

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

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*Note:* The two accompanying illustrations referred to as Figs. 1 and 2 in the article are numbered 10 and 11 in the captions.

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

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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.<sup>1</sup> The validity of this interpretation of the impact from new media and communications depends to 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.

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<sup>1</sup>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), *Istorīia odnoi knigi: Viatka i “ne-sovremennost’” v russkoi kul’ture Petrovskogo vremeni* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003), esp. chap. 7.

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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 Crummey for a copy of his *Rude and Barbarous Kingdome*.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> Understandably, the Turkish

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Nikolai F. Kapterev, *Kharakter otnoshenii Rossii k pravoslavnomu Vostoku v XVI i XVII stoletiiakh* (Sergiev Posad: M. S. Elov, 1914).

<sup>4</sup> Notably the embassies of Andrei Viniius and Pavel Menezii. See N. A. Kazakova, "A. A. Viniius i stateinyi spisok ego posol'stva v Angliiu, Frantsiiu i Ispaniiu v 1672–1674 gg.," *Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury* 39 (1985): 348–64; N. V. Charykov, *Posol'stvo v Rim i sluzhba v Moskve Pavla Meneziiia* (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorin, 1906).

<sup>5</sup> Contemporaries appreciated the significance of the Ottoman defeat in the 1683–99 war. See the substantial book marking the signing of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699: *Der siegreich geendigte Römisch-Käyserliche, Pohlnische, Muscovitische und Venetianische XV. Jahrige Türcken-Krieg ...* (Hamburg: von Wiering, 1699).

<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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*.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> In 1687, during campaigns in the Morea, the Venetians and some Habsburg military contingents besieged Turkish-held Athens.<sup>11</sup> There on the night of

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Nachrichtenmedium und Propagandamittel," in *Das Illustrierte Flugblatt in der Kultur der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Wolfgang Harms and Michael Schilling, *Microkosmos: Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft und Bedeutungsforschung* 50 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998), 226–58.

<sup>7</sup> The still standard work on the Muscovite post is I. P. Kozlovskii, *Pervye pochty i pervye pochthmeistery v Moskovskom gosudarstve*, 2 vols. (Warsaw, 1913). Five volumes of the *kuranty* have so far been published, with a sixth forthcoming.

<sup>8</sup> Recent work on the *kuranty* includes Stepan Mikhailovich Shamin, "Kuranty vremeni pravleniia Fedora Alekseevicha: K probleme zainteresovannosti Moskovskogo pravitel'stva v operativnoi informatsii o evropeiskikh sobytiakh 1670–80-kh gg." (Avtoreferat 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> See N. Levinson, "Al'bom 'Kniga Vinius' — pamiatnik khudozhestvennogo sobiratel'stva v Moskve XVII veka," *Ezhegodnik Gosudarstvennogo istoricheskogo muzeia 1961 god* (Moscow, 1962): 72–98.

<sup>11</sup> 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."<sup>12</sup> 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."<sup>13</sup> 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 Getümmel, so durch Entzündung aller dieser Munition entstand, war greulich, zumahl dadurch mehr also 200 Weiber und Kinder zusambt dieser so berühmten Antiquität in die Luft flohen."<sup>14</sup> 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 *kuranty*:

Из Венеции ноября в 8 день.

Из Афина турецкого 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 сентября в 20 день приступ чинили, и проведав господин граф Кениксмарк, что того города в кирхе богини Минерфа, турки все свои всякие воинские запасы сохранили, велел своим гранатчиком бросать в ту кирху огнестрельные гранаты, и 24-го дня сентября 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 сентября 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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*Royal Society and the American Philosophical Society* 3 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1987), 1–85.

<sup>12</sup> *A Journal of the Venetian Campaign, A. D. 1687. Under the Conduct of the Capt. General Morosini... Translated from the Italian Original, sent from Venice...* (London: H. C. Taylor, 1688), 38.

<sup>13</sup> *Die Europäische Relation* (Altona), 1687, no. 91 (datelined Athens, 11 October): 732. Cf. *Leipziger Post- und Ordinar-Zeitung*, 1687, no. 45/4 (datelined Venice, 7 November): 718.

<sup>14</sup> *Relations-Courier* (Hamburg), 1687, no. 178: [2–3].

челом, чтоб им в той здаче дать несколько дней сроку, 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 наше стоит под Афином, а конница назад пошла под город Коринфо.<sup>15</sup>

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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> The Venetian publisher of the serial diary of the campaign lavishly reviewed the glorious

<sup>15</sup> Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (hereafter, RGADA), *Kuranty: Translations of Foreign News*, f. 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 “Tsesarskie” (i.e., German) printed sources. Compare the Russian text with the article under the heading “Venedig den 17. Novembris st. n.,” *Europaeische 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.).

<sup>16</sup> Regarding the debate, see Léon de Laborde, *Athènes aux XV<sup>e</sup>, XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> *Nuova, e Distinta Relatione Dell’Acquisto della Città, e Fortezza d’Athene Fatto dall’armi della Sereniss. Rep. di Venetia Sotto la Ualorosa Direzione dell’Illustriss. & Eccellentiss. Sig. Francesco Morosini...* (Venice and Ferrara: Filoni, 1687), [3].

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.<sup>18</sup> Giacomo Filippi even composed verses “Per la bomba che nell’assedio d’Atene felicemente intrapresa da Sua Serenità rovinò il tempio di Minerva.”<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup> An anonymous eyewitness diary by a Swedish officer laments at length the destruction of the temple and describes the building in great detail.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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

<sup>18</sup> 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, *Athènes*, 2, following pp. 150, 172.

<sup>19</sup> Giorgios I. Pilidis, “La bomba arrogante e la poesia servile: celebrazioni poetiche,” in *Venezia e la guerra*, 276.

<sup>20</sup> Laborde, *Athènes*, 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).

<sup>21</sup> See L. Dietrichson, “Zum zweihundertjährigen Gedächtnis der Zerstörung des Parthenon,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 22 (September 1887): 367–76. Accounts by other officers involved in the siege are largely matter-of-fact. See Léon Laborde, *Documents Inédits ou Peu Connus Sur L’Histoire et Les Antiquités d’Athènes, tirés des Archives de L’Italie, de la France, de L’Allemagne, etc.* (Paris: J. Renouard, 1854), 148–54. For an account by the well-educated Anna Agriconia Akerhjelm, an attendant to Königsmark’s wife, see Laborde, *Athènes*, 2: esp. 276–79.

<sup>22</sup> See Robert Ousterhout, “‘Bestride the Very Peak of Heaven’: The Parthenon after Antiquity,” chap. 9 in *The Parthenon: From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Jenifer Neils (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 293–329.

long legs.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup> The *Leipziger Post- und Ordinar-Zeitung* indicated in a report from Vienna, "It is

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

<sup>24</sup> Athens was not prominent enough to be listed in "Opisanie razstoianie stolits narochitykh gradov, slavnykh gosudarstv i zemel ... po rozmeru knigi, imenuemyia Vodnyi mir," compiled in 1667, apparently by Andrei Vinus from a Dutch sea atlas and known in at least ten pre-19th-century manuscript copies. See V. A. Petrov, "Geograficheskie spravochniki XVII v. 'Poverstnaia kniga' i 'Opisanie rasstoianiiu stolits, narochitykh gradov slavnykh gosudarstv i zemel'... ot grada Moskvu,'" *Istoricheskii 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 *Povest' o sozdanii i plenenii 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 Spafarii-Milescu and the Likhud brothers could be expected to have known about Athens, at least from Classical sources.

<sup>25</sup> 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."<sup>26</sup> An Imperial commander, Prince Charles of Vaudemont, had trumpeted the news in the streets of Vienna on his way to the Imperial Palace;<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> Reports in the regularly published newspapers were supplemented simultaneously by the publication of separate pamphlets.<sup>29</sup>

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.<sup>30</sup> 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

<sup>26</sup> *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]).

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

<sup>28</sup> "Aus dem Kayserl. Feld-Lager bey Klein-Canischa vom 18. Sept.," *Stralsundischer Relations-Courier*, 1697, no. 80, Vom 1. Wein-Monaht: [4].

<sup>29</sup> 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-Monaht: 8. Of particular interest for its detail and statistics of the Imperial losses is *Relations-Diarium Der Grossen Zwischen denen Käyserlichen und Türckischen Armeen den 11. September 1697...* (Vienna: Anno 1697, den 18. September; several other nearly identical editions). For additional Zenta pamphlets, see notes below.

<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> 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 historical texts from the late 17th–early 18th century.<sup>32</sup> 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 substantial detail about the military operations over a period of about three weeks leading up to the battle.<sup>33</sup> The material undoubtedly comes from eyewitness description, which the publisher then combined with material from shorter newspaper articles.<sup>34</sup> In particular he drew upon the widely distributed account about the arrival of Count Dietrichstein in Vienna, the planned celebration of the *Te Deum Laudamus* (“и завтрешнего дни образ пресветлые Богородицы понесен будет в костел Святого 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.<sup>35</sup> The

<sup>31</sup> 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 account 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.

<sup>32</sup> For a description of the manuscript, Russian National Library (hereafter RNB), Collection of M. P. Pogodin, no. 1561, see A. F. Bychkov, *Opisanie tserkovno-slavianskikh i russkikh 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.

<sup>33</sup> The text corresponds to *Ausführliche Relation, Dessen Was sich seit den 22. Augusti bis den 13. September in Ungarn zwischen der Christlichen und Türckischen Armee zugetragen. Aus dem Feld-Lager bey Zenta den 13. September Ao. 1697* (n. p.). Other German pamphlets about Zenta have similar titles but different texts.

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

<sup>35</sup> 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 объявление, что с августа ж 22-го по 13 сентября меж христианским войском учинилось. Писано из обозу при Центе сентября 13-го числа 1697-го году.

RNB, Solovki No. 862/972

206-го сентября 1 числа меж христианском и турском учинилось. Писано из обозу при Ценке сентября 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.<sup>36</sup> Allowing for some distortion by editing or copying, much that is in it *could* be from the Pogodin text or its immediate source.<sup>37</sup> However, the final phrases seem to argue that the Solovki text is an independent one.<sup>38</sup>

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from the archive of a north Russian family of peasant merchants, the Shangins. See S. M. Shamin, “K voprosu o chastnom interese russkikh liudei k inostrannoï presse v Rossii XVII stoletia,” *Drevniaia Rus’: Voprosy medievistiki* 2(28) (June 2001): 42–59, here 57, citing the discovery by B. N. Morozov.

<sup>36</sup> For the Russian text, see Uo, *Istoriia odnoi knigi*, app. 6b, 301–02.

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

<sup>38</sup> 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 Remarqvablen Victoria Welche die allergerechtesten Käyserlichen Waffen über 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.<sup>39</sup> 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 презрил на Тиссе реке близ места именуемаго Сента, иде же Бог преизобилно даровал победу превеликую.... Правил и наставил нашего войска некоторый князь имянем Евгений принсонт Сабалдивский, которой имеет всякую доблесть, верность и всякия добродетели в себе, которых подобает имети всякому господину.

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.<sup>40</sup> 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

<sup>39</sup> The manuscript is in the State Library of Uzbekistan, MS PI 9250. For details, see Uo, *Istoriia odnoi knigi*, passim; the text is in app. 6a, 300–01. The Khlynov sacristan, Semen Popov, collected other late Muscovite *turcica* and copies made from the published Petrine *Vedomosti*, in which the subject in the first instance was the Great Northern War.

<sup>40</sup> 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-Monath: [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 bestrittenen Sieg ...* ([Altdorf]: Meyer, 1697); *Festivitas Gloriosa, Das ist Glor- und Sigreiches 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 hochansehnlichen Victori, 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.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup> 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

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<sup>41</sup> For details, see Waugh, *The Great Turkes Defiance*.

<sup>42</sup> For a good overview of evidence about the circulation of news texts outside of the chanceries, see Shamin, "K voprosu."

<sup>43</sup> An example is *Nuova, e Distinta Relatione Della Presa della Famosa Fortezza di Assac Fatta dalli Moscoviti...* (Venice and Rome: Domenico Antonio Ercole, 1696).

<sup>44</sup> For example, *Leipziger Post- und Ordinar-Zeitung*, 1697, no. 27/2: 588.

<sup>45</sup> 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 prebyvaniiem 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.<sup>46</sup> 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 Galiatovskiyi included similar Western pamphlet material about Shabbetai. Copies of Galiatovskiyi'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.<sup>47</sup> 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

<sup>46</sup> For the first discussion of this material in the *kuranty*, see my "News of the False Messiah: Reports on Shabbetai Zevi in Ukraine and Muscovy," *Jewish Social Studies* 41 (1979): 301–22. This has now been superseded by Ingrid Maier's articles: "Polnische Fabelzeitung über Sabbatai Zwi übersetzt für den russischen Zaren (1666)," *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie* 62 (2003): 1–39; idem, "Acht anonyme deutsche und polnische Sabetha Sebi-Drucke aus dem Jahre 1666. Auf der Spur nach dem Drucker," *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 83 (2008): 141–60.

<sup>47</sup> See Uo, *Istoriia odnoi knigi*, 48–53, the work by Michels and Lavrov cited there, and two articles by S. L. Shamin, "V ozhidanii kontsa sveta v Rossii (konets XVII–nachalo XVIII v.)," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 6 (2002): 134–38; idem, "Chudesa v kurantakh vremen pravleniia Fedora Alekseevicha (1676–1682 g.)," *Drevniaia Rus': Voprosy medievistiki* 4 (6), December 2001: 99–110.

and their providential interpretations.<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup> 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 Galiatovskiy’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.<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup> 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.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Böning, *Welteroberung*, 132–35; Johannes Weber, “Strassburg, 1605: The Origins of the Newspaper in Europe,” *German History* 24 (2006): 408–09.

<sup>49</sup> For example, in *Stralsundischer Relations-Courier*, 1697, no. 79, Vom 27. Herbst-Monath: [8].

<sup>50</sup> For an example, see my “Religion and Regional Identities: The Case of Viatka and the Miracle-Working Icon of St. Nicholas Velikoretskii,” *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte* 63 (2004): 259–78.

<sup>51</sup> An example in the *kuranty* for 1646 concerns a holy spring at the German city of Hornhausen. See *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.<sup>52</sup> 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."<sup>53</sup> 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

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<sup>52</sup> 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.

<sup>53</sup> Infelise, "The War," 233n4. Note Laborde's dedication in vol. 2 of his *Athènes*: "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.<sup>54</sup>

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.<sup>55</sup> If the Westernizing nobility of Peter's time were looking for a model to emulate, Prince Eugene ("которой имеет всякую доблесть, верность и всякия добродетели в себе, которых подобает имети всякому господину") could have served them well, as our Khlynov text so nicely suggests. Who could not but be impressed by his lovely Belvedere palace occupying one of the choicest pieces of real estate in Vienna and decorated with statuary proclaiming the apotheosis of its owner? The foreign visitor 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 current 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 defeat, like that at Kosovo for the Serbs, could better serve the purposes of national identity. Maybe it would be good simply to forget a battle whose reports, 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.

<sup>54</sup> See *Zenta 1697. Neubeginn für Ungarn und Österreich. Ausstellung anlässlich des 300. Jahrestages der Schlacht bei Zenta*, ed. Lajos Csecsényi (Vienna-Budapest, 1997). I am grateful to Prof. Andreas Kappeler for sending me a copy of this difficult-to-obtain booklet.

<sup>55</sup> One can sense the beginning of this adulation in contemporary texts. Verses at the end of one of the pamphlets begin: "Steh stille, Sonne steh! hier ist dein Josua, d. Savoyens tapffrer Prinz ..." (*Continuation Der erfreulichen Zeitung*, [4]).



**Figure 10.** The destruction of the Parthenon during the bombardment of September 26, 1687. Detail from an engraving based on the contemporary drawing by G. M. Verneda. Source: Léon de Laborde, *Athènes aux XV<sup>e</sup>, XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Renouard, 1854), 2: following p. 150. (Photograph © Daniel C. Waugh, 2007).



**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).