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Patriotism and Bellicism in German and Dutch Epics of the Enlightenment

Abstract: The German and Dutch historiography of eighteenth-century patriotism defines two different forms of patriotism. It is either presented as an enlightened and virtuous-eudemonic form of ‘love for the fatherland’ based on reason, or as an ideology that foreshadows nineteenth-century emphatic forms of aggressive nationalism. A critical reading of the mid-eighteenth-century epics *Cyrus* by Christoph Martin Wieland and *De Gevallen van Friso* by Willem van Haren shows that the discourses are strongly intertwined. Heroism in these epics is based on a personal experience of war acts and no longer on distanced and ‘theatrical’ experiences of the military spectacle. It confronts us with aggressive war fantasies related to early bellicism, as well as with pacifist statements. In *Cyrus*, for instance, the sentimental warrior inspires his fellow-soldiers to offer their blood in the struggle against the enemy, but he has doubts about the war and shows compassion with the enemy. Explorations of the effects of individual emotions on the battlefield, prepared both further idealisations of patriotic war acts and a more critical literary approach to war and fatherland.

Keywords: Patriotism, Bellicism, Dutch Epics, German Epics, Chr. M. Wieland

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German historiography of ‘patriotism’ has been dominated for decades by the idea that a division ought to be made in the eighteenth century between two main forms of patriotism: a cosmopolitan, enlightened and virtuous-eudemonic form of ‘love for the fatherland’ based on reason, and an ideology dispersed by more emphatic means of communication, which should be characterised as conservative and historicizing, focusing on tradition instead of progression.¹ Rudolf Vierhaus claimed that enlightened moral-educational interpretations of the fatherland did not disappear but were overlaid in the nineteenth-century by

¹ See Peter Fuchs, ‘Vaterland, Patriotismus und Moral. Zur Semantik gesellschaftlicher Einheit’, *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 20 (1991) 2, 89–103, here: 101–102.

German nationalism, which thus shielded the original principles of enlightened patriotism.² This was challenged in the mid nineties by a group of German literary scholars around Hans Peter Herrmann. They convincingly argued that in many cases literary texts from the seventeenth and early eighteenth century onwards already were advancing a form of patriotic thinking which cannot be called progressive, harmless or cosmopolitan at all.³

Around 1750, especially literary texts which explored national myths – like the epic poetry and theatre plays that describe the masculine heroism of Hermann Arminius and the courageous Germans in their struggle against the Roman Empire – have created the xenophobe national discourse in literature which traditionally was related to texts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. One of Herrmann's pupils, Hans-Martin Blitz, shows in his dissertation that this turn in German literature towards a form of aggressive nationalism should be located at a much earlier point in time than during the Seven Years Wars and the rise of Prussian militarism.⁴ Blitz gives examples of seventeenth century literary texts, like the work of Moscherosch and von Lohenstein, in which the ideal of a combative German nation was already becoming visible. Nevertheless, he also sticks to the opinion that two more or less separated patriotic discourses existed side by side in eighteenth-century German literature. He applies a different emphasis, however, admitting that enlightened and more progressive forms patriotism occurred in cities like Hamburg, but at the same time he reduces this patriotism to a minor, isolated local phenomenon in comparison to the massive production of eighteenth-century literary texts supposedly written to disseminate a power-oriented, militant and xenophobe interpretation of the love for the fatherland.⁵

Although I broadly agree with the main conclusions of Blitz and Herrmann, I think they are mistaken to separate progressive interpretations of the fatherland in literary texts published in urban centres of the early Enlightenment like Hamburg from other patriotic discourses in German literature, like for instance in Prussian war poetry. The problematic character of such an artificial distinction

2 Rudolf Vierhaus, "Patriotismus" – Begriff und Realität einer moralisch-politischen Haltung', in: Rudolf Vierhaus, *Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert. Politische Verfassung, soziales Gefüge, geistige Bewegungen*, Göttingen 1987, 96–109.

3 See in particular: Hans Peter Herrmann, Hans-Martin Blitz, Susanna Moßmann, *Machtphantasie Deutschland. Nationalismus, Männlichkeit und Fremdenhaß im Vaterlandsdiskurs deutscher Schriftsteller des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt a. M. 1996.

4 Hans-Martin Blitz, *Aus Liebe zum Vaterland. Die deutsche Nation im 18. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg 2000, 58–89.

5 Blitz (note 4), 93–97.

becomes clear when Blitz, in the case of Wieland's *Hermann*-fragment, has to tone down his earlier conclusions, admitting that in some cases enlightened visions on heroism could indeed very well intertwine with aggressive form of early nationalism.⁶ But even in the case of the bloodthirsty Prussian war epics, written during the Seven Years War, Blitz and others cannot really deny the ambiguous character of these texts: here, aggressive and offensive forms of patriotism go hand in hand with enlightened objections focused on the political and social emancipation of citizens.⁷

Dutch literary scholarship seems to have the same problem with interpreting the seemingly irreconcilable differences between the various patriotic discourses in literature of the mid-eighteenth-century. The Dutch tradition of enlightened patriotism, which was too dominant to put aside as just an isolated local phenomenon, coexisted with the long tradition of aggressive patriot rhetoric in Dutch literature, which was strongly related to the Dutch liberation myth of the struggle against Habsburg Spain during the Eighty Years' War. Faced with the problem of reconciling these different narratives about the fatherland, Dutch scholars constructed, just like their German colleagues, artificial delimitations between different forms of eighteenth century patriotism.⁸ This is understandable, since the abstract notions of the fatherland as a civic-eudemonic set of virtues, as we can find them for instance in the Dutch spectatorial magazines, seems to be rather different indeed from the understanding of patriotic behaviour in literary texts that incite citizens to defend their fatherland against the enemy during military operations.⁹

In the following I will argue that the difficulty of reconciling these seemingly incompatible eighteenth-century patriotic discourses has created a blind spot for literary texts which combine 'progressive' notions of patriotism with an understanding of the fatherland as the territorial soil for which the manly warriors should offer their blood in a struggle against its enemies. I intend to uncover this

⁶ Blitz (note 4), 135–141.

⁷ Blitz (note 4), 268–271 and Hans Peter Herrmann, 'Individuum und Staatsmacht: Preußisch-deutscher Nationalismus in Texten zum Siebenjährigen Krieg', in: Herrmann/Blitz/Moßmann (note 3), 66–79, here: 78–79.

⁸ N.C.F. van Sas, 'Vaderlandsliefde, nationalisme en vaderlands gevoel in Nederland, 1770–1813, *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 102 (1989), 471–495.

⁹ Surprisingly enough, these problems in analysing early patriotism in Dutch literature have been noticed by scholars only parenthetically. See for instance: Marijke Meijer Drees, 'Vechten voor het vaderland in de literatuur, 1650–1750', in: N.C.F. van Sas (ed.), *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, Amsterdam 1999, 109–142, here 111. Or the conclusions in: Marijke Meijer Drees, 'Patriottisme in de Nederlandse literatuur (ca. 1650–ca. 1750)', *De nieuwe taalids* 88 (1995) 3, 247–260, here 260.

blind spot and to bridge the gap between so-called progressive, hence emancipating, and conservative, hence oppressing, understandings of the love for the fatherland, by examining the revival of profane epic poetry in the middle of the eighteenth century. In doing so, I hope to call attention to the close relationship of bellicist thinking, civil emancipation and epic heroism in both German and Dutch literature. I will focus in particular on two works by authors who were inspired by contemporary enlightened political and moral concepts, but who also defended the ideal of a combative and warlike nation with a strong army: *De gevallen van Friso* (Amsterdam 1741/1758), written by the Frisian aristocrat Willem van Haren, and the epic fragment *Cyrus*, written by the young Christoph Martin Wieland and published 1759 in Zürich.

1 The Citizen and the Soldier

A first look at the fatherland discourse in German and Dutch moral weeklies seems to confirm the conclusions of scholars like Blitz that the notion of serving the fatherland here refers foremost to the private domain of the citizen and not to any aggressive conceptions of the fatherland. A prominent figure in the moral weeklies is the family father who, by teaching his children how to serve the fatherland as good citizens, not only furthers his own future, but also that of the urban civic community. It is a circular eudemonic understanding of the fatherland, which determines patriotism especially as a set of virtues which should be propagated and taught in the interest of the commonwealth.¹⁰ A closer look at these magazines reveals that this holistic fatherland concept can also contain professional advice regarding military defence. Describing the origins of patriotism, the Hamburg magazine *Der Patriot* explains the character of the good patriot by pointing to his duties as a house father as well as to his duties as a soldier: ‘Ein jeder Hauß-Vater befördert des Vater-Landes Bestes durch gute Kinder-Zucht: [...] der Soldat durch die Waffen [...]’.¹¹ Though education is the most important instrument of the citizen to serve the fatherland in the context of the family, the citizen has to imagine that defending the commonwealth could

¹⁰ Jürgen Rathje, ‘Geschichte, Wesen und Öffentlichkeitswirkung der Patriotischen Gesellschaft von 1724 in Hamburg’, in: Rudolf Vierhaus (ed.), *Deutsche patriotische und gemeinnützige Gesellschaften*, München 1980, 51–69, here 57–58 and Fuchs (note 1), 89–90.

¹¹ *Der Patriot* 49 (7-12-1724), in: *Der Patriot*, ed. Wolfgang Martens, Berlin 1969–1970, I, 414–420, here 415.

also imply that, serving the fatherland as a soldier, he has to use arms instead of pedagogical qualities.

The connection between private and public understandings of a patriotic moral, which interprets the defence of the fatherland as a matter of concern to all citizens, regardless of their profession, is typical for the republican background of Hamburg as an autonomous 'free' Imperial City (*Reichsstadt*). On the one hand, the awareness of civic responsibility in relation to urban self-defence made *Der Patriot* promote military virtues like bravery, discipline and order, but on the other hand, the magazine caricatures the soldier who as a family father tyrannizes his family with his rough 'military virtues'.¹² Although the holistic fatherland concept enabled the moral weeklies to connect the world of the citizen with the world of the soldier in theory, it remained in the end an artificial connection. As soon as military behaviour had to be described in detail, authors fell back on the usual soldierly caricatures. At first sight this may be remarkable, because in Hamburg, as in other European 'free cities', old forms of civic self-defence survived the process of military professionalization and the construction of professional armies. The ideal of patriotic self-defence however had little connection with real war experiences. After the Thirty Year's War, military acts were carried out by professional armies, often controlled by princely states. The urban militia of cities like Hamburg, Lübeck and Bremen did not disappear but were professionalised likewise, and civic engagement with these militias therefore was decreasing. Moreover, urban governments often opted for a smart neutrality policy, in order to avoid any military operations.¹³

In spite of the increasing distance between urban communities and military self-defence, citizens manifested a growing fascination with war journalism and the details of war acts during the first half of the eighteenth century. The battles of the War of the Spanish Succession were reported extensively in magazines, newspapers and poems.¹⁴ Public interest in the acts of war even encouraged authors to write commercial re-enactments of the most important battles, like three Amsterdam spectacle plays on the battles of Höchstädt (1704), Ramillies

¹² *Der Patriot* 58 (8-2-1725), in: *Der Patriot* (note 11), II, 41–51, here 43.

¹³ Thomas Schwark, *Lübecks Stadtmilitär im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte einer reichsstädtischen Berufsgruppe*, Lübeck 1990, 45–49. Joachim Ehlers, *Die Wehrverfassung der Stadt Hamburg im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Boppard am Rhein 1966, 84–128.

¹⁴ John Richardson, 'Modern Warfare in Early-Eighteenth-Century Poetry', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 45 (2005) 3, 557–577.

(1706), Oudenaerde (1708) and Rijssel/Lille (1708).¹⁵ Although the Dutch Republic was in danger of French occupation during this war, the plays concentrate solely on spectacle and the heroic glance of the most important war heroes, like Prince Eugene of Savoy, Duke John Churchill of Marlborough and Prince John William Friso of Orange, and hardly dwell on patriotic feelings related to the Dutch myth of self-liberation. After 1700, the militia of the powerful cities of Holland, the so-called *schutterijen*, were no longer put into action during military operations, just as in the German free imperial cities.¹⁶ The seventeenth-century Dutch patriotic discourse of self-defence, regarding and praising ‘every Citizen as a Soldier’,¹⁷ is absent from the spectacle plays and replaced by the personal heroism of some generals who defend the country as military professionals. The war spectacle on stage, illuminated with *vertooningen* (tableaux vivants), music and dances, was intended to impress the public visually and with sound effects, but seems to have had no intention to stimulate any personal identification with the heroic deeds of these brave warriors, who remain flat characters and only appear on stage during silent performances.

This detached form of public interest in military spectacle remained alive even during peace times. The public splendour of the big manoeuvre in the Saxon village Zeithain for instance, organised by August the Strong in 1730, inspired many authors to write literary glorifications of the strength of the different professional battalions participating.¹⁸ Remarkably enough, these authors were not in the first place interested in the literary sublimation of any national feelings. The musical theatre play *Das Campement* for instance, written by Johann Ulrich König during the Saxon *Lustlager* (with music by Telemann), is fixated solely on the theatrical aspects of the manoeuvre itself. During its performance in a provisional theatre in Zeithain, and later in the public theatres of Hamburg and Amsterdam, the play presented a cortège of different nationalities in the Saxon army. It paid much attention to special attributes and costumes,

15 Door Yver Bloeid de Kunst [motto of the author Enoch Krook], *De roemruchtige zegepraal van de veldslag bij Hoogstet*, Amsterdam 1704; *Het verlose Brabant en Vlaanderen, door de veldslag bij Rammellies*, Amsterdam 1706; *De nederlaag der Seine, door de veldslag bij Oudenaarde, 't bemachtigen van Rijssel, en verdere overwinningen*, Amsterdam 1709.

16 Paul Knevel, *Burgers in het geweer. De schutterijen in Holland, 1550–1700*, Hilversum 1994, 252–258.

17 Knevel (note 16) for instance quotes a poem from 1622 with the verse line ‘Als 't land gevaer lijd, is elck Burger een Soldaet’ (If the country is in danger, every Citizen is a Soldier) 259.

18 Survey of publications in: Hans Beschorner, ‘Beschreibungen und bildliche Darstellungen des Zeithainer Lagers von 1730’, *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 27 (1906), 103–151.

but not explicitly to any patriotic feelings related to the long Saxon military tradition.¹⁹ The play copies the situation of the manoeuvre itself, which took place in front of a big pavilion with huge balconies for the invited guests, enabling them to enjoy the military exercises like during a theatre performance.²⁰ Zeithain could be seen as an ultimate attempt of August as prince-elect and Polish king to arrogate the representative status of Saxony's military power and the long military tradition of the Saxon-Polish estates. König's unfinished panegyric epos *August im Lager*, written for the same occasion, also illustrates this royal military representational strategy, relating the heroism of the Saxon and Polish armed forces solely to the royal power and prestige of August the Strong and his dynastical ambitions.²¹

The States-General, the highest military authorities of the Dutch Republic, were inspired by manoeuvres like the one in Zeithain and decided to organise their own military exercises in the village of Oosterhout two years later.²² The Dutch Republic feared for military weakness of the Dutch army and the lack of military experience of its officers after nearly twenty years of peace since the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Therefore, the manoeuvre itself had a quite concrete goal: to test the military power and experience of the country. Yet, like Zeithain, the manoeuvre in Oosterhout also was a very public event. Tourists from the urban centres of Holland, like The Hague and Amsterdam, and even from other European countries, came to the province of Brabant to enjoy the military

19 Johann Ulrich König, *Das Neu-beglückte Sachsen Durch Die erfreuliche Geburt Eines Chursächsischen Prinzen, auf Veranstaltung Des Königl. Pohl. und Churfürstl. Sächsh. geheimen Secretairs Herrn Königs, als er eben in Hamburg anwesend war, In einem von ihm verfertigten PROLOGO vor seiner Opera Sancio*, Hamburg 1730. Dutch translation: Johan Jacob Mauricius, *Het Campement, tooneelspel verc. met zang, dans en vliegwerken*, Amsterdam 1742.

20 Hans Beschorner, 'Das Zeithainer Lager von 1730', *Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 28 (1907), 50–113, here 95. Image of pavillon in: *Das Königl. Polnische und Churfürstl. Sächsische Feld-Lager, Oder DIARIUM Und eigentliche Beschreibung alles desjenigen, Was in dem grossen CAMPEMENT [...] vorgegangen*, s.l. 1730.

21 Johann Ulrich König, *August im Lager, Helden=Gedicht. Erster Gesang, benannt: Die Einholung. Hr. Königlichen Majestät in Preussen allerunterthänigst gewiedmet*, Dresden 1731. The work was criticised strongly by contemporaries because of its superficial and one-dimensional character. Cf. the detailed remarks on this poem and its reception in: Dieter Martin, *Das deutsche Versepos im 18. Jahrhundert. Studien und kommentierte Gattungsbibliographie*, Berlin, New York 1993, 60–84.

22 W. H. van Seters, 'Het Campement bij Oosterhout Anno 1732', *Jaarboek van de Geschied- en Oudheidkundige Kring van Stad en Land van Breda 'DE ORANJEBOOM'* 22 (1969), 124–147; Olaf van Nimwegen, *De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden als grote mogendheid. Buitenlandse politiek en oorlogsvoering in de eerste helft van de achttiende eeuw en in het bijzonder tijdens de Oostenrijkse Successieoorlog (1740–1748)*, Amsterdam 2002, 64–65.

spectacle. This public interest was described ironically by the Dutch moral weekly *De Hollandsche Spectator*: 'I even know that some of the most famous and fashionable Master Tailors have been busy here in The Hague with adorning red and blue suits for the richest amongst the arriving Travellers with gold and silver and embroidering them in the most dashing and *military* way, thus enabling the young Lords to present themselves at the manoeuvres most properly, and even, on condition that their *air*, manners and well-lined purse would not give them away, to be taken for Officers.'²³

Since military costumes and attributes were part of the consumption culture of eighteenth-century Europe, this public fascination and identification with war and military culture was little related to patriotism or a desire for military heroism, but much more so to entertainment and leisure. The first military tourist attractions in Europe occurred, for instance, in the Swiss cities, which were visited during the grand tours because of their interesting military objects, giving evidence of the long Swiss military tradition.²⁴ The author of *De Hollandsche Spectator* criticises the superficial fascination with military culture apparent in the manoeuvre of Oosterhout as a result of the 'coffeehouse politics' of his time and the interference of uninformed parts of the public in national military debates.²⁵ The fact that the author stages an old officer to give his critical comments on the public discourse on war seems to be typical for the growing distance between 'war professionals' and citizens. Interference between these two worlds presents a problem, since the young coffeehouse-public that discusses military topics had not ever experienced a war in their lifetime. Influenced by the distorting public discourse on war, they would think too naively about military subjects, experiencing war as a game, a performative event, not as a concern of the fatherland and its patriotic citizens.

23 'Ik weet zelfs dat verscheide van de beroemste en modieuste Meester Kleermakers zo hier als in Den Haag, reeds bezig zyn, om voor de rykste van onze toekomstige Reizigers, rode en blauwe pakken, met goud en zilver belegt, en geborduurt op 't zwierigste, en op 't *militairste* toe te takelen, op dat aldus die jonge Heeren, met gevoeglykheid de krygsoeffeningen mogen bywoonen, en zelfs, indien ze maar door haar *air*, manieren en wel gespecte beurs niet verraden worden, voor Officiers worden aangezien.' *Hollandsche Spectator* 80 (1-8-1732), in: Justus van Effen, *De Hollandsche Spectator, 26 mei 1732 – 27 oktober 1732*, Pim van Oostrum (ed.), Leiden 1999, 165–170, here 168.

24 Martin Pestalozzi, *Das Schweizer Wehrwesen im Spiegel der ausländischen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Aarau 1989, 203–205.

25 *Hollandsche Spectator* 80 (note 23), 165–167.

2 The Arm of the Patriot (Wieland)

The manoeuvres of 1730 and 1732 could be seen in relation to another process of rethinking war and the function of the army during the early 18th century. The separation of the civil state from the warfare state in political and juridical thinking after 1700 caused war politics to become ever more dissociated from internal civic state affairs.²⁶ Centralised powers became responsible for external safety, which resulted in a state monopoly on military force, whereas local civic authorities maintained to be responsible for the inner safety of the state, but had little real military power. In the end, the absolutist state made war and the discourse on war into a monopoly of princes and monarchs. The function of military forces ceased to be seen as primarily safeguarding the people and the nation, and came to be regarded more and more as underpinning royal *puissance* and *réputation*.²⁷ It was this reputational function of having a strong standing army that was displayed during the public manoeuvres like the one in Zeithain. The manoeuvre was organised to impress European monarchs, like the Prussian King Frederic William I, who was one of August's most important guests. The event's representational character meant that publicity control was very important. Official reports and descriptions of the manoeuvre were produced by order of the court, while commercial publications without royal permission were prohibited.²⁸

Organised by August the Strong and the States-General respectively, the manoeuvres in Zeithain and Oosterhout exemplify the growing distance between civilians and standing armies, while also testifying to the increasing public fascination with war and armed power. The declining engagement of citizens in military actions, for instance as members of the urban militia, was balanced by a growing fascination for soldierly life. This may have had something to do with the professionalization of armies, which made soldiering much more 'exotic' than before. In the German countries it was Frederic the Great who made use of this fascination in his attempts to bridge the gap between his highly professionalised army and citizens as the (military) servants of his state. Like August, he saw the army as an important factor in royal self-representation, but he also knew that public support for his aggressive expansionist war politics was necessary to realize his military ambitions. Staging himself as 'Le premier Serviteur de

26 Jörn Leonhard, *Bellizismus und Nation. Kriegsdeutung und Nationsbestimmung in Europa und den Vereinigten Staaten 1750–1914*, München 2008, 74–77.

27 Leonhard (note 26), 181–207.

28 Beschorner (note 18), 108–109.

l'Etat'²⁹ and 'soldier-king' like his father,³⁰ Frederic activated an enlightened form of bellicism that turned war into an issue each Prussian had to feel himself attached to. Serving the state as a disciplined soldier should be the most important duty of all Prussians, including the king himself.

The idea that each citizen has a responsibility for the military defence of the fatherland was spread around the scattered Prussian countries by means of publicity, which found its rhetorical climax during the Seven Years War. Even beyond the territorial borders such as in faraway Zürich, the figure of Frederic the Great inspired authors to give support to the promotional campaign of his aggressive war politics. One of Frederic's admirers in the Swiss *Eidgenossenschaft* was the young Christoph Martin Wieland, who must have been inspired by Frederic's military and political heroism when writing his epic fragment *Cyrus* in 1759. Based on the third chapter of the third book of Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, the fragment describes the battle of the Persian hero against the Assyrian-Babylonian army near Arbela, ending with the fall of king Neriglissor in 556 BC.³¹ Although Wieland describes Cyrus' expedition as a war of liberation, the campaign actually was part of Persian expansionism. The relation with Frederic the Great's expansionist war politics of the Seven Years War seems to be quite obvious, but has been questioned by scholars who refute the idea of reading this epic text as a political pamphlet.³² Although we should not underestimate Wieland's panegyric intentions in writing this poem, it is important to note that he did not intend to write a poem for Frederick II or for other young princes solely, but for all 'Freunde der Tugend', as the author states explicitly in his foreword to *Cyrus*.³³ By addressing his readership in this egalitarian way, he turns royal war politics into an issue that concerns all readers: future princes, current princes, as well as their subjects.

Such equalisation of princes and citizens explains why 'inspiration' is one of the key words in this epic. The heroism of Cyrus is founded not in the first place

29 Friedrich II, 'Politisches Testament 1752', in: *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, Richard Dietrich (ed.), Köln, Wien 1986, 328–329.

30 Friedrich II (note 29), 408–409.

31 Cf. the afterword in the *Cyrus*-edition of Herbert Jaumann (ed.), *Der goldne Spiegel und andere politische Dichtungen*, München, Zürich 1979, 819–830, here 819.

32 Dieter Martin, *Das deutsche Versepos im 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, New York 1993, 199; W. Daniel Wilson, 'Wielands Bild von Friedrich II. und die ›Selbstzensur‹ des "Teutschen Merkur"', *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 29 (1985), 22–47, 25–26.

33 'Und ihr, höret mich, Freunde der unentheiligten Musen,/Und der Tugend, vor andern ihr künftigen Herrscher der Völker,/Deren jugendlich Herz die Gewalt der Wahrheit noch fühlet,/Hört mich und lernet von Cyrus die wahre Grösse der Helden!' Christoph Martin Wieland, *Cyrus*, Zürich 1759, 4.

on his own military heroic deeds, but on his ability to inspire his subjects to take up arms. The contrast between the warrior as the slavish subject of a tyrannical oppressor (Neriglissor) and the warrior as a free man who fights for his country voluntarily, is an essential aspect of the work: ‘Söhne der Freyheit, unwissend den Nacken slavisch zu beugen,/Aber gewohnt dem Gesetz, des Vaterlands heiliger Stimme,/Und mit schneller geflügelter Eile dem Winke des Feldherrn/Freudig zu folgen.’³⁴ Because these free subjects cannot be forced to fight, they need spirit to fight and it is Cyrus as a friend of the people (*Menschenfreund*) who is able to breathe that war spirit into his people: ‘Sie eilen/Jeder zu seiner Schaar und hauchen die Seele des Krieges/Unter die Männer; sie blitzt aus einem Auge zum andern,/Sympathetisch! Itzt dacht es sie schön fürs Vaterland sterben,/Schön, mit Staub und Blut und rühmlichen Wunden bedeckt/Hohe Trophäen von feindlicher Beute dem Sieges-Gott weyhen!/Also beseelt erwarten sie hitzig das Zeichen zum Aufbruch.’³⁵ Cyrus’ fighters are morally and politically free: with their fighting spirit they free themselves from egoism and other negative passions as well as from the tyranny of their oppressor.

In writing *Cyrus*, Wieland must have been inspired by the text he regarded as one of the epic masterpieces of his time: *Leonidas* (1739), by the English poet Richard Glover.³⁶ At first sight, Leonidas seems to be a classical epic hero who rises with ‘a godlike presence’³⁷ above the crowd, but in the first book already, when he takes the decision to die for his country, the protagonist turns out to be a man of feeling, who has to overcome his fears while making himself ready for his heroic deed: ‘Leonidas awake! Shall these withstand/The public safety? Lo! thy country calls./O sacred voice, I hear thee! At that sound/Returning virtue brightens in my heart;/Fear vanishes before her; Death receive/My unreluctant hand, and lead me on.’³⁸ Wieland was fascinated by this combination of sublime heroism on the one hand and the humane character of the epic hero on the other, as it showed the hero’s emotional strengths and weaknesses alike. The literary importance of this new kind of epic heroism thus introduced by Wieland in the German profane epic has been noticed by other scholars too,³⁹ but its relation to the epic’s quite aggressive bellicist message has been overlooked or

³⁴ Wieland (note 33), 5.

³⁵ Wieland (note 33), 50.

³⁶ Christoph Martin Wieland, ‘Theorie und Geschichte der Red-Kunst und Dicht-Kunst. Anno 1757’, in: Fritz Homeyer, Hugo Bieber (eds.), *Wielands Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin 1916, I–4, 303–420, 383–385.

³⁷ Richard Glover, *Leonidas. A Poem*, London 1763, 25 (line 117).

³⁸ Glover (note 37), 30–31 (line 228–233).

³⁹ Especially by Martin (note 32), 185–202.

even denied.⁴⁰ Essential for Cyrus as both a warrior and a ‘human hero’ (*menschlicher Held*) is his compassion with his soldiers and even with his enemies.⁴¹ His strongly felt empathy even induces some clear statements against the war in general, inspired by the famous words from Isaiah: ‘Stünde es an mir, so würden noch heute von Volke zu Volke/Alle Schwerdter zu friedsamem Sichel geschmiedet.’⁴² Still, immediately after uttering this pacifist message, Cyrus states that war will be necessary to free the people from their foreign oppressor and concludes that ‘Der Krieg ist kein Übel’.

As the case of *Cyrus* clearly illustrates, it is a misconception to think that thoughts about war during the Enlightenment always involved a distant, critical stance towards warfare and could only lead to war criticism.⁴³ The fascinating tension between warlike patriotism and pacifist humanism, propagating an even closer relationship of citizens with war, characterises the epic and seems to be typical for Wieland’s radical egalitarianism. Wieland’s hero is put on the same level as his servants, having doubts about the war and seemingly vacillating in his decision to fight. In the end, however, he is capable of making clear to his people even more emphatically than before why it is so important to take up arms. The decision to make war should be taken commonly and on common grounds by both the sovereign and his servants. Essential for Wieland’s conception of enlightened war politics is the free and autonomous position of the fighting subjects: they *choose* to fight. They are not slaves of an absolute king, but free citizens, who, inspired by their leader, are fighting for their country. Although the way Cyrus inspires his servants by teaching them why they should take up arms can be interpreted as ‘paternalistic,’⁴⁴ we should not trivialise the emancipating effects of this epic. They are grounded on the republican egalitarian ideals of the young Wieland, who encourages the reader to reconsider the discourse on war by praising war as a form of personal, moral as well as political liberation.

⁴⁰ Cf. the pacifist interpretation of the epic in: Wilson (note 32), 24–25.

⁴¹ Wieland (note 33), 26: ‘Wie könnt’ ich vergessen, Daß es auch Menschen sind, mir auch verbrüdete Menschen,/Wider welche mein dräuendes Schwerdt zum tödten gezückt ist.’ Here, Wieland falls back on ancient references to Cyrus’ humane character, especially in Xenophon’s *Cyropædia*: Xenophon, *Kyrupædie*, Rainer Nickel (ed.), Darmstadt 1992, 697 (comment 10).

⁴² Wieland (note 33), 10.

⁴³ Cf. for instance: Madeleine Dobie, ‘The Enlightenment at War’, *PMLA* 124 (2009) 5, 1949–1952.

⁴⁴ Blitz for instance for this reason puts aside the egalitarian aspects of Gleim’s panegyric ‘Grenadierslieder’ as ‘begrenzte emanzipatorische Tendenzen’: Blitz (note 4), 268 ff.

Having grown up in one of Germany's southern imperial free cities and living in Switzerland while writing this epic text, the young Wieland was educated in the principles of republicanism very early.⁴⁵ Wieland had connections in the circle around Johann Jakob Bodmer and thus had close relationships with the founders of the Helvetian Society in 1766, who aimed to reform the old structures of the Swiss *Eidgenossenschaft* into the principles of enlightened republicanism. An important aspect in their conception of the *Eidgenossenschaft* as a civic community of virtue (*Tugendgemeinschaft*) was its long military tradition. New pedagogical programmes were constructed, in which old military virtues played an important part, using ancient sources for military education like Xenophon's *Cyropædia*.⁴⁶ Wieland himself took part in these discussions, writing a response to the *Patriotische Träume* by Franz Urs von Balthasar, who suggested the founding of a new institution where young students could learn the profession of republican governor.⁴⁷ Balthasar refers to Cyrus as an exemplary model for the young Swiss patriots: he is one of the 'wahre Helden [die] ihr Vatterland durch herrliche Thaten und Siege in den höchsten Flor erhoben'.⁴⁸ Supporting Balthasar's proposal, Wieland stresses in his reaction that the republican constitution should be preferred above monarchy, because it is more closely bound up with civic virtues.⁴⁹ Wieland wrote his response to Balthasar's treatise in the same year that *Cyrus* was published. This is an important indication that his epic was strongly related to the Swiss debate on republicanism in general and the issue of the republican political education of the Swiss *Eidgenossenschaft's* future regents in particular.

In advocating the advantages of a republican constitution, the young Wieland was strongly influenced by the work of his close friend Johann Georg Zimmermann.⁵⁰ Falling back on the writings of Montesquieu and Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism* (1749), Zimmermann states in his treatise *Von dem Nationalstolze* (1758/1766) that patriotism can flourish better in a republic than in a monarchy. An important argument for this assumption is that, because

45 Irntraut Sahmland, *Christoph Martin Wieland und die deutsche Nation*, Tübingen 1990, 150–155.

46 Ulrich Im Hof, *Die Entstehung einer politischen Öffentlichkeit in der Schweiz. Struktur und Tätigkeit der Helvetischen Gesellschaft*, Stuttgart 1983, 32.

47 Harro Zimmermann, *Freiheit und Geschichte. F.G. Klopstock als historischer Dichter und Denker*, Heidelberg 1987, 102 ff.

48 Franz Urs von Balthasar, *Patriotische Träume eines Eydgnessen, von einem Mittel, die veraltete Eydgnesschaft wieder zu verjüngern*, Freystadt [i.e. Luzern] 1758, 5.

49 Christoph Martin Wieland, 'Gedanken über den patriotischen Trau von einem Mittel, die veraltete Eidgenossenschaft wieder zu verjüngern', in: Fritz Homeyer, Hugo Bieber (eds.), *Wielands Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin 1916, I–4, 206–218.

50 Sahmland (note 45), 150–155.

of their political freedom, the citizens of a republic are more strongly motivated to take up arms against the enemy, should this be called for: 'Folglich flößt die Freiheit dem Menschen einen gerechten Stolz ein, weil er alles seyn darf, was schön und groß ist. Dieser Stolz erhebt alle Kräfte des Menschen. Die Freyheit schwellt den Arm, der für sein Vaterland streitet, [...].'⁵¹ Wieland too champions this strong arm of the republican patriot by praising the 'manly' virtues of Cyrus and his combatants: their courage, readiness for war, discipline and soberness are put in contrast to the womanish ('weibisch'), cowardly and prodigal character of the hostile army defending the interests of a despot.⁵² Grown up in 'women's wombs', the slavish souls of these 'admirers of the throne' have degenerated due to monarchism.⁵³ The republican war spirit of the 'free warrior' is thus described in masculine terms,⁵⁴ as a positive emotion, and it is in this context that *Cyrus* should be interpreted indisputably as an epic text in which war inspiration and masculine fantasies of war both result from an emancipating civic aspiration to recapture the discourse on war.

3 The Reasonable Warrior (Van Haren)

In spite of his own involvement in the Swiss debate on the importance of patriotic education in military virtues, Wieland does not explicitly refer to the republican context of Switzerland itself in *Cyrus*. While in the German countries like Prussia the narrative of self-liberation and self-defence had an actual and progressive resonance in a public debate on patriotism, Switzerland was at odds with itself, due to the corruption of its oligarchic political elite. Before Swiss freedom was picked up as an important point of reference by German authors during the second half of the century,⁵⁵ the Swiss context of 1750 did not really offer an inspiring background for literary reflection on political heroism. Lessing's heroic drama fragment *Samuel Henzi* (1753), describing the so-called

51 Johann Georg Zimmermann: *Von dem Nationalstolze*, Wien 1766, 89. Cf. also the reflections on this fragment in: Zimmermann (note 47), 106.

52 Wieland (note 33), 58.

53 Wieland (note 33), 56.

54 Sengle typifies the epic as a 'Männer-Epos': Friedrich Sengle, *Von Wielands Epenfragmenten zum ›Oberon‹*, in: Hansjörg Schelle (ed.), *Christoph Martin Wieland*, Darmstadt 1981, 45–66, here 52.

55 Eduard Ziehen, *Die deutsche Schweizerbegeisterung in den Jahren 1750–1815*, Frankfurt am Main 1922.

Henzi-conspiracy of 1749 in Bern, shows how a patriotic discourse in a Swiss context had become stuck in a backward-looking reflection on the problems of Switzerland as an old republic. Lessing intended to defend the fraction of more moderate conspirators, ‘the last heroes of Bern’, as one of the main figures describes them: ‘Bern seufzet noch wie vor. Die Helden sind vertrieben; Doch ist ihr bester Teil in dir zurück geblieben.’⁵⁶ This hero is Samuel Henzi, the rational, sensible and prudent patriot, who strives to restore the old constitution of Bern, governed by its own citizens. His opponent is the revolutionary Dücret, the murderous and aggressive rebel, who wants to kill his fellow citizens.⁵⁷ The patriotic discourse Lessing presents here can hardly be interpreted as a narrative of renewal and progression, but focuses on the restoration of ancient rights of the Swiss *Eidgenossenschaft* instead of reforming and improving them.

Dutch authors of the mid-eighteenth century had to face the same problem as Lessing in their attempt to combine inspiring heroism with a patriotic discourse strongly related to a conservative republican rhetoric. The old narrative of self-liberation, bound up with the Batavian myth and the Eighty Years’ War against Spanish-Habsburg rule, was losing relevance and expressiveness and was gradually becoming more and more restricted to occasional works defending the status quo of the Dutch Republic governed by its oligarchic elite.⁵⁸ The last revival of Dutch patriotism in literature before the War of the Austrian Succession occurred in 1672, the so-called *rampjaar* (disaster year), in which the Dutch Republic was endangered by both internal conflicts and a military occupation by the French army.⁵⁹ During the first half of the eighteenth century, the old patriotic discourse of the combative Dutch Batavians seems to become more and more outdated and forgotten. As we have seen, there was hardly any revival of patriotism in Dutch literature even during the War of the Spanish Succession. Twenty years later, the poet Justus van Effen ironically wonders in his magazine *De Hollandsche Spectator* whether the completely antiquated Batavian myth might become more attractive, literary as well as commercially, if he would

⁵⁶ Samuel Henzi, in: G.E. Lessing, *Werke*, Herbert Georg Göpfert (ed.), München 1971, 2, 371–389, here 372.

⁵⁷ Albert Meier, *Dramaturgie der Bewunderung. Untersuchungen zur politisch-klassizistischen Tragödie des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main 1993, 161–180.

⁵⁸ Henk Duits, ‘Tussen Bato en Burgerhart. Bataven en Bataafs verleden in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de Gouden Eeuw’, in: Louis Swinkels (ed.), *De Bataven. Verhalen van een verdwenen volk*, Nijmegen 2004, 195–214, here 204.

⁵⁹ G. de Bruin, ‘Het begrip »vaderland« in de pamfletliteratuur ten tijde van de Republiek, 1600–1750’, in: N.C.F. van Sas (ed.), *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, Amsterdam 1999, 143–161.

transform it into a novel-like love story, introducing a new beautiful female protagonist to accompany the Batavian hero Baeto.⁶⁰

No wonder that Willem van Haren, author of the first profane Dutch epic in the 18th century, *Gevalen van Friso, Koning der Gangariden en Prasiaten* (Amsterdam 1741), decided to invent a new national-mythical story rather than taking recourse to the Batavian myth, in order to share his reflections on political-military heroism of his own days.⁶¹ Van Haren was an important figure in Frisian politics and a representative of the States of Friesland in the States-General in The Hague.⁶² *Gevalen van Friso* was his first important literary work. Although the text recounts the adventures of 'Friso', the mythical founder of Friesland, only two of the twelve books take place in Friesland itself. The other ten deal with the long peregrination of the hero, from his homeland India to the coastal area inhabited by a people called the Alanen. In the last book they decide to crown Friso their king and to name their country after their new ruler: Friesland.

One of the most striking aspects of Van Haren's epos is the minimised role of the hero. As in François Fénelon's epic *Télémaque* – a work with an impressive reception in Dutch 18th-century literature⁶³ – the hero is a young prince, a pupil of a wise teacher. But in contrast to *Télémaque*, Friso remains a totally flat and unimpressive character throughout the story. Appearing to be little more than a frame for his own adventures, Friso gives way to Theuphis, his educator. The latter acts like the actual hero of the story, confronting the nominal hero extensively with his religious, philosophical and political learning, such as his long explanation of the advantages of a republic over a monarchy.⁶⁴ Inspired by his master, Friso prepares a speech for the Roman Senate. Criticising monarchs in general, he undermines his own position as an Indian prince: 'Dear Fathers! I know how that a Prince/Can hardly ever feed true virtue in his heart,/And, blinded by the veils of Greatness,/It is hard for him to find his glory in the happiness of his People!'⁶⁵

60 W.A.P. Smit, *Kalliope in de Nederlanden. Het Renaissancistisch-klassicistische epos van 1550 tot 1850*, Groningen 1983, 2, 8–10.

61 Summary and analysis of the *Gevalen van Friso* in: Smit (note 60), 2, 349–392.

62 Biographical details in: J.H. Halbertsma, *Het geslacht der Van Haren's. Fragmenten*, Deventer 1829 and Johannes van Vloten, *Leven en werk van W. en O.Z. van Haren. Friesche edellui*, Deventer 1874.

63 H.G. Martin, *Fénelon en Hollande*, Amsterdam 1928.

64 Patrick Rileys relates this reduced heroism of the nominal hero in Fénelon's *Télémaque* to republican thinking. Cf. Patrick Riley, 'Fénelon's 'Republican' Monarchism', in: Hans Blom, John Christian Laursen and Luisa Simonuti (eds.), *Monarchisms in the age of Enlightenment. Liberty, patriotism, and the common good*, Toronto [etc.] 2007, 78–100, here 84–85.

65 'Doorlugte Vaderen! ik weet hoe dat een Vorst/Zeer zelden waare deugd kan voeden in zyn borst,/En, door de nevelen der Grootheid die hem blinden,/Is 't zwaar voor hem zyn' roem in 's

There is a clear tension in this text between this minimised role of the hero, who underrates his own qualities as a ruler, and the author's intention to give a strong example of republican heroism. In his foreword, Van Haren recommends the ancient Roman willingness to fight as a panacea for the demoralisation of modern republics during peacetimes caused by the corruption of their oligarchic elites, which should of course be understood as an allusion to the situation in the Dutch Republic. But it is unclear why Van Haren decided to take the adventures of an Indian prince in order to illustrate the importance of republican bellicist heroism. Van Haren solved this problem by granting a greater role to side-characters next to whom Friso would be expected to perform his heroic deeds. Not Friso but the Roman commander-in-chief Fabius (Maximus Rullianus) gives the reader an example of military courage, by attacking the enemy without any previous orders from the highest commander to do so and showing his willingness to risk his life twice in succession to save his fatherland.

The fact that Van Haren defends the opinion that war can be an instrument for moral correction does not mean that the epic is in every aspect a work written to defend offensive war politics, as has been noticed by earlier scholars too.⁶⁶ Van Haren's bellicism can be understood as an enlightened critique of demoralised republics as well as despotic monarchies of his own days. This becomes clear in his description of Friso's visit of the English coast in the tenth book of the epic. On the island Vectis (Wight), the political refugee Argentorix asks Friso for assistance against Cunnobellyn (Cunobelinus), the despotic king of Albion (England). Argentorix' reflections on Cunnobellyn's despotic regime must be understood as a clear defence of the principle to exclude war politics from the domain of centralised (royal) power. War declaration should be a decision made by the people and their representatives and not by a king alone:

'He can declare neither War nor Peace on his own authority,/Nor is he allowed to enter into a Treaty independently./Only the entire People have the right to decide about what the People concerns,/And nothing else can become Law, than what has been composed most solemnly/By the Country's Aldermen, elected by the People,/Coming forward after careful consideration and selection, as the most beneficial outcome.'⁶⁷

Volks geluk te vinden!' Willem van Haren, *Gevallen van Friso, Koning der Gangariden en Prasiaten*, Amsterdam 1741, 300, line 447–450.

⁶⁶ H.J.L. van Haselen, *Willem van Haren's 'Gevallen van Friso, koning der Gangariden en Prasiaten'*, Alphen a/d Rijn 1922, 66–68.

⁶⁷ 'Hy kan uit eigen magt geen' Kryg of Vreë verkonden,/Nog is alleen bevoegt in 't treffen van Verbonden./Het gansche Volk heeft regt in 't geen den Volke raakt,/En niets word Wet dan 't geen, op't plegtigste opgemaakt/Door de Oudsten van het Land, zelfs door het Volk verkoren./Na rypen raad en keur, het heilzaamst koomt te voren.' Van Haren (note 66), 401, line 705–710.

With these reflections on royal war politics in England, Van Haren must also have had the mixed constitution of the Dutch Republic in mind. By pointing to the disadvantages of the royal element in a mixed constitution, he touches upon one of the most central aspects of early modern Dutch constitutional debate: the political and military qualifications of the Stadtholder. Van Haren here advances the ideal of the reasonable republican warrior. Argentorix's speech contains a general condemnation of royal war politics as an unreasonable and popular form of bellicism that makes use of unchecked bellicose emotions: 'Instead of separating the duties of a General rightly/From domestic rule, he inflames the temper of many [...]/Warriors banged with their Swords on their Shield;/In short, it was all savage, outrageous, furious, wild.'⁶⁸ War politics should be based on reasonable considerations, and should therefore never be the primacy of one man who rules both the army and the country. It is royal bellicism Van Haren condemns here, because a king who is not bound to the political authorisation of his councillors will be able to exploit the support of his incited people, which would be a wild and dangerous basis for war politics.

4 Free Patriots on the Delightful Battlefield

The transformation of the classical epic hero with his sublime and superior character to a humble servant of his own people and the fatherland appears to be an important aspect of enlightened heroism in the discussed epic texts. In the case of *Cyrus*, it is the human and sensitive character of the hero as 'friend of the people' (*Menschenfreund*) which generates this shift. The hero is put on an equal level with his soldiers, who are his brothers-in-arms rather than mere armed servants. Like Fénelon and Wieland, Van Haren tried to combine royal heroism with criticism against absolutist monarchism. For that purpose Van Haren decided to reduce the role of his hero Friso to that of a minor figure with a flat character, subordinated to his teacher Teuphis and unable to demonstrate his princely character with autonomous heroic acts. This is of course a problematic understanding of heroism for an author who intends to write a strong and forceful epic. Carried away by the long expositions on theological, political and philosophical subjects, the author hardly paid any attention to the fact that an

⁶⁸ 'In plaats van dus den pligt een's Veldheers regt te schiften/Van 't binnenlandsch bestuur, ontvonkt hy veeler driften [...]/De Krygsliên klapten met de Zwaarden op het Schild;/Kort om, 't was alles woest, onzinnig, toornig, wild.' Van Haren (note 66), 404, line 765–766, 771–772.

epic text needs a hero. Suddenly, out of nowhere, in the last book, the obligatory deeds of heroism are at last performed by the hero himself: a fight with the dragon and a journey to the underworld. Friso's heroism is immediately rewarded as he then is crowned as King of Friesland, but only after promising his people that he will never be their sovereign, but always their equal friend.⁶⁹

Van Haren's decision to make a king the protagonist of his epic seems to have been made without seriously considering the difficulties implied by that choice, given his focussing on the political context of the Dutch Republic and his aim to make an end to the corrupt regime of regents. This is why he decided, after *Friso* was published, to write three additional poems, 'to place after Friso' – as the publisher introduces them at the title page – thus giving himself a second chance to explicate his political intentions. One of these texts Van Haren wrote to reflect on the war politics of the Dutch Republic is the short epic poem on Leonidas.⁷⁰ As an ally of the Empress, the Republic was asked already in the first half of 1741 for military support of Austria against the occupation of Silesia by Prussia during the War of the Austrian Succession. Apart from publishing pamphlets with extracts of his own bellicose speeches for the States-General,⁷¹ Van Haren also made use of his poems to influence public opinion in this matter. And with success: Van Haren's *Leonidas* 'was read loud on bridges and in publick places, and almost got by heart by the mob' and it 'raised the spirits so high in Amsterdam that the magistrates dreaded the consequence', as Willem Bentink, Duke of Portland, remembers twenty years later in a private letter.⁷² Under pressure of public opinion, the States-General decided in May 1743 to send a battalion of 20.000 soldiers to the German battlefields.⁷³

Van Haren's *Leonidas* could be read as a poem à clef in which Leonidas stands for the allies of Austria in the Dutch States-General. Leonidas' opponent Leotychides represents the delegates who were against a war with France. The poem fulfils the author's patriotic intentions as announced in the preface to *Friso*, by condemning the war-avoiding policy of the Dutch political elite (Leotychides), which would give evidence of their 'ontaaarde' (degenerated) state of mind: 'Degenerates! If no one is ready to die with me,/Alone, alone I will raise the War-Sword/And alone I will defend Freedom/With my life, not afraid of any

69 'Weet dat ik eer' uw Vrind wil wezen dan uw Koning!' Van Haren (note 66), 498.

70 It is unclear if he has been inspired by the work of Glover. A French translation was published in The Hague 1739 (Richard Glover, *Léonidas*, La Haye 1739).

71 Anon., *EXTRACT van een Reedenvoering door zeeker lid van een naburige Regeering* [etc.], Leeuwarden (s. a.).

72 Quoted after: Van Nimwegen (note 22), 156.

73 Van Nimwegen (note 22), 172–173.

death!/[...] How big their savage crowd may be;/All these assembled, coward and flabby Subjects/Their name itself unaware of FREE!’⁷⁴ Propagating an offensive war politics of the Dutch Republic, Van Haren uses the image of the patriotic soldier as an independent and republican fighter for freedom. An important aspect of his character is that same freedom: he does not fight to get free, but he already is free, because he made the decision to fight by and for himself, whereas the army of his enemy, the Persian king Xerxes (Frederic the Great), forms a savage crowd of unfree ‘flabby’ servants. For activating their patriotism, Xerxes had to pay and enslave his citizens as subjects. Therefore, their enthusiasm is false, savage and wild, whereas the republican soldier of course is their counterpart, in other words, independent, self-conscious, brave, rational and healthy.

As we have seen before, Wieland uses the same contrasting image in *Cyrus*, when he describes Cyrus’ soldiers as ‘sons of freedom’, while his enemy’s army is put together by enslaved citizens and spoiled unmanly courtiers.⁷⁵ The enlightened criticism of patriotism under absolutism as a form of enslavement falls back on old concepts of republican military self-determination like the urban militia, in which the love for the fatherlands is considered to be grounded on the loyalty of its citizens as free combatants and not on the service of professional soldiers. Although the War of the Austrian Succession itself was a classical war of the Old Regime, at the same time a revival of thinking about the advantages of civic militia emerged in the 1740-ies.⁷⁶ Montesquieu, for example, argued for the (re) integration of military life in society, which implicates that soldiers should be treated like any other French inhabitant.⁷⁷ Wieland’s friend Zimmerman refers directly to Montesquieu when he describes republican patriotism as the only true form of patriotism, thus linking political freedom to the bellicist principle of a public will to fight. He stages the patriotic citizen in his role as family man as well as professional soldier who is inspired by military pride although he would

74 ‘Ontaarden! Ik zal dan, wil niemand met my streven,/Alleen, alleen het Oorlogs-Zwaard/Opheffen, en alleen de Vryheid met myn leven/Beschermen, voor geen dood vervaard!/[...] Hoe groot hun woeste stoet ook zy;/Alle opgeraapte, laffe en vadzige Onderdanen/Den naam zelf onbewust van VRY!’ Willem van Haren, *Drie Uitmuntende GEDIGTEN* [...] *Om agter de GEVALLEN VAN FRISO*, [...] *te kunnen geplaast worden*, s.l. 1742, 9.

75 Wieland (note 33), 5 (‘Söhne der Freyheit’), 58–59.

76 Armstrong Starkey, *War in the Age of the Enlightenment, 1700–1789*, Westport, London 2003, 133 ff.

77 Leonhard (note 26), 63–64; Michael Sonenscher, *Before the Deluge. Public Debt, Inequality, and the Intellectual Origins of the French Revolution*, Princeton, Oxford 2007, 121–122.

never take up arms against his fellow-citizens.⁷⁸ Central to this antique republican patriotism is the military enthusiasm of the free soldiers who are inspired by the ‘holy word fatherland’.⁷⁹

Intertwined with war heroism, ancient republican military moral codes are thus presented as examples of patriotic behaviour within civic-urban society. One of the many examples of Prussian war poetry illustrating this shift is Ewald Christian von Kleist’s epic *Ciñides und Paches* (1759). Here, the high spirits of sacrifice under the Macedonian soldiers (‘Tod ist unser Wunsch und Glück,/ Wenn wir dadurch des Vaterlandes Wohl/Erkaufen können’) is presented as an example for the proud citizens of Athens.⁸⁰ Impressed by the self-sacrificing spirit of the enemy, the inhabitants of Athens decide to build a temple for the two Macedonian martyrs.⁸¹ The sacrifice of the individual soldier thrusts war experience right into the public urban sphere. This is not only true for Prussian war poetry, or the literary works written by Swiss admirers of Frederic the Great, like Wieland, but also for literature reflecting directly on the importance of military moral codes in a republican political context. Van Haren, who himself experienced some important battles in the Austrian Netherlands between France and the Allied Forces as a battlefield-representative of the States-General (‘ge-deputeerde ter velde’), wrote a dramatic poem in which he depicts a soldier who intends to flee from the battlefield, but decides at the last moment to return in the interest of the fatherland. The Ode (*Lierzang*), written in 1745 but published two year after the war in the Austrian Netherlands had reached its climax,⁸² celebrates a war spirit of self-sacrifice, but also suggests that personal weakness has to be overcome to sacrifice one’s life to one’s country.

Van Haren’s *Lierzang* refers to an actual case of desertion. Colonel Matthias Haycko Appius, son of an important regent from Groningen, had left the battlefield during the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745.⁸³ Appius became a public object of derision, and, when he was accused of desertion by the Dutch war council, the old caste of military nobles interpreted his deed as an example of unsoldierly,

78 ‘Er (the republican citizen, CvdH) siehet niemand der ihm sagen könne, ich habe den frommen Entschluß gefasset, um der Ehre Gottes willen deinen Nachbar seine Dörfer abzubrennen, und sein Land zu verheeren, geh hin, schlage dich zu meinen Rotten, und mache die eine Ehre zum Untergange deiner trostlosen Kinder in dem Tumulte der Waffen für mich zu sterben; [...]’ Zimmermann (note 51), 194–195.

79 ‘Das geheiligte Wort Vaterland.’ Zimmermann (note 51), 232.

80 Ewald Christian von Kleist, *Ciñides und Paches in drey Gesängen*, Martin Kagel (ed.), Erlangen 2006, 34.

81 Von Kleist (note 80), 37.

82 Reed Browning, *The War of the Austrian Succession*, New York 1993, 298–302.

83 Van Nimwegen (note 22), 113–114.

cowardish behaviour, which enabled them to criticize the urban civic elites who put inexperienced relatives at the highest ranks in the army.⁸⁴ Van Haren, who was of noble birth himself, also criticised his fellow Dutch regents who sold and bought high positions to make capital out of war, considering the armed defence of the fatherland as a form of self-enrichment. In his Ode he transforms war into a personal experience, with military qualities – courage, discipline and duty – and honour put in the centre, serving as a panacea for dangerous moral implications of nepotism in relation to the defence of the fatherland: personal cowardice, weakness and confusion. The soldier he describes had been tempted by Fear to leave the battlefield, but it is Shame that points at the unpatriotic character of his behaviour, symbolising military discipline as a self-regulating moral mechanism, which here is represented by the metaphor of a thunderbolt that rolls the repented deserter ‘voluntarily’ back to the ‘delightful’ battlefield, after which the protagonist sighs: ‘No, this did not help me to escape from the Flash,/Which struck me so severely. Much better it is to return/Going, together with brisk and fearless People,/Back to the delightful Battlefield!’⁸⁵

Literary idealisations of self-sacrifice like these, evoking a military ethic as part of a civic patriotic discourse on the fatherland, have been interpreted by German modern scholars as foreshadowing later xenophobe nationalism after the French Revolution⁸⁶ and have even been compared with the German war rhetoric during the First World War.⁸⁷ In the light of modern experiences with nationalism and aggressive war rhetoric, it may be tempting to make such comparisons, but we should take care to bear in mind that bellicist-patriotic discourse in the eighteenth century was at first strongly related to the ideal of enlightened egalitarianism and civic participation in war politics. The discussed examples of German and Dutch epics show that enlightened bellicism flourished not only in Prussia but also in the urban centres of a ‘progressive’ civic Enlightenment, like Amsterdam and Zürich. Therefore, it seems to be at least an exaggeration to understand mid-eighteenth-century bellicist discourse as the result of

84 Like in the memoirs of count Casimir von Schlippenbach, general in the Dutch States’ army: Hans Vogel & Marjan Smits (eds.), *Een oorlogsman van dezen tijd en beminnaar der sexe – De autobiografie van Casimir graaf von Schlippenbach (1682–1755)*, Amsterdam 2007, 17–18, 480–485.

85 ‘Neen, ’t helpt my niet aldus de Schicht te ontvlieden,/Die my zo zwaar doorboort. Veel eer, van voren aan,/Met wakk’re en onverzaagde Lieden/Naar ’t edel Slagveld toe te gaan!’ Willem van Haren, *Twee Lierzangen*, Den Haag 1747, 114.

86 Hermann (note 7), 78–79. Blitz (note 4), 268 ff.

87 Wilfried Barner, *Patriotismus und Kosmopolitismus bei Lessing während des Siebenjährigen Krieges*, in: *Revue d’Allemagne* 4 (1986), 612–622, here 618. Cf. critical remarks of Blitz (note 4), p. 148.

a Counter-Enlightenment.⁸⁸ Scholars like Herrmann seem to stop short at a crucial point when they conclude, with respect to Prussian war poetry, that the struggle for civic freedom and the appearance of militant and aggressive forms of patriotism should not longer be seen as mutually exclusive.⁸⁹ These are not merely two phenomena belonging systematically and historically together; no, one could even say, that the enlightened discourse on civic self-determination provided the breeding ground for later constructions of a superior combative fatherland. Epic texts asking of each citizen to be prepared for self-sacrifice were inextricably bound up with earlier 'progressive' interpretations of patriotic behaviour.

The renewal of epic poetry around 1750 afforded the possibility for authors to combine civic enlightened notions of the fatherland with classical constructions of heroism of the epic genre. What happened in the new profane epic after Fénelon in German and Dutch literature is actually a civic re-appropriation of military patriotic discourse. Whereas *Télémaque* can be read primarily as a reorientation on absolutism, the epic texts of Wieland and Van Haren could be interpreted also as a reorientation on republican bellicist discourse itself. Although Wieland's *Cyrus* tells the story of a royal hero inspired by Frederic the Great, his radical egalitarianism not only humanises epic heroism, but also propagates the military strength and independence of citizens as autonomous soldiers. *Cyrus'* fellow-combatants are no servants; they are independent warriors, fighting voluntarily for the good of the fatherland. An awareness of the political context in which the epics of Van Haren and Wieland were written reveals the obstacles which similarly hampered the identification of citizens with the army in the old republics, like Switzerland and the Dutch Republic. The professionalisation and centralisation of armed forces and the political domination of oligarchic elites created a political as well as discursive gap between citizens and war politics in the old republics.

Although the fascination of citizens for war acts in general could be found already in the spectatorial magazines and the 'coffeehouse-discourse' on war

88 Cf. Wolfgang Burgdorf, 'Reichsnationalismus' gegen 'Territorial-nationalismus'. Phasen der Intensivierung des nationalen Bewußtseins in Deutschland seit dem Siebenjährigen Krieg', in: Dieter Langewiesche and Georg Schmidt (eds.), *Föderative Nation. Deutschlandkonzepte von der Reformation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, München 2000, 157–91, 167 ff.

89 'Vielmehr haben wir zur Kenntnis zu nehmen, dass sich die beruhigende Trennung in einen friedlichen aufklärerischen Patriotismus und einen militant-aggressiven, romantischen Nationalismus andererseits nicht aufrechterhalten lässt – dass bürgerliches Freiheitsstreben und aggressiver Nationalismus einander nicht ausschließen müssen.' Herrmann (note 7), 78–79.

politics and military subjects, authors were not able to deploy it and bridge the gap between civic enlightened discourse and war politics before the second half of the century. Wieland and Van Haren made a successful connection between military events and a more personal 'human' war experience. Commercial forms of identification with war acts during the eighteenth century, like war tourism or the public interest in war events such as the manoeuvres of Zeithain and Oosterhout, were based on the desire to experience war as a performative event. The epics of Wieland and Van Haren could be seen as providing the first step in transforming these quite superficial forms of bellicism into an aggressive patriotic discourse based on the principle of self-sacrifice. This transformation becomes less implausible, if we realize that both phenomena result in the end from an enlightened understanding of the fatherland as it was disseminated by weeklies like the Hamburg magazine *Der Patriot*, which related the unrestricted concern of the citizen with all aspects of his fatherland, not only the care for the family but also the armed defence of that fatherland.

We should not be surprised by the conclusion that in the examples of epic patriotism discussed here, pacifist rhetoric, or even critical reflections on war, is more or less absent. Although Cyrus is made to utter some clear pacifist statements to strengthen his character as the people's friend, this does not mean that *Cyrus* is a pacifist epic. The epic fragment on the contrary glorifies a war when it is fought by free people to defend their fatherland. A space for civic war experience in literature had to be created first to make critical reflections on war and war acts possible at all. Mid-eighteenth-century war poetry, like Van Haren's *Ode* and Wieland's 'human' epic, can be seen to express the unintentional attempt – unintentional, because going hand in hand with glorifications of aggressive offensive state wars – to open up the discourse on war for public reflections on its horrors and for war criticism in general. By introducing the individual perspective of the soldier as a heroic self-assured servant of the fatherland, Wieland and Van Haren fulfilled not only an important precondition for further idealisations of patriotic war acts, but also for a more critical approach of war and fatherland in literature.

Acknowledgement: This article was written with financial support of the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation.