Emotions and Habitus of Officers as Reflected in Great Literature: The Case of the Habsburg Army from 1848 to 1918

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ABSTRACT: Why do some states assert themselves in the course of history, why do others fail? In the new field of the sociology of emotions, the feelings related to war and the feelings of people involved in it are still scarcely dealt with. This holds also true for a historical sociology of a 'habitus' related to the success of states in state-competition, with the notable exception of Elias's study (2007/[1950]) on the British naval officer. The Habsburg Monarchy's reckless step of going to war in 1914 was motivated by old feudal considerations of honour as much as by more 'rational' thinking, if the term is appropriate at all. Since 1848 at least – the year of the revolution – Habsburg officers formed a caste separated from the rest of society (Allmayer-Beck 1987; Rothenberg 1976) and they were shaped by a military-aristocratic 'habitus' in stark contrast to that of the working bourgeois. Although more and more officers were recruited from the (lower ranks of the) bourgeoisie, got very little salary and were even too poor to be in a position to marry, they stuck to the ideals and mores of a feudal warrior caste, except in those areas where technical skills were indispensable. A habitus evolved which combined bluntness, discipline of the barracks and feudal 'courage', but – an Austrian particularity – which was also opposed to 'knowledge' and unable to develop qualities of good 'leadership' in battle: determination and boldness often gave way to passivity, faltering and dithering in the face of battle. The causes for this to occur are not easy to find. In this paper, I try to bring some light into this matter by analyzing novels and other forms of prose fiction (Torresani, von Saar, Roth, Schnitzler, Lernet-Holenia etc.) to make visible the emotional experience and the situational constraints of Habsburg officers in their development from the middle of the nineteenth century to the end of the First World War.

1. The Problem

Why do some states assert themselves in the course of history, why do others fail? This question has returned into sociology, after a period of rather abstract and economically oriented thinking in terms of prospects and trends of 'modernization' with all its implicit vagueness. A re-born Historical Sociology (cf. Abrams 1982; Smith 1994; Mann 1993; Tilly 1992) has renewed our interest in the problems of state formation and warlike state competition as well. But not accidentally, probably, our focus of attention had also been directed to psycho-history as a historical sociology of emotions. Both have brilliantly come together in Elias's theory of civilising processes (Elias 2000/2012). The 1980s brought a re-discovery of the nation-state and its success in overcoming older political systems like dynastic states and empires, although most authors were guided by their wishes to see an end both of nations and nationalism (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990). Academic interest was complemented by the disturbingly pressing needs to cope with the partly extremely bloody results of the dissolution of the successor-states to the former Empires: Tsarist Russia, the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy. Even a good deal of what now counts as 'terrorism' is a late consequence of their vanishing. The Habsburg Monarchy covered – in the year 1914 – an area of roughly 680,000 km², sheltered more than twelve nations – and comprised more than 50 million inhabitants. Second only to Russia, it was

the largest European state. Until today, the question has not been decided how inevitable its downfall really was and which factors bear responsibility for this.

Historical sociologists do not really queue up for dealing with this little puzzle. Those who do have a certain inclination for macro-oriented and economist explanations. For Perry Anderson (1974), Austria's major defect lay in her inability to bring forth a fully developed capitalism, embodying, at the same time, a dissociating negation of the bourgeois nation-state (Anderson 1974, p.418). Her structural weakness – resulting in an absolutism devoid of military efficiency – is seen, by Anderson, as the logical outcome of feudal backwardness, particularistic interests of estates, regions and nations, and an atavistic authoritarian reaction that tried to overcome this by inefficient means. Roughly the same complex of arguments can be found in Paul Kennedy's (1990) account of overstretched great powers with limited economic resources: According to Kennedy, Austria's fall out of the ranks of the established great powers was simply due to lack of resources and national cohesion. This view of over-stretch is shared by a recent historical analysis for the eighteenth century in a detailed way (Hochedlinger 2003). In this perspective, Austria's quite prolonged survival (or her quite lengthy decay) is more miraculous than her final collapse.

But what these three historical-sociological narratives omit is any mentioning of mentalities or social (or national) habitus. None of the authors discussed the emotional aspect of this process of knock-out competition between empires and nation-states. They converge in attributing military success or failure – losing decisive battles or winning them – a major role, but they do not provide any information of how this was achieved or experienced. These explanations cannot, for instance, tell why it was so often the case that Habsburg armies even lost battles when they were hugely superior in numbers. There seems to be an element common to all these defeats – slowness of movement, lack of energy, indecisiveness, scattering of forces, passivity, but not seldom combined with enormous sacrifices in reckless, suicidal attacks. But if it is correct that a certain mentality was responsible for defeat in battle: how, then, can we prove it sociologically? This is why this paper turns to the development of the professional officer-corps of the Habsburg Monarchy and its 'habitus'. Elias's pioneering study on the development of the profession of the British naval officer (Elias 2007) was undertaken to explain Britain's competitive edge in the naval race of the 18th and 19th century. Here, I want to point to one possible cause for the relative weakness of Habsburg Austria in the European state-competition in the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century.

It has emerged out of historical analyses (Allmayer-Beck 1987, Rothenberg 1976) that the officers' corps of the Austrian army was socially secluded and isolated after the March Revolution of 1848, thereby developing a military-aristocratic habitus that stood in sharp contrast to the middle class one. The spirit of the corps oriented itself toward the aristocracy (convention of the familiar address '*Du*' among officers, also for the high nobility), even though the high nobility had just begun to accommodate with the bourgeoisie and marriages between the lower military nobility and members of the high nobility hardly happened. The mass of the officers became non-noble and bitterly poor, also too poor to be able to marry: but the feudal way of thinking set the tone in all but the artillery and pioneering branches of service in which a bourgeois thirst for knowledge predominated.

In some respects, a quite paradoxical picture of the Austrian officer's habitus arises: one of a man of 'practical experience' who is somewhat uncouth (the era of the 'coarse colonels'; cf. Allmayer-Beck 1987) and for whom exercises, regulations and therefore 'discipline' in the narrowest sense are most important, but who is not capable of strategic decisiveness and quick decisions despite all the bravery on the battlefield. Why that is so is not easily explainable. Along with the so-called 'Ego Documents', one hopes light will be shed primarily by works of fiction in the form of novels, novellas and short stories (for instance, according to Allmayer-Beck 1987, Torresani's 'Kropatsch, der echte Kavallerist' [Kropatsch, the True Cavalryman] closely approximates Benedek, the luckless general of 1866). Fictional literature (of Torresani, von Saar, Schnitzler, Roth, or

Lernet-Holenia among others) can be of particular help in depicting those feelings that contribute to the disposition of masculine readiness to die even in times of peace, whereby the paradox of the foolhardy pluck juxtaposed with the indecisiveness as well as the passivity of the Habsburg habitus can be traced. Special attention should also be paid, however, to peculiarities in the literary communication between author and audience – how 'realistic' are literary representations in a field where heroic elevations are not improbable?

Although the Habsburg army was reformed following every defeat, which should have brought a change in the principles and strategies in warfare, findings on their defensive, slow and indecisive character remain extremely stabile over centuries. Military scientists are interested in how much the fighting force of the Habsburg army was determined by education, training in logistics, the degree of organization (according to the famous words of the Austrian general in Karl Kraus, it should be the ambition of all officers to introduce organization) and the arming. The interest here lies instead in why Austrian officers so often lacked the courage to take risks and independent leadership. This should not be confused with personal cowardice: Benedek, for example, acquitted himself brilliantly even in the consciousness of imminent defeat and exposed himself to every danger of death. What this paper deals with is the Austrian predisposition toward passivity when energy was called for. Defensive tactics could of course be sensible in and of themselves, but when they went together with a paralyzing slowness, they were unproductive, to put it mildly. A possible answer can be found in the result of an analysis of different variations and sometimes also aspects of the Habsburg military habitus, which might have been shaped by feudal-chivalric as well as civil-patrimonial, bureaucratic elements.

Traditionally, the leadership positions in the army were reserved for nobility who were dynastically loyal and adhered to the old ideals of chivalry. Until the middle of the nineteenth century there was still the old system of regimental ownership, whose standard characteristics were nepotism, corruption, inefficiency, muddling through and nonchalance. With each wave of reform, the army became more standardized, 'bureaucratized', and 'scientific'. However, along with that, military service became increasingly unattractive for the old nobility, whose preferred field remained the cavalry while the artillery required a difficult schooling in warfare and therefore was more for the middle classes and the service nobility (granting nobility to officers was a common Austrian practice). By 1896, as many as seventy seven per cent of the officers were middle-class; the officers' corps around 1900 was also no longer predominantly German-speaking (just barely fifty five per cent) (see Deák 1991, p.223). Could it be that not only the spirit of feudalism was passed down to the middle classes in spite of the state's stinginess, but also the pre-modern habit of muddling through, despite all of the bureaucratization? Doesn't this all signify indecisiveness, competences that were not clearly defined, more fear of losing the goodwill of one's superiors than of defeat on the battlefield? Further considerations concern: (2) the feudal-warrior element of the Habsburg military habitus in Torresani and von Saar, in the 'old' army before the transition to a general conscription in 1868; (3) the patrimonial-bureaucratic element of this habitus in the barracks during the following decades, again in Torresani. Thereafter follows: (4) the further development and interweaving of the two in selected literary works of Roth, Schnitzler, Eichthal and Lernet-Holenia; finally, in order (5) to flow into a comparison with a nonfiction source – the memoirs of a Habsburg officer, Paul Schinnerer, from the First World War.

2. Torresani's 'Kropatsch, der echte Kavallerist' und Saar's 'Leutnant Burda' (Lieutenant Burda): The Feudal-Warrior Character of the Habsburg Officer in the Army before 1868

In the genesis of an aristocratic canon of honor and chivalry, the great difference between the nobility and 'the people' (farmers and citizens) is central. The Serbian general, von Stratimirovič (in the service of the Habsburgs, but also a rebel against Hungary in 1848/49), describes an indicative experience from his childhood:

> 'It is a warm day in May – I'm romping around the courtyard.
>
> I made a horse harness out of the laundry lines that I annexed, and drive four farmer boys – my horses – around the place. A fifth one, a half-grown strong farmer boy, is my riding horse. With slow, deliberate steps, my father comes over; he reprimands me to quit the game, to go to my tutor in the room, and not to miss the daily lesson.' (Stratimirovič 1911, p.1, translation by author)

The gesture of chivalrousness presupposes superiority first and foremost; with this backdrop, the self-control to resist exploiting the position develops, which is the foundation of every act of gallantry. Part of this is the fatalism of the warrior that feeds a stoic insensitivity to danger (which can become second nature and a part of the habitus). It was the aristocratic elements of the Habsburg army that were reminiscent of the feudalism of the knights in the Middle Ages, such as in the story based on an incident in the Battle of Solferino (1859):

> 'When the Hussar orderly Bécseys saw his cavalry captain fall, he shouted 'If my captain is dead, then I don't want to live anymore either!' and, scattering enemy blades, he blasted into the enemy battalion, whose commanding field officer held at the front, defending himself for a short time against the saber blows of the brave Hussar, but then was struck by him from the saddle.' (Enis von Atter und Iveagh 1898, p.40, translation by the author)

Carl Freiherr Torresani (von Lanzenfeld di Camponero; 1846-1907) has been – undeservedly – somewhat forgotten today. In his own time, he was arguably the most important Austrian military author, who influenced a whole series of others (see Blumenthal 1957, p.39). Because he made literary use of his own time in the military (he himself was with the Trani-Ulanen-regiment and advanced to General Staff Officer until 1874 when, due to quarrels with superiors, he was given one year leave and retired shortly thereafter) and developed a strong talent of observation for the representation of officers' characters, his works can serve as an exceptional source of information for an important period in the development of types of the KuK. ('imperial and royal') officers' habitus. 'Kropatsch, der echte Kavallerist' (appearing in 1889 as part of his 'Schwarzgelben Reitergeschichten' – 'Black and Yellow Rider Stories' [2] [#N2] – but already written in the 1870s) unites traits of the Austrian officer in the so-called 'Era of the Coarse Colonels' in an almost ideal-typical culmination. In open contradiction to the middle class spirit that focused more on education and diligence, the army put more emphasis after 1848 on the criteria of loyalty, devotion, on discipline and physical effort, burying access to knowledge and education again, also in their militarily settled form of tactical-strategic planning. As Allmayer-Beck explains, if the army itself became a kind of father country, the demand for unconditional discipline came from the young emperor himself, which could be traced back to the great impression made on him by the disciplined 'Italian' army under Radetzky (and his 'genius') – as the only contrast auspicious of order in the face of rampant, anarchic uprisings. 'Men of letters' (*Schriftgelehrten*) were useless here (which would take its revenge in the battle of Königgrätz at the latest); one needed instead whole, combat-ready men who did not hesitate for long. *Esprit de corps*, courage, discipline, adherence to the feudal-aristocratic warrior values of honour – these were the soul of the warrior elite who remained the instrument of the ruling nobility and who also saw their second natural enemy in the bureaucracy. 'Lieutenant

Burda' who was portrayed by Ferdinand von Saar and who failed due to his exaggerated concept of honor as well as the Bohemian first lieutenant Wendelin Kropatsch were not nobility (not even members of the military nobility which was much easier to achieve), but people of middle class descent, socialized according to feudal values. In the case of Kropatsch, the mint to coin his character has been shaped by the 'Trani-Regiment' or its ambitious colonel, who chooses Kropatsch to make him into the perfect model of the cavalryman.

> In choosing this archangel he had looked at all the traits that make for a true light rider: equestrian perfection, physical dexterity, quick decision, courage up to audacity, ambition pushed to obsession. His sharp eye had discovered all of these conditions in one person who had so far kept them so well hidden that no one, possibly not even he himself, had any idea of them.
>
> Kropatsch, first lieutenant Wendelin Kropatsch was the chosen one: a small unattractive person with a snub nose, receding chin and an overly long, burning red horizontal moustache that sharply cut his face into two parts under his nose like a huge fencing stroke (Quarthieb). (Torresani 1957, p. 45, translation by author)

He does not look the way one imagines a hero, but inside of him, the 'divine spark' is slumbering, making him predestined for something greater. Kropatsch is no genius, he has to work hard for everything, he is not in command of any noteworthy knowledge, and he is anything but lovable.

> His gait, hasty and in fits and starts like that of a weasel, his overly quick, scurrying way of speaking – exhibiting a curious family resemblance to his gait – were more suited to making him ridiculous than remarkable. And as he was also somewhat biting, somewhat bitter, somewhat begrudging, it was also understandable that he was not among the popular personalities of the officers' corps. (Torresani 1957, p. 46, translation by author)

What Torresani says about Kropatsch here – namely that he was missing exactly those virtues that were usually required of Habsburg officers (manners, agreeability, 'knowledge') – is very significant for the analysis of the variety in type of Austrian officers' habitus. Saar's 'Lieutenant Burda', for instance, offers a completely different picture. The central theme of the novella is Burda's unfortunate affinity to throw his net over highly placed young women of (highly) noble origins and the psychopathology that comes of it – or comes to light. Burda clearly requires manners, social skills and a suitable education for this. Yet Kropatsch is an insensitive brute. What Torresani depicts here is naturally more that the character traits of a specific individual with completely personal attributes. Those appear in the novella as well, of course – as becomes apparent in Kropatsch's unmistakable physiognomy. The 'coarseness' of the officer type in this time – which, according to Allmayer-Beck was typical for the post-Napoleonic orientation of the Austrian army that (in contrast to Prussia) had given up again on the idea of tactical-strategic training, whereby the success of the 'Italian army' under Radetzky in 1848-49 seemed to substantiate it as well as the strong emphasis on 'discipline', also or especially in the barracks – stands in peculiar contrast to two central ideals: firstly of the aristocratic etiquette in the idea of ease, sociability, good manners and 'amiability', and secondly, of middle class 'knowledge', which in turn can be further subdivided into a consumer's knowledge of good taste in music, theatre, and 'higher education' and into a more professional, technical, expert knowledge that accompanies professional occupation. While these two components are also missing in 'Lieutenant Burda' (in Saar's novella we do hear quite a lot about Burda's musical affinities, but nothing of his tactical proficiency), the first one is extremely pronounced in him – namely the talent of being accommodating and deft in (female) society. Up until the end of the Habsburg army in the first World War, amiability is an indispensable trait of its (career) officers, and

therefore also in many of Torresani's other narratives, such as the barracks novella ‘ Die chemische Analyse’ (‘The Chemical Analysis’) in which the inspiring general is charmingly affable and the regiment's doctor is an exceptionally gifted actor and musician. In this novella, the Habsburg type of officer as a small-minded, vexatious superior and bureaucrat dominates – something that is missing in Kropatsch's unit on the evening before the Battle of Custozza in 1866. Instead, the regiment to whom Kropatsch belongs has already cultivated a particular variety of militant courage in times of peace (‘Count of Trani, Prince of the Two Sicilies, 13th Ulanen Regiment’), namely audacity on the horse and rigorous discipline. The first-person narrator is briefed by Kropatsch in this way:

> ‘You know what,’ he said, taking a seat, ‘You hardly ever find me at home. The ones who stay at home a lot are especially bad cavalrymen. That's a fact. The stall, the riding school, the drill ground belong to the cavalryman. Strictly speaking, he should sleep standing next to his horse. But we're a sissified bunch, respectively generation.’ (Torresani 1957, p. 53, translation by the author)

Kropatsch's habit of hastily swallowing whole vowels (in the original German version) gives the depiction the appeal of ethnographic authenticity. Now the narrator (a young lieutenant, fresh in the regiment and under Kropatsch's thumb) experiences how the ‘Trani pluck’ really looks when they first ride out together and Kropatsch wants to prove his riding incompetence and has already properly humiliated him:

> ‘Suddenly I was torn out of my reflections by a shrill whistle coming from high above. Kropatsch had disappeared from my side and rode ten fathoms above me at the height of the bastion, quiet and nonchalant, as if he had been there from the beginning.
>
> ‘So, what's up?’ he shouted at me with reproach. And with that, he twitched his head to the left and up, which I understood.
>
> The embankment inclined about 35 degrees and was grown over with short, straw-colored, smooth grass. I saw no way of coming up there. However, my reputation in the regiment was at stake. Whoop! I gave my horse the whip, took a slanted rein and galloped up. He shouted encouragement at me: 'Guts, guts! Pure cold iron! (spurs, H. K.)” (Torresani 1957, p.56, translation by the author)

The manoeuvre failed, the lieutenant took a fall together with his horse, shirt torn, saber bent, but luckily otherwise uninjured.

It is a completely peculiar variant of training that Kropatsch provides the young lieutenant with here: It is a systematic drilling in one direction – ‘courage up to daredevilry’ should be engendered. Kropatsch himself was brought this way by the brigadier to risk his neck on a daily basis. Torresani knows of the psychological mechanisms to bring people to the point where they permanently cross their own fear thresholds. It is the dependence on praise and applause from their superiors, but first and foremost from their comrades:

‘It was a danger-filled, thoroughly strenuous, but very happy time for this – we can safely assume – immensely vain little officer, consumed by ambition. He was also like the trapeze artist in that the applause of the audience more than compensated for his daily risk.

And in truth, he did not lack for applause. He soon became the hero of the regiment and the brigade. All old antipathies silenced. Wherever he appeared, one immediately began to whisper and hum, stuck their heads

together, pointed him out to the newly enlisted:

'Do you know who that is? *Kropatsch*.'' (Torresani, 1957, p. 47, translation by author)

He contributes here to what one can call the ‘chivalrous spirit’ of a troop; Kropatsch's personality is the result of rigorous discipline, arising primarily from external forces and less from his own initiative. The Trani-Ulanen mastered the ‘light riding, marching in trot, group formations’ (ibid., p. 44) better than all others; their manoeuvrability, bravado in overcoming obstacles and general effectiveness made them into an elite formation with role model character.

The story Torresani tells takes a tragic turn. Kropatsch's reputation does not last. After the redeployment of the regiment to the colourful, brilliant ambiance of the fortress city Verona, he is soon forgotten and his fall from public grace strikes him deeply. In any case, his life outside of service has no highlights to show for. He ends a short affair with not particularly distinctive country ‘Circe’ [3] [#N3] out of professional considerations (but he then has to then make payments to support the child that results from it): ‘Regiment without women. Single officers, whole officers. Celibacy an inestimable advantage for mobility, pluck and daredevilry of a cavalryman’ (Torresani 1957, p. 69, translation by author). This statement comes from the brigadier and Kropatsch swears and oath on it to stay single. So the ‘true cavalryman’ remains dependent in every respect on the opinion of his regimental comrades until a few days before the Battle of Custozza (1866) – which incidentally ended in victory for the Habsburgs – when, in a heated, general mood of celebration and bolstered by a lot of alcohol, he tries a last time for their recognition by announcing a suicidal act of bravado:

‘'Gentlemen! Spartan mothers said: with a shield or on a shield. But I say: through the square or into the square. Or in other words: *blast or jump*! – Gentlemen! Kropatsch doesn't turn back, my word on that. Victory or Death! I'll drink to that!'

‘Up! Up! And away!' was the deafening echo through the room. Glasses flew against the wall clinked and shattered to pieces. Kropatsch was surrounded, embraced and celebrated. It was a triumph for him – again, after a long time. The deepest inner satisfaction radiated from his face. 'He has just pronounced his own sentence' an older riding master whispered in my ear. And I was convinced that he said the truth.’ (Torresani: 1957, pp. 77, translation by the author)

There is a remarkable parallel to Saar's ‘Lieutenant Burda’ here. His last, fatal act of rank hubris, which met with strong ridicule on the part of the (mostly noble) cavalry officers, also leads to a suicidal act, namely a fatal duel. There it is Burda who, in his delusions wishes to call out the commanders, challenges instead – as a representative – the colossal nouveau-riche gambler and ruffian Schorff. It is quixotic, but his courage impresses his comrades:

> ‘This (Note: the outcome that a duel with sabres might have) was now also deliberated in the regiment, where even the bad sentiment against Burda had suddenly turned into lively participation. His manly performance against the cavalrymen that awakened a sort of common pride, impressed most of them and there was no lack of signs of recognition, which Burda received with a serious reserve.’ (Saar 1998, p. 61, translation by author)

Burda's courage to pursue this duel so dangerous to himself shines a spotlight on the ‘feudal’ panache of the army as a whole. The officers welcomed warlike perspectives (shortly before the Crimean War) ‘with enthusiastic jubilance’ (ibid.,p. 38), which stands in peculiar contrast to the lack of determination and indecision of the government (ibid., p. 47). Burda provokes that welcoming scene that reveals the low

estimation of the roughneck Schorff and his aristocratic fighting and drinking companions, whereby he actually aims at the nobleman and merely accepts the upstart (who will then kill him).

Burda dies and the group opinion now turns against Schorff, who can only escape an honorary court investigation through the shabbiest of connections. Burda, however, whose desire for an alliance with a princess from a brilliant house sends him crashing down into unhappiness and delusion, who was humbled and humiliated, is carried from ridiculousness by his death.

Something very similar happens to Kropatsch who allowed himself to be carried away to a life-threatening manoeuvre. Kropatsch knows that, makes his testament (he leaves his letter of commendation to his brigadier, if he will frame it and hold it in honour of his memory), challenges a tree-tall Italian in a somewhat childish manner before the battle, and dies in the baptism of fire of his brilliant, glorious regiment in the way presented. As ridiculous as his motives were, as absurd and strange the whole character, he goes proudly and peacefully to his death:

> ‘A click of the tongue, a press of the calves. In a grand arching leap, the horse flies over the front line of bayonets, lands its six centers with full force in the middle of the enemy phalanx only to immediately collapse, bored through by fifty yatagans.’ (Torresani 1957; p. 86, translation by author)

The chivalrous enemy, full of admiration for the audaciousness, wants to spare him, but Kropatsch fires his revolver and has no more need of protection. It is noted in the edition edited by Blumenthal that ‘Kropatsch’ stands for the cavalry captain Ernst Kasperlik von Teschenfeld, who received the Military Merit Cross after his death.

Now to what extent does Torresani actually describe a variant of the Habsburg officers' habitus here? Is this description for something ‘typical’ also truly ‘valid’? Allmayer-Beck was of the opinion that ‘Kropatsch’ also represents a suitable portrait of Benedek, the head of the Italian army and luckless commander from Königgrätz. The personal courage of this person was also not in question; his success in putting down the 1846 Polish uprising in Krakow, however, was more attributable to his recklessness in the saddle than to his tactical deftness. His part in the defeat at Königgrätz is still debated today. For some, he was the victim of the out-of-date noble regiment of the army acting on its own authority in which he was over his head as ‘quasi-middle class’ (in reality, he was from the Hungarian gentry). For others, counting Allmayer-Beck himself, he was out of his depth faced with the tactical genius of Moltke and due to a lack of strategic boldness; he forfeited those advantages a decisive deployment in Bohemia could have given him. In any case, the falling apart of practical, fierce, spontaneous furiousness, and strategic temerity could be a tragic attribute of the Austrian army at Magenta and Solferino as well as at Königgrätz. Certainly, these defeats were also the result of inferior weaponry. One can compare the different ranges and firepower of Austrian, French, and Prussian rifles and canons; the Habsburg artillery drew the right conclusions and the infantry catastrophically wrong ones, namely resorting to avoiding the breech-loader's fire and to purely suicidal bayonet attacks. How such a practical form of bravery appears now as – bred, trained / inculcated – habitus can be perfectly drawn from this novella in any case. What is harder to estimate is the frequency of such an attitude occurring. But Torresani supplies a detailed depiction of the institutional practices in the ‘training’ for Trani-pluck with an abundance of expressions that have become incomprehensible today (Blumenthal's short biography of Torresani's soldier training confirms beyond any doubt that he was familiar, and very much so, with these practices from his own most personal experience: he imitated the way of speaking of the Swabian Edelsheim-Gyulai, he described the splendidly colorful uniforms all the way to the ‘Konfederatka’, a cap with an eagle feather, repeated forgotten expressions, knew everything about horses and cavalry equipment, and supplied

such a densely weaved fabric of information on the material structure and ideas of the Trani cavalry culture. It is aristocratically influenced, but increasingly being taken over by people of bourgeois or militarily ennobled origins, far from the high nobility – at least in the cavalry. But to what extent does Torresani describe a 'habitus'? Well, he does this in two respects. What makes for the 'Trani pluck' becomes 'second nature' to the cavalryman, which means it becomes like his own flesh and blood. Decisive here is not the spectacular heroic death of the otherwise less than heroic Kropatsch (although based on a true story, the dramaturgical intention of telling a moving and exciting story is tainted by the resulting exaggeration of its tragic character), but that which Torresani says about the complex interplay of institutional disciplinary external forces and the ambivalent emotions, defined by group norms, of the officer schooled in this way – and without our having to orient ourselves on the basis of extreme examples. Enough of the radiating force in norms of courage is evident, solely through the reflection of their appreciation by comrades and members of Kropatsch's peer group. What seems realistic is exactly Torresani's sober depiction, hardly lapsing into pathos, of Kropatsch's dependence on the recognition of his 'peers'; he is ruled by feelings of inferiority, like Saar's 'Lieutenant Burda', and for that reason, he seeks a suicidal way to excel. We ask ourselves in the face of the horrible slaughter on the many battlefields of the twentieth century how it was possible that soldiers went along with this and frivolously threw their lives away in the entrenchment. Torresani's explanation is as sober as it is realistic: Kropatsch's inner nature, his entire yearning, led him in this direction; he lacked alternatives for his feeling of self-worth. In this way it is understandable that the Austrians at Königgrätz made the heroic sacrifice of the 'Battery of the Dead', repeatedly and senselessly storming against the Prussian breech-loaders on the Chlum Height, and that, heroically and with great losses, they provided cover by their pride, their glorious cavalry, to the bitter end of the main army's withdrawal. It was an order, of course, but without the necessary disposition to obey these orders, this suicidal courage would not have developed. That it was not far from stupidity, Torresani doesn't say, but we see it so today.

3. The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Element of the Austrian Officers' Habitus in Torresani

A completely different facet of the Austrian officers' habitus becomes evident in another of Torresani's novellas. It has less to do with heroism in war and much to do with the bureaucracy and life in the barracks in peacetime. The narrative 'The Chemical Analysis' deals with the ritualistically restricted design of official authority through ambitious-submissive officers, with the modest pleasures of these officers (stationed in the capital and residential city of Vienna) in and out of service and with the relationship of the officers to the personnel. Torresani tells his story – in which ultimately the subservient character of a deputy barracks commander, who harasses his people in a ridiculing and humiliating way out of a false sense of zeal, is exposed by cheerfully impudent subordinates and brought to his downfall – likewise in a cheerful way with much humour and a subtle understanding of the milieu.

The scarcely demonic 'rogue' in this story is a major of modest nobility:

> 'The major's name was Ritter vom (sic!) Mumpf, Felix Ritter von Mumpf, at your service. He found himself at the time in those years that flatters like to call the best, had thin blond hair, a blond moustache and whiskers, a whiny way of speaking, and a posture as if he had to sigh from morning to night under a back-breaking load and his life could never be truly happy. That came to be because he would have liked to become a Lieutenant-Colonel and lived in constant fear of being given the sack first. If he had made a few blunders that, as he knew, his superiors had well

> kept in their mind, between him and advancement still stood two abysmal encampments in Bruck, a myriad of visitations and inspections, and two character reports by means of qualification lists: obstacles that each of which seemed insurmountable to him.' (Torresani 1906, p. 5f., my translation)

This characterization already somewhat illuminates the peculiarity of the huge bureaucratic machine that the royal and imperial army simply was, with the corresponding consequences for the shaping of the Austrian officers' habitus. Although Torresani disputed in his 'Prologue to the First Edition' that his protagonists actually allowed themselves to draw conclusions about possible 'Austrian conditions', as the imperial German press enjoyed apostrophizing them, it can be safely assumed that this was in fact the case. Blumenthal noted that he had already had difficulties with the military administration previously. In Torresani's words:

> 'In that he admits with pleasure that the patriotic, warm words he had the opportunity to intersperse here and there came from the heart, he has to refuse his acting people – especially those intended for burlesque roles - the honor of being photographs of real life, representatives of actual royal and imperial officer types.' (Torresani: 1906, Prologue, translation mine).

Torresani hides behind the humour that was the sole intention of his stories, but many other sources confirm what is typical in the picture he draws of Major Mumpf here:

> 'He had little self-confidence and knew why; despite being a good serviceman, he was a bad tactician with no knowledge concept of 'higher things', and always behaved like a fish on sand as soon as the regiment moved from the closed formation on the parade-ground to some field duty exercise. (...) He had ambition, Major Mumpf; and therefore all of his senses and aspirations were directed at obliging those on whom the satisfaction of this ambition depended. There was never a subordinate more ready to serve. He was entirely good will, from head to toe.' (Torresani 1906, p. 6, translation mine)

In the story Torresani tells here, Major Mumpf is devoted to the supposed will of the inspiring general in a way that the personnel as well as the officers' cadre of the Josefstadt barracks are harassed for weeks down to smallest and most ridiculous detail. The mighty man, decorated war hero and of a far more un-self-conscious and forceful character, casually states – in an extremely benevolent and affable manner – a single deficiency in response to the Major's enquiry: 'Right, right,' said His Excellence, 'the cleanliness could certainly be a bit better. The spit in the hallways isn't very appetizing; and couldn't claim that it smells like vanilla in the personnel tracts . . . ' (Torresani 1906, p. 20, translation mine). The submissive Major uses this to instigate a cleanliness orgy lasting weeks during which he torments everyone meticulously. Because this corresponds to his habitus:

> 'He carried out every official or unofficial wish of a superior with formidable enthusiasm and knew how to work them out regardless of all possible or impossible consequences. In this, he was truly – great. In contrast, he knew not to make himself great for those below him. He was – to use our army jargon – a genuine *grouch* (*Raunzer*), of false bonhomie and deceptively soft nature who, with a whiny voice, never expressed commands, but always wishes: Dear N., please be so kind! ... or Dear N., it wouldn't hurt if ... etc.' (Torresani 1906, p. 6f., translation mine)

Exactly this observation is very interesting because it indicates that a submissively authoritarian character can't automatically be fit into the 'Cyclist Model' (bending upward and kicking downward; see Heinrich Mann's classic description and Adorno's similarly classic interpretation). He can also have enough affect control at his disposal that his dominance is neither exhibited ostentatiously nor the desire to do so even confessed. Nevertheless, the Major often gets his way:

> 'In the process, he got on someone's back for so long, nagged, grouched and whined to them for so long until what he wanted was carried out and through. He never behaved unfriendly toward anyone; but no one could stomach him, and when he appeared at the end of the hall with his soft smile, one snuck out the other end. His stubbornness was unbelievable; he could repeat the same thing to someone fifty times and the fiftieth time his tone was not more excited than the first. But then he went quietly home, pulled out his pen and made a black line under someone's name. And the black line could not be gotten rid of by all the erasers of Theyer and Hardtmuth before it wreaked its effect in the next qualifications list.' (Torresani 1906, p. 7, translation mine)

What Torresani draws here is the portrait of a bureaucratic habitus, a habitus in which bureaucratic power is exercised apparently in an almost affect-neutral way, making it impossible to act out stronger affects of dominance because of automatic or conscious self-restraints. Of course, one cannot estimate the relative frequency of such a type in the Habsburg army; it is probable that it also surfaces in other armies at least occasionally. But one can compare Torresani's description with those from other fictional and also nonfiction sources, thereby attempting to estimate the credibility of its occurrence and significance. For example, Rauchensteiner (1994) presented much evidence in this way that makes clear a certain bureaucratic lack of self-sufficiency and an unwillingness to make decisions by Habsburg officers in the First World War One example followed the failed autumn offensive at Luck in 1915:

> 'What was revealed here was a dilemma of the Austrian-Hungarian leadership, and in particular it was a dilemma of their leaders. The army commanders and a whole row of corps commanders were not really in the position to demonstrate an autonomous operative leadership. They displayed a dilettantism that was mostly shamefully concealed in Austrian literature after the war. Yet it is almost unfair to pick out individual people and criticize them. Because it wasn't individuals! Beginning with the army's high command and continuing on to the army commanders, the corps commanders down to the divisions, it could be established again and again that the generals were often unsuited, developed too little initiative, occasionally did not follow orders, and above all, were not able to either convince or inspire. But one can not speak of failure in this, because the reasons for it partially lay deeper.' (Rauchensteiner 1994, p. 290, translation mine)

Standing in lively contrast to the servility and submissiveness of Major Mumpf in Torresani's novella is the unforced behaviour of the inspiring, unannounced general, who comes across in the barracks to encounter a pleasantly relaxed, highly unofficial idyll.

> 'The commanding officer, both hands placed on his hips, rocked back and forth on the tips of his feet, observing the scene with arched back and stomach extended out. The personal adjutant stood behind him with a face that as of yet had not expressed a single sensation; because he

> could not know how His Excellence would assess the situation had to hold his muscles at the lifeless point in order to then move them to the right or left, up or down depending on how it would prove to be indicated. One, two minutes of embarrassing silence followed; then the mighty one exploded:
>
> 'Who has inspection! Who! Where is the worm that I can stomp on!' – More dead than alive, Forchenwald came forward. 'So, so so! – Pütz! – note down the name! . . . Mister! You will be hearing more! I am going to set an example; and *example* that will take your breath away! You will think it is the Pummerin (the bell of St. Stephen's cathedral, H. K.) clanging in your ears! Is this being in uniform? . . . In *official* uniform? . . . No tie, no cap, so saber . . . the chest showing, so that one would think it is a *Geistinger* in The Beautiful Helen! And what kind of decorum-breaking shirt is that?' (Torresani 1906, pp. 14, translation mine)

This quote reveals two things: first the dominant unselfconsciousness of the commander, who – as one suspects due to the cheerfully forceful metaphors – quickly reverts to the jovial and affable, and second, the tense posture of the subordinate, watching for any nod of his superior. His facial expression may not betray anything, which is a considerable achievement in affect restraint and, when often or very often necessary, it also expresses an identifiable psychological or social habitus. Emotional processes (a solid portion of fear coupled with attention and excitement) correspond to bodily-somatic or describable and visible expression as well as a specific behaviour (the three aspects of any emotion, see Elias 1987). The dominance of one corresponds to the tense readiness for subjugation of the other. In any case, the General has no problems to put his own highly personal stamp on the situation at any time (whether on the battlefield as well, we can only conjecture). After he had ended his inspection very pleased and satisfied and without having harmed a single hair on anyone's head, the servile Major takes considerably spiteful steps:

> 'In a mild voice, Major Mumpf ordered the trumpeter from the gate sentries to be locked up for eight days, intensified by confinement in a dark cell and tobacco privation according to the regulations, and then climbed the main stairs, contemplatively but no less pleased than His Excellence, to his quarters.' (Torresani 1906, p. 21, translation mine)

From Torresani's novella, we gain three clearly discernible variants of a Habsburg officer's habitus. The first is the result of training for late-feudal daredevilry (typical of the cavalry strongly dominated by the aristocratic), coupled with tactically strategic cluelessness. The second reveals itself in the bureaucratic, fearful authoritarianism of subordinates who are reluctant to make decisions. The third is shown in the person of the general, in aristocratic affability and self-evident dominance. In the person of the regimental doctor and officer on duty, Forchenwald, we also meet a well-known type – notorious womanizers with artistic affinities and a sof spot for good society (such as in Saar's novella). This habitus with its variety in types can be established for the army from about 1850 to 1880 (the second Bosnian campaign). The following considerations now deal with its further development up to the Great War, touching on fictional and nonfiction sources.

4. Literary examples for the further development of the Habsburg military habitus

After 1868 the Habsburg army changed step by step from a dynastic professional army of long-serving officers true to the Emperor into to a multifariously peopled army of a democratizing, multi-ethnic dual state on the basis of a general compulsive military service and the training of non-permanent reservists. Military historians (Allmayer-Beck 1987, Déak 1991; Rothenberg 1976) have described this process in detail; at the same time, this was also a process of technologizing, industrializing and professionalizing in the areas of tactics and strategic alignment. From the personal accounts of officers in the Habsburg army, one can gain a good impression of this shift, which simultaneously instigated a structural conflict between the older, feudal-aristocratic warrior model and the bourgeois-technical, soberer and newer officer virtues based on diligence and technical knowledge. Naturally, that also means conflicts between the respective groups themselves. For example, in the memoirs of Paul Schinnerer who was a middle-class staff officer, it was the eternal struggle between frivolous, aristocratically influenced salon officers, without much expertise but with much pomp and over-confidence, and the (less numerous) soberly pessimistic and hard-working officers of his own stamp. Schinnerer was among those who had no illusions in 1914 about the chances of the royal and imperial army standing against the Russians.

In the literary documents on this time, which admittedly were mostly written after the defeat, we find a clear reflection of this constellation with emphases that coincide with the location of the respective author. Four such articulations are selected here: Joseph Roth's novel ‘Radetzky March’, the melancholy swan song to the Danube monarchy concentrating on the fate of resigned and weakened grandson of war hero from 1859 (the Battle of Solferino); Schnitzler's famous novella, ‘Lieutenant Gustl’, who seems to be a slave to an atavistic code of honor; Eichtal's novel ‘Der grüne Federbusch’ (‘The Green Plume of Feathers’) which tells the story of garrison life in Czernowitz around 1900 from the perspective of an Austrian patriot and Habsburg legitimist; and Lernet-Holenia's ‘Die Standarte’ (‘The Flag’), the novel which gives expression to the despair over the inglorious failure of the once splendid, sonorous regiment in the mutiny of its primarily Slavic soldiers in the late autumn of 1918.

Roth's ‘Radetzky March’ provides a good picture of all three forms of the Austrian officers' habitus discussed above. The good-natured, patrimonial authority of Torresani's general resurfaces in the figure of Colonel Kovacs:

> ‘Carl Joseph stopped in front of the Colonel with a soft clangor. ‘Servus!’ said the Colonel without sitting up from his dominos. He was an easy-going man, the Colonel Kovacs. For years he had formed the habit of a fatherly demeanor. And only once a month did he go into an artificial rage which frightened him more than the regiment. He screamed until the walls of the barracks and the old trees surrounding the watery meadow quaked. (...) Yes, he was known, the Colonel Kovacs, the good animal! One could depend on the regularity of his outbursts like the return of the moon phases. Cavalry Captain Taittinger, who had had himself transferred twice and was a perfect judge of superiors, attested untiringly to everyone that there was not a more harmless regimental commander in the entire army.’ (Roth 1957, p. 51, translation mine)

None of the types sketched by Roth give the impression of being particularly martial, but it turns out to be the middle-class, Jewish regimental doctor, Dr. Demant, who challenges the Count Tattenbach to a duel and goes together with him – to everyone's surprise – to his death. Roth makes the silently and generally accepted, feudal honorary canon explicit which Demant sees as hopelessly outdated: ‘To an easy death!’ replied the regimental doctor and emptied his glass while Carl Joseph set his schnapps back down on the table. ‘This death is senseless!’ continued the doctor. ‘As senseless as my life has been’ (Roth 1957, p. 77, translation mine). The war begins realistically enough for Carl Joseph, in Galicia with confusion, retreats, executions of

spies and informers resulting from paranoid fears, and it ends quickly in unintentionally heroic death while fetching water for his men. The feudal way of thinking is admired by Roth on the one hand, but also depicted as atavistic according to the middle-class, pacifist codex.

The element of admiration is completely missing in Schnitzler's novella *Lieutenant Gustl*. His highly vulnerable honour is injured by a powerful civilian; in his inner monologue, the young lieutenant, whipped up by fear, reflects on whether and how the incriminating circumstances of the case can become known to his peers and officer comrades, in which case the only option left open to him would be honourable suicide. The ghost fades but the psychological dynamic of the massive fear of shaming is mercilessly exposed by Schnitzler. Here is also a foil for comparison that made such a concept of honour seem nonsensical to Schnitzler: the horizon of a peaceful professional citizenry in which reputation is earned more through diligence and knowledge than physical bravery. Of course, the imperial and royal army is not alone in Europe with this late-feudal honorary canon and corresponding habitus; with the exception of England which developed it’s market economy and monetarized earlier, most European countries shared it until 1918.

While one can not know exactly where Schnitzler, the middle-class doctor, acquired his intimate knowledge of the soldier psyche (Freud famously considered him his literary alter ego), this is much clearer for Rudolf von Eichthal, the author of many novels about the old Austrian army: he himself was a decorated officer in the World War and knew the system of the Habsburg army well enough from his own experience. Although the novel *Der grüne Federbusch* was written many years after the First World War (year of publication: 1979), the accuracy of time and detail in the narration of Bukovina around 1900 is highly estimable. This is true for the painstakingly rendered old Austrian expressions and sayings, for the institutional knowledge of the army and for the depiction of the small but variegated, multi-ethnic as well as religious society of Czernowitz. What one can and should trust less is the jack-of-all-trades nature of the novel's hero, infantry First Lieutenant Spielvogel, which is so favourably embellished that it can claim no credibility. But beyond this idealization of the main character (something that will not be unfamiliar to readers of detective novels such as those of Raymond Chandler – even the idealization of the ‘hard-boiled detective’ does not impede the realistic interpretation of many observations of milieu) one can recognize forms of the Austrian officers' habitus in numerous examples. The first one to mention would be the relationship that turned critical between the old aristocratically-tinged muddler and the new type of middle-class officer, shaped by experience and expertise and personified by Spielvogel, the so-called *Brigadevogel* (an ancient term even in Austrian military jargon, H. K.). This means the type of staff officer supporting the brigadier general, about whose function Eichthal quotes Torresani: ‘big reputation with little responsibility, a lot of honour with a bit of work, especially when the brigadier is not over-ambitious, but a calm, easy-going man’ (Eichthal 1979, p. 23, translation mine).

A power struggle develops between First Lieutenant Spielvogel and the high men of the Lemberg Corps Command because with thorough expertise, he questions the Austrian deployment to corps alarm in the case of war with Russia. He finds the deployment right on the border wrong because it can't be defended and he suggests a line lying further behind.

> ‘For two days, he shut himself in his office, used his compass, wrote, painted, drew; for two days he remained invisible to the world and even let his food be brought from the officer's mess, in order to not be disturbed in his work. On the third day, he appeared with the finished proposal in neat final draft, supported with flawlessly drawn maps and plans.’ (Eichthal 1979, p. 54, my translation)

His superior officer recognizes the value of the work and approves the proposal. But consequently, it is not granted an auspicious fate:

> ‘On the very same day, the Chief of the General Staff submitted the matter to the commanding general, Count Stackelberg. This very old man, cavalryman, high aristocrat, for which a person first began with the baron and who despised everything that wasn't high nobility and cavalry, didn't even hear the Colonel out: 'What? Changing the corps alarm?' he shouted with abhorrence while he opened and closed his mouth with dentures clicking audibly as was his habit. 'Don't even think about it! We have just barely finished the thing ourselves.” (Eichthal 1979, pp. 109, my translation)

Spielvogel actually does fail, but not because of the general, but because of a sour and hateful subordinate who had already been hostilely disposed to him since Wiener Neustadt. Spielvogel may also have personal bravery and a willingness to take risks and he is also a favorite of women and the muses, but his real strength is middle-class achievement thinking. Many elements of Habsburg officer folklore still appear: the debts, the waste, the charm – as mentioned before, Spielvogel is a Jack-of-all-trades. As was already the case by Saar's *Lieutenant Burda*, the superiors also intervene in their subordinates' matters of love and marriage – if in Saar it was Burda's ambitions toward a young lady of high nobility that were choked off by a higher officer (a major in the service of a baronial boss), here it is the reverse and Spielvogel's superior who is interested in bettering his standing through marriage. One can certainly locate nepotism and patronage in these pre-modern interventions. None of the officers portrayed here allow it to be revealed that some of them would also order a nearly unconditional, suicidal attack. But also thoughts of achievement still assert themselves only by manoeuvres – again it is an arrogant aristocrat who his humiliated by the gutsy Spielvogel with his superior tactics. Eichthal's book is naturally written with the knowledge of the war's outcome and the devastating heedlessness of the leadership in 1914, and therefore can be counted as counterfactual literature. Still, the strokes of the brush painting an Austrian military habitus may be coarse, but correct.

Lernet-Holenia composes the tragic swan song of the monarchy and its glorious army. The standard is the ultimate symbol of loyalty to regiment and emperor.

> ‘The standard stood there upright, the ribbons moved in the draft coming from the door for a moment and then sank back down and flashes came from the golden lance blade up on the tip of the shaft (...)
>
> Like the rays from its tip falling around, the claim announced itself of being a symbol of the empire, sovereign, imperial, holy, a nest of the eagle who struck his quarry in their brocade, eyes directed toward the sun that no longer set where he raised his wings, in France, in Milan, over the sea, in Flanders, at Zenta and Slankamen, Malplaquet, Aspern, Leipzig, Custoza, Kolin. The solemn scent of incense from the field masses and processions, the victory's sweet smell of blood, the bitter smell of the twisted laurel still hung in the folds of the fabric.’ (Lernet-Holenia 1934, p. 187, my translation)

This poetic depiction shows us the heights to which patrimonial loyalty and dynastic we-feeling can soar. The key passage of the novel, however, is the mutiny of Slavic troops in a glorious regiment with dulcet names of Maria Isabella or Royal Allemand and Toskana-Ulanen, who ceased to function as war machines:

> ‘It was as if the helmets and uniforms fell off of the people, the insignia of the charges and the imperial eagle of the cockades, as if the horses and the saddles faded away and nothing remained but a few hundred naked Polish, Romanian, or Ruthenian farmers who no longer had

> any sense of bearing the responsibility for the fate of the world under the scepter of a German nation.' (Lernet-Holenia 1934, p. 161, translation mine)

Once again, the nobleman Ensign Menis is a cavalryman – the story is also one of romantic and audacious love in the midst of a dying army. So he pushes his way into the highest society in order to meet his future beloved:

> ''Imperial Majesty, if you please, allow me to introduce one ensign from the dragoon regiment of the Two Sicilies. – Squire,' he turned to me, 'I didn't quite understand your name.' I whispered my name to him. '. . . namely Ensign Menis,' he added. The archduchess presented me her hand to kiss.' (Lernet-Holenia 1934, p. 32, translation mine)

After the improper intrusion, an acquaintance with the beauty ensues, which – following Fähnrich's disciplinary transfer – provides the reason for many wild rides for visits in the night. Once again, Lernet-Holenia evokes the complete brilliance of the feudal-chivalric world of Habsburg officers, with all the charm of the downfall and without reference to the tactical or organizational questions. For the last time, the officers and personnel ritually swear the oath to his Majesty (and the latter already know that they will break it).

The mutiny was gunned down in a dreadful act of self-mutilation of the once proud army. The war is lost and probably would also have been had the whole lot of Habsburg officers been a paragon of professional competence (which many of them probably were). It is still indicative, however, that the last remnants of the Romantic cling to the dying idea of chivalry – instead of a more prosaic documentation of soberly fought and professionally captured victories.

5. A Comparison with nonfiction sources – the memoirs of Paul Schinnerer

As Rauchensteiner also shows in his great work *Der Tod des Doppeladlers* (The Death of the Double Eagle), the 1914 deployment in Galicia had already completely failed due to the misguided action of Conrad: he, like the others, had clung too long to the illusion that the war could be limited to Serbia and only redirected the second army to Galicia after, to all intents and purposes, it was already too late. Without them, however, the Austrian forces (of 1.2 million) were hopelessly outnumbered by the Russians (who numbered 1.8 million and were substantially better equipped). Ingrained in the Habsburg army since the Napoleonic wars, the impulse to take the offensive required a pre-emptive defence through attacks even by massive inferiority, which, however, the imperial and royal army was not capable of successfully carrying out for several reasons. In depictions by Schinnerer, who had to content himself with a subordinate position in the staff but who obtained a good overview of the collective failure in this nerve centre, the mentality-related, 'habitual' (for the concept of national habitus see Elias 1996) weaknesses of the imperial and royal army are blatantly obvious. As Clausewitz (1952 [1831]) had already noted, the spirit of an army cannot be broken alone through passivity and pessimism, but also precisely through unjustified, illusionary overestimation of their own capabilities making them defenceless against the consequent catastrophes. The paradoxes of an altogether hesitant army, lacking the force to break through, which is commanded nevertheless to an impetuous offensive push, come out particularly clearly here in the first weeks of the war. Schinnerer already renders judgment early on:

> 'The second army that had originally deployed against Serbia was put back on the train and found itself first in transit through Hungary. That is how this war, which would foremost have required quick, purposeful action, began with a senseless back and forth that already carried the seed of failure within it.' (II, 9, translation mine)

With that, the Battle of Lemberg that inaugurated the Galicia campaign joins a centuries-long succession of battles lost by the Habsburg army because of its characteristic hesitation and indecision that had become habitual: from the Silesian wars against Prussia in the defeats of Karl von Lothringen against Frederick II, in the battles of Ulm, Austerlitz or Eggmühl/Regensburg against Napoleon, against the French at Solferino and the Prussians at Königgrätz – in every place it was the dilemma of slowness and indecisiveness about deployment and formation which even the great bravery of the troops could no longer compensate for. As we have seen, a part of this carelessness that had likewise become habitual was already the mentality of the army in times of peace; in Schinnerer's unsparing depiction of the critical events in August and early September 1914, their catastrophic traits become even more apparent. As we will see, the propensity for overestimation was quite soon joined by a headless fear and inability to lead in the face of the catastrophe on the horizon.

Schinnerer's narration opens with his assignment as adjutant in the executive office of the third army command on August 3, 1914 in Pressburg (now Bratislava in Slovakia) – an assignment that he saw as a demotion and which offended him (only later was he supposed to receive a command in the field and also be promoted to major general).

> 'Whom I have to thank for this demotion I don't know because I just don't happen to belong to the certain clique, but was always denounced as an outsider, hard-to-handle and pigheaded, so that could well be the reason for this.' (II, 2, translation mine)

Perhaps for this reason, his judgment on the leading protagonists in the developing debacle of the third army turns out so bleak. His immediate superior, First Lieutenant von Filz 'did virtually nothing; later on he also played the great man who only acquired and didn't take charge of anything' (II, 2). He assigns a 'large part of the blame for the many failures of the third army' (II, 2) to the head of the General Staff section, First Lieutenant Anton von Pitreich. Schinnerer had already noticed Pitreich's foolishness by exercises earlier; his later occupation (he retained his position until the end of the war) Schinnerer judged as 'malign'. The army commander was cavalry general, Brudermann; he also does not come out well in the judgment (elegant, likeable, popular with the subordinates, also a capable cavalry officer, but to blame for the backward state of the cavalry in equipment, weaponry 'and the even more impossible tactics.' (II, 3)

> 'There is not much to say about the other ment of the staff, they were well-behaved, hard-working average people, all of the same cut, all of the optimists of course, with a thorough contempt for the foe, a false perception of our situation and complete ignorance of economic relationships, in short the true Austrian officers as I have always known them and have already described them in these pages.' (II, 3, translation mine)

Exceptions for him were, among others, his two friends Incze and Wanko, whom he attested to have military proficiency, intelligence, humour and pessimism.

Schinnerer is soon convinced that the major force of the Russian army will launch itself at the comparably weak forces of the fourth, first and third Austrian-Hungarian armies (the second had not yet arrived) nearby

and east of Lemberg.

> ‘The invasion of the Russian army in East Prussia did not disorient us, the major force had to come against us. Therefore we were very much in agreement with the deployment of our army on the San and were very astonished and dismayed when we suddenly heard the *army command* and with it also the entire *deployment* were *pushed forward to Lemberg* almost to our border. We were too weak to be able to confront the Russians so far forward and we fostered special worries about our right flank that now went without the backing of the Carpathians and were left completely hanging in the air.’ (II, 7, my translation)

On the way to Lemberg in the train, Officer Schinnerer already encountered the organizational chaos (congestion, incompetent Polish officials) that would be the constant companion of royal and imperial army in this theatre of war.

On August 25th, Schinnerer learns from his superior von Filz that the battle east of Lemberg was immediately at hand, whereby Filz calculates with only 3 to 4 Russian infantry divisions whose march to the north must be prevented. ‘I was rigid with amazement and disgust about this unbelievable misjudgment of the situation’ (II, 11). Filz simply and ungraciously calls him just an alarmist and is, like the other men of the army commando, in a mood of certain victory. In the ensuing battles of Lemberg (from August 26th to September 2nd 1914) Schinnerer's pessimism is substantiated in a horrible way. His task was to have the respective orders delivered to the units posted at the front; but within a short time chaos erupted in which no one any longer knew where the locations of the higher command were to be found. First the cavalry units (divisions) are annihilated, their commanders shot themselves, were relieved of command, or ‘displayed their complete incompetence (II, 12). The Russian army really did form up in greater numbers and the misfortunes lined up one after another.

> ‘The third corps had suffered terrible losses at Globugory, its heroic attacks had collapsed, the glorious Regiment No. 27 had been almost completely annihilated, the corps had flooded back to the higher ground west of Przemyslány and come to a wearisome stop as the Russians had not pressed after them. The 22nd Division, Field Marshall Lieutenant Krauss-Ellislago, the previous Chairman of the Operations Office whom I had long known as the greatest swindler and military imposter, had become so confused that the commander wanted to surrender and ordered his division to post white flags everywhere.’ (II, 13, translation mine)

Although this commander was removed from command by his subordinates, the greater Russian force with its far superior artillery had rolled over and beyond the weak Austrian forces, just as Schinnerer and the other ‘alarmists’ (II, 13) had thought.

After the catastrophic beginning, the old army with its career officers was now replaced with a kind of ‘Militia’ that carried on the war for another four years. It was also geo-strategic bad luck or incapacity that led to the defeat of the central powers. But just as Schinnerer recognized in his sober, illusion-free manner that it was very fundamental traits or deficiencies in the Austrian military habitus that contributed to earlier catastrophes, literary voices also made it clear in their own way that habitual problems existed in the Habsburg army. Fictional and non-fiction sources complement one another, correct one another reciprocally and, together, they help in reaching sociologically useful explanations for difficult problems. They don't, however, do it by themselves. For their interpretation we also always need theoretical syntheses by means of

which we can classify the often complex observations from literature and contemporary witnesses. In these, the emotions and the flow of their expression must inevitably occur in a 'habitus'.

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Biography

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Notes

1. I am very grateful to Ms. Pommer, University of Graz, for the translation from the original German. [#N1-ptr1]
2. Black and yellow were the colours of the Austrian imperial flag. [#N2-ptr1]
3. Circe or Kirke, the Dread Goddess, as portrayed in the *Iliad*. [#N3-ptr1]

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