

# **SOLDIER, STRUCTURE AND THE OTHER**

**SOCIAL RELATIONS AND CULTURAL CATEGORISATION IN THE  
MEMOIRS OF FINNISH GUARDSMEN TAKING PART IN THE RUSSO-  
TURKISH WAR, 1877-1878**

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## ABSTRACT

### **SOLDIER, STRUCTURE AND THE OTHER: SOCIAL RELATIONS AND CULTURAL CATEGORISATION IN THE MEMOIRS OF FINNISH GUARDSMEN TAKING PART IN THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR, 1877-1878**

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I examine the influence of Finnish tradition (public memory) about the 'correct' behaviour in war and relative to the other or not-us on the ways the Finnish guardsmen described their experiences in the Russo-Turkish war, 1877-1878. Further, I analyse how the men's peacetime identity was transformed into a wartime military one due to their battle experiences and encounters with the other (the enemy, the Balkans and its civilian population) and how public memory both shaped this process and was reinterpreted during it. Methodologically I combine Victor Turner's study of rituals as processes with Maurice Halbwachs's sociological insights about what he termed *mémoire collective* and what I have called public memory, and Eric Dardel's geographical view about the meaning of space in remembering.

My sources are the written recollections of the Finnish guardsmen, both volunteers and professionals. I have broken each recollection (nine together) down into themes (military ideals, views of the enemy, battle, the civilians or Bulgarians, etc.) and analysed them separately, letting every author tell his story about each thema. My conclusions suggest that the identity and public memory, which the men had internalised before the war did not as a rule essentially change. The reason is that the peacetime Finnish structure contained elements that facilitated the adoption of a wartime military identity. These may be summarised by the concept 'honour', which became manifest in the men's different social relations. These included loyalty to the Russian emperor, the fatherland and the Finnish Guard, hatred of the enemy and the men's mutual relations. Briefly, 'honour' was linked with the men's social status and identity; and what war experiences and encounters with the other taught the guardsmen was either to firmly stick to the pre-war strategies in establishing honour-increasing relations or to develop new ones to improve one's social status.



## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THIS STUDY examines accounts of ordinary people's experiences in an extraordinary situation, in this case, wartime. The war studied is the Russo-Turkish one of 1877-8, and the people are the Finnish guardsmen who participated in that war as members of the Russian army (Finland being part of Russia from 1809 to 1917). Applying Victor Turner's terminology, I see the guardsmen's wartime experiences as a process which affected their social relations and caused these to be reinterpreted. When speaking of social relations I have in mind especially the men's mutual relations and their attitudes towards the army institution as well as those vis-à-vis the foreign or other (the enemy, Bulgarian civilians, the Balkan space and Islam). My point of departure is that certain aspects of the men's peacetime culture, or, more exactly, what I have termed 'public memory' (roughly customs, conventions, clichés and patterns of behaviour and thinking pertinent to a given institution, for example, the army), formed the context within which the guardsmen interpreted their wartime relations and actions to make them coincide with what was considered socially or culturally 'normal' by the army, the Russian emperor or the Finnish public at home.

This approach is hardly a new one. Related work in anthropology has been carried out by Ruth Benedict, Mary Douglas, Clifford Geertz, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Marshall Sahlins, Victor Turner and others. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his concept of 'habitus' notwithstanding, I feel that not enough has been done to take individual, superficially 'trivial', narratives and events and render them meaningful by seeking to understand them in relation to, and as a reflection of, an institution's or group's public memory. I mean that, as Turner partly showed, the concept of 'process' (he spoke of ritual process) covers not only short 'sacred' or 'off-structure' rituals or phases in human life (for example, marriages and funerals) but also prolonged, structurally initiated or supported series of events (such as wars, imprisonment or hospitalisation, or periods in monasteries or concentration camps) and, in fact, the whole course of a society. Prolonged periods have been studied by various scholars (for example, Michel Foucault and Tzvetan Todorov), but not so often as processes which, on the one hand, reshape one's identity and relation to structure and, on the other, create means and strategies to cope with the whole process of human life.

Saying this is tantamount to stating that wars (or periods in monasteries or hospitals, for example) are not deviations from 'normal' structure; nor are they merely politics continued by other means or forms of social life outside society. To apply what Turner suggested in his *Ritual process* (1969): for individuals, periods of war, imprisonment or illness are occasions for re-reflecting on institutional and structural values, whereas for institutions they are ways of making 'normal' what is usually regarded as 'extraordinary', 'abnormal' or, at best, differing from the 'ordinary'. Accordingly, processes within or between institutions are discourses and social practices in negotiating social relations among and between individuals and institutions, and, as such, phases in the struggle for power, social position and authority.

Rather than studying it as a process bearing some similarity to ritual process, those emphasising the power struggle element in war have tended to trace its historical or political development over time or its effect upon individual persons from a psychological point of view. My approach has been somewhat different. In keeping with my institutional view I have attempted to combine anthropological and historical insights in order to see some eight months in the wartime Balkans as an effort to cope with a process (that is, changes in social relations) and to understand the Finnish guardsmen's wartime experiences by interpreting their narratives of that time as signs of their structural ethos and social position and as means of upholding, improving or changing these both.

Although I speak of change, my opinion is that war seldom changes military institutions or structure at large in any total manner. Rather, it dramatises and highlights certain aspects of a society's cultural logic. Hence, depending on one's social position, previous experiences, recollections and internalised public memory, some of one's structural values and notions are strengthened by war whilst others are challenged or ignored. Historians of the annalist persuasion may call this *long durée* and social scientists perhaps social inertia. Naming notwithstanding, this is, crudely, what Turner, in my opinion, meant when he talked about ritual process: continuity and change are intertwined. Accordingly, I have tried to show how different traditions of military heroism, structural authority, Finnish patriotism and attitudes towards Russians and other 'foreigners' in 'our' society were processed in the guardsmen's encounter with the Turkish enemy, the Bulgarian 'brethren' and space, and Islam. Although nothing special seemed to happen relative to these during the war, most of the men became more conscious of the existence of, and differences between, these relations and their opportunities to use them in negotiating their military and social position. Thus, what is seen as conventionalism or a strengthening of the status quo is, in fact, often an individual's ability or strategy to make concessions in return for institutional or social acceptance or awards.

The guardsmen, for example, tended to despise the Balkans, not so much because it was somehow an awful region but because this was expected by the army, the emperor and the Finnish public, which took for granted that the enemy and his territory were 'by nature' dreadful (just as the Finns were 'by nature' heroic). To take another example, though not all were professional soldiers, the men did not question the waging of war, despite the fact that fighting, particularly against Turks, or for Bulgarian liberation, was almost certainly of no special importance for them. One main reason was that participating in the war was understood to enhance the men's social prestige, or 'honour' as they put it, and waging war as such was generally considered a 'noble' rather than a 'mean' act. For the same reason, the men were willing to serve the Russian emperor, whether or not they wholeheartedly supported him, because imperial loyalty was esteemed as 'ordinary' (and also beneficial or profitable) social behaviour. Only after the emperor refused, in the late 1890s, to grant the Finns niches of personal and social reputation in return for their formal public loyalty did they revolt.

AS REGARDS the 'life history' of my study, the idea was ignited by the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the subsequent Balkan wars. At that time I was an assistant lecturer at the Department of Orthodoxy and East European Church Studies at the University of Helsinki. By chance, I was asked to lecture, and later to write as well, on the background of what was going on in the western Balkans. I found the theme interesting, especially because I had written my licenciate thesis (in comparative religion) on the position of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the Ottoman empire in 1453-1571. The realisation, however, that 'on-line history' was far too complicated for a dissertation prompted me to turn to earlier events in the Balkans.

Remembering a fascinating book, published in 1968, by a Finnish journalist, Tapio Hiisivaara, about the Finnish guardsmen in the Russo-Turkish war, I began to wonder whether their destinies might not be worth studying. I found some material, mainly their published accounts and memories, and started, in summer 1995, to read the men's recollections. Within two months or so I had finished some of the texts and broken them down into themes before other projects forced me to put the work on one side. I continued the study in November and December 1997, from August 1998 to May 1999, and again in November and December 1999. During these months I received financial support from, and had the pleasure of participating in two projects financed by, the Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters. One of them, entitled "Religion and National Identity in Baltic and Eastern

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## **Stops during the march of the Finnish Guard**

### *September 1877*

6th departure from Helsinki  
7th arrival at St. Petersburg *via* Viipuri  
8th departure from St. Petersburg,  
9th Daugavpils (former Dünaburg)  
11th Bialystock  
12th Kovel  
14th Razdelnaya  
15th to 21st Chişinău  
22nd Ungheni  
23rd to 25th Iaşi  
26th Ploieşti  
28th Bucharest  
29th Frateşti

### *October*

1st Brigadir  
2nd Zimnicea, Shvistov  
3rd to 4th Tsarevits  
5th Gorna Studena  
6th to 10th from Ovcha mogila to Ralyovo  
10th to 11th Ralyovo  
12th to 23rd Yeni Barkats  
24th to 29th Gorni Dübrik

### *November/December*

30th October to 13th November Dolni Dübrik  
14th to 15th Radomirtsa  
16th Petreven  
17th to 21th Jablonitsa  
22nd to 29th Pravets  
30th to 24th December Vrachesh/Orkhanie (modern Butovgrad)  
25th to 28th the Balkan mountains  
29th to 30th Churniak  
31st to 1st January, 1878 Sarantsi -Dolno Kamartsi

### *January 1878*

2nd to 3rd Vrazhdebna  
4th to 9th Sofia  
10th Tŭrnovo (an unidentified, perhaps abandoned, Circassian, village)  
11th Ikhtiman  
13th Boshjula

14th to 15th Adaköy (modern Novi Krichim)  
17th Dermendere (modern Likovo)  
18th to 21st Plovdiv  
24th Kadiköy  
25th Harmanli  
26th Mustafa Pasha Köprü (modern Slivengrad)  
28th to 5th February Edirne

*February-April*

6th Hofsa  
7th to 8th Baba Eski  
9th Lüleburgaz  
10th Kariçtira  
11th to 19th Çorlu  
21st Silivri  
22nd Kumburgaz  
24th February to 22nd April Florio Çekmece and Büyük Çekmece (near San Stefano)  
23rd April San Stefano (modern Yeşilköy)  
23rd to 27th on board ship  
27th to 29th Odessa  
29th Razdelnaya

*May*

1st Kovel  
2n Bialystock  
4th Vilna  
5th Pskov  
6th Daugavpils  
7th to 8th St. Petersburg  
9th Viipuri  
10th Helsinki

# 1. INTRODUCTION: A BALKAN WAR, THE RUSSIAN ARMY AND THE FINNISH GUARDSMEN

## 1.1. The nineteenth-century Balkans as a theatre of war

During the 19th century, the Balkan peninsula had already been a theatre of war several times before the war of 1877-8. Commonly labelled the Eastern Question, the Balkan wars clustered around the decline of the Ottoman empire, the revolts of her Balkan Christian subjects, and the intervention of European powers (Jelavich 1983: 186). There were uprisings, rebellions and fights against the Turks in Ottoman Serbia (1804, 1815), the Danubean Principalities (1821, against the Phanariote Greek abuses) and the Greek areas (1821-33). Many of these revolts were led by Balkan peoples serving in the Russian army.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Balkans witnessed wars between Russia and the Ottomans (in 1806-12 over Serbian independence and the Danubean Principalities; in 1828-9 over Ottoman concessions to Serbs; and in 1853-6 [the Crimean War] over Russia's right to protect the Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman empire - the Danubean Principalities were already a Russian protectorate). There were also conflicts between the Ottoman sultan and his vassals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (for example, in the late 1820s and early 1830s), Epirus (Ioannina, 1826), Albania (1831-5) and elsewhere. The bone of contention here was the abolishment of the Janissary institution and some other reforms initiated by the sultan that threatened the power of local rulers and landlords. Typical of these, with the exception of the Crimean War, was that the actual conflicts were of short duration, and that the whole 'war' usually lasted for only a couple of months. Also typical were the independent operations of irregular forces (for example, the *hajduks* and *armatoles*), and the lack of strategic orchestration of the various operations. The Serbian rebels, for example, scored several isolated victories between 1805 and 1810, but could not make use of them. Further, all major campaigns were fought in order to gain more political power: more autonomy or full independence in the case of Serbs, Greeks, Romanians and some local Ottoman pashas; more rights to interfere in Ottoman domestic politics in the case of Russia. (Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981: 69-71.)

During the Crimean War, Russia 'stimulated peasant insurrections in [the Danubean Principalities] and formed Bulgarian detachments in the Russian army'. Russian (and later Austrian) forces also occupied the Danubean Principalities and, in March 1854, crossed the Danube, encouraging subversive activities by Bulgarian émigrés and *hajduks* in Bulgarian territories. At the same time, there were insurrectionary activities among Greeks, who wanted to expand their territory at the expense of the Ottoman empire, and in Herzegovina and Bosnia, where peasants revolted in the late 1850s. All these upheavals were 'pacified' by the intervention of the European Great Powers. After the Crimean War, Europe saw both successful and failed attempts at national unification, as in Italy after the Franco-Austrian war (1859). In 1861 the union of the two Danubean Principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia, led to the birth of Romania. Two years later, the Poles revolted; in 1864 the Ionian Islands were united with Greece; and in 1866 a major insurrection broke out on Crete. These events, as well as the activities of various revolutionaries, Russian pan-Slavs and Serbian spokesmen for the unification of the South Slavs under Ottoman or Habsburg rule, both disseminated and encouraged anti-Ottoman tendencies in the Balkans. Support for the revolts (for example, in Herzegovina and Bosnia) by Russia

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<sup>1</sup> The leader of the insurrection in the Danubean Principalities, Tudor Vladimirescu (1780-1821), 'belonged [from 1806 to 1812] to the Romanian detachment of the Russian army'. The Greek prince Alexander Ypsantilis (1783-1828), the leader of the *Philike Hetaira*, an organisation created in Odessa in 1814 for the liberation of Greeks under Ottoman rule, was a general in the Russian army. (Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981: 76, 78-9.)

or Serbia was, however, not strong enough, and thus the superior Ottoman forces had no great difficulty in crushing them. (Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981: 114-21.)

In Bulgaria, too, there were revolts both before and after the Crimean War. But unlike their Greek or Serbian counterparts, Bulgarian (unsuccessful) peasant uprisings after the 1830s aroused but minimal interest outside the Balkans. The same was true of the several plots and conspiracies for the liberation of Bulgaria hatched by émigré Bulgarians in the Danubean Principalities or in Russia (and encouraged by these powers) as well as by various Serbs and Greeks. Throughout the 1860s there were several plans for Serbo-Bulgarian co-operation against the Ottoman empire and for the creation of a South Slav (Yugoslav) empire consisting of Serbia, Bulgaria and Ottoman Macedonia. None of these plans, however, came even near to realisation. Nevertheless, during the 1860s, and even more so in the early '70s, out of the interplay of general Balkan and European processes (unification, insurrections) and Bulgarian developments (local revolts, plans for liberation) emerged a genuine Bulgarian national movement. It operated first from bases in Serbia and, after about 1862, in Romania. In the early 1870s nationalistic and revolutionary ideas were mixed with, or replaced by, socialistic ones laying emphasis on the virtues of rural communities. (Crampton 1981: 168-9; Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981: 94-145.)

## 1.2. The road to war

After the Crimean War, Russia turned from the Balkans eastwards and secured herself a substantial amount of territory in the Middle and Far East. In the late 1850s she extended her conquests in the Amur and Ussuri areas in Manchuria. In Central Asia Tashkent was taken in 1865 and Samarkand three years later. In 1869 both Bokhara and Kokand (annexed in 1876) became Russian protectorates, and in 1873 Khiva was reduced to the same status. Also in 1869, Russian troops in Caucasus established a foothold in Trans-Caspia, strengthening their position by a series of campaigns against the Turkmene between 1873 and 1877. (Jelavich 1964: 163, 169; Seton-Watson 1988: 438-45.) At the same time Russia 'played the role of a bystander in the great events of Europe' (Jelavich 1964: 172). This did not please everyone in Russia, and especially discontented were the pan-Slavs.

The denotation pan-Slav is an umbrella term for several kinds of thinkers and politicians who were united in asserting Russia's leadership in the Slavonic world and her role as the liberator of Slavs from 'foreign' (Ottoman or Habsburg) domination.<sup>2</sup> The Crimean defeat had dealt a severe blow to Russian national pride and increased the popularity of pan-Slav rhetoric. In 1858 the Moscow Slavonic Benevolent Society was founded to assist the South Slavs of the Ottoman empire in their efforts to break with Turkish (Islamic) rule. A section of it was founded in St Petersburg in 1868, another in what was then Kiev a year later, and a third in Odessa in 1870.<sup>3</sup> Though the Society's practical achievements were modest, it brought to Russia students from the Balkans, mainly from Bulgaria, published materials of interest and organised education. In addition to Bulgaria's strategic position near the Straits, the reason for laying special emphasis on Slavs in general was that a majority of the Balkans' non-Slavic peoples, the Romanians and the Greeks, were no longer under the sultan's rule. The ultimate goal of the pan-Slavs was to resolve the Eastern Question by the unification of Balkan Slavic areas with Russia or at least the formation of a strong Slavic confederation in the

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<sup>2</sup> At least for some pan-Slavs, unification of all Slavs was no more than preparation for a power struggle with the only other significant 'race' acknowledged by pan-Slavs, the Germans, unified by Prussia (Utin 1879: 18-20).

<sup>3</sup> Russians were not the only ones to voluntarily assist Serbs. Some Finns and several Englishmen, both civilians and soldiers, did the same. In September 1875 one Englishman even founded a 'League in Aid of the Christian *Rayahs* in Turkey' (Anderson 1968: 3-7). According to some Russian estimates, the country's aid to the Balkan 'brethren' was rather modest, much less than that of west Europeans (Dostojevski 1996: 174).

Balkans, with the conquered Constantinople as its capital. This was, understandably enough, unacceptable to the sultan, the Austro-Hungarian empire, Germany, Great Britain or France, all of which correctly saw it as a threat to their position and power in south-eastern Europe. A compromise, the alliance known as the Three Emperors' League, was made between Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1873. (Jelavich 1964: 159, 173-5; Seton-Watson 1988: 446-7.) This increased tension in the Balkans.

On July 1875 a peasant revolt broke out<sup>4</sup> in the Nevesinje district of Herzegovina, east of the town of Mostar. The harvest of 1874 had failed completely, but the local tax-collectors tried to force the Christian peasants to pay their taxes anyway. Local Serbs, who constituted the majority, and Croats rose up and were supported after August 1875 by the Montenegrins. At first they scored several victories, as did insurgents in Bosnia, where the mutiny had spread in mid-August.<sup>5</sup> At the outbreak of the insurrection in Herzegovina the Russian emperor was given contradictory words of advice. On the one hand, those mainly interested in promoting reforms initiated by him, that is, the foreign minister, A.M. Gorchakov (1798-1883), the minister of finance, M.Kh. Reiter (1820-1890), and the minister of war, D.A. Milyutin (1816-1912), admonished him to be cautious, though Milyutin's views were ambiguous. Nationalists and pan-Slavs, supported by the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, N.P. Ignatiyev (1832-1908), the heir to the throne (the future Alexander III) and the emperor's brother, Grand Duke Michael (the elder, 1832-1909), were more belligerent. At first the former dominated the policy decision. As a result, Russia tried to solve the conflict peacefully by opening negotiations with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The three powers' attempts to calm the situation and to persuade the sultan to introduce additional reforms failed. Moreover, Great Britain supported the Ottoman government in order to break the Three Emperors' League. (Jelavich 1964: 177-8; MacKenzie 1979: 4-6.)

In spring 1876 Bulgaria revolted, but by the end of May Turkish troops and irregulars had brutally suppressed the revolt and committed a series of atrocities<sup>6</sup> that provoked strong protests not only in Russia but also in Great Britain. (Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981: 148-51; Jelavich 1964: 177-9.) Russian nationalistic and pan-Slav circles eagerly seized on these incidents to solve the Eastern Question. The pan-Slavs were vociferous in their support of Serbia, which tried to use the revolts for her own purposes, namely, to enlarge her territory. In June 1876, Serbia declared war on the sultan, and Russian volunteers - according to one contemporary estimate (Becker 1968: 246), some 4,700 men - poured into Serbia. Austria-Hungary, too, barred from Central European politics after her defeat by Prussia in 1866, was looking for territorial enlargements at the expense of the Ottomans. On 29 May 1876 the Ottoman sultan, Abd ul-Aziz (in power since 1861), died in obscure circumstances and was replaced by Murad V<sup>7</sup> (Mansel 1997: 301-3). For the subject peoples in the Balkans, as well as for the European great powers, events seemed to anticipate the breakdown of the Ottoman empire.

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<sup>4</sup> Its beginnings are somewhat obscure (see Farrar 1996: 30-1), and there is no unanimity about whether, or how much, the revolt was influenced by Russian propaganda, the Balkan situation in general or the activities of Serbian nationalists, whose goal was the unification of Bosnia and Herzegovina with Serbia (see Baker 1879a: ix-x; Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981: 142-3, 146-51; Hajek 1939: 3-4). This, however, does not affect my study.

<sup>5</sup> Revolts here came to an end only after both areas were occupied by Austria-Hungary after the Congress of Berlin, 1878.

<sup>6</sup> They were mainly committed in present south-western Bulgaria (see Anderson 1968: 48-52, 55). According to one later estimate (Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981: 153-4), '80 villages were burned, 200 villages were plundered, and 30,000 people died either in battle or at the hand of Turkish authorities'. A contemporary, and obviously very reliable, calculation suggested 54 villages destroyed and 3,700 Bulgarians killed (Anderson 1968: 71), while another claimed 15,000 dead (Furieux 1958: 12). In western Europe, the atrocities made the name of the Turkish irregulars, bashi-bazouks (see Ch. 4.2.), infamous.

<sup>7</sup> He was a nephew of Abd ul-Aziz and was in turn interned and replaced, on 31 August, by Abd ul-Hamid II (reigned

By the end of 1876, after Russia had intervened and saved Serbia by imposing, in October, an armistice on the sultan, it was evident that the Balkan question could not be settled by negotiations. Thus Russia, now adopting a more pan-Slav policy, and Austria-Hungary opted for an alternative - war with the sultan. In January 1877, Russia and the Dual Monarchy concluded an agreement in Budapest that, signed two months later, assured the monarchy's neutrality in war in return for Bosnia and Herzegovina being ceded to Austria-Hungary after the war. Bulgaria was promised to Russia. The creation of a Balkan Slav confederation (that is, the Serbo-Bulgarian alternative) was rejected. (Hajek 1939: 4; Jelavich 1964: 180; Menning 1992: 52.)

After the Russo-Austrian agreement Russia held negotiations with various European powers about the Eastern Question. These resulted, in March 1877, in the London Protocol, which required the sultan to introduce reforms among his Balkan subjects. When he refused, Russia continued the preparations for war. On 16 April (N.S.) Russia signed a convention with Romania to permit the transit of Russian troops across Romanian territory. Eight days later, Russia declared war on the sultan. On 1 May, Great Britain stated that Russia had thus broken the previous agreements (the London Protocol and the Paris Peace Treaty of 1856) concerning maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman empire. Three weeks later, Romania, thus far officially neutral, joined Russia and sent troops to support the Russian army. In December 1877, Serbia, which nine months earlier had concluded peace with the sultan, joined the Russians. (Genov 1986: 64; Menning 1992: 55; Seton-Watson 1988: 452.)

Due to Ottoman supremacy on the Black Sea, the war of 1877-8 was fought on two fronts, the Balkans and, on a smaller scale, the Caucasus. In the Balkans, the Russian army, after having crossed the Danube in June 1877, was divided into three columns. In the middle, General I.V. Gurko (1828-1901) advanced to the south, in the direction of the Balkans, to seize the mountain passes and prevent the deployment of Turkish units (then stationed in southern Bulgaria) in northern Bulgaria. In the west, a detachment advanced towards Nikopol and Vidin, and in the east another troop secured the advance of the other two. Throughout the war the main enemy for Russia was not the sultan but Great Britain, which wanted to prevent Russia from gaining control of the Dardanelles. (Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981: 155-6; Lalkov 1998: 138-9.)

The Russian army<sup>8</sup> expected a quick and easy victory,<sup>9</sup> but was soon disappointed. The main reason for its military setbacks was ineffective organisation. With great difficulty, Russian troops were at last able to defeat Turkish forces and to advance through the Bulgarian interior and Eastern Thrace to Constantinople. On 31 January 1878 an armistice was signed, and negotiations for the future of the Balkans commenced. The peace was concluded on 3 March 1878, but was amended later that

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1876-1909).

<sup>8</sup> At the outbreak of war, the Russian army in the Balkans consisted of 185,000 to 200,000 men, including Cossacks. They were called the irregular force according to the imperial regulation of 11 May 1875 (N.S.), as every Don Cossack was obliged to perform military service (Greene 1880: 46). Romania sent a force of 60,000 men, and Serbia 56,000 men. In addition, some 10,000 Bulgarians fought in the Russian ranks. Ottoman military strength in the Balkans was between 190,000 and 280,000. The number of irregulars among the Turkish troops was considerable, though a majority of those called bashi-bazouks were presumably, as argued by Baker (1879a: 96), armed Turkish civilians or perhaps Bulgarian-speaking Muslims or Pomaks (see Clarke 1988: 392) 'from all parts of the country, who followed the [Turkish] army in the hope of plunder'. There were also several Englishmen and other west Europeans, as well as at least a company of Poles. (Baker 1879a: 5-6, 8-9, 23-4, 51-2; Drury 1994: 5; Greene 1880: 140-1; Hajek 1939: 20, n. 1; Härtel & Schönfeld 1998: 119; cf. Hozier 1879: 62-3; Järvinen 1932: 35-6).

<sup>9</sup> In Utin's imagined discussion (1879: 10), before the war some enthusiasts could even speak of an 'excursion' (in Russian, *progulka*) to Constantinople. Russia also wished for a short war because she was, correctly, afraid that, were the fighting to last longer, the European Great Powers might become involved.



same year at the Congress of Berlin in a manner that disappointed both Russia and Bulgaria. (Ehrnrooth 1967: 102-3; Seton-Watson 1988: 453-6.)

### **1.3. The purpose of this study**

Around one thousand Finns also participated in the Russo-Turkish war, both within the Russian units and in the Finnish Guard. The purpose of this study is to seek to understand how men who were 'sandwiched' between loyalty to the Russian emperor and army, and the awakening Finnish nationalism experienced the war.

I equate experience with the men's remarks on and interpretations of changes in social relations (which undoubtedly happened when the men went to, and took part in, war). I examine how the army in general, the relations between guardsmen and 'us' and the foreign or 'other' (the Balkans, the enemy and the incidents of the war) were categorised and represented in the men's descriptions of their actions in the light of contemporary Finnish cultural logic (here: military traditions and nationalistic stereotypes), or 'public memory'. I look at the impact of war on the soldiers' military position and identity (that is, their relation to the army and state structure and the ways in which they negotiated their position relative to these institutions) and represented their views of the war. I single out identity because, as Taithe & Thornton (1998: 9) state in their introductory chapter, '[a] war narrative is fundamentally a narrative of identity', and because, as Augé (1998: 17) says, 'the theme of identity haunts ritual practice and all practice'.

The reason for this is three-fold. First, from the structural point of view, persons in a transitory position as in war are an anomaly, or ambiguity, pegging classification and identification (Douglas 1966). Second, identity is not only a psychological state of mind but is, above all, made up of one's concrete and symbolic actions fuelled by individual and public memories (Billig 1995: 65), and in war, more than on many other occasions, one has both to re-pattern one's actions and social relations and re-remember the structure that informs them. The study of identity and memory, thus, is a study of the way we and our structure, or society, are; it is a study of our ways of negotiating our social relations to secure the continuity of our individual life histories. (Lundin 1987; Rosen 1984.) Third, as Peltonen (1996: 180-3) pointed out, in stories about armed violence, especially atrocities, the narrators' ideological (or structural) predilections usually find a clear expression. As Turner (1977: 168-70) suggested, norms, values and beliefs exposed in ritual, or processes comparable to it, are part of the core of one's culture or society, and laying them 'bare', in ritual or in war, forces one to choose whether to adhere to, rearrange or reject them.

This point of departure, studying the individual in a situation in which his behaviour, options and strategies are not conditioned by structure in general but by a small part of it, contains some presuppositions. The first concerns the concept of structure. By it I mean the influence, power and interplay of a society's institutions - religion, science, government and the army - on our actions and options in everyday life and during exceptional periods such as wars or rituals. Exceptional periods are, in turn, viewed as occasions on which a part of structure temporarily functions for the whole of structure (Douglas 1986; Young 1965). In addition, structure and the cultural logic<sup>10</sup> we have internalised are not only a means of categorisation but also of using power to reproduce, reshape and interpret our relations to legitimise our positions and aspirations, and to force them upon the other, both inside and outside our society (Roseberry 1989).

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<sup>10</sup> Following Victor Turner (1986a: 273-4) I distinguish between 'structure' and 'culture'. The former emphasises social relations and the latter the systems of shared symbols used in these relations.

My second presumption is that wartime as a whole provides an over-arching frame that condenses men's general structural identity into a military one. This dramatisation of selected aspects of structure, in turn, persuaded the guardsmen to 'bargain', that is, fit their activities and ways of feeling, perceiving and thinking to structure's military interests (cf. Taylor 1998: 244). Thus I agree with Otterbein (1973: 940) who, quoting Lewis Coser's *The function of social conflict* (1956), stated that wartime 'reaffirms dormant [social] norms while at the same time creating new norms and modifying old ones'. Essentially the same was stated by Bakhtin (1995: 244-5), who suggested that periods when structure is 'suspended' (he spoke of carnivals) give persons (as members of groups) an opportunity to break down the old structure, to see the 'present order of life' from a new point of view and to create a new one.

#### 1. 4. Sources

My sources, the recollections of nine Finnish guardsmen,<sup>11</sup> may be seen as part of two larger branches of literature, travel accounts (as Varpio [1997] has done) and war memoirs, or even novels (which to my knowledge nobody has done [cf. Niemi 1980]). The former genre gained popularity in Finland in the nineteenth century and emphasised the writer's encounter with the other. The latter stresses a special feature of the other, enmity. As such, enmity can be said to be an age-old theme in oral and written Finnish texts, as well as in the creation of Finnish identity. It is therefore dealt with in the context of Finnish national awakening and narratives about Finnish heroism and their re-enactment in war.

The first Finnish travel books and other descriptions of visits to remote parts, both in Finland and abroad, were compiled by educated Swedish-speakers such as J.V. Snellman (1806-1881), Z. Topelius (1818-1898) and G.A. Wallin (1811-1852) in the 1840s.<sup>12</sup> Of them, Snellman visited parts of modern Germany, Topelius toured Germany, Belgium and France, and Wallin, who studied Arabic language and culture, described his journey from Cairo to Jerusalem. Most writings first appeared in Swedish-language newspapers. All authors combined personal events with scientific or documentary descriptions. They also evaluated places they saw by their 'enlightened' or romantic Finnish and West European aesthetic and moral standards, and could thus, for example, praise the natural beauty of a given landscape and condemn local urban decadence or find other customs and rationality either exemplary or totally incomprehensible and ridiculous - to Finns, that is.

The next three decades witnessed the rise of Finnish interest in the Finno-Ugric tribes of north European Russia and Siberia. Men such as M.A. Castrén (1813-1852) and August Ahlqvist (1826-1889) paved the way for such descriptions. The importance of these works for my study lies in the fact that their authors repeatedly stressed the importance of being aware of being a Finn, not something else, the declining influence of Russians upon the Finno-Ugric peoples, and the hardships the authors had to endure during their travels.

In the latter part of the 19th century, traces and memories of Finns were 'found' close to the Finno-Russian border as well. In the 1870s and 1880s a couple of books appeared that described the Finnish destinies in Archangel Karelia and on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. Among the most noteworthy were works by A.E. Ervasti (1845-1900), not least because he, unlike most previous authors, wrote in Finnish and so most people thus did not have to wait for translations. Ervasti's publications had an explicit nationalistic, and ethnocentric, tinge, which for the most part is foreign to my sources.

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<sup>11</sup> Seven of them served with the Finnish Guard and two with other units of the Russian army.

<sup>12</sup> What follows is based on Varpio 1997.

As far as ‘foreign’ settings and their evaluation and rendering familiar by comparative sets of opposing categories such as culture *versus* nature, us *versus* it (the other) or virtuous peasants *versus* crooked town-dwellers (Varpio 1997: 214-41) are typical of travel accounts, my sources belong in the same category. Unlike most travel books, however, my sources do not make travelling and comparison their main issue. Yet, if ‘travel’ is understood as meaning voluntary visits ‘for the purpose of experiencing change’ (Leed 1991: 291-2), the guardsmen, at least the volunteers, might be considered as travellers of a sort, or even as tourists. But if ‘travel’ is understood in the sense of H.M. Enzensberger (in Varpio 1997: 242) as a kind of protest against, or escape from, modern industrial society or as a way of spending leisure, then the bulk of my sources cannot be called travel literature, for their authors did not run away from their society; on the contrary, they brought it with them, though they tended to represent it as a binary opposition to the other, the enemy and his territory (cf. Fussell 1977: 80). Neither were they masters of their time as tourists are, but were subordinated to the general schedules of the army structure. My sources, then, are a part of the war literature, of recollections and impressions of war based on the first-hand experience recorded by Finnish guardsmen who took part in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8. I have included only writings that describe fully the participation of the Finnish Guard in the war (from September 1877 to the end of the war the following spring).

There are seven such works, six of which have been published: Wahlberg 1878, Fennander 1895,<sup>13</sup> Lindman 1879, reprinted with minor revisions in 1880, Palander 1881,<sup>14</sup> Jernvall 1899,<sup>15</sup> and Lindfors 1883, reprinted in facsimile in 1975. The seventh one is an unpublished manuscript in the Finnish Military Archives.<sup>16</sup> These are my primary sources, being also the first and, until 1898, the only, non-fiction Finnish books dealing with the Ottoman Balkans (Varpio 1997: 271-2).<sup>17</sup> Five of them (Wahlberg, Fennander, Lindman, Palander and Lindfors) were written by volunteers; only Jernvall and Wallin were professionals. Three of them (Lindman, Lindfors and Wallin) represent the ranker’s perspective; another three (Fennander, Palander and Jernvall) were written by NCOs, but the differences between them are considerable. Only one was written by an officer (Wahlberg), though he was not a combatant but a doctor. To represent the officer’s view better I have augmented my sources with two book-length recollections by professional officers who did not serve with Finnish troops (Alfthan 1879; Schulman 1955, written in the 1910s). All nine sources are a mixture of diary entries, quotations from, or paraphrases of, official documents, newspaper articles, personal recollections and, it seems, in some cases, broadside ballads. At least Fennander, in his second edition, and Wallin also drew on Jernvall’s book and Palander seems at times to repeat passages from Wahlberg.

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<sup>13</sup> A much shorter version of the book appeared in 1878. There are some striking similarities between his 1895 text and Jernvall’s first edition in 1881 (cf. Jernvall and Fennander, for example, in Chs. 4.5. and 9.2.) as well as between Jernvall and Wallin, who served in the same company. A significant difference between the two editions is that the latter contains a number of ‘exotic’ details and erotic allusions not included in the first edition.

<sup>14</sup> The published version of Palander’s recollections does not originate from his pen, but was edited by a certain Arvo Liljestränd. According to the editor, however, the book is based on Palander’s diaries and ‘other official sources’ and thus does not differ much from most of my other sources.

<sup>15</sup> The book first appeared in 1881 (see Vallinkoski & Schauman 1961: 162). The 1899 edition is unaltered.

<sup>16</sup> The manuscript (PK 1310/1), in Finnish, consists of 409 hand-written pages in octo, penned by a guardsman, Sten Wallin, and entitled “Recollections of the participation of the Finnish Guard in the Russo-Turkish war in 1877-8”. The time of its writing seems to be the 1930s (Veteraanit kertovat 1937; Wallin, Muistelmia, p. 146).

<sup>17</sup> As far as I know, the next book from a Finnish pen about the Balkans based on first-hand knowledge was J.W. Nylander’s *Bland frivillige* (Among volunteers, Helsingfors 1898), describing the author’s participation in the Turko-Greek campaign of 1897.

As minor comparative and supplementary material I have used other contemporary war memoirs, and newspaper and other articles. I have also included a random selection of other war recollections, mainly Finnish, ranging from the 1808-9, or Finnish, war - which for its part helps to evaluate the influence of the Finnish heroic public memory on the writings of the guardsmen - and the Boer War to Vietnam in the early 1950s. Taking them into account my main intention was to find recurrent, conventionalised ways of depicting events and relations to the other in war, and to see if, or how, war and its representation may have changed.

Contemporary reference material includes short pieces dealing with particular events or aspects of the war penned by Finnish or, in some cases, Russian soldiers, and a two-volume memoir by Baker Pasha.<sup>18</sup> The short pieces<sup>19</sup> were mainly published in the 1880s and 1890s in the magazine *Lukemisia Suomen sotamiehille* (Readings for Finnish soldiers), launched in 1888, officially to inspire Finns to fight for their native country and for their ruler, the Grand Duke of Finland and emperor of Russia (Jokipii 1978: 204-5). The magazine was published in Finnish and Swedish, with no difference in content. Baker's work (1879a; 1879b) is a military history of campaigns in which he personally partook or knew through his connections. Other reference material consists of news, articles and recollections published in the Finnish-language fortnightly, *Suomen kuvalehti*.<sup>20</sup> They were also issued, in 1878, as a separate book entitled *Kuvaelmia sodasta Wenäjän ja Turkin välillä 1877-78* (Descriptions of the war between Russia and Turkey in 1877-78).<sup>21</sup> Some material has been provided by contemporary literature or historical works quoting, or paraphrasing, relevant papers or letters<sup>22</sup> (Ehnrooth 1967; Gripenberg 1905; Lindgren 1878), and a very short manuscript (PK 1710/1) covering September and October 1877. A special case is J.I. Varén's *Upseerin muistelmia* I-II (Memoirs of an officer, two vols. 1895-8), which deals selectively with the war and events immediately following it. The author served in Russian units besieging Pleven, and joined the Finnish Guard after the surrender of the city (Fennander 1895: 89). He may be the same person as one Johan Warén, who is mentioned as a junior officer of the third company of the Finnish Guard in 1877-8 (M 61/26). The book is based on both personal experience and hearsay and is written in a rather novelistic way. It follows but incidentally the vicissitudes of the Finnish Guard.

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<sup>18</sup> Valentine Baker (1827-1887) was an English ex-officer who had arrived at Constantinople in September 1877 to introduce, as a part of Ottoman reforms, a new system of civil gendarmerie. As, however, this seemed to have little prospect of ever being realised, Baker 'accepted a commission in the Turkish army and went up to the front to command a division'. (Anderson 1968: 115, 120; see also Baker 1879a: xx.)

<sup>19</sup> The most extensive work comprises articles by J. Ahomäki (1889a; 1889b; 1891; and others not included here), a private, and later NCO, who took part in the war. Another work is the booklet *Henkivartijan muistelmia* (Memoirs of a guardsman, 1903) by Matti Kuula, a NCO trainee (jefreiter) from the Finnish Guard's second company, who left for the war in May 1877 as a member of the emperor's entourage, was wounded at Lovach in early September and returned to Finland via Russia (Kuula 1903: 4, 20-21; Talvitie 2000).

<sup>20</sup> The editor-in-chief of *Suomen kuvalehti*, Julius Krohn (1835-1888), was also the principal translator of Runeberg's *Tales* (see Ch. 3.1.1.) from Swedish into Finnish. Regarding other newspapers, I have mentioned, though selectively, news and pieces of recollections published in some Finnish papers (for example, the Fennomane *Morgonbladet* and *Uusi Suometar*). Most of the war news in these papers was taken from Russian, German, French or English sources (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 49; Kempainen 1999: 82), though at least *Morgonbladet* also got news from some of the guardsmen (*Morgonbladet* 22 November 1877). I have taken the newspapers and other such material into account if there is or seems to be a clear connection between published articles and the guardsmen's texts.

<sup>21</sup> The booklet seemed to be popular in the 1880s (Kuisma 1992: 103, 106), because it was found at that time among the property left by several deceased persons in the province of Häme.

<sup>22</sup> In late August 2000 I learned from Kerstin Kronvall that the Finnish Military Archives have some letters Jernvall wrote from the front to his wife. It was too late to take them into account here and as far as I know they would not change the general picture.

To my knowledge, memoirs were also published by Russians (MacKenzie 1979; Zolotarev 1983), as well as Englishmen, who volunteered for the Ottoman army (bibliography in Anderson 1968), and by many British and some American journalists, too, who covered the war (Clarke 1988; Ferneaux 1958). But it seems that, in recollections written by Finns, lower or middle class people featured prominently<sup>23</sup> whereas other memoirs were mainly written by ‘outstanding governmental or military persons’, and rather few dealt with the entire war period<sup>24</sup> (Zolotarev 1983: 95). Though it is probable that Finnish rankers’ and NCOs’ skills in writing and reading were somewhat better than those of Russians (Haapanen 1928: 18), a major reason for the lower-class Finnish contribution may be the general break-through of the Finnish language and folk culture, or what is labelled the Finnish national awakening. To put it differently, in Finland common men of the late nineteenth century were a social force capable of making their voice heard more than they were in Russia.<sup>25</sup> The emergence of a lower-class perspective on war is, of course, nothing peculiarly Finnish; the same happened, for example, in Great Britain in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars (Watson 1998: 96-7). But related to the total number of writers of memoirs about the 1877-8 war, or the small number of lower-class literate Finns in the 1870s and ‘80s, they are an exceptional phenomenon at their time.

Several of my sources (at least Jernvall, Lindfors, Lindman and Wallin) were written by men who distinguished themselves in war and were awarded one or two medals.<sup>26</sup> Regarding readership, a common denominator of all my sources is that they imply the readers wanted to hear a special story about Finnish bravery.<sup>27</sup> As to the audience, they were addressing at least six different, but partly overlapping, kinds of readers: the Swedish-speaking educated class (Wahlberg), common Finns (Lindfors, Lindman), educated Finns (Fennander, Palander), Finnish-speaking soldiers (Jernvall), Finns in general (Jernvall, Lindman) and the close circle of the author (Wallin).<sup>28</sup> The main comparative material (Alfthan, Schulman) was obviously intended for the Swedish-speaking upper class whereas articles in *Lukemisia Suomen sotamiehille* were written for the military. Their literary styles varied accordingly. Officers and other more educated men were more accustomed to using ‘high’ literary models, for example, heroic poetry and ancient historians when patterning their stories, while the less educated, though at least for some of them the great tradition was not unknown, were more heavily influenced by the conventions of what is usually called oral literature. As to the market, it is plausible that the books sold quite well, because several of them (Fennander, Jernvall, Lindman) were soon reprinted. This notion is affirmed by Lindman, who, in his preface to the second impression (1880), says that the first edition (1879), 3,500 copies, sold out in a few months.<sup>29</sup> In addition, dozens of

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<sup>23</sup> As Professor Maria Todorova pointed out (personal communication), my sample is small and thus my claim about the exceptional lower or middle class perspective is not very strong. However, Finnish broadside ballads, too, had featured common soldiers during the Serbian campaign in 1876, although they refrained from doing so in the 1877-8 war (Suistola 1987: 211).

<sup>24</sup> In contemporary Habsburg monarchy, too, (war) memoirs by common soldiers were almost non-existent (Deák 1990: 103).

<sup>25</sup> See Le Goff 1988: 120-1 for further discussion on lower-class perspective.

<sup>26</sup> Jernvall was granted the fourth and the third class cross of the Order of St Gregorius; Lindfors, Lindman and Wallin received the fourth class.

<sup>27</sup> For example, when summarising the course of war in 1877, the provincial newspaper *Oulun Wiikko-Sanomat* (29 December 1877, quoted in Kempainen 1999: 66) especially emphasised the pluck of the Finnish Guard.

<sup>28</sup> However, a short excerpt from his recollections was published in *Helsingin Sanomat* on 18 September 1937 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the Finnish Guard. In the article, four veterans of the 1877-8 war, among them Wallin, were interviewed (Veteraanit muistelevat 1937).

<sup>29</sup> My guess is that the exclusive coverage of the war in newspapers in early 1878 (Kempainen 1999: 67) helped to make the war memoirs ‘the book of the hour’. It perhaps is also not insignificant that the war greatly boosted the newspapers’

broadside ballads dealing with the war were composed after 1878, and nearly 50 reprints were taken from those published in 1877 or early 1878 (Suistola 1987: 193). However, I have found only two contemporary resumés of these books. Wahlberg was reviewed by Snellman in the newspaper *Morgonbladet* in December 1878 (Snellman 1895) and both Alfthan and Wahlberg, although very shortly, in the periodical *Historisk tidskrift* in 1879 (Frenckell 1879). So the Finnish, mainly Swedish-speaking, intellectuals were uninterested in the views of the middle and lower classes.

My sources, as well as my main comparative material, are written in the first person singular, as was typical of such writings (see, for example, Brakel 1994; Ehrström 1986; Lindberg 1904) though they are not autobiographies in any proper sense of the word but rather collective tradition in the making. A major proportion of them are paratactic narratives, in which several sorts of memories are ‘strung together like beads on a string’ (Fentress & Wickham 1992: 55), obviously presupposing that the context, that is, the road to war and the general course of war, was familiar enough to the reader and needed no explanations or introductions. Men obviously believed that what they rendered was objective, not socially constructed, truth about the war. The result was nevertheless a culturally patterned, or ‘subjective’, interpretation of their recollections of experiences. Briefly, what men recollected and described was not the ‘really real’, but what reality, as they perceived it, meant for them. One might also say that the result was a socially objective historical mythology (Eriksen 1995: 19; Taylor 1998: 237-8) about Finns, a set of stories based on actions and events that unquestionably took place but were written, or loaded, with many kinds of culturally shaped, conscious or unconscious, intentions, fantasies, expectations and images.

Thus, as with all human narration, in my sources, too, connections between truth (or what happened) and recollections (how what happened was remembered) are problematic. I cannot read my sources as historical facts or as totally reliable testimonies by eyewitnesses but, rather, as fragments aspiring to paint a series of realistic (not purportedly artistic) pictures<sup>30</sup> that are nevertheless ‘constitutive of the very reality’ they seek to depict (Rosen 1984: 3). Thus my sources can be read as attempts to teach a patriotic lesson (for example, Lindman),<sup>31</sup> to criticise structure (Palander), to defend the soldier’s societal duty to wage war (for example, Jernvall), to entertain the reader interested in the ‘recent war,’ (Alfthan 1879: 33; Wahlberg 1878, “Till läsaren” [To the Reader]) or all these combined (Jernvall). One could also say that much of the guardsmen’s writing addressed what rhetoricians have called the ‘universal audience’ (Billig 1995: 89), supposing, that is, that any reasonable person would find the arguments imbedded in recollections about the meaning of the war or the nature of the enemy, for example, ‘naturally’ reasonable. A large number of my sources, indeed a great part of war literature in general, may also be understood as a kind of propaganda that, under the pretext of entertainment, shows ‘our’ goodness and ‘their’ total evilness (Luostarinen 1986: 152). As Le Goff stated (1988: 304), quoting Jean Bazin, an apparently historical narrative conceals another message, a political or ethical one, because narrative is related to power structures. Therefore I consider it fruitful to read my sources as collective biographies, as narratives through which the guardsmen created (and recreated or commemorated) themselves as a group by referring to stories about commonly shared experiences, commonly shared traditions and public opinion.<sup>32</sup>

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circulation. For example, that of the *Uusi Suometar* increased threefold (Suistola 1987: 191, n. 3).

<sup>30</sup> By opposing ‘realistic’ and ‘artistic’ writing I mean that for the guardsmen it was important that they (or their companions) had really been there and seen and experienced what they described, while for romantic writers the artistic force of their lines mattered more than their being there (Layton 1986: 472).

<sup>31</sup> In Lindman’s case, at least, it is also possible that the intention was to show that even rather uneducated men of rural origins, and not only the cultured classes, were capable of contributing to the Finnish national awakening.

<sup>32</sup> The term ‘collective (auto)biography’ comes from Barbara Myerhoff, who in her *Number our days* (New York: Dutton

One reason for representing oneself in a collective way was that ‘the notion of an inner, natural self, distinct from society and its attributions, is a peculiarly modern idea, a product of the eighteenth century and romanticism’ (Leed 1991: 268). This is confirmed by my sources. For the guardsmen usually described not what they did or felt as individuals but how they behaved socially in relation to the other. This is in accordance with what Halbwachs (1950: 12-13; 1975: 140-2) says of remembering in general and what Tekampe (1989: 64) says of German memories about the Second World War. The guardsmen, moreover, did not draw a sharp distinction between their own recollections and those of other soldiers or news and official documents (for example, Jernvall, Lindman and Palander), a practice that was typical of some travel literature, as well as certain other branches of contemporary writing (Layton 1997: 95; Leed 1991: 189-90). For example, authors of Finnish broadside ballads of the late 1800s made little difference between their own creations and the material they borrowed from various sources (Laurila 1956: 162-3). But while broadside ballads did so in the hope of bigger markets, and to make their texts as ‘up-to-date’ as possible, the guardsmen obviously wanted to find words and images to render comprehensible unprecedented (and hence for Finns previously unrepresented) experiences (cf. Fussell 1977: 138-44), because items they borrowed were related to difficult, horrifying or extraordinary events (for example, the crossing of the Balkans, the sight of murdered Turkish civilians or seeing turtles for the first time).

It is also plausible that, because the men’s wartime knowledge of what happened was confined to certain particular events, some of them used official documents and other soldiers’ recollections to make sense of the whole operation and to fit, or negotiate, their own experiences to make them acceptable to those of others or the official picture of war (cf. Winter 1979: 170). For, as Connerton (1989: 19) notes, the strictly chronological telling, or remembering, of events or life histories is typical of ruling, not subordinate, groups and classes, and moreover indicates, as Rosen (1984: 173-9) has observed, a stricter, more fixed and less negotiable, less changeable, sense of oneself and one’s place in society. The result of borrowings was that the authors validated their personal experiences by structural traditions. Thus, what the guardsmen wrote tells us more about their society in general (meaning here both the ‘society’ of the army and Finnish society writ large) than about the Balkans or the guardsmen themselves as individuals (cf. Benjamin 1986: 20-1; Layton 1986: 484), the more so because for all authors the Russo-Turkish war was the first one they had taken part in; they had no previous personal experience of war.

One filter regulating the guardsmen’s writing was censorship. At the time my sources were written,<sup>33</sup> and indeed throughout almost the whole autonomy period, printed material in Finland, in practice especially newspapers and journals, were subjected by imperial orders to advance censorship (Leino-Kaukiainen 1996).<sup>34</sup> This restricted criticism, in particular of the emperor, the army, the church and the state administration, as well as the spreading of (mainly foreign) news and information

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1979) used it to denote ‘a means by which a group creates its identity by telling itself a story about itself’ as Turner (1986b: 40) put it. Renate Rosaldo said essentially the same when stating (1980: 140) that personal life (and stories about it) takes shape in cultural terms or, from my use of Halbwachs’s term, ‘public memory’ (see below Ch. 2.3.). Winter (1979: 16), too, noticed that recollections of individual infantrymen in the First World War produced considerable agreement ‘on which things were thought to be worth writing down and remembering’ or on ‘what men thought of the various facets of their common experience’.

<sup>33</sup> Wallin’s ms. is of course an exception.

<sup>34</sup> The strictness and execution of censorship varied greatly. In the 1870s and 1880s, when most of my sources were written, it was fairly light, whereas in the 1890s restrictions were quite severe, especially of material printed in the Finnish capital. In the countryside, censorship was more incidental. Amazingly, in my opinion, censorship at the time of the Russo-Turkish war was not particularly rigorous, even in the Russian-held areas of the Balkans. (Clarke 1988: 461; Leino-Kaukiainen 1996: 138-41, 144-50.)

considered immoral or somehow dangerous to the *status quo*. In general, therefore, I have paid attention not only to what is said in my sources, but to the ways, frequency and tone in which it is said, as well as to what is not said. For example, it is not surprising that the guardsmen echoed the official grounds for waging war or talked about defending ‘military honour’, which was a sensitive point for the Russian government (Niemi 1980: 88). But I find it interesting if they ignored official views, mentioned them in passing only, or put them to new use or into a new context. For example, Jernvall’s greater emphasis on Russian bravery and military honour and on Finnish obedience in his 1888 account of the battle of Gorni Dübrik than in that of 1881 probably resulted from stricter censorship and the rise of political nationalism in Russia.

My preference to read my sources as somehow ‘collective’ representations of views of groups may sound rather old-fashioned in the ears of those emphasising the fragmentary or polyphonic nature of all sources and the ‘inevitable’ idiosyncrasy of any event or statement. While not contesting the individual side of human life and its expressions, I, however, am more interested in what unites, or seems to unite, a group of individuals than in what separates them (cf. Le Goff 1988: 218-19). I also suppose that though humans often act for selfish or individual motives, their actions are argued, or ‘negotiated’, to express, at the social level, some common features (‘public opinion’) that are meaningful in social interactions (see Douglas 1986; Rosen 1984: 180-92). As Augé (1998: 25) put it, at a certain juncture what is meaningful for an individual can no longer be separated from social meaning.

### 1. 5. Notes on the authors

For two reasons, not much is told here about the authors of my sources. For one, there exists very little data on privates. For another, I neither study men’s personality nor attempt to reconstruct it. Instead, I focus on their personal reproduction of public memory in recollecting, and thus interpreting, commonly shared events during the war.

Most of the authors either served for a given period, usually six years, or were volunteers who enlisted at the beginning of the war and resigned, or were demobilised, soon after it. On the eve of the Guard’s departure up to one third of the guardsmen were newcomers, most of them volunteers, while half of the men, or 54 per cent, had served for at least two years (Järvinen 1932: 64-5). All were rather young. On the basis of official documents (M 61/26) I assume that the average age of those common guardsmen enrolled in the Finnish Guard during the Russo-Turkish war was 20 to 25 years. The youngest of them were 17 and the oldest nearly 40.<sup>35</sup> By religion they were, with few exceptions, Lutherans. The volunteers’ military training, especially in handling a gun, was minimal (Järvinen 1932: 65).

Some of the guardsmen at least were accustomed to a rather ‘wild’ life, as is also testified by stories about boozing in my sources<sup>36</sup> (Hiisivaara 1968: 183). For example, according to official records (M 44/2), in spring 1877 two men from the Guard’s first company were caught stealing. Both were in their mid-twenties (M 61/26) and had enlisted some years earlier. They were dismissed from the Guard by decision of the military court in August 1877. One of them had not previously broken the

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<sup>35</sup> An anonymous Russian soldier stated that there were no privates over 40 in his unit (Anonymous 1890: 350). This is in accordance with the 1874 law on military service.

<sup>36</sup> Drinking, even to excess, was typical of that time (Hiisivaara 1968: 32; Koskelainen 1918: 107; Saarenheimo 1984: 234). Soldiers’ drinking hardly surprises anyone (see Lindberg 1904: 47, 51; Pipping 1978: 108-9; Simola 1955: 41-2, 53) and may constitute, as Pipping (1978: 180-1) suggests, an army ritual of manhood, but also a means of eradicating memories of killing (cf. Browning 1999: 91).



military or civil codes, but the other had already been sentenced a dozen times, mainly for being drunk and disorderly in uniform (M 44/2).<sup>37</sup> To take another example, on the eve of the armistice, 31 January 1878, Karl Berg, an NCO in the Guard's fourth company, had been out enjoying himself. According to the order of the day of 1 February, he was demoted to the ranks on grounds of intoxication and disobedience (Järvinen 1932: 242). And then again, according to a local Finnish newspaper, *Ilmarinen* (5 September 1877), most of the volunteers [from the district of Vanajavesi, south-western Finland] were 'farm hands, madcaps and drunkards' (quoted in Hiisivaara 1968: 30). It is also told that a man who served as second lieutenant in the Guard had, before enlisting in 1872, led a very adventurous life (BR 1985: 71). These examples suggest that some of the men probably signed up for 'stimulating travel', as Layton put it, and others for the more idealistic reason of transforming the theatre of war into a promised land where their souls, as well as those of Bulgarians, might be healed (Layton 1997: 92-3).

In alphabetical order the authors are as follows. **A[nton] Reinhold von Alfthan** (1858-1925), born in St Petersburg, was the son of Georg von Alfthan (1828-1896) baron, lieutenant-general and senator. Anton was educated in Russia and trained with the Finnish Cadet Corps in the early 1870s, serving after that with the 1st Artillery Brigade of the Guard (Screen 1983: 104). After the war he was promoted to artillery officer (second lieutenant 1881, lieutenant 1883). From the mid-1880s until 1917 he worked as an industrialist with connections with Russia.<sup>38</sup>

**O.W. Fennander** is an obscure figure. Although his book demonstrates a first-hand knowledge of the war he is not mentioned in the contemporary muster-roll of the Finnish Guard (M 61/26). It is possible that he was one of the Guard's musicians or officials. At least he had some higher education and, most probably, spoke Swedish as his mother tongue (see Fennander 1895: 23-4).

**Janne** (Johannes) **Jernvall** (1851-1909) was the sergeant major of the third company of the Finnish Guard, promoted to that position in April 1877. On the eve of the Guard's departure Jernvall married Hilda Ristonen (1851-1938), who during the war nursed sick and wounded guardsmen sent to Helsinki and St Petersburg to recover (Talvitie 2000). The time of Jernvall's enlisting and his retirement are unknown to me, but at least in the early 1890s he was still in the army. According to Schvindt (1912, part IV, p. 12), Jernvall was the third company's sergeant major until 1879. Later on he served in the first company, and was well-known for his fondness for military discipline (Linder 1938: 5-7).

**Akseli Lindfors** (1853-1915), born the son of a tanner in the village of Kauhajoki, Ostrobothnia (middle western Finland), volunteered at the beginning of the Russo-Turkish war and resigned in September 1878. He then served first as a policeman in the town of Vaasa, Ostrobothnia, and later in his native village. After the death of his father he inherited a leather workshop and switched to tannery, which he continued for the rest of his life.<sup>39</sup>

**Wilhelm Lindman** volunteered on 3 August 1877, served in the Guard's second company, and was demobilised at his own request on 11 September 1878 (M 61/26). Besides his book he also wrote at least one broadside ballad on the 1877-8 war, entitled "Uusi Sotalaulu sodasta Turkin

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<sup>37</sup> For the sake of comparison I have to add that soldiers were not the only ones who broke rules. Students did so, too. For instance, on 1 December 1877 four students of the University of Helsinki visited a local brothel and had a quarrel with other clients. During it one of the students was given a black eye. He went crazy, took his knife, and wounded the man who had hit him and two other men. Nobody was killed but the student with the knife was sent down for 18 months. (Nyberg 1950b: 546.)

<sup>38</sup> Biographical data are taken from *Storfurstendömet Finlands Ridderskap och Adels Kalender för åren 1890* (Helsingfors 1890) and *Finska kadettkårens elever och tjänstemän 1812-1960*, suppl. III (Helsingfors 1961).

<sup>39</sup> M 61/26; and information provided by Kauhajoen Museoyhdistys (The Kauhajoki Board of Antiquity) in the facsimile copy of Lindfors's work (Lindfors 1975).

ja Wenäjän välillä 1877-1878” (A New Song about the War between Turkey and Russia in 1877-8), published in Viipuri in 1878 and reprinted in 1880, in which he made extensive use of newspaper articles (Suistola 1987: 217, 223).

**Didrik Wilhelm Palander** was born in 1857 in Kangasala, in the province of Häme, south-western Finland. His father served with the Finnish Guard, first as an NCO and later as an officer. In 1874 D.W. Palander joined the Finnish railways as a telegraphist. On 25 August 1877 he enlisted as a volunteer, was made a junior NCO one month later, and served with the first company of the Finnish Guard until 15 December 1879. He then went to work in the office of a company in Tampere, a town near his birth place, but returned to the railways in 1885. He married in 1891. In 1904 he founded a brickworks in Herrala, some 100 kilometres south-east of Tampere, where he had been station-master since 1895. In 1909 he moved to Pietarsaari, where he died in 1925.<sup>40</sup>

**Karl Magnus Hugo Schulman** (1850-1919) was a son of Alexander Schulman (1819-1890), an officer. He entered the Pavlovskiy Cadet Corps in St Petersburg in 1861, and three years later transferred to the Page Corps. He was promoted to second lieutenant and appointed to the Life Guard’s Litovskiy (Lithuanian) Regiment (part of the Third Infantry Division of the Guard) in 1869, taking part in the Russo-Turkish war as a member of this unit. In 1876 he was promoted to lieutenant. From 1881 onwards he was the commander of the Finnish Cadet Corps until the school was closed in 1902. He retired with the rank of major general. After that he was employed as the director of a local museum at Porvoo (near Helsinki) and wrote historical studies of the Finnish war of 1808-9 and the events of the Crimean War in Finland, as well as a biography of Emperor Alexander I. His recollections of the 1877-8 war were written in the late 1910s on the basis of his diary entries.<sup>41</sup>

**Carl Ferdinand Immanuel von Wahlberg** (1847-1920) was born in the *guberniya* of Samara in Central Russia, studied medicine and graduated from the Imperial Alexander University of Helsinki in 1873. He first worked at the university’s Physiological Department, but in 1876 switched careers and became a military doctor. In 1877 he was appointed junior doctor of the Finnish Guard, a post he held until the end of the war.<sup>42</sup> Besides medical work he was for a while also charged with the Guard’s funds and quartering. After the war, from 1881 to 1895, he served as the unit’s (senior) doctor. In 1895 he was made chief medical officer of the Finnish military. When the post was dissolved in 1902 he was appointed general manager of the Finnish Medical Board. In 1904 he was knighted. (Klinge 1997: 39; Schvindt 1912: 158-9.)

**Sten Wallin** (1853-1937), who volunteered in 1876 (see WMEP), served in the third company and, according to Schvindt (1912, part IV, p. 12), was the sergeant major of the Guard’s third company from 1882 to 1892. From that time until 1929, when he retired, he worked as the custodian of Seurasaari, an open-air museum in Helsinki (Veteraanit kertovat 1937; Talvitie 2000). He is described in greater detail in the next section as an example of a common guardsman.

## 1. 6. The common guardsmen’s social background

The essentials about the social background of the officers dealt with in this study may be gathered from the notes just mentioned, and the ideological preferences typical of them will be described in Ch. 3.1. Here I shall look at the background of the common men who make up more than half of my sources.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> M 61/26; Palander 1895: 14; an extract from the register of the Finnish parish at Jakobstad [Pietarsaari], dated 22 February 2000.

<sup>41</sup> *Kansallinen elämäkerrasto* ([Finnish] National Biography); V, S-Ö, article “Schulman”, Porvoo 1934; Editor’s Preface, in Schulman 1955.

<sup>42</sup> This post existed in wartime only (PK 467).

<sup>43</sup> Wahlberg and Palander surely, and Fennander probably, had an upper class background, or at least education, while

In the early 1870s the bulk of the Finnish population were peasants. In 1870, only some 7 per cent of the population lived in towns, and a decade later the number had increased by only 1 percentage point. Agriculture was the main source of livelihood for 74.8 per cent of the population in 1880.<sup>44</sup> Although social disparity certainly existed at that time, its scale and significance are disputed (see Liikanen 1995: 48). In the countryside and among peasants it could not have been very serious, since the means of accumulating capital were still very limited in the 1870s. (Aalto 1976: 174, 176; Ketonen 1989: 44-8.)

In the 1860s and 1870s three sets of events left a deep imprint on the lives of young members of the peasant class. The first was failure of the harvest, resulting in the hard years of the mid-1860s. These were felt particularly in Ostrobothnia, from where a great number of the guardsmen originated in the 1870s, and the eastern and northernmost parts of Finland, but had repercussions throughout the land. Tens of thousands of people died of hunger and disease.<sup>45</sup> One significant result of these terrible years was greater mobility of the population. Younger people in particular grew accustomed to travelling and to searching for better conditions elsewhere (see Aalto 1976: 166-7).<sup>46</sup> But they also become more critical of the existing social order (Haatanen 1968: 67-8).

The second set of events consisted of changes in the Finnish economy from the late 1860s onwards, as these affected the peasant way of production as well. From about 1870 until the outbreak of the First World War, the increasing industrialisation and urbanisation called for growth of agricultural production. This had several consequences. First, it escalated the agrarian crisis that was precipitated in the early 1800s, and led to an increase in social degradation and in the number of landless people, for example, in areas from which at least three authors of my sources (Lindfors, Palander and Wallin) originated. Second, industrialisation resulted in larger-scale tilling with the advent of new and more effective methods and machines, a surplus of grain, more intensive commercial contacts with towns and villages, and migration to urbanising areas in order to improve one's social status. For peasants, then, becoming a soldier was, or seemed to be, a favourable option.<sup>47</sup>

The third set of events was bound up with the political optimism of the 1860s, fuelled by the temporary cancelling of censorship at the beginning of the decade, the summoning of the Diet (in 1863, for the first time since annexation in 1809), improvements to the official status of the Finnish language vis-à-vis Swedish (in 1863, too), and imperial permission for the use of the country's own currency (1865). This liberal imperial policy was interpreted by many Finns as a step towards an independent Finnish state. However, social fragmentation and political liberation together resulted in the break-up of society into a variety of organisations and movements of a religious or social nature, which experienced their heyday in the countryside in the mid-1870s (Liikanen 1995: 20-1, 72).<sup>48</sup> Sten Wallin's story is used to outline how these processes affected the Finnish peasant.

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Lindfors, Lindman and Wallin most likely, and Jernvall obviously, shared a peasant background with most of the privates in the Guard (see Kylävaara 1978: 13-14).

<sup>44</sup> Finnish peasants of the 1870s can be divided into three main groups: well-to-do farmers, who owned their land (in 1875 some 20 per cent of the male population); crofters, who controlled their land (some 12 per cent); and the usually poor and landless farm-hands (some 50 per cent) and casual farm workers (17 per cent). The population of Finland in 1875 was 1.9 million. (Haatanen 1968: 61; Heikkinen 1995: 158; Soininen 1974: 28-49.)

<sup>45</sup> According to Aalto (1976: 165-6), during the worst years of 1866-8 some 270,000 people perished.

<sup>46</sup> However, the real migration did not begin until the early 1880s. According to one set of statistics, between 1871 and 1880 1,700 Finns left the province of Vaasa, Ostrobothnia, and, in the next decade (1881-90), over 16,000 (Alhoniemi 1972: 112, note 106).

<sup>47</sup> There are several studies dealing with the position of Finnish peasants in the 1800s. See, for example, Haatanen 1968: 40-1; Heikkinen 1995: 149-53; Saarenheimo 1984: 240-5, 250; Soininen 1974: 410-15.

<sup>48</sup> In general, from the viewpoint of my study, the importance of these societies lay in the fact that, although

In his short biography entitled “Memoirs from my life’s path” (PK 1310/1, in Finnish), Wallin tells us something about himself. Born in 1853 at Kisko, a small village in south-western Finland, Wallin first served a local landlord as a herdsman (in summer) and as an outdoor worker (in winter). At the age of 15 he became a hired hand in Kisko. He fell in love with a certain Maria Karppi (1854-1930), who worked for the same master. But because they were both very poor they, according to Wallin, dared not marry for another ten years.<sup>49</sup>

In the autumn of 1876 Wallin left for Helsinki in the hope of finding a better job. But many others had had the same idea, and because, as he says, the town was ‘foreign to him’, that is, he had no contacts, he could not find work. He went to see an acquaintance, who was serving with the Finnish Guard. This man urged Wallin to enlist and, to ease his way, introduced him to the second lieutenant of his company. Without further ado, Wallin signed up for six years, as was the common practice. A similar lack of hesitation about joining up is recounted, in a novelistic way, by Varén (1898: 1-5), and later by Simola (1955: 8-9), a Finn who joined the French foreign legion. Varén’s story is at least partly true, because the person he mentions, Iisak Gröndahl, really did exist, and was killed in the battle of Gorni Dübnik.

From Wallin’s recollections and the information available on the changes taking place during the third quarter of the 19th century it would seem that the life of the Finnish peasant was not easy (cf. Koskelainen 1918). Thus part of the explanation why peasants were eager to volunteer obviously is their wish to improve their social position. But very probably the contemporary Finnish structure also contained elements that encouraged the peasants to enlist in the war. To assess this I first discuss earlier studies, as well as public memory and its processing by individuals and groups at a general level.

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unsystematically, they undermined educational pursuits from above and encouraged peasants to ‘cultivate a nationalistic education’ by themselves. They also replaced God and the emperor with patriotism and enlightenment as the corner-stones of Finland and Finnishness. In the 1880s the pendulum swung back and reinforced the ‘emperor cult’ and the status of religion in the rural areas. (Liikanen 1995: 241-2.)

<sup>49</sup> A married farm-hand was no longer allowed to live in the house of his master (Saarenheimo 1984: 244)

## 2. NOTES ON EARLIER STUDIES AND THE APPROACH USED HERE

### 2.1. Studying war in anthropology

To place my study in a wider perspective, I take a brief look at the anthropological study of war and at a historical work that bears some similarity to my own effort.

Warfare<sup>50</sup> (for example, its origins in biology, ecology, culture, etc., or its relation to peoples' mode of organisation, or state-building) among tribal peoples has long been a subject of study by anthropologists whereas narratives about European war experiences have been of interest to European and American folklorists and historians (see Haas 1993; Otterbein 1973). Only occasionally have anthropologists ventured to collect data and make in-depth analyses of warfare in state societies (Harrison 1993: 1; Nagengast 1994: 111-12). Bronislaw Malinowski (1941), Quincy Wright (1942) and Ruth Benedict (1946) were among the first to do so. At first, due to the rise of Fascism and Nazism and the outbreak of the Second World War, the main emphasis was on analysing and condemning the real or assumed human aggressiveness,<sup>51</sup> which was seen as the main cause of war, and on distinguishing war from, say, feuding (see Otterbein 1973: 923-4; Riches 1991: 288-92). In Finland a pioneering study was Knut Pipping's sociological dissertation (1947) on the functioning of a Finnish company in the Second World War.

A generation later, scholars such as Eric Wolf (1969) were interested in the political, social and economic causes and consequences of warfare. Others, for example, Marvin Harris (1974), studied 'primitive' warfare from an ecological point of view, ascribing warfare primarily to conflicts over natural resources. In the next decades anthropological studies of warfare shifted towards (post)modern Euroamerican societies and focused on themes such as the Cold War and Star Wars to find means to reduce the risk of war (Turner & Pitt 1989). On the other hand, anthropologists became interested in intertribal conflicts, thus distancing themselves from the sometimes popular juxtaposition of peaceful 'savages' and warlike 'civilisation' (Otterbein 1973). Until recently, however, warfare has been studied mainly to reveal its 'natural' causes or prevent it from breaking out anew rather than to comprehend it, as, for example, Benedict did, as a socio-cultural construction arising from, and having meaning in, the reconstruction of social structures (Benedict 1989; Otterbein 1973: 926-7).<sup>52</sup>

Since the early 1980s the anthropological study of war, indeed of violence in general, has gained momentum, notably in North America (Krohn-Hansen 1997: 233). After the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989, a special branch of anthropological studies on violence has, as Nagengast put it, concentrated on relations 'between groups and the state and among groups within states, especially [on] violence rooted in ethnicity, nationalism, bids for autonomy and self-determination, and political demands for fundamental change' (Nagengast 1994: 110). A new trend in anthropological studies of warfare appears to have started, focusing on interrelationships between institutionalised violence (warfare), society and people (social identity).<sup>53</sup> Hence violence, and even war, is seen as an element of

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<sup>50</sup> Due to economies of work and space I have limited myself to a review of some anthropological works concerning warfare, although works dealing with violence in general might also be useful for my purposes (see, for example, George 1996; Nagengast 1994), and are occasionally referred to.

<sup>51</sup> Otterbein (1973: 926) noted that 'many anthropologists have been morally opposed to war' and that two of the 'founding fathers' of anthropology, E.B. Tylor and Franz Boas, were pacifists. Aggression (and, as a derivative, war) as a human instinct was proposed, among others, by S. Freud.

<sup>52</sup> To state that warfare affects ecological adaptation, for example, reflects the current mode of thinking rather than explains the inner 'nature' or 'logic' of warfare or a person's experiences of it.

<sup>53</sup> Marxists would hardly consider this as a novelty (cf. Roseberry 1989). And of course the idea itself is age-old, but its application to the study of war is more recent. See, for example, Daniel 1996; Feldman, Prica & Senjkovic 1993; Harrison

social behaviour and interaction rather than as social deviance (Nagengast 1994: 111; de Waal 1998: 183). Harrison (1993: 1), for example, says he is concerned ‘not simply with behavioural actualities of violence and war, but also with the systems of symbolism which shape these actualities by shaping the ways in which they are understood’. From this relational point of view, war loses its ideational, or instinctual, ‘nature’ and, as Riches (1991: 285) put it, ‘becomes [and not only symbolically] a part of human conduct in space and time’.

This is not very dissimilar from Victor Turner’s (1977) understanding of ritual process. Not surprisingly, some of his (and also Mary Douglas’s) ideas have already been used in the study of warfare (Krohn-Hansen 1997: 237-8; Todorova 1997: 18). As far as I know, the pioneer in this respect is the American historian Eric Leed, who in his *No man’s land: combat and identity in World War I* (1979) borrowed Turner’s concept of liminality.<sup>54</sup> The subject of Leed’s study, the essence of war’s cultural meaning, as Kurtz (1981: 59) aptly summarised it in his review, is ‘the transformation of the personalities of combatants as a result of their war experiences’, meaning here not only battle but all kinds of experiences. Leed’s main source was the literature written by the combatants themselves (Leed 1979; ix-x). According to Kurtz, Leed also attempted, as do I, to show how combatants ‘ascribe[d] meanings and patterns to a social circumstance [wartime events and relations] that seemed to resist all patterning’, and how they drew upon their ‘cultural repertoires [categorisation]’ to ‘define alterations’ that occurred during the war (Kurtz 1981: 59).<sup>55</sup>

There are, however, some differences between Leed and myself. First, Leed focused more on the psychological side of the wartime process, while I stress its social and relational side. Therefore he emphasises changes taking place in process (war) and their consequences under post-war conditions (for example, the destinies of veterans), whereas I lay stress on relations between the men’s narratives, their social positions, the military traditions, and attitudes towards power structure or authority. So, though I acknowledge the importance of post-war changes, I am more interested in how the soldiers used pre-war cultural logic in negotiating their wartime army position. Second, closely related to this is the fact that, unlike their comrades in the First World War, the Finnish guardsmen did not expect that ‘the war would resolve contradictions in the structure and organisation of [their own] society’<sup>56</sup> (Kurtz 1981: 62; Leed 1979: ix) but, rather, found new alternatives to bargain for their position inside their post-war peacetime structure. This at least partly explains the structural ‘hold’ on men, and is probably a reason why they changed less than did men in the Great War: the Finnish guardsmen also did not suffer from such serious post-war traumas as did the combatants studied by Leed.

The third point of difference arises from the nature of warfare. The First World War was mainly long-term trench warfare, whereas the 1877-8 war consisted of short skirmishes, days or even weeks waiting in outposts and forced marches from one place to another. In the latter war, then, men had little time to reflect on their position and identity, and thus change, but in the former, at least in theory, the opposite was true.

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1993; Povrzanovic 1997; Robinson 1999.

<sup>54</sup> In the course of this study I read Povrzanovic (1997) who, without mentioning Turner, stated (p. 159) that war ‘created a space recognised as authentic, providing a sense of *communitas*’ (her italics).

<sup>55</sup> More recently a group of British historians has published a collection of articles entitled *War, identities in conflict 1300-2000* (Taithe & Thornton 1998). Several of them are relevant from my point of view, not least because some of the authors have made use of works by Turner and Leed. Like me, they study the construction of military identity. But, unlike me, they emphasise ‘individual, gendered, or hyphenated’ self-identities (pp. 2-3), not social relations or social identity.

<sup>56</sup> The idea itself appears in different times and places (see Luostarinen 1986: 82) and was not unknown to contemporary Russians. Utin, for example, maintained that war would cut everything that was ‘sick’ out of the ‘body’ of society (1879: 1).

## 2.2. Earlier studies on the Russo-Turkish war

Apart from the theoretical resemblance to works like those mentioned in section 2.1, my analysis of the memoirs of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8 has no direct antecedents, though the period in general has of course been studied by numbers of scholars, especially by historians and political scientists. Moreover, anthropological studies on Bulgaria in general, other than those by Bulgarians, have been few<sup>57</sup> (for example, a chapter on ethnology provided by Kanitz 1875). Obviously for political reasons anthropologists from the so-called West who have studied the Balkans during the last fifty years have preferred Greece, Yugoslavia and Romania to Bulgaria.<sup>58</sup> In most cases these studies have focused on the ethnographic present in family life, kinship structures, power relations, economics, etc. Only a few have concentrated on warfare, violence or aggression. This is in my opinion a little strange, because the Balkans are so often stereotypified as an area where honour and shame, and their defence with force are among the key values.<sup>59</sup>

Russians, Bulgarians and, to a lesser extent, some others who have studied the war of 1877-8 have mainly done it from the Great Power and strategic, or military history, point of view. Examples are Radu Rosetti's "Romania's share in the war of 1877" (in *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 12 [1930]); J.F. Clarke's series of articles about the connections of Americans to the war (Clarke 1988) and Ian Drury's *The Russo-Turkish war 1877* (1994), which is a short introduction to the campaigns in the Balkans and a more detailed survey of the Russian and Ottoman armies and armament. Studies in Russian include N.I. Belyayev's *Russko-turetskaya voyna 1877-1878 gg.* (1956), V.A. Zolotarev's, *Rossiya i Turtsiya, voyne 1877-1878 gg.* (1983), and the multi-scholar work *Russko-turetskaya voyna 1877-1878 gg. i Balkany* (1978), edited by G.L. Arsh et al. (See bibliography in Menning 1992.) Of these, both Russians and Bulgarians have analysed the conflict as the War of Liberation, and focused either on its consequences (the creation of the Bulgarian state), the critique levelled by some contemporaries against the wartime functioning of the Russian army or the economic reasons for and class nature of the war.<sup>60</sup> These points have been made by, for instance, Zolotarev (1983), P.K. Fortunatov (*Voina 1877-1878 gg. i osvobozhdeniye Bolgarii*, 1950) and V. Topalov (*Kratka istoriya na osvoboditelnata voyna, 1877-1878*, 1958). (See Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981.) A more recent, but very short, interpretation in this direction is Nikolai Todorov's "The Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 and the liberation of Bulgaria: An interpretive essay" (in the *East European Quarterly* vol. 14,1 [1980]). These studies have usually had very little to say about grass-root level thinking and acting. For example, a work by several Soviet (Russian) scholars about Russian influence on the Bulgarian liberation (RioB 1982) actually states merely that the Russo-Turkish war was 'a great incident of the 19th century' and that it ended the Eastern Question (p. 111). The storming of Plevna and the crossing of the Balkans in December 1877 are routinely singled out as the most important events of the war (pp. 123-4; cf. Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 48).

To date, the Russo-Turkish war has been the subject of seven Finnish studies. The first one, in Swedish, is G.A. Gripenberg's *Lifgardets 3 finska skarpskyttebataljon 1812-1905* (The Life Guard's Third Finnish Sharpshooter Battalion, 1812-1905), published in 1905. As the title indicates, it

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<sup>57</sup> See, for example, bibliography in G.W. Creed, "Agriculture and the domestication of industry in rural Bulgaria", in: *American Ethnologist* vol. 22 (1995), pp. 528-48.

<sup>58</sup> See J.M. Halpern & D.A. Kideckel; "Anthropology of Eastern Europe", in: *Annual Review of Anthropology* vol. 12 (1983), pp. 377-402; Todorova 1997: 30-1.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. A. Simic, "The blood feud in Montenegro", in: *Essays in Balkan ethnology*, ed. W.G. Lockwood, Berkeley: Kroeber Anthropological Society 1967, pp. 83-94.

<sup>60</sup> Bulgarian scholars in particular have covered several other aspects of the war, too (Professor Maria Todorova, personal communication).

is a history of the Finnish Guard, not only of the war of 1877-8. Gripenberg, who himself took part in the Russo-Turkish war (Kylävaara 1978: 14), has augmented his historical story with excerpts from contemporary newspapers, military documents and letters written by the guardsmen or their superiors. In his Introduction he states that he has ‘especially tried to disclose what was typical [of the Guard] in [its] own time’. If we substitute ‘cultural logic’ or ‘public memory’ for ‘typical’, we are close to my ideas.

The second study, in Finnish, is an MA thesis by Reino Järvinen. Entitled *Suomen kaartin osallistuminen Venäjän joukkojen mukana vuosien 1877-78 Turkin sotaan* (The participation of the Finnish Guard with the Russian army in the Turkish war, 1877-8), this unpublished study was submitted to the department of history at the University of Turku in 1932. It places the war in the context of the Eastern Question. The Finnish participation is described mainly by restating, rather uncritically, some of my principal sources, for example, Wahlberg (1878) and Jernvall (1899), supplemented with archival material, of which, however, the author did not make any substantial use.

The third and fourth studies are by two eminent journalists, Tapio Hiisivaara (1968) and Keijo Kylävaara (1978).<sup>61</sup> They are general histories of the Finnish Guard drawing upon some of my sources (mainly Jernvall 1899 and Wahlberg 1878) and depicting almost day-by-day the trials of the guardsmen. The fifth study is an article “Suomen kaarti Bulgarian vapaussodassa 1877-78” (The Finnish Guard in the Bulgarian War of Liberation, 1877-8) published by the historian Mauno Jokipii (1978). Like the two books, the article is a mixture of the standard historical approach and the guardsmen’s own recollections. In emphasising the stand of the common guardsmen, Hiisivaara, Kylävaara and Jokipii all come close to one aspect of my study. None of them, though, ponders much either the guardsmen’s encounters with the Balkan world (the other) or relations between men’s representations of the Balkan and their Finnish structure. Rather, they try to establish a detailed, chronological (and ‘true’) description of events and the soldiers’ mood.

The sixth Finnish study of the Russo-Turkish war is Marjatta Hiisivaara-Hela’s unpublished MA thesis, submitted to the department of folklore at the University of Helsinki in 1982. Entitled “*Kosk’ riidat Turkki aloittaa, se kaadetaan*”: *arkkiveisut Turkin sodasta 1877-1878* (“Because the Turk started the quarrel, it’s he who will be defeated”: broadside ballads on the Turkish war, 1877-8), it is in a way a study of the Russian war propaganda, because the roughly one hundred ballads,<sup>62</sup> in Finnish, were composed, with some Russian influence, in Finland and mainly in 1877 in order to influence wartime Finnish public opinion (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 1; Hyvämäki 1964: 64).<sup>63</sup>

Hiisivaara-Hela herself says of her study (p. 1): ‘The purpose of this study is to examine what kind of information about the Turkish war broadside ballads spread and what kinds of elements they contained; [and to establish] how historical facts were represented in such ballads and how and for what purpose they were used.’ This partly overlaps with my study since I, too, am interested in the continuity and blending of fact (or experiences) and fiction (the interpretation of experiences) in my sources, and the views the authors had of Turks and the war.

The seventh and, thus far, the latest Finnish study is by the historian Jouni Suistola, who also deals with the broadside ballads. He describes (Suistola 1987) in detail how these ballads represent

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<sup>61</sup> The work by Hiisivaara is entitled “*Tuhannenpa verran poikia lähti . . .*”: *Suomen kaarti Balkanin sodassa 1877-1878* (“A thousand young men set out . . .”: The Finnish Guard in the Balkan war, 1877-8). Kylävaara’s book is entitled *Balkanin santaa* (The Balkan sands).

<sup>62</sup> 113, according to Suistola (1987: 193), by at least 22 different writers.

<sup>63</sup> In a similar manner broadside ballads, against Russia, were composed during the 1808-9 war on the initiative of the king of Sweden (Nousiainen 1961: 209-10).



the causes and different phases of the war and aims at showing, more or less in the manner of Hiisivaara-Hela, how faithful the ballads were to historical facts.

In addition, there is some important material relative to the war. In autumn 1984 nine Finnish journalists travelled the same route as the Guard. Their impressions, peppered with quotes from works making up my sources, were published the following year (BR 1985). A little later Jouni Suistola studied the impact of war on some aspects of local trade in the town of Oulu, northern Finland (Suistola 1986). In the 1990s a Finnish diplomat, Åke Backström, wrote two overviews of the Guard's participation in the war (Backström 1991a; 1996) and an account of Finnish casualties in the war (Backström 1991b). Finally, the historian Pertti Luntinen (1997: 119-25) briefly dealt with the events of the 1877-8 war in his general study of Russian troops in Finland in 1809-1918, and another historian, Pasi Kemppainen, discussed the war in his MA thesis entitled "Balkanin kriisi 1875-1878 kolmessa suomalaisessa sanomalehdessä" (The Balkan crisis 1875-8 in three Finnish newspapers), submitted in general history at the University of Oulu in 1999. Kemppainen's work (Kemppainen 1999) examines how Finnish newspapers represented the so-called Eastern Question in the mid-1870s and puts the 1877-8 war in that context. He neither has a separate chapter for the Finnish Guard nor refers to the authors I have used as my sources.

### **2.3. Methodological notes**

Roughly speaking, the studies of war and warfare mentioned above may be divided into two main and, in my opinion, complementary groups. One consists of studies that understand war as politics continued by other means, that is, as a constituent of conflicts and power struggles between states, non-governmental groups, societies or peoples. They also include those that consider war as an aspect of human aggressiveness, in either the direct biological or the modified ecological sense of the word, and see it from the point of view of, by definition, aggressive individuals or the parties involved. Both cases suggest study of the causes of conflicts, the goals aimed at and the strategies used to achieve them, restricting the term 'war' to mean mainly organised armed combats between different groups, leaving the other aspects of wartime more or less out of consideration (cf. Otterbein 1973: 923-4, 936). These studies, then, put emphasis on largely ahistorical causes and reasons of warfare.

The other group, a modified version of which is attempted here, looks at ways in which culturally constructed meanings, explanations, notions, beliefs or interpretations are reconstructed, re-institutionalised or re-patterned in memories of wartime experiences; or at what is narrated about combatants' wartime relations to the enemy, civilians or space (i.e., the theatre of war). (Harrison 1993: 16; Lehmann 1982: 232; Tekampe 1989: 12-4, 40-2; Wright 1965: 3-7). Thus 'war' means not only, or particularly, a series of battles and political decisions but warriors' structurally and militarily influenced grass-root activities that reproduced aspects of peacetime structure in wartime circumstances in a dramatised form (cf. Berggrav-Jensen 1916: 16-21; Leed 1979), beginning to be reminiscent of a ritual process in its liminal phase. This sort of study stresses the interdependence of a given structure and culture, its historically developing reasons for waging war and the probability that peacetime social relations and cultural logic are affecting the ways in which the warriors understand their own role and construct their enemy.

By seeing war in this way, I want to emphasise that I study warfare primarily not as a politically motivated use of force or a sudden burst of genetically caused aggression, but as an aspect of human social and cultural dynamics (Otterbein 1973: 935-6, 938). Thus understood, 'war' consists of armies, power politics and military traditions, and of personal actions, ideational and ethical preferences, opinions of the right way of life, internalised ethnocentrism and attitudes towards the

other.<sup>64</sup> That is, war is a process that has repercussions far beyond the battlefield or army barracks, and the study of a given war is at the same time a study of the societies and cultures involved.

### 2.3.1. Public memory

The two key concepts with which I try to put together the peacetime military and power institutions and the men's experiences in the wartime process are *public memory* and *memory processing*. The former term I have adapted from the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), using the terminology of Mary Douglas.<sup>65</sup> His understanding of it may be defined as follows. Public memory is the oral or written interpersonal communication by which individuals, as members of groups, remember and represent their relations to the other (be he or she a member of the same or a different group), i.e., their social identity, in such a way that they both reconstruct the past to fit the present and authorise the present by references to the past.<sup>66</sup> This notion about memories of the past, or history, means, first, that our present experiences make us remember, and hence reconstruct, earlier ones, that is, reinterpret the past, and our identity, from the point of view of the present (Le Goff 1988: 54).<sup>67</sup> Second, it means that our belief in the past, or identity, thus created as the 'true' one is based on the socially acknowledged continuity between our different versions of the past, which ultimately validates them.<sup>68</sup> (Connerton 1989: 27, 36-8; Rosen 1984: 18-59.)

This does not mean that public memory consists of a rational and conscious process of negotiation. More often than not it is made up of socially<sup>69</sup> unconscious, cultural logic, for example, manners, customs, habits and idioms in communication and conduct, that is, of conventionalised and simplified, or stereotyped, social practice. Public memory is thus the representational and relational context in which the meaning of a text, a discussion or an image or symbol, is produced and goes therefore usually unnoticed by writers or speakers (Billig 1995: 105-9). Or, as Mary Douglas uses it, public memory is 'the hold that institutions [for example, medicine, science, religion, army, politics]

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<sup>64</sup> This is maintained by several scholars, for example, Harrison (1993: 16-19), Lehmann (1982: 230-2), Malinowski (1941: 526-7) and Tekampe (1989: 1, 17).

<sup>65</sup> Halbwachs, and later Le Goff (1988), used the term 'mémoire collective', which Mary Douglas (1986: 70) translated as 'public memory'. I have used Douglas's parlance, because 'collective' in my opinion suggests more conformity than actually exists in a given group or society, and because it may convey some psychological or biological connotations (in the manner of Jung's collective archetypes) which I do not intend. For, like Halbwachs (1992: 168-9) I suppose that there is no purely private memory, because to represent a recollection one 'has recourse to the thought of [one's] group'. Another option would have been 'social memory' that, among others, Connerton (1989) and Fentress & Wickham (1992) have used. But 'social memory' seems to locate memory in the social sphere only, and to exclude, or minimise, the dialectics of society as institutions, groups, customs, etc., and the persons constituting, or upholding, them, which, in my opinion, constitute the core of what I call public memory. 'Social' and 'public' memory are not, of course, mutually exclusive (cf. Connerton 1989; Fentress & Wickham 1992: 26); and the way Fentress & Wickham (p. ix) define the concept comes close to my use of 'public memory'.

<sup>66</sup> This formulation is based on Coser's Introduction to Halbwachs (1992) and Halbwachs's own statements (1950: 28-34, 66-8; 1975: 79-80, 98-103, 118-19, 138-9).

<sup>67</sup> For example, when the guardsmen were on their way to the front they compared the Russo-Turkish war with the Thirty Years' War and themselves with the Finns who distinguished themselves in that war.

<sup>68</sup> What particularly seemed to validate the guardsmen's campaign in their writing was social prestige or honour: various imperial awards, feasts arranged by Finnish civilians and a cordial reception by Bulgarians.

<sup>69</sup> I do not deny the existence of the personal unconscious, but, first, the method adopted here is far from adequate for analysing it; and, second, I think that it is impossible to separate personal from social. In other words, a study may reach the personal only through the social; hence personal will be taken into account as expressed in social interaction. Here I partly disagree with Turner's last phase emphasis on individual mind (Turner 1985, Ch. 11), and lay more stress upon what Turner might have called [observable] performances of that mind (1985, Ch. 8).

have on our processes of classifying and recognising' (Douglas 1986: 3).<sup>70</sup> The concept, in other words, focuses attention on the social interaction in or between families, clans, parties, institutions and societies rather than on a person's psychology. Depending on how large a number of persons are involved, public memory ranges from rewriting family histories (to show what 'we' are and how 'we' differ from our neighbours) to inventing 'national character' (to evince what is common to, or typical of, 'us' but not 'them'). In each case, public memory thus puts members of the group in question as well as the other, the not-us, in social frameworks that, like human categorisation in general, help us to understand why we do what we do. By defining 'us', public memory also defines the other, thus helping 'us' to establish or invent relations to it or making us furious because it (the other) refuses to fit neatly into our categories (Rosen 1984: 1-5, 19-30). To borrow from Turner (1981: 163-4; 1986b: 40), public memory is the way in which the members of a group or society interpret their various (intra-group and inter-group) relations through internalised cultural categories. Therefore it is 'public' in the sense that it includes both popular and official data and opinions over which there is some consensus among a given body of human beings (Collard 1989: 90).

As a component of society and culture, public memory has two dimensions. Being a (set of) relationship(s) between events and the concepts used to describe and remember the events, public memory is, first, a vehicle of socially and culturally learned and distributed information (knowledge, ethics, opinions, feelings, attitudes, emotions, etc.) that links the members of a given group or society to one another and to other groups and societies but separates them from some others.<sup>71</sup> As such, public memory is partly unintended, that is, it depends not only on individual intentions but also on circumstances in which action is executed. For example, knowledge and memoirs of kinship relations, or 'good manners', 'force' people into a certain kind of conduct (Halbwachs 1992: 68-9). Second, public memory is an argument called on to confirm behavioural, moral and other codes or to affirm the meaning of a given event or conduct, as well as to demand change or to blame someone for breaking well-established rules (Douglas 1966: 102; Rosen 1984: 180-92; Turner 1981: 149). Thus public memory is the framework within which a given group fits its classifications, interpretations and judgements of its relations. (Halbwachs 1950: 101-3, 126-9; 1975: 20-3; Riches 1991: 283, 286.)

As an 'institution' governing or having an influence on society, public memory is to a certain extent consistent, but its interpretation or application in particular cases is inconsistent, because each person and group exploits it in a piecemeal way, 'in response to particular practical problems' (Douglas 1966: 89-91, 99-101). For example, as we shall see, depending on the situation the Finnish guardsmen recollected and represented their supposedly always 'same' Turkish enemy in several, and mutually contradictory, ways: he was non-human, bad, cowardly, respectable and generous. Thus 'public memory' is polyphonic in a Bakhtian sense of the word; it is not a developing perspective but a coexistence and interaction between different views and voices (Bahtin 1991: 49-50). Its internally contradictory 'nature' helps us to understand the ambiguity in the guardsmen's views of the enemy, the Russians, and the Bulgarian land and people, an ambiguity they did not themselves acknowledge or even notice. For a feature of public memory is that it allows members of a society to have different

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<sup>70</sup> To give an example, Robert Redfield (1989: 42), who, speaking of the influence of the great tradition upon the little one, quoted George Foster, stating that in Latin American village cultures one saw elements coming from pre-industrial European (great) tradition: irrigation wheels, items of the Catholic religion, political institutions, kinship systems (godparenthood) and the humoral pathology of Hippocrates and Galen. For similar views see also Foucault (1980); Halbwachs (1950: 70); and Hutton (1993: 78).

<sup>71</sup> The general idea here, namely, that information (or, as some scholars prefer to say, symbols) are used to express 'our' identity and to separate 'us' from 'them' is proposed by various scholars, for example, Asad (1983: 240); Benedict (1989: 55); Douglas (1986: 46-8); Halbwachs (1992: 175-6); Rosaldo (1980: 140-1); and Turner (1975: 45).

opinions and interpretations while sharing a social fiction that they are in agreement (Bell 1992: 183). For example, individuals may or may not believe X to be their enemy, but as long as they share a common notion that X is their enemy they keep on fighting X as long as their structure and social context, say, in warfare activates that belief. Or, as, Maria Todorova (1997) has pointed out, each of various west European countries held different, stereotypical, notions of the Balkans but could still understand each other. To add yet one more illustration of the functioning of public memory, the British social historian E.P. Thompson, when writing about the English food riots of the 18th century, which concerned mainly the price of bread in hard times, pointed out (1996: 126-37) that although the riots superficially seemed to be spontaneous and 'chaotic', they were usually based on patterns handed down by tradition, the core of which was that in times of depression people had the right to buy bread at a reasonable price.

The logic by which public memory functions is given expression in narratives, too. According to Tekampe (1989: 72), Albrecht Lehmann, who in his *Erzählungsstruktur und Lebenslauf: Autobiographische Untersuchungen* (1983) studied the autobiographies of 86 inhabitants of Hamburg, found that the writers used some *leitlinien* to structure and interpret their life stories. Gullestad (1994: 125-6), in her study of 630 autobiographies, found that the authors structured the material according to a few interrelated principles. In other words, the autobiographies were organised to fit some frameworks which for one reason or another dominated the narrators' interpretation of their experiences: childhood, marriage, work, illness, time in prisoner-of-war camp and so on. The same principle applies to the 'logic' of a given group as well. It, too, structures its identity by remembering and commemorating some events in details and totally forgetting or ignoring others (see Kangas 1996). The Finnish guardsmen were no exception but 'reified' some events, some social relations, into stories that were repeated in slightly different ways by several authors. At a general level, one may say that stories are told in such a way as to negotiate a common bond between the author and the reader, to place both the author and the reader inside the same group, to oppose 'us' to the other, and thus create for us a special identity and perception of the other. One could also say that events or phenomena that different people tend to interpret in different ways (and I do not mean mere disagreement over opinions but a deeper divergence in views) are in particular what I have here called the other, because what does not demand interpretation or explanation is familiar, self-evident and part of 'our' world.

The identity that an institution creates and upholds becomes important especially when the usual order of peacetime routines is violently or abruptly broken or when a person is dislocated from his or her familiar space or structure. After all, familiar order and routines, as well as domestic surroundings, are essential prerequisites for the normal, balanced conduct of life and for the creation and maintenance of the identity and meanings given to human relations. When order and familiarity are lacking, one starts to re-create them on the basis of the material provided by one's cultural background in general. (Halbwachs 1950: 130-1; 1975: 97-8; Mayer 1989: 210.)

Related to my study this means that when the Finnish guardsmen arrived at the theatre of war they were dislocated from familiar contexts. They acted in the new situation on the basis of their internalised Finnish culture, class position and public memory relative to that situation, and when they later recalled the war they condensed it into episodes that fitted their social position and public memory to make up a meaningful narrative. In other words, they processed their experiences to match the public memory relative to the Russian army, the emperor and the Finnish military and nationalistic traditions.

### 2.3.2. Processing memory

Processing memory may be defined as operational moments in a group's interpretation of recollections of the past, a kind of 'memory in action' (Riches 1991: 282). It has two aspects. On the one hand, members of a group try to remember things and events in a way that, while permitting them to negotiate with an institution, is also most advantageous for them; on the other hand, other groups and institutions try to influence the way the members of a given group remember. (Douglas 1986; Rosen 1984.) This process, during which social relations change or are rearranged for a shorter or longer period (Collard 1989), has been illuminated, especially from the point of view of institutions or structure, by countless studies of ritual processes (see in general Bell 1992). Victor Turner in particular has emphasised that because the status of initiands is often radically changed during the ritual, being in its liminal phase ambiguous or even the opposite of their status in the structure proper, rituals may also effect considerable structural changes (Turner 1975: 13-14; 1977: 95). However, the problematic of changes or developments occurring to persons during the ritual process has received little attention. Equally, the question as to how, as Turner (for example, 1979: 488-91; 1986a: 105-6) argued, persons in the liminal phase reflect norms and values internalised in the institutional routines, and reaffirm or reshape them, has often been seen as rather one-sided<sup>72</sup> (Leed 1979).

Ritual process as such is not my concern here. Turner's ideas about what happens during a ritual are, however, relevant in trying to understand what happened to Finns 'caught' between the Russian army and state institution and Finnish military traditions and awakening nationalism. To put it differently, Turner's understanding of ritual process provides an analogy for my attempt to comprehend the transformations in the relations of Finnish officers and especially of NCOs and privates vis-à-vis the foreign or other (the Russian army, the enemy and the Bulgarian people and space). Wartime or, more exactly, the (Russian and Finnish) military traditions encouraged, forced or seduced men to accept or establish only certain kinds of relations to what was dramatised, the war, and everything related to it. It was these relations that were vehicles of continuity and change in processing public memory about, for instance, 'proper' military conduct or the enemy, and forging these memories into strategies for negotiating their wartime (and, in fact, also post-war) social position. At the same time, processing memories of relations inside a given institution 'brought in' structure (because the processing was caused, initiated or fuelled by several structural institutions). Moreover, these relations served as 'fixed' points of orientation in the new conditions created or caused by wartime (Leed 1991: 72; Rosen 1984: 88, et passim).

Processing public memory means, thus, the processing of social relations and identity. Both rituals and armies focus on highlighting one aspect of social life, be it marriage, funerals or waging war. However, while participants in rituals know that this emphasis on one aspect is temporal, the wartime army institution aims at the transformation of men's (or women's) relations to such an extent that they would be dominated by combat and the defeat, or killing, of the enemy. This 'capacity' has two levels: instrumental, where killing is a means of incapacitating the other, and impulsive, where annihilation of the enemy becomes an end in itself (Haas 1993: 18-19). Both, it seems, are usually more easily achieved than one might expect (see Browning 1999: 120, 136-8, 185-7). The reason is that in peacetime, too, many institutions carry information that facilitates this process. Rituals of manhood, for

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<sup>72</sup> Both Marxists and non-Marxists have discussed how 'new and alternative [cultural or social] meanings, new forms of discourse, new selections from tradition or conflicts and struggles over the meaning of particular elements within tradition [are produced]' (Roseberry 1989: 47). However, in my opinion they have all too often ended with either conservation or challenge of structure or its particular institution, that is, with a static rather than dynamic view about the functioning of public memory.

example, whether tribal initiation rites, army regulations, parental instructions to youth about 'proper' masculine behaviour or the rules of a teen-age gang, include such features (Poole 1982).

The Russian tactician M.I. Dragomirov (1830-1905), who participated in the 1877-8 war, had a similar idea of initiation. According to Menning (1992: 39), he stated that in order to turn conscripted peasants into versatile warriors, their whole conscious being had to be directed to the attainment of military objectives. To realise this, they had to submit to indoctrination, that is, cultivation of loyalty, courage and patriotism, and to training, for example, bayonet drill and physical exercise. The actual 'school' where the transformation into a real soldier occurred was, in Dragomirov's opinion, hand-to-hand bayonet combat. If the 'lesson' was successful, men actualised the army's public memory and adopted a military identity that made them capable of developing a kind of 'military fury' in battle, though outside it they did not hate the enemy. The military identity constructed by an appropriate institution thus 'liberated' soldiers in battle from the natural or cultural restraints of not killing. Thus, when Harrison (1993: 25-7) saw killing as a violation of internalised social norms, he was, in my opinion, wrong. In most societies killing is accepted to a certain extent, even in peacetime conditions (for example, death penalty, euthanasia or abortion); and it is this 'banal' acceptance of killing, to use Billig's (1995) concept, which is needed to turn 'peaceful' people into 'born' warriors, no matter how much people consciously and legally insist that killing, particularly 'one of us', is wrong.

This does not mean that anybody can easily become a killer. For that a particular context is needed that allows a person to kill without moralising about the act of taking the other's life (see Anonymous 1890: 376-7); and in my study of war I have called this the creation of military identity. Its formation is facilitated by the creation of a war-like atmosphere (or space) by public opinion, especially the mass media, which makes it socially acceptable to associate the other, the enemy, 'with the wild, with danger and sorcery', as Harrison put it (1993: 40), and to see the waging of war as one's 'sacred duty'.

An aspect of opposing 'us' to the 'other' is that killing someone among 'us' is wrong, but killing the enemy is not only right but an obligation. Further, in battle the story is constructed so that it is not combatants who kill; it is the army that is killing (Berggrav-Jensen 1916: 230; Harrison 1993: 92-3, 95-6). Memoirs from the Great War indicate that this is not merely playing with words. Winter (1979: 210) quotes a soldier in the British army who wrote that '[w]e killed in cold blood because it was our duty to kill as much as we could . . . I killed just as much as I had hoped fate would allow me to kill.'

The question is, however, more complicated. On the one hand, though 'battle fury' may dominate relations to the enemy in battle, in most cases it obviously does not apply outside the fight (cf. Winter 1979: 226); on the other, humans are not mere automata who do whatever the dramatised aspect of structure, for example, the army, commands or forces them to do (cf. Ehrström 1986: 27-31). It may be true that, in battle, most soldiers are the army's 'willing henchmen'. But even then, and somewhat contrary to Leed (1979: 34-5, 106), I think that they are more than mere executors of the will of the army, the society or the state: they are self-conscious and responsible malefactors with alleged good intentions. The reason is that soldiers, who have internalised the image of war not so much as their sacred duty but as the 'normal' functioning of the army, identify themselves with the 'machine' that wages war, in most cases, their own unit. Their ordinary acceptance of structural authority is transformed into obedience to that group. In a way this has to happen if soldiers want to exist socially, because existence occurs inside but not outside the army's social relations. In other words, when structure is dramatised, or reduced, to army regulations a person becomes socially capable of committing, and considering normal, deeds that in peacetime may violate his social norms or are at

least outside the scope of the normal juridical codes and relational conduct of his society (see Harrison 1993: 111). The Finnish attitude at the time of these events was expressed by Topelius in one of his lectures in the mid-1800s, when he said that a real soldier has to be obedient enough not to criticise his commander even if there are reasons to do so (quoted in Vasenius 1927: 550).

The Finnish guardsmen in the Russo-Turkish war obviously accepted this, at least at times. The nationalistic atmosphere they lived in supported the structural military ideal of brave soldiers fighting a bad enemy. But the question is more complicated because much of the wartime army practice did little to support this view. Moreover, the Russian idea of Bulgarians as ‘brethren’ to be saved or Turks as the archenemy of the (imperial) structure did not make sense to the guardsmen personally as Finns, because for them it was the ‘truth’ dictated by the army, the emperor and the Finnish media loyal to the emperor. This resulted in a search, or bargaining, for a new *modus vivendi* with Russian-dominated army ideals and political powers, and partly overlapping, partly differing Finnish public memory relative to the military and politics. Briefly, in the wartime process the guardsmen constructed a military identity that combined their being soldiers, Finns and subjects of the Russian emperor in a way they could accept, and that they believed to be suitable for wartime and post-war conditions. A significant part in this process was played by space.

### 2.3.3. Space in memory processing

According to Eric Dardel<sup>73</sup> (1990: 1-2, 30, 42, 55), our experiences<sup>74</sup> of a given space (landscape, river, sea, forest, mountain or park) evoke in us feelings that partly depend on our personality, but are also heavily influenced by what I have called public memory. That is, our interpretation of space is mediated by notions of our group, society and culture. Encounters with natural or constructed spaces, especially in contexts that are new or foreign for us, are, in Dardel’s view (1990: 108, 113-14), essentially ‘enigmas’.<sup>75</sup> This is because we cannot make sense of them, see their position in a local cultural web of meanings or, literally, *see* the foreign places in the same way as local people do. As Turner (1986a: 95) stated, ‘[a]s members of [a certain] society, most of us see only what we expect to see, and what we expect to see is what we are conditioned to see when we have learned the definitions and classifications of our culture’. We cannot bear these enigmatic relations, but undo and reconstruct them to resemble something socially and culturally familiar or meaningful to us. Descriptions of these interpretation processes, in turn, are narratives about our experiential relation to the other (Knuutila & Paasi 1995: 40-7), which reveal not only our personal dispositions and attitudes, but also some underlying (and perhaps unconscious) patterns of our own culture towards the culturally other.

This means that what we remember, or claim to know, and what we say or write have not only a cognitive or expressive, but a strong visual and material, aspect, too. Accordingly, space and material conditions in general, as seen through our cultural categories, arouse in us images with which we can give new interpretations to the already existing public memory. (Fentress & Wickham 1992: 12-13, 34-6, 49-50, 92-3, 111-12; Rosen 1984: 5-17.) To put it roughly: figures of speech, conventionalised expressions, phrases, clichés and so on make up a large part of both our memory and knowledge and our ability to interpret new events and incidents (Billig 1995). Hence, in the case of the

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<sup>73</sup> Eric Dardel (1899-1967) was a French historian and geographer, whose *L’Homme et la terre*, published in 1952, is an important (but also neglected) work about the human experience of space (earth, as he usually said, meaning all kinds of landscapes, places and elements) and the ways in which language (poetry, epic, tales, stories, etc.) is used to express that experience (Pennanen 1997). Also Foucault (1980) and, before him, Marx and others have stressed the importance of human spatiality in understanding human life.

<sup>74</sup> By experience, Dardel means the active working of mind, not passive observance or acceptance of things.

<sup>75</sup> For an interpretation of his view see Pennanen 1997: 17-21, 26, 43, 90.

guardsmen, catchwords like 'coward' or 'filthy' were in fact images that in various contexts, situations and places 'explained', for example, the nature of the Bulgarians, the Turkish enemy or the Orient.

Arguing that meanings, or understanding, emerge from the dialectics of present relations related to the existing patterning or categorisation of the past (however near or distant) is, of course not only a description of what happened but a statement about the guardsmen's cultural logic in explaining and understanding the other (the idea is based on Basse 1990: 138; Pennanen 1997: 19-21; and Turner 1986b: 36). Paying attention to what kinds of spaces (spatial relations) were described, the ways in which different spaces were represented, and the experiences and feelings, or modes, with which they were invested thus reveals something about the guardsmen's public memory and their ways of reconstructing it. Though it may not have been the men's intention, their description of space not only conveys certain impressions and images but also their reflections on actions they were involved in (for example, battle). Thus their recollections are also attempts to clarify their own position, or status, and ways to define their own military and Finnish identity by means of the other they constructed. By emphasising the disorder and filth of 'oriental' spaces (usually towns) the guardsmen were also emphasising the order and cleanness at home, and thus the cultural difference between 'Finnish' and 'oriental' ways of life.

This kind of understanding of 'space' (or geography in general) does not arise solely from my theoretical viewpoint. It is also implicit in my sources, obviously because it was 'in the air' in the late 1800s. On various occasions Topelius, but also Runeberg, described landscapes from a viewpoint that read spatial history (traditions connected with places) in the light of the 'natural' characteristics, or virtues, ascribed to them. The result was a description, repeated in my sources, in which space expressed a person's feelings (for instance, love of fatherland), demanded one to be worthy of his or her land's 'glorious past', and connected virtues with one kind and vices with another kind of space (Alhoniemi 1969: 100-1).

This structural logic was used in various ways, In the context of battle the guardsmen appear to have mainly parroted the official propaganda, for their descriptions duly recognised the difference or otherness of 'oriental' or 'dirty' Turkish cities and villages. But spaces outside battles (their main mission) were most often described in quite a different manner, as 'serene', 'beautiful' or 'tranquil'. Thus it seems that space that was outside the direct control of the army allowed even critical reflections of that institution, and thus rethinking, and change, of one's military identity. It is this many-fold interpretation of space that makes Dardel's view a helpful contribution to the ideas about memory processing mentioned above. Reading my sources through Dardel I therefore argue that the negative or positive meanings guardsmen ascribed to space were intended to create, respectively, a difference from, or a similarity or unity with, the peacetime past and wartime present, and that this was done to facilitate the creation of the guardsmen's military identity. The beauty or serenity of landscapes (described before a fight) or the Finnish society they left behind (recalled by occasions such as Christmas) prepared them to endure the anticipated ugliness and noise of the battlefield or the 'dull' time of routine affairs. High mountains, where the air was fresh and people were allegedly more honest - that is, closer to Finns - reminded them in a moment of despair that, after all, there was something worth fighting for in this Bulgarian land. The dirty and foreign appearance of towns (usually reported after a battle or the conclusion of the armistice) was the *alter ego* of both their enemy and their own military identity. At times it may also have facilitated their separation from their wartime military identity or the theatre of war. Space, then, was something that helped the guardsmen to fix, as well as to articulate, their beliefs, desires and feelings regarding the other in recollections.



## **2.4. The organisation of the study and notes on names and transliteration**

There is perhaps no waterproof logic in the arrangement of the guardsmen's texts because practically each single item could be categorised in several ways. My reasons for presenting the different themes in the order just mentioned are the following. The general context for all the guardsmen's actions was being a soldier, a structurally 'true' soldier. Hence I have first outlined the relevant institutions and public memory, structural ideals and expectations of the military identity as well as the men's interpretations and initial processing of it (Chs. 3 to 5). Chapter 3 presents the Finnish and chapter 4 the Russian public memory and, as we shall see, these could overlap as well as disagree or simply ignore each other.

In the theatre of war, public memory and ideals were tested above all by the guardsmen's first battle, that of Gorni Dūbinik, which figures heavily in all recollections. Hence I have first discussed (Chs. 6 to 9) the most obviously military matters: battle, wounds, death, the enemy and army routines outside battle.

The second larger category in my study (Chs. 10 and 11) consists of relations to foreign or other people and space, particularly Bulgarians and Bulgaria, that the guardsmen were supposed to fight for or liberate. The fact that especially the space was also associated with the enemy, the Turks, who ruled it made it partly ambiguous.

Equally ambiguous was religion. Orthodoxy, on the one hand, connected the Bulgarians with the Russians (and thus with 'us') and, on the other, dissociated the Lutheran Finns from either of these because their Eastern Christianity was associated with something not-us, that is, non-Finnish. Islam, for its part, was the enemy's religion, but because the Finns' public memory linked it more with religious devotion or 'oriental' idleness or erotism than 'false' religion or danger of the Turkish faith, religion did not become a uniting point between the Finns and their Russian comrades-at-arms. This third category, revolving around ideological matters, differs from the other two in that, unlike these, it does not contain a common denominator that would unite the guardsmen. Rather, while 'common honour' in battle or 'civilising' efforts with Bulgarians provided a shared context, ideological matters gradually started to divide men (Ch. 12 and part of Ch. 13). The penultimate chapter (13) also describes the end of the wartime process, or the guardsmen's separation from the war and wartime military identity.

Chapters 4 to 13 begin with some introductory notes followed by long summaries of the voices of my sources in the order in which they were originally produced, starting with Wahlberg and ending with Wallin, followed by the main comparative material (Alfthan and Schulman), and comments or augments in the text and footnotes. My intention in proceeding like this was three-fold. First, by long summaries and quotations I wanted to expose men-in-flesh, and to allow them to speak as if for themselves, even if this has sometimes meant a tiresome repetition of things and events. Emphasis is thus laid equally on what guardsmen wrote and what I state in order to let the different 'worlds' remain relatively autonomous while also encountering each other. I could not reach their authentic voices, which at first was my intention, not least because they themselves freely mixed their voices with those of others (newspapers, official documents, etc.). But I hope I have managed to convey an idea of how the guardsmen expressed themselves and what they considered worth remembering.

Second, I wanted to some extent to separate my viewpoints and interpretations from those of my sources to allow my readers to draw their own conclusions, on the one hand, and to show how I read the material, on the other. Bakhtin (1991: 142-3) would say that separating my voice from those of the authors is a way of preventing them from merging into nobody's voice. That explains why I 'discuss' with my sources perhaps less than one might expect. And third, the breaking down of sources

into themes and the author-by-author representation of them helps to trace the guardsmen's individual ways of restating public memory and negotiating their structural position and unwraps the men's perspectives on war in the broad sense of the word.

The dating used by my sources has been preserved, although this may cause some confusion, since both the Julian and Gregorian calendars, or the Old and the New Style, were used. The Finnish Guard generally used the Gregorian calendar, whereas in Russia the Old Style prevailed until early 1918. In the 19th century it lagged twelve days behind the New Style. I have added O.S. or N.S. to dates whenever I have thought it necessary.

In transliteration I have followed the system of the British Library in rendering Cyrillic names and terms. Turkish names are spelled according to modern Turkish with the exceptions mentioned below. Where an established form already exists, I have used that; Alexander II, not Aleksandr II, for example. In some cases, to make printing easier, I have simplified the characters of some languages. Thus the Polish 'ł' and the two Turkish variants of 'i' are rendered as English 'l' and 'i'. Most place names are given in their present form to facilitate their pinpointing on the map. Thus, I write Plovdiv, not Philippopol, and Pazardzhik, not Tatar Pazardzhik. Placenames that no longer exist I have written as they were in the 1870s. If the correct spelling of a placename was impossible to trace I used my authors' version. Most small places mentioned only once in sources are dropped from the text. If possible, the location of the place - except for well-known ones such as Pleven, Plovdiv or Bucharest - is given when it is mentioned for the first time.

There are, however, some exceptions in rendering the place names. I speak of Constantinople, not Istanbul, because the sources unanimously used the Byzantine form, obviously wanting to make some point by that usage. On the other hand, to avoid confusion I speak of the battle of Plovdiv, not of Philippopol, and of Pleven, not Plevna, although both are established expressions. I have retained the names of Orkhanie, Adaköy and San Stefano, rather than Botevgrad, Krichim and Yeşilköy, because I found the former less cumbersome than the latter in this context.

The next chapter introduces the two sides of military identity-building relevant here: 'our' understanding of 'us' or the Finnish public memory regarding military and national traditions and 'our' comprehension of 'not-us' or Finnish attitudes towards Russians and the foreign or other.

### 3. FINNISH PUBLIC MEMORY: NATIONALISM, HEROISM, THE OTHER AND THE TURKS

#### 3.1. Finnish national awakening

Russia conquered Finland in the 1808-9 war with Sweden. For the Russian writing of history, the event was fairly insignificant. The Russians have not even given it a fixed designation but speak vaguely about the ‘annexation of Finland’ (in Russian, *prisoyediniye Finlandii*) to Russia. The episode was totally overshadowed in imperial history by the Franco-Russian war of 1812 (Kiparsky 1945: 41). For Finland and Finns, however, it became an important military event, one that gave the impetus to Finnish national awakening by putting extra vigour into attempts to establish a Finnish state, and into studies and representations of the ‘great’ Finnish past and the heroic defence of Finland against the superior enemy.

Ideas of separating Finland from Sweden had circulated amongst Finland’s mainly Swedish-speaking officers since the mid-18th century, and some serious attempts to do so had been made since the 1780s (Pohlebkin 1969: 97-8). The seeds of nationalistic ideas (in the sense of emphasising one’s own tradition) had at the same time been sowed by romantic Finnish thinkers such as Henrik Gabriel Porthan (1739-1804) and his pupil Eric Lencqvist (1719-1808), both of whom had studied pre-Christian Finnish popular beliefs (or, as they put it, ‘superstitions’). Porthan also laid the foundations of the study of Finnish medieval history. (Anttila 1936: 363-5.)

In this romantic and nascent nationalistic context the military defeat of 1808-9 created a wish to prove that Finns were, after all, morally superior to both Swedes and Russians, even though political history suggested otherwise. As Le Goff (1988: 47-9) put it, losing a war produced a trauma that was overcome by turning away from history and creating instead a mythology. With regard to Swedes, the trauma was caused by the flight of the Swedish army in 1808-9, which from the Finnish point of view was, even much later, not *realpolitik* but a dishonourable deed (Lipponen 1940: 64; Nousiainen 1961: 289, et passim; Wrede 1988: 28-9). In relation to Russians, the problem was how to show loyalty and at the same time build up a separate Finnish identity (cf. Klinge 1972: 11). The latter was officially facilitated by the fact that after the annexation Emperor Alexander I maintained the ancient Swedish constitutional law and promised to respect the Finns’ Lutheran religion (Luntinen 1997: 42).

The first, partial, answer to these identity issues was the emergence of Fennophilia, roughly equivalent to a keen interest in Finnish language, folk life and (idealised) rural or peasant values, which later were taken to be the basic ingredients of the Finnish identity. Originally a branch of German romanticism, Fennophilia flourished in the late 1810s and early 1820s especially among some of Finland’s Swedish-speaking intellectuals and clergymen. The fact that the creation of Finnish nationalism and national mythology was started by members of the Swedish-speaking upper class is not surprising if we consider the privileges and benefits given them by autonomy in running Finnish affairs in the Diet and in the Senate, just as they had done during Swedish rule. To legitimise their new position they had to replace their Swedish identity and past with something more acceptable to the emperor. Thus they turned to Finns or, more exactly, they started to create Finnish cultural identity.<sup>76</sup> I suppose that doing so many of them felt like Snellman,<sup>77</sup> who said that even small nations without

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<sup>76</sup> The issue is discussed by several scholars. See, for example, Klinge (1997: 9-21); Liikanen (1995: 121-2); Luntinen (1997: 44-5); and Screen (1976: 11-12, 15-16).

<sup>77</sup> J.V. Snellman (1806-1881), one of the most important Finnish politicians and philosophers of the autonomy period, laid the philosophical foundations of Fennoman politics.

political significance could be culturally very important and, in fact, better than their political masters (Airas 1981: 229). His example was the Jews.

Early spokesmen of Fennophilia, the university docent A.I. Arwidsson (1791-1858) and the poet, bishop and university professor F.M. Franzén (1772-1847), were unable to distance themselves from their Swedish past.<sup>78</sup> However, their, and especially Franzén's, literary output was of great importance to some of their successors, notably Runeberg (see below), because in the 1810s and '20s Franzén drew attention to the soldiers of the 1808-9 war and claimed them to be a part of the heroic Finnish tradition going back to the Thirty Years' War.<sup>79</sup> (Hautala 1954: 91-4; Koskimies 1936: 7-8; Meurman 1909: 39, 41; Niemi 1980: 48-9; Sarajas 1968: 22-3.) The war, like Runeberg's figures, is sometimes referred to in my sources, as well as in some other contemporary material. For example, broadside ballads now and the drew parallels between the Thirty Years' War and the 1877-8 war (Suistola 1987: 195).

### 3.2. The great and little traditions of Finnish heroism

Fennophilia gradually developed into Fennomania, a fully fledged attempt to create a Finnish state by making Finnish language and folklore *the* cornerstones of Finnish identity. The latter especially was considered to reflect the authentic Finnish identity. (Klinge 1997: 174-5, 180; Liikanen 1995: 33.) Swedish-speaking Finns such as Lönnrot, Runeberg and Topelius played here the leading role and created the great tradition<sup>80</sup> of enfolding Finnish nationalism. They also set the tone for public expression in general. The images and words of Finnish broadside ballads of the 1877-8 war, for example, were clearly marked by the influence of Topelius and Runeberg (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 78). Thus, though the great majority of peasants did not understand Swedish, they learned, or internalised, aspects of the great tradition through translations in both written and oral form. It was also actively transformed into little, or folk, tradition<sup>81</sup> by those not-so-many public figures who, more or less depending on great tradition (cf. Redfield 1989: 42-3), wrote and published in Finnish. In the rest of this chapter I discuss the Finnish great and little traditions on nationalistic thinking and military heroism, which, I suppose, the guardsmen both knew and used in their construction of (wartime) military identity. Thus, to paraphrase Douglas (1986: 58-9), I discuss upper-class and folk-dominated ways of classifying a particular type of information.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> In the case of Arwidsson, at least, this meant the legacy of enlightenment, on the basis of which he publicly advocated liberal ideas incompatible with the Russian emperor's policy. For these he was dismissed, in 1823, from the university and had to move to Sweden. (Leino-Kaukiainen 1996: 128-9.)

<sup>79</sup> This tradition was 'invented' in a more extensive form in Sweden in the mid-1800s (Klinge 1998: 131). Historically it was a fabrication for, according to the Finnish historian Jussi Lappalainen (see his article "Suurvallan eurooppalaistuttajat", in *Helsingin Sanomat*, 19 October 1998), 17th century sources do not single out Finnish soldiers. Their extraordinary bravery was a late 'discovery' that still prevailed at the time of the 1877-8 war (see Meurman 1882: 59-60). It supported the notion of Finns as the exponents of civilisation; the Thirty Years' War was represented as the Finnish-Swedish defence of 'light and freedom', as Meurman (1882: 59) put it. The role of heroic tales in inspiring militarism and encouraging persons to enlist is known from sources independent of mine, too (Watson 1998: 101).

<sup>80</sup> For Redfield (1989: 41-2), great tradition was that of the 'reflective few', the literate people, cultivated 'in schools or temples'. As Redfield implied, it was the tradition created and manipulated by those in, or having, power.

<sup>81</sup> According to Redfield (1989: 41-2), little tradition is that of the 'largely unreflective many', which 'for the most part [is] taken for granted and [is] not submitted to much scrutiny'. Here I do not fully agree. I hold that little tradition, too, is reflected on, albeit more by doing than thinking, in new ways.

<sup>82</sup> It would require another study to examine the various meeting-points of the great and little traditions in Finland. It seems (Liikanen 1995) that key points, apart from fairs, churches and schools, were the 'utilitarian' or 'educational', societies usually established by educated people (or by the Finnish administration) to promote agriculture or temperance, to disseminate the Bible or to collect folklore. They mediated aspects of great tradition (or 'right', 'civilised' behaviour and

Military traditions and nationalism become directly connected in the debate over general conscription in Finland introduced during the 1877-8 war, the polemic on which had started in 1870 but gathered intensity after the Bulgarian atrocities in 1876 and the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war. Many Finnish politicians emphasised the importance of a separate Finnish army; at least one, a leading Fennomane, G.Z. Koskinen (later known as Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen, 1830-1903), stated, in an article published in *Uusi Suometar* in October 1877, that, having a government of its own (that is, being a sovereign state), Finland should have an independent army as well (Kemppainen 1999: 58). I do not think that the guardsmen, at least the NCOs and privates, saw the matter quite like this, but due to the intense public dispute on conscription on the eve of their departure they probably came to think of the link between nation and the army. My sources, particularly Jernvall, clearly suggest that hardly any of the guardsmen opposed the idea that the Diet had adopted when accepting, in mid-January 1878, the law on conscription, namely, that in Finland the conscript should be charged with defence of the throne and the fatherland (meaning Finland) and not the (Russian) empire as the Russian draft statute had stated. (Kemppainen 1999: 62-4.)

### 3.2.1. The great tradition

The first important representative of great tradition relevant for my study is Elias Lönnrot (1802-1884), who compiled the *Kalevala*<sup>83</sup> from oral material that he collected mainly in Russian Karelia. According to Kallio (1994: 91), 'Lönnrot's aim was to compose a folk epic that would tell of the ancient history and past heroes of the Finnish people along similar lines to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*'. Later studies have emphasised the peaceful tones of the *Kalevala* rather than its heroic elements (which make up only a minor part of the work), but Lönnrot himself and his learned contemporaries did not hesitate to upgrade the image of heroes who, for the most part, died young if not always for a noble cause (Niemi 1980: 34-6). It is disputable how widely this heroic image was shared by common Finns (cf. Niemi 1980: 37; Silvasti 1933: 237-83); what is more certain is that with the *Kalevala*, Finnish folk tradition, oral history, literature and language<sup>84</sup> were given a position acceptable to educated people and thus a role in the creation of Finnish nationalism (Anttila 1936: 381-4). From the point of view of my study the importance of *Kalevala* is in breaking ground for a view that the Finns are a respectable people with a great and heroic past; all guardsmen serving with the Finnish Guard and publishing their memoirs held that view.

The second person to have a lasting impact on great tradition as well as on Finnish-speaking common people was Finland's national poet, J.L. Runeberg (1804-1877) (Alhoniemi 1969: 265-6; Kallio 1994: 98). If Lönnrot mythologised the 'timeless' past of the Finnish common man, Runeberg idealised the poetic image of the contemporary peasant and recent Finnish military history.

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manners) to the common people (see Liikanen 1995: 104) and encouraged them to create new ways of thinking, working, acting, making politics and respecting their own culture. By doing this they also reshaped people's identity and their notion of what Finland and Finnishness are (Liikanen 1995: 86-7). As shown by my study, another key point was the press and, to a lesser degree, the broadside ballad.

<sup>83</sup> It was first published in 1835. A much revised edition appeared in 1849. The work was soon translated into Swedish (1841), French (1845) and German (1852), and subsequently into several other languages. At about the same time, in 1831, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura (The Finnish Literature Society) was founded to promote the collection of Finnish language and folklore items by Lönnrot and others. (Anttila 1936: 411; see also Klinge 1972: 14.)

<sup>9</sup> The language of the *Kalevala* was, at least for Lönnrot's educated contemporaries, the true mother tongue of the Finns (Alhoniemi 1969: 284-5).

<sup>10</sup> In Swedish, *Fänrik Ståls sägner*. The first collection appeared in 1848 and the second in 1860. The Finnish translation of the first collection was published in 1867 by Julius Krohn (see Ch. 1, note 20). The 1860 one appeared in Finnish in several parts between 1870 and 1877. (Wrede 1988: 10.)

By doing this he boosted Finnish self-esteem and, for his part, reaffirmed the image of the common Finn as a frank and resolute fellow who was steadfast and trustworthy under all conditions. In his collection of heroic poems, *Tales of ensign Stål*,<sup>85</sup> he did more than anybody else to create the image of the brave Finnish privates (not only, or even principally, officers) of the Finnish war, and the ideal Finnish soldier, not only for his contemporaries but for succeeding generations, right up until the Second World War. (Anttila 1936: 386-7; Klinge 1972: 15; Wrede 1988: 7-9.) In so doing, Runeberg 'reified' what had for some decades circulated both in written and especially in oral form among large circles of people (Niemi 1980: 53, 56).

The *Tales* were 'widely read in schools and quoted from at patriotic events' (Kallio 1994: 101). That the Russian authorities 'who realized [the work's] potential value in diverting Finnish interest away from Sweden' (Kallio 1994: 99) encouraged this myth-making gave the *Tales* even greater weight. Although it was a 'patriotic' reading, the work was neither against Russian rule nor intended to create an anti-Russian Finnish identity but a Finnish nationalism that differed from the earlier, pro-Swedish one, and emphasised both the ability of Finns to stand on their own feet and their loyalty to the emperor. (Cf. Klinge 1997: 181-3.)

Runeberg himself, who was not a politician (Wrede 1988: 35), said that the goal of these poems was to prove that the Finns had suffered a noble defeat and shown that they were men, not cowards (quoted in Vasenius 1927: 99). This, after all, gave the lost war a positive meaning, a meaning applicable in multiple situations: bravery and 'manly' conduct were more important than victory or defeat (cf. Robinson 1999). This probably also explains why the *Tales* were the most quoted text in Finnish recollections of the Russo-Turkish war (Niemi 1980: 113; Varpio 1997: 177), which was by no means lost by the Finns; why they were referred to at the time of the Finnish Winter War (1939-40), which in a sense repeated the defeat of 1809 (Erho 1940: 79; Lipponen 1940: 33, 84); and why they were used by Finnish extremists to justify the attempt at seizing *lebensraum* in Archangel Karelia during the Second World War (Luostarinen 1986: 209).

For my purpose, the *Tales* are noteworthy for four reasons (see Runeberg 1963). First, the work was the first major publication to deal with Finnish military feats, that is, to represent the viewpoint or, rather, the patriotic world view of the defeated and not that of the victor (Wrede 1988: 10-11). Second, despite extolling individual bravery, Runeberg emphasised Finns in general rather than the upper class only, and stressed the constant, though fabricated, nature of Finnish heroism: the soldiers of 1808-9 were re-enacting the feats of their forbears in the chain of Finnish military heroes.<sup>86</sup> Third, bravery, especially feats performed for the fatherland, was portrayed not only as a soldier's duty, but as his sacred obligation; Runeberg created an image of the nationalistic warrior who was at once both peasant and soldier (Airas 1981: 280-1).<sup>87</sup> And, fourth, there was almost no place for women in the life of Runeberg's hero. All that they could do was support men in carrying out their military duty. Thus Runeberg gave material for two major readings of his work. The one was a kind of *heros* cult not so unlike the cults of antiquity (Alhoniemi 1969: 132-5). The other was a Hegelian (but also Snellmanian and even Topelian) ideal, according to which correct, or morally right, individual activity always aims at, or is inseparable from, collective and national prosperity. To complicate things further,

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<sup>86</sup> In addition to Franzén (see above), the same idea was repeated in poems of the literary critic, poet and professor of aesthetics and modern literature at the University of Helsinki, Fredrik Cygnaeus (1807-1881). In his "De sjuttio vid Demmin" (1864, The seventy [Finnish cavalymen] by Demmin), Cygnaeus praised the collective bravery of Finnish soldiers in the Thirty Years' War, as well as their unwavering loyalty to their king, Gustavus II Adolphus. (Alhoniemi 1969: 136-7; see also Niemi 1980: 55-6.)

<sup>87</sup> The idea goes back at least to ancient Rome and Cincinnatus (fifth century BCE).

Runeberg intermixed eulogy and irony to such an extent that the reader (or listener) had difficulty deciphering the poet's message. (Niemi 1980: 62-72.) This multivocal nature of the work perhaps explains why both the Swedish-speaking elite and the Finnish-speaking peasantry could claim it as their 'own'.

The heroic past, re-created by present deeds, was also emphasised by the writer, journalist and professor of history Zachris Topelius. He stressed military heroism or identity as such less than its transformation into love of fatherland as expressed in carrying out one's duty in the service of one's native country.<sup>88</sup> The main work through which Topelius suggested the reading of Finnish history as examples of heroism of the Finnish people was his long novel *Fälskärs berättelser* (Tales of an army surgeon; here Topelius followed Runeberg's lead in letting history be told from the viewpoint of a person with military experience). The work, which covered a period from the early 17th century to the 1770s, was first published in feuilletons in the Swedish-language *Helsingfors Tidningar*<sup>89</sup> (1851-66), and soon after (1853-67) as a multi-volume book. Its first chapters dealt extensively with the heroism of the Finnish (and Swedish) cavalrymen of the Thirty Years' War. The story itself was told, according to Topelius, towards the end of the 1828-9 Russo-Turkish war. A considerable part of the work was written on the eve of, during and in the wake of the Crimean War and may thus be understood as a comment on proper Finnish conduct in war (bravery, but also co-operation between different social groups or classes in a common project) and on the 'right' relation between ruler and ruled (that is, mutual loyalty). (Klinge 1998: 24, 292-300; Lagerlöf 1920: 324-39; Niemi 1980: 73.)

Another important contribution made by Topelius to Finnish patriotism-cum-heroism was his *Boken om vårt land* (The book on our land), first published in 1875, soon translated into Finnish, and reissued several times. A text book in seven parts for elementary schools, it described extensively the Finnish landscape (in fact, one might say that Topelius, more than any other Finn, created ways to see Finnish space as the abode of peace and natural beauty), people, folklore (the *Kalevala*) and Finnish history (with separate parts for Catholic Finland, from the mid-1100s to the early 1500s, the war of 1808-9, and 'modern times', that is, the Russian period until the time of writing the book). (Topelius 1875.) What *Vårt land* said of Finnish history, people and landscape rephrased much of what Runeberg had written in his *Tales* and was little short of a normative standard for Finns in the last quarter of the 19th century (Knuutila & Paasi 1995: 75-6; Wrede 1988: 11).

The lessons Topelius wanted to teach were, first, that Finns had a land and a long history and tradition of which to be proud, and, second, that they should therefore love their country and distinguish themselves as Finns, as bearers of virtues derived from the heroes of the *Kalevala*, the Thirty Years' War and the Finnish war. In other words, not unlike the ancient Roman historians, Topelius taught Finns to respect the past as a model for the present and the future. More than Lönnrot or Runeberg, Topelius emphasised that Finnish patriotism and Finnish identity were not incompatible with being a loyal imperial subject or a good neighbour to Sweden (cf. Klinge 1997: 183; 1998, passim). The implication of Topelius's argument was that loyalty to the emperor was possible as long as it served the homeland and did not challenge people's newly found identity as Finns. The same would appear to apply to the guardsmen's imperial fidelity: supporting the emperor was tantamount to supporting the creation of Finnish society. However, if these two conflicted, Topelius clearly suggested

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<sup>88</sup> I would say that Topelius tried to reconcile Finnish folklore (which, despite Lönnrot, in the opinion of the clergy and many other educated people was mere 'superstition' [cf. Laurila 1956: 132-5, 141]) with 'real history' by arguing that oral folk tradition and written history were both part of Finnish history.

<sup>89</sup> Topelius was its editor from 1842 to 1860. Through it, as well as his university lectures on Finnish history from the mid-1850s to 1875, he exercised considerable influence on his educated contemporaries (Nyberg 1950b: 412, 432).

that loyalty to Finland should take precedence over imperial affiliations. Here Topelius's political views and philosophy of history were close to those of Snellman (see Airas 1981: 209-10).

Topelius also wrote (in 1858) words for "Porilaisten marssi" (The March of the Björneborg [Pori] Regiment), also known as Bonaparte's March,<sup>90</sup> one of the main pieces played by the Finnish Guard. The better known words were penned by Runeberg and published in his *Tales* in 1860. (Nousiainen 1961: 201-3; Vasenius 1927: 95, 106.) It seems that it was these texts, combined with the 50th anniversary of the Finnish war in 1858, that made the tune so popular; before the mid-1800s it was hardly known to the larger public (Rein 1918: 84), but after that it became, so to speak, the second Finnish national anthem.

A peculiar kind of great tradition heroism was developed by the upper class regarding the Finnish peasant. It was an idealistic view of life in the countryside, a view<sup>91</sup> that obviously affected the writing of the authors of my sources as well. The image was drawn above all by Runeberg, Snellman (cf. Klinge 1998: 167-8) and Topelius. According to it, the Finnish peasant worked hard for the best of his society, not so much for his family or village. He was honest, trustworthy, stubborn, persistent, taciturn and inclined to melancholy. (Kemiläinen 1993: 88, 103-5; Nikki 1991: 28-9.) The archetype of this 'true' Finnish peasant, repeated in Topelius's *Vårt land*, was Saarijärven Paavo (Paavo of Saarijärvi), as described in a well-known poem by Runeberg (written in 1830). He was a somewhat slow but patient, humble, loyal, helpful and God-fearing tiller, whose nature was arguably determined by his environment. (Ketonen 1989: 42-3; cf. Koskimies 1936: 12-13.)<sup>92</sup>

This image was provokingly challenged in 1870 by Aleksis Kivi's (1834-1872) groundbreaking Finnish-language novel *The seven brothers*. This violation of the elite-constructed public memory was avenged, in the same year, by August Ahlqvist. He claimed, among other things, that Kivi, the future national writer, conveyed an untrue image of Finnish country people, which, according to Ahlqvist, should in fact be one of a 'taciturn and solemn people, having cleared, and still clearing, wilderness in this land' (quoted in Ketonen 1989: 54).<sup>93</sup> Kivi, in contrast, represented his characters (seven peasant brothers) as articulate and, from the point of view of the established order, antisocial rascals, always ready with pranks. Finnish country folk appeared in his novel, and in some of his plays as well, as uneducated drunkards who could be alternately brutal and frivolous. Briefly, the novel's characters not only contradicted the idealistic view of Runeberg and others, but questioned it. (Alhoniemi 1972: 44; Ketonen 1989: 80-1.) For common Finns, however, Kivi's characters probably provided a more plausible context of social communication than did those of Runeberg and his peers (

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<sup>90</sup> "Porilaisten marssi" was originally composed to glorify the 1632 victory of Swedish and Finnish troops over Catholic Germans at Lützen, where the leader of the victorious army, King Gustavus II Adolphus, died (Nousiainen 1961: 201-3). The Pori Regiment was famous for its bravery (see, for example, Holm 1977: 49).

<sup>91</sup> It was part of the more general European 'discovery of the people' (as P. Burke [*Popular culture in early modern Europe*, London 1983, Ch. 1] called it), and popular culture by the educated classes.

<sup>92</sup> As Ketonen (1989: 95-8; see also Suutala 1986: 238-9) has argued there is hardly anything specially Finnish in Paavo's character but rather he was an ideal type, a universal man invested with virtues borrowed from the classical Greek and Roman worlds (Koskimies 1936: 16, 22, 32-3, 40-1).

<sup>93</sup> Perhaps it is because Kivi's work showed signs of a return of what Bakhtin (1995) called carnivalism, or the common people's laughing culture, that it came as such a shock to many educated people. At the time of the creation of the 'noble' Finnish language and culture, Kivi consciously deviated from this project. If this is true, it may partly explain why the language of my sources, even that of less well-educated authors, is rather conventional, closer to the Runebergian or Topelian great tradition than the folk or 'laughing' culture: the debate served as a means to establish the borders of 'good' and 'bad' Finnish literary works, and, consciously or unconsciously, guardsmen writing in Finnish had drawn the 'right' conclusion.



Meriläinen 1927: 64). Nevertheless, the one did not exclude the other and, depending on the case, either could be invoked (an example is Erho 1940: 75, 121).

### 3.2.2. The little tradition

What, then, was the little tradition so powerfully evoked by Kivi? The Finnish little tradition of heroism and war has been studied much less than the great tradition. However, we know that the Thirty Years' War had created an oral tradition, traces of which were still extant in Finland in the early 1800s (SK 2 January 1877, p. 3). We also know that wars and tensions between Sweden and Russia from the late 16th century until Finland's annexation by Russia in 1809 had created an extensive oral tradition about courageous irregulars, euphemistically called 'guerrillas', who seized huge amounts of booty or, almost single-handed, beat off the enemy's whole army (see KT 1984: 383-404).<sup>94</sup> The Swedish army tradition in Finland also knew adventurous patrol-men, who played cat and mouse with the enemy (Brakel 1994: 26). Alongside this, the 18th and 19th century Finnish oral tradition, especially the women's tradition in Russo-Finnish border regions, abounded with critical, often ironic, representations of war. According to them, there was nothing particularly heroic in war; in contrast, it was a tragedy for common people. (Niemi 1980: 36-7.)

A new impetus for little tradition was given by the most remarkable early Finnish-speaking representative of Fennomanian ideas, Jaakko Juteini (1781-1855). He was a representative of the enlightenment, a pupil of Porthan and Franzén, and the secretary of the administrative council of the town of Viipuri, near St Petersburg. After several amendments, his poem "Suomen laulu" (The Song of Finland, 1810) became the well-known popular tune "Arvon mekin ansaitsemme" (We, Too, Are Worth Respecting), which has been regarded as the first Finnish national anthem (Niemi 1980: 79). It was sung in many crofts in the 19th century and even later (Haavio 1932: 58-9; Silvanto 1933: 236).<sup>95</sup>

Generally speaking, Juteini inspired his Finnish-speaking countrymen to appreciate their own Finnish language and history, and to think more of the present than the 'glorious' past (see Alhoniemi 1969, *passim*; Laurila 1956: 189-95). He ascribed to the enlightened tradition of criticising war and never tired of emphasising its harmful effects upon society and the horrors it would entail. His point was that only under conditions of peace could Finland develop into a civilised nation, thus anticipating some major ideas of Snellman. (Alhoniemi 1969: 50; Niemi 1980: 49-52.) The idea was, of course, known to contemporary educated Swedish-speaking Finns, too (see Ehrström 1986: 36).

Juteini's followers, the folk poets of the mid-1800s, did not oppose war (Laurila 1956: 192-3), but the great tradition soldier, who purposely followed the example of the heroes of the past, performing great feats and seeking a glorious death, was foreign to them. Rather, at a time, in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, when war became everybody's concern, folk poets simply admired those who they considered brave and reliable combatants of their own time, for example, the valiant soldiers of the Crimean War. (Alhoniemi 1969: 260-1; Haavio 1932: 58-9; Niemi 1980: 53.) They also praised, as did the Finnish peasant Johan Rännäri, a volunteer in the Crimean War, in one of his broadside ballads, the 'privileges' (free food, shelter and fine clothes) given the men of the Finnish Guard (Haavio 1932: 51-2).<sup>96</sup>

Other authors of broadside ballads<sup>97</sup> of the Crimean War emphasised the same virtues that the Finnish guardsmen extolled when describing their departure in 1877. Isak Lindberg from Kemiö (an

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<sup>94</sup> Fennander, Lindman and Jernvall, for example, told similar stories, see Ch. 9.2.

<sup>95</sup> Some poems inserted in Lindman's little book (1880: 52-6), and praising the Finnish Guard, resemble those of Juteini.

<sup>96</sup> Rännäri's ballads were rather popular in their time (Haavio 1932: 52-3).

<sup>97</sup> In the 17th and 18th centuries, most Finnish broadside ballads were written by educated men such as priests and other

island near Turku in south-western Finland) praised the readiness of the ‘Finnish boy’ to fight, when needed, ‘with joy’, his bravery and toughness, his ‘obligation’ in carrying out his duties, his skills in shooting and his ability to beat the enemy (Haavio 1932: 58-61).<sup>98</sup> Their tone was echoed after the late 1860s in a great number of poems and stories celebrating (or remembering) the Finnish war of 1808-9. These were published in Finnish and, to a lesser extent, in Swedish, too. Some of their authors even collected the oral tradition of the war,<sup>99</sup> which was also immortalised in the erection of war memorials (Haataja 1949: 81).<sup>100</sup>

At the same time, in his play “Olivretki Schleusingenissä” (A beer-drinking expedition into Schleusingen, 1866<sup>101</sup>) Aleksis Kivi mocked and parodied romantic heroism by showing that the most important things for soldiers (in this case contemporary Bavarians and Prussians fighting against Austria) were flagon and flirt. In Kivi’s play soldiers did not pursue glory or heroism (the ‘main character’ was not any single man but a military unit) but, on the contrary, only chatted, often hyperbolically or ironically, of fighting and, in fact, waged their fiercest battle (against their fellows-at-arms) over a barrel of beer. They also constantly quarrelled with or played pranks on each other, and paid only lip-service to officers and army regulations.<sup>102</sup> Niemi (1980: 90-3) has suggested that Kivi’s play may reflect the rebellion of a generation that had not experienced war against the heroic idealism of their fathers. And, indeed, there are signs in my sources (particularly Palander 1881) that indicate a critique of the structural notions of war.

In the 1870s, educated poets began to stress more the cultivation of peaceful means in constructing Finnish society. But public opinion, rather than ascribing to intellectual praising of peace, obviously held, as did a character from Topelius’s *Fälskärs berättelser*, that even the weakest of Finns matched ten enemies.. (Alhoniemi 1972: 34-5; Niemi 1980: 9-14.)

How well-known, then, were great tradition ideals among the common folk? We may suppose that in oral form some of their main themes and implications (for example, emphasis on the bravery of Finnish people as expressed in the Thirty Years’ War and the 1808-9 war; loyalty to the emperor as a guarantee of building up Finland as the national territory of Finns; belief in education and dutiful execution of one’s work as the main props of future Finnish prosperity) were shared by a large stratum of people. Approximately ten per cent of the common folk were able to read (Leino-Kaukiainen 1996: 128) and thus to put the written words of both traditions into oral circulation. We may also be sure that, as in any society, both the great and little traditions were in a constant state of flux, and that this process was accelerated in the 1870s by sweeping changes in social and economic life. This was especially true of military and national traditions, which in each case had to explain separately the reason for war and the nature of the enemy. Due to this, people in general, and soldiers in particular, tended to accept the image put about by Russian propaganda, though they made it more familiar for themselves by seeking, or inventing, parallels in their public memory. This way, too, the war became

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state functionaries. During the 19th century the number of writers from the ranks of the peasants increased, and the genre in general started to express, if not the lower class perspective, at least ‘folk’s’ own interpretations of the position into which it was put by the upper class. (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982; Niemi 1980.)

<sup>98</sup> Some of Lindberg’s poems were re-published in 1878 (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 1-2).

<sup>99</sup> To take an example at random, one of the collectors was the writer, journalist and philosopher K.A. Castrén (1845-1873). Some of his collections appeared posthumously in *Joukahainen* no. 7 in 1873 (pp. 124-41). *Joukahainen* was a publication of the Ostrobothnian Student’s Union.

<sup>100</sup> It may be no coincidence that this was concomitant with a revived interest in Kalevala-type folk poetry. After the 1860s several folklorists and linguists wanted to prove that the *Kalevala* was a true creation of the Finnish people, not a compilation by Lönnrot (Harmaja 1949: 92-3).

<sup>101</sup> It was loosely based on contemporary newspaper articles of the 1866 Prusso-Austrian War.

<sup>102</sup> “Olivretki Schleusingenissä”, in: Aleksis Kivi, *Teokset* 1, Helsinki 1972, pp. 147-227.

more acceptable, as both great and little traditions suggested, as an indispensable, though not necessarily amiable, part of structure. It was not openly challenged, but continued with new formulations, the construction of which was based, for example, on ambiguity in reading Runeberg and the contradictory notions of peasants by educated Fennomans and folk poets, oral literature and men like Kivi.

### 3.3. The Finnish Guard up to 1877

The above hypothesis is supported by the loyal support shown the emperor by the Finnish Guard, an elite troop created after the Russian annexation of Finland. Although its traditions were best known to the guardsmen, some events in the Guard's pre-1877 history (above all, the Crimean War and the commemoration of the Guard's 50th anniversary in 1858) were known or celebrated by a large number of people.

Immediately after the annexation, the future of the Finnish military looked gloomy. In 1810, on the advice of the Finnish Estate, the emperor decided not to maintain a regular Finnish military but to demobilise the army comprising some 22,000 men. In 1812 they were replaced by a 20,000 strong Russian force that by the eve of the Russo-Turkish war had reached 24,000 (Luntinen 1997: 47, 121).

Many members of the suspended military corps disagreed with the abolishment, and proposed the re-creation of a Finnish army. This was accepted during the Franco-Russian war in 1812, and three light infantry regiments on a recruit basis<sup>103</sup> were established in 1812 and 1813, each consisting of two battalions or 1,200 men. The first unit, created in Viipuri on 18 September 1812, was the Third Finnish Infantry Regiment. To educate officers, a military educational institution, the Finnish Cadet Corps, was founded in 1812. The language of command was, at first, Swedish and, after 1828, Russian. Official records were kept in Russian and some also in Swedish.<sup>104</sup> Men for these three regiments were recruited from all over Finland except the far north.<sup>105</sup> Recruits from the Viipuri district (the south-easternmost part of Finland, which had been incorporated into Russia back in 1721) were conscripted; those from other provinces enlisted. The regiments were separate from Russian units and had their own officers and budgets. In peacetime, the commander-in-chief of the three regiments, as well as all other troops in Finland, was the emperor's personal representative in the Grand Duchy of Finland, the governor-general, who was thus both a civil and a military servant. (Hannula 1936: 334-5; Seitkari 1951: 22-4.)

After its re-creation, the Finnish army and military education were reorganised several times. In 1827, the Finnish regiments were divided into three rifle brigades, each consisting of two battalions. To improve the training of young officers and NCOs, an additional training battalion had been established at Parola, a hundred kilometres or so north-west of Helsinki, in 1817. In December 1824, the battalion moved to the Finnish capital, and in 1829 it was renamed the Life Guard's (after 1871 the Third) Finnish Sharpshooter Battalion<sup>106</sup> (in Russian, Lejb-Gvardii 3-go Strelkovago Finskago

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<sup>103</sup> This meant that the majority of men did not serve continuously but assembled for 30 days training in the summer, as was common practice in peacetime Russia.

<sup>104</sup> This information is drawn from several sources: Gripenberg (1911: 895); Luntinen (1997: 55-6, 64-5); Screen (1976: 15, 243-4); and WM (p. 75, note).

<sup>105</sup> In the 1870s the southern and most westerly parts of Finland were well represented in the Finnish Guard. Of the 22 guardsmen who died in the Guard's first battle, Gornii Dübnik (see Ch. 6.2.), on 24 October 1877, all came from these two areas (PK 467; Lindgren 1878: 90-1).

<sup>106</sup> Screen (1976: 245) has translated the name as the Guard's Finnish Rifle Battalion and Drury (1994: 11) speaks in general of the Guard Rifle Brigade's battalions. To make things even more complicated, each of the infantry line divisions

bataliona), subsequently referred to as the Finnish Guard. In 1830-1, and again after the Crimean War, the number of troops was reduced, and in 1867 the Finnish force consisted of one guard of recruits, the Finnish Guard, and an insignificant naval force (abolished in 1880). The final noteworthy change before the abolishment of other Finnish troops in 1901 and the Finnish Guard in 1905 occurred in December 1878. That month the statute of 1874, which established a regular conscript army in Russia, was extended to cover Finland.<sup>107</sup> As to its place in the imperial military system, the Finnish Guard considered itself as part of the imperial elite forces, the Life Guard, not of the (ordinary) Russian army<sup>108</sup> (Gripenberg 1905: 144; Meurman 1882: 64-5). On the eve of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8, the Guard's peacetime strength was 679 men and its wartime strength 863, divided into four companies.<sup>109</sup>

The Finnish Guard was summoned to the front for the first time during the December 1830 Polish revolt. According to local Russian officers, the command was welcomed with 'thundering joy'. The Guard marched west, arriving on Polish soil in March 1831. Thus far the guardsmen had neither seen nor heard anything of their adversary, and when the enemy finally did attack, it was not a human one but an epidemic, *cholera morbus*. Not daunted, the Guard kept up its advance and in mid-May experienced its baptism of fire. The Guard's first casualties numbered 19 wounded and eight dead. Fighting continued all summer until the fall of Warsaw on 30 August 1831 (O.S.). Several officers were awarded imperial medals for their bravery in the storming of the Polish capital, and the Guard collectively merited the Standard of St Gregorius.<sup>110</sup> But the price the Guard paid for war was enormously high. It has been calculated that the number of dead exceeded 400, almost all of whom had perished in some epidemic. (Gripenberg 1905: 43-4, 49-87, 101; Pohlebkin 1969: 59.)

After the Polish insurrection the Guard spent some 18 years in peace. When the Hungarians rebelled against their Habsburg master in 1849, Emperor Nicholas I, considering himself guardian of the legitimate order not only in Russia but, when needed, elsewhere, too, decided to send some troops to restore order in Hungary. Among these units was the Finnish Guard, which, according to the order of the day (14 May 1849), was summoned 'to the State's western border'. The Guard was shipped from Helsinki across the Baltic Sea to Riga, where it stayed until 29 June. From Riga the Guard advanced to Brest-Litovsk, modern Brest, not far from the then Austro-Hungarian border, where it spent the whole period of military operations. It seems that the Finnish guardsmen did not take part in campaigns. Nevertheless, they had again to fight a familiar enemy, disease, in this case, dysentery.

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also had a sharpshooter company. Hence, to avoid confusion, I have stuck to a literal translation of the denotation.

<sup>107</sup> The history of the Finnish Guard is compiled from Gripenberg (1911: 895-6); Hannula (1936: 336-41); Luntinen (1997: 57, 68-9); Screen (1976: 245-6, 250); and Seitkari (1951: 21-2, 26).

<sup>108</sup> This may sound like splitting hairs, but it is not. As we shall see below, Finnish loyalty was not so much to Russia as to the emperor, and the attitude of the Finnish Guard was much the same.

<sup>109</sup> Of these, officers accounted, from second lieutenants to the battalion's commander, for 30. The number of NCOs was 76, meaning a wartime increase of eight. In addition there were musicians (46 according to PK 467), one signal-man for the whole battalion and five for each company. Men included 80 jefreiters or NCO trainees (increase eight) and 640 sharpshooters (increase 108). The non-combatant part of the troop included two doctors, a chaplain, a musical director, the battalion's and the companies' clerks, dressers and stretcher-bearers, and the service corps. The whole wartime strength was 964. (PK 467.) According to Hiisivaara (1968: 35), the number of those leaving in early September was, however 1,055, of whom 719 were sharpshooters (including jefreiters), 205 of them newly enlisted (Gripenberg 1905: 198).

<sup>110</sup> In histories of the Guard (for example, Gripenberg 1905 and 1911, Seitkari 1951), the Finnish participation in suppressing the Polish uprising is either passed over without comment or emphasis is given to the honour it brought the Guard. Only the author of an article in *Hufvudstadsbladet* in 1927 noted that 'it is not pleasant today to remember that Finnish soldiers were helping to suppress a people fighting for its liberty, but one has to take into account that [public] opinion then was different' (EvW 1927).

Their losses are not reported, but they seem to have been low. The Guard returned to Helsinki in mid-October 1849. (Gripenberg 1905: 135-7.)

After the Hungarian campaign the Guard spent some years ‘honing its military skills’. It also received some new equipment, among other things, weapons. When the Crimean War broke out in October 1853, the Guard was at first left in reserve. Not until 5 March 1854 was it summoned to St Petersburg, where it arrived nine days later. (Gripenberg 1905: 140-4, 150-1.) The Finnish press described the Guard’s departure with enthusiasm. The Young, or radical, Fennomane Helsinki-based *Morgonbladet*, for example, informed its readers on 20 March 1854 that the square where the emperor had reviewed the Guard before its departure had been ‘full of people, all of whom certainly bade our soldiers farewell with the common hope that in the coming battles they would stand or fall in a manly way’ (quoted in Gripenberg 1905: 151). A party was held for the departing men, and toasts were drunk to the health of the emperor, his family and the Guard. A song written by Topelius was sung, admonishing the guardsmen to behave in the manner of their forbears in the Thirty Years’ War and reminding them of the loyalty the Finns had always shown to the ruler because, as Topelius emphasised, this loyalty was tantamount to their love of their fatherland, Finland.<sup>111</sup>

In St Petersburg the Guard at first took part in securing the Russian capital, which was menaced by an ally of Turkey in the Crimean War, the British. On 9 May 1854 the Guard was summoned to Pavlovsk, the imperial estate some kilometres outside St Petersburg, to protect the emperor. Because Nicholas I put little trust in other persons, the order indicates that the Finnish guardsmen were considered among his most loyal subjects. Thus it is no wonder that at the end of July 1854, the emperor elevated the Guard among his Life Guards. Two months later the Finnish Guard was commanded to the front. On 28 September it left Pavlovsk for Krasnoye Selo, its regular drilling place since 1829, located some 25 kilometres outside St Petersburg. From there it advanced into Polish territory, where it spent the rest of the war, not returning to Finland until 1856. During this period, the guardsmen neither saw the enemy nor fired a single shot. Nevertheless their losses were some 650 men, all of whom died from various diseases. In addition, another 1,000 fell ill (the sick ones being replaced by reservists). The poor health record is attributed to inadequate clothing, a monotonous diet, unhygienic conditions and the ensuing epidemics. (Gripenberg 1905: 153-7, 162-5; 175-85; 1911: 897.)

The most noteworthy event in the Guard’s history between the Crimean and the Russo-Turkish wars was its 50th anniversary, which was celebrated in Helsinki in early 1858. The jubilee, however, did not so much emphasise the Guard as a unit of the Russian army as a successor of the allegedly famous Finnish troops who defeated the Germans in the Thirty Years’ War or the Russians at Narva in 1700, at Ruotsinsalmi, on the south Finnish coast, in 1790, and at several places during the Finnish war of 1808-9. (Vasenius 1927: 96-7.) The most likely reason was that, lacking a tradition of its own, as an elite troop would usually have (Deák 1990: 17), the Finns tried to create one. Because the 50 years of Russian service offered no substantial material for such a tradition and, moreover, because national ideas were circulating at that time, the Guard’s ‘tradition’ was linked to ‘famous’ Finnish military events. Thus, when the Guard left for the Balkan front in 1877, its position was somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, it was considered a bastion of Finnish loyalty to the emperor and his, not so much Russia’s, battle against his enemies and, on the other, it was increasingly becoming part of the upper class-dominated creation of Finnish nationalism.

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<sup>111</sup> The full text of the song is quoted in Gripenberg (1905: 152-3).

### 3.4. Attitudes towards Russians

In general, the same ambiguity prevailed in Finnish attitudes towards Russians. In the Finnish nationalistic interpretation<sup>112</sup> it has been common practice to trace Finnish anti-Russian attitudes, the 'ryssäviha' (hate of Russians) that flourished from the late 1880s to the end of the Second World War, back to the early 1800s. Sarajas (1968: 47), for example, 'found' its roots in the 1840s, that is, in the most reactionary times of Emperor Nicholas I. But in my opinion there is no unbroken chain of Finnish hatred of Russians.<sup>113</sup> Rather than being a question of ethnic antagonism, Finnish attitudes towards Russians depended on social and political vicissitudes (cf. Bulgarin 1996). In other words, they are examples of ways of categorising the foreign or other on a scale ranging from 'slightly different' to 'totally alien'.<sup>114</sup>

The key to Finnish attitudes towards Russians was the emperor, who administered Finland directly, independent of the Russian ministries. It is true that since 1863 Finland had a Diet of its own, but until 1886 its power was strictly limited and the real power lay in the hand of Emperor Alexander II who, let us not forget, was immensely popular in Finland (Evw 1927). Moreover, at the time of the 1877-8 war the four Estates at the Diet in reality represented no more than a mere quarter of Finns. Therefore for the rest, who were mainly peasants, their relation to the emperor was very important.

In general it seems that a majority of Finns accepted the authority of the Russian emperor as God-given, just as they had long accepted the Swedish king, and held the prevailing state of affairs, the *status quo*, as normal (Brakel 1994: 61; Meurman 1909: 218-21; Pohlebkin 1969: 57-8, 63-5). In other words, personal loyalty was more important than national politics. This was particularly true of Fennomans. On the eve of the war liberal Swedish-speaking bourgeoisie had more reservations in showing collective (or personal) loyalty to the emperor (Kemppainen 1999: 31-2). However, at that time Finnish public opinion had still not developed into full-fledged political nationalism and overt state-building accompanied by active resistance to Russia<sup>115</sup> (see Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 38; Klinge 1997: 35). Rather the scene was dominated by a web of personal relations centring on the sovereign, who alone was considered the giver and protector of Finnish autonomy (Alhoniemi 1969: 59, 64).<sup>116</sup> This does not necessarily mean a vertical power structure but, as Thompson (1996: 58-9) has shown in another context, a mutual dependence: the ruled do not only submit; they also know how to use their submission on one occasion to get, or negotiate, advances on another. This seems to be the case with the Finnish praise of the emperor as well: for its part it constructed his power, which, in turn, guaranteed the guardsmen's position. Only gradually, and increasingly after the death of Alexander II in 1881, were the Fennomanian sense of cultural superiority and the belief in promoting Finnish interests within the political system of imperial Russia replaced by political rejection of, and a power struggle with, Russia (see Alhoniemi 1972: 28-9).

The importance of the emperor for Finns was highlighted by the fact that social relations with Russians tended to be accidental. Most Finns seldom came in contact with them, because, apart

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<sup>112</sup> For Finnish historiography of the 1800s and early 1900s, see Liikanen 1995: 41-69.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Grotenfelt 1891: 32. According to Hiisivaara-Hela (1982: 45), in printed material of the 1870s it was still possible to use rather neutrally the word 'ryssä', or 'Rus', to indicate Russians. Only two decades later, however, use of the term had become very pejorative.

<sup>114</sup> See Billig (1995: 79-81) for such categorisation.

<sup>115</sup> It seems reasonable to put the beginnings of overt political Finnish nationalism somewhere in the late 1880s and early 1890s, when Russian politics shifted from the liberal legacy of Alexander II to attempts to restrict Finnish autonomy (see Grotenfelt 1891: 16-17, 32-3).

<sup>116</sup> This was also roughly the position of J.V. Snellman in his later years (see his article about the days of Emperor Alexander II in *Morgonbladet* 2 March 1880). Political nationalism hardly features in my sources.

from merchants, administrative functionaries and garrisoned soldiers, totalling some tens of thousands, there were very few Russians in Finland; moreover, these few were concentrated in the bigger towns in the south-west, south and south-east of the country. (Luntinen 1997: 42, 49-51.) This lack of intensive, long-lasting, face-to-face ties with Russians resulted in a variety of attitudes towards them. At a higher social level they ranged from politicising the ethnic factor (dissociating oneself from Russians and demanding full political independence) to mild critique, or total acceptance, of the Russian administration and its individual representatives in Finland (Klinge 1972; Meriläinen 1927: 88-104). The prevailing, and mildly ridiculing, popular notion held (Great) Russians as lively, light-hearted, *laissez-faire* people who were not (yet) corrupted by modernity (S 1878a: 18-19) but were in many respects indifferent or negligent (Ervasti 1918: 111). While this indicates a sense of cultural superiority typical of many people (see Birnbaum 1971), more negative attitudes were expressed in the late 1800s by some upper-class Finnish nationalists (examples are Ervasti 1918; and Genetz 1870). On the other hand, the most favourable attitudes, too, were expressed by noble, and mainly Swedish-speaking, males in the Russian administration or army.<sup>117</sup> According to Klinge (1997: 47, 172), they were loyal politically to Russia and culturally to Finland. They defended autocracy and were not interested in constitutional questions, since for them ‘Finland’ was more a way of living than a political entity (cf. Lagerlöf 1920: 353-64).<sup>118</sup>

At the level of the common people, attitudes were created more by hearsay than by factual knowledge or one’s social position, and found their expression in stereotypes. Oral tradition hated the foe, particularly Cossacks, of the early 18th century, when Russians occupied Finland (1714-21, see KT 1984: 314-55), and this resulted in mistrust, especially in western Finland. However, in the 19th century, the Fennomane great tradition standpoint, which gave due share to both the emperor and the native country, prevailed among the common people, too. According to one view, in the first half of the 19th century oral tradition held that ‘the gracious emperor’ had taken Finland in 1809 in order to support Finns with endless Russian storehouses full of flour (Puntila 1947: 463).<sup>119</sup> According to a tradition from the early 1800s, relations between Finns and Russian soldiers stationed in Finland were pragmatic. (Klinge 1997: 11; Topelius 1875: 205.) In other words, Russians were tolerated but seldom socially accepted, for instance, as marriage partners (Luntinen 1997: 51-2).<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, when Russia increased the strength of her troops in Finland during the Crimean War, Russian soldiers were warmly welcomed and Russian war efforts were lavishly supported both financially and morally (*Åbo Tidningar* 3 February and 8 April 1854, quoted in Nyberg 1950a: 299). The anti-Russian voices of students, especially from Ostrobothnia, formed a minority that was, however, to become increasingly

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<sup>117</sup> In the army during autonomy officers of Finnish origin numbered approximately 3,300. Their proportion was especially high in the period from the Crimean War to the actual formation of conscript troops in Finland, in 1881. (Screen 1976: 16-17, 287, 289.)

<sup>118</sup> This may be true, but I think that one possible explanation for the loyalty, especially that shown by high-ranking officers, is that men in the Russian army considered themselves first of all military functionaries, irrespective of which nationalities it comprised, or who commanded it. That was also what they were taught in the army; their training did not include politics. Deák (1990) says roughly the same of the contemporary multinational Habsburg officers. As I try to show, especially Alftan and Schulman who served in Russian units seem to support this hypothesis.

<sup>119</sup> The story is told, for example, by Bulgarin (1996: 86); Grotenfelt (1891: 4); S (1878a: 17); and Saarenheimo (1984: 239). Such stories were strengthened during the famine years, 1867-8, when the Russian government sent some flour to starving people (Koskelainen 1918: 79). Providing someone with flour or refusing to do so was an important sign of loyalty in recollections of the Finnish war of 1808-9 as well (Holm 1977: 37-8).

<sup>120</sup> In 1857, Pietari Mansikka (1825-1871), a Finnish-speaking poet of peasant origin, published a poem “*Talonpojan laulu*” (The Song of a Peasant) in which he stated that Finnish peasants were accustomed to marrying their children young, but not to foreigners, because such marriages would ruin the Finnish nation (Alhoniemi 1969: 162).

loud in the late 1800s (Nyberg 1950b: 432-4). Thus, although the Russians appeared to Finns as a politically, socially and culturally foreign element, on the eve of the Russo-Turkish war they were not commonly considered what in anthropology is called the other. This 'role' was reserved for people who down the centuries had been for Europeans the other, namely, the Jews and the Roma.

### **3.5. The foreign and other in Finnish public memory**

When Finland was annexed to Russia, her population was rather homogeneous, consisting of Finns, who were the absolute majority, and Swedes, who were the overwhelmingly most important minority but were not considered a foreign element.<sup>121</sup> There were also some German merchants and craftsmen, a few Jews, the Roma and the Sami. Russian rule added some Russians and a few Poles. The number of Jews, many of whom at first were in the imperial army, and Roma also increased after annexation. Topelius (1875: 205) estimated that in the early 1870s there were a few hundred of each, but for the Roma at least the number is too low and should be somewhere between 1,000 and 2,000 (see Nygård 1998: 108-9).<sup>122</sup>

A special case that, in the last decade of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century, became a bone of contention between Lutheran Finns and Orthodox Russians was the tens of thousands of Orthodox Karelians living in the border area between Finland and Russia. Linguistically they were close to Finns, but in religion and many aspects of social life and material culture they hardly differed from their neighbours, the Russian peasants.<sup>123</sup> Of these all, only Jews and the Roma were considered 'alien' to Finnish society. The rest were either 'exotic' (as, in most cases, the Karelians or Sami) or 'strange' foreigners whose 'odd' folkways could be laughed at but were not seen to pose a threat to Finns. This means that the Finnish guardsmen most probably constructed the other in terms of cultural, not political, superiority. Their attitudes towards the other were based on curiosity and various degrees of xenophobia rather than open racism.

The only exception perhaps was the Jews, for there are traces of anti-Semitism in my sources, particularly by authors in regular service. In Russia proper two tendencies towards the main other, the Jews, coexisted in the 19th century. On the one hand, the Russian government tried to assimilate them, although the liberal rule of Alexander II also gave them many privileges; on the other hand, Jews were frequently discriminated against (Illman & Harviainen 1987: 74-5; Löwe 1981: 187-8.) Both tendencies probably derived from the fact that Jews were newcomers in the Russian empire and mainly inhabited newly annexed border areas that did not necessarily welcome Russian rule. Before the annihilation of the Polish state at the end of the 1700s there were practically no Jews in Russia. In the 19th century over ninety per cent of the total Jewish population (some 5,200,000 in 1897), or approximately half of the Jews world-wide, were living in either former Polish territories or the 'homelands' in west and south-west Russia (mainly in today's Ukraine). (Löwe 1981: 185.) While most Russians were at that time living in rural areas, due to imperial legislation over eighty per cent of Jews

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<sup>121</sup> At the beginning of Finnish autonomy, in 1809, the fact that Swedes did not speak Finnish was of no great importance. Over the years the issue was debated several times, sometimes vehemently, and the dispute continued after Finnish independence in 1917. However, in other respects Swedes in autonomous Finland were not held as an alien element as were, for instance, the Roma.

<sup>122</sup> Harviainen (1999: 335) says that in 1868 there were 83 Jews in Helsinki and that in the early 1870s their number had grown to some 500, most of them soldiers serving in the Russian army. According to Salminen (2000), in 1885 they still were fewer than one thousand.

<sup>123</sup> Orthodox Karelians living around Lake Ladoga were known to Finns through descriptions of educated, and usually Lutheran, Finns who either visited or lived in the area. However, Orthodox peddlers from Archangel Karelia traded all over Finland throughout the 19th century and were well-known as singers of oral poetry.



were town-dwellers. Moreover, while Russians were mostly peasants, three-quarters of Jews were merchants, industrial workers or craftsmen, although many of them were for various reasons not so well-to-do as Russians often believed or suspected. (Löwe 1981: 186-7.) Thus Jews were both spatially and socially separated from the majority of Russians (as well as Finns), a fact that, especially in difficult times, increased the public perception of them as the hostile other (cf. Dostojevski 1996: 244-5). This happened in Russia increasingly after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, resulting in a series of intermittent pogroms (Löwe 1981: 204-5).

The late nineteenth-century Finnish attitude towards Jews was ambiguous. The Jews were permitted in three bigger Finnish towns only, namely, Helsinki, Turku and Viipuri (Salminen 2000). Open (or official) anti-Semitism was rare, but some covert dislike of Jews existed, at least among educated people such as Topelius<sup>124</sup> (Klinge 1998: 9). When a liberal representative of the Estate of Burgesses, Leo Mechelin (1839-1914), put forward a proposal in the 1872 Diet that all legal restrictions on Jews in Finland be lifted, he met resistance from members of the Diet (mainly officers) who had served in Russia, some (Lutheran) priests and conservative Fennomans. According to Rein (1918: 257-8), they were afraid that 'bad Jewish elements from Poland and Russia would flood our land if their position becomes better in Finland than it is in those countries'. The proposal was rejected. Six years later *Suomen kuvalehti* (15 July 1878, p. 178) published an article on Russian troops in Edirne. It was obviously written by a Finnish officer, although not by one of the Finnish Guard. He described how he and some others entered a café where all races of the 'old world' were represented, among them 'fawning and treacherous Jews'. In the last 1878 issue (15 December, p. 366) of the same magazine, a Finnish officer reported how, when staying in Sofia in early January 1877, he met in the bazaar Armenians, Turks and 'our old friends, the sons of Israel'. All these merchants were 'totally devoted to fleecing their Christian brothers-in-humanity'.<sup>125</sup> 'Sons of Israel' was a typical Russian phrase for Jews (Todorova 1997: 83).

At about the same time, January 1878, the leader of reinforcements of the Finnish Guard, Baron Georg E. von Alftan (1856-1901), was with his men in Iași. He wrote a report for the liberal newspaper *Helsingfors Dagblad*, in which he described local Jews, with whom the men were billeted, in dark colours (quoted in Kylävaara 1978: 94). Thus it seems that the anti-Jewish (and anti-Roma) attitude of some Finnish guardsmen reflected the educated world-view in Finland in the 1870s, though the anti-Semitic Russian present of the 1880s may have strengthened the intolerance towards Jews displayed in their recollections. That anti-Jewish attitudes were mounting in the 1870s and 1880s may be related to the growing Finnish nationalism. If this is correct, the burgeoning anti-Semitism is a sign of Finnish attempts to draw clearer boundaries between themselves and the other, including Russians. In this process of increasing Finnish consciousness and identity vis-à-vis the other, Jews shared the lot of the Roma (often mis-named Tartars), who for Finns were the best known 'racial' other.

The Roma are mentioned in documents dealing with the present territory of Finland from the late 16th century. The first Roma were all expelled. But because they kept on returning, after the mid-18th century those who had settled down and had a way of living accepted by the state (in this case, Sweden) were legally permitted to stay. Some of them even served in the army. Wandering Roma

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<sup>124</sup> He himself had Jewish blood from his mother's side.

<sup>125</sup> In the 1890s Finnish officers in the Russian service sometimes openly despised Jews (Haapanen 1928: 38, 43; Linder 1938: 9). A decade later, when describing Jews in Romania, the Finnish journalist I.K. Inha (1906: 18) held a somewhat more ambiguous view. On the basis of unspecified sources he, on the one hand, argued that Jewish merchants in Romania overcharged their customers and, on the other, criticised non-Jews for various prejudices, which had resulted in bloody pogroms.

who had no legally permitted occupation were, however, not tolerated. This seems to be a common European phenomenon. (Birnbaum 1971: 259; Nygård 1998: 98-100.)

Public Finnish opinion about the Roma was largely negative right from the beginning. They were hated, feared, regarded with suspicion and commonly accused of crimes (especially, of theft). Thus, at grass-roots level, an anti-Roma attitude was a commonplace among Finns (Nygård 1998: 106-7, 111-14), although both Finnish- and Swedish-speaking nineteenth-century romantic literature could also admire the Roma for their supposed 'natural' freedom and liberty (Alhoniemi 1972: 99). The official attitude, too, gradually changed as the Finnish structure increasingly stressed the national unity of the country. According to this view, everyone should live, behave and pray in the 'Finnish way'. Deviance was not tolerated.<sup>126</sup> In the last two decades of the 19th century the official Finnish policy become more racially discriminating, aiming at annihilation of the Roma language and culture. (Nygård 1998: 104-8.)

As to Orthodox Karelians, the role they played in the formation of Finnish nationalism and the national state in the 1890s and in the first decades of the 20th century is outside the scope of my study. What is relevant here are the late 19th-century opinions and notions of their cultural, religious and 'racial' otherness. From the Lutheran nationalistic viewpoint, Orthodox Karelians were uncivilised (see Ervasti 1918; Juva 1956: 149, 156-8). Elements in their language and manners that were similar to, or borrowed from, Russians were regarded as 'spoiled'. Other Karelian customs and beliefs were seen as relicts of antiquity. Upper class Lutheran Finns both marvelled at the latter as examples of cultural achievements of their forbears and despised them as 'superstitions' not acceptable for modern times. (Ervasti 1918: 26-7; Genetz 1870: 84, 87-8, 95-6; Haataja 1949: 57-8.) This may partly explain their disdain of Orthodoxy in the Balkans.

To conclude this section, in the 1870s and 1880s there existed in Finland no systematic demonisation of the racially or culturally other. However, Finnish attitudes towards, and conceptions of, the Roma, the covert dislike of Jews by even the lower classes or Orthodox Karelians by many educated people, and the rising Russian anti-Semitism contributed to the notion of Finnish cultural superiority over 'less civilised' people (cf. Harmaja 1949: 218). Such attitudes obviously induced the guardsmen to focus on the 'backwardness' of foreign people (Bulgarians and Turks) in the Balkans, too.

### **3.6. The Finnish perception of Turks and the Balkans**

Finnish ideas about the Turk may be tackled by seeking to answer two complementary questions. The first is: what did Russians in general, and Finns in particular, know about the Turk? And the second: are Finns and Turks related, as some nineteenth-century intellectuals believed?

Russians came into closer contact with the Ottoman Turks during the rule of Peter the Great (1682-1725) in the late 17th century. He expanded Russia's southern and eastern frontiers to the borders of the Ottoman, Persian and Chinese empires. This resulted in increasing political and commercial contacts, as well as in serious thinking about Russian identity, between Asia and Europe and, after the annexation of the Crimean khanate in 1783, in the establishment of oriental (Turkic and Islamic) studies. All this gained new importance after the Russian conquest of large parts of Central Asia in the 1860s and '70s, when the project, initiated by Peter the Great, of 'civilising' Russia's non-Orthodox people again gained momentum.

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<sup>126</sup> Work that the Finnish administration and the ruling people found useful, or morally correct, was, then, the demarcation line between Finns and the other (cf. Nagengast 1994: 123-4).

Russian attitudes towards Turkic people were mixed. On the one hand, it seems that, approximately since Pushkin's "The Captive of the Caucasus" (a narrative poem published in 1822), for educated Russians Turkic people were the last remnants of once 'noble savages' living in 'wild freedom' (Hokanson 1994).<sup>127</sup> While the subsequent Caucasian wars of the mid-1800s altered, and darkened, the picture, an aura of romantic heroism still lingered around Turkic people (Layton 1997: 82). However, the rise of pan-Slavism overshadowed this image with a notion of Ottoman Turks as physically and, especially, morally inferior to Russians or as 'nomadic hordes from Asia', as Dostoyevsky said in his *Diary of a writer* (Dostojevski 1996: 267). Though critical towards the 'west', pan-Slavs thus shared with western intellectuals the belief in European superiority and in the backwardness of 'Asiatic' people, who had to be forced into a 'European order of things', as Riasanovsky (1972) put it. Thus, on the eve of the 1877-8 war, the Russian image of Turkic people, and what little of it seeped into Finnish public opinion, had for decades been somewhat ambiguous.

The question 'Who are the Finns?' emerged gradually during the 17th and the 18th centuries as a part of the 'enlightened' classification of species and spaces in 'natural' taxonomies. It was first asked by some Swedish, German and French intellectuals, who disagreed as to whether Finns were European or Scandinavian aboriginals or non-Europeans who had but lately arrived in Scandinavia. (Hietala 1979: 80-1; Kemiläinen 1993: 46-9.) During the 18th century some linguists found that Finnish and Hungarian were related languages. The latter, in turn, was considered as a branch of Turkic and so, to simplify the matter, Finns were counted among Turks and Mongols. This 'fact' was affirmed by Swedish and German physical anthropologists, who by measuring human skulls attempted to lay the foundations of a scientific racial theory. (Kemiläinen 1993: 50-3, 68-77.) Thus, from the west European, and also Russian (Bulgarin 1996: 73), point of view Finns were seen as Turkish relatives.<sup>128</sup>

This notion was at least partly taken over in the mid-1800s by some educated Fennomans, who started to expand their knowledge of Uralic peoples linguistically related, or supposedly so, to Finnish. The actual founder of these studies, M.A. Castrén, as well as some of his successors, for example, August Ahlqvist, did not seriously question the relation of Finnish to Turkic. On the contrary, they, especially Castrén, tried to prove this relation by comparative studies. (Kemiläinen 1993: 81-3.) Finno-Ugric and Turkic were considered languages of the Ural-Altai peoples, and geographical proximity was seen as a sign of racial unity. After Castrén's death, in 1852, interest in such comparisons, as well as belief in Finnish as a language related to Turkic, gradually waned. Nevertheless, Castrén bequeathed to posterity a notion that Finns (including all speakers of Finno-Ugrian languages in Russia) were a great nation whose territory extended from the Gulf of Finland to the Altai (Alhoniemi 1972: 27). This, in turn, resulted in a (largely un- or semiconscious) sense of superiority over the Russians, who were considered but newcomers on 'Finnish' soil.

Common-sense opinions of Turks were less speculative. A representative of these was Topelius, whose negative opinions of Turks and Islam date back to the late 1820s, when several Finnish officers took part in the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-9 (Nyberg 1950a: 296). Later, when editor of the *Helsingfors Tidningar*, he aired his opinions in public. During the Russian campaigns in the Caucasus in the 1840s he used his newspaper to remind his countrymen of the 'danger' of the Turks, the

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<sup>127</sup> However, it seems that for educated Russians these 'noble savages' were not something totally different but a duplicate of themselves, their *alter egos* for good or, later, evil.

<sup>128</sup> Even decades after the Russo-Turkish war, educated west Europeans believed Finns were stumpy Arctic people who looked like Inuits or Sami (Hirn 1939: 13-18). If we add to this that in the 'enlightened' west European view Russians came in the same category (the famous French dictum stated, 'Grattez le russe et vous verrez le tartare' [in Dostojevski 1996: 156]), the question 'Who are the Finns?' also implied separation from Russians.

Caucasian mountaineers and Islam (Klinge 1997: 17; Nyberg 1950a: 296-7). During the Crimean War he predicted the collapse of the Ottoman empire and the (obviously Russian) expulsion of Turks from Constantinople. Appointed extraordinary professor of history at the University of Helsinki by the emperor in March 1854, Topelius was suspected by some of his contemporaries of being a lackey of the Russians - but his opinions of Turks or Islam were not questioned (Lagerlöf 1920: 348-52). Nevertheless, I think that, Topelius's personal opinions notwithstanding, there is no reason either to exaggerate the Finnish consciousness of Turks or to consider Topelius's ideas particularly anti-Turkish. Rather, since these attitudes were usually expressed in relation to Russian campaigns against Turks they may be interpreted as a token of political correctness.<sup>129</sup> This, though, was not so much a sign of real submission as a tactical means to negotiate power relations with the emperor, as referred to in section 3.4. This is, in my opinion, corroborated by the fact that when Fredrik Cygnaeus published an outline of Finnish history (in Swedish, *Hufvuddragen af Finlands historie*) in 1863, he divided nations into two categories: expansive ones and those who were content with their own territory. Turks were an example of the former and Finns of the latter category. (Alhoniemi 1969: 136.) As Alhoniemi (*ibid.*) remarks, there was no good reason, except a political one, why Turks (and not, say, French or British) should have been singled out as an expansive nation. A corresponding division was later, in 1882, made by Topelius, too (Alhoniemi 1969: 145).

Likewise in the Russian army tradition, and hence among Finnish officers, there existed a largely negative comprehension of Turks. This was due to the fact that, since the late 17th century, the Ottoman empire had been the army's main adversary. And since the early 19th century, when the Balkans really began to enter Russian politics and public memory, Turks were represented as cruel beasts who oppressed local Christians, Bulgarians in particular (Todorova 1997: 82-3). It was relative to this enemy-image that Balkan Slavs, notably Bulgarians (and to some extent Serbs), became Russian 'brethren', and started to appear as 'noble' and 'belligerent'. In other words, for Russians Bulgarians were much the same as were Karelians for Lutheran Finns in the late 1800s: the backward other that, at the same time, was the 'root of [our] culture', as Todorova (1997: 84) put it.

While Finns for obvious reasons could not perceive Bulgarians or Turks in that way, they could to some extent share the Russian disdain of uncultured backwaters and replace the Cossacks and other 'dubious' foes with Turks, perceived as the 'imperial' rather than the Finnish enemy. Already during the first decades of autonomy some hostility towards Turks seemed to exist among common people.<sup>130</sup> According to Klinge (1997: 15-16; 1998: 69-70), Runeberg, in his poem "Julqvällen!" (Christmas evening, 1841), outlined the fear of, and loathing for, the Turk while, interestingly, giving a sensual image of passionate Turkish women (cf. Fennander in Ch. 13.2.). Suistola (1987: 191) sees here traces of the influence of the 1828-9 Russo-Turkish war. Klinge argues (1997: 15-16) that during the 19th century the negative, and, I think, at the end of the 19th century also the sensual, image gained currency in Finland. Turkish support for rebelling Caucasian Muslims, like Chechens, combined with

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<sup>129</sup> However, war news obviously increased negative attitudes towards Turks among some sectors of Finnish society. Snellman, for example, could argue in his review of Wahlberg (1878) that '[t]he "poor" Turkish refugees [which the guardsmen saw on their way to Plovdiv] sold Bulgarian women and children [as slaves]' in Constantinople (Snellman 1895: 594).

<sup>130</sup> It could not originate in any first-hand knowledge, because none existed. Neither were there Turkic people in Finland. Only since the 1860s had Tatar merchants (with their families) started to settle in the Finnish capital and some other bigger towns, but they numbered only a few hundred. In addition, in Helsinki, and to a lesser extent in some other towns with garrisons of Russian units, there was also a group of Muslim soldiers, usually Tatars or Bashkirs. (Halén 1986: 149-53; 1999: 315.)

the Russian defeat in the Crimean War exacerbated relations with the Ottomans; hence learned circles in the army tended more and more to see the Turk as *the* enemy (see Klinge 1997: 12-15).

The Crimean War was the first widely covered foreign 'media event' in Finland (Saloheimo 1984: 235). Part of the 'news' comprised negative images of an adversary of Russia, the Turk. However, these images seemed to be mainly created by the atmosphere of war, for in the late 1860s, for example, Finnish newspapers wrote with respect of the manner in which Muslim soldiers of the Russian army celebrated Ramadan near Helsinki (Halén 1999: 315).

The tumult of the 1870s in the Balkans brought yet another change to that attitude. When Bosnian Serbs revolted in 1875, Finnish newspapers dealt with the matter at length, regarding the uprising as a remarkable phenomenon. Not surprisingly, particularly the Fennomane press took the Russian side, contrasting religious and national opposites: Christians *versus* Muslims, Slavs *versus* Turks. Also some anti-Turkish articles were published, and the few Finnish volunteers serving in the Serbian army were praised.<sup>131</sup> (Paasivirta 1978: 279-80; Söderhjelm 1920: 270-5.) However, some papers, especially liberal Swedish-language ones like *Helsingfors Dagblad*, published matter-of-fact articles on matters of interest such as the life of the Turkish sultan.<sup>132</sup> Hence 'oriental' Turkish grandeur and luxury rather than 'savagery' were emphasised. The Finnish-language papers, like the Helsinki-based Fennomane *Uusi Suometar*, in turn, stressed in particular the inescapable downfall of the Ottoman empire (Kemppainen 1999: 19), while a northern provincial paper, *Pohjois-Suomi*, stated, in an article published on 16 January 1878 and entitled "On the nature of Turks", that the Turks were benevolent, cordial, true to their friends and kind to animals (quoted in Suistola 1986: 130). This probably was the opinion of the middle classes (Suistola 1986: 131).

When news of Bulgarian massacres spread in spring 1876, at the time when Serbia and Montenegro were preparing for war with the Ottoman empire, fears were expressed that a new international conflict comparable to the Crimean War might break out (Kemppainen 1999: 20; Paasivirta 1978: 279-80). The general tone in the press was, as *Uusi Suometar* put it in its article on the murder of the German and French consuls in Thessaloniki in early May 1876, that in Turkey 'anything could happen' (*Uusi Suometar* 19 May 1876, quoted in Kemppainen 1999: 21-22). In Russia military preparations got under way in November 1876, and were soon followed by an appropriate press campaign. Thus, when war was declared in April 1877, the army and pan-Slav circles, but also Finns loyal to the emperor, claimed that most subjects of the emperor hailed the news with enthusiasm (Ehrnrooth 1967: 102-3; Grotenfeld 1891: 8). In fact, the opposite was more probably true (Zolotarev 1983: 98); for the obviously genuine, and strong, Russian feeling of solidarity with the South Slavs generated during the uprising in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1875-6 (Kollontai 1946: 18-19; Milojković-Djurić 1994, Ch. 3) was already on the wane.

There was no lack of interest in Finland, either. On 25 April 1877, following the official view, *Uusi Suometar* argued that 'never has a prince [the emperor was the Grand Duke of Finland] drawn his sword for a better and more just cause than that for which Alexander II has summoned his

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<sup>131</sup> Since A.M. Myhrberg (1797-1867), who in 1824 was a volunteer in the Greek War of Independence, a few students of Finnish origin had taken part in different European (and even non-European) conflicts, revolutions and wars of liberation. Their example was, however, not widely followed in Finland, though Myhrberg and the Greek War of Independence perhaps provided an ideal for some enlightened Finns. (Klinge 1997: 25-6.) The most famous Finnish volunteer in Serbia was a certain soldier-of-fortune, E.G.W. Becker (1840-1907), later known as Becker Bey. (See Becker 1968: 117.) Of other Finnish volunteers in Serbia, see WM (p. 88, note), Hiisivaara (1968: 6), Kylävaara (1978: 20) and Suistola 1986: 127).

<sup>132</sup> Examples in *Helsingfors Dagblad* are pieces on everyday life of the sultan ("Turkiets behärskare i sitt hvardags lifv", 20 December 1875) and on his court ("Turkiets behärskare i sitt hoflyx", 29 December 1875).

people to fight' (quoted in Paasivirta 1978: 282).<sup>133</sup> At the same time, on 4 May 1877, a Pietist clergymen and representative of the Clergy Estate, J.I. Bergh (1810-1878), proposed in the Diet that Finland should donate one million Finnish marks to the empress to be used to help the war wounded and sick. The proposition was finally accepted a month later, after much debate, with 42 votes for and 18 against (Kemppainen 1999: 35-40). In addition, during the summer of 1877 Finns financed a Red Cross unit (doctors and nurses) to take care of the injured (SK 15 October 1877, p. 241). And when the Finnish Guard was ordered to the front, in August, newspapers reported its preparations and departure (6 September) *in extenso* (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 43; Hyvämäki 1964: 54, 63). Throughout the war, the *Uusi Suometar* covered, in almost every issue, the war in general and the vicissitudes of the Guard in particular (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 44). *Suomen kuvalehti* and provincial and Swedish-language newspapers likewise published long reports and articles, especially about different battles, but very little other foreign news (SK 1877 and 1878; Kemppainen 1999: 16-17, and his Appendix 4).

This coverage is interesting in the context of the awakening Finnish nationalism. It hardly was a coincidence that efforts of small peoples to liberate themselves from a great empire were so closely followed, although, of course, the Balkan question was of high importance for Russia. In addition, the Finnish coverage again contributed to the creation of an image of the Ottoman enemy. In the *Uusi Suometar*, for example, Turks were represented as pagans who were blind in their stubbornness and extremely impudent (quoted in Hyvämäki 1964: 62). Some provincial papers referred to Turks as foreigners who should 'collect their packages and return to [their native] Asia' (Lindgren 1878: 25).<sup>134</sup> Thus at least Fennomane public opinion accepted, and supported, the Russian propagandistic view of Turks as savages, and the war as an ideological struggle between the true (or Christian) and a false religion (Islam), and between human freedom and civilisation and enslavement or inhumanity and barbarism (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 44-53; Hyvämäki 1964: 63).

The bourgeois Swedish-oriented, and more liberal and more anti-Russian, press did not, however, fully share that view. It looked at the war rather from the perspective of *realpolitik*, describing it as a conflict of interest between various Great Powers, and not mentioning religious or national contrasts, or taking an anti-Turkish stand (Paasivirta 1978: 282-3.) Commercial interests of liberal merchants, for which Great Britain was the most important trading partner, played here an important role (Suistola 1986: 125-6). It seems that those guardsmen who followed the Swedish or continental press accepted this and were more inclined to see Turks as a civilised people than were the pan-Slavs with their anti-western European rhetoric (cf. Järvinen 1932: 7).

To conclude, I argue that a great part of the contemporary Finnish attitude towards Turks was actually formulated in a few years or even months preceding the war,<sup>135</sup> and that opinions loyal, if not servile, to Russian propaganda were dominant. For example, in his recollections Jernvall cited a letter that, according to him, was given to the Guard on the day, 6 September 1877, it left Helsinki. He said (1899: 11-12) that the letter called the Turks brutal beasts with a false religion who suppressed 'our smaller brethren in Christ [the Balkan Christians]'. This comes close to the opinion expressed in

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<sup>133</sup> Paasivirta gives the date 1 May, which is a mistake. The 'noble cause' was also argued on the eve of the war by Topelius in his "Speech of the Principal" at the University of Helsinki (*Hufvudstadsbladet* 20 January 1877, quoted in Hiisivaara 1968: 5). Both expressions clearly state that the war was a just one (see Airas 1981: 243).

<sup>134</sup> When describing the first battle of Pleven, 8 and 9 July 1877 (N.S.), the same paper, the Hämeenlinna-based *Hämäläinen*, quoted at length two foreign correspondents, one British and the other obviously German. The latter blamed the Turks for committing 'more ghastly atrocities' than 'Attila, Chingiz Khan or Tamerlan' against the innocent Bulgarian Christians (Lindgren 1878: 42; he was the editor of *Hämäläinen* at that time). This is more or less the same as what the eminent British politician William Gladstone (1809-1898) had said after the 1876 Bulgarian atrocities (Furieux 1958: 11).

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Krenchel's (1929: 126-7) notes about quick changes in public opinion during the First World War.

some Finnish newspapers (*Uusi Suometar*, *Oulun Wiikko-Sanomat*) during an early phase of the Bosnian revolt: the Christians rebelled because they could no longer remain under Turkish (that is, Islamic) tyranny (Kemppainen 1999: 19, 21). Therefore, it was the duty of Finns, by God's will annexed to Russia, to 'protect the Christians of the Balkan peninsula and the Eastern Christians in general from the fury of the sectarians of Mahomet the false prophet'.<sup>136</sup> Thus the war propaganda was internalised ostensibly, if not in reality, by Finns. Wars, however are not waged by propaganda alone; the army needs ideals and practices that are of a more lasting nature than slogans created for a particular conflict. In the next chapter I shall deal with the state of the Russian army on the eve of the war and the ideals inculcated in the Finns in the Guard.

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<sup>136</sup> The letter thus suggests, with pan-Slav wording, that the war was a religious one. However, other guardsmen's recollections give little support to this notion.

## 4. THE RUSSIAN ARMY, ITS IDEALS AND THE FINNISH GUARDSMEN

### 4.1. The Russian army on the eve of the Russo-Turkish war

The Crimean defeat was followed by a painful transition in both Russian society and the army.<sup>137</sup> In the former, a series of legislative reforms culminated in the liberation of serfs in 1861. In the army a similar process 'conclud[ed] on 13 January 1874 (N.S.) with the proclamation of [qualified] universal military service'. It affected all men between the ages of 21 and 43. The time of service was five years, with an added 13 years in reserve. (Greene 1880: 3-18; Menning 1992: 6-7, 23.) Previously the bulk of the imperial army had consisted of serf recruits who, to put it bluntly, were 'beaten into submission and forced into the mold of the goose-stepping automaton'. At the same time, the 'War Ministry was overcentralized and too cumbersome to respond to the challenges of a changing military world'. (Menning 1992: 8-9.)

Organisational reforms got under way in 1862 with administrative decentralisation that involved the setting up of military districts, first in Warsaw, Vilnius, Kiev and Odessa, followed by six others in 1864, among them Finland, and five more a year later (Luntinen 1997: 113; Seitkari 1939: 104-5). Each district was a miniature version of the Ministry of War, intended to improve 'efficiency and ease the army's transition from [a] peacetime to [a] wartime footing'. To complete the system, in 1874 an administrative infrastructure of military chiefs was created at province and district levels. 'Their function was to assist the maintenance of reserve forces, to facilitate the flow of recruits into the army, and to ensure conformity of practice at the regional and local levels with Imperial military regulations' (Menning 1992: 13-14).<sup>138</sup>

While the Finnish Guard was in some respects a separate unit of the Russian army, its maintenance and supply with services depended on the total system of the Russian army, and thus suffered from the system's general weaknesses. For example, the time required for the concentration and mobilisation of troops was until the 1880s rather long,<sup>139</sup> and effectively curtailed all grander operational schemes. In addition, links between front and rear were weak (Menning 1992: 16, 19); hence the haphazard nature of many Russian campaigns and the ineffectiveness of the service corps indicated by my sources (Menning 1992: 34-5).

Administration was not the only area that underwent changes in the 1860s and 1870s; another was armoury. The Crimean War had proved the need to replace smooth-bore muskets with modern shoulder-weapons. After much trial and error, having in vain attempted to modify current weapons, the Russian military commanders adopted the Berdan No. 2 (Model 1870), firing .42-calibre bullets, as the Russian army's primary rifle.<sup>140</sup> It was a single-shot weapon with an effective range of 200-300 metres and a maximum range of 2,000 metres. However, at the outbreak of the 1877-8 war at least half of the Russian army was carrying one or other modified (old) weapons, while the rest of the

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<sup>137</sup> The army consisted of infantry, cavalry and naval forces. Here attention is paid to infantry only.

<sup>138</sup> According to Järvinen (1932: 28-9), in 1874 the military districts were replaced by army corps usually consisting of two infantry divisions, one cavalry division, two infantry artillery brigades and two cavalry batteries. But in fact the local administration and corps were two different 'methods of administration', as Greene (1880: 91-2) put it.

<sup>139</sup> In 1867, the minimum for mobilisation of units was 25 days (the Kiev Military district), and the maximum 111 days (Caucasian MD). Five years later these figures were 9 and 39 days. (Menning 1992: 19.)

<sup>140</sup> The Russian armament is discussed in detail in Greene 1880: 52-73. The Turks, too, got new (and, compared with earlier, superior) armaments at that time: Henry-Martini rifles from the United States and Krupps German cannon. However, it seems that most soldiers either did not receive them or were not trained to use them. (Anderson 1968: 115-16; cf. Baker 1879a: 64, 101-2.)



army, including the Finnish Guard, had Berdans. This caused serious problems in training and supply. (Menning 1992: 30-1; Greene 1880: 82-127.)

Some readjustment took place in artillery, too.<sup>141</sup> On the eve of, and during, the Russo-Turkish war the two main guns of the Russian artillery were bronze four- and nine-pounder breechloaders. The former weighed just over a tonne and its effective range was considered to be 3,200 metres. The latter weighed 800 kilograms and its range was 2,500 metres. In addition, there was a three-pounder mountain howitzer suitable for transport by pack animals to inaccessible areas. (Menning 1992: 32.)

One of the artillery's main problems during the Russo-Turkish war was selection of the right ammunition. High-explosive shells were effective against wood and stone but not against earthworks. Shrapnel 'retained greatest effectiveness at mid-range'. Canisters, while effective to 400 metres, contained fewer projectiles than shells. Thus, if the artillery units had no, or little, ammunition suitable for a certain terrain or operation, their effectiveness was questionable. In addition, at that time shrapnel, shells and canisters were so new that most gunners were hardly trained to use them. (Menning 1992: 32-3, 48.)

Developments in armaments, especially of shoulder weapons, meant that after the Crimean War the infantry in particular had to count on greater losses than before, since new rifles 'enabled defenders to engage their attacker at longer ranges with greater accuracy over longer periods of time'. Offensives therefore had to be conducted more cautiously than before and in new ways. Adaptation to the terrain, marksmanship and entrenchment gained new significance. Nevertheless, a combination of 'bullets and bayonets', firepower and cold steel, remained the basic Russian tactics in battle.<sup>142</sup> General Dragomirov, for example, who fought at Plevna, believed that a concern for self-preservation (in entrenchment, for instance) 'sapped the strength of [the soldier in the final] attack'. Thus, firepower played only an auxiliary role in battle. The only exception appeared to be the sharpshooters, who concentrated more on firing than on bayonet attack. But even they were trained to fire volleys on command rather than by individual choice of targets or uneven movements from cover to cover. (Menning 1992: 40-4.) To sum up, while the two decades after the Crimean War witnessed a veritable revolution in the Russian military system, the transition from old to new was, according to Menning (1992: 50), 'either imperfect or incomplete' when the Russian army went to war in 1877. This was, of course, not officially admitted by the army or the emperor. On the contrary, irrespective of facts, the war propaganda eulogised the Russian soldiers and demonised the enemy while military training aimed at providing them with ideals, the adoption of which would make them 'true soldiers', at least from the point of view of the army and the emperor.

As to the Finns, propaganda and training gave them two separate, yet connected, problems. First, they soon realised the gap between propaganda and ideals and their own experiences, or what might be called reality. Second, although propaganda and ideals were formulated at an abstract

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<sup>141</sup> Artillery figures little in my sources, because the Finnish Guard itself only had a few minor cannon, and no noteworthy co-operation with artillery units.

<sup>142</sup> At the outbreak of the First World War it was still the basic tactic of the British army, too (Winter 1979: 39), as it had been in the Swedish army a hundred years earlier (Brakel 1994: 33, et passim). Winter added (p. 40) that, according to one set of statistics, in the First World War only 0.03 per cent of wounds were inflicted by bayonets. However, because in the previous wars the rifles' fire power had been much less than in the Great War, bayonets were probably more important than Winter's note suggests. Statistics from the Russo-Japanese war (1904-5) put the percentage of bayonet wounds at between 0.2 and 9.4 (Seaman 1906: 112-13), though the average number seems to be below 1 per cent. Holm (1977: 78) claims that in the Finnish war (1808-9), all victories of the Sveco-Finnish army were due to man-to-man combats with bayonets, and Fernaeux (1958) stated that at the siege of Plevna bayonet combats were common.

level that suited both Finnish nationalists and Russian pan-Slavs, these abstractions materialised in a historical context that was different for Finns and Russians: where Russians could with some plausibility fight for their religious and ethnic 'brethren' in the Balkans, the Finns, ultimately, found that the religion and the people *they* were fighting for were Finnish. From this point of view it is perhaps no wonder that, in the end, non-professionals in particular were sick to death of war while at the same time being proud of having endured it. This is understandable if we apply here what Turner (1978: 565-9, 576-8) said of ritual, namely, that it is 'about' concrete (and conflicting) social relations and processes, not abstract (harmoniously) conceptions or pre-established perceptions.

#### 4.2. War propaganda

The Russian war propaganda<sup>143</sup> in general had two interdependent goals: to legitimise the war for the Russian public (the attack against, and the killing of, Turks) and to create a bond of fraternity and solidarity between the soldiers of the Russian army. In addition, it probably served the nationalistic cause of pan-Slavs (see Utin 1879). At least part of the propaganda's ferocity could be explained as nationalistic extravagance.

The propaganda was given expression in the press, orders of the day and official speeches following Russian victories and also on other official occasions such as sermons and statements during church services, and speeches at award-giving ceremonies. For example, on 2 January 1877 the Finnish-language magazine *Suomen kuvalehti* (p. 11) published a statement by Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich (1831-1891)<sup>144</sup> according to which the other European states had left the Balkan Christians in the hands of 'Muhammedans', who wanted to eradicate them. The statement continued that only 'our emperor had mercy upon [them]' and that if Turkey does not listen to peaceful advice (to improve the Christian position), she 'surely will obey the voice of cannon'. This ultimatum was justified by affirming that 'for the Russian people this [future] war is of a holy nature; they are ready to invest in it their last kopecks and last men . . . because the cause which they [the Russian soldiers] are going to defend is for us [Finns], too, the dearest one; it is our common cause of Christianity, civilisation and national liberty'.

Linking together Christianity (not Orthodoxy), civilisation and national liberation (at that time pervading all Europe), Nikolay Nikolayevich outlined a programme, the general validity of which Finns were hard put to deny. On the contrary, the wording of the programme may have helped them to translate Russian politics into Finnish aspirations, and to make themselves believe that in fighting for Russian political goals they were in fact promoting the civilising of Finland.

On the eve of the Guard's departure, the city of Helsinki organised a feast at which Senator C.H. Molander (1817-1897) spoke. He stated, among other things, that a 'noble and hard mission now awaited the battalion [the Guard]. But this is not the first time that Finns are leaving for the battlefield to offer their lives and blood for the highest interests of mankind. Already on the German fields [of the Thirty Years' War] they had fought valiantly, bleeding for our faith. Now, too, the battle was for the protection of our Christian brethren.' (Quoted in Lindman 1880: 5.) Similar arguments have been used in other wars, too (see Lindberg 1904: 50-1). Consciously or unconsciously they are based on the Christian notion of a 'just war'. As Paul Ramsey (1968: 143-4) has pointed out, it was for the sake

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<sup>143</sup> By 'war propaganda' I understand ways of trying to make 'our' troops internalise a certain notion of themselves and their enemy, irrespective of how successful this persuasion was (see Luostarinen 1986: 9-10).

<sup>144</sup> Nikolay was later appointed commander-in-chief of the Danube army (until the armistice of 31 January 1878). This piece of news obviously belongs to the larger discussion of the breaking or not breaking out of war that was widespread in Russia after 1875 (see Dostojevski 1996: 147, 154; Utin 1879, Ch. 1). It may indicate, as Utin (1879: 26-7) suggests, that nationalistic circles in Russia already wanted to go to war in 1876.

of love of neighbour, for the innocent and helpless menaced by someone, that a Christian was not only justified in waging war but obligated to do so.<sup>145</sup> If we add ‘civilisation’ or ‘culture’ to ‘Christian’, and understand it as a divine or sacred order, the opposite of which, chaos, is the realm of the devil (Alanen 1940: 49-50), we may grasp a major point in the guardsmen’s perception of the Balkan other).

Later, in its issue of 15 October 1877, *Suomen kuvalehti* (p. 242) pointed out that ‘from everything [that was going on in Finland] one could see that this war is a holy one for the Finnish people. [Finns] consider it as a point of honour to partake in it.’ Further on the same article clarifies that ‘holy’ here means ‘liberation from oppression’. This may be read in several ways, including a suggestion that the Finns should follow the Bulgarian example and liberate themselves from Russian tutelage. On the face of it, though, these words sounded much like the propaganda formulated by the pan-Slavs. According to this, the war, like the earlier ones against the Ottoman empire, was being waged to protect Balkan Christians from further Turkish savagery (after the incidents of 1876), to liberate Bulgaria and to beat off Islam, the principal enemy of Christianity (see Hiisivaara-Hela 1982, Ch. 4).

The Russian army, so the propaganda continued, was quite capable of attaining these goals, because it was one of the most effective combat troops in the world. Its soldiers were brave, quick, tough and diligent,<sup>146</sup> and their leaders, comparable to Hannibal and Napoleon, were thoroughly conversant with both tactics and strategy. The enemy, on the other hand, lacked material, and its leadership and ways of waging war were ineffective, to put it mildly (Utin 1879: 23). For example, when a Finnish newspaper article described, in late July 1877, the Turkish warfare in the Balkans it claimed, with some truth, that everything was ‘confused’. The Turkish commander-in-chief had been ‘slack’ and was with good reason replaced.<sup>147</sup> (Lindgren 1878: 25-8.) Thus an essential part of the propaganda consisted of praising one’s own side’s virtues and degrading the enemy’s (more often alleged than real) vices or immoralities. By this dichotomy, society (or the army at least) sought to imprint on every man a notion of his bravery and the meanness of the enemy, who usually had no real personal name or face,<sup>148</sup> but was simply the Turk. Thus the humanisation of ‘us’ and dehumanisation of the enemy (the other) was, and is, a part of strategy and at the same time a means to increase the soldier’s willingness to fight against, rather than to think about, the enemy.

One of the virtues of the Russian soldier, or so the propaganda said, was that, unlike the Turk, he did not fight for a wrong cause. Moreover, he obeyed the law (or order) of not harming the civilians in the enemy’s land or taking anything by force (Jernvall 1899: 246-7; quoting Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich). The enemy, however, was the opposite of this. The Turk was a savage, brutal and filthy coward (Utin 1879: 23), while the Russian soldier was, as *Hämäläinen*, a local Finnish newspaper, put it in mid-September 1877, the ‘most valiant in the world’. In addition, the Russian

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<sup>145</sup> Another question, of course, is whether or not ‘love of neighbour’ really means that making war on those who for some reason are not considered our neighbours, or are enemies of our neighbours, is justifiable.

<sup>146</sup> In the same vein Turkish privates were considered, by Turks and English alike, ‘brave and resolute men’, superior to their English counterparts in fortitude, discipline, sobriety and honesty (Anderson 1968: 115).

<sup>147</sup> In general this propaganda did not greatly differ from many of its earlier or later versions (see Luostarinen 1986: 225-6). However, the ability of Turkish troops (or commanders) to fight, as well as their momentary victories, were reported by the same newspaper (Lindgren 1878: 33, 30, 37, 58, 70-2), and the Russian leadership was criticised, although mildly (ibid.: 34-5, 43, 59, 71-2; cf. Zolotarev 1983: 97). Utin, too, let the ‘pessimistic’ character of his opening chapter (Utin 1879: 6) argue, on the eve of the war, that even after land reforms, peasants in Russian backwaters lived under worse conditions than the Bulgarians who the Russians were supposed to liberate.

<sup>148</sup> For examples of how this was done see Langness & Frank (1981: 14); Meggitt (1977: 104); Simola (1955: 96); and Tekampe (1989: 213).

soldier had not disgraced himself by torturing civilians or marauding as the Turk (meaning here bashi-bazouks) had done (Lindgren 1878: 59, 113-15).<sup>149</sup>

The cruelty of the (irregular) Turkish forces, already pointed out by the Finnish media at an early stage of the war,<sup>150</sup> was brought up by some guardsmen, too. Palander (1881), when describing the Russian attack on the fortifications in the Pass of Arab Konak in late November 1877, stated (p. 65), not unlike some broadside ballads (see Suistola 1987), that after having beaten back the enemy the Turks did not pursue them (in order to secure their victory) but, instead, assaulted the wounded, and ‘soon they hurled after the Russians hands, legs and heads which they had hurried to cut off from the poor men’. As such the story is neither new nor specially Turkish. For example, during the Thirty Years’ War, when Swedish troops besieged Freiburg, south-west of Dresden, the defenders caused them casualties, and ‘for some reason’, as Englund (1996: 193) put it, they also tried ‘to chop off heads [of fallen Swedes] from bodies, but these were too frozen to come loose’. In Finland, later oral tradition ascribed similar atrocities to the Cossacks, who in the early 18th century attacked Finland in the wake of the Russian army (KT 1984: 317-18, 323). Moreover, Bulgarin (1996: 47) claimed that, in the 1808-9 war, Cossacks, as well as some Finnish irregulars, had committed similar cruelties. But from the point of view of the ‘civilised’ Russians (or Europeans in general) such acts were ‘barbaric’ customs of bygone times. Hence the anger and bewilderment, not because of bodily mutilations as such, but because of the risk that this ‘savagery’ presented to ‘culture’.

Another aspect of the stories of atrocities is, as Meggitt (1977: 24) noted in the context of New Guinean highlanders, that mutilation (of a wounded enemy) is ‘the ultimate expression of contempt for the victim’s group’. As Krohn-Hansen (1997: 234) stated, quoting the anthropologist Michael Taussig, such stories (rumours, falsifications of data, etc.) are ‘the very stuff out of which violent political histories are made’, obviously meaning that if, as these stories argue, the enemy is indeed subhuman or even non-human, ‘we’ are not to be blamed for killing it (not him), the ‘evil one’ (Riches 1991: 285).<sup>151</sup>

Brutalities committed by Turkish irregulars - the partly civilian bashi-bazouks and the semi-military Circassians<sup>152</sup> - were commonly ascribed to Turks in general. Both were already infamous on the eve of the war. Their atrocities are often mentioned in my sources, in contemporary

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<sup>149</sup> I do not know whether or not Lindgren was aware of the harsh accusations, obviously true, levelled at Russian troops of having transgressed, during the first months of the war, what today would be called human rights (see Baker 1879a: 8-9; Bernhard 1877: 55-75). Stories about the enemy’s ‘unspeakable’ cruelties have of course long been a part of war propaganda (see Luostarinen 1986: 34-5; Peltonen 1996: 143-91), and are disseminated to prove the enemy’s immorality and inhumanity (Peltonen 1996: 185). During the Russo-Turkish war both parties accused, respectively, Circassians and bashi-bazouks or Cossacks of savage inhumanity (Baker 1879a: 93-4).

<sup>150</sup> The atrocities ascribed to bashi-bazouks were already reported in Finnish newspapers from the 1876 Bulgarian revolt (Kemppainen 1999: 25) and were repeated in news and broadside ballads during the siege of Pleven in summer 1877 (Suistola 1987: 200, 204). After the departure of the Finnish Guard *Suomen kuvalehti* (1 October 1877, pp. 229-30) reported that bashi-bazouks were ‘still’ committing ‘unspeakable’ atrocities, for instance, executing civilians or torturing wounded soldiers they had captured. In return, the Russians were told to put to death all bashi-bazouks that fell into their hands.

<sup>151</sup> Public memory fuelling such stories was obviously closely related to tales of ‘sub-humans’, especially the so-called cynocephalous people, well-known in the Russian army since at least the 16th century. According to these tales, known to Finns, too, they were unusually brutal and savage beings (Halén 1986: 141-6) and, for example, ‘cynocephalous’ was one of the invectives used by Aleksis Kivi. In Finnish parlance the word meant mainly Kalmuks.

<sup>152</sup> Though a majority of bashi-bazouks in the 1877-8 war were armed Muslim villagers from various parts of Bulgaria, some of them were men from Asia Minor who had arrived in the Balkans for various dishonourable reasons (Hajek 1939: 43). Circassians, though their activities had much in common with those of bashi-bazouks, were a separate irregular force (Baker 1879a: 97; Hajek 1939: 37; Ruigruh 1986: 56).

newspapers (Lindgren 1878: 40-1; *Tampereen Sanomat* 31 July 1877, quoted in Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 36-7), in broadside ballads (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 35-8) and in some other contemporary writings (for example, Dostojevski 1996: 165). An Austrian, Moritz Zimmermann, wrote (1878: 874) that it was not enough that 'they emasculated the injured which fell into their hands', but there were also cases in which 'dead bodies were chopped into pieces with hatchets'. An English journalist following the Russian troops claimed that '[t]he Turks invariably slaughtered their wounded antagonists found by them on the field, and the butchery was freely accompanied by aggravations of barbarity and torture such as cannot be described' (Forbes 1896: 197).<sup>153</sup> Such stories, as well as the pathetic description of suffering females and babies in the last days before the armistice made a good case of soldiers' implicit (and the propaganda's explicit) claims that they were fighting for a justified cause.

The other major aspect of the propaganda, the representation of the war as a battle between the 'true', or Christian, and 'false', or Islamic, religion, features in my sources mainly before the first hostile encounter and after the armistice, although in most cases the guardsmen did not consciously aspire to motivate their waging of war by religion.<sup>154</sup> In general, too, religion is rarely discussed and recollections of public personal piety are confined to occasional notes on the saying of prayers or holding of a service. For example, when the commander of the Finnish Guard since 1874, Colonel G.E. Ramsay (1834-1918) thanked (25 October 1877) his men after the battle of Gorni Dūbnik he restricted himself to some general points. According to Jernvall (1899: 78), he urged the men to thank God, 'who had given us victory' and, paraphrasing the army regulations, to pray for those companions 'who yesterday had bravely died for the honour of the emperor and our fatherland'.

By speaking of honour, Ramsay, my sources and the Russian war propaganda obviously meant several connected things. In the first place, as Snellman pointed out at the 1877 Diet, which discussed Finnish conscription, if the Finns did not take part in the war their honour would not increase but that of the Russians would (Airas 1981: 257). This statement makes sense if we suppose, as was commonly done at that time (see Deák 1990: 127), that the defence of military honour was possible by sword alone and that waging war in general enhances the prestige (or honour) of the state and the nation, and that Russia would win the war.

At the level of international politics, talking about 'honour' meant that after the events of the mid-1870s it would have been a heavy blow to Russia's prestige as the protector of the Balkan Orthodox people not to go to war (Utin 1879: 2-4). Very probably, however, this talk of honour was also associated with the good reputation of the emperor (who by late 1876 had chosen to wage war and could not hold back [MacKenzie 1979: 6]), the officers (i.e., noblemen), the Russian army in general and its elite units in particular, including the Finnish Guard, and other 'noble' organisations (discussed in Savtšuk 1996: 133-6), whose credibility was at stake or so it was believed (Forbes 1896: 193; Utin 1879). Thus understood, honour was less a religious or philosophical idea or virtue than a way of talking, at the individual level, about social status, prestige and identity and, at the national level, about the public esteem or contempt bestowed on Russia and her army and on their main functionaries by subject peoples or foreign countries (cf. Grotenfelt 1891: 7; Holm 1977: 55-6). Dishonour, on the other hand, was associated with losing one's social status, especially by cowardly or other conduct that was

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<sup>153</sup> Outside the context of war, contemporary sources described Circassians as fierce, but not savage, people, notorious not for butchering outsiders but for shedding each other's blood in endless feuds (S 1878b: 20-1). Thus it seems that much of their 'bloodthirstiness' was derived, for the present needs of propaganda, from the Bulgarian atrocities of 1876 (see Kollontai 1946: 18-19; Layton 1997: 94-5), though Baker (1879a: 97) argued that 'they had ever conducted their warlike operations in a bloodthirsty and restless spirit'.

<sup>154</sup> Religion is discussed in Ch. 12.

considered shameful (Robinson 1999: 124). The degree to which the guardsmen agreed or disagreed with, or ignored, this notion of honour indicates their commitment, or otherwise, to the official structure.

To conclude, in general Finns appear to have accepted the Russian propaganda, including its concept of 'honour' or at least they did not openly question it. Praising 'us' and slandering 'them' was a socially normal way of speaking in wartime. As Winter (1979: 209) put it, '[i]n an atmosphere of war's uncertainty and without evidence to the contrary . . . most men . . . accepted what they were told about the enemy', that is, they adopted the official structural position.<sup>155</sup> This holds true even if the situation, and the social relations comprising it, change. In the context of armed hostilities the Turks were the Finns' enemy. After the armistice official relations with Turks became more peaceful (Jernvall 1899: 267). A corresponding change occurred in the guardsmen's perception of Turks, because thoughts of slaying them no longer feature in their recollections after the end of hostilities (cf. Pipping 1978: 218-19 for a similar process among Finnish soldiers in the Second World War). This implies that, first, a soldier's ideal behaviour was socially constructed and, second, that the Finnish guardsmen had nothing personal against the Turks but only followed the lead given by the Russian army.

#### **4.3. The ideal soldier: disciplined hero like his forbears**

What, then, were these ideals? In general, social ideals operating in a given institution or society, especially when internalised in rituals or other similar processes or by propaganda and other mass persuasion, serve as models and guides according to which members of a society (or, more often, a group) adjust themselves in order to behave in a 'right' manner. What is more, adaptation to ideals facilitates one's preferred personal and social growth and allows one to exercise the usually positively loaded possibilities and potentialities associated with a given ideal (van Gennep 1977; Poole 1982). As to the Russian army or, in fact, any imperial army, the general purpose in establishing ideals was to make the men ideal or 'true' soldiers who without hesitation would be ready to prevent or suppress domestic revolts and to enhance the glory of the empire in foreign wars (Deák 1990: 7).

In the case of the Finnish Guard's ideals, there was a lack of models of the true soldier because, as mentioned in Ch. 3, the Guard had not taken part in a battle for decades. Moreover, those who enlisted on the eve of the Guard's departure, 205 men, or roughly a quarter of the total, had no more than a few weeks' peacetime military training (Gripenberg 1905: 198; Jernvall 1890: 212). The quest for a role, it seems, is one reason why the imagined heroes of the Thirty Years' War featured so prominently in the early part of the campaign.

The lack of training and the need for exemplary models were clearly discerned by military professionals. Jernvall (1890: 214), for instance, stated that the guardsmen, who had just arrived at the front and had no battle experience whatsoever, listened 'seriously' to a veteran's tales of heroism which 'steemed' or 'hardened' their nature to endure hostilities. Likewise Baker (1879b: 218) argued that '[a]ll the events of the war tended to show how rapidly recruits become good soldiers if drafted into really good battalions that have a prestige to maintain, and how, on the contrary, trained soldiers rapidly deteriorate if placed in newly organised or imperfectly disciplined battalions'. The guardsmen

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<sup>155</sup> Winter (1979: 209) added that if a soldier in the British army in the Great War 'came from a male-oriented family circle with an emphasis on toughness in personal relations and a concentration on past glories in military history, he would be unlikely to see the Germans in any other role but the military one of "enemy"'. Later (pp. 230-2), Winter suggests that rankers conformed because the army, but not the civilian English structure, offered them a chance to improve their social status. The former holds true for Finnish guardsmen in regard to Turks, and the latter may explain part of the common guardsmen's adherence to structure, though my sample is too small to allow generalisations.

obviously wanted to show their exemplariness, because recollections of battle and wounds are replete with stories about ‘manly ways’ of fighting or enduring. Moreover, it seems that the ‘fact’ that a soldier has to display military heroism in war was for them so self-evident that they could not contemplate the matter otherwise. Snellman most probably echoed a common opinion when claiming, at the beginning of the Russo-Turkish war, that fulfilling a soldier’s duty was tantamount to fulfilling the highest stage of human responsibility (Airas 1981: 252). This was, moreover, exactly what the home front expected of the guardsmen. For example, *Hämäläinen*, when reporting the first rumours about the battle of Gorni Dübnik, ‘hoped’ that the Finnish guardsmen ‘had been brave, at least those of them who had proper military training’, because the newly enlisted were ‘never fully trustworthy’ (Lindgren 1878: 76). In a later article about the same battle, *Hämäläinen* related that the Finnish guardsmen, too, like their Russian companions-at-arms, had ‘in a manly way’ stabbed Turks with their bayonets (ibid.: 83). This all sounds rather bloodthirsty. However, it may be understood from the then current presupposition that war is the *primus motor* of civilisation: without wars there is no progress, and without victorious wars a nation’s collective honour is jeopardised (Niemi 1980: 71, 73).

Nevertheless, heroism in battle was only one aspect of military ideals. The essence of the whole body of ideals was expressed in the imperial proclamation accompanying the statute on universal military service in Russia, effective as of 1 January 1874 (O.S.). According to it, ‘the defense of throne and homeland from foreign foes is a sacred duty of every Russian subject’ (quoted in Menning 1992: 23). This was echoed four years later in the corresponding Finnish law (Meurman 1882: 61), and a dozen years later (1889) in the first issue of the Finnish-language military magazine *Lukemisia Suomen sotamiehille*. In an article entitled “A Fine Military Companion”, a sergeant major stated that the true soldier fights for ‘the ruler, the throne, and the fatherland and its glory’ (L 1889: 16). Although the question as to how fully Finns identified themselves as Russian subjects is open to debate; from my sources it seems that loyalty to the emperor, or at least its public expression, was one of the accepted virtues of many Finns. This loyalty did not need to be of a particularly political character. Rather, it was a manifestation of what was considered ordinary social behaviour as, for example, by Topelius.<sup>156</sup>

What society, then, expected of an ideal soldier was the unquestioned fulfilling of commands and the structurally defined ‘sacred duty’, together with the subjugation of one’s own will to the operations of the troop<sup>157</sup> (Hyrkstedt 1890: 47-9). However, and partly in contradiction to this, war propaganda also emphasised individual bravery. Paradigmatic stories of, *nota bene*, officers’ feat appeared in newspapers and periodicals. The journal of the Russian Ministry of War, *Russkiy invalid*, for example, published a story in early summer 1877, repeated in some Finnish papers, about the death of a Finnish major, at the Caucasian front. According to Lindgren (1878: 14), who quoted the account, the officer, though mortally wounded, first led his men in an attack against the enemy and only then let himself be carried away to hospital.

On 26 June 1877 a story was published in a French-speaking Bucharest newspaper, *L'Orient*, about the Finnish-born commander of the XI Russian Infantry Division, Casimir Ehrnrooth (1833-1913), who was wounded at Oltenitsa, a small town some fifty kilometres south of Bucharest. According to the report (quoted in Ehrnrooth 1967: 117), his ‘accident deeply moved the army that loves him to the point of adoration and is ready to follow him even to hell. His soldiers rejoice in seeing him back among them so soon. Only seldom have subordinates shown such devotion to their

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<sup>156</sup> Another example is German non-political loyalty to Hitler at the time of his rise to power, see Krüger 1989: 21-2.

<sup>157</sup> As Snellman stated (1895: 592) in his review of Wahlberg (1878), ‘[i]f a stronghold has to be taken, this has to occur quickly, whatever the cost’. Thus he, too, sacrificed the individual to the general in the same manner as the Russian high commanders sacrificed their men in the three first, and unsuccessful, attacks in Plevna (Fernaux 1958).

superior.’<sup>158</sup> Lower in the ranks, and *post factum*, a Russian volunteer (Anonymous 1890: 348) of the 1877-8 war expressed the same ideal of fulfilling duty. While marching in terrible heat through the Romanian countryside towards the Danube he stated (*ibid.*): ‘I have never felt such peace in my soul, such content with myself [and] such a joy in life as when I endure military hardships.’<sup>159</sup> In general, whether they were describing Finns or Russians in battle, my sources almost invariably praised the courage shown by soldiers. Unselfish deeds and brave sacrifice for one’s own unit (not so much for the Russian army or empire) in battle were widely used motifs. Here they fully agreed with printed propaganda and war news.

The battlefield was not the only place where one could display heroism. Other ‘manly’ achievements that supported ‘our noble efforts’, and their imperial recognition, served the same purpose. Ahomäki (1891: 364), for example, quoted<sup>160</sup> with approval the words of Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich after the crossing of the Balkan mountains: ‘I [Nikolay] was sure that nothing would be impossible for the Russian soldier when he knew that the emperor wanted it and the commander ordered it.’ Sergeant Major L in the above-mentioned article “A Fine Military Companion” not only stressed the collective, or social, nature of military life but also the importance of strong bonds (or, as he said, love) between individual men. For, as he reiterated (L 1889: 24), if all members of an army unit not only fulfil their duty (that is, do exactly what they have been ordered to do) but also help each other to follow orders, the troop is practically invincible.<sup>161</sup>

Much the same was claimed by Palander (1881: 83), who said that anyone who had experienced the crossing of the Balkan mountains ‘no doubt came to the conclusion that any other army would have refused to advance, to climb and descend in blizzards, without food, dressed in summer clothes in December, when the temperature was minus 15 to 20 degrees [Celsius], dragging cannon that the Prussians considered too heavy to be transported along even roads’. The Russian army managed, however. Moreover, ‘nobody complained but the men went on cheering’. However, because cheering was on most occasions prescribed by army regulations (for example, in response to a speech given by the emperor or the brigade’s commander, see WM: 10), Palander’s story reiterated and strengthened the Russian army ideals.

The point here, as Sergeant Major L (1889: 24) rightly stated, was discipline. A disciplined soldier was an ideal soldier and, even more, for the army he was the only truly human being. L strongly disapproved of any disciplinary transgression, and advised the true soldier to help the army commanders by compelling his stubborn fellows to resign themselves to military authority (p. 25). To accomplish this, the soldier was urged to follow the example of famous military men of the past,

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<sup>158</sup> To judge by Ehnrooth’s biography (1967), these words were not a gross exaggeration, though they surely also were part of the Russian war propaganda and army legend-making. Much the same is told of one of the commanders of the Finno-Swedish army in the 1808-9 war, Colonel von Döbeln (1758-1820) (Brakel 1994: 135-6).

<sup>159</sup> That this was an ideal was known to men of the Russo-Turkish war. The anonymous writer himself testified (1890: 348-9) that soldiers were insubordinate due to the heat, and (p. 350) that a military man had to suffer with little hope of a ‘happy end’. But the ideal was maintained in men’s imagination, because its opposite, cowardice, or deviance from the structurally expected conformity, was one of the most despicable things in the army (see Browning 1999: 80-1), and to call somebody a coward was a major insult (Varén 1895: 73-5, 92-8; Winter 1979: 60). Most probably it was also seen as a sign of disloyalty to the emperor, who had set the army machine into motion (cf. Seaman 1906: 143 for a similar case in Japan during the 1904-5 war).

<sup>160</sup> Fennander (1895: 106-8) and Jernvall (1899: 189-91) also cited the speech. The quotation seems to be a standard military formula (see Brakel 1994: 50).

<sup>161</sup> This, of course, holds true for any army, at least since the Reformation (see Lehmann 1982: 230). By following orders a single private is liberated from taking responsibility. By doing what one has to do, one has no choice and, thus, no opportunity either to commit a crime or make a mistake (Gullestad 1994: 142-3).



Russians (Jernvall 1890: 214-15) as well as Finns (Ehrnrooth 1967: 21-2, 78, 80-1, 90-1). Jernvall (1899: 66), for example, rhetorically asked, in the context of the battle of Gorni Dübrik: 'Who [ranker] would not freely and with joy run towards death when he sees his commander dashing before him, shouting: Now, boys, victory or death?'<sup>162</sup>

Ideals proposed, persuaded or forced by structure, and their verbal repetition, are, however, one thing, but their internalisation and realisation in a person's conduct another. It seems to me that at best the guardsmen applied ideals in a rather selective way. As stated, the ideal military identity was explicated, or remembered, in the context of battles and other hardships, whereas otherwise it was practically forgotten. In other words, men conformed with structural ideals on the most 'honourable' occasions, or when co-operation was badly needed. Otherwise they deviated, and this non-conformity formed a potential for change at both structural and, perhaps even more so, personal level.

Nevertheless, guardsmen stressed stories about deviations, or acts of bravado, less commonly than they did those about conformity. The reason for this may range from censorship to social pressure, public memory and army regulations, which held it discreditable to behave, or talk about behaviour, contrary to official ideals (Leed 1991: 228-9). The only story about 'our' deserting the ranks in my sources is told seven decades later by Wallin (WM: 146-7), who related that on the way to Pravets one of his companions, who had enlisted in summer 1877, left the line to relieve himself when suffering from diarrhoea and never came back. However, though Wallin added (*ibid.*) that the man was probably 'too lazy' to fight, he did not condemn his behaviour. Neither did, later, other Finns, who frankly admitted deserting (Pipping 1978: 162-4; Simola 1955: 100-2).

Contrary to other sources, Wallin criticised 'overzealous' and 'adventure-loving' men and remarked, rather ironically, that one of those, at least, had no opportunity to 'show off' his bravado, because soon after the battle of Pravets he fell ill and 'was said' to have died in hospital. (WM: 160-1.) He also corrected a story about Gustaf Brunou (1857-1920), an ensign wounded at the battle of Pravets. According to the standard version, he was shot in both legs, and when taken to a dressing station was reported to exclaim: 'Damn all Turks who shot apiece my good footwear!' (Jernvall 1899: 107). Wallin, however, stated (WM: 165, note) that he was himself present on the occasion but did not hear this kind of 'joking'. Nevertheless, when starting their journey to the front, the guardsmen in general were more willing to 'joke' in the manner of Brunou than to ascribe to the more realistic attitude of the older Wallin. Given the 1870s tradition of military heroism, their view was what one might expect. The same may be said of their 'manly' thoughts about battle and death and the causes of the war; in thinking that way the guardsmen above all further processed the tradition handed down by military institutions and Finnish upper class nationalism. These issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>162</sup> In much the same way Runeberg, in his poem "Sandels", described J.K. Sandels (1764-1831), a high-ranking officer in the Finnish army, as a 'daredevil' whom his men therefore admired (Runeberg 1963: 70-8). The same is said of Finnish soldiers the Second World War by Pipping (1978: 164).

## 5. PROCESSING MILITARY MEMORY: APPROACHING THE FRONT

### 5.1. Journey to the theatre of war

In the manner of ritual processes, the guardsmen's journey to the front begin with a marked departure from everyday structure, in this case, from peacetime conditions. However, as van Gennepe (1977: 72, 78) understood, separation from a structural whole also means incorporation into a selected but dramatised part of it. In the case of the Finnish Guard, three events marked this transformation from the peacetime structural identity into the wartime military one. The first was the imperial order, issued in early August 1877, ordering the Guard to the front. The second was the preparation for departure, and the celebrations arranged in honour of the Guard's start in early September. The third was the crossing of the Danube on 3 October.<sup>163</sup> As we shall see, all three events feature prominently in my sources, as they did, particularly the men's departure, in Finnish newspapers, too (Kemppainen 1999). Their repetition in a more or less similar manner strongly suggests that for the guardsmen these were important events that had to be categorised in a particular way.<sup>164</sup> In other words, these events facilitated, as van Gennepe (1977: 20) put it, the entering of a new world different from their previous experiences. Interestingly, all the men of the Finnish Guard singled out the feasts Finnish civilians put on for them, whereas Alfthan and Schulman paid no special attention to farewell banquets or other incidents related to their departure. The fact that, unlike the other sources, the latter two were professional officers may partly explain this; however, Jernvall and Wallin were also professionals, and yet they recollected the Guard's start in much the same way as the five other sources. I surmise that the reason had something to do with nationalism; the authors wanted to stress that it was Finns who were departing.

Less attention was paid in my sources to the journey, by train, from Finland to Bulgaria, perhaps because neither the men nor their readers were familiar with the places en route, and because they were secondary to the men's narrative.<sup>165</sup> On their way the guardsmen made notes mainly of matters that reminded them directly either of battle or of the fact that they had left their native land and were now in a foreign (and hostile or exotic) one. Briefly, their descriptions dealt with occasions that invoked memories of Finland, the glorious Finnish (military) past or other military ideals. It seems that this was at least partly due to the context in which they lived, the burgeoning Finnish nationalism, with the Russians as its socially constructed other, because later Finnish recollections of journeys to the theatre of war in foreign parts do not place so much emphasis on Finnishness (see Fabritius 1986; Lindberg 1904; Simola 1955).

In general, recollections of the departure and the journey to the front lack personal character. In the manner of contemporary newspapers (see Kemppainen 1999: 42), the authors give the impression of a group that is enthusiastic about leaving. Nevertheless, the separation had a more individual side, too. We see this in the expression of the guardsmen's mixed feelings about the war (below in this chapter), and in their uncertainty about their return or their possible death on the battlefield.<sup>166</sup> However, these so-to-speak private emotions, too, were subjected to military ideals: the guardsmen imagined themselves as heroes of the past, warriors in the glorious army of King Gustavus II Adolphus in the Thirty Years' War. This reproduction of public memory re-created Finnish society

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<sup>163</sup> My sources waver a bit about dates, which is typical of rapid changes in wartime (Browning 1999: 112-13), but I have made them consistent.

<sup>164</sup> To point this out I have repeated these stories when summarising the men's recollections.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Erho 1940; Lindberg 1904; Lipponen 1940 for a similar description of departure to the front.

<sup>166</sup> The same is reported of Russian soldiers (Utin 1879: 25-6).

'here and now', reunited the guardsmen with it and dissociated them from the Russians, who could not participate in this tradition or share its symbolic meanings. It also facilitated the guardsmen's transition from peacetime to wartime conditions by substituting a beautiful, fabricated realm of glory and heroism for the hard reality of war.<sup>167</sup> As Taylor (1998: 246) indicated, in war in general heroic zeal could be one way of coping with the dangers and uncertainties associated with warfare. If this is true, during their journey to Bulgaria the authors of my sources were mainly rather anxious, because they frequently recollected feats of their forbears or talked or dreamed about the heroic deeds they themselves would accomplish. It was this anxiety, this uncertainty about what war is, fuelled with nationalistic or patriotic memories, that was turned, or channelled, into military fury.<sup>168</sup> In this light, I think, we can understand why 'the Emperor wept and the [Russian] troops shouted hysterical approval' (Clarke 1988: 458) when war was finally declared at Chişinău on 24 April, thus ending the long uncertainty as to whether or not war would be waged.

### **Wahlberg**

Wahlberg (1878: 1-2) opened his description of the departure for the Balkan front by giving the immediate reason for the Guard being summoned, namely, that the prolonged siege of Pleven made it necessary to have reinforcements. The order to leave was given on 3 August<sup>169</sup> (N.S.), a day after the Finnish Guard had returned from its usual summer drill at Krasnoye Selo. Having reported that, Wahlberg (pp. 3-7) continued with a detailed account of the Guard's draft, a list of officers, and the provisions, medical supplies and arms that each man took with him.<sup>170</sup> It seems that officers had many privileges, for example, bed, kitchen utensils and portions of sugar and chocolate.

On 3 September,<sup>171</sup> the citizens of Helsinki entertained the guardsmen lavishly with food and drink, and the officers were served a special lunch accompanied by several toasts and speeches. The next morning the Guard left by train for Viipuri to the accompaniment of solemn Lutheran music and the army chaplain's encouraging words. According to Wahlberg (p. 8), leaving the fatherland was a touching event, and many eyes were filled with tears.

Wahlberg described the journey from Helsinki to the Danube in a few paragraphs, often mentioning no more than the names of the places they passed through. He ended by stating (p. 9): 'Bored of all that is called a railway we were glad to arrive on 28 September<sup>172</sup> at Frateşti [some kilometres north of Giurgiu on the Romanian side of the Danube], where our march was to start.' It lasted for only a few days. Contrary to many others, Wahlberg said (pp. 9-10) that there were no

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<sup>167</sup> I do not want to make any special psychological judgement or guesses about the guardsmen's mental operations. I only argue that the way in which they expressed their feelings suggests the kind of interpretation outlined here. This, of course, does not exclude other ways of reading my sources.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Rampanen 1934: 38-40 for a similar view.

<sup>169</sup> My sources give two dates, 2 and 3 August, obviously because the guardsmen confused the date of their arrival in Helsinki with the one on which the order for departure was issued (see Gripenberg 1905: 198). I have used the latter throughout, disregarding my authors, who give the impression that they heard the order at Krasnoye Selo (Järvinen 1932: 57-8).

<sup>170</sup> According to Hiisivaara (1968: 46), a guardsman's full kit weighted some 43 kg. For the sake of comparison, the British pack in the Crimean War weighed some 60 lb (27.2 kg) and in the First World War just over 55 lb. (Winter 1979: 77-8).

<sup>171</sup> My sources give slightly different dates (3 to 5 September), but I have usually corrected them. For some reason my authors do not mention the banquet held by Russian officers in Helsinki for their Finnish counterparts (see Gripenberg 1905: 199).

<sup>172</sup> On 29 September, according to official documents (PK 467). Backström (1991a) also gives the date 28 September, but wrongly argues that the railway transport ended at Bucharest.

problems with maintenance; he himself bought a donkey to carry his goods and provisions, so that they were 'always at hand'.

At the beginning of October, the Guard arrived at Zimnicea (some 60 kilometres south-west of Giurgiu), opposite Svishtov in Bulgaria, where they spent the night. On 3 October, after morning prayers, the Guard crossed the Danube over a pontoon bridge.<sup>173</sup> The military band played "Porilaisten marssi", after which the men sang patriotic Finnish songs. When they arrived on the other side Wahlberg pondered whether they would ever return to Finland or whether they would be buried 'on foreign soil'. (Wahlberg 1878: 10-2.)<sup>174</sup> Thus, though Wahlberg discussed but little Finnish heroic traditions or Russian army ideals, the text suggests two things: that for him the Finns were always brave soldiers, and separate from the Russians, and that Wahlberg did not see a great difference between the guardsmen's peacetime and wartime identity; that is, contrary to General Dragomirov, for example, Wahlberg believed that (Finnish) peasants needed no special training or indoctrination to turn themselves into ideal warriors.

### *Fennander*

Fennander (1895: 15-16) began his recollections with the Guard's call up. The reason why the actual departure for war was delayed for a month was, in Fennander's realistic opinion, that the strength of the Guard had to be increased to correspond to wartime conditions. All the time the men seemed to be eager to meet the Turk in battle.

On 3 September, the inhabitants of Helsinki organised a farewell party for the Guard. Two days later, early in the morning, after short prayers, the guardsmen left. The departure, said Fennander, was taken seriously by both those who were leaving and those who stayed behind. A train took the Guard to St Petersburg, Vilnius and Chişinău, where they rested for six days. They were stationed outside the town and spent their time drilling and eating. On 21 September, they crossed the Prut, and late in the evening arrived at Iaşi, where they encamped on a hill outside the city. (Fennander 1895: 17-19, 20-3.)

On 26 September, the men left for Iaşi and travelled by train to Brăila, Bucharest and Frateşti, where they disembarked. They marched some five kilometres and encamped quite near the Danube. Four days later they started to move towards Zimnicea. The advance was difficult due to the extraordinary heat and lack of drinkable water. Fennander compensated for this by praising the site of their bivouac. According to him, it was the same place where Finns had fought the Catholics in the Thirty Years' War in the days of King Gustavus II Adolphus.<sup>175</sup> In the same manner, Fennander felt that the Finns now had to fight the 'Muhammedians'. (Fennander 1895: 25-7.) Thus the supposed 'honour' of a place connected present troops to earlier forces and, so to speak, required them not to disgrace themselves.

On 3 October, the Guard crossed the Danube. Every man tasted the muddy Danube water, much as Finnish troops were said to have done 250 years earlier when crossing the same river, albeit at a different point (Fennander 1895: 28-9). Fennander continued by quoting the whole passage from the article praising Finnish guardsmen in the Viennese *Presse* (pp. 29-31).<sup>176</sup> In the next sentence

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<sup>173</sup> The river here was more than a kilometre wide and some 30 metres deep (Menning 1992: 55).

<sup>174</sup> Thus it seems that whereas for some peoples (for example, the Mae Eгна of New Guinea) it was a great honour for a warrior to be buried where he fell (see Meggitt 1977: 107), for Finns, in Wahlberg's opinion, it was dishonourable to be buried in the land for which they were (allegedly) fighting.

<sup>175</sup> This was not the case.

<sup>176</sup> I assume that Fennander did not have a paper of his own but quoted, *post factum*, the Helsinki-based

he noted his arrival in enemy territory and his adoption of the military identity by stating (p. 31) that the Guard soon bivouacked by the side of a road that was full of soldiers going to the front and of Turkish prisoners of war escorted by a few Cossacks heading for Russia.

### ***Lindman***

Lindman started his recollections of the journey on 3 September, when the city of Helsinki threw a party in honour of the Guard. He lingered over details of the food served (wheat bread and sweets, among other things) and repeated at length the speech given by Senator Molander. The feast ended with toasts and “Our land”.<sup>177</sup> Next day the Guard was inspected by a high-ranking Russian officer of the Finnish military district, after which the Russian national anthem was played.<sup>178</sup> On 6 September, after divine service, the guardsmen ‘with tears’ bade farewell to friends and strangers alike. During the playing of the Russian national anthem the guardsmen boarded the train and left. In the evening they arrived at Viipuri, where an ‘enormous’ mass of people welcomed them and put on a feast in their honour. After much eating and drinking the train continued to St Petersburg, where the Guard was welcomed by ‘a group of Finns’. (Lindman 1880: 4-5, 7.)

Lindman outlined the journey from St Petersburg to Chişinău by mentioning some of the places where the train stopped. The men spent six days at Chişinău, since, as Lindman correctly stated, the ‘railway lines were so jammed with soldiers that there was no room to travel’. (Lindman 1880: 9.) At Iaşi the Guard was again held up by overcrowded railway lines, this time for four days. The men bivouacked on some hills behind Iaşi where, according to Lindman, Turkish troops had built fortifications the previous winter. (Lindman 1880: 11.) Some days later the guardsmen reached the end of the railway line. There for the first time they heard the ‘thunder of war’, that is, cannonades. Here also began difficult marches, ‘terrible and bloody battles’ and rain and cold (p. 12), in short, a soldier’s hard toil.

On 2 October, Lindman arrived at Svishtov, where the night was spent on an island in the Danube. On its banks they found the bodies of horses - signs of the Russian crossing in June. There it also turned out that one of the Guard’s suppliers, allegedly a Jew,<sup>179</sup> had provided Lindman’s company with mouldy peas. These were at once thrown into the river, and ‘the Jew had to take to his heels’. Next day the Guard crossed the Danube with the band playing. (Lindman 1880: 12-13.)

### ***Palander***

According to Palander (1881: 3-4), the regular summer manoeuvres were carried out as usual at Krasnoye Selo in 1877, but ‘due to battles of the Russian army in northern Bulgaria’ the Finns were ‘excited’. This was because they, too, were expecting orders to join the war. Thus the command of 3 August dispatching the Guard to the front was welcomed with cheers, since the Finnish soldiers were

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*Hufvudstadsbladet*, which published the article (in a Swedish translation) on 20 October 1877.

<sup>177</sup> “Our land”, the opening poem of Runeberg’s *Tales*, written in 1848, had since the 1850s been the unofficial (and later official) Finnish national anthem. In the latter part of the 19th century it was perhaps the most popular song in Finland, being sung not only on official occasions but also at gatherings organised for the common people by local non-profit societies (Liikanen 1995: 226-7.).

<sup>178</sup> It is perhaps no coincidence that from that occasion Wahlberg remembered the ‘solemn’ Lutheran music (implying the defence of the native land and its values) and Lindman the Russian anthem (a sign of the emperor, the high commander of the army). In fact, both were played.

<sup>179</sup> The fact is that some of the sutlers of the Russian army were Jews (Furieux 1958: 101). However, the way Lindman stated that the person in question was a Jew does convey more than a simple fact.

now being given ‘an opportunity to renew and enhance their age-old military reputation’.<sup>180</sup> After the command, preparations for the departure got under way. The battalion was brought up to wartime strength. Equipment, rifles and provisions were collected and distributed to the men. The atmosphere was one of trepidation mixed with joy. The former was expressed by mothers, wives, relatives, friends and sweethearts, who were afraid that their loved ones would never return; the latter feeling prevailed, according to Palander, among the guardsmen themselves, who believed that they would soon be able to show their bravery. (Palander 1881: 4-7.)

On 4 September, the Guard was mustered. Later on the same day, Palander says, the citizens of Helsinki honoured the guardsmen’s departure with a great feast (p. 6). Early on 6 September the men left. Palander (pp. 6-8) does not discuss the journey in detail but asks the reader to ‘speed over the monotonous Russian plains’ to Chişinău, where the guardsmen were allowed to have a few day’s rest. After that they continued by train, crossed the border river, the Prut, and arrived in Romania. According to Palander, at the border the train was stopped and the military band played ‘bellicose music as if to increase our eagerness to discharge our duty’, that is, to display their military identity.

Their next stops were Iaşi, where Palander had ‘much time to look around’, and Bucharest. The ‘terrible monotonous’ travelling by train ended at Frateşti, where the Guard rested for some days. Palander does not complain of the heat but says that the weather was fine. On 2 October, the men arrived at Zimnicea, and the next day they crossed the Danube. (Palander 1881: 8-14.) Palander, too, reproduced here the article from the *Presse*. While the article emphasised the joy of the Guard at having reached the enemy, Palander only stated (p. 14) that they were now on the ‘Turkish side of the Danube’ and advanced further without delay. Thus his gloomy musing about the war does not seem to prevent him from accepting his military identity, though for most of the journey he had been harbouring serious doubts about military ideals.

### ***Jernvall***

Jernvall described in detail the order of 3 August (1899: 5-6). According to him, on that day the then commander of the battalion, Colonel Ramsay, first ordered the Guard to salute H.M. Empress Maria<sup>181</sup> for her name-day, and only then informed the soldiers that they were being summoned to the front. The news was greeted with prolonged cheering. ‘Every soldier considers it his sacred duty to defend Christianity and the military fame of our forbears in a manly way.’ The preparations for the start lasted some four weeks and included the purchase of horses and provisions, recruiting and the drilling of new men. Jernvall himself reported (p. 6) having recruited twenty ‘strong men’ from his native province of Häme (in the middle of southern Finland). During this mission he also took farewell of his elderly mother and his friends.

On 3 September, the citizens of Helsinki put on a feast for the Guard. Two days later the guardsmen left. Jernvall (pp. 7-11) described in detail the packing, leave-taking of civilians (wives, sweethearts and others) and the divine service held just before the Guard boarded the train that took them to St Petersburg, where they rested for a day. According to Jernvall, local Finns urged the men to ‘beat [the enemy] or die’ and, in the manner of war propaganda, to ‘defend the sacred cause of Christianity, one’s own land and honour’ (p. 15). Then the guardsmen continued through the Baltics to Bialystok, in present-day Poland.

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<sup>180</sup> Whether or not the Finnish military reputation is ‘age-old’, in the context of the 19th century awakening Finnish nationalism its ‘antiquity’ was a new invention.

<sup>181</sup> Maria Alexandrovna, Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt (1824-1880), Alexander II’s spouse since 1841.

In Bialystok, too, a celebration meal was held, officially to mark the name-day of Emperor Alexander II (11 September, N.S.). The emperor himself had sent the Guard a message in which he wished it luck in its hard mission. On 12 September the guardsmen continued their journey, arriving two days later at Chişinău, where they rested for almost a week. On 18 September they celebrated the anniversary of the Guard. When commemorating it, the men, according to Jernvall (p. 19), did not ‘forget Him who gives all good things, namely, the Lord in heaven, whom we in our humble way obediently thanked’. By implication, this meant that the Guard’s journey was under divine protection and that its mission was just.

On the morning of 30 September, the Guard departed for Zimnicea. It was very hot and drinking water scarce. The Finns thus suffered, as predicted in the letter quoted by Jernvall at the Guard’s departure, from both heat and thirst. The march lasted for almost three days. The men reached Zimnicea on 2 October, and were stationed on a small island in the Danube. (Jernvall 1899: 24-5.) The sight of the mighty river reminded Jernvall (pp. 25-6) of the famous Finnish cavalymen (in Finnish, *hakkapeliitat*) who had fought on her banks 250 years earlier.<sup>182</sup> And paraphrasing Fennander (see above in this section), Jernvall, too, stressed that the Finnish Guard had arrived here to gain the same military merits and fame as their forefathers. And as the *hakkapeliitta* had fought for the true (that is, Lutheran) religion against the Catholics, so the Guard was defending (the true religion of) Christianity against the ‘Mahometans’.

On 3 October, the Guard had to wait for about an hour before crossing the river, since the artillery they were protecting went first. When their turn came, the Guard’s commander ordered the men to sing famous (Finnish) military songs like “Porilaisten marssi”. This all Jernvall described (1899: 27-30) mainly by quoting the above-mentioned article from the *Presse*. On the Bulgarian side of the Danube the guardsmen, following army regulations, fixed their bayonets to indicate that they had now arrived in enemy territory. Jernvall remarked (p. 27) that now they were on the soil where ‘their destiny was to be settled’.

### ***Lindfors***

Lindfors began his recollections with the departure of the Guard on 6 September. ‘After many kinds of preparations and arrangements’ the guardsmen were finally ready to start. The day, according to the author, was fine and bright, the words of the service held on the battalion’s square near the centre of Helsinki were ‘strong and pithy’, and the fiancées and sweethearts who escorted their loved ones were ‘weeping and wailing’, not knowing whether they would ever see them again. The guardsmen had mixed feelings. They were glad to leave but at the same time felt a little ‘odd’. Already in the train bound for Viipuri they started to miss their ‘dear fatherland’ and to feel a ‘strange presentiment’. On the other hand, they were comforted by Runeberg’s words that ‘it is better to die in war [than in peacetime]’. (Lindfors 1975: 3.) Thus, like most volunteers discussed here, Lindfors, too, felt uncomfortable when starting to create his military identity. A major reason in his case may have been that he called little on either official propaganda and ideals or learned mythologisation of the Finnish past when starting to transform his peacetime identity.

In Viipuri the local inhabitants showed the Guard lavish hospitality. On 7 September, the men arrived in St Petersburg, and next day they continued their journey. A few days later the Guard was on Polish soil,<sup>183</sup> where, obviously in Vilnius, the soldiers met the Finnish governor-general, Count Nikolai Adlerberg (1819-1892), who both feasted the guardsmen and wished them luck. The Guard

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<sup>182</sup> The term ‘hakkapeliitat’ comes from the old Swedish war cry ‘hacka på’, or ‘strike on’ (Luntinen 1997: 18, note 3).

<sup>183</sup> Present-day Lithuania.

advanced through present-day Poland, Belarus and Ukraine, reaching Chişinău on 14 September. They spent six days in the Bessarabian capital and then crossed the Russo-Romanian border ‘with the speed of wind’. On 29 September, they reached the end of the railway (Frateşti) and had to continue on foot. (Lindfors 1975: 3-5.)

After three days’ forced marching, the Guard bivouacked on a small island in the Danube just outside Zimnicea. On 3 October the guardsmen crossed the Danube ‘with great rejoicing and [accompanied by] rousing music’. They were keen to perform their duty but also deeply conscious of the fact that they were now on enemy territory. (Lindfors 1975: 6.)

### ***Wallin***

Wallin began his account with the departure of the Guard. Notwithstanding an abundance of eating and drinking at the farewell celebrations arranged by the citizens of Helsinki the previous day, ‘strangely enough’ none of the guardsmen were intoxicated. Only one fellow was missing. He was found dead drunk in barracks, left there and later sent to catch the Guard up but he got lost forever somewhere in Russia. The rest of the men attended a short service, and then marched to the railway station escorted by a large number of people who were not allowed, however, to go on the platform. Only wives and close relatives bade farewell to the Guard, which quickly boarded the train. Those who had liquor with them drank, and then fell asleep on the floor of their carriage. (WM: 1-5.)

At nightfall the train arrived at Viipuri, where local people had set up a feast for the men in the station building. In the middle of the night the train continued, and next morning steamed into St Petersburg. From there they travelled to Vilnius where, according to Wallin, they were fêted by the locals. After Vilnius, the journey was delayed due to heavy traffic and a lack of transport vehicles, and Wallin mentioned only a few places where they stopped or which they passed through. The train journey ended at Frateşti. According to Wallin, the men were delighted because the carriages had been dark<sup>184</sup> and full of vermin. The Guard headed along a dusty road for Giurgiu. It was hot and drinking water ran out, but as Wallin said, somehow they managed to reach Zimnicea, where they had to wait on a small island before they could cross the Danube. (WM: 6-19.)

When preparing pea soup, a staple army food, the men noticed that the peas were mouldy. The Guard’s junior doctor (Wahlberg) examined them and ordered the soup to be poured away. He asked where the peas had come from, and somebody said that they had been bought from local merchants. (WM: 19-20; cf. above, Lindman.) Next day the Guard crossed the Danube. During this operation the commander of the battalion ordered the band to play famous military tunes. After the crossing the men were commanded to shout hurrah and fix their bayonets (WM: 22-3), thus to publicly indicate their adoption of military identity.

### ***Alfthan***

After being summoned to the war at the end of July, Alfthan’s unit, too, spent some weeks in preparation, in this case at Krasnoye Selo. On 3 September, a battery of the troop, some 315 men, among them Alfthan, left St Petersburg by train for a small village in the *guberniya* (province) of Kherson, bordering Bessarabia. From there the men continued on foot across Bessarabia to Romania.<sup>185</sup> (Alfthan 1879: 3.)

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<sup>184</sup> They were the closed carriages known in Finnish as ‘härkävaunut’ (cattle trucks).

<sup>185</sup> This was the route taken by most Russian troops going to the Balkan front (Ehrnrooth 1967: 102).



Alfthan was rather uncommunicative about his journey (see pp. 4-9), listing merely the names of towns and villages where they stopped, and saying whether the men marched, went on horseback or travelled by train. The only other information he gave was a note to the effect that the rain was so heavy the pack horses refused to continue (p. 6). For a professional soldier, the transformation from a peacetime military identity to a wartime one was not difficult, or so Alfthan wanted to believe.

### *Schulman*

The Lithuanian Guard of Schulman was summoned to the front on 22 July. The order was welcomed with joy and merriment. According to Schulman, everyone was ready to exchange the ordinary 'boring' army routines for the new and unknown destinies of war. Schulman himself, who at that time was in Warsaw, was promoted commander of his Guard's fourth company and was kept busy preparing it for departure one month later. Reservists and new recruits had to be drilled, and the unit supplied with arms, provisions and other items. In early August, Schulman bade farewell to his family, that is, his brothers and his mother, who had come from Finland to Warsaw, and his obviously Russian friends. The Poles of Warsaw were rather indifferent to the departure, although the following year they warmly welcomed the soldiers back. On 2 September, the company, consisting of 10 officers and 611 NCOs and men, had a parade and a liturgy, and eight days later they left Warsaw by train. (Schulman 1955: 12-16.)

The journey lasted ten days. In Schulman's opinion, the men were in the best of spirits, spending their time singing and playing cards. The landscape they passed through was for the most part totally strange to Schulman but he was glad about that since, in his opinion, new places brought variety to the monotony of sitting in the train. The first place of any size where they stopped, on 11 September, was Brest. Three days later, in Razdelnaya, modern Ukraine, Schulman met some acquaintances from the Finnish Guard travelling the same route. On 15 September they arrived at Chişinău. The Lithuanian Guard stayed there for only one day before continuing, via Ungheni, a small town on the Russo-Romanian border, to Iaşi, where Schulman spent a whole day. He took a bath, his last one before arriving in Constantinople several months later, since it was, as he said, a sign of a civilised man to keep his body clean. (Schulman 1995: 16-19.) At a symbolical level this may have meant dissociation from the 'unclean' enemy, or what it (not he) was thought to represent (see Winter 1979: 146).

After Iaşi the Lithuanian Guard advanced slowly, now and then buying cheap fruit at stations where they stopped. On 20 September, the men arrived at Frateşti, where there was much coming and going. The medical corps were busy,<sup>186</sup> as were officers and civil servants, and Jewish, Bulgarian and Romanian civilians. In addition, there were all kinds of peddlers and beggars. It took Schulman two hours to make his way out of that 'chaos' and to find the bivouac situated about one kilometre outside the station. (Schulman 1955: 19-23.)

From Frateşti the troop marched along the Danube in order to cross the river at Zimnicea. Their heavy kits and the hot, and later rainy, weather did not make the march easy. The heat was so great that they marched only in the afternoons and at night across the 'endless maize fields'. On the second day the men lost their way and had to march for at least ten extra kilometres before arriving at Bragadiru, north-east of Zimnicea. The service corps lagged behind, 'naturally', as Schulman remarked. On the morning of September 25 they arrived at Zimnicea. It poured the whole day and still the next

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<sup>186</sup> Russians injured at the Balkan front were collected here before returning to Russia.

morning, when the men stepped onto the pontoon bridge and cheerily crossed over to the other side. (Schulman 1955: 25-9.)

## 5.2. Preliminary thoughts about battle, sickness and death

I have already mentioned that most of the casualties of the Finnish Guard, and of troops of 19th-century European armies in general (Seaman 1906: 2), were due not to the fighting but to disease. This was certainly known to the guardsmen in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8, since, apart from the cruelty of the enemy, illness was regularly mentioned in the army tradition, for example, in stories of Finnish officers serving in the Russian army. An example is provided by Major, later General, Gustav Ramsay (1794-1859), who took part in the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-9. In a diary entry dated 3 October 1829 (N.S.), he described how on that day one of his relatives died after a six weeks' serious illness, together with another soldier of Finnish birth. According to another entry, they were buried the next day. 'The Lutheran priest . . . carried out the sad ceremony: all Finns here escorted [the deceased] to their last resting-place.' Ramsay concluded: 'The second lieutenant from the regiment of W.<sup>187</sup> died today [4 October] in hospital. And the terrible toll taken by death has removed even some of the doctors working there.'<sup>188</sup> (Quoted in Klinge 1997: 12.)

During the Crimean War another officer, Magnus Ehrnrooth (1820-1860), who in spring of 1854 was in Silistria (modern Romania), wrote to one of his sisters in a letter dated 29 May 1854: 'The siege [of Silistria] is [a] really terrible . . . systematic butchering, night and day, in which all the means invented by science are used to exterminate the enemy. In addition, the irregulars of the enemy have the bad habit of cutting off the heads of any bodies they can lay their hands on. Thus we have today, with the consent of the Turks, fetched over 200 headless bodies . . . Such scenes we have in front of our eyes all the time, and they make the sojourn here in the long run rather unpleasant.' (Quoted in Ehrnrooth 1967: 34-5.) However, in the war of 1877-8 at least the official Russian medical records showed a marked improvement on the situation during the Crimean War. This was due to an influx of trained medical personnel, improved evacuation, and the creation of field hospitals at division level. Thus, according to statistics, the mortality rate for wounded soldiers on the Danubean front was 10.8 per cent or approximately one-third of the Crimean War rate. (Menning 1992: 82.)

In all my sources, unlike in most later Finnish war memoirs I have consulted (for example, Erho 1940; Lindberg 1904; Simola 1955), the expectancy of being wounded or killed features rather often at the beginning of the guardsmen's journey to the front, on the eve of their first battle, and right after it. But these presentiments are usually quickly dismissed, and death is accepted as part of a soldier's, or a hero's, life. In actual cases of injury or death, the emphasis in the narration is on heroic, or manly, acceptance in the manner of Finns of the past. One is given the impression it would have been shameful and dishonourable to behave otherwise. Illness is usually either totally ignored or mentioned only in passing, the reason probably being that, unlike death, illness could easily be interpreted as cowardice (see Ch. 7, Wallin).

### *Wahlberg*

On the first pages of his recollections, Wahlberg (1878: 3) praised the glory granted those who died for Finnish military honour. On this occasion he obviously was not thinking of the actual dying but of the abstract cult, or commemoration, of dead heroes. He expressed similar feelings at Zimnicea while

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<sup>187</sup> Meaning the Vyatka Regiment, with which Ramsay was serving at that time.

<sup>188</sup> According to Halén (1986: 151), altogether 29 officers of Finnish origin died in the war of 1828-9, none of them on the battlefield but from various diseases.

waiting to cross the Danube. He and some of his companions were sitting drinking and listening to the volleys thundering intermittently from the direction of Pleven.<sup>189</sup> Wahlberg began to muse (p. 11): 'It [death] may soon meet us. It is in God's hands, [while] our honour is in our own, and in the manner of their forbears the sons must increase it [the honour].'<sup>190</sup>

On the eve of the battle of Gorni Dübrik, when Wahlberg next spoke of being wounded or killed, he described (1878: 44-5), in the context of the preparations for battle, how the ambulances were located at three points, and how the dressing stations and military hospitals were arranged. This time he was perfectly calm. He did not paint dark pictures, did not anticipate anything; sanitation was his duty and he did it as well as he could, and that was all.

In the next section (p. 45) his tone changed a little, when he stated that he could read from the eyes of his (officer) companions the question: shall we meet again (after the battle)? According to Wahlberg (*ibid.*), his companions had mixed feelings. On the one hand they sat singing and toasting in Wahlberg's tent; on the other, they were grave, and from time to time a word about the possibility of dying in battle would surface.

### ***Fennander***

According to Fennander (1895: 18-19), when the Finnish Guard departed on 6 September, many of the guardsmen felt that their only protector in the battle for life and death was their gun. And when the fatherland, home, parents, relatives and friends were left behind, the men were wondering whether they would ever see them again. In Fennander's opinion, only knowledge of the 'fact' that they were going to perform their duty just as their forefathers had before them gave them some comfort.

Five days later the Guard was in Bialystok. Near the town were buried Finns who had succumbed to epidemics during the Polish revolt of 1830. Fennander and his comrades visited the graveyard, and Fennander (p. 21) remembered a proverb, in his opinion of Arabic origin: 'No mortal knows where his grave will be dug.' The same low spirits returned when Fennander (pp. 25-6) arrived on the northern bank of the Danube, saw the enemy's campfires on the other side, and longed for home. Thus, he struggled against adopting military identity.

On the eve of the battle of Gorni Dübrik, Fennander's feelings were more ambivalent. On the one hand, the inevitable fact that tomorrow some, or perhaps many, of his fellows, and maybe he himself too, would die, made him very sad. Deep in meditation he felt in advance the severe pains that wounds might cause. (Fennander 1895: 48.) On the other hand (pp. 50-1), and after second thoughts, he stated that during his lifetime a human being sees many sunsets and can never know whether the next day will bring good or bad things. Nevertheless, the day will come when joy and sorrow make no difference, the day when one's race is run forever. And since after death only reputation matters,<sup>191</sup> one should live a faultless life. Approvingly Fennander (p. 49) quoted the words of one of his comrades: '[Should I die,] write to my fiancée and tell her that I was a hero.' Thus social prestige induced Fennander to subscribe to military ideals.

### ***Lindman***

At the feast organised by the citizens of Helsinki in honour of the Guard in September, Lindman (1880:

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<sup>189</sup> Pleven lies some 60 kilometres south-west of Zimnicea.

<sup>190</sup> It seems that soldiers of Russian origin had less heroic and more realistic, or even awful, images of battles and dying (see Anonymous 1890: 364-5, 378-9). But Russians, too, considered it an honour to die for the emperor (*ibid.*: 371), though also they could thank God that they later only vaguely remembered the details of a real (or 'honourable') battle (p. 379).

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Brakel (1994: 81) for a similar aphorism in the 1808-9 war.

6) reported that someone asked why there was so much cheering and drinking, to which one guardsman replied crudely: 'We are drinking in praise of our blood.' Such banter has been one of soldiers' common means to handle terrifying past, or menacing future, experiences.<sup>192</sup> It was also typical of a certain sort of broadside ballad (Niemi 1980: 113).

When supplies were being distributed on the eve of the battle of Gorni Dūbnik, Lindman said (p. 17) that 'many had . . . their last supper'. Next day, when approaching Turkish fortifications, he reflected (p. 18) that 'an unexplained feeling prevails at the moment one first has to attack the enemy, firmly intending to kill as many of one's poor fellow-men as possible. A solemn shiver goes through the body. He does not know what his destiny will be at the next moment: will he perish or live? Will he be injured and left alone on the battlefield, where no loving heart will hear his last sigh? Will he be interred in Bulgarian soil, far from his beautiful native land?' As we shall see in the next chapter, in Lindman's case, his occasionally expressed hesitation concerning the adoption of military identity was dismissed with black humour, which ironised structural and the army ideals and made these acceptable for a while.

### *Palander*

On the eve of the Guard's start, Palander (1881: 5-7) dealt at length with the grief and sorrow of the relatives and friends of the departing guardsmen. On his way to the front, at the Romanian border, Palander (p. 8) reported having met a funeral procession, which he considered a bad omen:<sup>193</sup> '[I] felt that we too were being carried south to die [for nothing].' But he immediately added (ibid.): 'Away with such unmanly feelings.'

At the end of September, in Fratești, Palander suddenly remarked that '[in this place] we saw the first medical tents of the Red Cross' (p. 10). A couple of days later he was in Zimnicea. There he met a wounded Russian NCO who had taken part in a battle at Plevna. According to Palander (1881: 11), the soldier's descriptions of the fighting were hair-raising. 'Allegedly', as Palander with reservations stated, blood had flown down the hills, and the fields within square kilometres had been covered with the naked bodies of the dead. Hearing this, some of Palander's companions began to lose heart, but most of them wanted 'even more fervently than before to spill their blood for their emperor and in honour of their land'. This passage comes close to the use of religion in Finnish wartime newspapers and broadside ballads and the Russian war propaganda.

### *Lindfors*

Lindfors (1883: 4) first reported death in Chișinău, where one of his companions, a Guard's clerk, was killed in an accident. Without comment, Lindfors related that 'he was run over by a train carriage and crushed to death', and without more ado went on to describe how his company was stationed. According to Järvinen (1932: 79), the man was drunk. Perhaps because it was an accident, not a battle casualty, Lindfors almost ignored the incident. When arriving in Bulgaria in October, Lindfors (p. 6) was certainly deeply conscious that he had entered a hostile space, where death lurked round every corner, and no-one could know for sure whether or not he would return alive. These feelings were associated in his imagination with Pohjola, the mythical land of death and magic in the *Kalevala*. It also occurred to him that this was the same bridge over which Russian troops, accompanied by some Finnish soldiers, had fought their way in the previous summer, and that then a Finn was shot dead. This

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<sup>192</sup> See Rampanen 1934: 157-8 for more examples from the Great War.

<sup>193</sup> These, as well as graveyards, are bad omens in Russian recollections, too (Anonymous 1890: 338).

detailed knowledge of the war indicates that either Lindfors had a keen interest in war right from its declaration (which would partly explain his voluntarily enlisting) or he took the trouble to supplement his text with additional information after the war (or both).

On 5 October, Lindfors (pp. 6-7) saw an 'enormous' number of wounded Russian soldiers being taken to hospital in carts drawn by oxen. He said that although he had seen injured men during his journey by train, they had 'not looked as wretched as these'. According to Lindfors, the guardsmen then started to think about the days to come and became depressed at the thought that 'maybe soon' they would be in the 'same poor situation'. A week or so later, similar thoughts came to him while listening to the thunder of guns near Pleven, causing him to describe (pp. 9-10) with vivid images the 'death and murder' that these arms disseminated, and to smell the 'horrible stink from the fields of Hades', which were waiting for both young and old. No mention of 'feats' or 'honour': only musing and calculation of the risks involved in a soldier's work.

### ***Wallin***

After the crossing of the Danube, it occurred to Wallin that for the guardsmen the crossing was but a game, a 'ceremony', as he literally stated, but for the Russians, who had crossed the river in June, it had been a battle. He also remembered that among the Russians there had been three Finns who were still serving with the Life Guard (WM: 23-4, 27.) On the eve of the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik, he reported (p. 64) that most of the men waited for their departure quite silently; only a few chatted. Here Wallin's recollections come close to those of Lindfors.

### ***Alfthan***

The possibility of being wounded or killed first occurred to Alfthan on his way to the front. When he stopped at a small, unidentified place in Bessarabia he spotted, in the middle of the village, a grove which, in fact, was the local cemetery. He said that 'when looking at the tilted wooden crosses, I began to think of those still unknown burial places which, when we later arrived at the theatre of war, would mark our route . . .' (1879: 5)

The next time Alfthan came across death was at the imperial HQ at Gorna Studena, some tens of kilometres south of Svishtov, where he 'had time to watch' Bulgarian funerals.<sup>194</sup> 'Loudly, without pause, as if compelled to weep, the Bulgarian women raised their laments at the side of the grave pit where the white [shrouded] lifeless body' was lying. It is possible that because the dead person was a civilian, not a soldier, Alfthan did not begin to ponder death in battle. (1879: 26.)

On the eve of the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik, Alfthan returned to the subject. He addressed his reader (p. 42): 'See these two pictures that so touchingly portray the opposites, life and death, in a soldier's destiny.' The first one was a twofold view before a battle: a soldier saddling his horse and writing a letter with a big dog lying at his feet, staring at him with sad eyes. The second one presented a view after the battle: the soldier lying on the battleground beside his fallen horse, and the dog trying in vain to raise him from the dead by scratching his breast. In the background were medical personnel. That last picture, according to Alfthan (p. 43), also indicated the destiny in store for 'many troops that have gathered here [in Gorni Dŭbnik]'. And a few sentences later he (p. 44) assured the reader that 'at a [certain] minute in one's life the hour of death will arrive'. Then, 'as quietly as shadows, all souvenirs of life will pass away'. And he ended (*ibid.*) by asking his reader whether he [the reader] has really understood what it means to die? Here Alfthan clearly ascribed to the sentimental romantic genre of

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<sup>194</sup> My other sources do not mention Bulgarians (or civilians) at Gorna Studena.

subliming and ennobling the tragedy of death. But, though he later accepted death as part of a soldier's work, or lot, at first it may have been one reason why he was so sparing of words about his journey to the front and uncertain of his military identity.

### ***Schulman***

Schulman (1955: 17) first met wounded soldiers on the day, 10 September, he left Warsaw. By chance he came across a train transporting wounded men from the front. Schulman said that the sight of the suffering makes a painful impression on a person on his way to war. One could not help thinking that it might not be long before you yourself were sent back in the same state. The next time he met wounded men was during the last days of his journey by train, somewhere between Bucharest and Fratești. The immediate impression was again sad but, Schulman added (p. 22), one got used to it.

The day after they had crossed the Danube Schulman passed his brother-in-law, who was dying. He was informed about the man's condition only later, after his relative had already died, and bitterly complained that he had not had the possibility to see him for a last time and shake his hand. (Schulman 1955: 25-6.) Thus, what mattered was not death itself but a proper, 'civilised', or 'heroic', way of dying or faithfulness to structural manners, or public memory.

### **5.3. War, its cause and meaning**

The ideas about war that the guardsmen put into writing on their way to the front were at a rather general level: defence of military glory, behaving in a 'manly' way or fighting for the emperor or the 'true' religion. On the whole, these ideas were not even very original but were taken from, or paraphrased, Finnish newspapers and broadside ballads and the Russian propaganda. Thus, they represented more the voice of political and military institutions and the interests of groups in or having power (noblemen or merchants, for example) than that of the lower classes. The same seems to be true of a closely connected issue, namely, what the men said of the cause and meaning of war.

In the anthropological literature the reasons, or grounds, for waging war have been grouped into four partly overlapping categories. Otterbein (1973: 937-8) labelled them affectual, traditional, means-rational and ends-rational. Although he does not say so, the list includes concrete political, economic and demographic reasons and also their ideological justifications as fabricated by propaganda.

Affectual, or moral (see Leed 1979: 70), cause means that those who start a war are mainly motivated by a desire for 'honour', or social prestige, or by society's instigation of rage, dread or hatred due to the activity or existence of the other, called the enemy. Traditional cause is located either in the structure of given societies (a rather permanent state of conflict, for example, a blood feud) or in biology (war, like eating or copulating, is understood as something natural rather than cultural [see Harrison 1993: 1-4]). Means-rational grounds take warfare and its goals for granted. War is but one of the purposes of social life, and at the same time a socially accepted means for achieving socially established goals. Ends-rational causes of war emphasise the post-war political and economic results, that is, a 'happy end' justifies the war for those who start (or win) it. In the late 1800s, at least, the ends-rational grounds for waging war could also be ideological: waging war aimed at survival of the fittest in the sense of vulgar social Darwinism, because it was the 'destiny' of weak nations to perish.<sup>195</sup> Another version of this was to see war as originating primarily not from human decision but from superhuman, or divine, verdict (for example, Alfthan 1879: 17-18).

When listing causes of the 1877-8 war, my sources, that is, those who explicitly

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<sup>195</sup> Cf. Kanitz 1875: 34-5 for such an idea.

mentioned the subject,<sup>196</sup> ascribed mainly to affectual, or moral, and ends-rational reasons. These were formulated more on the basis of war propaganda than on actual knowledge; that is, they did not have any special opinion of war beyond its contemporary public discussion and the emotions and aspirations ignited by it. Guardsmen stated that war was waged because the emperor ordered so or because the position of Bulgarian Christians was unbearable (see Lindgren 1878: 1-3 for a newspaper opinion).

From the political point of view, the meaning given to the war was the liberation of Bulgaria, and from the specifically Finnish viewpoint, to increase the military glory of Finns and Finland (Palander 1881: 5-6). This was nicely in harmony with the official line. For, according to Hiisivaara-Hela (1982: 39), broadside ballads of the Russo-Turkish war gave four main reasons for war: to defend 'Christian brethren', to fight against the 'infidel', to obey the emperor's command and to follow the example of earlier famous Finnish military heroes. Such view put the emphasis on the glory of a group or land, i.e., on men's relation to their native country and other Finns, not on their personal convictions.

While one reason for this may lie in censorship, it seems plausible that, for the guardsmen, waging war when the emperor ordered was a normal, and socially logical and acceptable, choice that needed no special explanations: the emperor's enemies were the guardsmen's enemies as well and fighting for the emperor increased both his and the guardsmen's honour (and power). Further, the guardsmen obviously considered military service a 'noble' job, a good alternative to being a farm-hand, or, for those in a higher social position, an opportunity to consolidate their status. I think that the extensive descriptions of the celebrations held on the occasion of the men's departure are indications of that way of thinking: only those were honoured who really merited it.<sup>197</sup> Also the men's indifference or negative attitude towards Bulgarians, their ridiculing, rather than condemning, of Turks, and the presentation of Islam as something exotic rather than as an enemy of Christianity suggests that what they were after, or were maybe even pressed to aspire to by their society, was their own 'fame' as inseparable from Finnish glory, and not the Russian or Bulgarian cause. Briefly, their relation to the Russian aims of the war was quite external; they did not fight because they were unwilling to let down their poor 'brethren' (as, for example, some Russian volunteers in Serbia had argued in 1876 [Milojković-Djurić 1994: 105-6]) but because they wanted to distinguish themselves in the eyes of their Finnish contemporaries. Or, as Winter (1979: 33) suggested of London working-class recruits in the First World War, for them honour, patriotism and work for a better society were basically the same.<sup>198</sup> This was what Topelius, too, had argued (Niemi 1980: 75-6).

The same seems to be true for common Russian soldiers. The anonymous author of a recollection that appeared in Finnish, too, stated that among men of his unit (the real political) reasons for waging war were rather obscure, although they had spent almost half a year in Chişinău, Bessarabia,<sup>199</sup> waiting for departure for the front. According to the author, one of his mates once asked how long it would last before they arrived at Bokhara, and even after explanations was unable to see any difference between Bulgaria and Bokhara. (Anonymous 1890: 360-1.) Similarly, G.I. Uspenskiy (ca. 1840-1902) wrote of Russian volunteers in Serbia in 1876 that hardly anybody knew the historic

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<sup>196</sup> Fennander, Lindfors and Wallin did not express their opinion on the matter.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Lindberg 1904: 47-9, 51 for a similar view.

<sup>198</sup> But there were also Finnish exceptions. P. Nygrén, who served in the Guard's third company from 1 November 1876 to 2 September 1879, and was wounded at the battle of Gorni Dübnik, stated in his diary (PK 1710/1, p. [1]) that the reason for war was the Turkish oppression of Balkan Christians, and that it therefore was also a war according to the will of God.

<sup>199</sup> Russia had already started to concentrate troops in Chişinău in autumn 1876 (Gripenberg 1905: 197). In November that year they numbered 160,000 (Kylävaara 1978: 24).

circumstances or cause of the war but stated that they had come simply because they did not accept the oppression (by Muslims) of a small Christian people (quoted in Milojković-Djurić 1994: 106). It seems that the underlying notion of a 'just war' as a part of both Russian and Finnish public memory may explain a lot of the 'ignorance'. Thus, for the guardsmen, the Russo-Turkish war was 'just' because it was waged by a more civilised society (or so Russians and Finns supposed) for spreading civilisation in less civilised areas. The idea was perhaps most clearly formulated by Snellman (see Airas 1981: 204-5, 210-11), but there were also other Finnish politicians who, in 1876, held the army as the most distinctive mark of a full-grown nation (Kempainen 1999: 49, 51).

Nevertheless, the men also developed more down-to-earth, but not outspoken, reasons for fighting. I suppose that the anonymous Russian volunteer just mentioned hit the nail on the head when he stated that 'we' wanted to fight the Turk because it was his fault that 'we' had to endure this laborious and difficult campaign (Anonymous 1890: 361). That is, though the men's arrival in Bulgaria was excused with references to all kinds of lofty ideas about liberation, supposedly known to readers, the conscious *primus motor* that propelled the guardsmen to go on and fight was that they wanted to end the war, to gain glory and, very soon, to put an end to the troubles they felt the war caused them. This is evident in most of my sources. Because this thinking also contradicts the ideals expressed on other occasions, I believe that the explanation may lie in the men's superficial internalisation of official ideals. On the one hand, then, their wish to conform with, not to deviate from, what was publicly stated and commonly felt about the war made the men express reasons for going to war in structurally accepted terms. But, on the other hand, to invert an idea by Watson (1998: 97, 99), most of the men were so deeply involved in social relations at group level (that is, daily routines and events as well as operations of their own company) that they in fact remained politically ignorant (or indifferent to structural ideals). For that reason they tended to have little time to ponder the war's military, political or ideological goals or repercussions,<sup>200</sup> and could thus contradict themselves.

### **Wahlberg**

In general, it seems that for Wahlberg the war against the Turks was too self-evident, too well-known to his readers, to need any explanation. He merely stated (1878: 2-4, 8) that the main reason for waging it was to defend military glory. He was, perhaps on purpose, somewhat vague here, but obviously he meant Finnish, not Russian, glory.

After having arrived on Bulgarian soil, Wahlberg (pp. 32-6) mused at length over the Bulgarian national character,<sup>201</sup> and gave the war an emancipatory cause: it gave Bulgarians an opportunity to liberate themselves and, more importantly, to educate themselves. For not unlike his learned west European contemporaries, Wahlberg, himself educated in Vienna, believed that apart from Turkish oppression a lack of education was a major cause of Bulgarian misery, both materially and intellectually.

At the end of his work, Wahlberg (pp. 220-1) remarked that one often hears or reads that war is a plague visited on mankind, an evil, from which human beings have to be rescued before they can be happy. However, according to Wahlberg, historical documents do not support such assertions.

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<sup>200</sup> As Winter (1979: 16) put it, the common soldiers' war is made up of 'small details and large emotions'. This is essentially the same as stated by Antonio Gramsci, on a more theoretical level, in his *Selections from the prison notebooks* (New York: International 1971 [1929-35], p. 333, quoted in Roseberry 1989: 46) about man-in-the-mass, who 'has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity'. However, I see no reason to suppose that educated people are automatically more 'conscious' of motives for their activities.

<sup>201</sup> I discuss that in Ch. 10.



He asked (*ibid.*): ‘Is there any materially or intellectually advanced people that has not paid for its progress with the blood of its heart?’ His answer was in the negative. The forbears of the Greeks, Romans, Germans, Franks and Finns were all ready to offer for their native land what was dearest to them, their lives. The Finnish Guard, too, could, in Wahlberg’s opinion, be proud of having shed Finnish blood in discharging its duty, and also of the graves of Finnish soldiers at Gorni Dübnik commemorating Finnish military glory. This sounds like a version of cultural evolutionism: without a fight there is no human development. Social progress, thus, legitimised war, always and anywhere.

### ***Lindman***

Lindman first briefly reviewed revolts in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the mid-1870s and the efforts of the Great Powers to force the Ottoman empire to carry out reforms among its Balkan subjects. He continued by stating that, unlike the others, Russia was not content with the sultan’s promises of reform and, in the end, ‘trusting to the loyalty of his army’ the Russian emperor, albeit reluctantly, finally declared war. According to Lindman, the emperor did so because the ‘glory of Russia was now in danger’. Meanwhile Turkey, in Lindman’s opinion, committed many new sins by harassing and killing Christians in several Bulgarian towns. (Lindman 1880: 3–4.) Some passages later (p. 4) he added that the war was the ‘Christian war of liberation’. All this but restated both official propaganda and the news published in Finnish-language newspapers throughout 1876 (Kemppainen 1999: 26). Lindman either had no personal opinion or was careful not to express it publicly.

### ***Palander***

Palander (1881) saw the war as a means of cultivating Finnish military virtues (p. 6) and, in accordance with the official line, maintained that it was a soldier’s ‘sacred duty’ to fight the Turk (p. 8). However, he also suspected the Finnish Guard’s chances of succeeding in these tasks. When crossing the river Prut (separating Bessarabia from Romania), he remarked that the guardsmen were going to die for a cause that, ‘to be sure’, was a sacred one but the fulfilling of which could not get much support from the Guard (p. 8). Thus he dissociated Finns from the imperial Russian military structure and mission.

Nevertheless, Palander’s thoughts were mixed because, at the same time, he was eager to arrive at the front ‘in time’ (p. 7). Later, while bivouacked near Pleven waiting for battle orders, Palander assured his reader that the Finns had come ‘from the distant North’ to ‘shed their blood for the liberty and [the] peaceful [future]’ of the Bulgarians (p. 20). A few days earlier, the sight of the Danube had evoked a rather explicitly anti-war feeling. On the evening before they crossed the river, Palander stood by the mighty stream thinking that if she could speak she would relate a terrible story of all the wars she had seen. And in a biblical manner he continued (1881: 11) that ‘if stones on her shores and stars reflecting on her surface’, in fact, all nature, could speak, ‘together they would shout aloud: curse, a thousand curses on war that turns humans into fierce beasts! Curse war that crushes thousands of human hearts; curse!’ A little later, when going to sleep while listening to cannon thundering around Pleven, Palander (p. 12) heard a voice whispering in his ear: curse!

A critical public attitude to war, its condemnation as unreasonable (or unnatural as Palander seems to do), was not common in 19th-century Finland. One of the few, but for Finnish-speaking Finns rather well-known, exceptions had been Jaakko Juteini, who in the early 1800s had castigated warfare and painted its horrors with dark colours (Alhoniemi 1969: 50). Another example is an anonymous front page article (in Finnish) in the provincial *Oulun Wiikko-Sanomats* on 22 September 1877 entitled ‘Let us kill each other’, which concluded ironically: ‘This is civilisation’s last word: let us kill each other’ (quoted in Kemppainen 1999: 44). On the other hand, anti-war outbursts are known

from educated men who otherwise showed great bravery (as Palander did).<sup>202</sup>

In the end, though, Palander argued (p. 121) that the justification for the Russo-Turkish war lay in the defence of a small Christian nation against a bigger one's 'brutal attempts to suppress civilisation [in general or in Bulgaria]'. Thus the Finnish guardsmen who courageously fulfilled their duty (as members of the Russian army) and in some cases even sacrificed their lives had, ultimately, proved themselves Finns by waging war, not by cursing it. This certainly differed from, but did not totally contradict, the official position, and comes close to equating 'sacred cause' with 'national [Bulgarian, or Finnish] revolution'.

### ***Jernvall***

Jernvall did not actually ponder the causes or meaning of the war. He resorted to common phrases of heroically fulfilling one's duty and dying for a 'sacred cause', i.e., emperor and fatherland (Jernvall 1888: 13; 1890: 213). In his opinion, the main reason for waging war appears to have been that the army structure, embodied in the Russian emperor, willed so. For the Finnish Guard, as a part of the army, it was an 'honour' to obey imperial orders, because such was the 'natural' functioning of the army. (Jernvall 1890: 212-13.)<sup>203</sup>

In his earlier, book-length recollection Jernvall (1899) had added one more, though not so original, reason, namely, Bulgarian liberation. At the beginning of this book Jernvall stated (p. 3) that 'everybody still remembers those terrible revolts and resurrections which led to the war of 1877-8 . . . when the small principalities [*sic*] of Herzegovina, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia and Bulgaria mutinied in order to liberate themselves from the absurd Turkish oppression and violence'. The support of this 'just' war of liberation ignited by (alleged and real) Turkish brutalities legitimised Russian intervention to rescue the Balkans Christians suppressed by the 'bloodthirsty' Turk, and the attempt to eradicate the root of restlessness in the Balkans by expelling the Ottomans from south-eastern Europe (pp. 3-4, 11-12). To further justify the Russian intervention, Jernvall stated, partly correctly, that Emperor Alexander II only reluctantly sent his army against the Turk but did it, anyway, since 'Russian honour was now at stake' (p. 4). He added that both Russian and Finnish troops of the Russian army welcomed the imperial decision with joy (pp. 4-5).

After these introductory notes, which apply equally well to Russian politics and Finnish nationalistic bargaining with it, Jernvall described at length the Guard's journey to the theatre of war. During it he stated on several occasions that a military campaign is a proper way to enhance an army's military honour and glory (for example Jernvall 1899: 16-19). He returned to the causes and meaning of the war on the arrival, in mid-October, of a telegram announcing the Russian victory at Kars<sup>204</sup> (on 15 October, N.S.). According to Jernvall (1899: 42-3), a service was held, at which the guardsmen 'humbly and cordially thanked God, the Lord of the army', who, as Prince (from 1881 King) Carol I of Romania<sup>205</sup> (reigned 1866-1914) had put it in the telegram, had 'blessed our just cause'. Finally, on his way from Plovdiv to Edirne on 22 January 1878, when the war was practically over, Jernvall concluded that the only reason for the war had been 'Turkish insanity' (1899: 211). Thus, he more or less repeated the official propaganda without giving it a second thought, but in doing so managed to emphasise the Finnish contribution to the victory over the Ottomans.

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<sup>202</sup> An example is the British poet Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967) in the Great War (Fussell 1977: 90-1).

<sup>203</sup> Cf. Browning 1999: 205-44 for a similar attitude of ordinary Germans in the Second World War.

<sup>204</sup> At the Caucasian Kars, Turkish troops lost '16,000 casualties and 8,500 prisoners' (Menning 1992: 80). Kars itself capitulated on 6 November (O.S.).

<sup>205</sup> He was then commander of the western sector of the Danube front (Seton-Watson 1988: 454-5).

### *Alfthan*

At first Alfthan seemed to be enthusiastic about his departure for war. He reported (1879: 2) that his unit was at its regular drill at Krasnoye Selo when, on 30 July 1877, it was ordered to the Balkan front. According to Alfthan (*ibid.*), the men had been waiting for such an order and the first reaction was shouts of joy. The men came together to express their martial disposition, and the delegate who brought the message congratulated them that the emperor had been well-disposed enough to give them the opportunity to gain glory and to defend him, their native country and their Christian brethren.

In mid-September Alfthan found himself in a small village not far from Chişinău. News of the third battle of Plevna (11 September, N.S.), which ended in a Russian rout (Hiisivaara 1968: 24-8; Menning 1992: 67-9), had just reached him, and he exchanged some words about the future of the war with his fellow officers. A doctor coming from the front had joined them, bringing news that the Russian military command was in disorder, and that 'at HQ the Life Guards were anxiously awaited' (p. 8). One of the COs commented (*ibid.*): 'I can easily believe that they will give us, too, a chance to knock our heads against the wall.'

The next time Alfthan (1879: 16-17) mused upon the war he was in Giurgiu, a town on the Romanian side of the Danube. The visible effects of warfare that he saw there prompted the rhetorical question (p. 17): 'How long ago was it that the Sovereign of the earth first mixed [the river's] blue waves with human blood?' And he answered (p. 18), with mixed feelings, by recalling bygone times from the Romans and the Huns of Attila, from 'savage pagans [migration of peoples] who knew no better calling than martial heroism, to the civilised warrior of today who, while fulfilling his duty up to his final moment when a whistling bullet meets his trembling breast, still hopes that he may some day use his best, mature crafts [for peacetime work]'. Later, on the eve of the battle of Gorni Dübник, Alfthan (p. 37) was able without reservation to emphasise the importance of fulfilling one's duty by stating that the storming of Gorni Dübник (i.e., war) was a task, or a mission (in his Swedish, *värf*), in other words, a pragmatic operation.

After the battle Alfthan changed his tone. Having described the fighting in general, he (p. 46) stated that war left no-one cold, because in it human beings, 'in their struggle for survival', are instigated by the 'innate murderous spirit of thinking creatures on earth . . . turn the most terrible means of destruction, war, against their own kind'. And having seen the wounded and the dead, Alfthan (p. 52) was ready to condemn the war out of hand.

Some weeks later, when gazing at the starry sky over the Balkan mountains, Alfthan had become sceptical about the whole war. 'Life and blood are offered here in order to conquer an insignificant parcel of land', he mused (p. 97).<sup>206</sup> And on Christmas Day 1877 (N.S.), he remarked (p. 109) that 'this solemn feast is celebrated by cannon shots and by shedding human blood'. In the end, when the Russian troops had crossed the Balkan mountains, Alfthan nevertheless found some meaning in the war effort; for he stated (p. 115) that by losing the Balkan mountains the Ottomans lost their 'most terrifying defence line in Europe', and that every shot that he (Alfthan) fired shook the very foundations of the once so mighty Ottoman empire. Thus the victory of the 'civilised' world over the 'barbarians' finally gave a 'noble', and even historical, meaning to the war. Although not identical to the official ideas, this, nevertheless, accorded neatly with the European, including Russian, belief in its 'civilising' effect upon the Balkans.

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<sup>206</sup> Nevertheless, the idea of liberating the Bulgarian 'brethren' also surfaces in Alfthan's recollections from time to time (for example, pp. 75, 87).

### *Schulman*

Schulman's memoirs (1955) begin with the declaration of war (on 24 April 1877, N.S.). He first noted that Russia started the war with too small an army and therefore reinforcements were necessary. He continued by stating that in his troop, the Lithuanian Life Guard, 'all were enthusiastic about taking an active part in battle' (1955: 11). The reason for this, according to Schulman (pp. 11-12), was that everyone in Russia took a keen interest in this war, the purpose of which was 'to liberate the Christians from hundreds of years of cruel Turkish oppression'. This reason for the war was repeated (p. 15) on the occasion of the liturgy held on 2 September, when the Life Guard's Lithuanian Regiment left for the Balkans. A bishop asked God to protect the departing soldiers who, in his words, were fighting for a sacred cause. The bishop was also reported to have promised eternal life to those killed in battle for their Christian brethren. According to Schulman (*ibid.*), the ceremony was both solemn and moving, and many guardsmen were in tears when wondering who would return and whose destiny would be death in a foreign land, 'far from fatherland and the dearest ones at home'. Thus Schulman fully ascribed to the official propaganda, obviously because its denial would have questioned the meaning of the army, which was his life's point of reference.

At a more general level this was what all the guardsmen were doing: they were fighting for their social position at home. This was an acceptable enough meaning for waging war whether or not the men felt some sympathy for the Bulgarians or the Russian political cause in the Balkans. It is to their battle and related recollections I now turn.

## 6. RECOLLECTING BATTLES: DISPLAYING OUR HEROISM

### 6.1. Military identity and ideals in memoirs

Before proceeding to recollections of different battles I shall briefly discuss how the guardsmen saw their military identity and the army ideals they were supposed to internalise. As with war propaganda, so with the army's ideal of the 'true soldier', it seems that, to borrow Connerton's distinction (1989: 90), men recognised ideals rather than incorporated them. They did not give personal testimonies of these ideals but either narrated stories of how bravely their fellows-at-arms behaved or then restricted themselves to structurally proposed statements. Because contemporary literary genres did not exclude stories about individual bravery - an example is Runeberg's poem about private Munter that appeared in the latter part of his *Tales* - it seems that men conformed by narrating a story they were expected to tell. For example, to draw attention to Finnish courage, most men recounted the same incidents. Doing so, they turned their individual experiences into socially accepted views and norms.

#### *Wahlberg*

According to Wahlberg (1878), when the Finnish Guard was commanded to the front, everybody knew their duty, 'the defence of the military honour of our forbears' (p. 3). When describing the enlisting of volunteers to the Guard, Wahlberg (p. 4) stated that there was no need to force the men, for many peasants, even the sons of well-to-do ones, willingly 'substituted plough for rifle'. And when the train left Helsinki, Wahlberg (p. 8) said that 'everyone was [fully] conscious of his obligation and intended either to return after having worthily performed it or to offer his life'.

At the battle of Gorni Dübnik, Wahlberg (p. 53) remarked that, cases of disastrous firing notwithstanding, there were 'no examples of anyone having taken a step backwards without orders'. After Pravets he noted (p. 91) that though the newly enlisted Finns could not in all respects match the Russian elite troops, in battle they had shown themselves to be as brave soldiers as anyone. In other words, there were no cowards or breakers of army rules among them. Wahlberg continued (p. 53) by relating some stories circulating about Finnish courage: 'During the fiercest burst of bullets the gun of a young recruit from the third company misfired. Urged by his captain, he sat down, took his tools, repaired the deficiency, charged again and fired.' In another case a man's index finger was shot off, but he 'quite calmly replaced it with his middle finger and kept on shooting'. This is no different from that of Munter. Wahlberg added (p. 54) that one could tell many stories of the boldness of Russian soldiers,<sup>207</sup> too, but 'I prefer to continue my story'. After Pravets, however, he gave no more examples of the 'true' Finnish soldier. Nevertheless, the few he had given fully dovetailed with the army ideals.

#### *Fennander*

Fennander (1895) restated structural ideals by quoting from published sources. The Finnish crossing of the Danube in early October, for example, he described (pp. 28-31) by quoting at length from the Viennese newspaper *Presse*, which praised Finns most highly. In mid-October he reported (pp. 43-4) that a telegram was read aloud to the Guard, informing them of the 'splendid victory' of Russian arms over the Turks at Kars,<sup>208</sup> and interpreted the tidings as follows. When a brave soldier hears such news,

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<sup>207</sup> Praising Russian soldiers alongside the Finns is typical of my sources and, for natural reasons, of the contemporary Finnish media, too (see Lindgren 1878: 91, et passim). Even in 1906, when relations between Finland and Russia were much soured, Humble (1906: 44) could still state that stories about the courage of common Russian soldiers, as opposed to officers, were true.

<sup>208</sup> See above, Ch. 5.3., note 204.

his blood starts to run faster, he envies those who have already had the opportunity to fight, and with fervour awaits the moment when he can honour his fatherland with equal feats. In other words, waging war gave the men a chance to show their heroism, military courage and imperial loyalty exactly as the war propaganda and the army ideals stated.

A few days after the news, General Gurko reviewed the battalions and, according to Fennander (pp. 45-6), praised the Finnish guardsmen highly, finding them skilled enough to drop even a bird on the wing, to say nothing of Turks, who could only walk and run away. However, Fennander seems to be a little confused because, in the same context (p. 45), he also described himself sitting on a cold and rainy night, thinking about the past and the future and, in the end, falling asleep and dreaming alternatively of his peaceful home and fierce fighting. And when marching towards his first battle on a beautiful morning he sensed tranquil nature speaking to him saying (p. 51): 'I rest in peace. Why do you, human, struggle, why are you restless?' Thus, in the end Fennander seemed to pay lip-service to army ideals in order to conceal his desire to deny them. Or perhaps he was only afraid of his first combat.

After the battle, Fennander (p. 62) concluded that although the soldier's profession was often despised, his obligation to die for his land and people was of utmost importance. To prove this, or convince himself, Fennander (pp. 66, 69-70) described in detail the funeral of the Finns who had fallen at Gorni Dūbnik, the speech delivered on that occasion by the commander of the Guard, Colonel Ramsay, the memorial at their burial place, and the awarding of medals a few days later to those who had distinguished themselves in battle. Later on Fennander related (p. 75) that when Colonel E.R. Ramsay (1837-1914), soon after the battle, was appointed commander of the Semenovo Life Guard, he bade farewell to the Finnish Guard with the following words: 'We [the Guard] have the highest duty [in the world] to re-establish the military honour of the Finnish battalion.' And when the Russian emperor visited the Guard on 4 November he, according to Fennander (pp. 72-3), singled Finns out thanking them 'from the bottom of his heart'. Thus, what mattered was, in the end, not courage or death but memories, and commemoration that made them into an exemplary model for survivors and posterity.

In mid-December, while at Orkhanie, Fennander felt homesick and was less certain about a soldier's duty. He wrote (p. 84): 'My spirits were low because I noticed that . . . a little comfort [an occasional abundance of supplies] but made one homesick [filling one's stomach was equal to being at home] and prompted the desire to return to one's native country.' However, Fennander did not give in to this 'temptation' but reminded (p. 85) himself of his commander, who had said that the true soldier never retreated a step.

### ***Lindman***

Lindman restricted himself to some officially accepted examples about the true soldier. On 23 October, when General Gurko informed his soldiers of the next day's battle, he praised the Finns. According to Lindman (1880: 17), too, Gurko stated that he had heard that the Finnish guardsmen were so skilled that they could drop a bird on the wing, to say nothing of the Turk in his stronghold. On the 'Finnish Mountain' the Guard, according to Lindman (p. 29), became so hardened that those 400 men who were still in line 'were the match of any troop whatever'.<sup>209</sup> The guardsmen, he continued (ibid.), did not complain of hardships but were in good spirits. Thus Lindman actually did not say anything about the men's real feelings or attitudes, but 'recycled' structural ideals back to structure.

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<sup>209</sup> Here Lindman quoted from SK (15 April 1878, p. 115).

### ***Palander***

Palander (1881) was not totally pleased with the official ideals and on several occasions (for example, pp. 11-12, 45) criticised the duty (of waging war) he was fulfilling. Nevertheless, when describing the battle of Gorni Dübrik, he quoted (p. 43) the rumour that in the middle of the battle a guardsman had started to fill his pipe, but that not having a tinder-box he asked for one. An officer, standing at a distance of some ten steps, said he had one and asked the soldier to come and fetch it. He did so, as he later explained, to test the man's bravery. The ranker passed the test: risking his life, he went to his superior while bullets whizzed around him, lit his pipe, and 'quite calmly smoking returned to his place'. Palander contested (p. 44) that the story might indicate foolish behaviour; in fact, he said, it demonstrated the Finnish soldier's 'reliable and non-perturbed' conduct, even on the battlefield. Later on, Palander praised General Gurko for behaving exactly as a true soldier should (p. 62): 'It was a pleasure to see that he risked his life in the same way as his men, and did not seek better [safer] cover than he had shown them.' Such praising of superiors has been typical of many wars and commanders.<sup>210</sup>

As to discharging duty outside battle proper, Palander (pp. 74-5) mentioned the difficult crossing of the Balkan mountains, and praised the 'wonderful endurance and calm bravery' of Finns and Russians alike who, even when totally exhausted, were still ready and able to fight the Turk. When ordered to accomplish tasks that did not please him, like hauling cannon or standing in outpost while the others were in battle, Palander grumbled but concluded (pp. 69-70): 'What else could we do but obey.' He also admitted (p. 75) wavering from the ideal, but said that, nevertheless, at the bottom of every heart there was the wish to beat the enemy. Thus Palander went to the verge of questioning the structural ideal but, in the end, submitted to it.

### ***Jernvall***

In his book-length recollection, Jernvall (1899: 5-6) first reported how the Finnish Guard welcomed orders to depart for battle with joyous cheering and how, when later packing up their equipment, the men boasted to each other, wondering how many Turks they would kill or when they would see the first red-heads [a reference to the Turkish fez] or when, with the arrival of the Finns, the Turks would be really beaten off.

Some pages later (pp. 11-14), Jernvall linked Finnish and Russian ideals by quoting from a letter, allegedly originating from a Finnish pen, which stated that the true soldier fought for the honour of God, emperor, homeland and the heroic achievements of his forefathers, and against an enemy who both suppressed the Finns' fellow Christians and was himself an apostate from the true (i.e., Christian) religion. In fulfilling this mission, the real soldier was willing to suffer hunger and thirst, cold and heat, the horrors of war and the weariness caused by sojourn in a foreign land.

In the same vein, Jernvall praised the heroism of both Finnish and Russian soldiers at the battle of Gorni Dübrik, though he ranked Finns the braver (1888: 6). He underlined this by relating (1888: 7; and 1899: 56) a story about the commander of his company, Captain Bremer, who in the heat of the fighting burst out: 'With [no more than] ten valiant and strong Finns we may at a suitable moment rush the biggest Turkish troop [and crush it].' Later Jernvall stressed the courage of the guardsmen during the crossing of the Balkan mountains. According to him (1899: 154), the Finns sang 'beautiful songs of their fatherland' while freezing in vain attempts to light fires in a snowstorm.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Cf. Bulgarin 1996: 70 for an example from the 1808-9 war.

<sup>211</sup> Wallin contested this, see Ch. 9.2.

Jernvall also warned that a soldier who did not do his duty was punished. When describing the battle of Pravets, he (1889: 6-7; 1899: 107-8) told the tale of a certain Theodor Takt, a private, who did not take part in the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik.<sup>212</sup> According to Jernvall, Taft was later wounded in the backside. His companions laughed and claimed that the Turks 'knew who they were punishing', that is, they considered him a coward.<sup>213</sup>

It is not surprising that Jernvall paraphrased military ideals. Yet he did so less often than one might expect from an army professional. The reason may be that though he greatly respected the army, he had reservations about Russians, as will be seen later on. Hence he respected the Russian army only on occasions that he could also use to promote the honour of his fatherland.

### ***Lindfors***

Lindfors (1975) did not have much to say about carrying out one's duty. He confined himself to remarking (p. 28) that during the Russo-Turkish war he took part in eleven battles and volunteered five times to patrol the enemy's outposts. With satisfaction he concluded (ibid.) that 'sixteen times I risked my life . . . and doing so I was awarded a cross of the Order of St Gregorius'. Thus it seems that Lindfors himself was convinced that he had done his best and fulfilled his duty, and that that was all structure could expect of him. From the military structural point of view, however, he was a disinterested wage-earner rather than a soldier with internalised military ideals.

### ***Wallin***

At first Wallin tried to live up to the structural ideals. When seeing General Gurko for the first time, on the eve of the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik, he stated (WM: 57-8) that the general, who was known to the guardsmen through newspaper articles describing his battle on the Shipka Pass in the summer of 1877, praised the Finns as skilled shooters and urged them to be sparing with rusk in bivouac and ammunition in battle. In other words, he encouraged them to use their bayonet in combat, that is, to follow the army ideals.

After the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik an alarm was raised that turned out to be false. Wallin's company was lined up, and the commander said (in Swedish): 'Here we stand and will not give up an inch.' (WM: 96.) Later, when the men were awarded crosses, Wallin (p. 122) reported that one of the crosses was given to a soldier who, in the midst of the fighting, had stopped to mend his rifle, as it was not working properly.

On the second day of the battle of Plovdiv (16 January), when the Guard was stationed behind an embankment, it turned very cold. Wallin went to fetch some hay from a stook some 200 metres away. When he returned with a load of hay, 'Turkish rascals' shot at the bale, which fell to the ground. 'But I wasn't scared because I had already got used to the whistle of bullets.' He reloaded the hay and returned to his position. (WM: 275.)

Wallin also volunteered for night patrols to reconnoitre the enemy's positions. But staying awake was more difficult than he had realised, and he fell asleep. The leader of the patrol found him and gave him a piece of his mind. (WM: 129-31.) Wallin did not volunteer again, but when ordered obeyed 'without objecting' (p. 158). In the course of the war he fell sick more than once and lost contact with the Guard. Though not quite well, however, he always returned, because he felt it shameful not to be in ranks. (WM: 174-6, 214-15.)

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<sup>212</sup> Jernvall (1889: 7) says that at that time Takt was ordered to serve with the service corps.

<sup>213</sup> However, in December 1877 Takt was awarded a fourth class cross of the Order of St Gregorius (Talvitie 2000).



On the way to Edirne, half of the men from Wallin's company were ordered to watch the Guard's cannon while the other half were stationed in a near-by village. The soldiers left on sentry complained, but someone said to them: 'What are you grumbling for; you volunteered, didn't you?' And the company's sergeant major (Jernvall) said: 'One has to be content [with orders].' (WM: 306-7.) Thus Wallin oscillated between upholding and downplaying the army rules and obligations. It seems that consciously he adhered to them, because otherwise he would have been a coward; unconsciously, however, he denied them by falling ill.

### *Alfthan*

At first Alfthan fully ascribed to the army ideal. He approvingly quoted the advice, received from an older officer at Svishtov in mid-September, who questioned the heroic ideal by admonishing him 'not to forget that most often death is the lot of those who rush into attack without checking the circumstances [i.e., in an undisciplined way], and [that] only those who survive are commemorated and rewarded.' Alfthan replied that he was an artillery officer with no intention of 'either rushing ahead or lagging behind, since his place was next to the cannon'. (Alfthan 1879: 24.) Later he put the army before the civilian heroic ideals by quoting a Serbian-born cavalry captain whom he met some weeks later at the foot of the Balkan mountains. According to Alfthan (p. 87), the captain explained that he was not fighting for 'Slavonic brethren', Bulgarians being only 'a race mixed with Mongolian blood [see Ch. 10.1.]', but because service in the Russian army was 'his [the captain's] career for life'. Thus, what mattered for him was the army institution, not the political goals the army was exploited for.

In the context of the crossing of the Balkan mountains, Alfthan (p. 108) described a skirmish that took place near Sofia. In accordance with the tactics of his day, the commander of the Russian troops had allowed the Turks to approach until they were only a few tens of metres away. Then he let loose a volley, followed by an attack with fixed bayonets. 'Such cold-bloodedness could have developed only amongst troops with long military experience', Alfthan concluded (*ibid.*).

In mid-January, Alfthan (p. 143) reported having witnessed how some artillery troops hauled cannon through the ice-cold waters of the Maritsa. Some of the ropes used had to be fastened under water, a task that was carried out admirably, since, as Alfthan said (*ibid.*), 'at stake was not individual health but the achievement of a military goal. How many soldiers soon after the crossing [of the river] got a fever or a cough or cold may be reported by doctors of the respective units', but, in Alfthan's opinion, at the moment of dragging the cannon over the river the men did not worry about such matters.

Later, when reporting on the battle of Plovdiv, Alfthan again praised the courage of the Russian army. He stated (p. 161) that soldiers of General N.N. Velyanov's (1818-1884) corps 'again displayed unbelievable cold-bloodedness by letting the enemy approach to within a distance of fifty feet before firing sharp volleys, thus forcing it to turn back'. This happened three times before the Turks retreated, leaving some six hundred dead on the field. Russian losses, according to Alfthan (*ibid.*), were ten dead and fifty-eight wounded. In general, then, it seems that, unlike the men of the Finnish Guard, Alfthan emphasised more the army at large than the bravery of his own unit. His 'true soldier' was a faithful member of the army, regardless of which nation it served. He did not defend a nation's but, so to speak, the international army's honour.

### *Schulman*

When describing the difficult advance of Russian troops during the first days after the crossing of the Danube, Schulman (1955: 34-5) remarked that although there had been all kinds of problems, the men

did not lose their tempers but worked eagerly.<sup>214</sup> And in the neighbourhood of Pleven, where the Russians had to starve for a week, they, in Schulman's opinion (p. 44), endured better than their Finnish comrades.

On 28 October, when Schulman's company was advancing towards Telish, where the men were to receive their baptism of fire, Schulman wondered what was going through the men's minds. He admitted (pp. 57-8) that this was hard to tell, but at least their faces were calm and showed no dismay. On the contrary, the men looked happy and glad, as if knowing that they were, as Schulman put it, a 'chosen people, the imperial Guard' destined to show what they were capable of. However, after a while the men began to look more serious. Their cheerful voices grew silent, and one after the other they made the sign of the cross [signifying an Orthodox prayer]. Schulman himself (ibid.) felt above all tired since he had been unable to sleep during the two previous nights.

Schulman's view of Russian officers was more ambivalent. Soon after the crossing of the Danube, some of the troops lost contact with the main force. When this was finally re-established and the men encamped not far from the other troops, nobody bothered to send them any supplies. Schulman (p. 39; see also pp. 29 and 41-2) accused the commanders of the force with hard words, saying that they were totally useless.<sup>215</sup> Later he modified this view somewhat. When meeting General Gurko for the first time at Pleven in mid-October, Schulman (pp. 48-9) praised him highly as an effective and skilled commander. In early November he returned to the subject. He wrote that exchanges of volleys between Russians and the besieged Turks were daily routine. During one such exchange, General Gurko and two other generals met in an entrenchment where Schulman's unit had replaced a battalion of the Prussian Regiment. The Turks kept on firing, and the generals continued their discussion as if nothing were happening. For Schulman (pp. 71-2) this was an example of the ideal soldier.

After the armistice Schulman met the opposite to this ideal (pp. 134-6). One day at the end of January in 1878, when he and a fellow-officer were out for a stroll in Pazardzhik, they met a man clothed in simple Bulgarian dress. To Schulman's astonishment, his companion, a certain captain, started to beat the man with his stick. It eventually turned out that the man was a runaway Russian soldier. The captain handed him over to a Russian unit to be arrested and court-martialed. Schulman added that probably many of the soldiers reported as having disappeared in obscure circumstances had in fact deserted. He also complained that he had met several Russian officers who, in accordance with the 'widely admitted Russian dishonesty', made the most of the war to indulge in speculation. This was especially true of those who stayed in the rear. Thus, though Schulman acknowledged structural ideals in the army, he was professional enough not to pay mere lip-service to them, but demanded that they be put into practice, too.

## 6. 2. From Gorni Dübnik to Plovdiv: a general review of battles

To understand how the guardsmen perceived their battles, I shall briefly sketch them from the general point of view of contemporary military history.<sup>216</sup> When the Finnish Guard arrived in the Balkans, either most of the fiercest battles were over<sup>217</sup> or the Guard did not take part in them.<sup>218</sup> Besides, the

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<sup>214</sup> He added (1955: 34) that 'today' (that is, in the late 1910s) it is hard to believe that contemporary Russian soldiers (of the First World War) belong to the same nation as those that he (Schulman) knew in the Balkans.

<sup>215</sup> However, he also (ibid.) admitted that once they got accustomed to wartime and army life they learned something.

<sup>216</sup> In addition to references given below, see *Ocherk deystviy zapadnogo otryada general-adyutanta Gurko*, 3 vols., S-Peterburg 1891-3. For some reason the work does not include the battle of Gorni Dübnik.

<sup>217</sup> For example, the first three battles of Pleven and the battle of Shipka Pass, all in summer 1877.

<sup>218</sup> The last battle of Pleven in December 1877.

Russian army was greatly superior in cavalry and artillery (Baker 1879a: 18), the latter explaining some of the 'easy' Russian victories after the Finnish arrival.<sup>219</sup> Perhaps to emphasise their own role or to dovetail their stories with official Russian military history (which did not discuss details that could diminish Russian glory), the guardsmen usually did not mention or ponder these facts in their recollections, and for this reason, if no other, their accounts give a distorted picture of the campaign. According to the guardsmen, except at Gorni Dübnik, the Turkish troops mainly either retreated, or fled in panic as the Finns claimed. This was how contemporary Russian cartoons, too, represented events (Kollontay 1946: 19). Indeed, there was some truth in the claim, for after the fall of Pleven (10 December 1877, N.S.) the Turkish troops really did start a hasty retreat and fought back only occasionally (Anderson 1968: 150-1).

Already during the campaign the Guard's first battle, Gorni Dübnik,<sup>220</sup> became, not without reason, an object of recollections and stories that, it seems, set it aside from later engagements.<sup>221</sup> The more time passed, the higher Gorni Dübnik was elevated and the other battles reduced to mere notes. In the guardsmen's recollections, the events of their first battle blended with the public memory of the heroic mythology fabricated around the Thirty Years' War, and soon superseded it. Topelius (1938 I: 23) had opened his long novel, *Tales of an army surgeon*, by stating that in the history of Swedish and German military and political history one battle, that of Breitenfelt, on 7 September 1631 (O.S.), in which King Gustavus II Adolphus had beaten the Catholics led by Tilly, will be celebrated through centuries; the guardsmen recollected their first battle in the same way. Thus, the battle of Gorni Dübnik both reinterpreted and reinvented Finnish military heroism. Perhaps, therefore, to restate military ideals, many authors had personally very little to say about the battle but quoted from various printed sources that were in accordance with that tradition. It may also be, as Benjamin (1986: 22-4) suggested, that the greater the 'shock effect' of an event, the less one actually remembers of it. Censorship probably also channelled the men in this direction; it was safer to restate official versions than to produce new ones.

In the total context of the Russo-Turkish war, Gorni Dübnik does not rank very high. For the Russians, it was only one of several minor, but unavoidable, battles in their mission to liberate Bulgaria. Some contemporaries argued that the Turkish defeat was a sheer accident (Zimmermann 1878: 923-4) or that, making 'a most gallant resistance', the Turks nearly succeeded in repulsing the Russian attack (Baker 1879b: 17). Modern military history agrees with the Russians by considering the battle as one of the many that completed the fall of Pleven (Menning 1992: 71). Even Finnish sources at first merely stated that the Finnish Guard had 'bravely defended' national honour (SK 15 January 1878,

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<sup>219</sup> However, superiority in cannon in those days did not automatically guarantee success. Baker (1879a: 27), though not impartial, argued that once in late August near Shumla (modern Shumen), the 'Russians fired nearly 500 shots, and we had only one man wounded'.

<sup>220</sup> Dolni Dübnik, Gorni Dübnik, Telish, Radomirtsi, Yablanitsa, Pravets and Orkhanie were fortifications protecting Turkish communications from Pleven to Sofia. They were established after the beginning of the siege of Pleven.

<sup>221</sup> On the basis of shots calculated to have been fired in different fights Gorni Dübnik was their only real battle. There the guardsmen fired 7,850 shots; at Pravets 3,965; at Dolno Kamartsi 850; at Vrazhdebna 1,100; and at Plovdiv 925 (Järvinen 1932: 290). On average, the men thus fired only a few shots per battle (see Gripenberg 1905: 220, 230). This was in keeping with the Russian tactic of preferring 'cold steel' to firing. For the sake of comparison, according to Baker (1879b: 160), the 'bravest troops' under his command at Sarantsi (see below) shot 263 to 292 rounds each. Compared with the First World War, for example, these numbers are modest (see Krenchel 1929: 57), even if we take developments in armaments into account.

p. 24). But before long Gorni Dübrik was considered a ‘splendid victory’, which opened the way to a ‘long line of [other] victories’ (SK 1 October 1878, p. 287).

Despite these statements, Gorni Dübrik was important, even crucial, for Turkish communications between Plevna and Sofia. Its storming meant in practice the fall of Plevna. The Turks, of course, knew this well and had fortified it heavily. The stronghold consisted of two redoubts, one on the ‘most elevated point between the village [of Gorni Dübrik] and the road [to Plevna]’, and the other ‘on the other side of the road’. According to Hozier, both redoubts were surrounded ‘by a series of advanced entrenchments which extended to a considerable distance’. The Turkish commander, Ahmed Hifzi Pasha,<sup>222</sup> had at his disposal perhaps 10,000 men<sup>223</sup> but only four guns. (Hozier 1879: 695.) The Russians had at first some 20,000 to 25,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry plus 48 guns (SK 15 January 1878, p. 23; Drury 1994: 11-12; Kylävaara 1978: 45); these included troops sent towards Telish and Dolni Dübrik to secure the Russian rear.

The fortifications were attacked by three columns from three sides: north, east and south. The Sharpshooter Brigade, of which the Finnish Guard was a part, started to advance in the morning (between eight and nine o’clock) from the north towards the main redoubt. At first only the Guard’s second and third companies were engaged, but around noon the other two were taken from the reserve. (Kylävaara 1978: 44, 47, 52; Wahlberg 1878: 43-4.) At about ten o’clock ‘grenadiers of the Guard, who formed a part of the column of the centre [attacking from the east]’, stormed the lesser redoubt. Russian troops then attempted a general attack, but it was badly co-ordinated and failed completely. In the afternoon, the Russians had advanced so close to the main redoubt that ‘many of the [Russian] guns had . . . to cease fire for fear of injuring their own men’. At that moment ‘it was learnt . . . that a column of chasseurs of the Guard . . . which had been sent against Telis[h], had foolishly allowed themselves to be crushed there’, leaving Gorni Dübrik columns ‘exposed to a flank attack on the left’. (Hozier 1879: 696-7.)

General Gurko, who had taken over his post as commander-in-chief of the Life Guard only three days earlier, on 21 October 1877, nevertheless ordered ‘the decisive attack’ at three o’clock. All columns were instructed to start simultaneously after a given signal (three salvos). Due to a misunderstanding, the right-hand column attacked before the signal. Noticing this, Gurko quickly sent the other two columns to support them, but the result was a series of isolated operations instead of a united one. No single body of troops managed to reach the main redoubt. But, according to Gurko’s report, ‘with the exception of the Finland Regiment<sup>224</sup> none of them retreated’.<sup>225</sup> (Greene 1880: 276; Hozier 1879: 698.) By about four o’clock, the Russian troops had advanced very close to the main redoubt. After some waiting, Gurko decided to make ‘a fresh attack at nightfall’. This began at half past five, supported by guns that advanced behind the infantry. The cannonade at a short distance was very effective, setting the redoubt partly ablaze. Injured men and horses perished in the flames. The camp was enveloped in ‘a thick yellow mist of dust and smoke’. Suddenly ‘a deep hurrah rose above the din’; the Turkish breastwork was taken.<sup>226</sup> The Russian victory was secured by troops attacking from the

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<sup>222</sup> He was the officer who had brought the first convoy to Plevna after the siege was laid (Furieux 1958: 162).

<sup>223</sup> Hozier (1879) gives two different numbers, 7,000-8,000 (p. 695), and 10,000 (p. 700). The latter is also given by a contemporary Finnish report (SK 15 January 1878, p. 23).

<sup>224</sup> A Russian unit not to be confused with the Finnish Guard (see Luntinen 1997: 50).

<sup>225</sup> The Finland Regiment did so because they could not find any cover, but they soon established themselves anew ‘on the slope of the height in the space which [they] previously occupied’ (Hozier 1879: 698).

<sup>226</sup> According to Manning (1992: 72), this was done by grenadiers of the Guard, who ‘against all odds’ had managed to advance and, just after sunset, to set foot on the ramparts. Their shouting ‘galvanized’, as Manning put it, nearby troops into

Turkish rear, '[at] about the same moment that the Finland [R]egiment forced an entrance on the other side'. The Turks 'lost heart', and at about six o'clock Ahmed Hifzi Pasha 'hoisted the white flag'. Turkish casualties were some 3,000 men, or, according to Menning (1992: 72) and Drury (1994: 11-12), 1,500. Half the number were taken as prisoners of war, and the rest managed to withdraw to Telish or Pleven. Russian losses at Gorni Dübnik were some 100 officers and 3,200 men.<sup>227</sup> (Greene 1880: 277; Hozier 1879: 698-700.)

After Gorni Dübnik the Guard spent about two weeks in outpost. In mid-November, the troops laying siege to Pleven were divided into two corps. One continued the siege and the other headed south under Gurko. The latter was further split into three, or occasionally two, columns. The Finnish Guard advanced with the westernmost units, the commander-in-chief of which was Lieutenant General P.A. Shuvalov (1827-1881). (Järvinen 1932: 140-1, 144.) The reason for sending a column southwards was that, after a long delay, the sultan had at last sent an army that, according to Furneaux (1958: 189), consisted of 'a rabble', that is, elderly men and reservists. They arrived at Orkhanie on 22 November, but 'the mere sight of the Russians was enough' to make them flee 'in confusion and panic' (Furneaux 1958: 190). Hence, when the guardsmen described the Turkish 'fighting' in much the same way they were not necessarily exaggerating the impact of their (that is, the Life Guard's) arrival upon the Turkish forces.

The Guard's second battle, **Pravets**, fought on 22 and 23 November 1877 was much easier, because it was primarily not between men but between guns. The Russian detachment in Pravets, with which the Finnish Guard fought, was under Major General A.V. Ellis (1825-1897) and consisted of the Moscow Regiment, the Sharpshooter Brigade's second and third (or Finnish) battalions, and a few dozen cavalry units (Greene 1880: 293; Gripenberg 1905: 219). The Turks had built fortifications on the western slopes of a valley on the way to Sofia. Russian troops mounted the eastern slopes and started to fire (Kylävaara 1978: 62-3). According to Hozier (1879: 710), 'of this little notice was taken [by the Turks]', who were obviously confident of the improbability of a Russian assault. However, a possible Russian outflanking forced the defenders to fall back, and thus Pravets was taken almost without bloodshed. Russian casualties were two officers wounded and seventy men killed or wounded. Finnish losses were three wounded (Greene 1880: 293-4; Kylävaara 1978: 63).

After the crossing of the Balkans, the Russians prepared to capture Sofia, and during the last days of December they attacked several minor fortifications north of the city. Among them was the village of **Sarantsi**,<sup>228</sup> some kilometres south-west of Arab Konak.<sup>229</sup> There Russian troops (some 20,000 men<sup>230</sup> and an unknown number of heavy guns<sup>231</sup>) came, on 31 December, across a Turkish force of 5,000 men (Baker [1879b: 154]: 3,000 men) and seven cannon under the command of General Baker. The fortifications at his disposal were far from excellent, but he skilfully used the ground and the guns placed on a hill next to an inn. The Russian troops were divided into two columns. The Finns, together with the brigade's second battalion and the Preobrazhenskiy Regiment, attacked on the left

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action. However, a contemporary Finnish source (SK 15 January 1878, p. 23) claimed that at five o'clock in the afternoon it was still uncertain who would win the battle.

<sup>227</sup> Backström (1991a) claims that the Russians lost only some 900 men at Gorni Dübnik but does not refer to any sources.

Cf. Wahlberg's note on Russian casualties in the battle of Telish in section 6.3.

<sup>228</sup> In my sources and in other contemporary accounts and maps the place is called Taskisen (with various spellings).

<sup>229</sup> Arab Konak was a Turkish stronghold at the other end of the pass leading from Vrachesh towards Sofia. The distance from Vrachesh to Arab Konak was some 15 kilometres.

<sup>230</sup> Hozier (1879) gives two different numbers, 25,000 (p. 777) and 17,000 (p. 778).

<sup>231</sup> Sixteen, according to Greene (1880: 331), or forty-eight, if we rely on Baker (1879b: 134).

several times but always had 'to fall back again exhausted and with thinned and demoralised ranks from Turkish fire', as Hozier claimed. At nightfall the Russians had to retreat, but so had the Turks, who in vain had waited for reinforcements. They joined the Turkish main troop withdrawing from Arab Konak. For the Russians, the fall of Sarantsi meant that their way to Sofia and Edirne was now open. (Baker 1879b; Greene 1880: 331-2; Hozier 1879: 777-8.)

From Sarantsi, the Russians advanced to **Vrazhdebna** and **Dolno Kamartsi**.<sup>232</sup> At Vrazhdebna, a village on the Iskür, and less than ten kilometres east of Sofia, a thousand or so Turks were lined up to defend a bridge. The Sharpshooter Brigade's second and third (Finnish) battalions attacked, supported by a Cossack battery. Their cannon or, according to another interpretation, the Russian attempt to outflank the enemy's rear, forced the Turks to retreat, practically without a fight. As they left, they set the bridge and a part of the village on fire, but the Russians quickly managed to extinguish the flames. (Greene 1880: 334; Gripenberg 1905: 225-6; Hozier 1879: 779-80.) At Dolno Kamartsi, the plan was merely to occupy the village, which had been abandoned by the Turks (Järvinen 1932: 199). Some of my sources speak of two battles, others of three and yet others seem to confuse the three places (Sarantsi, Vrazhdebna and Dolno Kamartsi).

To the Russians' surprise, the Turkish troops abandoned Sofia without a struggle and fell back towards Plovdiv, leaving the city (and many places in the vicinity) to marauding irregulars (Hozier 1879: 781, 783). On 9 January, the Russian troops departed from Sofia in three main detachments. The Finnish Guard was in the centre under Shuvalov. They advanced along the main road towards Ikhtiman and Pazardzhik. On 11 January the force came across Turks who, however, withdrew after hearing of the capture of the Shipka Pass (on 10 January). Three days later (14 January), Russian troops engaged the Turks near **Plovdiv**, where the last battle of the Finnish Guard was fought on 15-17 January. The city was important for both armies. The Turks wanted to secure their withdrawal by holding it, and the Russians tried to outflank them and destroy the rest of the Ottoman armies. The total Russian strength amounted to 60,000 to 70,000 men in five (at times six) columns. The Turkish troops consisted of about 35,000 men under Fuad Pasha. The other commander, Süleyman Pasha (ca. 1838-1892), had already retreated to Plovdiv with 10,000 to 15,000 men. (Greene 1880: 339-43; Hozier 1879: 787.) According to Baker (1879a: 249-50), Fuad 'had a great reputation for energy and dash'. Süleyman, in contrast, had until then 'clung to Shipka', having 'persistently thwarted all the operations [of the two other Ottoman armies in the Balkans]'. He was later court-martialled and given a 15 year sentence for the defeat at Plovdiv<sup>233</sup> (Clarke 1988: 462).

The Finnish Guard, together with the Grenadier and Pavlov Regiments, fought against the rear of Fuad Pasha, consisting of 15,000 to 20,000 men. Advancing southwards along the southern bank of the Maritsa, the Guard soon reached the railway line leading to Plovdiv. The Turkish positions were on the other side of the line, in and near some villages. Heavy firing continued throughout the day. In the evening, the Finns withdrew to the village of Adaköy, on the banks of the Maritsa. (Greene 1880: 343-4; Gripenberg 1905: 228-9.)<sup>234</sup> Next day (16 January) the brigade was reinforced with the Moscow Regiment and two batteries from the Guard Artillery. The detachment was ordered to advance along the railway line towards Plovdiv. It engaged with a minor Turkish unit, and had an 'artillery duel' with it, as Gripenberg put it. Late in the evening, the Finns were billeted in a mansion near the village of Medzkür, some kilometres south-west of Plovdiv. During the night, Fuad Pasha's troops joined up with

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<sup>232</sup> Vrazhdebna lay a few kilometres west, and Dolno Kamartsi some kilometres east, of Sarantsi.

<sup>233</sup> This may be a slightly unfair judgement, for shortly before the war Süleyman Pasha's troops had extinguished a peasant uprising in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

<sup>234</sup> For a slightly different account see Hozier 1879: 787.

the rear of Süleyman Pasha and occupied strong positions on hills to the east and west of the village of Markovo, some six kilometres south of Plovdiv and not far from Medzkür. (Greene 1880: 345-6; Gripenberg 1905: 229-30; Hozier 1879: 789.)

The third day of the battle of Plovdiv the Finnish Guard spent manhandling cannon and marching this way and that depending on the general movements of the Russian troops. The overwhelming superiority of the Russian manpower and cannon forced the Turks to retreat. In the end they were cut off and a great number of them (perhaps 2,000) were slaughtered in a gorge. In other engagements, Turkish losses amounted to 3,000. The Russians admitted to 400 killed or wounded on 17 January, and to 1,250 in the whole battle. Finnish casualties were two wounded. The Russians also captured a large number of Turkish guns, anywhere from fifty (Hozier 1879: 792-3) to more than one hundred (Greene 1880: 347). According to Gripenberg, during these three days only the Finnish Guard's first company<sup>235</sup> engaged with the Turks and even then kept up only a desultory fire. This may be the reason why the total losses of the battalion were a mere four wounded. (Gripenberg 1905: 230.) If this is true, it may also explain why my sources had not much to say about the battle; they did perhaps not fight in it (although they said they did).

### 6.3. Gorni Dübnik - and the war was over?

Finnish public memory had two main views of the battle. On the one hand, it emphasised individual heroism. On the other, it stressed obedience to superiors and collective military endeavour rather than individual valour. When the Finnish Guard arrived at the theatre of war, the first 'model' seemed to be uppermost, even in the minds of common guardsmen not educated in the ancient history and romantic philosophy that formed the model's ideational basis. At the start of the First World War, Winter (1979: 224) likewise noticed that young men, especially those with some higher education, 'undoubtedly did enjoy the war'. And he added that 'their early deaths before the cumulative strain of war embittered their judgement may account for much of the exuberance'. But as time passed, heroism among the guardsmen was more and more associated with the first battle, Gorni Dübnik.<sup>236</sup> The timing of subsequent clashes wavered, and they were interpreted, and remembered, as minor affairs. In the end, the men had little more to say about the battle of Plovdiv other than that the enemy was completely beaten off. This was especially true of volunteers, but also some of the professionals had grown weary of waging war and, above all, of the hardships that had to be endured between battles. A special case is Wahlberg, who, due to his duties as junior doctor acted in the rear and, it seems, mainly summarised official reports, not personal experiences.

It would be tempting to argue that since Gorni Dübnik served as the men's initiation into

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<sup>235</sup> Due to diseases, only some 300 men were left.

<sup>236</sup> In addition to material presented below, see Ahomäki 1889b: 39-45; 1891: 366-72. According to *Suomen kuvalehti's* 15 January 1878 issue (p. 23), the men started to tell stories about both Gorni Dübnik and the crossing of the Balkans immediately after the latter was completed. Three years after the war, in 1881, two monuments were erected to commemorate the Guard's participation in the war. One was placed in the Guard's square, near the centre of Helsinki, and the other in Gorni Dübnik (Meurman 1882: 61-2). Some 25 years later the Finnish journalist and ethnographic writer, I.K. Inha (1865-1930), mentioned (1906: 31) in his introduction to the Balkans that Gorni Dübnik was 'known to us Finns, because the Finnish Guard received its baptism of fire there in the war between Russia and Turkey'. Fifty years after the battle, its anniversary was still celebrated annually (EvW 1927). And in 1937 *Helsingin Sanomat* still commemorated the Finnish Guard's (125th) anniversary (Veteraanit kertovat 1937). All these examples tell the same story, namely, how 'we' defeated 'the other', the enemy, in spite of his vehement resistance. As such this construction is of course common to many kinds of representations of battle (examples are given by Jaroschka 1992: 43-6; Lindgren 1878: 20-1).

war,<sup>237</sup> their first experience of killing or being killed, they wanted to ‘elevate’ it or that because they had endured storms, mud and hunger they now sought to counterbalance these with a ‘noble’ battle. Both rationales possibly contribute to the truth, but I maintain that the two main reasons for the glorification were, first, the number of casualties and, second, the fact that the Finnish mass media (newspapers, periodicals and broadside ballads) singled out this battle but not the others. Especially Lindman and Palander resorted to published news when describing the fight.

Gorni Dübrik was the first, and only, battle where Finnish losses were considerable, and where a large proportion of these were deaths. Thus it, more than any other conflict involving Finns in this war, offered material for commemoration, at both personal and collective level. Lists of deceased and references to funerals and memorials in several recollections support, in my opinion, this hypothesis. In addition, on a less rational, but no less real, level, narratives about Gorni Dübrik encapsulated everything that was to be said, or remembered, about battles. In other words, they were a sort of creation myth that later enactment, or combats, only repeated.<sup>238</sup> When Lindman and Palander quoted from or paraphrased *Suomen kuvalehti* or *Morgonbladet* they did so in my opinion because representations of the events in the mass media had already established themselves as the truth or as fact (see Suistola 1987: 207-10): Gorni Dübrik had become an image of Finnish bravery and the honour the guardsmen won in the same way as Auschwitz, for example, evolved into a dominant symbol of the Holocaust.

The guardsmen themselves wrote that although battle seemed terrible to start with, one soon grew accustomed to it. The same is maintained, but also contested (Winter 1979: 161), by combatants of the First World War.<sup>239</sup> It may be reasoned that if one does not somehow get used to being in danger one will collapse, both physically and mentally, since nobody can be afraid all the time (Berggrav-Jensen 1916: 14-15). Another possible explanation is that, afterwards, war was remembered in terms of the true soldier (see Berggrav-Jensen 1916: 231-3; Lipponen 1940:30-4), that is, the ideal, so to speak, executed the military mission through the real soldiers’ bodies.

Both arguments may be partly true, but only partly. For the guardsmen’s memories of actual clashes are succinct and impersonal.<sup>240</sup> This suggests, as Winter (p. 181) has observed, that the men were too afraid and too intensively fixated on their own survival to remember much detail apart from the death of the man next to them. To save face, and also their self-respect and social reputation, the men afterwards almost invariably described the battle in heroic terms, often exaggerating the ferocity of the firing, because heroism and participation in important action (battle for a noble cause) were socially acceptable, whereas cowardice and the insignificance that a private would obviously feel (being but a cog in the machine) were not. In all cases it may be true, as Fussell (1977: 173-4) suggests, that ‘heroic’ images, or literary clichés or public memory, communicated a sense of war that was not real but somehow more understandable to the readers than an accurate description.

The other side of being afraid was to belittle the Turkish effort. Of the common soldiers in the narratives here, both Lindman and Lindfors related how the guardsmen took an unspecified number of Turks prisoner of war. Palander says, probably correctly, that most of these were sick or wounded,

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<sup>237</sup> Cf. van Gennep 1977: 65-115 for examples on initiation.

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Le Goff 1988: 40-2 for similar ideas.

<sup>239</sup> On the first day of the Somme an Englishman wrote (quoted in Winter 1979: 180): ‘I hadn’t gone ten yards before I felt a load fall from me. I knew it was alright . . . I knew I was in no danger.’ Thus ‘getting accustomed’ was tantamount to being momentarily not afraid of death.

<sup>240</sup> So are those of their counterparts in the Boer War (Lindberg 1904: 31-4; 59-60), the First World War (Fussell 1977: 169-71; Winter 1979: 181, 189) and Vietnam (Simola 1955: 34, 44-6).



and thus their capture was no particularly great feat. Decades later Wallin even credited the whole episode to the Russians.

The guardsmen also repeatedly remarked on the 'hasty retreat' of the Ottoman troops. In a way they were right. But, like the newspapers and propaganda, the men quickly forgot that the reason why the Guards had been summoned to the front in the first place was the Russian losses and inability to advance in the summer of 1877, which indicates the Turkish ability to fight as well.

### ***Wahlberg***

Before describing the battle of Gorni Dübnik, Wahlberg (1878: 41-2) informed his reader why the place was so important. After the Russian declaration of war, the Ottoman commander of Vidin, Osman Pasha (ca. 1832-1900), had advanced to support the Turkish troops in Nikopol.<sup>241</sup> Because, however, the town surrendered before Osman Pasha's reinforcements arrived, and since Romanian troops cut off his retreat, the pasha had to fortify his position in and around Pleven. His troops were supplied from Sofia, and the intention of the Russian attack was to destroy this line of communication.

The Russian strategy as presented by Wahlberg (p. 43) was simple: first to isolate Gorni Dübnik from the neighbouring fortifications in Telish (to the south-west) and Dolni Dübnik (a few kilometres north-west) and then to storm it as quickly as possible. Wahlberg continued (pp. 43-6) by describing in detail the preparations for the assault, for example, the establishing of a field hospital and the early (one o'clock) reveille of the soldiers on the morning of the battle, 24 October. According to Wahlberg, everything happened quietly and in the best order. The men had 'now' decided to teach the enemy a lesson in army 'discipline' (in his Swedish, *tukta*).

The battle itself Wahlberg described in the manner of an official report. He detailed (pp. 46-50) the movements of the Finnish Guard, the storming of the Turkish redoubts, the salvoes fired by guns and rifles, and the casualties. He told the reader that the Guard had difficulty in advancing since it was forced to remain in an open field before the main Turkish redoubt, and that its position, as indeed that of the whole troop, was precarious because of the skilful Turkish defence. But fate, God or fortune was on the Russian side, and their last attempt to capture the Turkish positions was successful, albeit executed in disorder. Brakel (1994), for example, described battles of the Finnish war in 1808-9 in much the same way as an ordeal the men finally passed through.

Some pages later (pp. 68-72) Wahlberg reported the battle of Telish (on 24 October), in which the Finnish Guard did not participate. To capture the stronghold, the Russians had to cross an open field offering no particular cover. They eventually managed to do so, but the operation cost the lives of more than nine hundred men. Wahlberg took pains to excuse this wastage of human lives by appealing to its significance for the final Russian victory.

Communications to Sofia were at stake at Pravets, too (pp. 75-6, 78-84). The Turkish position was well fortified, and the terrain was difficult. Therefore the major role in the battle was played by cannon, which the Russians slowly hauled into better and better positions while sharpshooters fired on incautious enemies. The Russian victory was finally achieved by an attack on the Turkish rear.

After the crossing of the Balkans, the next few battles were fought mainly by Russian troops. The Finnish Guard was kept in the rear, and thus the battles of Sarantsi and Vrazhdebna caused no trouble. (Wahlberg 1878: 125-9.) As the fighting was drawing to a close, the Guard took part in one of the fiercest battles of the war, that of Plovdiv, or so Wahlberg maintained. He himself was not

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<sup>241</sup> Northeast of Pleven, on the southern bank of the Danube.

present, but on the basis of the information at his disposal he recounted (pp. 155-6, 169-76) in detail both the background and the phases of the battle. Wahlberg's general view that the Russians attempted to surround the Turkish positions while the Turks tried to keep their retreat route open and his conclusion that the operations of the Russian troops finally forced the Turks to fall back in confusion are in accordance with the known facts. Wahlberg neither glorified Russian (or Finnish) heroism nor disdained the enemy.

### ***Fennander***

Fennander's (1895: 52-9) description of the battle of Gorni Dübrik reads like a stereotyped recollection from the Finnish war (cf. Ehrström's [1986: 42-3] account of his first battle in 1808; Holm 1977: 31) or a much abridged prose version of Runeberg's poem "Den femte juli" (The Fifth of July); all these eulogised, in an emotional yet impersonal way, 'our' courage in battle and the glorious death for the 'sacred cause' we were fighting for.

Fennander began his story by relating how troops of the Russian army started to advance early on the morning of 24 October.<sup>242</sup> Catching sight of the Russian patrols, the Turks started to fire at them. Soon the Finnish Guard, too, was involved in the shooting. Nothing daunted, the troops advanced in short rushes covered by artillery units. It was in Fennander's opinion an infernal sight: bullets notwithstanding, the soldiers made progress while the wounded groaned, some of them in mortal agony. Officers set a brave example and, alongside the Finns, the Russians fought valiantly. Although the losses were considerable, the men did not fall into disarray but kept on advancing, waiting for orders to storm the fortification. Eventually the Turks hoisted the white flag. And although, due to some misunderstanding, the battle continued for a while even after that, the Russian victory was complete.

Fennander's next battle was but a scuffle. On 30 October his company approached the fortifications around Dolni Dübrik and was welcomed with shots by the defenders. The Finns dug themselves in on a field near the fortifications and stood there the whole day in outpost. Next day they were replaced, and when they returned on 1 November the Turks had retreated. (Fennander 1895: 70-1.)

After a two week wait the Guard continued its advance. The enemy was not seen. On 21 November the men were instructed that they would fight on the next day. According to Fennander (p. 78), the news 'didn't seem to discourage anybody, because we were bored and hoped that the war would soon be over'. Next morning the troops continued towards Pravets. They met some bashi-bazouks, who first 'tried to shoot those in the front [of the company], but [quickly] fled' and withdrew to the Turkish stronghold on the hills near Pravets. The troops were ordered to storm the fortifications, but the Turkish positions were so good this was not easy. Both sides fired mainly with heavy guns, and the role of the infantry was to haul the cannon back and forth. Meanwhile other Russian troops attempted a flank movement. Finally the troops in front were ordered to attack and, cheering, the guardsmen rushed forwards at nightfall. The Turks fled and once again the Russian victory was complete. (Fennander 1895: 79-82.)

The next two skirmishes, which took place immediately after the crossing of the Balkans, Fennander mentioned only briefly. Having rested for some days in Sofia in early January, the Guard again departed. In mid-January it engaged with the enemy near Plovdiv. The battle lasted for three days,

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<sup>242</sup> The distance from Yeni Barkats, the village from which they departed, to Gorni Dübrik was some 25 kilometres (Backström 1991a; Gripenberg 1905: 205, 208).

of which Fennander had next to nothing to say, remarking merely that ‘in the end the Turks had to escape in terrible confusion’ (p. 111). Thus, though he argued that routines were boring while battles were not, his silence about fights and his relative verbosity about the cruel enemy, suggest that not combat as such but images attached to the enemy dispelled the ‘boredom’ of the other army routines. Briefly, what was essential was not fighting but the creation of an object to struggle against.

### **Lindman**

According to Lindman, for the Finns the battle of Gorni Dübrik began at half past six, when the men contacted the first Turks in outpost. These retreated and, Lindman says, every soldier advanced, being anxious about his future, until an order ‘aroused them for their . . . terrible mission’. ‘Dreams’ disappeared and were replaced by ‘manly feelings’. The men rushed forwards and the sight of the pain of their wounded comrades ‘exalted’ them and propelled them along ‘like injured animals’. (Lindman 1880: 18-19.)

At half past eight the Guard was at a distance of some five hundred metres from the Turkish positions. Bullets hailed down on them. The men advanced the next four hundred metres some forty metres at a time. The next fifty took all of five hours to cross. Officers fell here and soldiers there, and ‘it was a wonder that we didn’t all [die]’. At nightfall, the artillery fired nine salvoes, and ‘with loud cheering’ the Russian troops ‘extended their bayonets against the Turks’. (Lindman 1880: 19.) An hour later, Lindman was passing the Turkish main redoubt where, according to him, the fighting was still going on. He deplored (p. 20) the sight, saying that it was one that only ‘sick and excited brains could imagine’: the redoubt was in flames, and with it were burning people and animals, living and dead, tools, arms and many other things. Thus, unlike Wahlberg, Lindman did not provide the reader with a ‘total picture’ of the battle but only recounted how the ‘work’ of the common soldiers proceeded.

Lindman recollected only very shortly the battle of Pravets a month later, simply saying (p. 24) that the Turks fought valiantly at first, but ‘in the end’ they had to ‘take to their heels’, due to Russian cannon fire. Russian casualties, unlike at Gorni Dübrik, were insignificant, as were Finnish ones.

Immediately after the crossing of the Balkans, the guardsmen attacked ‘with vigour’ the ‘strong fortification’ of the Turks at Sarantsi. One section of the Russian force started to block the Turkish positions, another advanced frontally, and some units secured the Russian rear. Advancing Russian soldiers fired at the enemy for five hours or more,<sup>243</sup> after which the Turks fell back or, in Lindman’s words, fled to the mountains. He added that, at the same time, Russian forces also defeated the Turks at Arab Konak and took ten steel cannon in booty, and furthermore that on 3 January (Lindman’s dating) the Finnish Guard were in a fray around a bridge in the village of Vrazhdebna, after which the ‘road to Sofia was open’. (Lindman 1880: 32.)

About a week later, near Pazardzhik, the guardsmen arrived at the Maritsa. Withdrawing Turks had left ‘a dozen men’ to destroy a bridge, but the guardsmen prevented their mission and took the Turks prisoner of war.<sup>244</sup> One of them managed to escape but, Lindman related, a Bulgarian civilian<sup>245</sup> who saw what happened, seized a sabre, ran after the Turk, caught him and cut off his head. According to Lindman, it was ‘amusing to see how the Bulgarian rejoiced at his feat’. (Lindman 1880:

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<sup>243</sup> Here Lindman refers to the booklet *Kuvalemia sodasta Wenäjän ja Turkin välillä* (see Ch. 1.4.). Perhaps he had forgotten the details of that fight or could not make a clear difference between clashes at Dolno Kamartsi and Vrazhdebna.

<sup>244</sup> Lindman is obviously speaking of the battle of Vrazhdebna.

<sup>245</sup> Who he was and why he was there is not told.

34-5.) Corresponding acts of homicide by Bulgarians are reported by Baker (1879b: 225-6). Lindman's remark, for its part, may be an example of what the Finnish folklorist Seppo Knuutila has called 'macabre comics'. The term refers to stories in which cruelties inflicted upon the enemy are a source of mirth and delight (quoted in Peltonen 1996: 53). The existence of such stories in later wars (for example, Lipponen 1940: 56), in turn, may indicate that black humour, horseplay and even terror are a means of dealing with, and creating identity in the face of, broken illusions (or ideals) caused by the hard reality of war; at least Finnish soldiers had used coarse humour as a way of coping with hardships (Niemi 1980: 43). Aleksis Kivi also used such humour in his play "Olviretki Schleusingenissä". So there is no reason to suppose that Lindman was a sadist or crazy with war. Back on the eve of the Guard's departure he had joked in the same rough way.

Partly his text may be explained by supposing that he used here the same style as in composing broadside ballads. On the other hand, if the liminal phase exposes, as Turner (1977) maintains, some structural essentials, I cannot exclude the possibility that Lindman's story, compounded by wartime conditions, revealed the cruel dimension of the Finnish peacetime structure, the oppressive side of upper class power over the lower classes and the practice of the state, the army and other such institutions deliberately to make soldiers act mercilessly against their enemy, as pointed out in chapter 4. As Winter (1979: 40-1) argued, quoting a private: the brutality of army drills makes men, who themselves are not brutal, cultivate brutality 'to get the army tone'. Because, however, 'our' brutality is incompatible with official ideals and the Finnish public memory of heroism (Niemi 1980: 71-2), or military identity, the guardsmen did not usually express such things. Lindman's outspoken words suggest that black humour could be used to resolve the dilemma caused by 'our' practical savagery and theoretical, or ideal, goodness.

On 14 January the Guard crossed the Maritsa<sup>246</sup> at nightfall with the intention of launching an assault on the enemy, whose positions were no more than a rifle-shot away. Due to Turkish superiority the attack was, however, postponed until the next day. (Lindman 1880: 35.) According to Greene (1880: 342), the reason for not fighting was that 'the Turks, on the run, had got about a mile ahead, and Shouvaloff, having only 8 battalions at hand, was obliged to be prudent, especially as it was already nearly dark'. Next morning the men were realigned in two companies, which then took part in the battle of Plovdiv.<sup>247</sup> According to Lindman, the Turks had fortified themselves in three positions along the Maritsa. The Russians attacked them, and '[w]e, too . . . squatted from morning till evening by a road while the enemy pounded us from all directions with shells and bullets that killed humans and horses'. The battle ceased in the evening, and during the night the Turks 'managed' to retreat. On their way they again, according to Lindman, set some villages ablaze before making new dugouts. (Lindman 1880: 36.) On 16 January, the Guard was mustered behind the railway embankment along the line to Edirne. Russian cannon fired on the enemy 'so that the earth shook'. The Turkish reply was ineffective because of the short range of their shells.<sup>248</sup> Next day the Guard fought, according to Lindman's calculations, its eleventh and last battle, in which the Turkish army was 'completely defeated'. (Lindman 1880: 37.)

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<sup>246</sup> According to Hozier (1879: 788; cf. Greene 1880: 342), at this point 'the ford was nearly 200 yards wide and four feet deep'. See also Jernvall in Ch. 9.2.

<sup>247</sup> Cf. above, p. 126.

<sup>248</sup> Here Lindman again refers to the booklet *Kuvalemia sodasta Wenäjän ja Turkin välillä*.

## *Palander*

On the eve of the battle of Gorni Dübrik, Palander's thoughts turned to Finnish military glory. He stated that 'we felt that we had now to revive the Finnish soldiers' age-old glory' and 'to show ourselves worthy descendants of the heroes [of the Thirty Years' War]'.<sup>249</sup> Such thoughts were important to encourage the soldiers, since 'a battle like this was often a hazard', and its final outcome could depend on mere chance. Palander stressed the importance of the battle, pointing out that Russians and Turks alike knew that it would 'settle the destiny of Pleven'.<sup>250</sup> (Palander 1881: 29.)

The night before the battle was cold and foggy. Silence reigned, broken only now and then by the bark of a dog or the thunder of cannon from the direction of Pleven. In the 'melancholy' moonlight the landscape looked 'deserted and desolate'. The guardsmen had packed their kit and were sitting about, chatting and waiting for the order to depart.<sup>251</sup> According to Palander, they talked about home and joked about the possibility of death. Nobody was afraid of the battle. (Palander 1881: 29-30.) The same was said by an unidentified Finnish officer serving with the Russian artillery, who witnessed how the soldiers began their march towards Gorni Dübrik in the middle of the night. According to him, '[s]ome of them were now on their last march. The men were in good spirits, and I heard soldiers joking' (quoted in Lindgren 1878: 86). This picture may incline too much towards heroism. At least some of the British soldiers in the First World War admitted their fear before a battle or stated that their emotions came and went 'like clouds in the sky' (Winter 1979: 171-3).

At one o'clock the last orders were given and a short prayer was said, after which the guardsmen departed. Cossacks on horseback went ahead, reconnoitring the territory. The Guard proceeded across maize fields and through oak woods to the banks of the Vit. They waded across the shallow stream and stopped on the other side for an hour and a half, according to Palander to make sure that the enemy would not disturb the crossing of the Vit. Then they again departed, advancing through maize fields towards the road from Pleven to Sofia. It was cold, and the first sunbeams penetrated the foggy air only with difficulty. (Palander 1881: 30-2.)

Here Palander's text again resembles the *Morgonbladet* article (nst 1877). One explanation is that his memory failed or that he wanted to express himself in officially accepted terms, to repeat the 'public truth'.<sup>252</sup> Fussell (1977: 55) offers another explanation. Speaking about the Great War, he stated that '[w]hen a participant in the war wants an ironic effect, a conventional way to achieve one is simply to juxtapose a sunrise or sunset with the unlovely physical details of the war that man has made'. Whether or not Palander really wanted to be ironic is hard to tell, but in their contemporary context his words were most probably read as a romantic allusion to the participation of nature in the battle (cf. Winter 1979: 225). That is, Palander wanted to transform a 'perfect idyll into the barbarous glamour of war' as Furneaux (1958: 50) put it in the context of similar descriptions of the siege of Pleven by some British newspapermen.

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<sup>249</sup> The anonymous writer of the article on the battle of Gorni Dübrik published in the Swedish-language *Morgonbladet* on 22 November 1877, who was also a guardsman, wrote, instead, that 'one had the feeling that the Guard's [age-]old honour was at stake; to show oneself worth heroes of Borodino, Smolensk, Kulm, Leipzig [and] Waterloo', that is, heroes of the Russian army in the Napoleonic wars (nst 1877).

<sup>250</sup> The same was said by nst (1877) in *Morgonbladet*.

<sup>251</sup> Here Palander's description is almost identical to that of a correspondent for the *Morgonbladet* (nst 1877).

<sup>252</sup> The possibility that Palander himself would have been the author of the article seems unlikely, because the author states that his company chief sustained contusions in the battle of Gorni Dübrik (nst 1877). This chief could only be the commander of the fourth company, Karl Hausen (1840-1895), and Palander served in the first company.

Soon the Guard arrived at a wide plain, and the troops were lined up in battle order. From their positions the guardsmen could clearly discern the enemy's bulwarks and the main Turkish redoubt. It was not long before the first bullets were whizzing around their ears.<sup>253</sup> According to Palander, this resulted in a rather 'strange feeling', however, it was not 'as bad as I had imagined'.<sup>254</sup> Much worse was to see a companion next to him fall down and to know that there was no way to help him. (Palander 1881: 32-4.)<sup>255</sup>

Palander then digressed to describe the fortifications of Gorni Dübrik, and to list the units that took part in the battle and their positions. He then sketched the simultaneous battle of Telish, and continued, with a long quotation from the report of General Gurko, to outline the general course of the battle. (Palander 1881: 35-42.) After that he returned to the Finnish Guard and its contribution to the battle.

The morning was still cold. The fog had lifted but the sunshine was darkened by gun-smoke. 'The Turkish fire was terrible', and every time the guardsmen rushed forwards the fusillade increased into a shower of bullets that Palander compared to a fervent drumming. Only the fact that the Turks shot 'as inaccurately as furiously' saved many a soldier's life. (Palander 1881: 42-3.) The rest of the battle Palander skipped over quickly, mentioning only (p. 44) that the guardsmen shot and proceeded, advanced and fired. This 'terrible game with death lasted uninterrupted from half past eight [A.M.] until half past five in the evening', and 'during all that time the Finns demonstrated their determination, unswerving bravery and manliness'. At nightfall, when the guardsmen were about to storm the main redoubt, the Turks suddenly struck colours: 'the shambles was over'.

On the morning of 22 November the Guard was lined up into battle order in Pravets. In Palander's opinion, victory in this fight would decisively settle the control of communications between Plevna and Sofia. He went on to describe the landscape and the Turkish positions, remarking that 'in retrospect' it was hard to comprehend how the victory at Pravets was possible, because the fortifications looked so invincible. Due to the Turkish positions, the Russians fired at the enemy mainly with their cannon. After having mentioned this, Palander again abandoned the Finnish Guard in order to give his reader a 'total picture'. On the basis of official reports composed afterwards he related how some of the Russian troops were dispatched to outflank the Turks, and then to let the hostilities cease overnight. (Palander 1881: 57-60.)

During the night Russian cannon and sharpshooters were re-stationed closer to the enemy's fortifications. In the morning the Turks 'protested' by shooting, but 'since they always aimed at the same place it was in the end rather easy to avoid [their projectiles]' (p. 61). The exchange of shots

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<sup>253</sup> According to Gripenberg, the Finns were about 1,000 metres from the Turkish positions when they suffered their first losses. They were forbidden to fire before the distance between them and the enemy was close to 600 metres. This may partly explain why each Finn, according to the battalion's statistics, fired only 10.9 shots at Gorni Dübrik, although they had 90 cartridges each. (Gripenberg 1905: 210, 212; Kylävaara 1978: 40.) It goes without saying that a phrase like 'air swarming with bullets' is common enough in battle descriptions. An unidentified Russian soldier, for example, later recalled that when crossing the Danube (on 15 June 1877) in a small vessel under Turkish fire, 'the water around the pontoon boiled from ricocheting bullets' (quoted in Menning 1992: 57).

<sup>254</sup> This was repeated by other guardsmen as well as by other soldiers. For example, Lieutenant Colonel, later Marshall and president of Finland, C.G.E. Mannerheim (1867-1951) wrote to his brother Johan from the Russo-Japanese war (1904-5) that when he was shot at in battle for the first time he could not tell how he felt when the bullets whizzed around him. 'It was not pleasant, but neither can I say that it caused me any great shock.' (Mannerheim 1982: 157.) A similar conclusion was drawn by soldiers of the First World War, with the exception that in many cases men who were for a long time constantly under fire (in a static position) became 'liable to breakdown mentally or to show a nervousness which may be defined . . . as mental terror . . .' (Leed 1979: 183).

<sup>255</sup> Here too Palander restates the *Morgonbladet* article (nst 1877).

continued the whole day (23 November). The Russians waited impatiently for their comrades to appear in the Turkish rear but, to their disappointment, the first to arrive were Turkish auxiliaries who attempted a blockade. The Russian position was for a while precarious before, at nightfall, their reinforcements attacked the Turkish rear. The column in the centre, where the Finnish Guard was, 'could in that case do hardly anything'. The Russian assault resulted in a Turkish withdrawal. The Finnish Guard spent most of the battle firing at the enemy from a distance. (Palander 1881: 61-3.)<sup>256</sup>

After having crossed the Balkans, the Guard was involved in three minor clashes. The first occurred on 31 December near the village of Sarantsi when the rear of a Turkish troop fell back, and was 'hardly worth mentioning'. The second took place on New Year's Day at Dolno Kamartsi. Here, too, the Turks were withdrawing, and there was no more than desultory fire between the last retreating men and the Finns. In addition, some 130 men, many of them sick or wounded, were taken prisoner of war (cf. above, Lindman). The third clash, at Vrazhdebna on the Iskür, was in Palander's opinion a little more serious, but in the end the Turks again withdrew, but only after they had set the village and a bridge over the river on fire. (Palander 1881: 84-7.)

About the first operation of the Finnish Guard at the battle of Plovdiv - the crossing of the Maritsa - Palander had nothing to say. The rest of the battle on that day, and also on the following one, he cut short by merely relating how the guardsmen 'fought all day', and when the Turks in the evening retreated to the mountains 'the [Sharpshooter] Brigade returned to the village [of Adaköy]'. On the second day of the battle, 16 January, the guardsmen found a large abandoned Turkish store and filled their knapsacks with provisions. On the evening of 17 January, the Turks fell back, and the road to Plovdiv and on to Edirne was open to the Russian troops. (Palander 1881: 100-1.)

### ***Jernvall***

In both of his recollections of Gorni Dübrik, Jernvall (1888; 1899: 49-70) presented a detailed description. He first described reveille at one o'clock, on 24 October, telling how the guardsmen got up quickly and punctually and followed the orders given them, and how a morning prayer was said. According to Jernvall, the guardsmen were in a very good mood and joked, for example: 'Bequeath me your heritage and I'll look after your fiancée if you die.' (Jernvall 1888: 1-2; 1899: 49.)

The troops advanced to the Vit, crossed the cold but shallow water and rested until dawn. When commanded, the guardsmen were ready 'at once'. The orderly march towards Gorni Dübrik reminded Jernvall of a festival parade on the Guard's drill ground at Krasnoye Selo. Even the sun, in Jernvall's opinion, was clad in festive attire, as if for her part celebrating the 'solemn' last parade before eternity (cf. above, Palander). This image Jernvall repeated a few sentences later by comparing the march to battle to a festival parade, implying that waging war was tantamount to having a feast. (Jernvall 1888: 3.) To compare a battle to a feast (Bulgarin 1996: 56) or a game (Fussell 1977: 26-9; Niemi 1980: 99) is a very old device that has been used to both elevate and mock warfare as Bakhtin (1995: 172), for example, has shown. Jernvall would appear to have had the former in mind, but this does not prevent his reader from interpreting things differently.

The troops advanced in 'complete order' (1899: 52) on the shooting enemy, 'cheering and running as fast as they could' (1888: 4-5). Although Jernvall above all praised the Finns by telling one story after another of how valiantly they conducted themselves during the battle (for example, 1888: 6-

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<sup>256</sup> Palander inserted here (pp. 64-5) a short report on some other battles on the northern side of the Balkans, in which the Finns did not participate.

8; 1899: 53, 55, 56-7, 59), he also stressed Russian bravery (1899: 57-8), and remarked that 'it was a pleasure' to see them advancing (1888: 6).

Suffering heavy casualties the troops approached the Turkish fortifications. Rifles and cannon from both sides fired non-stop, but the Turks were unable to drive their enemy off. Late in the evening, when the Finns were 'impatiently' waiting for the order to attack (1888: 9; 1899: 60), the Turkish troops suddenly raised the white flag. The guardsmen rushed cheering towards the fortifications, but for some unknown reason the Turks opened fire again. This resulted in yet more shooting and casualties on the Turkish side before they surrendered. (Jernvall 1888: 12-13; 1899: 64-6.) The same is reported to have happened on the same day at Telish (Menning 1992: 73) and, if true, may be attributed either to a failure in communicating orders or to devious tactics. One possibility is that Jernvall mistook Telish for Gorni Dübnik. He may also have wanted to emphasise the 'treacherous' and 'dishonourable' nature of the Turk, for there is no trace of this episode in any contemporary history of the war that I have been able to consult (for example, Greene 1880; Hozier 1879; Zimmermann 1878), although the incident is repeated by Lindman, Wallin and Schulman.<sup>257</sup> One possible model for the story may be the battle of the Shipka Pass in summer 1877, of which it is also reported that Turks started to shoot again after having signalled their wish to surrender (Forbes 1896: 192). In general, abuse of the white flag is a common device in narratives about the cunning enemy (see Krenchel 1929: 97-8; Lindberg 1904: 135).

Gripenberg (1905: 211) and, following him, but without references, Kylävaara (1978: 55) explained the incident as follows. Seeing the white flag, the Russian troops started to cheer. Not all the units, however, saw the flag and understood the noise as a signal to storm. When the Turks saw the Russians attacking they started to shoot once again. It seems that we have here a reinterpretation of public memory. While authors publishing in the late 1800s accused the Turks of fraudulence, later ones were at pains to rationalise Turkish conduct and, perhaps, their waging of war, too.

The next time Jernvall's company engaged the enemy was on 30 October near Dolni Dübnik, where the Finnish guardsmen replaced a Russian unit in an outpost. The Turks welcomed them with some salvoes, to which the Finns responded. After the latter had reached their earthwork the two sides stopped firing. During the night, both Turks and guardsmen reconnoitred, and by mistake some Finnish sentries almost gunned down their own patrol. 'Only darkness saved us', Jernvall, one of the patrol members, stated. (Jernvall 1899: 85-8.)

On 1 November the Finns became aware of an unusual silence in the Turkish fortifications. A horse patrol sent to investigate reported that the Turks had retreated without a fight, obviously to Pleven, because all other routes were blocked by Russian troops. Jernvall was angry with the Turks who had so 'treacherously' run off, not giving the Finns an opportunity to 'beat them off'. (Jernvall 1899: 88-9.) The next three weeks were spent on marches or in entrenchment. On 21 November Jernvall's company was told that 'tomorrow' they would again have to fight. The news was welcomed with joy; the guardsmen wanted military action in order to 'hasten the end of the war' (Jernvall 1899: 101). The battlefield was the mountains around the village of Pravets. On the morning of 22 November the troops started to advance. The reconnoitring patrols met a few Circassians (Jernvall 1889: 1), in Jernvall's earlier recollection designated bashi-bazouks (1899: 102), and some shots were exchanged. The Turkish outposts withdrew, and cannon fire started on both sides.

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<sup>257</sup> Of these Lindman (discussed in Ch. 8) and Schulman, who spoke of Telish, were independent of Jernvall while Wallin probably was under the influence of the memoirs of his former sergeant major.



Due to the mountainous terrain and the strong Turkish position, a frontal attack would have been suicide. Thus General Gurko decided to outflank the enemy and, simultaneously, to bombard the fortifications with shells. The infantry, including the Finns, were given an auxiliary role in firing rifles and moving heavy guns from one position to another (1889: 2-4; 1899: 103-5). In his later version of the battle Jernvall (1889: 2) asserted that the Finnish Guard was given a 'place of honour' in front of the centre of the Turkish troops. In the earlier version (1899: 103) he merely remarked that 'we were stationed on some mountains opposite the Turkish middle front'.

Supported by cannon, a part of the Russian force made slow progress while in the dark of night their companions advanced in the Turkish rear. When the enemy was surrounded, or so it was thought, the troops in front were ordered to attack. They charged, showing no signs of fear, though Turkish bullets fell right next to them, and reached the Turkish fortifications, only to discover that the enemy had retreated, or escaped as Jernvall put it, to avoid being outflanked.<sup>258</sup> (Jernvall 1889: 6; 1899: 104.)

After the Balkan crossing during the last days of December 1877, Jernvall's company had a five hour hostile encounter with Turks at Sarantsi. Jernvall had little to say about it. He only related that the Turkish positions were strong, but when 'our fine artillery' thundered for some hours, our 'alert and reliable' infantrymen kept up the pressure, and the 'big troops of our army' suddenly appeared in their rear, the Turks very quickly 'took to their heels'. (Jernvall 1899: 162-3.) On 2 January the Finnish Guard arrived at the Iskür. Here, on both sides of a bridge near the village of Vrazhdebna, the Turkish troops had fortified their positions. Catching sight of the enemy they opened fire. The guardsmen responded, and after some four hours of 'furious' fighting, the Turks, again threatened with a Russian flank movement, fled 'aimlessly', not, however, before 'they had set the bridge and the village ablaze'. (Jernvall 1899: 168-70.)

On 15 January the advancing Russian troops reached high ground. There they came upon retreating Turkish troops climbing the nearby slopes. Both sides opened fire. The Guard, lined up behind a railway embankment, was ordered to prevent the enemy from changing its position while the rest of the Russian troops were sent to surround them. The strategy worked well and forced the Turks to fall back towards Plovdiv. At nightfall the firing ceased. On 16 January the Guard continued in pursuit of the Turks. It again overtook them, and the result was heavy shooting that continued until dark fell. In the evening hostilities ceased. Next day, around noon, the Guard was ordered to 'look death straight in the eye', that is, to engage the enemy in a frontal attack. The Turks poured bullets and shells on the Finns, but due to the soft soil the latter did not detonate. In the end the Turks 'had to flee in a terrible tumult', having lost their whole artillery. Hundreds of prisoners of war were taken and, according to Jernvall, thousands of wounded and dead lay on the ground. The Turkish defeat meant the end of the war. (Jernvall 1899: 196-201.)

### ***Lindfors***

According to Lindfors, the guardsmen did not sleep well during their few hours of rest before departing for Gorni Dŭbnik. At half past midnight they were woken up for a drink. Then the company captain reviewed the ranks and, since everything was as it should be, the battalion commander ordered the men to advance. At first they marched quietly, but after a while they started to chat in order to give themselves courage, and gradually they became more and more enthusiastic. They crossed the Vit and

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<sup>258</sup> Here is one of the inconsistencies indicating that the text was written more to praise the Finnish (and, perhaps, Russian) soldiers than to describe actual facts. For if the Turks had retreated, as they obviously had, they could not pour such showers of bullets as Jernvall recollected.

got their footwear 'full of ice-cold water', slipped cautiously over open ground, and proceeded through a maize field where the first bullets 'whizzed close to our ears'. The sun had now risen and everything 'looked so beautiful, but the bloodthirsty angel of war was already hovering invisible in the air'. (Lindfors 1975: 11-12; cf. above Palander.)

The men were ordered to advance in a line. Shooting broke out, and at first the hail of bullets aroused 'odd, terrible feelings' in the guardsmen. Very soon, however, they grew accustomed to this 'new situation' and loading, taking aim, shooting and hastily advancing 'began to seem a commonplace, just as ordinary as it should be'. Thus Lindfors kept on rushing forwards and firing, disregarding the fact that the Turks were showering the guardsmen with shells and bullets, and that several of his companions fell or, as Lindfors put it, 'the god of war reaped his harvest'. (Lindfors 1975: 12-13.) If we believe Haapanen, who stated (1928: 232) that a human being never gets accustomed to being shot at, we may suspect that Lindfors here wrote more as he expected his readers would like to hear the story than to convey the reality.

About the battle of Pravets Lindfors had not much to tell. He related how the guardsmen 'stood there for two days and nights while bullets [shells] rained down'. As if in passing, Lindfors commented that by chance he discovered the right trajectory for the Guard's cannon firing at the Turks on the elevation opposite, thus implying that he contributed to the victory. (Lindfors 1975: 17.) In the afternoon of the second day of the battle, fog prevented the forces from discerning one another. According to Lindfors (p. 17), the (Finnish) guardsmen (*sic*) decided to take the Turkish fortifications by surprise and, moreover, to avenge their (three) wounded companions. But when the troops reached the enemy positions they discovered that the Turks had retreated.

The same happened, according to Lindfors, on New Year's Eve when once again the enemy fled without a fight. The Guard followed and came up with the Turks at Dolno Kamartsi,<sup>259</sup> where they were just about to 'plunder [the village] and slaughter [the villagers]'. The Turks 'disregarded our company', retreated hastily to a hill and entrenched there. Not all of them were fast enough and so, as Lindfors put it, the guardsmen killed 'many red-pants' and took 'a hundred of them' prisoner of war. Those on the hill were soon forced off it by cannonade. The guardsmen were ordered to find billets in the village while a Russian unit was sent in pursuit of the withdrawing Turks. Soon the Finns, too, were commanded to advance with a group of prisoners of war. On 2 January they arrived at Vrazhdebna on the Iskür. There they had 'a minor disagreement with Turks' over a bridge across the river. Russian cannon forced the Turks, who lacked heavy guns, to fall back. (Lindfors 1975: 22-4.)

The last battle of the Guard, that of Plovdiv, hardly figures in Lindfors's recollections. He merely observed that on 15 January 'we had to stand the whole day while shells poured down on us', and after that 'we' returned to Adaköy. Next day the battle flared up anew. The main role was played by the cannon, and again the guardsmen returned to Adaköy for the night. On the last day (17 January) a Russian troop advanced from the direction of Edirne to outflank the Turks. Meanwhile two other units, among them the Finnish Guard, made a frontal attack, and were welcomed by the Turks with fierce firing. Despite heavy casualties, the Russians advanced, forcing the enemy finally to retreat 'in great disorder'. (Lindfors 1975: 27.)

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<sup>259</sup> Lindfors treated Dolno (in his spelling, Dalni) and Kamartsi (Komartz) as two separate villages. His mistake validates the general argument that he only remembered these fights vaguely, and that they were for him of minor importance.

## **Wallin**

The Finnish Guard advanced in two lines through maize fields towards the Turkish fortifications at Gorni Dübrik. The sound of firing came closer, and the men met two cavalymen, one of whom was wounded. The Turkish and Russian heavy guns started an artillery duel. Soon the Finns arrived at the edge of an open field, and the shooting increased in intensity. Some men were wounded or killed, but the majority advanced in short dashes. They were soon joined by Russian grenadiers of the Guard, and together continued forwards. The Turks in the major redoubt fired on them vigorously, and the Finns were in trouble on the open field. Several more were wounded or killed. (WM: 69-80.)

According to Wallin (p. 82), after a few hours, the non-stop shooting had ‘so dulled him that [he] cared little about losing [his] life’. All he felt was a ‘total fatigue’, and the only thing he wished for was a moment of sleep. And, indeed, he reported (pp. 82-6) that he did fall asleep for an hour or two. On awaking, he noticed that the firing was still going on, though not as vehemently as earlier. Ranta<sup>1</sup> (1890: 309) also reported that a certain ranker (not Wallin) was said to have slept for about an hour on the battleground of Gorni Dübrik. That soldiers can sleep even when bullets are raining down seems possible.<sup>2</sup> A natural explanation is their utter exhaustion due to lack of sleep, but it may also be a kind of adaptation to warfare by temporarily escaping the dangerous situation or a reaction to fear.

Wallin advanced slowly behind the embankment of the road from Pleven to Sofia.<sup>3</sup> The other soldiers of his company were already there, firing at the Turks every now and then. According to Wallin (p. 91), the shooting caused no real harm to the enemy. Late in the afternoon the Russian cannon started to fire salvos. Shells ignited the major Turkish redoubt, and the Turks hoisted the white flag but then started to shoot again.<sup>4</sup> The guardsmen rushed in an assault, the Turks poured out of their fortification, and the battle ended, after a short clash with bayonets, in Turkish capitulation. (WM: 91-4.)

The battle of Pravets Wallin described by reporting in detail the movements of the various troops and cannon. On the first day of the battle (22 November) the cannon fired some volleys only. The Turks did not respond. After nightfall patrols were sent out to reconnoitre enemy positions, and on their return at sunrise the guardsmen were ordered to advance. At the same time Russian cannon opened fire, and now the Turks replied. For a while the Finns were in the thick of a barrage, but only one of them was wounded. Then the Turkish guns fell silent. The guardsmen waited some time and were then ordered to advance. At a distance of 200 to 300 metres, the Turks started to shoot with rifles, to which the Russian responded with cannon. When the firing ceased, the Finns continued and found a good position. After waiting awhile they heard someone cheering from above. Russian troops sent to outflank the Turkish fortifications had attacked the Turkish rear. The voices soon grew quiet, and the Guard was ordered to withdraw. When it returned next morning, the Turks had gone. (WM: 153-7; 161-9.)

On 1 January the Guard engaged a retreating Turkish troop at Dolno Kamartsi. At first the Turks were reluctant to fight, but seeing the small number of their adversaries they took up a position on a hill south-east of the village. Both troops opened a fusillade. The skirmish ended when the four cannon of the Guard arrived and discharged some volleys, which made the Turks fall back. At the same time the second battalion of the brigade, which had advanced on the left side of the Finns, took a hundred Turks prisoner of war. (WM: 220-2.)

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<sup>1</sup> Gustaf Ranta who, in the manner of Wallin, had enlisted in late 1876 for six years (Talvitie 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Examples are given by Berggrav-Jensen (1916: 12-13, 20-1); Erho (1940: 136); and Winter (1979: 117-18, 178).

<sup>3</sup> Turkish redoubts were on the both sides of this road, which ran roughly from north-east to south-west. The minor fortification on the southern side of the road had by now been taken by the Russians, but the major one on the northern side was still able to defend itself.

<sup>4</sup> Here, too, Wallin obviously depended on Jernvall's text (see above).

On 2 January the Guard reached the outskirts of Vrazhdebna. The Turkish troops stationed there opened fire from a distance of some 300 metres. The fourth battalion of the brigade, which was in the vanguard, soon informed the others that its rounds were running out, though Wallin supposed that the Russians were lying in the hope of being replaced. Thus the Finns, ordered to take the lead, advanced 150 metres. After desultory fire from both sides the Turks started to retreat, but not before they set fire to some of the houses in the village and the bridge leading over the Iskūr. The guardsmen put the fire out. (WM: 229-35.)

On its way to Plovdiv the Guard arrived, on 14 January, at the Maritsa. General Shuvalov, who happened to be on the spot, ordered the Finns to wade across. Russian troops, according to Wallin (p. 270), were allowed to use the bridge a few kilometres further on.<sup>5</sup> Having crossed the Maritsa, the men stopped to empty the water out of their boots. Then they continued in battle array towards ‘a certain village’ that the Turks had fortified.<sup>6</sup> At a distance of 300 metres from the village, the Finns were ordered to take up their positions behind a railway embankment. The Turks fired ‘slowly’ at the Finns and ‘more fiercely’ at the Russians. The exchanges lasted until nightfall. The night was spent in a nearby village, where the men found and drank some wine. (WM: 270-3.)

Next day (16 January) the Guard returned to the embankment. According to Wallin, the Finns were now in reserve, but the Turks, nevertheless, still fired at them from time to time, and some men were wounded. Worse than that, in Wallin’s opinion, was the cold. At noon the Turks started to retreat, and the guardsmen began to advance along the railway. They did not catch the Turks but ‘without firing a shot’ returned to their lodging of the day before. In the morning the men set off eastwards. By afternoon they had contacted the Turks, who were entrenched on some hills. Both sides opened fire. Turkish shells, ‘as usual’, fell as duds on the muddy ground. At nightfall the Turks withdrew. In Wallin’s recollections the battle was now over. He correctly surmised that the role of the Guard had been ‘rather modest’. (WM: 274-8.)

### *Alfthan*

When describing his first battle, that of Gorni Dūbnik, Alfthan (1879: 39-41) described at length the preparations for the attack. He pointed out that the commander of the Guards in the Balkans, General Gurko, personally investigated the enemy positions, and that the ground around Gorni Dūbnik was carefully checked. He also listed in detail the troops that took part in the battle, as well as their armaments.

According to Alfthan (p. 44), on their way to the battle the men ‘devoted sufficient time to self-reflection’. He did not say, though, what the men were thinking about but switched (pp. 44-51) to a long account of military movements: how one column attacked from the north, and the other two from the south and the east. He also described in detail the Turkish fortifications and the surrounding terrain. The battle itself he depicted from the point of view of a ‘total historian’ as exchanges of shots between Russian and Turkish troops, and as a series of advances and retreats until the final attack. For example (p. 47): ‘At ten o’clock General L.L. Zeddeler [1831-1899, the commander-in-chief of the column in the centre] with his grenadiers took the smaller Turkish redoubt in a vigorous assault and, following the garrison that escaped to the bigger redoubt, tried to continue the attack, but due to murderous [Turkish] firing had to fall back.’<sup>7</sup> He concluded (p. 51): ‘Blood-red passed the moon over the field. Such was the battle of Gorni Dūbnik.’

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<sup>5</sup> According to Greene (1880: 341), all the troops under Shuvalov ‘forded the Maritza’.

<sup>6</sup> Here Wallin confuses the events of January 14 and 15.

<sup>7</sup> As Alfthan himself (p. 46) pointed out, this picture was reconstructed after the battle, because no single soldier was in a position to follow the whole battle.

After Gorni Dübник, Alfthan (pp. 59-62) described the trench warfare in nearby Pleven on the basis of impressions he gathered during his trips to acquire provision for his unit. He continued (pp. 63-8) by reporting his battery's journey towards the Balkan mountains and Sofia. He listed the places he passed through, and enumerated in detail the troops he saw, and also their armaments. He remarked that they advanced with virtually no interference from the enemy.

In early December Alfthan's troop left Etropole,<sup>8</sup> where they had spent some time resting and on outpost duty, and advanced to the nearby pass of Baba Konak, some 1,800 metres above sea level. The Russians started to make earthworks in front of the pass, and the Turks began to fire on them from their fortified positions. According to Alfthan (p. 81), on the first day the Turks 'fired fiercely' and 'with unusual accuracy'. The Russians 'were indebted to the way [their] entrenchments were made' that the Turks did not manage to injure them (*ibid.*). By modern standards, then, this trench warfare was highly ineffective. There was much shooting, but casualties were incidental. There were 'truces' during breakfast, problems with maintenance and shortages of ammunition. Added to which, it was foggy, preventing effective shooting. (Alfthan 1879: 80-6.) Even so, according to Alfthan (p. 83), the Turks made 'wild attacks' on the Russian positions, and were beaten back only with difficulty. This state of affairs prevailed throughout almost the whole of December while the troops waited for reinforcements from units that had been besieging Pleven. Having crossed the Balkans, the troops arrived at Sofia on 3 January after skirmishes and losses, which in Alfthan's opinion were insignificant. The city surrendered without a fight, and 'for the first time since 1434, a Christian army was present in Sofia' (p. 109).<sup>9</sup>

The Russian force stayed in Sofia until 9 or 10 January, when the men were ordered to advance, via Plovdiv and Edirne, on Constantinople. The Ottoman troops withdrew before the Russians, avoiding battle. At Vakarel, Alfthan was told by an acquaintance that the emperor and the sultan had negotiated an armistice. This hearsay aroused 'both mistrust and hope. An end to privations was anxiously awaited, but one suspected that expectations of an immediate end to military operations could be but an illusion' (p. 132). This was also the opinion of General Gurko, who decided to advance despite the rumour. (Alfthan 1879: 126-7, 130-3.) On 15 January the troops continued their march towards Plovdiv. As they approached the city, they met some of its inhabitants, who informed them that 'the enemy' had already left. But these 'good tidings' were, according to Alfthan (pp. 140-156), premature: the Russian troops soon engaged retreating Turks, and the following battle lasted three days on and off. The Turks were on the defence. At least Alfthan's battery seemed to be possessed by a kind of 'martial fury', because he related (p. 156): 'They [men of the battery] shot more and more eagerly, and as if trembling with satisfaction every time a deadly projectile hit the moving masses, spreading death and destruction overall.' He continued (*ibid.*) by saying that he was not discussing the moral side of such annihilation, but merely testifying to a [common] phenomenon. And 'surely' it would be useful for many a preacher of morality or 'armchair philosopher' to face 'hard reality', and only after that to 'invent means of making human beings happier'. This somewhat obscure passage may indicate not selfish joy at Turkish annihilation but ideational delight at the 'civilised' Russian victory over the Turkish 'realm of evil'. At a more personal level, Alfthan's remarks perhaps show his relief at the 'just' end of armed hostilities. It may also be that when 'the other' is totally dehumanised, 'we' do not even expect it (not he or she) to die in the manner we do (see Winter 1979: 133).

After the battle of Plovdiv, Alfthan stated (pp. 175-6) that he was finished with his description of military campaigns in this war, because the following events occurred at a more political level. Thus his wartime role as a soldier had come to an end.

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<sup>8</sup> A dozen kilometres south-east of Pravets.

<sup>9</sup> The quotation was borrowed by Alfthan from a telegram sent by Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich to the emperor after the Russians entered Sofia (Schulman 1955: 120).

### *Schulman*

Schulman's first battle was that of Telish on 28 October. The troops departed in the morning, and by eleven were lined up somewhat south-east of the Turkish fortifications. The men rested briefly, during which time Schulman, who had not slept for two nights, took a nap. He was woken by Russian and Turkish cannonade. After some hours of shooting the Russians demanded that the Turks capitulate, which after a while they also did. Thus the battle was over, or so the Russians believed. But, according to Schulman, the Turks used their surrender as a pretext to attempt to flee. When the Russians learned of this they began to shoot again, and after some firing the Turkish troops finally gave up. The casualties suffered by the Russians were insignificant, but not those of the Turks. In addition, the Russians took some 3,000 Turkish prisoners of war. (Schulman 1955: 57-8, 60-2.)

After Telish, Schulman's company was ordered to join the troops besieging Plevna. Some six weeks or so later, on 9 December, the Turks attempted a break-through. Their main force clashed with Russian grenadiers stationed to the left of Schulman's unit. After some salvos the battle developed into hand-to-hand combat. Schulman's troop, in reserve, fired on the Turkish right flank. For a long time Schulman did not know which side was getting the upper hand, but at last he saw the Turks fall back. At about the same time a part of his unit was sent to check the nearby Turkish earthworks. A short skirmish followed in which a Russian lieutenant distinguished himself in a manner much praised by Schulman (he said that the officer was 'very cold-blooded'). Soon afterwards, the Turks capitulated. (Schulman 1955: 90-3.) Thus Schulman's battle was over. Surprisingly, a professional officer devoted no more than a few pages to what is usually considered a soldier's main job, fighting. The reason was probably that he saw no point in detailing what he considered routine affairs, especially if there was nothing exceptional or heroic in them.

In general, what the guardsmen underlined in battles was their heroism, but in a manner that matched what the state and the army and also Finnish public opinion, influenced by Finnish nationalism, expected of them. The battles themselves were not important or significant for the guardsmen; what mattered was that they could render them in a 'manly way'. The same holds true for wounds and death in battle, to which I now turn.

## 7. DISEASE, WOUNDS AND DEATH IN AND OUTSIDE BATTLE

In Ch. 4 we saw that death occupied several authors before the campaign. It continued to do so during it, too. Outside battle contexts, death was seldom described, but in battle recollections it figured prominently. It seems that in combat death was something natural, which came within the framework of fighting and required no explanations because it was taken for granted that falling in battle increased the honour of both the deceased and his nation or people. No signs of the regret or sorrow common at the death of a relative or close friend in peacetime (de Waal 1998: 64-8) were reported; only respect if someone died 'like a man'. But outside the battle context, death was unnatural or even dishonourable, something that was not acceptable, that could not, and should not, happen in wartime.<sup>269</sup> This difference between death in and outside the conflict situation is indicated, for example, by the deep concern shown by the men after the battle that the corpses should be properly buried. In 'less honourable' cases they obviously regarded funerals as no more than an indispensable routine.

The possibility of being wounded is also mentioned now and then, but the statistically more likely chance of contracting a disease was hardly considered, even after weeks at the front. (Erho and Simola, writing in 1940 [pp. 30-2] and 1955 [pp. 58-60], respectively, no longer had such hesitations.) Epidemics, despite some improvements in the care of the sick in the 1870s, were the soldiers' worst enemy.<sup>270</sup> While the Guard was on outpost duty at Folni Dübrik some 100 men fell ill (Järvinen 1932: 139, 143). According to one estimate, in December 1877 only about one third of the Finnish guardsmen (300 to 400) were fit to fight (Lindgren 1878: 108-9; cf. Gripenberg 1905: 221), so many having caught cold or been affected by frost-bite in the high mountains. Later, after conclusion of the preliminary peace treaty at San Stefano (3 March, N.S.), several soldiers fell victim to disease.<sup>271</sup> Except for Wallin, however, none of the authors explicitly worried about the disability caused by wounds or illness. Could it be that the men passed silently over the thing they feared the most? Did they perhaps want to give an impression of power and health as had the British soldiers in the Great War (Taylor 1998: 244), for surely wounds and illness implied weakness, loss of manliness and destruction of both 'our' human and army body, neither of which was acceptable either in reality or in contemporary literary conventions (see Brakel 1994: 48; Krenchel 1929: 54-5).<sup>272</sup> The same was probably true of vermin, which are mentioned only by Wallin, but swarm in later war literature (for example, Erho 1940; Krenchel 1929). It seems that at least in times of battle the men were also ashamed of 'deserting' ranks, even due to illness, although in later Finnish memoirs it proved an 'honourable' way out of battle and other hardships (Lindberg 1904: 30; Simola 1955: 182-3).

Medical treatment, too, occupies no special place in the men's recollections. The focus in cases of wounding and illness is on the person's ability to endure rather than the capacity of the doctor or medication to cure. One obvious reason for this was that the medical profession was not an institution as such in the Russian army, and therefore it could not attract or influence men as it was to

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<sup>269</sup> Cf. Berggrav-Jensen 1916: 37-8 for a similar view on men in the Great War.

<sup>270</sup> Though comparisons must be made with caution, I refer here to Englishmen of the First World War, of whom only a third were A1 fit, while '41 per cent . . . were given the bottom health classification of C3' (Winter 1979: 30).

<sup>271</sup> According to official statistics, 541 men fell sick between September 1877 and the end of May 1878. Of these, 57 died. The worst months were November 1877 and April 1878 when, respectively, 108 and 134 men were taken ill. (Järvinen 1932: 287.) Backström (1991a) reports that in the war the Finnish Guard lost a total of 275 men, of whom 40 died in battle or from wounds, 148 perished of diseases and 3 went missing. Because Backström neither defines the period (is he speaking of wartime or is he counting the post-war time, too?) nor gives any detailed information about his sources his numbers must be treated with caution. However, what is sure is that most Finnish casualties were sick or lightly wounded.

<sup>272</sup> Sixty years later a guardsman could claim that 'not a minute' was he ill during the war (Veteraanit kertovat 1937).

do in the armies of the 20th century.<sup>273</sup> Probably the men's conceptions of the role of medicine in war also differed from those of posterity. If we think, as the guardsmen clearly did, of wounds and disease in terms of honour, and add to this the inadequacies of transport and hospitals in the 1877-8 war (Anderson 1968: 97-8), it becomes easier to understand why it might be considered more glorious to recall suffering wounds in a 'manly' way than to complain about them or to chat about the time spent in (the field) hospital.

In reality, however, things were probably not so simple. A survey of memoirs of British soldiers who were wounded, but survived, in the First World War suggests that the majority neither thought of continuing the battle nor attempted to conduct themselves in a particularly manly way. On the contrary, those who were conscious either went over their earlier lives or, if not so badly hurt, often tended to become 'walking wounded' (Winter 1979: 194-5). On the other hand, one of them mentioned how he read Aeschylus while lying injured in a shell-hole for twelve hours (*ibid.*: 196). Several others showed their calmness, too (*ibid.*: 205). Thus, though one may suspect that in recollections 'manly suffering' could be a literary device handed over by public memory (see Brakel 1994: 25, 112; Runeberg 1963) and used to create a socially expected, or presupposed, image of their conduct, the men also argued that they patterned their behaviour accordingly.

A clear difference is made between 'our' casualties and enemy 'corpses'.<sup>274</sup> The former are discussed by the guardsmen at considerably greater length than in later Finnish war recollections.<sup>275</sup> Occasionally they are seriously deplored as losses, but not pitied. Sometimes they encouraged thoughts of retaliation. Thus both dying in battle and avenging of losses are remembered as something increasing 'our' honour. Finnish losses also made the men comment on the transience of human life, and ponder their own destiny as a part of the larger-than-human world history (though my sources do not state the matter in this way). In the end, 'our' dead are commemorated as part of the 'cult' of Finnish heroism, endurance and manliness.<sup>276</sup> Memory united the living with the dead and the ideals the latter had died for; it strengthened the awareness of being a Finn, i.e., the nationalism of the men. For, in ideologies such as nationalism, the dead have much the same function as martyrs in Christianity: they are 'always' remembered as examples of paradigmatic behaviour (Le Goff 1988: 136-7). Reading the guardsmen's memoirs in this way I imply that, ultimately, they did not fight, or die, for Bulgarian liberation but for the Finnish right to the space called Finland.

The enemy's casualties, in contrast, are usually mentioned only in passing, and without comment. On some occasions they are described in detail, but rather as if to entertain the reader. There was nothing tragic or pathetic in the Turkish casualties, nothing worth remembering; and the Turks themselves were only 'targets' to be gunned down.<sup>277</sup> This was typical of later enemy descriptions as

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<sup>273</sup> The medical services, not unlike the Russian army in general, obviously expected a short war and, in the face of defeats, did not have the organisation, personnel or means to deal with sick and wounded *en masse* (see Anderson 1968: 93-4; Hiisivaara 1968: 85-6, quoting Wahlberg [1878]; and Kollontay 1946: 19-20).

<sup>274</sup> This was typical of other wars, too. Fussell (1977: 77) says that the British soldiers in the Great War claimed that, unlike 'our' dead, the German ones were 'porcine'.

<sup>275</sup> For example Lindberg (1904, the Boer War), Erho (1940, the Winter War) and Simola (1955, the Vietnam War) did not discuss 'our' casualties very much.

<sup>276</sup> Povrzanovic (1997: 155) noted that when the Serbs battered Dubrovnik in the early 1990s, those who made the most noise about their suffering were often the loudest exponents of [Croatian] nationalistic rhetoric, and in many cases also the first to leave the city. From my point of view the link between nationalism and arguments concerning suffering is important. By establishing it, both Croats and guardsmen, each in their own way, made public their (allegedly) great sacrifice for Croatia or Finland.

<sup>277</sup> After the armistice the relation changed; the enemy ceased to be an enemy, becoming almost a human being. On some occasions, death put an end to the Turkish 'inhumanity' (see Alfthan, below in this chapter).



well (Erho 1940: 29-30; 65-7, 75; Simola 1955: 54-5, 108). The enemy happened to be of a certain nationality or race, but what mattered was that he was 'our' foe. Nationality, race, etc. were merely pretexts covering this fact. So seeing a dying, or dead, enemy did not remind the authors of the fragility of human life (i.e., it was of no importance in human history) but of the inhumanity of the enemy in not taking care of their dead. When Jernvall, for example, was in Sofia in early January 1878 he wondered (1899: 177) why the Turks and Bulgarians 'almost totally' ignored the 'dead bodies lying in the streets and at corners'. On the other hand, after the armistice, the guardsmen could (and did) pity the masses of poor displaced Turkish civilians they passed lying dead between Plovdiv and Kharmanli. Jernvall (1899: 213-14) added that seeing dead Turkish women and babies he 'inevitably' found himself thinking how 'in these times human life is reduced to a pure mockery'. He could afford to pity them because, unlike the Bulgarians, Turkish civilians were not involved in the guardsmen's web of relations to the hostile other.

To sum up, then, the guardsmen's relation to death usually served some purpose in their creation of military identity. Elevating 'our' dead and degrading the enemy's, as well as pitying civilians, all dovetailed with both Russian and Finnish structural ideals and facilitated bargaining with both.

### **Wahlberg**

Wahlberg (1878: 37) first reported cases of illness from Yeni Barkats,<sup>278</sup> where the monotonous food and the rain that had accompanied them all the way to the village resulted in dysentery. The sick were lodged in a house temporarily turned into a field hospital. But, Wahlberg commented, conditions in Yeni Barkats were such that the sick could neither sleep nor eat a proper diet.

After the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik Wahlberg wrote (p. 50): 'With beating hearts the commanders had mustered their troops. Many were the gaps in the ranks, many the eyes now closed [forever], many the hearts that no longer beat. But many who suffered in pain rejoiced at the message of victory that reached them where they lay in ambulances around camp fires. Many of them were only waiting for information that their troop had safeguarded its military honour before they were ready calmly to leave their souls in God's hands and pass away forever.'<sup>279</sup> He continued (pp. 50-2) by describing his own activities during the battle: how he had been worried about the Finnish soldiers and, since they [i.e., their wounded] were for some reason not carried to the hospital, went to look for them; and how he finally found the Finns and continued his work until late in the night.<sup>280</sup>

Next day Wahlberg went to the battlefield to look for any wounded who might still be lying there. He said (p. 54) that the view was such that his pen was unable to describe it. He admonished the reader to imagine a meeting with the silent inhabitants of a graveyard, their limbs unnaturally stiffened, their countenances in agony, and see their 'open wounds, from which here a heart, there a brain or lung or liver gazes at you', silently speaking a language that only the heart may understand. It has been said, he continued (ibid.), that 'a soldier's death is glorious, and in fact it is so, since a mourner does not leave any grave in as low a spirit as that of his comrade who has fallen on the battlefield, gladly fulfilling his destiny, even if it demanded his painful death'.

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<sup>278</sup> Yeni Barkats is either modern Burgach, near Pleven, or a place close to it.

<sup>279</sup> The idea that, in the battlefield, the dying soldiers 'with their last breath cheer[ed] on their comrades', as Furneaux (1958: 121) put it, was typical of 1877-8 war descriptions in general.

<sup>280</sup> The atmosphere in Wahlberg's description is reminiscent of that in the poem "Gamle Lode" (Old Man Lode) in the second part of Runeberg's *Tales*. In it an old officer treated the wounded enemy soldiers after a battle (Runeberg 1963: 149-55, especially verse 9).

Coming close to the Turkish redoubts, Wahlberg saw even more horrendous things (pp. 54-5): 'Corpses were lying there in wild disorder next to dead horses and draught animals, etc. Some wounded had sought shelter in huts made of sods [and wood], and had fallen victim to flames when [cannonade] set them ablaze. Their charred bodies were now buried by their surviving comrades.' The sanitarians' work,<sup>281</sup> though, did not cease here, for on the third day after the battle the wounded were still being operated on and bandaged in circumstances far from ideal (p. 56). A week later, Wahlberg related (p. 66) that the senior doctor of the Guard, Winter, was still fighting 'an enemy worse than bullets or shells, namely, typhus'.

A few days later the Finnish Guard departed via Gorni Dübrik for Sofia. It passed by the battleground and the graves. The multitude of wooden crosses, voracious dogs and birds of prey 'bore witness that here death was the master' (p. 68). This prompted Wahlberg to ask rhetorically (ibid.): 'Where shall our path lead? To glory or defeat, to life or death? No longer can those who rest here or our young friend<sup>282</sup> whom we now lower into the grave ask about their destiny. They have cast their die, they have fought like men, and have found peace.'

In December, when the Guard was on outpost duty on the 'Finnish Mountain' and, after that, crossed the Balkans, Wahlberg occasionally expressed surprise that so few men in fact fell sick. On 29 December, when the guardsmen had just arrived at the southern slopes of the Balkans, Wahlberg reported (p. 124): 'In general the men are in unusually good health, and it is a wonder that only a few caught cold [during the crossing] so badly equipped they were. In a much more regrettable situation were those who were taken ill, because it is totally impossible to treat them properly here.' So Wahlberg painted a hellish image of wounds and death in battle, only to nullify it by arguing, unjustifiably, that wounds and death were otherwise of little concern to the Finns, even if they were ill prepared to cope with them.

### ***Fennander***

Fennander described his first experience of a dead soldier at the battle of Gorni Dübrik. He related how the Turks, observing the advancing Russian troops, started to fire. One bullet hit a man in Fennander's line not far from him. 'Oh!' was his last word, according to Fennander, who continued: 'There he fell bleeding, in a foreign land far from home.' Many others followed him. One was wounded in the chest and another was hit in the stomach. 'There a companion writhed in mortal agony', but Fennander had 'at the moment' no time to help him. (Fennander 1895: 53.) Such 'naturalistic' descriptions were common in British privates' recollections of the First World War, too (Winter 1979: 26); as one of them put it (ibid.: 82-3), '[a] casualty was not a matter for horror but replacement'.

This 'indifference' may have been a sign of manhood or its socially accepted representation. To the same category belongs the ability to endure without complaining. Fennander remembered, for instance, how some soldiers who were only slightly injured, commented (the sound of the bullet that hit): 'What a whiz', and continued fighting (Fennander 1895: 57.) But if someone was badly hurt and asked the 'favour' of being killed by his companions, 'nobody was heartless enough to kill his own brother, his own companion on the battlefield' (ibid.). Thus the man who begged the

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<sup>281</sup> However, Wahlberg had less to say about it than one might expect in view of his function in the Guard. This was already noticed by Snellman (1895: 593) in his review of Wahlberg's work. Some other Finns under similar conditions devoted more space to their medical works (for example, Rampanen 1934). The reason in Wahlberg's case might be that he had only few serious cases and, further, that he did not want to emphasise illness or light wounds. His silence over, or even denial of, disease may be due to censorship and the fact that such casualties were not considered very 'honourable'.

<sup>282</sup> Ensign O.A. Welin, born in January 1857, died on 12 November 1877.

favour had to commit suicide. The contrast between killing Turks without hesitation and not 'one of us', even when it might be a 'kind deed', is striking. Clearly in the context of warfare the enemy is not a human being whereas 'we' are, perhaps, more than human, especially on the threshold of death.

The evening after the battle one could hear the groans of the wounded left on the field. Because of the darkness 'one could not help them now' (p. 59). Some pages later (pp. 62-3) Fennander, however, contended that the Finns tried to find all their casualties on the same evening but failed, and thus many of them had to spend their night where they lay 'badly wounded and in terrible pain'. Next day Fennander visited the battleground and stated (p. 63) that seeing so many dead, humans and animals alike, 'discouraged even the bravest soldier'. Thus the 'fury' of battle was followed by sadness and low spirits. Fennander suddenly seemed to notice (p. 64) that 'many of my companions, with whom only yesterday I spoke, had fallen asleep for ever'.

The dead were quickly buried, with Christian ceremonies as Fennander stressed. On their graves wooden crosses (or only one, cf. below, Jernvall) were erected to remind those who came after of 'heroes who for Christian love and the glory of [their] fatherland died an untimely death' (p. 66). The commander of the Finnish Guard, Baron Ramsay, then ordered the guardsmen to thank God for victory (ibid.), implying that casualties were acceptable as an offering for Turkish defeat.

On the occasion of the Guard's second battle, at Pravets, Fennander only briefly mentioned that some were wounded (pp. 79-82). In the same manner he reported the result of the skirmishes at Sarantsi and Vrazhdebna (pp. 94-6). This may be because Finnish casualties were indeed minimal and no-one was killed. But the short comment at the end of the battle of Plovdiv, namely, that 'thousands of dead and wounded covered the battlefield' (p. 111), seems to indicate that he had either grown accustomed to casualties or was tired of warfare, or both. In any case it seems that because the dead were not Finns they were not his concern.

### ***Lindman***

When a young guardsman was wounded in the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik, Lindman consoled him 'as best [he] could' but the other complained of his terrible thirst. A lieutenant who happened by gave the wounded boy some brandy from his bottle. Then they left him and 'hurried on'. (Lindman 1880: 20.) This brief note on wounded and dead is in accordance with Lindman's terse descriptions of battles, and obviously means that he had completely forgotten, or pushed out of consciousness, memories of wounds and death. Thus war, at least losses in war, were for him nothing honourable, but rather something horrendous. Lindman's use of black humour also suggests that he had difficulty in accepting, or rendering meaningful, death in battle. It was too high a price for a soldier's work.

### ***Palander***

Palander said that he would never forget the first time he saw a Finnish guardsman killed. It happened during the early hours of the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik. According to Palander (1881: 33), the man 'collapsed only a few steps away from me; the bullet hit him in his belly, but he didn't die instantly. The poor fellow hardly groaned, but it was painful to see him writhing as if with cramp. Anyhow, [this was nothing compared to] what else I was going to see in the course of this memorable day.' He added (p. 34) that before sunset 'many veins had ceased to pulsate, many hearts to beat, and many souls had faded'. Without doubt, he continued (ibid.), every human being was mortal, but the hour of death was clearer to those who fought on a battlefield than to those busy with their everyday lives in an organised (peacetime) society.

After the battle Palander again, as on his way to the front, described (p. 45) the horrors of war: the crushed, mutilated and stiff corpses of humans and animals lying on the field, and the agony of the wounded, who in their distress prayed the passer-by to have mercy by killing them;<sup>283</sup> mercy that, Palander stated, was 'hard to have'. The sight was so terrible that, according to Palander (*ibid.*), everyone who was not emotionally 'totally dull' loathed it and, 'feeling his insignificance and powerlessness, could only cry: a curse on war!' This all sounds like a shock effect. That guardsmen suffered from it may be inferred from the fact that the scene is depicted with almost identical words by Lindfors (below), indicating that they did not remember personal details but resorted to images created by newspapers and broadside ballads or handed down by pre-war military traditions.

Three weeks after the battle the men headed south. They passed by the battlefield, where the wooden crosses erected on graves, the carcasses of horses and other animals, and even damaged oak trees reminded them of the deceased and the destiny awaiting those still alive. Around noon, the men arrived at Telish, where the mass graves of Russians and Turks, each in their own area, pieces of cartridge boxes and fragments of shells reminded them again of the war and the transience of life. Even more worried were the guardsmen about the toll taken by disease, which decreased the number of men capable of fighting. (Palander 1881: 52-4.)

At the battle of Plovdiv, in mid-January, Palander's tone (pp. 100-1) was less impassioned. He confined himself to stating that one (Russian) grenadier was 'so badly wounded that even for a hardened man it was difficult to face him'. A shell had ripped his leg off 'just above one boot, so that the footwear and the part of the leg inside it were lying at one or two ells' distance from the man; he suffered unspeakable pain'. Though Palander did not pronounce a curse on war this time, the message is clear: there is nothing honourable in war.

### ***Jernvall***

At the battle of Gorni Dübrik Jernvall certainly observed that several of his fellow-guardsmen were either wounded or killed, but during the battle this did not concern him (1888: 5; 1899: 53). When fighting, he said (1888: 7), a true soldier kept on advancing and did not care how many followed him. He approvingly quoted (*ibid.*) Runeberg in Finnish translation: 'Mutt' suuriko joukko vai pienempi [seurasi], mitä hän siitä tiesi.' This may be rendered in prose as follows: when attacking the enemy the true soldier does not count how many (or few) others follow him. The passage is from Runeberg's "Löjtnant Zidén" (Lieutenant Zidén, Runeberg 1963: 39-44, verse 9). The same attitude was revealed by Jernvall in his story (1888: 8; 1899: 59-60) about a soldier who was mortally wounded but called a companion and asked who was going to win. Upon hearing that the Turks were losing the battle he said: 'Thus I may die in peace.' Which he also did the very next moment.

Jernvall also emphasised that though many Finns were badly wounded and suffered ghastly pain, 'they did not complain' (1889: 60) but endured all hardships 'in a manly way' as Finnish soldiers had to do (1888: 8). The same fortitude was ascribed to Turkish privates by Britons who volunteered to care for the sick and wounded in the war (Anderson 1968: 117). During the Russo-Japanese war (1904-5), the Finnish Lieutenant Colonel C.G.E. Mannerheim (1867-1951) imputed similar manliness to some Caucasians and their 'traditional concept of honour' (Mannerheim 1982: 157). And an English surgeon wrote about the wounded in the First World War that 'it was an extraordinary thing that in this charnel tent [field hospital] of pain and misery, there was silence and no outward expression of complaint . . . even badly wounded often asked for a smoke' (quoted in Winter 1979: 198). Thus it seems that suffering without complaint, or at least narratives of it, is widely

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<sup>283</sup> See above, Fennander, and below, Wallin's story of Iisak Gröndahl.

considered as a token of a true soldier.

After the battle, the Finns, according to Jernvall (1888: 13; 1899: 75), carefully searched for their casualties on the battlefield and found them all. In his imagination Jernvall (1899: 67) let a wounded man conjecture how Turks came in the dark of night to cut off his limbs, causing him to suffer fearful pain. He obviously agreed with Lindberg (1904: 102, 105), Krenchel (1929: 35-6) and Erho (1940: 76, 127-8), who considered that the worst thing for a soldier was to hear his wounded comrade groan and to be unable to help him. Jernvall also duly inserted in both of his recollections of Gorni Dübnik a list of men from his company who were wounded or killed (1888: 15-16; 1899: 72-4), as if to honour the memory of 'Finnish heroes'. He also described (1899: 76-7) in detail the Christian burial of the fallen Finns,<sup>284</sup> and the erection of a wooden cross to commemorate their graves.

At the end of October Jernvall's company was in a brief skirmish at Dolni Dübnik, where it was picketed. Jernvall passed this over with no more than a note, and continued by remarking that during the time in Dolni Dübnik most of the men in his company suffered from dysentery, a disease that 'quickly enfeebled a man, however strongly built he was'. On 14 November the Guard was ordered to continue. They marched via Gorni Dübnik, where the signs of the recent battle were still visible. The sight was 'so gruesome' that 'one was compelled to think how short and insignificant a human life is'. By the Finnish graves the men also pondered where they themselves would find their ultimate resting place. (Jernvall 1899: 96.)

The heavy rifle and cannon fire notwithstanding, Finnish casualties at the battle of Pravets were few. And even those who were wounded claimed it was but a trifle (Jernvall 1889: 6). This may be part of the reason why, after the battle, Jernvall said nothing about the wounded, merely relating how the men built a camp fire and ended the day 'talking and joking' (1889: 9-10; 1899: 112-14). Next day he visited the Turkish fortifications and saw many fallen Turks. His only comments were (1899, pp. 115 and 116, respectively): 'Turks shot dead were lying [in several places] with rifles in their hands and with sunken heads', and 'In the big entrenchment, too, there were many fallen Turks.'

He showed the same indifference towards Turks when reconnoitring Turkish outposts near the 'Finnish Mountain' in mid-December with a dozen other guardsmen. During a patrol, Jernvall saw two Turkish sentries 'chatting, not having learned of our presence'. Without more ado Jernvall commanded his men to shoot, thinking that at least 'some bullets would hit the target'. Three volleys were fired, the Turks 'awoke from their dreams', and one of them fell. 'We didn't know, though, whether or not the shot had killed him.' (Jernvall 1899: 138.)

In contrast, when two of his company's men were accidentally killed on 23 December by a barn collapsing on top of them, he described the event in detail, concluding: may they rest in peace! (Jernvall 1899: 147-8.) The same happened when a man from Jernvall's company died at Plovdiv, obviously of a heart attack. Jernvall did not meditate on death as such, but was very concerned about a proper burial, and regretted that the battalion's chaplain could not be present, with the result that the guardsmen themselves had to perform the ceremonies (ibid.: 207).

On the other hand, when speaking about the wounded and sick soldiers left by Turkish troops in Sofia in their hasty retreat in early January, Jernvall (1899: 173) first blamed the Turks for having treated them badly, and went on to say that 'our people' both 'gave them medical treatment and comforted them'. Thus he quite consciously built up a commemoration, or 'cult', of 'honourable' Finns

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<sup>284</sup> Together 24 (Gripenberg 1905: 239), though some sources give the number as 22 (Kylävaara 1978: 56). Either way, the losses of the whole Sharpshooter Brigade at Gorni Dübnik, 57 dead and 227 wounded, were the lightest of all infantry units (Greene 1880: 277).

while, and perhaps unconsciously, making a mockery of this 'cult' by implying that the 'honour' originated in killing the totally insignificant, or inhuman, enemy. This inconsistency is, however, in-built in the propaganda and military ideals.

### *Lindfors*

Lindfors (1975: 12-13) witnessed his first death in battle early on the morning of 24 October. The Finnish Guard had just crossed a maize field and had arrived at the edge of a bare, open place widening before the Turkish fortifications at Gorni Dübrik. Here 'the first comrade from the third company fell. An enemy bullet hit him in the chest and his warm blood flowed on Muhammedan ground: "He was the first of us!", the captain exclaimed. He was soon followed by others.'<sup>285</sup> With the same 'manliness' Lindfors accepted wounds: 'suddenly an oath and a shrill cry were heard next to me' (p. 13), indicating that one of his companions had been hit in the eye. The wounded man, however, 'once he realised [what had happened]' merely confirmed that he had lost an eye (ibid.).

Another companion of Lindfors was similarly hit in his head, passed out and was carried away. He later recovered. Lindfors continued by stating (p. 13) that 'again something went bump next to me', meaning that once more somebody was knocked down by a bullet. The same happened a third time, and the victim, again one of Lindfors's pals, showed him his damaged wrist, saying that 'here's another bean [bullet]'. A minute later a fourth comrade was wounded. Then he himself began to ponder: 'Now it is my turn', and hastily swallowed the last drops of the liquor he had bought in Iași. (Lindfors 1975: 13-14.)

Lindfors then intended to advance, but his fourth companion begged him to dress his [the comrade's] wounds. This Lindfors did, afterwards rushing forwards, swearing to avenge his mates. Momentarily he was terrified by the bloody deeds committed in battle, but these thoughts were replaced by a 'lack of pity [in the face of casualties]' and by '[dreams about] the Finnish glory' gained through battle. Impatiently he awaited the order for the final attack, and when it came, even the Turkish artillery<sup>286</sup> could not prevent the guardsmen from forcing the Turks to surrender. (Lindfors 1975: 14-15.) Thus, more lightly than Lindman, he indicated his willingness to accept even death as a 'risk' involved in his work.

Afterwards the battleground resembled an inferno. Redoubts were in flames, smoke lay over all, the whole place reeked, and human and animal corpses littered the ground. The groaning and moaning of the wounded filled the air, many of them writhing in agony, and the ground was running with blood. (Lindfors 1975: 15.)

A month later Lindfors was much less emotional. He skipped over the battle of Pravets, simply mentioning that 'a few soldiers and an officer' were wounded (p. 17). From other sources we know that this is true. But the difference between the inferno of Gorni Dübrik and the almost 'pastoral' mission in Pravets is quite striking. As with Palander, here, too, I suspect some kind of shock effect that was not buried in silence but enwrapped in horror stories.

Whereas Finnish losses at Gorni Dübrik made Lindfors angry and ready to retaliate, killing the enemy outside battle was for him a kind of adventure. When he was patrolling Turkish outposts near Vrachesh in December, Lindfors (pp. 18-19) showed himself willing to shoot the Turks, quiet though they were, without hesitation. Similarly, after a skirmish at Dolno Kamartsi in early

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<sup>285</sup> Lindfors did not comment on this in any way. It seems that although he used emotionally loaded expressions, he did not pass judgement but restricted himself to reporting what actually happened.

<sup>286</sup> It hardly existed.

January 1878 he only mentioned (p. 23) that ‘the yards and lanes of the village swarmed with dead Turks’. And when describing the Guard’s last battle (at Plovdiv), Lindfors feasted upon the Turkish deaths. He reported (p. 27) how ‘a part of our artillery rode up a hill’ and started to pour shells upon the enemy, ‘there a Turk fell headless, his head flying through the air; the leg of a second and the arm of a third rose into the heights to greet it. Blood oozed out and overflowed . . .’ It would seem that, in the end, for Lindfors killing was a job that had to be done because he had enlisted to do it, and ‘horror stories’ were both a means that propelled him to perform his work and testimonies that he had done his job well.

### **Wallin**

Right from the beginning, Wallin remembered death and wounds as a commonplace in war. When at Gorni Dübnik the Finnish Guard had advanced some metres over the open field, Wallin (p. 75) heard a ‘strange rumbling’ on one side of him. Looking across he saw a fellow ‘lying motionless on the field some six paces away. “[He] fell”, said my nearest companion.’ No more information is given. Neither did Wallin complain about what happened. In the same way he also reported the next death (ibid.): ‘A little later . . . man close to me was aiming at the enemy when a bullet hit him in the head. He died instantly, next to me.’

Later on during the battle of Gorni Dübnik an NCO who had volunteered in Serbia in 1875 was wounded in the arm. He asked Wallin to escort him to a field hospital, but Wallin replied: ‘By no means! Haven’t you got sound legs, you are able to go there on your own.’ (WM: 89.) And as if to contrast this man’s behaviour, Wallin reported (p. 98) that one of his companions, also wounded at Gorni Dübnik, obviously suffered terrible pain but ‘didn’t complain at all’. After the battle Wallin reported (p. 109) as hearsay the death of Iisak Gröndahl (cf. above, Fennander and Palander). He was badly hit in the belly, and the sanitarians supposed that he had preferred suicide to terrible pain. The assumption was based on the fact that powder had blackened one of his cheeks. Wallin commented (ibid.) that the story was probably true, because ‘it suited [Gröndahl’s] habits well ‘.

After the battle of Pravets the Guard bivouacked there a week. During that time there were heavy storms. Several men, among them Wallin, caught cold and were sent to the village of Pravets. They were billeted in houses, some six or seven men in each room. Having got a bed, Wallin lay dazed until the evening of the next day. Then he was given something to eat and slept yet another night, after which he was ordered to go for a medical examination. However, when Wallin heard that the main body of the Guard had departed on the same morning he decided he was well enough to leave, and caught his company up. The same happened after the crossing of the Balkans. On his way to a village Wallin passed out, but recovered sufficiently to reach it. There he was again ordered to go for a medical examination. Instead of a doctor, though, he saw an army surgeon, who gave him tea mixed with camphor. Having drunk it, Wallin fell asleep. When he woke up the following morning he learned that the Guard had a rest day. After another cup of tea Wallin slept the whole day and the next night. The following morning he re-joined the ranks. (WM: 173-6; 210-14.)

At San Stefano an epidemic broke out among the guardsmen. Wallin reported that he once saw sick men lying in open tents, the wind blowing sand over them, ‘as if to bury them alive’ (p. 355). As time passed and the number of patients grew, the men began increasingly loudly to wonder how long they would still have to stay ‘here’ (p. 356). On 18 April,<sup>287</sup> the Guard was informed it was soon to be repatriated. Next day a service was held, during which Wallin got a headache. After the service he

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<sup>287</sup> It was Maundy Thursday, N.S.

went to his tent and slept so soundly that even a minor earthquake did not really wake him. Next morning Wallin did not feel much better but mentioned it to no-one since he wanted to leave with the Guard. So he prayed to God and was able to embark. (WM: 361-4.)

On board, he lay in a stupor, and in Odessa, after a medical examination, he was hospitalised.<sup>288</sup> In his ward there were also many other sick Finns. Captain Bremer briefly visited Wallin, and was followed by an 'elderly [Russian] lady with her adult daughter', bringing the patients 'tit-bits', as Wallin put it.<sup>289</sup> The lady supposed that the Finns, living 'on the shores of the Arctic Ocean', could not bear hot sunshine, which was why they had fallen ill. After the women, two Russian men visited the hospital. They did not distribute delicacies but kopecks, eight to each patient. During Wallin's first week in hospital, three patients died and eight were declared fit and discharged. Two weeks later Wallin, too, was declared to have recovered and, with three other men, was sent back home. (WM: 367-75.) Thus Wallin told a 'manly' story, not of 'heroism' shown in battle, but of endurance in what might be called everyday army life, coming close to the upper class ideals of the Finnish peasant.

### *Alfthan*

Alfthan first mentioned disease in early October at Ralyovo,<sup>290</sup> where he could not find lodging because the inhabitants had small-pox (1879: 32). One senses some indignation in his tone: why had the villagers contracted such an illness now that he needed shelter? I have been unable to verify his story from other sources. Perhaps Alfthan mistook the name of the village. In any case, the statement implies that diseases caused by war harassed not only soldiers but civilians too. Some pages later Alfthan deplored the 'wastage' of human lives at Pleven. When commenting on the first three attempts to storm the town (in July and August 1877, O.S.), he remarked (p. 38) that 'in the end [i.e., after three unsuccessful attacks] it was understood how futile it was to offer still more thousands of human lives to storm a position that nature, without human effort, had made almost invincible'.

Writing about the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik, Alfthan wanted to give his reader an impression of how the battlefield looked from the medical point of view. He described, for example (p. 49), how 'the four vehicles carrying wounded went back and forth without a break. Everywhere one could see walking wounded who had not found room in the vehicles but had enough strength to drag themselves slowly along, some with bandages around their heads, others with bound up arms. [Thus] wandered these pale, crawling figures . . .' This passage Alfthan inserted in the middle of his detailed description of military operations during the battle.

When the battle was over, Alfthan saw 'mutilated corpses strewn willy-nilly like broken toys. Many a torso had open, gaping wounds. Wherever one looked a bloody eye or a broken skull stared back at you. Against the soil was pressed the agonised face of a body, bayoneted in the back by several strokes.' Wounded men in terrible torment begged their comrades to put an end to their sufferings. Animals, too, mainly horses with one leg missing or otherwise injured, were lying here and there. (Alfthan 1879: 51.) Alfthan's last recollections of this battle were that it had taught him two lessons. The first was that human beings (or bodies) are, indeed, very frail; and the second, that war is something to be condemned instantly (p. 52).

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<sup>288</sup> With him were several other Finnish guardsmen, 52 according to Hiisivaara (1968: 211) or 86 (Gripenberg (1905: 237). The latter was the official figure (Järvinen 1932: 275).

<sup>289</sup> It was Easter, according to the old style.

<sup>290</sup> A small village a dozen kilometres south of Pleven,



A couple of days after the battle Alfthan was sent to fetch the order of the day from the brigade HQ. There he learned that one of his former comrades, a young lad, had been killed by a Turkish shell. He did not deplore the matter, merely reported it (p. 57). In December, when his unit was trying to shoot its way through the Balkan passes, Alfthan evinced a trace of heroic irony, pointing out (p. 81) that, of the ten or so shells that 'found their way into the battery's wall', one came through, wounded a soldier, and 'fell to the ground between the commander of the battery and me but did not explode; otherwise I probably would not be reporting what happened'.

A few days later Alfthan arrived at Sofia. When approaching the city he saw by the wayside a large number of dead, mainly Turks. He said (p. 120) that he himself especially remembered 'the body of a young Bulgarian, hardly more than a kid, who had fallen as a sacrifice to persecution and was now lying by the road, his youthful head placed against a stone. Next to him lay a man, slain while still full of vigour, on whose stiffened features lingered a curious expression, a half hopeful smile such as occupies a person at the moment of death, indicating expectation of delights and pleasures in the paradise the Muhammedan religion promises to every Musulman who falls in battle against the infidel.' Thus, a dead enemy was no longer an enemy.

During the battle of Plovdiv Alfthan described (p. 149) at length the firing with rifles and heavy guns. He reported that '[b]ullets hissed and whistled, while officers and soldiers carried out their tasks'. Here he also reported (ibid.) a wounding: 'All of a sudden one heard quite near a blow, a sound as if a hard object had ripped its way through soft material. "Who was hit!" One soldier next to a cannon put his hand to one side of his breast. Blood was flowing from it. "Sanitarians! Carry away the wounded!" A moment later a similar sound was heard, and again a breast, an arm or a leg was hit.'<sup>291</sup>

In the end, Alfthan turned to a kind of naturalism. During an exchange of shots during the battle of Plovdiv, 'the Turks discharged some shells against the newly positioned battery, and one of them cut off the head of a soldier, whose lifeless body collapsed onto the ground. The head disappeared completely, only a bloody spot on the neck indicating [the point] at which [the head] had been severed from the body. He was immediately buried in the ground behind the cannon, and a wooden cross was erected on the filled-in pit' (p. 155). Thus Alfthan modified his stance, and from cursing war he switched to telling stories in much the same vein as Lindfors had. Perhaps he, too, needed stories to carry out his 'honourable' duty.

### ***Schulman***

To start with, Schulman's company was kept in reserve. On 25 October his unit was ordered to advance from Ralyovo to a nearby village (Chirikhov). En route he met a colony of carriages transporting injured from the battle of Gorni Dübrik to Zimnicea. In the village proper Schulman met two seriously wounded Finnish guardsmen and, as he said, was lucky enough to have one of his unit's doctors to help them. From the village Schulman could see the battlefield of Gorni Dübrik, over which 'the angel of death had spread his dark wings'. Unburied corpses lay everywhere, and the earth was covered with all kinds of things - cartridges, ragged garments, bayonets, rifles, human and animal entrails, blood and cadavers of oxen and horses. According to him, Turkish prisoners of war supervised by Russians were burying their dead in the following manner. First they would fasten a rope to a foot of the dead man, and then they would drag the body to a large pit and throw it in without any ceremonies. As soon as the pit was full, it was covered with earth. Schulman said that he could not stand watching for long but

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<sup>291</sup> Cf. above, Fennander. Here, too, a casualty is not a matter for horror but replacement.

went into his tent. That same evening, he nevertheless witnessed the Christian burial of fallen Russians. (Schulman 1955: 53-5.)

At the second battle of Telish (28 October) Schulman saw a freshly wounded man, a soldier who had come on horseback from the front to the rear. One of his arms had been crushed by a shell, and his horse's muzzle was damaged as well. The arm was quickly amputated. Schulman said that because the man was the first [newly] wounded person he had ever seen (although he had earlier [p. 17] stated that he met the first wounded on the very day he departed for the front), the sight made a great impression on him. Later, Schulman assured his reader, he grew accustomed to wounds, commenting that 'a man can get used to anything'. (Schulman 1955: 59.)

During the crossing of the Balkans some soldiers lost their footing on the steep mountain slopes, fell over the edge and died. Schulman (p. 109) related that once a priest accompanied by a Cossack arrived on horseback high in the mountains, stopping at the edge of an abyss. The priest put on his cassock and started to recite a litany. All present bared their heads. The priest ended the ceremony by throwing three handfuls of snow into the depths. 'Thus the simple burial ceremony came to an end and we returned to our work', Schulman concluded.

When the war was approaching its end, Schulman (p. 133) fell ill. It happened in Pazardzhik, where he had to spend three weeks indoors. He neither specified the nature of his illness nor commented on it otherwise. A week after his recovery Schulman was in Edirne, where a Russian colonel, a friend of his, had disappeared. At first nobody knew of his whereabouts, but when the military commandant threatened to raze the town to the ground, the colonel's stabbed body was found in a well. Local inhabitants handed over a man who was accused of the murder, but whether he had actually committed the crime or not remained uncertain. Equally uncertain was the reason why the colonel was killed. Schulman personally thought it was either (Muslim) religious fanaticism or simply robbery. In any case, after that incident Russian officers were forbidden to stroll around alone after nightfall. The colonel was buried in Edirne's Armenian graveyard, but whether or not he was an Armenian, Schulman did not say. (Schulman 1955: 142.)

In the spring, when the preliminary peace treaty had already been signed, Schulman was stationed near San Stefano. Typhus raged, especially among the Finnish Guard, which, as Schulman stated, was therefore sent back to Finland earlier than many other troops of the Russian army. According to an entry in his diary of 5 May, there were some 11,000 sick men in San Stefano. This was in his opinion a disproportionately high number, probably more than ten per cent of all the men there. (Schulman 1955: 147, 160, 163.) However, he did not complain or ponder the reasons for the spread of disease, but calmly accepted it as a 'normal' part of war. What a 'civilised' army had to do was not to propose improvements, but to treat the dead and the sick in a proper, 'humane', way.

In general 'our' wounds and dead were connected with 'manly' suffering and heroic self-sacrificing while the enemy's sufferings are hardly mentioned and their dead are linked with inhuman and barbaric treatment of the deceased. Thus, if recollections of battles stressed 'our' (well-intending) superiority without clearly pointing out the (harmful and) hostile other, recollection of wounds and death were already part of the discussion of 'us' *versus* the other or the creation of the enemy-image, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## 8. THE INVENTION OF THE ENEMY

### 8.1. Creating the enemy

Though the word ‘enemy’ does occur in my sources (for example, Jernvall 1899: 137, 168, 172; Palander 1881: 101), the authors, not unlike their Russian contemporaries (see Utin 1879), most often spoke about ‘Turks’. The Finns did so because they lacked any better denotation. The main difference, or otherness, ‘connoted’ by the word ‘Turk’ was religious. For the guardsmen, the term referred primarily not to nationality or ‘race’ but to the fact that their enemies were Muslims.<sup>292</sup> Nevertheless, the religious opposition that the Russian propaganda underlined was not emphasised by my sources.

The guardsmen’s enemy-image<sup>293</sup> is, in practice, inseparable from the war propaganda, the Finnish military self-image and the manner in which battles are described. However, some passages in my sources indicate an overt or covert effort to emphasise the image of the Turkish enemy on other occasions, too. By this ‘enemy-image’ in a enlarged sense I mean all negative attributes and the ridiculous or frightening ‘otherness’ attached to the presentation of Turks as persons, as a people or as adversaries. Intentionally or unintentionally, these designations created or strengthened a notion of ‘us’ united by common, negative or belittling attitudes towards the ‘not-us’ (Luostarinen 1986: 155-6, 159-60). The enemy-image was needed and used to enhance the cohesion of the troops in the multi-ethnic yet socially and culturally divided Russian empire,<sup>294</sup> and to distinguish the allegedly bloody good soldiers of the Russian army from the evil brawlers of the Ottoman horde. In the same manner in the First World War, the Germans were represented by their opponents as ‘bloodthirsty Hun[s,] and [in the] Cold War enemies [of the West] as insects, pigs, and beasts of various kinds’ (Nagengast 1994: 113-14). Thus Haas was presumably right in his claim when, quoting Clark McCauley, he stated that ‘the fact appears to be that hating violence requires [the social construction of] violent people to hate’ (Haas 1990: 14).

The means used by the Russian war propaganda to accomplish its aims was twofold. Russian soldiers were claimed to be valiant heroes under excellent leadership, while Turks were allegedly badly equipped and commanded by brutal cowards.<sup>295</sup> Even foreign (American) observers and journalists following the Russian troops could claim that the Turks almost never took prisoners; nor were Russians ‘ever’ brought to Turkish hospitals (Clarke 1988: 478). To a certain extent, the propaganda was successful since, with very few exceptions, the guardsmen did not see Turks as individuals, or even as humans, but collectively as either cowards<sup>296</sup> or savages.<sup>297</sup> In most cases they

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<sup>292</sup> The Russians, it seems, considered Turks more in terms of race. In Russian military slang Turks were referred to as ‘svolochi’, which may be translated as ‘swine’ (Menning 1992: 63).

<sup>293</sup> I speak of their enemy-image rather than their notion of the enemy, because it seems that before the armistice the men had practically no contact with Turks outside battle. Thus what they ‘knew’ or, rather, imagined, of the Turks was based on (scanty) public memory, war propaganda, battle experiences and the visible signs of war in the Bulgarian land and people.

<sup>294</sup> Cf. Deák 1991 for the officers in the Habsburg empire.

<sup>295</sup> Russian shortcomings, and their atrocities towards Turks were, of course, tacitly passed over, though they were commonly known. In the early months of the war in particular the Ottoman sultan several times accused the attacking Russian troops of cruelties ‘au mépris des droits de l’humanité et sans nécessité militaire’, as Bernhardt (1877: 64) said when putting the sultan’s complaints before the Great Powers concerning events in the town of Ruse on 1 July 1877. Later in the same month the Ottoman government accused the Russians of systematically destroying Turkish villages in northern Bulgaria (Bernhardt 1877: 66-7) or, in modern terms, of ethnic cleansing. The Russians also armed Bulgarian civilians and incited them against the Turks (see SK 1 December 1877, p. 278; Zimmermann 1878: 821).

<sup>296</sup> Because of several Turkish retreats, most of which were incomprehensible from the perspective of Finns.

<sup>297</sup> Due to irregulars, whose deeds were, without more ado, lumped together with those of regular Turkish troops.

also ascribed to the Turks traces of atrocities that they came across, though they had often been committed by Bulgarians or Russians.

This all seems to corroborate Tekampe's observation (1989: 58) that when next to nothing is known of the other (the enemy), his (or her) image is reduced to a few stereotypes. To quote Rosen (1984: 136), due to this, 'an element of distrust often tends to persist' in social relations thus constructed that facilitates the killing of the enemy: it is more difficult to slaughter a person with whom one has some positive relation. From the point of view adopted here, ignorance regarding the enemy also facilitates the internalisation and recollection of the ideal military identity: believing that 'it' is horrible makes it more plausible to claim that we are spotless.

However, a corrective must be taken into account, namely, that since often (and in the case of the Russians, but not the Finns, also in the 1877-8 war) the enemy is in fact a neighbour, positive connections and connotations associated with it, if indeed such exist, must first be eliminated. In other words, the propaganda, and the men themselves, have to get rid of thoughts, feelings and memories implying some positive personal relation to the other and, instead, impose upon it an impersonal, dangerous and hostile 'otherness'.<sup>298</sup> Just because the other, the enemy, is everything 'we' are not, that is, brutal, oppressive, murderous, etc., 'we' not only fought it but are justified in having done so (Luostarinen 1986: 141-8.). Briefly, from a military and political point of view, the 'enemy' is a name for obstacles hindering 'us' from fulfilling our mission (Berggrav-Jensen 1916: 205-7). From the ideational perspective, on the other hand, the enemy is dangerous, due to its potential power over 'us'. By this I mean that 'we' are not afraid of it because it is hostile, awesome and so on, but because we fear that we ourselves may be no different. This cultural logic is also applied inside a society or structure, for example, in the opposing of nature and culture or male and female. In war it is only transferred to our relations to the enemy (cf. Newman & Boyd 1982: 266).

Formally, the Russian propaganda image's logic closely resembles Finnish public memory. The latter, too, knew an enemy that was religiously different and a menacing Great Power (the Habsburgs in the Thirty Years' War and the Russians in the Finnish war). On the other hand, apart from the Crimean War, Finns had neither a shared positive military history with Russia nor a tradition of hostilities with Turks. Thus the Finnish enemy-image of the Ottoman empire lacked all historical plausibility and, unlike in Russia, could not be justified by real examples emphasising 'eternal' antagonism or a history of conflicts. Hence, though the guardsmen did differentiate between themselves and the 'inferior' other in general, the image of Turks as the enemy was not easily politicised because, unlike Russians, Finns lacked a proper context within which to make the image politically advantageous. The only Finnish justifications for making the Turks an enemy were, first, xenophobic elements in the guardsmen's own society and, second, the pragmatic Finnish loyalty to their ruler, who had declared the Turk the enemy. When these were interpreted in terms of honour (at stake was our 'right' way of life, menaced by the other's 'wrong', or 'barbaric', manners, or the possibility of losing our favourable position by not obeying imperial orders), it could, nevertheless, present a strong case.

In the course of the campaign, the manifold hardships of war appear to have ignited in the guardsmen some hatred of the Turk. As Palander (1881: 57) aptly put it, 'when we [several weeks after our arrival] started closely to ponder our vicissitudes and the destiny of the Bulgarians we started to

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<sup>298</sup> A Finnish volunteer in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, Verner Humble (1906: 36), noted that one of the tasks of the official Russian media was to instigate hate against the Japanese, because before the war it had not existed. In fact, most Russians knew next to nothing about Japan or her people. The task was accomplished, among other things, by publishing horrifying stories of atrocities that the Japanese were alleged to have committed. A great part of this holds true for the 1877-8 war as well.

hate our enemies, and [this hate] inspired us to fight with fervour'. But if we think about the argument, it seems to me that Palander, and the guardsmen in general, did not actually hate the Turk so much as the circumstances in which they found themselves, and counterbalanced these by thinking of the future 'honour' they could gain, if in no other way than by hating the enemy.

Because the enemy and circumstances were mutually dependent the enemy could be either the Turk or the Bulgarian, for both offered the guardsmen some rationales to be constructed as the enemy: the Turk because, defying all 'good' military behaviour, he did not fight valiantly enough to be 'honourably' defeated; the Bulgarian, since he was too 'effeminate' to help even his 'liberators', not to speak of his inability to liberate himself without outside help. In both cases the most important thing for the guardsmen was not the object of hate or the relation to the other as such but the unifying effect of this relation on them (the guardsmen). Briefly, they were united in hate.

That men's hate, and their fury in general, was situational and constructed for the purpose of war rather than innate and personal is partly confirmed by the fact that after the armistice the Turks were no longer treated as the enemy. At times, this could happen even earlier. Jakob Ahomäki, a Finnish guardsman not included in my sources, related (1889a: 13-14) that on the 'Finnish mountain' both Finns and Turks fetched hay for horses and men (the latter used it for bedding) from the same barns. Sometimes they happened to arrive together, and then they simply entered the barn in turns.<sup>299</sup> A representative in the Balkans of the British "Russian Sick and Wounded Fund", A. Baker (a Turcophobe), for his part related how after the fall of Plevna he saw Russian soldiers sharing their rations with Turkish prisoners of war being escorted to Russia (quoted in Andersen 1968: 108). And his namesake, Baker Pasha (1879a: 95), stated that in September 1877 Turkish soldiers in a village not only hurried off to fetch water for a wounded Russian soldier but 'not a few offered him a share of their scanty portion of tobacco'.<sup>300</sup> In every case the enemy was temporarily re-categorised a non-hostile other. In the guardsmen's case, at least, giving up hostilities after the armistice was also in accordance with their cultural values, which emphasised the soldier's duty to fight in combat and, as a sign of a civilised person, to express generosity afterwards.

All this suggests that this war was understood as a kind of ritual fighting, not dissimilar from the fist-fights that, at least until the 1920s, took place on special feast days in the Russian countryside. In these, the men first beat each other with ferocity, and in the next moment sat down peacefully to smoke and chat about the 'match'.<sup>301</sup> Winter (1979: 62) also reported that in the First World War the Sherwood Foresters, who were mostly miners, showed 'no great enmity' when taking prisoners of war. 'It was as if a cricket match had been played and won', no more (ibid.). In the end the winner could afford to offer the opponent tobacco.

In part, these stories certainly belong to the realm of propaganda or originate in the genre of war literature. But there is no reason to believe that the cases mentioned are nothing but fabrications. After all, the enemy-image in battle, between battles and after the armistice could not be the same if we accept the argument that it is constructed to fit the moment at hand.

A special case in the Russian and Finnish enemy-image building comprised the bashi-bazouks. This is no wonder for their (real or alleged) cruelties were well covered in the Finnish press. Moreover, the war propaganda represented them as bloodthirsty beasts of proverbial cruelty. They also

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<sup>299</sup> A similar story is told by some British newspapermen; during the siege of Plevna Russians and Turks both fetched water from the same brook and arranged by signs a cease-fire for that time (Ferneaux 1958: 126).

<sup>300</sup> The same is known from other wars, too, for instance the Crimean War and the First World War (Leed 1979: 108-10), and essentially the same was postulated by Simola (1955: 178) about Vietnam.

<sup>301</sup> G.I. Fomin in his *Kulachnye boi v Voronezhskoy guberniy*, Voronezh 1929, quoted in Savtšuk 1996: 95-6.

caused considerable damage, as well as some casualties to the Russians (and Bulgarians). Thus, although not Turks, they, more than the regular Turkish troops, corresponded to propaganda's image of the savage Turk. No wonder then that they were thus characterised in Finnish recollections, too. Obviously, apart from the physical environment, they were all the Finns were really afraid of, which naturally attracted additional negative images. According to Luostarinen (1986: 26), feeling itself menaced, a group defends itself by forming a negative view of its threat. An alternative is that the use of force, and power in general, demands a counterpoint, something that resists. The other side of the coin may be, as Luostarinen suggested in another context (1986: 27), that, by describing Turkish irregulars, Finns externalised their own structural 'otherness', their negative attitudes towards non-Finns or their own 'potential for inhumanity', to borrow an expression from Turnbull (1980: 11).

## **8. 2. The valiant but coward savage or the enemy-image**

What guardsmen singled out from their enemy-image (i.e., bashi-bazouks, Turks, the nameless enemy in general) tells us something about their identification with the military structure and their comprehension of their role, or identity, as soldiers. Their various viewpoints may be stated as follows. Some of the guardsmen laid stress upon the cruelty of the enemy, especially the bashi-bazouks, and obviously thought, or cared, little about the deeper reasons for their being the enemy. For them, the work of the soldier was to wage war, and for that one needed an adversary. As regards the men's loyalty, it seems reasonable to suppose that for the guardsmen, who considered war as work, the principal motive for commitment to the official wartime structure was bread and social prestige.

Other guardsmen, despite parroting the official view of ferocious Turkish irregulars, represented the enemy-image in more ideological terms. They stuck to those layers of the enemy-image that dealt with 'our' civilisation and the enemy's lack of culture, and emphasised more the 'perennial' difference between 'us' and 'it', or culture and savagery, than the temporal task of the soldier to accomplish his present mission. At any rate, they engaged themselves rather strongly to the power structure in general.

When processing the enemy-image, all the guardsmen initially seemed to rely on the stereotypic images drawn by Russian propaganda. During the campaign some of them lost belief in these clichés, but did not replace them with anything else. Others continued to affirm their trust in the propagandistic view, whether they believed in it or not, while yet others switched to a more multi-dimensional picture of Turks as being almost as human as they were. From other wartime contexts, too, it is known that meeting the enemy has resulted in his no longer being seen as a monster but as a man (Watson 1998: 107; Winter 1979).

However, the matter is more complicated, because very few guardsmen had a single consistent view of Turks, or the enemy. In most cases the Turks were judged in the light of their recent deeds and were declared, respectively, cowards or heroes. Sometimes it was suggested that there existed a constant Turkish nature. But this, too, varied according to the situation. In battle it was most often characterised with epithets such as 'cowardly' and 'treacherous', but in more peaceful contexts it was assigned a mixture of good and bad features. Wahlberg and Jernvall, for example, could both praise the bravery of the Turks who, fulfilling their 'duty', retaliated, and blame those 'cowards' who 'only' fall back, thus disgracing their 'honour'. Possibly both sorts of enemy (the brave and the cowardly) were needed in order to create a plausible story of 'our' victory. The valiant enemy enhanced 'our' honour, because 'we' beat him despite his pluck; and the coward was a source of laughter that strengthened 'our' belief in the superiority of 'our' culture (that was not laughed at). Noteworthy is that the Finns almost invariably spoke of Turkish bravery in cases when the enemy beat the Russians,

whereas his cowardice was linked with ‘manly’ Finnish victories. Thus it seems that, in fact, the war diminished Russian honour and strengthened the Finns’ sense of their cultural (or, alternatively, national) pre-eminence (in regard to the Russians more than the Turks).

### ***Wahlberg***

Before the battle of Gorni Dübnik, Wahlberg (1878: 38, 43, 88) praised rather impartially both Finnish heroism and the boldness of the Turkish troops at Plevna. Contrary to the recollections of common soldiers, after the battle he stated (p. 53) that ‘the enemy’s way of shooting proved to be practical’, since his troops were stationed in two lines, of which the one shot with rifles, without aiming, all guns pointing at the same area, and the second charged.<sup>302</sup> A few sections later Wahlberg (p. 55) related that on the day following the battle, when wounded Turkish prisoners of war were gathered together, ‘representatives of all [Russian] troops arrived to take a closer look at the enemy’. No hate, disgust or fear but only curiosity was reported. The Turkish irregulars, in this case, Circassians, Wahlberg, however, condemned (p. 77).

After Gorni Dübnik, Wahlberg heard rumours about the despoiling of dead and wounded Russians. ‘To see with our own eyes the “Turkish cruelties” we took a ride [there]’ (p. 72, his quotation marks). Wahlberg and his companions noticed (pp. 72-3) that the dead who had not been interred deep enough had been stripped of their clothing. ‘Thanks’ to hungry dogs one body had lost an arm, another a leg or a face. Wahlberg left open the question as to how often Turks had been the marauders or how often the blame lay with the Bulgarian ‘brethren’. He only remarked (p. 73) that he saw Bulgarians ‘swarming’ amongst the graves like ‘hyenas in a church yard’.

Two months later, when Russian troops occupied the village of Sarantsi, they also took many Turkish prisoners of war. Wahlberg said (p. 131) that ‘[i]t would be unfair not to say a word about the humane attitude of Finnish soldiers towards the captured enemy. All grudges had disappeared before the disarmed enemy, and what is more: [the Finn] shared his tobacco and bread with the Turk, and on the way . . . he helped and supported the sick and, in all respects, showed himself to be a true soldier’. The same was reported in British newspapers of the Russian emperor himself during the siege of Plevna; he, too, showed generosity towards the defeated enemy (Furneaux 1958: 80).

### ***Fennander***

Fennander first saw the enemy, some prisoners of war, in Ungheni. Among them were bashi-bazouks, who, according to him (1895: 23) were infamous for their cruelty. He considered (*ibid.*) them as ‘monsters in human form’, although during the actual fighting he hardly mentioned them. Towards the end of the war, however, he returned to the subject by repeating that Turkish irregulars were not humans since their most pleasant work was to slay, burn and loot (p. 115).

On the battlefield Fennander first came across Turks at Gorni Dübnik. They were described with sentences emphasising the enemy’s combat readiness, such as, ‘Turks, who had noticed . . . our [Russian] cavalry, started to shoot’, or, ‘when somebody stood up, a Turkish battery rained shells upon him’ (pp. 53, 54, respectively). However, he considered them bad soldiers. For, although he praised the Turkish ability to aim, every time he also added a note annulling the praise. For example, he stated (p. 54) that the Turks knew well how to fire their cannon, but nevertheless ‘not all shells exploded’. Or, ‘the Turks defended themselves exceptionally bravely’ but, however, soon struck

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<sup>302</sup> This strategy obviously harked back to earlier, but not-so-distant, times when rifles (or muskets) were not very accurate, and the surest way to cause casualties to the enemy was to fire with all weapons at a certain point.

colours (pp. 57-9). In later Finnish war recollections, the enemy's inaccuracy in shooting and 'our' masterful firing were to become a cliché on occasions when 'our' casualties were light (see Erho 1940: 26-9, 48-50, 111-43).

After the battle Fennander again saw prisoners of war. He first reported that some of them were ordered to bury their dead fellows, a job that 'seemed to displease them'.<sup>303</sup> The graves they dug were huge, large enough to take hundreds of corpses. The dead were interred 'in the usual [Turkish] manner; no funeral ceremonies were conducted', Fennander said (1895: 68). In 1906 I.K. Inha wrote, in the first part of his survey of the Balkans (pp. 18-19), that the 'lowest [lit. cheapest] class' of the Roma do not inter their dead. Forty years later, in 1943, Finnish propaganda made a distinction between 'Russians' (volunteers who had joined the Germans) and 'Bolsheviks' (those inhabitants of the Soviet Union who fought against the Germans) by arguing that the former were humans because they interred their dead, but the latter were not since they merely hastily dug a pit for their casualties (Luostarinen 1986: 23).

The fact might be that burial practices varied depending on the conditions. Baker, serving in the Ottoman army, testified (1879a: 45) that after a battle in mid-August, '[l]ittle graveyards had been carefully made for the repose of those who had fallen. Muscovite and Mussulman lay side by side, a small upright stone only distinguishing the latter from his quondam enemy'. A fortnight later, in another locality, he found (p. 86) that '[n]o care had been taken in the burial of the Russian dead . . . Along the road that we followed, mere heaps of earth had been thrown upon the Russian corpses, and heads, arms and legs were protruding from the ground and exposed to the action of a powerful summer sun.' Though he certainly was partial in his description, there would seem to be no reason to completely distrust his words. Thus the one-sided insistence on Turks leaving their dead unburied in my sources was above all a means of creating the inhuman, or bestial, enemy-image, and of maintaining one's own military identity by ascribing alien customs to the other.

On the other hand, Fennander (p. 68) told his reader that both Russian and Turkish wounded were treated in exactly the same manner in a hospital set up by the Red Cross. He also reported (p. 129) that in San Stefano Finnish and Turkish soldiers were on good terms, helping each other when needed. So, on neutral ground as in a hospital or after the armistice the 'godless' and 'barbarian' enemy was as human as 'we'. Thus it seems that for Fennander, too, there existed two contrasting views of Turks. The one, handed down by the Russian war propaganda, stated that the enemy was inhuman, beastly, cruel and barbarous; the other, created by conditions outside battle, saw the enemy more as a social and human being, as a fellow worker in a given situation.

In combat Fennander implied Turkish 'cowardice' by recounting (pp. 71-2) how the enemy escaped without a fight or how (p. 82) the Turks had abandoned a stronghold without a struggle. He also suggested that the Turkish troops did not wage war as 'military honour' would have required (p. 103). Instead, as for example in the case of their retreat from Sofia, they told the local non-Turkish population 'horrible tales [i.e., lies], causing the peace-loving local people to flee, too' (pp. 97-8).

The killing of an enemy did not disturb Fennander. After having crossed the Balkans he and some of his comrades went to a village in search of provisions. There they found a Turk lying in a barn and, supposing he was dead, approached him. But the man suddenly jumped to his feet and attacked one of the Finns. Only the quick intervention of a passing Russian soldier saved the victim. The Turk was stabbed and the guardsmen searched the corpse, finding 'eight Russian silver roubles and

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<sup>303</sup> Jernvall, who told the same story (1899: 80-1), added an explanatory note to the effect that the Turks were in 'very low spirits, due to their defeat in the previous day's battle'.



sharing them out' (Fennander 1895: 95-6).<sup>304</sup> Nothing more was said about the Turk, whose death for Fennander was of total unimportance. Most probably he was left unburied.

In the same way he described the death of a Turkish sniper. On 18 January, when advancing towards Plovdiv, Fennander's unit came across a Turkish irregular. He was about to shoot a Finnish officer, but at the last minute a warning was cried out. The sniper's bullet missed its target, but the officer's did not. The Turk was 'gunned down'. (Fennander 1895: 108.) A story in the same vein was told by Pipping (1978: 77-8) about the slaughter of two Russians in the Second World War, and by Simola (1955: 125) about the shooting of a Vietminh fighter. It is possible that all these stories are true, but their similarity in very different contexts suggests that they were above all literary devices, a kind of short story to entertain the reader.

Turkish civilians, however, were obviously not in the same category as Turkish soldiers. For example, on his way from Plovdiv to Kharmanli, Fennander described in a very moving way the refugees, mainly Turks, who were lying dead by the wayside or were close to death, obviously of hunger and cold.<sup>305</sup> Many others, clothed in rags and without food, among them several mothers with small children, were escaping in the direction of Edirne. Fennander said (p. 115) that '[their] misery . . . was such that it is impossible to put it into words. One might suppose that seeing this sight even the most heartless person would have felt pity. But lo, there were people, alas, human beings who had plundered and battered and even killed those wretched people: these [malefactors] were Turkish subjects, bashi-bazouks. This tribe loved nothing more than killing, burning and looting.'<sup>306</sup>

During the next few days Fennander saw more unfortunate victims; in many cases whole families had been killed and many people robbed. 'The dead body of a Turkish women caught my attention particularly, and I felt sorry for her. Her face, even in death, was very beautiful, and she wore a dress made of the finest material. Her valuables had been stolen . . . She seemed to belong to some noble Turkish family, and her picture remained long in my mind. I took some garments lying around and covered her dead body with them.' In the next paragraph he added that artillery carriages had run over many corpses on the road because there was no time to move the dead away. (Fennander 1895: 116-17.) This semi-erotic and at the same time violent scene comes very close to seeing war and sexuality as two aspects of exultation (cf. Fussell 1977: 270-9).

After the armistice Fennander made some more sensual references to Turkish women. At Çorlu, in mid-February, he claimed that though they were usually veiled he had caught a glimpse of their 'very beautiful faces'.<sup>307</sup> He went on that it was no wonder that some Russian officers were said to have taken Turkish wives because, indeed, the Turkish women were particularly beautiful; 'one never forgot their faces if only once seen unveiled'. These 'embellishments', added to the 1895 edition of Fennander's book, were lacking in the 1878 edition. Perhaps the author thought that his readership in the late 1890s would not be interested in 'pure' facts alone but would need some romantic, even erotic,

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<sup>304</sup> A similar story from the First World War was told by one of Krenchel's (1929: 51) informants.

<sup>305</sup> It is impossible to confirm whether or not Fennander really witnessed the sight described here. Unquestionably, the guardsmen must have seen dislocated people in appalling conditions. But the style here suggests that this account is not a personal experience but a borrowed literary image intended to underline the horrors of war (see Ch. 9.2., Lindman, Palander).

<sup>306</sup> These proprietors were probably Circassians who, well before the general Turkish retreat, fell back, spreading rumours of Russian cruelties, and seizing the opportunity in the panic thus caused to maraud local villages (see Baker 1879b: 10).

<sup>307</sup> It is unknown how many Turkish women, if any, there were in Çorlu. According to Wahlberg (1878: 192-3), most of the inhabitants were Greek. It is improbable that Fennander really would have had an opportunity to see Turkish women indoors, even if there were any.

entertainment, too, in the manner of certain historical novels.<sup>308</sup> Another possibility is that female figures (in literary work) represent an ideal or an abstraction. Thus Fennander's 'sensuality' in his 1895 edition may be understood as a process turning memoirs of wartime reality into a world of ideas, of fantastic feats among females, that were more suitable for a peacetime male culture. Moreover, stories about the victor's amorous relations with the women of the defeated party are typical of many war tales; and as a rule these women are 'exceptionally beautiful' (see, for example, Bulgarin 1996: 78, 94, 127).

### **Lindman**

While the Finnish Guard was in Iași (23 to 25 September), local people, Christians, as Lindman emphasised, told them that 'last winter' the Turks had built at the outskirts fortifications and erected gallows, on which they had sworn to hang Christians. The Russian mobilisation had forced the Turks to withdraw, and later in spring Russian soldiers had burned the gallows in their camp fire. (Lindman 1880: 11.) I have been unable to verify the story from other sources, but in any case it contributed to the image of Turks as barbarians and enemies of Christianity.

Describing the battle of Gorni Dübnik Lindman (p. 20) reported that after the Turkish force had struck colours, a few of them started to fire again. He commented (ibid.) that the incident proved 'the Turkish treacherousness but also bravery'. He went on (pp. 20-1) to say that right after the battle rumours spread that Turks do not immediately kill all the wounded they manage to capture, but torture them first in a cruel manner. Rumours had it, for example, that an officer was scalped in the shape of a cross, and that Turkish words were incised with a knife on some soldiers' bodies. Lindman thought that there was some truth in the rumours, pointing out (p. 21) that corpses found near Telish (after the battle on 24 October) bore testimony to these cruelties. If the story is true, the mutilations were more probably caused by Bulgarian or Turkish bashi-bazouks, who despoiled dead bodies (Baker 1879a: 45, 131).

On the 'Finnish Mountain' in December Lindman reported (p. 27): 'In war the Turks are hasty cowards. When facing even a minor danger they hide themselves in their fortifications and stay there.' He added (ibid.) that patrolling Finns often scared the Turks, who 'became mad and rushed [hither and thither] in the dark, shooting each other'. But he also praised (ibid.) Osman Pasha, who had defended Plevna 'with incredible courage'.

After having departed from Sofia Finnish and Russian troops pursued the retreating enemy. Then the Turkish commander, to save his men, Lindman stated, resorted to a trick (p. 34). He let the Russian commanders believe that a cease fire had been negotiated, and when the Russian troops halted to check the truth of the matter, the Turks took to their heels. This, Lindman added (ibid.) did not, however, save them. Nevertheless, even when 'escaping', the Turks, according to Lindman (pp. 39-40), 'as usual' murdered Balkan Christians, and were instigated to do so by Turkish officials.

After the armistice Lindman (p. 44) asserted that bashi-bazouks operating near Çorlu 'did not leave off their . . . servile cruelty'. They had attacked a half dozen Cossacks sent to buy provisions, torn them into pieces and robbed them. From San Stefano Lindman reported that Turkish and Russian officers were amiable to each other, since they shared a 'liberal', 'cosmopolitan' world view.<sup>309</sup> 'After the peace treaty' Turkish and Russian soldiers, too, were on friendly relations and chatted and played together. As a token of friendship, the Turks gave Russian and Finnish soldiers good tobacco. (Lindman 1880: 46-7.) An article in *Suomen kuvalehti* (15 July 1878, p. 178) on Russian soldiers in

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<sup>308</sup> Cf. Klinge 1998: 64, et passim, for the readership.

<sup>309</sup> In his recollections of the Finnish war, 1808-9, the Finn Ehrström (1986: 97-8) ascribed such a mentality to the officers of his troop.

Edirne also described how, on meeting, Russian and Turkish soldiers at once made friends, though they had but lately been enemies. According to the article, this was possible because they no longer considered themselves 'Turks or Russians but human beings'.

### **Palander**

To begin with, Palander's attitude towards the Turks was rather neutral. He neither praised nor blamed them, nor did he, unlike several others, accuse them of all kinds of atrocities. When describing the battle of Gorni Dübnik he, as if in passing, remarked that the Turks were bad shooters (1881: 43). A few pages later (p. 47) this was explained as a part of Turkish strategy. Not unlike Wahlberg, Palander reported that the Turks were lined up in two ranks, of which the one fired and the other charged.

Three weeks later Palander repeated (pp. 53-54) the hearsay that the mere appearance of a minor Russian cavalry troop had resulted in the hasty withdrawal of a much more numerous Turkish force.<sup>310</sup> On the eve of the battle of Pravets, Palander related (p. 57) how the Guard spent the night in a village, 'where we saw signs of Turkish atrocities'. He also assured (ibid.) his reader that seeing them did 'not yet' affect him. By this he obviously meant that they did 'not yet' cause him to think of Turkish oppression of Bulgarians and Bulgarian liberation. However, in spite of his arguments it would seem that they did not affect him later either, because, with the exception of a long quotation from an article in the London-based *Daily News*<sup>311</sup> on the destiny of dislocated Turks and Bulgarians (Palander 1881: 102-6), he never once mentioned atrocities.

Palander's remarks (p. 61) at the battle of Pravets put the enemy in a slightly ridiculous light: 'because the Turks here, too, [as at Gorni Dübnik] shot in their usual random way we suffered hardly any casualties'. The same he asserted of the skirmish at Vrazhdebna on 2 January (p. 87). Unlike at Gorni Dübnik, explanations for the Turkish firing were not given.

When describing Sofia, Palander inserted in his account a long description of the Turks, and a few words about some other peoples<sup>312</sup> of the Ottoman empire. According to Palander (pp. 90-1), the 'Turks in general are not as mischievous as is commonly, and especially because of this war, thought. On the contrary, they have many good qualities. They are brave, merciful, honest and polite. On the other hand, in their hate and revenge they are uncontrollable, and in questions of religion they are intolerant. They do not lack reason or skills but, partly on religious grounds, partly due to other unnecessary beliefs, they have not accepted inventions and improvements made by European peoples except in the organisation of their army'.<sup>313</sup> He continued (p. 91) that 'like [other] oriental people [the Turks], too, sit with crossed legs [and] eat and sleep on the floor'. In Palander's opinion (ibid.), the Turks liked no sport but riding, did not accept dancing men, and were extremely heavy drinkers of coffee and smokers of tobacco. Despite schools and other educational institutions, the Turks had 'no scientific culture'. And although they favoured music, architecture and gardening, they 'hardly knew

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<sup>310</sup> This could be true, see Ch. 6.2.

<sup>311</sup> It was an article (reproduced in Hozier 1879: 812-13) by an American artist and writer, Frank Millet (1846- 1912), who covered the war on the Russian side. It described the destinies of dislocated Turks and Bulgarians, their conflicts, and the desolate conditions of the Turks in particular. The same source was quoted by several other guardsmen as well (see Ch. 9.2., and Jernvall in Ch. 10). The paper itself was Russophile and Turcophobe in tendencies (Anderson 1968: 5).

<sup>312</sup> The other people mentioned were Greeks, Serbs and Bosnians, meaning Bosnian Serbs. The first were, in Palander's view, better educated than Turks, and as brave as their ancient forefathers. However, according to Palander, the Greeks in Turkey had a reputation for fraudulence. Of the two other peoples, Palander only related that their religion was Greek Orthodoxy.

<sup>313</sup> Turks were described along the same lines soon after the war in *Suomen kuvalehti* (1 May 1878, pp. 125-6). It seems that this image applied to, and was constructed on the basis of, mainly upper class Turks (cf. Baker 1879a: 6-7).

painting or sculpture'. The whole piece has most probably been adapted later from some historical work, for at the time he was in Sofia Palander hardly had the time or opportunity to make any such observations. But the fact that he inserted the passage in his memoirs suggests that he wanted to see the Turks from a larger perspective than that of the war propaganda.

Palander himself partly confirmed this. After Sofia, he warned his reader not to uncritically accept the propaganda hurled against the Turk during the war. At the same time, however, he told a story (pp. 98-9) that amounts to just such propaganda. Apparently when the Finnish Guard arrived at Boshulja,<sup>314</sup> some guardsmen went to look for provisions. They met an elderly Bulgarian and asked him to sell them some food. The old man wondered at their request and said that when the Turks had passed (a few days earlier) they had not asked but had simply seized what they could and, furthermore, committed all kinds of cruelties, among other things, recruiting two of his sons by force. 'But when our men had explained that they never took anything without paying for it and that they had no intention of harming the Bulgarians, the old man was pleased and said that he did not expect any remuneration. He brought them meat and cabbages and urged them to eat as much as they could so that they would be strong enough to take revenge on the Muslims for their ferocity.' Having finished, the guardsmen, nevertheless, gave him some money. The old man responded by offering them wine and, when they departed, in tears thanked those who 'in a Christian manner' fought for his people.

On the occasion of the signing of the preliminary treaty on 3 March, Palander commented (p. 114) that Russian and Turkish soldiers, who now faced each other on the field waiting for news of the conclusion of peace, had 'as true soldiers' learned to 'respect each other'. He also said (*ibid.*) that the soldiers considered the treaty as the beginning of a friendship which, in turn, was based on the fact that '[war] experiences had taught [them to appreciate in the other] qualities that they did not know existed or, to be more honest, that they had earlier ignored'.<sup>315</sup> Irrespective of whether this is true or not, Palander's narrative refers not only to the official phraseology but also to the nascent alternative in Finnish public memory, namely the anti-military working-class perspective (cf. Lindberg 1904 for a more conscious view). It also suggests that he had not fully internalised the official military ideals but was rethinking the structural categorisation of the enemy.

### ***Jernvall***

Jernvall saw the enemy for the first time in Ungheni. They were prisoners of war, 'ugly bashi-bazouks' as Jernvall (1899: 20) put it, 'notorious' for their (alleged or real) brutalities. Some guardsmen passed judgement on the basis of their appearance: '[They look not like humans but] monsters.' (*Ibid.*)

In his recollections from 1888 Jernvall admitted (p. 4) that the Turkish artillery was effective, at least occasionally, at the battle of Gorni Džbnik and that the Turks defended themselves 'in a manly and admirable way' (p. 11; see also 1899: 62). He underlined (p. 11) the great number of dead and wounded Russian soldiers (1888), and quoted Gurko in praising the Turkish commander, Ahmed Hifzi Pasha, as a worthy and brave adversary. Thus he implied both that the victory was honourable for the Russians and that propaganda's image of the Turks was untrue.

In his earlier description of the battle (1899), his tone is more ambiguous. On some occasions Jernvall clearly despised the quality of Turkish soldiers. For example, he ascribed Russian and Finnish casualties to chance rather than to the Turkish ability to shoot well (for instance, p. 55). He also blamed the Turks for first hoisting the white flag and then attacking the Guard in a 'scurrilous way'

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<sup>314</sup> By this Palander may mean modern Kostenets, half-way between Sofia and Pazardzhik.

<sup>315</sup> Though his wish may seem fanciful, it implies that peaceful face-to-face contacts with the enemy may destroy the structural enemy-image. A similar story by an English private in the First World War is reported by Winter (1979: 216).

(p. 61). However, after the battle was over, hostilities were swept aside. Jernvall remarked (p. 81) that after the Russian victory at Gorni Dübrik all the wounded, Turks as well as Finns or Russians, were sent to be treated at a Red Cross hospital near the Danube. There they recovered side by side, and there were 'no more grudges between them, but they were [all] satisfied with their destinies as was appropriate for a true soldier'.

Like several of his companions-at-arms Jernvall had a low opinion of bashi-bazouks. From a village near Orkhanie, for example, he reported (1899: 98-9) that 'from here the Russian cavalry had . . . [recently] expelled bashi-bazouks, who had committed many evil deeds in the village and had threatened to return and drive the [Russian troops] away'. He added (p. 99), however, that this was never put into practice. The implication that bashi-bazouks (or Turkish troops in general) were boasting cowards was enlarged on after the battle of Pravets in Jernvall's comments (1899: 112-13) regarding the Turkish retreat. According to him, those who managed to escape, should thank 'their excellent ability to run' for their luck at not falling into Finnish hands. They should also be grateful that they had lost only a few pairs of boots when running down the mountains 'showing the white feather'. He reported much the same of the skirmish at Sarantsi, adding (1899: 163) that the withdrawing Turks were 'parted' by some shells that 'admitted [many of] them to the "joys of paradise"'.

Having reached the southern slopes of the Balkans, Jernvall repeatedly related how the retreating Turks showed their 'bravery' by burning down villages (for example, 1899: 193, 195). On the second day of the battle of Plovdiv (16 January), Jernvall reported that his company came across some (obviously Bulgarian) refugees that (probably irregular) Turkish forces had robbed and killed. The sight was 'horrible, awful' (p. 198). On the other side of Plovdiv it was no better. On and by the road 'there were dead bodies of men, women and children, as well as of oxen, bulls, donkeys, dogs and many [other] animals, blocking the way every twenty steps'. Clothes, mattresses, blankets and other things were lying all around, trampled into the mud. Broken carts and every kind of kitchen utensil were strewn willy-nilly, and 'totally innocent infants lay dead on the snow, abandoned by their mothers, who themselves were exhausted from hunger, cold and desperation'. In Jernvall's opinion (pp. 209-10), a civilian might have been stricken with terror at such a sight, but 'we who had been steeled by the flames of battles' were not particularly impressed since 'we knew that we had to advance, even if the devil himself were [waiting for us]'.<sup>316</sup> In the next few paragraphs, Jernvall (pp. 210-11), though, described in a very moving way the poor (Turkish) refugees the guardsmen 'constantly' met. He concluded by saying that the point of these pictures was to show the reader that the war had its 'darker side', too. And finally he admitted that even the 'iron heart of a strong soldier' felt pity for these wretched creatures, even if they were 'Muhammedans, as indeed they were', because they were 'peace-loving people', civilians who the Turkish army had 'seduced and forced . . . to flee all the way from Pleven, frightening them with tales about how the Russians would maltreat them'.<sup>317</sup>

During the next few days the Guard passed more and more dead people. Some of them had been killed,<sup>318</sup> others had died of cold or hunger. According to Jernvall (p. 213), it was especially horrible to see some female bodies, buried in the snow, their heads run over by the wheels of artillery

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<sup>316</sup> Varén (1896: 1-6), too, said that the first sight of these murdered and robbed people moved his heart, but that one soon got accustomed to it.

<sup>317</sup> A few pages later (pp. 214-17) Jernvall quoted the above-mentioned *Daily News* article about the desperate conditions of displaced Turkish civilians.

<sup>318</sup> Some of them, at least, were the victims of Russian irregulars, Cossacks (see Anderson 1968: 152), although Jernvall does not impute their death to anybody in particular.

carriages. The women were, in Jernvall's opinion (*ibid.*), Turks, since they had red or brown hair dyed with henna in the Turkish manner.

### *Lindfors*

The first time that Lindfors (1975: 8) reported a contact with Turks was in early October in a village near Pleven. After a heavy march in the rain across muddy fields Lindfors's company stopped in the evening close to a Turkish village. The men needed some firewood and, without more ado, seized the wooden fence around the village. The only inhabitants, 'old women', got angry at this, 'screaming, howling and raising their hands towards the sky shouting: "Allah, Allah il Allah!" (Allah is the Turkish name for God [Lindfors explained].) But we were hungry and disregarded the noise the old women made.'

Lindfors had not much to say about Turkish soldiers. When describing the battle of Gorni Dübrik, he commented (1975: 14-15) that, ultimately, the Turks could in no way prevent the victory of the Finnish Guard (*sic*). According to Lindfors (*ibid.*), most of the Turks were more than willing to capitulate when seeing the guardsmen face to face.

After having crossed the Balkans the Guard, according to Lindfors (p. 22), advanced along a hillside where there were lying 'an enormous number of dead Russians,<sup>319</sup> many of them brutally tortured [in an unspecified way]'. However, Lindfors did not blame the Turks. And on the same day (1 January) he felt sorry for some Turkish prisoners of war whom the Guard was ordered to supervise in Dolno Kamartsi and who, 'unlike us', were 'in poor condition; their clothing was shabby, they walked bare-foot and their feet were frozen, swollen as thick as round Russian loaves' (p. 24). However, he did not pity (*ibid.*) those not strong enough to walk further. 'It would have been indecent to leave [them] there to suffer. Thus, since they couldn't follow, we put a quick end to their lives. I believe that they, too, accepted this as the best solution. At least they did not beg for mercy.' It is of course possible that prisoners of war were executed without trial, but it does not seem very likely in this case. I suspect that, above all, the story was created to show that the Finnish soldiers hated the enemy in the way the army expected or to display their imperial loyalty. Similar conduct by Finns towards Russians is implied in some recollections of the Finnish war (see Holm 1977: 31-2).

The Guard's last battle, at Plovdiv, convinced Lindfors of the cowardice of the Turks. He related (p. 27) how, after two days of cannonade from both sides, the guardsmen finally attacked the Turkish positions, and 'our brave shouting and good order confused the enemy', who fled 'screaming [and] in great disorder'.

Lindfors also singled out bashi-bazouks. When describing how, after the armistice, the guardsmen were stationed in Çorlu he reported that 'our' Russian cavalry 'visited remote villages in order to buy fodder for the horses'. During these expeditions patrols were 'constantly harassed by hordes of bashi-bazouks'. According to Lindfors, these irregulars were 'Turkish volunteers' who were totally 'untrained as soldiers, if one dares so to designate those who wage war only to plunder and tear [everything] into pieces like bloodthirsty beasts'. In Lindfors's opinion, the bashi-bazouks were worse than beasts because 'they had reason, which beasts do not, to invent the most terrible torments and tortures for those who happen to fall into their hands'. Lindfors also gave his reader to understand that he, too, had sometimes seen humans maimed by bashi-bazouks, and concluded that if 'we [the guardsmen] had happened to get hold of those beasts [bashi-bazouks] I can swear that their trial would not have been long'. (Lindfors 1975: 30.) The Englishman Baker Pasha had no better opinion. He considered bashi-bazouks cowardly savages and, seeing robbed and mutilated Russian dead, stated that

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<sup>319</sup> Obviously those killed at the battle of Sarantsi, see Ch. 6.3.

'[h]ad I but caught [bashi-bazouks] in the act I would have had them shot without the slightest hesitation' (1879a: 131).

In general, Lindfors's attitude towards the Turks fluctuated between pity and loathing. Usually, however, he harboured substantial reservations about them. For example, from San Stefano he reported that the Turkish cavalry 'in its own way greeted us, their adversaries and conquerors, smiling in a miserable and affected way' (p. 31). But in the end he, too, stated that relations between the two enemies improved, and finally Finnish and Turkish soldiers shared both tobacco and liquor and had a good time together even though neither knew the language of the other (p. 32).

### **Wallin**

Wallin's first sight of bashi-bazouks was at a small station where his train had pulled in between Chişinău and the Russo-Romanian border. His only comment was that the bashi-bazouks, who were escorted by a couple of Cossacks, were dressed 'oddly'. (WM: 9-10.) In early October at Ralyovo he related, in the context of Finns buying sheep, that an ensign of the third company, O.A. Welin, was told how some two weeks before bashi-bazouks had visited the village [of Ralyovo] and demanded sheep. They had got none, because the villagers had hidden their animals. The bashi-bazouks had stolen something<sup>320</sup> and, when departing, had threatened to hang all the villagers if they did not get sheep the next time they came. (WM: 48-9.)

After the battle of Gorni Dūbnik Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich asked the men what they thought of the Turks. According to Wallin (p. 111), someone answered: '[They are] all right', but most of the soldiers said nothing. And Wallin added (ibid.) that by no means could the Turks be 'all right', since 'they had fired at us in such a bloody way'.

When in outpost on the 'Finnish Mountain', Wallin wondered why the Turks had abandoned 'such a strong fortification' (i.e., the 'Finnish Mountain'). A few passages later he reported that, in early December, the Turks were said to have attacked Russian outposts in Arab Konak with such ferocity that these were lost for a while and were retaken only after the Russians had received reinforcements. (WM: 184-6.) After the crossing of the Balkans, he reported that the Turks who fell back from Arab Konak and Sarantsi had caused the Russians 'rather great losses', with the result that they were unable to set off in pursuit immediately (p. 218). This was obviously true.

After the fray at Dolno Kamartsi, Wallin strolled around in the village hoping to find something to eat. He met two Bulgarians who pointed at a sick or wounded Turkish soldier lying in the snow. 'I went over to him and rolled him down a slope. He gazed up at me with a glance that I have been unable to forget even [today]. By doing so I, for my part, wished to please the local people and to get some delicacies' (p. 224).<sup>321</sup> These were not given to him; instead, as he sarcastically said, he had shown a 'Muhammedan, what Christian love of neighbour looked like' (p. 225).

Near Edirne, Wallin's company stopped for the night in a village allegedly burned down by bashi-bazouks four days earlier. They had also seized all sheep and valuables and killed 'some old men'. 'Such is war', Wallin concluded. (WM: 308.)

His first night in San Stefano Wallin spent in a tent left by Turkish soldiers. In the morning, the Turks came to fetch their tents and provisions. Having had no bread for some days, the Finns wanted to buy some Turkish biscuits, that is, dried white bread, and started to bargain over the price. The Turks charged four kopecks for each biscuit, but if someone did not have that much, the

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<sup>320</sup> Wallin does not specify what it was.

<sup>321</sup> If we believe Turnbull (1980), hunger may indeed make people do many things normally found revolting by 'civilised' people.

Turks 'were content with what they got'. (WM: 342-3.) Later Wallin (p. 353) found some bones on the seashore that, in his opinion, must have been Turkish. Because he had once seen how the Turks interred a corpse on the shore by barely covering it with sand, he concluded that they used to bury their dead in a 'shallow pit' and cover them 'lightly' with earth.

After three weeks in an Odessan hospital, Wallin returned home by train. At an unnamed station, the train was boarded by a Turkish officer and two soldiers, all prisoners of war.<sup>322</sup> The two soldiers were carrying tall boots that they put on in the carriage, tottering around like little children learning to walk. This amused their Russian fellow-travellers. Wallin surmised that the Turks 'had long-legged footwear for the first time' (p. 381). Wallin saw them for the last time in Grodno. There they were billeted in a huge barracks holding, Wallin estimated, hundreds of Turkish prisoners of war. (WM: 380-1, 384-5.)

### *Alfthan*

On the eve of the battle of Gorni Dübnik, Alfthan said (1879: 39) that the Russian defeat at Telish in mid-September had 'again raised the morale of the fatalistic Turkish army [in Gorni Dübnik]'. The same 'fatalism' he later ascribed to some Turkish prisoners of war he saw near Plovdiv sitting on the ground and 'motionlessly staring ahead like a mass of automata' (p. 135).

On one occasion after the battle of Gorni Dübnik, when Alfthan and his comrades were on their way to get some forage for the horses, they saw a Turkish corpse. The young soldier who first spotted it commented: 'See, here he lies, the condemned Musulman. He has received his well-deserved punishment.' But an elderly soldier next to Alfthan retorted: 'He only executed the same [mission] that you were ordered to [do].' (Alfthan 1879: 56.) When Alfthan's patrol arrived at the village, they found no forage, since, as he said (p. 56) 'not long before the village was burned down by Circassians. The ruins of incinerated houses were a reminder of the visit of these violent guests.'

Sometimes Alfthan commented on Turkish actions in a half-surprised tone. During the advance from Pleven towards Telish, Alfthan observed (p. 63) that all the Russian troops who had fallen there had already been buried, 'and even the Turks had . . . dragged their dead along the earth to some graves, dug as far as possible from those of Christian dogs'. Some passages later, Alfthan remarked (p. 64) that 'the notorious Şefket Pasha [a local Turkish commander], who had caused so much fear among the unarmed Bulgarians and [had shed so much of] their blood, had escaped as soon as the first armed [Russian troops] approached'. Thus, in Alfthan's opinion the pasha was both a tyrant and a coward.

Later on Alfthan returned to the Turkish irregulars' cruelties towards Bulgarians. He related (p. 71) how, when his unit was near the Etropoliska plateau, some Bulgarians they met coming down from the mountains described their fate in this war. According to Alfthan (ibid.), they reported 'with apparent calm . . . about their dwellings laid waste, the wretched end of numerous members of their families, and the [disappearance of] Circassians. Violence, murder and oppression were for them such a commonplace that these matters were considered part of everyday life wherever Turks set foot.' Thus a hasty generalisation turns the occasional raid into a common 'national character'.

Some days later, when still waiting to cross the Balkans, Alfthan and his Bulgarian guide were returning from Pravets. The Bulgarian pointed out a white building with a cross at one end of the roof. Alfthan did not recognise its function, but his companion informed him that it was a monastery. They visited it and 'an old priest in monk's garb' showed them sacred books lying on the floor and torn

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<sup>322</sup> Wallin does not mention an escort; it would seem they were travelling on their own.



into pieces, the iconostasis, which had been knocked down, and pictures of saints (icons, mural paintings) that were damaged. 'It is the Circassians' work the monk said, when he met my curious gaze.' (Alfthan 1879: 75-6.)

The Turkish capacity as soldiers Alfthan commented on briefly in December, when engaged in combat at the Turkish fortifications in the Pass of Baba Konak. Alfthan remarked (p. 81) that one day the Turks shot 'unusually surely'. Another day they launched a fierce attack that the Russians, however, managed to repulse (p. 83). Later, when the Russian troops took Pazardzhik without resistance, local Bulgarian citizens shouting 'from every direction' assured them that the Turks had recently visited the town 'burning, murdering, and plundering' (p. 138). Alfthan added (*ibid.*) that it was unfair to blame only the Turks because the Bulgarians, for their part, had looted houses abandoned by fleeing Turks.

### ***Schulman***

Schulman first saw Turkish troops on 16 September, less than a week after having left for the front. It happened in Ungheni, and the men in question were prisoners of war. According to Schulman (1955: 19), they were Turkish irregulars who 'looked repugnant and wild, casting upon us glances full of hatred'.

The next time Schulman met prisoners of war<sup>323</sup> was in October, when his regiment was on its way to join the other units of the Guards. Near a village not far from Telish the Russians had to ford a river. On the opposite bank they met 'a transport of about a dozen of prisoners of war, among whom one could notice several Negroes' (p. 53). The word was somewhat offensive at that time, as it is today. Nevertheless, I think that Schulman wanted less to degrade black people as such than to emphasise the difference between 'us' and the enemy, which the latter's dark colour made noticeable.<sup>324</sup>

A few passages later Schulman described (p. 55) the burial of fallen Turkish and Russian soldiers. He inserted a story of how one of his injured countrymen, a lieutenant, had accidentally taken poison instead of medicine and explained that officers in the Russian army had some poison with them in case they should fall into Turkish hands.<sup>325</sup>

After the last battle of Telish, on 28 October, Schulman asserted that he had with his own eyes seen corpses of those who had fallen in that battle bearing the unmistakable marks of torture. According to Schulman, these cruelties were noted by General Gurko and reported to some prestigious foreign newspapers. Whether or not they were ever published, Schulman did not know. In any case, the atrocities were ascribed to Turkish irregulars who, according to some Englishmen<sup>326</sup> taken prisoner of war after the fall of Telish, were such a 'wild horde' that even the high commander of Telish, Ismail Haki Pasha,<sup>327</sup> had been unable to control them. (Schulman 1955: 59-60.)

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<sup>323</sup> They were taken at the third storming of Plevna in late August, N.S.

<sup>324</sup> In the same way, after the battle of Gorni Dübnik, Jernvall remarked that among dead enemies were some 'strongly built Negroes' who had 'fallen as heroically as the whites' (1899: 70). In the same context Palander (1881: 48) reported hearing that a 'Negro' who had been taken prisoner of war had refused to inter dead Turks, because 'their religion forbade them to touch the corpses of [persons belonging to] another faith'. These 'Negroes' were most probably the Egyptian contingent, which for the most part remained inactive. For example, they did not take part in the battle of Gorni Dübnik (Drury 1994: 13); hence, in reality, Jernvall very likely did not see their dead bodies there.

<sup>325</sup> According to Schulman, the Russians had heard much about Turkish atrocities towards prisoners of war. The poison was needed to commit suicide in preference to being tortured by Turks.

<sup>326</sup> These Englishmen had served in the Ottoman army.

<sup>327</sup> In the same passage, Schulman (p. 60) said that Ismail Haki Pasha himself was not a true soldier, but a coward.

In general, Schulman thought that Turkish morale was rather low. He mentioned Turkish defectors (p. 77) who were 'warmly welcomed' by Russian soldiers who first fed them and later shared their provisions with them.<sup>328</sup> Later (p. 87) Schulman added that during the last phase of the siege of Plevna, in early December (N.S.), there were so many Turkish defectors that in the end the Russian commanders forbade their men to accept any more, saying there was not enough food. So, for Schulman, like most guardsmen, the enemy was the foe above all because he was savage and cowardly, but also because he had alien, or 'uncivilised', habits, for example, when burying the dead. These propaganda-created, or supported, 'qualities' were attributed to the enemy in battle; at other times Schulman makes no mention of them. In general, it seems that the privates reported the most ferocious actions against the Turks whereas NCOs and officers derided, but also praised, the enemy in words and kept silent about their real conduct towards him. One reason for this could be that the privates' knowledge of the Turks obviously consisted mainly of war propaganda but the officers and, it seems, most of the NCOs, had access to further information. However, this does not explain the privates' actions. My working hypothesis is that the common soldiers' partial cruelty towards the Turks was largely caused by the rankers' subjugated, yet seldom discussed, relation to their superiors, especially to the officers, and, above all, their discontent with the army routines in general and the hardships they underwent, in particular when crossing the Balkan mountains in mid-winter. These aspects of the guardsmen's wartime experiences are the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>328</sup> Bulgarin (1996: 152, 160) had said the same about the Russian soldiers' conduct towards sick or wounded 'Finnish defectors' who fell into their hands in the Finnish war, 1808-9.

## 9. COMRADESHIP AND ROUTINES: SOCIAL RELATIONS AMONG ‘US’

Much of what the guardsmen wrote concerns daily affairs and repetitive forms of army routines outside battle (drills, reviews, marches, building dugouts, standing in outpost, etc.) or what were, for them, extraordinary events (musters by high-ranking commanders and imperial awards). As Cleveland (1985: 79) suggests, this part of wartime recollection much resembles descriptions of hard work alternated with merry-making or feats. In many cases descriptions of these routines also implied, or even exposed, tensions between the army structure and privates or NCOs. Men wrote so much about what bodily affected them that they obviously felt, in a very literal sense, through their body the transformations, big and especially small, caused by the war and the army. Winter (1979: 56) quoted a certain G. Coppard, who, in his memoirs of the First World War, wrote: ‘Our [trench] life was dominated by small, immediate events. Bad weather and long working hours would provoke outbursts of grumbling. A sunny morning and the prospect of a holiday would make us exuberantly cheerful and some would declare that the army was not so bad after all. A slight deficiency in the rations would arouse mutinous mutterings. An extra pot of jam in the ration bag would fill us with a spirit of loyalty and patriotism.’ This is not far from Finnish loyalty to the emperor, who provided them with never-ending loads of Russian flour. As Douglas (1986: 116) would have put it, the army, and the society of which it was a part, ‘carved in human flesh’ its own image.<sup>329</sup> And this image, and moral codes about what kinds of relations make up a proper military identity,<sup>330</sup> the guardsmen either accepted, rejected, transformed or questioned in their writings. In other words, they accepted or rejected the army’s codes carried out in routines.

At a very general level these codes could be summarised as the concepts of obedience and honour. The army becomes the social body that by various orders inflicts hardships upon soldiers’ individual bodies, demanding that they endure these ‘like a man’. While public memory had prepared the guardsmen to ‘heroically’ endure actual battles, the volunteers, at least, were ill instructed in less heroic routines, that is, the everyday life in the army. On the other hand, the men were obviously not ready to cut themselves off from the military structure, because that would have signified separation from the human and social relations that constituted the essence of their military identity. Thus they, at least formally, at the level of narrative, succumbed to routines and unquestioningly, or jokingly, obeyed and accepted them as part of a soldier’s work. They might, though, sublimate routines by arguing that they were the means to achieve the sublime end, the sacred cause for which they were said to be waging war. Both ways meant individual resignation to the social body, the army, and resulted in the creation of a sphere of structural egalitarianism among men. Hence, in their aspirations to fulfil the military ideal of the true soldier, the men were equal. This was true above all in battle. When deviating from, or neglecting, ideals, which not seldom was the case outside combat, egalitarian bonds were broken and the men could, and did, bear mutual grudges and come into conflict with one another.

When talking about ‘body’ I mean both the men’s biological body and their social body,

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<sup>329</sup> The pains and wounds inflicted upon novices in some male initiations (see Poole 1982: 120-30) have the same purpose.

<sup>330</sup> The biologist Richard Alexander stated in his *The biology of moral systems* (New York 1987, quoted in de Waal 1998: 41) that the moral basis and the wars and armed conflicts of human societies are two sides of the same coin. I do not fully agree. I think that the army, warfare and wartime have reduced, or dramatised, social, moral and cultural codes to a few, and that the tension between accented values in the wartime process and the plurality of values in the peacetime structure contribute to the revaluation of moral systems.

in this case, the army. Thus I consider the guardsmen's talk about their bodily strength and well-being as an essential part of both their individual and military self-image and identity. By talking about bodily sufferings they showed how, at the expense of their body, they followed the 'sacred' social codes of their military structure, exchanging their distress for the socially more valuable 'honour'. Narratives and recollections about that crafted a new chapter in the men's 'collective biography', their narrative way of creating them as a group, as a military body. However, due to the men's different position in peacetime society and the army structure, only in battle could a ranker even imagine that his sufferings were equal to those of an officer. Outside battle, rank and file, and occasionally NCOs as well, noticed that they had to undergo hardships not expected of officers. Thus narratives about difficulties in executing daily routines or operations not involving fighting (for example, the crossing of the Balkans), which in theory could also unite the men, contained many elements that destroyed the unity, though the guardsmen did not usually mention this.

### 9.1. Group relations in the army: comradeship and critique

In recollections, the relations between the Finnish guardsmen were in general depicted as ideal as were those between initiands in Turner's description of liminality and *communitas* (1977). But there were exceptions. Lack of food caused tensions in relations between rankers (below especially Lindman and Wallin). Berggrav-Jensen (1916: 27) has suggested, from the First World War, that men interpreted their mutual relations, and their attitudes to the army, in terms of lack of food in order to avoid thinking about something worse, namely, the totality of the warfare itself and their uncertain position on the lowest echelons of the army structure.<sup>331</sup> I think that this needs elaboration. Although there is evidence that at least some of the men experienced fear (see especially Wallin, in this chapter, and in Chs. 6 and 7), it was shameful to show it to the army structure or fellow soldiers. In other words, fear was connected with cowardice and cracks in mutual relations rather than shortage of food as such. In point of fact, the guardsmen may have talked about shortages of supplies because the malfunctioning of a system they had been taught to trust and, ultimately, the benevolent emperor, had, in their opinion, deluded them - or broken the code of honour by not keeping the promise to supply the Finns with flour, that is, food - and compelled them to extra efforts they were unwilling to undertake.<sup>332</sup> On the other hand, the guardsmen were certainly accustomed to seeing wartime in terms of lack of food because this was how Runeberg had presented the matter in his *Tales* (see Ehrström 1986: 81) and how the military folklore common to all armies described it.<sup>333</sup>

Some friction is also reported between professional officers and volunteers (see Palander, below). In this respect, the Finnish guardsmen differed somewhat from their counterparts in the First or Second World War who, with few exceptions, argued that the military *Kameradenschaft* was perfect.<sup>334</sup> Combining Winter (1979: 55), who ascribed comradeship to the practical utility of 'carry[ing] the guilt

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<sup>331</sup> My sources allow neither verification nor falsification of these hypotheses. Shortages of food and other transport were both common and real, not fictitious, due partly to ineffective Russian transport systems, and partly to the persistent heavy rain that, according to one contemporary description (Lindgren 1878: 47-8), turned both Romania and Bulgaria into a field of mud almost impossible to penetrate.

<sup>332</sup> Cf. analogical examples from the Finnish war of 1808-9 (Holm 1977: 38) and the Second World War (Pipping 1978: 118-19).

<sup>333</sup> Stories about lack of food are told by Brakel (1994: 58) and Bulgarin (1996: 31, 68) from the Finnish war, 1808-9, Lindberg (1904: 54-5) from the Boer War, Rampanen (1934: 120-1, 153-4) from the First World War, Lipponen (1940: 77-8) from the Winter War, 1939-40, and Cleveland (1985: 89) from the Second World War.

<sup>334</sup> See examples by Tekampe (1989) for the Second World War and Winter (1979) for the First one; cf. Cleveland (1985) for the Second World War and Krenchel (1929) for the First one.

of killing', and Turner (1977: 139), who considered 'spontaneous communitas' [that wartime also is] 'charged with affects, mainly pleasurable ones', may explain a lot of the comradeship in wars that involve mass killing. The guardsmen's point of view is perhaps more consistent with some early evidence from the First World War indicating that comradeship exists in some units but not in others (Berggrav-Jensen 1916: 156-8). In any case, the guardsmen also had an 'exemplary model' for comradeship in stories about solidarity among Finns in the 1808-9 war in general and in the most famous of its Finnish regiments, the Björneborg (Pori) Regiment, in particular (see Brakel 1994: 124-5, 142).

The reason for the existence or lack of comradeship may be that its intensity depends on how close men's relations were to each others. Thus, comradeship was probably more common, or more often remembered and asserted, if the men, especially privates and NCOs, lived in the same tent, came from the same area and shared a period of military or other training (this is suggested by Brakel 1994: 58-60; and Pipping 1978: 144-59) than if they were strangers to each other (see Krenchel 1929: 49). The scale and degree of danger to which a given group is exposed, and the relative homogeneity of public memory of military matters shared by the men, also contribute to comradeship. As Winter (p. 55) points out, 'the group [usually a company] allowed a sense of purpose . . . which permitted men to impose a sense of time upon days which seemed otherwise [meaningless]'.

In the case of the Finnish Guard, the creation of vertical comradeship was hampered by a cultural and language barrier, the officers being as a rule highly educated Swedish speakers and the rankers less or non-educated Finnish speakers. The NCOs were a mediating link, for it seems that many of them were fluent in both languages. Yet the political conflict over the language issue that permeated Finnish society for several decades after the 1870s (see Juva 1956: 178-9) is absent from my sources.

Neither is much made of social, or class, difference between officers and other soldiers (officers, if mentioned at all, are usually praised); it is nevertheless clear that officers constituted a separate group. Though they, for their part, too, praised the common soldier, not usually individuals but the whole body of men as an embodiment of military ideals, they associated with their peers. This was, of course, in accordance with army regulations. However, the officers of the Finnish Guard did not live 'in [such a] blissful ignorance of the lives [of their men]' as their contemporary Habsburg counterparts, according to Deák (1990: 102), although in the Finnish Guard, as in any army, the general situation was that the officers issued orders and the men obeyed.

An important common denominator among officers was the social relations established in peacetime and, in particular, during training at military schools. Such *esprit de corps*,<sup>335</sup> or public memory created by shared experiences and rules of conduct that held officers together and distinguished them from other groups both inside and outside the army,<sup>336</sup> was attested to by some cadets of the Finnish Cadet Corps. It was, they said, a spirit that endured throughout their lives (Screen 1976: 64-5). Haapanen (1928: 40, 86-7), a Finnish officer serving with several Russian units in early 1900s, also gave examples showing that preserving the honour of the officers of a given unit relative to outsiders was of high importance. Nationality had no significance; what mattered was that the other was an officer of 'our' unit. According to Screen (1983: 138), an officer's service record<sup>337</sup> 'made reference

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<sup>335</sup> It was not a feeling but an institution. According to Screen (1983: 39), '[t]he *Kamratskap*, or cadets' fraternity, which dated back to 1821, provided rules of conduct for the cadets, reinforced by sanctions administered by the senior cadets themselves'. For details, see Fieandt 1984: 155-64.

<sup>336</sup> Cf. Halbwachs (1992: 139), who says that '[i]n every major administration there are traditions alongside technical matters. Each individual who enters a profession must, when he learns to apply certain practical rules, open himself to this sensibility that may be called the corporate spirit, and which resembles the collective memory of the professional group.'

<sup>337</sup> In Russian, *poslyzhnoy spisok*.

not to his nationality but to his social origin and to the *guberniya* from which he came'. Only by the end of the 19th century had nationality become important to the Russian military authorities.

Leed (1979: 25) argues that feeling unity between men can be seen as a 'product of the essential liminality of the war'. I agree but think that he does not sufficiently take into account the difference between professionals, recruits and volunteers. The former were obviously to a certain extent 'united' in peacetime as well, whereas the other two were brought together by the war alone and had, as Leed (1979: 55) observed, to create a uniting bond to survive the war, or perish. In other words, while the professional's social relations were partly the same in war and peace or, as a soldier in the Russian white army later put it, '[w]here the Army is, there is the Motherland' (quoted in Robinson 1999: 135), the enlisted had no ready-made military relations, only ideals upon which to start creating them. Therefore I see that the untarnished reputation, or 'honour' of Finns, Finland, or the Russian empire as the guardsmen usually put it, served as the starting-point for the materialisation, or ritual-like dramatisation, of ideal relations among 'us'. Winter (1979: 138) comes close to this by suggesting that responsibility to one's troop prevented many men from cracking up mentally, that is, from being unable to adopt any identity by establishing social in-group relations. In general volunteers had the most to say about social relations among 'us', or then they had nothing to say.

Relations between the Finnish Guard and the other troops of the Russian army, on the other hand, were described as being friendly and the Russians were said to favour Finns. Ranta (1890: 314-15), for example, reported the following episode from the battlefield of Gorni Dübrik. He and some other Finns were ordered to carry the wounded to field hospitals. One of these was a Russian colonel, who asked which unit the men belonged to. Hearing they were Finns he exclaimed: 'Dear Finns, from time immemorial known for their bravery.' This, of course, was also a way to let even a Russian praise the 'age-old' Finnish military glory.

Much later the commander of the Finnish Guard, Colonel Ramsay, was to express a different opinion. According to him (1932: 16), in both the military and civil administration of the empire there were, even before the 1877-8 war, Russians who envied the favour the emperor displayed to the Finnish Guard. This opinion is more credible than stories about 'friendly relations' from time immemorial, which might be due to censorship or the men's wish to conform. Nevertheless, there is no special reason to suppose that Finnish-Russian relations in the army would have been particularly tense in the late 1870s. Some sort of taunting between different army units, or nationalities, is probably common to all times and places (see Birnbaum 1971: 250; Erho 1940: 43). But how relations are described, or remembered, depends for what purpose the description, or recollection, is made. It is one thing to say, for example, that the Russians were brave and so were we but quite another to argue that they failed to play their part in hauling cannon whereas we succeeded. In the first case, unity is negotiated with fellow-soldiers against a common enemy. In the second case a hierarchy amongst 'us' (Finns and Russians) is more important than differences between 'us' and the other (the enemy).<sup>338</sup> Finnish recollections about harmonious relations among themselves served, then, to strengthen their military identity, and to help them bargain with the structural notion of the army as an ideally functioning social body. The Finnish praise of Russians (meaning usually the other battalions of the Sharpshooter Brigade) in battle contexts<sup>339</sup> also contributed to both ('we', Finns, that is, the army, were

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<sup>338</sup> Cf. Rosen 1984: 4, 29-30 for a similar view in another context.

<sup>339</sup> This may also be due to the fact that common danger usually unites soldiers and downplays mutual grudges (see Berggrav-Jensen 1916: 22-7, 195; de Waal 1998: 142) or to the knowledge that several men of Finnish origin served with the Russian troops (Kylävaara 1978: 48-9). But there also existed the Runebergian tradition of respecting Russian soldiers. In the first part of his *Tales*, Runeberg published a poem entitled "Kulneff", in which he extolled the bravery, humanity and

brave), whereas stories of Russian failures outside battle obviously bolstered a separate Finnish identity and opinion of their superiority over Russians.<sup>340</sup> Thus such stories were also a means of creating a Finnish identity for a unit that was in fact a part of the Russian army, a narrative combat in which the Finns wanted to beat the Russians at the levels of story-telling and public opinion. One might also say that the degradation of Russians (the nearest ones, the other battalions of the brigade), and jokes about them, were all part of a social game in which honour was at stake. To put it bluntly, it was socially honourable for Finns but implied loss of face for Russians if the Finnish guardsmen could do something better than their Russian companions or if they could complete what Russians had shirked.<sup>341</sup> By doing things well the Finns showed that they were 'true soldiers', whereas the Russian failure was a sign that they did not know how to behave. The increment in honour also put the Finns high in the Russian army structure, and the juridical fact that the Russian army could not court-martial them<sup>342</sup> gave the Finns an additional weapon in accumulating this kind of honour.

That Finns resorted to joking may imply that they felt themselves to be lower down in the army hierarchy than Russians. After all, since ancient times laughter has been the inferior's weapon against the socially higher and stronger (Bahtin 1995; de Waal 1998: 143). There is, however, no strong evidence to support this assumption in my sources. Aside from routines and fulfilling off-combat orders, for example, manhandling cannon, Russians, if mentioned, are described as kind people. Therefore, it seems more plausible that some kind of 'symmetrical joking relation' existed between the, in principle, equal battalions of the Sharpshooter Brigade; each of the two parts of the relation, the Finns and the Russians, made fun of the other (for although I have no examples of Russians poking fun of the Finnish guardsmen it is clear that joking was an important aspect in Russo-Finnish relations [see Vihavainen 1991]). For the Finns, relations that permitted disrespect and prevented hostility were part of maintaining the order in the army structure. By joking the guardsmen tested the limits of tolerance of the Russian army regulations and traditions and carved themselves a separate Finnish niche in the brigade, for as far as I know they hardly ever made fun of the other Russian units, although they often spoke vaguely of 'Russians' in general rather than of the brigade's Russian guardsmen.<sup>343</sup>

### **Wahlberg**

Wahlberg (1878) first referred to comradeship when the Finnish Guard joined the other battalions of the Guard's Sharpshooter Brigade at Gorna Studena<sup>344</sup> on 5 October 1877. He related (pp. 14-15) how warmly and kindly both the emperor himself and the officers of the other troops welcomed them [the officers of the Finnish Guard].<sup>345</sup> He also emphasised (pp. 38, 40) the benevolence of the new commander-in-chief of the Life Guard, General Gurko, towards the Finnish guardsmen.

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generosity of Major General Ya.P. Kulnev (1764-1812), who in the Finnish war fought against Finns but, nevertheless, was regarded by them as a true soldier (Runeberg 1963: 90-7, especially verses 15-20).

<sup>340</sup> An alternative interpretation is suggested by Winter (1979: 55-6), who noticed that 'shared prejudices against other units' were among the factors that united Englishmen of a certain unit in the First World War.

<sup>341</sup> According to some studies on relations between human aggression (on a scale from disputes to fights) and hierarchy, for men at least conflicts are a means of negotiating one's position in the hierarchy of a group (see de Waal 1998: 138-9).

<sup>342</sup> See Wallin, in this chapter.

<sup>343</sup> 'Joking relationships' are discussed in detail by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. According to him, a joking relationship is 'a relation between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instances required, to tease or make fun of the other, who in turn is required to take no offence' (1940: 195). Some sentences later he states that '[i]n some instances the joking or teasing is only verbal, in others it includes horse-play; in some the joking includes elements of obscenity, in others not' (ibid.).

<sup>344</sup> The location of the imperial HQ at that time.

<sup>345</sup> 'Strong emotions' in reunions of army officers were commonplace at that time (Anonymous 1890: 357-60).

Less formal contexts for expressions of comradeship in Wahlberg's recollections are officers' getting together to have a good time. In mid-October, when the Finnish Guard was on outpost duty at Yeni Barkats waiting for orders to start out, Wahlberg (pp. 40-1) reported that 'now and then some fellows from other troops<sup>346</sup> would come visiting, driving away a dull evening by having a glass of water with sugar and brandy with us, and listening to songs sung by our magnificent quartet'.

Drinking united Wahlberg (pp. 58-9) with a Russian cavalry officer as well.<sup>347</sup> A few days after the battle of Gorni Dübник, the Finnish Guard advanced some kilometres northwards to Dolni Dübник under cover of darkness. Wahlberg lost his way and came across some Russian cavalymen. 'A friendly captain' invited him to the camp fire, offered him a glass of tea, and told him about his [the captain's] unit's skirmishes with Circassians. Thus, like most Finnish officers in Russian service (see Screen 1983: 120), Wahlberg, too, appreciated Russian officers at least. However, it seems that he valued them because they were educated, not because of their nationality.

Some weeks later the Finnish Guard arrived at the village of Yablanitsa at the foot of the Balkan mountains. There the Guard, according to Wahlberg (p. 76), came into close contact with Russian soldiers for the first time.<sup>348</sup> In Wahlberg's opinion, neither officers nor privates had anything to complain about because the Russians made as brave soldiers as anybody, and in friendship and hospitality they were the best.

### *Fennander*

Fennander (1895) had very little to say about relations between men. On several occasions, though, he reported the shortage of provisions and the different, and morally perhaps questionable, ways used to obtain food from local people by force (for example, pp. 38-41). Such things naturally affected human relations. According to Fennander (pp. 77-8, 95), the shortage of, or struggle for, food badly damaged relations between different troops.

### *Lindman*

Lindman summed up his experiences of comradeship at Gorna Studena by stating that the guardsmen had no food there, but the 'Russian Guards'<sup>349</sup> offered them 'hard tack' and soup made of cabbage. Some days later, after an extremely stormy night, some NCOs of the Finnish Guard visited Lindman. They had run out of money and, Lindman said, 'begged' him to help, if possible, so that they would not perish in the cold. Lindman understood the hint, took a small bottle out of his pocket and offered them a nip. He also bought some wine from a peddler, which they drank at once. Next day (8 October), the guardsmen were unable to find fresh water. They happened to be passing a bivouacked Russian unit, so Lindman dropped in to ask for water, which he got. He offered the Russians some money, but they refused it. (Lindman 1880: 13-15.)

On the eve of the battle of Gorni Dübник something 'strange' happened. When Lindman was having his meal a lieutenant of the Finnish Guard visited him and started to eat with him from the same pot and with the same spoon. As he ate, the lieutenant said: 'Let us fortify ourselves with a hearty meal for the fight tomorrow.' (Lindman 1880: 17.) The reason why an officer ate from the same pot as a private may be, as Kylävaara suggests (1978: 64), the lack of provisions that forced even officers to

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<sup>346</sup> Their nationality is not specified, but they were probably Finns (see Wahlberg 1878: 15).

<sup>347</sup> In Douglas's opinion (1971), drinking together establishes less intimate relationships than eating.

<sup>348</sup> Obviously he did not count the shared encampment at Gorna Studena.

<sup>349</sup> That is, the other three battalions of the Guard's Sharpshooter Brigade.



take what they could. This was known from the Finnish public memory relative to the Finnish war, too (see Holm 1977: 86-7). At a deeper level, however, it also reflects the power of wartime process, especially on the eve of possible death, which breaks down social barriers<sup>350</sup> (Connerton 1989: 83; Winter 1979: 176). In the normal peacetime Finnish structure it would have been highly improbable for an officer, who presumably was a nobleman, and a peasant to share a meal or use the same spoon, because it would have been an 'improper' act on the part of the officer.

Sharing a meal implies strong bonds between men (Douglas 1971). According to Lindman, the guardsmen sometimes failed to pass this test. For example, immediately after the crossing of the Balkans, food, especially bread, was of inestimable value. During the crossing everyone was asking for it and nobody admitted to having any. But secretly many soldiers had a slice of black bread to nibble on. (Lindman 1880: 31.)

Lindman seldom spoke disparagingly of Russians. The only such episode where this happened was after the armistice, just before the Guard's arrival at Edirne. A Russian troop already stationed there in a two-storey barracks abandoned by the Turks had had an accident. The men on the ground floor lit a fire on the floor because, as Lindman explained, 'Turkish houses seldom had a proper stove'. But they had all been very tired and had fallen asleep. Meanwhile, the house caught fire. The men on the first floor had to save themselves by jumping out of the windows, and many of them were injured and some even killed. But the 'most shameful' thing was that the unit's standard, its 'honour', also perished in the flames. (Lindman 1880: 42-3.)

### ***Palander***

When describing the preparations for the Guard's departure, Palander (1881: 5) first listed a ranker's kit, and continued that 'concerning officers' outfit I have no exact information, but doubtless they arranged things so that, as far as possible, they could enjoy the luxury [they were used to] in the midst of warfare, too'. He added (ibid.) that afterwards, when already at the front, he heard rumours that whereas the privates had nothing but dry bread and water, the officers feasted on 'steak, soya, roasted goose and God knows what delicacies', and drank wine as if they were spending a quiet summer evening in the best restaurant in the Finnish capital.<sup>351</sup>

Later Palander repeated the complaint. On Christmas Eve, he said (pp. 76-7) that while the common soldiers had only scanty rations the officers had a 'northern' Christmas feast with Christmas tree, abundant dishes, wine and music.<sup>352</sup> After having crossed the Balkan mountains, Palander reported (pp. 83-4) how the guardsmen were billeted in a small village where most of them had to sleep in deep snow. Palander went to look for something more comfortable, and managed to find a house full of Russian soldiers. Soon, though, four or five officers, speaking Swedish among themselves, entered and, deciding that this was an appropriate lodging, drove the soldiers out.

A few days later in a small village near Sofia, where the Guard received a dispatch from Finland, Palander (p. 96), after having said that many NCOs and privates were sent 'special parcels' from home containing even letters, burst out that 'their highnesses the officers' had decided that since rankers had no noble feelings of home there was no need to deliver these parcels to them.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> See also below, Alfthan.

<sup>351</sup> At that time Palander himself was not a private but what was known as a junior NCO. However, his food was obviously the same as that of common guardsmen.

<sup>352</sup> This is how things were reported by a correspondent for *Helsingfors Dagblad* (quoted, without date, in Gripenberg 1905: 222).

<sup>353</sup> Later (pp. 108-9) Palander explained that common men received their parcels a month later in Çorlu.

When speaking about relations with Russian soldiers, Palander (p. 15) first emphasised their kindness. From Gorna Studena he recalled that when the Finnish battalion arrived, the Russians ‘welcomed us in a friendly manner’. Later, on 18 November when two Russian regiments joined the Sharpshooter Brigade, Palander again said (p. 56) that ‘one cannot but praise the courage and conduct of Russian privates’. However, if Finnish and Russian interests conflicted, Palander’s tone changed. After the review in Gorna Studena, the brigade advanced towards Pleven. Soon it started to pour, making it difficult to find a dry place for the night. Palander (p. 18) and some others discovered a hayrick, but a Russian cavalryman who was watching, forbade them to sleep there, claiming that the hay was intended for the horses of his unit. The real reason, though, was that men of his troop were already sleeping in the hay. Consequently, as soon as the watch had disappeared and Palander attempted to push his way into the hay, a voice from the rick shouted in Russian: *Poshol, poshol!* [Go away, Go away!]. Finally he found some space and fell asleep.

Towards the end of the war, Palander (pp. 106-7) noted that the Moscow Regiment, wanting to save time on its march to Edirne, did not bother to stop to build a bridge over a tributary of the Maritsa but hurried on to the city. By accident the barracks where it was billeted caught fire and several soldiers were injured in the flames; some of them even died. Thus their violation of comradeship was avenged. Here Palander’s emphasis differs from that of Lindman, who stressed loss of honour.

### ***Jernvall***

In general Jernvall (1899) did not have much to say about comradeship. Usually he emphasised the unity of the Finnish Guard: the guardsmen (collectively) did this or said that. He reported no disagreement or discontent between the guardsmen. Relations between Finns and Russians, on the other hand, he first reported to be friendly, praising mutual hospitality (p. 31). Towards the end of the war, however, he became more critical. For example, at Trajan’s Gates, where the terrain made the advance difficult, Jernvall said that the Finns managed well but that the brigade’s fourth battalion ‘that descended before us, progressed so slowly that we got furious with them’ (p. 187).

Likewise, in the context of food supplies Jernvall expressed his dissatisfaction. When the Guard was in picket at Yeni Barkats, Russian cavalymen patrolled around reconnoitring the enemy. They brought back a lot of grapes, selling them to the infantrymen and obtaining ‘extra money, which did not please us but made us envy [their] privileges’ (p. 40). He also mentioned (pp. 202-3) some minor strife between Finns. After the battle of Plovdiv the Finnish Guard stopped for some hours at Belashtitsa,<sup>354</sup> famous, as indeed was the whole valley, for its wines. In the village some guardsmen found an unlocked wine cellar full of huge barrels filled with the most excellent ‘Turkish wines’. As mentioned in chapter 1, the guardsmen were not exactly teetotallers, and here, too, they seized the opportunity to booze, which resulted in some quarrels between the inebriated. In the end an officer restored order by beating some of them with his crop.

### ***Wallin***

Contrary to my other sources, Wallin recalls relatively many stories about disputes and grudges, and seems to have almost totally forgotten Finno-Russian comradeship. He only mentions that at Gorna Studena the other battalions of the brigade treated the Finnish Guard to a soup made of cabbage, because the service corps lagged behind.<sup>355</sup> He continues by telling how Finns<sup>356</sup> serving in other

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<sup>354</sup> A village near Plovdiv.

<sup>355</sup> He probably merely repeated Lindfors’s recollections (above, in this chapter).

battalions visited their countrymen. One of them was a sharpshooter named Karl Sten (1847-1927), who had been awarded a fourth class cross of the Order of St Gregorius for courage displayed at the crossing of the Danube in summer 1877, and was therefore highly regarded by the guardsmen.<sup>357</sup> The Guard's chaplain happened to be there, too, and offered Sten a drink from his hip flask. But when it seemed to him that Sten was going to empty the whole flask, the chaplain 'grabbed the bottle saying: good fellow, don't drink it all; I don't have any more of this stuff with me'. Then he left, and the privates had a good laugh. (WM: 24, 27-8.)

At Ralyovo, where a patrol of guardsmen, among them Wallin, bought some sheep from local Bulgarians, one of Wallin's mates, that is, one of the four or five who shared a tent with him, secretly seized a lamb. Despite the general shortage of provisions, Wallin and his two companions slaughtered and ate the animal without their company's knowledge.<sup>358</sup> (WM: 44-7.)

After the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik the Guard was awarded crosses of the Order of St Gregorius. The commander of the third company, Captain Bremer, suggested that one of them should be given to a certain Anton Lindberg, a soldier who had carried an NCO from the battlefield to a field hospital. Nobody objected, but later someone said that Lindberg did not deserve the cross because he left the battlefield in the morning and did not return until late in the afternoon.<sup>359</sup> (WM: 122-3.)

Some weeks after this incident, at the battle of Pravets, the Guard had to haul the cannon up some steep slopes. Among the men was a 'rather lazy' soldier who was better at giving advice than lending a helping hand. One of the other men got angry and threatened to knock him down if he did not pull his weight. He did but slipped away after the battle. Next time Wallin met him was much later in Helsinki. (WM: 156-7, 168.)

After Pravets, Wallin was taken ill and spent a short time in a local house turned temporary hospital. Waking up he saw that the other men in the same room were eating hot soup. He asked for some, but they 'rudely' refused, telling him to make his own, which he accordingly did. (WM: 175.)

As to Russians, Wallin most often either criticised them or poked fun at them. On the first night after the Guard's departure from Gorna Studena, Wallin was looking for somewhere dry to sleep. He lost his way in the dark and was about to enter a tent where some Russians were sleeping. He apparently woke them up, because they called him a 'bloody chukhna'.<sup>360</sup>

At Yeni Barkats, Wallin and his pals went to fetch some grapes and had to slip through a Russian outpost. Wallin remarked (p. 55) that he 'didn't know how watchful the Russians were, but at least we didn't see any of them . . . though men should have been spaced out every twenty paces from each other'. When the Guard arrived at a high point in the Balkan mountains, some of their number were ordered to haul up a cannon the Russians had left on the slope. The men grumbled, calling the

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<sup>356</sup> Wallin mentions four by name.

<sup>357</sup> Sten, who had enlisted in 1867 and served in the Finnish Guard's first company, was one of the jefreiters who had been commanded to the emperor's entourage at the beginning of the war (Kuula 1903: 4).

<sup>358</sup> Cf. Lindman, in Ch. 5.2. A similar story is told by Ranta (1890: 303-6), who reported that while on patrol he found, also in Ralyovo, a lump of salt that was in his opinion on that occasion more valuable than gold, and hid it from the patrol's other members. His intention was to share it with his companions, i.e. the men in the same tent, but in the end he shared it out evenly with all his company's men.

<sup>359</sup> The said Lindberg died on 26 December 1877 of complications due to influenza. He had enlisted for six years on 1 October 1875. (WM: 143; Talvitie 2000.)

<sup>360</sup> Cf. above, Palander. 'Chukhna' was a common Russian designation for certain Finno-Ugric peoples, for example, Estonians, Finns and Karelians, in and around St Petersburg. It denoted a broad scale of meanings from mild ridicule to sharp dislike (Hirn 1936: 173).

Russians ‘chickens’, but went to work. When they had finished they maintained that the Russians had left the gun out of ‘laziness’. (WM: 204-5.) He hardly could say more clearly that the Finns were true soldiers and the Russians were not. Thus, while the other men of the Finnish Guard either praised the ‘friendly relations’ between Finns and Russians (that is, what the army and the emperor certainly expected) or only mildly ridiculed them (what the Finnish readership, raised in the spirit of awakening nationalism, was probably looking for), Wallin did not hesitate at times to heap abuse upon the Russians (which was in accordance with the nationalistic expectations of the time [1930s]).

Wallin (p. 138) claimed that the commander of the Sharpshooter Brigade, Major General Ellis,<sup>361</sup> despised Finns and had no understanding of the special position of Finland, among other things, her separate legislation.<sup>362</sup> To prove this, Wallin told a story (pp. 138-40, mentioned briefly by Wahlberg, too [1878: 65-6]). The Finnish Guard had two slaughter oxen, which were watched over by two men in turn. One day one of the oxen tried to get away, but one of the sentries shot it down. After having learned of the event, Ellis threatened to court-martial the man,<sup>363</sup> and was very surprised when he was told that the Finns had a criminal code of their own and could not be tried in a Russian court. After three days in custody the man was released without explanation or further measures.

### *Alfthan*

In Alfthan’s memoirs, routine affairs did not always function on a comradeship basis in inter-unit relations or in co-operation between different troops of the Russian army. Alfthan (1879: 10) complained that when he arrived at Iași railway station (outside the city) and visited the local Russian commander in order to find lodging, he was told to look among ‘the troops which had already arrived [and] had been bivouacked in the south-eastern corner of the town’. Alfthan added (ibid.) that ‘such were the instructions we had to be content with in several cases, if we got any at all’.

But, in general Alfthan (1879: 19) seemed to idealise what he in Swedish called *kamratlif*, camaraderie. He said that one should not forget that a battle usually lasted no more than a few hours or days while the rest of a soldier’s time in war was spent in an earthwork or a camp in the open air or fighting the elements. He added (ibid.) that it was for comradeship’s sake that he had written his recollections. As he explained (p. 31), under the exceptional conditions of wartime, social ranking sometimes lost its meaning and led to a comradeship that was characterised by total freedom from any usual conventions. This kind of freedom seemed for Alfthan to be the ideal condition among soldiers, because he protested strongly against the minutiae that, perhaps, suited peacetime drills but not the battlefield. For him, comradeship also implied a kind of acknowledgement of equal human rights for all members of the army. After the battle of Gorni Dūbnik, in which Russian troops suffered heavy losses, Alfthan (pp. 52-4) heavily criticised the Russian commanders for strategic shortcomings that resulted in unnecessary wastage of human lives. To prove his point, Alfthan gave a couple of examples of comradeship. In September 1877 he spent a night in the house of the commander of Svishtov (p. 24). He had taken off his wet coat and lit a candle, when the commander, an elderly major, came in with a glass of tea. ‘He wanted to talk a while with the young man as if to sample an age which he himself had already passed.’ In his second example, Alfthan described (pp. 25-6) how he spent the next night in the canteen tent. Though it was crowded he was given a glass of tea and room was made for him to bed down.

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<sup>361</sup> Troops under Ellis’s command varied. Sometimes they included the whole brigade, sometimes only part of it. (Hiisivaara 1968: 92, 100.)

<sup>362</sup> This may of course be hindsight.

<sup>363</sup> Wallin does not say why.

In December, when in the Balkan mountains, he returned to the subject. One day he visited the bivouac of General V.D. Dandeville (1826-1907), his new division commander. On his way, Alfthan (pp. 94-5) met an officer sitting by the camp fire. Interested in 'knowing something about [the officer's] way of life' he asked if he took his meals alone. The officer replied that at noon he ate with the privates, since 'we army officers are used to sharing good and bad things with soldiers who, during military campaigns, are more like comrades and companions than subordinates'. Concrete proof of comradeship was given to Alfthan by one of his friends, a captain. During the battle of Plovdiv, Alfthan (p. 166) went to see some of his companions in their hut. As he was leaving he felt somebody touch his coat; 'and when I turned my head, I saw that the captain was putting a good slice of bread into my pocket . . .'

On the other hand, and unlike Finnish guardsmen, Alfthan did not hesitate to mention Russian robberies. He wrote (p. 120) that when his unit was approaching Sofia he saw many almost naked (i.e., despoiled) Turkish corpses lying in wayside ditches. Moreover, when Russian soldiers (of his troop) noticed a dead body still wearing a warm, padded greatcoat they took it 'without the slightest hesitation',<sup>364</sup> even if it was 'a little bloody'. Alfthan (ibid.) rationalised this by arguing that it was not robbery, because 'the dead . . . could not feel either cold or heat and had, after all, no heirs other than worms, which sooner or later would feed on the corpse'.<sup>365</sup>

Alfthan showed a special inclination towards Finnish guardsmen. For example, he mentioned (p. 20) with pleasure his encounter with the Guard's junior doctor [Wahlberg]. He was pleased (p. 43) to have an opportunity to shake hands with 'many Finnish comrades who [on their way to the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik] passed by [the battery where Alfthan served]'. And later he never failed to mention if he happened to meet any of his compatriots (for example, pp. 101, 117, 130, 170).<sup>366</sup>

### **Schulman**

Schulman (1955), too, complained of the shortage of supplies, and especially of the malfunctioning of transport, laying the blame on the Russian commanders<sup>367</sup> (for example, p. 29). He had very personal experience of this, for on one of his first days in Bulgaria he failed to get anything but a glass of tea. By chance he met his cousin, also serving with the Russian army. Hearing that Schulman had eaten nothing he immediately took him into his tent and offered what he could (pp. 29-30).

In the next passage (p. 30) Schulman talked about the new commander of his division, Lieutenant General V.V. Kataliy (1818-1878). He said that the general was severe and very demanding, particularly on himself. Nevertheless, he was 'always fair'. He treated his men 'like a father, in a human way, taking much trouble over their well-being'. His opposite, in Schulman's opinion (pp. 30-1), was Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich, whom he met soon afterwards. The grand duke usually 'cared very little about [his men]' and 'had in many years not even seen his troops'.

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<sup>364</sup> Alfthan here used a word that literally translated means 'superstition'.

<sup>365</sup> Baker (1879b: 105) attributed similar seizure of property from the dead to Turkish soldiers but did not explain it. Most probably these seizures were not so much expressions of malignancy towards dead enemies as dictated by necessity, that is, failures in maintenance.

<sup>366</sup> It seems that he wanted to underline both his Finnishness and the presence of Finns in the war.

<sup>367</sup> Critique did not prevent Schulman from being loyal to the army structure. Much in the same way General Baker could write (1879a: 61) of a fight in August 1877 that '[i]t was perfectly maddening to remain a spectator on our point of observation, and to see a battle so completely thrown away [due to the inefficiency of the Turkish staff]', and still remain in the Ottoman ranks. In my opinion, both men shared a conviction that their (idealised) notion of army structure was superior to both the Russian and Ottoman reality.

But though officers were of various kinds, the common Russian soldiers were not. They were always trustworthy and ready to offer their last slice of bread to a hungry man. Schulman (p. 44) reported that he had personal experience of this: once a private had asked him to accept a piece of hard tack or some bread. When Schulman asked what the man would have, he answered that he (the ranker) could eat maize that was growing in quantities in the fields. The story, also known from tales and pictures representing the Finnish war of 1808-9 (see Ehrström 1986: 71), may or may not be true, but it served to strengthen the upper class ideal notion about the peasant.

## 9.2. No feats, only outpost and army routines

Army routines, and in general the days elapsing between fights, were rather hard on the Danubean corps of the Russian army. This affected the mood of the men. A Russian soldier stated in mid-summer 1877 that inactivity and disease combined with the lack of provisions and information about the way the war was going were demoralising the units, which preferred even fighting to this boredom (Anonymous 1890: 372-3). Much the same is maintained by some guardsmen, who found picketing and carrying out army routines while waiting for battle more stressful than battle itself. Wallin (WM: 388), for example, on his way back to Finland from Odessa after the war, explained to a compatriot he happened to meet that 'battle was not so bad but the forced marches, crossings of high mountains and frost-bite were . . . so terrible and nasty that one preferred a battle and wished for a bullet through the skull'. Similar statements from the Great War prompted Leed (1979: 93) to claim that '[t]he role that material and physical necessities - food, drink, work, defecation . . . play in the disillusionment of volunteers [is] significant', transforming the image of the soldier as a heroic warrior quickly into a cog in the machine (ibid.: 90-2).

Another way of interpreting the critique of, and complaints about, army routines - apart from seeing it as a literary device typical of many war narratives<sup>368</sup> - is to attribute it to the powerlessness men felt under the supremacy of the army structure (see Cleveland 1985: 81). As Peltonen (1996: 259-61) suggested in the context of the Finnish Civil War in 1918, challenging the limits of the army regulations, in some cases at least, was a means of contesting (the peacetime) structure. Thus, breaking the rules could be the guardsmen's, particularly the NCOs' and rankers', way to try to assert some self-control over everyday routines, which officially were under army control.

The complaints may, however, also be interpreted as a way of proving one's (structurally postulated and expected) heroism, for example, through daring raids. Indeed, stories about the reckless ranker or NCO who was cunning enough to fool both the enemy and his superiors are common in my sources. He is represented as the right man in the right place in battle, but otherwise he is said to have behaved as he pleased. For example, Fennander (1895: 86-7) tells how he and some of his companions sneaked up to the enemy's camp and stole some joints of beef. This tale is similar to the stories of the cunning guerrillas of the Finnish little tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>369</sup>

Seen this way, as both a means of challenging structure and affirming its heroic ideals, 'adventures' and critique of 'boring' routines may be understood as part of the processing of the military identity. In both cases, at stake was the men's relation to the army and its ideals. Both were men's own unofficial, but necessary, and to a certain extent tolerated, interpretations of these ideals and

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<sup>368</sup> For example, Runeberg (1963) praised the endurance of hunger and hardships in the 1808-9 war in his poem "Soldatgossen" (Soldierboy), published in 1860 in the second part of his *Tales*.

<sup>369</sup> In general, contravening regulations was part of the soldiers', or at least officers', peacetime 'entertainment' as well (see Linder 1938: 59-65). Moreover, mutual competition among equals and the teasing of newcomers were a part of the army tradition (see for example Becker 1968: 15-25).

military expectations of how to be a hero or a real soldier. For only after having transgressed official ideals, or creating their own versions of how to 'play the game', did men both learn the rules, and find out more about how to bargain (Fussell 1977: 27; Kangas 1996: 32; Pipping 1978). Therefore, being of personal importance to the men, such events were also remembered better than many other incidents.<sup>370</sup>

Not all routine affairs were, however, 'boring'. Two of them, at least were remembered in my sources as events that bolstered military ideals and men's optimism about the war. The one was the crossing of the Balkans in winter, which the guardsmen still alive remembered even 60 years later (Veteraanit kertovat 1937), and the other the giving of imperial awards. To start with the former, according to one contemporary report (Hozier 1879: 772-3), the route over the mountains, although 'very well planned' in advance 'presented an ascent of nearly four miles'. Due to the intense cold that followed the rains and thaw, the whole road was covered with a thick layer of ice. The horses were unable to climb up 'a slope of over thirty degrees [that was as] hard and smooth as glass'. Moreover, on the evening of 28 December, a 'violent snow storm [blew up that] . . . lasted all night and [a] great part of the next day'. The descent was even more difficult than the ascent, 'owing to the soldiers not being able to gain a footing on the slippery ice'.

According to Menning (1992: 75), a no lesser military authority than Helmuth von Moltke (1800-1891) had declared the mountains impassable in winter. Zimmermann (1878: 947) stated that 'with good reason' the crossing could be considered 'a nearly superhuman undertaking'. In Hozier's opinion (1879: 773), the courage displayed by the soldiers of the Russian army during the crossing was 'beyond praise, and the sufferings they patiently endured are indescribable'.<sup>371</sup> The Turks were 'completely astounded by the apparition of the Russian army [on the southern side of the Balkans], which seemed to them to partake of the miraculous'. (ibid.: 774).<sup>372</sup> A Soviet joint work (RioB 1982: 124) claimed that it was 'the most splendid and, in addition, the most clever achievement of the war'. Clarke (1988: 465), too, praised it as 'one of the great feats of military history'. This may all be repeating contemporary Russian propaganda or *post factum* mythologisation, because from ancient times to the early modern period, non-Balkan intellectuals tended to believe that the Balkan mountains were much greater than they actually were (Todorova 1997: 25-6). Baker, who served in the Turkish army, pointed out (1879b: 90) that the crossing was 'long expected' by the Turks and thus did not take them by surprise. It was only due to the incapability of the senior commanders that the Russians could cross the mountains unhampered. Thus it seems that, although there is no reason to doubt the difficulties of the crossing, the insurmountability of the mountains is a part of myth-making to bolster the victor's honour (Greene 1880: 321-2, 328-9, 366-7). The crossing was also singled out in broadside ballads, which emphasised the corporeal sufferings, particularly hunger and cold (Suistola 1987: 216-17). The Finns also fail to mention that they were among the last to cross the mountains, the first Russian troops having arrived at the southern side of the Balkans on 24 December (N.S.) (Greene 1880: 329).

The other event invariably mentioned with satisfaction in recollections is the award of medals. It seems that all guardsmen understood the social meaning of awards in terms of both self-respect (because they could themselves decide who would be awarded), remuneration and structural gratitude, and that they thus affirmed their notion of war as a socially and personally estimable job or

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<sup>370</sup> Cf. Bulgarin 1996: 158-9 as an example from the 1808-9 Finnish war.

<sup>371</sup> According to one contemporary estimate, some 19,000 soldiers died of cold in this venture (*Moniteur Universel*, November 1878, quoted in Hajek 1939: 65, note 2).

<sup>372</sup> Three decades later a Finnish commentator had a totally different opinion, saying that 'the Balkan [mountains] have not usually presented any great obstacle to modern armies' (Inha 1906: 5).

mission. Furneaux (1968: 80), following the English newspaperman Archibald Forbes who rode with the Russians in the 1877-8 war, stated, speaking of officers, that a soldier awarded by the emperor himself 'was so overcome with this mark of distinction that he walk[ed] about weeping with the prized decoration in his hand, half dazed'. While the Finnish guardsmen did not describe their awards as vividly as that, they were like the Englishman in the First World War, who, according to Winter (1979: 190), said that awards were for a soldier 'the outward visible proof... that he had done his job well'. Briefly, relations to structure, as well as among men, were partly evaluated by the public dignity given to men who lived up to military ideals.

In a sense separate from routines was the incident recounted by most of my sources depicting the wretched plight of the displaced Turkish civilians, numbering perhaps 200,000 (Clarke 1988: 466), that the guardsmen came across near Khaskovo. On 18 and 19 January, a crowd of them, mainly women and children, who, caught between two Russian columns, had not the strength to flee to the nearby mountains, were murdered and robbed by outraged Bulgarians, bashi-bazouks and others (Clarke 1988: 479). I reproduce most of the recollections of this incident, or rather restatements of a newspaper article about it (see below, Palander), in this chapter; some were discussed in Ch. 8.2. and some I have left to Ch.10. The reason is that most of my sources 'only' tell a vivid horror story, but some use the occasion to give their opinion of the Bulgarians, to colour the cruelty of their armed enemy or to fabricate exotic stories about Turkish women. In all cases, however, the guardsmen's style of writing is similar to that of the newspaper articles recounting the horrors of the Bulgarian massacres of 1876 (see Clarke 1988: 405-6), the worst of which had taken place in roughly the same area. In some form, these stories were through various channels familiar to all men. By talking about the Turkish massacre, the guardsmen, perhaps unconsciously, were challenging the 'just' Russian cause of war: the liberation of innocent Bulgarians from the savage Turks. Perhaps the guardsmen were also somewhat unnerved by the slaughter of civilians because none of them ventured a description of his own but resorted to published articles. In other words, for them the sight had been literally indescribable, yet at the same time horrible enough to make a lasting impression requiring a description.

### ***Wahlberg***

The first enemy the Finnish Guard met on Bulgarian soil was torrential rain that turned the fertile fields extremely soft, forcing the guardsmen to literally wade through mud. Such trying conditions exhausted some of the men, and 'no order or persuasion [to continue] was of any help'. To make the situation worse, the unit's service corps went astray. Rank and file had to spend the night on sodden fields while officers were billeted in some Bulgarian houses. Even after the heavy rain had stopped it was not easy to advance. On 12 October the men arrived at the village of Yeni Barkats and pitched camp, waiting for new orders and the Life Guard's new commander-in-chief, General Gurko. Food was scarce and Wahlberg, finding daily life boring, went riding in the surroundings. (1878: 15-16, 19-20, 38.)

At Yeni Barkats, renamed by the Finns the 'Village of Hunger', there were disputes and even fights with local people over efforts to get food. What was more, Wahlberg disliked local dishes, stating (p. 27) that a 'soup made of lamb was perhaps the worst dish that a human being [coming] from civilised regions could have'. Thus the arrival of fresh provisions was a feast: 'one may believe that we ate sumptuously' (p. 40).<sup>373</sup> Shortcomings in sanitary transport and organisation also irritated Wahlberg (pp. 56-7), especially during and immediately after the battle of Gorni Dübnik. He criticised, though in

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<sup>373</sup> A correspondent of the *Morgonbladet* also complained (13 October 1877, quoted in Gripenberg 1905: 205) about the unsalted meat and the maize bread that did not taste 'at all [the same as] our bread'. Thus the heart of the matter in hunger seemed to be, as Gripenberg (1905: 206) admitted, more the difference in dishes 'here' and 'there' than the real lack of food.



rather neutral terms, the lack of communications between the three different dressing stations, which resulted in an unusual long wait for treatment on the part of many injured until the senior doctor of the Guard, G.G. Winter (1825-1901), put things in order. Wahlberg (*ibid.*) saw the main reason for the disarray in the 'lack of training in peacetime', and listed a multitude of corrections for the army sanitary corps in the future.

A week after the battle the units were mustered by the emperor. According to Wahlberg (pp. 62-4), more important than this for the Finnish Guard was the information that their commander, Colonel Ramsay, had been replaced by Colonel Viktor Procopé (1839-1906), at that time commander of the 101st Permian Infantry Regiment. Because he had not yet arrived, command was temporarily assumed by the head of the Guard's fourth company, Lieutenant Colonel J.C. Sundman (1828-1893).

The Guard spent a dozen or so days on outpost duty, securing the Russian siege of Plevna from attack from the direction of Sofia. Wahlberg (pp. 64-5) found life in camp agreeable. There was no lack of either 'physical or intellectual stimulation': he received visits from other troops and read letters and papers dispatched from Finland. In general, the days were spent in drills and the evenings in lively discussions. The officers' food met the requirements of upper class men accustomed to 'high society'. On one occasion, they enjoyed, for example, 'an excellent steak and a cup of coffee or a glass of wine'. After a while, though, these routine affairs made Wahlberg despondent. For him, the worst thing was that the Guard could not count on a quick ending of their picket, for it depended on the progress made at the siege of Plevna. In mid-November the battalion was given the command to head south. Nothing special happened, except the battle of Pravets and the fact that they had to supply themselves with bread [that is, food]. (Wahlberg 1878: 66-9, 74-5.)

On 4 December the Guard was entrenched on a hill between Orkhanie and the village of Vrachesh, south of Orkhanie. The slopes were soon renamed the 'Finnish Mountain'.<sup>374</sup> (Wahlberg 1878: 94-5.) The outpost was in place almost a month, though Wahlberg and most of the officers did not live on the hill but in the village at its foot. According to Wahlberg (pp. 98-100), all days were the same. On 19 December the Guard was relieved and started to prepare for the crossing of the Balkan mountains. In Wahlberg's opinion (pp. 105-10), the men had enough bread but lacked meat, salt and clothing.<sup>375</sup> Thus the Guard had to resort to *ad hoc* measures, for example, to slaughter some forty sheep to make footwear from their skins. On the morning of 25 December the men departed.

The Finnish Guard advanced more slowly than had been expected. There was also some uncertainty as to the exact plans of the army commanders, and thus the Guard waited for two nights in deep snow, wasting scanty provisions and forage. The guardsmen were lucky enough to be able to fetch some supplies from Vrachesh, where the service corps had remained. The commanders of the units suggested that the troops should turn back, but General Gurko objected. (Wahlberg 1878: 119-20.)

On 27 December the Guard continued its advance. The men arrived in the neighbourhood of Arab Konak and deviated from their 'highway' to follow a steep and narrow path over the rocks. Sappers cut a zig-zag way up the icy slopes, and the soldiers dragged their outfit up the mountain. The ascent of men and animals lasted around eight hours, and during it they lost some of their provisions. Having reached the summit the Guard bivouacked. Next day (29 December) the men descended the other side. The rocks were rather steep, and it was difficult to lower the cannon, and in some cases the

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<sup>374</sup> According to one contemporary account, the 'mountain' was only two or three hundred metres higher than the surrounding plateau, but its slopes were very steep (SK, 15 February 1878, p. 53).

<sup>375</sup> In the opinion of Gripenberg (1905: 207) the reason for the clothing shortage was that on 19 October General Gurko had given an order of the day stating that 'to make the marching easier for the men' part of their outfit, among other things any extra boots, had to be left in a village near Ralyovo. The footwear they got back in San Stefano, Gripenberg said (*ibid.*), but other things were sold in Ruse after the war.

animals, too, but in the end they succeeded. After some skirmishes the Guard continued early on the morning of 2 January 1878 towards Sofia. The road was slippery, and on the way the men passed numerous corpses of fallen Turks. After a moment's desultory fire with retreating Turkish troops, the men arrived at a large village, Vrazhdebna, where they found provisions and lodging in houses.<sup>376</sup> On 4 January the Guard entered Sofia. (Wahlberg 1878: 120-4; 131-5.)

Five days later the Guard headed for Plovdiv to prevent the withdrawing Turkish troops from joining forces. When leaving, the guardsmen were issued winter clothing and other supplies dispatched months before from Finland. Some other things, for example, part of a military hospital's equipment, were still lying on the northern slopes of the Balkan mountains, and Wahlberg, who at that time was also the quartermaster, had to return to Vrachesh to fetch them. There he met some of his comrades who, being ill, had been left there. According to Wahlberg, their situation was worse than those on the front, not because of their illness or the poor conditions in the hospital but because they could do nothing else but lie and wait, feeling extremely bored. (Wahlberg 1878: 155-6, 158-60.)

On his way back Wahlberg met an officer of the Sharpshooter Brigade's second battalion, who informed him about the battle of Plovdiv. On 18 January Wahlberg arrived at the village of Adaköy, half-way between Pazardzhik and Plovdiv, where he saw the first signs of the battle: dead bodies and crushed arms. To provide his reader a full account of the battle, Wahlberg quoted at length (pp. 162-9) a story of it told by the Guard's senior doctor, Winter.

From Plovdiv the Guard headed for Edirne. The most remarkable events on the way were encounters with displaced Turks<sup>377</sup> and the pouring rain, which soaked the men in a small town near Edirne. When crossing the swollen rivers they also lost some pack-animals. (Wahlberg 1878: 181-4.)

It was still pouring when Wahlberg arrived at the outskirts of Edirne and found lodging with a Greek confectioner. He (pp. 189-92) spent many days in the city socialising with his companions, meeting acquaintances from other units, listening to patriotic music performed by members of the Finnish Guard's military band, and hearing rumours of armistice and peace. There was also some unrest, because Wahlberg stated that there were days on which 'hanged Bulgarians decorated the streets like gas lamps at home [in Finland]'.<sup>378</sup> On 5 February the troops were ordered to start for Çorlu, a small town half-way between Edirne and Constantinople. Thus, Wahlberg both contested the Russian army structure by pointing out its shortcomings, and restated the official Fennomane position of the emperor's loyal and courageous Finnish subjects who willingly obeyed imperial orders and fulfilled them no matter what the circumstances.

### ***Fennander***

On 5 October the guardsmen arrived at Gorna Studena, where they were welcomed by the emperor himself. Fennander emphasised the joy felt by the Guard at seeing the emperor, as well as the latter's concern for the Finns, but countered this by continuing that 'words are not enough to relate all the miseries [prolonged rain, darkness, penetrating cold] we had to suffer [right after our departure from Gorna Studena]'. (Fennander 1895: 32-6.)

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<sup>376</sup> To sleep in a house, not in a tent, seemed to have been an important experience since Wahlberg mentioned it on several occasions.

<sup>377</sup> Unlike other guardsmen, Wahlberg did not describe their miseries.

<sup>378</sup> It seems that throughout the war Turks, on the one hand, and Russians and Bulgarians (encouraged by Russians) on the other, committed all kinds of atrocities towards Bulgarian and Turkish civilians. (See Bernhardt 1877: 64-5; Hajek 1939: 42-3; Zimmermann 1878: 821, 951-2.) According to Anderson (1968: 165, relying on contemporary eyewitnesses), '[t]he Turkish governor [of Edirne pursued, in summer of 1877] a brutal policy of reprisal towards any Bulgarian suspected of an offence . . . and every day except Friday was a hanging day'.

Some days later, in the 'Village of Hunger', the Guard was waiting for battle orders, so the men spent their time digging entrenchments and reconnoitring enemy positions. They were also hungry, because during the first six days they had to manage without bread or salt. Their main dish was mutton, which they ate raw, since they were unwilling to walk a long way to fetch fresh water for cooking. This, though, did not discourage them. They sang (military and patriotic) Finnish songs and seized provisions, especially grapes, which had just ripened, from neighbouring Bulgarian villages. According to Fennander, these 'expeditions' were both dangerous (because of reconnoitring Turkish patrols) and 'amusing', the latter perhaps since they were officially forbidden. But because nothing dangerous happened, the men were not punished for disrupting their daily routine. (Fennander 1895: 38-41; cf. Pipping [1978: 69-72] of similar Finnish 'feats' in the Second World War.)

Otherwise Fennander only occasionally mentioned daily routines. Usually he (p. 73) stated merely that this or that was done (earthworks were dug, firewood was fetched for cooking, etc.). Events of ordinary camp life seemed hardly worth mentioning. Nevertheless, passages complaining of the shortage of provisions or, explaining, in the manner of Lindman, Lindfors and Wallin, in detail how false alarms were given due to mistakes made by Russian soldiers (pp. 77-8) may be read as an implicit critique of the army structure and command, though Fennander indicated that they were part of the normal functioning of the army. For example, he mentioned (p. 83), not without irony, that because he and his companions sometimes had nothing to eat but dried rye rusks they were inclined to feel rather 'dry'.

At Vrachesh the guardsmen started to picket on the 'Finnish Mountain'. They were short of provisions there, too. In addition, the weather turned colder. However, a major part of his description (pp. 86-91) is devoted not to these matters but to an adventurous raid on the nearby Turkish outposts and the preparation of a pig for the Christmas meal. It is as if Fennander were trying to counterbalance his recollections of the low spirits caused by carrying out routines by complaining about, or even ridiculing, them, or remembering or perhaps fabricating stories indicating a good mood. For example, in his description of the crossing of the Balkan mountains (pp. 91-4), very little is said about the preparations for the climb or how it progressed, whereas a fair amount is said about the cold weather and the difficulty of lighting a fire. Or, when describing the guardsmen's sojourn in Sofia in January 1878, he paints (pp. 99-100) a quite naturalistic picture of Finns seeking, finding and drinking liquor, and getting drunk.

On 31 January Fennander's unit, then stationed at Edirne, was told that a cease-fire 'very favourable for Russia' had been negotiated (Fennander 1895: 123). The first section of the armistice treaty promised Bulgaria autonomy under Bulgarian administration and the withdrawal of Ottoman troops. Other clauses affirmed Montenegrin, Romanian and Serbian independence, Bosnian and Herzegovinian autonomy, and proper compensation to Russia (see the text in Schopoff 1904: 353-4). A week later the Finnish Guard left the city and headed for Constantinople. On 11 February it arrived at Çorlu.

### *Lindman*

After having crossed the Danube, the Guard rested and 'the men cleaned themselves', since on 5 October they were to be received by the emperor at Gorna Studena. According to Lindman, the emperor welcomed the Finns with a 'magnificent and inspiring speech' and 'wished us luck in our dangerous campaign'. 'As usual', the guardsmen answered with hurrahs. On 6 October, after imperial muster, the troops were commanded to advance, despite heavy rain, and the emperor himself escorted the men for some three kilometres. There was no letup in the rain, and the drenched men were worn out by

marching along muddy roads. The night was spent outdoors in the rain. (Lindman 1880: 13-14.) Lindman (p. 14.) found a hayrick but could not sleep in it, because the sentry guarding them told him to leave.<sup>379</sup> So he had to keep moving the whole night in order not to freeze.

The following week or so was not much better. It kept on pouring. The service corps had caught up with the main troops and there was enough food again, but only for a while. The soaked men had difficulty sleeping and getting their clothes dry. Many contracted dysentery. On 12 October the Guard arrived at Yeni Barkats. There, according to Lindman, for ten days guardsmen had nothing to eat but a slice of [black] bread, accompanied by uncooked maize, bread made of maize flour that they milled themselves by various means, and water-melons. In vain they tried to buy some food<sup>380</sup> in nearby villages; there was none. The guardsmen also spent time on outpost duty and, Lindman claimed, once took four Turks prisoner of war, keeping them in a deep pit. (Lindman 1880: 15-16.)

Reveille for the battle of Gorni Dübrik was sounded at midnight on 23 October. An hour later the men departed, and at half past four they waded across the river Vit. A prayer was said, and the staff captain, W.A. Ehnberg (1841-1895), urged the Finns to follow the example provided by their brave forbears and to fight to the last man. Thereafter the Guard continued through maize fields towards Gorni Dübrik. After the battle a false alarm was given. According to Lindman (p. 21), the reason was the escape of two prisoners of war.<sup>381</sup> The Cossacks caught and killed them, making a noise that was mistaken for a Turkish attack. (Lindman 1880: 17-18, 22.) This probably indicates how tense the men were after their first battle.<sup>382</sup>

On 25 October dead Russian soldiers were buried. After the ceremony Lindman felt both relieved and hungry, and explained that he had not eaten for three days. With his three mates he found a fat sheep, which they slaughtered and ate. Later on the same day the emperor visited the troops and thanked them for their bravery in battle. A little later, at Dolni Dübrik, the Guard was awarded crosses of the Order St Gregorius (12 in all) and was reviewed. Four weeks later, on 20 November, they left to 'conquer Pravets'. The Turkish positions were so high in the mountains that it was 'almost impossible' to get the cannon and 'other war material' up there. However, Pravets was taken rather easily, and the Russian troops took a lot of guns and provisions as booty. (Lindman 1880: 22-4.)

From Pravets the Finnish Guard moved to Vrachesh, where they picketed on the 'Finnish Mountain'. The place was in Lindman's opinion (p. 24) 'difficult and dull' because, among other things, it was a long way to fresh water. The weather turned wet and cold, and footwear was so tattered that water, and later snow, '[permanently] occupied them' (ibid.). There was also a lot of sickness (p. 25).<sup>383</sup> The 'dullness' may have been the reason why young NCOs played tricks on a nearby Turkish picket. One of them attacked with ten men, shouting orders that, for a while, made the Turks think the whole Guard was advancing. The Turks started to fire furiously and the NCO returned, doubled up with laughter. The same happened many times. (Lindman 1880: 25.)<sup>384</sup> On the 'Finnish Mountain' the Guard

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<sup>379</sup> Cf. Palander, in section 9.1.

<sup>380</sup> What he, or the guardsmen in general, understood by 'food' is nowhere specified, but I presume that meat, potatoes, different sorts of porridges and black bread made up an essential part of it (on common food at that time see Talve 1973).

<sup>381</sup> The one was, in Lindman's opinion, an Englishman, the other a Pole.

<sup>382</sup> Similar stories are told of the Finnish war (Brakel 1994: 38; Ehrström 1986: 48-9) and the Second World War (Pipping 1978: 74).

<sup>383</sup> Lindman gave statistics, originally published in the 15 February 1878 issue of SK, p. 53, according to which 87 men were ill in November and 55 in December. Lindman's source (Preface, in Lindman 1880) was the collection of articles entitled *Kuvalemia sodasta Wenäjän ja Turkin välillä* (see Ch. 1.4.).

<sup>384</sup> This, too, is a passage taken directly from SK (15 February 1878, p. 53). Here Lindman is clearly applying the same technique he, and many others, used in composing broadside ballads, that is, paraphrasing news (see Suistola 1987: 222).

heard of the capitulation of Plevn. The news was greeted with joy, and the guardsmen even anticipated a cease-fire. The Russian army staff, though, had decided otherwise, and thus the Guard set out on a journey that 'would ever be counted among the boldest and most wonderful enterprises in history', namely, the crossing of the Balkan mountains in winter. (Lindman 1880: 28.)<sup>385</sup>

On Christmas Eve a barn where some guardsmen were billeted in Vrachesh burned down and two men were injured. One of them died almost instantly and was interred at the foot of the 'Finnish Mountain' (Lindman 1880: 25, see also Jernvall and Wallin, below in this chapter). On Christmas Day, the Guard set out to cross the mountains. The 'road' they marched along was in Lindman's opinion (p. 29) an old, long forgotten 'highway' that had now turned into a forest. The local people did not know of its existence, but 'a wise old Bulgarian' who guided the Russians had revealed it to General Gurko.<sup>386</sup> Sappers, guided by this old man, went first preparing the way. The rest of the troops followed with the heavy kit. Soon they had to stop, because the vanguard had got stuck somewhere. The guardsmen bivouacked in the snow while sappers cleared the way during the night. 'At last', Lindman stated, the Guard reached the summit, and on 31 December the men arrived at the southern side of the Balkans.<sup>387</sup> One of the most uplifting moments of the war for Lindman was when General Gurko thanked the soldiers after the crossing. (Lindman 1880: 29-31.)

On 4 January the Guard entered Sofia with 'colours flying and bands playing'. In the main cathedral a 'solemn prayer' was said for the capitulation of the city. (Lindman 1880: 29.) After their departure from Sofia three days later, the guardsmen received an assignment of clothing from Finland. In Lindman's opinion (p. 34) this was badly needed, though it would have been better had it arrived before the crossing of the Balkans.

On their way to Plovdiv the guardsmen advanced through two mountainous areas but, according to Lindman (p. 34), after the crossing of the 'great Balkans' they were a piece of cake. When approaching Pazardzhik, the guardsmen observed that the town was ablaze. Lindman thought that the retreating Turks had set the houses on fire. However, the Guard had no time to put out the flames but continued on their way 'the band playing'. Local inhabitants, said Lindman, offered<sup>388</sup> them bread, wine and even tobacco.<sup>389</sup> (Lindman 1880: 35.) In the same way, during the Crimean War, Finns are said to have offered spirits, beer and tobacco to Russian soldiers who came to defend the south and west coasts of Finland against the British (Luntinen 1997: 89, especially note 78). In general, giving or refusing to give tobacco seems to be for soldiers an important symbol of mutual relations, friendly or hostile (Krenchel 1929: 26, 30).

The Guard then followed the Turks, crossed the river Maritsa, and were stationed in an outpost. The men's clothing was sodden and froze on their bodies, but fortunately there happened to be a good store of wine in a not distant village. The men warmed themselves by drinking this, while at the

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<sup>385</sup> Here, again, Lindman paraphrased SK (15 April 1878, p. 101). He also reported (p. 28), like SK, that every night a large number of men got frost-bite. Unlike SK, Lindman added that they were Russians (and not Finns).

<sup>386</sup> According to Hozier (1879: 772), the 'road' was a path revealed to Russians by a local Bulgarian shepherd.

<sup>387</sup> Lindman inserted here (pp. 30-1) a long quotation from SK (15 April 1878, p. 115), where 'an officer of our Guard' described the transport of cannon over the mountains. I have omitted it because it adds nothing special to the 'feat' of crossing the wintry Balkan mountains as described by Wahlberg.

<sup>388</sup> In the same way, during the Crimean War, Finns are said to have offered spirits, beer and tobacco to Russian soldiers who came to defend the south and west coasts of Finland against the British (Luntinen 1997: 89, especially note 78). In general, giving or refusing to give tobacco seems to be for soldiers an important symbol of mutual relations, friendly or hostile (Krenchel 1929: 26, 30).

<sup>389</sup> This somewhat obscure passage, restated by Lindfors (1975: 25-6), obviously means that Finns were ordered not to stop to put out fires (and, perhaps, to use the opportunity to seize booty) but to rest somewhere on the outskirts of the town, where local people entertained them (see Hiisivaara 1968: 161).

same time, Lindman stated, Turks burned down a nearby Turkish village<sup>390</sup> and tortured its inhabitants, so that ‘today . . . thousands of Bulgarians’ were killed. (Lindman 1880: 35-6.) Some days later, after the battle of Plovdiv, the guardsmen returned to a village where they had spent the previous night. According to Lindman (p. 36), there was a lot of meat and wine, but little bread. The same was true of Plovdiv, though there the men had to buy their wine (p. 38).

Not unlike most of my sources, Lindman, too, described in detail the flight of Turkish civilians before the Russian troops in south-eastern Bulgaria, and the ghastly sight of hundreds of dead along the way from Plovdiv to Kharmanli. According to Lindman, the road was full of corpses of Turkish and Bulgarian civilians, and Turkish soldiers, many of them badly mutilated. Women, children and old men, as well as the animals who had pulled their carts, had died of hunger and cold.<sup>391</sup> (Lindman 1880: 40-1.) He concluded (p. 41) that ‘[h]e who had with his own eyes seen this misery could never forget it. It was not unusual for mothers in the dark of night to abandon their children by the roadside in the snow . . . Bulgarians [then came and] plundered things [left by the wayside] and threw the children in the mud’.<sup>392</sup> In general, then, Lindman’s own voice, and mood, is melancholy. So as not to challenge the structure too badly, and to encourage himself, he inserts passages that relate ‘high’ moments of the campaign, temerity in patrolling, and the crossing of the Balkans. But he often separates these voices (of NCOs and officers) from his own mood, or his relation to them, by adding the source from which his inserts are taken.

### *Palander*

The Guard crossed the Danube on 3 October, marched for one day, and rested. According to Palander (1881: 14), a rest was usually ordered after two days’ march, but because the emperor was going to review the Guard, the men were given time to prepare themselves. On the morning of 5 October the Guard went to nearby Gorna Studena. The emperor welcomed them already on the outskirts and, said Palander (pp. 15-16), displayed his favour to the Guard. The Finnish soldiers, for their part, rejoiced that their ‘dear Grand Prince<sup>393</sup> escorted them to their lodging’. According to Palander (*ibid.*), the guardsmen supposed that they would have several days’ rest, but since a ‘soldier’s duty is not to idle’ they were, instead, ordered to continue their march the next day.

The Guard first advanced along a ‘well-prepared way made of stone’, but soon turned onto a village track. The day was hot and the men had nothing to drink. ‘In fact, by the wayside we saw a well but because [many] troops had already [used it] before us, it had been emptied and only a little muddy slime was left’. In the afternoon it started to rain, and all sorts of stories ‘about how the rainy season turned Bulgarian roads into bottomless quagmires started to frighten us’. (Palander 1881: 16.) Their fear was not unfounded. Torrents of rain soon had the guardsmen wading through mud. Marching was extremely hard and now and then some soldiers, Russians according to Palander (p. 17), became exhausted and gave up, being too tired to take one more step. Neither commands nor requests could force them to continue.<sup>394</sup> Communications between units disintegrated, too. On the second day of the

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<sup>390</sup> This may be a misprint, because in the same sentence Lindman speaks of the village’s Bulgarian inhabitants. Another possibility is that he saw no particular difference between Bulgarians and Turks. But apart from that, it is evident that in the early days of the war Russians had set local villages ablaze to prevent Turkish troops from using them, and now the Turks burned them in order to deprive Russians of the shelter they might give (see Baker 1879a: 144; 1879b: 188-9).

<sup>391</sup> Lindman’s description is an abridged version of an article in SK (15 May 1878, pp. 143-7), the source of which is not mentioned.

<sup>392</sup> This is Lindman’s own comment, although based on an article in SK.

<sup>393</sup> Unlike most guardsmen, Palander here speaks of Grand Prince (of Finland) and not the emperor (of Russia).

<sup>394</sup> Cf. above Wahlberg for an almost identical note.

march when the Finns arrived at the place where they were ordered to spend the night, the soldiers who had been sent on ahead to look for a decent dry place lost their way, and were found only after some hours. Thus everyone had to bivouac as best he could, and in the end nobody knew where the rest of his unit was. (Palander 1881: 17-19.)

Next day they rested, warming themselves around campfires made of stooks, thus 'bidding farewell' to provisions for horses, Palander observed. The guardsmen, for their part, fortified themselves with liquor sold by some Romanian peddlers. The next day (9 October) the rain stopped, but the mud made advancing hard. The service corps lagged behind, and 'we had to eat whatever we could find'. Thus, when three days later the men arrived at Yeni Barkats, Palander was very grateful, since it was the first sunny day for a long time. (Palander 1881: 19, 26.)

The Guard spent about ten days in the village. In the daytime it was warm and cloudless, but the nights were chilly. Moreover, there were no provisions and the food taken by force from local villages was insufficient. At least to Finnish taste the maize bread and mutton without salt were no delicacy.<sup>395</sup> The lack of supplies (or perhaps the monotonous diet) also resulted in diarrhoea. The arrival of the service corps saved the men from worse, and after a few days most of them had recovered and were in a better mood. (Palander 1881: 26.)

Camp life at Yeni Barkats was in Palander's opinion (pp. 27-8), apart from the matter of food, 'quiet and restful'. Each morning started with a short prayer, after which 'everybody went about his duties'. Young guardsmen who longed for adventure were at any time ready to volunteer to reconnoitre the surroundings, returning with grapes and hay or even the 'small Turkish horses that ran semi-wild on the plain below our bivouac'. Others watched the movements of Turkish service corps to and from Plevna. In the night they stared at Turkish campfires and pondered their future. After the battle of Gorni Dübnik, the wounded were given medical treatment and the dead were buried. Inspections were held, and the bravest guardsmen were awarded crosses of the Order of St Gregorius. New tasks waited ahead, and the battle of Gorni Dübnik soon looked, in Palander's words, 'like an unforgettable dream'. (Palander 1881: 47-9.)

The Guard's next goal was nearby Dolni Dübnik. The fortifications were not attacked but the guardsmen divided their time between outpost duties and rest. The Turks soon abandoned the stronghold, and the Guard was stationed there until 13 November. This stay was, according to Palander, rather dull, notwithstanding the now abundant supply of food. A usual day consisted of morning prayers, drill, dinner, rest, a shorter drill and evening prayers. This monotony was relieved by the emperor, who in early November reviewed the Guard. (Palander 1881: 49-51.)

During the Guard's stay at Dolni Dübnik, rumours spread that the men would soon be sent home. Thus the guardsmen were a little disappointed when, instead, they were ordered to continue southwards. Their next stops were Radomirski, near Telish, on 14 November, for two nights, and Yablanitsa, where they spent half a week and were ordered to build a winter camp. Even the peddlers who followed the troops started to make proper stalls for themselves. Nevertheless, on 21 November the Guard was ordered to march to the village of Pravets and to attack the adjacent Turkish fortifications. According to Palander, the men were calm: 'No longer was it a novelty to point a murderous weapon at a human being. It had turned into simple performance of duty . . .' (Palander 1881: 55-7.)

After the battle the Guard had some problems with provisions because the service corps still lagged behind. It started first to rain and then to snow, and the guardsmen were not pleased to learn

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<sup>395</sup> Cf. above, Wahlberg. Here again Palander's description seems to owe something to the Guard's junior doctor.

that they had to stand in outpost on a hill near Orkhanie for a long time. Neither did they like the shortage of provisions, nor the fact that they had to fetch their drinking-water from a valley some 300 metres below their lodging. Once again the men divided their time between outpost duties and rest while the other battalions of the brigade were engaged in battles. The Finns complained at first, but later they learned that the commander of the brigade, General Ellis, had wanted to give the Guard, and especially its numerous sick, time to recover.<sup>396</sup> (Palander 1881: 65-70.)

The time on the 'Finnish Mountain' was rather hard. Shelter was far from adequate, the mountain itself was frequently wrapped in fog or cloud, and since it often rained or snowed the guardsmen were alternately either soaked or frozen. Pieces of their kit rotted, and many of the men fell ill. To entertain themselves, some guardsmen volunteered to raid Turkish pickets. At other times the men sang Finnish songs which, according to Palander, even the Turks listened to. (Palander 1881: 71-3.) On 13 December the Guard learned that Pleven had surrendered. According to Palander (pp. 73-5), the guardsmen at first hardly believed it because it was so unexpected. The news, though, encouraged them to put up with the now bitterly cold weather.

Just before Christmas the men were removed from their outpost, stationed in Vrachesh, and told that they would soon cross the Balkans. On Christmas Day (N.S.) they started the ascent of the mountains. As Palander put it (pp. 77-80), 'hardly anybody who read or heard about [the crossing] . . . could ever imagine the tribulations that accompanied it'. To begin with, after their departure the men could advance only a few kilometres before they had to stop to wait for the cannon. 'The open sky above our heads was our roof, snow-drifts were our beds . . .' In cold and storm they had to wait for over forty-eight hours before going on. Their tortuous path was icy, which did not make the ascent any easier, and after a while a snow-storm blew up. In addition to their normal kit, every man had to drag a shell with him. In spite of all this they arrived at the summit on the afternoon of 28 December, that is, in about two days. There they stopped overnight and descended next day (p. 81). After a few brief skirmishes the exhausted Guard arrived in rather chilly weather in Sofia. Turkish troops had abandoned the city without a fight, and the guardsmen marched in after their commanders had warned them to conduct themselves in a seemly manner. (Palander 1881: 84-8.)

On the next pages Palander digressed to describe the Ottoman empire, the location of Sofia, and the ethnology of her inhabitants (pp. 88-95). Of his stay in Sofia he had little to say, since the days were 'monotonous'. He merely said that the Guard rested, did outpost duty, and acquired provisions from a Greek merchant 'at a reasonable price'. On 7 January the guardsmen were instructed that they would start the following day. They were also told that the 'warm clothes sent from Finland' had arrived and were at a distance of one day's journey. However, they did not wait for them but left the city on the morning of 9 January, and received the dispatch on the evening of the same day in a 'miserable village'. This message from their distant homeland was interpreted by the guardsmen as 'tender solicitude on the part of [their] mothers and sisters'.<sup>397</sup> (Palander 1881: 95-7.)

The weather was still cold and snowy, making the advance difficult. On 11 January the guardsmen arrived at Ikhtiman, a small town taken on the same day by other troops of the Russian army.<sup>398</sup> Next day they reached a rather high group of mountains, Trajan's Gates. Again manhandling the cannon, the men crossed them and arrived at the other side late in the night. Contrary to army

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<sup>396</sup> Cf. Wallin, in section 9.1., for a different view on Ellis.

<sup>397</sup> Finnish women, as well as their Russian counterparts (see Kollontay 1946: 19), had made socks and other garments for their countrymen in the army.

<sup>398</sup> According to Hajek (1939: 65), Russian troops led by General Shuvalov occupied Ikhtiman on 11 January, and Pazardzhik two days later.



regulations, they were not allowed to rest the following day, but only on the day after that. During the rest, thirteen guardsmen were awarded crosses of the Order of St Gregorius for bravery displayed in their crossing of the Balkan mountains. On 14 January they continued and arrived in the Maritsa river valley. It turned warm and bright and there was not much snow. Around noon the men reached Pazardzhik. They did not stay there, though, but moved on towards the Maritsa and, in the afternoon, waded across and immediately clashed with some Turkish units. Palander did not describe the fight but only stated that ‘the enemy fell back on the mountains and we were stationed [in a nearby village]’. There the guardsmen found both wine and liquor and had a good time, with the deserved hangover next day, when they continued towards Plovdiv. (Palander 1881: 99-100.) After a few kilometres they came across Turkish troops. The battle of Plovdiv lasted on and off for three days. After it the Guard spent four days in Plovdiv resting, of which Palander had nothing to say. Equally scant is his report of their march to Edirne, of which there was ‘hardly anything worth mentioning, except the terrible consequences of the escape of Turkish civilians’. To describe them Palander quoted at length a moving story penned by a ‘well-known’ correspondent of the London *Daily News*.<sup>399</sup> After that he hastily sketched the Guard’s entrance into Edirne, and two events there. The first was a review of the Guard by the emperor, who addressed it with a few words in Finnish. The second was an accident that happened to the Moscow Regiment.<sup>400</sup> (Palander 1881: 97-107.) Thus Palander emphasised the men’s loyalty to the emperor and restricted himself to not openly criticising the Russians. Thus far his mood was in accordance with army views and Fennomane politics. However, he rarely singled out awards received after the battle, and in general conveyed an impression of the men’s low spirits during the war, implying that, despite the fact that many of them were volunteers, their relation to official politics and ideals was ambiguous.

### ***Jernvall***

After having crossed the Danube the Finnish Guard advanced for a few hours ‘up steep hills and slopes’ before pitching camp near Tsarevets.<sup>401</sup> The next day (4 October) they rested. A morning prayer was said, after which the guardsmen mended their equipment and watched the passing carts transporting supplies or prisoners of war escorted by a few Cossacks. On the morning of 5 October the Guard continued its march to Gorna Studena, where it met the emperor, cheered him and, singing Finnish military songs, escorted him through the village. On the other side of Gorna Studena the Guard joined the brigade’s other battalions, which had already spent some ten days there. (Jernvall 1899: 30-1.)

The following day started with the usual morning prayer. Some hours later the emperor reviewed the brigade. Jernvall described it briefly (p. 32 saying that ‘at the end he [the emperor] wished us luck in all the vicissitudes of the war’. This statement was welcomed with ‘enthusiastic’, ‘endless’ cheering - just as army regulations ordered. Then the units departed. It was pouring with rain, and ‘everybody had an opportunity to think about his future destiny’. Water softened the earth, making both marching and pitching camp difficult. The soldiers were soon drenched and covered in mud. The advance in general was badly organised. Jernvall related (pp. 32-4), for example, how on the evening of 7 October the guardsmen had to encamp near a village in total darkness and go to sleep without having a fire or getting anything to eat. However, Jernvall did not actually complain about the situation but merely stated that ‘words cannot describe this misery, neither are they able to dispel it’. He comforted himself, and the reader, with a proverb: ‘Human life is not a bed of roses.’

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<sup>399</sup> See Ch. 8, note 311.

<sup>400</sup> See Lindman and Palander, in section 9.1.

<sup>401</sup> A village halfway between Svishtov and Gorna Studena.

The following days were all alike. The torrential rain continued, the service corps was straying somewhere in the middle of nowhere, and marching alternated with patrolling (during the night) or compelling local Bulgarians to supply the guardsmen with food. On 12 October the Guard arrived at Yeni Barkats, and on the next day the rain stopped. The men complained about the constant lack of bread and salt but seemed otherwise to be contented enough hunting for food and preparing for a possible Turkish attack. On 19 October General Gurko reviewed the troops and advised them to 'be sparing with cartridges in battle and biscuits in their lodging'. Next day the Guard spent in drill, and the following day also started with drill, but after a while the men were sent back to their bivouac, and at one o'clock divine service was held. A telegraph and field post office was set up and the soldiers quickly seized the opportunity to send messages to their relatives in Finland. The 22 October passed in uncertainty about the future, but the following day it was confirmed that 'tomorrow we will have to fight in order to expel the Turks from a village'. According to Jernvall, the guardsmen would have but two choices 'tomorrow': to conquer or to die. Early on the morning of 24 October the troops were commanded to march towards Gorni Dübnik. (Jernvall 1899: 35-49; the quotations are from pp. 45 and 48, respectively.)

After the battle of Gorni Dübnik the Guard again stayed where they were and waited. It had turned so cold that the men burned everything they could find, even the telegraph masts, stooks and cartridge boxes left by the Turks. They spent their time taking care of the wounded, burying the dead, cooking and overhauling their equipment. Next day the commanders, including Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich, thanked the guardsmen. Nikolay's thanks were repeated on 28 October, when several crosses of the Order of St Gregorius were awarded to 'valiant NCOs and privates' (p. 83).

After a few days on outpost duty in Dolni Dübnik, which the Turks had given up without battle, Jernvall's company was again put in reserve. The most senior commanders, among them the emperor, General Gurko and Carol I, prince of Romania,<sup>402</sup> visited the Guard on 2 and 3 November, obviously to encourage the troops. (Jernvall 1899: 85-92.) The next few days were a rather 'tedious' time for the Guard (p. 93), full of daily military routines, and in mid-November the men set out for Sofia. The road was now good, especially when compared with the muddy fields they had had to push through a month before (pp. 95, 97). Jernvall had nothing special to report. He admired the landscape, but otherwise life was a 'monotonous' round of digging entrenchments and coping with chilly nights (p. 100). On 21 November the guardsmen were informed that the next day they would fight again (p. 101). It was to be the battle of Pravets.

From Pravets the guardsmen moved some kilometres westwards, to near Orkhanie. It began to snow, a storm blew up, and since their tents were either in bad condition or had been lost altogether, they suffered from the bitter cold and, very soon, lack of supplies, too. Thus they had to resort to excavating pits in the ground (in the end these 'cabins' were, in Jernvall's opinion, rather comfortable) and plundering foodstuffs from abandoned houses. (Jernvall 1899: 116-20.) On 1 December the Guard was commanded to picket on the 'Finnish Mountain'. From there they fired desultory shots at the Turkish outposts which, according to Jernvall (pp. 125-7), could not fire back effectively, because the range of their cannon was too short.<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> He was commander-in-chief of the troops besieging Plevna, and also of the Finnish Guard from 8 to 22 October (Järvinen 1932: 291).

<sup>403</sup> This could be true, but also a part of Jernvall's narrative about 'our' superiority. Baker's notes (1879a: 151, 185) about Turkish heavy guns allow both interpretations.

Standing in outpost alternated with reconnoitring. One night Jernvall and two other guardsmen were sent to the next Russian picket, which was manned by the Izmailovo Guard. The patrol's mission was, first, to inform the Russians that all was quiet in their sector and, second, to ask if the other had any news. The three guardsmen groped their way in the dark when suddenly, near a mill, they chanced on 'six strongly-built Turkish<sup>404</sup> dogs'. According to Jernvall, they looked 'like wolves and had the nature of a wolf, too'. With Jernvall's sword and the soldiers' bayonets they managed to get rid of the dogs. The 'miller [a Bulgarian] pretended not to have heard [the dogs' barking and whining]'. Without further adventures the guardsmen arrived at the Izmailovo outpost, delivered their message and returned to camp. (Jernvall 1899: 128-9.)

The Guard hung around the 'Finnish Mountain' until Christmas. It snowed, and the weather got colder and colder. Outpost duties alternated with resting and mending their kit. In the end, according to Jernvall, the men knew the place as well as the inside of their pockets. To protect themselves from the cold, the guardsmen built some huts of branches, twigs and bundles of leaves, and lit fires inside to warm them. This called for care since the huts were constructed of a rather combustible material. Once, according to Jernvall, the company captain's batman, an elderly Russian<sup>405</sup> soldier, was commanded to keep an eye on the fire at night. He fell asleep, though, and the hut burned down, but the captain and his batman managed to escape. (Jernvall 1899: 130-5.)

On 12 December the Guard learned that the emperor had granted them twelve crosses of the Order of St Gregorius for courage displayed at the battle of Pravets. The men were instructed to choose twelve soldiers from amongst their own number. One of them was Jernvall. On 15 December Jernvall's company was temporarily lodged in Vrachesh. Two days later it returned to the mountain, only to descend once again on 19 December. All the time the snow kept on falling. In Jernvall's opinion, the guardsmen were living 'like [wandering] gypsies, if not even worse'. (Jernvall 1899: 139-45; the quotation is from p. 144.)

On 23 December Jernvall's company again descended to Vrachesh, but could no longer find a single house to stay in. The reason was that after the surrender of Pleven, Russian soldiers poured out of the town in the direction of Sofia, and many of them were at that moment billeted in Vrachesh. Eventually the Finns found shelter in some dilapidated barns. The next evening (Christmas Eve, N.S.) one of the barns collapsed, killing two men of the third company, who were buried by a stream in the vicinity. The rest had supper, followed, in the chilly darkness, by thoughts of God and relatives back home before they fell asleep in the hope of better times ahead. (Jernvall 1899: 145-9.)

On Christmas Day the men left for Arab Konak. According to Jernvall it was very cold, minus 20 degrees Celsius, and getting a fire going was difficult. To avoid the strongholds in Arab Konak the troops turned onto an icy mountain path that, due to the deep snow, was hard going, especially with cannon, shells, horses and oxen (the latter were for food). Jernvall did not report the difficulties the Guard had during the climb. At the top many men lay awake the whole night, but some slept 'quite peacefully, although it was really cold, protected from the snow by canvas'. (Jernvall 1899: 149-55; the quotation is from p. 155.)

Next morning the men started the difficult descent. The weather was still cold and stormy. The path was steep and slippery, and especially with animals and cannon progress was slow and arduous. Many a time the men were forced to wait until those lower down had managed to pass a difficult point. Nevertheless, according to Jernvall, the 'Finnish fellows descended with enthusiasm and

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<sup>404</sup> More probably they were Bulgarian dog; it was only the attack on enemy space that made Jernvall consider them Turkish.

<sup>405</sup> Why Captain Bremer had a Russian, and not a Finnish, batman in an all-Finnish unit is unknown to me.

courage' through untrodden snow-drifts. In the evening they arrived without losses at the foot of the mountains. There they were billeted in a village until the early morning of 31 December, when they were again given the order to march. Their destination was the village of Sarantsi at the foot of the pass of the same name beyond Arab Konak. After a short, and for the Russian army victorious, battle the guardsmen bivouacked overnight near the village. Next morning (1 January) they went on again. After some four hours' march they caught sight of withdrawing Turkish units. Though the Turks were superior in numbers they kept on retreating. The guardsmen followed, and caught up with the Turkish rear in a Bulgarian village. According to Jernvall, some of the Turks tried to hide but capitulated without a fight after the villagers revealed their hiding place. Many of them suffered from frost-bite. (Jernvall 1899: 155-66, the quotation is from p. 158.)

The villagers gave a warm welcome to the Russian troops, who stopped there for a while and replenished their supplies before starting to clear the district of any remaining Turks. Similar stories about Bulgarian hospitality during the 1877-8 war were told from many places.<sup>406</sup> Whether true or not, these stories reproduced the notion of Russian authority and superiority in Bulgaria, for the welcome given the Russian soldiers much resembled the ceremonies with which, in the late 19th century, the new governor of a Russian province would be welcomed and acknowledged as the messenger and representative of 'civil order' (Yaroshevski 1997: 58-9).

On the banks of the river Iskür, the Guard engaged in a short skirmish on 2 January, but otherwise advanced unhampered because the Turks, continually menaced by Russian outflanking, continued to fall back, eventually giving up Sofia, too, without a fight. The Finnish Guard did not enter Sofia until the evening of 4 January. According to Jernvall, this happened in an atmosphere of some joy: the band played and the soldiers sang. (Jernvall 1899: 166-75.)

Jernvall's company spent a while in Sofia and then relieved another company in an outpost located some two kilometres outside the city on the road to Plovdiv. After a day the men came back, only to return to their picket the following day. On the morning of 9 January they left for Plovdiv, and in the evening stopped for the night in a village where a load of supplies from Finland reached them. Every man was issued a new pair of boots and two pairs of socks. The guardsmen were very grateful and, promising to march all the way to the grave of the Saviour if necessary, spared a kind thought for the 'dear maidens of Finland' who had 'not yet forgotten them but had knitted them such beautiful and good socks'. (Jernvall 1899: 178, 182-4; the quotation is from the p. 184.)

On 10 January the men continued their march, and in the evening their new commander, Colonel Procopé, joined them, bringing many thanks to the 'brave and loyal' soldiers from the 'heir of the throne'.<sup>407</sup> In the evening a fire broke out in the village where the Guard was stationed, burning down some houses and injuring the colonel's horse so badly that it had to be shot. Next day the guardsmen continued to Ikhtiman, where they were billeted in some abandoned Turkish houses. On 12 January they passed through Trajan's Gates. The terrain was particularly difficult, especially for the cannon. (Jernvall 1899: 184-8.)

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<sup>406</sup> For example, when the Russians had crossed the Danube and arrived at Svishtov (28 June 1877), local Christians reportedly welcomed them with flowers and by ringing the church bells, which had been forbidden for a long time by the Turks. Men knelt before the soldiers, and women kissed their hands. When the emperor visited Svishtov on 3 July 1877 he was met in the traditional Slavonic way with bread and salt, and also with great joy. (Hajek 1939: 25.) According to a Bulgarian historian, Gurko's detachment was 'inevitably welcomed with tears, flowers, bread and salt' (Lalkov 1998: 139). Baker (1879b: 123-4) told a similar story of Russians at Sarantsi. See also Ch. 10.2.

<sup>407</sup> Crown Prince Alexander Alexandrovich (the future Emperor Alexander III), who at that time was commander of the eastern column of the Russian Danubean army (Lalkov 1998: 138-9). Procopé had met the prince on his way to his troop.

The next few days were no different from the previous ones: marching alternated with resting. On 14 January the Guard arrived at Pazardzhik, where a Turkish rear guard was about to retreat. After some shooting, the guardsmen lost contact with the enemy. They rested for a few hours outside the gates of Pazardzhik, and then continued to the Maritsa. On its banks they came across some Turkish units burning down a village and causing other damage. The bridge over the river was also destroyed. Russian troops were ordered to attack, and the Finns were commanded to cross the ice-cold but shallow Maritsa first, which they did without hesitation.<sup>408</sup> They got sight of the Turks, but it was too dark to fight. The soaked and frozen men spent the night in the nearby village of Adaköy, where they made campfires and found wine and pork to warm themselves. Next morning, after some hours of marching, they again ran across Turkish troops, who now decided to fight. The battle of Plovdiv lasted three days and ended in a total Turkish defeat. Jernvall's company was then billeted in the village of Likovo,<sup>409</sup> some kilometres south of Plovdiv. The men slaughtered and ate a cow they happened upon, and spent the night in a barn. Next day, after having tasted sweet wine in a village close by, they marched to the gates of Plovdiv where General Gurko thanked them for their bravery and warned them not to disturb the citizens or destroy their property. The troops spent a few days in the city and headed, on 22 January, for Edirne. Soon after Kharmanli they caught a glimpse of Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich. According to Jernvall, this sight much delighted the men. Then the rain started, and by the time they arrived at Svilengrad<sup>410</sup> they were soaked through. The town was full of mud but Jernvall managed to find lodging in a fairly dry 'bazaar [shop]'. (Jernvall 1899: 192-6, 200-14, 227-31.)

On 27 January the Guard continued the march. After some kilometres they arrived at a tributary of the Maritsa, which was swollen from the rain and melting snow. The retreating Turks had destroyed the bridge and there was little wood to build a replacement. Thus the re-construction took some time and the guardsmen had to wait in the rain and cold. As a result they did not reach Edirne on the same day as was intended but had to overnight by the wayside and seize some food from a nearby village. The following day, then, they arrived at Edirne, where they were billeted in a big, three-storey house, allegedly belonging to a Jewish pasha who had fled to Constantinople. Next day the commander-in-chief, Nikolay Nikolayevich, mustered the troops and distributed medals awarded by the emperor to those NCOs and common soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the last few battles. On the evening of 31 January Jernvall heard rumours, later confirmed, of an armistice. The guardsmen were pleased to learn that the war was drawing to a close. (Jernvall 1899: 231-42.)

The first days of February the guardsmen spent mainly washing and mending their clothes and footwear. On 4 February the reserve, 150 men sent from Helsinki around the middle of January (Lindgren 1878: 117), reached them, just in time for the armistice - as some older soldiers were not slow to remark. Two days later the Guard left for Edirne. It turned very warm, and after having suffered from the cold for so long, the guardsmen now had to endure the heat, which in some places turned the ground into a morass. On 11 February, the men arrived at Çorlu. As usual, they entered playing military tunes and singing appropriate songs to mark their taking possession of the place. (Jernvall 1899: 243-52.)

The Guard spent some ten days in Çorlu. The weather was variable, some days being cool, others warm. Provisions were again in short supply, but the soldiers were pleased because, unlike in the mountains, at least they had shelter. There was little to do except chat with their Armenian hosts<sup>411</sup> and

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<sup>408</sup> Cf. Lindman, in Ch. 6.3.

<sup>409</sup> Then Dermendere.

<sup>410</sup> Near the present Turko-Bulgarian border, at that time called Mustafa Pasha.

<sup>411</sup> See Ch. 10.3.

drill over and over again. Around mid-February additional supplies arrived from Finland, and the guardsmen were happy to get new underclothes. (Jernvall 1899: 252-60.) On 20 February they set off once again. They reached Silivri the following day, and two days later caught a glimpse of Constantinople. The view pleased Jernvall (p. 264), as did the sight of Russian troops that, like a gigantic curling serpent, were now reaching 'their campaign's end', ready to destroy the city if needed.

Thus, to inform his reader about the men's mood Jernvall emphasised events related to courage, endurance and loyalty to the emperor and the army structure. One could say that this is exactly what one might expect from a contemporary professional matching structural ideals. Only Jernvall's notes on relations to Bulgarians, Turks and Russians, which in most cases tend to be rather derogatory, indicate that he made a great distinction between 'us' and the other. For example, when emphasising Finnish loyalty he stressed *Finnish* fidelity to those in power in general or to the prevailing military authority. Thus, by stressing obedience to authority Jernvall managed to describe the men's mood during the war in a manner equally acceptable to current Finnish and Russian politics, and public memory.

### **Lindfors**

After having crossed the Danube the guardsmen rested. On 4 October they continued their march, arriving in the evening at Gorna Studena. The emperor himself welcomed the Guard, which joined the other three battalions of the brigade. Next day the troops were reviewed by the emperor, who wished them well and urged them to show the same courage as in their manoeuvres at Krasnoye Selo. The weather was terrible. The pouring rain turned the fields into a sea of mud as they advanced and soaked their clothing so that in no time they were shivering with the cold. Then, in the evening they had to pitch camp without a fire, surrounded by mud. Lindfors was lucky enough to buy a drink from a peddler to warm himself; much else for dinner he did not get. (Lindfors 1975: 6-8.)

The next few days were no different. On 12 October<sup>412</sup> the men arrived at Yeni Barkats, where they were stationed for several days while listening to the 'funeral march' of cannon from Plevna. They were starving, for the service corps lagged behind. Lindfors, though, was not critical of the situation. Instead, he described how they ground maize with their hand-made tools and gathered grapes to eat.<sup>413</sup> (Lindfors 1975: 9-11.) Unlike Wahlberg or Palander, he, a man of lower order, did not feel that this 'barbarian' food was tasteless or inappropriate.

More than a week later the service corps caught them up and the usual provisions were again distributed. Early on the morning of 24 October, the men departed for Gorni Dŭbnik, where the fighting lasted until nightfall. Lindfors testified that the guardsmen who emerged from the battle alive and unscathed were extremely glad but had difficulty falling asleep. Late in the night the alarm was raised, but it proved to be false. In the morning the brigade gathered for divine service to thank the Lord for victory. After that the dead Finns were buried with 'due solemnity'. Those who had especially distinguished themselves in battle were awarded crosses of the Order of St Gregorius. (Lindfors 1975: 11-16.)

The following two weeks the Guard picketed in Dolni Dŭbnik. The men then moved off towards the Balkan mountains, engaged in a skirmish at Pravets, and arrested 'a malevolent Turk' in a village, where they bought provisions and assorted equipment 'at a low price'. At the end of November

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<sup>412</sup> Lindfors (1975: 9) incorrectly gives the date 14 October.

<sup>413</sup> Similar 'improvisations' were reported from the First World War. A certain Bruce Bairnsfather, for example, used his pistol to supplement his rations, getting one day 'a rabbit and three chickens together with gooseberries and rhubarb from no-man's-land' (Winter 1979: 19). The latter two he, of course, got without shooting!

the Guard took an outpost near Orkhanie, where they stayed until Christmas. The days spent in picket or resting alternated with sorties to reconnoitre enemy positions. It seems that for Lindfors the latter was the most important, for he reported that he volunteered five times for patrols of the Turkish outposts, and devoted considerable space to describing them. He said he went on these excursions 'for fun and to pass the time'. Like my other sources, Lindfors, too, mentioned that they were plagued by pouring rain or heavy snow, accompanied by cold. Though provisions were now abundant, the guardsmen grew tired and longed 'ardently' to return to battle. This wish showed signs of being granted on Christmas Day, when they started the crossing of the Balkans. According to Lindfors, it was an 'awful trip' because of the cold, blizzards, inadequate clothing and sparse provisions. Also manhandling the cannon and helping the horses along icy and trackless heights was no pleasure. In sixteen hours, however, they made it to the top and were ready to forget all their previous obstacles and hardships. Making fires was not easy since they had no dry firewood, but in the end some guardsmen managed to get one going. During the night it snowed a lot, and in the morning the soldiers were covered with flakes 'like Lapps'. In a snowstorm they made the descent, now and then losing control of the cannon, but finally coming safely to the other side and even ground. (Lindfors 1975:16-22.)

At the end of December there were some minor skirmishes, but as a rule the Turks were better at retreating than fighting. Thus the guardsmen advanced rapidly and, guided by an elderly Bulgarian, arrived in early January at the outskirts of Sofia, where they rested and 'waited for orders to take the city'. There was no need to resort to force, however, because the Turkish troops again withdrew without a fight, leaving 'hundreds' of empty tents behind them. Thus the conqueror could enter with trumpets and drums playing. (Lindfors 1975: 24-5.)

On 8 January Lindfors's company left Sofia, their packs full of Turkish bread and other provisions. By the wayside they saw 'dead Turks and all sorts of remains that the retreating men had not had time to clean up or take with them' (pp. 25-6). In Pazardzhik they engaged with the enemy, who escaped after having set the town ablaze in several places. The guardsmen, however, had no time to extinguish the fires but marched, band playing, through the city. That notwithstanding, the 'dear brethren' of Pazardzhik 'handed us packages of tobacco' (cf. above, Lindman).

On 14 January the Guard caught up with the Turkish troops at the Maritsa. Lindfors reported (p. 26) that there were 'thousands of [Turkish] refugees wading across the [shallow but ice-cold] river'. The bridge was gone, and the guardsmen, too, had to wade across. For a while they were uncertain whether or not there would be a fight. 'But for some reason', and 'contrary to the [initial] intention', the retreating Turkish troop was not attacked. Instead, the freezing guardsmen were billeted in a nearby village.

After the battle of Plovdiv the Guard arrived, on 28 January, at Edirne, where Lindfors promptly lost his way in the dark, but was reunited with his company when day dawned. The soldiers spent their time sleeping and eating; some of them tried opium. (Lindfors 1975: 26-9.) On 31 January, an armistice was concluded. 'For us it was a sign of peace and rest', Lindfors stated (p. 30). The guardsmen now left Edirne and, after a six day march arrived at Çorlu, where they stopped for ten days before departing for Silivri. Of this place Lindfors only reported (ibid.) that 'there, too, the local wine was excellent and cheap'. Lindfors's story, thus, emphasised the relations between common soldiers, who against all odds were able to endure and to do what the army structure commanded. He did not resort to 'elevating' points of the campaign, such as praising the 'miracle' of the crossing of the Balkans, but, instead, stressed the hard work of common soldiers that made the Russian victory possible and the 'ordinary' pleasure that getting some tobacco or alcohol afforded.

## **Wallin**

After crossing the Danube the Guard marched for some kilometres before bivouacking. The chaplain held a service, after which the guardsmen were ordered to prepare themselves for a review in Gorna Studena. There the emperor himself welcomed the men, who responded by cheering until Colonel Ramsay signalled them to stop. The emperor then addressed the men with kind words. Prayers were said, after which the brigade mustered in a field about one kilometre outside Gorna Studena. It started to rain and before long to pour. Nothing daunted, the brigade moved off, and marched sodden through mud until nightfall. The place where they were supposed to overnight was, naturally enough, very wet, and so the guardsmen tried to find somewhere less damp. (WM: 24-6.)

The next few days were wet and cold. In addition, the heavy packs chafed the men's shoulders, which in Wallin's opinion was worse than the bad weather; some men even abandoned part of their kit. The service corps lagged behind, and the men went on outpost duty hungry. Finally a patrol was sent to look for food. Some sheep were found in Ralyovo, but two elderly local men let them run away. The leader of the patrol tried to explain, in good Finnish and bad Russian, that the guardsmen wanted to buy the sheep, not steal them. In the end the Bulgarians understood and, Wallin stated, 'immediately' handed over some animals. The price, a silver rouble for each sheep, was paid later the same day in the company's bivouac. (WM: 33-44, 47.)

After Ralyovo the rain stopped, and at sunset the Guard arrived at Yeni Barkats, where they were stationed on some hills opposite the village. Nobody had any bread left. The Guard's service corps was held up somewhere between Gorna Studena and Ralyovo, but Wallin and his companions did not starve, because they still had some mutton. (WM: 49-51.)

At Yeni Barkats there was no food, 'not even salt', since the Turks had seized everything. Even the village was deserted. The guardsmen found sheep in some villages farther off, and Wallin thought they would be enough. He supposed that during the years of the great hunger in Finland (mid-1860s) many of the soldiers had grown accustomed to even more meagre provisions, but added that 'one's stomach really does not get used to starving'. Thus soldiers supplemented their rations with beans and maize growing in near-by fields. They also bought grapes from Russian cavalymen on patrol in the vicinity and, later, went to pick some themselves. (WM: 51-5.) The service corps arrived on 23 October. After the 'usual prayer' the company's captain, Bremer, informed his men that soon after midnight the troops would leave to 'capture a small Turkish fortification' (WM: 64). The troops drew up in battle array. The chaplain gave a 'short, solemn speech, which ended with a prayer' (p. 66). After that the men started off. They crossed the river Vit and rested for an hour. After another prayer they continued. Immediately after the battle the alarm was sounded, but it proved to be false. According to Wallin (p. 97), the cause of the alarm was cartridges left by the Turks and detonated by the conflagration in the main redoubt. The next operation was to look for the wounded and help them. This took until late at night, after which everyone fell asleep. Nobody wanted to eat, though they had had nothing the whole day. (WM: 98-101.)

Next morning the Guard buried their dead. Wallin was one of the few not present at the funerals because he was on sentry duty. He said (p. 105) that he heard that the ceremony was 'quiet and simple'. After the funerals, first General Gurko and then Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich thanked the guardsmen. The latter offered them two drinks, instead of the usual one, and two herrings. The men had a meal, after which Wallin asked for and received permission to visit the Finnish burial place. On his return he saw some Turks interring their dead. According to Wallin, the work did not please the Turks.<sup>414</sup> (WM: 110-14.)

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<sup>414</sup> I suspect that burying disfigured bodies can never be very pleasing to normal human beings (see Winter 1979: 207-8).



The next weeks were spent in outpost. The weather turned colder and the men, whose clothing was worn-out, got frost-bite and many caught cold. The prince of Romania, General Gurko and the emperor visited the Guard. After the imperial visit the men were informed that the order of battle had changed. Instead of a common charge, the guardsmen would now advance in dashes of one or two men.<sup>415</sup> Officers, who had suffered severe casualties at Gorni Dübnik, were in the future forbidden to take the lead but instructed to follow their units. The new tactics were then drilled several times. (WM: 133-8.)

On 14 November the Guard continued 'towards Constantinople', as the captain of the company stated, according to Wallin (p. 144). The first stop, however, was Gorni Dübnik, where visible signs of the fighting still covered the battlefield. Advancing was not easy, because several men had diarrhoea (WM: 145-46). Nevertheless, they reached Yablanitsa and entrenched there. The digging was in Wallin's opinion (p. 149) 'a waste of time', since the dugouts were never used. The weather turned colder and colder, and to 'warm' the soldiers the commanders informed them that 'tomorrow' they would have a fight in Pravets (ibid.)

After the Turkish withdrawal from Pravets, the Guard was first stationed in the abandoned fortifications. Digging more entrenchments did not please the guardsmen since, as Wallin pointed out, they were hungry. The provisions distributed in Dolni Dübnik had run out, and in the past eight days they had only had three hot meals. A patrol was therefore sent to seize food (sheep, maize, beans) from villages in the vicinity. Some days later, in Vrachesh, the situation was very different, because they found a great quantity of provisions left by retreating Turks. (WM: 170-3, 176-7.)

The Guard spent a couple of weeks in Vrachesh, dividing their time between picket duty on the 'Finnish Mountain' and rest in the village. After the arrival of the service corps the men got a hot meal and a portion of meat daily. Guardsmen who had proved themselves at the battle of Pravets were awarded crosses of the Order of St Gregorius. 'Teasing' the Turks in near-by outposts with reconnoitring patrols and shivering in their own earthworks were part of the daily routines. On 23 December the men learned that they were to leave. The next day there was an 'unfortunate incident' in which a barn where some guardsmen were lodged collapsed, killing two of them. One died almost instantly and was buried at the foot of the 'Finnish Mountain'. The other passed away later in hospital.<sup>416</sup> (WM: 181-94.)

Next morning, 25 December, the Guard set out to cross the Balkans. Wallin estimated that the temperature was twenty degrees Celsius below zero. After some eight kilometres' march along the main road to Arab Konak, the Guard stopped while sappers finished clearing the way. The men stayed there, shivering, for more than forty-eight hours. After having progressed for some five kilometres they turned onto a narrow pass, where they stopped for the night. Meanwhile some Russian troops cut a road into the icy slopes. According to Wallin, this work left many Russians with frost-bitten hands or feet. (WM: 196-201.)

On 28 December the Guard continued, meeting the brigade's second battalion with four cannon. Some of their shells were distributed to Finns.<sup>417</sup> The second battalion went ahead, pulling the heavy guns, and the Guard followed with the projectiles. Despite a blizzard, the Guard arrived at the

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<sup>415</sup> My other authors do not mention this. Gripenberg (1905: 217) briefly states that after the battle of Gorni Dübnik '[s]ome improvements were introduced to reduce losses in attacks across open terrain'. Humble (1907: 40) gives the same information from the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5.

<sup>416</sup> Jernvall reported that the collapse was caused by a fire, but Wallin (and Palander) does not mention this.

<sup>417</sup> Forty to each company, according to Wallin, each weighting some five kilograms.

summit in the afternoon. The Finns returned the shells to the Russians and protected themselves from the storm by digging into the deep snow. According to Wallin, they were able to light a fire,<sup>418</sup> and in fact the stay on the top was not as bad as that in the pass. Next day the Guard made the ascent, having with it two cannon and two carriages of shells. Wallin briefly reported that these were lowered by means of ropes. The only trouble the men encountered was due to the second battalion of the brigade, whose cannon had for some reason jammed on the slope. Wallin ironically stated that the Russian must have stopped to make tea. (WM: 202-9.)

After the crossing the Guard marched to a village west of Arab Konak and stopped there overnight. The following night was passed in Sarantsi, from where the men continued to Dolno Kamartsi. On the way they saw the corpses of Russians killed the previous day. At Dolno Kamartsi they caught a glimpse of retreating Turks, engaged in a minor fray, and took some prisoners of war. Near Sofia the Guard waited for the Turkish departure until nightfall before entering the city with band playing. Wallin's company was stationed in a house by a square, and Captain Bremer strictly forbade his men to plunder the two locked stores in the house or to leave the house at night.<sup>419</sup> (WM: 210-20, 241-6.) Next morning the men searched the house and found some maize and wheat flour, out of which they made porridge. In the afternoon they got supplies from stores left by the Turks, among them 'delicious wheat biscuits' (p. 249).<sup>420</sup>

On their fourth day in Sofia Wallin's company was sent to patrol the road to Plovdiv. Wallin himself was left behind as sentry.<sup>421</sup> He found some stearine and started to cast candles because they had no light at night. On 9 January the Guard departed for Pazardzhik. On the way they spent the night near a half-burned-out village where they received supplies dispatched from Finland: footwear from the 'Finnish state [*sic*]' and socks 'knitted by Finnish women'. Next day they were joined by their new commander, Colonel Procopé. The men were a little surprised that he spoke Finnish 'fairly well', since his predecessors, and the senior commanders in general, addressed the men in Swedish. (WM: 249-61.)

The men advanced via Vakarel,<sup>422</sup> Ikhtiman and Trajan's Gates to Boshulja, where they were ordered to stop. Since it was only noon, they were a little surprised, but no explanation was given. Instead, they were awarded eight crosses of the Order of St Gregorius for bravery displayed during the crossing of the Balkans or in the fights at Dolno Kamartsi and Vrazhdebna. Late the same evening rumours spread that the reason for stopping was the Turkish offer of an armistice. To check the truth of this, a message was sent to General Gurko. When he did not confirm the rumours, the troops continued to Pazardzhik. (WM: 262-9.)

After the battle of Plovdiv the Guard headed for the city of Plovdiv, passing through some villages on the way. According to Wallin, in one village a Russian junior army surgeon showed some guardsmen an unlocked store where they found several barrels of wine. The men started to drink, but when officers noticed what was going on, the orderly officer was sent to chase the soldiers off with his whip. They were not punished, and later they told 'nice stories' about the incident. (WM: 279-87.)

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<sup>418</sup> Cf. above, Jernvall and Lindfors.

<sup>419</sup> Wallin related (WM: 245) that later he heard that on the very first night three Russian soldiers had broken into a store, were immediately captured, and flogged the next day. He also said (pp. 251-2) that this was not the only incident and that Finns, too, committed such offences.

<sup>420</sup> Baker (1879b: 173), in contrast, declared that they were rock-hard and had to be soaked first.

<sup>421</sup> Because he performed sentry duty in Gorni Dübrik as well, although only after the battle, he was either particularly trusted or had, for some reason, volunteered.

<sup>422</sup> Some 30 kilometres south-east of Sofia.

On 18 January the Guard arrived at Plovdiv, where General Gurko welcomed them and warned them not to take law into their own hands. After that the men were billeted. A civilian selling wine and, on the next day, spirits, too, soon appeared in Wallin's lodging. After three days in Plovdiv the Guard departed. The weather turned warmer. Between Plovdiv and Kharmanli the men came upon signs of plunder and murder 'every five or ten paces': the dead bodies of women, children, old men and animals, as well as a confusion of garments, dishes and broken carts. Wallin heard that these poor devils were 'Muhammedans' who had fled before the Russians from the northern side of the Balkans.<sup>423</sup> (WM: 287-9, 294-8.)

The way from Kharmanli to Edirne was muddy. The rivers had burst their banks, and now and then the Guard had to wait until the sappers had built a temporary bridge. After three days the men finally discerned the towering minarets of the city. Soon they were welcomed by General Gurko, and then entered Edirne with band playing. The first to welcome the guardsmen in the city were local wine sellers. Wallin, though, did not report any trading, and later he added that, in the end, there was not so much wine in the town as one might have expected. (WM: 300-6, 310-14, 320.)

On 29 January the troops were mustered by Nikolay Nikolayevich, who also distributed some third class crosses of the Order of St Gregorius.<sup>424</sup> The soldiers were then ordered to overhaul their equipment. Two days later rumours of a cease-fire spread; next day it was officially confirmed and the men were offered a drink. On 3 February General Ellis inspected the men's clothing. He passed the Finnish Guard without comment. Next day a Finnish reserve of 36 soldiers arrived. On 5 February the guardsmen were informed that they would leave for the Turkish capital the following day. Five men from Wallin's company were ordered to clean the mansion they were billeted in, allegedly belonging to a Jewish pasha who had fled. The cleaning was to include a small synagogue, where the soldiers had mended their footwear and clothes, and also a balcony they had used as a toilet at night. But in the hurry to leave, the cleaning was not done and, Wallin supposed, that if the pasha ever returned 'many's the time he surely spit in disgust . . .'. (WM: 316-19, 321.)

After a few days the Guard arrived at Çorlu with band playing. The commander of the brigade delivered a speech, in Russian, of which Wallin said that he didn't understand a word and so does not know whether the commander was reproaching or praising the men. In Çorlu the guardsmen were lodged in several occupied houses. Wallin was accommodated with an Armenian who, he said, was 'of the Greek faith'.<sup>425</sup> The quarters were tidy, and the men soon found the reason why: the next morning their host's two adult daughters appeared in their room 'with brooms and dusters', obviously intending to clean it. Wallin's sergeant major (Jernvall) did not allow this but ordered his men to do their room themselves. That was the last time, Wallin said, that they saw the daughters.<sup>426</sup> Nine days later the Guard left the village. (WM: 324-8.)

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<sup>423</sup> Wallin, too, mentioned the *Daily News* article, though he attributed it to a 'Viennese newspaper' (WM: 297). He stated that his source was the booklet *Kuvaelmia sodasta Wenäjän ja Turkin välillä vuosina 1877-1878* (see Ch. 1.4.). Wallin commented on the sight by repeating a saying that he claimed to have heard in childhood from an old veteran (of the Finnish war): 'It is easier to wage war than to be trampled on by war.' Jernvall used the same expression on another occasion (see Ch. 10.3.).

<sup>424</sup> Wallin (p. 316) remarked that this was a great honour, because men who received this cross were also granted a pension amounting to half of their monthly salary. Those awarded crosses of the fourth class got a pension of one third of their present salary.

<sup>425</sup> Perhaps Wallin knew that there are also Catholic and Protestant Armenians. Or perhaps he only wanted to designate the Armenian's religion to point out that he was not a Muslim, that is, an enemy.

<sup>426</sup> Cf. Jernvall, in Ch. 10.3.

Not unlike Lindfors, Wallin, too, stressed relations between privates and NCOs. But he also acknowledged structural power in the form of loyalty to the emperor and other authorities and, perhaps because he was writing considerably later than the other authors, admitted that an important reason why the men endured the war was alcohol. His repeated ridiculing of Russians may reflect the Finnish mood of the 1930s, when laughing at Russians was common in nationalistic or patriotic circles (see Luostarinen 1986).

### *Alfthan*

On 28 September Alfthan moved with the Finnish Guard along the northern banks of the Danube towards Zimnicea. He observed (1879: 18) that the troops now marched in battle order, but was harsh in his criticism of this, saying that the movements were suitable for peacetime manoeuvres, not for military operations. Soon afterwards Alfthan (pp. 27-8) lost contact with his battery. On his way back he met a soldier from the service corps of one of the Guards regiments, who likewise was lost. Later, when on his way to Pleven, Alfthan (pp. 29-30) came upon a service corps unit, and saw that although it was raining and the weather was chilly the poor soldiers had no shelter other than their greatcoats. Due to the torrential rain they could not make a fire or sleep properly; nor did they have much to eat. 'Their position was so bad that I saw an elderly NCO weep.'

The cold, wet weather and lack of supplies in general, that is, critique of situations caused by a malfunctioning army infrastructure, dominate Alfthan's recollections of the execution of daily routines and the troops' mood. He mentioned (p. 32), for example, when still on his way to Pleven, that 'at times life in camp seemed sunny and cheerful and at others encircled by dark, menacing clouds'. On arrival at Pleven, Alfthan remarked (p. 35) that 'recollections of staying in this wasteland are coupled with reminiscences of a shortage of provisions, especially bread'. After the battle of Gorni Dübnik, when there was still some uncertainty as to whether or not Alfthan's battery would continue its advance (p. 58), he said (p. 61) that 'the weather was wet and foggy, the soil turned into a soft slime, and [I] felt that life was really dreary'. He contrasted (pp. 60-1) this with his foraging expeditions in the beautiful Bulgarian landscape in the midst of 'fresh air, wide-open fields and high mountain tracts', memories of which were 'among his most happy souvenirs' of the Bulgarian campaign. In December, when his battery was stuck in the Balkan mountains, Alfthan (p. 91) tried to make sense of the poor conditions by recalling, together with his companions, their journey to this place through Bessarabia and across the Danube. He stated (*ibid.*) that these gatherings were the only way to brighten up 'the dull and inactive life', the high point of which was 'the satisfaction of physical needs [i.e., hunger]'.

When the end of the war was in sight, Alfthan obviously felt more comfortable. At Pazardzhik, which he entered on 14 January, his troops were welcomed 'with the most unanimous signs of joy and benevolence' (p. 138). Local women gave the soldiers a lot of tobacco, 'which they knew the troops had long been without' (*ibid.*). Thus, right up until the end of the war, Alfthan, on the one hand, found the army routines boring and, on the other, wanted to believe that the military operations not only had a 'civilising' effect but were also wanted by local people.

### *Schulman*

When Schulman's unit stepped onto Bulgarian soil on the morning of 25 September, the rain was pouring down. Advancing through the muddy fields was difficult, besides which the men had to spend the night in the open without a meal, for which Schulman blamed 'our commanders' impractical arrangements' (Schulman 1955: 29). Next day the emperor reviewed the troop. After that men bivouacked in a Bulgarian village, staying there for a whole week. They rested and received letters and

newspapers from Russia and Finland, an event which gave great joy. In addition, they listened to the thunder of cannon from the direction of Pleven (pp. 30-1, 33).

On 6 October Schulman's unit continued the advance. The continuous rain made the march difficult. The men were soaked through and had nothing to eat. Schulman and some others lost contact with the main force, and in the evening found shelter with a friend of Schulman's, who was chief of the division hospital. (Schulman 1955: 33-5.)

A few days later the troops were close to Pleven. Their battalion commander was, however, unable to decide where to encamp, and so the men waited in uncertainty and roamed around aimlessly. At last, in total darkness, Schulman (pp. 41-2) was entrusted with the mission to find a place to pitch camp, which he also did. Next morning the march continued. Though the enemy was not far away, the foe they had to fight was not the Turk but hunger. Maintenance did not function, and the soldiers could not buy anything from the Bulgarian villages they passed through. Schulman concluded that either the local inhabitants had nothing or they were for some reason unwilling to sell. In the evening the men encamped on a hill, which they labelled the 'Hunger Mountain'. There they lingered from 11 to 20 October. According to Schulman, the days were extremely difficult until the service corps arrived on 18 October. During these days they heard about the Russian victory at Kars.<sup>427</sup> The tidings resulted in jubilation all round, and a service was held. In Schulman's opinion, even more important was the visit of the new commander-in-chief of the Life Guards, General Gurko, who uttered 'manly and warm words' and urged the guardsmen always to remember that they were the elite of the Russian army. (Schulman 1955: 43-9.)

On 25 October Schulman's company was ordered to join the other troops. Late that same evening the men arrived at a village near Telish. After having witnessed the burial of Turkish and Russian soldiers they bivouacked. Their rest was short lived, however, for in the middle of the night the men were woken up and ordered to march to Telish, they now being a reserve for the battalion in outpost between Gorni Dübrik and Telish. Next night they relieved this battalion. Thus they spent two nights with hardly any sleep. (Schulman 1955: 52-6.)

At the beginning of November, the company continued along the banks of the Vit and encamped near a small village some kilometres south-west of Pleven, spending six weeks there in all. The place was quite near some Turkish strongholds, and exchanges of shots, usually causing no special harm, became a part of the daily routine. To strengthen the Russian siege Schulman's unit was ordered to build new earthworks between their position and that of General Skobelev,<sup>428</sup> some kilometres to the east. At first the men tried to work at night, but the darkness made this impossible. So, covered by Skobelev's men they continued in daylight. The digging did not take long, and once finished the men were kept in reserve until 17 November, when they returned to the front line. During the following two weeks entrenching continued. At the same time the Litovskiy Regiment celebrated its anniversary, in Schulman's opinion rather modestly. (Schulman 1955: 67-70, 72-4.)

On 3 December a 'small change' took place, when Schulman's men were ordered to picket in a village where they had been once before in early November. The Turkish fortifications were located on hills just opposite the village, which made the place somewhat dangerous. Reconnoitring, too, was difficult, due to the Turkish positions. In addition, the regiment had to entrench once again and so the men had little time to rest. They spent the nights in full kit, ready to start fighting at any moment.

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<sup>427</sup> See Ch. 5.3., Jernvall.

<sup>428</sup> It is not quite clear whether Schulman means General M.D. Skobelev (1843-1882) or his father, Dmitriy (1821-1879/80; he died on 27 December 1879 O.S.), also a general. Both took part in the siege of Pleven (Furneaux 1958: 25). The index added to Schulman's work (1955) identifies the general as Mikhael Skobelev.

On the night of 8 December Schulman's unit heard some noise from the enemy lines. The Russians suspected that the Turkish defenders of Pleven were preparing to break through. This was corroborated by some Turkish defectors. The break-through started at dawn. The actual fight was short, and after that Schulman's troop had to wait for a while in uncertainty about what to do next. Rumours of peace spread, and hence the men were surprised when on 12 December they were ordered to continue southwards. (Schulman 1955: 85-90, 96.)

Four days later the emperor mustered the troops. Schulman remarked that due to marching along muddy roads in bad weather, and the long time spent in camp, 'all outward elegance had disappeared'. Instead of smart uniforms, the soldiers wore rags. The emperor, though, did not comment on their clothing but personally awarded medals to soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the last battle of Pleven. Immediately thereafter the battalion departed for Orkhanie. The weather turned from bad to worse, it kept on snowing, and the temperature sank. The landscape became hilly and the road steep. All this made the march very arduous, especially with heavy guns, which predictably lagged behind. Nevertheless, on 19 December men arrived at Orkhanie. But information about their arrival had failed to reach the town and nobody had reserved them a place for the night. At first the men were commanded to bivouac outside the town, but soon new orders were given, saying that they had to continue to Vrachesh, where, Schulman added, the Finnish Guard was patrolling. (Schulman 1955: 96-101.)

However, there was no room for them in Vrachesh either, and they were commanded to the nearby village of Skravena. The way there was dangerous, because the men had to cross the no-man's land between the Russian and Turkish outposts. They also had to wade across a stream several times. Schulman said that it was a mystery why the Turks did not shoot at them. Another mystery to Schulman was why they had to use this route since there was another, much safer one. Finally the totally exhausted men arrived at Skravena, pitched camp, and rested for one day before returning to Orkhanie. From there they continued, on 25 December, to Vrachesh to cross the Balkan mountains. (Schulman 1955: 102-4.)

On the first day in the mountains Schulman's troops advanced only a few kilometres. In the evening they were ordered to bivouac where they were. Many officers argued that it would be better to return to Vrachesh, but General Gurko would not allow this. The Russian soldier never retreats, he was reported to say. During the next two days, the troops could advance only a couple of kilometres. However, the men did not pay much attention to this, because, Schulman said, crosses of the Order of St Georgorius were awarded to those who had distinguished themselves in the last battle of Pleven,<sup>429</sup> after which the men were offered some liquor. (Schulman 1955: 105-7.)

On 28 December the vanguard had managed to clear the road and the men could march more quickly. Soon, however, they began to have problems with the cannon. Half of the men hauled them up the mountain slopes while the other half carried all the equipment. In a day they could move only a few kilometres. The higher they ascended the colder it became. To make things worse, on the 28th a snowstorm blew up. Though the dense forest protected them from the worst, the wind blew the snow into high drifts that hampered their progress. Finally the men reached the summit and started the descent. Darkness soon fell, and they had to bivouac. Meanwhile the temperature sank and it was bitterly cold in the raging wind. Most of the men had no shelter (a tent, for example), and nobody had any provisions. They collected some firewood but it was too fresh to burn, and even if someone managed to light a fire the wind blew it out. That night was, in Schulman's opinion, the worst in the

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<sup>429</sup> There may be some confusion in this part of Schulman's recollections, because a few pages earlier he reported that these medals were awarded on 12 December.

whole campaign. Some 160 men from Schulman's regiment ended up with frost-bitten hands or feet. (Schulman 1955: 107-10.)

The rest of the descent was at least as hard as the ascent. The mountains were very steep and the snowy paths, if such even existed, were slippery. The cannon constituted a problem, too. The men tried to lower them slowly on ropes, but the guns were hard to hold back. At last the men arrived at the southern side of the mountains, in the small village of Churek, some ten kilometres west of Arab Konak. In the village they found no shelter other than a cow-shed, since two other troops were already billeted there. Early next morning the men continued their march, but because the road was very slippery they had to leave most of the cannon behind. Schulman's company was ordered to see to them, with the result that it was separated from the main force for the rest of the war. (Schulman 1955: 111-13.)

New Year 1878 began with fine weather. Ordered to continue, Schulman's company had, however, little time to enjoy it. Other troops had already advanced southwards and were engaged by the enemy. The route Schulman took was even more difficult than that over the Balkans. At two o'clock on the morning of 4 January the company was ordered immediately to join the troops commanded by General Velyaminov, who was fighting the enemy some twenty kilometres to the south-west. Upon their arrival the skirmish was already over, and the Turks were retreating towards Edirne. So Schulman's unit entered Sofia without delay on the afternoon of 5 January. Two days later the company left the city to join the troops pursuing the retreating enemy. On the way 'nothing special' happened but, said Schulman, the soldiers saw indications of Turkish cruelties towards local Christians in the form of burned out and plundered villages. According to him, the Turks had murdered some of the inhabitants and dragged the others off with them. In the evening Schulman's unit was stationed in Ikhtiman, where a Turkish negotiator visited the Russian high command, unsuccessfully proposing an armistice. During their sojourn Schulman was appointed commandant of the town. His first duty was to welcome the Finnish Guard and thereafter to spend a convivial evening with its officers. (Schulman 1955: 114-25.)

On 14 January a company of the Finnish Guard escorted some 300 Turkish prisoners of war to Ikhtiman. The party included 200 women and children who, in Schulman's opinion, were the prisoners' wives and children. These followed the prisoners since they were afraid of the Bulgarians who, according to Schulman, had on several occasions butchered unarmed women and babies. On the evening of the same day Schulman was ordered to take the Turks to a nearby village, where a great number of prisoners of war were already concentrated. The transport progressed well. En route they passed destroyed and burned-out houses that, according to Schulman, had been ravaged by Turkish irregulars. In the village some hundreds of new prisoners of war were attached to Schulman's column. On 17 January it arrived at Pazardzhik, where Schulman's troop stayed until 6 February. The Russians had some problems with Turkish irregulars who, despite the armistice, continued to attack and plunder villages in the vicinity. Another problem was due to Schulman's troop being separated from the rest of the regiment, as a result of which for two months they had no doctor or medicine. They also lacked cash, leading to shortages of provisions, because the maintenance was still not functioning and the troops had to buy what they needed. However, they made good use of stores that the retreating Turks had not had time to empty. (Schulman 1955: 127-37.)

In mid-February Schulman caught cold, so he stopped with his batman in a small village while the main force marched on to Edirne. Fortunately, said Schulman, the railway ran by the village. He therefore decided to travel by train, though the local station master, a German, warned him that, due to Turkish irregulars, the railway might be damaged. But Schulman was ready to take the risk, and

arrived safely at Edirne. After a long search he found quarters and his men, who had arrived some days earlier. For health reasons, Schulman spent some days in Edirne before travelling, on 20 February, by train to Çorlu, where his company arrived five days later. (Schulman 1955: 139-40, 143.) Throughout his memoirs Schulman supports the prevailing authority and power relations. Though he sharply criticises structural malfunctioning, he nowhere questions either the military and imperial structure itself or his or anybody else's present position inside it or relation to it.

To conclude, it seems that in general all Finnish guardsmen, whether or not they served with the Finnish Guard, had, outside battles, a rather low opinion of Russians. The Finnish guardsmen's mutual relations, on the other hand, were partly dictated by their position in the army: the officers and the professional NCOs tended to see the relations more in the manner of the army ideals while volunteer privates and NCOs, who had no permanent position in the army structure, were more critical. However, their critique, or what they narrated in their recollections, is clustered around certain themes, which implies the formation of some kind of heroic lore during the war. If so, the men's critique was part of their narrative creation of their identity as Finnish soldiers: by criticising the functioning of the Russian army they distanced themselves from it and found a separate existence of their own. On the other hand, by remembering approximately the same events (adventures, hardships, extraordinary incidents or things) they forged themselves as a community, the Finnish Guard. Both hold true for the guardsmen's recollections of the Bulgarian people and space, though remembering these served other functions, too. I first turn to the guardsmen's impressions of the Bulgarian people.



## 10. FROM THE 'EXOTIC' FOREIGN TO THE 'BARBARIAN' AND 'INFERIOR' OTHER

### 10.1. Bulgaria and Bulgarians and some west European images of them

Before giving the Finnish guardsmen's view of Bulgaria and its people I shall briefly present the larger context, the contemporary west European image of them, because it was more or less known to more educated guardsmen.

The Bulgarian state<sup>430</sup> and nation (a mixture of Slavs and Bulgars, a Turkic people<sup>431</sup>) emerged in the middle of the first millennium CE. They gradually developed into a Balkan great power and, during the ninth century, began to adopt Christianity in its Byzantine form. The first Bulgarian state was crushed by Byzantium in the early 11th century, and the second, created two centuries later, was eliminated first by Serbs and then by Ottoman Turks in the 14th century. The latter annexed Bulgaria to their empire after their victory over Vidin in 1396. Although some scholars (especially Bulgarians and Turks) disagree as to the development of Islamic communities on Bulgarian soil (forced or voluntary conversion), it seems certain that from the early 15th century Islam spread into Bulgaria in three ways: via conversion, colonisation of Muslims, and stationing of Turkish troops. The diminishing power of the sultan over local governments and landlords (or, in some cases, warlords) from the late 18th century brought the antagonism between Christians and Muslims to a head. The 1876 collision mentioned in Ch. 1 was an example of this. (Härtel & Schönfeld 1998.)

The Bulgarian climate is in general temperate, neither very hot nor very cold except in the high mountains. The average summer temperature in the 1870s was between 20 and 40 degrees Celsius. (Kanitz 1875: 53.) Geographically, Bulgaria is characterised by two opposing areas: flat country in the north and east, and mountains in the west, south and middle. The mountainous areas in particular are cut by several rivers and creeks running through valleys that for the most part, and especially in the west, were almost unknown to the outside world in the early 1870s. (Clarke 1988: 379; Hellwald & Beck 1878: 258, 269-70; Kanitz 1875: xv-xvi.) In 1876 one prominent Englishman could still claim that 'many [English] people use the word "Bulgaria" to mean any country between the Adriatic and the Euxine' (quoted in Anderson 1968: 16). Unlike many other parts of the Balkan peninsula, the Bulgaria of the 1870s was a very fertile land, the northern granary of the Ottoman empire. According to one estimate, revenues from Bulgaria made up one tenth of the whole Ottoman budget, and in peacetime the fields lining the Black Sea were said to feed half of the population of Constantinople.<sup>432</sup> The items most commonly cultivated were maize (two-thirds of all tillage), wheat, rice, beans, onions, hemp, grapes and melons, and also tobacco and silk. (Hellwald & Beck 1878: 258-9, 261; Kanitz 1875: 52-3.)

The 19th century was a time of economic crisis for both Bulgaria and indeed the whole Ottoman empire. To redress the situation the sultan had started to initiate various reforms in the

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<sup>430</sup> By Bulgaria I mean, for the sake of simplicity, the present territory of the Bulgarian state. Her area under the Ottoman sultan in 1877 was divided between the provinces of Tuna (Danube) and Roumelia. The former included much of present-day Serbia and Macedonia, as well as the northern part of present-day Bulgaria. The latter comprised, besides the southern part of present-day Bulgaria, parts of Macedonia and northern Greece. (See Hozier 1879: 64; and map in Anderson 1968: 214.)

<sup>431</sup> In nineteenth-century sources, Bulgars were often considered a Finno-Ugric or Uralic people (see Inha 1906: 11; Kanitz 1875: 7) but, except for Wahlberg, who here was under the influence of German-speaking scholars, my sources are silent on the subject. They were probably aware of it but, eager to build up a notion of Finns as members of civilisation, presumably wanted to dissociate themselves from a people that 'Europe' considered backward and even barbarous.

<sup>432</sup> However, the writer of an article published in an Austrian newspaper in 1867 could argue that neither in the Orient nor the Occident had he seen such poverty and misery as in Bulgaria (quoted in Hellwald & Beck 1878: 267).

1820s<sup>433</sup> and tried to establish large-scale connections with the European Great Powers. The central power was, however, too weak to carry out the reforms; or, rather, local masters were strong and independent enough to prevent the implementation of any reforms that might jeopardise their power. The result was deepening crisis, inflation and dwindling tax revenues, especially after the Crimean War. Thus, in spite of good intentions, the Ottoman reforms resulted in a doubling of the taxes<sup>434</sup> paid by Balkan Christian peasants. The crisis affected Bulgaria particularly badly right from the beginning of the reforms (hence the numerous peasant revolts mentioned in Ch. 1). The outcome was large-scale emigration, a business crisis caused by external industrial competition, deepening social differentiation of the population and the development of, on the one hand, a class of conservative, prosperous non-Muslim office-holders and, on the other, a class of educated, liberal, or revolutionary, Bulgarians and émigrés. However, despite the differences between poor, moderately well-off and wealthy Bulgarian peasants in the early or mid-1800s, there were no serious tensions between them because, since the 1830s, even the poor were free to move when and where they wanted, and usually had a big enough parcel of land for their families' needs. (Crampton 1981: 166-70, 173-7, 180-1, 185; Djordjevic & Fischer-Galati 1981: 127-8.)

From the demographic point of view Bulgaria in the late 19th century was a blend of some ten nations or peoples differing greatly from each other in language, manners and dress, and partly in religion, too. The majority population comprised Bulgarians, numbering perhaps up to two million.<sup>435</sup> They were dominant in western and central Bulgaria, especially in the countryside. The largest minority consisted of Turks, who dominated eastern and particularly south-eastern Bulgaria. The rest were made up of Crimean Tatars, Circassians, Serbs, Romanians (and perhaps Vlachs), Jews of Spanish origin, and the Roma. In addition, in the bigger towns<sup>436</sup> of eastern Bulgaria there was a handful of Greeks and Armenians. (Hellwald & Beck 1878: 259-63.) Of these, Tatars (some tens of thousands) and Circassians (originally perhaps 150,000 but after the war almost non-existent) were newcomers of the mid-19th century, who had arrived after the Russian conquest of their lands. The Ottoman government had colonised them in western and northern Bulgaria to drive a wedge between the Bulgarians. (Hellwald & Beck 1878: 263; Inha 1906: 29-30.) As stated in Chs. 3 and 6, they were notorious for their real or alleged cruelty towards their enemies, that is, they were considered especially savage, and contrasted with 'civilised' Europeans.

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<sup>433</sup> A detailed study of these is provided by Roderic Davison in his *Reform in the Ottoman empire 1856-1876*, Princeton 1963.

<sup>434</sup> According to Hajek (1939: 25, 115-16), the heaviest tax was the *bedel*, which Christians paid in compensation for not serving in the army.

<sup>435</sup> According to some contemporary estimates (Hellwald & Beck 1878: 263; Kanitz 1875: 42; Zimmermann 1878: 127), there were about five million Bulgarians living in the Balkans in the mid-1870s. Hozier (1879: 64) gives the figures one million Turks (probably meaning Muslims in general) and four million Slavs for the European part of the empire and *Uusi Suometar* (1 March 1878) put the number of Turks at 2.2 million and that of Slavs at 3.7 million, of which roughly half were Serbs and the other half Bulgarians. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (9th ed., vol. IV, Chicago 1891: 516) gave a figure of 1.5 million Bulgars and 0.5 million Ottoman Turks in 1870 for the province of Bulgaria (which did not include the most southerly parts of present-day Bulgaria, or Eastern Roumelia). *The Statesman's Year Book* for 1901 (ed. J.S. Keltie, London 1901) estimated that 2.5 million Bulgars, 0.57 million Turks and 0.21 million other people were living in Bulgaria (consisting roughly of the present area of Bulgaria). Thus I conclude that the war of 1877-8 affected some two million Bulgarians and almost as many Turks.

<sup>436</sup> In the 1870s Bulgarian urbanisation had just started. Towns began to grow in the 1830s in the wake of the Ottoman reforms. The first real factories, making clothes for the reorganised Ottoman army, were established in Sliven and Plovdiv in 1836 and 1848, respectively. (Crampton 1981: 162, 188.) However, in the 1870s, for example, Ruse (an important port town opposite Giurgiu on the Danube) had developed, for a while, into an important centre of trade (Ruigruh 1986: 55).

The contemporary European (non-Balkan, non-Russian<sup>437</sup>) view of Bulgarians, usually meaning males (Todorova 1997: 14-15), was not much better. According to an English journalist (Forbes 1896: 187), their land was 'ugly and squalid'. The inhabitants, though, were praised as hard-working and skilled peasants who kept their houses and clothes spotlessly clean. They were said to be active church-goers, although, it was argued, they had internalised the Christian faith only superficially, and were in many respects hardly more than 'pagans'. (Hellwald & Beck 1878: 265-7, 272-3; Kanitz 1875: 56-68.) On the other hand, they were often considered racially inferior, lacking even the slightest resemblance to civilised people. According to one, and in all respects negative, Austrian newspaper opinion from 1867, they appeared neither 'noble nor worthy' like Turks, nor 'proud and lofty' like Greeks, but 'dragged on like tortured pack animals'. (Hellwald & Beck 1878: 265-6.) Compared with the 'nearly always clean' Turkish houses, 'the Bulgarian houses even of the better order, generally swarmed with vermin' (Baker 1879a: 255; though he certainly was not impartial). Similar notions were often heard in the 1860s and '70s.

The western view also claimed Bulgarians to be sullen and reserved, timid but yet cunning and crooked. However, according to the Austrian article quoted above, unlike many other Balkan Christians, especially Albanians, Bulgarians had the advantage of not appearing to be bandits. Rather, they looked sorrowful and anxious. Joy, it was maintained, was something out of the ordinary among them.<sup>438</sup> And above all they were egoists of the worst kind, who would not raise even their little finger to help their neighbours, even if they, too, were Bulgarians. Their Turkish neighbours, on the contrary, were declared to be kind-hearted enough to lend a helping hand even to an 'infidel'. (Hellwald & Beck 1878: 266-7; see also Kanitz 1875: 49.) This latter notion was patterned according to the positive image that the Enlightenment, especially in France, constructed of Turks (Todorova 1997: 70-1, 163).

As to Bulgarian military virtues, the author of the article believed that although Bulgarians had once [in the Middle Ages] been brave soldiers, 'today' it would be possible 'to conquer the whole of Bulgaria with a battalion of Austrian soldiers . . .'.<sup>439</sup> The statement, of course, completely ignored the role of the Ottoman army in such an enterprise. But it probably supports the notion that Bulgarians, who, from the Austrian, or west European and Russian, point of view lived on the periphery, were regarded as inferior beings simply because they inhabited the borders of the 'civilised' world, in the 'European Levant', where European manners, norms and ways of classification run the risk of being dissolved (Leed 1991: 135-6; Todorova 1997: 17-18, 27, 78).

After having shown contempt for Bulgarian and praised Turkish virtues, the author of the above-quoted article claimed that the rule [of the 'virtuous' Turks] had had a completely demoralising effect on the Bulgarians, causing them to lose their former military strength. Moreover, exploitation and oppression by local Turkish officials had driven the Bulgarians into all kinds of misery.<sup>440</sup> (Hellwald & Beck 1878: 267-9.) In the same vein, Kanitz (1875: 23), who for a dozen years had travelled in the

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<sup>437</sup> The Russian view was ambiguous. At home Bulgarians were usually highly regarded, but in the memoirs of Russian officers about the war they are often disdained (MacKenzie 1979: 10, 18).

<sup>438</sup> By this were perhaps meant people living in the countryside (see Kanitz 1875: 46). The statement was contradicted later in the same article by arguing that Bulgarians 'with pleasure' play, sing and dance in the open air (Hellwald & Beck 1878: 270).

<sup>439</sup> While Kanitz (1875: 23) made a similar point, he also expressed some reservations, especially concerning Bulgarians living in the western part of the country and having revolted since 1830s against their local landlords or sided with Russia in the Crimean War.

<sup>440</sup> The author also noted the Ottoman reforms, but stated, perhaps correctly, that thus far (by 1867) they had had no (positive) effect upon the countryside. On the other hand, Zimmermann (1878: 127) remarked that while the Turk had destroyed the material conditions of life, the Greek ('der Fanariot') had done the same in the spiritual sphere. By this he meant the long Greek control over Bulgarian Orthodoxy.

Balkans, argued that while ‘Europe’ had celebrated, in the persons of Columbus, Luther, Copernicus and Bacon, ‘her spiritual revival, [the Turks had] extinguished all intellectual efforts [in the Balkans] for centuries’. Later on (p. 56), he claimed that the Turkish government had blocked all rational initiatives to develop Bulgaria into a civilised land. This self-contradicting, and fragmented, picture of both Bulgarians and Turks<sup>441</sup> is typical of what Edward Said (1985) has called Orientalism. It seems that to some extent these notions were held by at least the more educated men of the Finnish Guard (and the Russian army in general).<sup>442</sup> However, before discussing that I shall look briefly at how the guardsmen saw foreign people on their way to the front.

## 10.2. Being curious about the foreign

Though the guardsmen did not pay much attention to places or peoples they passed on, they did jot down some anecdotes and episodes. In general it seems that while initial encounters with signs of war (wounded soldiers, prisoners of war) were associated either with ‘our’ aspirations to gain glory and honour or with fear of death, encounters with other people and other places acted as an initiation into the otherness of ‘it’, the enemy. The latter was especially true of notes about Jews<sup>443</sup> and, in a more positive sense, of many kinds of curiosities. It may be of course that travellers, be they soldiers, scholars, tourists or whatever, who spend only a short time in a foreign place most often remember only things they find ‘curious’. But in all cases they are remembered because they are something ‘out of place’, outside our cultural categories, thus ‘proving’ the foreignness or otherness of a place or a person (Hirn 1936: 46-7; Leed 1991: 15, 187-8).

My sources divided, although not explicitly, the people into foreigners having curious or exotic manners, dresses and so on, and the other that was not only different from but opposite to ‘us’. The authors recollected with both overt and covert intentions to evoke in readers certain sentiments and thoughts relative to the foreign or other, to persuade them to accept the author’s point of view of, or power over, the other. For example, when speaking about the enemy, and especially their irregulars, the bashi-bazouks and Circassians, who made up the ‘essential other’, the guardsmen pushed the difference to the utmost. The latter were cowards, beasts, barbarians, etc., while they themselves were the reverse. When describing a foreign person, who as a rule was a civilian, the guardsmen emphasised his (seldom her) gratitude towards them or his (her) unwillingness to co-operate. Briefly, depending on the conditions, relations were underlined with different characteristics and, at the same time, different aspects of ‘us’ were highlighted and different features of identity affirmed or recreated. On their way to the front, when meeting Russians and other Eastern Slavs, of whom the guardsmen said nothing, and Roma, Jews and Romanians, the guardsmen behaved more or less like stereotypical tourists of today. They were suspicious and yet curious about foreign persons, customs and, sometimes, food and dress, and singled out details they found exotic,<sup>444</sup> but which superficially had no connection with the war.

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<sup>441</sup> Hellwald & Beck claim (1878: 274) that Bulgarians were fatalists and mystics, but in the next paragraph (p. 275) say that they were bearers of a long (and venerable) technological tradition in constructing bridges and buildings.

<sup>442</sup> Before the war, Finnish newspapers had not published more than a half dozen of articles on Bulgaria and Bulgarians (Kemppainen 1999: 44); and even those dealt mainly with military matters. For example, the *Uusi Suometar* foreshadowed the Russian campaign in an article translated from the German and published on 1 May 1877. Three decades after the war a popular Finnish description of the Balkans took a simplified Orientalism for granted, arguing that a Balkan disadvantage was that the area had ‘so long suffered from the brutal oppression of [Asiatic] conquerors’ (Inha 1906: 4).

<sup>443</sup> Cf. above, Ch. 3.5.

<sup>444</sup> Of course, peacetime travel accounts may have served as models for wartime descriptions. At least the ethnographic details given by, for example, Wahlberg (1878) greatly resemble those of Kanitz (1875).

On the basis of what I said in Ch. 3.5. about the Finnish public memory in constructing the other as people, it seems that the guardsmen's two prevailing interpretations of encounters, both before and after the battle of Gorni Dübrik, were interest in ethnic or national peculiarities and a sense of superiority, born out of the recently created Finnish national awakening.

Before the battle, the former was dominant. With one exception (Alfthan), the authors, however, restricted themselves to short remarks. One author (Jernvall) had time for hardly anyone but young girls, perhaps because he got married shortly before his departure. Many (Lindman, Wahlberg, Wallin and Schulman) had nothing at all to say before their arrival in enemy territory.

One may wonder at the men's silence over the female, because it is known that wartime contacts with women, mainly with so-called ladies of easy virtue, or fantasies about women and sex are common (see examples in Cleveland 1985: 90-2; Englund 1996; Humble 1906: 41; 1907: 45; Simola 1955: 62-5). It is also evident that, by breaking down structural normalcy, wartime conditions distort regular social relations between men and women, thus affecting men's notion of gender relation and sex (Humble 1907: 44-5, 49; Winter 1979: 142).<sup>445</sup>

In the Russo-Turkish war one reason for the authors' silence was probably the relative lack of *les beaux restes*.<sup>446</sup> The prime reason for this, in turn, was presumably the mobile nature of the warfare and the inadequacy of communications. An additional reason may be that, as Fabritius (1986: 66) stated in the context of the Spanish Civil War, when continuous fighting dominates men's doing, feeling and thinking there is quite simply no time for women. It may also be that the preparation for, and partaking in, battle 'inhibits sexual desire', as Winter (1979: 150) suggests, because in general women do not figure in the guardsmen's writings until the end of the war. In any case, thinking of women also prevents a soldier from functioning in a militarily ideal way (Erho 1940: 23). Moreover, there were some structural and cultural reasons for not mentioning women in recollections on war. These included censorship, social and religious disapproval or repression of the public presentation of sexuality (Pohjola-Vilkuna 1995) and 'coarse' description in general, and the guardsmen's overt or covert acceptance of literary conventions of the Runebergian (that is, nationalistic) great tradition. This followed the tradition of antiquity in seeing warfare as a manly way of life in which it was not relations to women that were important but those to other men, the enemy.<sup>447</sup> There is no reason to doubt that a considerable number of guardsmen both thought of women and, like their compatriots in the Second World War (Pipping 1978: 184-9), considered them, above all, as sex objects. Coupling this with the then current notion of the 'effeminate' Orient (Todorova 1997: 13-14), it would be tempting to argue that the Turks were not considered as men but as women, and that the superiority of Finnish men to Turks in battle strengthened their structural superiority to Finnish women back in Finland. Some support for this hypothesis is given by anecdotes circulating in Finland after the war. According to one of these, because nobody else could match the Finns, the Turkish commanders sent against them a giantess who killed half a dozen guardsmen before a brave Finn managed to spear her (KT 1984: 435).

### ***Fennander***

The first foreigners Fennander mentioned (1895: 27-8) were a group of wanderers, perhaps Roma, who had brought a dancing bear to his camp near Zimnicea. He did not comment on the event, merely

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<sup>445</sup> Unlike in recollections from the First World War (see Fussell 1977), there are no signs of homoeroticism or homosexuality, if we do not want to take as such the occasional hero-worshipping of particularly courageous officers or the emphasis on comradeship

<sup>446</sup> One could find them at least among officers in the rear (see Forbes 1896: 193; and Alfthan, in Ch. 11.1.).

<sup>447</sup> Cf. Layton 1997: 87, 91 and Winter 1979: 150 for a similar idea.

mentioning that when one of his companions threw a portion of a bull's head to the bear, it nearly crushed the tamer when he tried to take the titbit away.<sup>448</sup> Thus the distinctive feature of the other people was their being somehow funny, not alien or hostile.

### ***Palander***

Palander (1881: 8) inserted in his recollections an ethnographic-like description of Romanians he observed on his way to Iași. He stated that the typical dress of Romanian males consisted of a 'long, white shirt, trousers made of cotton, strips of leather that were tied under the feet and used in rainy weather only, a leather belt to which were fastened a knife, tinder-box and purse of tobacco, [and] over his shoulders a sheepskin coat with the wool outside'. In addition, he carried a staff. Palander (*ibid.*) also remarked that young Romanian women in their 'nice national dresses, that is, skirts made of only one piece of cloth', looked 'very pretty'. So, for Palander the other people were above all different humans.

Similar non-othering observations occur, alongside more dubious ones, in some other recollections as well (for example, Wahlberg and Alfthan). They could be literary devices typical of contemporary travel literature and intended to colour the text. But I think they served another purpose as well; that is, they were intended to put the described people in their 'right' place on the scale of culture evolution. This does not exclude the possibility that at least some of the authors were genuinely interested in Bulgarians and did not see in them the foreign or other but a fellowman.

### ***Jernvall***

Jernvall (1899: 16-17) was first attracted by some 'beautiful Jewish maidens' in Bialystok, who in his opinion were the only thing worth mentioning in that town. In Iași Jernvall (p. 21) again paid attention to Jews by remarking that there 'seemed to be more of them there than usual'.<sup>449</sup> He also mentioned (pp. 21-2) a group of bear tamers, who got their animal to dance, and remarked that 'they seemed to have permission to move around freely', implying that this was not the case in Finland (or Russia). In Jernvall's opinion, the tamers were 'almost as hairy as their bear', while ordinary Iașiians 'seemed to be by nature benevolent people'. So the other people were exotic and strange but also, in a way, familiar.

On 28 September the Finnish Guard arrived in Bucharest. The men were not allowed to visit the city, but 'luckily enough we happened to stop near a big factory where hundreds of maidens were working'. When these had a break the guardsmen asked them to dance, and though 'we did not understand each other's language the girls smiled as if at a ball'. (Jernvall 1899: 23.) It may be, as Lindberg (1904: 48-9) suggested two decades later, that the young girls were simply curious to see men in uniform. But apart from this, Jernvall seems to imply that young girls welcomed the army, and that future battles were comparable to feasts.

### ***Lindfors***

Lindfors (1975) started his description of the other people with the inhabitants of Iași. 'According to their oriental nature', Lindfors (p. 5) said, 'the occupants were very polite and friendly, though they did not know our language.' However, their way of life was 'in many respects completely strange to us'. In Lindfors's opinion (*ibid.*), to describe it would have required much more space than he had at his

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<sup>448</sup> This is a typical example of the 'amusing and awesome details', to use an expression of Topelius's fiancée, later wife (Vasenius 1931: 165), that sometimes coloured guardsmen's texts.

<sup>449</sup> Because to my knowledge he had not been in Iași before, this statement perhaps means that there were more Jews in the Moldavian capital than he expected. As mentioned, there were only a few hundred Jews in the whole of Finland.

disposal, and thus he restricted himself to a couple of examples. First, instead of eels, local restaurants served the ‘flesh of frogs’, which tasted ‘a bit like mutton’; and second, in Romania, unlike in Finland at that time, peasants did not grow rye but wheat and maize. So Lindfors used his own experiences to show that the other people were different from, but not necessarily inferior or hostile to, Finns.

### *Alfthan*

On its way through south-western Russia, Alfthan’s battery stopped at a village, on the outskirts of which lived some Ukrainians. The centre was inhabited by Jews. According to Alfthan (1879: 4), ‘Russians [*sic*] and Jews did not get along well’ and didn’t live in the same quarters. ‘The Jews are masters in these places, and in general they are numerous in the south-eastern provinces of Russia, where they pitilessly exploit the poor peasants.’<sup>450</sup>

After having crossed the Dniestr, Alfthan arrived at Bessarabia, annexed to Russia in 1812. According to him (p. 5), the Moldavian population had kept their national habits intact and had not adopted the Russian language. He also said (*ibid.*) that their dwellings were clean and tidy. Old men would sit deep in thought on benches facing the courtyard, smoking their pipes. Their character was honest and tranquil and, therefore, although they were ‘sons of the south, their slow nature resembled that of Finns’. But Alfthan hastened to add (p. 5) that the land was not prosperous. The reason, in his opinion, lay more in people’s lack of enterprise, industriousness and tenacity than in the barrenness of the soil.

While walking around in a village near Chişinău, Alfthan met a group of Roma at one end of the village. He remarked (p. 8) that their ‘dress was simple but clean’ and continued that ‘they behaved in a quiet and appropriate manner but that their black hair and dark countenance did not leave any doubt [as to the fact] that these people belonged to a race whose origins are obscure, that wanders around aimlessly, and that nothing can hinder from following a way of life dictated by centuries of tradition’.

It seems that for Alfthan these ‘people without cares’ (p. 8) were representatives of the so-called noble savage, also represented by the ‘virtuous’ Romanian peasant. Though Alfthan did not actually discuss peasantry, tillers of the soil are implied as a counterpart to the dishonest upper class town-dwellers. Similar notions were current among other Finns. For example, Casimir Ehrnrooth, commander of a division that on the eve of the war was stationed in the small town of Kubei (some 100 kilometres south of Chişinău), wrote to a Polish friend in April 1877, praising the virtues of the local inhabitants (mainly Bulgarians and Swabes) and juxtaposing them to the ‘sinful [occupants] of Iaşi or Bucharest’ (Ehrnrooth 1967: 108). In general, opposing the morally good countryside’s ‘authentic’ people to the morally bad city’s ‘corrupt’ inhabitants was typical of educated Finns (Vasenius 1931: 152-5) and romantic writers. According to Layton, Lord Byron, for example, ‘contrasted the Alps’ inspirational power to the torturing “hum of human cities”’ (Layton 1986: 478). But whether ‘without cares’ or ‘corrupt’, the people Alfthan met on his way lacked in his memories one thing, and with it everything, namely, civilisation. This disadvantage was easily turned into a rationale about their subjugation by ‘civilising’ them.

En route to Bucharest Alfthan (p. 13) drew special attention to the Armenians, the most extraordinarily dressed men ‘with a lively expression on their faces, flashing, sharp eyes and black hair’. In Alfthan’s opinion, their ‘long silken waistcoats and velvet coats were very striking’. Moreover,

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<sup>450</sup> This was written at a time when anti-Semitism and assaults on Jewish property were on the increase in Russia (Ehrnrooth 1967: 95).

they were ‘the most skilled merchants, who stuck firmly together and amassed remarkable amounts of wealth but were in general not liked’. Alfthan (p. 15) also found some local customs not very rational. When writing about draught oxen, Alfthan claimed that they were harnessed<sup>451</sup> in a manner that was not very sensible. He added that it was hardly necessary to point out how much bigger a load, and with less discomfort, oxen could pull if better harnessed.<sup>452</sup>

### 10.3. ‘Civilising’ Bulgarians

The Finnish guardsmen saw Bulgarians (meaning the Bulgarian peasant) in much the same idealistic, romantic and paternalistic light in which the Finnish upper class saw their fellow-farmers in Finland. To understand the guardsmen’s view we have to take into account their opinion of Turks, not so much as soldiers or the enemy but as a ‘civilised people’ on the one hand, and as oppressors, on the other.<sup>453</sup> Lacking any special knowledge of Bulgarians, the guardsmen seem to have compared them with both Finns and Turks, and to take for granted the Russian propaganda according to which they were liberating ‘backward’ Bulgarians from the Turkish yoke and giving them an opportunity to join the ‘civilised world’. Thus the whole war had, or acquired, the character of a ‘civilising’ mission: success in war was seen as a sign of the cultural superiority of the winner and vice versa, ‘advanced’ culture had the right to expand, even through war (see Airas 1981: 252). The idea of a mission consciously or unconsciously built a notion of Finnish superiority over Bulgarians, especially males, but to some extent females, too. For, though Todorova is in general correct in stating (1997: 14-15) that the ‘western’ balkanist discourse has been male-centred (in the sense that both western visitors and the persons they described were usually men), many guardsmen had something to say about Bulgarian women, too.<sup>454</sup>

Unfortunately, as the guardsmen asserted, the Bulgarians themselves were reluctant to be freed. Thus they in many ways hampered the imperial mission and, ultimately, their own liberation and social evolution into fully-fledged citizens of the ‘commonwealth’ of (civilised) Slavs as the

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<sup>451</sup> The lower part of the harness was placed on the animal’s breast and the upper part against the back of its neck, causing painful chafed spots.

<sup>452</sup> Alfthan’s, and Palander’s (see Ch. 11.1.), concern about animal welfare was at that time untypical. More commonplace was indifference towards animal suffering (Suutala 1986: 243). ‘Animal lovers’, if they happened to be men, were obviously ridiculed as ‘effeminate’. In Finland, Juteini and Topelius were exceptions. In 1870 the latter established a society for the protection of birds that was active mainly among school-children. Of course, as Professor Karen Armstrong (personal communication) noted, if the point in Alfthan’s text was that animals should be treated in a sensible way, this passage does not prove he was an ‘animal lover’ but a man of reason fighting against the other’s stupidity. However, I think that Alfthan was both; he (like Palander) was a young idealist who in his society could sustain new ideas (see his support of religious freedom for the Skoptsy in chapter 12), but who (more than Palander) saw his own ideals, and the rationality of his society, as the only sensible one.

<sup>453</sup> This of course implies that the guardsmen’s world view, as well as the Finnish public memory, was in many respects inconsistent. Turks, for example, could be in one context cruel and savage, and in another civilised and noble. In this case the inconsistency may arise from the fact that the Turkish picture originated partly in pre-war and wartime, which emphasised either their ‘civilised’ nature or their cowardice, cruelty, etc., and partly in post-war conditions, when it was felt necessary to argue that ‘we’ had beaten a great and heroic enemy.

<sup>454</sup> It is not quite clear why the guardsmen, especially the more educated ones, wrote ethnographic notes about Bulgarian women. In general, an important point in writing ethnography was in proving Bulgarian backwardness, and thus justifying the war as a mission to spread ‘higher’ culture; Wahlberg, for example, compared Bulgarian peasants to the inhabitants of (supposedly less developed) eastern Finland. Possibly he and the others were following conventions of travel literature (see Klinge 1998: 70; Leed 1991, Ch. 7), but it may also be that, for them, a flourishing peasant or folk culture was proof of a virtuous people worth ‘civilising’ and fighting for. Such a view is easily the first step towards full-blown (Finnish) nationalism.



propaganda implied.<sup>455</sup> For example, it seems that the Finns presupposed, as the Russian propaganda maintained, that the local people would welcome their 'liberators' with open arms, and indicate their alliance by sharing their food with hungry soldiers whose service corps had failed them. When this did not happen, the men complained, for hungry men can seldom afford to be generous. Bulgarians who charged high prices were in the guardsmen's eyes speculators working against the common good: victory over the Turks. Those who refused to sell, making the soldiers resort to force, were either stupid or cowardly savages pursuing their own selfish goals instead of the common national cause (as civilised people would). For - if they ever thought about it at all - the guardsmen could not understand the Bulgarian fear of Turkish retaliations after the war.<sup>456</sup>

The regular occurrence of such encounters did not change the Finnish attitude but rather confirmed it. Thus, in general, it seems that the guardsmen neither accepted the Bulgarian moral, social and cultural code nor, as might have happened, rethought their Finnish one.<sup>457</sup> Instead, they reaffirmed, and superimposed upon the Bulgarians the army's structural position that was neither Finnish nor Russian but common to many military institutions. According to it, it was the 'right' of the warring army to take provisions by force (see Englund 1996). Thus questions of alleged or real survival apparently strengthened the guardsmen's military identity relative to civilians. Their 'fury' was ignited by any situation they considered difficult enough to endanger their existence as a group, to jeopardise the adopted notions of 'correct' relations between 'us' and the other, that is, briefly, to endanger their 'honour'. The latter is evident from the fact that the guardsmen were lavish in their praise of places where Finns (or Russian troops in general) were given a warm welcome as liberators, or where they were billeted in a friendly manner. This was what power structure, too, expected: our 'honour' was linked to our power to make the other recognise our superiority (cf. Robinson 1999: 124). *Suomen kuvalehti* (15 September 1877, p. 260), for example, reported that the Russian 'saviours' were welcomed with bread, salt and the cross; the latter to be kissed as a token of a shared faith.

However, though this welcome was praised as a spontaneous local reaction to the arrival of Russian troops, and thus bolstered 'our' identity as 'heroes', it would appear, at least in some cases, to have been far from this. For example, when on 20 January 1878 General Strukov came to the gates of Edirne, which the Turks had just abandoned, he sent the following message to the citizens: '[L]et the inhabitants come in all confidence to meet us with bread and salt.' This they did. When Strukov later on the same day entered the city, 'thousands of people crowded around with shouts of joy, and kissed the hands and knees of his men' (from his report, quoted in Hozier 1879: 808-9). Thus it is probable that the Bulgarians did not so much welcome the Russian army as the expulsion of the Turks and the end of war. But that was not what the Russian propaganda wanted to emphasise.<sup>458</sup>

The soldiers paid attention not only to the Bulgarians themselves but to their relations to the Turks as well. The guardsmen usually reported Turko-Bulgarian hostility and retaliations, and in general found both the Turkish military tactics of burning down abandoned places and the Bulgarian

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<sup>455</sup> Cf. Yaroshevski (1997: 62-5, 68) for additional examples of such efforts.

<sup>456</sup> The Bulgarians had some reason for their fear. A decade earlier, during a Bulgarian revolt in 1867, a local Turkish commander had under pain of severe penalties, even capital punishment, forbidden any kind of help to rebels, including delivery of supplies (Kanitz 1875: 29). In the early months of the 1877-8 war the Russian army had forced the Turkish troops to retreat from some parts of northern Bulgaria. When the Turks had retaken these parts they had brutally avenged the local Bulgarian assistance of Russians. (Hajek 1939: 45; Hiisivaara 1968: 22.)

<sup>457</sup> Snellman, on the contrary, in his review of Wahlberg (1878), found it 'excusable enough' that Bulgarians under these conditions hid their flocks or refused to sell their sheep (Snellman 1895: 593-4). On the possible rethinking of one's own moral codes in general, see de Waal 1998: 107, 152-3, 170-1)

<sup>458</sup> See also discussion in Ch. 9.2., Jernvall, and below, Wahlberg.

practice of plundering and killing Turkish civilians repugnant. In the case of Bulgarian atrocities, the men most often attributed them, as the propaganda would have them do, to long and oppressive Turkish rule, but their target, local people instead of the Turkish administration, the Finns disliked. It seems that the Bulgarians' revenge was rejected as 'barbarian', as something they did because they could not better control themselves or behave as a civilian or civilised people would be expected to, i.e., to leave warfare to armies. Very seldom did the guardsmen try to understand the mutual enmity in the light of recent Bulgarian massacres or current wartime conditions. In general, statements about Turkish oppression in my sources were apparently intended to justify the Russian military intervention,<sup>459</sup> whereas Bulgarian cruelties, apart from challenging the Russian mission, purported to convey an image, and feeling, of the 'savage' other that the guardsmen were civilising. Perhaps the men also projected upon the Bulgarians their own feelings of shame and guilt about killing and about the sufferings that the war and the Russian army caused civilians and therefore exaggerated the Bulgarian atrocities in order to mitigate their own sense of guilt.<sup>460</sup>

For the guardsmen, then, descriptions of relations to the Bulgarians were apparently above all a means to vent their frustration when hungry or in low spirits or to bolster their own wavering identity as civilised people or true soldiers.<sup>461</sup> Thus, in processing their own wartime identity, the Finns forced the Bulgarians into either a realistic or a romantic ideal relationship, depending on the military identity they had adopted or were processing. The realistic relationship developed gradually out of direct encounters, whereas the romantic one was based rather on pre-established west European cultural evolutionist notions, which stated that the Bulgarians were such and such a people. A realistic relationship was established on the basis of a single event or series of similar events, that is, it was invented *ad hoc*, albeit on the basis of public memory of military matters (including propaganda). The romantic relationship, though, was forced upon events, i.e., it presupposed the (timeless) meanings of relations rather than constructed them in contact with real people. However, the men who established their relations to Bulgarians using the romantic, or idealistic, option had the most to say about local people. The reason may be that, generally speaking, they also pondered the war in ideological terms, as a war of liberation, not merely as a job ordered by an authority in the way the men with the realistic relationship to Bulgarians tended to do. Thus, seeing that not all Bulgarians were politically enlightened enough to comprehend the meaning of a Russian victory beyond their immediate local conditions, that is, the creation of a Bulgarian state, the guardsmen were somehow disappointed, and expressed this by blaming the Bulgarians, instead of rethinking why the Bulgarians limited themselves to local retaliations. The guardsmen who were but waging war could also be disappointed, but this was dictated by the current situation, not by Bulgarian deviation from some pre-established model or ideal.

### **Wahlberg**

In accordance with educated opinions of his time (see Kanitz 1875: 45-6), Wahlberg (1878: 23-4) explained that the forefathers of the present Bulgarians were an Ural-Altaic people and thus related to Finns. Subsequently they had been conquered by Slavs and slavified. From then on, their history was, in Wahlberg's opinion, a story of the degeneration of a great Balkan power into an Ottoman province. Racially, though Wahlberg did not use that word, the Bulgarians of 'today' reminded him of Finno-

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<sup>459</sup> Or to please the censorship.

<sup>460</sup> Cf. Browning 1999: 166-9 for similar thinking in the case of Germans who executed Polish Jews in the Second World War.

<sup>461</sup> Approximately the same was reported by Simola (1955: 114-15) of the attitude of French legionaries towards Vietnamese prisoners of war used as forced labour.

Ugric tribes by the Volga, and their 'plain and simple' way of life was in Wahlberg's eyes an embodiment of the ancient Finnish life style. Thus, it seems, Wahlberg both saw Bulgarians in terms of idealised Finnish peasants and discerned in them potentially 'correct' racial features appropriate for 'civilised' people.<sup>462</sup>

This historical overview is followed by a long ethnographic-like description (pp. 24-32) in the manner of Kanitz (1875)<sup>463</sup>, supplemented with some pictures showing exteriors and interiors of Bulgarian peasant houses, how peasants dressed, what kinds of utensils and tools they used, how they tilled the land, etc. As a curiosity Wahlberg mentions that Bulgarians kept 'wet things' (that is, beverages) in vessels similar to those used by the inhabitants of Savo, a province in eastern Finland. Bulgarian women were, in Wahlberg's eyes, rather ugly<sup>464</sup> but, nevertheless, vain and inclined to wear too much ornamentation.

His rather neutral, and to some extent positive, ethnographic view of Bulgarian peasants did not prevent Wahlberg from seeing Bulgarians in general in a negative light. He argued that, due to centuries of Turkish oppression, the Bulgarians were servile and uneducated, 'never had the courage to openly defend [their] rights', and could find trustworthy allies only 'in fraudulence and cunning'. Thus, Wahlberg continued, it was no wonder that the Finnish guardsmen wondered whether it was worth fighting for such a 'rabble'. However, Wahlberg warned against hasty judgements by wondering what would have become of Finns under such conditions? (Wahlberg 1878: 32-5.) The discrepancy in Wahlberg's description is only superficial, for, by nature, being (allegedly) of Finnish origin, Bulgarians were virtuous, and had degenerated only under foreign oppression - just as had the Finns, Wahlberg comes very near to saying.

The two contexts in which Wahlberg usually established relations to Bulgarians were quartering and food. In both he had to resort to force. For example, in Yeni Barkats the Bulgarians showed no pleasure in welcoming officers who seized lodging in local houses. Neither did they welcome the forcible exchange of chickens, pigs and goats for money. Wahlberg was surprised that the Bulgarians did not seem to understand the special demands of wartime conditions and, in his opinion, tried to cheat him, that is, to hide food or to overcharge his men. For this he again laid the blame on 'hundreds of years of Turkish oppression'. (Wahlberg 1878: 33-5.)

When the Finnish Guard was approaching the Balkan mountains in mid-November, Wahlberg (p. 75) observed the 'clear difference' between two types of Bulgarian. Those living on the plains were, in his opinion, of dubious character whereas the highlanders, who had less contact with Turks, were 'more civilised', and were hospitable and trustworthy.<sup>465</sup> To his surprise, Wahlberg found (ibid.), as did Palander (see below), that in the village of Lukovit, some 40 kilometres south-west of Pleven, the inhabitants 'voluntarily offered soldiers bread, etc.'. The claim about civilised highlanders was repeated by Inha (1906: 29) in his overview of the Balkans. It would appear that 'civilisation' for Finns, as indeed for many other Europeans, was identified with cultural and ethnic conformity and, ultimately, with nationalism, whereas 'barbarism' was tantamount to the porosity of social, religious and linguistic borders so typical of much of Balkan lands and peoples (Hösch 1998). Thus limitations

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<sup>462</sup> See Todorova 1997: 18-19 for such a classification.

<sup>463</sup> Excerpts from Kanitz's work had been published in Finnish translation in SK in 1876 and 1877. These did not include the information that Wahlberg (and Palander, see below in this chapter) offered the reader.

<sup>464</sup> According to Kanitz (1875: 43), young girls were 'in many districts' rather beautiful. However, hard work after marriage, which 'burdened women among Bulgarians as it did among all South Slavs', soon made them lose their looks.

<sup>465</sup> I return to the mountain-dwellers as a 'civilised people' in Ch. 11.2. In fact, in remote mountain villages the traits that Wahlberg took for virtues, were probably necessities for survival; without them village life would have been impossible (see Turnbull 1980: 26-7).

in communication and a clear distinction between 'us' and the other implied, in the Balkan context, a 'higher' level of humanity and culture. It is also possible that Wahlberg's emphasis on 'uncorrupted' rural life was a critique of the urban (Swedish-speaking or Russian) elite in Finland. Snellman, who reviewed Wahlberg's book, for example, had castigated city life because it diverted a person's interest from the collective, that is, national, cause to the pursuit of individual good (Airas 1981: 222).

The latter kind of behaviour led Wahlberg (1878: 108-9) to consider Bulgarians barbarous. He pointed out that, at least in areas liberated by the Russians, the Bulgarians took revenge by seizing Turkish movables and cattle in order to profit from them. The Bulgarians in uniform were in Wahlberg's opinion no better than the civilians, but he did not ponder the grounds for the seizures. However, he returned to the subject when spending a couple of days in Sofia in early January. After having remarked that 'Turkish cruelties' had made headlines in the press, he continued (pp. 151-2): '[L]et us therefore, for a change, speak about Bulgarian violence.' As an example, he reported (ibid.) how, next to his lodging in Sofia, a crowd of Bulgarian soldiers had broken into a Turkish house and begun looting. As if that was not enough, they had forced a member of the household to give them money. Wahlberg considered this a crime, because 'a true soldier's' duty is to protect helpless people, not to rob them. He thus summoned some Finnish soldiers and with them compelled the Bulgarians to return what they had taken. After that he beat them, if not black and blue, at least enough to 'make them remember [us] Finns'. He also stated (p. 153) that he did not know whether it was out of sympathy for the weak or due to the greater hospitality of the Turks than of the Bulgarians but both the Finnish and Russian soldiers 'seemed to respect the enemy's nation more than the Bulgarians'. That it could be due to the (west) European categorisation of Turks as more 'civilised' than Bulgarians was not expressed in his memoirs.

In mid-February the Finnish Guard was in Çorlu. According to Wahlberg, most of the local inhabitants were Greeks. By underlining this, Wahlberg probably wanted to emphasise his return to the 'civilised' world. For in contemporary educated west European circles the Greeks were most often associated with their past, i.e., ancient classical culture. Wahlberg was billeted with a Greek teacher, who took the opportunity to 'illuminate' him about 'barbarous' Bulgarian habits and their 'uncultivated' language (compared with Greek). (Wahlberg 1878: 192-3; for other examples of similar verdicts, see Mansel 1997: 310.) This passage, appreciation of Greeks (at the cost of Bulgarians), implies the author's preferences and classification of people.<sup>466</sup> It differed somewhat from contemporary Russian policy, which had shifted from a sort of pan-Orthodoxy supporting Greeks to pan-Slavism favouring Bulgarian nationalism (Mansel 1997: 297).

### ***Fennander***

Fennander first mentioned encountering Bulgarians a few days after the crossing of the Danube. The Finnish Guard bivouacked in a village, and a dozen men were sent to nearby villages to get cattle and other food. According to Fennander (1895: 37), the Bulgarians were unwilling to sell their last sheep, because they were afraid of Turkish reprisals. So, as Fennander said, the soldiers had to take the animals 'almost by force' and compel the Bulgarians to accept a silver rouble for each of them in compensation. In the next sentence Fennander (p. 37) reported that the Guard often came across 'hordes' of Roma, travelling on carts drawn by oxen. Perhaps, he pondered, the horrors of war had forced these people to move. No further explanations were given, but it seems that in Fennander's opinion Bulgarians and the Roma belonged to the same, very low, social and cultural level.

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<sup>466</sup> See also below, Schulman.

Some days later (12 October) the Finnish Guard arrived at Yeni Barkats. Lack of provisions was a constant problem here and the soldiers had to help themselves. While doing this they, according to Fennander (p. 39), 'got to know the Bulgarian and his disposition towards other people'. He went on by pointing out (*ibid.*) that since the Bulgarians were unwilling to sell Finns food, or else charged prices that the guardsmen could not afford, the soldiers had to resort to stealing (which was officially forbidden). He concluded that the Bulgarians were a suspicious and treacherous lot, greedy for money. 'The Bulgarians treated us as their arch-enemies', he complained (*ibid.*). The guardsmen's own dubious morals (breaking orders not to steal from local people) Fennander seemed to accept as a normal part of warfare.

When not hungry, however, Fennander presented a different picture of Bulgarians. Approaching Sofia in early January the Finnish Guard engaged in a skirmish with Turkish troops defending a bridge over the Iskür. The latter were forced to retreat, but not before they had set the bridge on fire. The Finns along with Bulgarians from the adjacent village managed to put out the flames. The guardsmen then passed the night in the village and, according to Fennander (p. 97), had 'never before . . . been treated in such a good way by Bulgarians' Fennander only regretted (*ibid.*) that the Finns did 'not quite understand [the villagers'] language'.

At the end of January Fennander reported the guardsmen having seen a long line of Turkish civilians suddenly attacked by some Bulgarians. The Finns intervened but before the scuffle was over both sides had exchanged many blows. In general, Fennander stated, it was not only Bulgarians that robbed Turks but also vice versa. However, he pitied the most innocent victims of these acts of retribution, the women and children, and provided the reader with several images of suffering or of dead mothers with small children or even infants. (Fennander 1895: 118-20.)

### ***Lindman***

Lindman (1880) had very little to say about the Bulgarians. According to him, in Sofia the Russian troops were welcomed by 'several hundred' Bulgarians, who brought General Gurko bread and salt as a 'token of friendship'. 'They [Bulgarians] didn't, though, seem to be really happy or feel liberated.' With the exception of some elderly people, the welcome was rather formal. (Lindman 1880: 33.) Here Lindman departed from the official line and, probably, reported what was closer to reality. At least, it seems, he here resorted to his own experiences, not somebody else's.

### ***Palander***

According to Palander (1881: 20-1), the Finns had arrived to liberate the Bulgarians. Nevertheless, these were often hostile towards their liberators and cheated them in many ways. However, 'one cannot blame them, because hundreds of years of subjugation to Turkish rule had taught them to suspect everybody except themselves'. He continued (*ibid.*) by remarking that the Bulgarian reluctance to provide the soldiers with food, even in exchange for money, caused many of them to think that the Bulgarians, too, were their enemies. 'But anyone who had even the slightest knowledge of their situation and destinies or who reflected on the reasons for their behaviour pitied them, [irrespective of] their conduct.' In Palander's opinion it was only natural that the Bulgarians should be suspicious of their new masters, too.

After having defended the Bulgarians' conduct, Palander (pp. 21-2) turned to ethnography. He informed the reader that the (rural) Bulgarian male was usually tall and strong, while the female was rather short. The latter had oval-shaped faces, blond hair and lively black eyes that were, however, only seldom attractive. Indeed, they were, in general rather plain, Palander maintained. The

male's everyday clothing was 'simple', consisting of baggy trousers, a white shirt, a short coat and head-gear, and either a fez or a hat made of sheepskin. The female wore a short, 'coarse' skirt and white apron. In general 'womenfolk, like women everywhere, loved to decorate themselves'. Palander described in detail their 'jewellery', as well as the appearance of Bulgarian peasant houses, tools, sources of livelihood and the division of labour.<sup>467</sup> He also reported at great length how the bride was brought in a procession to her new home and what happened there, giving the impression that he personally took part in one such celebration (pp. 23-5).<sup>468</sup>

All this was written before Palander had experienced any fighting. After the battle of Gorni Dūbnik, he (p. 55) saw a grimmer facet of Bulgarian life. On the evening of 14 November he arrived at the village of Radomirtsi, where he witnessed a 'terrible occurrence'. A Bulgarian saw a Muslim<sup>469</sup> woman walking along the road, rushed after her and, having caught her, beat her so hard that she died. The reason he gave for his action was that the woman, who was obviously there by chance, had intended to set fire to the village. Palander did not believe this, and said that the real reason was most probably that the man wanted to avenge the long Turkish oppression.

A few days later Palander was approaching the Balkan mountains. In his opinion (p. 55) the further the Finnish Guard proceeded into the highlands, the more clearly one could see the difference between lowlanders and highlanders. The latter were in Palander's opinion (*ibid.*) more open-hearted, friendly, honest and trustworthy than the former. As an example he mentioned a village where the inhabitants 'for the first time during our sojourn in Bulgaria voluntarily brought us bread and other necessities'.<sup>470</sup>

Palander's experiences from Vrachesh, where the Guard stood in outpost for about a month, were, however, very different. When provisions ran out, Palander and some other men were sent to get food from the villagers. These claimed to have none. After having been told this several times the guardsmen decided to check the truth of the statement. They found plenty of food and, without more ado, seized some of it. The old men of the village swore by God that they would starve, and 'especially old women made a lot of noise'. The guardsmen neither understood much of what they were yelling nor 'cared all that much'. They estimated the price, put the money in an old man's hand, and left. (Palander 1881: 66-7.)

On 1 January the Guard was on the southern side of the Balkans. In the village of Dolno Kamartsi the men had a short exchange of shots with a retreating Turkish troop. When the Turks had disappeared, the Bulgarian villagers welcomed the Russian troops in the traditional friendly Slavonic manner by offering them salt and bread. On the other hand, any wounded Turkish soldiers who had not been carried away by their fellows were 'very probably' put to death by the very same people. At least Palander noticed signs of axe strokes on Turkish corpses. (Palander 1881: 86.) Thus, unlike other NCOs and officers (except Fennander), Palander clearly shifted from a romantic position to a realistic one. Previously he had many idealistic notions of Bulgarians, not all of which he abandoned, but in the midst of wartime miseries he resorted to more instant, situation-by-situation evaluations.

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<sup>467</sup> Palander did not refer to Wahlberg's work but obviously his 'ethnography' owed something to it.

<sup>468</sup> It is difficult to say whether or not Palander had some written sources for his description. In any case his presentation significantly differs from, though does not contradict, that of Kanitz (1875: 72-4). However, the passage strongly suggests to the reader that Bulgarians, not unlike Finns, were a people with a thriving folk culture.

<sup>469</sup> Palander, unlike my sources in general, used the term 'muselmi', or Muslim; in general guardsmen spoke of 'Muhammedans', and so did Palander in some other places (for example, p. 102). The term was at that time widely used (see, for instance, Baker 1879a; 145, 149) and did not necessarily have any particularly negative connotation.

<sup>470</sup> Cf. above, Wahlberg.

## ***Jernvall***

After having crossed the Danube Jernvall's company had several times to help itself in obtaining food. Unlike Palander or Fennander, Jernvall did not complain but merely reported the fact. He stated (1899: 36-7) that a patrol was dispatched to take sheep from local Bulgarians and to pay compensation in silver roubles. According to Jernvall (*ibid.*), the Bulgarian men objected: if we sell you sheep and the Turks learn of it they will take it out on us in a horrible way. In Jernvall's opinion this only indicated how hard the Bulgarians were oppressed; they were afraid even now when the Turks' power was diminishing.

The next time Jernvall mentioned Bulgarians was when the Russian troops entered Orkhanie in late November, and the local inhabitants rang the church bells.<sup>471</sup> According to Jernvall (pp. 122-3), they did so in order to welcome the 'valiant liberators', who in their generosity had marched 'through battles and storms' to reach the 'beautiful valley of Orkhanie'. But he also remarked (p. 122) that the Bulgarians were ringing the church bells because the Turks had for so long forbidden them to do so. He went on to say (p. 123) that the people of Orkhanie complained that some six months before the declaration of war the Turks had forced them to fortify Orkhanie 'without compensation'.<sup>472</sup> Anyone who was unwilling was whipped or beaten. The Finns acted differently and thus, Jernvall said (p. 126), the Bulgarians in Vrachesh voluntarily helped the guardsmen to haul their four cannon to their outpost on the 'Finnish Mountain'. In other respects, too, the villagers 'were very friendly to us [Finns]; and [friendship] was the only gift they could present us, for they themselves live in very poor circumstances, not unlike others who have been trampled on by the military foot' (p. 142). The last sentence comes close to an overt critique of Russian rule in Finland.

After having crossed the Balkans the Guard was involved in two brief skirmishes. The first one took place on 31 December in the village of Sarantsi, the other a short distance away a little later. The villagers, who were Bulgarians, welcomed the Russian troops extremely cordially, and 'were very pleased that we had driven away the Turks who had committed this and that evil' (p. 167). Jernvall added (*ibid.*) that the village looked very prosperous and the people were particularly hospitable.

In much the same way he praised (pp. 170-1) the welcome given the Guard in Vrazhdebna. The elders of the village 'blessed us and threw grain upon us from a vessel resembling a bushel'. The 'girls and married women, when welcoming us, tried to kiss our dirty, weather-beaten hands, but who would be fool enough to allow that to happen'.<sup>473</sup> And of Pazardzhik, which the Guard passed through on 14 January, Jernvall reported (p. 193) that local Bulgarians 'brought us wine, bread and water [and] welcomed us as their final liberators from the [Turkish] terror'.

According to Jernvall, the Finns returned the hospitality in like vein. He related (p. 171) an episode from Vrazhdebna, according to which a 'foreign', i.e., Russian, soldier appeared in the house where Jernvall's platoon was billeted, and tried to seize the host's only sheep. The Bulgarian resisted, but the soldier did not give up. Jernvall and his men intervened and told the man 'not to commit such a heartless deed'. They pointed out that this was their lodging and that he had nothing to

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<sup>471</sup> Similar episodes were remembered also after the armistice (see Ch. 13.1.) and by visitors other than Finns (see Forbes 1896: 190-1). It obviously underlined, and fixed in memory, the supposed, wished-for end of the Islamic phase in Bulgarian history.

<sup>472</sup> During the war it was common Turkish practice in Bulgaria to compel Bulgarians to dig entrenchments and to build fortifications around towns and cities.

<sup>473</sup> It is not clear what Jernvall meant by this. He obviously knew that this was a custom when welcoming guests. By refusing to be kissed on the hand he denied the offered hospitality, and for Bulgarians this could be an insult. Lindfors, for his part, says that women kissed the guardsmen's hands (see below, in this chapter).

do there. In the end the man left without the sheep. Jernvall concluded (*ibid.*): ‘This increased the household’s trust in us, as was natural enough.’

In Plovdiv, too, after the battle (15 to 17 January) Russian troops were warmly welcomed, according to Jernvall (p. 205). He said that when General Gurko rode in he was met by ‘priests of the Greek religion and the elders of the city’ who, ‘as is the practice among peoples of the Greek religion, offered him bread and salt’.<sup>474</sup> Most citizens looked, in Jernvall’s opinion (*ibid.*), ‘glad and satisfied’, but some, ‘supposedly Muhammedians’, stared angrily at the Russian troops.

After the armistice Jernvall had nothing to say about the Bulgarians; he was no longer interested in them if indeed he ever really had been. His description, by playing down conflicts and disputes in acquiring food and by underlining Bulgarian hospitality and good Finno-Bulgarian relations, only repeated the official propaganda. In contrast, after the end of armed hostilities he dealt at length with the Armenians on whom he was billeted in Lüleburgaz and in Çorlu in mid-February (pp. 249-56). For example, he described (p. 253) the ‘beautiful, young’ daughters of his first host, who cleaned his room in the morning. Similarly the baggy trousers that local women wore attracted Jernvall’s attention. He said (p. 254) that ‘seen from behind there was no difference between men and women except that the women, and especially married ones, had more imposing buttocks’.<sup>475</sup> Of course, he may not have been interested in Armenians, either, but this tinge of the exotic merely counterbalanced the terror of battle and the ghastly sight of murdered Turkish civilians.

### *Lindfors*

In early October the Finnish Guard passed through a riverside Bulgarian<sup>476</sup> village that looked ‘very beautiful’ (Lindfors 1975: 9). On the bank of the stream was a water-mill, where a Bulgarian was grinding corn. After much bargaining Lindfors bought some flour from him, using it later to make porridge for himself and his fellows. In an earlier passage he had described how the guardsmen’s seizure of part of the fence surrounding a Turkish village for firewood had given rise to loud yelling on the part of elderly local women.<sup>477</sup> Thus he made a sharp contrast between ‘howling’ Turks and ‘hospitable’ Bulgarians.

On New Year’s Day, just after having crossed the Balkans, the Finnish Guard were involved in a short fray in Dolno Kamartsi. According to Lindfors (p. 23), the guardsmen expelled some Turks who were about to destroy the village. In return the inhabitants, ‘old women as well as young girls’, rejoiced in our victory, ‘kissed our hands, thanked us and brought us freshly baked cakes and everything, saying that we had saved them from the tiger’s claws’. In a clay-built house, where Lindfors dropped in for a while to warm himself, the hostess took off Lindfors’s boots and dried them while the host offered him a drink and a slice of fresh bread. A few sentences later Lindfors related (p. 23) that all the houses in the village were built of clay. He also observed that the inhabitants were

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<sup>474</sup> As remarked above in this chapter, according to Hozier (1879: 808-9), the general was Strukov who, Hozier reports (*ibid.*), was received by ‘the clergy of the different persuasions, who came to meet him with banners, crosses, and holy images’.

<sup>475</sup> A sensual picture of oriental, or orientalist, women (meaning those in harems, not ordinary women) generally pervaded the latter part of 19th century western Europe, as shown by several paintings dealing with this theme. An example at random is J.-L. Gérôme’s “The Moriscoan Bath” (1870).

<sup>476</sup> Lindfors did not specify the ethnic factor here.

<sup>477</sup> The possibility of Turks remaining so close to the front is improbable but, due to examples from more eastern parts of Bulgaria (see Baker 1879a: 120, 243), cannot be totally ruled out. But, regardless of the facts, Lindfors gave his reader an impression of Turks, in contrast to Bulgarians, even if the women really were Bulgarians.



usually ‘clean’ and ‘ruddy-faced’. The men wore ‘baggy pants, fur caps, and short jackets,<sup>478</sup> and strips of leather tied to their feet with thongs’.<sup>479</sup> He also briefly described the dress of a mature woman, and that of an unmarried girl, and concluded by remarking that the young girls<sup>480</sup> looked ‘fierce and lively’ and moved accordingly.

On 2 January Lindfors arrived at Vrazhdebna, which Turkish troops had abandoned after some firing. Lindfors took a look at the local houses. One of them was full of girls busy at some job he could make no sense of. On the threshold of another he was welcomed by an angrily barking dog. Lindfors was just about to beat it with the shaft of his rifle when someone inside called out something, ‘in Russian’ as Lindfors believed. He understood the (Russian) diminutive ‘bratushka’,<sup>481</sup> or ‘dear brother’, took this as an invitation, and stepped in after having hit the dog ‘a little’ with his rifle. He was welcomed with bread, salt, pork and tobacco, all of which, being ‘a hungry man’, he found fine and tasty. (Lindfors 1975: 24.) Perhaps Lindfors did not partake in expeditions forcing the Bulgarians to hand over food, because he mentions none and his picture lacks the negative aspects portrayed by most others. It is also possible that due to his social (peasant) background he felt sympathy towards common Bulgarians and was inclined to remember mainly positive relations to them.

### **Wallin**

Writing many decades after the war, Wallin seems to be ashamed of the forcible seizure of food. Nevertheless, not unlike Lindman, he remembered the Bulgarians only as an insignificant episode in the total context of the war. He did not have much to say about them, and the little he did dealt with the moral aspect of the Finnish seizure of provisions from locals. Though dictated by necessity, it, according to Wallin (WM: 172-3), was not to the liking of all guardsmen. After the battle of Pravets, Wallin reported (*ibid.*), one NCO who had been sent on such an expedition burst out to his company’s sergeant major: ‘Truly I do not want to take part in this kind of looting. I would rather starve.’

Some six weeks later in Dolno Kamartsi, Wallin reported (WM: 222-3) that after the Guard had expelled the Turks from the village, local Bulgarians welcomed the men with food. From Vrazhdebna, where he arrived next day, Wallin reported that ‘five old men of the village’ welcomed the guardsmen by showering them with seeds of ‘barley and wheat, thus probably bidding us welcome’ (p. 234). He also paraphrased (WM: 237-8) Jernvall (above) by stating that when his platoon spent a night in Vrazhdebna, two Russian soldiers pushed their way into the house and attempted to seize the host’s only sheep. The company’s sergeant major (Jernvall) forbade them, but when they refused to obey, the Finns threatened the Russians with force. Only then did they leave. The hostess was very grateful and the next morning treated the Finns to soup made of cabbage. Broadly speaking, Wallin’s relation to the Bulgarians does not seem to differ much from that of Lindfors.

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<sup>478</sup> Lindfors called them in Finnish ‘körttiröijy’, which is hard to translate. It refers to the coats used by the male representatives of a Finnish Pietistic movement that were rather common in Lindfors’s home district (see Meriläinen 1927: 53).

<sup>479</sup> The same was told by Kanitz (1875: 44). However, Lindfors had probably not read Kanitz, and neither was this piece of information translated in *Suomen kuvalehti*’s selections of Kanitz’s work. Thus the note seems to be based on Lindfors’s own observations. Unlike Wahlberg, for example (see above, in this chapter), Lindfors’s text does not suggest any comparison between ‘civilised’ Finns and ‘backward’ Bulgarians but, rather, similarity. He merely stated what he saw and remembered.

<sup>480</sup> Or women in general; the sentence is a bit obscure.

<sup>481</sup> Whether or not he was addressed in Russian is impossible to tell for sure. A Bulgarian equivalent for ‘dear brother’, ‘bratshe’, sounds much similar.

### *Alfthan*

After leaving Svishtov, where he met a Bulgarian funeral procession, Alfthan came to the village of Ovcha mogila, near Gorna Studena. Unlike many other villages, it still had plenty of cattle and other livestock, as well as some horses that, Alfthan assumed, had been taken from their former owners, the escaped Turks. He needed a horse to catch up with his troop, which had left while he was still in Svishtov, and so opened negotiations with a local peasant. Meanwhile the peasant's adult daughter made Alfthan an omelette. According to him, she was of average size, 'as are most women of her kinsfolk', had 'a rather beautiful countenance, slightly dark skin and a gorgeous figure. From the trinkets, bracelets and earrings she wore I inferred her love of ornaments.' (Alfthan 1879: 27.)

Her father, though, was one of those 'sly Bulgarians'. He would not sell a horse to Alfthan, who, in the end had to resort to force to get a mount. He regretted that he had to hit a fellow-man, but 'for me there was absolutely no other way' (p. 27). He further asserted (*ibid.*) that force was the only means by which a Bulgarian could be convinced that the other person was in desperate need of something. He maintained (pp. 27-8) that after having been forced to do something, the Bulgarian would be extremely helpful and, lacking morality, unlikely to resist. Alfthan related (p. 129) a similar episode from Novo Selo (near modern Novi Khan, not far from Sofia), where he was escorted by a friendly Bulgarian. To provide Alfthan with supplies and lodging, the Bulgarian yelled at his reluctant compatriots and threatened them with force. When Alfthan asked why he behaved thus, the man replied: 'You won't get anything out of them otherwise.' Simola (1955: 116) argued the same of Indo-Chinese. The former soldier emphasised west European civilisation, the latter the white race. In both cases the notion that the 'mob' obeys only brute force of course suited well the needs of an invading army believing in its own military and ideological superiority.

In order to rejoin his unit Alfthan compelled a Bulgarian to show him the way to Pleven. They rode along a muddy track. The evening grew dark and it was raining; Alfthan was afraid of robbers and, finally, of his Bulgarian companion, too, but was comforted by the possession of a revolver. Suddenly, however, the Bulgarian broke the ominous silence by calling Alfthan 'bratushka'. Thus 'in the end there arose in the impenetrable darkness between us a sort of comrade-like confidence'. Soon afterwards they ran across a service corps and got some maize to eat. The Bulgarian was, however, unwilling to continue and proposed that they should return to his house; the journey thither was in his opinion much shorter than that to Alfthan's destination, Pordim.<sup>482</sup> Alfthan did not argue, and they returned. In the peasant's house Alfthan met a Cossack, who helped him like a servant, and the Bulgarian showed the hospitality that 'only a poor house may give'. (Alfthan 1879: 28-30.)

When bivouacking a few days later in Ralyovo, Alfthan's battery had to warm themselves around campfires made of rye shocks, since they were the only combustibles the men could find. Alfthan regretted that the village's winter stores were thus destroyed, and asked rhetorically (p. 32): 'Should one henceforth pass a verdict upon him [the local peasant] because of his stubborn lack of kindness [towards the Russian soldiers]?' Next day he (p. 36) saw an elderly Bulgarian women standing next to the burned shocks. 'Spitting on [the ash] she yelled, cursing the offenders.' Alfthan suspected (*ibid.*) that this 'strange' act was based on some 'old folk custom', but he did not say whether or not he considered the act a sign of Bulgarian cultural inferiority to Finns or Russians.

The next dozen or so days before the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik Alfthan (pp. 35-6, 61) lacked provisions. His unit, too, resorted to all possible means to get supplies. In many cases force was used and provisions were either bought at nominal prices or taken without any compensation, which was

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<sup>482</sup> Some 20 kilometres east of Pleven.

officially forbidden. Alfthan (p. 72) wondered that the Bulgarians, who in his opinion had accepted Turkish terror without protest, should so vociferously oppose the compulsory supplying of Russian troops. He recalled how he once saw a furious Bulgarian woman outside the regiment commanders' tent. At first 'I thought that in front of me was a mad woman or one suspected of espionage and sentenced to be hanged. But when I was told that it was only a matter of some sacks of seized chickens I completely relaxed.'<sup>483</sup>

But the Bulgarians had other defects, too. A minor point that troubled Alfthan was their concept of hygiene, which differed from Alfthan's. When billeted in a peasant's house in Novo Selo he had words with the person in charge of cooking. According to Alfthan (p. 129-30), every time the food was prepared he had to check the pot and force the cook to wash it with hot water. The cook would retort: 'Sir, it is but the same concoction that will be put back into it.' Alfthan went on (p. 130) that in Novo Selo he also had an opportunity to learn how a Bulgarian family dined: they sat down around a big pot and 'ate their meal, usually consisting of chicken with rice, in the Turkish way with all five [fingers]'. In the same manner the 18th century ethnographers of Russian peoples had equated such manners with savagery, and cleanness, in all its forms, with civilisation (Slezkine 1997: 41).

But there were more serious things, too. In October, near Pleven, Alfthan observed that Bulgarians were eager to seize the opportunity to take valuables and property abandoned by fleeing Turkish civilians (p. 67). On the southern side of the Balkans, in Khaskovo, he happened to witness (pp. 181-3) how two Bulgarians tried to seize the modest belongings of a Turkish family. Using his whip, he sought to force the Bulgarians to stop. But they insisted that because the Turks had caused them (meaning Bulgarians in general) so much harm they now had the right to take whatever they could. When Alfthan retorted that these Turks had not harmed them, the Bulgarians replied by pleading their sufferings. Alfthan saw that there was no point in arguing and remarked ironically (p. 182): 'So Christian were [our] Christian brethren.' He soon saw other examples of Bulgarian retaliation. He pitied the Turks but did not go further in pondering the matter.

On some occasions Alfthan (p. 61) also reported the difficult position of Bulgarian Christians between the Russians and Turks. After the battle of Gorni Dübник, in early November, when his battery was entrenched in an area south of Pleven, Alfthan related that the Turks had freed Christians they had forced to build fortifications. The Russians, however, were not willing to let them return to their homes, since they were afraid that some of them might be Turkish spies. So these 'Christian brethren', amongst them some women disguised in men's clothing, had to choose whether to starve in no-man's-land or to try and slip away from the Russian patrol during the night.

In December, when waiting for orders to cross the Balkans, Alfthan went for a ride in the direction of Pravets. He was guided by a young Bulgarian who during their trip told him 'long stories about Turkish malevolence in these regions in 1876, when his own house was razed to the ground'. This and other misdeeds had aroused in the Bulgarians 'a great hatred of those brute [Turkic] warriors', whereas towards Alfthan and the others who 'fought for the liberation of [the Bulgarian] folk' they felt much attachment. (Alfthan 1879: 74-5.) Thus, to sum up, Alfthan remembered his relation to the Bulgarians as that of a master to his serfs.

### ***Schulman***

After the battle of Telish, at the end of October, Schulman's company advanced to Pleven. The men had to march partly in the dark, and on one occasion Schulman hired two Bulgarians to guide them. He

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<sup>483</sup> In other words, in Alfthan's opinion such a seizure was quite normal under wartime conditions. Cf. his rhetorical note quoted in the previous passage.

had, however, little confidence in them. Above all he suspected that they would lead his unit a roundabout way in order to get more money, since they were paid according to the length of the journey. Schulman explicitly claimed that the Bulgarians were shrewd people who knew how to turn a profit in all circumstances. Thus, he added, later he stopped hiring Bulgarian guides and trusted to his map and compass. (Schulman 1955: 68-9.)

Some two months later, in the village of Skravena, near Orkhanie, he was billeted with a Bulgarian family. According to Schulman, they did what they could to entertain him, and said (p. 103) that there was a big difference between these 'mountain people' and those living in the north Bulgarian lowlands. The former were 'hospitable, kind and understanding'.<sup>484</sup>

In December, when stationed in an abandoned village near Pleven, Schulman observed that many houses in the village had an underground cellars where all kinds of things were stored. He mused that this 'unhealthy' way of building was due to Bulgarian caution and fear of displaying one's property to Turks, who had oppressed the Bulgarians for centuries. Schulman also thought that the Bulgarians' shrewdness, mistrust and selfishly calculating character was caused by Turkish rule. (Schulman 1955: 86.) Here he, like most guardsmen, merely repeated the official line without really giving any thought to Bulgarian history under the Ottomans. It seems that even he, a future historian, believed in the ahistorical 'nature' of historical events.

In early January Schulman was treated by an old woman with whom he was billeted on his way to Sofia. Schulman wondered why she refused to charge him; apparently this was the first - and last - time in Bulgaria that something like this happened to him. The old lady's explanation was that she did so because the Russians had come such a long way to help the Bulgarians. She also claimed to remember the previous time that imperial troops had been in Bulgaria (in 1828). 'I was a young girl then', she said. (Schulman 1955: 117.)

Schulman's next host in Sofia likewise praised the Russian army for liberating the Bulgarians. He said that before retreating, the Turkish troops had taken the most influential [non-Muslim] men, as well as many women, hostage.<sup>485</sup> Schulman's host further reported that a majority of Turkish civilians had fled along with the troops, as had most of the Turkish soldiers being treated in hospital. Many of them had not been strong enough to walk, and so the precincts of the hospitals and the outskirts of Sofia were covered with their dead bodies.<sup>486</sup> Schulman added that according to the trustworthy testimonies of some doctors, the conditions in the Turkish hospitals and the state of the remaining patients were such that even painters' visions of hell were pleasant in comparison. (Schulman 1955: 118-19.) He obviously exaggerated the conditions in Turkish hospitals (see Anderson 1968; Baker 1879b).

From Sofia Schulman continued to Plovdiv. On the way he made the acquaintance of a Bulgarian Orthodox priest, 'the memory of whom I carry with me still'. According to Schulman, it was hard to believe how low the level of schooling of these 'spiritual leaders of the people' was. The priest looked like a peasant, and Schulman soon noticed that his education did not differ from that of his flock. He was illiterate but, nevertheless, had some service books in Church Slavonic, from which Schulman, a Lutheran, read aloud for him. After a while a peasant arrived to have a child christened. The baby was not his, nor was it even with him, and the ceremony was carried out in its absence. The

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<sup>484</sup> Thus he agreed with Wahlberg and Palander (see above, in this chapter).

<sup>485</sup> This was not the case.

<sup>486</sup> Sofia was a major centre for wounded and sick Turkish soldiers from forces in western Bulgaria. At the beginning of 1878, according to Hozier (1879: 780-1), there were '6000 persons under treatment in the ambulances'. Of them 5,000 were on 2 January hurriedly loaded onto carts and sent 'along abominable roads in the bitter cold' with the result that 'a large number of them perished'.

priest took his book, leafed through it, chose a page at random, and spoke by heart some words that certainly was not written there, or so Schulman maintained. (Schulman 1955: 121-2.) Thus, not unlike Wahlberg, Schulman presented education and civilisation as the two main issues in his recollections of relations to Bulgarians. He did not, however, blame the Bulgarians but, as suited Russian propaganda, their masters, the Turks. This indicates that relations to the Turks, as well as relations between various units of the Russian army, were understood and accepted by the guardsmen in the manner suggested by war propaganda, the army tradition and the cultural logic of the (Finnish) structure.

In the case of Schulman and other officers, the same cultural logic obviously also guided their thinking relative to the Bulgarians and made them see these as a backward people, though not without the (supposed) virtues of a rural community. The NCOs and especially the privates did not necessarily share that logic and had therefore to 'invent' relations to Bulgarians (and Bulgaria) on the spot. How this happened, and how the officers' cultural logic worked, is the subject of the next chapter.

## 11. FAMILIARISED AND REPUGNANT PLACES: SPACE IN WARTIME MEMOIRS

### 11.1. Places of entertainment, luxury and misery

In the opinion of Halbwachs (1975:104-8; 1992: 193-235) recollections are attached to places rather than to people. This seems to be true of my sources, too, as, first, the authors wrote more about places than about people and, second, descriptions of places were clearly used as means of orientation, to establish and evaluate their relation to warfare and the people in enemy territory. In other words, places invariably evoked judgements about people but the converse is rare. Except for Wallin, all the authors had something to say about places, but four of them (Wahlberg, Lindman, Wallin and Schulman) had nothing to say about foreign people before the Guard's arrival in Bulgaria.

Places that the men mentioned during their journey to the front were usually depicted as either hostile or foreign. They evoked recollections of, and anticipated, heroism, death at the hands of the enemy, the 'unreasonable, oriental' way of doing things or the misery, poverty and ignorance that in the guardsmen's opinion plagued the other. They might also be uncomfortable, because the war had turned them into expensive market places overrun by 'dubious characters', or 'exotic' or 'beautiful', easing men's anxiety about the future. At times they could even be 'clean' and 'beautiful', that is, 'civilised', in opposition to the enemy territory. But, whatever the case, recollections attached to places illuminate the men's initial processing of military identity. In short, the more the guardsmen accepted the notion of the other places as 'oriental', 'dirty' or 'hostile' the less they saw of it, the more they internalised military ideals and the less they were able to question them.

#### *Wahlberg*

The first other place Wahlberg described was Giurgiu on the northern side of the Danube, opposite Turkish-held Ruse. According to him (1878: 9), besides fortifications, 'we met here for the first time the destruction that always follows in the wake of war. The town was devoid of people; houses were abandoned, and here and there cannon projectiles had forced their way through walls, and even through dwellings and churches.'

Zimnicea, too, where he arrived some days later, and Svishtov on the opposite side of the river reminded Wahlberg of the enemy. He first related (p. 10) that 'the panorama would surely have given grounds for many pleasurable reflections, but there was no time for that . . .' Instead, there was time (ibid.) for a description of the turmoil brought to Zimnicea by the war; all kinds of merchants having gathered there, not to speak of gamblers, bandits and other doubtful folk. Later (p. 18) he painted an almost identical picture of Yeni Barkats, where the Finnish Guard stood a week in outpost before the battle of Gorni Dübnik.

#### *Fennander*

The first place Fennander (1895) described in some detail was Iași. According to him (pp. 23-4), it was very clean. The streets were paved with concrete and the town was surrounded by beautiful parks. By chance Fennander met a Swedish craftsman, who took him to see the most notable sights. Later, when waiting to cross the Danube at Zimnicea, Fennander (p. 27) noted the 'oriental' look of the town, which in his opinion was neither big nor splendid but merely a market place. Unfortunately, he said, prices were so high that a common soldier could hardly afford to buy anything. In marked contrast to the town were the fine weather and the mighty Danube (p. 28). Here we see a clear 'descent' from 'civilised' north to 'savage' south.

### ***Lindman***

Near Iași, where the Guard spent some days, vineyards were a temptation to some soldiers. In addition, Lindman mentioned, the guardsmen were ‘entertained’ there by some bear-handlers, who ‘plagued their . . . bears with many kinds of annoyances’. (Lindman 1880: 11-12.) Thus it seems that Lindman hardly noticed, or at least pondered, the other space. To be more exact, he did not establish a relation between war and the places he passed through on his way to war.

### ***Palander***

Palander’s description of foreign places started with the Guard’s arrival at Chișinău. According to him (1881: 7-8), there was ‘much to say’ about the town,<sup>487</sup> ‘economically it was rather lively’, and ‘during this war it had earned a place in history since war had been declared there and because all troops travelling to the [Balkan] battlefield first gathered there’. Palander also mentioned (*ibid.*) that the guardsmen could feast there upon ‘all sorts of grapes and other delicacies’.

The outskirts of Iași, where Palander arrived a few days later, consisted of ‘low wooden hovels packed together in narrow, dirty streets’. The inhabitants were of divers nationalities: Wallachians, Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Roma and, ‘now’, some Russians, that is, soldiers. The centre of the city, in contrast, looked both splendid and ‘western’; the streets were paved with asphalt, the droshkies were ‘magnificent’, and one could buy anything from the shops ‘with windows’ though prices were high. There were also several sights worth seeing: the university, the king’s palace, the theological seminary and several churches. (Palander 1881: 8-9.) To judge from a picture, probably a wood engraving from the late 19th century,<sup>488</sup> Iași, at that time the seat of Romanian cultural life, was indeed an impressive city, at least compared with contemporary Finnish towns. But what is important here is Palander’s implicit equation of the west European features of a place with what is socially and morally good or acceptable and his dismissal of all the rest as unworthy.

The same contrast between ‘civilised’ centre and ‘savage’ periphery Palander (pp. 9-10) observed in Bucharest: on the one hand, palaces of stone and finely dressed gentry, on the other, miserable wooden huts and half-naked Roma. The streets were full of oxen pulling carts loaded with army supplies: ‘These useful and even-tempered animals . . . were treated with the usual . . . indifference’, that is, they were misused. Palander added (*ibid.*) that ‘it goes without saying that it would be much more valuable . . . to treat them more properly’. Thus the relation to the other was above all on sensible grounds, as it was with so many contemporary Finns (Klinge 1998: 247-8). As in the case of Alfthan, this, however, does not exclude moral or aesthetic grounds for defending what is later called ‘animal rights’, because in Ch. 5.3. we saw that Palander could also, for example, curse the war.

### ***Jernvall***

Jernvall (1899) made only a few notes on Chișinău and Iași. In the former he (p. 18) praised the ‘noble fruits of southern Europe’, the grapes and water melons that were so cheap and tasty that the Finns devoured them in quantity, almost making themselves ill. In the evenings, Jernvall entertained himself listening to how the hundreds of dogs in the town barked, each in its own ‘peculiar way’. In Iași,

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<sup>487</sup> Gripenberg (1905: 200), who also was there, later argued that Chișinău was a ‘populous but highly unsympathetic’ town.

<sup>488</sup> *Iashi, a city of great destinies*, tr. [from the Romanian] by F. Ionescu, Bucharest 1986, picture 213.

Jernvall, too, approvingly noted (p. 21) streets made of concrete, beautiful parks and cab drivers clad in 'fine' garments. The location of the city in a 'nice, spacious valley' also pleased Jernvall (p. 22).

### *Lindfors*

According to Lindfors (1975: 4), Bialystok, as well as the Guard's next stop, Kovel in what is now Ukraine, were both small and unimpressive, if one 'did not take into account the Polish cemeteries' where rather tall grave monuments 'attracted the attention' of the guardsmen. The landscape along the railway was in Lindfors's opinion 'monotonous and flat, not as varying and hilly as, for example, in Finland'.<sup>489</sup>

A week later the guardsmen were in Chişinău, where they stayed for six days. Lindfors stated that it looked 'rather old-fashioned' and that 'Jews seemed to thrive there in abundance'. Iaşi, where he stopped for some days in late September, was 'beautiful and clean', and even the streets were of concrete. (Lindfors 1975: 4-5.) So after the departure Lindfors at times seemed to be in low spirits and started his adoption of military identity cautiously and with reservations.

### *Alfthan*

In the middle of September, Alfthan arrived at Chişinău, where his corps' HQ was located. The city deserved, in his opinion (1879: 6), 'no special description'. The most remarkable place was a local restaurant where representatives of the Russian army discussed the recent (third) attempt to storm Plevna.

Next day, Alfthan's battery continued its journey, arriving on the second day at a half Russian, half Jewish village. The village headman billeted them in a house on the main road, furnished in a 'luxurious', 'oriental' way, but Alfthan and his four fellow officers 'rightly concluded' that they had been billeted with Jews, 'something we resolutely resisted' (p. 7). He went on (*ibid.*) to say that they 'eventually found a room in the house of a Russian land-seller'.

Arriving at Iaşi Alfthan (p. 10) first encountered, on the outskirts, 'a heap of low wooden huts in narrow, unclean lanes' and '[c]urious folk [that] gazed at us unabashed'. In the centre of the city 'things . . . began to look brighter'. Alfthan (*ibid.*) felt he had returned to the civilised world with 'tidy houses, shops with windows made of glass and splendid cafés'. To show that they, too, were civilised persons, after having bivouacked, Alfthan and his companions changed their clothes and went to see the 'official buildings'. These included the university, the city hall, the theological seminary and some churches. They then went shopping, and 'although prices were high, we found everything we needed'.<sup>490</sup> (Alfthan 1879: 11.)

Like Iaşi, Bucharest left Alfthan a little confused. Already before his arrival, he (pp. 13-14) had described the city as 'enchanted'. Seen from afar, and coloured with the 'last golden beams' of the setting sun, Bucharest was like a 'beautiful, fantastic painting'. Alfthan ascribed this to the numerous churches with gleaming cupolas and crosses, the now half-ruined monasteries, the buildings ranging from the heights of luxury to the depths of misery, and the many gardens. But to a greater extent than Iaşi, the Romanian capital had two faces.<sup>491</sup> On their arrival, the railway station was a scene

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<sup>489</sup> This was claimed by a man from Ostrobothnia, one of the flattest parts of Finland!

<sup>490</sup> Unlike common soldiers, officers thus could afford to pay high prices.

<sup>491</sup> The notion was echoed by Inha, who, in 1906, wrote (p. 21) that 'only a few decades ago' Bucharest was beautiful to look at from afar, but seen from close by she was 'somehow distasteful'. Schulman said about the same of Edirne (see Ch. 11.2.). Thus, from a distance the 'Orient' was charming, but its 'real' face was rather ugly.



of the utmost confusion (pp. 13-14): '[The place was crowded with] a colourful mass in uniforms', both soldiers and officials, street vendors touting everything possible, and peddlers selling newspapers from many different countries.<sup>492</sup>

Having cleared their way through the crowd Alfthan and his companions took a carriage with the intention of driving into the city centre. For some reason they were afraid that the vehicle might break down and, besides, the way into the centre was not encouraging. The buildings were squalid, and, he predicted, in rainy weather 'the lanes were like sewers'. Neither did the numerous heavy wagons that drove in and out of the city loaded with supplies for the army improve the condition of the roads. In the centre of the city, beautiful palaces stood next to a dirty meat shop located in a wretched hut. Splendid carriages drove amongst dilapidated carts, and elegantly dressed gentlemen walked next to half-naked Roma. And the 'ladies of easy virtue' were not ashamed to walk around in public surrounded by 'frivolous men'. (Alfthan 1879: 14-16.)

From Bucharest Alfthan continued to Fratești, where he bivouacked with the Finnish Guard, accompanying it to Giurgiu. In Alfthan's opinion, nothing special happened on the way. He encamped on the shore of a tributary of the Danube. Everything was quiet. The 'oriental moon' shone over the landscape, and from an adjacent village music was heard, mixed with the evening prayers of the Finnish Guard. Next morning the peaceful atmosphere had disappeared. Along the pontoon bridge over the Danube crowded a very mixed bag of all kinds of vehicles transporting supplies to the Russian troops in Bulgaria. Alfthan stopped overnight in Zimnicea. In the evening the transport tumult ceased, but from the direction of Pleven the 'heavy thunder of cannon' was heard, preventing him from relaxing. (Alfthan 1879: 18, 20-1.)

### *Schulman*

On 15 September, Schulman (1955) had some hours to visit Chișinău. He took a carriage (p. 18) but found nothing interesting, 'filth and lack of order prevailed overall'. The only thing worth noting in his opinion was the house in the centre of the city where Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich had lived the previous winter. That is, only the Russian presence made the place worthy of something. Nonetheless, the countryside, the hilly terrain, fertile soil, verdancy and tree-clad mountains made a great impression on Schulman. And so did Iași, 'because of its cleanness', streets paved with asphalt and stylish houses (p. 19). But Brăila, which from afar pleased him with its 'churches and towers', proved 'as unclean and messy as all the other cities in the Orient' (p. 21).

The centre of Bucharest, on the other hand, with its elegant shops, comfortable hotels and fine restaurants, looked like a west European city. The streets were 'in really good condition'. But Schulman saw some 'oriental features' in the people. (Schulman 1955: 21-2.) Zimnicea, where he crossed the Danube, was according to him (p. 28) hardly worth mentioning. The restaurants were bad and prices exorbitant. Their clientele consisted of all kinds of people: elegant Russian officers, adventurers of all nationalities, bandits, gamblers, black-marketeers, etc. In short, everything one might expect to find in the rear. So Schulman had a clear-cut opinion of the value, or rather lack of it, of the other space, which implies a clear-cut military identity as well.

In general, it seems that places on the way to the front were for officers mainly something negative, not-us, while for NCOs and privates they were sites of occasional entertainment or not worth remembering at all; that is, they were not so much the other (or an aspect of creating the enemy-image) as something foreign (in the sense of a landscape that occasionally captures our interest). An exception

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<sup>492</sup> The reason for this was that Bucharest was a centre that supplied the Russian and Romanian army with provisions.

is Palander, but his background (he was an officer's son, that is, he shared the tradition of the army functionaries) may explain part of this.

## 11.2. The enemy space: grandeur and filth

The guardsmen's encounter with enemy territory resulted in darker notions. It would seem that the experience of entering enemy territory, or 'other space', is itself enough to make one establish negative relations to that place. For example, when Saara Rampanen, a Finnish nurse in the First World War, crossed what was then the German-Russian border, she claimed that the landscape on the Russian side instantly looked repulsive (Rampanen 1934: 81-2). Writing in the late 1970s, Winter said (1979: 101) that '[w]ith his head below ground level, of necessity, a man [of the Great War] might as well have been fighting in Kent or China. Even today old soldiers look on maps of northern France with surprise, as if the west front were a state of mind or a residue of experiences rather than a geographical location.' For, as poets have always known, space in general and nature in particular can be 'animated'. As Dardel pointed out in Ch. 2.3.3., we may find it 'horrible', 'awful' or 'unfamiliar'. Or we can experience it in a positive, lofty or elevating way, often having a sense of something that Turner (1981: 157) called 'invisible or supernatural beings or powers', in short, religion. According to Layton (1986: 478; see also 1997: 85-6), the 'rhetoric of "gloom and glory" runs as a unifying thread through the works of [the 19th century Russian] poets of marked individual talent who made the [Caucasus] speak of a diversity of concerns, ranging from "civic courage" to a secret love affair. The "wild, awesome beauty" of the Caucasus embodies "dread and charm;" the poetic *persona* fills with "wonder," gazing upon lofty mountains, capped by "virgin snows" and a "bright raiment of ice".' She also noted (1986: 483) that Pushkin's 'representations of the Caucasus . . . laid the foundation of the entire ideational structure within which terrain was read as a sign, designating such attributes of the local population as rebelliousness, love of liberty, stormy passion, brashness, pride'. According to Klinge (1998: 94), visiting Paris in 1847 Snellman correspondingly compared what he saw with representations of the city in novels by Eugène Sue (1804-1857).

Such ways of representing nature by established patterns were known to the guardsmen, too, to some extent. Their public memory was influenced by the works of Runeberg and Topelius, both of whom used experiences of nature to create strongly moral or even religious sentiments and judgements (Alhoniemi 1969: 86, 107).<sup>493</sup> The guardsmen used these patterns to reflect on, or counterbalance, the horrors of battle and to justify the seizure of space. For example, the 'clean' mountaineers mentioned in chapter 10 affirmed in the men the belief that even these 'backwaters' could some time be a part of (European) civilisation, and were thus worth liberating. Much in the same way, an Englishman, Baker, fighting on the Ottoman side, contrasted (1879a: 12-13) natural beauty with the horrors of war and let the former account for his defence of Ottoman rule on Bulgarian soil.

I do not claim that experiences of space were the only, or crucial, factors in the Finnish processing of military ideals and public memory. But experiences or, rather, images attached to memorable places<sup>494</sup> certainly affected the way men saw and categorised the Balkans. On the one hand,

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<sup>493</sup> Layton (1986: 479) has called such representations 'quasi-religious', arguing that they make 'mountains symbolic of spiritual uplift and escape from the vanity of the world'. But I think it is up to authors and readers how they see the matter.

<sup>494</sup> It is impossible to distinguish the common guardsmen's personal experiences of towns from the images they used to recall these places. Hermeneutic problems in interpretation notwithstanding, we do not know for certain what they actually saw, what they borrowed from other sources or what they simply fabricated on the basis of clues provided by wartime hearsay and peacetime public information. The common soldiers were usually either forbidden to enter towns (and, in some cases, villages) or their movements there were strictly limited (WM: 251, 320). Officers and some NCOs had more freedom to move. However, all of them seemed to remember not so much what they saw but what they were prepared to see or what

the 'filthy', 'oriental' Ottoman rule and the 'unhealthy' social life associated with it 'demanded' to be abolished (cf. Todorova 1997: 119-20). In most cases, filth was associated with everyday living. It consisted of tangible products of human life such as excrement and rubbish or was a side-effect of war. Unlike in several tumults and conflicts in the 20th century, cultural monuments such as mosques, churches and other 'high' buildings were not usually declared unclean. Roughly speaking, then, filth was an aspect of the enemy's practice rather than his ideology. Correspondingly, space associated with the enemy was most often seen through the prism of the *ad hoc* needs of wartime, and only secondarily from the perspective of peacetime notions about the Turks or the Balkans.<sup>495</sup>

On the other hand, these 'serene', 'quiet' or 'beautiful' natural surroundings outside the enemy context 'asked' the guardsmen why they were fighting, as did glimpses of familiar scenes that reminded them of Finland. Thus, to paraphrase Rosaldo (1980: 143), filth, or more exactly stories about it, united Finns into the social world of the Russian army and the imperial structure whereas descriptions of 'beautiful' nature distanced them from the Russian structure by making them ponder why they, Finns, were fighting for it or whether the war belonged to the 'nature' of Finnish structure.

Interestingly, contemporary Englishmen who, for some reason, visited Russian troops also described them as dirty. The British military attaché, Colonel F.A. Wellesley, for example, who was a guest of the emperor, wrote in the heat of July 1877 of a 'filthy Russian [who hacked to pieces a sugar block] with a filthy chopper on a filthy roadway' and stated that there was 'not a latrine in this camp of grand dukes and grandees' (quoted in Anderson 1968: 97). And the colonel's countrymen in the Great War accused French farmyards, that is, civilian territory, of being dirty as not even the Welsh are (quoted in Winter 1979: 143). Thus otherness, dirty and enmity were lumped together to form a counterbalance to our 'clean' identity. Or, as Fussell (1977: 235) stated of Englishmen, '[r]ecourse to the pastoral is [a]... mode of both fully gauging the calamities of [war] and imaginatively protecting oneself against them'.

In general, disregarding battlegrounds, the Bulgarian space to which the Finnish guardsmen directed most attention was mountains, followed by some larger cities such as Sofia, Edirne or Constantinople. The guardsmen seem to have embodied in mountains everything they considered worth respecting and remembering: mountains were strong, independent, beautiful and free;<sup>496</sup> in a word, the 'authentic' Bulgaria they had come to liberate. And because these were attributes that both Finnish public memory and Russian propaganda ascribed to the 'true' soldier, mountains served as men's own idealised image as well as their idealised human mode of being in Finland reproduced in the Balkans. Probably for that reason, the men, in the end, tended to experience the difficult crossing of the mountains as a great event, because the magnificence of the huge masses of rock merged in the guardsmen's writing with Finnish honour, or greatness, and being literally 'high up' bolstered the men's self-esteem.

This is not mere word-mongering. At least for educated Finns there existed a public memory linking mountains, authenticity and free people. The idea goes back to Montesquieu (1689-1755) at least, but its Finnish version was formulated in the late 1810s by the university professor J.J.

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they expected or were supposed to see.

<sup>495</sup> However, the image that Turkish places, and the 'Orient' in general, were 'filthy' was a standard European cliché at that time. For example, William Herbert, a young German of British origin who volunteered on the Turkish side and took part in the defence of Plevna, said that the town had filthy streets which were impassable in wet weather and complained of the absence of sanitary arrangements, of 'heaps of offal' and the 'thousand-and-one stench of urban Turkey' (Furieux 1958: 45). Being an accepted and commonly used European description of Turkey, 'filthy' thus particularly easily became an attribute of the enemy and everything associated with him.

<sup>496</sup> The matter is discussed in detail in Dardel (1990) and Suutala (1986).

Tengström (1787-1858) and had some influence on thinkers of the day such as Lönnrot, Runeberg and Snellman. According to Tengström, all truly or potentially civilised people were mountain-dwellers, such as the Greeks, Swiss or Finns (*sic*) (Klinge 1997: 174). Cultivated in that spirit, during the campaign educated Finns looked for traces of 'high' Greek civilisation and praised mountain Bulgarians but not lowlanders. They also spoke disparagingly of contemporary 'low' Turkish and Bulgarian culture, making an exception, however, of 'virtuous' folk culture. Emotionally charged images and the making of mountains into symbols of courage, inspiration, power, bellicosity, etc. was, of course, a typical *topos* of romantic writers, which had flourished in Finland at least since Runeberg, and in Russia since Pushkin (see Layton 1986: 470). Anthropologically, however, the point here is that, as Rosen (1984: 7) put it, 'space is deeply intertwined with social identity'. A 'high' place implies a high or respectable race or people good to be related to, whereas a 'low' place connotes racial inferiority and the impossibility of (egalitarian) relations (Rosen 1984: 24).

The same dualism was applied to the two Ottoman capitals, Edirne and Constantinople (the latter is dealt with in Ch. 13.2.). Both were luxurious cities with splendid pasts and, to some extent, presents. Their glorious history echoed the feats of Finnish forbears, and their present grandeur, and especially the lack of it,<sup>497</sup> proved to the guardsmen that the war, the process, was worth enduring: 'we' had come to 'their' places, and 'their' filth was turning into 'our' purity. Alternatively it may be said that what guardsmen fought for was to prevent the 'filth' of the other from infiltrating into Finland.

The guardsmen did not express themselves in this manner. Like modern tourists (see Leed 1991: 288-93), they spoke of the difference between 'oriental' Balkan areas and Finland, and either explained the otherness away by saying that it was like back home or emphasised it by scorning its 'alien' nature and 'wrong' way of existence. All this allowed the men to reflect on their own feelings relative to the other. They also visited famous sites, and considered themselves pioneers who were returning civilisation to places from which it had disappeared hundreds of years before, or so they believed. Thus space, like a dominant symbol in ritual as formulated by Turner (1986a: 30-1), served a wide variety of purposes. It helped to maintain an image of the true soldier always discharging his duty, in this case, liberating and civilising a space. It assured that the space was worth the sacrifices made for it. And it helped to offset the terrible feelings evoked by battles.

Seeing the Balkans in this way narrowed the differences between the Bulgarian people and Turkish-dominated places into a single, undifferentiated, 'Orientalism'. This narrowing was more typical of those who were inclined to see the Bulgarian people in a romantic light. But such a categorisation also created a problem: how could the Bulgarian people be 'virtuous' and their land 'squalid'? Although the question is not overtly discussed in my sources, most of the authors 'solved' it by opposing the 'Bulgarian' countryside and the 'oriental' Balkans (as if they did not exist in the same geographical space); that is, finally, ignoring the people and emphasising 'filth' as the quality of the enemy territory. If we suppose that interest in ethnography was an expression of the men's peaceful, cultural, and Finnish, nationalism, I think that it was at least temporarily overrun by another kind of nationalism, viz., military heroism that was better suited to wartime conditions. Both kinds of nationalism existed, at the level of words and categories at least, on peacetime Finnish conditions; hence both could be used in the Balkan context.

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<sup>497</sup> Lack of grandeur, pointed out by several of my sources, supported the notion that all that remained of the Ottoman empire were splendid frameworks and exteriors, as Inha (1906: 2) suggested, and thus the culture supposedly brought by the Russian army was badly needed.

## **Wahlberg**

Wahlberg's first impression of Bulgarian space was *pittoresque*. After having crossed the Danube the Finnish Guard bivouacked near a village (Tsarevets). Wahlberg (1878: 13) said that the area was dominated by delicate green grass and woods of oak and beech that the setting sun coloured in a wondrous way. Everywhere it was quiet and tranquil, only cannon volleys from the direction of Pleven disturbed the peace. Svishtov, on the other hand, which Wahlberg (pp. 13-14) visited the next day, 'had a totally Turkish character with its narrow, winding streets, open-fronted shops<sup>498</sup> and slender minarets'. Narrow streets as a sign of a place's 'oriental', or alien, character were mentioned by a contemporary Russian war correspondent, too (quoted in Todorova 1997: 84).

Later, Wahlberg no longer overtly juxtaposed (good) Bulgarian villages and (bad) Turkish towns. Yet he still praised Bulgarian villages. When the Finnish Guard was stationed in a village, probably Yablanitsa, Wahlberg (p. 76) commented that the exceptionally beautiful weather of late November, together with the glorious landscape, persuaded him and his companions to go for short rides in the surroundings. Thus he both indicated that Bulgarians were worth liberating (as the Russian propaganda said) and implied that in general virtuous people, including Finns, should be free.

During December, when the Guard was in outpost on the 'Finnish Mountain', the wild and rugged highlands both fascinated and awed Wahlberg.<sup>499</sup> He wrote (p. 105): 'The high, snow-capped mountains with their oaks and beeches, their wild and barren rocks that are steep and hostile even to snow-flakes, the dark and starry sky, the small stream, independent enough not to let ice and cold shackle its grey waves; all that united into a winter landscape of impressive beauty.' And on Christmas Eve (p. 112): 'The high Balkans clad in their pure, white garments looked higher and more solemn than usual, as if wondering at the handful of men nearby who, surrounded by cold and dark, dared to think about a feast despite all the tears and misery that the war had caused.' It was a poetic way to claim that 'heroic' Finns were bringing peace here.

The first city Wahlberg entered in Bulgaria was Sofia. He dwelled at length on the city's history, from Roman times to its position in 19th century Balkan trade (pp. 136-8). According to him (*ibid.*), Sofia was a typical oriental town. Its streets were narrow and twisting and in bad condition, not in any respect comparable to the 'elegant boulevards of western Europe'. Houses with windows opening onto the garden rather than the street, as well as shops and workshops consisting of one room with no wall on the side of the street were also distinctive marks of the city's oriental character. Briefly, Wahlberg outlined a process of decay from glorious antiquity to the disagreeable present.

He was not the only one to dislike the city. An Englishwoman who volunteered to take care of Turkish wounded considered Sofia a 'wretched town, only a big, overgrown village, of no importance whatever' (quoted in Anderson 1968: 167). Baker (1879b: 12) found the houses in Sofia 'as a rule' bad, and the streets 'in a dreadful condition of dirt and slush'. He, however, perhaps correctly, ascribed much of this to wartime conditions rather than to any 'perennial' oriental nature. The future Soviet politician Alexandra Kollontay (1872-1952), who lived in Sofia as a little girl, wrote in her memoirs (1946: 28) that 'with her one-storey houses and dusty streets Sofia resembled more a big village [than a town]'. However, the city much pleased her, or so she said (*ibid.*).

In Sofia Wahlberg (p. 150) found plenty of provisions but little intellectual nourishment. By the latter he meant discussion with peers, for he described (pp. 150-1) how he visited the local

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<sup>498</sup> That is, shops were located by the roadside.

<sup>499</sup> Here he, as well as the other guardsmen writing in the same way (see especially Palander, below in this chapter), turns out to be a true romantic creating visions of 'awe and enthusiasm in the face of such vast terrestrial phenomena as the sea and mountains' as Layton (1986: 473) put it.

Austrian consul, having dinner with him and some of his friends. Many of these were doctors, and together they wondered at the bad hospital conditions suffered by the wounded left behind by the Turks.<sup>500</sup>

Plovdiv, where Wahlberg arrived in mid-January, was in his opinion (pp. 176-8) a multi-ethnic (Turkish, Greek and Bulgarian) town with a splendid Roman past.<sup>501</sup> To see various parts of the Ottoman empire 'first and foremost [as a] "classical ground"' and the Turkish present as 'debasing the illustrious ancient tradition' was typical of the Enlightenment and persons raised in its spirit. This kind of representation of the foreign or other coincided nicely with a notion of west European superiority, because it underlined the observer's lack of interest in, and perhaps scorn of, the modern Ottoman or Bulgarian culture. (Todorova 1997: 22, 63, 96.)

According to Wahlberg (pp. 179-80), Edirne lay in a 'flat' setting that sunset gave a rather beautiful appearance. From a distance the city looked impressive but, he remarked (ibid.), its history was bloody. In his imagination he saw generation after generation attacking each other 'here' in the most brutal ways and thanked God that the history of his land was not like that.<sup>502</sup> Entering the city, Wahlberg (pp. 185-9) said that it was like arriving in Versailles. Soon, though, he put aside the beauty of the parks and started to catalogue the battles the city had witnessed from the times of the Romans and Goths to its capture by the Ottoman sultan Murad I in 1360. Despite this, the former Ottoman capital did not 'today' lack the 'oriental luxury' of valuable mosaics and famous buildings. One of the most remarkable was the famous mosque<sup>503</sup> of Sultan Selim II (reigned 1566-74), the structure of which Wahlberg described in detail. 'Amongst the oriental attractions worth seeing' Wahlberg (ibid.) mentioned the bazaar of Ali Pasha, where he and his companions bought some 'minor' items of 'oriental luxury such as rose oil and silk'. Wahlberg's indifference to their existence next to 'oriental squalor' suggests that, depending on the context, he modified the image of the Orient to fit either the wartime (filth) or peacetime (exotic luxury) categorisation of the other

### ***Fennander***

Bivouacking near Pleven waiting for orders for his first battle Fennander (1895: 40-1) spent some time reconnoitring enemy activities in the vicinity of the Vit. He had, however, also time to admire the 'luxuriant flowers', 'beautiful banks', and clear water and sandy beaches of the river. His companion, a lieutenant, painted pictures of these scenes. The serene view reminded Fennander of his home and childhood, and he added that 'only then does one love one's home when one is far away and enduring all kinds of hardships'.

The next time Fennander (p. 50) praised the beauty of the Vit was early on the morning of 25 October, when the Guard was crossing the river for its first battle. As well as sandy beaches and luxuriant flowers he mentioned a sparkling spring located on one bank of the river and geese that asleep glided along the river. The rosy sun was rising and 'everything was quiet, as if even nature were resting

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<sup>500</sup> In a similar way Turks had left their wounded after the battle of the Shipka Pass on 7 July 1877 (Menning 1992: 58), probably due to lack of transport and opportunities to evacuate them. Similarly the Russians, for their part, in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-5 left their sick and wounded behind at Mukden to be able to retreat faster (Seaman 1906: 132).

<sup>501</sup> Plovdiv, with some 30,000 inhabitants on the eve of the war, was the administrative centre of the Ottoman province of Roumelia, roughly equivalent to modern southern Bulgaria, European Turkey, northern Greece and Macedonia (Anderson 1968: 214).

<sup>502</sup> If by this he meant Finland, as he probably did, he was disregarding much Finnish history. But perhaps he was merely contrasting contemporary peacetime Finland with the wartime Balkans.

<sup>503</sup> It was built by the famed Ottoman architect Sinan (ca. 1490-1588). For Turks it was the most beautiful in the whole of their empire (Inha 1907: 16).

in order to endure the tumult of the day'. As if anticipating the coming battle Fennander added (ibid.) that he felt an almost irresistible desire to shoot a goose.

'Splendid' and 'legendary' Sofia, where the Guard stopped for a few days, was in Fennander's opinion (pp. 100-1) 'built in an oriental way'. The streets were 'very narrow' and 'probably stank in the summer heat, especially because all the rubbish from shops and houses was thrown onto the street'. Fennander (ibid.) also noted the city hall, churches, 'almost all of which were full of sacks of flour', and larger dwellings, 'many of which were occupied by wounded Turks' left 'to fend for themselves'.

In mid-January Fennander arrived at Pazardzhik. According to him (p. 108), the town was in a very beautiful setting. It contained several imposing, though not very big, mosques. 'The streets were broad and in other respects, too, the town looked prosperous.' Plovdiv, a town built on three hills in the middle of a plain, he likewise described (pp. 112-13) as 'particularly beautiful and rather large'. The streets were 'in most cases narrow but not as filthy as in Sofia'. The buildings did not make an impression on him, but 'when one entered the courtyard, it was full of plants and in all regards clean'.

Fennander's opinion (pp. 122-3) of Edirne was more ambivalent. He remarked that the city was located 'at the confluence of three rivers, at a site with [much] natural beauty'. He also praised the imposing houses of Edirne, but added that 'the streets were narrow and dirty as is common in oriental cities'. Thus he did not actually reflect much on the Bulgarian space or war there, but was satisfied to affirm the propaganda's claim that Turkish-dominated towns were as 'alien' as the Turks themselves. Mountains, or the space inhabited by Bulgarians, he left aside. My interpretation is that he had internalised the part of military identity that required hatred of the enemy, but not the part that claimed the Russians were 'here' to help their suffering 'brethren'.

### ***Lindman***

The Guard arrived at Çorlu, roughly halfway between Edirne and Constantinople, on 10 February. In Lindman's opinion (1880: 43-4), 'a great chaos' prevailed. In addition, the place was very dirty.<sup>504</sup> The guardsmen tried 'by every possible means' to improve the situation. The same 'chaos' and 'filthiness' was typical of Silivri, too, Lindman (p. 44) observed. The other thing of note about the town was that wine was cheap. The reason for not commenting on space could be that he felt that his work was to fight the enemy, not to pay attention to other matters. Moreover, he probably had not absorbed an 'enlightened' upper class categorisation of either the Turks or the Bulgarians. Before the armistice, places he saw were simply part of enemy territory. As we saw in the previous chapter, he had very little to say about Bulgarians, no more than what he himself obviously had time to observe. That is, he did not put people (or places for that matter) into some pre-existing categories such as 'authentic' or 'corrupted'. After the fighting had ceased he continued to observe what immediately affected him.

### ***Palander***

According to Palander (1881: 14), after having crossed the Danube on 3 October the Finnish Guard advanced through oak and beech forests and along 'beautiful valleys'.<sup>505</sup> In the afternoon it arrived at Tsarevets. The village has been burned down by the retreating Turks, and thus the guardsmen bivouacked on nearby hills. Palander noticed tortoises, which the Finns had not seen before and which

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<sup>504</sup> Only privates stated that Çorlu was a 'squalid' place. The rest of my authors either said nothing at all or claimed that there was nothing worth mentioning about the place. The reason, perhaps, was that the common soldiers were ordered to clean up the village.

<sup>505</sup> Cf. above, Wahlberg, for a similar view.

‘abounded there in large amounts’, giving the guardsmen ‘much fun’. The story was reported in almost identical words by Jernvall (1899: 30). Another version was published by Ranta (1890: 294-5). As such, the episode was insignificant, but the frequency of its mention suggests that somehow it expressed the guardsmen’s sense of the difference, if not necessarily otherness, of the place they had come to.

The first place where the Guard was stationed for a longer period was Yeni Barkats. According to Palander (p. 20), it was ‘in a rather nice setting by a small river’. The view to the south was beautiful, too: a minor plain crossed by the river Vit and, further to the south, the bluish slopes of the Balkan mountains. When he later approached them, the landscape with its villages on the banks of streams with water-mills became, in Palander’s opinion (p. 55), still more beautiful.

In late December Palander (p. 81) admired the sight unfolding from a peak in the Balkan mountains that he had reached in a snowstorm. The summits offered ‘a view that no mortal could ever forget, were he to live for a hundred years’. They shone in the purple of the setting sun which made the slopes sparkle ‘in the finest hues of yellow and rose and grass-green’. Behind this ‘beautiful picture’ was the ‘ever-blue firmament, the faintly shining moon, and even some twinkling stars. In the valley below - darkness, a snow storm; above - starlight, sunset, ever-lasting peace, brightness.’<sup>506</sup> All this prompted Palander to ask (ibid.): ‘Do not these [mountains] resemble great, lost recollections, or human giants and savants . . . which, surpassing human misery and inferiority, allow us to look at them as [the] best examples of wisdom, power, genius and calm, [all merits] necessary in the battle of life?’

Sofia inspired Palander (pp. 88-93) to relate some words about Ottoman history, economics, demography, ethnology, religion and administration, followed by a description of the city. According to Palander (pp. 93-5), Sofia ‘looked totally Turkish. Some individual buildings and [the Ottoman army] barracks notwithstanding, the city was built exactly according to Muhammad’s requirements.’<sup>507</sup> The streets were curving and narrow, partly paved with stones. Living-rooms were usually built to face the courtyard, but if they sometimes faced the street or the market-place their windows were carefully covered. [Due to this,] rooms facing the streets were used as [stores or privies], which did not offer a pleasant [view] to the passer-by.’ He continued by describing workshops located in these stores, mentioning in passing that the city’s parks were well-attended, and ending up by giving fairly detailed information about female and male garments.

The next few villages where the Guard stopped were in Palander’s opinion (p. 96) very squalid. Cherdekli,<sup>508</sup> not far from Sofia, was ‘one of the most miserable villages we saw during the whole mission’. The village of Tŭrnovo,<sup>509</sup> constructed by Circassians, also looked ‘very wretched, maybe because the inhabitants had fled’. The Guard, though, was billeted there overnight.

On 18 January the Guard entered Plovdiv with ‘music playing and colours flying’. The streets were full of people and ‘we met here the same multitude of faces, colours of dress and mixture of languages as in other towns on the southern side of the Balkan mountains’ (p. 101). Palander continued (pp. 101-2) that the city itself, as its old Roman name Trimontium indicated, was built on

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<sup>506</sup> Just for comparison’s sake I quote from Pushkin’s “The Captive of the Caucasus” (1822) a few lines where the hero appreciates the mountains’ distant peaks: ‘He [the hero] marveled, staring at the view / of the remote, enormous faces / of mountains, hued gray, rose and blue. / Vistas of majesty resplendent! / The everlasting thrones of snow: / The summits look like clouds in steady / lines to the viewer from below [the terrain].’ (Quoted in Layton 1986: 475, her translation.)

<sup>507</sup> I find this passage a little puzzling. Palander does not specify what he means by these requirements, and to my knowledge there are none. Perhaps he wanted to emphasise the damaging influence of Islam upon society, as implied by his next sentences.

<sup>508</sup> Palander’s denotation.

<sup>509</sup> Palander’s denotation.



three hills and looked 'very pleasant'. The main street was long, but 'narrow and dirty'. The shops facing it were closed, but when the shopkeepers learned that the Russian soldiers had been strictly forbidden to loot, they were reopened.

In late January Palander arrived at Edirne, 'the sultan's old capital on the Maritsa, which here flows wide and strong. Over the river had been built three big stone bridges' (p. 107). The buildings, made of clay and wood, were in Palander's opinion (ibid.) rather low. Only in the main streets were there higher wooden dwellings. The sites worth seeing that he listed included the 'most beautiful sanctuary in all Turkey', the mosque of Sultan Selim II, and the city's numerous shops.

On 5 February the Guard was ordered to continue to Çorlu. It was 'a small, well-built Greco-Bulgarian town', of which there was 'nothing else to say' though the Guard spent some two weeks there. On 20 February they headed for Silivri, and on the same day they arrived at the shore of the Sea of Marmara. 'A wonderfully agreeable feeling of relief overwhelmed us, we viewed the sea as the key that would open the way back home for us.' (Palander 1881: 107-9.) Thus Palander's memories of the foreign space were almost pastoral to begin with and never lost this tint, although he now and then added the conventional note on 'dirty' and 'oriental' character of a place or complained of its 'narrow' streets. In other words, he did not show either contempt or alarm but, in several places, appreciated the otherness of the Balkans or the Turks. Doing so he differed from most of his companions.

### ***Jernvall***

After having crossed the Danube the Guard bivouacked on a hill near Tsarevets. There Jernvall (1899: 30) paid special attention to the snakes and tortoises. 'The latter appeared rather strange to us since we had never seen anything like them before.' He continued by reporting how the animals crept into the men's tents and, when chased, hid in their shells (cf. above, Palander).

On his way from Dolni Dübrik to Orkhanie and Sofia, Jernvall (pp. 97-8) praised the beauty of his surroundings. He stated that the landscape was delightful and mountainous and looked 'impressive'. The 'magnificent' sights varied: here mountain tops and there valleys. He often passed lonely houses and villages. A stream meandered on one side of his route, turning several water-mills, of which a few were in use and the others abandoned. Though the vegetation had already withered, 'everything' testified that in the summer these places were 'especially nice and attractive'.

During the next few days Jernvall (pp. 98-100) repeatedly praised the natural beauty of the area, especially the streams and mountains. He returned to the subject in Orkhanie (p. 117): '[Here] we had a good opportunity to admire those beautiful, majestic highlands where, when one looked downwards, villages and houses in the valleys looked like small toys.' And a month later he (p. 152) was looking 'from the abode of clouds [e.g., from a peak of the Balkan mountains] at the wonderfully beautiful sight' of the basin of Sofia.

In Sofia the retreat of the Turkish troops and the hasty flight of most of the Turkish inhabitants had caused chaos. 'Robbers, thieves and other scoundrels' seized the opportunity to maraud as much as possible before the Russian army restored order, Jernvall (p. 174) reported. His company was billeted in two deserted houses. Jernvall (pp. 175-8) was welcomed by a 'rather surprised' female cat with two kittens. After several days under the cold open sky he felt very comfortable lolling on a low divan. Sleeping was less comfortable, because there were more men than space to lie down in. However, the night passed. Next day the guardsmen mended their equipment, feasted upon food snatched from abandoned Turkish stores, and smoked the 'first-rate Turkish tobacco' in Turkish pipes made of clay.

On 9 January the Finnish Guard headed for Plovdiv. The first night was spent in a village in a 'beautiful valley in the middle of a magnificent park'. The houses, though, were dilapidated, in addition to which the retreating Turks had burned down 'many beautiful dwellings'. (Jernvall 1899: 183.) Plovdiv itself Jernvall (pp. 205-6) found very attractive. Using the same words as Fennander (above) he praised the location of the city on the Maritsa, which 'flowed through the town, making life there pleasant in many [not specified] ways'. In construction the city was 'oriental'. The streets were narrow and unclean and the dwellings looked mean, though their courtyards were both clean and particularly beautiful with their lush greenery. Jernvall also noticed the presence of 'numerous churches [i.e., mosques] with their high towers [minarets] pointing [up] and gilded stars and crescents [fixed] on their roofs'. But he seemed to be more interested in wine and liquor; he particularly remarked that the latter smelt slightly of aniseed.

Edirne Jernvall (pp. 236-40, 247) found a big and bustling city. 'Turks with their fezes and turbans swarmed everywhere selling in shrill voices' wines, water and halva. Jernvall was billeted in the big, three-storey house of a Jewish dignitary said to have fled to Constantinople. The courtyard was 'as beautiful as paradise', and the location of Edirne was also 'of great natural beauty'. In contrast, the streets were 'dirty, twisting and narrow as is usual in the Orient'. On both sides of the streets were all kinds of stalls and workshops. Jernvall was particularly attracted by the shoemakers, who worked in the basements of the houses, and he described their job in detail. He did not forget to inform the reader that in Edirne people usually wore slippers (not shoes). In passing he also counted 'many magnificent churches<sup>510</sup> [mosques]' with their 'towers [minarets]',<sup>511</sup> and several Muslim cemeteries outside the city.

Having left Edirne and passed Lüleburgaz, Jernvall saw several places with old ruins and stone walls allegedly going back to Greek and Roman times. According to him (p. 250), they looked rather 'legendary', thus reminding him that he was in the cradle of an ancient civilisation. Later (21 February), when advancing along the coast of the Sea of Marmara, Jernvall (p. 261) suddenly remembered that the troops of Alexander the Great had once marched 'along the same route as that now being travelled by the army of Alexander the Great of the North [i.e., the Russian emperor Alexander II]'. Arriving on the same evening at Silivri, Jernvall (p. 262) found the 'gigantic' ruins of a fortress and an 'age-old' Roman church.<sup>512</sup>

More clearly than my other sources Jernvall thus argued that only Greco-Roman, or 'European', antiquity was able to produce anything of value.<sup>513</sup> Unlike Europeans, the Turks had not built upon that heritage (or so Jernvall maintained), and the results were to be seen: they had not been able to develop a national identity worth respecting (because everything they had was either 'worthless' or 'filthy'). The Bulgarians, on the other hand, as well as other people with peasant virtues and a land with natural beauty had, or could have, a worthy national identity and, by implication, a national state. Thus Jernvall, perhaps unintentionally, described his experiences of the Bulgarian space in a manner that satisfied both pan-Slavic and awakening Finnish national aspirations.

Jernvall juxtaposed the 'great' landmarks of history with present Turkish localities. The first one was a destroyed village near Lüleburgaz, which was 'particularly unclean. Overall lay carcasses, [all places were] dirty and smelled bad' (p. 250). The second was Kumburgaz, some ten

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<sup>510</sup> Jernvall designated all kinds of sanctuaries churches, which may tell something about his religious convictions. However, to call mosques churches was typical of that time (see, for example, Alfthan, below).

<sup>511</sup> According to one estimate (Inha 1907: 16), in the early 20th century there were some 150 mosques in Edirne.

<sup>512</sup> Whether by this he means a Roman temple, as I believe, or a Byzantine church is unclear.

<sup>513</sup> Cf. Le Goff (1988: 65-6) for similar view in other contexts.

kilometres east of Silivri, which was ‘particularly squalid: carcasses were abandoned on fields and in the lanes of the village’, and the stench was ‘indescribably bad’ since all excrement was thrown straight onto the streets. When the guardsmen were commanded to clean up the mess, local peasants simply ‘stood next to us, gazing and wondering with their mouths agape’ (p. 263). Thus, Finns knew how to handle the space properly but the ‘oriental people’ did not. It also seems that the marked contrast in Jernvall’s text between the ‘attractive’ or ‘beautiful’ Bulgarian places and the ‘filthy’ Turkish areas is his literary device to defend the Russian military campaign.

### *Lindfors*

As long as hostilities continued, Lindfors (1975) concentrated on describing people he met and incidents that happened to him. Only seldom did he have anything to say about places *per se*. For example, his sojourn in Sofia did not result in historical or ethnographic presentations but in a personal recollection of how he and his pals seized barrels of wine from abandoned houses and drank, drank and drank (p. 25). He concluded the episode by remarking that ‘this kind of recklessness was forbidden, of course, but the commanders were unable to keep an eye on everything’. Fennander (1895: 99-100) and Jernvall (1899: 205-6) said the same. Heavy consumption of liquor was also reported of Russian volunteers in Belgrade in October 1876 (Milojković-Djurić 1994: 109). At least in the case of the guardsmen we may suppose that, long deprived of any substantial amounts of wine, they could not resist looting and drinking, even if they were not the worst of drunkards. Narratives about boozing may indicate a loosening of discipline, as Haapanen (1928: 214-15) suggested of similar Russian behaviour in the First World War. However, this was not the point of my authors. Rather, because it seems that the presence or absence of alcohol made average rankers appreciate or loath many a place, I suppose that drinking was one of the few entertainments the men had and therefore ‘places of drinking’ were remembered. Furthermore, it seems to me that recollections about events that the men considered less important from the viewpoint of the army structure tended also to be less in accordance with the military heroic tradition than memories of issues that were significant for the men’s military relations and positions (for example, battles).

After the battle of Plovdiv the Guard entered the city. According to Lindfors (p. 28), Plovdiv was ‘a very pleasant town with many mosques or churches’. But the ‘streets were narrow, winding and dirty as in all Turkish towns’ (*ibid.*). The same he claimed of Edirne where, in addition, ‘rooms facing onto the street had no windows’ and roofs were ‘flat’ and ‘slightly slanting’ (p. 29). He had no better opinion (p. 30) of Çorlu, which was a ‘filthy place’. Both streets and houses were unclean. Dead human and animal bodies lay everywhere, and the air smelled fetid. The guardsmen, of course, tidied everything up and even organised the shopkeepers who overcharged the soldiers. Some guardsmen, though, disregarded orders and paid as they pleased (that is, very little or nothing). In general, what I said of Lindman above holds for Lindfors, too.

### *Wallin*

The Guard’s way from Radomirtsi to Yablanitsa went along a mountain path. Beneath them, a stream meandered in a valley, ‘[t]he natural beauty of which, despite the late autumn, was very charming. And the weather, too, was particularly warm’, Wallin concluded (WM: 149).

Wallin’s impression of Çorlu was different. The time spent there was ‘boring’ and the men eagerly awaited orders to depart. They were not too keen on drilling, but least of all did they like the commandant’s order to clean the streets and alleys in the vicinity of the men’s lodgings. ‘The cleaning was badly needed . . . since the inhabitants of Turkey are accustomed to throwing their rubbish

and excrement out of the window.’ The soldiers felt that the commander should have ordered the villagers, not them, to tidy the place up.<sup>514</sup> (WM: 328.) These brief sketches are hardly genuine recollections but adaptations from earlier works by Jernvall and Lindfors. Thus it seems to me that Wallin had either lost his memories of the Bulgarian space or reduced them into a few clichés, because he found no place for them in his attempt to depict the war and Finnish heroism.

### *Alfthan*

After having crossed the Danube Alfthan and his batman were sent to fetch provisions from Svishtov. They made their way over the mountains where, according to Alfthan (1879: 22), vines grew in numerous vineyards. On the mountain meadows, ‘even after the devastating war, a countless multitude of white-coloured cattle and oxen were wandering’ (ibid.).

In Svishtov ‘the Orient met us. Everywhere there are Muhammedan churches [mosques].’ The town was in Alfthan’s opinion like a labyrinth, and in the lanes there was mud up to the knees. ‘Of course there were no pavements.’ Trade in the town had benefited from the war, though Svishtov had ‘always’ been a relatively important centre of commerce. (Alfthan 1879: 22.)

After Alfthan had bought provisions it was too late to return, but it was not easy to find accommodation for the night because all the houses were crowded and the ‘so-called inns’ with their few ‘grubby’ rooms did not attract him. Neither did the hordes of card players and ‘all kinds of folk’.<sup>515</sup> So he decided to sleep out of doors. However, it began to rain and he had to move. So he went to the commander’s office, situated in the former residence of the local Turkish governor, and there he found a place to sleep. (Alfthan 1879: 23-4.)

Later on, especially straight after the battle of Gorni Dübrik, Alfthan extolled the beauty of the Bulgarian highlands. As he advanced, however, he (pp. 73-4) felt less comfortable. At the end of November he and his unit started the crossing of the Balkan mountains. The path was ‘covered with snow and led us astray several times’. The temperature ‘sank sharply’. In this kind of weather Alfthan arrived at the town of Etropole, which ‘did not offer anything of special interest’, only mills being ‘still more primitive than the mill wheels one encounters here and there in the Finnish wilderness’. Thus for him Bulgarians were even more backward than ‘primitive’ Finns.

Later the landscape did not change much, or so Alfthan claimed. He said, for example (p. 100) that Orkhanie, which he visited to get supplies, was ‘a Bulgarian town very much like all the other oriental towns in appearance, and consisted mainly of houses similar to these in the villages [around]’. And in Plovdiv Alfthan (p. 178) was ‘welcomed’ by ‘the same multitude of types, the same diversity of colours in garments, the same babel of languages that [he] had met overall in oriental towns’. Though the surroundings were beautiful, the city had in his opinion (p. 179) a medieval air about it, reminding him of ‘the old houses in [Hans Christian] Andersen’s fairy tales’.

The opposite of this ‘monotonous’ city, where there was no difference between the Turkish and the Bulgarian ‘Orient’, was the spectacular landscape. Though the crossing of the Balkan mountains was full of obstacles, there was also something irresistible in their ‘wildness’. Alfthan wrote (p. 115): ‘Wherever one looked or turned the eyes, there were snow-capped, glimmering peaks and ranges, one after another. Between them opened deep, enormous valleys. The sun shone brightly and

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<sup>514</sup> The same was maintained in the Thirty Years’ War by soldiers of the Swedish army: it was the duty of civilians to clear up their mess, the soldiers took care only of those fallen in battle (Englund 1996: 231). Neither they nor the guardsmen obviously thought that there could be sound hygienic reasons for clearing up (cf. Seaman 1906, Ch. 9, for discussion on that issue).

<sup>515</sup> Alfthan was in general suspicious of many kinds of foreigners, including Bulgarians.

the azure-blue sky arched over the whole scene. One could have been lost in thoughts gazing at such a view and forget everything else.’ But he again hastened to ask rhetorically: ‘How much blood has been shed here, and how much agony has this landscape seen?’ Thus, more than Wahlberg or Palander, Alfthan was a true romantic, although for him the other people were mainly a source of indignation, not of delight or inspiration as for Byron, for example.

After the battle of Plovdiv the war was over for Alfthan. On his way to San Stefano, he (pp. 186-92) only briefly listed the places he passed through. The most remarkable sight, in his opinion, was the mosque of Sultan Selim II in Edirne, and the most notable incidents were two fires that he witnessed and reported at length.<sup>516</sup> So, after the armistice the ‘alien’ space as if disappeared, turning into something neutral, something that one could ignore, forget or pretend not to see at all. It was the war that had given meaning to the other space.

### **Schulman**

On the afternoon of his first day on Bulgarian soil, Schulman (1955: 29) arrived at a small Turkish village. The inhabitants had fled and taken with them everything they could. The empty houses made a ghostly impression on Schulman. He concluded that the Turks had escaped since they feared that the Russians would harm them, ‘[thus] ascribing to us their own methods of warfare’. He repeated this in his report (pp. 118-19) of the Turkish retreat from Sofia before the Russian army.

In Sofia Schulman had two days off to look around. He found the city sad and unclean. ‘In the manner of all oriental cities’ here, too, filth and decay prevailed. Everything was either in bad condition or, in the case of the restaurants, for example, too expensive. The only interesting sight in the city was the veiled Turkish women, the first he had ever seen. (Schulman 1955: 119-20.)

Some ten days later Schulman was escorting some prisoners of war from Ikhtiman to Pazardzhik, in his view (p. 132), another town built in a ‘truly oriental style’. He (ibid.) found many buildings very beautiful, but the streets were ‘most unclean’. The local Bulgarians had plundered many abandoned Turkish dwellings and burned them down. To prevent the Russians from doing the same the Bulgarians had marked their front doors with a cross to indicate that the occupants were Christians.

According to Schulman (pp. 141-2), an ‘oriental’ expression was dominant in Edirne. Although from a distance the city looked rather ‘magnificent’, from within it was a ‘big Turkish village’. The streets were narrow, crooked and badly surfaced, and the buildings, usually one or two-storeyed, were in poor condition. What was more, in the ‘inevitable oriental manner’ everything was dirty. Only a few places were worth praising: the sultan’s old palace, Eski Saray, where the Russian HQ was located, the mosque of Sultan Selim II, and the bazaar of Ali Pasha.<sup>517</sup>

On the afternoon of 27 February Schulman arrived at the shore of the Sea of Marmara. He recollected (p. 143) a well-known passage from Xenophon’s (c. 430-354 BCE) *Anabasis*:<sup>518</sup> Thalatta, thalatta! (The sea, the sea!), thus indicating that the war was, to all intents and purposes, over, just as it was for the Greeks two thousand years before. In Xenophon’s case, the point was that local people, the Pontic Greeks, understood the word ‘thalatta’, signifying that the Greek soldiers were back home. That probably was Schulman’s point, too, for the ‘Orient’ was in his recollections but one big ‘mess’ deserving nothing better than to be cleaned up by ‘civilised’ people. This stereotype, though borrowed

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<sup>516</sup> Such accidents seem to have been rather common at that time. Wahlberg (1878: 162, 185), too, mentioned a few.

<sup>517</sup> Because also Wahlberg and Palander mentioned the same places they perhaps were ‘must’ for at least more educated soldiers.

<sup>518</sup> The work describes the Persian retreat of ten thousand Greeks who took part in a military campaign of Cyrus the Younger.

from peacetime structure rather than wartime propaganda, strengthened Schulman's military identity because it affirmed that he was doing the 'right thing'.

### **11.3. Finland re-created in Bulgaria**

In one way or another wartime conditions intensify one's relations to a certain definable group, be it company, nation, race or whatever, that may be clearly separated from another group of people (see Daniel 1996, Ch. 1; Povrzanovic 1997: 160-1). In the political context this phenomenon is called nationalism. In the case of the Finnish guardsmen, I cannot speak of explicit, fervent nationalism in either the political or ideological sense of the word, because I lack evidence. However, occasionally the men recalled the relation to their native land by adding a note or two about Finland. Some detail or incident might remind them of, say, a summer morning in a Finnish village or Christmas festivities back home. Though much of this may be ascribed to homesickness (cf. Winter 1979: 162 for similar 'nostalgia' in the Great War), remembering familiar people and the native land and her customs in the Balkans obviously reminded guardsmen of social relations and situations in Finland and, as a side-effect, turned the Balkans into 'homeland space' as Billig (1995: 43) has put it. I even venture to suggest that the Finnish military and other songs sung by the Guard on various occasions, as well as imperial awards, mentioned in Ch. 9, taught the men, however unconsciously, a lesson in what may be called a reminder of (upper class constructed) patriotism: namely, that hard work for Finland and loyalty to the emperor (Klinge 1998: 147-63) were the 'honour' of every Finn. Or, more modestly, as Fussell (1977: 67) suggested, '[t]he smallest memorials of a familiar [thing] could sustain the spirits'. Thus, though the guardsmen were not nationalists in the ordinary sense of the word, their references to Finland and Finnishness come close to what Billig (1995: 6) has called 'banal nationalism', that is, the reproduction and maintenance of national themes and ideas through everyday talk and behaviour. For example, Finns of the 20th century could talk of the 'holy trinity' of home, church and fatherland as the 'natural' characteristics of everything Finnish (Alanen 1940: 25-6).

The guardsmen did not yet come that far. In place of traditional Christianity, they emphasised their own important social relations at home. Christmas, implying the coming together of family members and relatives, was a case like no other (the same was said by Baker [1879b: 86] and, later, by Rampanen [1934: 90-4] and Lipponen [1940: 164-5]). Remembering it tended to intensify the men's feeling of being forcefully separated from these relations. In general, the guardsmen's sparse notes on Finland implied a longing for a place, a Promised Land to which they could not return, at least not yet, or an effort to transfer familiar relations in their idealised form to Bulgarian soil. On the other hand, the guardsmen's references to Finland might also be seen as a means of integrating the territorial other into 'our' mental space (cf. Knuuttila & Paasi 1995: 54-8 for some examples). Here the connecting link was religion. It was usually the sight of a ruined Orthodox church or monastery or hearing the sound of church bells that reminded the men of their native (Lutheran) Finland. That is, 'common' Christianity, as formulated in war propaganda, dissolved differences between Bulgaria and Finland and made the places 'here' in the Balkans more like the ones back 'there' in Finland. Interestingly, Alfthan and Schulman recalled no such incidents. This supports my hypothesis that in their case the army, and not a given land, was their real 'native country'.

#### ***Wahlberg***

'Wasn't it quiet and tranquil all around us?', Wahlberg rhetorically asked (1878: 76) when going for a ride in the mountains after the battle of Pravets. He continued: 'It lacked but the sound of church bells to arouse in us a sentiment equal to that experienced on a peaceful Sunday morning in our own land.'

This omission was rectified a few days later in the town of Orkhanie, where the sound of Bulgarian church bells really did remind Wahlberg of his native country (p. 89).

Soon afterwards the Guard was in Vrachesh where it found abundant provisions abandoned by the Turks. Not having experienced such profusion for a long time the men celebrated Christmas in advance with bacon and rice pudding.<sup>519</sup> (Wahlberg 1878: 86-7, 90-1.) On 19 December the Guard was replaced and started preparations for the crossing of the Balkans. Christmas according to the Gregorian calendar, however, occupied the soldiers' thoughts, for they wanted to celebrate it before their departure. Wahlberg (pp. 105-10) related both matters in detail. He mentioned, for example, that a 'small, stunted larch, the only one that existed [there]', substituted for a real Christmas tree.

According to Wahlberg (pp. 112-13), Christmas Eve was celebrated with special devotion. The Guard gathered for solemn evening prayers and a feast that, in Wahlberg's opinion, was not especially merry, but due to the circumstances and setting in which it was held nevertheless left an unforgettable memory. This all made Wahlberg recall Christmas in Finland in general and the religious meaning of the feast in particular. By linking together Christmas, its Lutheran celebration and Finland as the fatherland, Wahlberg consciously created a nationalistic atmosphere. Or as Snellman (1895: 591) remarked, this passage witnessed the guardsmen's 'manly, vigorous [that is, Finnish] spirit'. But Wahlberg was perhaps also contrasting the war with the message of Christmas, or 'peace on earth'.

### ***Fennander***

Arriving at Orkhanie the guardsmen found plenty of food and medicines. Fennander said (1895: 84) that although it was only the end of November, 'it might almost have been Christmas'. And not unlike at Christmas, some of the guardsmen ate too much and got ill (ibid.).<sup>520</sup> Later on (pp. 86-91) he described at length the preparation of a pig for the Christmas meal, perhaps because it temporarily interrupted the wartime hardships. Because pork is an essential part of the Finnish Christmas dinner, the description also evoked images or thoughts of the most important Finnish religious feast.

### ***Palander***

Passing Orkhanie in late November, the guardsmen heard a church bell ringing, 'for the first time during our stay on the southern side of the Danube', as Palander (1881: 69) commented. The sound immediately reminded them of Finland where they, according to Palander (ibid.), 'devoutly listened to church bells of a Saturday evening'. They felt homesick and ardently hoped that they would soon be able to return to their 'sweet Finnish backwoods'.

In Vrachesh the guardsmen found provisions galore abandoned by the retreating Turks. In early December they therefore anticipated Christmas by feasting on pork and rice pudding. Otherwise they alternated between outpost duty and rest, while the other battalions of the brigade took part in battles. (Palander 1881: 70.)

On Christmas Eve the battalion came together for evening service, after which an 'insufficient portion of provisions' was distributed. This annoyed Palander (pp. 76-7) who, after having described the meagre rations, added, with post-war wisdom, that newspaper stories claiming that they feasted on rice and other delicacies were untrue. Some days later, high in the Balkan mountains and in the middle of a blizzard, the totally exhausted men slept, though badly, and, according to Palander (p. 81), dreamt of Christmas at home.

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<sup>519</sup> Both Finnish Christmas dishes.

<sup>520</sup> According to a Finnish proverb, at Christmas one may eat the whole day and night.

### ***Jernvall***

After the battle of Pravets the Guard arrived at Orkhanie, continued to Vrachesh, where they were stationed. Because Orkhanie had been a major Turkish junction between Plevna and Sofia, the guardsmen found large quantities of provisions there. The men joked that because of the hasty Turkish retreat they could now celebrate Christmas in advance. (Jernvall 1899: 120-5.)

At the summit of the Balkans Jernvall was entranced by the landscape, but dispelled the enchantment with a remark about the cold weather and the difficulty of getting a fire going. Despite this, Jernvall said, the men sang 'those joyful, beautiful songs of our fatherland'.<sup>521</sup> (Jernvall 1899: 154.) And when new supplies of clothing reached the Guard in mid-February, Jernvall said (p. 259) that the men were reminded of their 'sacred duty' to uphold the 'age-old glory and honour' of the Finnish soldier, that is, a reminder of relations to Finland encouraged the men to redouble their efforts.

### ***Lindfors***

The officers celebrated Christmas in a Bulgarian house. The battalion's junior medical doctor (Wahlberg) managed to acquire a Christmas tree for which he, Lindfors said (p. 20), paid one franc, and 'still the owner [*sic*] yelled when his tree was cut down'. Lindfors added (*ibid.*) that he mentioned this because a spruce 'here' was a rarity.

As mentioned above, Wahlberg pointed out that the tree was a larch. Both species were indeed rare in Bulgaria, where forests are dominated by beeches and oaks. But the botanical correctness is here of no importance. What matters is that the Finnish guardsmen wanted to have a Christmas tree, a symbol of the 'Finnish' Christmas, which made the foreign space more familiar (cf. Rampanen 1934: 175).

### ***Wallin***

According to Wallin, on Christmas Eve the Guard's chaplain gave a homily on celebrating the Nativity far from home. He assured the men that the 'same sky and stars' watched over 'them' back there and 'us' here. After the service the men had Christmas dinner. (WM: 195-6.)

To conclude, the Balkans were seen as a space of great, and marked, contrasts. They were 'beautiful' or 'filthy', 'virtuous' or 'depraved'; all ways to either find positive links to the other or to separate oneself from it. Religious space (that is, Orthodox sites) in particular reminded the soldiers of the Finnish Guard of important familiar relations back in Finland and (Christian) values associated with them. That is, religion familiarised the difference between the Balkans and the forms of life the men were accustomed to at home. I find this interesting because if the men had internalised the war propaganda, Orthodoxy would have reminded them they were fighting for the 'true' religion (Christianity) and against the 'false' one (Islam). Thus, apart from legitimising the Russian campaign or serving in the construction of the enemy-image, religion had other (and I would say, more important) meanings in the guardsmen's recollections, to which I shall now proceed.

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<sup>521</sup> Wallin (WM: 206) contested this by stating that all the men were so tired that 'singing didn't occur to them'.



## 12. RELIGION IN THE CONTEXT OF WARTIME

In this chapter I shall look at the guardsmen's recollections of religion, confining myself to their explicit statements about Christianity and Islam, and passing over the occasional remarks about 'superstitious habits' and Judaism.<sup>522</sup> By religion I mean both the guardsmen's Lutheran Christianity and a modified Turnerian understanding of religion as an expression of, and a means to negotiate, social relations and the structural categorisation. For the guardsmen, Lutheranism meant hardly more than a systems of beliefs and worship of God internalised in childhood and practised on appropriate social occasions, and a source of 'normal' social morality. From the Turnerian processional viewpoint (see Turner 1986a: 48-58), 'religion' is a part of constructing and shaping social solidarity and the values and categories that unite 'us' and separate 'us' from 'them'.

The main reason why religion figures in my sources is war propaganda. Its understanding of religion comes rather close to a sort of categorisation. Its way of declaring warfare as one's 'sacred duty' (Hyrkstedt 1890: 51-3) implies a notion of waging a holy war against the godless enemy, a war in which God himself is on our side.<sup>523</sup> Theoretically, 'God on our side' would ideologically justify 'our' warfare (and distinguish it from that of the enemy) and sociologically and psychologically integrate a nation by persuading civilians and soldiers to believe that by waging war they are fulfilling a universally valid mission.<sup>524</sup> However, a reading of my sources does not seem to verify this claim. Certainly the battalion's chaplain argued right after the Guard's crossing of the Danube that the men had arrived from 'distant places to wage war for the blessed [Christian] religion against those cruel Mahomedans' (Ranta 1890: 295), and Jernvall made the same point. But while only one guardsman (Lindfors) was openly indifferent or hostile towards religion, most of them restricted themselves to no more than short notes on ceremonies ordered by army regulations.<sup>525</sup> Unlike in Russia (see Dostojevski 1996: 240), in Finland religious issues rarely aroused enthusiasm for the war. This may be partly explained by the indifference of the upper classes towards conservative Christianity (see Juva 1956: 22-5) and the social mobility of rural youth. It may also indicate that Finns found the 1877-8 war not just but unjust. For though they ideationally could perceive the war as a battle between the 'true' and the 'false' religion, in practice their society had no reason to think of it in terms of a Christian-Muslim dichotomy as Russians had. Rather Finns (but also Russians) interpreted the war in terms of contemporary national progress or backwardness.<sup>526</sup> Formally the logic was the same: 'our' way of life was the true one and theirs was not.

With minor exceptions religion is reported to have no personal importance. Jernvall (1899: 75) 'humbly and cordially thanked God' that he had come unscathed out of the battle of Gorni Důbnik. And seeing a huge white flag adorned with the figure of Christ carried in front of the emperor he felt that it was his duty to fight 'the whole world, if necessary, in defending the lofty, sacred flag of the cross' (1899: 92). Leaving for the front, Nygrén<sup>527</sup> made an entry in his diary beseeching the 'Lord of heaven and the creator of earth' to strengthen him in using 'my weapon against the oppressors of thy holy congregation' (PK 1710/1, p. [1]). But in general the guardsmen did not write particularly about

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<sup>522</sup> The Finnish public memory of Jews was outlined above in Ch. 3.1. The guardsmen's anti-Semitic notes are scattered throughout Chs. 4, 6.3., 10 and 13.2. 'Superstitions' were mentioned by Alfthan only.

<sup>523</sup> See Jaroschka (1992: 37) and Luostarinen (1986: 33) for some examples.

<sup>524</sup> Cf. Dostojevski 1996: 233-8 for that idea.

<sup>525</sup> Pipping (1978: 190) says the same of the Finnish company he studied in the Second World War.

<sup>526</sup> Cf. Todorova (1997: 70-1) for contemporary ideas.

<sup>527</sup> See Ch. 5, note 198.

the consolation religion is said to give soldiers in wartime.<sup>528</sup>

At first, the relative paucity of references to religion may seem odd, because despite changes in the world view arising from an increase in knowledge of the natural sciences<sup>529</sup> Lutheran Christianity had a strong hold on most Finns (see Meriläinen 1927). Likewise in the official public view and propaganda, among other things in broadside ballads dealing with the war, the religious element was strong and obviously had an influence upon men's thinking about the war (Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 77-8), because religious talk about virtues can easily be translated into discussion about one's status and esteem or 'honour' in society (see Robinson 1999). It is known, too, that even non-believers with a Christian cultural background may in wartime turn their thoughts to Divine Providence (Fabritius 1986: 120). But as examples of European wars, at least since the Thirty Years' War, show, religiously cloaked propaganda is one thing and the mind of combatants is another. In the guardsmen's case, what mattered was neither the propaganda as such nor their personal convictions, but the army tradition which, apart from the ceremonies and services prescribed by army regulations, was in general indifferent to soldiers' convictions (see Deák 1990: 172).

Another thing that mattered was the role of religion in the men's wartime relations in the Balkans (which was unimportant) and peacetime relations in Finland (which was of some importance). As long as the enemy's religion, or the enemy himself, did not endanger these, the Christian religion or anti-Islamic rhetoric was not a big issue for the guardsmen. The latter was not heeded, and the former was simply a part of the ordinary, or 'boring', army routine, a practice the men tended to disregard as either an 'old-fashioned' custom or an 'upper class' way of thinking.

Nevertheless, there is one thing that implies a sense and the importance of religion, namely, burials. As we saw in Chs. 7 and 8, several recollections stated that the enemy either did not inter its dead or did so in a disrespectful way, while 'we', the Finns, buried our fallen companions with 'solemn' rituals. As Peltonen has argued (1996: 200), such narratives strongly suggest that for 'us', but not the enemy, some things are sacred or that 'we' are humans and 'they' are not. The cultural logic here is that those who are 'properly' buried are remembered and commemorated. Remembering creates public memory which, in turn, is essential for the existence of a culture or civilisation. Without burials there is no memory and, thus, no culture.

The Orthodoxy of the guardsmen's Russian fellows-at-arms and their Bulgarian 'hosts', if mentioned, was often accused of being backward or, at least, somehow odd. According to Järvinen (1932: 247-8), one of the Guard's stretcher-bearers died of pneumonia at Lüleburgaz and was buried in the local Orthodox cemetery. The funeral ceremony carried out by a local priest was in the guardsmen's opinion 'strange'. Here they agreed with west European theologians and other writers, who since the 16th century had repeatedly denigrated the 'low' level of both Orthodox theology and priests (Luostarinen 1986: 65).

Islam, on the other hand, though the religion of the enemy, is not usually criticised or censured by privates. In fact, it is rarely even hinted at until after the cease-fire, when the men had the occasional opportunity to see mosques and Muslim cemeteries. This silence may indicate that they did not perceive the war as a struggle between two religions but were interested in more practical matters such as survival and merry-making. Only Finnish broadside ballads (that is, in fact, Russian

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<sup>528</sup> Examples of this are provided by Berggrav-Jensen (1916: 65-8), Erho (1940: 77-8), Lipponen (1940: 39) and Winter (1979: 172).

<sup>529</sup> Since the mid-1800s there had been trends in Finnish little tradition emphasising that the Bible was not enough but people should learn elements of the natural sciences as well (Laurila 1956: 142-3). Laurila (*ibid.*: 195) ascribes this partly to the influence of J. Juteini (see Ch. 3.1.). On the other hand, Utin (1879: 26) reported that when the Russian soldiers left St Petersburg they were bidden farewell with wishes that God might protect them and bring them back safe and well.

propaganda) represented a bloodthirsty and dogmatic opinion ascribing the war to the Islamic religion having renounced both the Holy Spirit and the 'divine peace of the heavenly Father' (quoted in Hiisivaara-Hela 1982: 31).

Officers and NCOs had a more ambivalent view of Islam. The majority opposed it on grounds of its 'savage' or 'fanatical' nature, but they could also refrain from critique or even see some positive values in it. In general it seems that the more they saw Islam in terms of a world view, that is, considered it somehow 'backward' compared with west European notions, the stronger their anti-Islamic views. Perhaps unexpectedly, a keen interest in Christianity resulted in both a more and a less negative view.

Most of the authors of my sources were interested, at least to some extent, in Islam. Actual encounters with Islamic monuments were described in a rather neutral or tourist-like way as mosques, minarets or graveyards visited,<sup>530</sup> though at least one private (Lindman) once showed a lack of respect towards Islamic sacred places. Orders not to violate the Muslim religion<sup>531</sup> may partly explain this 'tolerance', but perhaps more important was the (unconscious) polarisation of Islam. On the one hand, before the armistice Islam was reduced to a hostile ideology and Muslim males were perceived as an opposite to their (the guardsmen's) military ideals or the 'true' soldier. On the other, afterwards Islam was seen through peacetime public memory<sup>532</sup> as something 'exotic' made tangible in the form of seductive and interesting females or monuments worth seeing or at least mentioning. This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that mosques and women were seldom disparaged, whereas profane public places and spaces associated with men or soldiers were regularly referred to as 'dirty' or 'filthy'. In other words, what was negative in Islam was a product of wartime conditions or military thinking. At least indirectly the guardsmen's talk about the 'dirty' or 'filthy' Orient was also a statement about their fear of the effects of 'hostile' wartime Islam upon their own society. For, as Douglas (1966: 1, 29) has pointed out, where there is talk about dirt there is also a social system trying to keep a distance between 'us' and 'them', or 'good' and 'evil'.

### **12.1. Christianity: 'rational' Lutheranism and 'superstitious' Orthodoxy**

The guardsmen's attitudes towards their own religion, which in general, and in the case of all my sources, was Lutheranism, may be summarised by the word 'rational' or 'sensible'. While mainly officers came close to explicitly saying so, all the men's behaviour on occasions having religious connotations (funerals, Christmas) shows that they took for granted that the ceremonies or the manner in which they were conducted was the only correct one.

What, then, was the guardsmen's relation to Orthodoxy, the religion of their Russian comrades-at-arms and their Bulgarian 'brethren'? The Lutheran Finnish notion of Orthodox Russians in the late 1800s was that they faithfully and seriously performed religious rituals, but that their knowledge of Christian dogma was almost non-existent (S 1878a: 11). A rather fervent Fennomane, A.W. Ervasti, for example, claimed that even outsiders could not but respect ordinary Russian believers

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<sup>530</sup> According to SK (15 June 1878, p. 178), Russian officers, too, were interested in Islam. In Edirne they were said to have paid local people gold in exchange for entrance into the mosque of Sultan Selim II to be present at a service (meaning, perhaps, the Islamic ritual prayer). Whether the story is true or not, it indicates, if not a keen interest, at least curiosity about, rather than hostility towards, Islam.

<sup>531</sup> On 22 June 1877 (N.S.) Emperor Alexander II had issued a statement to Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria assuring them that the Russian army would respect and protect the Muslim religion, way of life and families (quoted in Hajek 1939: 22, note 2). Varén (1895: 80) pointed out that Russian soldiers were prohibited under penalty of death from insulting the 'religious rights of the Turkish subjects'.

<sup>532</sup> See Ch. 3.6.

(1918: 120). But then he went on to describe (p. 121) how, after having made the sign of the cross before an icon supplicants yawned ‘piously’ or blew their noses. He also argued (p. 117) that the interior of the Solovskiy monastery<sup>533</sup> cathedral made a ‘disheartening’ impression on him. He did not specify the reason why but obviously it had something to do with the sanctuary’s ‘numerous’ murals and ‘wonder-working’ icons, the veneration of which was from Ervasti’s Lutheran point of view tantamount to ‘pagan idolatry’ (pp. 117-19). Thus it seems that despite the occasional praise, Russians and their Orthodox religion were usually accused of not fulfilling Protestant standards.

Less fervent Fennomans were also interested in Orthodox rituals and had at least some superficial knowledge of them (see S 1878a: 26-7, 29). Nevertheless, my sources had very little to say about Orthodoxy, obviously because it was a highly delicate subject. Palander said nothing at all. Only Alfthan and Schulman, though at least nominally Lutherans, showed some interest in Orthodoxy, whereas Jernvall blurred the differences between confessions and Wahlberg and, in places, Schulman, obviously considered the Orthodox faith ‘uncivilised’. Thus it seems that positive comments on Christianity and internalisation of the army tradition as a point of orientation in social relations went hand in hand, notwithstanding the author’s personal convictions. Roughly generalising, the professional guardsmen took Christianity as a part of army structure whereas the volunteers’ attitude depended on the role they ascribed to religion in their personal and social life.

### **Wahlberg**

While waiting in Dolni Důbnik for orders to continue, Wahlberg described the Bulgarian land, people and customs. He maintained that the Bulgarians were dishonest, deceitful and treacherous. Moreover, they did not make ‘a sharp distinction between what is mine and what is yours’ but seized any opportunity to make a profit at the expense of their neighbours. In Wahlberg’s opinion this was all largely due to lack of education, but Orthodox Christianity could be blamed as well because the village priests were often harsh and incompetent and, in most cases, also foreigners, that is, Greeks (1878: 35).<sup>534</sup> Thus it seems that while in rural life the Bulgarians could in Wahlberg’s opinion be virtuous, as mentioned in chapter 10, in religious life they could not. I suppose that this was due to the fact that the former nicely dovetailed with Wahlberg’s (mainly implicit) comparison of rural Bulgaria with rural Finland, showing that the latter was more ‘developed’ than the former, while the latter was contrary to his view of reasonable conduct of human life.

Staying in Çorlu in mid-February 1878, Wahlberg met a Greek school teacher who praised his countrymen and belittled the Bulgarians. This led Wahlberg (p. 194) to discuss the ‘so-called Bulgarian church struggle’, which ‘duly illuminated’ relations between Greeks and Bulgarians. According to Wahlberg (ibid.), the Patriarchate of Constantinople had brought the formerly autocephalous Bulgarian church totally under its control and had also attempted to Hellenise her ecclesiastical life. In about 1860 enraged Bulgarians had expelled their ‘foreign’ (i.e., Greek) bishops and had asked the Ottoman government to restore the independent Bulgarian church. After a long dispute the sultan gave in, and in 1872 the Bulgarians were given a semi-autonomous church administration. Since then Bulgarian bishops had been leading protagonists of Bulgarian nationalism. Wahlberg added (ibid.) that, according to the Greek teacher, all this was as insignificant as the liberation of Bulgaria by Russia.

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<sup>533</sup> The monastery is located on the White Sea islands bearing the same name.

<sup>534</sup> Village priests were mainly Bulgarians but their ecclesiastical superiors had until recently been Greeks.

### ***Fennander***

Fennander (1895) duly mentioned Lutheran services as a regular part of the Guard's daily routine (for example, pp. 66, 90, 128) but showed no interest in them. As for Orthodoxy, all he had to say was that, in Sofia, Orthodox churches were used as stores for flour (p. 100).

### ***Lindman***

Lindman (1880) seldom reminded his reader of the Christian nature of certain people or things. In Iași he made a point of saying (p. 11) that the local people were Christians, and when the fallen Finns were interred after the battle of Gorni Dübnik, he mentioned that they were buried 'according to ecclesiastical rites' (p. 22).

### ***Jernvall***

In the context of a service held two days after the battle of Gorni Dübnik, Jernvall said (1899: 82) that 'Russians had found a holy picture or painting [icon] in a maize field and that it was some two ells high and represented the Virgin and child'. He described (ibid.) how the guardsmen used it as their altarpiece, with the result that their service 'looked very solemn', and added (ibid.): '[S]urely Bulgarians had hidden the picture in the maize field to prevent the Turks from finding it and using it in a sacrilegious way, since for the people of the Greek faith [icons] are very sacred and precious.'<sup>535</sup>

Departing from Silivri on 22 February, the Finnish Guard passed a Greek monastery. On the top of the building a 'golden cross, or mark of a cross, solemnly and valiantly rose towards the sky' (1899: 262). According to Jernvall (ibid.), this sight greatly excited the men because for 'a long time we had had to look at those monotonous crescents on the roofs of mosques'. After the preliminary peace treaty, Jernvall once wished that the guardsmen could continue all the way to Jerusalem, to those 'former holy places, which for centuries have suffered under Turkish oppression, in the shackles of a false doctrine [Islam]' (1899: 277).

### ***Lindfors***

The Guard spent Christmas Eve at the foot of the 'Finnish Mountain'. According to Lindfors (p. 20), the men had a warm meal, a drink and a slice of Bulgarian cheese. The chaplain said a short prayer, for which the men were grateful, 'especially because it was so short, for it was bitterly cold and standing still in the snow was no pleasure'.<sup>536</sup>

### ***Wallin***

Besides Jernvall, Wallin is the only guardsmen who reported having prayed. This happened when the Guard was just about to leave San Stefano. Wallin did not feel well but desperately wanted to join the others. Thus he 'more devoutly than ever' prayed that God would give him the strength to leave. Were this to happen, Wallin promised he would 'mend his ways', go to church more frequently and read the Bible (WM: 363-4). And lo, he was able to embark, though the journey came (for a moment) to an end at Odessa. Later on (pp. 405-6) he said that he really believed that the Supreme One had helped him, even though he himself had 'for the most part' not kept his promises.

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<sup>535</sup> It obviously did not occur to him that the use the guardsmen made of the icon could be equally sacrilegious from the Orthodox point of view.

<sup>536</sup> A more open rank and file critique of Christianity or, rather, anticlericalism was soon expressed, see Lindberg (1904: 99-100, 103).

### *Alfthan*

In Iași Alfthan met some Skoptsy, members of a religious group that parted from the Russian Orthodox church in the 18th century.<sup>537</sup> They considered that women (and the sexuality associated with them) were a major obstacle on the path to salvation, and to put an end to this temptation their menfolk castrated themselves. The Russian church regarded the Skoptsy as heretics, and in Russia at the time of Alfthan's writing their religion was forbidden. His encounter with them made Alfthan praise the new Romanian constitution, enacted in 1866, which granted civil rights remarkable at that time: freedom of education, the press and assembly, personal inviolability and religious freedom. According to Alfthan, due to the last item, the Skoptsy had found in Iași 'a quiet, safe place'. Most of them worked as drivers and 'made up a male society organised in a communist manner'. One could easily recognise them 'by their beardless faces, which gave the older men in particular a very strange and unusual appearance'. (Alfthan 1879: 11.)

Though Alfthan was a Lutheran he was obviously not exempted from his unit's Orthodox services; at least he now and then mentioned them. The first time was on the occasion of the emperor's visit a few days after the battle of Gorni Dübnik. Alfthan related that a 'thanksgiving prayer' for the victory was said (p. 58).

In late November Alfthan arrived at Etropole, where he visited an Orthodox church. He reported (p. 74) that the interior of the sanctuary was 'already' decorated with the 'Russian [double-]eagle' cut in wood.<sup>538</sup> He also said (ibid.) that (Russian) soldiers frequented the church for the liturgy and prayers. A couple of days later he came upon an Orthodox monastery. His first thought was (p. 76) that 'perhaps on these wild mountains I may [now] hear the solemn notes of an organ'.<sup>539</sup> He added without a trace of irony (ibid.) that this wish was not granted but that 'music I was, however, able to listen to after a while', played not on the organ but by 'whistling bullets'.<sup>540</sup> He then described (ibid.) in detail the devastation wrought on the monastery by the Turks.

### *Schulman*

Schulman commented that one thing he would always remember of his sojourn in Pleven was the signal summoning the soldiers to evening prayer. At that time, the Turks used to fire shells which, according to Schulman, far from disturbing the soldiers gave their prayer an even more solemn character. (Schulman 1955: 67-70.)

## **12.2. Islam: tourist-like curiosity, indifference and contempt**

In the late 1800s Finnish public memory of Islam consisted of knowledge of some isolated facts, for example, that the Qur'an was the Muslims' holy book and that Muhammad was their prophet, and that praying, fasting and giving alms were Muslims' main religious duties (see Juva 1956: 74; S 1878b: 10, 12-13). But what individual persons actually knew of Islam in Finland at that time is hard to tell.<sup>541</sup> On the occasion of the visit of some skilled Arab horsemen to Helsinki in the early 1850s Topelius had

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<sup>537</sup> See Conybeare 1921: 363-70. There were some Skoptsy elsewhere in Romania, too, especially in Bucharest (Inha 1906: 18).

<sup>538</sup> This symbol, which Russia had taken over from Byzantium, was of course not an uncommon sight there, though Alfthan obviously considered it a recent work due to the Russian arrival.

<sup>539</sup> Thus he associated the monastery with the Lutheran religion, because organs are seldom used in Orthodox liturgy.

<sup>540</sup> Alfthan often used the technique of first describing a peaceful setting and then letting it remind him of the (military) destruction lying ahead.

<sup>541</sup> In the mid-1890s Varén (1895: 65) could still claim that a women's veil was prescribed by the Qur'an or that the fez was worn by Turkish women.

written in his *Helsingfors Tidningar* that ‘only two of them adhered to the strict Quaranic prohibition of alcohol’, while the (seven) others believed that Muhammad had not issued his regulations to cover a situation in which the temperature sank to twenty degrees Celsius below zero (quoted in Vasenius 1931: 168).<sup>542</sup> A similar story is told by Varén (1895: 84) of a Turkish bey living near Edirne.

In summer 1876, the liberal Swedish-language *Helsingfors Dagblad* published a nine-part article entitled “Islam i 19:de århundaret” (Islam in the 19th century), which in fact mainly illustrated some historical and religious aspects of the Ottoman empire (Kemppainen 1999: 18, note 18).<sup>543</sup> On the eve of the 1877-8 war, the Finns thus were probably not totally ignorant of Islam. Lacking contact with living Muslims, however, they obviously did not see it as a religious or social system but rather as a collection of curious, and unconnected, beliefs and manners (see Juva 1956: 158-9).

For Russians the case was somewhat different. Encounters with Muslims and Islam were a part of social practice from Central Russia to the recently conquered Caucasus and Turkestan, and hostility towards Muslims seemed in places to be rather strong (see Päivärinta 1880: 23-4).

In general, officers appear to have held the most negative opinions of Islam, perhaps because what they believed they knew about it offended their ‘civilised’ world view. NCOs mainly restricted themselves to some notes either explaining certain details of Islamic daily practice or giving an impression of buildings and places worth seeing. The privates had hardly any opinions. They tended to treat Islam as the same sort of ‘exotic’ feature as the tortoise, for instance.<sup>544</sup> Thus it seems that, in wartime, education increases one’s hostility if practical knowledge of and peaceful contacts with the other are lacking.

### **Wahlberg**

The Ottoman Turk was in Wahlberg’s opinion (1878: 139-41) ‘a born warrior’ who trusted in Allah and the tradition he inherited from his forefathers, and was therefore not afraid of being conquered by ‘another culture or civilisation’. The Turk accepted easily any fate and death since, Wahlberg observed, he sucked resignation from his mother’s breast. Wahlberg went on to maintain (ibid.) that he was an impractical dreamer who had no sense of reality although he was very fond of gold. If allowed to pray five times a day and to fulfil the other duties prescribed by Islam he paid no attention to taxes or to oppression by bureaucrats, nor did he demand any reforms, though they were badly needed.<sup>545</sup>

Wahlberg also warned (p. 146) his reader not to measure Turks by European standards, because ‘the Ottomans have not turned into Europeans but have converted their part of Europe into the Orient’. To prove his point, Wahlberg (p. 147) stated that, for Turks, education meant learning the Qur’an by heart; children learnt barely how to read and write and that was all. Turkish ‘culture’ in

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<sup>542</sup> The visit is also reported in Halén 1986: 122-4. By chance the visit coincided with the time of death of the first, and for a long time only, true Finnish orientalist, G.A. Wallin, at least by hearsay known to the visitors. Wallin’s travels in the Near East and the Arabian Peninsula, most probably were known to his educated Finnish contemporaries as well as at least the more learned guardsmen (see Harmaja 1949: 52, 85; Vasenius 1931: 506).

<sup>543</sup> The article, written by the famous Hungarian Orientalist Ármin Vámbéry (1832-1913), was a translation of his book *Der Islam im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, published in Leipzig in 1875.

<sup>544</sup> See Ch. 11.2., Palander and Jernvall.

<sup>545</sup> These statements were followed by a rather neutral description of Turkish houses, the reception of visitors, domestic utensils, movables and dresses (pp. 141-6). Because Wahlberg probably had no time to scrutinise the Turkish houses and because it was typical of that time to supplement a text from other sources I suspect that he took this information from some ethnographic work, though I have been unable to verify this. The point here, however, is that in the context of the armistice the Turks were described as a perfectly ‘normal’ people whereas during the fighting they had been assigned all kinds of disparaging and irrational qualities.

Wahlberg's opinion (*ibid.*) meant the adherence to traditional values and ways of life, whether they were useful or useless, good or bad.

During the last weeks of his stay in San Stefano, Wahlberg visited Constantinople. There, in Üsküdar, he and his companions watched a dervish ritual that ended with the consecration of water and its distribution as medication to a sick person. Wahlberg said (p. 208) that it 'made a repugnant impression on us, but [knowing that] we were not in Europe but in Asia comforted us a little'.<sup>546</sup> He also claimed (pp. 209-10) that the Turks disdained all kinds of art and had no sense of aesthetics.

### ***Fennander***

Fennander described (p. 113) how in Plovdiv 'several high towers [minarets] rose towards the sky', and continued by reporting (*ibid.*) that 'some men found tiny gold coins and different kinds of books, among them the Qur'an', in the mosques.<sup>547</sup> In Edirne he observed (p. 123) that 'there were several big and magnificent mosques in the city'. He also informed the reader (*ibid.*) that 'at the outskirts of the city there were many cemeteries . . . where strange grave monuments made an odd impression, for the Turks do not use crosses'. When leaving Edirne on 6 February he noted (p. 125): 'Far and wide one could discern the city's high minarets, from the top of which we had often heard those calls: "Ah, Allah", in Finnish: "Rukoilkaamme Jumalaa [Let us pray to God]".'

After the preliminary treaty of San Stefano, Fennander said he visited Constantinople. There he paid special attention to Turkish women. Their beauty prompted him to comment that it was no wonder that Turkish soldiers were ready to sacrifice their lives on the battlefield if one recalled that 'in the religion of Muhammad' those who died (in war) were rewarded in the next life with ten immaculate virgins (pp. 135-6). Because this passage is lacking from the 1878 edition, its insertion in the second edition suggests that either memories of war had made room for more pleasant images or that Fennander, for some reason, yielded to a general literary trend as he seemed to do in Ch. 8, too.

### ***Lindman***

Lindman (1880: 44) reported that because the guardsmen did not at first have enough bread in Çorlu, he and his companions decided to build an oven in a mosque.<sup>548</sup> When it was almost ready, the service corps arrived, and 'so we did not need to bake bread in a Muhammedan mosque'.

### ***Palander***

After his arrival at Sofia, Palander digressed from his main plot to describe the Ottoman empire and her inhabitants. In this context he also briefly examined the Islamic religion. According to Palander (1881: 91), the religion of the Ottoman empire was 'Muhammedanism or Islam. Its main doctrine holds that there is but one God, and Muhammad is his prophet.' In Plovdiv Palander also briefly mentioned (p. 102) that by the main street 'there [was] a big Muhammedan church [mosque], one of the most beautiful of those that I had seen thus far'. Later (p. 107) Palander said that the mosque of Sultan Selim II in Edirne was 'the most beautiful in all Turkey'.

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<sup>546</sup> Here Wahlberg did not differ from educated (Great) Russians, who loathed the 'barbaric', 'dirty', 'lazy', 'opium-smoking', 'howling' Turkestan dervishes (see Päivärinta 1880: 24). The consecration of water and its distribution to the sick were common practices in Orthodoxy, too.

<sup>547</sup> That is, they robbed them.

<sup>548</sup> Why just there is not told.



### ***Jernvall***

Jernvall first referred to the Islamic way of life in the context of provisions that the Guard found in Vrachesh. After having described the various foodstuffs, Jernvall remarked that there were also 'big herds of swine', and added that 'they did not belong to the Turks, because they do not eat pork'. (Jernvall 1899: 124.)

While in outpost on the 'Finnish Mountain' the guardsmen, according to Jernvall (1899: 136), used to 'greet' the nearby Turkish fortifications with a few salvoes. On 11 December (that is, the day after the fall of Plevna) they did this immediately after sunrise and, in Jernvall's opinion (*ibid.*), disturbed the 'Muhammedan morning prayer'. After the clash at Sarantsi, Jernvall mentioned in passing (p. 163) that Turks (Muslims) who died in battle were immediately admitted to the 'joys of paradise'.

In the Muslim cemetery outside Edirne, Jernvall (1899: 238-9) wondered at the 'strange' grave monuments. He pointed out that unlike 'us and all other Christians', Turks did not use crosses but small, round stones, the tops of which were often carved to resemble a turban or a fez. Seeing a large number of them in the same place, Jernvall remarked that they 'somehow amused the spectator'. Perhaps this was Jernvall's black humour, not dissimilar from that of Lindman mentioned in Ch. 6.3. It possibly 'amused' the victor to see his enemy not only defeated but also, and literally, buried.

In Edirne, Jernvall's opinion was more mixed. Leaving the city he took a last glance at it and said (1899: 247) that it looked very magnificent with its mosques and minarets, from which the 'voices of a false doctrine resounded, the tyranny of which we too were commanded to punish here, far from our homeland'.

### ***Lindfors***

Lindfors's (1975) notes on Islam are scanty. He related merely that in Plovdiv and Edirne there were 'mosques or churches' and that in Edirne the mosques, were 'more splendid' than local houses (pp. 28 and 29). There were 'no seats' in the mosques but people stood during the service 'with a turban on the head', and 'sometimes one bowed down [touching] the floor with the mouth in the same way as Russians [do], though Turks are not Christians but Muhammedans' (pp. 29-30). He added (p. 30) that 'a large cemetery surrounded almost the whole city [of Edirne]'.

### ***Wallin***

After the battle of Gorni Dŭbnik Wallin visited the Finnish burial ground. On his way back he saw some Turks interring Turkish dead. When he told his companions that the Turks had dragged the corpses of their fallen companions in a 'disgusting' way, the company's sergeant major (Jernvall) thought that 'perhaps it was the Muhammedan way of burying' (WM: 115).

In Edirne, where the Guard spent a week, Wallin stated that he visited the city four times, for about half an hour each time. According to him, the only remarkable things there were the numerous minarets. He also remarked that some men had told him that 'at sunset . . . at the top of every minaret there appeared a man shouting: Allah! Allah!, etc.' Then 'all the civilians in the streets stopped and turned towards the sunrise and took off their headgear or knelt for a while. Whether or not the Turks were so devoted to their God I cannot tell since I didn't happen to be there.' (WM: 320-1.)

### ***Alfthan***

When approaching Sofia Alfthan discussed (1879: 122-3) at length the Turkish system of tax-collection, the 'whole burden [of which] lay on the poor peasant'. By collecting taxes, the Turks in

Alfthan's opinion (*ibid.*) had twisted the law prescribed by Muhammad<sup>549</sup> and therefore their work 'was akin to sacrilege'.

On his way to Plovdiv Alfthan listed other Turkish 'crimes'. He met a Bulgarian school teacher who was employed as the interpreter of a Russian unit. This man told Alfthan a story about the origin of the Circassians: apparently after the Bulgarians and Greeks had fought long and hard over the possession of Constantinople the latter resorted (as they really did) to Ottoman help. This aid, however, turned against the Greeks and led first to their subjugation and later to that of the Bulgarians as well. Recently, the school teacher went on, the Turks in their turn had 'implanted' in Bulgaria Circassians, who were Muslims (amounting to the 'natural enemies' of the Bulgarians) as well as 'professional thieves' and 'half animals' (since they were pastoral nomads following their own tribal laws and customs). The story ended with a claim that history would repeat itself; finally the displaced Circassians would turn against the Turks and destroy their empire. Briefly, they would reap what they had sowed. The story contains no explicit references to Islam or religion in general. But the 'ethical lesson' the Bulgarian teacher taught Alfthan, namely, that whoever trusted the Turks [Muslims] would perish, is obvious. (Alfthan 1879: 128-9.)

In Plovdiv Alfthan visited an empty mosque. He said (pp. 178-9) that when he looked at 'the concentric circles of hundreds and hundreds of polycoloured glass lamps', the space reserved for women, and the stairs leading to the top of the minaret he had to admit that 'there are many things in the Muhammedan religion that may be associated with a people's poetic sense'. Thus, like Wahlberg, Alfthan distinguished between the wartime and peacetime perception of Islam. The former was really the other while the latter was either something exotic or something disgusting but not so dangerous.

### ***Schulman***

On Christmas Eve (O.S.), while in Sofia, Schulman attended a liturgy on the occasion of the Russian take-over of the city. He then strolled around and, among other things, visited a mosque 'plundered by Russian soldiers'. He observed that 'obviously they considered they had performed an exploit pleasing to God'. Soon afterwards he saw another mosque marauded by Russians, but did not comment. (Schulman 1955: 120, 123.)

In mid-February (N.S.) Schulman was in Edirne, where he visited the famous mosque of Sultan Selim II. After having described the building and its surroundings, Schulman mentioned (pp. 141-2) that Muslims took off their footwear when entering the mosque but that he and other 'infidels'<sup>550</sup> did not do so. He also commented (p. 142) that the 'door-keeper, a dervish who did not hesitate to accept tips', did not pay any attention to their conduct.

In general, it seems that after the armistice the guardsmen were quickly forgetting the 'age-old' military glory they had come to defend and started to behave like civilian travellers who visited places worth seeing, and admired this and complained about that thing or custom. Briefly, they were abandoning their military identity and their role as soldiers. This transition from wartime to post-war life is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>549</sup> That is, the order not to collect tributes.

<sup>550</sup> His quotation marks.

## 13. SEPARATION FROM MILITARY IDENTITY

The guardsmen may have been sparing of words about their transition from Finland to the theatre of war, but they were even more so about their surrender of military identity or incorporation into structure. This process started with the cease-fire and ended with the men's arrival in Helsinki on 9 May 1878. The final demobilisation was ordered by the emperor on 16 September of the same year (Järvinen 1932: 280).

### 13.1. Leaving warfare: from the armistice to departure for Finland

If the whole period of war can be considered as a kind of liminal phase, the time from the conclusion of the armistice (31 January) and especially from the guardsmen's arrival in San Stefano (24 February) to their departure for Finland (23 April) was the most liminal, or nervous, stage of the war. A major reason for this, apart from the 'dullness' caused by the end of fighting, was that after six months at the very latest most front-line troops have gone 'off their heads', and even rest cannot save them (Winter 1979: 133). By early March, half a year had passed since the Guard's departure. Moreover, after the armistice the lives of the weary NCOs and privates were overshadowed by prospects of a war between Russia and Great Britain,<sup>551</sup> the enforced wait for the conclusion of the peace treaty<sup>552</sup> (on 3 March), outbreaks of disease<sup>553</sup> and uncertainty about their repatriation. For officers, on the other hand, the period was like a holiday, though Alfthan had nothing to say about it. The privates and NCOs were probably fed up with the war because, with the exception of Jernvall and Wallin, they were volunteers<sup>554</sup> who had committed themselves to wartime relations only. The armistice was a time of not-war-not-peace and the volunteers did not know whether to continue their creation of military identity or to begin their separation from it. The officers, even Wahlberg who had also volunteered, on the other hand, committed themselves to the army structure in war and in peace. Thus the armistice had less effect on their relations and identity-building.

#### *Wahlberg*

According to Wahlberg, the arrival of Russian troops in San Stefano greatly animated the village's life. Constantinopleans came in great masses by train to their 'summer resort' to gaze at the Russians.<sup>555</sup> Wahlberg himself, too, reported having felt like a vacationer. He chatted with his companions, read French newspapers, enjoyed the occasional cup of coffee, and bought 'oriental rarities'. (Wahlberg 1878: 198-200.)

#### *Fennander*

In the second edition of his memoirs (1895) Fennander overcame the problem of finding a proper identity by adopting that of a traveller, or tourist, such as did not exist in the first edition (1878). He constructed relations to the 'exotic' other by describing the 'beautiful Turkish women' (p. 126) or the

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<sup>551</sup> Rumours about that had been spreading for some months, and in March 1878 all Russian Military Districts, including Finland, were secretly ordered to strengthen their defences (Kempainen 1999: 67, 71).

<sup>552</sup> The treaty confirmed clauses agreed at the conclusion of the cease-fire. The San Stefano *Préliminaire de paix* (see Schopoff 1904: 354-68) affirmed, and further specified, the nature of Bulgarian independence, the position of her Muslim subjects and their property, and the payment of war indemnity.

<sup>553</sup> In April, 134 Finnish guardsmen fell sick, compared to 32 in March and eight in February. Of these, one officer and nine NCOs and privates died in San Stefano and were buried there (Gripenberg 1905: 236; Järvinen 1932: 266, 287).

<sup>554</sup> Fennander is an open question.

<sup>555</sup> The distance between Constantinople and San Stefano is some 15 kilometres.

smoking of opium that he claimed to have tried in Çorlu (p. 127; the same was claimed by Lindfors). The former had led to nothings, but the latter, though delightful, gave him a terrible hangover.

In San Stefano the 'exotic' included (p. 129) the 'marvellous and wonderful' strait of Bosphorus, the snow-capped mountains on the Asian side of Constantinople, the 'shining' Sea of Marmara and the distant and 'charming' Princes Islands off the city. Fennander also admired (pp. 130-1) the garden-like surroundings of his lodging (a mansion), which included a fine fish pond and the orchards of near-by San Stefano, and said that Turks were very fond of plants and flowers.<sup>556</sup> He also described in detail drills, epidemics, an earthquake that scared the Guard in late April, the building of a Finnish *sauna*, or bath, the soldiers' merry-making, and their longing for the black bread they were accustomed to at home. (Fennander 1895: 130-4.) Briefly, he was at pains to find a new point of orientation.

### ***Lindman***

On 22 February the Guard 'at last' arrived at the coast, and next day the men were in San Stefano. There they stayed 'until the conclusion of the final peace'<sup>557</sup> on 3 March. Lindman argued that the conclusion was important for both Russia and the whole 'civilised world', because it happened on the same day as the liberation of the serfs in Russia seventeen<sup>558</sup> years earlier. Now, Lindman stated (1880: 44-5), the 'serfdom of millions of Christian Slavs under Mahomedians' was abolished 'forever'. He also described in detail the ceremonies held on 3 March, and concluded (pp. 45-6) that '[t]hus ended, in a solemn and dignified way, the war of 1877-8 between Russia and Turkey'.<sup>559</sup>

Despite the treaty, though, the guardsmen had to wait in San Stefano for several weeks. The time passed in the 'usual routines', once interrupted by an earthquake. Lindman said (p. 46) there would have been many other 'strange things' to relate about the Guard's sojourn in San Stefano, but there was no more space in his little book. Thus, once the fighting was over, Lindman considered his 'contract' fulfilled and began to dissolve his military identity by affirming structural values he had left behind when dramatising the military ideals mentioned in Ch. 4.

### ***Palander***

When Palander arrived at the Sea of Marmara on 20 February he had a 'wonderful, relieved, pleasant feeling' that the journey would immediately continue to Finland (1881: 109). But this did not happen. Instead, the guardsmen were quartered in a mansion near San Stefano. The place did not please Palander. He said (pp. 109-11) that the surroundings were 'empty and like a steppe'; there were no forests, and even a single tree was 'hard to find'.<sup>560</sup> The men spent their time in outpost duty and drills. This 'tedious life' was interrupted only by infections, and once by a young boy, an orphan, who sobbingly asked the soldiers to take care of him. After several requests the company chief adopted him.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> The contrast to the scenes of massacre between Plovdiv and Kharmanli described a few pages earlier in Fennander's text is enormous.

<sup>557</sup> Lindman, like my other sources, speaks of the final, and not the preliminary, peace treaty even though the treaty, as the men certainly knew at the time of their writing, was largely amended in Berlin in summer 1878.

<sup>558</sup> Lindman says, eighteen years. Perhaps he counted back from the date of the actual writing of his memoirs.

<sup>559</sup> In Finland, at least newspaper reactions to the peace were rather lukewarm (Suistola 1986: 129-30).

<sup>560</sup> In other words, he missed Finland and expressed his disappointment at not finding it in San Stefano.

<sup>561</sup> He was later known to the Finns as Aleksei Apostol. Born in Athens around 1866, he was a talented musician and enlisted in the Guard's band. Later he held several posts in military and civilian musical circles before his death in 1927. (Hiisivaara 1968: 202-3.)

During the time between the Guard's arrival and the conclusion of the treaty, rumours spread that a new war was about to break out. There were many days when the guardsmen had a feeling that they were standing on the 'edge of a volcano', not knowing when and where they 'would encounter an eruption'. The day before the conclusion of the treaty and the actual day on which it was signed (2 and 3 March) passed in painful waiting. Only late in the afternoon was it announced that the peace treaty had now been signed. The news was welcomed with loud cheering, followed by a parade that the emperor himself reviewed. Palander commented that although the information about the declaration of war (in April 1877) had been received with enormous enthusiasm, the tidings about the ending of hostilities were greeted even more enthusiastically. The declaration of peace was followed by a festive liturgy. (Palander 1881: 111-15.)

After the peace treaty the men became more homesick. Palander found the time from 3 March to 23 April, when the Guard departed, 'one of the hardest we had to endure'. Army routines were boring in the extreme. The men were worried about, and feared, the diseases that plagued the troops. Moreover, rumour spread that they would have to stay in San Stefano for three years. Even if they did not believe this, the mere uncertainty made them nervous. (Palander 1881: 115-16.) Thus, though Palander longed for Finland he expressed fears of his future in peacetime society and, correspondingly, of his re-incorporation into it.

### *Jernvall*

After the armistice the approaching spring, singing larks and growing grass reminded Jernvall (1899: 251, 254) of his 'distant, dear homeland'.<sup>562</sup> Even the 'Orient' looked 'attractive', no longer hostile or dirty, when perceived under the open sky on a warm and beautiful morning (p. 258). Especially in San Stefano Jernvall admired the high mountains on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, 'sparkling and lofty' in the sunshine; the 'glorious' sunset, the natural beauty surrounding his lodging, and the play of 'all kinds of maritime animals' in the Sea of Marmara<sup>563</sup> (pp. 267-8).

In San Stefano Jernvall's company was first quartered in some tents left by Turkish troops, then in storage huts, and finally in a barn that was full of dung and had to be cleaned out first. These removals occupied the men outside drills and other army routines. Jernvall did not complain but only recorded them in the same manner as the declaration of peace and the following review of troops. Weeks passed on outpost duty, in drills and attempts to control an epidemic that struck many guardsmen down. Finally, to put an end to illness, Jernvall's company was ordered to move again, this time into the open air. On 18 April the guardsmen were informed that the emperor had ordered the Guard to be repatriated as soon as possible. The information was welcomed by emphatic cheering and by singing the unofficial Finnish anthem "Our land". So, in Jernvall's recollections, as well as Wallin's (see below), the men had no doubts that they were returning to Finland, not Russia. Next day they were bid farewell by a minor earthquake, and on 20 April they themselves took their leave by having a good time. So to sum up, Jernvall does not seem to have had any great difficulty in re-adapting to peacetime conditions, because the army structure in his case, too, provided him with the basic relations to which he could weld his military identity.

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<sup>562</sup> In the context of warfare Jernvall used the expression 'fatherland', but after the armistice he started to speak about 'homeland'. The former may be understood to mean either Finland or the Russian empire while the latter could mean Finland only. If paired with what else Jernvall wrote this seems to suggest that his loyalty to Russia was restricted to wartime matters; in peacetime he put Finland above the empire.

<sup>563</sup> Cf. above Fennander's similar notes.

### *Lindfors*

Lindfors (1975: 30) only remarked that the Guard arrived at the coast of the Sea of Marmara and, soon afterwards, stood 'before the gates of the Turkish capital, Constantinople'. He continued (*ibid.*) that having advanced 'so far in the land of our enemies that it was impossible to go further' the guardsmen now wanted to go home 'because there was nothing else to do'. Thus Lindfors's military identity was a creation of wartime conditions and came to an end in much the same manner as a temporary job. However, he was proud of his work because he emphasised rankers, and not officers or the emperor, as independent actors.

The guardsmen had to wait for nine weeks before their return took place. During that time they overhauled their equipment, took baths, drilled and longed for home. Lindfors complained that in San Stefano it was impossible to get black bread, that is, bread made of rye flour, regardless of how much one was willing to pay for it.<sup>564</sup> Black bread (and the domestic relations this implied) was what Lindfors desired above all. (Lindfors 1975: 30-1).

### *Wallin*

After Çorlu the Guard advanced 'in the refreshing morning sun', arriving at Silivri on the coast in the afternoon. There Wallin's unit found that they had been billeted in a house with closed gates. They rattled the gates for some time and eventually two men, who 'looked Jewish', came into the yard but still had no intention of opening up. But when the Finns kept on knocking they at last unlocked the gates and 'disappeared'. Next morning the Guard continued along the coast. In the evening Wallin's platoon was billeted in an attic in Kumburgaz. Immediately an old man appeared, peddling wine that 'sold well'. (WM: 330-3.)

On 24 February the Guard arrived at San Stefano. There it encountered the last Turkish fortifications before Constantinople, hastily constructed after the war had broken out. The Turks were unwilling to let the Guard pass, and so the guardsmen had to wait there in uncertainty for some three hours. At last the stalemate was resolved and the men were quartered in a mansion called Florie Çekmedçe, about four kilometres west of San Stefano, and almost on the shore. There Wallin's unit spent the first night in tents left by the Turks. Next day they were ordered to clean a cow-shed full of dung. When the place was tidy and disinfected, the soldiers were lodged there. (WM: 334-45.)

The next few days passed in drilling (for the peace treaty parade) and in anticipation of peace. Uncertainty, though, prevailed until the last minute. Finally Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich announced to the troops that peace had been concluded. After loud cheers a liturgy was held. The Finns, however, kneeled<sup>565</sup> to thank for peace only after Colonel Procopé ordered them to do so. After the service the troops were inspected, and next day (4 March) the guardsmen who had distinguished themselves in the battles waged on the southern side of the Balkans were awarded crosses of the Order of St Gregorius. Wallin himself received one. (WM: 346-52.)

The time between the conclusion of peace and the Finnish departure was 'dull'. The men had to endure vermin and disease. The latter they attempted to ward off with physical exercise and a thorough cleaning. When these were not effective, the men were moved outdoors. They spent their time watching ships passing or porpoises, which the guardsmen mistook for whales, playing in the sea. They also swam, played, sang and washed their clothes, substituting sand for soap. Most of all, though, they

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<sup>564</sup> Fennander, above, said the same.

<sup>565</sup> The Orthodox custom of kneeling in some parts of the liturgy was obviously foreign, though probably not unknown, to Finns. With his statement Wallin obviously wanted to emphasise the Finnish independence of the Russians, although it also seems clear that soldiers act, or should act, only after having been commanded to do so.

reflected on their return home and waited for the orders to leave. When these were issued, on 18 April, the Guard's musicians played "Our land". (WM: 352-3, 356-61.) Thus Wallin's recollections again indicate a discrepancy between the Finns, who wanted to return home, and the Russian wartime structure that prevented them from doing so.

### **Schulman**

On 20 February Schulman arrived by train at Çorlu, where he spent a week waiting for his unit. On 27 February he proceeded, reaching the Sea of Marmara the same afternoon. It made a favourable impression on him, and he looked on the rest of his march, including the time spent on the coast waiting for his departure for home, more as a tourist trip than a military campaign. The wait, though, lasted until the end of the summer. Schulman passed the time pleasantly enough, going to see a French *variété* that visited San Stefano from Constantinople, visiting the other units stationed nearby, going for trips by boat and sometimes shooting at porpoises. Much of his time was spent taking care of the many ill men, most of whom had contracted typhoid. When the army's sojourn was prolonged, the troops started to entrench and to build new roads from San Stefano towards the Black Sea. An ominous sign of a new war was the drilling that became more frequent in the early days of summer. In late June tensions gradually eased. As the weather at the same time turned increasingly hot, every Russian began to long, and wait, for repatriation. For Schulman's unit this was realised at the end of August.<sup>566</sup> Before that the troops paraded by the walls of Constantinople to 'display' Russian might. (1955: 142-8, 160-70.)

### **13.2. Soldiers to tourists: visiting Constantinople**

A soldier casually visiting cities outside battle is indifferent to the ordinary way of life in such places. Like the modern tourist, lacking deeper contacts with the local people (except, perhaps, for publicans and prostitutes), he points out 'exotic' or 'famous' sights, or 'curiosities'. In all cases his goal is the same: to ignite his reader's imagination. (See Simola 1955: 163-4; Thornton 1985: 10.)

From the late 19th-century educated western viewpoint, the first impression of Constantinople in 1878 was of a big city of 650,000 inhabitants that was a mysterious, seductive and enchanting, but also dangerous, part of the Orient. The city was a fabulous place where the westerner (male, of course) could expect to encounter beauties comparable to those of the *Thousand and one nights* at every turn. A closer look at the city might help him to see the multiple layers of history and culture, and to perceive differences in the 'Orientalism'. Originally, Constantinople had been a 'splendid [cradle] of culture and an outpost against the East'. Subsequent layers of Western Christian, Turkic and Islamic influences had turned it into a fascinating but, in western eyes, internally empty façade. Pera especially had become 'self-consciously Parisian', while three-quarters of the population of Galata were Christians, the majority with foreign passports. (Inha 1907: 1-2, 4, 7; Mansel 1997: 287. The quotations are from Mansel.)

I presume that the educated Finnish guardsmen were aware of, and probably shared, this kind of perception of Constantinople. They also belittled the city, like Islam, on the grounds that it was not 'civilised'. This contempt led them to look for traces of the 'lost' Greek, Roman and Byzantine civilisation, to be shocked at or, at least, impatient with the present 'barbarism' of the Ottoman capital in general and, at the same time, to admire the beauty of some of its 'civilised' landmarks and buildings

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<sup>566</sup> There is some confusion in Schulman's dating of his departure. He reported that his ship arrived at Odessa on 5 August (1955: 171), that he spent five days there (p. 172), and then left by train for Warsaw, arriving there on 16 September (p. 173). Because he did not give any reason why the train journey should have lasted more than a month it would seem that he mistook August for September.

or 'erotic' and 'oriental' females. Thus the educated guardsmen looked at the city, or remembered it, with a mixture of 'enlightened' arrogance, romantic nostalgia for a 'great past' and escapism into an imagined oriental fairyland (see Inha 1907: 10, 12-13). More crudely, it was the victor's 'structural rape' of the defeated Ottoman structure. I should add that, after the peace, officers could see Constantinople almost as they pleased, only a few non-officers (three NCOs and three men from each of the Finnish Guard's companies) were allowed to visit the city, and only on the eve of their repatriation (Järvinen 1932: 260). None of the three privates dealt with in this study visited the city, and two of them, Lindman and Wallin, do not mention it at all. This is in accordance with their writing as a whole, which tends to be totally absorbed by the army present.

### **Wahlberg**

Wahlberg and his companions took a steamer to Constantinople. The journey lasted half an hour. Seen from a distance, the city was in Wahlberg's opinion marvellous<sup>567</sup> because everything was in balance: the famous mosques did not hide the private palaces surrounded by 'dark green cypresses'. (Wahlberg 1878: 200.)

The ship berthed next to the bridge leading from Stambul to Galata and Pera. According to Wahlberg, the Golden Horn between these parts of the city was a lively centre of trade. He did not, however, stop to buy anything but continued through the crowd. 'Every second step we were harassed by begging children who were not willing to [let us go before we had given them] one or two piasters.' At last he managed to take an 'underground train'<sup>568</sup> from Galata up to the hills of Pera, which in his opinion was not unlike a European capital. (Wahlberg 1878: 201-2.)

On the hills Wahlberg and his companions visited the Galata Tower<sup>569</sup> for a view over the city. Then they crossed the Golden Horn by a small boat, *kaiki*, landed near Topkapi Saray (the sultan's residence until 1839), passed it and approached Haghia Sophia. Wahlberg commented that the minarets and other annexes the Ottomans had added to the original building had been unable to turn the sanctuary from a church into a mosque.<sup>570</sup> But neither had the long Ottoman presence on European soil managed to turn Turks into Europeans, Wahlberg concluded.<sup>571</sup> (Wahlberg 1878: 203-5.) Inside the church he observed (p. 205) 'masterly architecture' and 'decorations' (mosaics, columns, etc.) that made such an impression on him that all other thoughts disappeared. Soon, though, he remembered that during the war the place had accommodated some 10,000 families of refugees.<sup>572</sup>

Wahlberg also visited the Blue Mosque (of Sultan Ahmed I, 1603-1617) as well as sanctuaries of Sultan Mehmed II (1444-1481) and his son and successor Bayezid II (1481-1512), and praised their beauty. 'Quite near the last mentioned [mosque] lay the bazaar, which is the largest not only in Turkey but in the whole Orient.'<sup>573</sup> There one could buy 'everything the Orient produces', be it clothing, textiles, spices, ornaments, arms or whatever. According to Wahlberg, 'to the disadvantage of the country and to the annoyance of the customer' most of the merchants were Greeks, and in order not

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<sup>567</sup> Cf. Alfthan's similar notes on Bucharest in Ch. 11.1. and Schulman's on Edirne in Ch. 11.2.

<sup>568</sup> Funicular railway financed by an English company and opened in January 1875.

<sup>569</sup> In Turkish, Galata Kulesi. It was built in the fifth century CE and was used as a fire station. The modern tower was built by the Genoese colony in 1348. Later visitors used it as a viewpoint of Constantinople.

<sup>570</sup> This was repeated with the same words by Inha (1907: 8). See also Schulman below in this chapter.

<sup>571</sup> He had stated the same earlier, see Ch. 12.2.

<sup>572</sup> According to one estimate (Anderson 1968: 192), 300,000 people, both civilians and combatants, sought refuge in the city during the war. The mosaics mentioned by Wahlberg were whitewashed after the capture of Constantinople by Ottomans in 1453, but were partly cleaned in the 19th century (Inha 1907: 9).

<sup>573</sup> According to one estimate, at the beginning of the 20th century there were some three thousand shops (Inha 1907: 11).



to be totally robbed, the buyer had to haggle to get two thirds off the price. Critique notwithstanding, Wahlberg and his companions bought all kinds of ‘souvenirs from Turkey’ before returning to their hotel in Pera. (Wahlberg 1878: 205-7.)

In the afternoon they took a carriage to see the sultan’s new palace, Dolmabahçe, built between 1849 and 1856.<sup>574</sup> Later they took a boat to Üsküdar, the Asian side of the city where ‘at every step they met the old Turkey’ represented by Arabs, ‘Negroes’, pilgrims from Mecca and all kinds of dervishes. They also visited a dervish *tekke* and witnessed there a ritual performed by whirling (or, as Wahlberg called them, howling) dervishes. After that they returned to their boat and had themselves rowed back to Galata. (Wahlberg 1878: 207-8.)

In the evening the men visited the ‘Ottoman theatre’ because the capital had no other ‘dramatic art’ to satisfy their taste. The performance, an operetta, was, in Wahlberg’s opinion, poor.<sup>575</sup> Next morning he visited the Irene Museum,<sup>576</sup> where objects from the pre-Ottoman time were exhibited. He admired statues from the Greek, Roman and early Byzantine periods and remarked that ‘thanks to the Turkish scorn of all art<sup>577</sup> and their eagerness for destruction, many items were not well preserved’. (Wahlberg 1878: 209-10.)

From the Irene Museum Wahlberg and his companions went to the Janissary Museum,<sup>578</sup> finding there ‘a collection of ugly and monotonous wooden figures clad in national costume [ranging] from the empire’s earliest times to the present’. The men continued to the Byzantine Hippodrom,<sup>579</sup> where only ruins of the ‘precious antiquities’ were left, and to Yedikule,<sup>580</sup> which the French, according to Wahlberg, aptly called ‘puits du sang’. On their way back, Wahlberg visited the ruins of the palace of Belisarius<sup>581</sup> and admired the ‘original’ Byzantine way in which it was constructed. Before leaving Constantinople he also paid a visit to the Swedish ambassador and discussed with him the stay of the Swedish king Charles XII (reigned 1697-1718) and ‘other Scandinavian soldiers’ on the shores of the Bosphorus. (Wahlberg 1878: 210-15.)

### ***Fennander***

Fennander visited Constantinople, at least in his writing, but the city did not make a favourable impression on him. He duly mentioned that ‘in the middle of the city stood the famous and very large mosque of [Haghia] Sophia, formerly a Christian church’. He also praised the palaces of the sultan and his harem, as well as the well-stocked shops on the main streets. But he also related that ‘the streets

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<sup>574</sup> The sultan had recently moved into another palace, Yildiz, which was less open to attack from sea or land (Mansel 1997: 308).

<sup>575</sup> This was perhaps because of the war. In general, although classical west European music and theatre performances, usually in Italian, were a novelty in Constantinople they were of high quality (Mansel 1997: 291-2).

<sup>576</sup> The Church of Haghia Eirene (in Turkish, Aya Irini Kilisesi), near Haghia Sophia. It is a 4th century church built by Constantine the Great. Until Haghia Sophia was built in the 6th century, it was the city’s cathedral. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 the church was enclosed within the walls of Topkapi Saray and served as an arsenal. In the 19th century, a collection of antiques was stored there.

<sup>577</sup> A few sentences earlier (p. 210) he had said that museums with painted art were forbidden in the Ottoman empire because Islam was ‘against this kind of art’.

<sup>578</sup> I do not know what exactly Wahlberg means by this ‘janitscharerenes museum’. Alfthan (below) obviously speaks of the same place under the name ‘Historical Museum’. It seems to be located somewhere between Hippodrom and Yedikule and may mean a place which does not exist any more.

<sup>579</sup> Hippodrom (in Turkish, At Meydani) was built by the Roman Emperor Septimus Severus in 203 and later extended by Constantine the Great. It lies a little south-west of Haghia Sophia.

<sup>580</sup> The famous ‘prison of seven towers’ that Sultan Mehmed II built after his conquest of Constantinople near the shore of the Sea of Marmara. At the time of Wahlberg’s visit it had long been abandoned.

<sup>581</sup> A Byzantine general in the early sixth century.

were very narrow and dirty and crowded with huge packs of [master-less] dogs whose puppies lay in the ditches'. (Fennander 1895: 134-5.)<sup>582</sup>

The women attracted Fennander in his 1895 version of the story. When walking in a park he gazed at Turkish and Christian females. According to him (p. 135), some Turkish women wore 'such a light veil that one could well see their beautiful features and dark brown eyes'. Because all this is either adapted from Jernvall's text or is pure fantasy, I think that this piece is part of Fennander's rethinking of his military identity, as well as an attempt to make his stay in San Stefano look more interesting for the reader.

### ***Jernvall***

A few days before the Guard's departure Jernvall and his companions took the train, arriving 'in a few minutes' at the city's main railway station. Jernvall's group continued by a horse-drawn carriage under the guidance of a self-appointed guide, a young Greek. Jernvall said that he demanded too much money and so was fired, and added that 'we managed quite well without him'. (Jernvall 1899: 280-1.)

The first place they visited was Haghia Sophia. After having praised its magnificent appearance Jernvall related that 'this time the place was not tidy' because only a few weeks ago it had been sheltering 'some thousands of poor refugees' who had found 'peace and protection there from the turmoil of war'. However, when leaving the sanctuary after the peace treaty they had not cleaned it and had left behind all kinds of rubbish. (Jernvall 1899: 281.)

From Haghia Sophia the soldiers went to a restaurant 'in the middle of a beautiful orchard', to have a bottle or two of lemonade. There everything was 'particularly neat and tidy'. They met 'an elderly Turkish gentleman' rocking a pretty little girl on his knees. Jernvall, too, wanted to hold the little one because 'the child was so beautiful', and was allowed to do so. The old man knew some Russian and told Jernvall that twenty or so years before he had been in St Petersburg on business. According to Jernvall, he did not regret the arrival of the Russians. Some others perhaps did, however, because, in the afternoon when Jernvall and his companions were strolling in the streets, 'Turks gazed at us with hatred in their eyes'. (Jernvall 1899: 281-2, 285-6.) This may be true, but it is also probably what Jernvall expected.

From the restaurant, the guardsmen took a carriage to the 'most beautiful parts of the city'. They passed the sultan's new palace and continued over the bridge to Galata and Pera. There they stopped at a restaurant, where the housekeeper astonished them with her ability to speak 'some kind of' Russian. It turned out that she hailed from southern Russia. Her two 'good-looking' daughters performed some Turkish dances for them, and the guardsmen responded with Finnish and Russian ones. After some two hours of merry-making the Finns continued by carriage. Jernvall labelled the ride a 'showing off', and explained that because common soldiers so seldom had the opportunity to visit Constantinople they wanted to demonstrate what 'Alexander's soldiers' really looked like. (Jernvall 1899: 282-4.)

During the journey by carriage Jernvall observed the people in the street. He noticed that 'almost all nations of the world' were represented in a great variety of garments. The most usual dress seemed to be large pantaloons drooping down at the back. Because the back was often rather close to the ground and because the streets tended to be both narrow and dirty, the trousers easily became soiled. Jernvall said that many people 'seemed to be wearing pantaloons with a rather muddy back'. He added that in rainy weather this kind of dress looked 'rather ridiculous'. (Jernvall 1899: 284-5.)<sup>583</sup>

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<sup>582</sup> Cf. Inha (1907: 8) for a similar statement.

<sup>583</sup> That is what he assumed to, but most probably did not, see with his own eyes.

There were a lot of women in the streets. Jernvall supposed that their large numbers were due to the refugees who had poured into the city. He mentioned that they were veiled, because 'as is the Turkish custom' females had to cover their faces so that only the eyes were visible. It seemed to him that 'many of these darlings . . . glanced at us in a rather hostile manner, obviously because we had beaten off their fiancés'. Nevertheless, when seeing a group of 'beauties' knitting in a park Jernvall approached them without hesitation. When he got up close, however, the maidens ran off laughing. (Jernvall 1899: 285.)

Jernvall and his companions walked on, and everywhere Turks 'gathered around' them, staring at them as if they were 'strange animals'. In the evening they returned to San Stefano by train, thanking their 'lucky stars' that they had managed to get back 'safe and sound' from that chaotic place where one is 'assassinated or hanged before one even notices [it]'. (Jernvall 1899: 286.) If the place really was so awful one may wonder why Jernvall wanted to visit it at all.

### ***Palander***

Palander obviously did not visit Constantinople, because he mentioned the city only in passing when describing the parade after the conclusion of peace. He stated that in the background (behind the parading men), behind the water and fields, rose the 'high tower and slender minarets of the mosque of [Haghia] Sophia' and, further away, like hills, the Princes' Islands, hiding, 'we knew', the English navy.<sup>584</sup> The whole panorama was crowned by the snow-capped Mt. Olympus sparkling in the last beams of the setting sun. (Palander 1881: 115.)

### ***Lindfors***

Lindfors did not visit Constantinople. When starting back for Finland he informed his reader that the Turkish capital was 'splendid and beautiful beyond compare'. The 'gilded roofs of mosques, and palaces made of marble' took leave of him and the ship he left on. (Lindfors 1975: 32-3.)

### ***Alfthan***

After the peace treaty Alfthan visited Constantinople. He took a boat from San Stefano, and as he approached the Ottoman capital different memories and sentiments filled his mind. He first observed the 'minarets and cupolas of the countless mosques of old Stambul' (1879: 193). They evoked various incidents of the war: bloody fights, destroyed villages and thousands of dead; all souvenirs that 'easily touch us but which we usually forget as soon as we are no longer in their immediate sphere of influence' (pp. 193-4). Next Alfthan (p. 194) saw suburbs, built next to old (Byzantine) walls, which reminded him of tales about robbers and lovers.<sup>585</sup> He also thought that some of the displaced persons he had recently seen might have found refuge here. Then his attention was caught by the Golden Horn. He remarked (p. 195) that anyone visiting the city for the first time would be amazed at the multitude of ships and boats, as well as the coming and going in and around the bay.

Ashore, Alfthan went to Stambul which, he said, was the 'really Turkish part of the city, the centre of the Musulman population, and the place of residence of the Ottoman pashas and higher officials'. Alfthan was 'pleasantly surprised to find that streets were wide and the houses clean'. But

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<sup>584</sup> Six British 'iron-clads' had anchored off the Princes' Islands on 13 February 1878 (Mansel 1997: 307). Originally they were intended for the Dardanelles, where they had arrived in summer 1877 to prevent the Russians from capturing Constantinople.

<sup>585</sup> By this he probably meant tales like those in the *Thousand and one nights*.

some houses on the side streets, looking as if they had been entrusted to nobody's charge, 'indicated that the Oriental spirit hovered over these blocks'. (Alfthan 1879: 196-7.)

After having strolled about for a while Alfthan took a carriage to Haghia Sophia. The courtyard was occupied by refugees, their features worn by troubles and suffering. A soldier guided him through a dark corridor to a gallery. Alfthan looked down 'at the place where, in olden times, stood a Christian altar'. He looked around but could not see any paintings. High on the walls hung 'several round pictures . . . with Muhammedan inscriptions, blue on white'. (1879: 197-8.)

Alfthan's next stop was at the Historical Museum,<sup>586</sup> where he saw human figures made of wax or lead. A statue of a young, veiled man aroused Alfthan's curiosity, until his (Greek?) guide explained that young Janissaries who did not yet have moustaches had to cover their faces (pp. 198-9).

From the museum he took a carriage to the bazaar. This was a huge building with countless small shops offering, among other things, Oriental carpets and all kinds of garments and textiles. Many of the shopkeepers were in Alfthan's opinion Jews who, however, had to compete hard with the Greeks and Armenians. Alfthan considered all three scrupulous enough, but argued that the Jews were easily cheated by the other two (p. 199).<sup>587</sup> Besides sellers and buyers the bazaar was crowded with a 'mob' of people. There were beggars and pickpockets next to 'more decent, rather well-dressed persons who called themselves *dragomaner* [here: guides] but who . . . might more appropriately have been described as *dagsdrifvare* [loafers]'. These 'speculators' surrounded Alfthan and offered their services. However, Alfthan's driver, 'who seemed to be more at home [there]', had no pity on them and drove them away with his whip. (Alfthan 1879: 200.)<sup>588</sup>

Alfthan's last views of Constantinople were hasty sketches. Turkish women, all in similar dresses, promenading in the streets; beggars, strong men whose poor position Alfthan assumed to be a product of the 'worthless' Turkish administration; houses in Galata, built 'in European style'; and a Turk who had never been outside Constantinople but had managed to learn both Swedish and Norwegian while unloading Scandinavian ships in the Golden Horn. (Alfthan 1879: 200-2.) Thus, after hostilities had ended readopted the peacetime west European attitudes of distrust in 'devious' and 'oriental' people, and contempt of their 'lack of culture'.

### **Schulman**

Schulman stayed in San Stefano until the end of summer 1878 and visited Constantinople several times by steamer. Aboard, Schulman became acquainted with a Swiss mining engineer who had spent some twenty years in Constantinople. When the steamer landed by the bridge connecting Stambul and Galata, Schulman's guide took him by underground railway to Pera, where Schulman took a room in a hotel. Then they went sightseeing. Schulman admired Pera's 'elegant shops', but complained that the roads were narrow and twisting. French was spoken overall, even, according to Schulman, by the swarms of beggars, though 'one had better not pay any attention to them'. In the evening Schulman went to the theatre to see an operetta. According to him, the actors were Armenians, the language was Turkish, and the performance so bad that he left after the second act.<sup>589</sup> (1955: 148-52.)

Next morning he took a carriage to the great bazaar. Schulman said it was so big that one could easily spend a whole day there. He, though, 'wasted' only some hours in buying souvenirs to take

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<sup>586</sup> See above, note 578.

<sup>587</sup> We have already seen in Ch. 10 that he had strong views on Jews.

<sup>588</sup> Again, as with the Bulgarians (see Ch. 10), Alfthan indicates that with 'uncivilised' people brutal force is the only correct way to handle with.

<sup>589</sup> Cf. above, Wahlberg.

home. The way of trading was in Schulman's opinion rather odd. When he went into a shop the shopkeeper locked the door and let nobody enter. While bargaining, he was served coffee and a water pipe, and 'time seemed to be of no value to the seller'. (1955: 152.)

From the bazaar he went sightseeing again. He passed a column 'of God knows what age' that he called 'colonne brulée',<sup>590</sup> and 'an underground structure from early Christian times' that 'the Turks call Bin-bir-dersch'<sup>591</sup> because they say that it has up to 1,001 columns'. He arrived at the Hippodrome, had 'the feeling of walking on ancient soil', described briefly the function of the place and added that on one side lay the 'magnificent mosque of Sultan Ahmed, well worth paying attention to'. (1955: 152-3.)

Schulman next went to a museum, where he saw models of Janissaries clothed in national costumes from different periods.<sup>592</sup> The sight displeased him, as it was 'monotonous and tasteless'. He also complained of the lack of an art gallery due to the fact that 'the Muhammedan religion forbade painted representations [of living creatures]'. He then dropped by Topkapi Saray and Haghia Sophia, which did not impress him as much as he had expected. He maintained that the later Turkish annexes, like minarets, did not match the original structure, and so the massive building, instead of evoking a sense of something sacred, perplexed the spectator. He did not go in because the place was full of refugees, many of whom had typhoid. From Haghia Sophia Schulman left for Pera. He made a long tour to visit the grave of Eyüp<sup>593</sup> outside the walls of Constantinople, the 'Sultan Valide',<sup>594</sup> in the middle of Stambul, and the Venetian<sup>595</sup> built Galata Tower. After dinner he went by steamer to see the Dolmabahçe Palace from the sea. The view much pleased him. (1955: 153-4.)

According to Schulman, in the evening Constantinople offered no special amusements. Theatres were poor, and concerts were non-existent except for 'café performances', which abounded. Schulman went to a café but found the singer's voice of 'inferior quality'. On the upper floor of the café there was a secret gambling den where, 'one may suppose', the play was not fair. At least Schulman lost some gold coins at roulette. (1955: 154-5.)

Next day he visited Büyükdere, a village by the Bosphorus some fifteen kilometres from Constantinople, where most of the foreign ambassadors, including the Russian one, had their summer residences. He visited the Russian residence, had dinner there and returned to Constantinople. According to Schulman, the voyage was wonderful, it would be 'hard to imagine anything more enjoyable'. (1955: 155-6.)

After a short stay in San Stefano, Schulman returned to Constantinople. This time he visited the Princes' Islands. He and his companions were perhaps the first Russian officers to go there, and their visit caused great unrest because the locals<sup>596</sup> thought they had come to prepare the Russian occupation of the islands. On the largest island, Büyük ada,<sup>597</sup> Schulman was hosted by a friend of his

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<sup>590</sup> Probably Çemberlitas, or the Burnt Column (due to its blackish colour). The now some 36 metres high monument was originally built by order of the emperor Constantine the Great to decorate the Forum he had had constructed.

<sup>591</sup> Binbirdsurek, or the cistern of a thousand and one columns. It was built at the time of Constantine the Great and later damaged by earthquakes. At the time of Schulman's visit it was most probably not in use.

<sup>592</sup> Cf. above, Wahlberg and Alfthan, and note 578.

<sup>593</sup> Abu Ayyub, in Turkish Eyüp, Muhammed's standard bearer, who died during an Arab siege of Constantinople in the 670s CE. Later he became the 'patron' of Ottoman Constantinople. The mosque and space around his tomb, known as Eyüp, was the place where sultans were installed. It was built by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror and completely reconstructed in 1800 by Selim II. It is one of the holiest Islamic sites in Turkey.

<sup>594</sup> Valide çami, or the mosque of the sultan's mother.

<sup>595</sup> In fact, Genoese.

<sup>596</sup> Mainly Greeks, see Inha 1907: 14.

<sup>597</sup> Schulman called it Principo, which was the common designation at that time.

Swiss guide, a Greek banker. In addition to excellent food he had the rare occasion to converse with a Turkish harem lady, who spoke perfect French. She was one of the wives of a high Turkish official who happened to be visiting the banker at the same time as Schulman. According to Schulman, as long as her spouse was present, she did not join the company, but when he left, she did. (1955: 157-8.)

From *Büyük ada*, Schulman crossed over to the Asian side of Constantinople. There he and his companions emptied a bottle of wine as a toast to Asia before taking a train to the port, and from there a ship back to the European side of the city. Then Schulman returned to San Stefano, determined to visit the Princes' Islands once again. The opportunity came on 1 June, when he and some hundred other officers hired two steamers to take them to *Büyük ada*, where they had a great feast with an abundance of food and drinks, fireworks and dancing. Similar parties were arranged later on in the summer and, according to Schulman, many Greek families living on the island and in Constantinople joined the Russian officers. (1955: 158-9.)

### **13.3. Repatriation**

Considering the virtually unanimous enthusiasm with which the privates and NCOs welcomed their repatriation, descriptions of their thoughts and experiences while travelling home are few and far between. Perhaps they considered such details boring for their readers. Or perhaps the men were too excited to remember<sup>598</sup> much more than events that added to their honour (for example, the Guard's elevation among the Old Guards). It also seems probable that most of the volunteers discarded their military identity with the conclusion of the peace treaty. Thus they were in a sense already back in Finland while still travelling. As to the professionals, for them the journey home did not mean deconstruction but reconstruction of military identity, or, in the case of Wahlberg, adherence to ideals that were about the same in war and peace. Nevertheless, it seems that, in general, all were relieved that the war was over.

#### ***Wahlberg***

After the peace treaty, the men eagerly awaited their repatriation orders. Wahlberg said that when these came, no-one could describe the joy they all felt. But, he added, had the war broken out again, hardly anyone would have refused to stay. However, it did not, and except for a couple of dozen seriously ill men, the guardsmen departed on 23 April by steamer over the Black Sea for Odessa. There, according to Wahlberg, they left 93 soldiers in quarantine while the rest continued by train to Helsinki, where they were warmly welcomed on 9 May. (Wahlberg 1878: 216-20.)

#### ***Fennander***

According to Fennander, when the Guard left on 25 April, he was not very well. Four days later their ship arrived at Odessa, where the guardsmen were given a friendly welcome. After a party they continued by train to St Petersburg, Viipuri and Helsinki. Fennander had not much to say about their arrival, though he was obviously very happy. His final concern in the text was for those who had died either on the battlefield or of disease. He concluded by asking: 'When will the time come when there are no more wars and peace prevails?' (Fennander 1895: 137-41.) Thus, although he remembered the war with pleasure, he was not ready to rush headlong into a new one or to dramatise his military identity again.

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<sup>598</sup> Even the day they departed, 23 April, is not always recollected accurately.

### ***Lindman***

On 23 April Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich announced that the emperor had elevated the Finnish Guard among the Old Guards.<sup>599</sup> The information ‘greatly pleased’ the Finns. (Lindman 1880: 47.) On the same day the Guard boarded a ship. Next morning it passed the Turkish capital and sailed towards the Black Sea. Such a fierce storm blew up, however, that the ship had to wait at the entrance to the sea for some twenty-four hours before continuing. The sea was still rather rough, and most of the men were seasick. The journey lasted five days and fresh water had almost ran out when the ship docked at Odessa. Before disembarking, the soldiers were submitted to a medical examination. (Lindman 1880: 47.) It was Easter (O.S.), and an ‘enormous crowd’ welcomed the guardsmen, putting on a feast in their honour. On 2 May the guardsmen continued by train to St Petersburg. There local Finns came to meet the men. After that they were received and reviewed by the emperor. A body of the cavalry of the Guards entertained the Finnish Guard in the evening, as did Finns residing in the Russian capital the next morning. Feasting continued on 8 May in Viipuri, where the Guard’s standard (symbolising its bravery and honour) attracted considerable attention. A unfortunate incident occurred in Viipuri, when a sick guardsman who had been left in his carriage during the feasting died of typhoid fever. Lindman consoled his reader: ‘At least that hero had the opportunity to be interred in the bosom of his homeland.’ (Lindman 1880: 47-50.)

Around midnight the train started, and on 9 May arrived in Helsinki, the capital of ‘our dear fatherland’. There the inhabitants again welcomed the Guard with a feast. ‘Our hearts were full of joy. We didn’t even eat, because it pleased us more to shake hands with friends and acquaintances.’ The celebrations were followed by divine service, and after that the Guard had three days’ leave. According to Lindman, during that time the soldiers met old friends, who with ‘great curiosity asked questions about our extraordinary campaign’. (Lindman 1880: 50-1.) Thus Lindman underlines the social prestige of war and the structural acceptance of and rewards for those who had worked it through.

Lindman concluded by summarising some moral lessons that the war in his opinion had taught. He remarked that as long as mankind was oppressed by tyrants, warfare was a ‘horrible’ but unavoidable (necessity). He also asserted that one must defend Christianity and the ‘honour of one’s own country’ as the Finnish Guard had done. Lindman believed that only after their homecoming did the guardsmen really know what it meant to love one’s fatherland.<sup>600</sup> And he ended by declaring that were Finland to be involved in war again, it would be the duty of every ‘decent citizen’ to fight for ‘victory and honour’. (Lindman 1880: 51-2, 54-5.) In other words, though he was not fond of war he was ready to make a new contract because a soldier’s work was as honourable as any ‘decent’ job.

### ***Jernvall***

On 23 April Jernvall’s company left its ‘lethal’ position. After divine service the Guard advanced with band playing to San Stefano, where Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich reviewed it, thanked the ‘Finnish boys’ and wished them a pleasant journey. The men answered with the usual cheering. In the evening they boarded a huge steamer, which left next morning. At the other end of the Bosphorus a storm on the Black Sea held the vessel up for a time. When the journey continued the guardsmen ‘took a last look at the beautiful capital of the tyrannical [power]’, and ‘with pleasure’ bid it farewell ‘forever’. On 27 April they arrived at Odessa and underwent a medical examination. The sick were put

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<sup>599</sup> Here Lindman is mistaken, because this was announced on the emperor’s birthday, 29 April, and was put into practice in St Petersburg by the emperor himself (see Järvinen 1932: 275, 277; Meurman 1882: 74). The error, however, does not affect my study.

<sup>600</sup> Cf. Topelius (in Ch. 3.1.) for a reminiscent view.

into quarantine, and the rest marched to the city and were received ‘extremely well’. According to Jernvall, Odessa was clean and beautiful, the [main] streets were wide and the buildings gracious. (Jernvall 1899: 286-90, 292-4.) This may be understood as a comparison with ‘filthy’ Constantinople. Otherwise, however, Odessa, founded in 1794, had a rather west European look because it had mainly been planned by French émigrés, and most of the early architects had been Italians.

From Odessa the men continued by train. On 3 May they stopped at Brest, where Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich reviewed the Guard and told the men that the emperor had elevated it among the Old Guards.<sup>601</sup> Hearing this, the men cheered ‘heartily’. On 7 May they arrived in the Russian capital, where a great number of Finns welcomed them. At noon the emperor reviewed the Guard and thanked the men for their ‘loyal service’. Next day they continued via Viipuri to Helsinki. In both towns they were enthusiastically welcomed. (Jernvall 1899: 294-9.) Thus Jernvall’s attitude to changes due to the end of war is even more pragmatic than Lindman’s. The wartime military identity is as easily put aside, or re-dramatised, as is any role in the scheme of structurally preferable jobs.

### *Palander*

The news of the Guard’s departure delighted the men so much, Palander said (p. 116), that he did not even try to describe it. ‘[A]nybody can imagine how it feels when, after a long term in prison, one is released to breathe the divine fresh air.’ But there were also some unlucky fellows. According to Palander, twenty-three who were seriously ill had to stay behind, ‘perhaps to recover, perhaps to die’. The ‘old rags’ (i.e., men’s worn-out uniforms) were burnt to prevent infections from spreading to Russia and Finland. The emperor himself<sup>602</sup> reviewed the Guard, ‘sincerely’ thanked it, and wished the men luck on their journey home. Then they embarked. Due to a heavy storm the ship had to wait a day and a night before crossing the Black Sea to Odessa. The sea was so rough that most of the men were seasick. Those who were not sensed the ‘feeling and freedom’ that only a stormy sea can bring. (Palander 1881: 116-18.)

In Odessa the Guard was billeted in a large barracks. Next day the local people organised a party for men. After that, with the exception of the sick who were left in the city, they continued by train. On the way, and especially in Polish territory, the guardsmen saw a great many Turkish prisoners of war. On 7 May the train arrived in snowy and frosty St Petersburg. The men were issued new clothes. After that the Guard was reviewed by the emperor, who again, as Palander remembered, thanked it and announced that it had been elevated among the Old Guards. Next morning, after a banquet thrown by local Finns, the guardsmen travelled by train to Viipuri, where they were welcomed with food and drink. ‘The women of Viipuri crowned our standard with laurels.’ On 9 May the guardsmen arrived in Helsinki, where they were welcomed with “Our land” and other patriotic and military music, flying colours and endless cheering. (Palander 1881: 118-20.) So it seems that in the end Palander negotiated a structural identity by accepting awards that structure offered men in ‘compensation’ for, or in ‘honour’ of, divesting their military identity. Or perhaps he had found deviance from structural ideals too hard and wanted to conform.

### *Lindfors*

The Guard left San Stefano by ship with band playing. Soon the ship was caught in a storm and had to cast anchor. On 28 April, according to Lindfors, it arrived at Odessa where, ‘as in San Stefano, a lot of

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<sup>601</sup> See above, note 599.

<sup>602</sup> In fact, Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich.



the guardsmen were left in hospital'. 'A sort of feast was arranged for us because the greatest Russian holiday, Pasha, that is, Easter, was at hand.' (Lindfors 1975: 33.)

From Odessa Lindfors continued by train. On Polish soil he fell ill and was transferred to the ambulance carriage. Despite that 'I preserved my strength and life until St Petersburg and my arrival home'. On the way the guardsmen were instructed that the emperor had elevated the Guard among the Old Guards. For that the men were very grateful, Lindfors says, and there seems to be no reason to doubt that the event was considered important because Lindman, Jernvall and Palander likewise singled it out. Lindfors also reported that people in general, and Finns in particular, cordially welcomed the Guard both in St Petersburg and in Viipuri. With special gratitude he remembered a 'blessed lady' of Viipuri, who presented him two bottles of port. (Lindfors 1975: 33-4.)

In Helsinki the reception was even more animated and joyous, even though there were some who could not join the company because their loved ones did not return. Nevertheless, according to Lindfors, all casualties were rewarded by the knowledge that the Guard had written 'a small but honourable line' in Finnish history. He concluded by quoting Runeberg, who asserted that the Finns were a people who endured, and overcame, all troubles and were always faithful to their principles.<sup>603</sup> (Lindfors 1975: 34-5.) Thus his dismantling of military identity did not much differ from Palander's.

### **Wallin**

According to Wallin, the Guard's journey back to Finland started on 22 April. First the chaplain led solemn prayers. Then the men marched some three kilometres to San Stefano, where they waited for Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich. Finally he appeared and delivered a short speech thanking the men. The Guard proceeded to the nearby harbour, spending a day there before embarking. Wallin was so sick that he could keep going only with the help of his friends. On board he slept the whole way to Odessa, and there he had to spend three weeks in hospital. (WM: 364-7.)

After his discharge, Wallin and three of his companions were first taken to a local army barracks. Next morning they were given some bread and soup, and eight kopecks to buy food en route. Then they were put on a train for St Petersburg. At Brest they were commanded to alight, put up in an army barracks and given something to eat. Next morning they were again given eight kopecks each and orders to continue to Grodno. There they spent three days and nights, again in a barracks which, this time, was dirty and overrun by vermin. The whole town of Grodno was, in Wallin's opinion, 'rather unsavoury'. (WM: 377-83, 390.)

From Grodno Wallin continued to St Petersburg, where he was lodged in an empty barracks. No food was provided, though Wallin and his companions were hungry and had no money. After one night they were taken to the railway station and put on a train. Hungry and, as he especially underlined, dirty<sup>604</sup> he arrived in Helsinki, and thus 'the homecoming was much more miserable than the departure [for the front] had been' (p. 404).

In Helsinki the men hurried to their barracks for a meal. In the end, Wallin stated (p. 405), he was lucky to return in rather good health, whereas some 190 men had passed away during the campaign. Thus, though Wallin served with the Guard for several years, at the time of remembering, in the 1930s, he obviously had difficulty accepting his participation in war on the Russian side.

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<sup>603</sup> He quoted, in Finnish translation, the ninth verse from the poem "Den femte juli" (The Fifth of July), published in the second part of Runeberg's *Tales* (Runeberg 1963: 178).

<sup>604</sup> He said that his clothing and that of his companions swarmed with vermin (WM: 403).

### *Alfthan*

On his return to San Stefano from Constantinople, Alfthan contracted typhoid. When he had recovered he was sent by boat to Odessa, and from there by train to Finland, where he arrived soon after Midsummer. (Alfthan 1879: 204-5.) Thus he relinquished his wartime military identity and reassumed his peacetime one as if nothing special had happened. For a young army professional this probably was rather typical.

### *Schulman*

Schulman departed from San Stefano by ship in early September 1878.<sup>605</sup> After some sixty hours he arrived at Odessa. He pointed out that due to a storm the journey had lasted twice as long as usual. However, it was worth it because, as Schulman put it, ‘it felt good to stand on Russian soil again’ (p. 172). He spent five days in Odessa before leaving by train for Warsaw, where he arrived on 16 September and was welcomed with great festivities. (1955: 170-4.) His position on military identity was therefore close to that of Alfthan: societies come and go but the identity created by the army remains. The various aspects of that identity, their relation to the other in the Balkan context, and to authority created by the military are the subject of my conclusions.

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<sup>605</sup> Cf. what he says in section 13.1.

## 14. CONCLUSIONS: SOLDIER, THE OTHER, AUTHORITY AND MILITARY STRUCTURE

In this work I have examined Finnish guardsmen's recollections of their experiences of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8 as narratives of the adoption and maintenance of a military identity. I have paid attention to the ways in which the men described (or remembered) their relations to, and interpretations of, three separate but intertwined categories: military heroism (including the heroic ideals of the Finnish tradition and the Russian army, battles, wounds and the enemy), the foreign or other (the Bulgarian people and space, the Ottoman-held Bulgaria the guardsmen were sent to liberate) and the ideology they were expected to fight against (Islam, 'Asiatic' world view) or for (Christianity, or Orthodoxy, and the 'honour' of the imperial 'fatherland').

I have found that certain themes and ideas crop up repeatedly, expressed either in the form of exemplary stories (for example, tales of the Finns 'manfully' enduring their pains or the Turks 'cowardly' taking to flight or the bashi-bazouks torturing their prisoners in the most savage manner) or value-laden clichés (the 'filthy' Orient, the 'virtuous' Bulgarian mountaineers or the 'devious' town-dwellers). This is what one might expect to find in war memoirs; a tendency to elevate 'us' and downplay 'them' or to project our vices (or, occasionally, virtues) upon the other. However, what in my opinion is interesting is the way these 'clichés' allowed communication across class and social boundaries and negotiation of one's position in the military structure; that is, how they formulated aspects of military identity more or less shared by most or, in some cases, all men and helped to create a 'collective biography', a sense of 'us', the Finns and Finnish Guard, relative to other Russian units, the enemy or the Balkans.

### 14.1.Aspects of wartime military identity

On the basis of previous chapters, I have divided the guardsmen's recollections of wartime military heroism into three categories, that is, three clusters of clichés, symbols and ideas. I call them, respectively, idealising, proletarianising and wavering views of the war and the military. These are three overlapping or, on some occasions, contradictory aspects of military identity, suggesting both mutual interdependence and conflicts. More particularly, they are three ways of adopting and remembering military identity (meaning not an unchanging set of mind but a tendency to act in a new situation by applying attitudes, knowledge and values internalised in pre-war conditions).

*Idealising* was most typical of men who held a commanding position in the army hierarchy. It seems that they never actually dissociated themselves from the ideal soldier of society's great tradition, that is, the structurally obedient hero. They made no big difference between social and military identity and equated the latter with army ideals as formulated by society. Briefly, they unquestioningly accepted some idealised aspects of military structure and interpreted their experiences in the light of them. It is understandable that this 'idealising identity' was most easily espoused by men in a higher position, who had more personal freedom, and perhaps opportunities, for heroism than privates. One might also say that officers in particular had more 'honour', or 'prestige', to lose if they failed to live up to military ideals.

One much favoured feature in idealising was to take for granted great tradition's notion of Finns as born soldiers and, at the Guard's departure, to stress the guardsmen's eagerness to leave for the front. This was coupled with examples of Finnish bravery, particularly at the battle of Gorni Dübnik. Further, typical of men who used idealising clichés was to emphasise not the war's political or historical causes but its ideational goal, namely, to enhance (Finnish) military glory or, alternatively,

the spread of west European 'civilisation' among the 'barbarous' Orientals. This 'cultural mission' they found self-evident; it needed no rationales: 'our' army could not help of fighting for a 'just' cause.

To achieve that mission, they emphasised a soldier's obedience to orders rather than his individual daring. They also stressed the unquestioned authority of one's superiors, for example, by presenting the emperor's will as the main reason for waging the war. The Finns had no personal inducement to fight, but in dutifully obeying the emperor, or authority, they, according to this view, heightened their own glory. Thus an essential factor in idealising consisted of obedience and pride in everything 'honourable' which, often, was also Finnish. At times this was coupled with a strong feeling that Finnish guardsmen had come to Bulgaria to fight the 'false' religion, not unlike their forbears had done in the Thirty Years' War, thus continuing a long, and mainly invented, line of national glory.

Men who emphasised the ideal aspect of military identity also stressed the army's, and not the individual soldier's, correct functioning in fulfilling its mission. Thus they criticised the army only in so far as it failed to help the men create a 'proper' military identity, that is, did not come up to its own standards. Moreover, by repeatedly emphasising comradeship among soldiers they integrated themselves more closely with the army structure. The authors' possible nationalistic sympathies notwithstanding, it would seem that they did not want to contribute to Finnish heroic mythology but rather to emphasise the heroism of the Russian army in general, to make the army institution into the real hero of the battles. In so doing they showed their loyalty to, if not Russia itself, at least the emperor who had sent the army to the Balkans and also supported the prevailing social and military hierarchy, which was bolstered by these institutions.

The *proletarianising* view characterised the men with a lower position in the hierarchy. It was expressed by the actualisation of a few items from the military public memory and tended to prove the author a 'true soldier' (that is, a reliable member of the army institution) in order to secure for him an assured place in the army, and post-war society as well. Men holding such a view could accept or even internalise ideals about the 'civilising' effects of a 'just' war, obedience to the authorities or the enhancement of a nation's 'honour' by victorious combat, but they did not interpret the war in general in the light of these ideas. Instead, they restricted themselves to clichés revolving around what they considered their main work, fighting the enemy. That is, they invested their military identity, and their opportunities to negotiate, in the militarily highly recommendable option, a reliable fighter (worker), and argued that by fulfilling their role as the 'ideal soldier' in battle they were testifying to their loyalty to the army and the emperor. Outside combats they cared little about army ideals. In my opinion, these guardsmen also stuck to the concept of work in order to be categorised useful for the army, because in Finland 'useless' people, such as the wandering Roma, were categorised outside the 'normal' structure.

Accordingly, before the Guard's first battle the men holding such a view pondered neither the glory nor the shame that might be awaiting them. For them a 'military career' was merely a job offered by the army and, ultimately, by the emperor. A soldier was above all a trustworthy and loyal labourer for whom it was shameful to break off an unfinished job. By focusing on the soldier's duty as work, the men, particularly the rankers, closed their eyes, so to speak, from the causes and effects of their military actions and acknowledged their 'employer's' official line about the war being a legitimate defence of Christian 'brethren'. Of course, it is also possible that they wrote thus due to censorship. However, I consider it more likely that the 'official line' was for them the natural context of speaking about their reason for fighting, because it was rooted in their pre-war everyday language. They probably neither knew nor cared about other ways of speaking, nor paid particular attention to the way they presented a matter that for them (and their audience, too) was self-evident. Thus, this pragmatic way of

recollecting indicates some degree of submission to structural authority as an indispensable means of being able to bargain with it.

The *wavering* aspect of military identity was aligned with an insecure social position. It was a dialectic process that faithfully repeated, and thus reproduced, most aspects of military traditions of the army and related institutions, but at the same time showed readiness to level critique against public memory of the military structure and to fabricate new dimensions around accepted traditions. It seems to me that this kind of remembering was particularly typical of men of the middle classes who were looking for new alternatives both inside and outside contemporary society. However, this aspect is much less common and much more heterogeneous in my sources than are the other two. The men who expressed it could condemn or challenge army ideals in favour of new ones (and were thus groping for a new meaning to the military slaughter and a 'revised' world view, identity and social relations). Yet, they did not push their critique to its utmost limits but let their voice die away short of becoming too noisy. Alternatively, they expanded some elements of the existing ideals by their literary imagination and established a 'narrated identity' by detaching the combatant from his peacetime and wartime realities and transforming him into an adventurer such as is suggested by novels.

Emphasis on ideals meant avoiding reflection on the fact that men (or human beings in general) make war (because, in that perspective, soldiers are reduced to tools in the 'hand' of God, war or the army institution, or fate), whereas emphasis on work at least implied that someone blood and flesh is fighting. The former view thus obscured the causes of war and made it an 'honourable' game, whereas the latter easily watered down the effort of inquiring into these causes by confirming that it is not the worker's duty to ask such questions. When required, the wavering view could adopt either position without fully aligning oneself with one or the other.

#### **14.2. The Balkans in the Finnish wartime recollections**

How, then, did army life and encounters with the foreign or other in the wartime Balkans appear to the Finnish guardsmen? The answer is linked with the above-mentioned aspects of military identity and their ways of reproducing, or reconstructing, relations to the other. Those for whom war was above all a job kept to details directly affecting themselves and did not even attempt to paint a general picture of war or the Balkans; the perspective of the others, in contrast, was more or less totalising. Nevertheless, the proletarianising view could end up by either surrendering to, or bargaining with, the army institution and post-war society. Equally, the idealising view could conclude by inventing benefits of war for peacetime society or by pointing out the harm it causes the individual. That is, they all were flexible in 'negotiating' their relation to the army and post-war society by means of their experiences of the wartime process. The focus of their actions was not the Balkans *per se* but the army 'here' and the structure back home, and thus they created strategies that were needed not only in war but in peace, too, to make their actions socially acceptable or even preferable. Accordingly, what they saw was less a real place we call the Balkans than a mental act, a way of categorising things and events. This categorising can, again, be divided into three views: seeing what one expects to see, not seeing what is categorised outside work and doubting 'our' images, or imaging, of the Balkans.

As regards to *seeing what one expects to see*, which was typical of all views but most clearly expressed in the idealising view, there were two main ways of perceiving Bulgaria and its people: as an idealised (that is, virtuous) folk culture, which was described in ethnographic terms; and as contemporary poor devils who the Finns had to rescue from harmful Turkish rule because the guardsmen themselves were unable to do so. The first was in accordance with some guardsmen's nationalistic ideals, for had not the Finns, too, a splendid past and a 'virtuous' thriving peasant culture? Although the authors did not say so, the reader might suspect that, in their opinion, Russia had played

the same role for Finland as Turkey had for Bulgaria. For it seems that the authors did not actually despise the Bulgarians as such but rather the 'degrading' and 'foreign' Turkish influence on them, which by definition was negative. The Turkish presence resulted in disorder, whereas nature, assisted by the Russians, was the source of the correct state of affairs, or order, in both the natural and the social life of Bulgaria. Briefly, these guardsmen held strong views, constructed along the lines of the war propaganda or army preferences, or, to put it differently, their experiences merely 'verified' what they expected to see.

Correspondingly, they juxtaposed idyllic Bulgarian landscapes with 'oriental' towns and cities that, despite some splendid landmarks, were the antithesis of meritorious highland Bulgaria. They were not only ugly and dirty but also dens of iniquity and tedium, even if their location was, in the men's opinion, of great natural beauty. This contempt for the 'squalid' Orient served as a communicative link to the Russian structure, while 'virtuous' highlanders (the Bulgarian 'brethren' of Russia) allowed the authors to reflect, consciously or unconsciously, on the nature and future of the Finnish common people (that is, nationalistic ideas) without alerting censorship too much or jeopardising their structural position.

The second way - seeing the Bulgarians as 'poor devils' - was given expression in contacts that had something to do with forcing foodstuffs out of local people. The guardsmen took the 'right' to seizure so much for granted that they could only wonder why the Bulgarians were unwilling to help their 'liberators'. The view had little to do with the idealising way of speaking about perennial or timeless Bulgarian 'virtues' or 'national character' but saw the people through the lenses of the current war propaganda, which presented them as 'simple folk' gratefully welcoming their liberators. Seeing what horrors war could inflict on innocent civilians might upset the authors, but it had no deeper effect, perhaps because concern for civilians would have hampered a soldier from executing his mission. This image, though idealised and one-sided, was militarily more practical than a romantic ethnography and more closely tied to the contemporary army structure. However, this cultural evolutionary image of the Bulgarians also suggested that they lacked morality and initiative, and had to be treated with force if one wanted to get anything out of them. Both views together legitimised, in the authors' recollections, the Russian attack upon the Turks, who were accused of ravaging the Bulgarians, and justified the official Russian belief that, despite all, the Bulgarians would be able to establish a splendid national state. The Bulgarian praise of the Russian army, which the authors occasionally mentioned, further reinforced their belief in the structural grounds for war: 'we' did what the 'people' wanted.

After the armistice, the view 'seeing what one expected to see' stated that the localities the Finns were now travelling in belonged to the cradle of the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations, the implication obviously being that after the Romans the Balkans had been shrouded in Turkish darkness, which the Finns, and the Russian army in general, had now dispelled. Accordingly, seeing big towns such as Sofia and Edirne, the authors representing that view complained of their 'inevitable' oriental filthiness. Only some buildings, for instance, the mosque of Sultan Selim II in Edirne, were in their opinion worth praising.

From this perspective, Balkan religions did not look much better, either. The men talked disparagingly of the low standard of Bulgarian Orthodox priests, and the clergy's dogmatic views were for them nonsense. In some cases this 'educated' intolerance of Orthodoxy may partly be a sign of the authors' anti-Russian sentiments, because especially at Christmas, which is the most important feast for Protestant Finns, Lutheran Christianity was covertly juxtaposed with Russia. Christmas was linked with peacetime Finland and all good things associated with it and, though the evidence is meagre, it was

understood more as a part of the national, or Finnish, way of life than as a particularly religious ritual. Briefly, that kind of description was a way of symbolically creating a sense of Finnish (national or military) unity and 'civilisation' in the middle of, and in opposition to, the Balkans.

From this rational and nationalistic viewpoint, Islam was a lot of mumbo-jumbo that threatened to make a mess of the civilised European order. For example, the authors tried to show that the Turks, and by implication Muslims, lacked morality and could never be trusted because they always betrayed and destroyed those who sought their assistance. They thought that Muslims, whom they equated with Turks, were 'born warriors', 'impractical dreamers', religious 'fanatics' and lovers of gold who refused to give up their obsolete traditions. That one person could hardly be all this did not bother them, because they wanted to 'prove' that the Turks, or Muslims, were an uncivilised, non-rational and evil people who deserved nothing better than to be conquered by the representatives of civilisation. Here the authors' recollections again fit Russian notions, but their emphasis on the Turkish otherness, not mere foreignness, also suggests that Finnish separation from the other (and hence intensified creation of 'us' or a sense of nationalism) was in process. Thus, the Turks could equally well serve as a point of reference for Finns dissociating themselves from what was not considered a genuine component of their culture, that is, Russians.

In general, however, Islam was of no great interest. I find this a bit curious, because the idealising view also emphasised the orderly functioning of the army, and the authors certainly understood the importance of the enemy-image for the men's willingness to fight. Possibly the authors were too rational, or 'enlightened', to truly appreciate the power of 'irrational' or religious symbols as a unifying factor.

*Not seeing what is categorised outside work* was most typical of men who emphasised the notion of war as a job. Except for occasional notes on obtaining food by force, the proletarianising view had practically nothing to say about the Bulgarians. Partly this was due to the limited contacts with them and, as in the case of occasional visitors in general, the fact that no deeper social bonds were established; but partly it was because subscribing to this view simply located Bulgarians outside the guardsmen's mandate: their work was within the army and on the battlefield, not in relations to civilians. In other words, it was reasoned that the soldier's duty was to fulfil military obligations. To do this adequately the authors therefore consciously or unconsciously closed their eyes to everything else, categorised it outside. This was probably easy, because merely getting through army routines took the lion's share of the time of, in particular, the privates and NCOs. What little they said of Bulgarians emphasised the Finns' ability to survive among real Bulgarians, and did not ascribe to them any idealised or demonised 'virtues'. If the authors made a point here, it was that a soldier's work was, as the Russian propaganda in fact stated, to defend the helpless Bulgarians - even if their 'assistance' harmed the local people.

Before the armistice, these men barely mentioned the 'beauty' or 'ugliness' of the surroundings they were working in. Likewise, after the armistice almost the only occasions when they commented on space were in two places, Çorlu and Silivri, both of which they claimed to be filthy and in disorder. There probably was some reason for their singling out Çorlu, the place where the Guard spent more than a week in mid-February. It is possible that the village was particularly unclean, which would not be a wonder in wartime conditions, but it is also possible that the authors expressing the proletarianising view were sick and tired of the war and, frustrated in their expectations of quick repatriation, vented their feelings by exaggerating the squalor of the place where they had to stay longer than usual. None of this indicates any great strategy in bargaining with structure but, rather, separate actions dictated by circumstances. This, however, is a sort of 'common sense' strategy for dealing with

structure and expectations, and the alternative all guardsmen occasionally resorted to, irrespective of what aspect of military identity they in general emphasised.

From the perspective 'not seeing what was categorised outside work' Orthodoxy, and Christianity in general, was of no interest because the army did not emphasise it. Islam was hardly more interesting. Rather like tourists, the men noted the existence of mosques or, in their parlance, churches, and added some inaccurate remarks about Muslim ritual prayer. They seemed to neither object to nor admire Islam. It was simply a thing that happened to be in the same place as they were when performing their army routines.

Occasionally this view could also come close to a restatement of war propaganda, thus making some concessions to the military authority. For example, it repeated the claim that Turks were inhuman because they did not inter their dead (in a Christian way). Briefly, then, from this perspective, religion was merely a subtext in recollecting the war.

*Doubting 'our' images of, or imagining, the Balkans* occurs in memoirs that ascribed to what I have called the wavering aspect of military identity. These authors shared the then dominant European notion of 'cunning and barbarian' Bulgarians. Yet, at an ideal level, they also showed willingness to see things from the Bulgarian perspective, that is, to understand the Bulgarians' present behaviour in terms of their recent history. They, too, counterbalanced the 'degrading' Turkish influence on them by emphasising the genuine and flourishing Bulgarian folk culture.

In practical relations, however, they showed less understanding. When looking for provisions they were as ready to use force and as deaf to Bulgarian protests as were the guardsmen in general. Thus when their survival was at stake they sacrificed the ideal Bulgarian to the real Finnish soldier. Or, more generally, wartime practice was incompatible with pre-war ideals, which therefore started to crumble. When they clashed, the ideals (the image of friendly and honest Bulgarian highlanders) were replaced by their opposite (unpredictable and deceitful villagers). Thus, when describing the Bulgarians, they did not discriminate between different kinds of ideas. On the one hand, the authors accused them of being greedy and treacherous, because they were unwilling to provide the Finns with food. On the other hand, they warmly praised the friendliness of the liberated Bulgarians and pitied the dislocated civilians, both Turks and Bulgarians. Briefly, first-hand experiences and imperial propaganda made no big difference to them; neither did they take a stand. Their strategy was to pay lip-service to the military.

In the idealising manner, these authors also separated the beauty of highland Bulgaria from the reality of warfare. However, they did not juxtapose rural landscape and urban settlements but closed their eyes to the present by seeing in the latter features of an ancient civilisation rather than proofs of utter contemporary decay. Of several places they had nothing original to say, merely repeating clichés used by my other sources: cities looked 'oriental' or even repulsive, although their natural setting was very agreeable. Obviously, if some events or spaces did not suit their literary purposes they considered it best to ignore them or to adapt them to the appropriate public memory. It is this flexibility that, though typical of other recollections as well, is particularly characteristic of them.

They also had nothing to say about Orthodoxy. Of Islam they made no negative statements, although they could detect a tinge of eroticism in it, for example, by suggesting that Turkish soldiers were ready to 'sacrifice their lives on the battlefield' because of the virgins promised them in paradise. Thus Islam, or rather west European prejudices about it, offered them some material for fabricating stories.



### 14.3. Wartime experiences, identity, structural authority and Finnish nationalism

Whether the army ideals were treated in an idealising or proletarianising manner, the differences between a guardsman's identity and social position in the peacetime structure and the wartime army were not very great. In fact, one might ask whether the men really had distanced themselves from their peacetime identity and, hence, whether one can speak at all of their creation of, and separation from, military identity or reintegration with post-war society. The idealising and proletarianising aspects differed, rather, in their perception of what was the meaning and importance of military (and social) identity. Idealisation emphasised official, not infrequently governmental, institutions as a means of bargaining for their members' positions and benefits inside the same institutions. Proletarianisation laid more stress on local social relations among equals, on the often informal social networks and on the ability to establish new relations for the benefit of a local society (in wartime, often a company) or one's social status there.

In my small sample, wavering from military ideals did not result in real separation from them (that is, did not end with their radical critique and the creation of a considerably different new identity) but usually in quiet resignation to, or disregard of, the army or structure in general. It would seem that the structural weight of military ideals was too heavy to be handled (that is, the army's tolerance of deviance was low) and thus tended not to be mentioned or remembered. In addition, the usually invisible and taken-for-granted subtext of all my sources, the bellicose aspect of Finnish society (I mean the part that memories of the Finnish war, 1808-9, and stories about the Finns in the Thirty Years' War played in the making of Finnish national consciousness) made it difficult for any guardsmen to criticise the 'consecration' of 'manly' fighting. However, in contrast to idealisation and proletarianisation, the wavering view did not unquestioningly affirm cultural categorisations: for even silence and dismissal may be a protest against, if not yet fully-fledged critique of, prevailing notions.

What, then, was it that united the guardsmen and made them a military collective? Regardless of social status, they all shared two beliefs that were also typical of contemporary public opinion and military traditions: one should behave in a 'manly way' in battle and show unwavering loyalty to the emperor. In the Finnish context of the late 1800s manly behaviour was linked with the awakening nationalism (that is, the examples of and paradigms for courage that the guardsmen, with the exception of Alfthan and Schulman, who served with all-Russian units, used were Finnish) and the loyalty implying submission to the structural authority (in other words, the emperor, who was believed to be sympathetic towards Finnish aspirations). The men's bravery was presented either by stressing the excellent functioning of the whole army (this was more or less the point of officers and NCOs, whether professionals or volunteers) or the own company (all privates). Loyalty was expressed by grateful notes on imperial awards and reviews. It seems clear that had they written otherwise their work would not have been published. However, equally clearly it would seem that the notions that soldiers conducted themselves in a manly way and were loyal to the emperor were an essential structure in contemporary Finnish everyday consciousness and that the Finnish public expected the guardsmen to write so. Nevertheless, by emphasising that they were *Finnish* guardsmen and that it was the *Finnish* Guard that was loyal and behaved in a manly way, they also made a military-coloured nationalistic point.

The other thing that practically all the guardsmen shared was acceptance of the reasons for the war as formulated in the pre-war Finnish press and by Russian propaganda, namely, that is, that they were defending - often unspecified - military honour, liberating the Bulgarians and 'civilising' the Balkans. The men also took for granted much of the propaganda's and media's definition of bashibazouks as the savage other. But whereas bravery and loyalty were unmistakably linked with and created and upheld by military and political institutions, images and clichés created by newspaper

articles and war propaganda were a means of interpreting the men's relations to these institutions, that is, to express the courage favoured, or the support expected, by these institutions. Therefore, the official claim that the war was also between the 'true', or Christian, and 'false', or Islamic, religion was for the most part disregarded (Jernvall is the only notable exception), because it was neither religious grounds for the war that were underlined by the army nor fighting for religion but for the emperor and fatherland, that is, loyalty, that was singled out as a brave act in the army practice. Thus, although several guardsmen at first gave the impression that they were going to defend true Christianity, just as their forbears had done in the Thirty Years' War, they soon quietly abandoned the idea.

As to their relations to the foreign or other in the Balkans - the Bulgarians, the Turks and Islam, the guardsmen serving in the Finnish Guard lacked the guidance of relevant public memory. My initial hypothesis that public opinion of the Roma or Jews directed their interpretations also seems to beg a corrective. It was not so much Finnish public memory's preconceived image of the other as the expected 'rational' behaviour on the part of the other that prescribed the guardsmen's notions of the Turks and Bulgarians; the more the men were disappointed in their expectations the more negative were their views. I therefore conclude that, for want of a common public memory attached to a given institution, each guardsman saw the other in the Balkans by indiscriminately piecing together ideas and prejudices familiar to him; that is, events were not interpreted in any systematic way but each case was tackled individually. A common denominator in interpretation, however, as in the case of the Roma and Jews, too, was a sense of (cultural or national) superiority.

The same may be said of the men's attitudes towards Bulgarians. Only Alfthan and Schulman noticeably despised them, whereas Wahlberg, Palander and, to a lesser extent, Lindfors even attempted an ethnographic description of rural Bulgarians. The others paid attention to the Bulgarians only on occasions related to food or liberation of a village from Turkish hands, that is, in relations in which 'our' survival or bravery was important. Even Jernvall, who, if we leave out Alfthan and Schulman, was the most anti-Semitic of the guardsmen (and hence potentially the most hostile towards the foreign or other) did not show contempt for the Bulgarians, albeit he, like most guardsmen, derided them as cowards not unlike Turks. As I see it, the Finnish 'benevolence' towards the Bulgarians was due to their identification with victims of the Turks, while the guardsmen's 'patronising' attitude originated from a combination of Finnish nationalism and Russian propaganda, both of which fuelled the notion of 'our' superiority to the other; for had not the Bulgarians been unable to liberate themselves without Finnish (and Russian) help?

Hence, what united the Finnish guardsmen (not only those of the Finnish Guard but also those serving in other units) focused on shared, and usually taken-for-granted, notions of fighting, command and imperial authority. When recollecting events directly related to these items all guardsmen categorised them in much the same way, that is, shared a cultural logic. Unanimity in these unified them as a military group. However, the bulk of the men's recollections dealt with matters other than battles and orders or the emperor. Thus, what separated them, and prevented them from really encountering each other as human beings or even as soldiers, were above all recollections of routines, that is, everyday life.

In the case of both routines and the soldiers' mutual relations, the common denominator was position in the army structure or, to simplify the matter, the fact that the officers had power and their subordinates had not. So much of what the guardsmen wrote of routines and relations between soldiers of different ranks indicates a struggle over the degree of autonomy in behaviour and over power or submission to power inside the army. This, in turn, suggests that outside battle the guardsmen were far from being a cohesive group. Their disagreement, however, was counterbalanced by the

above-mentioned shared cultural logic and the unifying pressure of the army institution; with the partial exception of Palander, none of the guardsmen indicated a wish to modify existing military values but 'only' to secure their position inside the army structure. This also seems to be the 'simple' reason why the Finns were willing to fight for a Russian cause against the Turks, who were in no way their personal enemies; the guardsmen had internalised a 'manly' and authoritarian structure that they considered the normal way of life. Doing what structure expected of them or demanded of them were both equally normal. In other words, if war is accepted as a way of defending 'our' society and values and if obedience to authority (a superior's control over subject) and work for the common interest are taken for granted, quite ordinary men are willing to wage war. There is no need to incite them by demonising the enemy or emphasising his otherness, for, as we have seen here, it did not matter whether the guardsmen considered the Turks civilised or savages, or whether or not they esteemed the Bulgarians, they were all fighting against the former to liberate the latter. Thus, what mattered was not the nature of the enemy or the reason for war but the everyday context in which the guardsmen were living when departing for the front, that is, the cultural values and the nature of public memory attached to the institutions that shaped the men's social positions and relations. In this respect they were no different from succeeding generations of soldiers, the overwhelming majority of whom behaved in the same way. In fact, they had no other choice if they wanted to maintain their integrity as soldiers. For irrespective of whether civilians support or criticise the army, the people who make up the army have to stick together, at least on group level. If they do not, then the army exists only in some very superficial, structural or administrative sense.

To sum up, then, my study suggests that loyalty to institutional authority (here: the Russian army and the emperor) is a key to understanding why the Finns so willingly and uncritically went to war and accepted it as 'our' war, despite all the hardships they had to undergo. In their society there was little to challenge that loyalty but much to support it, even at a level that was so self-evident for the men that it would never even occur to them to think about it; for example, the popular notion that the emperor personally was the prop and benefactor of Finnish society, the contemporary 'manly' view of war as an 'honourable' action, and the social advantages gained in the service of the emperor. An extra impetus was given by the emerging Finnish nationalism, a 'banal' aspect of which was Finnish heroism (a set of customs and images and figures of speech rooted in their everyday life) that could be understood both in military terms and as a form of cultural superiority. Thus, in a particular nationalistic context, the emperor was for the guardsmen a uniting factor both in society and in the army; therefore the men did not need to create a new military identity but to 'dramatise' military features existing in their peacetime society. To perform this, volunteers could develop themes suggested by the nascent Finnish nationalism that emphasised the heroism of their forbears, while the army professionals were able to make use of the military tradition's paradigmatic stories of brave soldiers. In principle, these ideals more or less coalesced and allowed the creation of a military identity loyal to the emperor. Only when Finnish nationalism turned from cultural superiority (which emphasised the idiosyncrasies of the Finns and their separateness from Swedes, their former masters) into politics (claiming that the Finns were not only a nation among other imperial Russian nations but a people entitled to a state of their own), did it also challenge the authority of both the emperor and the Russian army; in place of the former it demanded the Finnish government, and the latter, the Finnish national army.

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### *Abbreviations*

LSS = Lukemisia Suomen sotamiehille (Readings for the Finnish Soldier)

SKS = Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura (The Finnish Folklore Society)

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PK 467 Anteckningar från fälttåget åren 1877-1878. (Notes from the campaign of 1877-8.)

PK 1310/1 Väapeli [S.A.] Wallinin muistelmia Turkin Sodasta Suomen Kaartista. (Sergeant Major Wallin's recollections of the Russo-Turkish war.)

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WMEP (n.d., n.p.): S.A. Wallin, Muistoja elämäni polulta (Memories from my life's path).

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<sup>606</sup> The Scandinavian and/or German letters ü, ä and ö are treated as u, a and o.

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