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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Romeyn de Hooghe and his prints on the Great Turkish War

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An economy of heads

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Triumphalia and satire

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

Notes

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

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

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

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