

executed in all kinds of ways, and shrieks, something which cannot be adequately described with words or sufficiently lamented with tears'. Then the wind caught hold of the diversionary fires (for which Guericke supports Ackermann's explanation) 'so that by ten o'clock in the morning everything was on fire, and by ten o'clock at night the whole city, complete with its beautiful town hall and all the churches and monasteries, had been reduced to ashes and heaps of stone' (G.83). There was one major exception, the refuge of most of the survivors: 'In the cathedral there were some 4000 people, who had retreated there and hidden themselves away. And although at the beginning some imperialist soldiers got in and killed a number of people, as well as allegedly raping two women, guards were soon posted on the doors and further violence was prevented' (G.86). These were the fortunate minority. Guericke describes the aftermath:

The number of those who were killed or died in the city - for not only the sword but also the fire swallowed up many people - cannot be accurately known. Soon after this appalling conflagration General Tilly had the corpses of those who had been burned or killed in other ways loaded from the streets, ramparts and elsewhere on to wagons and put into the waters of the Elbe, but for almost a full year afterwards many dead bodies were found - five, six, eight, ten or more at a time - in the ruined cellars where they had been overcome and had suffocated. Furthermore those who lay in the streets had been so consumed by the fire and shattered by the falling buildings that the pieces often had to be loaded up with pitchforks, with the result that no-one will be able to give the real number. By and large, however, it is thought that of the order of 20000 people, adults and children, had to end their lives or suffered bodily injuries in such grim circumstances. This includes the two suburbs, and those of the Imperialist soldiers who died and were burned, for not only did many fall at various points in the assault but a good number were also late in leaving, spending too long searching houses or cellars or otherwise getting lost. The dead bodies which were put into the Elbe outside, in front of the Wafer Gate, were unable or unwilling to drift quickly away because at that point there is a whirlpool or eddy. Thus many floated about there for a long time, some with their heads out of the water and others with their hands outstretched as if to heaven, making a gruesome spectacle for onlookers. There was much prattle about this, folk saying that it was exactly as though these dead people were still praying, singing and crying out to heaven for vengeance. (G.86-7)

6 Faith and Experience

(Religion ~~is~~)

Religion and superstition

The war is often interpreted as being at least in part one of religion, but whatever the significance of religion in the politics of the princes it does not emerge from the testimony of these eyewitnesses as the central issue for most of the ordinary people, pastors and priests apart. Whether nominally Protestant or Catholic the armies were as religiously as they were ethnically cosmopolitan, embracing men of all religions or none so long as they would serve. In the many accounts of soldiers from defeated units being enlisted by their captors there are no suggestions of a religious test being applied. Monro was as keen to have the potentially Catholic Irish as the English and Scots. Hagendorf served equally conscientiously with the Protestant Swedish and the Catholic Bavarian armies. Poyntz changed both sides and religion but did not specifically match the two, enlisting with Protestant Saxony soon after his own conversion to Catholicism. Just as natives of Sweden were a relatively small minority among the troops referred to in convenient shorthand as Swedes, so the religious labels applied to the armies reflected more the political allegiances of their princes than the personal beliefs of soldiers or commanders.

For Protestant pastors the religious aspect of the war had a direct and personal significance, as the Imperialist military success of the late 1620s provided the opportunity for militant recatholicisation. When the disputed territory of Kitzingen was awarded to Catholic Würzburg rather than Protestant Ansbach in January 1629 the bishop lost no time in asserting his religious as well as his secular authority. Dietwar, a Lutheran pastor, was deprived of his living and given 14 days to leave. Laymen had a choice: 'A new inquisition was then held in Kitzingen and it was decreed that anyone who did not want to turn Papist must leave the town within 14 days'. Some 'worshipped the Antichrist Baal' while others 'preferred to wend their way into misery' (Di.64, 65). Lutheran texts went on the bonfire: 'They took away all the Protestant books from the houses and burned a huge

part of them in the open market-place in Kitzingen. Then after Gustavus Adolphus's victory at Breitenfeld in 1631 the newly-appointed Catholic priests fled, 'with their housekeepers', as Dietwar sardonically notes. He was duly reappointed pastor in his old parish, and as the Protestant military successes continued 'those from Hoheim who had turned Papist all reconverted of their own free will, except Jörg Hirtz, who was buried at Kitzingen on the 14th of November and remained a malicious blasphemer and denier of the truth' (Di.64, 72, 79). The Imperialists returned after the change in fortunes at Nördlingen in 1634 and Dietwar was again expelled, surviving for the next three years as best he could with the help of gifts from his co-religionists before being appointed to a living in still-Lutheran Ansbach territory nearby. Kitzingen remained in Catholic hands and he reports that repeated efforts were made to suppress Lutheran worship. In 1636 people were forbidden to travel elsewhere to hear Lutheran sermons and in 1637 those who did were fined a Reichstaler every time. These measures were evidently unsuccessful, as in 1641 they had to be repeated: 'At Kitzingen the Protestant inhabitants were forbidden by public decree to attend sermons in Protestant places' (Di.108).

The schoolmaster Gerlach, a Lutheran from a village outside Kitzingen, also records these changes in religious control and the reactions of the population. In October 1631 'as the Catholic priest was away, the Baden folk in Üngershausen dared to have church bells rung and the Gospel read and sung'. In May 1635, after the second recatholicisation, a priest attempted to preach in the village of Fuchstadt 'but he was chased away by the farmers', and when in June 'he announced from the pulpit that the visitation of Mary would be celebrated the farmers complained about it and refused to perform any more labour service on the church land, but the festival was held nevertheless' (Ge.9, 17, 18). Gerlach also notes anti-Protestant sentiment, mentioning that the estate steward 'seized many Lutheran books and heated the stoves in the castle at Rottenbauer with them', while in October 1639 'the Catholic millers in Essfeld, Hetzfeld, Darstadt and Gassdorf were forbidden to grind for Lutherans and the Hetzfeld bakers were not allowed to sell bread to Lutherans any more' (Ge.16, 27).

Although Kitzingen was a special case because of its disputed ownership it was by no means unique, and two other pastor diarists, Büttner and Henrici, were likewise expelled from and reappointed to their livings in parishes in Baden and Hesse respectively. Mallinger's experience provides a contrast. Soon after occupying Freiburg the Swedes made provision for their own religious practices: 'On the 4th of January [1633] a preacher went up into the pulpit in the Augustinian monastery for the first time and gave a sermon. After that the senior officers sought a church in which they could hold their Lutheran *exercitium* for themselves and the soldiers under their command.' Mallinger notes regretfully that these Lutheran preachers 'reached so far into the hearts not only of their co-religionists, but also of many supposed

Catholics' (Ma.536). In June the margrave of Baden arrived in Freiburg, calling an assembly of the citizens and asking

whether they would hold to their old and long-established Catholic religion or whether they would accept their liberation. But the calm resolution and response of the pious and zealous Catholic citizens was *unanimitèr* that they wanted to live and die by their old, well-founded religion. Because of this constancy nothing more was asked of them. (Ma.541)

The long and short of this understandably partisan account is that after making a ritual gesture towards converting them the Swedes and their allies left the Catholics of Freiburg to their religion. This seems generally to have been the case, although the Naumburg chronicler Zader, himself a Protestant, does note mistaken religious zeal among Gustavus Adolphus's Finnish troops: 'At that time the Cloister Gate, or School Gate, which was close by Naumburg, was virtually razed to the ground by the Finns, who took it for a Roman Catholic monastery' (Za.28). The monks of Salem, although frequently raided and plundered, were targeted more for material than religious reasons, and violations of churches reported by Bürster likewise had more to do with looting than religious opposition. Even so there were incidents, as when Swedes plundered a village in 1633,

injuring no more than three people but catching a priest at the altar during Mass, *post consecrationem*. They threw *sacram hostiam* away, tipped over the chalice, which they smashed up and took with them, and held the priest captive, but after a ransom of ten taler was paid they set him free again and moved on. (Bü.28)

In Protestant areas measures against Catholics were sometimes taken on security grounds, as in Strasbourg, which survived the war without occupation but lived in fear of betrayal by a Catholic fifth column. Walther describes Catholic cloisters with access to the walls being compulsorily evacuated in 1633, and Catholics in the city were also disarmed:

Dato it was proclaimed and read out to the sound of trumpets that all farmers and people from elsewhere, as well as those belonging here, who were of the Papist religion were immediately to surrender all their hand-arms and firearms at the Tailors' Hall, under penalty of corporal or capital punishment; which they did. (Wl.28)

Wagner reports similar measures in Augsburg after it admitted the Swedes in 1632. Initially the city's leading Lutherans were more circumspect, suggesting that 'to begin with the Roman Catholics should not all be displaced and

excluded, one with another, from authority and *officiis*, but that at least some of them might be tolerated and stay on'. This met with a sharp response from Gustavus Adolphus: 'It wouldn't do to entrust the sheep to the wolf again' (Wa.10). Catholics were accordingly dismissed and a few days later 'all the Papists here were also disarmed by the Swedes'. In January 1633 'all towers in the Papist churches and cloisters were closed off so that they could no longer look out and give signs of various kinds to the enemy' (Wa.18, 29). Many of the monks were expelled from the city, and those who remained were suspect. Wagner reports that he himself, accompanied by workmen, went to a monastery and 'had the suspicious exits, particularly those from the cloister into the Maierhof, barred and even walled up', while a convent also came under scrutiny and was raided, 'when many weapons were found in the tower referred to' (Wa.43).

Sometimes the religious outlooks of the authors show through, and these are naturally more prominent in the accounts of monks, priests and pastors. The laymen range from Zembroth, who barely mentions religion in his brief and to-the-point chronicle entries, through others who make conventional religious references from time to time, to those such as Heberle and Preis who constantly insert pious expressions at moments of notable tribulation or relief. Among the soldiers Poyntz wears his religion lightly whereas Monro comes across as a rather opinionated and self-righteous Calvinist. Nevertheless outspokenly partisan comments are infrequent in these accounts, religious loyalties usually being implicit rather than explicit, or indicated merely in passing; Gerlach is one of many to refer to Catholic clerics as 'Papist jack-priests', while the Munich chorister Hellgemayr calls the Swedes 'the heretics' (Ge.13, Hl.202). There are exceptions. The pastor Schleyss is strongly partisan, regarding the armies raised by the Protestant German princes as God's own and praying: 'God grant his soldiers luck and victory!' He repeats the wish before Lützen, later adding an epitaph for Gustavus Adolphus: 'May the Almighty God in his goodness raise up another hero for the succour of his oppressed Christendom! Amen' (Sc.1. 86, 95). Walther echoes this, describing the king as 'this beloved hero' who 'poured out his kingly blood for religion, for German freedom, and for our good' (Wl.27). Schleyss displays his prejudices in referring to Protestant subjects as 'poor, defenceless and abandoned people' when they were forced to acquiesce in the recatholicisation of monastic lands, whereas he notes with satisfaction the removal of Catholics from office in Augsburg: 'Here God, the righteous justice, has passed judgement and gladdened the worthy Protestant citizenry' (Sc.1. 85, 93).

Hagendorf's occasional comments shed light on the religious views of a common soldier, albeit one more intelligent and educated than the average. He was conventionally religious rather than particularly pious, but the deaths of his children are always marked with a benediction and on his wife's safe return from the flames of Magdeburg he expresses his relief: 'Truly God protected her' (Ha.47). He is even more emphatic about his own escape from the

carnage at Nördlingen:

On this occasion the Almighty kept a special watch over me, so that I will owe great thanks to the Good Lord for as long as I live, as I had not so much as a finger injured. Apart from me not a single one of all those who came back to the regiment was unhurt. (Ha.62)

In between such traumatic events he makes little mention of religion and he was certainly not partisan in a religious sense in his military duties. The enemy were simply the opponents of the army in which he was for the time being serving, possibly his former comrades after his enforced changes of side, and he betrays no personal, political or religious animosity.

Hagendorf illustrates the coexistence of faith, scepticism and superstition. In Arras during the French campaign he visited the Chapel of the Holy Light to see a miraculous candle given by the Virgin Mary in the Middle Ages: 'It has, so they say, already been burning for three hundred years and the same candle hasn't burned out yet. I will leave it there; anyone who wants to can believe it, but I don't' (Ha.78). Elsewhere he refers matter-of-factly to 'Heuberg, where the evil spirits gather', and he records unquestioningly the experience of a group of gambling soldiers:

On one occasion there was such a cursing and swearing at the gaming area. Then when one of the players bent down after a dice, for they were playing on a table and it had fallen off, he saw someone with a cloven hoof standing by the board. This figure began: 'O Lord Jesus, what kind of gamblers have we got at this table!' Then he suddenly disappeared, leaving a foul stench behind him. (Ha.88, 95)

Hagendorf also reports burnings for witchcraft: 'There is good dark beer in Lippstadt, but also evil people. I saw seven of them burned. Among them was a pretty young girl of 18, but even so she was burned' (Ha.46).

Clergymen too sometimes hovered on the boundary between faith and superstition. Bürster tells of soldiers looting the monastery church being awed by a picture of the Virgin apparently crying, and of a sacrilegious looter dogged by bad luck: 'One of them had also stolen a priest's Mass robe, but soon afterwards, on the second or third day following, he lost his coat and two horses. He admitted frankly that from that hour onwards he had had neither good fortune nor a lucky star' (Bü.45). Among the Protestant pastors Dietwar carefully records a variety of omens after the recatholicisation of Kitzingen in 1629, noting that the first woman to go to confession was struck by lightning, the officer who came to burn the Lutheran prayer-books fell ill, knockings were heard in the night at Hoheim, and an 'ugly owl' sat on the altar during *Ave Maria* (Di.58). Spiegel notes another ominous owl: 'Through almost the whole of this winter a big owl or eagle-owl sat up

in the church tower every night, rejoicing and gloating horribly, doubtless over the terrible misfortune, ruin and destruction of this town and country, according to God's threat in Isaiah 13, v. 21 et 22' (Sp.33). Plebanus believed that storm winds foreshadowed new catastrophes of war: 'battles, skirmishes, robbing, plundering, burning', adding that 'I too was not infrequently afflicted with losses' (Pl.280).

Laymen such as Heberle, Walther and Wagner also refer frequently to omens, while many of the diarists saw the comets of 1618 and 1630 as portents of the war as a whole or of the sufferings of their particular area. Even the widely travelled and highly educated lawyer Pflummer was credulous. He repeats a tale told by a Catholic priest who was captured in a Swedish raid under cover of fog. He found that many of his captors were also Catholics, including their lieutenant, who boasted that the fog was not natural but had been conjured up by one of his troop. He invited the man, a Finn, to demonstrate:

To please the priest the man agreed, whereupon he positioned himself on a particular spot. First he uttered a number of incomprehensible magic words and then he stretched out his hands and shook them. It was as though an ash fell from them, which spread out bit by bit, and like a fog covered first the magician and then the entire *compagnia*, so that they became quite invisible. (Pf.63)

After reporting further supernatural powers attributed to the Finn Pflummer adds his own comment: 'And since there are doubtless more such magicians to be found with the Swedish *armada*, one may well conclude that some of their victories are attributable more to this devilish *praestigiiis* than to their courage *et verae virtuti*' (Pf.63).

Plague, famine and depopulation

War, plague and famine were commonly linked in the perception of the time, and often seen as punishments from God. The Strausberg town clerk Schuster held this view of the war, describing it as 'our Lord God's punishment, which afflicts Germany on account of her sins and vices, which have become rife far and wide in these times' (Sh.16). The pastor Minck was equally clear: 'In between, and alongside the scourge of war, God sent the pestilence here after us' (Mi.254). Another town clerk, Raph, completed the trilogy: 'Thereafter followed the third scourge of the just and angry God, namely the coal-black bitter hunger' (Ra.198).

It is not surprising that the diarists saw a link between plague and war, although this is questionable epidemiologically. The consequences where plague did strike are beyond doubt, and these accounts show that individuals were much more likely to lose relatives and that communities suffered

far more deaths from epidemics than from either famine or the direct effects of war. Central southern Germany suffered particularly badly in 1634 and 1635, when Heberle lost his stepmother, a brother, four sisters and three children among the 'many thousand people' whose deaths he attributes to hunger, war and 'the terrible sickness, the pestilence' (He.161, 152). In Hesse Cervinus lost his entire family: 'My beloved wife Dorothea, with six dear children, and "Pitzi" Margarete, who looked after them, departed this life into God's peace within a few days.' He himself was near death but recovered, 'perhaps to endure more misfortune than has already occurred', as he bitterly comments (C.91). He assesses deaths locally at over half the population, noting 334 burials during the month of August 1635 in the small town of Grünberg, 27 at a single ceremony. At Bietigheim Raph reports that 'over 585 people died' out of a population quoted as 1800 in 1634, 'among them 60 married couples, and quite a number of whole families and households' (Ra.191, 196). Lang, from Isny, names some 30 individuals, mostly 'close friends of mine' but including his sister and his son, who died in the plague epidemic of 1635, of which he says: 'Since July this year there have been so many deaths that the like of it has never been heard in human memory' (La.29). Minck is similarly specific, listing by name the 25 survivors of the 'over 300 souls' living in Biberau before the epidemic, and noting that four of those died of hunger soon afterwards (Mi.256). He gives a horrific account of rotting bodies lying unburied before eventually being collected and consigned to mass graves. Writers who give few numbers and little detail about the war can be quite precise about plague deaths; Feilinger notes 22 in the village of Elm in an outbreak in June 1631 and another 26 in October of the same year.

Towns were more prone to epidemics than the countryside, and the effect of disease on a city such as Strasbourg, which escaped the worst effects of the war itself, is striking. Walther reports that during an outbreak in 1633 'within 20 weeks 4392 people died in this city' (Wl.30). Murr reports the onset of plague in Nuremberg in October 1634 and notes that by January 1635 there had been twice as many cases as in the 'great death' of 1585 (Mu.83). Infection spread even faster when cities were crowded with refugees. Pflummer makes the point in reporting an outbreak of 'Hungarian fever' in Überlingen in 1634, from which many people died, 'but for the most part only farm folk from elsewhere, or poor citizens because of their slovenly way of living or lack of cleanliness in their housekeeping'. He links this to overcrowding arising from the war 'on account of the overwhelming numbers of country people, with their horses and cattle, who have taken refuge in the city' (Pf.138). Vincent, although also seeing such infections as divine punishment, adds a medical man's practical comment:

Besieged in the Castle of Heydelberg, I visited every day divers sick of the Plague, and like diseases. But in neither of these two great Plagues in