“My Brothers, Double your Prayers”: The Confessional Issue and Religious Networking in post-Westphalian Europe

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Geoffrey Parker, a noted historian of the Thirty Years' War, argued that one of the great achievements of that conflict was the abatement of the confessional issue as a "major destabilizing influence in European politics."¹ Nor is he alone. Many historians consider the peace of Westphalia (1648) a decisive turning point in international relations. Protestant theorists who saw their faith secured and Frenchmen who saw the beginnings of their triumphs have also overemphasized its importance. Parker acknowledged that religion continued to be "politically important" but maintained that it "no longer dominated international relations as it once had done."² In support of this view he cited one observer who noted after the Westphalian congress that "Reason of state is a wonderful beast for it chases away all other reasons."³ Nonetheless, the issue of religion still proved potent, especially when it was mixed with other elixirs, such as reason of state. The modern international system did not emerge full grown from the treaties of Münster and Osnabrück of 1648 as Athena did from the head of Zeus, nor should the modernity of the seventeenth century be exaggerated. In the minds of many, confessional issues still mattered. Jeremy Black and others as well have recently contended that "the role of confessionalism" in international politics needs to be re-examined.⁴

² Ibid.
³ Von Thurshirn, 28 Nov. 1648, quoted in ibid.
Confessional solidarity mattered in the pre- and post-Westphalian period. Religious issues polarized as well as united. Catholics as well as Protestants combined to advance their confessional interests in post-Westphalian Europe. Although no strong religious bond united the combatants in the great wars of the seventeenth or early eighteenth century, religion still featured prominently. Consider the outcry over Leopold's selling of Protestant ministers as galley slaves in 1674, Louis XIV's Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, or Archbishop Leopold Anton von Firmian's expulsion of the Protestants from Salzburg in 1730. Religious and diplomatic networks often intersected. Intertwining elites dominated both groups and often acted in concert particularly over religious issues with strategic overtones. These elites often shared a common educational background as well. For example, the court preachers at Frederick I of Prussia's court had attended universities in Leiden, Utrecht, Oxford, and Cambridge, to name but a few. Religious networks were also reinforced by an extensive network of publishing houses.

The often overlapping religious and diplomatic networks acted in concert to advance, for example, Protestant concerns. Many influential Protestants, such as Leibniz, supported the efforts of Daniel Ernst Jablonski, the court preacher at Königsberg, to unite the British, Swiss, and German Protestants. This idea particularly appealed to Frederick, the elector of Brandenburg, king in Prussia, a Calvinist who ruled over a predominantly Lutheran state. Both the Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge, a private organization of both clergy and laymen dedicated to advancing the work of the Anglican Church, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts actively intervened on behalf of their co-religionists abroad as did some of the English archbishops, such as John

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7 Ibid., 137-39 et ff.; York Minster Library, see Life of Dr. John Sharp, esp. part III and appendix II and Papers of Archbishop John Sharp, parts 1, 2, 6, 7, and 12 ff.; Gloucestershire Record Office, Hardwicke Court Muniments, Correspondence of Archbishop Sharpe, ff. esp. boxes 77 and 78; and Cambridge University Library, papers of Simon Patrick, bishop of Ely, esp. Add. 46, letter of Jablonski of 14 May 1712.

Sharp, archbishop of York. Exemplative of this network was Robert Hales, an influential member of the Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, who strove to create a network of Protestants. This network, he hoped, would ultimately lead to a united Protestantism that would be able to counter Catholic influence and protect Protestants throughout Europe. He actively involved himself in Protestant concerns, although his hopes of creating an eventual union between the Anglican Church and Protestants in Europe proved chimerical.

The diplomatic démarches during the War of the Spanish Succession and the ensuing peace negotiations underscore the vital role of confessionalism during the period. Conflicts with religious overtones whether in the Holy Roman Empire, Hungary, France, or Savoy erupted and divided the allies. In spite of the prediction of Jacob Jan Hamel-Bruyninx (1662-1738), the Dutch envoy at Vienna, that intervention in Protestant affairs in the Holy Roman Empire would be disastrous, England, along with other Protestant powers, notably Brandenburg Prussia, complained about the alleged persecution of Protestants in the empire, particularly in Silesia. These complaints did nothing to improve allied relations but did elicit in turn complaints from Johann Wenzel, Graf von Wratislaw, the imperial representative in London, about the persecution of Catholics in England and Ireland. Sir Phillip Meadows, the British representative at Vienna in July 1709, perhaps unconsciously revealed his frustration to Marlborough when he noted that he had brought up the issue of the "injustices done" to the Reformed in Silesia as he had done earlier in "memorial upon memorial."

9 A. Tindal Hart, *The Life and Times of John Sharp, Archbishop of York* (London: S.P.C.K., 1949); York Minster Library, see Life of Dr. John Sharp, Papers of Archbishop John Sharp, parts 1, 2, 6, 7, and 12 ff.; Gloucestershire Record Office, Hardwicke Court Muniments, Correspondence of Archbishop Sharpe, ff. esp. boxes 77 and 78; and Cambridge University Library, papers of Simon Patrick, bishop of Ely.


11 Ibid., 35-6.


The Protestant powers, England and the United Provinces, in particular, also sought to aid their co-religionists in Hungary and in France. Both the Rákóczi insurrection (1703-1711) and the Camisard revolt (1702), which broke out and were extinguished during the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1714), appealed to religious sensibilities, triggered strategic concerns, and underscored the vital role of religious networks in Early Modern diplomacy.¹⁴

Both Hungary and France harbored a tradition of resistance and garnered sympathy from highly placed diplomatic and religious figures. Just as Leopold in Hungary strove to extirpate Protestantism, so, too, did Louis in France. Of the two insurrections, the Hungarians were more successful in securing support, because the leader of the Hungarians was noble and therefore more credible and had far more resources¹⁵ than the principal Camisard leader, Jean Cavalier, the son of a peasant. In addition, the Hungarian insurgents numbered in the thousands, while those in France in the hundreds. Rákóczi was able to enlist Hungarians from all classes while the Camisards came predominantly from the peasant (42%) and artisan classes (58%).¹⁶ The Camisard insurrection often did not speak with one voice, while the Hungarians had the advantage of having a politically astute, articulate leader. In addition, Rákóczi appealed to both the enemies and allies of the Habsburgs while the Camisards only appealed to France's Protestant foes. Many of the Protestant clergy in Europe, however, regarded the Camisards as fanatics or charlatans in part because of the visions, the public hysteria, and the violence endemic in the uprising.¹⁷ Still, the allies attempted to support their co-religionists in France or as one English representative dubbed them, “the Queen's cheapest allies.”¹⁸ The Maritime Powers were unwilling at first to send aid in part because of their reluctance to sanction rebellion but also more pragmatically because of the doubts they harbored that the rebels could seriously challenge the royal forces. When the insurrection proved its resilience—much to the frustration of Louis XIV, the allies did send aid—but admittedly too late. The English dispatched two agents, David Flotard in 1703 and Tobie de Rocayrol in 1704, as well as two frigates, which were dispersed by storms and one of which was captured. Both the English and the Dutch also sent money to Geneva for the Camisards.

¹⁵ See, in particular, for the Hungarian efforts Budapest, Országos Levéltár, Rákóczi Szabadságharc Levéltára, 9.15, passim.
¹⁸ Frey and Frey, Societies in Upheaval, 18;
1709, the allies again sent a diversionary force, but it was forced to withdraw, as was the one sent in 1710. Of the leaders of the insurrection in France, Roland died in battle, and both Mazel and Cavalier ultimately accepted the armistice. When Mazel attempted to return to France to ignite yet another insurrection, he was captured and executed. Cavalier joined the royal army, but escaped and fought with the allies. He, too, sought to return to Languedoc but failed and subsequently served as governor of Jersey before dying abroad.

Rákóczi and his followers in Hungary were much more successful in garnering support and establishing both diplomatic and religious networks to support them than the rebels in the Cévennes. In particular, throughout the Hungarian insurrection (1703–1711), Rákóczi exploited the confessional issue to obtain much needed diplomatic leverage in his struggle against Leopold I and later Joseph I. Rákóczi realized that he needed the military, financial, and diplomatic support of foreign powers and that his chances for success hinged on his ability to transform a small localized struggle into a European affair. Not only did he personally appeal to rulers throughout Europe, but he also dispatched both diplomats and clerics to establish an extensive network of supporters. Although Rákóczi underscored the grievances of the Protestants in his approaches to the Protestant powers such as England, the United Provinces, Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden, many of his followers were Catholic as he was. Rákóczi, in addition, appealed on other grounds to other rulers regardless of their faith. Catholics: the rulers of France, Poland, Bavaria, and Venice, and the Pope; Orthodox: the tsar; 

19 See B.M. Add. Mss 61257 and 61258 for assorted letters from the Camisard leaders. For the transfer of funds see in particular Add. Mss. 61258, fols. 85-116; Add. Mss. 61413, fols 37-38; Add. Mss. 61148, fols. 105-108; Add. Mss. 61143, fols. 71-74; and Add. Mss. 61169, fols. 54-59, Extracts from the Resolutions of the States General.


22 B. M., Add.Mss 36795, fols.116-118 for Hales proposal of Feb.1709/10?.

23 Peter Pastor, “Hungarian-Russian Relations during the Rákóczi War of Independence,” in From Hunyadi to Rákóczi, 470.
and Muslim: the Turks. For example, Domokos Antal Brenner was dispatched, albeit unsuccessfully, to Clement XI to obtain papal support. Although the French had sent both men and money to aid the insurgency, they never formally recognized the new Hungarian government. The Russians extended international recognition, but this gesture had little significance and even less impact. The Russians appointed a special ambassador, Emelian I. Ukraintsev, but when he died at his post, either from a fever or excessive drinking, another was not sent. Nor were the Hungarian representatives to Peter I, Sándor Nedeczky, or Maté Thalaba successful in eliciting any substantive aid. The Russians’ meager efforts to mediate between the Habsburgs and the Hungarians were even less productive than those of the Maritime Powers.

The English and the Dutch, fearing that Leopold would divert badly needed troops from the war effort, urged their ally to negotiate with the insurgents. They feared that the Habsburg withdrawal of troops from the Rhine to Hungary would only prolong the war with France. Imperial resources were already overtaxed. The Maritime Powers also feared that the Turks might, at French instigation, launch yet another conflict with their old enemy, Austria. Both powers were also concerned that the emperor's withdrawal of troops to the Hungarian front would only encourage the peace party in their respective countries.

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26 Ibid., 474-76.


concerns melded with a real sympathy for the Hungarians, whom they saw "fighting only to protect their religion and liberty." Because of such concerns the Maritime Powers acted: they persuaded the emperor to accept their mediation for the negotiations in 1704 and 1705-1706, both of which floundered. The emperor's professed willingness to negotiate proved a canny stratagem, for it enabled him to appease his allies and at the same time gather more troops to dispatch to Hungary. The Habsburgs never deviated from their plan to crush Hungarian separatism.

Even after the failure of these negotiations, Rákóczi persisted in his attempts to win over the allies. He unhesitatingly exploited the religious issue, arguing as late as 1709 in a letter to Marlborough, the allied commander, that the Protestant religion would be extirpated in Hungary unless a settlement were reached with the emperor before the conclusion of a general peace. The emperor, however, proved increasingly resistant to demands from his allies on behalf of Hungary and bluntly told them that he "hoped and expected" that they would "desist from interposing their mediation" in the affairs of Hungary. The results had been as earlier -- resentment on both sides. In 1710 both the Grand Pensionary, Anthonie Heinsius, and the British representative, Charles Townshend, continued to urge Philipp Ludwig, Graf Sinzendorf, the imperial representative at the abortive Gertruydenberg negotiations to end the "troubles" in Hungary. In 1710 yet again, Sir Francis Palmes, the British representative in Vienna, was ordered to raise the issue of mediation with the imperial court. In his dispatch home, he dryly understated the court’s position when he noted that they were not "inclined to it." When told to press the issue, which he did, the reaction was predictable: he


Linda and Marsha Frey, *A Question of Empire*, esp. 82-84.

B. M., Blenheim Papers, British Diplomatic Correspondence, M36, Raby to Marlborough, Berlin?, 22 January 1709.


told the secretary of state candidly that a “great aversion” existed to such efforts and could only conclude gloomily that the insurrection would “end in the utter destruction” of the Hungarians.\textsuperscript{34} As late as December 1710, Palmes was still trying but candidly told St. John that such solicitations on behalf of the Hungarians would “not be hearkened to.”\textsuperscript{35} Nor was the court willing to accept the mediation of the czar. \textsuperscript{36} By 1711 Allied exasperation with the house of Austria was clear; the British in particular wanted the Habsburgs to concentrate all of their troops on the war and to recall the troops in Hungary. St. John put his disgruntlement pithily when he noted in a letter of 22 May 1711: “It is high time that the House of Austria who expected everything should begin to do something.”\textsuperscript{37}

The situation in Hungary, however, was dire; 85,000 had died in the war and another 410,000 had died from the pest ravaging the country. In addition, the country, already ravaged by the earlier war with the Turks, faced further deprivation during the eight years of war with the Habsburgs. \textsuperscript{38} Rákóczi found himself trying to prolong a war that he could not win. He had not succeeded in winning even one pitched battle with the Habsburgs. Nonetheless, Rákóczi remained at least outwardly optimistic and he ingenuously assured his representatives in Constantinople that both the allies and French would ensure that the Hungarians would be included in a universal peace treaty. \textsuperscript{39} Even after the peace at Szatmár of April 1711 that formally ended the insurrection, Rákóczi continued to underscore the threat to Protestantism. Klement adopted much the same tactic in August of 1711 when he equated abandoning Hungary with abandoning Protestantism. Hungary would share the fate of Bohemia; Protestantism would never be re-established. \textsuperscript{40} Two days earlier Queen Anne had ordered Charles Whitworth, ambassador extraordinary at Vienna, to urge the emperor to “detach” himself from Hungary. \textsuperscript{41} Klement, in a memorial to the States-General of January 1712, again emphasized that the interests of Rákóczi and the Protestant religion were inseparable and that the surety of one depended on that of the other. The bond between co-religionists was such that they called one

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\bibitem{P.R.O.} P.R.O., S.P. 80/31, fol.3, Palmes to Boyle, Vienna, 24 September 1710.; fol.30, Palmes, Vienna, dispatch of 4 October 1710; fols. 23-24, Palmes to Boyle, Vienna, 28 September 1710.
\bibitem{Ibid.} Ibid., fols. 86-87, Palmes to H. St. John, 17 December 1710. See also fol. 92, Palmes to ?, Vienna, 24 December 1710.
\bibitem{P.R.O.} P.R.O., S.P. 80/30, Palmes to Boyle, Vienna, 13 August 1710.
\bibitem{B.M.} B.M., Add. Mss. 37,358, fol. 247, St. John to Peterborough, 22 May 1711.
\bibitem{Várkonyi} Várkonyi, “Ad pacem universalem,” 5.
\bibitem{Joseph Fiedler} Joseph Fiedler (ed.), Acktenstücke zur Geschichte Franz Rákóczis, 2: 193-203, Klement to Queen Anne, 5 August 1711 in Fontes Rerum Austriacarum, 17(1958).
\bibitem{Parke} Parke, ed., Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private of the Right Honourable Henry St. John, Lord Visc. Bolingbroke, Bolingbroke to Drummond, 3 August 1711, I. 295.
\end{thebibliography}
another "brother." Just as the Treaty of Westphalia acted as a surety for the Protestant religion, he contended, so too the coming peace should act as a guarantee for the spiritual and temporal liberties of Hungary. In late 1712 Rákóczi, traveling under the alias Count de Saaros, even tried – but unsuccessfully, to see the queen and make a personal appeal.

Still later Rákóczi would attempt through Brenner and Klement to have the Hungarian issue discussed at Utrecht, two years after the settlement at Szatmár (1 May 1711). Klement pointed out to the bishop of Bristol, one of the British representatives, that the interests of Protestantism and those of Rákóczi were inseparable. Other Hungarian envoys appealed just as unsuccessfully to the Protestant powers as a whole. At the Utrecht conferences, no power came to Rákóczi’s aid. It was a Catholic power, France, who raised the question of Transylvanian independence, but only as a “bargaining ploy.” Rákóczi’s efforts to have the Hungarian situation raised at the Rastatt negotiations, which concluded peace between the Holy Roman Emperor and France, failed as did his subsequent efforts. In Hungary, Rákóczi refused to accept the negotiated amnesty and died in exile. Although Rákóczi and his followers did not attain most of their goals, what success they achieved was partially attributable to Rákóczi’s exploiting the extensive religious networks.

Although many statesmen undoubtedly sympathized with Rákóczi and some with their co-religionists, other considerations prevailed. As Daniel Defoe phrased it so succinctly: “It is not enough that a Nation

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42 Fiedler (ed.), *Acktenstücke zur Geschichte Franz Rákóczy’s*, ii. 255-258, Klement to the States-General, January 1712.
45 Fiedler (ed.), *Acktenstücke zur Geschichte Franz Rákóczy’s*, ii. 365-66, Klement to Rákóczi, Utrecht, 17 June 1712.
46 Ibid., ii. 368-69, Klement to Rákóczy, Utrecht, 2 June 1712. For Rákóczi’s agents reports see also Budapest, Academie Bibliothek, Ms. 4942-4945, 4951-4953.
be Protestant, and the People our Friends; if they will joyn with our enemies, they are Papists, Turks, and Heathens, as to us."\textsuperscript{50}

Nonetheless, during the peace conferences, negotiations often foundered over other religious questions. At the abortive peace negotiations of 1709-1710, the representatives from the Protestant states were concerned, as Charles Townshend, ambassador extraordinary to the United Provinces, phrased it, about "securing the Protestant religion" in the treaty.\textsuperscript{51} Some British church leaders, such as Robert Hales, saw the peace treaty as a "providential opportunity" for the "relief" of the Protestants. \textsuperscript{52} Other idealists in 1712 went so far as to argue that the coming peace treaty could re-establish Protestantism in France. \textsuperscript{53} But at Utrecht the British envoy Charles Talbot, duke of Shrewsbury, found Louis XIV intractable on just such issues.\textsuperscript{54} The envoys from Britain and the United Provinces were also unsuccessful in their attempts to force Victor Amadeus II, duke of Savoy, to guarantee the religious freedom of the Vaudois, whose condition fluctuated as often as the duke’s political fortunes. As an ally of Louis XIV in 1686 the duke revoked the edicts of toleration and launched a war of extermination against the Protestants. When the duke joined the alliance against France, a secret clause required him to restore the rights the Vaudois had lost. After the war the political winds again shifted – this time against the Vaudois. \textsuperscript{55} Early in the war, the scheme broached by John Churchill, duke of Marlborough, and William III to invade southern France with the support of Huguenot exiles and Vaudois irregulars and incite the French Protestants to rebel, underscores the exploitation of the religious issue by such pragmatists.\textsuperscript{56} In order to obtain more leverage the Protestant powers often acted together. For example, the queen instructed the British representatives at Utrecht, Thomas Wentworth, baron Raby and third earl of Strafford, and John Robinson, bishop of Bristol, to “concert with the Protestant allies” in order to pressure Louis XIV to restore religious rights to the French Protestants and release

\textsuperscript{50} Béla Köpeczi, “The Hungarian Wars of Independence of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries in their European Context,” in \textit{From Hunyadi to Rákóczi}, 452.

\textsuperscript{51} B.M., Egerton Mss. 894, fol.15, Townshend to Boyle, The Hague, 16 May 1710 n.s. and Add. Mss. 36795, esp. ff. 100, 116-118.

\textsuperscript{52} B. M., Add. Mss. 36795, fol.100, extract of letter, Boyle to Townshend, 1. Nov. 1709 and Stowe Mss. 223, esp. folvs. 234,235, and 258-261.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Mémoire abrégé ou considerations générales touchant le rétablissement de la religion reformée France par le prochain traité de paix} (The Hague; Johnson, 1712).


\textsuperscript{56} Claude Sturgill, “The Camisards,” in ibid., 74-5.
French Protestants from the galleys. Confessional solidarity and other such stratagems were not always successful because for many compromise on religious issues was anathema.

In the treaties which ended the War of the Spanish Succession, many of the servitudes, that is restrictions of or limitations on a state's sovereignty over part of its territory, were religious in nature. To give but three examples, articles 10 and 11 of the Anglo-Spanish treaty of Utrecht stipulated that the British could not settle Moors or Jews in Gibraltar and had to allow Catholics the free exercise of their religion in both Gibraltar and Minorca, and article 9 of the Barrier Treaty of November 1715 provided that the Protestant Dutch were to enjoy the free exercise of their religion in the barrier fortresses that were located in the Catholic Netherlands.

Probably the most incendiary issue for the Protestants was the stipulation in the treaties of Rastatt (1714) and Baden (1714) that the treaties of Westphalia (1648), Nymegen (1678-9), and Ryswick (1697) would serve as "the basis and foundation" for those agreements. Protestants wanted to modify or exclude Article four of the Treaty of Ryswick, which provided that "the Roman Catholic religion shall continue in the state it is at present in the places restored [by France]." After Louis XIV had seized these territories, he built over 1900 churches or chapels and introduced the Catholic religion in many areas, such as the Palatinate, that had been Protestant. Relations, for example, were strained even during the War of the Spanish Succession between the Maritime Powers and the devoutly Catholic, Johann Wilhelm von der Pfalz-Neuburg, the elector of the Palatinate and Herzog von Jülich-Berg, because he had supported article 4 earlier in 1697. Nonetheless, the elector allied with the Habsburgs and had been the first prince of the empire to join the Grand Alliance. In 1712/1713 the British, the Dutch, and the Prussians had demanded, in vain, that this article be modified but their Catholic allies aligned with France and supported its inclusion. Confessional solidarity triumphed. At the imperial diet, the Corpus Evangelicum, and at the Baden negotiations, the Protestant powers, particularly Prussia and Hesse-Darmstadt, engaged in many unsuccessful démarches to eliminate that provision. This "evangelical alliance" did

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not succeed, because the main signatories of the treaties were Catholic, as were many of the electors and estates in the Holy Roman Empire.

The issue of establishing Hanover as the ninth electorate in the empire also had religious overtones because many feared that the plurality in the electoral college would pass to the Protestants. This fear partly accounts for the pope's intervention on behalf of the two Catholic Wittelsbachs, the electors of Bavaria and Cologne, and for Louis' unwillingness to recognize the Hanoverian electorate until he was assured that the Wittelsbachs would be restored to all their lands and dignities. The Catholics were equally successful in safeguarding the Catholic religion in Guelders. Although the elector of Brandenburg received Upper Guelders, he did so only with the proviso that Roman Catholics would have complete religious freedom. Although the representatives of the Protestant powers on one side and those of the Catholic states on the other were not always successful, their willingness to act in concert and to appeal to the religious bond underscores its importance. Religious issues played a role during the War of the Spanish Succession and the ensuing peace negotiations because co-religionists often appealed to religious solidarity and exploited confessional networks to publicize their concerns and to coordinate their stratagems. After 1648, in multiple instances, religion proved to be the tie that bound.