civil war, where contestants regarded their opponents as traitors who should be wiped out, rather than as combatants with rights under the rules of war.⁴⁰ And, although Spanish America lacked conflicting national or religious identities, violence was often aggravated by ethnic antagonisms. Spaniards routinely regarded peasant rebels as unruly, irrational people, subject to murderous passions, especially if they were Native American. On the other hand, European Spaniards were sometimes singled out for particularly violent treatment, because of their image as social parasites and bad Christians. In Venezuela, European Spaniards were also scapegoated as enemies of the people for political reasons, when Bolívar, seeking to define conflict in terms of American liberation from Spanish tyranny, called for their extermination in a 'war to the death'.

This lethal polarization was particularly noticeable where political contest was strongest and where popular insurgencies and guerrilla wars were led by local men over whom governments exerted little control. Perhaps the most arresting example was that of the royalist *llaneros* in Venezuela, who acquired a singular reputation for ferocity. Boves and his followers fought without quarter, preyed on civilians, and established such a reputation for rapine that thousands fled from their path. Their terrifying image owed something to the personality of their leader, for Boves was a Spaniard driven by hatred for creoles, eager to present himself as the scourge of 'traitors', and ready to inflict extreme punishment on those he regarded as the king's enemies. The violence attributed to Boves's warriors was possibly exaggerated by contemporary commentators, due to the racial composition of his forces and their way of life. In fact, plunder was the usual guerrilla tactic of living off the land, and *llanero* violence was shaped by life on frontiers where the writ of government ran thin.⁴¹ There was an insurrection of poor, mixed-race frontier communities against the creole governments of coastal cities, and they brought the behaviour of semi-nomadic cattle drovers to the practice of war. Here, indeed, in Venezuela, we see the first stirrings of a kind of irregular warfare that was also found among the *gauchos* of the plains of the Río de la Plata. Conducted by *llaneros* and *gauchos* under local leaders, it drew on the experience of communities shaped by life on the fringes of the Pax Hispanica, with tactics and weapons familiar from raiding wars against independent Amerindians and from herding semi-feral livestock. These were rural communities fighting to defend their way of life against outsiders, with little regard for European ways of war or concepts of the nation.

The violence that spread with wars for territory and militarization of the populace was to some extent curbed by the customs of the Pax Hispanica. Although popular pieties might sometimes justify murder and massacres, religious differences neither motivated conflict nor aggravated violence. On the contrary, confessional conflict was absent and contending sides generally showed respect for religion and deference towards the Church. Nor was violence exacerbated by radical fervour of the kind found in revolutionary France: Spanish-Americans did not see their revolutions as the birth of a new man and a new society, and were not converted into cannon fodder for 'total war' of the kind associated with the French Revolutionary wars.⁴² On the contrary, citizens were often unwilling recruits with a strong inclination to desert when removed from their home localities. These characteristics helped to check the violence of war, as armies were never long in the field, fought brief battles, and tended to disperse rapidly when faced with defeat. Warfare could be more intense and protracted in fights over home territory, but the damage tended to remain within the local arena, rather than spreading over a larger scale.

Legacy

When Fernando VII was restored to the Spanish throne in 1814, and the insurgents retreated on many fronts, royalists hoped to recover the colonial peace. The Pax Hispanica was irretrievable, however, now that war had been socially embedded in several regions and Spain had revealed its military vulnerabilities. Where forced to retreat, insurgents in Mexico, Venezuela, New Granada, and Upper Peru simply shifted their ground, harassing their enemies from remote areas rather than confronting them in pitched battles. Such warfare gave increasing importance to the local *caudillo*, the politico-military leader who was instrumental in mobilizing local and regional support, and such leaders played key roles in keeping hopes for independence alive. Indeed, from the ranks of the *caudillos* came leaders who, intent on creating new states, built armies geared to fighting on European lines.⁴³

In South America, this opened a new phase of war in which politico-military leaders sought to create regular armies based on European models, and declared war against Spain as a foreign power. San Martín's creation of his 'Army of the Andes' and invasion of Chile in 1817 opened this era, a feat that was followed, in 1818–19, by Bolívar's offensive against Spanish forces in Venezuela and New Granada. Their expansion into Spanish-held territories cleared the way for the conclusive stage of the independence wars, in which the armies established by San Martín and Bolívar converged on royalist Peru. Now, with better-organized armies at their disposal, they conducted conventional wars and did battle with Spanish forces in the field. This was a crucial development. They not only defeated Spain's armies, but did so with armies led by men for whom war was a political career, and whose armies were seedbeds for the formation of new states.⁴⁴

However, if war was the crucible for forging independent states, the collective violence caused by prolonged internal wars left a legacy that complicated the transition to statehood. By the time that Bolívar defeated the last royalist armies of Peru and Upper Peru in 1824–25, the Pax Hispanica was already shattered by internal warfare, with multiple and enduring effects. It is difficult to measure the damage done by war, in terms of mortality and damage to economic and social life. But one thing is clear: the rebellions and wars triggered by competing claims for sovereignty had produced an unprecedented rise in collective violence in many regions of Spanish America, mobilized sectors of the population previously marginalized from power, sometimes on a large scale, and destroyed the bonds on which the Pax Hispanica had been based.⁴⁵ Violence had become an indispensable instrument of politics, and, after the overthrow of Spanish rule, continued to be used by the elites, old and new, to assert their ambitions and defend their positions.⁴⁶ For at least a generation, military chiefs from the wars of independence became prominent political figures, establishing new states, defining their geographical boundaries, and shaping their constitutions. However, unlike the wars of early modern Europe, the Spanish-American wars of independence did not produce ‘military revolutions’, nor their political corollaries. They had, instead, tended to fragment the political order, dissipate authority, and disperse the control of violence away from the centre.⁴⁷ And, now that the Pax Hispanica was finally erased amid intense competition for power, collective violence became a much more frequent feature of political life.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, P. Dwyer and A. Nettelbeck, ‘“Savage Wars of Peace”: Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World’, in P. Dwyer and A. Nettelbeck (eds), *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World* (Cham, Switzerland, 2018).
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- 4 On such collective violence in Europe, see M. Greengrass, *Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517–1648* (London, 2015), pp. 90–100, 394–6. For global comparisons, see

- B. Sandberg, *War and Conflict in the Early Modern World, 1500–1700* (Cambridge, 2016).
- 5 S. B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Toleration and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven, CT, 2008), pp. 150–76; A. C. van Oss, *Catholic Colonialism: A Parish History of Guatemala, 1524–1821* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 179–88.
 - 6 R. B. Ferguson and N. L. Whitehead (eds), *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare* (Santa Fe, NM, 2000), pp. 1–30; D. J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven, CT, 2005), pp. 52–90.
 - 7 Weber, *Bárbaros*, pp. 178–220.
 - 8 See, for examples: C. M. MacLachlan, *Criminal Justice in Eighteenth Century Mexico* (Berkeley, CA, 1974), pp. 37–52; W. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford, 1979), pp. 3–112; W. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 207–36; S. Thomson, *We Alone Will Rule: Native Andean Politics in the Age of Insurgency* (Madison, WI, 2002), pp. 85–104.
 - 9 On violence within the family: V. Uribe-Uran, *Fatal Love: Spousal Killers, Law and Punishment in the Late Colonial Spanish Atlantic* (Stanford, 2015). On violence towards women: N. A. Robins, *Of Love and Loathing: Married Life, Strife and Intimacy in the Colonial Andes, 1750–1825* (Lincoln, NE, 2015).
 - 10 J. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Modern World, 1400–1800* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 272–303.
 - 11 For an analysis of slave resistance in a region with some important concentrations of slavery, see A. McFarlane, ‘Cimarrones and Palenques: Runaways and Resistance in Colonial Colombia’, *Slavery and Abolition*, 6:3 (1985). For a wide-ranging, comparative analysis of resistance in the Euro-American empires, see A. Helg, *Plus jamais esclaves! De l’insoumission à la révolte, le grand récit d’une émancipation, 1500–1838* (Paris, 2016), chaps 2–4.
 - 12 See, for example: Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion*, pp. 113–51; A. McFarlane, ‘Civil Disorders and Popular Protests in Late Colonial New Granada’, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 64:1 (1984); S. O’Phelan Godoy, *Rebellions and Revolts in Eighteenth Century Peru and Upper Peru* (Cologne, 1985), chap. 3.
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 - 14 J. H. Coatsworth, ‘Patterns of Rural Rebellion in Latin America: Mexico in Comparative Perspective’, in Katz, *Riot, Rebellion and Revolution*.
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- 18 Thomson, *We Alone Will Rule*, chap. 6.
- 19 A. McFarlane, *War and Independence in Spanish America* (New York and London, 2014), pp. 16–22.
- 20 A. Rabinovich, ‘The Making of Warriors: The Militarization of the Río de la Plata, 1806–1807’, in R. Bessel, N. Guyatt, and J. Rendall (eds), *War, Empire and Slavery, 1770–1830* (Basingstoke, 2010).
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- 22 For broader comparisons between revolutions in the Americas, see L. D. Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850* (New Haven, CT, 1996); J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven, CT, 2006), chaps 11–12.
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- 24 C. Thibaud, *La república en armas: Los ejércitos bolivarianos en la guerra de independencia en Colombia y Venezuela* (Bogotá, 2003), pp. 75–6.
- 25 See, for example, the attacks of Hidalgo’s rebels in the Bajío towns, notably their sack of Guanajuato, where they massacred some 200 Spaniards: see H. Hamill, *The Hidalgo Revolt: Prelude to Mexican Independence* (Gainesville, FL, 1966). On attacks by both royalist and insurgents on towns in Upper Peru: M. L. Soux, *El complejo proceso hacia la independencia de Charcas, 1808–1826* (Lima, 2010).
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- 27 B. Hamnett, *Roots of Insurgency: Mexican Regions, 1750–1824* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 47–73.
- 28 E. Van Young, ‘Popular Religion and the Politics of Insurgency in Mexico’, in A. Ivereigh (ed.), *The Politics of Religion in an Age of Revival* (London, 2000).
- 29 Hamill, *Hidalgo Revolt*, p. 176.
- 30 C. I. Archer, ‘The Cutting Edge: The Historical Relationship between Insurgency, Counterinsurgency and Terrorism during Mexican Independence, 1810–1821’, in L. Howard (ed.), *Terrorism: Roots, Impact, Responses* (Westport, CT, 1992).
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- 41 G. Carrera Damas, *Boves: Aspectos socio-económicos de su acción histórica* (Caracas, 1968).
- 42 D. A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know it* (London and New York, 2007), chaps 4–5.
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- 44 Thibaud, *La república en armas*, pp. 394–408.
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7

Restraining/encouraging violence: commerce, diplomacy, and brigandage on the steppe routes between the Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania, and Russia, 1470s–1570s

Alexander Osipian

This chapter examines the large-scale non-state violence on the trade routes in the buffer zone between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania,¹ the Grand Duchy of Moscow,² the Ottoman Empire, and the Crimean Khanate. Though the rulers constantly declared their will to maintain the diplomatic contacts and protect the caravan trade between these states, execution of their orders was entrusted to those who actually committed the violent attacks – the Cossacks and the local dignitaries.

The violence on the steppe roads was not haphazard but well-coordinated. It was encouraged or, at least, tolerated by the local dignitaries who benefited from it and who provided the brigands with the necessary patronage. To avoid an open war with a powerful neighbouring state, these dignitaries sometimes detained and executed some perpetrators but never tackled the underlying causes of the brigandage (*qazaqliq*). Even the occasional imprisonment of the dignitaries themselves failed to stop brigandage since its preconditions remained in place: the frontiers were not fixed and guarded, the roads were not patrolled, the officials and servicemen were not paid or underpaid, and the rulers lacked tools to curb raiding and instead continued this hybrid war, simply shifting responsibility onto the so-called ‘nameless’ or ‘master-less men’.

Social bandits or governors’ henchmen? Two approaches to brigandage

The Zaporozhe and Don Cossacks are among the best-studied topics in Ukrainian and Russian historical writing. Nineteenth-century Romantic and populist historiography represented them respectively as brave defenders of the Christendom

against the Tatar-Ottoman menace and as communities of freedom-fighters who welcomed runaway serfs.³ Two discourses were further developed by Soviet Marxist historiography which emphasized the class struggle and stressed the leading role of the Cossacks in the great 'anti-feudal uprisings' and 'peasant wars' from the 1590s to 1770s.⁴

These romanticized Cossacks are close to Eric Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels* (1959) and *Bandits* (1969). Hobsbawm defined social bandits as peasant outlaws whom the lord and state regarded as criminals.⁵ Anton Blok criticized Hobsbawm's approach, pointing out that all outlaws require protection to operate as bandits. Blok argued that they were protected by local rulers with whom they shared the booty.⁶ The links of bandits to wider society, and particularly to central and local authorities, have been diligently examined in some case studies.⁷

The early Cossacks lacked many important features necessary to be identified with Hobsbawm's *social bandits*. In the early stage, between the 1470s and 1570s, they mainly appear in the sources when they attacked merchant caravans and ambassadorial trains. The contemporary sources interpret the very word 'Cossack' (*kazak* or *qazaq*) as 'outcast', 'freebooter', 'vagabond', or 'expellee'.⁸ Though the early Cossacks were outcasts from the Tatar Hordes, they included princes, noblemen, and ordinary nomads,⁹ not the runaway serfs as later in the seventeenth century.¹⁰ The Cossacks were hired by the states of East Central Europe for various tasks, but frequently brought their employers to the brink of war through their behaviour. By exploring their activity, this chapter examines in turn the scale of violence, the diplomatic discourses of sovereignty and (ir)responsibility over the steppe routes, management of violence, and formation of the networks assisting the brigandage.

The scale of violence

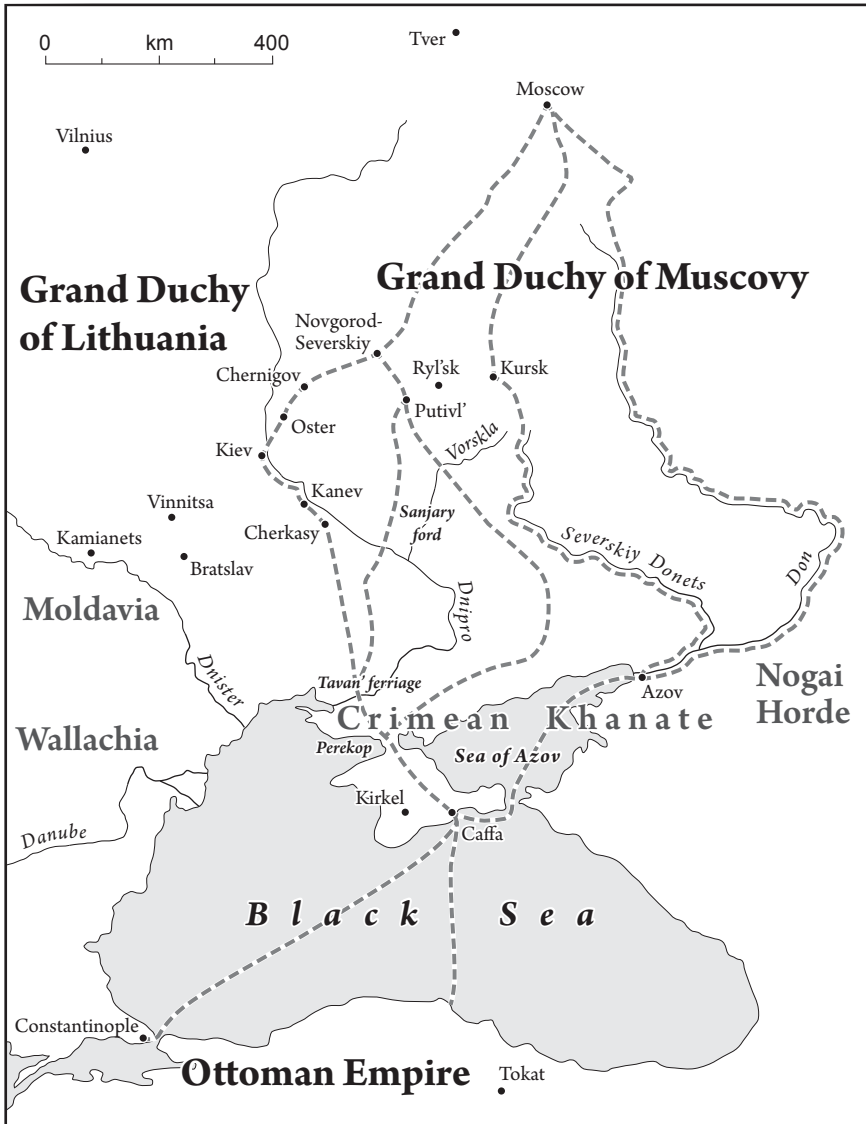
The Golden Horde's khans benefited from the long-distance trade and protected the merchants in their domains.¹¹ The disintegration of the Golden Horde in 1420–80 caused the rise of brigandage on the steppe.¹² The Ottoman conquest of the Genoese colonies in the south Crimea (Caffa, Soldaia, Chembalo) in 1475 changed the balance of power in the region.¹³ Mengli-Giray, the khan of Crimea, accepted Ottoman vassalage and with the sultan's blessing allied in 1480 with Muscovy against Lithuania, making annual incursions into Lithuanian domains until 1505. Lithuania, in turn, allied with the Great Horde against Muscovy and Crimea. In the next decades, the region's contested status opened it to the Cossacks of Muscovy, Lithuania, Crimea (Perekop), Azov, Astrakhan, and the Great Horde who attacked the caravans and ambassadorial trains. This complicated situation allowed each ruler to blame others for these assaults.

The Crimean khan shifted his loyalty after 1507 and henceforth the Tatar raids devastated the southern provinces of Muscovy.¹⁴ Raiding proved so destructive that Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy sent yearly gifts (*упоминки*) across the next two centuries to the Crimean khan for him to desist.¹⁵ On the other hand, the governors of Polish and Lithuanian frontier castles frequently raided the Ottoman settlements and Tatar encampments between the rivers Dnister and Dnipro.¹⁶ And the Cossacks were involved in these raids too.¹⁷

Sixteenth-century commercial, diplomatic, and military communication between Moscow and Crimea ran along several routes between the rivers Dnipro and Don.¹⁸ The westernmost led from Moscow via Chernigov, Oster, Kiev, Kanev, Cherkasy, the ferry of Tavan', the isthmus of Perekop, and finally to the main seaport of Caffa.¹⁹ A second route led from Moscow to its border town Putivl',²⁰ from where travellers crossed the Dnipro river at Kanev, Cherkasy, or another suitable place downstream, then once again at the ferry of Tavan' to reach Perekop. The third route went from Putivl' through the steppe on the left (east) bank of the Dnipro to Perekop. In these three cases the travellers crossed the areas under Lithuanian control. A fourth route led through the Muscovite border town of Kursk, then down the Severskiy Donets and Don rivers to the Ottoman city of Azak (Azov), and then by the Sea of Azov to Caffa. On the fifth easternmost route, travellers sailed down the Don to Azov. The same area was crossed by several routes (called *shlakh* or *sakma*) used by the Crimean Tatars for their incursions into lands to the south of Moscow. The most important, the *Muravsky shlakh*, had merged with the so-called 'great ambassadorial road' along the hilly watershed divide between the Dnipro and Severskiy Donets.²¹

The attacks on the caravans were committed in the forest-steppe and steppe zones between the Dnipro and Don, particularly between the Dnipro and Severskiy Donets – that is, in the areas of the present-day Ukrainian oblasts of Kharkiv, Poltava, and the eastern part of Dnipropetrovsk oblast. This area was a buffer zone between Lithuania, Muscovy, the Crimean Khanate, and the Great Horde, and had a dubious legal status.

The merchants only dared to travel through the steppes organized into big, well-armed parties or convoys (*caravans*). Michalon Lituanus,²² in his treaty written c.1550, estimated the size of caravans circulating between Caffa and Kiev as up to a thousand men each.²³ The caravan robbed in 1545 by the Cossacks of Kiev, Cherkasy, and Kanev certainly fits Michalon Lituanus's description.²⁴ That scandalous case was considered at the ducal court in Vilnius in the presence of the Crimean ambassador and twenty-seven merchants,²⁵ whose names were mentioned in the records.²⁶ Without question they were wealthy merchants, but the caravan also included less prosperous merchants ('with other our companions'),²⁷ factors, assistants, servants, wagon drivers, and a military escort. In March 1489, Ivan III, the Grand Duke of Muscovy, complained to the Polish king, Kazimierz IV, about a caravan of Russian merchants from Moscow, Tver', and Novgorod that



Map 7.1 Trade routes between Moscow and Caffa in the 1470s–1570s.

had been plundered on the Tavan' ferry. The charter names six main merchants 'with companions, many people, all together 120 men, besides their people'.²⁸ In total, there were 120 merchants in this caravan besides the assistants. An ambassadorial instruction names six merchants from Moscow who, 'with companions all together 45 men', were plundered on the Severskiy Donets on their way to Azov

in 1495, by local Tatars who killed twenty-two and injured twenty-three others.²⁹ Jan Chrnzowicz, the governor (*starosta, capitaneus*) of Kanev, mentioned 'a big caravan of about hundred wagons' in November 1551.³⁰ The Nogai embassy that arrived at Moscow in 1549 consisted of seventy members of the ambassadorial train accompanied by 200 merchants with 3,000 horses.³¹

The brigands were equally numerous. The Muscovite embassy of Prince Fedor Romodanovsky was attacked and robbed on the steppe in 1501 by the joint force of the Tatars of Azov, the Great Horde, and Turks of Azov, together numbering 140 men.³² Several Ottoman and Crimean caravans were attacked in 1545 by the Cossacks of Cherkasy, Kanev, Bratslav, Vinnitsa, and other Lithuanian border towns who together fielded 800 men on the steppe near Cherkasy.³³ The brigands were well organized. Their leaders (*golovy, starshie, atamany*) were recognized by the victims and frequently mentioned in complaints and diplomatic correspondence. In many cases, the freebooters were well informed about the approaching caravans and embassies and coordinated their actions to mount ambushes on several routes simultaneously.³⁴

To minimize risk, merchants frequently joined an ambassadorial train, thereby increasing the defensive force of a convoy and hoping to benefit from the diplomatic immunity and military escorts provided by the ambassador's master and host. However, this frequently proved counterproductive, because brigands specifically targeted ambassadorial trains more than the sole caravans because of the double booty of merchants' goods and diplomatic gifts. Eight Muscovite embassies were plundered in the area between the Dnipro and Don in just ten years, from 1493 to 1503.³⁵ The journey across the steppe became so dangerous that the Muscovite ambassador Ivan Oshcherin waited more than a year in 1503–04 in the border town Putiv' until the Crimean khan provided him with a military escort.³⁶

A sad fate befell the Russian merchants travelling from the Crimea in company with the Polish ambassador in 1488–89. The ferrymen at the Tavan' crossing over the Dnipro, on the border between the Tatar and Lithuanian domains, refused to take the merchants across the river. Abandoned on the wrong side, they were attacked by 'the people of Kievan governor Yuri Patsovizh' (Jerzy Pac) led by certain headmen – Bogdan, Golubets, and Vas'ko Zhila.³⁷ The merchants were beaten, some killed, others captured, and their merchandise stolen.

Though the governor did not take part in the assault, Ivan III demanded on 20 March 1489 that the Polish king, Kazimierz IV, investigate the case, punish offenders, and offer compensation for the damage and murder.³⁸ At that time, Lithuania and Muscovy were in a state of undeclared war (1487–94) and were making mutual military incursions into the borderlands. Nevertheless, Kazimierz IV at least replied to the Muscovite ambassador in 1490, but claimed that the investigation revealed that only the Turkish merchants with the caravan had been robbed, while the Muscovite subjects had received their merchandise back and had

even been given some of the Turkish goods.³⁹ Referring to Ivan III's claims that individual Muscovite subjects had been robbed by Jewish toll collectors in the well-populated Lithuanian domains, Kazimierz IV explained that the Russian merchants deliberately avoided the custom offices of Smolensk and Minsk by choosing the 'new roads'. It was no surprise, according to the Polish king, that these merchants were detained and forced to pay tolls in Lithuania, just as his own subjects were required to do when travelling in Muscovy.⁴⁰

Pillage, responsibility, and compensation: a case study

While Kazimierz disputed Muscovite claims, it was clear that the authorities recognized that their subjects were often involved, as is illustrated by a case from 1546 when Lithuania and the Crimean Khanate were once again on the brink of war. Khan Sahib-Giray wrote to King Sigismund August that the Cossacks of Kiev, Kanev, Cherkassy, and other border towns had plundered some caravans of Ottoman and Crimean merchants travelling between the Crimea and Moscow in 1545.⁴¹ The Tatar ambassador was sent to Lithuania, accompanying the twenty-seven merchants who had been affected. Initially, Sigismund August intended to reject the merchants' complaint, but changed his mind primarily because most of them were Ottoman subjects and the king was afraid to provoke the powerful sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, who had just defeated the Habsburgs in 1544.⁴² The fifteen merchants from Constantinople were most probably purveyors of the sultan's court.⁴³ Secondly, Sahib-Giray claimed that four of the Tatar merchants had been heading to Moscow with his money, and estimated their losses at 862,000 coins.⁴⁴ The khan threatened the king with possible military intervention by posing the rhetoric question: 'whom should attack my Tatars if they can't make war against Muscovy?'⁴⁵ A compromise was found and the merchants were paid compensation.

Sigismund August's reply to Sahib-Giray and the merchants' acknowledgement letter are important sources helping us to reconstruct the event, examine both sides' discursive strategies, and illuminate contemporaries' understanding of what constituted 'trade routes.' The king opens his letter with the promise to send gifts (*поминьки*) to the khan, as it was done before for maintaining the friendship between two states.⁴⁶ Then Sigismund August states that, even before Sahib-Giray's complaints arrived, he had initiated the investigation following reports from his borderland governors. Based on its results, the king declares that the attacks on the khan's domains and subjects were made by Muscovite Cossacks from the border castles of Putivl', Chernigov, and Novgorod-Severskiy, who had falsely put the blame on the king's own Cossacks.⁴⁷ According to Sigismund August, the Muscovite Cossacks attacked the caravan on the steppe when it crossed Sanjary ford on the Vorskla River, a left tribute of the Dnipro.⁴⁸ The king's Cossacks were in the same area pursuing their traditional economic activities (*входахъ*) of fishing

and hunting, and with no knowledge of the approaching caravan. According to their own testimony, these royal Cossacks were attacked without provocation by the caravan merchants, along with some Tatars – probably the military escort they hired in the Crimea. Other royal Cossacks arrived and attacked the Tatars to free their comrades. They found that the caravan was being pillaged by Muscovite Cossacks, who had probably been captured by Tatars during previous incursions, and were now being led to Moscow for ransom or exchange. The Muscovite captives liberated themselves, stole the merchandise, and fled to Moscow, while the king's Cossacks only obtained small booty.⁴⁹ The apologetic headline of this story is evident: the blame is put on the Muscovite Cossacks in the same way as, according to the king's statement a few lines above, the Muscovite Cossacks put the blame on the king's subjects.

The key point in the king's letter is that 'those merchants are guilty themselves because they left their customary old roads and went with their goods, not in accordance with the old habit through the castles of His Grace – Kiev, Cherkasy, and Kanev – as it was before, but by other new uncustomary roads where is great insecurity'.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the king, because of his friendship with the khan and 'despite the custom', did 'what he should not do' and ordered the investigation, compelled the Cossacks to return the goods to the merchants, and paid them considerable cash compensation for the remainder of their lost merchandise. At the same time, Sigismund August noted that if the merchants 'would apply to the law court they will never get the same [favourable] legal resolution because they left the old roads'.⁵¹ The idea that the merchants were themselves guilty because they took a new uncustomary road to evade toll payment was repeated several times in the king's letter, as well as in other documents. The king thereby emphasized that the compromise reached in 1546 was something exceptional, and not to become a precedent for future cases.

Finally, Sigismund August added instructions explaining the sequence of actions the merchants needed to follow in future to escape pillage. The khan was to order that they follow the old roads. 'In accordance with the old habit', merchants approaching the Tavan' ferry were to notify the voivode of Kiev and governor (*starosta*) of Cherkasy and Kanev that they were going to Lithuania, or through it to Moscow. The voivode and governor were then to send an escort. After paying the toll, merchants were to be convoyed to the border with Muscovy 'without any obstacles' (*зачепицьки*). If the khan's merchants or Turkish caravans used 'the new and uncustomary roads, sending no news to the voivode and governor', the king disclaimed any responsibility for their security 'and whatever damage will happen to them he shifts responsibility on his brother the khan and wants to know nothing and *nihil debet* to his brother and the merchants'.⁵²

In their acknowledgement letter, the merchants accepted the king's version of events and recognized their primary responsibility for bypassing the royal castles to avoid the tolls and going 'not by the road, but through the virgin steppe where

neither our ancestor merchants, nor we ourselves ever travelled'.⁵³ The merchants' acquiescence is unsurprising, since they recovered their goods and money. On the other hand, they acknowledged in future that 'His Grace the Sovereign does not want to consider such complaints, because it is not the Sovereign's obligation to safeguard the virgin and desert steppe where no customary road ever passed.'⁵⁴ The king's message is evident: no tolls, no protection.

On the surface, it looked as if the Cossacks were simply given *carte blanche* to pillage caravans which avoided the tolls, but that was not the case. As the merchants refused to leave Vilnius without receiving their full compensation in cash, it was paid from the state treasury.⁵⁵ The two quittances issued by the king and Senate to the treasurer are revealing here since they were written for domestic use only. First, there is no mention of the Muscovite Cossacks. The whole responsibility is put squarely on the king's Cossacks whose unprovoked assault risked military conflict with the Ottomans and Tatars.⁵⁶ Second, the king expressed the belief that the Cossacks roamed the steppe and pillaged caravans on the instructions of some borderland governors (*державъцы Украинные*), and he held both them and the governors responsible for the royal expenses. Therefore, the king and Senate ordered that 'the governors who sent the Cossacks to the steppe and got their share of booty as well as their officials, captains, sergeants, landlords, burghers, Cossacks, or any other subjects ... all of them must pay the sum of money ... to the Royal Public treasury without exemption and postponement in order to hold them from doing such damages in the future'.⁵⁷

This case raises some important issues requiring further examination: 1) the legal regime on the trade routes; 2) discursive strategies – formal replies and false statements – made by rulers and high officials to shift responsibility; 3) compensation paid for damages and punishment of the highwaymen; and 4) engagement of the borderland governors and large groups of the population in the 'raid economy'.

Translation of violence in diplomatic terms: the steppe routes as a discursive and legal category

The court records and diplomatic correspondence reveal that the trade routes – particularly the steppe roads – were considered by contemporaries as special traffic streams with their own legal regimes and conditions of use and responsibility. The distinction between 'customary/public' and 'uncustomary/hidden' roads was widespread in the diplomatic correspondence, as well as interstate treaties. For instance, the capitulations sent by Sultan Murad III to the Polish king, Stefan Batory, in 1577 read:

When Armenians and other infidel merchants living under the royal hand [i.e., the subjects of the Polish king] want to come to Moldavia and my other well-protected

dominions and practice trade, they should not travel through deserted and wild areas or use hidden roads, but they should come by the direct public road which has been customarily traveled by merchants.⁵⁸

Public roads in the Ottoman domains were well-travelled, frequently patrolled, and consequently safer. Unlike the Ottomans, the rulers of Eastern Europe absolved themselves of the responsibility for security on the steppe roads. The Nogai prince Yusuf complained in 1549 that his merchants were robbed on their way back from Moscow by Russian bandits on the Don river.⁵⁹ Ivan IV replied that

your merchants may come to us with no fear. When going by road they must safeguard themselves since, as you know yourself quite well, on the steppe there are always many villains from different states. Who can identify these villains? No one robber ever reveals his name. So, your merchants must defend themselves during their journey. And we are not able to protect them on the steppe, but only in our domains.⁶⁰

At the same time, rulers held their counterparts responsible if an assault was committed in their section of the steppe route. When the Muscovite embassy to the Crimea was pillaged and captured by Tatars of the Great Horde in 1501, Ivan III wrote to the Crimean khan Mengli-Giray that 'you, brother, know better how to liberate them because they were captured on your route'.⁶¹

The authorities sometimes used the dangers of the steppe routes to extort money from foreign merchants. For instance, in 1500 Mengli-Giray used the pretext 'that there are Cossacks of the [Great] Horde on the road' to refuse a permit to Stepan Vasiliev, a Russian merchant returning from the Ottoman domains to the Crimea where he wanted to join the merchants of Kiev to go together to that city. Vasiliev complained to Ivan III, who in turn wrote to Mengli-Giray disputing the khan's claim. The khan replied personally to Ivan III that he let Vasiliev leave the Crimea after the merchant had paid him 2,000 silver coins 'with no coercion and harassment'. Ivan III replied sarcastically to his Tatar ally: 'Once you took two thousand coins, the road became free and there were no Cossacks on the steppe. Could it be more coercive and harassing if our merchant was overtly forced to pay?'⁶²

These quite sophisticated formal replies were elaborated in state chancelleries which regarded the steppe as a neutral buffer zone and a field of operations for diverse Cossacks, rendering it impossible to identify the actual perpetrators of specific crimes. When the Nogai prince Kel-Mahmet complained in 1538 to Ivan IV about the evil deeds committed by Muscovite Cossacks, the latter replied that:

you know quite well that the villains are everywhere. There are many Cossacks roaming the steppe – the Cossacks of Kazan', Azov, Crimea and other troublemaking Cossacks. And those from our borderlands mix with them and likewise go to the steppe. These men are thieves and villains for you as well for us. No one instructs them to commit the crimes. And after committing some crime, they return to their lands.⁶³

In August 1549, Ivan IV responded to the Nogai prince Yusuf that the Don Cossacks were beyond his control, 'and these villains are living on the Don without our permission because they are runaways. We have often sent our men to capture them. However, our men could not catch them ... And if your men will catch some of the villains, then send them to us and we will order them executed.'⁶⁴ Interestingly, that June, Ivan IV had already written to another Nogai prince, Kasay Mirza, that 'owing to the friendship between us, I sent my Cossacks to attack the Crimean domains'.⁶⁵

Such excuses were employed to deny responsibility and consequently escape obligations to make recompense to those affected. For example, King Alexander blamed 'nameless men' in a letter to Mengli-Geray when merchants from Caffa, travelling with the envoys of the Crimean khan and the sultan of Caffa, were plundered by Cossacks on the Tavan' ferry in 1504.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the king persuaded the khan that he had already sent to Kiev and Cherkasy to investigate the case, suggesting that he well knew who could commit the assault. Alexander promised that if the Crimean ambassadors arrived at Kiev, the captured perpetrators would be executed in their presence and any plundered items would be returned to the merchants, who in any case had already received reimbursement for their lost merchandise.⁶⁷

These cases indicated that merchants were most likely to be reimbursed if they were subjects of a powerful ruler who might otherwise retaliate, as exemplified by Poland-Lithuania's concern to maintain peace with the Ottomans and to prevent Tatar raids. The formal replies and excuses were employed if the plundered merchants were the subjects of minor rulers, as it was in the case of Muscovy and the competing Nogai princes, or if a ruler was dependent on the military alliance with his counterpart, as illustrated by the relations between Muscovy and the Crimean Khanate in the 1480s–1500s.

Networks of plunder: the management of violence and the social benefits of brigandage

This formal system of official routes and protection relied on local officials who were often directly engaged in brigandage or benefited from it in many ways. Michalon Litanus noted around 1550 that various residents of Kiev – toll collectors, merchants, moneychangers, boatmen, wagon drivers, innkeepers, tavern keepers – were profiteering equally from the caravans going through Kiev by the old road, as well from those plundered in 'the pathless steppe' (*campis inviis*) or entombed there under the snowdrifts in winter. He believed these practices were the true source of the abundance of precious silks, zibeline furs, and spices sold at low price in the kiosks of Kiev.⁶⁸ However, he did not mention the local dignitaries who were the main beneficiaries.

As early as 1499, Grand Duke Alexander stipulated in a charter that Cossacks

returning from Cherkasy or the steppe were obliged to give a tenth of their booty to the voivode of Kiev.⁶⁹ This practice of granting border dignitaries the right to maintain themselves by levying tribute was known as *kormlenie* (provender rent) and was widely used in Lithuania and Muscovy.⁷⁰ Moreover, many dignitaries organized and led freebooter raids into the Ottoman and Crimean domains employing Cossacks as their henchmen.⁷¹ The Crimean envoy saw merchandise plundered from caravans for sale in Cherkasy in 1545.⁷² Armenian merchants, who were Ottoman subjects, complained to the Polish Diet (*Sejm*) that they had been plundered in 1568 on the Lithuanian–Muscovite border by Cossacks from Kiev, who delivered the stolen goods to the voivode of Kiev.⁷³

It was the same picture on the opposite side of the steppe. Muscovite–Tatar diplomatic correspondence reveals the networks of dealing in stolen goods in the Ottoman cities of Caffa and Azov. In 1500, Yushko, the Muscovite clerk in Caffa, discovered that two Tatar merchants were trading zibeline furs looted from the embassy of Ivan Oshcherin.⁷⁴ The latter was sent by Ivan III, in 1497, to Moldavia, and plundered by the Tatars somewhere in Polish Ukraine.⁷⁵ Yushko petitioned the Ottoman governor (*paşa*) of Caffa, who ordered the merchants to be imprisoned and delivered the furs to the local chief of police (*subaşı*). The governor told Yushko that the Crimean khan would personally interrogate the merchants when he arrived in Caffa, but when Mengli-Giray appeared, the governor and police chief claimed that the suspects had been released on bail, but had fled along with the bailsmen. They delivered the furs to the khan, who refused to give them to Yushko under the pretext that they were moth-damaged.⁷⁶ One can suppose that the Ottoman officials were either bribed by the merchants or patronized the whole network.

An even more confusing case occurred in Moscow in 1502. There, two Turkish merchants from Caffa and Tokat sold goods stolen from the Muscovite embassy of Ondrey Kutuzov, who had been killed by Azov Cossacks the year before. The goods were recognized by some merchants and officials who had been members of the embassy. The two merchants were interrogated in the presence of the Ottoman and Crimean ambassadors, who were in Moscow at that time. They claimed to have received the stolen goods from Ottoman officials in Azov – a supervisor of bazaars and trade (*muhtesib*), and a janissary officer (*mukhzir*). Two pounds of silk were confiscated, sealed by the Ottoman ambassador Alakoz, and given to the Muscovite ambassador Olesha Golokhvastov, who was going to Caffa.⁷⁷ According to his instructions, Golokhvastov was to speak to the sultan of Caffa and governor, claim back the pillaged goods, and demand punishment of the perpetrators. A note in the instructions unravelled the whole network: ‘all the officials of Azov are helping the Cossacks of Azov and of the [Great] Horde. The officials let the Cossacks go to the steppe and what the latter loot they split with the former.’⁷⁸

The last sentence corresponds with Mengli-Giray’s letter to Ivan III in 1500 when the Muscovite and Crimean ambassadors were robbed on their way on the steppe by the Azov and Astrakhan Cossacks, and sixty-four of the party were captured.

The Cossacks sold the captives, merchandise, and diplomatic gifts, valued at 3,985 roubles, to the Turkish merchants in Azov.⁷⁹ Mengli-Giray advised Ivan III to raise the matter with Sultan Bayezid II's ambassador, who was on his way, and to 'tell him about the chiefs of police (*subaşı*), fortress commandant (*vizdar*) and merchants of Azov; all the evil is because of them, they are instigating the evil-doers and sending them to Rus' and sharing [the spoils] with them'.⁸⁰

Finally, in 1503 the sultan of Caffa sent his troops and official investigators to Azov where they destroyed the whole network of freebooters and dealers in stolen goods. The Azov officials, who had protected this network in return for a cut, were imprisoned in Caffa, while the Cossacks were defeated on the steppe and executed.⁸¹ However, the effects of this punitive action were only temporary, and already in 1515 Muscovite envoys in Azov could not get any escort because all the Cossacks were away raiding.⁸² Much later, in 1570, Ivan Novosel'tsev, the Muscovite ambassador, on his way back from Istanbul to Moscow, noted in Azov that most of the local Ottoman officials who greeted him before were now absent. Novosel'tsev discovered that they had joined Tatars to form a 1,200-strong party led by the raider-voivode (*вылазной воевода*) to ravage the southern provinces of Muscovy. When Novosel'tsev addressed the governor (*sanjak-bey*) of Azov, the latter replied that the Tatars were acting despite his orders.⁸³

The merchants' choice of 'new/uncustomary/hidden' roads was perceived by the Cossacks – and their patrons – as a fair excuse to plunder the caravans. But caravans were more often plundered at the Tavan' ferry on the 'old habitual' road. According to evidence from 1456–57⁸⁴ and around 1550,⁸⁵ there had once been a customs house in the time of Grand Duke Vitautas (1392–1430), which was now described as an abandoned building. All the attacks on the caravans examined in this chapter were committed at the main fords. One can suppose that there had been customs houses at these points under the Golden Horde, but that these were abandoned after the collapse of this state. Memories of these custom houses, sometimes reinforced by the buildings themselves, survived until the late sixteenth century.⁸⁶ Probably, the Cossacks pretended to collect 'the old tolls' from the caravans. When their claims were rejected by merchants accompanying ambassadorial trains or with a hired military escort, the Cossacks considered plunder an appropriate response. Nonetheless, the frequent attacks on caravans indicate that, by the sixteenth century, foreign merchants considered Cossacks as having no right to claim tolls. Much later, when the Zaporozhe Cossack Host was well-institutionalized, foreign merchants paid the tolls at the fords, as well as to the obligatory Cossack escort imposed on them.⁸⁷

From the 1570s, both Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy tried to establish central state control over the Cossacks and, thereby, reduce violence on the steppe. King Stefan Batory recruited 600 Cossacks in 1578 to patrol a frontier on the Lower Dniro. The king and his successors sent a banner to the Cossacks. Since the number of these 'registered Cossacks' never exceeded 10 per cent of the host, the

former were paid by the king to prevent the latter from raids against the Tatars and Ottomans. Muscovy reformed its defence of the steppe frontier in 1571 after Ivan IV, for the first time, paid a subsidy of money, fabrics, saltpetre, and lead to a group of the Don Cossacks for escorting Muscovite and Ottoman ambassadors to Azov the year before. The tsar also promised a subsidy to all the Don Cossacks if they assisted his ambassador during the trip.⁸⁸ In 1594, Tsar Fedor sent a subsidy of fabrics, saltpetre, sulphur, lead, and grain to the Don Cossacks for their raids against the Tatars of Crimea and Azov and Nogais. He also promised more subsidies if the Cossacks escorted his and the Ottoman envoys to Azov and kept peace with the 'people of Azov' until the Russian envoy returned from Istanbul.⁸⁹ Thus, one can suppose that the rulers of Muscovy abandoned efforts at direct control and instead paid the Cossacks for safe conduct of its ambassadors across the steppe, while the tsar's subsidy supplied the foodstuffs and materials they needed to produce gunpowder and bullets, thereby encouraging their raiding economy.

Ultimately, all these measures proved ineffective, and the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed the spread of Cossack brigandage. The Zaporozhe and Don Cossacks started naval raids in the Black Sea during the 1580s.⁹⁰ The Don Cossacks also spread their brigandage to the Volga region and the Caspian Sea. The Zaporozhe and Don Cossacks devastated many provinces of Russia during its Time of Troubles (1604–18). The Polish crown's prohibition on Zaporozhe Cossacks' raids 'in the steppe and sea', imposed in 1638, was among the main reasons for their great rebellion in 1648–54, and resulted in the Host's secession as the de facto state of the Hetmanate. The great Razin's rebellion started with the pillaging of a merchant caravan in the Volga region in 1667 that belonged, in part, to the tsar and patriarch.

Nonetheless, central state control was finally established in the early eighteenth century and the violence on the steppe was ultimately restrained. The key factors behind this were the development of Russian military colonies through the building of fortified lines with soldier-settlers, and the establishment of fixed borders between the states, as well as between the Cossack Hosts. Roadblocks were erected in frontier districts to check the flow of refugees to the steppe and control Cossack movement to the borderland towns. Finally, the regular tsar's subsidies and shipment of military materials made the Cossacks dependent on central state control.⁹¹ By promoting border patrols, migration control, bureaucratic regulation of cross-border contacts, and deportation of dissidents, Peter I accomplished the delegitimization of non-state violence in the steppe and accepted responsibility for trans-border violence emanating from his territory.⁹²

Conclusion

A sovereign providing letters of 'safe conduct' to merchants and other travellers was regarded as the main guarantor of secure travel in his domains. Many

merchants had good connections with the ruling elite; some of them were suppliers to the court. The luxury commodities they transported between Moscow and the Black Sea ports, such as furs, silk fabrics, spices, and decorated arms, were consumed exclusively by the upper-classes as symbols of social prestige. Thus, plunder of these items immediately prompted diplomatic correspondence. However, the absence of stable central control over the means of violence in the buffer zone rendered preventive measures largely ineffective. The rulers preferred to avoid awkward responsibility by relinquishing their sovereignty over the steppe routes.

This too, was ineffective, since the equivocal rhetoric used in the interstate correspondence failed to persuade the addressees, who were in a similar situation. Rulers frequently employed Cossacks to raid their neighbours' domains during both peace and war, depopulating whole provinces. The permanent hybrid war in the desert steppe made the Cossacks an indispensable, effective, and inexpensive military force for the rulers. Thus, the plunder of a caravan was regarded as a lesser evil when employing these poachers turned gamekeepers to restrain large-scale violence.

The growth of the brigandage on the steppe routes continued because of the patronage of the local authorities and the support of networks of assistance. Violence on the steppe, including borderlands raids and plundering along the trade routes, was a profitable business for those who managed, protected, and assisted it in various ways. The local governors provided the brigands with necessary patronage. While some merchants bought stolen goods from the freebooters, others provided the Cossacks with a livelihood and military ammunition. The alehouse keepers and ransom-brokers were also in the list of profiteers.

Notes

- 1 Henceforth referred to as Lithuania.
- 2 Henceforth referred to as Muscovy.
- 3 See, for instance: V. Bronevskiy, *Istoriya Donskogo voyska* (St Petersburg, 1834), pp. 38–9; N. Kostomarov, 'Dve russkie narodnosti', *Osnova*, 3 (1861), p. 64; N. Kostomarov, 'Bunt Sten'ki Razina', in *Istoricheskie monografii i issledovaniya* (St Petersburg, 1903), p. 409 (originally published in 1863); D. Yavornytskiy, *Istoriya zaporizkikh kozakiv*, vols 1–3 (Lviv, 1990) (originally published in 1892–97).
- 4 See, for instance: V. A. Golobutskiy, *Zaporozhskoe kazachestvo* (Kiev, 1957), pp. 48–9, 58, 61; A. Pronshteyn and K. Khmelevskiy, 'Donskoe kazachestvo v sovetskoy istoriografii', *Voprosy istorii*, 1 (1965); A. Pronshteyn and N. Mininkov, *Krest'yanskie voyna v Rossii XVII–XVIII vekov i donskoe kazachestvo* (Rostov-na-Donu, 1983); N. Mininkov, *Donskoe kazachestvo v epokhu pozdnego srednevekov'ya: do 1671 g.* (Rostov-na-Donu, 1998).
- 5 E. J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London, 1969), p. 13.
- 6 A. Blok, 'The Peasant and the Brigand: Social Banditry Reconsidered', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 14:4 (1972), pp. 497–8.

- 7 K. Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca, NY, 1994); P. Sant Cassia, 'Banditry, Myth and Terror in Cyprus and Other Mediterranean Societies', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35:4 (1993), p. 774; I. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece 1821–1912* (Oxford, 1987); N. A. Curott and A. Fink, 'Bandit Heroes: Social, Mythical, or Rational?', *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 71:2 (2012).
- 8 *Sbornik Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* (148 vols, St Petersburg, 1867–1916), XLI, [hereafter *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41]: Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenij Moskovskogo gosudarstva s aziatskimi narodami: Krymom, Kazaniu, Nogaitsami i Turtsiey. Chast 1 (gody s 1474 po 1505) (St Petersburg, 1884), p. 14; J. Dlugossii, *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, vol. 12 (1462–1480), ed. Jerzy Wyrozumski et al. (Cracow, 2005), pp. 243–4; M. Bielski, *Kronika Polska* (Sanok, 1856 ed.; originally published 1554), pp. 990–1; M. Miechowski, *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis*, ed. and trans. S. Anninsky (Moscow, 1936; originally published 1517), p. 152.
- 9 M. Khodarkovsky, 'Taming the "Wild Steppe": Muscovy's Southern Frontier, 1480–1600', *Russian History*, 26:3 (1999), p. 248; J.-Y. Lee, *Qazaqliq, or Ambitious Brigandage and the Formation of the Qazaqs: State and Identity in Post-Mongol Central Eurasia* (Leiden, 2015).
- 10 A. Stanislavskiy, *Grazhdanskaya vojna v Rossii XVII v. Kazachestvo na perelome istorii* (Moscow, 1990), p. 36.
- 11 D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 118; V. Ciociltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Leiden, 2012); N. Di Cosmo, 'Mongols and Merchants on the Black Sea Frontier (13th–14th C.): Convergences and Conflicts', in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World* (Leiden, 2005).
- 12 The fragmentation of the Golden Horde created the six competing khanates of Crimea, Kazan, Astrakhan, Siberia, the Great Horde, and the Nogai Horde.
- 13 M. Berindei and G. Veinstein, 'La présence ottomane au sud de la Crimée et en mer d'Azov dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 20:3–4 (1979).
- 14 Khodarkovsky, 'Taming the "Wild Steppe"', pp. 259–64. A. Khoroshkevich, *Rus' i Krym: ot soyuza k protivostoyaniyu (konets XV–nachalo XVI vv.)* (Moscow, 2001).
- 15 M. Dovnar-Zapol'skiy (ed.), *Litovskie upominki tatarskim ordam: Skarbovaya kniga Metriki Litovskoy 1502–1509 gg.* (Simferopol, 1898); A. Lyubaya, 'Tatarskie "pominki" v kontekste vzaimootnosheniy Pol'skogo korolevstva i Velikogo knyazhestva Litovskogo s Krymskim Khanstvom v XVI v.', *Studia Historica Europae Orientalis*, 1 (2008).
- 16 A. Dziubiński, 'Polsko-litewskie napady na tureckie pogranicze czarnomorskie w epoce dwu ostatnich Jagiellonów', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 103:3 (1996); D. Kołodziejczyk, 'Slave Hunting and Slave Redemption as a Business Enterprise: The Northern Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries', *Oriente Moderno*, 86:1 (2006).
- 17 G. Veinstein, 'Prélude au Problème Cosaque: à travers les registres de dommages ottomans des années 1545–1555', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 30:3–4 (1989).
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- 19 Capha or Caffa, present-day Feodosiya in the Crimea.
- 20 Putivl' fell under Muscovite control in 1500.
- 21 Syroechkovskiy, 'Puti i usloviya', p. 213.
- 22 Michalon Litanus is usually identified with either Michal Tyszkiewicz, a Lithuanian ambassador to the Crimean khan in 1538, or Michal Vasylevych, a scribe in the Lithuanian embassies to the Crimea in 1511–13.
- 23 M. Litanus, *De moribus Tartarorum, Litanorum et Moschorum* (Basel, 1615), p. 35.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- 25 Fifteen Turkish merchants from Constantinople, eight Armenian and Turkish merchants from Caffa, and four Tatar merchants from Kirkel (Kyrk-or in the Crimea).
- 26 *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41, p. 29.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 *Sbornik Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva*, XXXV [hereafter *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 35]: G. F. Karpov (ed.), *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snosheniy Moskovskogo gosudarstva s Pol'sko-Litovskim*, part 1 (s 1487 po 1533 god) (St Petersburg, 1882), p. 26.
- 29 *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41, p. 298.
- 30 M. Vladimirovich-Budanov (ed.), *Arkhiv Yugo-Zapadnoy Rossii*, part 7, vol. 1, *Akty o zasele-nii Yugo-Zapadnoy Rossii* (Kiev, 1886), p. 96.
- 31 N. M. Rogozhina (ed.), *Posol'skie knigi po svyazyam Rossii s Nogayskoy Orдой 1489–1549 gg.* (Makhachkala, 1995), p. 292.
- 32 *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41, p. 349.
- 33 M. Obolenskiy and I. Danilovich (eds), *Kniga posol'skaya Metriki Velikogo knyazhestva Litovskogo*, vol. 1 (s 1545 po 1572 god) (Moscow, 1843), p. 20.
- 34 *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41, p. 52.
- 35 *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41, pp. 194–5, 240, 332, 349, 388, 433, 477. *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisey* [hereafter PSRL], vol. 11 (St Petersburg, 1897), p. 227.
- 36 *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41, pp. 482–516.
- 37 *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 35, pp. 23, 26.
- 38 *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24, 26–31, 38, 42.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Obolenskiy and Danilovich, *Kniga posol'skaya Metriki*, pp. 20–1.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 43 The Ottoman sultans regularly sent their court merchants to Moscow to buy the furs there. A. Bennigsen and C. Lemerrier-Quelquejay, 'Les marchands de la Cour ottomane et le commerce des fourrures moscovites dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 11:3 (1970); G. Veinstein, 'Marchands ottomans en Pologne-Lituanie et en Moscovie sous le règne de Soliman le Magnifique', *Cahiers du monde russe*, 35:4 (1994).
- 44 Obolenskiy and Danilovich, *Kniga posol'skaya Metriki*, pp. 22–3.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 55 The total was 350,000 Lithuanian silver coins (*зрпубѣ*).
- 56 *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 34, 35.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- 58 D. Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman–Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century): An Annotated Edition of ‘Ahdnames and Other Documents’* (Leiden, 2000), p. 278.
- 59 Rogozhina, *Posol’skie knigi po svyazyam*, p. 295.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 298.
- 61 *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41, p. 349.
- 62 *Ibid.*, pp. 304–5.
- 63 Rogozhina, *Posol’skie knigi po svyazyam*, pp. 230–1.
- 64 *Ibid.*, p. 298.
- 65 *Ibid.*, p. 291.
- 66 K. Pułaski (ed.), *Stosunki Polski z Tatarszczyzną od połowy XV wieku* (Cracow; Warsaw, 1881), pp. 269–74. *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41, p. 542.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 269.
- 68 Lituanus, *De moribus*, pp. 35–6.
- 69 I. Grigorovich (ed.), *Akty, odnosyashchiesya k istorii Zapadnoy Rossii*, vol. 1: 1340–1560 (St Petersburg, 1846), p. 170.
- 70 B. Davies, ‘The Politics of Give and Take: *Kormlenie* as Service Remuneration and Generalized Exchange, 1488–1726’, in A. M. Kleimola and G. D. Lenhoff (eds), *Culture and Identity in Muscovy, 1359–1584* (Moscow, 1997).
- 71 C. Lemerrier-Quellejey, ‘Un condottiere lithuanien du XVIe siecle le prince Dimitrij Višneveckij et l’origine de la Seč Zaporogue d’apres les archives ottomanes’, *Cahiers du monde russe et sovietique*, 10:2 (1969).
- 72 Obolenskiy and Danilovich, *Kniga posol’skaya Metriki*, vol. 1, p. 23.
- 73 M. Dovnar-Zapol’skiy (ed.), *Arkhiv Yogo-Zapadnoy Rossii*, part 8, vol. 5, *Akty ob Ukrainskoy Administratsii XVI–XVII vv.* (Kiev, 1907), pp. 173–5, 187–90 [complaint from 1570].
- 74 It was written on the fur bundle – probably on the back-cloth – that it was sent from Olena, daughter of Ivan III, to Alexander, son of Moldavian prince Stefan the Great. *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 41, p. 310.
- 75 *Ibid.*, pp. 240, 304.
- 76 *Ibid.*, p. 310.
- 77 Both ambassadors – Golokhvastov and Alakoz – along with the fellow merchants were robbed by the Tatars of Astrakhan on the Don river in 1502. *Ibid.*, p. 433.
- 78 *Ibid.*, p. 404.
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 332.
- 80 *Ibid.*, p. 329.
- 81 *Ibid.*, pp. 469, 470–1, 473, 475–6, 480.
- 82 *Sbornik Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva*, XCV [hereafter *Sbornik RIO*, vol. 95]: G. F.

- Karpov and G. F. Shtendman (eds), *Pamyatniki diplomaticheskikh snoshenij Moskovskogo gosudarstva s aziatskimi narodami: Krymom, Kazaniu, Nogaitsami i Turtsiey*, Chast 2 (gody s 1508 po 1521) (St Petersburg, 1895), p. 142.
- 83 'Posol'stvo Ivana Novosil'tseva v Turtsiyu', in N. I. Prokof'ev (ed.), *Zapiski russkikh puteshestvennikov XVI–XVII vv* (Moscow, 1988), pp. 217–18.
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- 87 A. Skal'kovskiy, *Istoriya Novoy Sechi ili poslednego kosha Zaporozhskogo* (Odessa, 1846), pp. 253–4; Yavornytskyi, *Istoriya zaporizkikh kozakiv*, I, pp. 302–3.
- 88 A. Lishin (ed.), *Akty, odnosyashchiesya k istorii Voyska Donskogo* (3 vols in 4 parts, Novocherkassk, 1891–94), I, pp. 1–2.
- 89 *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
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- 92 B. J. Boeck, *Imperial Boundaries: Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great* (Cambridge, 2009), chap. 9.

8

Restraining violence on the seas: the Tokugawa, the Zheng maritime network, and the Dutch East India Company

Adam Clulow and Xing Hang

In 1665, the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* or VOC) called in its fleet. Intended to strike back against the sprawling Zheng maritime network, which had successfully evicted the Dutch from their colony on Taiwan, the fleet had been sent to restore the Company's damaged prestige in the region while netting valuable goods. Instead, the governor-general had been forced to declare that all Zheng shipping sailing to Japan, the richest market in the region, would be safe from attack. It was a sudden ending for a campaign that had begun in 1662 with oversized plans of carrying the war against Zheng Chenggong, or Koxinga as he was widely known, into the coastal waters of Japan itself, striking vessels where they were most vulnerable as they entered and exited key ports. The decision to halt the campaign stemmed from concerted pressure applied from Nagasaki. There, prohibitions against attacking Chinese vessels on their way to Japan, first articulated over a decade earlier, had been repeated with increasing frequency by Tokugawa officials determined to secure vulnerable shipping lanes. From the Company's perspective, such injunctions were an essentially illegal action taken by a regime that was determined to favour a group they described as the 'Koxinga Chinese' over all others, while preventing the organization from taking its 'lawful revenge' for the loss of Taiwan.¹ But, fearful that its ships would be arrested, its assets confiscated, or its merchants expelled from Japan, VOC officials were forced to step back.

The cessation of the campaign against Zheng shipping shows how a territorial regime with no navy to speak of could still exert influence over the waves, effectively restraining seaborne violence on key shipping lanes. Less than a decade later, however, Tokugawa officials faced a different threat that proved far more difficult

to manage. In late 1672, news reached Nagasaki that a tributary vessel from Ryukyu had been captured on its way from that island archipelago to China.² The Ryukyu kingdom (modern-day Okinawa) held an ambiguous political status. It was connected both to Tokugawa Japan, which held military dominion over the territory via Satsuma domain and to China (first Ming then Qing), to which it dispatched regular tributary embassies. But while its exact political status was kept deliberately vague, ships from Ryukyu sailed under the protection of the Tokugawa military government (*Bakufu*), which relied on the territory as a valuable source of information and an unofficial conduit to China. Now, however, Tokugawa officials received word that a Ryukyuan ship had been captured, its cargo confiscated, and most of its crew massacred, their bodies dumped overboard.

Tokugawa officials had been dealing with violence on the sea lanes criss-crossing East Asia for years, but there was something different about this episode. The ship from Ryukyu had not been attacked by a European overseas enterprise like the Dutch East India Company operating with a flexible dispensation for privateering. Instead, it had been seized by vessels attached to the Zheng state on Taiwan.³ By 1672, when news of the vessel's capture reached Nagasaki, Zheng Chenggong, who had evicted the Dutch from their former colony, had been dead for a decade, but his son and successor, Zheng Jing, was in the process of constructing a mercantile polity on Taiwan with a long reach that extended across the region and into Southeast Asia. Outraged by Zheng actions, Tokugawa officials in Nagasaki responded with a familiar set of tactics by arresting vessels and seizing compensation. This time, however, the aftermath played out very differently. Whereas the Dutch East India Company had always capitulated by staging a swift retreat in the face of Tokugawa action, Zheng Jing pushed back by sending ships to patrol the sea lanes leading into Nagasaki. The result was an impasse and a precipitous drop in Nagasaki trade as the Zheng blockade began to stifle maritime routes leading into the port.

As has been well documented, maritime violence was at the centre of the European push into Asia.⁴ To borrow Carlo Cipolla's words, guns, sails, and empire were bound tightly together.⁵ The overseas enterprises that began to move into Asian waters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were maritime organizations that were geared towards seaborne warfare, and they brought with them a formidable technological combination of heavy guns and robust ship design. Because of this, European overseas enterprises were, from the beginning, heavily dependent on the use of maritime force to attack competing merchant groups and pry open port cities. In such cases, seaborne violence formed a potent and much used bargaining chip to improve trading conditions.

At times, such tactics could yield immediate results, inflicting devastating defeats or forcing dramatic shifts in policy, but this was not always the case. Seeking to push back against oversized notions of European power in early modern Asia, revisionist scholars have shown that European advantage was just as often curtailed as it was deployed to maximum effect, and that sporadic successes

did not translate into a consistent broader picture of victory. They have examined the ways in which the capacity of European fleets to seize ships belonging to, or at least claiming ties with, Asian states was constrained by a fear of reprisals on the ground in a dynamic that Ashin das Gupta first labelled a 'balance of blackmail ... between land and sea'.⁶

While such analysis has offered a highly valuable corrective, it rests on a continuing focus on European overseas enterprises as the sole source of maritime violence. In recent years, historians such as Tonio Andrade have called for a shift to examine the activities of non-European maritime powers, such as the Zheng or the Ya'rubi dynasty of Oman, that were capable of challenging Europeans at their own game.⁷ This chapter seeks to build on that discussion but to push it in a different direction. If Andrade has called attention to the role of 'Asian counterparts to the Portuguese, Dutch and English Empires', then it raises a question as to how local states responded to the activities of these aggressive and well-armed indigenous maritime powers.⁸ The attack on the Ryukyu junk presents one case study, providing an example of an Asian state, Tokugawa Japan, that was compelled to respond to violence from an Asian maritime power, the Zheng network.

This chapter focuses on Tokugawa reactions to two maritime operations: the first carried out by a European overseas enterprise, the Dutch East India Company, and the second by its great Asian rival, the Zheng. By comparing the very different ways these responses played out, we seek to make two points. First, we argue that the rise of Asian maritime powers like the Zheng presented a new challenge for politics across Asia, even for those like Tokugawa Japan that had dealt successfully with European maritime violence. In this case, the regime was forced to confront a sudden escalation that threatened key trade routes. But second, we suggest as well that such crises could be more easily defused as long-standing ties provided opportunities to settle on improvised solutions capable of satisfying different parties. While the situation degenerated quickly after the Zheng enforced a blockade on incoming shipping, it also snapped back with surprising speed. In this way, the case of the Ryukyu junk shows something else: how a dangerous impasse could be unexpectedly resolved via an ambiguous compromise in which multiple sides could claim to have emerged victorious. The rapidity of the settlement depended, we suggest, on a common language of diplomacy that facilitated a rapid convergence on a convenient consensus.

The early modern world was characterized by new and more lethal ways to wage war on land and by sea. The Dutch East India Company and the Zheng maritime network, which provide the focus for this chapter, were both formidable organizations with a reach that would not have been possible in earlier centuries. But local states found, at the same time, new ways to restrain violence by deploying a range of mechanisms. This basic tension necessitates a more expansive understanding of the 'balance of blackmail' that stretches beyond the standard binary of European violence and Asian response to encompass different permutations.

Containing the Company

By 1600, East Asia had long been a centre for global piracy, home to successive waves of large-scale predation that targeted first the Korean and then the Chinese coast.⁹ The arrival of the Dutch East India Company, however, signalled a new phase as the organization's gunned vessels allowed the initiation of prolonged campaigns on the open sea. When it was chartered in 1602, the VOC had been given the right to recruit and deploy its own military forces. By the time it arrived in Japan seven years later, the Company had become a potent maritime power in Asian waters, its ships augmented by an elastic legal framework that could be wrapped around even the most hastily improvised of campaigns. The result was to make the Company the 'world's largest and best-capitalized privateer enterprise'.¹⁰

In the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, which was the effective hegemon over Japan from 1600, the Company encountered a state with very limited maritime resources. Once in Japan, however, the VOC became entangled within a Tokugawa legal order in which its freedom to act against its three primary competitors, Japan-based merchants, the Portuguese, and Chinese traders, was significantly constrained. The *Bakufu* succeeded in containing VOC violence through a series of ad hoc edicts that served to create vaguely defined, but nonetheless highly effective, zones of maritime protection. In 1621, for example, and responding to a string of encounters or near-encounters close to its shores, the *Bakufu* decreed that all merchants in Japanese coastal waters were entitled to protection if they were attacked, regardless of whether or not they carried a maritime pass issued by Tokugawa officials.¹¹ In response, VOC officials, who had previously discussed sending their ships directly into Nagasaki harbour to attack Portuguese shipping there, were forced to abandon any attempt to patrol Japanese waters looking for prizes.

With the expulsion of the Portuguese from Japan in 1639, Chinese merchants sailing to Nagasaki from the China coast and Southeast Asia moved aggressively to fill the space left open in Japan's commercial networks. For the VOC, which had anticipated a lucrative surge in trade following the eviction of their primary European rivals, the increase in Chinese shipping, much of it connected to the Zheng mercantile network, represented a source of consistent frustration. The result was sporadic conflict along the sea lanes leading into Japan. Over time, a pattern began to emerge as VOC attacks on Chinese vessels spurred protests and petitions from the victims as well as Zheng representatives. In the aftermath of such encounters, Chinese mariners sought both protection and restitution from the Nagasaki governor (*bugyō*), a key Tokugawa official posted in the port city and tasked with overseeing foreign trade.¹² After investigating these cases, the *bugyō* issued repeated warnings to VOC officials not to harm Chinese shipping coming to Japan.

In the 1650s, such episodes became more frequent as competition between the Dutch East India Company and the Zheng ramped up, and Tokugawa warnings

became more insistent. Part of the conflict centred on the deerskin trade, which had emerged as a significant point of friction between these organizations. While deer has been hunted for millennia, seventeenth-century Asia witnessed an unprecedented boom that turned deerskins into one of the most heavily traded commodities across the region, with tens of thousands of skins regularly shipped out each year from Ayutthaya (Siam), Cambodia, and Taiwan, which emerged as the three most important points of supply. In Ayutthaya, successive kings had granted monopoly rights over the deerskin trade to the Dutch in 1634, 1645, and 1646.¹³ Although these agreements promised control over the deerskin trade, they proved extremely porous and were filled with holes that could be readily exploited by a combination of local officials and rival traders, usually acting in tandem. Chinese merchants became especially adept at buying up large numbers of deerskins and shipping them out to Japan in secret. In response, the VOC attempted to police maritime traffic leaving Siam by inspecting ships as they departed and confiscating any goods that violated its claimed monopoly.

Such conflicts reverberated out to Japanese ports. In July 1653, a VOC ship, the *Gecroonde Liefde*, lifted 26,366 deerskins from three Chinese junks that were stopped a few miles off the Siam (Chao Phraya) river.¹⁴ When the mariners that had sailed aboard one of these vessels arrived in Japan, they proceeded to complain to Nagasaki officials. According to the head of the VOC factory, 'the people of the [recently arrived] junks, making a great noise, went together with some Japanese ... [who were included] to make the crowd seem larger, to hand over a written complaint to the governors'.¹⁵ Eager to defend the legality of such actions, Company agents explained that they had been given these rights by a 'certain charter from the Siamese king'.¹⁶ They found little support from *Bakufu* officials, who insisted that any attack was unacceptable. By November 1653, Dutch representatives in Nagasaki were cautioned that VOC vessels should neither attack nor in any way damage Chinese vessels on their way to Japan'.¹⁷

In Batavia, the Company's headquarters in Asia, the VOC hierarchy concluded that Tokugawa officials were determined with 'either justice or injustice to protect the Chinese, though they are a rot and ruin to the Company's trade everywhere'.¹⁸ Fearful of the consequences that might flow if such prohibitions were violated, they explained that 'Japanese exactitude in this matter must be satisfied'. Because of this, they had no choice but to let 'the Chinese junks, who sail and trade in our enemies places, pass and repass (upon return) without damaging them'.¹⁹ In 1659, the *Bakufu* went a step further. In October of that year, Zacharias Wagenaer, the Company's senior merchant in Japan, was instructed that the Dutch 'shall not pirate [*bahan*] Chinese ships [*tōsen*] coming by sea to Japan'.²⁰ If such orders were challenged, the *Bakufu* was prepared to take action by seizing assets in Japan. Once this edict was in place, Tokugawa officials moved to enforce it retroactively. In October 1660, they informed the Dutch that they should hand over a large sum to the chief merchant of a Chinese vessel that had, in a separate incident, been

captured three years earlier near the coast of Vietnam. Although the Company resisted, Nagasaki officials eventually forced VOC agents to pay up.²¹

Such episodes established a clear template for how to deal with maritime violence. Confronted with attacks on shipping, the Tokugawa regime moved to place maritime spaces and ships under its protection. If this protection was violated, the Nagasaki *bugyō* was willing to confiscate goods from European assets stored in Japan and force compensation. The 1659 edict referred to the general category of Chinese vessels or *tōsen*, but the benefits of this protection were conferred disproportionately on vessels attached to the Zheng maritime network. The importance of Tokugawa protection to the Zheng has been a central theme in our own work, and it has been underscored in a sweeping study by Cheng Wei-Chung, who argues that ‘by issuing a proclamation that no Chinese vessels should be harmed in the waters between China and Japan, ... Japanese authorities spread a protective umbrella over the trading junks of the Cheng regime, keeping them safe from Dutch attacks’.²² In this way, Tokugawa protection settled over Zheng shipping, ensuring that such vessels could not be attacked even when a state of open conflict existed with the VOC. The consequences played out most dramatically in the aftermath of the fall of Taiwan, when the Company’s attempts to launch a multipronged assault on Zheng shipping ran up against a wall of Tokugawa resistance.

Restoring the Company’s reputation

In April 1661, Koxinga landed at the head of an army on Taiwan, marking the beginning of a campaign that would end nine months later with the surrender of Fort Zeelandia.²³ Confronted with such a clear attack on its possessions, VOC officials in Batavia were adamant that prior restraints must now be lifted and Company warships should be free to attack Zheng vessels wherever they were encountered, including in Japanese waters. The VOC *opperhoofd* in Japan was instructed to inform Edo that the Dutch ‘could not refrain from the right, that nature has given all people, to do all damage [to Koxinga’s ships] that we are capable of, even in Japanese waters or elsewhere’.²⁴ Such arguments seemed to be buttressed by the destruction of the *Hector*, a VOC ship that had been carrying cargo intended for Japan, by Zheng ships.²⁵ If Koxinga’s forces could attack ships carrying goods intended for the Japanese marketplace, then what right did the *Bakufu* have to protest when the Company did the same?

Although its economic importance had been gradually declining for years, the surrender of Fort Zeelandia in 1662 marked a significant setback for an organization that had steadily expanded the boundaries of its influence since its creation.²⁶ Lacking the military resources needed to retake the island, Batavia was determined to strike back at Zheng shipping, both to gain some compensation for its conquered colony but also, VOC officials believed, to prop up the organization’s damaged reputation in the region.²⁷ To achieve these ends, the Company assembled a powerful

fleet made up of twelve ships and placed under the command of Balthasar Bort.²⁸ In his instructions, Bort was specifically authorized to take the fight into Japanese waters if prizes could be seized there. His superiors explained that ‘we have established and resolved in the council of Indies to attack Koxinga’s junks as enemies in Japanese waters regardless of Japanese wishes’.²⁹ In drafting such orders, the VOC hierarchy in Batavia was well aware that Tokugawa officials might react badly to such actions, but they instructed Bort to disregard the potential consequences:

As we are still uncertain how our business will develop in Japan and that it could happen (in the worst case) that the Japanese receive our actions against Koxinga so badly, especially when we attack them in Japanese waters, that they go as far as seizing the Company’s ships, people and merchandize. You will nevertheless not reduce in the slightest the hostility against Koxinga, but continue pursuing them, without showing the least respect towards the said Japanese. All junks from Koxinga without distinction from which place they come from or where they are going must be treated as enemies with violence.³⁰

In this way, the need to strike back against Zheng shipping outweighed all other factors. Even if the Company’s vessels, goods, or people were arrested, the campaign must continue.

Such ambitions faltered, however, in the face of Tokugawa resistance. On 29 August 1663, a VOC ship, the *Klaverskerk*, encountered and destroyed a Chinese junk on its way from Chaozhou in Guangdong province to Japan.³¹ Although the *Klaverskerk* was not under Bort’s command, its actions formed part of the wider campaign against the Zheng. The sinking of a Chinese vessel on its way to Nagasaki generated a sharp reprimand from Tokugawa officials, who, although they refrained from taking direct retaliatory action, were clear that no further assault on Zheng shipping sailing to Japan would be tolerated.³² By 1665, VOC officials meeting in Batavia had resolved to suspend the campaign against Zheng shipping. Meeting on 25 April, they expressed their concern that, in the aftermath of the *Klaverskerk* episode, any attempt to continue the campaign against Zheng shipping might result in the Dutch being permanently expelled from Japan.³³ The result was that they saw little alternative but to follow Tokugawa injunctions by refraining from attacking Chinese junks.³⁴

In its deliberations, the governing council in Batavia had left open the possibility that operations might resume after a year’s interval. On 15 May 1665, however, the decision was made to call off the campaign altogether.³⁵ Even as they agreed to halt operations, VOC officials were furious that they could not avenge the ‘damage and disgrace’ done to them by Koxinga’s invasion of Taiwan. It was against the ‘law of peoples’ (*het volkeren recht*), they declared, to prevent the Company from taking its ‘lawful revenge’ (*rechtveerdige revengie*) against the Zheng. And yet they saw no other choice, with VOC officials in Japan explaining that the governor-general had now given express orders not to harm Chinese vessels on their way to Japan.³⁶ The

suspension of Bort's campaign demonstrated the ways in which Tokugawa officials were able to effectively restrict and restrain violence. Such mechanisms would be challenged, however, when Zheng ships turned their cannon on a ship from the Ryukyu kingdom.

The case of the Ryukyu junk

In June 1662, having successfully ejected the Dutch from Taiwan, Zheng Chenggong died at the age of thirty-eight. He was succeeded by his son, Zheng Jing, who was faced with multiple threats from domestic rivals determined to seize power – from Qing forces, who wanted to eliminate the last remaining challenge to the legitimacy of the Manchu court, and from the Company, which was still determined to strike back against its old foes. By 1670, he had succeeded in consolidating his power in Taiwan, while rebuilding and expanding an extensive commercial network that stretched increasingly into Southeast Asia. Even as his overall position on Taiwan was strengthened, however, Zheng Jing faced a worsening relationship with Japan and the Tokugawa regime, which had long acted to protect Zheng shipping.

This deterioration was driven by a range of factors. The first centred on a set of increasingly stringent restrictions placed by the *Bakufu* on the export of silver, which was a key commodity in East Asian trade.³⁷ The second hinged on the opening up of tributary relations between Ryukyu and the Qing regime in China. Ryukyu occupied an indeterminate political space in East Asia in this period. In 1609, Tokugawa Ieyasu had authorized an expedition to bring the Ryukyu kingdom, previously an independent maritime hub, into the Tokugawa diplomatic system as a vassal state. Forces attached to Satsuma, a powerful domain in Kyushu, captured the king and brought him to Edo to pledge his allegiance to the Tokugawa. In the aftermath of this campaign, Ryukyu was not, as might have been expected, incorporated directly into Japan. Rather it occupied what has been described as a position of 'dual subordination' to both China and Japan.³⁸ This meant that the territory remained officially within the Chinese tributary system and continued to dispatch embassies to China, while all parties combined to obscure the fact that it had been conquered by Japanese forces. It made for an ambiguous status in which the Ryukyu kingdom was at the same time an independent kingdom and a vassal of both China and Japan.³⁹

For decades, Ryukyu tributary missions had offered homage to the Ming emperors, but with the fall of the Ming, they adjusted to the prevailing political winds. From 1663, ships from the Ryukyu kingdom began (with Tokugawa permission) to make regular voyages, including tributary missions, to Qing ports.⁴⁰ The decision enraged Zheng officials, who viewed the Qing as illegal occupants of the Chinese throne. Less than a decade later, in 1670, Zheng vessels captured a junk from the Ryukyu kingdom, killing most of the crew and seizing its goods. The exact circumstances of the attack remain murky. According to a subsequent letter

sent from Taiwan to Japan, the 'Ryukyu vessel was paying tribute to the barbarians in barbarian territory. Our forces naturally attack barbarian ships. How could we have discerned whether or not it came from Ryukyu?'⁴¹ In this retelling, the attack was presented as the fault of the Ryukyans for, first, operating in a violent zone in which Zheng and Qing forces had repeatedly clashed and, second, failing to properly inform Taiwan. As Zheng officials explained, the 'Ryukyans did not dispatch any ship with a letter to explain the situation', hence making them responsible for any attack. What is not clear is whether the sinking of the vessel was an opportunistic action or part of a premeditated campaign designed to punish Ryukyu for opening relations with the Qing. Regardless, the episode was a direct product of the switch of tributary relations from the Ming to the Qing, which had turned vessels from Ryukyu into clear targets.

For months after the junk from Ryukyu disappeared, no one was sure what had happened to it: whether it had been captured or simply lost at sea. The lack of clear intelligence is not surprising. After their vessel was seized, Zheng sailors had massacred all its crew members aside from three or four youths, who were subsequently taken as prisoners to Taiwan. At some point, however, they managed to escape and make their way back to Ryukyu.⁴² Word of the attack travelled from there to Satsuma, where it triggered an immediate reaction. The sinking of the vessel threatened Ryukyu's role as a conduit between China and Japan and hence struck at Satsuma's profitable intermediary position. Outraged, the lord of Satsuma rushed to the political centre to complain before the shogun. Once in Edo, he insisted that the *Bakufu* must take action for the 'murder of his subjects' or he would be forced to do so himself.⁴³ Not only had Zheng actions resulted in the loss of lives, goods, and money, they were also a direct assault on Satsuma's prestige.⁴⁴

The *Bakufu* moved to respond quickly by borrowing a familiar page from the tactics it had used so effectively against the Dutch. In December 1672, Nagasaki officials seized three of the 'wealthiest Koxinga junks' belonging to Zheng-affiliated merchants, then anchored in Nagasaki harbour.⁴⁵ They were stripped of their masts and held in the harbour under guard as Nagasaki officials proceeded to explain that Zheng actions were 'a horrible and never before heard manner of procedure' that must be punished severely.⁴⁶ By 14 January, compensation had been set. Writing from Deshima, the VOC *opperhoofd* reported that the three vessels would only be permitted to depart once they had paid a total fine of 30,000 taels, split evenly between them. This sum would be forwarded to the Ryukyu kingdom via Satsuma 'in satisfaction for the damage that was done to the Ryukyus'.⁴⁷

With compensation exacted, the *Bakufu* moved to more clearly define the status of vessels from Ryukyu, hence making sure there would be no further repeats of what had happened. In April 1673, VOC agents were summoned to receive their usual orders from *Bakufu* officials in Edo. To the standard clauses about not attacking Chinese vessels and reporting dangerous activity by the Iberian powers were appended a new order specifically addressing the status of vessels from the Ryukyu

kingdom. If the Dutch should 'encounter the vessels of the Ryukyu islands lying east of Formosa towards Japan we should not damage or assault them as they were subjects of the realm'.⁴⁸ What exactly 'subjects of the realm' meant was, as so many aspects of Ryukyu's status, open to interpretation. In the Dutch account, the Ryukyans were described as *onderdanen* or subjects, a phrase that could encompass domestic subjects, while in the Japanese version they were referred to more ambiguously as the inhabitants of an attached country (*fuzoku no kuni*, 附属之国).⁴⁹ But the overall significance was clear: Ryukyuan vessels were under Tokugawa protection and should not be attacked in any way.

The order not to attack ships from the Ryukyu kingdom was repeated annually for decades after 1673. In his famous account of his experience in Japan, Engelbert Kaempfer recorded instructions he received from *Bakufu* officials that the 'inhabitants of the Ryūkyūs are people that submit to Japan and you shall not capture them regardless of where you come across them'.⁵⁰ It was a blanket protection that was stronger than that afforded to Chinese merchants, who were not given a specific status. Whereas past edicts had ordered that no Chinese ships should be attacked, in the Ryukyuan case it was the crew themselves who, as 'people that submit to Japan', fell under Tokugawa authority. And whereas the security of Chinese vessels was only guaranteed on their way to Japan, ships from the Ryukyu kingdom were placed under *Bakufu* protection wherever they were encountered.

By mid 1673, everything seemed to have been resolved. Compensation had been seized, the Zheng had been warned, and a new edict had placed all vessels from Ryukyu firmly within a zone of Tokugawa protection. Subjected to similar punishments in earlier decades, VOC officials had contemplated staging a maritime blockade to force the *Bakufu* to the negotiating table, but they had always retreated from such tactics for fear that any attempt to make use of superior maritime firepower would generate an even harsher reaction in Edo. Such reservations were clearly expressed by one Company official who wrote in response to the arrest of VOC vessels in Nagasaki harbour that 'to maintain the company's rights through reprisal and to engage in attacks against the Japanese is not advisable now or in the future'.⁵¹

Zheng Jing, however, reacted very differently. Furious at the *Bakufu*'s policy, he placed an embargo on Chinese shipping travelling to Nagasaki. The blockade was expansive enough that it was picked up and recorded by a range of European observers. English merchants at their newly opened factory in Taiwan heard reports of Zheng fleets roaming the waters outside the south-eastern provinces of Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong, ready to intercept and seize ships.⁵² In Nagasaki, the effects were obvious. With the blockade in place, the number of Chinese ships travelling to Japan plummeted rapidly.⁵³ Those few Chinese mariners who made it to Japan recounted harrowing tales of violent encounters with Zheng vessels.⁵⁴ One captain reported in July 1673 that he had departed Canton with a handful of other vessels. Attacked, he had managed to escape, but at a cost of one dead and many injured.

The fate of the accompanying ships is unknown, but it seems likely they were taken by Zheng vessels.⁵⁵

What was clear to all observers was that the ‘Tayouanese Chinese’ had now ‘declared war on the Chinese junks that trade with Japan’.⁵⁶ For the *Bakufu*, which had been largely successful in suppressing VOC violence, the response represented a significant and worrying escalation. A blockade, which the Dutch had occasionally threatened but never actually initiated, was now in place, with Zheng ships cutting off the flow of imports into Nagasaki.⁵⁷ *Bakufu* leaders had long worried about an attempt to target Japan’s vulnerable trade routes.⁵⁸ Now, one was in place, and it was not clear how long it would remain in effect or what was needed to lift it.

When it had first arrested the three Taiwanese vessels, the *Bakufu* had suggested that an ambassador could be sent from the Zheng to Nagasaki to resolve the matter.⁵⁹ Even with declines in Japanese supply, much of Zheng Jing’s trading network continued to hinge on silver from the archipelago. Because of this, an extended embargo threatened to hurt Taiwan’s economic interests as much as it did Japan’s.⁶⁰ Not surprisingly then, Zheng Jing was willing to send an ambassador, although he insisted that any settlement would have to be on his terms. He evidently hoped to effect a quick and painful punishment on the *Bakufu*, thereby forcing it to retreat from its past position. In late September 1673, an envoy, Wu Peng, arrived from Taiwan bringing with him a number of bargaining chips, including a small group of Japanese mariners who had been driven onto Taiwanese shores by strong winds and imprisoned there. As further leverage, the ambassador’s ships carried within its hold an estimated 250,000 taels worth of cargo, consisting mainly of silk and silk-piece goods, which were in high demand in a market newly starved of access to precisely such goods.⁶¹

Wu Peng stayed in Japan for a number of months, before eventually departing in January 1674. While the limited sources do not enable us to trace the precise course of negotiations, the ambassador appears to have exceeded his instructions. He had been sent to force Tokugawa officials to pull back from their previous position, including the levelling of a 30,000 tael fine, by threatening further attacks on shipping coming to the archipelago.⁶² Instead, Wu appears to have adopted a far more conciliatory attitude. He released the Japanese mariners he had brought with him and accepted a return gift of 2,000 taels from Nagasaki officials.⁶³ Even more striking, the ambassador appears to have suggested that the fault lay on his master’s side and that Zheng Jing would accept the shogun’s forgiveness for any mistakes he had made.⁶⁴ The reasons for this strategy are not clear, but they likely stemmed from Wu’s own role in the Zheng hierarchy. As an official merchant, he had his own stake in preserving the flow of goods between Taiwan and Japan. He had borrowed capital and ships from Zheng Jing and other key members of the Taiwan bureaucracy to trade on their behalf. In exchange, he was entitled to repay the loan at a lower level of interest and acquire a share of the profits. Because of this, Wu, like his fellow official merchants, stood to bear the brunt of any losses if

the blockade continued indefinitely.⁶⁵ As a result, he seems to have been a willing collaborator with Nagasaki officials who also wanted to resolve matters in the swiftest possible way.

When Wu Peng arrived back in Taiwan, however, he received a very different response. According to reports received by the Dutch, the former ambassador was imprisoned for having made promises at odds with his initial instructions.⁶⁶ With Wu's guarantees apparently voided, things settled into an impasse and the blockade stretched on. Zheng Jing seemed to have no interest in settling the conflict on Tokugawa terms, while the *Bakufu* lacked the means to challenge Zheng vessels on the open ocean. Early in 1674, however, this situation was suddenly upended by fast-moving developments in China itself.

The catalyst for this sudden change was the outbreak of a revolt by Qing regional strongmen across southern China against the Manchu court. This massive uprising, usually called the 'Three Feudatories' rebellion, created an opportunity that was rapidly seized for Zheng Jing to join forces with the rebels by moving troops back onto the continent. It also changed the political equation overnight. First, the immediate cause of the conflict was removed. It was no longer possible for Ryukyu to maintain tributary relations with the Qing, because its ships were cut off from access to the ports controlled by the rebel generals.⁶⁷ The result was that the basic problem that had given rise to the dispute was erased. And second, the eruption of the conflict created an urgent need for Zheng vessels that had been used in the blockade to be deployed elsewhere.

Faced with the chance to move back into China, the conflict with the *Bakufu* was shifted far down the list of Zheng priorities. Despite this, it was still necessary to patch up relations so Zheng trading vessels could continue to access Japanese commercial circuits, hence providing a source of income to prop up the war effort. It was a hurdle that many European overseas enterprises had struggled to clear after they attempted to re-establish relations after a period of conflict. In this case, however, the crisis was defused with remarkable speed.

In 1674, a new envoy was sent to Nagasaki with a missive from Taiwan. He carried an unusual but effective document that seemed calculated to give something to both sides, mixing friendly sentiments with an aggressive insistence that Zheng forces had been fully justified in their initial attack on the tributary vessel from Ryukyu.⁶⁸ Although the letter came from Taiwan, it did not originate with Zheng Jing himself. Instead, a revenue official called Yang Ying had penned it, because his superior 'was away at the moment, personally leading troops'. While such an absence was certainly possible, the letter surely reflected Zheng Jing's will but was, we can assume, presented as the work of a subordinate to minimize risks if it was rejected. The contents themselves were cryptic. On the one hand, the letter affirmed Zheng Jing's good relations with Japan in glowing terms. The two polities had been, the letter insisted, bound together by good relations for years as if they were one family. Since 'the subjects of Japan are just like our subjects', Zheng

Jing had decided to return the 2,000 taels paid out to his ambassador. There was no reason, the writer insisted, to accept compensation simply for returning the shipwrecked sailors belonging to such a close ally. At the same time, however, Yang was clear that no blame could be attached to the Zheng for the initial attack on the vessel from the Ryukyu kingdom. Taiwan maintained good relations with Japan but not with the Ryukyu kingdom, which must be considered an enemy because it had betrayed the Ming by going over to the Qing. If there was any culprit for what had happened, it was surely the Ryukyu kingdom, which was directly responsible for ‘harming our neighborly ties’ when it failed to communicate its plans to Taiwan.⁶⁹

Wu Peng, the overly conciliatory ambassador, received an intriguing mention. Yang explained that he had originally been slated to lead the current mission but had ‘contracted an illness and could not board the ship’.⁷⁰ His replacement was Cai Zhuyi, another official merchant, who would hand over the disputed 2,000 taels of silver and place the letter in the hands of the Nagasaki magistrates for forwarding onto the shogun in Edo. The reference to the ambassador raises a number of questions, but it seems most likely that Wu Peng’s convenient illness was designed to conceal his ongoing imprisonment. This impression is strengthened by the fact that Zheng Jing was indeed returning the 2,000 taels that Wu Peng had originally accepted on his behalf.

The arrival of the letter signalled the sudden end of the dispute. Although neither side issued any clear statements, what seems most likely is that an improvised compromise that satisfied all parties had been reached. Ryukyu had received compensation for the loss of its vessel and its shipping could now travel securely under Tokugawa protection. The *Bakufu* had punished the offenders and arranged restitution, thereby bolstering its role as Ryukyu’s overlord and leaving its prestige intact while restoring a key trade route as Chinese junks started to pour back into Nagasaki.⁷¹ For Zheng Jing as well, it could be interpreted as a victory of sorts. The anti-Manchu rebellion meant that Ryukyu could no longer send tributary vessels to the Qing, hence removing the original problem. At the same time, Zheng Jing’s envoy had returned the troublesome 2,000 taels, thereby loudly signalling his refusal to accept *Bakufu* authority, while reaffirming a key alliance with an important commercial and geopolitical partner. And he had done this while opening up the space to devote his full attention and resources to the campaign against the Qing.⁷² The result is that the brewing conflict was erased overnight.

The ‘balance of blackmail’ in Asia

The case of the Ryukyu junk, which escalated and then de-escalated so quickly, defies easy interpretation. In comparison to similar episodes involving the Dutch, where the *Bakufu* had emerged as the clear victor, the sudden resolution of the

conflict with the Zheng yielded a far more mixed result. On the one hand, it shows the power of well-armed Asian maritime powers like the Zheng. While the Tokugawa regime possessed some tools to force compliance, the power and reach of the Zheng maritime network made it a difficult foe to deal with. Unlike the Dutch East India Company, which deliberately refrained from such steps, Zheng Jing opted to blockade the coast in an attempt to force Tokugawa officials to give in. Whether such a tactic would have proven successful in the long term is difficult to know since Japan remained Zheng Jing's premier trading partner, but it certainly worried Tokugawa officials, who confronted a sudden escalation of the conflict. Whereas the *Bakufu* had largely contained VOC maritime violence, the regime struggled to do the same with the Zheng.

And yet, just as it had escalated rapidly, the conflict ended suddenly as a letter written by one of Zheng Jing's subordinates succeeded in papering over the dispute with a hastily contrived settlement. The turnaround is striking, but in fact such resolutions were not as uncommon as they might seem at first. As has been well documented, diplomatic impasses in seventeenth-century East Asia were frequently remedied through a combination of pre-existing structures mixed with active interventions by local mediators and conveniently self-serving interpretations. Ronald Toby, Etsuko Hae-jin Kang, Gregory Smits, and Jiang Wu have all demonstrated how Tokugawa authorities resorted to ambiguity and even outright deceit in their dealings with Korea, Ryukyu, and the Ming and Qing regimes of China.⁷³ Compared to the aftermath of Hideyoshi's hugely destructive invasion of Korea, which was smoothed over by brokers from Tsushima domain shuttling between the two sides, the dispute between the Zheng and the Tokugawa was far less substantial, but its final resolution shared some similar features. Most importantly, compromises that enabled the re-establishment or continuation of relations invariably looked very different depending on perspective. Just as Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan had accepted a mutually beneficial resolution that seemed to address their very different, and fundamentally contradictory, concerns, so had the Zheng, the Tokugawa, and Ryukyu managed to engineer a compromise in which they all seemed to emerge as victors.

Across several decades, the Zheng maritime organization proved a formidable challenger to European powers. Before his disastrous adventure on the continent, Zheng Jing succeeded in creating a maritime state that could compete with Europeans at their own game. But we should be careful of assuming that any maritime power, however formidable, could act freely in a region crowded with powerful territorial states. Instead, there was a 'balance of blackmail ... between land and sea' that restrained maritime violence from both European and Asian sources. The result is that any assessment of early modern violence must look not only towards those maritime powers active on the waves, but also to the territorial polities that clustered on the shores and which, even in the absence of their own navies, retained a significant degree of influence.

Notes

- 1 15 May 1665, (NL) Archief van de gouverneur-generaal en raden van Indië (Hoge Regering) van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie en taakopvolgers, 1612–1812, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id> (accessed 10 April 2020). Full scans of these resolutions can now be accessed via the pioneering Sejarah Nusantara online platform developed by the National Archives of the Republik of Indonesia and the Corts Foundation.
- 2 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, access number 1.04.02, Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) [hereafter NL-HaNA, VOC], inventory 1294, Japans daghregister van den jare 1673 gehouden bij den Ed. Martinus Caesar int rijk van Japan, 2 Dec. 1672. Despite the name of the record, the diary begins on 13 November 1672. The capture of this vessel has been referenced in a number of studies. G. Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics* (Honolulu, 1999), p. 22; U. Kenzen, *Sakoku to han bōeki: Satsuma-han no Ryūkyū mitsuboeki* (Tokyo, 1981), pp. 80–2; N. Kimura, *Bakuhansei kokka to Higashi Ajia sekai* (Tokyo, 2009), pp. 104–5.
- 3 For the rise of the Zheng, see X. Hang, *Conflict and Commerce in Maritime East Asia: The Zheng Family and the Shaping of the Modern World, c.1620–1720* (Cambridge, 2016). Patrizia Carioti has contributed a number of foundational studies in multiple languages on the Zheng organization. For one example, see P. Carioti, ‘The Zhengs’ Maritime Power in the International Context of the 17th Century Far Eastern Seas’, *Ming-Qing Yanjiu*, 5:1 (1996). See also Cheng Wei-Chung’s important book, which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter: W. C. Cheng, *War, Trade and Piracy in the China Seas, 1622–1683* (Brill, 2013).
- 4 A range of activities, from ship-to-ship engagements to blockades to naval bombardments, can be subsumed within the wider category of maritime violence.
- 5 C. Cipolla, *Guns, Sails and Empires: Technological Innovation and the Early Phases of European Expansion, 1400–1700* (New York, 1965).
- 6 A. D. Gupta, ‘Indian Merchants and the Western Indian Ocean: The Early Seventeenth Century’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 19:3 (1985), p. 494. Other scholars have described the same dynamic as a ‘balance of terror’ (Farhat Hasan), a ‘fragile equilibrium’ (Sanjay Subrahmanyam), a ‘stalemate’ (Michael Pearson), and a ‘finely tuned balance’ (Om Prakash). F. Hasan, ‘Conflict and Co-operation in Anglo-Mughal trade relations during the reign of Aurangzeb’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 34:4 (1991), p. 352; S. Subrahmanyam, ‘Forcing the Doors of Heathendom: Ethnography, Violence, and the Dutch East India Company’, in C. Parker and J. Bentley (eds), *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and Community in the Early Modern World* (Maryland, 2007), p. 137; O. Prakash, ‘The Mughal Empire and the Dutch East India Company in the Seventeenth Century’, in E. Locher-Scholten and P. Rietbergen (eds), *Hofen Handel: Aziatische Vorsten en de VOC, 1620–1720* (Leiden, 2004), p. 192.
- 7 T. Andrade, ‘Beyond Guns, Germs and Steel: European Expansion and Maritime Asia, 1400–1750’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 14:1–2 (2010).
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 165.
- 9 For the wakō, see J. Elisonas, ‘The Inseparable Trinity: Japan’s Relations with China and Korea’, in J. W. Hall and J. McClain (eds), *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 4, *Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge, 1991). For an important recent study of domestic pirates,

see P. Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2014).

- 10 T. Andrade, 'The Company's Chinese Pirates: How the Dutch East India Company Tried to Lead a Coalition of Pirates to War against China, 1621–1662', *Journal of World History*, 15:4 (2004).
- 11 NL-HaNA, VOC, 1075: 89–92, esp. 92v: Copie remonstrantie van Jacques Specx overgegeven op 't comptoir Firando, 20 Sept. 1621. The complete Japanese edict can be found in Nagazumi Yōko, 'Hirado ni dentatsu saretā Nihonjin baibai buki yushutsu kinshirei', *Nihon rekishi*, 611 (1999). See also A. Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (New York, 2014), chap. 4.
- 12 Lane Earns' study of the *bugyō* remains one of the best resources available in English. L. Earns, 'The Development of Bureaucratic Rule in Early Modern Japan: The Nagasaki Bugyō in the Seventeenth Century' (PhD Dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1987). From 1633 on, two *bugyō* were appointed each year, one based in Nagasaki, one in Edo. For a more recent examination, see Suzuki Y., *Nagasaki bugyō no kenkyū* (Kyoto, 2007).
- 13 D. Na Pombejra, 'The Dutch–Siamese Conflict of 1663–1664: A Reassessment', in L. Blussé (ed.), *Around and About Formosa: Essays in honor of Professor Ts'ao Yung-ho* (Taipei, 2003), p. 292.
- 14 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Nederlandse Factorij in Japan, access number 1.04.21 [hereafter NL-HaNA, NFJ], Dagregister Frederik Coyett, inventory number 66: 20 Aug. 1653; 28 Sept. 1653. See also C. Viallé and L. Blussé (eds), *The Deshima Dagregisters*, vol. 12, 1650–1660 (Leiden, 2005), pp. 108, 114–15. The ship appears here as the *Gekroonde Liefde*.
- 15 NL-HaNA, NFJ 66: Dagregister Frederik Coyett, 27 July 1653.
- 16 *Ibid.*, Dagregister Frederik Coyett, 28 Sept. 1653.
- 17 *Ibid.*, Dagregister Frederik Coyett, 10 Nov. 1653. Viallé and Blussé, *Deshima Dagregisters*, p. 121.
- 18 W. P. Coolhaas (ed.), *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-generaal en Raden aan heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (9 vols, The Hague, 1960–present), II, p. 710. We have translated 'patrocineren' as protect, although a more literal translation would be to patronize.
- 19 The warning against attacking Chinese ships was also presented to the VOC in 1657.
- 20 A. Hayashi (ed.), *Tsūkō Ichiran* (8 vols, Tokyo, 1912–13), VI, p. 223.
- 21 NL-HaNA, NFJ 75:56–7: Indijck Dagregister, 30 Oct. 1662.
- 22 Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*; X. Hang, 'The Shogun's Chinese Partners: The Alliance between Tokugawa Japan and the Zheng Family in Seventeenth-Century Maritime East Asia', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 75:1 (2015); Cheng, *War, Trade and Piracy*, p. 223. In this way, he suggests that the 'warning from the Japanese shogunal court' provided a highly 'effective source of security' for Zheng vessels.
- 23 As described in T. Andrade, *Lost Colony: The Untold Story of China's First Great Victory over the West* (Princeton, 2011).
- 24 Coolhaas, *Generale Missiven*, III, p. 373.
- 25 *Ibid.* In fact, as Andrade explains, the *Hector* 'had been destroyed not by the enemy, but by carelessness'. Andrade, *Lost Colony*, p. 135.
- 26 L. Blussé, 'No Boats to China: The Dutch East India Company and the Changing Pattern of the China Sea Trade, 1635–1690', *Modern Asian Studies*, 30:1 (1996).

- 27 J. E. Wills Jr, 'Ch'ing Relations with the Dutch, 1662–1690', in J. K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 228.
- 28 P. van Dam, *Beschrijvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie*, ed. F. W. Stapel (4 vols in 7 parts, The Hague, 1927–54), II. I, p. 721. The authoritative account of the Bort campaign remains: J. E. Wills Jr., *Pepper, Guns and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622–1681* (Cambridge, 1974).
- 29 NL-HaNA, VOC 886:151: Instructie voor den commandeur Balthasar Bort ende den Raedt.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 Tokyo daigaku shiryō hensanjo (ed.), *Dai nihon kinsei shiryō: Tōtsūji kaisho nichiroku* (Official diaries of the office of Chinese interpreters) (Tokyo, 1984), I, pp. 175–6. The details of the actual encounter are sketched out in VOC sources as well as in documents produced by the Chinese interpreters' office in Nagasaki.
- 32 The episode is discussed in more detail in Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*, chap. 5.
- 33 25 April 1665, (NL) Archief van de gouverneur-generaal en raden van Indië (Hoge Regering) van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie en taakopvolgers, 1612–1812, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id> (accessed 10 April 2020).
- 34 *Ibid.* This was not the only factor. The suspension of the campaign was motivated in part by a belief that it was simply impossible to seal off all the shipping lanes leading into Japan.
- 35 15 May 1665, (NL) Archief van de gouverneur-generaal en raden van Indië (Hoge Regering) van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie en taakopvolgers, 1612–1812, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id> (accessed 10 April 2020).
- 36 C. Viallé and L. Blussé (eds), *The Deshima Dagregisters*, vol. 13, 1661–1670 (Leiden, 2010), p. 162.
- 37 For a discussion, see Hang, 'The Shogun's Chinese Partners'.
- 38 N. Mizuno, 'China in Tokugawa Foreign Relations: The Tokugawa *Bakufu*'s Perception of and Attitudes toward Ming-Qing China', *Sino-Japanese Studies*, 15 (2003), p. 119.
- 39 For a more detailed discussion, see D. Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-century Japan* (Berkeley, CA, 2005). See also Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*. As Smits explains, there was a conscious attempt to present Ryukyu as a separate country.
- 40 Hang, *Conflict and Commerce*, p. 190. Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, p. 21. For Ryukyuan tribute to China, see Wang Q., 'Changes in the Composition of Ryūkyū's Tribute to Qing Period China – Historical and Economic Aspects', in A. Schottenhammer (ed.), *The East Asian 'Mediterranean': Crossroads of Culture, Commerce and Human Migration* (Wiesbaden, 2008), pp. 222–3. For Qing relations with the Ryukyu kingdom, see A. Schottenhammer, 'Empire and Periphery? The Qing Empire's Relations with Japan and the Ryūkyūs (1644–c.1800), a Comparison', *The Medieval History Journal*, 16:1 (2013).
- 41 S. Hayashi, *Ka'i hentai* (The metamorphosis from Chinese to barbarian), ed. U. Ren'ichi (2 vols, Tokyo, 1958–59), pp. 72–3.
- 42 This was reported in: 2 December 1672, Japans daghregister van den jare 1673 gehouden bij den Ed. Martinus Caesar int rijk van Japan, NL-HaNA, VOC 1294.
- 43 NL-HaNA, VOC 1294: Caesar Dagregister, 2 Dec. 1672.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 *Ibid.*

- 46 *Ibid.*, 14 Jan. 1673.
- 47 *Ibid.*, Cheng, *War, Trade and Piracy*, p. 237.
- 48 NL-HaNA, VOC 1294: Caesar Dagregister, 26 Apr. 1673; Kimura, *Bakuhansei kokka to Higashi Ajia sekai*, p. 105.
- 49 Hayashi F. (ed.), *Tsūkō ichiran* (A catalogue of seaborne traffic) (Osaka, 1967), VI, p. 225; Kimura, *Bakuhansei kokka to Higashi Ajia sekai*, p. 105.
- 50 E. Kaempfer, *Kaempfer's Japan: Tokugawa Culture Observed*, ed. and trans. B. Bodart-Bailey (Honolulu, 1999), p. 231.
- 51 W. P. Coolhaas, 'Een Indisch verslag uit 1631, van de hand van Antonio van Diemen', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap*, 65 (1947), p. 90.
- 52 Chang H. J., A. Farrington, Huang F. S., Ts'ao Y. H., Wu M. T., Cheng H. F., and Ang K. I. (eds), *The English Factory in Taiwan: 1670–1685* (Taipei, 1995), p. 172.
- 53 Tanabe, M., *Nagasaki bunken sōsho*, vol. 1.2: *Nagasaki jitsuroku taisei* (Nagasaki, 1973), pp. 56–7; Iwao S., 'Kinsei nisshi boeki ni kansuru suryoteki kosatsu', *Shigaku-Zasshi*, 62:11 (1953), p. 12.
- 54 NL-HaNA, VOC 1294: Caesar Dagregister, 6 July 1673. Cheng, *War, Trade and Piracy*, p. 238.
- 55 NL-HaNA, VOC 1294: Caesar Dagregister, 6 July 1673.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 9 July 1673.
- 57 It was a double blow as no ships from Taiwan – a key trading link in its own right – were allowed to sail to Japan. *Ibid.*, 6 July 1673.
- 58 It was something that had preoccupied officials in Edo after the Portuguese had been expelled from Japan in 1639. This concern was expressed to VOC officials, who were asked what would happen if the Portuguese decided to target shipping coming to Japan.
- 59 NL-HaNA, VOC 1294: Caesar Dagregister, 12 Dec. 1672.
- 60 Chang et al., *The English Factory in Taiwan*, p. 172.
- 61 NL-HaNA, VOC 1294: Caesar Dagregister, 20 Sept. 1673.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 18 Aug. 1673.
- 63 It was not a happy homecoming for these shipwrecked sailors, who were taken off in chains. The Dutch suspected that they would be tortured to find out why they had sailed to Taiwan and whether they had willingly violated the *Bakufu's* restrictions on private trade and travel abroad. *Ibid.*, 20 Sept. 1673.
- 64 This is according to ambiguous reports received by the Dutch, but later events suggest that it was accurate. NL-HaNA, NFJ 87: Dachregister gehouden bij 't opperhoofd Joannes Camphuijs in Japan beginnende den 29 October 1673 en eindigende 19 October 1674 [hereafter Camphuijs Dagregister], 24 Nov. 1673.
- 65 For more on official merchants, see Han Z. H., 'Zheng Chenggong shidai de haiwai maoyi he haiwai maoyi shang de xingzhi: 1650–1662', in Xiamen University History Department (ed.), *Zheng Chenggong yanjiu lunwen xuan* (Fuzhou, 1982), pp. 172–3.
- 66 NL-HaNA, NFJ 87: Camphuijs Dagregister, 20 July 1674. This comes from a Dutch source but it appears to be confirmed by the fact that Zheng Jing later decided to return the 2,000 taels received by his ambassador.
- 67 Cheng, *War, Trade and Piracy*, p. 238.
- 68 Hayashi, *Ka'i hentai*, pp. 72–3.
- 69 Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, p. 22.

- 70 Hayashi, *Ka'i hentai*, pp. 72–3.
- 71 NL-HaNA, NFJ 87: Camphuijs Dagregister, 31 July 1674.
- 72 Ultimately, however, the move into China proved disastrous. Within a decade, Zheng Jing was dead and by 1683 Taiwan was in Qing hands.
- 73 R. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Stanford, 1991); E. H.-J. Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese–Korean Relations: From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1997); J. Wu, *Leaving for the Rising Sun: Zen Master Yinyuan and the Authenticity Crisis in Early Modern East Asia* (Oxford, 2014); Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*.

9

‘The wrath of God’: legitimization and limits of Mughal military violence in early modern South Asia

Pratyay Nath

In 1568, an army under the command of the third Mughal emperor Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar (r. 1556–1605) stormed the fort of Chitor in western India after a prolonged siege of six months. On the day of the victory, Akbar ordered a general massacre (*qaṭl-i ‘āmm*) of the garrison as well as of the general population. According to contemporary texts, some 30,000 people were killed as a result. This event stands out as one of the most glaring instances of spectacular military violence in Mughal history, where not only the combatants but also a very large number of civilians were put to the sword. Abul Fazl, the principal biographer of Akbar, provides an official justification of this drastic action. He writes that in the final hours of the defence of the fort, a garrison of around 8,000 men received active assistance from around 40,000 peasants. He points out that when Alauddin, the Khalji sultan of Delhi, had conquered Chitor in the early fourteenth century, ‘the peasantry were not put to death as they had not engaged in fighting’.¹ Abul Fazl argues that on the present occasion, they had to be punished because of the ‘great zeal and activity’ they had shown in defending the fort against the Mughal army.²

Was this incident just a plain act of revenge against an adversary that had offered dogged resistance against imperial expansion? What does this massacre tell us about the larger history of how the empire justified similar acts of military violence? Was the way Abul Fazl legitimized the massacre of the civilian population of Chitor different from how instances of violence against actual combatants were legitimized? What sorts of limits to military violence did Mughal imperial ideology prescribe and Mughal armies observe? In order to answer these questions, one must begin by understanding how Mughal imperial culture conceptualized sovereignty, kingly rule, and war.

In this chapter, I first explore the meanings of Mughal sovereignty and its origins in a particular strand of Persian political philosophy. Drawing on scholars like Muzaffar Alam, I argue that from Akbar onward, Mughal political philosophy was deeply influenced by the normative philosophy of the thirteenth-century Persian polymath Nasiruddin Tusi. Second, I unravel the duties and responsibilities of the sovereign within this ideological framework. Next, I argue that given the nature of the doctrine of sovereignty under the Mughals since Akbar, war was conceptualized less as a princely whim for self-aggrandizement and more as an unavoidable means for fulfilling the duties of rulership. War, in other words, was perceived as a moral compulsion of the king. I then discuss some of the facets of the history of military violence under the ‘great Mughals’ since Akbar. I argue that in the conduct of war and the perpetration of violence, the Mughal state drew heavily on Nasirean ethical recommendations. Making and representing war in the name of the abstract category of justice within the all-encompassing framework of universal sovereignty allowed tremendous flexibility in unleashing as well as restraining military violence. Next, I study the limits of this violence both within the imperial ideological discourse and at a practical level in the course of military campaigns. Finally, I argue that although military violence was an important, frequent, and widespread aspect of Mughal empire-building, it was used more for defeating and co-opting adversaries into the imperial body politic than for destroying or eliminating them outright. I conclude by pointing out that this particular dimension of Mughal military violence finds resonance with the tendencies of the Ottoman and the Qing empires, and marks a contrast with the early modern European experience.

Mughal imperial ideology and Nasirean ethics

Mughal emperors were firm believers in the political philosophy of universal sovereignty. At the heart of the Mughal brand of this philosophy lay a pronounced thrust on cosmopolitanism. This encompassed various aspects of the imperial experience, including religion, race, and language. Several scholars have noted that Mughal emperors scarcely favoured any one particular community when it came to patronage or employment. Ruling a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional land, they kept their imperial vision broad. They welcomed with open arms anyone willing to join their ranks. One of the main philosophical influences that profoundly shaped this Mughal version of cosmopolitan universal sovereignty was a particular strand of Perso-Islamic normative texts (*akhlāq*).

Muzaffar Alam points out that in early modern South Asia, it was Nasiruddin Tusi’s thirteenth-century Persian text *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri* that remained the most influential text of this normative tradition and the cornerstone of Mughal imperial ideology. Tusi’s ideas can be traced further back to the tenets of Aristotle’s *Nicomachea*. In the Mughal Empire, knowledge of the Nasirean *akhlāq* spread through the circulation of *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri*. This was augmented by the writing

and reading of other works like *Akhlāq-i Humāyūnī* and *Mau'izah-i Jahāngīrī*, which closely followed and expanded Tusi's ideas. Alam points out that Tusi's text was one of several important works that Abul Fazl recommended to be read out regularly to Akbar. Akbar, in turn, instructed his officials and commanders to read this text closely. Alam argues that Nasirean ethics and political philosophy exerted a deep influence on Mughal political thought, something that is evident from several texts produced, and intellectual projects undertaken, at the imperial court.³ While several other normative paradigms of political philosophy coexisted in Mughal South Asia, Alam stresses that as far as the long-term self-fashioning of the empire was concerned, the Nasirean *akhlāqī* tradition exercised by far the most important and enduring influence.⁴ He sums this argument up by observing that '[T]he unmistakable imprint of Nasirean ethics that one discerns is thus not simply on the norms or principles of governance but on a very wide area of Mughal politico-cultural life.'⁵

At the heart of Mughal imperial ideology lay a particular conceptualization of the meanings of the universal empire and the role of the sovereign therein – one that drew heavily on Tusi's recommendations. Writing in the late sixteenth century, Abul Fazl described the emperor primarily as the fountainhead of justice and the protector of harmony and equilibrium in the world. This association of princely rule with the administration of justice is one of the most enduring themes of political philosophy across Eurasian societies. The Perso-Islamic tradition that Nasiruddin Tusi was a part of was particularly strong and consistent in its emphasis on this association. Tusi's work upholds justice as the highest form of virtue and locates it at the heart of human well-being and prosperity. He also points out that being just was the most important quality that a ruler must possess, since 'in justice lies the order of the realm (*qawām-i mamlukat ba-ma'dalat būd*)'.⁶

Mughal imperial texts heavily borrowed from Tusi's emphasis on justice as the cornerstone of sovereignty. Emperors were consistently portrayed in contemporary literature as approximations of the just ruler idealized in Tusi's *akhlāq*. Narrating an incident involving Akbar, Abul Fazl describes how, on his way from Kabul to North India in 1589, the emperor discovered that a man had 'dishonoured' a peasant's daughter. Akbar felt obliged – we are told – to dispense justice immediately. He had the offender executed. It was further discovered that one Sharif Khan, the son of an imperial calligrapher, was also partly responsible for the crime. Not deterred by the fact that the man was related to an imperial officer in his own employment, the emperor also punished Sharif Khan severely.⁷

This representation of Mughal emperors as the steadfast defenders of justice is also present in other imperial texts. In his autobiography, Akbar's son Jahangir (r. 1605–27) records that one of the first things he did after his accession was to fasten a 'Chain of Justice (*zanjīr-i 'adl*)'. The chain, he wrote, was made of pure gold and held sixty bells. It stretched across the breadth of the Yamuna, from the walls of the Mughal fort at Agra to a stone post on the other bank of the

river. He declared that anybody in pursuit of justice ‘might come to this chain and shake it so that its noise might attract [Jahangir’s] attention’.⁸ In several of the allegorical paintings commissioned at Jahangir’s court, this chain makes an appearance. All this resonates with the ideas of Tusi, who locates justice at the heart of social order and links it with the notions of equilibrium and unity.⁹ He – and, in his vein, Mughal ideologues like Abul Fazl – argued that one of the principal ways of ensuring the prevalence of justice in society was to replace multiplicity with unity.¹⁰

Justice and the role of the king

It is the method of the establishment of unity in society which brings the king into the picture most prominently in the ideological schema laid down by Tusi. Later texts produced in the Timurid and Mughal milieu echoed this thought. One example is *Akhlāq-i Jalāli*, a fifteenth-century normative text inspired by Tusi’s *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī*. It argues along similar lines that ‘the maintenance of equity and reference to it, can only be effected by the ascertainment of a mean’.¹¹ However, the author continues, determining this mean is extremely difficult and requires taking the recourse of divine law, since the origin of all unity lies in ‘the Supreme and Holy Divinity’.¹² In order to ensure the determination of the mean and the maintenance of equity on its basis, the mediation of somebody becomes essential.¹³ This can be none other than the just king (*pādshāh-i ‘ādil*).¹⁴ The author argues that it is for this reason that god selected the king and equipped him with a sword.¹⁵ This was done so that ‘whosoever should be incompilant with the equation of money, seeking more than his right and overstepping the path of rectitude, with this trenchant sword he may be enabled to bring them to order’.¹⁶ In turn, this would help establish and preserve unity in the world. In the domain of politics, the duty of the king is to guide the people of the world towards pledging their political allegiance to a single person – himself, since he alone had been chosen by god – and thereby eliminate the evil of multiplicity of allegiances and motives. Writing almost a century later, Abul Fazl echoed the same argument. In the *Akbar-nāma*, he writes that great rulers devote their efforts to ‘the production of unity and to the [*sic*] removing the dust of complexity by the water of simplicity’.¹⁷ He emphasizes that as one such great ruler, his patron’s ‘whole thought is to accept the obedience of mortals so that multiplicity (*manshūr*) may become unity (*paiwast*) and that mankind in general may have repose’.¹⁸

Through such a proposition, kingly rule was conceptualized as an instrument necessary for the establishment of unity, equivalence, and justice in society. Dispensing justice was conceived as the inherent *obligation* of the sovereign, not an occasional *favour* that his rule might or might not bring to the world. Writing in the seventeenth century, the Mughal commander and scholar Baqir Najm-i Sani reiterated this idea by arguing that if divine favour had chosen

somebody to be a ruler, he must value this decision and 'hold the empire dear and venerable'.¹⁹ One particular passage from his text is worth quoting at length as a typical example of his views on the rationale behind kingship:

In systemizing rules and in maintaining their procedures, he must exert the utmost care to achieve justice ('*adl*) and impartiality (*inṣāf*). If the judge [ruler] does not regulate the affairs of the people, a clandestine rebel, abetted by tyranny, will destroy the lives of the nobility and plebeian alike. If the light from the candle of justice does not illuminate the sombre cell of the afflicted, the darkness of cruelty (*ẓulmāt-i ẓalm*) will blacken the entire country just as it does the hearts of tyrants ... Therefore, rulers must consider that they occupy the throne *in order to dispense justice*, not to lead a life filled with pleasure. They must consider justice ('*adl*) and equity (*inṣāf*) as the means to survival of their rule (*mūjab-i baqā'ī-i saltānat*), permanence of their fame (*dawām-i nām-i nekū*) and reward in the hereafter (*ihrāz-i ṣawāb ākhirat*). To them, nothing should be more binding than pursuit of the people's welfare.²⁰

It is interesting to compare such ideas about the ruler's responsibility towards his people as presented by the writers of Mughal chronicles and normative literature with the debates around kingship that emerged in Western Europe around the same time. It is true that the kind of secularization that ideas of kingship went through in those parts of the world, especially in the formulations of John Locke or Thomas Hobbes, was absent in the official discourse of the Mughal Empire. Unlike in Locke's propositions, Mughal political theorists did not give common people any right to judge their kings. The latter could indeed be judged, but only by the divinely mandated universal sovereign, whose realm – and hence right – was all-encompassing. At the same time, Mughal writers – like the ones discussed above – did inscribe in the Mughal vision of kingship a very strong element of reciprocity that kings owed to their subjects in terms of maintaining peace, order, and justice. What this did is project the Mughal emperor as an absolutist, benevolent, father figure – something similar to what Peter Wilson finds in the case of kingship in early modern Germany.²¹

War and military violence as moral compulsion

Within this Mughal ideological paradigm, the sovereign bore a grave responsibility. Harbans Mukhia points out that in Abul Fazl's imagination, the sovereign's absolute power was tempered by his 'responsibility to establish absolute peace among his subjects through the practice of non-discrimination and to bring about tranquillity and prosperity through paternalist care'.²² Problems would usually arise when rival political powers, whose allegiance the Mughals sought, would refuse to bow down to imperial authority. What might have seemed to be an expression of paternalistic care for the Mughals was quite understandably perceived as nothing less than rampant aggression by other powers. In many cases, these rivals would flatly refuse to accept Mughal suzerainty, much to the surprise and annoyance of

Mughal authors, who remained firmly convinced of their own divinely ordained mission and the promise of their eventual victory. Faced by such instances of what the empire saw as strange acts of 'insubordination', military violence did not remain a princely whim; it was conceptualized as a moral compulsion. If Mughal monarchs were to fulfil their kingly duties on earth on the lines suggested by Tusi, they did not have an option but to resort to military violence against their rivals. It is precisely such a vision that Abul Fazl expresses:

The sole idea (*hamagi basej*) of wise kings is day by day to refresh the garden of the world by the streams of justice and assuredly this design is accomplished whenever extensive countries come into the hands of one who is just and of wide capacity. And when an empire has been civilized by an enlightened and just ruler and the people thereof – small and great – sit in the shade of tranquility, it is unavoidable (*nā-guzīr*) that such a prince should cast a profound glance on the deeds of neighbours who have taken the path of dissimulation. He must look closely in order to perceive if their former conduct can be brought into line with love and order and if they can be induced to treat their subjects properly. If they do not, then the requirement of justice is such that (*āyīn-i dādgarī ān-kah*) they should be punished and their land taken from them.²³

This important passage links the Mughal court's legitimization of aggressive campaigns and military violence with their dynastic ideology. Conquest and governance are shown to be not enough in themselves, but depicted as only an intermediate stage before further expansion was made essential by the moral and ethical compulsion of fulfilling the duties of kingship.

This moral compulsion was further magnified by the universalist aspirations of the Mughal emperors. This is where the Mughals assimilated Nasirean *akhlāqī* recommendations with their eclectic ideas about universal rule. The Mughal emperor was seen as the benevolent, just, yet strict *paterfamilias* in charge of protecting order and peace in the world, and guiding humanity towards the bliss of loyalty and true enlightenment. Although in actuality he ruled over the inhabitants of his limited territories, theoretically his dominions were supposed to encompass the entire universe. For this reason, he could not but concern himself with the welfare of all mankind.²⁴

Conditions for waging just war

If violence was inevitable, what were the norms of initiating it? In *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī*, Nasiruddin Tusi lays down very detailed guidelines about when and how the just prince should open military offensive against another ruler. Tusi writes that the initial step for the prince should be to try and win over his enemies through persuasion, so that the need for war did not arise.²⁵ War might be started only when such peaceful methods had failed. The prince was to make sure that he had 'only Pure Good and the quest of the Faith' in his heart and did not want 'superiority

or domination' for himself.²⁶ Tusi continues to argue that a state could wage war on its enemies under six conditions – that the enemy was innately evil and it was impossible to reform him; that fighting him was the only way out of the situation he himself had created; that victory of the enemy would only empower him; that unless given battle, he would escape with one's material belongings; that fighting him would not involve any act of treachery or dishonesty; and finally, that there would be no condemnation of fighting the enemy 'in this world or the next'.²⁷ By laying down these detailed recommendations about the waging of just war, Tusi projected the use of military violence as a last resort. It was to be initiated only when all other methods had failed and the adversary had not shown any sign of 'reform'.

It is interesting how these recommendations perfectly match the economics of war. Waging war is an expensive business, where a state's long-term investments in personnel, animals, and technology run the risk of annihilation in a very short span of time. Hence, across time and space, states have usually tried to avoid war and settle disputes through peaceful negotiations. However, given the extreme frequency of wars throughout human history, what becomes striking is how frequently such negotiations have failed. Hence, waging war as a last resort was not entirely a novel idea that Tusi forwards; what is worth noting is the language he uses and the moral economy within which he locates such decisions.

Contemporary texts unanimously argue that Mughal rulers and commanders sincerely upheld this Nasirean principle of war as a last resort. These texts never forget to mention that before attacking any neighbouring ruler or chieftain, Mughal armies would always seek to persuade him to submit through peaceful negotiations. This is exemplified by a passage from *Akbar-nāma*, where Abul Fazl narrates the dispatch of a Mughal army against the Baluchis in modern Pakistan in the late sixteenth century. He writes that the troops were 'first to guide them [the Baluchis] by wisdom-conferring counsels, and if these were not effectual they were to enlighten their darkness by the flashes of the sword'.²⁸ It is, however, difficult to ascertain whether these steps were actually followed on the ground, or if they were merely literary conventions of Mughal court chronicles, irrespective of what transpired in the real world. However, what we do know is that the Mughals were always willing to accept the submission of their adversaries and to co-opt them afterwards. This meant that imperial armies would likely be willing to first try to convince their adversaries to submit before hostilities broke out.

This tradition continued well into the seventeenth century. Mirza Nathan – a Mughal commander who served on the empire's eastern front in the early seventeenth century – goes on at great length in his autobiography to narrate how this line was toed in the Mughal military operations in Bengal and Assam in during his time there. One example relates to the sending of an expedition against an Afghan adversary – Khwaja Usman of Bokainagar. Nathan tells us that Islam Khan

Chishti – the *ṣūbadār* (governor) of Bengal – and his commanders agreed to first write to Usman, admonishing him. If Usman was to submit to Mughal authority, he would be forgiven; if not, the imperial army would invade his land.²⁹ Nathan writes that as per this decision, a letter was drafted addressing Usman, ‘every word of which was a closet of peace’.³⁰ It reasoned that the ‘well-being of both the worlds’ and the ‘main spring of better days’ for both him and his people would immediately ensue if he were to get over his ‘self-conceit and arrogance’ and bow down to the authority of ‘the protector of the world’.³¹

In the face of such diplomatic pressure that combined the hope of getting a share of the empire’s increasing resources and a threat of entering into serious armed conflict with a powerful state, many *zamīndārs* (chieftains) and rulers felt it wise to submit and accept Mughal suzerainty. This is what the Baluchis mentioned above, for instance, did when Akbar sent an army against them. Abul Fazl notes happily that violent means did not need to be adopted in teaching them a lesson in loyalty to the empire. He observes that the ‘sound of the approach of the world-conquering troops aroused the slumberers (*ghunūd-gān-i pīndār*) and guided them to good service’.³²

Conduct of war and military violence

If such diplomatic posturing was rejected, war would follow sooner or later. The chronicles give us the impression that in the course of campaigns, imperial armies always preferred to engage their enemies out in the open in frontal combat. For the Mughal court, this was the most honourable thing to do. This is something that Shah Jahan’s (r. 1628–58) biographer Abdul Hamid Lahori calls *jang-i ṣaff*.³³ Apart from the *akhlāqī* recommendations about honourable war, Mughals also knew that it was in such forms of engagements that their strength lay. Whenever the enemy refused to do this, and resorted to night attacks, surprise attacks, hit-and-run tactics, or used the cover of jungles and rains instead, Mughal texts would brand them as deceitful, treacherous, duplicitous, and cowardly.

Legitimizing violence against civilians was always more difficult than legitimizing that committed against combatants. One of the problems, however, was that in North India, a large number of peasants wielded weapons and served as combatants during the off season of cultivation.³⁴ Not only peasants, but even a large number of religious ascetics also bore arms and hired out their services to states and armies as mercenaries.³⁵ In fact, historical scholarship points out that a large part of the South Asian population was perpetually armed throughout early modern times. Douglas Streusand points out that this made Mughal empire-building remarkably different from similar contemporary processes.³⁶ Given the unclear boundary between combatants and non-combatants, the issue of violence against civilians was much more complex in this part of the world than in others. The incident at Chitor that I began this chapter with is a case in point.

This ambiguity between a combatant and a civilian notwithstanding, there are several examples when large numbers of common people became the targets of Mughal military violence. In the course of campaigns, imperial armies often took recourse to systematic plundering of villages and terrorizing the general population. This was especially true in cases where imperial armies feared that their adversaries enjoyed wide moral and logistical support of the local population or the local *zamīndārs*. Apart from lending military support, the latter would also often be responsible for supplying the local ruler – whom the Mughals had attacked – with food and other essential resources. In these cases, alongside pursuing the ruler, imperial armies would also direct their violence against these chieftains to dissuade them from supporting him and thereby resisting Mughal expansion.

Mirza Nathan's memoirs provide us with a particularly large number of such examples from the Mughal campaigns in Kuch Bihar and Assam in the early seventeenth century. The reason behind this is probably twofold. First, the fact that Nathan was involved in several of these raids himself in one capacity or the other meant that he saw the unfolding of the campaigns from a proximity unmatched by imperial chroniclers, who would usually be located far away from the action. As opposed to the overviews offered by the latter group, Nathan's version provides us with a detailed and ground-level account of day-to-day events. Second, written of his own volition, Mirza Nathan's account is relatively more objective in its narration of events than those writing in the direct employment of emperors.

For instance, Nathan writes that as an imperial army marched against Dhubri in Assam in 1612–13, he was sent at the head of a detachment to raid the areas of Bhitaband and Bahirband. He writes that he was instructed 'to bring the ryots [peasants] under control; failing that he was to bring them as captives and drive them away from their lands'.³⁷ Nathan records that he carried out these orders to the last word and notes that his soldiers 'did not allow the natives any respite even to drink water, for a period of four days and nights'.³⁸ Many were imprisoned, their property looted, and animals seized. This severe action forced the local *zamīndārs* to submit to the imperial army. They were allowed to remain in their territories only upon the solemn promise that they would not oppose the Mughal advance.³⁹ After eventually consolidating their base in Hajo and Pandu in Kuch Bihar, Mughal armies tried to subjugate the 'Eighteen Rajas' of the Himalayan foothills. After conquering Rani, there was again serious raiding and plundering. All the forts of the Rajas were destroyed. Nathan records that Mughal troops executed all those who resisted them, while the rest were imprisoned. The soldiers and crew of the imperial fleet, who had suffered during the campaign due to a shortage of food, compensated for their hardship by looting and plundering the local villages.⁴⁰

This kind of large-scale violence was legitimized in Mughal chronicles as an unfortunate but necessary condition for the Mughal mission of establishing justice and social order in the world. Normative texts produced during the first half

of the seventeenth century support such a justification. Baqir Najm-i Sani, for example, writes:

If punishment and chastisement are non-existent, [state] affairs will be in ruin ... If the sword of retribution (*tegh-i siyāsat*) is not drawn from the scabbard of vengeance (*niyām-i intiqām*), the roots of rebellion (*bunyād-i fitna*) are not eradicated and the basis of oppression (*asās-i sitam*) is not undermined. If the debris of tyranny (*khās wa khāshāk-i bī-dād*) is not burnt in the fire of [imperial] wrath (*ātish-i qahr*), the seedling of repose will not flourish in the garden of hope ... Therefore, rulers should display mercy of God toward the virtuous and the reformers and the wrath of God toward the evildoers and the seditious.⁴¹

Of course, there was no telling where the ‘roots of rebellion’ or the ‘basis of oppression’ should be located. There was a great deal of merit in using such vague categories. Any measure of raiding, plundering, enslavement, or massacre that strategic concerns could deem necessary could also dovetail into this provision created by the *akhlāqī* tradition. Within the imperial ideological framework, these two logics – the logic of *realpolitik* and the logic of the *akhlāq* – were inseparable. There was no opposition between them, and the flexibility of the Nasirean *akhlāqī* tradition meant that the norms could be variously interpreted by the chroniclers and commanders to mean different things at different points of time to suit the imperial agenda.

Limits of Mughal military violence

Nasirean ethics recommended that if the enemy would surrender and seek pardon in the course of war, the righteous imperial soldiers were to treat him with generosity – the noble quality that was ranked next only to justice.⁴² Imperial chronicles usually discuss in detail how this was precisely the way Mughal armies behaved. Well into the second half of the seventeenth century, when – under Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707) – Mughal imperial ideology had taken a Sunni Islamic turn, these Nasirean recommendations were still upheld by the chronicles. Harbans Mukhia also points out that the image of the Mughal emperor as the justice-dispensing and caring *paterfamilias* endured throughout the greater part of Mughal rule.⁴³ At times, precedence could be drawn from Islamic religious texts to justify the same action. For example, describing the treatment of defeated Ahom soldiers by Mughal troops, Shihabuddin Talish invokes Quranic verses not to contradict what Nasirean ethics recommended, but to bolster it.⁴⁴

Contemporary Mughal texts were always enthusiastic in stressing that in the course of military campaigns, imperial armies would go to great lengths to ensure that the life and property of the common people were not harmed. We are told that commanders frequently issued categorical orders to this effect. The Assam campaign of 1662–63 is a case in point. Shihabuddin Talish writes that Mir Jumla,

the commander of the invading Mughal army, issued an imperial decree at the very outset. It instructed his soldiers 'not to plunder the property and not to be cruel to the women and children of the local inhabitants'.⁴⁵ Talish claims that Mir Jumla enforced this rule with such severity, that during the entire period of the invasion 'none of the officers or soldiers had the courage to cast covetous eyes on the property and women of the people of Aasham'.⁴⁶ Whether or not this really happened, such stories gave Mughal chroniclers narrative resources to portray an image of imperial armies as the vanguards of justice and social order.

The chronicles narrate several instances where Mughal soldiers – found guilty of violating such decrees – were expressly brought to justice and punished publicly. One such incident is narrated by Talish from the time of the Mughal occupation of Kuch Bihar in 1661. When some soldiers of the imperial army were found guilty of defying a similar *farmān* forbidding the infliction of any harm to the life and property of the people of the city, they were arrested and presented before Mir Jumla. Talish writes that as a punishment, 'an arrow was passed through their respective nostril. The stolen goods were hung round their neck and they were paraded through the entire town'.⁴⁷

Owing to the limited amount of information, it is difficult to gauge how far such incidents reflected the norm. It was obviously in the interest of the empire and its chroniclers to exaggerate the role of such decrees in shaping the behaviour of imperial soldiers and keeping them on the righteous path prescribed by Tusi. How much of these ethical norms were actually observed in the heat of the moment and away from the watchful eyes of imperial supervisors is a matter of debate. It is likely that vernacular sources would tell a different story about the role of Mughal soldiers in the countryside over the course of prolonged military campaigns. For our purpose, however, it is important to note that Mughal chroniclers would like us to believe that imperial commanders regularly resorted to different methods to protect the interest of the common people, and that they were generally successful at this. After narrating the incident cited above, for example, Talish goes on to boast about how Mir Jumla's prompt, strict, and public dispensation of justice restored the Kuch people's faith in the Mughal army, and encouraged the ones who had run away from their homes to return.⁴⁸

These ground-level measures mirrored the orientation of Mughal political ideology. Harbans Mukhia points out that Mughal ideologues like Abul Fazl tempered the absolutist image of the justice-dispensing world-conquering emperor with 'paternalistic generosity and the spirit of forgiveness'.⁴⁹ Once again, the genealogy of these traits can be traced back to the Nasirean ethical paradigm, where generosity ranks right after justice as a quality desirable in the ideal sovereign. There are several instances cited in Mughal texts about emperors making public statements about their generosity. In 1605, for example, three Rajputs of the Khachhwa house rebelled against imperial officers, taking up arms against them. Jahangir writes that his own officers demanded serious punishment for the offenders. They

reminded the emperor that had such acts been carried out in the Uzbek realm, the 'whole family and connections of that band of men would have been destroyed'.⁵⁰ However, Jahangir decided to display his magnanimity instead of his vengeance. He retorted that 'justice demands (*muqtaṣā-i 'adālat nīz ast*) that many shall not be chastised for the fault of one'.⁵¹ Abul Fazl makes a similar point while narrating the episode of Akbar pardoning the Baluchis and calling back the army that had gone against them. The chronicler reiterates the idea that his patron did not intend to use military violence to fulfil his own selfish motives or just randomly; his decision to unleash violence was tempered by his inclination to shower generosity on anybody who was willing to submit to him.⁵²

Mughal military violence in the early modern world

It is this aspect of Mughal statecraft that lent it a specific quality. On the one hand, the linking of military violence with the category of justice meant that the Mughal state could legitimize making war against anybody and everybody in the name of this abstract concept. Any act of perpetration of military violence – or the restraint of it – could be justified as something that justice demanded. On the other hand, the projection of the Mughal emperor as the benevolent, paternalist, universal sovereign committed to the cause of *ṣulḥ-i kul* (peace with all) meant that he was open to forging alliances with almost anybody, irrespective of their race, religion, and other denominations.⁵³ Recent scholarship on Mughal warfare and empire-building highlights this strong accommodative and inclusive dimension of Mughal statecraft. Farhat Hasan argues that the reason the second Mughal emperor Humayun's (r. 1530–40, 1555–56) conquest of Gujarat in the early 1530s proved short-lived was that he did not forge alliances with the various stakeholders and power blocks at local and regional levels. Four decades later, his son Akbar managed to found a more durable regime in the same region by co-sharing his resources and sovereignty with these people after his initial conquest of them. Douglas Streusand reasons that when it came to sieges, Mughals as well as their adversaries treated fortresses more as bargaining chips for striking political deals than as targets meant to be annihilated. Finally, Jos Gommans stretches this argument the farthest and contends that large-scale military victories only had a symbolic value for Mughal empire-building. Spectacular victories – like those in the battles of Panipat (1526, 1556) and Khanua (1527) – merely served as trump cards in a political game largely dominated by forging and switching alliances.⁵⁴

To say that wars and military violence played only a marginal or symbolic role in Mughal empire-formation is problematic. The instances of long-drawn-out violent conflicts involving very large numbers of combatants and casualties are simply too many in contemporary sources. However, what is indeed borne out by the latter is that the Mughals used military violence more to force their adversaries into submission and co-option, than for their outright destruction. Building their empire in the

multi-ethnic and multireligious region of South Asia, this inclusivity of the Mughals ushered in the development of a highly diverse and cosmopolitan empire. At the same time, the empire must have benefited from the projection of the sovereign as the defender of justice and military violence as a means of his establishing it. Linking war to the interest of a specific community would have created fissures in their diverse empire. But the definition of military violence as a means of defending justice helped motivate the extremely heterogeneous aristocracy and armies of the empire.

This inclusiveness of Mughal statecraft resonates with several other early modern empires. Karen Barkey argues that Ottoman empire-building revolved around a similar ideology of universal sovereignty. She contends that the Ottoman process of incorporation and assimilation of different political groups did not involve 'much of the contestation assumed in the European model of state-making'.⁵⁵ Peter Purdue argues that the Qing espoused a similar openness in China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He observes that their 'ethic of inclusion, offering all who committed a proper place in a universal moral order', set them apart from their Ming predecessors, whose 'ethnically oriented policy' characterized an empire meant primarily for the Han Chinese.⁵⁶ Consequently, while the Ming had shut themselves off from the Mongol invaders of Inner Eurasia, the Qing sought more active engagements with the latter and were even prepared to absorb them into their empire if they were ready to submit. Purdue argues that it was this broad-based inclusiveness of their universalist imperial ideology that helped the Qing state achieve territorial expansion to a degree unknown to any other Chinese dynasty before them.

It is also evident that the Mughal case marked a considerable divergence from early modern Europe in terms of the development of the norms for the conduct of war and the perpetration of military violence. In his now classic text on the changing ideologies of war in late medieval and early modern Europe, James Turner Johnson outlines this complex process. Johnson argues that throughout the medieval period, there existed in Europe a theological doctrine about the right to wage war and a chivalric body of thought about the conduct of war. These two doctrines merged together in the sixteenth century to form what has been called the classic just war doctrine. But soon after this, the new combined doctrine once again split between the proponents of war waged in the interest of religion, and those who argued in favour of war being waged for entirely secular political reasons. With the rise of the secular state over the following centuries, it is the second doctrine that found increasing currency in the domain of politics.⁵⁷

Interestingly, in the Mughal case too, we find religion taking a back seat in justifying military violence, especially between Akbar and Shah Jahan. However, this did not amount to the increasing secularization of political philosophy found in Europe. The dominant discourse on kingship in the Mughal Empire still held it very much as divine, and the emperor continued to be seen as appointed by god.

But, as I have pointed out earlier, the rhetoric used to conceptualize this kingship transcended the boundaries of any specific religion. The overwhelming adherence to the Nasirean ethical norms created a state that was aggressively expansionist, yet cosmopolitan, tolerant, and most importantly, ready to ally with anybody. As a result, the military violence that it was ready to unleash was, in theory, infinite in its scope, but in practice, tempered by its universalism and inclusivity.

Notes

- 1 A. F. Allami, *Akbar-nāma*, ed. M. A. Rahim (3 vols, Calcutta, 1877–86), II, p. 323; H. Beveridge (trans.), *The Akbarnama of Abu'l Fazl* (3 vols, Calcutta, 1897–1921), II, p. 475. Also see K. N. Ahmad, *Ṭabaqāt Akbarī*, ed. B. De (3 vols, Calcutta, 1927–40), II, pp. 214–19; B. De (trans.), *The Ṭabaqāt-i Akbarī of Khwājah Niẓāmuddīn Aḥmad* (3 vols, Delhi, 1992), II, pp. 341–8; M. A. Qandahari, *Ta'rikh-i Akbarī*, ed. H. S. Muinuddin Nadwi, S. A. Ali, and I. A. Arshi (Rampur, 1962), pp. 109–15; T. Ahmad (trans.), *Ta'rikh-i Akbarī* (Delhi, 1993), pp. 148–53.
- 2 *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, II, p. 323; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, II, p. 475.
- 3 M. Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India, c.1200–1800* (Delhi, 2004), p. 61.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 81–114, 141–89.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 70–1.
- 6 Tusi assigns justice a uniquely high place among various virtues. N. Tusi, *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī*, ed. M. Minavi and A. R. Haidari (Tehran, 1976), pp. 304, 143; G.M. Wickens (trans.), *The Nasirean Ethics*, (London, 1964), pp. 230, 104.
- 7 *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, III, p. 569; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, III, p. 861.
- 8 N. Jahangīr, *Tūzak-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. S. A. Khan, vol. 1 (Ghaziipur, 1863), p. 3; A. Rogers (trans.), *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī or the Memoirs of Jahāngīr* (2 vols in 1, Delhi, 2006), I, p. 7.
- 9 The translators of *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī* use 'unicity' rather than 'unity' to express the idea of being or comprising one, or the state of being united as a whole and complete entity.
- 10 *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī*, ed. Minavi and Haidari, p. 131; *Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, p. 95.
- 11 J. M. Asad, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, ed. H. S. A. Haidari (Delhi, 2007), p. 57; W. F. Thompson (trans.), *Practical Philosophy of the Muhammadan People, exhibited in its Professed Connection with the European, so as to Render Either an Introduction to the Other; Being a Translation of the Akhlak-i Jalaly, the Most Esteemed Ethical Work of Middle Asia from the Persian of Fakir Jany Muhammad Asaad* (London, 1839), pp. 126–7.
- 12 *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, ed. Haidari, p. 57; *Akhlak-i Jalaly*, trans. Thompson, pp. 126–7.
- 13 *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, ed. Haidari, p. 57; *Akhlak-i Jalaly*, trans. Thompson, pp. 126–7; the translators render 'mediation' as 'intermediacy'.
- 14 *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, ed. Haidari, p. 57; *Akhlak-i Jalaly*, trans. Thompson, p. 127.
- 15 *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, ed. Haidari, p. 57; *Akhlak-i Jalaly*, trans. Thompson, p. 127.
- 16 *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, ed. Haidari, p. 57; *Akhlak-i Jalaly*, trans. Thompson, p. 127.
- 17 *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, III, p. 518; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, III, p. 791.
- 18 *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, III, p. 240; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, III, p. 343. These findings support the arguments of Linda Darling, who has worked extensively on the idea of

- the circle of justice in West Asian political philosophy. Darling argues that the association between justice and kingship remained strong under all of the great Mughals and that this was especially true for Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan, although it wielded some influence before and after them as well. L. Darling, “Do Justice, Do Justice, For That is Paradise”: Middle Eastern Advice for Indian Muslim Rulers’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 22:1–2 (2003), pp. 8–12.
- 19 M. B. N. Sani, *Mau’izah-i Jahāngīrī of Muhammad Baqir Najm-i Sani: An Indo-Persian Mirror for Princes*, ed. and trans. S. S. Alvi (Albany, NY, 1989), pp. 45–6, 147–8. Emphasis mine.
 - 20 *Ibid.* Emphasis mine.
 - 21 P. H. Wilson, ‘War in German Thought from the Peace of Westphalia to Napoleon’, *English History Quarterly*, 28:1 (1998), p. 12.
 - 22 H. Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* (Oxford and Victoria, 2005), p. 52.
 - 23 *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, III, p. 474; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, III, p. 715. Translation partially mine.
 - 24 *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, III, p. 69; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, III, p. 96. See also *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, III, p. 188; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, III, p. 264. Also see Pratyay Nath, *Climate of Conquest: War, Environment, and Empire in Mughal North India* (Delhi, 2019), pp. 225–47.
 - 25 *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Minavi and Haidari, p. 311; *Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, p. 235.
 - 26 *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Minavi and Haidari, p. 311; *Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, p. 235.
 - 27 *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Minavi and Haidari, p. 338; *Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, pp. 255–6.
 - 28 *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, III, pp. 235–6; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, III, p. 335.
 - 29 M. Nathan, *Bahāristān-i Ghā’ibī*, transcribed copy of the original Persian manuscript preserved in Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, JS 60–62; National Library, Kolkata, Jadunath Sarkar Collection, JS60: 62b–3a; M. Nathan, *Bahāristān-i Ghaybī: A History of the Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the Reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan*, trans. M. I. Borah (2 vols, Guwahati, 1992 ed.), I, p. 159.
 - 30 *Bahāristān-i Ghā’ibī*, JS60: 62b; *Bahāristān-i Ghaybī*, trans. Borah, I, p. 159.
 - 31 *Bahāristān-i Ghā’ibī*, JS60: 62b; *Bahāristān-i Ghaybī*, trans. Borah, I, p. 159.
 - 32 *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, III, pp. 239–40; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, III, p. 342.
 - 33 The phrase stands for a military encounter where both the parties involved first draw up their forces in proper battle array and then engage in frontal combat.
 - 34 D. H. A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450–1850* (Cambridge, 1990); D. H. A. Kolff, ‘Peasants Fighting for a Living in Early Modern North India’, in E.-J. Zürcher (ed.), *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour 1500–2000* (Amsterdam, 2013), pp. 243–66; I. A. Khan, ‘Muskets in the Mawas: Instruments of Peasant Resistance’, in K. N. Panikkar, T. J. Byres, and U. Patnaik (eds), *The Making of History: Essays Presented to Irfan Habib* (London, 2002), pp. 81–103.
 - 35 Important works in this field include W. G. Orr, ‘Armed Religious Ascetics in Northern India’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 24:1 (1940); D. Lorenzen, ‘Warrior Ascetics in Indian History’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 98:1 (1978); W. Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires* (Cambridge, 2006).
 - 36 D. Streusand, *The Formation of the Mughal Empire* (Delhi, 1989), pp. 70–2.

- 37 *Bahāristān-i Ghā'ibī*, JS60:110a; *Bahāristān-i Ghaybī*, trans. Borah, I, pp. 230–1.
- 38 *Bahāristān-i Ghā'ibī*, JS60:110a; *Bahāristān-i Ghaybī*, trans. Borah, I, pp. 230–1.
- 39 *Bahāristān-i Ghā'ibī*, JS60:110a; *Bahāristān-i Ghaybī*, trans. Borah, I, pp. 230–1.
- 40 *Bahāristān-i Ghā'ibī*, JS61:197a; *Bahāristān-i Ghaybī*, trans. Borah, I, p. 419.
- 41 *Mau'izah-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. and trans. Alvi, pp. 46–7, 148–9.
- 42 *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī*, ed. Minavi and Haidari, p. 338; *Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, p. 255.
- 43 Mukhia, *The Mughals*, pp. 52–4.
- 44 S. Talish, *Tarikh-i Aasham*, trans. M. Asif (Guwahati, 2009), p. 31.
- 45 *Ibid.*, pp. 31–2.
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 48 *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.
- 49 Mukhia, *The Mughals*, p. 54.
- 50 *Tūzak-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Khan, I, p. 13; *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, trans. Rogers, I, p. 30.
- 51 *Tūzak-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. Khan, I, p. 13; *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, trans. Rogers, I, p. 30.
- 52 *Akbar-nāma*, ed. Rahim, III, p. 240; *Akbarnama*, trans. Beveridge, III, p. 343.
- 53 Defined as 'universal peace', the doctrine of *ṣulḥ-i kul* was developed at Akbar's court. For details, see M. A. Ali, 'Sulh-i Kul and the Religious Ideas of Akbar', in M. A. Ali, *Mughal India: Studies in Polity, Ideas, Society and Culture* (New Delhi, 2008), pp. 158–72. Also see Nath, *Climate of Conquest*, pp. 270–1.
- 54 J. J. L. Gommans, 'Warhorse and Gunpowder in India c.1000–1850', in J. Black (ed.), *War in the Early Modern World* (London and New York, 1999).
- 55 K. Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), pp. 1–2.
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- 57 J. T. Johnson, *Ideology, Reason and the Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts, 1200–1740* (Princeton, 1975). Also see J. Q. Whitman, *The Verdict of Battle: The Law of Victory and the Making of Modern War* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

Part III

Differentiation and identification

10

‘Sacrificed to the madness of the bloodthirsty sabre’: violence and the Great Turkish War in the work of Romeyn de Hooghe

Michel van Duijnen

In early modern Christian Europe, ‘the Turk’ played an important role in the imagination of violence. With the successful European campaigns of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, ‘Turks’ came increasingly to be seen as warriors that were equally cruel and formidable.¹ Sixteenth-century German propaganda prints would portray Turkish raiders as beasts that impaled children on lances, collected trophy heads, and ate the flesh of their victims.² In this way, ‘the Turk’ became a benchmark for excessive violence in the imagination of Christian Europe. During the wars of religion, both Catholic and Protestant factions would use this image of the Turk to denounce their Christian enemies. Rhetorically, heretics were described as just as cruel as the sultan’s soldiers – if not more bloodthirsty in character.³ Even the battle cry of some of the early Dutch Calvinist rebels in the Eighty Years’ War, who claimed that they would ‘rather [be] Turkish than Popish’,⁴ played on the general Christian-European fear of the ever-lurking Turkish threat.⁵

However, these older sixteenth-century images started to be rapidly reconfigured during the Great Turkish War of 1683–99. In 1683, after a period of uneasy peace between the Austrian Habsburgs and the Ottoman Empire, Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa marched on Vienna in a spectacular show of military might. While the Ottoman army laid siege to the city, the king of Poland, John III Sobieski, took command of a relief expedition. After a gruelling siege of two months the relief force arrived and scattered Kara Mustafa’s troops. Defeated at the gates of Vienna, the Ottoman forces were now put on the defensive. Seeking to exploit the victory at Vienna, Pope Innocent XI set up an anti-Ottoman alliance under the banner of the Holy League, initially comprising the Holy Roman Empire, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Papal States, and the Venetian Republic. Soon, forces of the

League entered Ottoman Hungary and made steady gains in pitched battles and sieges alike.

The newly found victories made their mark on the age-old trope of ‘Turkish cruelty’. No longer the perpetrator, the Turk was now imagined to be the unfortunate subject of extreme violence, meted out by the forces of the Holy League. The storming and capture of Buda (1686) and Belgrade (1688) in particular were accompanied by large-scale massacres of Ottoman civilian populations, of which explicit and lurid descriptions circulated within the news networks of Europe. Such stories sparked the imagination of men and women far beyond the borders of the countries committed to the Holy League. In fact, many illustrated news prints and printed triumphalia were produced by artists and publishers based in the Dutch Republic, a neutral party in regard to the Great Turkish War.⁶ The Haarlem-based artist Romeyn de Hooghe, an extremely successful and productive Dutch printmaker, was especially famous for his high-quality prints on the wars with the Ottoman Empire. An equally savvy businessman, De Hooghe worked together with printers from the Southern Netherlands, and alongside his so-called news prints in broadsheet format he produced a number of etchings for the propaganda efforts orchestrated by the local authorities in the Southern Netherlands.⁷

In this chapter, I will analyse how De Hooghe visualized the violence connected to the Great Turkish War. As will be shown, De Hooghe’s portrayal of the battle against ‘the Turk’ alternated between a triumphant exaltation of Habsburg power and a more ambiguous view of south-east Europe as a distant and distinctly violent place beset by ruthless Christian soldiers and warlike border peoples. De Hooghe’s work across a number of genres – news prints, triumphalia, and satire – shows how traditional tropes of Turkish cruelty were, paradoxically, increasingly projected onto the victorious Christian soldiery of the Holy League. This perspective on De Hooghe’s work will add to the broader historiography on a change in the conduct and representation of war in the course of the seventeenth century. According to Martha Pollak, the “half-suicidal” excesses of the Thirty Years’ War’ spurred a post-1648 drive to regulate warfare that went hand in hand with the creation of printed and painted orderly siege views providing a sanitized representation of war.⁸ In the case of the Dutch Republic specifically, David Kunzle has argued that already during the later stages of the Eighty Years’ War, Dutch printmakers promoted the siege as a civilized, sanitized, and benign form of warfare.⁹ However, in contrast to this scholarly narrative of an increasing drive to regulate the conduct of warfare during the course of the seventeenth century, De Hooghe consistently portrayed the violence inflicted by the Holy League, whether in siege or pitched battle, as unrestrained and uncontrollable in character. Thus, in De Hooghe’s print on the fall of Belgrade, none of the order supposedly invested in siege views is to be found. The spectator is presented with numerous impaled Turkish heads, the massacre of civilians by Imperial forces, and the full-scale slaughter of surrendering Ottoman troops (Figure 10.1). Instead of following a broader European trend in the ordering

and sanitizing of warfare in its representational forms, De Hooghe's siege views, triumphalia, and satirical prints sought to explore the different faces of unrestrained violence. As I shall show here, the end result was an ambiguous image in which the victorious forces of the Holy League were bestowed with the stereotyped cruel character of their vanquished Turkish enemies.

Romeyn de Hooghe and his prints on the Great Turkish War

De Hooghe was one of the most prolific and famous Dutch printmakers of the late seventeenth century. Although there is no comprehensive inventory of De Hooghe's work, it is estimated that his workshop churned out more than 4,000 prints, mostly book illustrations, which covered a wide variety of distinct subjects.¹⁰ Political events however, both historical and contemporary, would take a prominent place within this enormous oeuvre – a preference that coincided with De Hooghe's personal drive to amass fame and fortune.

While De Hooghe's own political loyalties would always remain somewhat of a mystery, his work was clearly influenced by the prospect of participating in high society.¹¹ During his career, De Hooghe would bind himself to powerful figures in European politics, providing a colourful collection of European sovereigns with baroque glorification in printed format. The beneficiaries of De Hooghe's inventive mind included not only the Dutch stadtholder William III, but also John III Sobieski, through his Amsterdam agent Franciscus Mollo, and the Austrian Habsburg emperor Leopold I. Though his prints travelled far and wide, De Hooghe himself did not. Other than a short stay in France, De Hooghe probably never set foot outside the Dutch Republic.¹² For his many prints on foreign affairs, he relied either on his own imagination, stocks of existing images, or drafts from artists embedded with European armies.¹³

In his prints on contemporary politics, De Hooghe used a number of different formats. The most straightforward one was the so-called 'news print', a historiographical term used to denote a print that revolves around a contemporary event.¹⁴ These prints often related to important military feats such as pitched battles, sieges, and naval warfare, or ceremonial pomp, including marriages, burials, and coronations. In form, they mostly consisted of a printed image in broadsheet format together with a short text or poem that expanded on the scenes presented to the reader.¹⁵ The term 'news print' itself might be misleading in the sense that these prints could still be sold by publishers years after the relevant event had taken place. Already during the seventeenth century, some of De Hooghe's news prints had become collectors' items that were coloured by hand and carefully preserved in luxurious albums.¹⁶ At the same time, 'news' was often hardly the sole, or even the main aspect of the print. News prints were inevitably published later than written news reports and often focused more on spectacular sights and theatrical descriptions rather than a precise portrayal of the events in question. Yet what they lacked

in terms of news, the large broadsheet-format news prints made up for in the fields of aesthetics and propaganda. In Dutch houses, broadsheet news prints were hung on walls, doubling as decoration and as a badge of political or religious allegiance. With many news prints costing only around 20 cents, it was a remarkably cheap way to liven up one's home.¹⁷ This function was reflected in the size of the prints. For instance, the illustrated part of the Belgrade news print (Figure 10.1) was of significant proportions, measuring 46.6 cm by 58.1 cm.

The second printed category De Hooghe was involved with can be classified as 'triumphalia': etchings of allegorical scenes that celebrated particular sovereigns and their military prowess.¹⁸ Often, these prints would play on the broader category of triumphal imagery, mimicking in printed form either the triumphal arch, or a fictitious triumphal entry. Triumphalia could be found in the same broadsheet format as news prints, but were also inserted in a number of festival books by De Hooghe's hand. This was, for example, the case with the booklet commissioned to capture the celebration of the conquest of Buda in Brussels, which opened with an allegorical and fictitious triumphal entry of Leopold I. Whereas triumphalia were at times created in response to particular events, such as coronations or military victories, they are set apart from news prints by their aim of capturing and translating the event mainly through the use of allegorical themes.

The third category, satire, did something quite different from triumphalia, primarily mocking the players in European power politics rather than glorifying them. De Hooghe played an important role in the development of modern satire and his satirical prints were as inventive as they were biting.¹⁹ Here, a special place was reserved for Louis XIV, the nemesis of the stadtholder-king William III, but many of Europe's powerful men were fair game in De Hooghe's satirical output. Unsurprisingly, De Hooghe's satirical prints often remained unsigned, or appeared with the fake address of a foreign printer.

It is not always clear to what extent De Hooghe worked on his own initiative and to what extent his work was the result of direct commissions, either by powerful patrons or particular publishers.²⁰ In the case of the Great Turkish War, De Hooghe's prints were distributed in a number of ways. For instance, many of his news prints on the conflict, including those concerning the sieges of Buda and Belgrade, were sold under the address of the Amsterdam publisher Aert Dircksz Oossaan. It is not unlikely that Oossaan himself had directly commissioned these prints. In 1686, Oossaan published a journal on the siege of Buda, in which he stated that the booklet was printed on his own initiative, aimed at 'the community' at large and aficionados of siege warfare in particular.²¹ In the address to the reader, he also promoted some of his other merchandise on the Great Turkish War, stating that he had recently commissioned a 'curious print' on the battle of Budua (present-day Budva, Montenegro),²² which would be available for sale within 'two or three days'.²³ Oossaan had a broad market in mind for his high-quality merchandise; the print of Buda was published in two versions: one with a Dutch text and one

with a French text. In addition, copies of De Hooghe's print of Buda were made by German workshops, attesting to its wide success and popularity.²⁴

In the case of a publisher like Oossaan, commercial interest may have been the primary motivation. Yet in other examples, a noble patron can be identified more clearly. Franciscus Mollo is named as the commissioner of several of De Hooghe's prints that celebrated Polish victories over the Ottoman Empire in the Polish–Ottoman Wars (1672–76).²⁵ And while the Brussels festival book on Buda is without a dedication or address, Dirk van Waelderer has argued that its focus on the splendour of the Thurn and Taxis family suggests that the commissioners should be sought within the circles of higher authority in the Southern Netherlands.²⁶

The anti-Ottoman works commissioned by Mollo in the 1670s were only a prelude to the flurry of production by De Hooghe during the Great Turkish War. Virtually all major battles and sieges would find their way to the drawing tables of De Hooghe's workshop, complemented by prints that glorified or satirized the different warring parties. Yet in all three distinct formats, De Hooghe clearly sought to explore in visual terms the violence that washed over south-east Europe, framing its intensity both in terms of triumph and in terms of horror.

'Without regard for sex or age': norms for warfare with 'the Turk'

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Austrian Habsburgs had often traded blows with the Ottoman Empire, yet as Andrew Wheatcroft points out, these conflicts were not necessarily more intense than the bloody wars that had engulfed Christian Europe in the wake of the Reformation.²⁷ However, in the aftermath of the 1648 Peace of Münster, conflicts with the Ottoman Empire became more bloody relative to the cooling interconfessional strife within Christian Europe. This would become increasingly clear after the unsuccessful Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683, as the sheer scale of the sultan's campaign started to harden attitudes in the Austrian–Ottoman conflict. In 1685, the Imperial siege of Neuhäusel (Nové Zámky, present-day Slovakia) was fought to the bitter end, resulting in the massacre of the Ottoman garrison along with any remaining women and children.²⁸ According to a contemporary Dutch news report, those trying to flee the city across the water next to the Vienna gate were killed by Hungarian soldiers waiting on the shores. The deaths, 'both combatants and non-combatants, also women and children, were counted up to 2000'.²⁹ An Italian reporting on the same massacre described that he had watched in horror as the triumphant Christian forces not only took the heads of Ottoman soldiers, but also those of the fallen women and children.³⁰

Neuhäusel would become a bloody example for other protracted sieges that followed in its wake – most importantly those of Buda (1686) and Belgrade (1688). Both taken by storm, these cities had effectively forfeited any recourse to a negotiated surrender. The capture of Buda especially was an equally bloody,

strategic, and symbolic victory for the forces of the Holy League. With the capture of the capital of Hungary, the Austrian Habsburgs cemented their claim on the kingdom's historic lands and throughout Europe the event was hailed as a victory for Christendom at large. In addition, many in the Dutch Republic hoped that a conclusive victory over the Ottoman Empire would allow Leopold, an ally in the broad coalition against Louis XIV, to free up forces to put more pressure on France.³¹ In Amsterdam, the fall of Buda was met with the staging of plays, the printing of siege journals, as well as the publication of an exquisite print of the storming of Buda by De Hooghe.

Of specific interest here is a play staged in the Amsterdam theatre only three weeks after the capture of Buda.³² In itself this was already an unusual move, as explicit references to current political events were normally banned from the Amsterdam stage.³³ The piece was written by Govert Bidloo, the future court physician of William III and a friend of De Hooghe. As a playwright, Bidloo was well known for his love of spectacle and equal disdain for the restraint of the Dutch adepts of French classicism. Lauding the members of the Holy League for their hard-fought victory, the play openly celebrates the recent conquest of Buda as a triumph for Christendom at large. All the same, the act that portrays the sacking of the city is quite explicit and is introduced by a *tableau vivant* of soldiers cutting open their vanquished enemies in order to find swallowed riches. Streaming into the city, the soldiers ignore their own safety as well as the orders of their officers.³⁴ Tellingly, it is the allegorical figure of Violence that narrates the gruesome sack of the city. Armed with torch and sword, Violence tells the audience that the rapacious soldiery had become completely uncontrollable:

too much set on booty and untamed murder,
the violation takes off, vengeance leads to atrocities
and law and reason now hang at the end of a rapier
everything is offered up to escape chain and death
here the Christian lights the houses [on fire], there the Turk
victory separates them and lets the Roman [i.e. Holy Roman] gangs
wallow in booty, blood, in terror, in chains and in screams³⁵

Strikingly, a 1688 news print on the capture of Belgrade illustrated by De Hooghe described the sack of the city in similar terms, drawing on the same image of an uncontrollable and violent sea of soldiers flooding into the city (see [Figure 10.1](#)). With a colourful and highly theatrical description, the accompanying text states that:

the Turks threw down their weapons and cried for quarter, but the soldiery was too heated to grant it to anyone and the fury so great, that without regard for sex or years, all [before them] were hacked into pieces. The blood streamed off the heights of the castle and within the hour, 10,000 Turks of all sorts, were sacrificed to the madness of the bloodthirsty sabre.³⁶



Figure 10.1 News print on the capture of Belgrade by the Holy League in 1688. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Belgrado met syn slot en voor-steden stormenderhand veroverd door de keyserlyke machten. Den 6 sept: 1688.*

In the print itself, the massacre is not shunned, but shown in the finer details of the onslaught taking place around the main fortress (see [Figure 10.2](#)). Women and children are running around in panic, tumbling over the city walls, with Christian soldiers striking down surrendering Ottoman soldiers. Numbers shown on the print refer to short descriptions in the accompanying text: at 22 we see ‘Veterani and Huesler ... putting everyone to the sword’; at 24 ‘invading Hungarians, massacring everything’ (note the lack of restraint as implied by the terms ‘everything’ and ‘everyone’). Both in Bidloo’s play and in De Hooghe’s print, the Christian soldiers are described as cruel, uncontrollable, and above all unrestrained in their exercise of violence. In contrast, ‘the Turk’ is no longer simply the infant-killing caricature as found on sixteenth-century German propaganda prints. Instead, the Turkish soldier is described as the victim of the lawless violence ignited by intense warfare – massacred together with his wife and children and refused quarter by Christian warriors. This twist would readily find a place in the thriving print industry of the Low Countries, with De Hooghe as its most enthusiastic and productive trendsetter.

An economy of heads

De Hooghe’s highly detailed prints present many distinct elements to analyse, but I want to focus here on one specific aspect represented in most of De

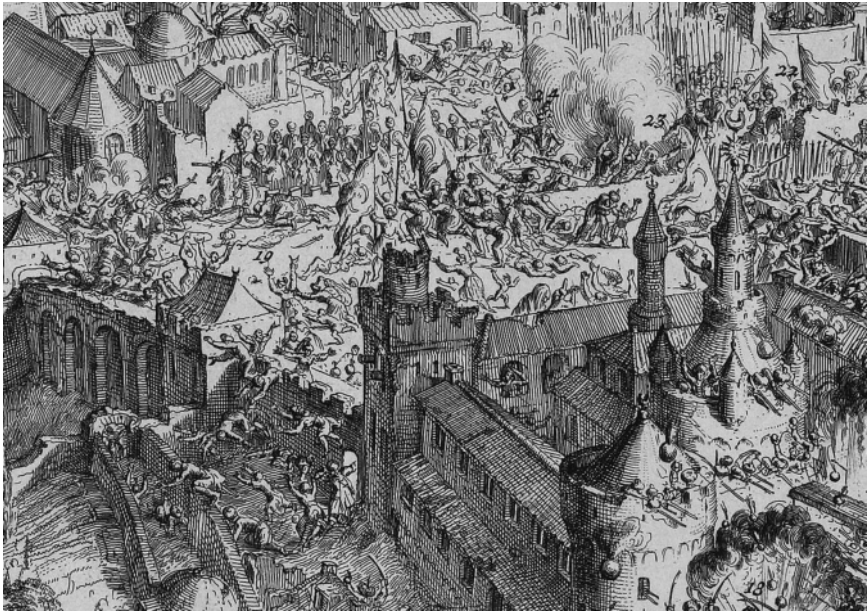


Figure 10.2 Detail of news print on the fall of Belgrade. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Belgrado met syn slot en voor-steden stormenderhand veroverd door de keyserlyke machten. Den 6 sept: 1688.*

Hooghe's work: the Turkish trophy head. The taking of heads was a common occurrence in wars with the Ottoman Empire, practised by Christian and Muslim forces alike.³⁷ In this vein, a printed journal concerning the Venetian siege of Coron (1685) would casually mention inventories of Turkish heads alongside captured guns and ammunition.³⁸ Presenting the reader with a figure of 130 heads, the writer stresses that the Christian forces had in fact killed many more Turks, but were unable to advance far enough to avail the remaining corpses of their heads.

Before the Great Turkish war, the topos of trophy heads had alternately functioned as a sign of Muslim brutality and Christian victory. Yet with the steady Austrian advance during the 1680s, its role as a sign of Christian triumph started to displace that of Muslim cruelty in imagery concerning Christian–Ottoman warfare.³⁹ De Hooghe was especially generous with severed Turkish heads and they are to be found in almost all of his prints on the Great Turkish War. In this, war with the Ottoman Empire offered new ways to explore the visualization and glorification of violence. Even though beheading was a common practice in the execution culture of early modern Christian Europe, (visual) media would often present severed heads outside the context of the judicial system as signs of cruelty and barbarity.⁴⁰ In this light, it is important to note that De Hooghe consistently associated head-hunting with the little known 'warrior peoples' of south-east Europe. In his famous print on the siege of Buda (see [Figure 10.3](#)), three 'exotic' looking soldiers stride up a hill overlooking the city. Identified as a 'Rats', 'Tolpats', and 'Haiduk' in the accompanying description (terms referring to Hungarian and Serbian irregulars),⁴¹ these figures come to exchange Turkish heads for money, which is given to them by the well-dressed and wigged officers of the Holy League.

A similar sight can be found in De Hooghe's print concerning the siege of Belgrade, where the foreground is filled with Croatian soldiers, some carrying lances with impaled Turkish heads, others in the act of decapitating Turks (see [Figure 10.4](#)). Finally, a small tower at the edge of the suburb of Belgrade captured by the besiegers presents a display of spiked heads along its ramparts.⁴²

Effectively, De Hooghe presents these Croats, Hungarians, and Serbs as a mediating factor for the graphic violence associated with the victories of the Holy League. Visually, headhunting is isolated and projected solely on the south-east European irregulars, who give form to a practice that is deemed to be barbaric in the context of interconfessional Christian warfare. In this representation of headhunting, the prints contrast with the written sources on the sieges (as well as Bidloo's siege play) in which headhunting is not associated with any particular military or ethnic group, but instead presented as a common practice among all the forces of the Holy League. The highly detailed war journal describing the capture of Buda published by Oossaan, the same Amsterdam publisher who sold De Hooghe's prints of the fateful siege, presents several instances of head-hunting without linking these to any specific military group. Austrian officers seem



Figure 10.3 Detail of news print on the capture of Buda by the Holy League in 1686. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Belegering der sterke stad Buda of Offen, door de Keyserlycke en geallieerde machten. 1686.*



Figure 10.4 Detail of news print on the fall of Belgrade. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Belgrado met syn slot en voor-steden stormenderhand veroverd door de keyserlyke machten. Den 6 sept: 1688.*

in fact to promote the practice, as they are reported to be paying money for any Turkish head brought to them (as is faithfully presented in De Hooghe's print of Buda).⁴³

In his emphasis on the practice of headhunting, De Hooghe thus did something distinctly different from the textual accounts of the sieges in question, associating it exclusively with the diverse array of 'exotic'-looking south-east European irregulars. Here, De Hooghe's prints fit in with the wider craze around 'exoticism' at the turn of the eighteenth century in the Dutch Republic, as identified by Benjamin Schmidt. Schmidt has argued that after the Westphalian peace of 1648, Dutch printmakers and publishers increasingly positioned the theme of extreme violence as a non-European affair taking place in a broadly defined 'exotic' (i.e. non-European) world.⁴⁴ De Hooghe's prints on south-east Europe perfectly fit this trend. Pictured in outlandish clothing and with hairstyles matching those of the Turks, the south-east European irregulars present the spectator with a Dutch imagination of Europe's fringes: exotic, dangerous, and violent. If Dutch sources at large portrayed south-east Europe as a region troubled by the violent excesses of local irregulars and the imported forces of the Holy League, De Hooghe's visualization already points to the eighteenth-century process of demarcating a ('civilized') Western Europe from a ('barbaric') Eastern Europe.⁴⁵ In this sense, the trope of unrestrained violence was as much about the victories of the Holy League as it was about De Hooghe's violent imagination of the Habsburg-Ottoman borderlands as an 'exotic' place.

Triumphalia and satire

As discussed earlier, a second type of prints made by De Hooghe can be categorized as printed 'triumphalia', allegorical scenes that glorified the victories of the Holy League. A striking example is found in the series of etchings produced for the festival book commemorating the celebration in Brussels of the capture of Buda. While eight prints portray impressions of the celebrations in Brussels, the first one concerns a fictive triumphal entry of Leopold I into the city.⁴⁶ Seated on a triumphal carriage and surrounded by representations of Christian and Roman virtues, the emperor runs over the vanquished Turks standing in his path (see [Figure 10.5](#)). Again, we find a large number of impaled Turkish heads, carried along by soldiers dressed in classical attire.

In contrast to the news prints, there are no Hungarian or Serbian irregulars present in this allegorical scene. Instead, the violence is channelled through soldiers in classical Roman attire and figures from Graeco-Roman mythology. Other allegorical prints by De Hooghe follow the same structure.⁴⁷ They consistently portray the Holy League in close connection to explicit violence against the subjugated Turk – whose body is crushed under the wheels of victory chariots, or reduced to a trophy head. At the same time, this type of violence clearly functions



Figure 10.5 Fictive triumphal entry of Leopold I to celebrate the Holy League's capture of Buda. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Divo et invictissimo Leopoldo I* [...]. 1686–87.

in the context of allegorical imagery. The headhunting irregulars so prominent in De Hooghe's news prints are conspicuously absent. Instead, their place is taken by standardized figures representing classical virtues and Roman soldiers. Rather than commenting on the mores of south-east European warfare, the impaled heads blend in with the rest of the allegorical imagery, turning into symbols of Habsburg military might and Christian supremacy.

In a sense, of all three genres, triumphalia is the most straightforward in its use of the Turkish head; it is designated to serve within the clearly defined context of the glorification of religious, political, and military supremacy. In this aspect, it differs strongly from the third and final category, that of satirical prints. De Hooghe's satirical prints are far more ambiguous in their message and heavily reliant on both simple and complicated references to visual tropes.⁴⁸ However, despite these characteristics, De Hooghe's satirical work arguably shows most clearly how unrestrained violence became such an iconic part of his imagination of the Great Turkish War. This is most explicit in De Hooghe's satirical '*konings-spel*' on the year 1687, a print which deals almost exclusively with events from the Great Turkish War (see [Figure 10.6](#)).⁴⁹ The intricate broadsheet contains thirty-two small etchings with short accompanying verses and goes back to the older sixteenth-century tradition of the '*koningsbrieven*' (king's letters).⁵⁰ These were prints usually created for the celebration of Three Kings' Day and portrayed a number of roles within a fictive royal household. The different images would be cut out and divided by lot among a group of people, promoting one of the party to the role of king for the evening.⁵¹ In some cases, the verses of a *koningsbrief* would indicate instructions attached to the different roles,⁵² but this is not the case with De Hooghe's print. Instead, the rhymes consist of political figures (Christians) taunting and intimidating their enemies or, conversely, pleading for their lives (the Turks).

It is unclear whether De Hooghe's print was meant to be used in the context of the celebration of Three Kings' Night. The print could very well be a piece of political satire that simply used the familiar format of the *koningsbrief* to create an accessible and appealing product.⁵³ At the very least, the fact that the print in the Rijksmuseum collection has been preserved intact suggests that this particular copy of De Hooghe's *koningsbrief* was never used in the traditional festivities associated with Three Kings' Day.

Regardless of its function, De Hooghe's print follows the traditional format of the *koningsbrief*. As with many other *koningsbrieven*, all figures come in pairs. Normally, this would be a man (left) and woman (right) in the same role (king and queen, etc.). Here, however, most of the pairs concern the Holy League (left) and the Ottoman Empire (right). In these contrasting pairs, the Holy League is consistently connected to extreme acts of violence, most prominently dismemberment, beheading, and cannibalism – all traits previously associated with the Turkish terror. The Ottomans, in contrast, are begging for mercy or running for their lives. For example, the Imperial general Dunnewald is portrayed as the '*voor snijder*'



Figure 10.6 Satirical print on the events of the year 1687. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Koning-Spel Courant op 't Jaer 1687*, Amsterdam 1687-88.

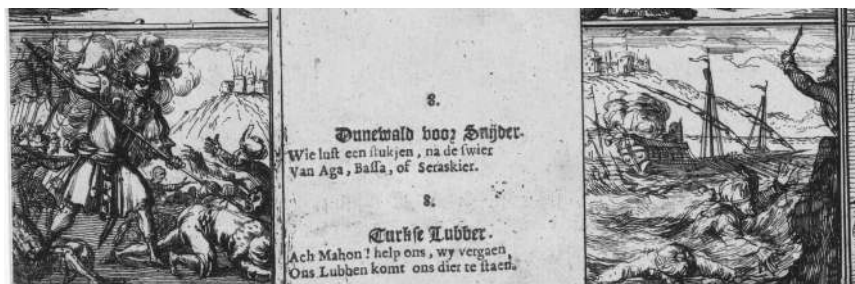


Figure 10.7 Detail of Figure 10.6. Dunnewald impales an Ottoman soldier on his spear.

(carver), tasked with cutting the meat dish at the table (see Figure 10.7). Shown skewering a Turk on his spear, he asks:

Who would like a piece, in the style
Of Agha, Pasha, or Serasker? [Ottoman titles]

The famous Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, commander of the Austrian forces during the siege of Vienna, is introduced as the court physician. Holding a severed head, he exclaims:

Away with you, Tartars and Cossacks,
My cure is, to cut everything off

The final print is the most striking and presents ‘knight Janko, cook’ – referring to Stojan Janković Mitrović, a Morlach commander fighting under the banner of Venice (see Figure 10.8). As a representative of the Dalmatian borderlands, his role will not surprise us. Standing next to a hearth filled with roasted limbs and heads, Janković states that:

Before this kitchen of the Morlachs
Even the Sultan would shit himself

The not so subtle message of this print is that even the Great Turk would not be able to stomach such a grisly sight.⁵⁴ Janković’s Ottoman counterpart, the dwarf servant of the sultan’s cook, is insulted by being portrayed as an incompetent chef – yet he is not the one cooking human flesh. With Janković as cannibalistic cook, the Turkish terror has effectively become a Christian terror.

Interestingly, a number of variants and reprints of De Hooghe’s 1687 *koning-spel* were produced, most of them by publishers from the Southern Netherlands.⁵⁵ Already in 1687, a variant of the print was published in Antwerp by Philibert Bouttats, a printmaker from the Southern Netherlands who had lived in Amsterdam and worked with De Hooghe some years before.⁵⁶ Now with verses in both French and Dutch, the print adds a couple of new atrocities, most prominently those of the Venetian general Francesco Morosini, ‘cupbearer’, who is shown drinking the

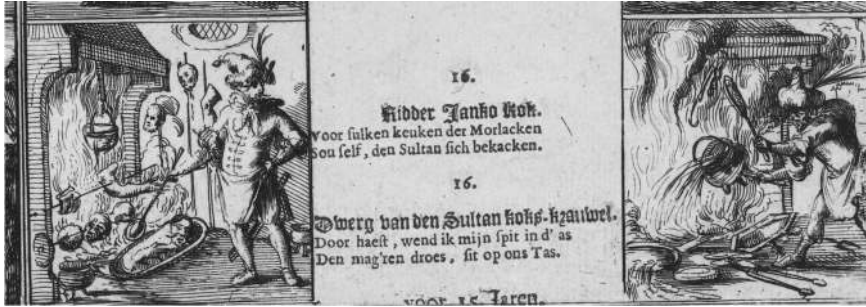


Figure 10.8 Detail of Figure 10.6. On the left, Janković before a hearth with roasted Turkish heads and limbs. On the right, the dwarf servant of the sultan's cook dropping his food in the ashes of the hearth.

blood of his Turkish victims. The image of Morosini is flanked by an Ottoman cup-bearer, who laments that his people grow thirsty as he is unable to provide them with 'Christian blood'. Effectively, the print shows how Morosini is successful in his cruelty where the Turks are not, defeating the Ottomans at their own game. In another variant of the print by Joannes van Soest, the Imperial commander Commercy replaces Dunnewald as carver. Shown with an array of severed body parts, he states:

I cut, carve and skin
 Turks and Tartars alike
 And make no difference
 In years young or old⁵⁷

Clearly, these heavily referential satirical prints designated unrestrained violence as the hallmark of the Holy League, appropriating the tropes of typical Turkish cruelties (cannibalism, dismemberment, flaying, drinking of blood) as Christian ones. Yet the *koningsbrieven* on the Great Turkish War did not simply represent a carnivalesque reversal of a 'normal' order in which the Turkish terror became a Christian terror. In fact, carver Commercy's rhyme that plays on the killing of children and the elderly has its counterpart in the aforementioned news prints and war journals on the sack of Belgrade and Neuhäusel by the forces of the Holy League. Similarly, the extensive use of dismemberment in these satirical prints was already present both in news prints and triumphalia. As such, these *koningsbrieven* merely magnified and played with existing descriptions of the atrocities taking place on the south-east European front. De Hooghe's *koningsbrief*, however, did so in a manner that was decidedly different from its Southern Netherlandish counterparts. Whereas the *koningsbrieven* from the Southern Netherlands presented the atrocities in the light of the emperor's victories and the triumph of Catholicism at large, De Hooghe's *koningsbrief* also sought to connect the violence more broadly to tropes of Catholic

fanaticism and the religious persecution of Protestants in Imperial Hungary. Even though Leopold I was an indispensable ally for the Dutch Republic in the conflicts against France, concerns about the treatment of Hungarian Protestants surfaced both in print and theatre.⁵⁸

The religious dimension to the depicted violence can be deduced from a number of differences between De Hooghe's *koningsbrief* and those printed in the Southern Netherlands. The first subtle difference is the role played by Count Imre Thököly, leader of the Hungarian Protestant anti-Habsburg uprising. In De Hooghe's print, Thököly stands out by his high status, being second in line after the sultan and bearing the title of counsellor. Shown in Turkish dress, the count states:

For the country's freedom and doctrine ['de Leer'],
[I have] risked my peace, what else can I do?

The rhyme seems to refer to Thököly's Protestant background and plays on the widespread sympathy for Protestant Hungarians in the Dutch Republic.⁵⁹ In a strikingly different tone, all the Southern Netherlandish prints show him as 'the fool', either in chains or contemplating surrender to his 'rightful' lord (the emperor). Other details that are only present in De Hooghe's print reinforce this Protestant reading in which violence is connected to Catholic 'fanaticism'. The print of the Imperial general Caraffa hints at the heavy-handed Habsburg subjugation of the Transylvanian (*Siebenbürger*) Protestants.⁶⁰ Caraffa himself is shown ordering around men in Turkish dress who carry dishes, stating:

Set the table, you Siebenbürger cities
He who wields power, listens to no reason

Equally absent from the Flemish prints is De Hooghe's 'Roman cupbearer' (*Roomse als schenkers*), who is shown offering up the 'blood of heretics' and is contrasted with a cryptic print titled 'Protestants &'. The Dutch term 'Roomse' is in itself an interesting label, as it could both mean 'Roman', here in the context of the Holy Roman Empire, and 'Roman Catholic'. Since the cupbearer is contrasted with a number of Protestants, the satirical print seems to favour a religious reading of the term. Naturally, this Catholic cupbearer thirsting for the blood of heretics is missing from all the Southern Netherlandish prints. Philibert Bouttat's print, for example, replaced this 'Roman' cupbearer with the aforementioned Morosini, who drinks the blood of Turks, rather than that of Protestant heretics.⁶¹

The Southern Netherlandish counterparts to De Hooghe's *koningsbrief* thus used the atrocity theme much more superficially in a strict Christian–Turk dichotomy. In contrast, De Hooghe's presentation of the Holy League as a force with characteristics previously linked to the 'Turkish terror' is not only connected to a general Christian triumphalism, but also more narrowly to stereotypes of violent Catholics as cultivated in the Dutch Republic. In turn, these views connected to a negative image of the south-east European borderlands in general. As such,

De Hooghe was not only invested in portraying the Turks as a defeated enemy, but also in painting a spectacular and gruesome image of south-east Europe as a region beset by warlike border peoples and ruthless Christian soldiers. With De Hooghe's satirical prints, we thus come full circle. The theme of unrestrained violence has completely shifted from the Turks to the commanders of the Holy League – now associated with the typical tropes of 'Turkish cruelty'.

Conclusion

The works of De Hooghe show that his visualization of violence against the Turks was not simply a one-dimensional portrayal of Christian triumphalism. As with all representations of violence, the message across the different genres of news print, triumphalia, and satire is inherently ambiguous. It played on older tropes such as the cruel and uncontrollable soldier, as well as the stereotyped image of the 'warlike' peoples of Europe's borderlands. All of this was captured by the diverse use of the Turkish head. In news prints, beheadings feature as a visual cue to the otherness of Hungarians and Croats; in triumphalia, the Turkish heads transform into an allegorical sign underlining Habsburg military might; in satire, the dismembered and beheaded Turkish corpse serves as a prop in a morbid kitchen. Far from enforcing a more orderly and 'clean' representation of war, the different images of the victories of the Holy League all thrive and function in their own way through the visualization of explicit and unrestrained violence. The changing fortunes on the field of battle favoured a visual reinterpretation in which 'the Turk' was a vanquished rather than a formidable enemy. In this shift, the place of violence changed accordingly, at times transposing tropes of the 'Turkish terror' one on one to a new 'Christian terror'.

Through De Hooghe's focus on unrestrained violence, a number of themes are brought to the fore. One prominent aspect lies in the creation of a diffuse image of south-east Europe as a particularly violent place – a vision that falls in line with a broader reorientation of a post-Westphalian Dutch press that sought to present extreme violence as a non-European phenomenon. Here, it is important to note that De Hooghe's prints were not always in line with the more detailed and nuanced textual sources, which related violence more broadly to the Holy League at large rather than the south-east European irregulars specifically. At the same time, De Hooghe's *koningsbrief* connected unrestrained violence in more general terms to older Protestant stereotypes of Catholics. Whereas similar satirical prints from the Southern Netherlands presented the violence of the Holy League in the positive light of the Catholic-Habsburg victory over Turks and heretics, De Hooghe played with the idea that these particular forms of unrestrained violence were part of a more sinister Catholic spirit. In a striking reversal of older visual traditions, tropes of unrestrained violence that had once been used to vilify the Turks were now projected onto the members of the Holy League – who De Hooghe depicted

as standing victorious among the dismembered, beheaded, and cooked remains of their Turkish enemies.

Notes

- 1 This article is the result of my work as a PhD candidate in the research programme *Imagining Violence: Techniques of Early Modern Performativity in the Northern and Southern Netherlands 1630–1690*, which is financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). I would like to thank Yannice De Bruyn, Inger Leemans, Wicher Smit, Frans-Willem Korsten, Erika Kuijpers, and the organizers of ‘A violent world’ for the helpful feedback on earlier versions of this paper.
- 2 H. Madar, ‘Dracula, the Turks and the Rhetoric of Impaling’, in J. R. Decker and M. Kirkland-Ives (eds), *Death, Torture and the Broken Body in European Art, 1300–1650* (Surrey, 2015), p. 175.
- 3 H. Theunissen, ‘Barbaren en Ongelovigen: Turcica in de Nederlanden 1500–1800’, in H. Theunissen, A. Abelmann, and W. Meulenkamp (eds), *Topkapi & Turkomanie: Turks-Nederlandse Ontmoetingen sinds 1600* (Amsterdam, 1989), p. 47.
- 4 K. Westerink, ‘Liever Turks dan Paaps: Een Devies Tijdens de Opstand in de Nederlanden’, in Theunissen et al., *Topkapi & Turkomanie*, pp. 75–96.
- 5 B. Jezernik, ‘Imagining “the Turk”’, in B. Jezernik (ed.), *Imagining ‘the Turk’* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2010), p. 8.
- 6 For a solid overview of images of the Great Turkish War in Hungary (including many of De Hooghe’s works), see: R. György, *Schlachtenbilder aus der Zeit der Befreiungsfeldzüge* (Budapest, 1987).
- 7 H. van Nierop, *The Life of Romeyn de Hooghe 1645–1708: Prints, Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Golden Age* (Amsterdam, 2018), p. 193–4.
- 8 M. Pollak, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 142.
- 9 D. Kunzle, *From Criminal to Courtier: The Soldier in Netherlandish Art 1550–1672* (Leiden, 2002), p. 503.
- 10 A selection of De Hooghe’s more well-known works can be found in: J. H. Landwehr, *Romeyn de Hooghe, the Etcher: Contemporary Portrayal of Europe, 1662–1707* (Leiden and New York, 1973). A short title list of books illustrated or written by De Hooghe based on Landwehr et al. can be found in van Nierop et al., *Romeyn de Hooghe*, pp. 258–303.
- 11 A. de Haas, ‘Commissaris van zijne Majesteit en Mikpunt van Faamroevende Paskwillen: Een Biografische Schets’, in van Nierop et al., *Romeyn de Hooghe*, p. 14; H. van Nierop, ‘Romeyn de Hooghe and the Imagination of Dutch Foreign Policy’, in H. van Nierop, D. Onnekink, and G. Rommelse (eds), *Ideology and Foreign Policy in Early Modern Europe (1650–1750)* (Farnham, 2011), p. 214.
- 12 Van Nierop, *The Life of Romeyn de Hooghe*, p. 60.
- 13 Van Nierop, ‘Romeyn de Hooghe and the Imagination of Dutch Foreign Policy’, p. 201; for speculation on De Hooghe’s sources for his print on the capture of Buda, see: G. Rózsa, ‘Romeyn de Hooghe und die Türkenkriege in Ungarn’, *Oud Holland*, 77:1 (1962).
- 14 For the merit of the term ‘news print’, see: I. Veldman, ‘Een Riskant Beroep: Crispijn de Passe de Jonge als Producent van Nieuwsprenten’, in J. de Jong et al. (eds), *Prentwerk 1500–1700* (Zwolle, 2001), p. 155.

- 15 H. van Nierop, 'Profijt en Propaganda: Nieuwsprenten en de Verbeelding van het Nieuws', in H. van Nierop et al. (eds), *Romeyn de Hooghe: De Verbeelding van de Late Gouden Eeuw* (Zwolle, 2008), pp. 73–4.
- 16 This was, for instance, the case with the 'Atlas van der Hagen', an album created by the merchant Dirk van der Hagen (1645–1710). See: T. Goedings, 'Kunst- en kaartafzetters: gekleurde prenten en kaarten', in van Nierop et al., *Romeyn de Hooghe*, p. 212.
- 17 Veldman, 'Een Riskant Beroep', p. 155; van Nierop, 'Profijt en Propaganda', p. 74.
- 18 I take here a broad view of triumphalia in the spirit of art historian Derk Persant Snoep, who used the term to denote all material relating to the public celebration of political or religious figures. In this chapter, the category includes the popular fictitious triumphal arches and triumphal entries that existed only in print. D. P. Snoep, *Praal en propaganda: Triumphalia in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1975).
- 19 M. Hale, 'Romeyn de Hooghe and the Birth of Political Satire' (PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 2006).
- 20 Van Nierop, *The Life of Romeyn de Hooghe*, p. 195.
- 21 *Dagverhaal van de vermaarde belegering der sterke stad Buda [...]*, pub. A. D. Oossaan (Amsterdam, 1686), p. 2.
- 22 P. van Eeghen and J. P. van der Kellen, *Het werk van Jan en Casper Luyken* (2 vols, Amsterdam, 1905), I, p. 137.
- 23 *Dagverhaal van de vermaarde belegering der sterke stad Buda*, p. 3.
- 24 Rózsa, 'Romeyn de Hooghe und die Türkenkriege in Ungarn', p. 107.
- 25 J. Otten, 'Biografie van Romeyn de Hooghe', *De Boekenwereld, Tijdschrift voor Boek en Prent*, 15 (1988), pp. 26–8.
- 26 D. van Waelderren, 'Feest in Brussel na de Inname van de Stad Buda in 1686', *De Achttiende Eeuw: Documentatieblad van de Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw*, 45:2 (2013).
- 27 A. Wheatcroft, *The Enemy at the Gate: Habsburgs, Ottomans and the Battle for Europe* (New York, 2010), p. 213.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 *Daeghlycksche aenteekeningh en nette beschrijvingh van 'tgeen sigh heeft toegedraegen in de belegeringh der vestingh Neuheusel*, pub. A. D. Oossaan (Amsterdam, 1686), f. D recto.
- 30 P. Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (New York, 2015), p. 214.
- 31 Van Nierop, *The Life of Romeyn de Hooghe*, p. 196.
- 32 For an overview of Dutch plays on the siege of Buda, see: O. Réthelyi, 'Buda's Reconquest (1686) and the Image of Hungarians, Ottomans and Habsburgs in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Drama', in G. Almási, S. Brzeziński and I. Horn (eds), *A Divided Hungary in Europe: Exchanges, Networks and Representations, 1541–1699* (3 vols in 1 book, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2016), III, 167–94.
- 33 An exception was made for peace plays. See: K. van der Haven, 'Voorzichtige propaganda in twee Amsterdamse vredespelen', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 25:1 (2009), p. 39.
- 34 G. Bidloo, *Het Zegepraalende Oostenryk, of Verovering van Offen*, pub. A. Magnus (Amsterdam, 1686), p. 17.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

- 36 Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, Atlas Van der Hagen, 1049B10_046_1: www.geheugenvannederland.nl/nl/geheugen/view?coll=ngvn&identifier=KONB01%3A47 (accessed 11 Jan. 2018).
- 37 On the importance of trophy heads for both Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman wars in Europe, see: Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans*, chap. 5.
- 38 *Daeghlycksche aenteekeningh en nette beschrijvingh van 'tgeen sigh heeft toegedraegen in de belegeringh der vestingh Neuheusel*, f. H2 recto.
- 39 In travel stories, violent headhunting 'Turks' were still a popular topic. See: B. Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism and Europe's Early Modern World* (Philadelphia, 2015), chap. 3.
- 40 For a good example of this rhetoric, see the English view of Irish 'savageness' in relation to beheading and judicial violence: J. D. Walter, 'Performative Violence and the Politics of Violence in the 1641 Depositions', in M. O Siochru and J. Ohlmeyer (eds), *Ireland: 1641 Contexts and Reactions* (Manchester, 2013), p. 140.
- 41 For a transcription of the text published together with De Hooghe's print of Buda, see: G. Rózsa, *Budapest Régi Látképei (1493–1800)* (Budapest, 1963), pp. 240–1.
- 42 In a print by De Hooghe on the 1676 Imperial siege of Philippsburg, Croatian soldiers can also be seen carrying the heads of vanquished Frenchmen. See: Romeyn de Hooghe, 'Beleg en inname van Philippsburg (rechterblad)', 1676. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam RP-P-OB-79.314: <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.336413> (accessed 11 Jan. 2018).
- 43 *Dagverhaal van de vermaarde belegering der sterke stad Buda*, p. 16.
- 44 Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism*, chap. 3.
- 45 L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1994).
- 46 The series, with descriptions in French and Dutch, had no official title, but can be found in the Rijksmuseum under the name: 'Intocht van Keizer Leopold I in Brussel'. For a description of the different versions of the print series, see: Van Waelderren, 'Feest in Brussel na de inname van de stad Buda in 1686'.
- 47 See for example the following prints in the collection of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: RP-P-OB-67.726 and RP-P-1907–2650; as well as De Hooghe's allegorical prints on John III Sobieski's victories over the Ottomans in the Teylers Museum Haarlem: KG 06593 and KG 06571.
- 48 Hale, 'Romeyn de Hooghe and the Birth of Political Satire', p. 3.
- 49 In 1689, a copy of De Hooghe's *koningsbrief* was printed with a partly revised text to serve as an Orangist commentary on the Glorious Revolution. Only the first eight figures were renamed to refer to the Glorious Revolution; the other eight kept their original titles and references to the Great Turkish War. Romeyn de Hooghe, 'Koning-Spel Courant op 't Jaer 1689', 1689. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-82.697: <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.467715> (accessed 11 Jan. 2018).
- 50 J. van der Waals, *Prenten in de gouden eeuw: van kunst tot kastpapier* (Rotterdam, 2006), p. 46.
- 51 *Ibid.*, pp. 46–7; M. Jacobs, 'Driekoningen, Bonenkoningen, échte Koningen, Feesten en Macht', *Faro: tijdschrift over cultureel erfgoed*, 1:4 (2008), p. 9.
- 52 Jacobs, 'Driekoningen, Bonenkoningen', p. 9.

- 53 This option is not unlikely as the use of the *koningsbrief* has been attested as a popular format for political commentary in the Southern Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See: W. Braekman, 'Driekoningenavond: Koningsbrieven, Liederen en Gedichten', *Volkskunde*, 98:1 (1997), p. 19.
- 54 In De Hooghe's satire, eating was consistently connected to power, whereas defecating was linked to loss of control. Hale, 'Romeyn de Hooghe and the Birth of Political Satire', p. 115.
- 55 It is impossible to say with certainty which *koningsbrief* on the Great Turkish War came first. However, there are several indications that De Hooghe's *koningsbrief* is the original on which all the other Southern Netherlandish counterparts are based. First of all, De Hooghe's figures are at times modelled on the oldest surviving *koningsbrief* from Holland (1577). A second factor that points to De Hooghe's work as the original is the fact that the prints from the Southern Netherlands often show De Hooghe's figures mirrored and in lower quality. Third and finally, the rhymes in De Hooghe's work connect more closely to the acts of the figures when compared to the plates of Gaspar and Philibert Bouttats. For a reproduction of the 1577 *koningsbrief*, see: A. A. van Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, *Het Driekoningenfeest: de Uitbeelding van een Populair Thema in de Beeldende Kunst van de Zeventiende Eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1997), p. 42. Note that the cook, musician, and counsellor strongly resemble the images from De Hooghe's print.
- 56 Bouttats and De Hooghe would also collaborate on a print concerning the victory of the Holy League at Zenta in 1697. See: Hale, 'Romeyn de Hooghe and the Birth of Political Satire', p. 197. For Philibert Bouttats's *koningsbrief*, see: 'Spotprent op de gebeurtenissen in het jaar 1687, Philibert Bouttats (I)', 1687–88. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-82.550.
- 57 The *koningsbrief* is dated 1717 and based on a print created during the Great Turkish War by the Antwerp printer Gaspar Bouttats. The reprint may have been linked to the Austrian capture of Belgrade in 1717 during the Austro-Venetian-Ottoman war (1714–18).
- 58 E.g. A. van Poot, *Naauwkeurig verhaal van de vervolginge aangerecht tegens de euangelise leeraaren in Hungariën*, pub. T. ten Hoorn (Amsterdam, 1684); Bidloo, *Het Zegepraalende Oostenryk*, p. 21.
- 59 Réthelyi, 'Buda's Reconquest', p. 178.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 169.
- 61 'Spotprent op de gebeurtenissen in het jaar 1687, Philibert Bouttats (I)'.

Atlantic slave systems and violence

Trevor Burnard

Atlantic slavery was a violent institution. The Atlantic slave trade was even more violent. I hardly need to point out this basic fact. An essay about slavery and the slave trade can easily turn into a sickening litany of appalling acts of violence meted out by slave owners towards enslaved people and the less frequent but often equally violent response of enslaved people undertaking acts of resistance to enslavement, including armed revolt. Luxuriating in the violence of slavery is an easy trap for historians to fall into. Walter Johnson, for example, in an otherwise fine book on slavery in the antebellum Mississippi Valley, reaches for sensational language in describing the customary violence of slavery in this period and place. He layers evocative words – slaveholders ‘screaming execrations’, slaves ‘pleading, shrieking, moaning, crying out for mercy’, omnipresent torture where whipped slaves expressed themselves in ‘choking, sobbing, spasmodic groans’ – and uses extensive bodily function imagery to try and evoke in the reader an emotional response about the horrors of nineteenth-century American slavery like that which abolitionists of the time tried to inspire in their readers, in the Victorian age of sentimental reading. The American South in this and in other recent interpretations, was founded on ‘blood, milk, semen and shit’.¹

Similarly, Edward Baptist piles on example after example of horrific violence against enslaved people to make the argument that it was calibrated torture, as inflicted on the cotton plantations of the nineteenth-century American South, that allowed the Industrial Revolution to break through ‘the resource constraints that had imprisoned previous civilizations in a Malthusian cul-de-sac’. He uses the metaphor of a ‘whipping machine’ to argue that the discipline of torture as ‘a technology for controlling and exploiting human beings’ created a ‘vast archipelago

of slave labor camps' where the 'whipping machine' made slaves endure an 'unprecedented level and quality of field labor' in a 'dynamically evolving technology of measurement, torture and forced innovation'.²

The problem with this highly emotional language, as Philip D. Morgan argues in a critical review of Johnson's book, is not just that 'rhetoric often substitutes for analysis', but that 'the effect of the piling on of horrors and the shock value of the imagery is the reverse of the one intended'.³ Such language hardens rather than softens the reader to the violence of slavery, especially when acts of brutality are catalogued and repeated at length, making it hard to engage fully with the subject. What is more important than enumerating the everyday and extraordinary violence in the Atlantic slave system that began in the mid fifteenth century, before Columbus's voyages to the New World, and which lasted until 1888 when Brazil became the last society to abolish slavery, is to analyse the meanings for planters, traders, and enslaved people of the constant violence that enveloped this system.⁴ In this chapter, I use violence as an analytic category in order to demonstrate how brutality, violence, and death were not mere by-products of the extremely lucrative early modern plantation system but were the *sine qua non* of that plantation world.

This approach requires understanding the visceral meaning of the systemic violence that was exerted against African people. That violence happened first in Africa as they were loaded onto slave ships – James Stanfield in a poem on 'the Guinea Trade' described them as part of a business that was a 'vast machine' that while 'assum[ing] the honours of a honest trade ... had, beneath a prostituted glare [a] poison'd purpose'.⁵ It continued in the Americas, where Africans were transformed into slaves and were worked relentlessly, especially on sugar plantations, where conditions were harsh – Caribbean slaves endured the worst demographic experiences of any enslaved peoples, with annual population attrition due to high mortality rates being consistently in the negative throughout the eighteenth century. And it persisted into the nineteenth century with legacies that continue into the present during what scholars now term a 'second slavery', in which new market-oriented forms of slavery were 'parts of a distinct cycle of economic and geographic expansion of the capitalist-world economic processes of industrialization, urbanization and the restructuring of world markets that occurred as merchant capitalism turned into industrial capitalism'.⁶

It is important to stress the long-lasting nature of slavery and its adaptability to modernity. The violence of slavery and the slave trade in the Atlantic world was not an atavistic throwback to pre-modern times that was thankfully ended as Enlightenment values and disavowal of violence as a means of conflict resolution became more prevalent in Atlantic societies in Europe and the Americas.⁷ The fundamental definition of slavery remains constant from its origins in the ancient world to its criminalized presence today – it is the complete and exploitative control of one person (the slave) by another (the slaveholder) in which the slave is treated as property. That definition allows us to know that slavery did not necessarily end

with legal declarations of slave emancipation and that it is intimately tied up with coercion and thus with violence.⁸ Being a slave was not just physically violent; it was psychologically devastating. It is for this reason, as much as more obvious forms of violence, that so many enslaved people – depressed by the reality of their hopelessness in a system from which they were unlikely to escape physically unscathed – turned to suicide as one release from their predicament.⁹

One reason to avoid an excessive concentration on describing lurid aspects of violence in slavery and instead examine violence as an analytic concept, is that focusing on acts of violence can resemble voyeurism – perhaps even have a pornographic quality – in an approach which has a long and troubled history in abolitionist literature. One way in which anti-slavery discourse might be enlivened was to sensationalize and sexualize the whip, the most potent symbol of white authority in the slave colonies of the Americas. Karen Halttunen dubs such prurience the ‘pornography of pain’; this sensationalist approach can be overdone as much in present-day scholarship as in abolitionist literature. Zoe Trodd raises the issue precisely in an examination of prominent tropes, such as the kneeling slave of the Wedgwood medallion and the scourged back of an antebellum American enslaved man. She suggests that it is time for these images to be dropped. Urging contemporary anti-slavery artists to try and find ‘a less abusive usable past’, she argues that scenes of whipping too often put ‘slaves on display, reaching for shock value but risking sensationalism and objectification’.¹⁰ I am guilty myself of such sensationalism. My biography of Thomas Thistlewood, an English migrant who lived in Jamaica between 1750 and 1786 and whose extensive diaries provide a rare first-hand insight into the lived experience of slavery, albeit from the viewpoint of a master, tries to portray Thistlewood in the round, as a keen amateur scientist, avid reader, and man of the Enlightenment as much as a brutal and sadistic sexual predator and vicious slave manager. But it is my description of the worst examples of Thistlewood’s violence towards slaves, notably his invention of a punishment he called ‘Derby’s Dose’, in which an enslaved man defecated into another slave’s mouth which was then gagged shut, that attracted most attention in reviews and popular repetition.¹¹

I address here the point of violence in Atlantic slavery and the slave trade and how the incidence of violence in these institutions varied over time. First, was violence central or incidental to the ideology of enslavement in the Atlantic world, and if so, to what extent did slavery underpin the whole character of Atlantic slave societies? Second, was violence effective in the way slave owners treated and controlled enslaved people, especially in those slave societies in the Greater Caribbean, north-east Brazil, and parts of the more southerly regions of the American South where the demographic balance between enslaved blacks and free whites was most heavily weighted in favour of blacks? Was it also effective for enslaved people on the relatively rare occasions when they contested the circumstances they found themselves in through active acts of resistance and rebellion?

Violence within slavery was foundational, purposeful, and so central to slavery that getting rid of it or even lessening its incidence or intensity threatened the whole basis of masterly dominance over enslaved people. Violence also generally produced efficacious results for slave owners in respect to how they maintained control over their enslaved property, how they were able to employ violence while not impeding their capacity to use slaves to make money for themselves, and how they kept themselves secure in societies in which they were often heavily outnumbered. However, it was less efficacious in convincing their rulers in Europe or their more powerful compatriots in non-slaveholding parts of their nation that their authority over their slaves was legitimate. The violence of Atlantic slavery and the slave trade was so obvious to everyone and so extreme in its many manifestations, especially when news of slave revolts and their suppression reached other places, that it provoked consternation among populations increasingly outraged about the use of violence to control people: a growing hostility to what antebellum northerners in the United States called with disdain 'the slave power'.¹²

Perhaps the most dramatic manifestation of outrage over violence in slavery and the slave trade came in the 1780s, with an infamous case of murder in the slave trade in 1781. A subsequent court case in Britain in 1783 about this murder percolated into an embryonic abolitionist movement, which erupted in 1787–88 as the biggest social reform movement in British history, leading to the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807. Sailors on the *Zong* either deliberately or by accident found themselves leagues distant from the western shores of Jamaica in November 1781. They hatched a plan that they later claimed arose out of necessity to prevent the possibility of captive Africans revolting and taking over the ship. It involved murdering 132 Africans by throwing them overboard. Such an act of violence was hardly unusual in the slave trade. What brought the case to public attention, however, was that the crew of the *Zong* had the idea of claiming insurance for the financial losses they had incurred in murdering African captives. The underwriters demurred and refused to pay, whereupon the ship owners sued for financial restitution. The abolitionist Granville Sharp was alerted to this civil case by a black abolitionist, Oludah Equiano, and was so outraged at the inhumanity by which a case of murder was treated as an instance of insurance fraud that he publicized the case. Although initially the British public were not very interested, by the mid 1780s they came to see the *Zong* as indicative of the essential wickedness of the slave trade. What was particularly dreadful about this case, abolitionists like Thomas Clarkson and James Ramsay insisted, was that it was carried out by British sailors on a British ship and resulted in a case in a British court, decided inconclusively and, it was argued, immorally by a famous British judge, Lord Mansfield. In 1788, Clarkson wrote of the *Zong* that it was an event 'Unparalleled in the memory of man ... and of so black and complicated a nature, that were it to be perpetuated to future generations ... it could not possibly be believed'.¹³

The role of violence as exercised by enslaved people against slave owners is an especially ambivalent historical issue. On the one hand, it is difficult to see this violence as anything other than the understandable response of people pushed beyond endurance against oppression, using the tools that they had at their disposal, given that the powers of the state were all aligned on the side of their oppressors. On the other hand, these acts of violence removed the moral upper hand from enslaved people, confirming, usually unfairly, to their erstwhile supporters in Europe and North America, that slave owners' assertion that enslaved people were barbarians was essentially correct.¹⁴

More to the point, violence employed by enslaved people seldom worked in the ways that slaves wanted. When enslaved people raised their hands against their masters, they were invariably killed and their friends and families were punished. The successful slave insurrection in Haiti starting in 1791 has become the emblematic example of slave rebellion in the Atlantic world; but Haiti was the exception, not the rule, in a world where most emancipations occurred through legislative fiat from outside forces rather than through the actions of the enslaved. A more typical slave rebellion was Tacky's Revolt in Jamaica in 1760, a major slave rebellion involving thousands of slaves that resulted in the deaths of tens of whites and hundreds of blacks. Unlike the Haitian Revolution, Tacky's Revolt was put down by the Jamaican state. Their revenge was immediate and gruesome. Rebel leaders were put to death by slow fire and by hanging in gibbets until they starved to death, while hundreds of slaves were transported to British Honduras. White Jamaicans learned from their near-death experience in 1760 that if they were sufficiently resolute against any sign of slave rebellion and were prepared to use extreme violence to defend planter prerogatives, their safety would be secured.¹⁵ So too, planters took their revenge against slave rebels in the aftermath of the Berbice Rebellion of 1763, which was a major colony slave rebellion in which practically all enslaved people were involved as an apparently united force against the Dutch state and which resulted in rebel slaves taking over the colony for a remarkably long period of time. When the Dutch regained the colony in late 1763 they took their revenge in the usual fashion, executing 128 rebels, in often gruesome ways, and punishing through whippings and the transportation of thousands more.¹⁶

The major counterexample to this sad record of violent slave resistance resulting in more violence from a resurgent master class, supported by the imperial or national state, is the Haitian Revolution of 1791 to 1804. Yet the historical interpretation of this event is itself highly problematic. It was an extraordinarily violent event, even by the standards of Atlantic rebellions involving slaves or indigenes. Laurent Dubois estimates that in 1802–03 alone 100,000 people died in Haiti, nearly four times as many people as died in the seven years of the American Revolution. It resulted in slavery ending forever in France's richest colony, the birth of the first independent black colony in the Americas, but also, through Napoleon Bonaparte's cession of most of France's North American possessions in the Louisiana Purchase

of 1804, provided the territorial means through which slavery in the United States was able to expand spatially through the first half of the nineteenth century. The violence that led to the creation of Haiti out of the plantation colony of Saint Domingue, however, crippled the economy of the new nation. It also established patterns of dictatorial behaviour exhibited by its first leaders, notably Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Henri Christophe, that have since echoed through Haitian history. Dessalines is the great hero in Haitian history, but he was also noticeably cruel and violent. His first act on taking control of the newly independent Haiti in 1804 was to order a mass killing of most of the French whites who remained in the republic – perhaps several thousand people. Dessalines presented the killings as self-defence and as revenge for past crimes committed by French planters against enslaved Haitians. He declared that ‘yes, we have paid back these true cannibals crime for crime, outrage for outrage’. The legacy of Haiti as an excessively violent place lives on: in Hollywood as the home of zombies and vodou and in its present-day ranking as one of the most ‘fragile states’ in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁷

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suggest that acts of violent resistance by enslaved people were wrong, futile, or counterproductive. When enslaved people were violent, their violence demonstrated three things. First, it made clear to fellow enslaved people that at least a few slaves were so unhappy with their predicament that they were willing to show masters that accepting enslavement was not the same thing as welcoming it. Their violent rejection of aspects of slavery demonstrated that enslaved people rejected the idea promulgated by their masters that enslaved people were naturally suited to enslavement and happy in that condition. Slave resistance through violence happened at all stages of Atlantic slavery, perhaps most commonly on slave ships. David Richardson estimates that perhaps one in ten slave ships experienced an insurrection.¹⁸ A typical insurrection arose on a British slaving vessel, the *Clare*, in 1729, when the captives, ten leagues off the Gold Coast, ‘rose and making themselves Masters of the Gunpowder and Fire Arms’ forced the white crew into a longboat and took over control of the ship, eventually making landfall and escaping back into their homeland.¹⁹ Of course, it was hard to control violence so that it was directed only against whites. Slave ships were frequently scenes of horrific violence between captives deranged by the horror of their confinement in fetid, crowded underground quarters. Henry Smeathman, in a particularly vivid account of the appalling conditions that faced captives on crowded and smelly slave ships, detailed how in the 1770s on a trip to Antigua male captives tore each other apart through fighting, making sailors too afraid to venture into what they saw as a violent hell-hole.²⁰

Second, violence committed by enslaved people demonstrated to opponents of slavery in metropolitan Europe and northern America the true realities of slavery, separate from the propaganda presented to them by proslavery advocates. Slave masters always insisted that enslaved people in the Americas were happy with

enslavement and that Africans preferred being in the Americas to the barbarous lives they had left behind in an essentially mythical 'Africa'. The proslavery historian Edward Long, for example, noted in response to questions about whether Africans preferred to live in Jamaica or Africa that he 'once interrogated a Negro, who had lived several years in Jamaica, on this subject'. The man replied to Long that in Jamaica he had 'food and clothing as much as he wanted, a good house and his family about him, but in Africa he would be destitute and helpless'.²¹ The violence that Jamaican slaves repeatedly carried out despite the strong likelihood that slavery would lead to cruelly imposed punishment showed that Long was fooling himself (or, more likely, had been fooled by a slave who told his interrogator what he thought his questioner wanted to hear).

It demonstrated also that slavery was not a benevolent institution but was permeated in every aspect of its being by coercion – sometimes purposeful, sometimes random – and it indicated that slaves responded to constant violence by being violent themselves. Planters only managed enslaved people through frequent punishment. The Jamaican overseer, Thomas Thistlewood, learned the importance of using violence on his arrival in Jamaica in 1750. Three months after starting work as an overseer, Thistlewood gave 'old Titus' fifty lashes for helping a runaway and after he 'confess'd to have satt and eat' with the runaway slave 'several times' he gave him another hundred lashes for this 'villainy'. In 1756 – the year of 'Derby's Dose' – Thistlewood administered fifty-seven whippings to a population of around sixty male slaves, gagged another four without whipping, and put eleven in stocks overnight.²² Even in the last days of slavery in the British West Indies and after abolitionist pressure on planters to reduce the punishment meted out to slaves, the amount of punishment endured by slaves just in the course of living and working on plantations was excessive. In the South American colony of Berbice, in the year 1830 alone, out of a population of 20,645 enslaved people, 2,118 men and 1,406 women (3,524 individuals) were flogged, put in stocks, or otherwise disciplined.²³ When enslaved people fought back against the violence that surrounded them, it highlighted less what they had done, but just how vital coercion was in securing any measure of slave obedience.

Third, violence by slaves provoked sufficient outrage among abolitionists imbued with Christian doctrines, in which the iconography of Christ's martyrdom was central, that they easily equated suffering slaves with their own suffering saviour. It is important to note that this equation occurred before enslaved people – at least in the French, British, and Dutch Atlantic worlds – had themselves become Christian. Slavery was not in itself problematic for Christians – believers, after all, described themselves as 'slaves of Christ'. But what Katherine Gerbner calls 'Christian slavery' placed on slave owners a duty to act towards slaves as good Christians, an invocation that presumed masters would not exercise unreasonable violence against their slaves. Quakers – not until the mid eighteenth century notable as abolitionists – played a crucial role in insisting that violence towards slaves

went against God's will. Richard Pinder, a Quaker in Barbados, wrote a pamphlet in 1660 reminding slave owners that slaves 'are of the same Blood and Mould, you are of' and that if they 'rul[ed] in such Tyranny over your Negroes ... you will bring Blood upon you and the cry of their blood shall enter into the eares of the Lord of the Sabbath'. Pinder was an early ameliorationist, wanting to reform slavery along Christian lines. Quaker insistence that masters could not exercise unfettered dominion, including violence, over their enslaved property was one reason why they became a persecuted sect in Barbados.²⁴

The violence of the slave system and the slave trade was commonly seen by its opponents through a Christian lens. The eighteenth-century slave ship captain John Newton, who became, as well as the author of the enduring hymn 'Amazing Grace', an early abolitionist, explicitly shaped his lengthy reminiscences about the brutality of the slave trade within an insistent Christian discourse of attaining salvation through grace so that previous sins could be forgiven. Other abolitionists, including black abolitionists such as Oludah Equiano, whose account of the horrors of the slave trade remains one of the few texts to describe in detail the systematic violence of the Middle Passage, also adopted the language of religious conversion to describe what slavery and the slave trade was like and to suggest that the way out of this violence for masters and slaves alike was through accepting Christian doctrines.²⁵

What made slavery a sin was its violence, as many early abolitionists attested. Granville Sharp, for example, came to abolitionism mainly through seeing West Indian planters in London treating their enslaved property with extreme violence. Thomas Clarkson, James Ramsay, and Anthony Benezet were all early abolitionists who first decried the violence inherent in slavery before coming to see the slave trade and slavery itself as inherently immoral and sinful.²⁶ When evangelical Christians learned of slave rebellions and the grisly ways in which slave rebels were put to death, as in the well-publicized aftermath of Tacky's Revolt in 1761, they tended to see African rebels as Christian martyrs. Vincent Brown notes that 'news of the executions circulated amid prevailing sentimentalism and popular Christian martyrology, which helped the British to envisage their nation as a moral community founded in persecution, death and religious virtue'.²⁷

As enslaved persons became Christian in the early nineteenth century, this language of martyrdom became ever more prevalent. The most famous Christian-inflected account of the travails that enslaved people put up with from evil and violent masters was Harriet Beecher Stowe's bestselling *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). In this novel, Stowe draws on stories of slave resistance from real-life fugitives to paint a vivid, if problematically racist, abolitionist portrait of an American South suffused with violence. The eponymous hero is a Christ-like figure ennobled by his suffering, an enduring figure of black victimization and stoic resistance through non-violence. Although abolitionists welcomed the attention that Stowe's novel received, some were critical of the submissive quality of Uncle Tom. William Lloyd Garrison, for example, asked 'is there one law of submission and non-resistance for

the black man and another of rebellion and conflict for the white man?' Thomas Wentworth Higginson lamented that Tom was not a hero who resisted more and suffered less.²⁸ But what Stowe recognized was that, among a sentimentally inclined readership, tales of excessive violence, patient suffering, and implied redemption worked better than any other narrative strategy to inculcate sympathy among otherwise indifferent whites for the plight of enslaved blacks. Stowe wrote fully in the tradition of the first English-speaking abolitionist writers, like Thomas Day and John Bicknell. Day and Bicknell's famous poem, *Dying Negro* (1773), was about an enslaved man who commits suicide rather than be transported into Caribbean enslavement, thus glorifying the African who chooses Christian redemption in death over servitude in life. As Celeste-Marie Bernier has argued, while white readers could easily identify with slaves as passive victims, they found it much harder to connect to black men praised as heroes, especially if, like Toussaint Louverture, or Frederick Douglass, they were unafraid to use violence in resisting enslavement.²⁹ To some extent, that is a problem that has continued to the present.

Planters tended to either deny that the slave system was inherently violent or else insist that violence was necessary because otherwise naturally savage Africans would rise and kill them. The latter argument was prominent in the period when few Europeans challenged the idea that slavery was essential to produce luxury products that Europeans craved, such as tobacco and sugar, and when the morality of the enslavement of Africans was seldom challenged. In the seventeenth century, few planters in the Atlantic world bothered to try and explain why they were as cruel as they were towards enslaved people. If any explanation was given, it was that masters had to use violence against slaves because, as the English traveller Richard Ligon declared in 1650, Africans were 'a bloody people' and would – if not kept under strict control – 'commit some horrid massacre upon the Christian population, thereby to enfranchise themselves and become masters of the island'. Ligon's fears were realized in plots discovered in 1659, 1675, 1686, and most seriously in 1692. In that year, according to testimony later gained under torture from a slave named Ben, slaves conspired in an elaborate plan in which enough slaves to form four regiments would attack whites and seize white women, 'to make wives of the handsomest, whores, cooks, and chambermaids of the others'. The Barbadian response was ferocious – after torture and court-martial, slaves were executed, castrated, and otherwise punished. The discovery of the plot did not inspire any reflection on the violence of the system. Instead, as contemporaneously in Jamaica, which experienced several small revolts resulting in the murder of several whites in 1678 and through the 1690s, the main thought was to punish rebels in as exemplary a fashion as possible. Hans Sloane described the series of brutal punishments used in 1688 – burning by a slow fire, castration, limb amputation, and whipping. Sloane elaborated: 'after they are whipped till they are raw, some put on their skins Pepper and salt to make them smart'. The punishments were 'harsh' but Sloane thought that the slaves' crimes meant they deserved what they got and

that gruesome punishment was ‘sometimes merited by the blacks, who are a very perverse generation of people’.³⁰

By the early eighteenth century, planters became more conscious that metropolitan Europeans found their behaviour intolerable – Charles Leslie, for example, wrote in 1740 of Jamaica that ‘no Country exceeds them in a barbarous Treatment of Slaves, or in the cruel Methods they put them to death’.³¹ In the French and British Atlantic worlds, the eighteenth-century plantation system was more successful and probably more violent than what had gone before.³² Some became concerned that ruling by violence alone was insufficient to control angry and violent enslaved property. One important thinker who believed that the punishment of slaves needed to be accompanied by promises of good treatment and mercy was Daniel Defoe, who wrote extensively on slave punishment despite never having visited any American slave plantation. Although he accepted that Africans were naturally vicious and could only be ruled with a ‘rod of iron’, as they naturally took advantage of anyone who tried to treat them well, Defoe advocated that the usual terror exercised against enslaved people be tempered by mercy so that masters would be able to inculcate among their slaves a feeling of gratitude that punishments were rational and intended to reform the slave. As George Boulukos argues regarding Defoe’s 1722 novel *Colonel Jack*, ‘he narrates what could be called the invention of slave-owner paternalism, the moment in which a policy of unashamed cruelty is abandoned from the suspicion that gentler ways might produce more efficacious results’.³³

In most places in the Atlantic world, slave owners did not move far from the formulation begun by Defoe in the 1720s whereby it was assumed that slavery was inherently violent because Africans could not be controlled otherwise. Some writers tried to fool metropolitan observers by claiming that slavery was mostly benign and the relationship between slaves and masters was harmonious. Edward Long, for example, unconvincingly tried to counter Charles Leslie’s negative view of Jamaican planters by stating that Creole Jamaicans were ‘humane and indulgent masters’.³⁴ But the evidence of planter cruelty and indifference to slave welfare was so glaringly apparent that few Jamaican planters were willing to corroborate Long’s fantasy. The violence of the plantation, as seen in the ubiquitous use of the whip, was accompanied by vast indifference to the living standards of enslaved people. The most extreme slave societies on the eve of the American Revolution – Jamaica and Saint Domingue – were probably the most unequal societies on earth, where enslaved people had a standard of living that even in good times barely kept them above subsistence and in bad times led to starvation and death.³⁵ In the nineteenth century, the booming economy of Cuba assumed the mantle of most unequal society once held by Jamaica and Saint Domingue.³⁶

Planters in these slave societies – societies which consumed enslaved people and in which violence and the threat of violence was neither hidden nor

denied – accepted the reality that enslaved people hated them and that they could only get these adversaries to work and to not kill them through various forms of coercion, forms that changed and became subtler over time, but which remained forms of coercion throughout. Jamaica's wealthiest early nineteenth-century planter, Simon Taylor, for example, was a successful planter because he refused to overwork his slaves, but he was far from being a 'kind' master. He knew that he depended on the slave trade and was distraught when Britain abolished that trade in 1807. He did not punish slaves directly himself but hired overseers who he knew would treat enslaved people firmly, ignoring any claim from enslaved people that they were punished excessively and that they experienced significant degrees of sexual violence from rapacious whites. As Christer Petley notes, 'he was part of an ever-vigilant white minority, alert to signs of unrest among the slaves on his properties – people who had every reason to want to rise up, to free themselves and to harm or kill their oppressors in the process'.³⁷

In the new United States, however, different demographic conditions shaped approaches to slavery. In particular, a majority white population in the slave states and a black population that grew after the mid eighteenth century from natural population increase (meaning that, after 1800, increasingly few enslaved persons had been born in Africa) encouraged planters to formulate proslavery ideologies predicated on the idea that slavery was upheld not by violence but by a shared understanding of reciprocity between paternalistic masters and mistresses and grateful, obedient, and protected enslaved people. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese have explored the dimensions of this idealistic (and unrealistic) ideology, which they term 'slavery in the abstract'. They conclude that white southerners adopted an ideology of generous paternalism based on personal intimacy between slave owner and slave, where racially superior whites supported – often, planters believed, against their better interests – racially inferior subordinates whose natural place was at the bottom of the social order. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney II of South Carolina, for example, declared in the early nineteenth century that 'Beyond mere animal suffering the slave has nothing to dread. His family is provided in food, shelter and raiment, whether he live and die.' The way that proslavery white southerners described it, slavery was a pleasant condition much better than a freedom that enslaved people were unprepared for, and preferable to the uncertainty, drudgery, and exposure to dearth that they believed was the condition poor white people in the antebellum North daily experienced.³⁸

Similar views about slavery as a beneficent, non-violent institution were expressed by planters in other nineteenth-century slave societies. Their views percolated down into how free people of colour were treated after emancipation. Sir John Gladstone, Britain's largest slave owner in nineteenth-century Demerara and a pioneer in a second variation on the slave trade, the importation of indentured labour from Asia into the eastern Caribbean from the late 1840s, was a firm supporter of gradual emancipation – so gradual, indeed, that it was unlikely ever

to happen. Ameliorative measures, especially government restraint on what he considered to be inevitable misuses of power by violent masters, ‘cannot fail to effect such a progressive change in the general character and habits of the slave population that when the distant period should arrive the transition from slavery to freedom will finally be accomplished without revulsion or danger’. The key word is ‘distant’. His famous son, William, agreed with his father; as British Prime Minister, William Gladstone regretted that British emancipation had been precipitate, as people of African descent had to be kept in subjection, if not in slavery, because ‘in the case of negro slavery ... it was the case of a race of higher capacities ruling over a race of lower capacities’.³⁹ When ex-slaveholders had power over ex-slaves, as in the Jim Crow American South, they implemented such beliefs in new forms of coercion, such as convict-leasing, and in pernicious forms of violence dressed up as social control, such as lynching, which exploded in the American South after 1890.⁴⁰ Freedom did not necessarily mean the end of racially motivated violence nor signified that whites were willing to allow ex-slaves and their descendants a place in the politics that emerged out of slavery.

That planters fooled themselves that slavery was not based on violence should not dismiss the essential truth that slavery did in fact improve, or at least become less obviously based on violence, over time. Such a statement does not absolve nineteenth-century slaveholders from their crimes against enslaved people. Violence was everywhere in nineteenth-century slavery. But slavery was more violent before 1800 than it was after that date – the Christianization of slaves, the influence of ideas of freedom and human rights, and the example of Haiti as what happened when societies gave in completely to treating people as disposable commodities all made a difference. Lessening violence was most obvious in North America, as the stark code of patriarchalism changed from the late eighteenth century into the less austere ideology of paternalism. As Philip Morgan explains, ‘patriarchal masters stressed order, authority, unswerving obedience and were quick to resort to violence when their authority was questioned ... [while paternalist masters] were more inclined to stress their solicitude, their generous treatment of their dependents’. Moreover, patriarchalists – men like Simon Taylor of Jamaica – had no illusions that their slaves loved them, as did paternalists. They knew very well that their slaves hated them, that they were capable of rebellions, and that they had to be considered dangerous aliens, ‘domestic enemies’, to be controlled principally by violence and force.⁴¹ It was patriarchalists who were clear-sighted: slaves on nineteenth-century Louisiana or Cuban sugar plantations would have scoffed at suggestions that they lived under a mild form of paternalistic enslavement in which violence was replaced by kindness.⁴² But the paternalist vision of indulgent masters had considerable force. This is one reason why Harriet Beecher Stowe balanced her evil and cruel Simon Legree character, tormenting Uncle Tom, with the kind and benevolent but weak Augustine St Clare, who exemplified the benevolent aristocratic paternalist slave master.

This discussion leads us into the question of whether slavery in the Americas was more or less violent over time. In many ways, even asking such a question is not helpful in trying to understand the effects of enslavement on individuals. After all, it can be argued that it is misguided to try and quantify levels of violence in slavery and the slave trade, as violence is relational to individuals and psychological violence may be as devastating to the psyche as physical violence, as Nell Painter reminds us.⁴³ But, bearing in mind this important caveat, if mortality rates can stand in as proxies for the violence of slavery, then the violence of slavery lessened over time. In the most violent part of the Atlantic slave system, the Middle Passage, mortality rates declined from a mortality rate of 22.6 per cent for slave ships sailing before 1700 to 9.6 per cent between 1801 and 1820. Although the slave trade was far from finished in the nineteenth century, with millions transported to Iberian America until the mid 1860s, the abolition of the slave trade by most major European slave-trading powers in the first two decades of the nineteenth century meant that fewer Africans suffered from the excessive violence of that trade than in the eighteenth century.⁴⁴ And mortality rates also declined on slave plantations, even in major sugar producing societies. In the British Caribbean, annual mortality rates in Barbados declined from 5.8 per cent in the mid seventeenth century to 0.8 per cent in the late eighteenth century and to positive increase in the early nineteenth century. In Jamaica, there was a similar decline from 4.6 per cent in the seventeenth century to 2.6 per cent in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.⁴⁵ It seems that the true nadir of slavery, when slaves suffered most from endemic violence, was when plantations were being formed and when the large integrated plantation was becoming established in the early eighteenth century. Ira Berlin, who introduced the idea of a 'plantation revolution' in French and British America around 1700, notes that after that date 'Chesapeake slaves faced the pillory, the whipping post and gallows far more frequently and in far larger numbers than ever before'. The Chesapeake was following the example of Barbados half a century earlier. Antoine Biet, who visited Barbados in 1654, was shocked at planter sadism towards slaves, such as a master cutting off a slave's ear, roasting it, and forcing the slave to eat it. He lamented that 'it is inhuman to treat [slaves] with so much harshness', a view echoed a year later by Isaac Birkenhead who claimed that planters were happy to kill their slaves, 'dogs and they being of one ranke with each other'.⁴⁶

Planters who were honest with themselves recognized that this violence turned their societies into Hobbesian ones. This relied on the common view of Hobbes as describing social order as based on blind obedience to Leviathan – state-sanctioned control over mechanisms of violence – without considering Hobbes's careful theory of how such obedience was in the end based on consent (slaves never consented to their condition, so a slave society could never quite accord to Hobbesian principles).⁴⁷ The Jamaican historian Bryan Edwards took this Hobbesian view of the proper relationship between masters and slaves when he argued that 'the leading principle on which government is supported is *fear*, or

a sense of that absolute coercive necessity, which leaving no choice of action, supersedes all sense of *right*.⁴⁸

A final case illustrates the centrality of violence to shaping the nature of slave societies and affecting every aspect of enslaved persons' lives. Nicolas Lejeune, a psychopathic Saint Domingue planter, whose excessive cruelty to enslaved women was so outrageous that it led the French state to take the rare decision to prosecute a white man for violence done to black women, described the basis of planter power over slaves in the baldest fashion. In a 1788 speech made after his inevitable acquittal by a white jury on charges of cruelty and murder, Lejeune explained why in a complete slave society like late eighteenth-century Saint Domingue slave owners needed to be given a torturer's charter. White rule, Lejeune insisted, was dependent on terror and the willingness of whites to use violence to keep slaves from 'buy[ing] their freedom with the blood of their masters'. 'The unhappy condition of the Negro leads him', he argued, 'to naturally detest us. It is only force and violence that restrains him.' He concluded that 'it is not the fear and equity of the law that forbids the slave from stabbing his master, it is the consciousness of absolute power that he has over his person. Remove that bit, he will dare everything.'⁴⁹ Three years after Lejeune's speech, his 'daring negroes' removed that bit by force and started, as Lejeune feared, stabbing their masters, taking by force what masters maintained only through violence.

Notes

- 1 W. Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Harvard, 2013), pp. 9, 172, 191.
- 2 E. E. Baptist, 'Toward a Political Economy of Slave Labor: Hands, Whipping Machines and Modern Power', in S. Beckert and S. Rockman (eds), *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (Philadelphia, 2016), pp. 56–8.
- 3 See P. D. Morgan's review of Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, in *American Historical Review*, 119:2 (2014), pp. 462–4.
- 4 See D. B. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York, 2006) and P. D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* (New York, 1990).
- 5 J. F. Stanfield, *Observations on a Guinea Voyage, in a Series of Letters Addressed to the Rev. Thomas Clarkson* (London, 1788).
- 6 D. Tomich, *Slavery and Historical Capitalism during the Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, MD, 2018), p. ix.
- 7 For the wider context, see D. Eltis and S. L. Engerman (eds), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 3, AD 1420–1804 (Cambridge, 2011) and D. Eltis, S. L. Engerman, S. Drescher, and D. Richardson (eds), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 4, AD 1804–2016 (Cambridge, 2017).
- 8 D. A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York, 2008).

- 9 T. Snyder, *The Power to Die: Slavery and Suicide in British North America* (Chicago, 2015).
- 10 K. Halttunen, 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture', *American Historical Review*, 100:2 (1995); Z. Trodd, 'Am I Still Not a Man and a Brother? Protest Memory in Contemporary Antislavery Visual Culture', *Slavery & Abolition*, 34:2 (2013).
- 11 T. Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and his Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004).
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12

A ‘theatre of bloody carnage’: the revolt of Cairo and Revolutionary violence

Joseph Clarke

It is impossible to disentangle French Revolutionary history from the history of violence. For both contemporary commentators and subsequent historians, the very chronology of the period is defined by its eruptions of mass violence, the *journées* that demarcate the Revolution’s different phases, while the interpretation of that violence has generated some of the historiography’s most heated debates. Without, as some have suggested, reducing the Revolution to killing pure and simple, violence remains, as Jean-Clément Martin and Bronislaw Baczko have recently restated, an inextricable element of Revolutionary political culture.¹ Indeed, it is a measure of this preoccupation that Micah Alpaugh’s 2015 study of *Non-Violence and the French Revolution* was widely greeted as a radical departure in the historiography.² And yet, for all the research that has been devoted to Revolutionary violence, that research has tended to revolve around two related but quite separate themes: the relationship between urban, typically Parisian, ‘crowd’ violence and authority, and the difference between Revolutionary violence and violence under the *ancien régime*.³ While the politics of popular violence still provokes debate, there is greater consensus on the latter point, and the difference between Revolutionary violence and earlier forms of Franco-French conflict remains critical to our understanding of the Revolution as a rupture with the past.

With little in the way of technological innovation to distinguish Revolutionary violence from that which preceded it, the basis for that distinction is primarily one of intention, a matter of the more ambitious aims that inspired communities to take up arms after the events of 1789 revealed that popular violence could bring about regime change. As William Beik’s survey of crowd violence from the sixteenth century to the Revolution concludes: ‘the difference between earlier instances of

collective action and the revolutionary instances lay in the new meaning which revolutionary participants attributed to the exercise of violence'.⁴ Certainly, crowd violence targeted many of the same victims – officials, clerics, merchants accused of hoarding – on either side of this caesura and many of the ritualized aspects of popular violence – the mutilation of enemies, the parading of body parts – appear unchanged across two centuries of popular protest. But such similarities are, in this view, superficial. As Donald Sutherland has recently argued, a fundamental difference exists between the massacres that took place in September 1792 and their 'sixteenth-century counterparts' because 'revolutionary atrocities took place in a secular and political context'.⁵

This insistence that the Revolution represents a watershed in the way that collective violence was understood and employed resonates across much of the scholarship on the Revolutionary wars too. Whether those wars are calibrated in terms of scale or conceptualized according to von Clausewitz's 'absolute war', assumed to anticipate later imperialisms or, more controversially, to prefigure the genocides of the twentieth century, Revolutionary warfare is generally seen as both quantitatively and qualitatively different from that which preceded it. The 'master narrative' of modern warfare that begins in 1792 and culminates in the totality of twentieth-century conflict raises, as Roger Chickering has cautioned, 'as many problems as it resolves' and it certainly has its critics, but this narrative remains tenacious nonetheless.⁶ At the most basic level, the creation of the citizen army that emerged from 1793's *levée en masse* continues to define interpretations of this period and more recent work on the cultural history of Revolutionary warfare has tended to reinforce this sense of rupture with the past.⁷ Despite their very different points of departure, David Bell's account of the 'First Total War' and Philip Dwyer's pioneering work on massacres in the Revolutionary wars both arrive at a similar set of conclusions concerning what Bell describes as the 'decline of religion as a cause of hostilities' during the eighteenth century and what Dwyer defines as the 'profoundly secular' nature of Revolutionary repression.⁸ Like Sutherland, Dwyer sees an 'important distinction' between the religiously motivated massacres of the *ancien régime* and the ideologically inspired atrocities of the Revolutionary wars, and this distinction reflects a wider understanding of the Revolution as the dawn of a 'resolutely secular' political modernity.⁹

This interpretation also resonates with the recent imperative to view the Revolution and its wars as global phenomena, projecting and 'pioneering' new forms of imperialism beyond Europe.¹⁰ With this perspective in mind, Pierre Serna has traced the path that led men like Pierre François Boyer from the defence of the *patrie* in the 1790s to the conquest of Algeria in 1830. Boyer fought in Italy and Egypt in the late 1790s and earned his sobriquet, *Pierre le Cruel*, in Spain a decade later before going on to apply lessons learned there to an exceptionally brutal command in Oran in the 1830s.¹¹ If, as Edward Said suggested, 'the line that starts with Napoleon' in Egypt in 1798 continued on throughout the colonial conflicts of the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries, then men like Boyer embody that connection as they carried the violence pioneered in the 1790s across a global stage in the nineteenth century.¹²

Pierre le Cruel's career is a useful point of departure because it exemplifies this tendency to view the Revolutionary wars as a foreshadowing of conflicts to come rather than as a reflection of violence as it was experienced in the 1790s. So, with his career as a cue, and Ute Planert's caution that historians of the Revolutionary wars have taken 'insufficient note of lines of continuity to early modern times' in mind, this chapter examines the violence of the 1790s from the perspective of the men who inflicted most of it: the 'armed missionaries' that Robespierre warned of in January 1792, the Revolution's men in uniform.¹³ It explores how these soldiers calibrated the violence they were called on to commit and how they rationalized it at its worst, in order to understand the experiences that made men like Pierre Boyer cruel. Far from being unambiguously modern in either conception or conduct, the argument here is that these men's experience of violence represents instead a complex interplay between the politics of the Revolutionary present and the cultural memory of past conflicts. One place to begin teasing out that complexity is, with due deference to Said, Cairo and what one French eyewitness described as 'the theatre of bloody carnage' that took place there in October 1798.¹⁴

Cairo, October 1798

It is impossible to say exactly how many died during the 'two days of desperate fighting' that convulsed Cairo from the morning of 21 October 1798 and ended when French troops stormed the al-Azhar mosque the following evening.¹⁵ However, it is possible to say that what began as an anti-taxation demonstration quickly escalated into a popular uprising that threatened to overthrow the occupation that had been established that summer, and that this threat prompted a brutal response.¹⁶ Reports that the Porte had declared war on France certainly contributed to rising tensions, as did a summer of increasingly unpopular French reforms, even if these often opened with 'God has commanded me', but in Cairo, as across much of French-occupied Europe, it was the army's rapacity that finally provoked resistance.¹⁷ From the Rhineland in the mid 1790s to Spain over a decade later, the onset of a French occupation has been compared to 'the arrival of a biblical plague of locusts' or the descent of a wolf pack, and the Egyptian campaign was no different.¹⁸ As elsewhere, the army's arrival was accompanied by a steady stream of 'contributions' and 'requisitions' and, despite orders prohibiting pillage, it is clear from many soldiers' testimonies that a poorly provisioned army provided for itself as best it could.¹⁹ This aspect of the French expedition has never attracted as much attention as Bonaparte's 'enlightened enterprise' in Egypt, but the flip side of French occupation was an order based on wholesale extortion, sweeping exactions, and five or six executions a day in Cairo alone.²⁰ By mid October, tensions were running high in

the capital and the proclamation of a new property tax on 20 October crystallized this discontent. The following morning, a demonstration in the al-Husayn quarter quickly turned to riot after the French general, Dominique Dupuy, was killed while attempting to restore order. His death triggered 'a general revolt' and as looting spread, attacks on Europeans, along with their local sympathizers, continued into the night.²¹ Facing the first real threat to their authority since their arrival in Cairo, the French were caught badly off guard. Bonaparte was not even in the city that morning, but on his return that afternoon preparations for a counteroffensive were quickly set in place.

The gloves came off the following day. Early that morning, Bonaparte ordered his men 'to put anyone found armed to the sword' and as his battle-hardened veterans confronted crowds equipped, for the most part, with sticks and stones, the outcome was inevitable.²² As the troops moved in, corralling the insurgents in the area around the al-Azhar mosque, the repression was, in Lieutenant Chalbrand's words, 'rapid and terrible'.²³ One dragoon wrote: 'we swept through gloomy streets, massacring mercilessly all who were there with weapons in hand', but Jean-Gabriel de Niello Sargy's account suggests that the killing was even more indiscriminate.²⁴ He recalled that anyone found out of doors 'was sacrificed without pity' and this impression is confirmed in François Bernoyer's letters describing 'an awful massacre' as French cavalry, supported by cannon, 'cut large crowds to pieces' throughout the city.²⁵ The climax came in the al-Azhar that afternoon when, after heavy shelling, the French stormed the mosque with orders to 'exterminate everyone' in it.²⁶ The fighting there would be immortalized – and eroticized – a decade later in Girodet's immense *Révolution du Caire*, but for those present at the time, there was nothing romantic about what took place in the al-Azhar. One soldier reported that 'no quarter was shown' in the mosque, while François Vigo-Roussillon grimly concluded: 'there was great carnage' there too.²⁷

Carnage is the term most contemporaries used to describe these events, but if witnesses agreed on the scale of the bloodbath, they differed dramatically as to how many lives were lost. Alexandre Lacorre recalled seeing bodies 'at every step' as he walked through an eerily silent city the next day, but other accounts are less impressionistic and a week later Bonaparte wrote to Paris reporting fifty-seven French dead and between 2,000 and 2,500 civilian casualties.²⁸ This is certainly an underestimate. Lieutenant Laval agreed that 'very few French' died but he put the civilian death toll at close to 6,000, an estimate Auguste Colbert echoed in his letters home, while Corporal François reckoned the revolt cost 283 French dead and wounded, although once again this was dwarfed by his tally of over 4,000 civilian dead.²⁹ More importantly, the killing did not stop there. With the revolt quashed, Bonaparte issued orders on 23 October that any insurgents captured alive were to be taken to the army's stronghold, the Citadel, beheaded and their corpses cast into the Nile.³⁰ Niello Sargy claimed that 300 died this way, including several prominent clerics charged with sedition, but Bernoyer put the number at 2,000;

in either case, the killings were still taking place long after Bonaparte proclaimed 'peace perfectly restored'.³¹

Like many later descriptions of colonial violence, the accounts that survive of this massacre were written from an overwhelmingly Western perspective. Bonaparte's men were prolific letter-writers, diarists, and memoirists and, in contrast to soldiers in subsequent conflicts, they did not flinch from describing the violence they inflicted as well as that which they witnessed.³² By comparison, far fewer Cairenes left a record of these events. However, those that did, like the Arab Christian commentator Nikula al-Turk or his Muslim contemporary Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, describe the scale of the slaughter in very similar terms. For al-Jabarti, the death toll appeared so immense as to be incalculable, while al-Turk's claim that 'at least five thousand Muslims perished' echoes the highest French estimates.³³ The casualty figures differ from one account to another, although ethnicity did little to determine that difference, but the fact remains that somewhere between 2,500 and 8,000 Cairenes died violent deaths in the space of just three days. To set those figures in context, it seems fair to say that the carnage in Cairo represents the largest single loss of civilian life during a decade of Revolutionary violence. Indeed, even the most conservative of those casualty figures, Bonaparte's own, represents a far greater loss of life than the death toll of the bloodiest of Revolutionary *journées*, the 1,200 to 1,400 men and women murdered in Paris during the prison massacres of 2–7 September 1792. To put it another way, almost twice as many Cairenes were killed during those two days in 1798 as Parisians throughout the Terror, in a city half the size of the French capital.³⁴

This was killing on a grand scale, but this very asymmetric violence was neither unique to Egypt nor unprecedented in the 1790s. It was certainly extreme in extent, but after five years of fighting counter-insurgency campaigns against Vendéens and *chouans* in France, *barbetti* in Piedmont, and 'brigands' across occupied Europe, this was an all too familiar way of waging war for the Revolution's soldiers.³⁵ It was especially familiar to those in the Army of the Orient, who had already accompanied Bonaparte into Italy in 1796. Throughout that campaign, Bonaparte's faith in the salutary effects of 'a terrible example' had been constant, and proclamations and even press notices repeatedly promised that resistance would provoke a spectacular reckoning.³⁶ Following the burning of Binasco and the massacre of its men-folk in May 1796, for example, he published a 'Proclamation to the inhabitants of Lombardy' warning: 'Let the example of Binasco open your eyes! Any villages persisting in revolt will share its fate', and his men were as good as his word.³⁷ Across Lombardy and the Veneto, massacre was an accepted means to an exemplary end in 1796 and the French occupation of Egypt was accompanied by the same orders to 'make a terrible example', the same scorched villages, the same trail of 'streets covered in dead'.³⁸ The army's advance through Sharqia province in early October was typical. After suffering light losses to raids launched by 'Arabs howling like wild beasts', Corporal François casually noted that 'we burned 23 villages, the most

rebellious ones ... All of the inhabitants, except the women and children, were put to the sword. More than 900 were put to death.³⁹ Wherever it came, the French response to resistance was immediate and terrible, and in this respect the violence unleashed in Cairo differed from that inflicted on villages like Thévené – where the wounding of one French soldier led to the massacre of an entire village – only in scale.⁴⁰ So much, it might be added, for the ‘paix aux chaumières!’ the Revolution had promised in 1792.

All of the ranks recognized this exemplary logic and congratulated themselves repeatedly on their thoroughness in following it through, at first in the countryside between Alexandria and Cairo and then in the capital. As Lieutenant Chalbrand concluded after the revolt there: ‘the repression was ... terrible, but it impressed upon the Muslims an extraordinary idea of French strength and power and this ... consolidated our domination’.⁴¹ This reasoning was widely shared. Joseph Moiret viewed ‘the severity we deployed’ in equally sanguine terms, concluding that ‘happily for us’ it would deter ‘those who might be tempted or incited to follow its [Cairo’s] example’, while others described it as a ‘lesson’ for all Egypt.⁴² In this sense, there was nothing unusual about the carnage these soldiers wrought in Cairo and none of their accounts attempt to excuse it by reference to the indiscipline or bloodlust that officers sometimes cited to excuse a city’s sacking after a siege. On the contrary, Bonaparte’s order to ‘exterminate’ everyone in the al-Azhar was an atrocity intended to subdue a whole city and, beyond that, an entire country, and its meaning was clear to all of his men. Grenadier Vigo-Roussillon summarized this rationale in stark terms: ‘only terror could keep us in a country where we were few in number and where all the inhabitants were, out of religious fanaticism, our irreconcilable enemies’.⁴³ This was slaughter as strategy, the deliberate use of massacre to consolidate a colonial occupation. And yet, however calculated this carnage might have been, Vigo-Roussillon’s reference to religious fanaticism suggests that there was more to this violence than simply impressing the locals with an object lesson in French military might.

Civilization and fanaticism

According to Henry Laurens, everything the French did in Egypt ‘was done in the name of civilization’: it was, he argues, ‘the key word of expeditionary discourse’.⁴⁴ This may well have been true of the savants who aspired, in Jonathan Israel’s account, to ‘bring Egypt into a new era’ by dint of enlightened *idéologie* and Republican reform and it unquestionably provided French propagandists (and some subsequent commentators) with a suitably selfless excuse for an unprovoked invasion.⁴⁵ This civilizing mission may even have meant something to Bonaparte in his more messianic moments, but spreading ‘civilization’ meant little to most of his men. They had scant time for the savants – officers observed that ‘a kind of fury ... animated the soldiers’ against the intellectuals they blamed for

being in Egypt in the first place – and even less for their highfalutin ideas of enlightened imperialism.⁴⁶ While some officers echoed the official line, most soldiers were sceptical of this civilizing mission and after just a few weeks among this ‘sottish, slavish people’ Joseph Moiret probably spoke for many of his comrades when he concluded that ‘we soon saw the impossibility of civilizing them’.⁴⁷ Whatever other ambitions these men may have entertained in Egypt, and surviving long enough to get home would probably have satisfied most of them after the French fleet was routed at Aboukir Bay, civilizing the Orient was not one of them. Indeed, soldiers rarely mentioned the idea in their journals or letters home, except in so far as they considered Egypt a ‘land where civilization seemed extinguished’.⁴⁸

If the idea of civilization is often absent from these soldiers’ testimonies, the fear of fanaticism features prominently in most accounts of the expedition. That one word, along with its offshoots fanatic, fanatical, fanaticized, recurs repeatedly in their letters and diaries and it encapsulates how these men viewed what Sub-Lieutenant Vertray described as ‘this fanatical and fatalistic people’.⁴⁹ The contrast between Egypt’s antique past and what the French saw as its abject present; the despotism its people supposedly submitted to; the poverty, dirt, and disease they endured; the oppression of its women; the want of wine and the absence of amenable female company: most soldiers attributed some if not all of what they saw as Egypt’s backwardness to Islam’s influence and ‘the moral brutalization’ it supposedly inspired.⁵⁰ Pierre Gerbaud even blamed the ‘astonishing multitude of ugly, useless dogs’ roaming Egypt’s towns on the idiosyncrasies of a religion that supposedly prohibited killing them, before embarking on his own private war on Damietta’s dogs.⁵¹

The French blamed Islam, much more than Mamluk rule, for their alienation in Egypt and this antipathy only increased when the soldiers came face to face with Islam at its most exuberant during Cairo’s celebration of Mawlid that August. Edouard de Villiers du Terrage expressed a common view when he wrote that these devotions ‘inspired me with pity and contempt’.⁵² More importantly, these festivities also inspired fear – fear of the unknown certainly, but also fear of what many of the French saw as Islam’s essential extremism, an absence of restraint that some likened to insanity, especially when it was expressed with the unsettling enthusiasm of the city’s Sufi mystics, ‘holy madmen’, ‘foaming at the mouth ... running the streets ... naked as apes’, that the French described seeing that August.⁵³ For many of the French, Islam appeared to be unreason incarnate, but if some soldiers owed this jaundiced view of Islam as a kind of ‘perpetual delirium’ to the extracts from Volney’s *Voyages en Egypte et en Syrie* that were available in their messes, they were the well-read few.⁵⁴ Instead, for the majority, this intense antipathy was more ingrained than erudite. It stemmed from the ‘disenchantment’ they experienced from the moment they arrived in Egypt and the disconcerting ‘difference of *moeurs* and religion’ they encountered there.⁵⁵ For that reason, Bonaparte’s attempts to draw Islam, or at least its elites, into the Republican fold proved contentious from the start.

From the moment the French arrived in Egypt, Bonaparte had pursued a concerted, if not particularly convincing, attempt to win over Egyptian hearts and minds by appearing to embrace Islam. From his much-mocked declaration that 'we too are true Muslims' on arriving in Alexandria to his orders to show respect for Islam and its adherents, this policy defined the early stages of the expedition and it intensified when the French occupied Cairo in July.⁵⁶ Further proclamations declaring Bonaparte's respect 'for the religion of the Prophet which I love' accompanied the army's arrival in the capital and this policy climaxed a month later when the army was made to mark Mawlid with as much pomp as possible.⁵⁷ Pierre Pelleport claimed that 'nothing was forgotten to persuade the Egyptians that the army had the greatest reverence for the Prophet', although he also admitted that the soldiers privately sniggered at the 'comedy' of it all.⁵⁸ Sniggering may have been a price worth paying if this posturing had succeeded, but it seems clear that few Cairenes were convinced by these attempts to conscript Islam to the French cause. Al-Jabarti, for one, was scathing about Bonaparte's 'incoherent' declarations of devotion, and the Egyptians' adoption of the nickname Ali-Bonaparte was clearly a mark of ridicule rather than respect, even if the joke was largely lost on the French.⁵⁹ More damaging still, this policy also took a toll on the men's morale, their regard for their general, and maybe even their self-respect. All of those orders to avoid offending local religious sensibilities evidently failed because they had to be reissued repeatedly, while the sight of Bonaparte in 'oriental costume' during Mawlid unsettled some in the army.⁶⁰ Lieutenant Chalbrand claimed that many of his men found these 'acts of deference towards mahometanism' 'demeaning' and Joseph Moiret's verdict was even more damning.⁶¹ Reflecting on the pretence the army had been ordered to put on, he recalled his comrades complaining 'that they had not shaken off the prejudices of Europe only to adopt those of the Orient'.⁶² Bonaparte's policy, as his men saw it, of pandering to Islam clearly rankled. It ran counter to their own aversion to Egyptian culture, but perhaps more importantly it offended, as Moiret's remark suggests, the soldiers' sense of themselves as a Revolutionary army, a force freed of the prejudices of the old order and fighting to establish the new. By 1798, that self-image was deeply ingrained.⁶³ It had been forged in the defence of the *patrie* and honed on battlefields across Europe, but its roots lay back in France, in the rhetoric of Republican regeneration and the religious conflicts that had convulsed France since the Revolution began.

From the first major outbreaks of resistance to Revolutionary change in 1790, the new regime routinely attributed any form of popular opposition to 'the clamours of fanaticism', a matter of clerical conspiracy and misguided religious fervour on the part of a 'fanaticized countryside'.⁶⁴ As the new authorities struggled to contain rising disaffection, this analysis became a commonplace in 1792, and when that disaffection exploded into civil war in the Vendée in March 1793 its outbreak was understood in the same terms. For the Republicans sent to repress the rising in the west that spring, the revolt there was represented not as a rural revolt against

enlistment, but as a Manichean struggle pitting liberty against backwardness and bigotry, a war in which the enemy always went into battle swathed in scapulars, urged on by their priests, 'the apostles of fanaticism' in General Turreau's terms, with the promise of a martyr's death.⁶⁵ This image of relentless religious fanaticism and the 'sacred fury' it inspired was a recurring theme in Republican dispatches from the Vendée and it shaped many soldiers' sense of both the nature of the revolt and the kind of repression it warranted.⁶⁶ As one officer wrote from the west of France in August 1793:

It is a great mistake to employ tactics against men who fight, a scapular and a rosary in hand and who hurl themselves against our artillery armed only with sticks ... As long as we wage a war against these fanatics other than that which they wage themselves, we are lost. We must follow their own methods ... We can no longer hope to bring them to reason. We must kill them all, or they will kill us.⁶⁷

This image of the enemy as irrational and implacable, and the orders for a war of 'extermination' that it inspired, marked the Vendée out as radically different from the war France was fighting on its frontiers.⁶⁸ In defining civil war as a war against fanaticism, the Revolution defined it, as Antoine Momoro insisted that autumn, as a conflict in which 'an entire population can be considered an enemy', a crusade in which compromise was inconceivable.⁶⁹

Many historians have argued that the Revolutionary and Imperial authorities criminalized civilian resistance as 'banditry' and 'brigandage', but in defining civil war in this way, Republicans described the opposition they encountered in much more apocalyptic terms.⁷⁰ In this discourse – and it was ubiquitous in 1793 – the fanatic was not simply an outlaw: he, or she, was demonized as something monstrous, a 'ferocious beast', a 'hydra', or described as a disease, a 'gangrene' that could only, as Bertrand Barère insisted that August, be excised with 'fire and the sword'.⁷¹ The Republican elite dehumanized civilian resistance and it seems clear that many soldiers embraced this message wholeheartedly. In their accounts, the civilians in the West appear inherently alien: 'strangers to our *moeurs*, our laws', 'barbarians', or simply inhuman, 'fanatical brigands' fit only to be dealt with 'as one hunts wild boars', as one volunteer claimed in June 1793.⁷² This may explain why soldiers like Corporal François Joliclerc felt able to write home that 'men and women, they will all be run through. They must all perish, all except the little children' or bragged, like Michel Raphanel in a letter to his father, of their intention to 'exterminate all' the Republic's enemies.⁷³ Just as the *levée en masse* began to assemble the largest army Europe had ever seen, Revolutionary discourse radically redefined these soldiers' sense of what they were fighting for and, just as importantly, what they were fighting against. In waging war on religious fanaticism, men like Joliclerc or Raphanel believed they were fighting a crusade in which the laws of war no longer applied.

Neither Joliclerc nor Raphanel ever reached Egypt, but many of their comrades did and they carried all of the preconceptions they had acquired about the nature of

civilian resistance and how to combat it with them from France into Egypt in 1798. Many in the Army of the Orient, from generals like Dumas and Kléber and junior officers like Vaxelaire or Colbert to ordinary soldiers like Louis Bricard, were veterans of the Vendée. More, like Bonaparte himself, had honed these assumptions about enemies armed with 'a dagger in one hand and the crucifix in the other', in Italy during the *triennio*.⁷⁴ For the French, the resistance they encountered in Italy seemed, as one soldier wrote from Lazio in 1798, 'just like the Vendée', and many of his comrades applied the same analogy once they reached Egypt.⁷⁵ Admittedly some, like Dumas, held that the war there was even 'worse than that of the Vendée', but it is the choice of comparison that matters here because this readiness to view wars of conquest in the light of civil war at home determined how these soldiers conceptualized, and ultimately conducted, counter-insurgency in Egypt.⁷⁶ It explains the wary eye the army kept on muezzins from the moment it arrived in Egypt and it makes sense of the uneasy census of Cairo's 300-odd mosques many soldiers made as soon as they reached the city.⁷⁷ As Dominique-Vivant Denon put it, the French saw Cairo's mosques as 'the refuge of crime' and they appraised them accordingly, as they would an enemy army, because this is where they expected opposition to originate.⁷⁸ Inevitably then, when the crisis finally came to a head in October, the identification of responsibility for the revolt was little more than a reflex.

There was unquestionably a religious dimension to the revolt of Cairo. Al-Jabarti admitted as much when he criticized a militant minority among the *ulama* for seizing on the sultan's declaration of war to incite 'the riff-raff' to rise up, but for all that, the revolt of Cairo was a riot that spiralled out of control rather than the eruption of a holy war.⁷⁹ Religious grievances may have fuelled resentment against French rule but, as across occupied Europe, it was the new regime's rapacity, rather than religious zeal, that finally prompted resistance. The civilians who accompanied the armies often recognized as much, although few soldiers saw things this way.⁸⁰ At most, they saw the everyday affronts and unpopular exactions the occupation engendered as minor irritants, 'secondary circumstances ... that came to the aid of the seditious' according to Auguste Colbert, and most of his comrades agreed.⁸¹ Instead, both officers and men looked instinctively to the 'crazed convulsionaries' concealed in the city's mosques and blamed their 'fanatical preaching' and 'seditious sermons' for the events that overtook them on 20 October.⁸² It was a reassuringly familiar explanation, and as in Europe it served to absolve an unwelcome occupation, and its men, of responsibility for the resistance their presence had provoked.

When the fighting had finished, the violence that had begun, according to the French, in the mosques ended there too. Having identified religion once again as the root cause of revolt, the Revolution's soldiers exorcised their anger in the al-Azhar itself. No soldiers described this aftermath in any detail – and that uncharacteristic silence is suggestive in itself – but al-Turk and al-Jabarti did, and their accounts fill that void. While al-Turk confined himself to describing how 'distressed' the city's

residents were 'to see the sacred sanctuary of their mosque violated', al-Jabarti described what that 'profanation' amounted to in despairing detail:

the French trod in the Mosque of al-Azhar with their shoes, carrying swords and rifles ... they ravaged the students' quarters ... They plundered whatever they found in the mosque ... They treated the books and Qur'anic volumes as trash, throwing them on the ground, stamping them with their feet and shoes. Furthermore, they soiled the mosque, blowing their spit in it, pissing and defecating in it. And whoever they happened to meet in the mosque they stripped. They chanced upon someone in the students' residence and slaughtered him. Thus they committed deeds in al-Azhar which are but little of what they are capable of, for they are enemies of the Religion.⁸³

Iconoclasm and pillage were nothing new to these soldiers. The French left a trail of sacked churches, smashed saints' statues, and stolen silverware across Western Europe too. And yet, however accustomed these men were to acts of sacrilege and symbolic violence, all of this desecration and defecation seems like an act of expiation too. For an army that had so self-consciously, as Moiret put it, 'shaken off the prejudices of Europe', the three months that preceded the sacking of the al-Azhar had been an unsettling experience. They had been three months of putting up with a 'victorious general debasing himself to feign religious sentiments contrary to his conscience' and three months of orders to respect a religion most of these men despised.⁸⁴ The ferocity of the violence in the al-Azhar is a measure of the toll this policy finally took and perhaps even a mark of the shame it inspired. It is as if all of that frenetic spitting and shitting and pissing was meant to purge the pollution of proximity to a religion these men found 'repellent' and undo the ignominy of Bonaparte's assertion that 'we too are true Muslims'.⁸⁵

The Revolution's 'rites of violence'

There is much here that seems to prefigure the violence of later colonial campaigns. The Army of the Orient's systematic use of massacre in 1798 seems to foreshadow the atrocities the French employed in Algeria in the 1830s, just as these soldiers' use of the term 'fanatic' to describe their enemies anticipates the idiom colonial officials employed to the same end in British India throughout the nineteenth century.⁸⁶ The 'prose of counter-insurgency', to borrow Ranajit Guha's phrase, appears common to both contexts and in this sense Said was right.⁸⁷ There is a line that connects the French presence in Egypt to these later colonial contexts, and from that perspective this violence does appear precociously modern. However, from the perspective of the soldiers who engaged in this slaughter, that line leads in a very different direction and it points backwards, not forwards, in time. These soldiers arrived in Egypt with their own experiences to draw on and their own entrenched understanding of the relationship between religion and violence. These had been established at home, in their experience of civil war and, beyond

that, in the cultural memory of the confessional conflicts that had convulsed France throughout the early modern period.

Rather than interpreting Revolutionary violence as unequivocally modern, let alone 'profoundly secular', focusing on these soldiers' experiences in the 1790s presents instead lines of continuity that reach back from the repression in Cairo to the civil war in France, a civil war that contemporaries repeatedly conceptualized by reference to the wars of religion. The men of the Revolution may have repudiated the French past, but they knew their history well and they repeatedly invoked it to explain the violence that engulfed them in the 1790s and to justify the extremes they employed in suppressing it. Allusions to Saint Bartholomew's Day, the Michelade, and all the other 'cruelties committed in the wars of religion' loomed large in Revolutionary accounts of the war in the Vendée and the memory of the more recent religious war in the Cévennes proved just as serviceable.⁸⁸ Mathieu Baudran, for example, doubtless disapproved of Louis XIV's *dragonnades* – most good Republicans did – but he still recommended applying them as a model when he was sent west to suppress *chouannerie* in 1795.⁸⁹ History had taught this generation that civil conflict was inherently confessional and they defined their enemies and calibrated their response to them accordingly. In interpreting counter-insurgency as a war waged against religious fanaticism, the Revolution embraced an earlier language of confessional conflict and this language carried within it a whole set of assumptions about the nature of the enemy and the violence it was permissible to deploy against it. The resonance of this language explains the ease with which those orders to 'exterminate' were issued and the enthusiasm with which they were carried out. In defining their opponents as fanatics, these soldiers marked them out as fundamentally different from other combatants. Unlike conventional armies which might be defeated in battle, an enemy inspired by religious fanaticism could never be brought to terms or reasoned with because the fanatic was, by definition, unreasoning, 'imbecilic', 'atrocious and insane'.⁹⁰ Immune to reason and negotiation, the 'fanatic' had forfeited the right to be regarded as a conventional opponent and was reduced instead to a 'semi-savage', a 'barbarian', or worse still, in language that was repeated from the Vendée to Egypt, a 'ferocious beast'.⁹¹ In dehumanizing their enemies in these terms, Republicans rationalized their recourse to extremes of violence that seemed, by the standards of the eighteenth century, to belong to another era.

This is why that final frenzy in the al-Azhar mosque is so revealing. The Revolution's soldiers thought of their enemies as relics from the past and their 'rites of violence' reflect something of that identification of resistance with religious war.⁹² The dehumanization of the enemy on religious grounds; the decision to exterminate those deemed beyond the pale by virtue of their religious beliefs; the singling out of clerics for special retribution; the resort to massacre and mutilation; the casting of corpses into water to be washed away; even that compulsion to desecrate and defile sacred spaces: there is a pattern to this violence and that pattern is predicated on the soldiers' perception of religious difference and the threat it

posed to the order they embodied. However much Revolutionary historians may think of 1789 as ‘the threshold of the modern age’, its ‘year zero’ even, and however much they insist that Revolutionary violence, like the politics of this particular modernity, was radically different and ‘resolutely secular’, these ‘rites of violence’ suggest that the Revolution’s relationship to the past was more complicated.⁹³ These Revolution’s soldiers were not ‘warriors of God’ in the sense that their sixteenth-century predecessors were, but in imagining the wars of the 1790s as a ‘war to the death’ against an enemy inspired by religious fanaticism, these men were fighting their own wars of religion.⁹⁴

Notes

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- 5 Sutherland, ‘Justice and Murder’, p. 133.
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- 9 Dwyer, ‘Violence and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars’, p. 123, and L. Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (London, 1986), p. 28.
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- 30 Napoléon, *Correspondance*, V, p. 114.

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- 87 R. Guha, 'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency', in R. Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II, Writings on South-Asian History and Society* (Oxford, 1983).
- 88 For these parallels, see Clarke, "The Rage of the Fanatics".
- 89 Aulard, *Recueil*, XIX, p. 300.
- 90 Barère, *Rapport*, p. 22; *La Feuille Villageoise*, 4, 24 Oct. 1793, p. 87.
- 91 E. Fairon and H. Heuse (eds), *Lettres de Grogards* (Liège, 1936), p. 126; Miot, *Mémoires*, p. 55.
- 92 N. Z. Davis, 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France', *Past & Present*, 59 (1973).
- 93 For example, D. Andress, 1789: *The Threshold of the Modern Age* (New York, 2008); Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas*, p. 17; Hunt, *Politics*, pp. 20, 28.
- 94 Vigo-Roussillon, *Journal*, p. 83; L. M. Routier, *Récits d'un soldat de la République et de l'Empire, 1792–1830* (Paris, 1899), pp. 81–2.

13

Conquer, extract, and perhaps govern: organic economies, logistics, and violence in the pre-industrial world

Wayne E. Lee

Augustus Caesar would say, that he wondered that Alexander feared he should want work, having no more worlds to conquer: as if it were not as hard a matter to keep as to conquer.

Francis Bacon¹

[The first emperor of China] failed to rule with humanity and righteousness and did not realize that the power to attack and the power to retain what one has thereby won, are not the same ... Insuring peace and stability in the lands one has annexed calls for a respect for authority. Hence I say that seizing and guarding what you have seized, do not depend upon the same techniques.

The Grand Historian Sima Qian, critiquing China's first emperor,
Qin Shi Huangdi²

Since the old days the Tatar have fought our fathers and grandfathers. Now to get revenge for all the defeats, to get satisfaction for the deaths of our grandfathers and fathers, we'll kill every Tatar man taller than the lynch-pin on the wheel of a cart. We'll kill them until they're destroyed as a tribe. The rest we'll make into slaves and disperse them among us.

Chinggis Khan, as recorded in the Secret History³

It was not plunder they [the Cherokees] wanted from them [the Creeks] but to go to war with them and cut them of[f] [kill them].

George Chicken, reporting on Cherokee motivations in 1715⁴

Large-scale coordinated violence has nearly always sought to rearrange political authority; violence in self-defence is not an exception to this statement, as it merely seeks to maintain the status quo.⁵ The post-victory process of rearranging authority

and its subsequent maintenance, however, is less well studied than the immediate means of achieving that victory. In part, this is because military history has traditionally focused on the narratives and variables of campaigns and battles, while political history tends to focus on long-term state formation through the lens of institutional development. As a result, analyses of the key role of force in the complex dynamic of consolidating and maintaining conquest *after* victory have fallen between the cracks.⁶ Furthermore, historians in general have focused on these dynamics within and among traditional sedentary states, eliding wide swathes of the human experience outside that social formation. Indeed, even the word 'conquest' is not quite right, as it implies some form of territorial capture or control. As we will see, not all war was about controlling or occupying territory.⁷

The theoretical model presented here, therefore, seeks to transcend states. It posits that victors in the pre-industrial world secured the long-term benefits of military success through a combination of four 'pillars': legitimacy, sanctity, bureaucracy, and the deployment of force in a security or 'latent' mode. The way victors deployed the last pillar, latent force, was heavily shaped by logistical considerations, which in turn reflected the fundamentals of the victor's subsistence system. Rather than simply comparing different states, or even comparing 'barbarians' with more settled polities, this chapter compares early modern societies according to their different systems of subsistence: agricultural states, nomadic pastoral clans on the Eurasian steppe, and Native American polities in the North American woodlands during the historic era.⁸ These are used to analyse different forms of 'conquest' – the ability to secure long-term benefits of military success – thereby highlighting the structural relationship between logistics and the expected rewards of conquest. The chapter focuses first on conflict *within* each of these subsistence niches. Over time, patterns of conquest within each niche generated normative definitions of victory and associated expectations about the fate of defeated populations. When different systems clashed – for example, when the steppe invaded the sown or when the forces of a state marched into the North American woods – the resulting mismatch of expectations about the meaning of victory changed not only the violence of war, but also the violence of post-war consolidation.

Moving beyond a focus on settled states as the norm and instead systematically comparing a fuller range of sociopolitical formations can move us beyond simplistic assumptions about the violence of 'primitives', 'savages', 'barbarians', or even intruding 'colonists'. Culture and prejudice surely played profound roles in generating violence, including violence beyond what was considered normal.⁹ This approach also lessens our dependence on contemporary representations and accounts of violence and allows us to investigate the relationship between structure and violence: the ways in which fundamental structural conflicts were embedded in different societies' expectations of resource extraction in the wake of so-called victory.

Hierarchical agricultural states

In the states of the pre-industrial world, one can discern three basic types of conquest wielded against other states, summarized in [Table 13.1](#) (along with two forms of non-conquest outcomes):

This simple typology is messier in reality of course. Methods were used in varying combinations, depending on the victorious state's calculation of risks and rewards. Furthermore, complete conquests were relatively rare. More common outcomes are reflected in the table by the two non-conquest types: one in which the losing side surrendered a slice of territory to the victor to bring an end to an expensive or increasingly dangerous conflict, and the other when there was little thought of outright conquest and instead the combatants sought more short-term plunder or merely to exert political pressure through destruction. Finally, these conquest methods also often occurred in succession. A losing or weaker state might submit, thus becoming a tributary vassal or client, but then later rebel, leading to a more complete conquest and provincialization – a pattern common to Assyria, Egypt, China, Rome, and many other expansive states in the pre-industrial world. The larger point is that each of these methods of consolidating conquest was designed to capture resources from the territory and labour of the defeated state, largely for the benefit of the elite in the victorious state.

The elites of most pre-industrial states reaped the rewards of conquest personally, but rulers also 'reinvested' in their military capacity, using conquest to help acquire more force. But here we must distinguish between 'force' and 'power'.¹⁰ Power in this sense was the ability to rule without the resort to force. When behavioural assumptions and cultural norms of deference allowed for the peaceful collection of taxes (for example), a ruler's fundamental power was greater than if he or she had to rely on force for that collection.

Consolidating power over conquered populations rested on four pillars. These pillars are not confined to states, but the state provides us with a familiar framework within which to consider them and we will turn to their non-state manifestations later. The four pillars are legitimacy, sanctity, bureaucracy, and latent force.¹¹ Power – rule without resort to violence – ultimately relied on legitimacy, and there were many frameworks for establishing this: the claim of blood descent, the imprimatur of an election, a cultural belief in victory as a sign from the divine, or even simply a reputation for generosity to allies and kin in the aftermath of victory. All were mechanisms for asserting the legitimacy of rule. Very frequently, however, legitimacy was tied to a claim of sanctity. A claim of access to the divine was so significant and so common that we must consider it separately from legitimacy. Bureaucracy institutionalized the exercise of power without the resort to violence. It was more mechanistic than the cultural norms required for legitimacy or sanctity, but its regularized systems of extraction, especially when modulated by law, depersonalized the process. Bureaucracy distanced the ruler

Table 13.1 Conquest types in war between sedentary agricultural states

Shorthand for political nature of victory	Political fate of losers	Resource reallocation Spatial rearrangement	Consolidation requirements
Mass population removal	Elite decapitated; population enslaved or displaced	Much moved to conqueror's original resource area (or are forced to migrate away)	Conqueror must have a resource base that needs labour, or surplus population prepared to colonize (the latter becomes provincialization, but without a native population to control)
Tributary	Elite submits or is co-opted under pressure; or a puppet ruler installed	Labour remains on conquered territory; surplus redirected to conqueror; local bureaucracy intact	No major garrisons required More profitable for conqueror but less politically reliable Requires some loyalty work
Partial territorial surrender	Limited conquest: territorial slice surrendered	Central polity surrenders a territorial slice to provincialization; local elite usually replaced	Requires territorial garrisons and loyalty work, primarily against <i>revanche</i> by defeated enemy state
Provincialization (elite replacement)	Elite decapitated; new elite imposed	Labour remains on conquered territory; some surplus to reward newly imposed elite, rest to conqueror state	Requires territorial garrisons and loyalty work
Plunder, devastation, raid	No authority change, but regime legitimacy undermined, costs incurred	Plunder taken	Not a form of conquest by itself

or the elite from the resentment of the taxed and thus sustained the broader legitimacy of rule.

In the long term, legitimacy, sanctity, and bureaucracy are cheaper and more efficient pillars of rule than force, but establishing any of them among a newly defeated population represented a generational challenge. Creating a legitimate heritable or transferable dynasty beyond the immediate 'rights of the victor' required what we will call here more generally 'loyalty work'. Establishing claims to a divine connection, for example, might require generations of cultivation. Fortunately for many new conquerors, bureaucracy, unlike sanctity or legitimacy, often proved somewhat easier to transfer to the victor.

Even more than bureaucracy, however, the readiest pillar for consolidating control in the immediate wake of state territorial conquest was the management and distribution of some form of latent force. Military forces, even if no longer actively fighting, provided a visible guarantee against continued resistance or future rebellion. In general, the precise ways that latent force was composed, used, and distributed depended on two key factors: the specific type of conquest (tributary, provincialization, and so on) and the military logistical system, which was in turn derived from the normal demographic operating environment of the conquering society. It is this latter tripartite relationship (demographic space – military logistics – latent force management) that primarily concerns us here.

The logistics supporting an agricultural state's military on campaign differed from those required for latent force. Campaign logistics depended primarily on the roads (rivers in some cases) and the food generated by the local organic economy: armies moved on locally built roads and ate locally produced food. In low-density, resource-scarce environments (deserts, mountains, and so on), wagons carrying supplies assumed greater importance, and sometimes roads had to be built as part of the campaign.

Latent force logistics, however, presents a somewhat different problem, visible in outline in the 'consolidation requirements' column of [Table 13.1](#). We can dispose of the first two relatively quickly, because mass displacement and tributary submission typically avoided latent force costs. An enslaved population brought back to labour in the home territory, or sent to another province of the empire, required relatively little latent force (except possibly to escort them along the march). Such a population, beaten down, often dispersed, in an unfamiliar territory, and probably deprived of many of its adult men by defeat, was an unlikely immediate source of rebellion. Rather than outright force, enslaved populations were managed more by a rearrangement of the bureaucracy to provide slave codes and relatively cheap policing.

The next cheapest option was some form of submission followed by a tributary relationship. In this case, land and labour came together, almost entirely without administrative cost to the victor. The losing state continued to operate its own systems of collecting surplus and provided its own internal and external security,

only now the tributary state transmitted part of its surplus to the victor as tribute. Depending on the exact nature and terms of the submission, the victor might have to fund a puppet ruler, or even locate a small garrison in the loser's territory, but compared to provincialization the logistical requirements were tiny.

Provincialization, however, either of a surrendered slice of territory or of the entire territory of a defeated state, put heavier demands on latent force. The usual requirement was some form of distributed garrisons around the defeated territory. There were other forms of latent force – such as the court as travelling armed camp, in which the king moved around his territory accompanied by the army, imposing costs on his local hosts, reminding them of his power, and keeping the army supplied by moving – but garrisons were the more common method among agricultural states. The number and location of garrisons varied with geography and population distribution, but population control and the enforcement of surplus collection required a wide distribution of force. Like troops on campaign, those troops had to eat and move. In densely settled and well-developed areas, it was a relatively simple matter to put such garrisons into regional market towns and the loser's capital, where roads came together and to which food was already being regularly transported by the normal functioning of the economy. In many cases, however, the occupiers had to split forces into smaller garrisons, since no one region could supply sufficient food for a large army for very long, except at the great expense of transporting it. English forces in Ireland in the sixteenth century made these kinds of calculations explicit – in peacetime they dispersed garrisons around the territory to 'bridle' the countryside, with each garrison dependent on local food and transportation networks. The garrisons were supposed to live from the 'cess' of the surrounding countryside – a kind of tax-in-kind – and meanwhile, if the locals rebelled, that same produce would be forfeit to destructive raids by the garrison.¹² English long-term plans in Ireland sought to build the other pillars of conquest by 'shiring' the Gaelic territories, imposing the English county structure, property law, and judicial systems.¹³

In densely populated core provinces, as the other three pillars of conquest took hold, latent force became less necessary. Frequently those forces then moved to the state's periphery, where the local population might not be dense enough to sustain them. In such undeveloped regions the central government found itself paying for walls, roads, and for the long-distance transport of food to sustain the garrisons – one need only think of the Roman frontier and the Chinese steppe frontier, but other examples abound, not least in the Ottoman and Russian empires. Alternatively, as became common in medieval China, soldiers were required to grow their own food on the frontiers. These expensive frontier latent force requirements were only made possible by the shift to cheaper forms of legitimated bureaucratic rule in the core provinces.

In sum: the military conquest of one agricultural state by another made it possible to extract new wealth from the additional territory (or from a newly enslaved labour pool). A tributary-type conquest did not require the victor to deploy force

to extract that wealth, but it was less politically stable. If the victor opted for provincialization – often the case after a rebellion – wealth extraction during the early stages of consolidation required the distribution of latent force in the form of garrisons around the new territory, typically fed by local foodstuffs moving through existing road and market networks. These relationships of demographic space to force distribution were established by the very nature of the agricultural organic economy as exploited by a hierarchical state. None of this is particularly surprising, but framing the issue in this way becomes more interesting as we turn to other demographic spaces.

Steppe nomadic pastoral tribes

The organic economy and political structures of nomadic pastoralists differed markedly, and in that demographic space military logistics rested on very different foundations and therefore so did the possibilities and requirements of latent force. Specific locations were relatively less important as neither surplus nor political power accumulated in any one location – at least until a steppe tribal confederation achieved imperial levels of success and conquered sedentary states. In intra-tribal conflicts, however, there were few strategic shortcuts of attacking cities or key transit points for surplus goods; one had to attack the people themselves. And adding defeated people tended to be the main point of success: as Bat-Ochir Bold noted, although the chronicles ‘often relate of one tribe conquering another and taking the conquered *nutug* [pasture] into its possession ... the basic motivation for gaining possession of *nutug* was to use the conquered people as potential soldiers and not as labourers’.¹⁴

In this economy, ‘conquest’ meant capturing people and their flocks, with varying fates for the defeated elites – meaning the clan leaders, their immediate male kin and their closest followers (or *nöker* in Mongolian). Table 13.2 summarizes the types of conquest, of which the first three are all simply variants of incorporating a defeated people. These differ primarily in the extremeness of how the victor treats the losers – a choice determined by the probability of successfully incorporating the adult men, and influenced by the history of their rivalry and the ambitions of the victor. The first option was by far the preferred one, since it allowed for the incorporation of a large number of the defeated men as warriors.

The final two represent the most typical form of steppe warfare, in which small-scale clan-level raids netted plunder and people, but generally lacked the decisive outcome of a major battle. Such raids would be the normal pattern of war and only infrequently would they tip any regional balance of power. However, it is important to note that it was success in these raids that could build a young leader’s reputation and lead to further and further confederation through the remaining type of conquest: voluntary subordination, or what political scientists refer to as ‘bandwagoning’ – joining the winning side.

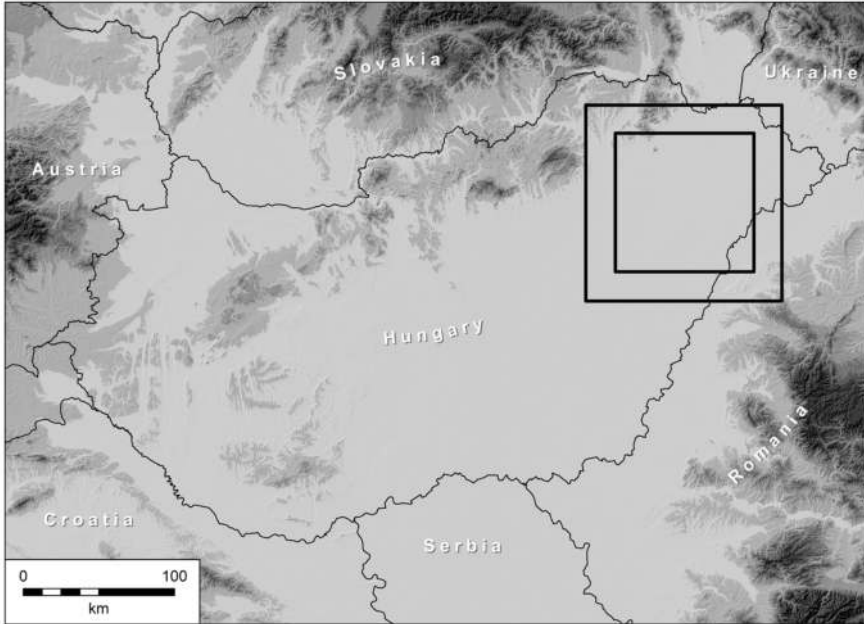
Table 13.2 'Conquest' types in war between steppe tribes

Form of military operations	Shorthand for political nature of victory	Political fate of losers	Resource reallocation Spatial rearrangement	Consolidation requirements
Battle	Decapitate and co-opt	Decapitate narrow band of elite; co-opt remainder (men not killed)	Gain people, herds and pasture; enlarge army	No garrisons, but requires loyalty work
Battle	Decapitate and subordinate	Decapitate broad band of elite; subordinate remainder (most men killed)	Gain people, herds and pasture	No garrisons; only limited loyalty work (some feud issues with survivors)
Battle	Population elimination	Eliminate wide swathe of population	Gain herds and pasture	No garrisons or loyalty work
Reputation claim (based on military success elsewhere)	Voluntary subordination; bandwagoning	Voluntary subordination to a winner	Gain people; enlarge army	No garrisons; requires loyalty work
Raiding	None (not a conquest strategy)	None; they raid in retaliation	Gain herds, but that puts pressure on current pasture	No garrisons or loyalty work
Persistent raiding	Population displacement	Enemy migrates	Gain herds and pasture	No garrisons or loyalty work

It was through raids and the consequent gradual acquisition of loyal followers, blood brothers, and a powerful *nöker* that Temujin slowly and painfully rose to become the head of a massive tribal confederation that would then become an empire under his new name of Chinggis Khan. The more powerful such a leader became, the more other tribes would voluntarily sign up to his cause, hoping to reap the rewards of further success. The empire's political fragility remained, however, and holding it together required the loyalty work embedded in the other three pillars of political consolidation.¹⁵ Legitimacy and sanctity via proof of bloodline, success in battle, and proper adherence to key rituals were central to maintaining control, but neither bureaucracy nor latent force played much of a role. Even those defeated peoples who the sources say became 'slaves' of the victors (*bo 'ol* in Mongolian) occupied a more complex status than is usually associated with that word; they were subordinated and incorporated, but with a future that could include advancement and even elite status, meaning that latent force played little role in enforcing obedience from an enslaved class.¹⁶ Successful nomadic conquerors could and did impose rule over others; their societies could and did stratify along lines of wealth, bloodline, and position, but the mechanisms of rule differed from the territorial forms of agricultural states.¹⁷ Among other things, bureaucracy on the steppe was minimalist at best – although successful steppe conquerors of sedentary lands quickly adopted sedentary bureaucracies to serve them.¹⁸ As for latent force, the legitimacy of rule on the steppe depended on successful *active* force and there was little room for its use in a latent mode, *except* to the extent that one might consider military reputation to have acted as a kind of latent force check on rebellion.

Latent force on the steppe

As already discussed, victors rapidly accumulated force by incorporating the defeated into their own armies. This was a fundamental component of steppe life.¹⁹ But turning nomads into something resembling a garrison-based latent force was harder to do. For one thing, garrisons could not control nomadic populations, much less extract surplus from them, since people were not tied to the land in a way that a static deployment of force could control. But even more important were the logistical obstacles to maintaining a large nomadic force in any single location. These problems boil down to the calories in a steppe warrior's ration and the acres of grass required for a large herd of horses. To shortcut a lot of calculations (and a tremendous amount of uncertainty about pasture requirements), we can use a relatively moderate estimate that each soldier would need 208 acres of steppe pasture to sustain the bare minimum string of five horses and one sheep for a year (in stockage terms this is twenty-six 'sheep-equivalents').²⁰ To convey what that means graphically, consider the annual pasture requirement for a single 10,000-man Mongolian *tümen* (a division) superimposed on a map of Hungary (Map 13.1).²¹



Map 13.1 Pasturage requirement for one year for one *tümen* of Mongolian warriors, at twenty-six sheep-equivalents per man. The inner box represents a moderate estimate of 8 acres/sheep-equivalent; the outer box is a more extreme 16 acres. Superimposed here on a map of the Great Hungarian Plain. Map drawn by Rebecca Seifried.

Furthermore, five horses and one sheep are an extreme minimum, which does not include breeding stock or account for any of the other realities of maintaining herds for more than a single year. This expansive requirement for pasture immediately suggests the problem with setting up territorial garrisons: steppe forces needed to keep moving or disperse. Without garrisons, the role of force in post-conquest consolidation among steppe tribes was reputational: if you rebel, we will again call up our loyal forces and defeat you. It was not preventative force; it was a retaliatory promise. This pattern of expectations showed itself most dramatically when nomadic conquerors used violence in conquered sedentary states. Having extracted the promise of submission, they then heavily punished disobedience with extreme retaliatory violence, as Chinggis Khan did to the Xi Xia empire when they began to refuse to cooperate as promised.²²

Native Americans in eastern woodland North America

The notion of ‘conquest’ among North American indigenous peoples is harder to identify and define, in part because many anthropologists and historians long

resisted the idea that Native American warfare was indeed lethal and that it often aimed to enhance one group's power at the expense of another.²³ Many scholars now recognize the pre- and post-contact role of violent resource competition in Native American society, agreeing that Native Americans, in line with much of the rest of the world, fought with deadly intent and with both individual and group interests in mind. David Silverman, for example, recently summarized Native American motivations for war as 'the defense or expansion of territory; the seizure of captives for enslavement and adoption; the negotiation of tributary relationships between communities; the revenge of insults; the protection of kin from outside aggressors; and the plunder of enemy wealth'.²⁴

As with our other examples, military activity and the implications for consolidating victory into some form of gain were powerfully shaped by the Native North American organic economy and their fundamental sociopolitical organization. In approaching military logistics in the demographic space of native North America, we should remember that North America was not 'wilderness'. It was an environment substantially shaped by human activity, albeit differently from what European settlers expected.²⁵ Clusters of associated towns had many beaten paths between them, as well as out to their fields and primary gathering areas. The forest immediately surrounding a town would have been punctuated by 'oldfields' – that is, abandoned farm fields left fallow and now often prime locations for nearby hunting (deer prefer to browse in meadows close to the cover of trees). In addition, paths to distant hunting grounds or for trade were clearly marked out and could stretch hundreds of miles – the so-called Warriors' Path extending from upstate New York to the Cherokee and Catawba country in North and South Carolina is only the most famous. There were many such paths.²⁶ Similarly, navigable waterways and the appropriate technology for traversing them and then portaging around fall lines were well known and portage paths well established.

This may not sound that far removed from agricultural states in the sense that we have villages surrounded by a network of fields and paths, but the differences were considerable. Paths in North America were designed for humans in single file. Draft animals and wagons were unknown before European contact and throughout the middle of the eighteenth century among the Native Americans of the eastern woodlands horses remained rare, especially in warfare. In addition, once away from the village cluster itself, the density of the route network would have dropped precipitously, confining military movement to remarkably predictable paths on both land and water.

In general, therefore, Native Americans had no means for bringing supplies along in their wake, although there are some accounts of laden canoes being left behind as a kind of supply cache. Evidence suggests that war parties often hunted en route, but once they were in enemy territory this was more difficult to do safely.²⁷ As a result, when a war party arrived at an enemy town cluster at the end of a long march, they lacked the logistical means to remain there for very long. They could not conduct a

protracted siege, and if they succeeded in taking a town by assault or rapid siege, they had no way to resupply their forces to remain and hold the town in the face of reinforcements from other nearby related towns (a very strong possibility given the way they were clustered). Captured Europeans who narrated their experiences frequently attested to the logistical desperation on the return march to their captors' home town.²⁸ This reality not only affected how Native Americans perceived conquest, it also affected how they thought of using latent force to consolidate conquest.²⁹

Beyond logistics, two key characteristics of Native American sociopolitical configurations related to the other pillars of rule also affected campaigning and conquest. First was the strong pressure to avoid catastrophic losses. The relatively egalitarian and consensus-based authority structure in most historic period Native American societies meant that extreme casualties would dramatically undermine a leader's legitimacy.³⁰ Second, the blood revenge imperative was crucial in motivating individual warriors to join a war party and its requirements profoundly shaped the nature of their campaigning. Among other things, warriors who had assuaged its requirements might feel no compunction in returning home, regardless of the needs of the group.³¹ The feud's prominence, however, has tended to obscure the extent to which many ongoing conflicts were about more than mere revenge – they were also about resources, even if only in the sense that maintaining a reputation for effectively taking revenge was key to both minimizing challenges and for consolidating 'conquest'. Reputation management, as on the steppe, was a form of latent force.

To leap ahead into the argument, there were only two types of victory consolidation in woodland war (see [Table 13.3](#)). The third type shown in the table, small-scale raiding, is *not* a conquest strategy as such, much like the last type in [Table 13.1](#). Although small-scale raiding may not have been intended to force major resource allocations (whether people, land, or other resources), it did successfully fulfil cultural mandates for blood revenge while also maintaining the group's reputation for strength, hopefully forestalling attacks on its home territory as a result. On the other hand, *persistent* raiding, even on a small scale, especially raids that 'cut off' one or more towns, could expect over time either to force population displacement or to achieve submission leading to a tributary arrangement. Note that either result could come about from the same type of campaigning; which one occurred depended on both sides' assessment of their relative strength. Neither of these results necessarily lends itself to traditional notions of conquest, but resources were certainly being reallocated as a result of victory. What is interesting here is the relatively low requirement for latent force to consolidate victory. Let us consider each in turn: displacement and tributary submission.

Displacement

As we have seen, a war party at the end of a long march was at the end of its logistical tether and operating within a kind of danger zone, surrounded by enemy towns in

Table 13.3 'Conquest' types in war between Eastern Woodlands Native Americans

Campaign types	Shorthand for political nature of victory	Political fate of losers	Resource reallocation Spatial rearrangement	Consolidation requirements
Persistent cutting-off attacks	Tributary (elite decapitation was rare)	Various tributary arrangements, ranging up to subordination	Exotic goods/possibly some subsistence tribute/some captives absorbed	Loyalty work required (reputation management), but no garrisons
Persistent cutting-off attacks with complete village destruction(s)	Population displaced	Enemy migrates/territory emptied	Expand buffer zone and/or hunting grounds; some captives absorbed	No garrisons or loyalty work
Raiding	Captives and plunder	None (not a conquest strategy)	Some captives absorbed/exotic goods	No garrisons or loyalty work

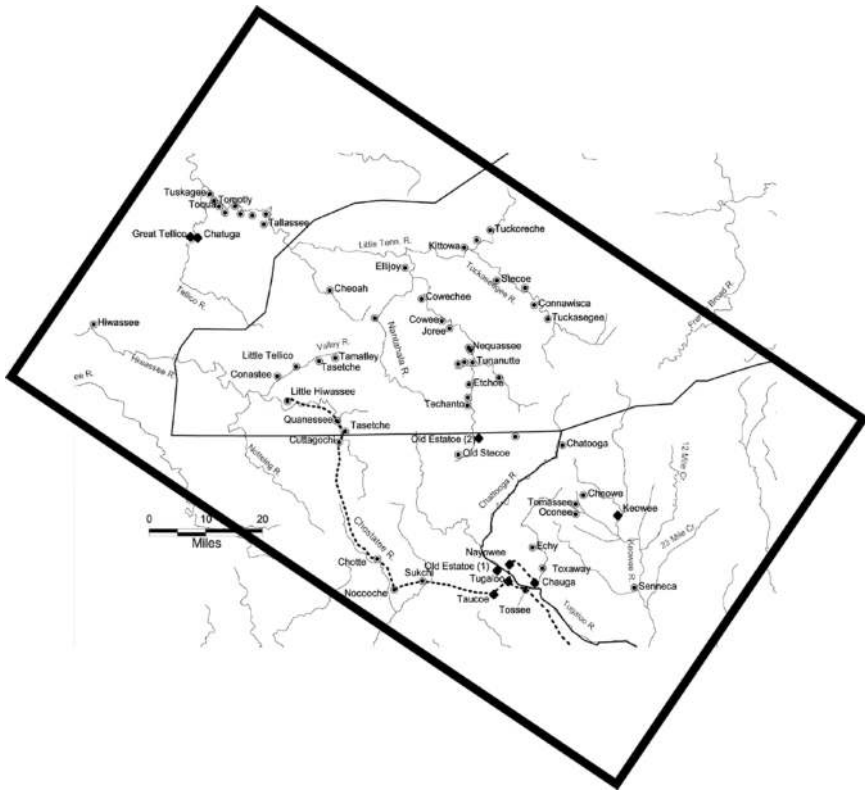
a regional cluster. Attackers tended to hit quickly and then return home. There was no logistical support – and neither was there cultural support through the blood-feud dynamic – for ‘take-and-hold’ territorial war. On the other hand, persistent attacks or a few massively successful town attacks could force a threatened people to decamp and evacuate the region. In other words, wars could be fought in order to *empty space*. Iroquois attacks on the Huron in the late 1640s famously forced Huron migration, leaving their territory essentially empty. These migrations have often been seen as a victim’s response, but they were just as likely to have been the victor’s objective, even in intra-Indian warfare. Such emptiness produces a wider buffer zone in which game can flourish, effectively increasing the hunting territory safely available to the victor.

In the Creek–Cherokee War of 1715 to 1752, we can trace the impact fairly clearly. [Map 13.2](#) conveys a sense of how much acreage was required to support a deer population large enough to sustain the Cherokee subsistence system, which depended on hunting in the winter.³² When compared with [Map 13.3](#), which shows the depopulation or forced migration of the southern Cherokee towns during the long war, it is clear how this now vacant space represented a large accession of hunting grounds for the Creeks, as well as a deeper security buffer zone between themselves and the remaining Cherokees.³³ It is rare to be able to reconstruct this kind of detailed version of territory being emptied by war, but one often finds it as an expectation among defeated peoples in the way many of them proceeded to migrate. We have already mentioned the departure of the Hurons after the Iroquois attacks in 1648 and 1649. Other defeated peoples’ migrations include the Tuscaroras, the Yamasees, the Delawares, the Shawnees/Savannahs, the Eries/Westos and more.³⁴ Historians have often interpreted these movements as part of coalescence in the face of defeat – and so they were. But they also signified the departure of the defeated from their original home territory. Rather than submit, they departed.

This form of victory consolidation by simply emptying territory is extremely cheap. It does not require any deployment of latent force, nor is any loyalty work required to prop up the other three pillars of rule (legitimacy, sanctity, or bureaucracy). And in terms of reputation management, which we have called a form of latent force, the campaigns themselves functioned to shore up that reputation.

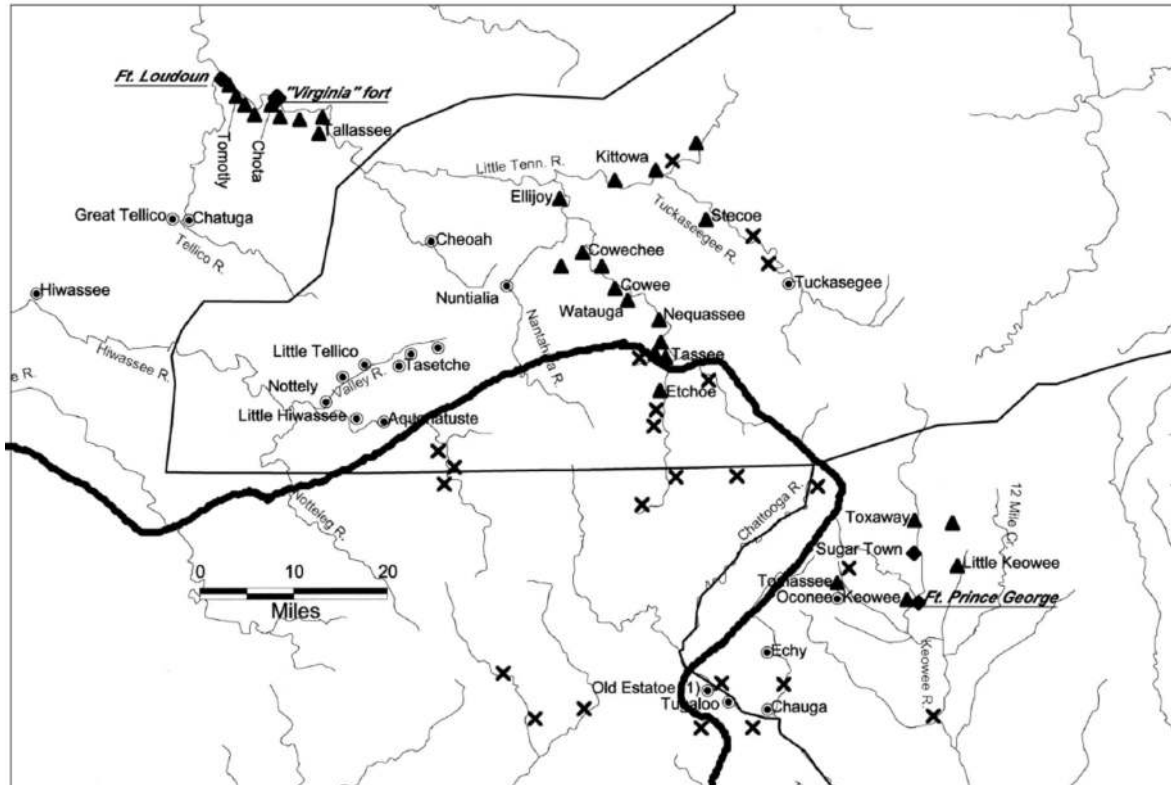
Tributary

For all the same logistical and sociopolitical reasons, warfare conducted to impose a tributary status also lacked the means to deploy latent force. Even during the increasingly territorial and authoritarian rule of Powhatan over much of the Chesapeake Bay, there is no evidence for garrison distribution. Powhatan’s wars instead used both types discussed here: he warred to empty territory in fear of



Map 13.2 Cherokee town clusters as they were c.1715. The rectangle superimposed on the map comprises 8,820 square miles. Using figures from the most densely deer-populated county in modern Kentucky, such a territory might support a population of 414,540 deer. Even that number would only provide twenty-six deer per person to the c.1700 Cherokee population. Clearly a much larger hunting area was required for it to be sustainable.

threats to his authority and he warred to establish tributary relationships over other towns. Tribute, however, seems to have been his primary goal: that is, to force a group to submit to his authority at least to the point that they regularly sent him tribute in material form – both exotic goods and subsistence.³⁵ Having imposed a tributary relationship on a submitted population, however, meant that the chief had to put a higher premium both on reputation management and on other forms of cultural work to control them. Powhatan's control seems to have been relatively authoritarian, but the other well-known example, that between the Iroquois Confederacy and their defeated tributary 'subordinate' peoples, suggests a much milder form of control. Francis Jennings's examination of the relationship between the Iroquois and the Delaware conveys the complexity of the problem. The



Map 13.3 Cherokee towns as of about 1760. Each cross indicates a town site that had existed in 1715. The thick line approximates the amount of territory abandoned by the Cherokees.

Delawares briefly admitted an Iroquois chief to live among them and they appear to have surrendered control of some of their foreign policy to the Iroquois. But they retained almost complete autonomy in their relations with Pennsylvania and control over their own territory – although the Iroquois would pressure them to sell to Pennsylvania in 1737 (The Walking Purchase). Indicative of the many shades of grey in the varieties of submission, however, was the fate of the Susquehannocks, whom the Iroquois more completely removed from their original home territory and absorbed into their central population – not as slaves or subordinates, but as new kin.³⁶

Within all these variations of submission, however, the need persisted to do cultural work in the submitted population, either to fully embed them as new kin or to persuade them of the finality of their submission. Bureaucracy as we understand it did not figure in that process, but issues of legitimacy and sanctity did play a role. We know, for example, that central to establishing legitimacy for the incorporation of individual captives was the mechanism of assigning kinship. In the mourning war tradition of the Iroquois peoples and among many other groups, individual captives were assigned specific familial roles, often replacing recently deceased family members.³⁷ Such a kinship claim also probably played a role in maintaining the subordination of whole populations, in the way that the Delawares, for example, were called ‘nephews’ after their submission. With respect to latent force, one sees similar cultural mechanisms at work in reputation management rather than a physical garrison or other distribution of force. One wonders, for example, how far the much-discussed habit of the Iroquois of referring to the Delawares as ‘women’, and thus unable to make war, was a rhetorical means of enforcing subordination and enhancing Iroquois martiality.³⁸ Or whether Powhatan’s mock battle, witnessed and described by John Smith, was something regularly conducted to persuade assorted audiences of his overwhelming power?³⁹

The implications for the violence of conquest

Several implications emerge from this comparative discussion of the role of subsistence systems and logistics in defining the nature of conquest and consolidation. The most significant for this volume on violence were the consequences when war occurred *outside* of the symmetrical pairs presented here. Each example explored thus far has been deliberately symmetrical: states against states, steppe tribes versus steppe tribes, and the intertribal conflicts in Native North America. Patterns of conflict repeated over time within those pairs created not just a material reality but also an ideological framework through which participants understood the function of war and anticipated its rewards. War with a people outside that framework generated both material and ideological challenges.

For example, the normal steppe nomad’s expectation of absorbing defeated nomads with a similar lifestyle meant that controlling peasants had no initial

appeal for them. This attitude generated the famous moments in which nomad victors considered converting conquered farmland into pasture (which of course would have left the peasants to starve or move).⁴⁰ This was partly logistical, since they were well aware that a landscape of grain fields or rice paddies could not sustain their horses. It was also a normal initial response for a steppe tribe that had not yet imagined becoming an expansive empire. Their more usual raids on peasant communities along the steppe frontier could not lead to snowballing force; the standard forms of absorbing defeated tribes simply did not apply to those who were not also horsemen.⁴¹ The result tended to be a higher level of violence meted out to the sedentary population. For example, in an odd reversal of the usual steppe decapitation strategy, ‘when the Turk-Khazars attacked Caucasian Albania in 628 as allies of Byzantium, the Qağan allowed those “nobles and leaders” who surrendered “to live and serve me”. As for the others, all males over fifteen years of age were to be killed and the women and children enslaved.’⁴² In this instance, the Qağan seems to have adopted the nomadic concept of folding defeated elites into his extended warrior household (or *nöker*) as part of the conquest of a sedentary state, but he found no use for the majority of the defeated male population. This mismatch of expectations of conquest may have led to wider swathes of adult men being killed than in similar defeats of nomadic peoples. When a steppe people became imperial conquerors they learned to modify their attitudes towards the conquered populations, building systems of bureaucratic rule and distributing garrisons composed of their defeated sedentary enemies’ forces. But in general, the endemic conflicts between sedentary and nomadic peoples produced extraordinary levels of violence – partly due to a sense of cultural superiority on both sides, but also because of their very different senses of what victory was supposed to bring.

Likewise, recognizing much Native American conquest as war to produce empty space helps explain patterns of violence across the early modern period and beyond. Success put more distance between them and their enemy and expanded a fruitful hunting zone. There was no implied need for subjugation or population control. But it did require the enemy to move away. This meant that Native American warfare used violence to frighten – to create a sense of vulnerability. Their systems of warfare were not designed to allow for wholesale incorporation – individual adoptees yes, but they had no use for a generalized accession of territory *with* population, because they lacked the latent force potential to secure them. Thus the epigram at the opening of this chapter explaining Cherokee motives: they wanted revenge and to terrify their opponents. But when used against state-sponsored settlers, Native American styles of violence designed to frighten ran into an enemy that did not want to move. The demographic wave of European settlers quickly refilled whatever land had been temporarily emptied by Native American attacks, and Native Americans may have felt compelled to escalate the frightfulness of their attacks. Early attacks, like the Powhatans against the Jamestown colonists, or the Tuscaroras in North Carolina,

or the Pequots in New England, have been interpreted as messaging attacks, not the onset of all-out territorial war. It was indeed real violence, but also symbolic and designed to strike fear. In this context they engaged in the posing of bodies, stuffing dirt or bread in the mouths of the dead and so on.⁴³ It is not unreasonable to suggest that Indian violence escalated in the next generation's warfare, having found that selective killing and pointed symbolism were not terrifying enough to push back white settlement.

European armies operating in North America were frustrated *both* by geographical obstacles to their usual logistical system and by the expectations of their opponents about what victory meant. As the English colonized North America they went through a series of reactions to the problems posed by its logistical environment, the nature of Indian resistance, and their own expectations of conquest. As we have seen, standard practice in state-on-state conquest often first attempted to impose a vassal or tributary status. It is easy enough to find such attempts in play in the early Virginia colony. The English literally labelled Powhatan a vassal of King James, complete with an intended submission ceremony, and they would attempt similar measures in many places around the continent. In some ways there was congruent conceptual ground here, since the Native Americans themselves had a somewhat parallel mechanism for tributary status.⁴⁴ English expectations of tribute, however, were more expansive, hierarchical, and expected profit from the bulk delivery of goods, whereas Native American versions of tribute, with some exceptions, tended to focus on key status goods rather than bulk subsistence. The increasing English demands for complete submission on their terms led to violence, which gave rise to Native resistance – quickly labelled 'rebellion'. Alternatively, in some English colonies the English waged or spurred campaigns of enslavement to procure labour, sometimes for local use, sometimes for profitable export. Those efforts generated traumatic effects around the south-east, finally spurring such a backlash from the Indian population that African slaves became preferred.⁴⁵ Indian resistance, labelled rebellion, then suggested a shift to the more comprehensive alternative of displacement followed by settler provincialization.

Repeatedly, over the course of the next two hundred years (at least), the English and later the Americans would win a perceived victory over a group of Native Americans, often concluded by a treaty surrendering territory to white settlement, and then face the challenge of provincialization, which seemed to require the distribution of latent force across a very expansive territory. In Native North America, however, that norm quickly broke down. First, the density of the white population on the frontier did not provide sufficient organic logistical support to sustain a garrison from local resources (both in the sense of transport routes and population density producing subsistence surpluses). Worse, when Native Americans launched attacks in that environment many settlers fled, further reducing nearby logistical capacity.⁴⁶ Frontier forts proved expensive and vulnerable over and over again (as they had done in sixteenth-century Ulster too).

The first attempted solution to this problem was to *build* the necessary infrastructure, as previous empires had done through frontier fortification and road systems. That too, in North America, proved expensive and vulnerable. In the words of a contemporary analyst:

Those who have only experienced the severities and dangers of a campaign in Europe, can scarcely form an idea of what is to be done and endured in an American war. To act in a country cultivated and inhabited, where roads are made, magazines are established and hospitals provided; where there are good towns to retreat to in case of misfortune; or, at the worst, a generous enemy to yield to ... But in an American campaign every thing is terrible; the face of the country, the climate, the enemy. There is no refreshment for the healthy, nor relief for the sick. A vast unhospitalable desert [*sic*], unsafe and treacherous, surrounds them, where victories are not decisive, but defeats are ruinous.⁴⁷

Meanwhile and equally relevant, early seventeenth-century English hopes that conquest would capture labour (in addition to land) also fell flat as Native Americans followed their own pattern of moving away in the face of defeat. We should see early Virginia reservations or New England Christian Indian 'praying towns' as exceptions to a more prevalent Indian pattern of vacating territory.

Lacking the preventative control of widely distributed garrisons, the British or American state then resorted to the punishment campaign designed to force a full population displacement. In one sense it was a resort to attempted tributary systems, in which campaigns were designed to terrorize populations into submitting. Fire and destruction were seen as necessary tools to impose the state's will. Since campaign armies, in the absence of their normal logistical system depending on local food production, could only pass through the territory and could not occupy it, they resorted to destruction. This strategy represented an escalation of violence driven by incompatible structures of conquest. To be sure, the strategy was not unfamiliar or unknown to Europeans. States in medieval Europe, for example, usually lacked the capacity for full territorial conquest and resorted to devastation raids (*chevauchée*) instead.⁴⁸

To use a different region as another example, Thomas Robert Bugeaud, fighting in Algeria in the 1840s, argued for a scorched earth policy of *razzias*, designed to destroy settlements, crops, and so on. He argued that the only thing of value there would be 'the agricultural interest spread over the whole surface of the country'.⁴⁹ In an essay on Algeria, written in 1841, the famous Alexis de Tocqueville, understating the worst implications of *razzias*, characterized them as 'unfortunate necessities'.

If we do not burn harvests in Europe, it is because in general we wage war on governments and not on peoples ... We shall never destroy Abd el-Kader's power unless we make the position of the tribes who support him so intolerable that they abandon him. This is an obvious truth. We must conform to it or give up the game. For myself, I think that all means of desolating these tribes must be employed.⁵⁰

In the long term, state control in these environments emerged through the importation of enough colonists to create the demographic infrastructure to sustain garrisons (and who themselves constituted a militia as a kind of latent force). Consider, for example, the changes wrought by settlement in Ohio. American military campaigns in Ohio in the 1780s and 1790s struggled or were outright destroyed. Anthony Wayne's 1794 campaign finally resulted in battlefield victory, but the real change was demographic: in 1793 there were about 3,220 settlers in Ohio; this had increased to 5,000 by 1796, and by 1801 to 45,000.⁵¹ General Josiah Harmar, posted in eastern Ohio in 1785, set his lieutenant, Ebenezer Denny, to count the settlers moving on the river past the fort. Eventually there were enough settlers and Harmar moved his headquarters further downriver and built a new fort in present-day Cincinnati.⁵² Those settlers frequently ignored whatever fragile structures of law the state had created to regulate relations with the indigenous peoples and instigated violence to displace them yet further away.⁵³ Native American displacement in such cases was normal to their form of warfare that sought to empty land, but from the state's perspective it proved initially frustrating to hopes of control – although by the 1790s such displacement had become the primary goal of the new American state. A similar situation had plagued English colonists in Ireland, who were frustrated by the mobility of Irish labour, whose wealth was invested more in their cattle than their land. 'Frustration' in this case generated further violence. The mobility of the Irish became defined as part of their 'savagery', and it entered into the roll call of the rationalizations of violence. In the longer term it also led to the violence of deracination. The conqueror, relying on bureaucracy and often on missionary work to change the structures of sanctity, both backed by latent force, forcibly acculturated the conquered. The losers had to be made to fit the winners' expectations of conquest, no matter how violent that process might be.

The early modern world played host to a wide variety of subsistence systems with different expectations of military victory; globalizing contact, trade, and conflict after 1500 put many of those societies into contact for the first time. The model outlined here allows us to go beyond the war rhetoric of the literate and discern how violence also sprang from fundamental structural differences. Material constraints affected practice, practice became norms, and violated norms then produced violence qualitatively and even quantitatively unrelated to the nominal goals of the conflict. Over time, and sometimes very quickly, the playing out of such violence produced ideologically freighted words like 'barbarian', 'savage', and ultimately 'colonist'. The rhetoric, the processes, the institutions, and above all the violence of acculturation arose not just from cultural demonization or prejudice, but from the underlying logistics of conquest and the resultant set of expectations about what one gained from victory.

Notes

- 1 J. Buchan (ed.), *Essays and Apothegms of Francis Lord Bacon* (London, 1894), p. 219.
- 2 S. Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty*, trans. B. Watson (Hong Kong and New York, 1993), pp. 80–1.
- 3 P. Kahn, *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Boston, MA, 1998), p. 65.
- 4 G. Chicken, 'Journal of the March of the Carolinians into the Cherokee Mountains, in the Yemassee Indian War, 1715–16', *Yearbook of the City of Charleston* (1894), p. 342.
- 5 The wide coverage of this chapter and the limitations of space preclude a full recitation of sources. All of the claims made in the chapter are part of a larger ongoing project, tentatively titled 'The Pillars of Conquest: Consolidating Victory in the Preindustrial World'. Quite a number of people have been very helpful on this project and I am especially grateful to Erica Charters, Marie Houlemare, and Peter Wilson for including me. In addition, my thanks go to Timothy May, Liz Ellis, Stephen Morillo, Clifford Rogers, and Rhonda Lee.
- 6 There are few works on this subject. Key entries include: M. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, Volume 1: *A History of Power From the Beginning to AD 1760*, new ed. (New York, 2012); N. Schadlow, *War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Combat Success into Political Victory* (Washington, DC, 2017); P. M. R. Stirk, *A History of Military Occupation From 1792 to 1914* (Edinburgh, 2016); D. Day, *Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others* (New York, 2008); J. Landers, *The Field and the Forge: Population, Production and Power in the Pre-Industrial West* (New York, 2003); C. J. Rogers, 'Medieval Strategy and the Economics of Conquest', *Journal of Military History*, 82:3 (2018).
- 7 It is important to emphasize that even in wars arguably not caused by resource conflict, such as revenge raids, blood feuds, or wars for god or glory, the victor quickly moved to take advantage of newly available resources. This model addresses those processes, not war causation as such.
- 8 Obviously there were other systems of subsistence, but these three can demonstrate the model.
- 9 W. E. Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500–1865* (Oxford and New York, 2011).
- 10 I derive this distinction from the work of H. Arendt. See her 'On Violence', in N. Scheper-Hughes and P. Bourgois (eds), *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology* (Malden, MA, 2004).
- 11 The most sophisticated treatment of this larger problem within states is Mann, *Sources of Social Power*. He identifies Economics, Ideology, Military, and Political as his primary categories. My analysis differs primarily by focusing in on how the 'military' piece is fundamentally dependent on logistics.
- 12 Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers*, pp. 51–3; W. E. Lee, 'Keeping the Irish Down and the Spanish Out: English Strategies of Submission in Ireland, 1594–1603', in W. Murray and P. Mansoor (eds), *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 60–1.
- 13 The conversion of 'commanderies' to 'counties' in ancient China represents a parallel case: M. Loewe and E. L. Shaughnessy, *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 613–16, 998.

- 14 B.-O. Bold, *Mongolian Nomadic Society: A Reconstruction of the 'Medieval' History of Mongolia* (New York, 2001), p. 42.
- 15 This characterization of Chinggis Khan's rise and the various types of victory consolidation in Table 13.2 are based on a close reading of every incident of 'victory' in the so-called Secret History and accords with David Morgan's general interpretation. Kahn, *Secret History*, pp. 48, 51–2, 58–9, 62, 65, 68; D. Morgan, *The Mongols*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA, 2007), p. 34.
- 16 The issue of 'slavery' among nomads is complex, but see T. D. Skrynnikova, 'Relations of Domination and Submission: Political Practice in the Mongol Empire of Chinggis Khan', in D. Sneath (ed.), *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth–Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge, 2006), esp. p. 93.
- 17 See D. Sneath, 'Imperial Statecraft: Arts of Power on the Steppe', in *Imperial Statecraft*, pp. 1–22; D. Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* (New York, 2007). Sneath would prefer to discard 'tribe' and even 'tribal confederation' as descriptive terms, but we believe they retain value in this comparative context.
- 18 The transition from traditional steppe methods of conquest to the use of local rulers or centrally imposed bureaucrats in the Mongol Empire was complex and varied by region and over time. For one survey, see T. May, *The Mongol Conquests in World History* (London, 2011).
- 19 P. B. Golden, 'War and Warfare in the Pre-Cinggisid Western Steppes of Eurasia', in N. Di Cosmo (ed.), *Warfare in Inner Asian History, 500–1800* (Leiden, 2002), p. 130.
- 20 Both John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck (based on travels deep into the Mongol Empire) wrote that meat was reserved for the winter season; mare's milk was the primary food during late spring, summer, and autumn. They also indicate that one sheep could feed multiple men; Rubruck even specified 100 men per sheep: C. Dawson (ed.), *Mission to Asia* (Toronto, 1980), pp. 17, 63, 97–8. It was probably more varied: hunting was a supplement especially in summer and autumn; fermented milk was still available in early winter. A calorie count confirms these contemporary observations. One mare can provide a 0.6 gallons/day at c.2,700 calories. One pound of mutton is c.1,340 calories and one sheep produces at least 120 half-pound servings. Adding the need for horses to carry burdens as well as produce milk, this results in the traditional warrior's string of five horses and one sheep as providing 120 days of meat and 280 days of mare's milk (the meat being shared). See note 21 for more citations.
- 21 This is a summary of a complex issue; starting points for these calculations are: D. Sinor, 'Horse and Pasture in Inner Asian History', *Oriens Extremus*, 19:1–2 (1972), p. 182; H. J. Wiens, 'Geographical Limitations to Food Production in the Mongolian Peoples Republic', *Annals of the American Geographers*, 41:4 (1951); J. M. Smith Jr., 'Hülegü Moves West: High Living and Heartbreak on the Road to Baghdad', in L. Komaroff (ed.), *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden, 2012); J. M. Smith Jr., 'Ayn Jalut: Mamluk Success or Mongol Failure?', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 44:2 (1984); D. Morgan, 'The Mongol Armies in Persia', *Der Islam*, 56:1 (1979); Z. Pinke et al., 'Climate of Doubt: A Re-Evaluation of Büntgen and Di Cosmo's Environmental Hypothesis for the Mongol Withdrawal from Hungary, 1242 CE', *Scientific Reports*, 7:12695 (2017); U. Büntgen and N. Di Cosmo, 'Climatic and Environmental Aspects of the Mongol Withdrawal from

- Hungary in 1242 CE', *Scientific Reports*, 6 (2016); R. P. Lindner, 'Nomadism, Horses and Huns', *Past & Present*, 92 (1981). The approximation here is supported by a general estimate from Dr Jamsranjav Bayarsaikhan (National Museum of Mongolia) of typical nomadic family pasture requirements. I am grateful to Timothy May for many (and continuing) conversations on this issue.
- 22 Morgan, *Mongols*, p. 57; Kahn, *Secret History*, pp. 148, 156; P. Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 104–5, 140–1; C. F. Sverdrup, *The Mongol Conquests: The Military Operations of Genghis Khan and Sübe'etei* (Solihull, 2017), pp. 98–9, 166–7; H. Franke and D. C. Twitchett (eds), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6, *Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 208–13.
 - 23 R. J. Chacon and R. G. Mendoza, *The Ethics of Anthropology and Amerindian Research: Reporting on Environmental Degradation and Warfare* (New York, 2012), Preface and Introduction.
 - 24 D. J. Silverman, *Thundersticks: Firearms and the Violent Transformation of Native America* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), p. 9.
 - 25 W. M. Denevan, 'The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 82:3 (1992); W. Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England* (New York, 1983).
 - 26 For just one example, see P. A. W. Wallace, *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA, 1965).
 - 27 I am preparing a separate article on the details of Native American campaign logistics in this period, tentatively titled "'The Indians are Hunting': Native American Expeditionary Logistics and the Problem of Territorial Conquest'.
 - 28 There are many examples. Representative stories can be found in R. VanDerBeets (ed.), *Held Captive by Indians: Selected Narratives, 1642–1836* (Knoxville, TN, 1994), pp. 12–13, 53–4, 136–7.
 - 29 Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers*, pp. 151–5.
 - 30 W. E. Lee, 'Peace Chiefs and Blood Revenge: Patterns of Restraint in Native American Warfare in the Contact and Colonial Eras', *Journal of Military History*, 71:3 (2007), p. 724.
 - 31 *Ibid.*, pp. 713–14, 723.
 - 32 Modern estimates suggest that 'on the average property, it will take around 25 acres of native woods or 5 acres of openings (re-growth) to support a single deer in good health': www.northamericanwhitetail.com/2010/09/22/deermanagement_naw_aa902landscaping/ (accessed 10 Mar. 2020). In autumn 2003, Kentucky's Owen County had the highest average deer population at 47/square mile (= 47/640 acres): www.kdfwr.state.ky.us/fallo3mg1.asp. Unfortunately this source is no longer available online, but was also consulted by this researcher: www.maa.org/book/export/html/115877 (accessed 10 Mar. 2020), who reports the same numbers as I recorded at the time of writing.
 - 33 The data in [Map 13.3](#) is derived from W. E. Lee, 'Fortify, Fight, or Flee: Tuscarora and Cherokee Defensive Warfare and Military Culture Adaptation', *Journal of Military History*, 68:3 (2004).
 - 34 D. La Vere, *The Tuscarora War: Indians, Settlers and the Fight for the Carolina Colonies* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2013), pp. 183, 196; A. Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (New Haven, CT, 2002), pp. 41, 55–6;

- B. G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's 'Heroic Age' Reconsidered* (Kingston and Montreal, 1985), pp. 263–73.
- 35 T. E. Davidson, 'Relations between the Powhatans and the Eastern Shore', in H. C. Rountree (ed.), *Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500–1722* (Charlottesville, VA, 1993), pp. 146–7, 150; W. Strachey, *The Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania (1612)*, ed. L. B. Wright and V. Freund (London, 1953), p. 87; R. D. Ruediger, 'Tributary Subjects: Affective Colonialism, Power and the Process of Subjugation in Colonial Virginia, c.1600–c.1740' (PhD Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2017), *passim*.
- 36 F. Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* (New York, 1984), pp. 154–5, 159–61. There are other examples of the absorption of people as a blend of tributary and adoption, including the hopes of the Narragansett allies of the English in 1637, who lamented the killing of so many Pequots at Mystic whom they had hoped to control after their defeat. Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers*, pp. 154–5.
- 37 D. K. Richter, 'War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 40:4 (1983).
- 38 F. Speck, 'The Delaware Indians as Women', *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 70:4 (1946), pp. 384–5; J. Miller, 'The Delaware as Women: A Symbolic Solution', *American Ethnologist*, 1:3 (2009). This issue is the subject of some debate, and even the Iroquois and the Delaware may have interpreted its meaning differently, much less our European witnesses.
- 39 'A Map of Virginia', in P. L. Barbour (ed.), *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith* (3 vols, Chapel Hill, NC, 1986), I, pp. 166–7.
- 40 J. J. L. Gommans, 'Warhorse and Post-Nomadic Empire in Asia, c.1000–1800', *Journal of Global History*, 2:1 (2007), p. 14; Morgan, *The Mongols*, pp. 64–5.
- 41 To be sure, when steppe nomads became conquerors they learned to demand sedentary troops from their victims, who often served as garrison forces in sedentary lands.
- 42 Golden, 'Pre-Cinggisid', p. 155.
- 43 Frederic Gleach called this an Algonquin 'aesthetic' of war. For examples of such symbolic violence messaging see: F. W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln, NE, 1997), pp. 157–69; T. C. Parramore, 'The Tuscarora Ascendancy', *North Carolina Historical Review*, 59:4 (1982); W. L. Saunders (ed.), *The Colonial Records of North Carolina* (10 vols, Raleigh, NC, 1886–90), I, p. 826.
- 44 A key source on this congruence in tributary thinking is Ruediger, 'Tributary Subjects'.
- 45 Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*.
- 46 See the contemporary judgement in *The Journals of Major Robert Rogers & An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians in the year 1764, under the Command of Henry Bouquet, Esq.* (Dublin: R. Acheson, 1769), facsimile reprint as *Warfare on the Colonial American Frontier* (Bargersville, IN, 1997), pp. viii–ix.
- 47 *Warfare on the Colonial Frontier*, pp. xiv–xv.
- 48 C. J. Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy Under Edward III, 1327–1360* (Woodbridge, 2000); Rogers, 'Medieval Strategy'.
- 49 Quoted in J. E. Sessions, "'Unfortunate Necessities": Violence and Civilization in the Conquest of Algeria', in P. M. E. Lorcin and D. Brewer (eds), *France and its Spaces of War: Experience, Memory, Image* (New York, 2009), p. 31.

- 50 A. de Tocqueville, 'Essay on Algeria (October 1841)', in *Writings on Empire and Slavery*, ed. and trans. J. Pitts (Baltimore, 2001), pp. 70–1.
- 51 C. G. Calloway, *The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army* (New York, 2015), p. 153.
- 52 E. Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny: An Officer in the Revolutionary and Indian Wars* (Philadelphia, 1859), p. 241.
- 53 Parallel examples of those on the frontier provoking violence to enable conquest include Caesar in Gaul and the 'New English' in sixteenth-century Ireland.

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