

## THE RECRUITMENT OF SOLDIERS IN THE HABSBURG ARMY IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

**Abstract:** This study embarks on a brief overview of the ways in which the Habsburg Army was recruited and completed in the 18th century and the early 19th century. In addition to the mercenarian system perpetuated from the past, there was a transition toward the voluntary recruitment of paid soldiers from among the Habsburgs' own subjects, in parallel with soldiers from the neighbouring states. During the first decades of the 18th century, the mandatory recruitment of citizens deemed to be undesirable, dangerous and of too little use for the economy of the state was implemented. These two models provided the main sources of soldiers up until the introduction, in the last two decades of the 18th century, of the military conscription system, a system that preceded compulsory military service, which was to be introduced only a century later, in 1866. Special attention is given to the provinces of Hungary and Transylvania, which did not accept the introduction of the conscription system.

**Keywords:** army, recruitment, the Habsburgs, Transylvania, Maria Theresa, Joseph II.

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### **The mercenarian tradition**

This research is dedicated to the Austrian Army, more precisely the way in which the army was recruited and completed during the period of Austria's maximum eastern and south-eastern expansion, from the expulsion of the Turks from Hungary at the end of the 17th century until after the Napoleonic Wars. Throughout Europe, from the late 17th century until after the mid-18th century, there occurred transformations of the medieval armies - consisting of "feudal contingents, mercenary armies, militias of the cities and the peasants, princely bodyguards, troops that stayed together only for a while"<sup>2</sup> - into regular, permanent armies, serving as instruments of the state and its policy. Such a process also took place in the Austrian Empire, when, in order to expand its dominance in South-Eastern Europe, the House of Habsburg needed an ever more numerous, unitary and well-trained army.

In the 17th century, mercenarian practices ensured the core structure of armies, especially when it came to numerous troops for waging important wars. Up until the 16th century, Swiss mercenaries were in the highest demand, but from the time of Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519) on mercenary troops began to be recruited also in the German space. These troops were famous throughout Europe for their effectiveness, but also for the brutalities they committed. During the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), waged by both sides mostly with mercenaries, the Austrians

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<sup>2</sup> István Deák, *Mai presus de naționalism. O istorie politică și socială a corpului de ofițeri habsburgici, 1848-1919*, Cluj-Napoca, Academia Romană, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2009, p. 41.

recruited huge armies from across Western Europe. Albert von Wallenstein (1583-1634)<sup>3</sup> was a typical and brilliant example of a commander of mercenaries; he led the Catholic Emperor's armies against Protestant princes, but was killed at the command of the same Emperor, because he had abused his almost discretionary power in an attempt to enforce his own policy. What defined this mercenarian system was free recruitment, future soldiers receiving a lump sum payment and being employed for a specified period, usually until the end of the campaign. The commander of the mercenaries was entrusted by a prince or another authority to recruit a number of regiments, which meant that this commander became a businessman, for he made recruitments with his money or on the basis of credits. The captains and colonels in his suborder conducted the recruitment process itself, dealing with the equipment and payment of the soldiers. The money paid in advance was recovered from the commander of the army, Wallenstein in this case, and he received it from the emperor. The commanders of regiments and companies were their owners, representing the backbone of the army, and a side effect was the dishonest enrichment of these officers who appropriated a part of the money, reporting higher expenditures. In the 17th century there were also other famous mercenary leaders, such as Duke Bernhard of Saxony-Weimar (1604-1639), who maintained a large private army, fighting with it on the side of various European kings. Wallenstein surpassed them all having several dozen entrepreneurs, owners and commanders of regiments in his suborder. His army comprised, in 1632, 57 infantry regiments and 70 cavalry regiments. Under Wallenstein's command, his troops committed robberies and acts of violence against the civilian population, as mercenaries were accustomed to, even though their leader placed a high value on discipline and strove to enforce it.<sup>4</sup>

The huge costs of the army organized by Wallenstein were covered through the system of the war contributions imposed not only on the enemy or occupied countries, or in the countries on whose territory those wars were waged, but also on the Austrian provinces. Wallenstein perfected the contributions system. Some contemporary historians consider him to have been the greatest war entrepreneur of his time, for he was not only a military commander, but also managed the food and clothing supplies, the payment of the army, and its equipment with weapons and ammunition.<sup>5</sup>

Until Maria Theresa's reign, there were great variations as regards the size of the army, which grew a lot in times of war, but whose regiments were reduced or dissolved entirely in its aftermath. After the Peace of Westphalia, Ferdinand III reduced the number of infantry regiments from sixty-six, in 1637, to only nine. This

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<sup>3</sup> The historian Jules Michelet wrote about this figure: "Sombre, silent, unapproachable, Wallenstein opened his mouth only to order executions and yet everyone marched under his banners ... He established the reign of soldiers ... Anyone who had iron spurs could be king and did what they wanted." Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France. Vol. 11: Richelieu et la Fronde*, Paris, 1862, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Rebitsch, *Wallenstein. Biografie eines Machtmenschen*, Wien-Köln-Weimar, Böhlau, 2010, pp. 127-130.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Winkelbauer, "Nervus rerum Austriacarum. Zur Finanzgeschichte der Habsburgermonarchie um 1700," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1620 bis 1740: Leistungen und Grenzen des Absolutismus Paradigmas*, ed. Peter Mat' a, Thomas Winkelbauer, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2006, pp. 196-197.

strong variation was also maintained during the reign of Leopold I (1650-1705)<sup>6</sup> and even in the age of the great military commander, Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736).<sup>7</sup>

### Free recruitment and *ex officio* recruitment

In the 18th century, the army continued to fill its ranks through voluntary recruitment (in German, *Werbung* or *Anwerbung*), on a contract basis, the future soldiers receiving, upon concluding the agreement, an advance payment (*Handgeld*) and then being more or less regularly paid. While during the time of Wallenstein, the soldiers under his command had been recruited from the vast European spaces (Ireland, Scotland and the Catholic Netherlands provided soldiers for the cavalry, Croats were in demand in Hungary, and Italians and Spaniards were hired for the infantry regiments in Italy, etc.),<sup>8</sup> in the first decades of the 18th century there was a tendency to restrict the area of recruitment to the Austrian space and to the Roman Empire of the German Nation, the Austrian regiments being granted territories of recruitment there.<sup>9</sup> The tendency became ever more evident in the following decades. Soldiers were recruited voluntarily and paid, but in the 18th century, aside from these features, they no longer had almost anything in common with the mercenary troops of previous centuries: they lacked discipline and terrorized the civilian population during and especially after the end of various campaigns. However, recruitment abroad, especially in the Holy Roman Empire, remained for a long time a way of troop completion, which, although it cost much, had the advantage that it exempted the manpower in agriculture, crafts, industry and mining from military duties. In 1765 it was more rigorously regulated,<sup>10</sup> in the sense that henceforth all the German regiments received recruitment territories in the Holy Roman Empire and there were created institutions that were to organize this recruitment as effectively as possible.<sup>11</sup> A series of ordinances issued by the Aulic War Council during the time of Joseph II constantly brought new details concerning the qualities of the officers and non-commissioned officers dispatched, for this purpose, to certain areas of the German space, the preferential advancement of meritorious officers,<sup>12</sup> the maintenance of officers who established good relations with local authorities in their positions,<sup>13</sup> the equipment of the recruits and money they received in the beginning,<sup>14</sup> the age and the

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<sup>6</sup>Alphons von Wrede, *Geschichte der k. und k. Wehrmacht. Die Regimenter, Corps, Branchen und Anstalten von 1618 bis Ende des XIX. Jahrhunderts*, Viena, 1898, vol. I, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup>Gilbert Anger, *Illustrierte Geschichte der k. k. Armee dargestellt in allgemeiner und specieller culturhistorischer Bedeutung von der Begründung und Entwicklung an bis heute*, vol. II, 1887, p. 698.

<sup>9</sup>Anger, *op. cit.*, p. 936.

<sup>10</sup>The high resolution of 4 June 1765. See Wrede, *op cit.*, p. 100, note 1.

<sup>11</sup>Wrede, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 100.

<sup>12</sup>The Ordinances of Prague, 1 March 1779 and 12 April 1782. *Apud* Jakob Heinrich, *Gesetze für die k. k. Armee in Auszug nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Gegenstände*, Vienna and Prague, 1784, p. 335.

<sup>13</sup>The Ordinance of Prague, 20 February 1781. *Ibidem*

<sup>14</sup>The Ordinance of the Aulic War Council of 15 September 1779 and the Ordinance of Prague, 10 April 1781. *Ibidem*, p. 337.

height of the recruits,<sup>15</sup> etc. Soldiers were recruited mostly from Prussia, Bavaria, the Palatinate (Kurpfalz), Würzburg, Ansbach, Zweibrücken, Darmstadt, Münster, Trier, Cologne, Liège, Wolfenbüttel, but also from the provinces subjected to the Turks.<sup>16</sup> Even during the wars with Napoleon, recruitments were made outside the Austrian provinces; provisionally discontinued due to the campaigns against the French, the activity of all those 32 recruitment commandos that were active on the territory of the Holy Roman Empire had been resumed in 1802.<sup>17</sup> At the beginning of the 18th century, the custom of borrowing entire regiments or corps from foreign sovereigns was also maintained. In the campaign to Italy, Eugene of Savoy led troops borrowed from the King of Prussia, while for the wars with the Turks, the Austrians borrowed troops from Bavaria. Other troops were requested, in this age, from the Danish, Dutch and English sovereigns, leading historians to assert that in wars led by Eugene, barely one quarter of the soldiers belonged to the Austrian Army, the remaining troops being borrowed.<sup>18</sup> Beginning with the reign of Maria Theresa, recourse was also made to the recruitment of volunteer corps<sup>19</sup> from across the Habsburg Empire or from outside it. Sometimes these volunteers became the nucleus of a future regular regiment. This was the case of the volunteer corps recruited with the permission of Empress Maria Theresa in 1740 by Baron Franz von Trenk from his estate in Croatia and made up largely of former thieves and outlaws pardoned for the purpose of enrolment, a corps that later became the nucleus of the Hungarian Infantry Regiment no. 53.<sup>20</sup> From the Romanian space, at the time of the wars waged by Joseph II against the Turks, there were recruited, in 1788-89, volunteers from Transylvania and

<sup>15</sup> The Ordinance of Vienna, 15 September 1779 the one of Prague, 14 February 1783. *Ibidem*, p. 337.

<sup>16</sup> Jakob Heinrich, *Gesetze für die k. k. Armee in Auszug nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Gegenstände*, Vienna and Prague, 1787, p. 626 [i.e. 520]

<sup>17</sup> *Cirkular-Rescript an der Hofkriegsrath, an sämtliche General-Commanden und die dem Hofkriegsrath unterstehene den Hauptämter*, Viena, Degen, 1802, p. 5. The Austrian Army was no exception, all the armies of the time being partly made up of foreigners. Even the regiments of the Prussian Army had Hungarians, Italians, Dutch, Swiss and soldiers from other German states. Similarly, Germans served in other armies: the Netherlands, France, Spain, England. 30,000 German mercenaries fought on the side of the King of England in the US War of Independence. Even the armies led by Napoleon foreigners had a considerable number of foreigners, in the Russian campaign (1812/1813) less than half of his soldiers being French. See Jochen Oltner, "Migration, Krieg und Militär in der Frühen und Späten Neuzeit," in *Krieg, Militär und Migration, in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Matthias Asche, Berlin-Münster, Lit Verlag, 2008, p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> Anger, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 939.

<sup>19</sup> Soldiers were hired and paid during the conflict; when peace was concluded, that corps was usually dissolved. The corps of volunteers could be made of less valuable members from a military perspective or, if they were good fighters, like those recruited by Trenck in Croatia, if they committed numerous abuses. Trenck's soldiers, Barițiu wrote, "spread fear in the German lands, just like the Turks had previously spread it." See George Barițiu, *Părți alese din istoria Transilvaniei pe două sute de ani în urmă*, second edition, Brașov, Inspectoratul pentru cultură al județului Brașov, 1993, vol. I, p. 370. About the corps of Arnauts recruited in the Principalities, in 1788, a foreign traveller through the Romanian lands stated that it consisted of the worst elements of the Moldovan nation. See *Hacquets neueste physikalisch-politische Reisen in den Jahren 1788-1789 und 90. durch die Dacischen und Sarmatischen oder Nordlichen Karpaten*, part II, Nürnberg, 1791, p. 49.

<sup>20</sup> Anton Marx, *Geschichte des 53-ten ungarischen Linien-Infanterie-Regiments*, Viena, 1838, p. 11.

a corps of Arnauts from the Principalities; the latter participated, under the command of Joseph Bedeus von Scharberg, in the Battles of Focșani and Mărtinești.<sup>21</sup> Among the foreign officers employed in the Austrian Army there was Prince Radu Cantacuzino, son of the Wallachian ruler Ștefan Cantacuzino, who was briefly, in 1736, Commander of the Illyrian Border Guard Regiment, during a campaign in Italy.<sup>22</sup>

The tendency of recruitment from the power-holders' own countries became more and more visible over the course of the 18th century. In as early as 1722, captains received an order enjoining them to send a number of soldiers on 9-10 month leave, so that recruitments could be made in the Austrian provinces with money saved in this way.<sup>23</sup> Upon taking the reign, Maria Theresa found a body of officers of very different ethnicities, many from outside her empire. At the soldiers' level, the situation was even more variegated from an ethnic point of view.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, Maria Theresa pushed for the recruitments to be made primarily from among her Austrian subjects.

In addition to contract-based recruitment, another way the ranks of the army could be filled during the reign of Leopold I (1658-1705) was through recruitments made by the estates. The central institutions, such as the Aulic War Council and the Aulic Camera, where the required number of new soldiers was centralized at the end of each year, distributed them by province, and the provincial authorities further distributed them by counties (or seats and districts), cities and towns. In the language of the time, this kind of recruitment was called *Aushebung*, *Rekrutierung* or *(Land)rekrutenstellung/ ex officio Stellung* in German and had the advantage that it did not keep the officers in charge of recruitment away from the troops, but it also had the disadvantage that the local authorities seized the opportunity of enrolling as soldiers young men of a more criminal disposition, undesirables, or even men who were unfit for military service. The complaints submitted by the military authorities to the Aulic War Council were apparently in vain, because the custom of sending turbulent or suspect individuals in the army, regarded as a correctional institution, remained in use for a long time.<sup>25</sup> In this case it was not a question of the free option of the future soldiers, for they were sent into the army by local authorities because

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<sup>21</sup> Anger, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 1080. Joseph Beddeus von Scharberg was, in 1788, captain in the Second Romanian Border Guard Regiment, when he was advanced to the rank of major and was entrusted with the command of the volunteer corps in the Principalities, with which he distinguished himself in the two battles. The volunteer corps was dissolved in 1790 and he returned to his regiment, advancing to the rank of colonel in 1801, a rank at which he retired. He died in Mediaș in 1806. See Constantin von Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaisertums Österreich enthaltend die Lebensskizzen der denkwürdigen Personen, welche seit 1750 in den österreichischen Kronländern geboren wurden oder darin gelebt und gewirkt haben*, vol. 1, Viena, 1856, p. 219.

<sup>22</sup> See N. Iorga, *Radu Cantacuzino*, în *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile secțiunii istorice*, Seria III, tom XIII, pp. 9-10.

<sup>23</sup> Anger, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 936.

<sup>24</sup> Gustav von Hubka, *Geschichte des k. und k. Infanterie Regiments Graf von Lacy Nr. 22 von seiner Errichtung bis zur Gegenwart*, Zara, Editura regimentului, 1902, p. 60.

<sup>25</sup> Anger, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 935.

they had mutilated themselves to avoid military service, because they had fled dodged recruitment, because the authorities considered them useless, indolent or roguish, or because some influential villagers or members of the same family thought they were dangerous and wanted to see them removed from the community. Catching the future soldiers occurred throughout the entire county on the same day, the date being kept secret and being preceded by secret meetings of the local leaders, who had to reach agreement on the candidates that were to be sent to the army. This undertaking was, therefore, one of the riskiest for the local political bodies (especially for the judge and jurors of the village), which exposed themselves thus to the vindictiveness of the candidates or their relatives.<sup>26</sup>

Those employed with a contract (called *Capitulanten*, from contract, *Capitulation*) were wilfully recruited and received a sum of money in instalments (called *Handgeld*), which varied depending on supply and demand, as well as the man's physical qualities. A committee made up of officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers travelled to the designated villages or circles, submitted to the local authorities the documents on the basis of which recruitment was permitted, and then, as a rule, a drummer announced the recruitment conditions to the local population.<sup>27</sup> The rules of voluntary recruitment were, however, often violated and the banning of illegal recruitments was always on the agenda. An order issued by the Aulic War Council on 30 January 1722 prohibited employment through dishonest means, through ruses and alcohol incentives, and threatened with punishments the infantry officers who walked around girded with a broadsword, as if they were about to recruit soldiers for the dragons and the cuirassiers, as these categories enjoyed great prestige, just like the entire cavalry in general. These threats also concerned those officers who captured craftsmen's apprentices and sold them to the local authorities that were obliged to provide recruits, practising thus illegal human trade.<sup>28</sup> Orders of this kind were constantly reissued, proving how easily and frequently they were violated.

In reality, the task was not easy even for those who were in charge of recruitment. In Bavaria, whence several Austrian regiments were recruited, there were many tall peasants, in high demand, whom officers would have liked to hire, but who cost a lot. If promises and money did not persuade them, guile and violence were the means at hand. The complaints of the local authorities in this province from the beginning of the 18th century show that the illegal capturing of recruits was quite frequent. Some communities retaliated violently to such recruitments, leading to the wounding or even killing of those who had taken up soldiers by force.<sup>29</sup> As for guile, here recruiters were helped by alcohol and women of loose morals. They lured young

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<sup>26</sup> This was Johann von Csaplovics and his work *Gemälde von Ungern*, part II, Pesta, C. A. Hartleben, 1829, p. 222-223.

<sup>27</sup> Hubka, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-12.

<sup>28</sup> Hermann Meynert, *Geschichte der k.k. österreichischen Armee, ihrer Heranbildung und Organisation, sowie ihrer Schicksale, Thaten und Feldzüge, von den frühesten bis auf die jetzige Zeit*, vol. IV: *Geschichte des Kriegswesens und der Heeresverfassung in der österreichischen Monarchie vom Tode des Kaisers Leopold I. bis auf die gegenwärtige Zeit*, Viena, 1854, pp. 12-14.

<sup>29</sup> Hubka, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-12.

men to the tavern, where they often established their headquarters, giving them to drink in order to persuade them more easily that life as a soldier was full of adventure. They resorted to the most despicable scams, such as finding a sum of money in the pocket of a young man (or even in the food or in the drinking cup!), the sum being declared then as *Handgeld*, while the man upon whom the money had been found was declared a recruit. Or it sufficed for an unwitting young man to be persuaded to drink in honour of the emperor or the commander of armies for this gesture to be considered the recognition of a commitment. If the man refused to consider himself a future soldier, he was declared a rebel, arrested and maltreated until he succumbed and was enlisted.<sup>30</sup> Because young men had become suspicious, more and more sophistication was required for luring them. A legally-trained early 19th-century author described a typical recruitment scene. At an annual fair or at the feast of a church's patron saint, that is exactly where many people gathered, those in charge of recruitment presented themselves and installed a tent in the centre of the village in question. The scenes recounted by him took place in Hungary, where military service for the hussars was, by far, preferred to that in the infantry, so recruiters dressed up in hussar uniforms, the band that accompanied them played, and soldiers performed martial dances that young people enjoyed very much. However, they tried to remain aside, looking from a few steps away, with their hands in their pockets or clasped behind their backs, lest they should be grabbed by hand, for shaking hands with the officers was tantamount to an agreement of military commitment. But the officer or one of his entourage started speaking with the young man he had laid eyes on, convincing him that he was from around the same place (after learning from the naïve young man all the information he needed), which meant that he had gained his trust; he then spoke to the young man then about the hardships of life as a soldier, which he wouldn't recommend to anyone, and advised him to never shake hands with a recruiter, for he would be considered a recruit. But he invited the young man to have a drink before saying goodbye to his new friend - and here the seducer used a convincing tone - for it was all right to do so. The young man had a drink, followed by another and many more, got into a jovial mood and then woke up as a fresh recruit without even realizing what had happened.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Anger, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 697.

<sup>31</sup> Csaplovics, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-224. Things happened like that also on the threshold of the 1848 Revolution, as noted by a French intellectual married to a Hungarian countess. "Sometimes the sound of military music suddenly breaks out in the village. Hussars, dressed in their elegant outfit, perform an animated dance in the square, jutting their spurs. The peasant comes rushing and contemplate this brilliant performance. His eyes watch the dancers; he spies on every shot, on every gesture: the music and the noise of the swords exalt him; just as fascinated outside, he leaves the circle of spectators, hits his spurs and joins the hussars. He admires their uniform. He is given a sword: he catches a *şako* adorned with a flying plume. In his drunkenness, he quickly makes a cross or signs his name at the bottom of a dangerous paper that is shown to him. Will he not have, in turn, some nice weapons, a good horse, and will he not come, in a dazzling outfit, to dance before the women in his village? Alas! The dream does not last long. Having become a soldier in the service of the "German Emperor," he is subject to a discipline he hadn't suspected. If only he had at least the beautiful horse that his imagination had painted! But much of the time he's incorporated in the infantry, and he no longer has any other consolation than to wear his boots and tight pants with gallons that distinguish the Hungarian regiments from the German troops." See Auguste de

Violent recruitments were commonplace also in Prussia in the 18th century, causing people to flee *en masse* across the border.<sup>32</sup> Violent recruitments are also documented in Saxony<sup>33</sup> and throughout the Holy Roman Empire,<sup>34</sup> as well as in other European spaces.<sup>35</sup> What the historian Stefan Kroll says about the Army of Saxony may be valid for all the armies of the time: during years of peace violent recruitments were sporadic, but when there was a sudden need for higher numbers of troops, the complaints of those forcibly recruited were quickly dismissed by the authorities, so the difference between the two forms of recruitment was difficult to make.<sup>36</sup>

### **The introduction of the military conscription system**

After the almost ceaseless wars with the neighbouring powers from the early years of her reign, Maria Theresa had to think about a more efficient and less costly recruitment system than that of hiring foreign soldiers, following the Prussian model in supplementing the army ranks with recruits from the Austrian provinces. Prussia had gradually introduced, since 1722-1733, a pattern of recruitment that preceded compulsory military service, called the canton system (*Kantonsystem*), based on the principle that every subject was required (with some exceptions) to do military service. The country was divided into territories for completing the regiments, called cantons, each regiment being assigned such a canton, whence they recruited necessary soldiers. Based on this system, the Army of Prussia had grown substantially in a short time, having approx. 190,000 soldiers in around 1790, ranking behind Austria and Russia, but ahead of France, the countries compared to which it was far smaller in terms of surface and number of inhabitants.<sup>37</sup>

Up until 1770, numerous changes, but on a smaller scale (for Maria Theresa's army was almost incessantly on a footing of war), tended to make the army more uniform in terms of clothing and armament, of organization and training, reducing the rights of the owner of the regiment who hitherto had broad powers (inherited from the age of mercenaries) as regards choosing the regiment's uniform, appointing officers and selling officers' posts, etc. In this way, the army was becoming more and more an army of the emperor. In 1769 regiments received a number, even though they continued to be called after the name of the owner.<sup>38</sup>

Gérando, *Transilvania și locuitorii săi*, I, translated from the French by Laurențiu Malomfălean and Marius Mitrache, revision and critical apparatus by Ana-Maria Stan, foreword Ioan-Aurel Pop, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2014, p. 33-34.

<sup>32</sup> Meynert, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> Stefan Kroll, *Soldaten im 18. Jahrhundert zwischen Friedensalltag und Kriegserfahrung. Lebenswelten und Kultur in der kursächsischen Armee 1728-1796*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2006, pp. 129-132.

<sup>34</sup> Ralf Pröve, *Lebenswelten. Militärische Milieus in der Neuzeit. Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. Bernard R. Kroener, Angela Strauß, Berlin, Lit-Verlag, 2010, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, the chapter "Du recrutement forcé sous l'Ancien Régime" in Edgard Boutaric's book, *Institutions militaires de la France avant les armées permanentes*, Paris, H. Plon, 1863.

<sup>36</sup> Kroll, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 73.

<sup>38</sup> Wrede, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 37-41.



A much more important reform was that related to recruitment. From 1771 to 1881, a new recruitment and troop supplementation system was introduced in the Austrian Army: the system of conscription and recruitment circles (*Conscription- und Werbbezirkssystem*) based on a very thorough census of the population and on the principle of every citizen's obligation to defend his country. However, not only were whole social categories exempted, but also some provinces that had maintained their old constitutions and military laws. Due to the resistance encountered, conscription could be introduced only in the provinces: Bohemia, Moravia, the Austrian part of Silesia, Austria above and beneath the Enns, Steyermark, Carinthia, Craina, Görz County Gradiska, and Galicia and Lodomeria. This system was not accepted by the Kingdom of Lombardo-Venice, Tyrol and Vorarlberg, Hungary and Transylvania, where recruitment and regiment completion continued to be done only through voluntary recruitment (*Werbung*) and through recruitment made by the political authorities (*Rekrutenstellung*), and in case of great need by summoning all those capable of fighting (*Aufgebot*). An exception was the Military Border, where all the fit men were subjected to the obligation of military service through their very status as border guards.

The conscription of the population was a laborious process, put into practice by a bureaucracy that did not leave anything to chance, every situation being taken into account. For the population census, forms were drawn up for each family (*Familienbogen*), recording as much information as possible, especially about the potential soldiers: the name of each member of the family, their age, their qualification, as accurately as possible, their religion, height, health problems, etc. These forms had many entries, and instructions for completing the information in respect of each person were very detailed. It was necessary, for instance, to record whether a young man had parents or not, if he was born of married parents or out of wedlock; if he was not present in the village, his whereabouts and for what purpose; about those who had learned a craft it was important to note down whether or not that was their main source of income. As for the height of the young men, there were three possible sections in which they could be included. Other instructions related to the socio-professional categories and the way in which each person had to be tabulated.<sup>39</sup> By centralizing this information, civil and military authorities had a clear record of the recruitable population available to them. To keep this information up to date, the movement of the population was reviewed every year, between the months of February and May. Civil and military servants went from house to house and recorded the changes. Note was taken of the soldiers on leave, the young men who had military obligations, but had become inapt or had moved in the meantime, etc.<sup>40</sup> In the provinces subject to conscription, the population movement was no longer free, a young man with military obligations being prohibited from moving to a different recruitment constituency than that approved by the authorities; what was even more difficult was moving to another Austrian

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<sup>39</sup> Heinrich, *Gesetze...*, 1787, pp. 590-591.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 593-596.

province that was not subject to conscription, in this case, that the family needed the approval of the Aulic Chancellery of the province in question.<sup>41</sup>

Although rigorously compiled, the lists of those who were recruitable were not long.<sup>42</sup> Besides the fact that they could redeem themselves by paying a sum of money or finding, also in exchange for money, a substitute, a lot of categories were exempted: nobles, priests, civil servants and their sons, some categories of peasants who owned a particular area of land or were the only sons of elderly parents, mining workers, craftsmen, etc., that is, all the individuals necessary for the major economic activities, in addition to the privileged classes.<sup>43</sup> Temporary exemptions existed, too, being generally applied in the case of young men who had not finished their studies yet. Men aged between 17-18 and 40 years were recruited, military service was for life, and only those not subject to conscription could be hired on a contract basis (*Capitulation*) for a certain period, but at the conclusion of the contract, those soldiers were invited to get rehired, better conditions and a sum of money being offered to them upon signing a new contract.<sup>44</sup>

Each regiment had now a fixed circle for military recruitment and troop completion, as well as a permanent garrison location, and in times of peace the regiments were generally deployed in the recruitment territory. These recruitment circles reflect Austria's territorial gains and losses: after the first division of Poland (1772), Austria gained Galicia and Lodomeria, where more and more regiments were recruited, especially after the losses incurred after 1800: the Netherlands, Lombardy, Venice, etc.<sup>45</sup>

At the insistence of Archduke Charles (1771-1847), President of the Aulic War Council and promoter of some vital army reforms in the wake of the defeats suffered before the French, the Patent issued on 4 May 1802 abolished the burdensome military service for life, limiting it to 10-15 years for those subject to conscription.<sup>46</sup> Under the Patent concerning conscription of 25 October 1804, some improvements were brought to the conscription system, followed by others, after the campaigns of 1805, 1809 and 1813.<sup>47</sup> Around the 1848 Revolution, military service was reduced to 8 years: in 1845, in the German provinces,<sup>48</sup> and, in 1847, in Transylvania.<sup>49</sup> The

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 602.

<sup>42</sup> Not even all those conscripted were incorporated, but only a part of them. The legislation from the beginning (see *Conscriptions-und Werbbezirkssysteme. Für die kaiserl. königl. Deutschen Erbländer in Friedens-und Kriegszeiten*, Klagenfurt, 1781) does not specify how many of those conscripted were called to arms and according to which criteria. Perhaps they were summoned by date of birth, like in Prussia, and the draw was introduced later. See Denise Geng, *Monarch und Militär. Zum Verhältnis von politischer und militärischer Führung im 19. Jahrhundert. Preußen - Deutschland im Vergleich*, Berlin, LIT Verlag, 2013, p. 59.

<sup>43</sup> Wrede, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 101.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 102.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 103.

<sup>46</sup> Anger, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 1266-1267.

<sup>47</sup> Franz Joseph Schopf, *Sammlung aller in Conscriptions-, Recrutierungs-und Militär-Entlassungs-Angelegenheiten erlassenen Vorschriften*, Viena, 1833, pp. 4-5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 107.

<sup>49</sup> Bariț, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 766-767.

standardization of the recruitment system at the level of the entire Empire took place only in 1852, when the 8-year military service, plus two years in the reserve, became valid everywhere.<sup>50</sup>

The conscription introduced by Joseph II did not solve the problem of ensuring the necessary troop numbers, because recruitment with money was maintained, especially in the Holy Roman Empire, as was the mandatory recruitment conducted by local authorities. During the period of the wars with the French, recourse was made, again, to the recruitment of volunteer corps, such as the volunteer corps in Galicia organized by Count O'Donnell or the one organized by Archduke Charles in the Austrian provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, in 1800. The military border was considered another rich source of soldiers, especially in the latter part of the wars caused by the French Revolution of 1789.<sup>51</sup>

### Hungary and Transylvania

Recruitment in the provinces of the Hungarian Crown and in the Principality of Transylvania, where the new recruitment system could not be imposed - despite all the insistence of Joseph II, who sent troops in the Hungarian counties that displayed the strongest resistance<sup>52</sup> - posed special problems to the Austrian military administration. According to the feudal constitution, the country's defence was the duty of the nobility. Small regular troops existed here, a sort of militia, known as hajduks. In addition to these small units, the nobles had the obligation to take part in the war personally, as long as they could carry weapons (*insurrectio personalis*) and they also had the duty to equip a number of soldiers from among the freemen who had settled on their estates (*Portal-Insurrection* or *Banderien*), their number varying depending on the size of the estates. At the same time, there was a tax for the maintenance of the troops, distributed by villages and boroughs, depending on the number of houses.<sup>53</sup>

At the beginning of the 18th century, the regular troops in Hungary included only one infantry regiment, organized in 1702, and three hussar regiments, organized in 1688, 1696 and 1702. In the Diet of Pressburg from 1715, it was decided that other regiments should be organized to supplement the regular army,<sup>54</sup> so much so that at the beginning of the reign of Empress Maria Theresa, only three regular infantry regiments and eight hussar regiments came from the Hungarian provinces.<sup>55</sup> The number of regiments recruited from Hungary was thus small in relation to the totality of the troops, as in 1728, the Habsburgs had 119 regiments (65 infantry, 17 dragons,

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<sup>50</sup> Jürgen Angelow, *Von Wien nach Königgrätz. Die Sicherheitspolitik des Deutschen Bundes im europäischen Gleichgewicht (1815 - 1866)*, München, Oldenbourg, 1996, p. 67.

<sup>51</sup> Anger, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 1266.

<sup>52</sup> Ferdinand Ebhardt, *Geschichte des k. k. 33 Infanterie-Regiments*, Weißkirchen-Biserica Albă, 1888, p. 146.

<sup>53</sup> Hauptmann Alexich, *Die freiwilligen Aufgebote aus den Ländern der ungarischen Krone im erten schlesischen Krieg*, part I, in: *Mitteilungen des K. und K. Kriegs-Archivs*, vol. IV (1889), Viena, 1889, pp. 117-119.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 120, note 2.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 120.

26 cuirassiers, 10 hussar regiments, 1 hajduk regiment). Still, this was a theoretical number, for in reality the last wars of Charles VI were lost due to the lack of troops.<sup>56</sup>

The infantry regiment organized in Hungary in 1702 was sent to the battlefield in Italy, where a part of the war of the Spanish Succession was waged (1700-1714), and after 1720, it participated in an expedition to Sicily where it lost many men (in 1723 alone it lost 388 soldiers), but there was no money for new recruitments. In 1726 the regiment was still in Italy in a state that was far from joyful, the soldiers receiving their payment only partially, and the officers not having been paid for several months. At the review in 1726, it was found that many soldiers had died or defected, and in 1728 the documents registered the same situation: irregular payments, a weakening discipline, illnesses and the death of many soldiers caused by the unhealthy climate of the Italian region of Mantua.<sup>57</sup> The history of this regiment gained better contour during the War of Succession, when it gradually became a Transylvanian regiment. Maria Theresa demanded the Transylvanian Diet in 1741 to organize permanent regiments instead of the old nobiliary insurrection. The Transylvanians undertook to recruit an infantry regiment and a cavalry regiment, to supplement them by voluntary recruitment, but requested that they should be named Transylvanian regiments (*Siebenbürgische Regimenter*). The 2,000 recruits gathered with difficulty formed, eventually, the fourth battalion of the regiment organized in 1702 (now called the Gyulai Regiment, after its owner), which subsequently became the Transylvanian Regiment (*Siebenbürger Regiment*); from 1769 on, it had the number 51.

The empress, constrained to wage war by the King of Prussia's invasion of Silesia in December 1740, was in dire need of more numerous troops, asking the Diets from Hungary and Transylvania for more soldiers. In Hungary, Marshal Count Joahann Pálffy, who was to the liking of Vienna, was appointed commander of all troops in Hungary and was authorized to convince the counties of the need for new recruitments. Much fewer soldiers were recruited eventually (the plans had been for the recruitment of over 21,000 soldiers), because the Austrians saw the Hungarians' arming with suspicion, having the anti-Habsburg revolt of 1703-1711 still fresh in their memory. The claim that these troops should be commanded solely by Hungarian officers and generals made an even more unpleasant impression, the Court attempting to convince the Hungarians to give money instead of soldiers.<sup>58</sup>

In 1743, the Transylvania Estates organized a regiment of hussars.<sup>59</sup> Barițiu stated that in 1744 the Diet also discussed about the organization of a regiment, but they barely managed to recruit 1,000 soldiers.<sup>60</sup> From the territory of present-day Transylvania recruitments were made also for the 31st Infantry Regiment, then called the Haller Regiment, after the name of its first owner. In 1741 Baron Samuel Haller

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<sup>56</sup> Anger, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 939.

<sup>57</sup> Maximilian Maendel, *Geschichte des k. und k. Infanterie-Regiments Nr. 51*, Cluj, 1897-1899, vol. I, pp. 72-78.

<sup>58</sup> Alexich, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-129.

<sup>59</sup> Anger, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p.1081. This was the Hussar Regiment that, as of 1769, bore no. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Barițiu, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 376.

von Hallerstein received the patent for the organization of a regiment at the expense of Estates in Hungary. In addition to many counties in Hungary, the regiment was recruited from the counties of Zarand, Arad, Bihor, Maramureş and Satu Mare.<sup>61</sup> The recruits of this regiment - coming from the vast Pannonian steppe, from the Carpathian Mountains, and many from the dungeons of the counties - were difficult to master, and there was a lack of experienced officers and barracks. One of the battalions of this regiment, sent to Peterwardein, rebelled in the summer of 1742 against the officers, the soldiers shooting a captain and partially destroying their weapons and uniforms.<sup>62</sup> Hungarian recruits, raised in a spirit of freedom and having a highly developed sense of honour, found military discipline abominable, as it often made use of baton blows, so defections were a common phenomenon in all the regiments organized according to the Diet's decisions from 1741.<sup>63</sup>

Recruitments were difficult also in Transylvania. In 1745 the officers of the Gyulai Infantry Regiment entrusted with recruitment complained that the local authorities undermined them instead of supporting them.<sup>64</sup> In 1746 recruitment proceeded very slowly, even though they were conducted in other areas, too, such as Mediaş, Sighişoara, Târgu Mureş.<sup>65</sup> In 1750 213 soldiers could barely be recruited for this regiment.<sup>66</sup>

The requests for new recruits arrived ever more often in Transylvania too, especially during the wars with France. The Principality of Transylvania contributed with amounts of money, called subsidies, and with new recruits almost annually. In 1809 alone, the Saxon village of Prejmer had to give 50 young men for the organization of a battalion of Jäger,<sup>67</sup> while in time of peace the village gave only a few recruits. The punishments threatened increasingly those who mutilated themselves, so as to avoid the army, and lately even the relatives of those concerned had been threatened with punishment because they had not prevented those self-mutilations. War loans, voluntary at first and then mandatory, accompanied the recruitments of this period. In 1809, the Transylvanian nobility was last called to defend the country, according to its old right that was much clamoured by its members, who refused customary recruitment. However, the nobles' army and the Jäger battalion recruited by the Saxons reached only the border with Austria, as the Peace of Vienna was concluded in October 1809.<sup>68</sup>

Recruitment envisaged the Romanians ever more frequently, as they were the most numerous population and the military authorities rallied the efforts of the

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<sup>61</sup> Karl von Blažkenović, *Chronik des k.k. 31. Linien-Infanterie-Regimentes*, Viena, 1867, p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Ludwig Kirchtaler, *Geschichte des k. u. k. Infanterie-Regimentes Nr. 2 für immerwährende Zeiten Alexander I. Kaiser von Russland*, Viena, 1895, p. 8.

<sup>64</sup> Maendel, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 181.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 190.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 203.

<sup>67</sup> Lorenz Gross, *Auszug aus der Tartlauer Chronik*, în *Chroniken und Tagebücher*, vol. III, Braşov, 1915, p. 88.

<sup>68</sup> Friedrich Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen für das sächsische Volk*, vol. II, 1700-1815. *Von den Kuruzzenkriegen bis zur Zeit der Regulationen*, Sibiu, 1907, pp. 416-417.

Romanian clergy in an attempt to attract them as soldiers. The Romanian bishops advised the faithful to embark on a career in arms,<sup>69</sup> and during the wars with France they sent circular in which it was stated that premature marriage was forbidden for young men who tried to dodge the army and that those were the very individuals who would be taken in the event that recruitments were made.<sup>70</sup> In the early years of the wars with the French, Romanian officials in Burzenland wrote to the authorities that they could not gather the required number of recruits, as the young men were away with the sheep in Wallachia,<sup>71</sup> or that they had not managed to capture more than one lad at a wedding.<sup>72</sup> On 22 March 1799, the same officials wrote to the local authorities that the Saxon officials favoured their conationals in the recruitment process and demanded that the number of recruits should be distributed proportionately, not to the Romanians' detriment.<sup>73</sup> There was talk, then, of capturing the recruits, showing that the recruiters were forced to resort to violent means. During the war with the Turks, on 10 August 1788, soldiers were recruited in Codlea "in an unusual way," wrote a Saxon chronicler. On Sunday, at the church, after the end of the divine service, the women were taken out and the 25 young men whose names were read aloud were placed under guard as prospective recruits.<sup>74</sup>

The Saxon chronicles from Burzenland mentioned, in 1758, the capturing of recruits by violence, "especially in the Romanians' case," and their reaction, especially as they fled into the forests. The inhabitants of the Saxon villages were seized by uncertainty and intervened with the government, which prohibited fleeing from recruitment and summoned the runaways to return.<sup>75</sup> In 1760, the capturing of Romanian recruits, at night, was mentioned again. So was the revenge of those who had managed to escape by bribing the recruiters, as was the complaint addressed to the Romanian bishop against this abuse. Similarly, in 1762, Romanian recruits were caught at night but escaped by bribing the officials sent after them.<sup>76</sup> A similar mention was made by the German publicist Friedrich Wilhelm August Murhard (1778-1853) who, travelling from Sibiu to Bucharest in 1799, was outraged by the barbaric methods with which the Romanians, the nation that was deprived of most rights, were caught for the army. The officials and their men barged into their homes at night, caught them and tied them up like slaves, the author stating that he had seen several convoys of recruits, bound two by two, and if anyone attempted to flee, their hands were tied too. Not once were there bloody clashes or even violent deaths

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<sup>69</sup> *Catalogul documentelor românești din Arhivele Statului de la orașul Stalin*, București, Direcția Arhivelor Statului, 1955, vol. I, p. 480.

<sup>70</sup> Ilarion Pușcariu, *Documente pentru limbă și istorie*, tome I, Sibiu, 1889, pp. 155-156.

<sup>71</sup> *Catalogul documentelor românești ...*, pp. 539-540.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 550.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 582.

<sup>74</sup> "Auszug aus Annales Czeidinenses (1597-1840)," in *Chroniken und Tagebücher*, vol. II, Brașov, 1909, p. 400.

<sup>75</sup> Joseph Teutsch, "Nachlese zu den kurzgefassten Jahrgeschichten von Ungarn und Siebenbürgen," in *Chroniken und Tagebücher*, vol. I, Brașov, Zeidner, 1904, p. 474.

<sup>76</sup> Joseph Teutsch, *Historische Zugabe [1467-1770]*, in *Chroniken und Tagebücher*, vol. I, Brasov, 1904, p. 352.

among the officials, for the Romanians defended themselves with whatever was at hand. Their fate seemed to Murhard to be similar to that of the slaves sold to the Europeans by the Kings of Guinea. Therefore, they fled in large groups to Wallachia or took refuge in the mountains for a few months, whenever they heard that new recruitments would be made. In Europe it was known that English sailors used to be caught by violence, but the author assured us that the barbarism of these illegal means exceeded all limits in Transylvania and in some parts of Hungary.<sup>77</sup> On one such nocturnal undertaking against some Romanians who had escaped from recruitment, in around 1795, the future Mayor of Sibiu, Martin Hochmeister (the son of the first editor and printer in the city, having the same name), who was just a petty clerk at the time, had the little finger of his right hand crippled forever.<sup>78</sup> Even Barițiu spoke of the difficulty involved in the recruitment of soldiers in Transylvania, where, after the middle of the 18th century, it was only with great difficulty and with an advance payment of 10 florins that one could gather by voluntary recruitment “one thousand or two of lads from the most wretched population.” Barițiu bemoaned the barbarous method of “capturing [them] with the rope and with the village dogs,” a method that was dropped gradually from 1830 to 1847.<sup>79</sup>

In the Diet of January 1847 there were heated discussions around the proposal to abolish the exemption of the nobility from regular military service, but the nobles, who represented the majority in the Diet, only accepted a reduction of military service to 8 years and other facilities for the soldiers. The nobility also demanded that the recruits from Transylvania should serve only in the Transylvanian regiments.<sup>80</sup>

A standardization of the army in all the Austrian provinces occurred only after the defeats from the wars of 1859 and 1866, which were followed by an era of peace, necessary for more thorough reforms. The expression of this standardization was the introduction of compulsory military service in 1866.

In conclusion, the evolution of recruitment systems in the period examined here was determined by the frequent wars Austria waged in order to become a major power in Europe. The system of recruiting paid soldiers from outside the Austrian provinces became too expensive, so recourse to paid soldiers from among their own subjects was increasingly made. In the mid-18th century, the Austrian Army comprised, broadly speaking, paid soldiers, recruited voluntarily, from both Austrian and the neighbouring territories (the Holy Roman Empire was preferred for the recruitment of soldiers, but not only) and, to a lesser extent, soldiers recruited by force at the suggestion of the local authorities, as these authorities wanted to get rid of

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<sup>77</sup> Friedrich Murhard, “Bruchstücke aus dem Tagebuche einer Reise von Hermannstadt nach Buckarest im Jahr 1799,” in: *Der Genius der neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Altona, 1802, pp. 205-206. Recruitment by violence was frequently encountered in Prussia, but also in the entire space of the Roman-German Empire, where many were armies made recruitments, including the Austrian Army.

<sup>78</sup> See Adolf von Hochmeister, *Leben und Wirken des Martin Edler von Hochmeister 1767-1837*, Sibiu, 1873, pp. 67-68.

<sup>79</sup> Barițiu, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

<sup>80</sup> Friedrich Teutsch, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 1816-1868, *Von den Zeit der Regulationen bis zur Einführung des Dualismus*, Sibiu, 1910, pp. 148-150. See also *Gesetz-Artikel des Siebenbürgischen Landtages vom Jahre 1847*, [1847], pp. 41-42.

subjects deemed to be expendable or undesirable. After Maria Theresa took the throne, what was necessary was a more efficient recruitment system, which could furnish more numerous and cheaper soldiers, in order to cope with the pressure of the wars to which Austria had been challenged by Prussia, and then in the context of the many wars with the French. From 1770 to 1780, conscription was introduced, inspired by a similar Prussian system. Based on the principle of compulsory military service, but accepting the exemption of the privileged social classes and entire provinces (including the Great Principality of Transylvania), the conscription system was applied in parallel with the other models of recruitment. Functioning more or less efficiently, these recruitment systems provided the army, which was permanently on a war footing, with new soldiers for the troops that were diminished by the direct consequences of the war, by diseases and serious epidemics and, last but not least, by massive defections, especially in the first part of the 18th century. The exemption of the privileged classes from military service, but also the way in which the state exerted discretionary powers over some of its citizens, considered to be undesirable, reflected a specific conception of the pre-modern era, overcome gradually only in the late 19th century, when compulsory military service became generalized.