

Projektskizze

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To be wounded in battle and healed in Napoleonic Europe (PhD project)

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During the large scale battles of the Napoleonic Wars, such as Wagram (5-6 July 1809) or Leipzig (16-22 October 1813) thousands of men were wounded, and needed treatment. This PhD project, focusing on the French and Austrian armies, aims to understand how injured soldiers were or were not taken care of, both by their military health services and by civilians.

On May, 3rd 1809, in Eberlsberg, Lieutenant Pierre-Martin Pirquet of the Austrian imperial and royal army, received a bullet in the chest. Although he was abandoned on the battlefield and spent the night amongst corpses, he ultimately survived, and after four years of treatment, recovered. He tells of this experience in his diary[1].

This type of narrative has been the origin of this thesis, entitled "To be wounded in battle and healed in Napoleonic Europe" (1805-1813). The aim of this work is to follow soldiers from the moment they are wounded in battle up until their recovery or death, thus enlarging the study of the experience of war beyond the sole short time of combat. Four battles of the 1805, 1809 and 1813 campaigns on the main theatre of operations are at the heart of this research: Austerlitz (December, 2nd 1805), Aspern-Essling (21-22 May 1809), Wagram (5-6 July 1809) and Leipzig (16-22 October 1813).

Studying this time frame enables to follow the changes in the art of war during the Napoleonic era, which is often seen as a key moment in the emergence of modern warfare[2]. Although weapons largely remained the same throughout this period of time, increased manpower and use of artillery mean that the wounds inflicted on soldiers were more numerous and more serious[3]. In this context, military health services struggled to take care of all the wounded and often called for the assistance of civilians. In the French army, recruitment was made difficult by the precarious status of the medical staff[4], and poorly trained surgeons were often hired. Pierre-François Percy, the head surgeon of the French army, called these surgeons « chirurgiens de pacotille[5] » ("phony surgeons"). In the Habsburg Empire, the difficulty was to find

qualified personnel, even if medical officers had had a more stable situation than their French peers since Joseph II's reforms in the 18th century[6]. The imperial and royal army thus recruited civilians, and hardly trained – and sometimes very young[7] – assistant surgeons.

This thesis has a transnational scope, as treating wounded men often involved these men crossing borders. This means that the sources documenting it also come from several countries. In practice, I mainly use sources from the French and Austrian army. This compromise makes it possible to take into account phenomena that exceed the national scale, while upholding a detailed understanding of the institutions of both Empires.

This research aims to put into contact the historiography of war experience and the historiography of medicine, and more precisely, military medicine. Such contacts have been experimented with success concerning both World Wars[8], but has largely yet to be conducted in Napoleonic history. I will rely on new military history, which since John Keegan's "The Face of Battle"[9], has largely modernized writing about the history of war. This modernization involved both a closer look at the soldier's experience on the battlefield[10], and a broader take on the implication of societies in war, constituting a social and cultural history of armed conflicts[11]. Works of this nature have been conducted in Napoleonic history[12].

This approach will enable to resituate the experience of an injury in the broader experience of war, to clarify the issues concerning remembrance of combat, and to discuss the role of civilians in treating the wounded.

Reliance on the historiography of medicine will allow me to understand the relationship to pain and body integrity in the pre-anesthetic era[13], contemporary medical debates[14], the organization of military health services[15], and the interactions – in particular power plays – between physicians and patients[16].

The sources used in this thesis are both published documents and archives. I use memoirs, diaries, and testimonies collections of injured soldiers, surgeons, and civilians implicated in the treatment of wounded men. Those texts, which were sometimes written decades after the events, must be used with caution, taking into account the memorial stratification within them[17]. Using them however enables to retrace individual experiences on the long term and to understand the self-narration strategies. Archival sources of varied nature allow for the reconstitution of several aspects of the wounded men's treatment. I use laws, regulations, and instructions concerning the military health services, reports on the state of hospitals, medical reports and theses on various surgical operations, death certificates, and hospital staff lists. These documents can be found in the *Val de Grâce* (Paris), the *Service Historique de la Défense* (Vincennes), the *Kriegsarchiv* (Vienna) and the *Sächsisches Staatsarchiv* (Dresden).

To analyze those sources, I will use both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods enable precise reconstitution of wounded men's journeys, but they result in an overrepresentation of officers. To correct this bias, I apply a quantitative analysis of two databases. One records the causes and places of death of the 1.537 French soldiers who died following the battle of Austerlitz, and the other documents the injuries and conditions of treatment of French, German and Italian soldiers housed in civilian homes in

Dresden in June 1813.

By cross-referencing administrative documents and self-narratives, qualitative and quantitative methods, military history and the history of medicine, French, Austrian and German sources, this thesis – supervised by Patrice Gueniffey (EHESS) and Sven Externbrink (Universität Heidelberg) – therefore aims to follow the different stages of the experience of men wounded in battle during the Napoleonic wars.

[1] Pierre-Martin Pirquet, *Journal de Campagne de Pierre-Martin Pirquet (1781-1861) Officier au Service de l'Autriche. Tome I (1799-1813)*, Liège 1970.

[2] For a summary of the debates on the matter, see : Stéphane Calvet, *Leipzig, 1813 : La guerre des peuples*, Paris 2013.

[3] On the death toll of the napoleonic wars, see : Thierry Lentz, *Nouvelle Histoire du Premier Empire - Napoléon et la conquête de l'Europe 1804-1810*, Paris 2002.

[4] Jacques Sandeau, *La santé aux armées. L'organisation du service et les hôpitaux. Grandes figures et dures réalités*. In: *Revue du souvenir napoléonien* 450 (2004), pp. 19-37.

[5] Val de Grâce, « Carton n°18 », Dossier n°10.

[6] Joachim Moerchel, *Das österreichische Militär-sanitätswesen im Zeitalter des aufgeklärten Absolutismus*, Frankfurt am Main 1984.

[7] For example, Wenzel Krimer, *Erinnerungen eines alten Lützower Jägers*, Stuttgart 1913, became a surgeon's assistant at the age of fourteen.

[8] Sophie Delaporte, *Les médecins dans la Grande Guerre*, Paris 2003.

[9] John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, London 1976.

[10] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Combattre. Une anthropologie historique de la guerre moderne*, Paris 2008.

[11] Marian Füssel/Michael Sikora (eds.), *Kulturgeschichte der Schlacht*, Paderborn 2014.

[12] Natalie Petiteau, *Pour une anthropologie historique des guerres de l'Empire*. In : *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle* 30 (2005) [online]

[13] Peter Stanley, *For fear of pain, British surgery, 1790-1850*, New York 2003.

[14] Jacques Léonard, *La médecine entre les savoirs et les pouvoirs*, Paris 1981.

[15] Salomon Kirchenberger, *Kaiser Josef II. als Reformator des Österr. Militär-Sanitäts-Wesens: ein Beitrag zur Sanitäts-Geschichte des k. und k. Heeres*, Wien 1890.

[16] On this subject, refer to the conference « Savoirs, santé et pouvoirs à l'époque moderne » held at the Institut Historique Allemand in Paris on 25.06.2018

[17] Natalie Petiteau, *Ecrire la mémoire : Les mémorialistes de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, Paris 2012.