News Sensations from the Front: Reportage in Late Muscovy concerning the Ottoman Wars

Daniel C. Waugh


Note: The two accompanying illustrations referred to as Figs. 1 and 2 in the article are numbered 10 and 11 in the captions.
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This essay concerns the ways that awareness of the larger world may be shaped by news about current events and by retrospective historical memory. My inspiration is some Muscovite texts, by themselves probably insignificant, whose study raises broader issues about early modern cultural history. There is growing interest in how the emergence of the modern press helped create in Europe a sense of “contemporaneity” as one of the hallmarks of the transition to “modernity.” That is, through growing access to regular foreign news, people were able to situate themselves in an expanded world of human action, in the process moving away from providential interpretation of events to a more “rational” understanding of the world.¹ The validity of this interpretation of the impact from new media and communications depends on a considerable degree on what one can document about readers and their responses, subjects which to date are still considerably under-studied. Even if assumptions about the growing sense of “contemporaneity” are valid for Western Europe—and to a degree I question that argument—to expect to find synchronous developments in Russia may be unreasonable. Apart from the issue of contemporary responses to current news, it is of interest to examine how the news stories of one era might look to later generations. It is very easy to read back a significance not felt at the time; similarly the emphasis of the earlier story might change if it is invoked as a part of contemporary political discourse.

¹ This was the subject of a conference in Bremen, “Time and Space on the Way to Modernity: The Emergence of Contemporaneity in European Culture,” 15–16 December 2006. Important books which support this idea are: Holger Böning, Welteroberung durch ein neues Publikum: Die deutsche Presse und der Weg zur Aufklärung. Hamburg und Altona als Beispiel ([Bremen:] Edition lumière, 2002); and Wolfgang Behringer, Im Zeichen des Merkur. Reichspost und Kommunikationsrevolution in der Frühen Neuzeit (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003). The paper which I co-presented with Ingrid Maier at Bremen questioned this emphasis. See also my “We Have Never Been Modern: Approaches to the Study of Russia in the Age of Peter the Great,” Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas 49 (2001): 321–345; and idem (in Russian, D. K. Uo), Istoriia odnoi knigi: Viatka i “ne-sovremennost’” v russkoi kul’ture Petrovskogo vremeni (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003), esp. chap. 7.

My specific subject is reports about the late 17th-century European wars against the Ottoman Turks, a topic which first occupied me as a graduate student, when I had the temerity to ask Bob Crummev for a copy of his *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom.* The importance of the Ottomans for early modern Europe is undoubtedly still underestimated, despite the nearly continuous wars against the Turks and large volume of contemporary publications regarding them. The Ottomans were often central to the concerns of the Muscovite government even if, until well into the 17th century, it had largely resisted being drawn into fighting them. Muscovite priorities lay elsewhere, and there was a distinct lack of empathy for the plight of the sultan’s Orthodox subjects. It is somewhat ironic, therefore, that when Muscovy finally plunged into the Turkish wars in the 1670s, its ambassadors were unable to elicit much support, since the major Western powers then had other concerns. What ultimately would bring together a coalition of Christian states was the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683. The dramatic defense of the city was followed by a rolling back of Ottoman control in southeastern Europe, a process that ended only in the 20th century.

Reports about the Turkish Wars continually appeared in regularly published newspapers and in hundreds of separately published pamphlets whose impact as sources of news still merits study. Understandably, the Turkish

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2 This work resulted in a dissertation on Muscovite turcica and a monograph, *The Great Turkes Defiance: On the History of the Apocryphal Correspondence of the Ottoman Sultan in Its Muscovite and Russian Variants,* with a foreword by Academician Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1978).

3 See, for example, Nikolai F. Kapterev, *Kharakter otoshenii Rossi k pravoslavnomu Vostoku v XVI i XVII stoletiakh* (Sergeiev Posad: M. S. Elov, 1914).


6 Regarding this latter point, see Mario Infelise, “The War, the News and the Curious: Military Gazettes in Italy,” in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London: Routledge, 2001), 216–36. Infelise emphasizes that, unlike other important centers for distribution of news in Europe, Venice relied on media other than regularly published newspapers. Even though Böning recognizes that pamphlets and broadsides were a significant supplement to the newspapers, it seems wrong to suggest that the pamphlet literature was somehow inferior to the newspapers because it appeared only with some delay, which was certainly not always the case. Cf. Böning, *Welteroberung,* 72–73; Jutta Schumann, “Das politisch-militärische Flugblatt in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts als
material is also abundant in the Muscovite news translations and summaries known as the kuranty, which were compiled on a regular basis in the Diplomatic Chancery starting when Muscovy joined the European postal network in the 1660s. The publication and study of the kuranty continues, with the results so far not giving us any reason to revise drastically what we have long known about the very limited Muscovite awareness of the outside world and current events in it. That said, it is nonetheless of interest to see what events were reported and how they were recorded.

One of the longstanding confrontations of the Turkish wars pitted the Venetians against the Ottomans in the Eastern Mediterranean in battles often reported in the kuranty. A few Western engravings of the Venetian-Turkish war for Crete in the 1660s have been found as well in the library of Andrei Vinius, the Muscovite translator of Dutch extraction who would head his government’s postal service to the West in the last quarter of the 17th century. In 1687, during campaigns in the Morea, the Venetians and some Habsburg military contingents besieged Turkish-held Athens. There on the night of


7 The still standard work on the Muscovite post is I. P. Kozlovskii, Perveye pochty i perveye pochtemiestvi v Moskovskom gosudarstve, 2 vols. (Warsaw, 1913). Five volumes of the kuranty have so far been published, with a sixth forthcoming.

8 Recent work on the kuranty includes Stepan Mikhailovich Shamin, “Kuranty vremeni pravljenia Fedora Alekseevicha: K probleme zainteresovannosti Moskovskogo pravitels’tva v operativnoi informatsii o evropeiskikh sobytiakh 1670–80-kh gg.” (Avtoref. diss. na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata istoricheskikh nauk, Moscow, 2003); and two monographs on the language of the texts and many articles by Ingrid Maier, the editor of the forthcoming foreign source volume in the kuranty series. The present article is part of a book about Muscovite acquisition of foreign news which I am writing with Prof. Maier. Her suggestions for this article have been invaluable.

9 For the Morea campaigns of the 1680s, see Venezia e la guerra di Morea: Guerra, politica e cultura alla fine del ’600, ed. Mario Infelise and Anastasia Stouraiti (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005); and Laura Marasso and Anastasia Stouraiti, Immagini dal mito: La conquista veneziana della Morea (1684–1690) (Venezia: Fondazione Scientifica Querini Stampalia, 2001). I am indebted to Prof. Infelise for sending me copies of these books and his notes from materials in Venetian collections. For reports in Muscovy, see, e.g., Vesti-Kuranty 1651–1652 gg., 1654–1656 gg., 1658–1660 gg. (Moscow: “Nauka,” 1996), 20–21, 44, 61, 65–66, 97, etc.


11 On the campaign, see K. M. Setton, “The Venetians in Greece (1684–1688): Francesco Morosini and the Destruction of the Parthenon,” in Papers Read at a Joint Meeting of the
September 26, as an English translation of a serial Venetian diary of the war laconically reported, “they began to play with their Bombs upon the Fortress; one of which fell among their Ammunition, and fir’d a great part of it, to the great terror of the Besieged, whose Defences began to fail them, their Parapets being ruin’d, and their great Guns dismounted.”¹² The German newspapers at the time, equally laconic, added one significant detail: “Denn 26 fiel eine Bombe in den berühmten Tempel Minerve, welches das Haupt Magazyn war.”¹³ And so the Parthenon was left in ruins (see fig. 1 following p. 72).

One of the commanders at the siege, Count Königsmark, noted how “eine Bomme [sic] in den sehr berühmten Tempel Minerva, welcher Seither so vielen hundert Jahren respectiret worden, fiel,” with the result being: “Das Getümme, so durch Entzundung aller dieser Munition entstand, war greulich, zumahl dadurch mehr also 200 Weiber und Kinder zusammt dieser so berühmten Antiquität in die Lutte flohen.”¹⁴ His report was a source for news printed in the Europäische Zeitung (Hanau). That text, or one very similar to it, received in Moscow via the Riga post on December 12 (O.S.), in turn was the source for an account of the event in the Russian kuranti:

Из Венеции ноябрь в 8 день.

Из Афина турского города нам подтверждают, что тот город стоит на высокой каменной горе и у того города одне врата да три стены а в нем 40 пушек а ратных людей 400 человек салдатов, и под тот город наши войска сентябрь в 20 день приступ чинили, и проведав господин граф Кениксмарк, что того города в кирхе богини Минерфа, турки все свои вские воинские запасы сохранили, велел своим гранатчиком бросать в ту кирху огнестрельные гранаты, и 24-го дня сентябрь ту кирху со всеми запасы сожгли и верхней замок города того от того зажжения разрушился. Однако ж турки з городовых стен нам крепкой отпор дали, и от того города отбили, и увидя, что наши в тот город непрестанно стреляют и огненные гранаты пускают, и сентябрь 26-го числа несколько человек знатных турок для договору к нам вышли. И нам объявили, что они тот город здати нам хотят, не для воинского нашего разорения но для того, что у них в кирхе все воинские запасы згорели. И били

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¹⁴ Relations-Courier (Hamburg), 1687, no. 178: [2–3].
челов, чтоб им в той здache дать несколько дней срочки, и дано им на шесть дней сроку, на которой срочной день 1500 человек мужеска и женскаго полу ис того города вывести. И даны им до города Смирна карабли и провожатые.

Ныне войско нaше стоит под Афином, а конница назад пошла под город Коринфо.15

The approach to “translation” in this case was quite typical of what we find in the kuranty once the postal system had been established, the flow of news regularized, and the quantities of news received thereby far exceeded Muscovite needs. Summaries were the order of the day. The texts had to be quickly processed and then read to the tsar and boyars, in the given instance, on December 16, four days after the news had been received.

The Western accounts of the event convey the sense that the loss of one of the great monuments of antiquity was deemed incidental to the capture of Athens from the Turks. The responses in Venice were perhaps the most complex, given the singular attention which was lavished there on the re-conquest of the Morea and the controversies over the decision to abandon Athens only a few months after it had been taken.16 One of the earliest short news pamphlets reporting its capture merely told readers that a bomb had hit a powder magazine and that subsequently the Turks surrendered.17 The Venetian publisher of the serial diary of the campaign lavishly reviewed the glorious

15 Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (hereafter, RGADA), Kuranty: Translations of Foreign News, t. 155, op. 1, 1687, no. 6, pt. 3, pt. 2, fols. 253–54 (copy kindly provided to me by Stepan Shamin). An identical copy, removed from its Muscovite archival environment in the beginning of the 20th century, is in the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences (BAN), St. Petersburg, MS 34.14.12, fols. 76, 17, 18. The immediately preceding entry, datelined Vienna, October 13, contained other news on the Turkish/Tatar wars. This particular section of the kuranty is specified as being from “Tsarskoe” (i.e., German) printed sources. Compare the Russian text with the article under the heading “Venedig den 17. Novembris st. n.,” Europäische Zeitung (Hanau), 1687, no. 90, 8 November: [2]. Note that dates in the headings generally are those of the source for any given report even if the calendar in the city where the newspaper was published was different. This explains the apparent contradiction of events occurring after the publication date or cases where it seems the news traveled impossibly fast. The Gregorian (N.S.) calendar was ten days ahead of the Julian (O.S.).

16 Regarding the debate, see Léon de Laborde, Athènes aux XVe, XVIe et XVIIe siècles, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Renouard, 1854), 2: 191 ff. Laborde was appalled by the Venetian commander Francesco Morosini’s bungled attempt to cart off some of the sculptures which had survived and even more incensed by the fact that he seriously considered the complete destruction of the Acropolis before abandoning the city.

history and ancient ruins of Athens, as Mario Infelise has put it, “due not so much to the importance of the military episode as to the suggestiveness of the place.” In a subsequent number the campaign diary finally lamented what had happened to the Parthenon (“the most beautiful antiquity of the world has been destroyed, a memorial that had never yielded to the injuries of time…”). A separate account published in Venice later that year included an accurate description of the Parthenon and what was left of the Temple of Minerva.18 Giacomo Filippi even composed verses “Per la bomba che nell’assedio d’Atene felicemente intrapresa da Sua Serenità rovinò il tempio di Minerva.”19

It should not surprise us that the cultural significance of the site would find echoes in Baroque Venice. Furthermore, the besieging troops obviously included at least some officers who had an appreciation of Classical antiquity.20 An anonymous eyewitness diary by a Swedish officer laments at length the destruction of the temple and describes the building in great detail.21 The Imperial general who shared some of the responsibility for the explosion recognized that the temple was famous. Of course what those who lamented the loss failed to appreciate is that the Parthenon in 1687, severely damaged in a fire in late antiquity and defaced first by conversion into a Christian church and later into a mosque, was hardly an unsullied monument to the age of Pericles.22 Even in Venice, the episode occupied a relatively small place in the outpouring of material on the Turkish Wars. Elsewhere in Europe the explosion of the Parthenon as a news story seems not to have had very

18 Infelise, “The War,” 218, 223–24, and 218–19. The Venetian archives contain a military engineer’s drawings dramatizing the explosion (Fig. 1). Engravings from them are in Laborde, Athénes, 2, following pp. 150, 172.
20 Laborde, Athénes, devotes vol. 1 and the first part of his vol. 2 to demonstrating how by the second half of the 17th century there was a substantial European interest in Athens and its antiquities. Thus the destruction of the Parthenon cannot be excused as “medieval” ignorance (177–78).
long legs.23 Once reported, it became simply one more of the war stories which followed in rapid succession as campaigns unfolded, battles were won and lost. There is as yet no evidence that the event made any impression whatsoever in Muscovy. Arguably, no one there had ever before heard of the Parthenon, and few individuals would have been able to locate Athens on a map.24

A decade after the Parthenon blew up, there was another noteworthy event in the Turkish wars. On September 11, 1697, at Zenta (Senta) on the Tisza River in what is now northern Serbia, the Habsburg army under Prince Eugene of Savoy destroyed the Ottoman army, killing the Grand Vizier and sending the Sultan fleeing for his life. News of the victory quickly made the papers, and reports about the battle, the consequent celebrations and the military follow-up continued to be published for several weeks.25 The Leipziger Post- und Ordinar-Zeitung indicated in a report from Vienna, “It is

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23 In fact, it was not even reported immediately in all the newspapers. As Laborde notes (Athénes, 2: 148–49 n), Theophraste Renaudot cryptically mentioned the event in his important Gazette only on December 27.

24 Athens was not prominent enough to be listed in “Opisanie raz stoianie stolits narochitykh gradov, slavnykh gosudarstv i zemel ... po rozmeru knigi, imenuemyla Vodnii mir,” compiled in 1667, apparently by Andrei Vinius from a Dutch sea atlas and known in at least ten pre-19th-century manuscript copies. See V. A. Petrov, “Geograficheskie spravochniki XVII v. ‘Poverstaia kniga’ i ‘Opisanie razstoianiu stolits, narochitykh gradov slavnykh gosudarstv i zemel’... ot grada Moskvy,’” Istoriicheskii arkhiv 5 (Moscow-Leningrad: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1950): 150. Stepan Shamin attempts to demonstrate the geographic knowledge at the Muscovite court by tabulating which cities in the headings of kuranty texts were glossed by the clerks in the Diplomatic Chancery. His assumption is that those not glossed were well known to the listeners when the kuranty were being read aloud. There is apparently no mention of Athens in the kuranty for 1676–82. See S. M. Shamin, “Politiko-geograficheskii krugozor chlenov pravitel’stva tsaria Fedora Alekseevicha,” Drevniaia Rus’: Voprosy medievistiki 1(15) (March 2004): 21–22. In fact Athens was known in Muscovy. As Sergei Bogatyrev has pointed out in a posting to H- EarlySlavic (April 15, 2007), the Powest o sozdani i plenenti Troiskom, known in 16th-century copies, mentions the city and describes sites in Ancient Greece (but not the Parthenon) which a Muscovite miniaturist even decorated with semi-nude statues when illustrating this passage. A search through the Muscovite translations of Western cosmographies may turn up additional material on Athens, if not on the Parthenon. Individuals like Nikolai Spatarii-Milescu and the Likhud brothers could be expected to have known about Athens, at least from Classical sources.

25 The most complete collection of early German newspapers, at the Deutsche Presseforschung in Bremen, includes the following with Zenta-related news: Die Europäische Relation (Altona), 1697, nos. 73, 75; Relations-Courier (Altona), 1697, nos. 145, 147, 149; Hamburger Relations-Courier, 1697, no. 146; Relation aus dem Parnasso (Hamburg), 1697, nos. 75, 76; Leipziger Post- und Ordinar-Zeitung, 1697, nos. 37/1, 37/2 and supplement, 37/4; nos. 38/1, 38/2, 38/4; Stralsundischer Relations-Courier 1697, nos. 76-80.
certain that this is the most important action in this entire war in that the
enemy has never suffered such a great loss of its best manpower with so little
loss on our side.”

An Imperial commander, Prince Charles of Vaudemont, had trumpeted the news in the streets of Vienna on his way to the Imperial Palace; a few days later the arrival of Count von Dietrichstein with trophies must have created a public sensation. Turkish banners and horse-tail standards (Ross-Schweiffe) were displayed in the Cathedral of St. Stephen during the solemn mass celebrating the victory. Additional news articles tabulated the numbers killed and wounded on both sides, the wagons and treasure captured, and painted a gruesome picture of a river so full of corpses that one could walk across on them as though on a bridge. In the days following the battle, the stench of rotting bodies was such as to overwhelm even pre-modern noses accustomed to foul odors.

Reports in the regularly published newspapers were supplemented simultaneously by the publication of separate pamphlets.

Tsar Peter I learned about the Habsburg victory at Zenta in Amsterdam, where he had arrived some two weeks before the battle. During this unprecedented first visit of a Russian ruler to Western Europe, the tsar and his entourage had, of course, ample opportunity to access Western news sources first-hand and send translations of them back to Moscow.

Apart from what he could learn from the press, it is clear that the Habsburg court was keeping him well informed about the battle. The Habsburg affairs files contain several

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26 Leipziger Post- und Ordinar-Zeitung, 1697, no. 38/1, lead article datelined Vienna, 21 September: 597, my translation. For a contemporary English translation of a typical newspaper account of the battle, see A Full and True Account of a Total Victory over the Turks with an Account of the Coronation of the King of Poland (n.p. [1697]).

27 Leipziger Post- und Ordinar-Zeitung, 1697, no. 37/1: 584.


29 See the advertisements in Hamburger Relations-Courier, 1697, no. 146, 38/1 (Montagis.), 20 September: 8; Stralsundischer Relations-Courier, 1697, no. 82, Vom 8. Wein-Monah: 8. Of particular interest for its detail and statistics of the Imperial losses is Relations-Diarium Der Grossen Zwischen denen Käyserlichen und Türkischen Armeen den 11. September 1697... (Vienna: Anno 1697, den 18. September; several other nearly identical editions). For additional Zenta pamphlets, see notes below.

30 For examples of Dutch newspapers with Russian annotations of their having been translated in the Netherlands while Peter was there, see Ingrid Maier, “Niederländische Zeitungen (’Couranten’) des 17. Jahrhunderts im Russischen Staatsarchiv für alte Akten (RGADA), Moskau,” Gutenberg-Jahrbuch 2004: 196; idem, “Presseberichte am Zarenhof im 17. Jahrhundert: Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der gedruckten Zeitung in Russland,” Jahrbuch für Kommunikations-Geschichte 2004: 109. I have not searched Dutch newspapers for accounts about Zenta.
originals and translations of accounts about it which still await analysis. Of
significance is the fact that at least three of the Russian accounts about Zenta
are known in manuscripts that circulated in Muscovy outside of the chancery
milieu.

Arguably the most interesting of these Russian texts about Zenta is the
longest, known from a single copy in a Pogodin Collection miscellany of his-
torical texts from the late 17th–early 18th century. The immediate “convoy”
of the Zenta pamphlet includes a widely known fictional account of a 16th-
century Muscovite embassy, the translation of an inscription on the grave of
Constantine the Great, and a copy of the indictment against the rebellious
strel’tsy in 1698. The text about Zenta seems to be a complete translation of a
separately published German pamphlet and is distinguished for its sub-
tantial detail about the military operations over a period of about three weeks
leading up to the battle. The material undoubtedly comes from eyewitness
description, which the publisher then combined with material from shorter
newspaper articles. In particular he drew upon the widely distributed ac-
count about the arrival of Count Dietrichstein in Vienna, the planned celebra-
tion of the Te Deum Laudamus (“и завтрешнего дня образ пресветлые
Богородицы понесен будет в костел Святаго Стефана и тамо пета будет
«Тебе Бога хвалим» для полученной над турком победы”), and the statistics
of casualties and booty.

The second Russian account is little more than a statistical tabulation of
losses and booty. Like the Pogodin text, it is known in one manuscript, a
miscellany compiled from separate quires in the Solovki Monastery. The

31 In particular, it will be necessary to analyze the material in the files in RGADA,
Relations of Russia with Austria, f. 32, 1697, op. 1, no. 13, pts. 1 and 2, of which so far I
have seen only a listing of headings. Also, there is at least one short newspaper ac-
count in the kuranty files, RGADA f. 155, 1697, op. 1, no. 12, fol. 61. The latter text does
not coincide with any of the Western newspaper accounts I have so far located, nor
with the three Russian texts which circulated outside the chanceries in Muscovy. I am
grateful to Prof. Maier for references to this material in RGADA and to Stepan Shamin
for sending me the text from f. 155.

32 For a description of the manuscript, Russian National Library (hereafter RNB), Col-
lection of M. P. Pogodin, no. 1561, see A. F. Bychkov, Opisanie tserkovno-slavianskikh i
ruskikh rukopisnykh sbornikov Imperatorskoi Publichnoi Biblioteki (St. Petersburg, 1882),
116–18. I am grateful to Nataliia Pak for providing me with a transcription of this text.

33 The text corresponds to Ausführliche Relation, Dessen Was sich seit den 22. Augusti bis
Aus dem Feld-Lager bey Zenta den 13. September Ao. 1697 (n. p.). Other German pam-
phlets about Zenta have similar titles but different texts.

34 Thus, cf. RNB, Pogodin, no. 1561, fol. 128v, and Relations-Diurium (Vienna, 1697): [8],
and fols. 128v–129v with Leipziger Post- und Ordinar-Zeitung, 1697, no. 38/2: 601.

35 The manuscript is RNB, Collection of the Solovki Monastery, no. 862/972. What I
assume is that one of our three Zenta texts, possibly this one, is also known in a copy
literary context for this short account is fairly typical for texts which originated in government chanceries in the late 17th century but somehow made their way into broader circulation. In this case the “convoy” is other news items: an account about the Astrakhan rebellion in 1706 and a printed copy of the Petrine Vedomosti from 1723. The quire containing the Zenta text is arguably the oldest part of the book, possibly a copy dating from soon after the battle.

The Solovki text is prefaced by a heading “Почта,” by which we probably should understand the foreign post, the main source providing the newspapers translated in Moscow. It is not uncommon for headings in kuranty translations to mention specifically the receipt of the sources through the post. While the title of the text which follows is not identical with the title in the Pogodin account, the two overlap sufficiently to argue that Solovki borrowed from Pogodin or its immediate source.

RNB, Pogodin No. 1561

Подлинное обявление, что с 206-го сентября 1 числа меж христианским и турском учинилось. Писано из обозу при Ценке сентябре 13-го числа лета 1698 [sic].

The Solovki text contains the old-style date for the battle, in place of the dates in the longer pamphlet title encompassed by its long narrative. In the absence of such a specific narrative text in the Solovki copy, the ubiquity of the statistics it contains makes determination of its source difficult.36 Allowing for some distortion by editing or copying, much that is in it could be from the Pogodin text or its immediate source.37 However, the final phrases seem to argue that the Solovki text is an independent one.38


36 For the Russian text, see Uo, Istoriiia odnoi knigi, app. 6b, 301–02.

37 Cf., for example, Relations-Diarium (Vienna, 1697), [8], which contains some of the exact numbers: the total of wounded cavalrmen is 327, of infantrymen 1114, of dead and wounded horses 825, and of lost horses 112.

38 The mention of the French ambassador is a problem here, although his presence in the vicinity at the time was reported: Relations-Diarium (Vienna, 1697), [2], and Continuation Der erfreulichen Zeitung von der Remargwaben Victoria Welche die allergereichstesten Kýperlichen Waffen üher den Erb-Feind den Türcken in Ungarn bey Zenta erhalten haben (Vienna, 21 September 1697), [3].
The third Russian account of Zenta is known from a copy which, like that in the Solovki manuscript, was preserved in one of the remote parts of the Russian state far from the capital and its diplomatic translators. We will call this the Khlynov text, since it was in the library of a sacristan in Khlynov (later re-named Viatka) by approximately 1700. The text claims a Latin source, which is not impossible, since the court in Vienna was communicating with Peter in Latin. At its outset, the rhetorical style of the Khlynov text distinguishes it from any of the other accounts so far discovered:

Хотя в начале дело показалось зело худо, а потом Бог милостивой на нас презри на Тиссе реке близ места именуемаго Сента, идье же Бог прелестно даровал победу превеликую.... Правил и наставил нашего войска некоторый князь именем Евгений принцонт Сабальдивский, которой имеет всюкую доблесть, верность и всякая добролети в себе, которых подобает иметь всякому господну.

Although it moves on to a more factual recitation of statistics (which overlap but do not exactly coincide with those in other accounts), the first part of the text concludes in a way that could point to a possible clerical author. It relates the arrest of several Jews including one “well-known” Apekgan, under suspicion of their having aided the enemy. Then in a different hand the manuscript contains a second and partially repetitive set of statistics from a report erroneously datelined Vienna 21 October (instead of September) and apparently drawn from a different source. In style and content we can easily recognize here one of the ubiquitous newspaper reports on the battle. We are left with the unanswered question of where and by whom the two parts of the Khlynov text were spliced together.

Having more than one text about Zenta in contemporary Russian translations should not surprise us, given the centrality of the event for

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39 The manuscript is in the State Library of Uzbekistan, MS PI 9250. For details, see Uo, *Istoriaia odnoi lavigi*, passim; the text is in app. 6a, 300–01. The Khlynov sacristan, Semen Popov, collected other late Muscovite *turca* and copies made from the published Pe-trine *Vedomosti*, in which the subject in the first instance was the Great Northern War.

40 There is a sentence on detention of Jews in an article datelined Vienna, September 22, in the *Stralsundischer Relations-Courier*, 1697, no. 79, Vom 27. Herbst-Monacht: [4]. Nothing there connects their arrest with suspicion of possible relations with the Turks. Sermons preached about the battle were being published, although it is difficult to imagine one of them was a source here. See Christoph Wegleiter, *Christliche Danck-Predigt für den am 1. (11.) Herbst-Monat dieses 1697. Heil-Jahrs unweit Zenta an der Theys herrlich bestritthenen Sieg ...* ([Alteldorf]: Meyer, 1697); *Festivitas Gloriosa, Das ist Glor- und Sigrechtes Lob- und Danck-Fest Welches Den 13. October 1697 in der Hohen Thumb-Stifts-Kirchen zu Passau wegen der den 11. September wider den Erb-Feind der Türcken in Hungarn bey Zenta erworbenen hochansehllichen Victorii, Solenniter gehalten ...* (Passau: Höller, 1697).
Russian-Habsburg relations and the substantial Russian interest in news about the Turkish wars. Such reports often accompany items such as descriptions of Peter the Great’s capture of Azov or the apocryphal correspondence of the sultan.\(^{41}\) Similarly, we should not be surprised by the circulation of such materials outside of the chancery milieu. While for most of the 17th century foreign news in Russia was considered a state secret, occasionally the government disseminated news about successes of Russian allies. Moreover, chancery clerks began to take home copies of texts.\(^{42}\) It seems unlikely though that enough of this material circulated so that many Muscovites became aware of the contemporary larger world in the same way that a good many individuals in cosmopolitan cities in the West could become informed by purchasing a newspaper or hearing it read aloud in a tavern.

Nonetheless, we might venture here that even in the decade between the report about the Parthenon and that about Zenta, the doors were opening just a bit for the broader dissemination of news, thanks to a desire on the part of Peter’s young regime to spread that information. Pamphlets were published in the West about the siege and taking of Azov.\(^{43}\) The German and Dutch newspapers reported what they learned from Peter’s embassy regarding continuing successes of Muscovite armies against the Tatars as well as the fact that those victories were being celebrated in various Russian cities.\(^{44}\) The idea of public display with appropriate Baroque fanfare to celebrate military victories was becoming part of Russian culture, at least in the capital.

Of course we cannot know what readers in Russia may have thought of the reports about Zenta.\(^{45}\) It is unlikely that anyone there at the time knew who Prince Eugene was or would have much cared. After all, only thanks to that battle did his name become a household commodity in Vienna. And surely, unlike Azov, whose memory Peter and later generations took pains to preserve, Zenta was quickly forgotten. It was not a Russian battle or a Russian hero.

If such accounts of the Turkish Wars would then largely have fallen on deaf ears in Muscovy, what aspects of contemporaneity might have had

\(^{41}\) For details, see Waugh, The Great Turkes Defance.

\(^{42}\) For a good overview of evidence about the circulation of news texts outside of the chanceries, see Shamin, “K voprosu.”

\(^{43}\) An example is Nuova, e Distinta Relazione Della Presa della Famosa Fortezza di Assac Fatta daili Moscoviti... (Venice and Rome: Domenico Antonio Ercole, 1696).

\(^{44}\) For example, Leipziger Post- und Ordinar-Zeitung, 1697, no. 27/2: 588.

\(^{45}\) Peter and his entourage are quite a different matter, given the fact that Zenta paved the way for the Habsburg Emperor to sign a separate peace and abandon his Russian ally. For the consequent Russian negotiations with the Habsburgs, see Iskra Schwarz, “K voprosu o sud’be Sviashchennoi Ligi v sviazi s prebyvaniem Velikogo Posol’stva v Vene,” in Reflections on Russia in the Eighteenth Century, ed. Joachim Klein et al. (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2001), 126–37.
greater resonance? Among the kuranty of the 1660s is a set of translated reports about the false Messiah, Shabbetai Zvi, whose appearance in the Ottoman Empire interested Jew and gentile throughout Europe. These accounts occupy disproportionate space among the news being translated in Muscovy at the time, probably due to the fact that contemporary Muscovites, including the tsar and the members of his court who might be privy to the news, had been touched by widespread eschatological expectations. The events of the church schism were in play, which could only have heightened the contemporary relevance of this news. Even though there is no evidence that the accounts in the kuranty were disseminated outside the chanceries, a book written as an anti-Jewish polemic by the Ukrainian Orthodox cleric Ioannikii Galiatovskiy included similar Western pamphlet material about Shabbetai. Copies of Galiatovskiy’s Mesia pravdyvyi circulated in Muscovy, which means that this contemporary pamphlet literature reached more people than would otherwise have been the case. All in the name, of course, of religious polemic defending the True Faith.

A second example is a series of accounts containing prophecies of the coming Judgment, the first of which seems to have appeared in Muscovy in the 1660s, and the last around 1730. While not many copies are known, the Russian texts are probably successive translations of pamphlets which kept appearing outside of Muscovy. These pamphlets clearly appealed to religious sentiment, and for that reason, when found in the hands of religious dissenters whom the Muscovite authorities chose to condemn in the same breath with the “Old Believers,” they and their owners were punished. Yet here was material of contemporary interest for the Muscovites who would dare to possess and disseminate such texts.

One might conclude from these examples that a focus on such contemporary issues in Muscovy simply proves the old point about Russian cultural backwardness vis-à-vis the West. After all, modern newspaper historians emphasize how a rational and secular age was dawning, as evidenced by a very low percentage of 17th-century newspaper articles devoted to wonder tales


and their providential interpretations.\textsuperscript{48} The modernizing European mind was abandoning medieval superstition and a religious interpretation of the otherwise inexplicable. Yet by themselves statistics derived from such content analysis are of limited value. The same newspaper publishers who were reporting on Zenta and advertising separate pamphlets on the battle were hawking as well new editions of what they claimed were famous almanacs with astrological prognostications.\textsuperscript{49} In fact, in Europe as in Muscovy, the popular mind was still little touched by what we today call the “scientific revolution.” Even leading exponents of the latter were still very much into astrology, and most individuals believed in a providential interpretation of history.

Even if Galiatovskyi’s writings or these translated eschatological pamphlets reached but a small audience, was there other contemporary news which might have had broader resonance in Muscovy? One possible answer involves the spread of belief in miracle-working relics and icons. The 17th century in Muscovy was a time when veneration of relics and what were understood to be wonder-working icons proliferated. Indeed, alarmed by how such phenomena seemed to be getting out of hand, the Church (backed by the State) attempted, unsuccessfully, to bring the cults under control. Peter the Great’s Synod attacked these popular cults with a vengeance, and with an equal lack of success.\textsuperscript{50} Yet Muscovites were not alone in such beliefs and veneration, as any number of shrines and cults in the West (with new ones emerging all the time) would illustrate.\textsuperscript{51} Even if the spread of news about some new miracle or cure was largely by word of mouth, the news reached a great many people. One might reasonably suppose that they remembered such news much longer than any number of reports connected with an obscure foreign battle, even against the “arch-enemy” of Christendom. To assess the impact of foreign news on early modern European minds requires that we take into account the widest range of other impacts on those same minds, including the legacies of deeply rooted cultural convictions which people would not lightly abandon.


\textsuperscript{49} For example, in \textit{Stralsundischer Relations-Courier}, 1697, no. 79, Vom 27. Herbst-Monath: [8].

\textsuperscript{50} For an example, see my “Religion and Regional Identities: The Case of Viatka and the Miracle-Working Icon of St. Nicholas Velikoretskii,” \textit{Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte} 63 (2004): 259–78.

\textsuperscript{51} An example in the \textit{kuranty} for 1646 concerns a holy spring at the German city of Hornhausen. See \textit{Vesti-kuranty} 1645–1646, 1648 gg. (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 136–42, 244–51. As Ingrid Maier shows in a forthcoming study, the Muscovite translation of the long list of those miraculously cured is based on a published German pamphlet, which appeared in more than one edition.
In conclusion, let us examine the afterlife of the news about these events in the Turkish wars. What happened to the Parthenon in 1687 now may seem to be of less interest than a later episode in its history.\textsuperscript{52} We have grown accustomed to seeing the building that is emblematic of Athenian culture as a glorious ruin, even if the computer allows us to see a reconstruction in all its original glory. Indeed its iconic status for Greek nationalism and for others’ perceptions of the glories of ancient Greece is really an invention of the 19th century. Léon de Laborde’s book published in Paris in 1854 was, as Mario Infelise has put it, “inspired by a ferocious anti-Venetian sentiment.”\textsuperscript{53} But who today would similarly castigate the Venetians, who, after all, share with many of us a common cultural heritage? The news story about the Parthenon which attracts more attention concerns the removal of its sculptures to England by Thomas Bruce, Seventh Earl of Elgin, an event which provoked an immediate and vitriolic response by Lord Byron. In today’s post-imperial world where claims about repatriating stolen treasures are a cornerstone of assertive national identity, the story of the Elgin marbles has been elevated to the level of scripture. The plundering of the Parthenon by the Earl of Elgin is emblematic, analogous to how the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban and the World Trade Center by al-Qaida are emblematic. However, one can imagine a situation where the focus on news about the Parthenon might again shift, for example in the hands of those who would use the incident to condemn the Turks as they seek to become part of the European Union. It is easy to imagine a discourse: “How could they possibly have thought of using the building as a powder magazine? They don’t share European values.”

What about the subsequent history of Zenta, which, unlike Athens and the Parthenon, is hardly a household name today? Here too we can see how news in earlier times may remain alive, if for divergent purposes. The great imperial capitals are full of emblems of past glories, which may still retain some meaning to those once ruled (or ruling) from the imperial palaces. In Budapest, a 19th-century statue to Prince Eugene commemorates the victory at Zenta, a major step in the liberation of Hungary from Ottoman rule. It is clear though that Hungarians saw the restoration of Habsburg rule throughout Hungary as a mixed blessing (the most striking evidence being the rebellion of Ferenc Rákóczi II a few years later). Even on the 300th anniversary of the battle, the joint Hungarian-Austrian exhibition commemorating

\textsuperscript{52} On the history of responses to the Parthenon, see Mary Beard, The Parthenon (London: Profile Books, 2002); also, The Parthenon, ed. Jenifer Neils, esp. chaps. 10, 11.

\textsuperscript{53} Infelise, “The War,” 233n4. Note Laborde’s dedication in vol. 2 of his Athénes: “Aux vandales, mutilateurs, spoliateurs, restaurateurs, de tous les pas, hommage d’une profonde indignation” (iii)].
the event focused far more on its consequences for Habsburg-Hungarian
relations than on the ousting of the Turks.54

Zenta made Prince Eugene a hero in the Habsburg Empire. His lustre
grew from his continuing military success during the wars of the first decades
of the eighteenth century.55 If the Westernizing nobility of Peter’s time were
looking for a model to emulate, Prince Eugene ("которой имеет всякую
dоблесть, верность и всякия добродетели в себе, которых подобает иметь
всякому господину") could have served them well, as our Khlynov text so
nicely suggests. Who could not but be impressed by his lovely Belvedere pal-
ace occupying one of the choicest pieces of real estate in Vienna and deco-
rated with statuary proclaiming the apotheosis of its owner? The foreign visi-
tor to Vienna today surely will note the statue to Eugene outside the Hofburg,
even if it may take busy thumbing through the Lonely Planet guide to learn
who he is. The road from Zenta leads as well to the Military History Museum
in Vienna, where displays glorifying Austrian military history give pride of
place to the sieges of Vienna. Zenta is there too, with the display of the gold
signet ring which is mentioned in so many of the contemporary news reports
as having been around the Grand Vizier’s neck when he died in the battle (fig.
2). Just a few steps away are the banners and catafalque for Prince Eugene’s
state funeral and burial in 1736 in a separate chapel in the Cathedral of St.
Stephen, where Zenta had been celebrated with a solemn Te Deum. Perhaps
more than ever in a world where Vienna no longer rules an empire and
Austrian military power is an artifact of memory, Austrian national identity
requires the cult of Prince Eugene. Yet in witnessing, as I did in 2004, the use
of the Military History Museum as a venue for ceremonies involving the cur-
rent Austrian military and attempts there to interest Austrian schoolchildren
in their past by showing them displays of old weaponry, I cannot but wonder
whether Eugene and the Turkish wars have much of a future. Perhaps a de-
feat, like that at Kosovo for the Serbs, could better serve the purposes of na-
tional identity. Maybe it would be good simply to forget a battle whose re-
ports, in the fashion of the day, routinely branded the Turks “The Arch-
enemy.” In the parts of Europe where Zenta has been most celebrated, such
epithets just might be resurrected as part of a modern xenophobic and racist
nationalism in response to, say, Turkish immigrants. Then we might well
wish that the battle had been as quickly forgotten in Central Europe as it was
in Muscovy.

Jahrestages der Schlacht bei Zenta, ed. Lajos Cécényi (Vienna-Budapest, 1997). I am
grateful to Prof. Andreas Kappeler for sending me a copy of this difficult-to-obtain
booklet.

55 One can sense the beginning of this adulation in contemporary texts. Verses at the
end of one of the pamphlets begin: “Steh stille, Sonne steht hier ist dein Josua, d.
Savoyens tapffrer Prinz ...” (Continuation Der erfreulichen Zeitung, [4]).
Figure 11. Gold signet ring of Ottoman Sultan Mustafa II, taken by the victorious Habsburg army from around the neck of the Grand Vizier, who died at the battle of Zenta in 1697. Collection of the Military History Museum, Vienna. (Photograph © Daniel C. Waugh, 2004).