

# **Violent Encounters at Ostend, 1601–1604: Spatiality, Location, and Identity in Early Modern Siege Warfare**

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## **ABSTRACTS**

Die Belagerung von Ostende (1601–1604) mag kein großes Thema aktueller Historiographie sein, doch sie erregte im Europa des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts immense Aufmerksamkeit. Verschiedenste Publikationsformate widmeten sich der Operation als bedeutendem Teil des niederländischen Aufstands gegen die Habsburgermonarchie und präsentierten eine blutige Konfrontation von bislang ungekannter zeitlicher Länge. Illustrierte Flugblätter und ausführliche gedruckte Berichte trugen dazu bei, dass Ostende zu einem symbolträchtigen Ort für die Formierung einer neuen niederländischen Identität werden konnte – wenngleich die Spanier es einnahmen. Die Geschichte der Belagerung illustriert so einerseits Michel de Certeaus metaphorische Überblendung zwischen Krieg und Erzählung als Raumpraktiken. Andererseits erinnert sie auch an die physische, existenzielle Dimension von Kriegsgewalt. Gewaltpraktiken und -repräsentationen formten gemeinsam eine „Kriegslandschaft“ (Kurt Lewin) mit Orten, an denen neue Grenzen zwischen Eigenem und Fremdem geschaffen wurden. Die schlammigen Gräben von Ostende wecken heute Reminiszenzen an die Felder von Flandern des Ersten Weltkriegs, was zu vergleichenden Betrachtungen dieser „Gewalträume“ (Jörg Baberowski) anregt. Zugleich können die Belagerungsoperationen, die tausende von Menschen mobilisierten, im Lichte neuer Ortskonzepte betrachtet werden, die eher hervorheben, wie spezifische Orte sich an den Kreuzungspunkten individueller Bewegungsbahnen formen. Durch die Verbindung dieser unterschiedlichen Konzeptionen von Raumkonstruktion ist es möglich, die physischen Aspekte der gewaltsamen Begegnung und des Alltagslebens in der Belagerung mit der Entstehung des neuen niederländischen Staates in Beziehung zu setzen.

While the siege of Ostend (1601–4) is not overly prominent in modern historiography, it did

raise immense attention across Europe in the early 17th century. The operation, which formed part of the Eighty Years' War of the rebellious Netherlands against the Spanish Habsburg monarchy, was represented as a bloody encounter of inconceivable length in various published formats. Contemporary sources such as broadsheets and printed siege accounts contributed to Ostend's becoming one of the iconic places of the formation of a new Dutch identity – in spite of its capture by the Spanish. The story of the siege thus substantiates Michel de Certeau's metaphorical likening of warfare and story-telling as spatial practices. Yet, it is also a reminder of the physical, existential dimension of war. Practices and representations of violence contributed to the making of a "war landscape" (Kurt Lewin), of places, in which new boundaries of identity and alterity were produced. As the muddy trenches of Ostend call to mind early-20th-century war experiences in Flanders, they invite comparative approaches to the general characteristics of "spaces of violence" (Jörg Baberowski). Yet, as will become clear, this massive siege operation, which mobilized thousands of people, can also be regarded in the light of new conceptions of "place," which emphasize particularities created in the crossing of individual trajectories. An analysis that unites these different concepts of spatial constructions is able to link the physicality of violent encounters and the daily life of the siege to the emergence of the new Dutch state within early modern Europe.

The centenary of World War I has once more called to mind the history of Flanders as a zone of conflict. Every-day experiences of life and death "In Flanders Fields"<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere, especially in World Wars I and II, have come under historians' closer scrutiny since the 1980s. Drawing on soldiers' letters as a new kind source material, researchers have attempted to reconstruct war experiences and thereby furthered methodological reflections<sup>2</sup> in the context of 'new military history'<sup>3</sup>. Against this background, the contents of a soldier's letter, allegedly found in the pockets of a dead man after one of the fierce, yet ultimately fruitless attacks on enemy lines in Flanders, appears all too familiar: Addressing his brother, the writer describes the bleak situation in the trenches. Cold and damp cause everyone bodily pain. The enemy is stubbornly clinging to his positions. The writer's comrades are dying in great numbers. 48-hour watches in the flooded trenches are horrible, but the conditions in the rearward camp are hardly better. The soldiers bear constant cannon and grenade fire. Money is sparse while the price of straw for bedding

1 For the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they have been immortalized in John McCrae's famous poem.

2 P. Knoch, *Feldpost – eine unentdeckte Quellengattung*, in: *Geschichtsdidaktik* 11 (1986), pp. 154–171; id., *Kriegserlebnis als biographische Krise*, in: A. Gestrich et al. (eds.), *Biographie – sozialgeschichtlich*, Göttingen 1988, pp. 86–108; K. Latzel, *Die Zumutungen des Krieges und der Liebe: Zwei Annäherungen an Feldpostbriefe*, in: P. Knoch (ed.), *Kriegsalltag: Die Rekonstruktion des Kriegsalltags als Aufgabe der historischen Forschung und der Friedenserziehung*, Stuttgart 1989, pp. 204–221; K. Latzel, *Vom Kriegserlebnis zur Kriegserfahrung: Theoretische und methodische Überlegungen zur erfahrungsgeschichtlichen Untersuchung von Feldpostbriefen*, in: *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 56 (1997), pp. 1–30; B. Ziemann, *Feldpostbriefe und ihre Zensur in zwei Weltkriegen*, in: K. Beyrer and H.-C. Täubrich (eds.), *Der Brief: Eine Kulturgeschichte der schriftlichen Kommunikation*, Heidelberg 1996, pp. 163–170.

3 For the international debate on proper themes and methods of military history in the 1970s, see D. Showalter, *A Modest Plea for Drums and Trumpets*, in: *Military Affairs* 39 (1975) 2, pp. 71–74; summarizing the developments by the 1990s: P. Paret, *New Military History*, in: *Parameters* 31 (1991), pp. 10–18.

and of victuals is constantly rising. In spite of all this, the writer feels lucky as he has so far been in good health and has some cash left in his pockets. Yet, his optimism was to prove unfounded. The letter never got into the mail.

In the light of World War I, according to George Kennan “the great seminal catastrophe”<sup>4</sup> of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the story of this letter could have been a typical example of the experience of trench warfare which has become iconic<sup>5</sup> for this “first large-scale industrialized conflict”, which “gave birth to the concept of total war”.<sup>6</sup> Yet, the account given in the letter summarized above refers to a much earlier conflict in Flanders. This was not even the famous Thirty Years War, before the 20<sup>th</sup> century regarded as an epitome of devastating and all-encompassing conflict,<sup>7</sup> but only one of the conflicts that eventually fed into this early modern “great war”, namely the Eighty Years War against Spanish rule.

The letter, allegedly written on 29 December 1601 in the Spanish camp before the fortifications of Ostend,<sup>8</sup> was given into print (or simply made up) by the defenders of the town. With it, they meant to dissuade “all kindes of lewde people”<sup>9</sup> in “forraine Countries”<sup>10</sup> from joining the Spanish army. The printed publication claimed that the document had been found in the pockets of a dead attacker after the general storm attempted by the Spanish troops on 7 January 1602. The attack failed, but cost, according to the defenders, the lives of more than 2000 soldiers in Spanish service.<sup>11</sup> Whether the published letter was just a ploy to undermine the enemy’s recruiting efforts or a faithful reproduction of a genuine document, it indicates that the story of a voice from the trenches seemed plausible to contemporary readers. Letters from and about the siege were indeed frequently circulated and given into print as news.<sup>12</sup>

- 4 G. F. Kennan: *The Decline of Bismarck’s European Order: Franco-Russian Relations, 1875–1890*, Princeton 1979, p. 3.
- 5 See for example the title choice of A. Booth: *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space between Modernism and the First World War*, New York 1996.
- 6 S. Förster, Introduction, in: R. Chickering and S. Förster (eds.), *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914–1918*, Cambridge, UK 2000, pp. 1–15, at 6.
- 7 A direct comparison between the Thirty Years War and World War I is drawn by Förster, Introduction, p. 5. A renewed interest in the dynamics of early modern war, in the field of political science, has been demonstrated recently by H. Münkler, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg: Europäische Katastrophe, deutsches Trauma 1618–1648*, Berlin 2017.
- 8 E. Grimeston, *A True Historie of the Memorable Siege of Ostend, [...]*, London 1604, p. 112.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- 12 For hand-written newsletters, see I. Atherton, *The Itch Grown a Disease: Manuscript Transmission of News in the Seventeenth Century*, in: J. Raymond (ed.), *News, Newspaper and Society in Early Modern Britain*, 2nd ed., London 2002, pp. 39–65 [1st ed. 1999]; their relation to printed newspapers is examined by H. Böning, *Handgeschriebene und gedruckte Zeitung im Spannungsfeld von Abhängigkeit, Koexistenz und Konkurrenz*, in: V. Bauer et al. (eds.), *Die Entstehung des Zeitungswesens im 17. Jahrhundert: Ein neues Medium und seine Folgen für das Kommunikationssystem der Frühen Neuzeit*, Bremen 2011, pp. 23–56. For contemporary printed publications on Ostend, see the titles given in the database of *Early English Books Online*, e. g.: *Newes from Ostend [...] Diligently translated out of Dutch into English, according to the Dutch copie, printed at Amsterdam, London 1601*; *Further newes from Ostend. [...]*, London 1601; *The Oppugnation and fierce siege of Ostend by the Arch-duke Albertus his forces [...]*, [London 1601]; *A breefe declaration of that which is happened aswell within as without Oastend sithence the vij. of Ianuarie 1602 [...]*, Middleborrow and London 1602; *A dialogue and complaint made vpon the siege of Oastend, made by the King of Spaine, the Archduke, the Infanta, the Pope,*

The temporal glitch engendered by the soldier's letter marks the importance of historical siege warfare for a history of (violent) encounter. The case of Ostend allows for an exploration into the connections between space, place, and violence in a longer-term perspective. Minute analysis of early modern warfare and its (published) representations, created for an emerging European market of printed news, enriches current discussions of violence and space/place-relations. Triangulation with questions of cultural identity formation confirms that locations of military conflict have to be taken into account in discussions of the relations between places and cultural encounters. In a first step, it needs to be established how theoretical approaches linking violence and space can be brought to relate to the renaissance of place-concepts. Secondly, some remarks on the historical background of the operations around Ostend explain how these contributed to the political and cultural differentiation of 'rebellious Dutch' from 'Spanish overlords'.<sup>13</sup> Considering this, primary sources on the fate of Ostend, particularly the first published siege journal, a day-by-day account of the operations, in which the soldier's letter appeared, as well as other printed visual and textual material about the siege has to be re-read. Thus, in a third step, narratives of the military operations and the fascinating visual illustrations of de- and re-constructions in the besieged city are inspected in terms of place-making. How strategies and tactics employed in these representations connect to identity-formation is investigated in the fourth section.

## 1. Approaches: Spatial Analyses of Violence

In early-modern military history, the term 'approach' refers to the zig-zagging trenches dug towards the point of a bastion in a Vaubanian "siege in form"<sup>14</sup>. Siege warfare's fundamentally spatial character seems to indicate that it occupies a core position in historiographical reflections on the spatiality of violence.<sup>15</sup> Surprisingly, it has been all but disregarded. The theoretical approach taken by Jörg Baberowski, who has taken up Wolfgang Sofsky's sociological term "Gewaltraum", "space of violence", is focusing on space as an enabling factor for acts of violence, particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> For Baberowski,

the Prince Morrice, and the eldest sonne of Sauoye. [...], London 1602; Extremitie vrging the Lord General Sir Fra. Veare to offer the late anti-parle with the Arch-duke Albertus. [...], London 1602; Newes from Flanders and Ostend [...], London [1604].

- 13 This dichotomous differentiation is actually a surprise in the light of the strong 'Burgundian' tradition in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Netherlands: H. Schilling, *Der Aufstand der Niederlande: Bürgerliche Revolution oder Elitenkonflikt?*, in: H.-U. Wehler (ed.), *200 Jahre amerikanische Revolution und moderne Revolutionsforschung* (= *Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Sonderheft 2*), Göttingen 1976, pp. 177–231.
- 14 See for this ideal type in military history e. g. J. Childs, *Warfare in the Seventeenth Century* (Smithsonian History of Warfare), Washington, D. C. 2001, pp. 141–150.
- 15 At the time of writing still advertised as in print: S. Petersen, *Ding – Macht – Raum: Zur materiellen Kultur von Belagerungen im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: N. Korths et al. (eds.), *Räume, Orte, Konstruktionen. (Trans)Lokale Wirklichkeiten im Mittelalter und der Frühen Neuzeit*.
- 16 J. Baberowski, *Einleitung: Ermöglichungsräume exzessiver Gewalt*, in: Id. and G. Metzler (eds.), *Gewalträume: Soziale Ordnungen im Ausnahmezustand*, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, pp. 7–27; for the concept's genesis and application,

vignettes of warfare, highway robbery, and public executions from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries merely illustrate an undifferentiated “order of premodernity”<sup>17</sup>, in which permanent insecurity arises from potential violence, as yet uncontrolled by the modern state.<sup>18</sup> Closer investigation of early modern war as a “space of violence” thus seems in order. Yet, as Teresa Koloma has pointed out, Baberowski’s concept, defined by an absence of the state, harks back to ideas of space as an empty container for social interaction.<sup>19</sup> As a remedy, she suggests the sociology of violence should focus on experiences and social production of – lived and living – spaces.<sup>20</sup> This critique connects extremely well to the reconsideration of ‘place’ in other academic disciplines, which likewise call for an experiential reconsideration of place as constructed by acts of movement and encounter.<sup>21</sup> Research on the spatiality of violence may thus profit from “topological” approaches<sup>22</sup> with their focus on experiences and practices of relating.<sup>23</sup> Such a linkage of theoretical fields can, moreover, address the danger of limiting relational, experiential concepts of space or place to situations of peaceful, supposedly uninterrupted circulation. Two authors, Kurt Lewin and Michel de Certeau, help in building a theoretical framework for bridging the conceptual gaps which separate civilian from military spatial practices and early modern from modern violence. Lewin was drawing on his experiences in the German field artillery on the Western and Eastern fronts of World War I,<sup>24</sup> when he published his first academic article in a psychology journal in 1917.<sup>25</sup> He described the experiential specificity of a “war landscape”, in which military violence created zones of danger and barriers, which in turn shaped perceptions and movements of the combatants. In later works, Lewin developed a topological concept, “hodological space”, defined by routes of movement through distinct areas.<sup>26</sup> He proposed that this abstract

see F. Schnell, *Ukraine 1918: Besatzer und Besetzte im Gewaltraum*, in: Baberowski/Metzler, *Gewalträume*, pp. 135–168, at 137–138.

17 Schnell, *Ukraine 1918*, p. 98.

18 Baberowski, *Räume der Gewalt*, pp. 47 and 67–68.

19 Teresa Koloma Beck, *Gewalt – Raum: Aktuelle Debatten und deren Beiträge zur raumsensiblen Erweiterung der Gewaltsoziologie*, in: *Soziale Welt* 67 (2016), pp. 431–449, at 438.

20 Koloma Beck, *Gewalt – Raum*, pp. 444–446.

21 See e. g. the works by geographer D. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, Minneapolis 1994; and social anthropologist T. Ingold, *Against Space: Place, Movement, Knowledge*, in: P. Kirby (ed.), *Boundless Worlds: An Anthropological Approach to Movement*, Oxford 2009, pp. 29–43.

22 Koloma Beck finds them well developed in the sociology of space and urbanity: Koloma Beck, *Gewalt – Raum*, pp. 440–441 and 444–446.

23 Despite his call for finer terminological differentiation, Günzel identifies relationality as the core characteristic of topological approaches: S. Günzel, *Spatial Turn – Topographical Turn – Topological Turn: Über die Unterschiede zwischen Raumparadigmen*, in: J. Döring and T. Thielmann (eds.), *Spatial Turn: Das Raumparadigmen in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 219–237.

24 W. Dornik, “Ganz in den Rahmen dieses Bildes hinein passt auch die Bevölkerung”: Raumerfahrung und Raumwahrnehmung von österreichisch-ungarischen Soldaten an der Ostfront des Ersten Weltkrieges, in: B. Bachinger and W. Dornik (eds.), *Jenseits des Schützengrabens: Der Erste Weltkrieg im Osten: Erfahrung – Wahrnehmung – Kontext*, Innsbruck 2013, pp. 27–43, at 38.

25 K. Lewin, *Kriegslandschaft*, in: *Zeitschrift für angewandte Psychologie* 12 (1917), pp. 440–447; reprinted in C.-F. Graumann (ed.), *Kurt-Lewin-Werkausgabe*, vol. 4: *Feldtheorie*, Bern 1982, pp. 315–325.

26 E.g. presented in K. Lewin, *Der Richtungsbegriff in der Psychologie: Der spezielle und allgemeine Hodologische Raum*, in: *Psychologische Forschung* 19 (1934) 1, pp. 249–299.

model could clarify the psychological concept of direction in discussions of intentional acts of movement, “locomotions”, within a dynamic living space, “Lebensraum”.<sup>27</sup> Stephan Günzel points out that, in spite of its “ahuman” perspective, hodological space was strongly influenced by Lewin’s phenomenological reflections on war landscapes.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, hodological space connects personal and environmental factors in spatiality. It concedes some influence to external structures (like the existential threats of the war zone), while maintaining that living space is formed by physical or mental movements.<sup>29</sup> This dynamic entanglement of constructive actions and moments of exposure to a hostile environment is particularly helpful for the purpose of understanding place-making activities in war. Lewin explicitly hoped for interdisciplinary applications of his hodological space.<sup>30</sup> In any case, it adds the aspect of military violence to recent circulatory concepts of place.

Michel de Certeau’s work links thinking about spatial practices to early modern (cultural) history. The Jesuit scholar is usually cited to contrast – geometrical, “dead” – place and – living, practiced – space.<sup>31</sup> While, terminologically, he thus squarely contradicts recent theories of living place, he does connect his reflections of spacing activities with the military concepts of “strategy” and “tactic”.<sup>32</sup> He associates the former with the grand spatial vision and control of the elevated “voyeur”<sup>33</sup>, the entrepreneur or town planning institution, easily transfigured into the air-borne attacker of city life. The latter refers to the predominantly temporal acts of resistance of the “walkers”<sup>34</sup> in the city, the “small” people who can only fight the owners of space in their little counter-cultural actions. Yet, the structural composition of de Certeau’s binaries itself makes clear that his work harbors a different reading of his famous phrase that “space is a practiced place”.<sup>35</sup> Spatial practices, whether appropriations ‘from above’ or relations ‘below’, never exist in isolation. Strategies and tactics are always linked in the construction of living spatial configurations. De Certeau thus makes clear that spatial theory has to take into account conflict and boundary-drawing. This is where his work connects to Lewin’s topology.

Both de Certeau and Lewin draw attention to the relational, constructed and living aspects of spatiality. Although they prefer to speak of “spaces”, their approaches are closely related to recent (mostly Anglophone) calls for a resurgence of place. At the same time,

27 Ibid., pp. 251–252.

28 S. Günzel, Kurt Lewin und die Topologie des Sozialraums, in: F. Kessl and C. Reutlinger (eds.), *Schlüsselwerke der Sozialraumforschung*, Wiesbaden 2008, pp. 94–114, at 101.

29 Calling hodological space a “result of acts or [...] spatial sum of these acts” emphasizes the latter: Günzel, Kurt Lewin und die Topologie, p. 111 (transl. AFK).

30 Looking particularly to sociology: Lewin, *Richtungsbegriff*, p. 299. Stephan Günzel identifies him as a theorist of social space, “Sozialraumtheoretiker”: Günzel, Kurt Lewin und die Topologie, p. 105.

31 M. Füssel, Tote Orte und gelebte Räume: zur Raumtheorie von Michel de Certeau S. J., in: *Historical Social Research* 38 (2013) 3, pp. 22–39; see also W. J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2nd ed., Chicago 2002, p. viii, and the discussion in the introduction above.

32 M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley 1984; e-book 2011, p. xix.

33 Ibid., p. 92.

34 Ibid., p. 93.

35 Ibid., p. 117.

their conceptions take into account the potentially conflictual aspects of spatial acts and the determining influence, sometimes even existential danger, imposed by some spatial features. In combination, Lewin's and de Certeau's concepts thereby prepare the ground for an analysis of the construction (and destruction) of places in early modern siege warfare, for which Ostend can be regarded as a case in point.

## 2. The Siege of Ostend and the Emergence of the Dutch: Violent Encounter, Place-Making and Cultural Formation

The siege of Ostend unfolded during the Eighty Years' War (1566/68–1648) in the Netherlands.<sup>36</sup> Although it ended in the loss of this important port city for the rebellious United Provinces, it can be seen as a formative event for Dutch culture as it was created in the course of the long struggle against Spanish rule.<sup>37</sup> Violent counter-insurgency operations by the Spanish governor, the Duke of Alva,<sup>38</sup> were taken up in print publications denouncing Spanish "terror". These mobilized "Patriot" opposition across the Netherlands<sup>39</sup> and united Protestant Europe in revulsion.<sup>40</sup> While Alva's harsh intervention had at first united the seventeen provinces in resistance, it became clear over the course of war and negotiations in the 1570s that attitudes towards Spain in the seventeen rebellious provinces were by no means universal.<sup>41</sup> Forming the unions of Arras and Utrecht, respectively, in 1579 the southern provinces sought for reconciliation, while the northern ones, led by Holland, cut their ties with the Spanish monarchy.<sup>42</sup>

After failed political experiments with French and English protectorates, the rebellious Northern provinces opted for republican government without foreign intervention – in spite of considerable military pressure.<sup>43</sup> Unexpectedly, the young state, dominated by the province of Holland and its advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, succeeded in driving back the Spanish armies during the 1590s.<sup>44</sup> Profiting from the absorption of the

36 See e. g. S. Groenveld et al. (eds.), *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog: opstand en consolidatie in de Nederlanden* (ca. 1560–1650), Zutphen 2008.

37 For a very good structural summary of developments since the mid-1500s and an overview of classic studies on the origins of what he regards as the revolution of the Netherlands, see Schilling, *Aufstand*, pp. 177–231.

38 His reign pushed even formerly conciliatory Dutch nobles towards open defiance of Spanish rule: J. I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806*, Oxford 1995, pp. 152–161.

39 P. J. Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt*, Ithaca 2008, pp. 166–259.

40 The contribution of these events and their media representations to the formation of "confessional alignments" in the emerging international system is e. g. highlighted by H. Schilling, *Confessional Europe*, in: Th. A. Brady, H. A. Oberman and J. D. Tracy (eds.), *Handbook of European History 1400–1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. ii, Leiden 1995, pp. 641–681, at 660.

41 Initially, the full States General of the Netherlands had convened without the monarch's approval (this is discussed by Schilling, *Aufstand*, pp. 198–199) and declared their common determination to rid their territories of Spanish troops (Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 184–186; G. Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, London 1977, pp. 177–178).

42 Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 186–209; for the Spanish view, see Parker, *Dutch Revolt*, pp. 180–194.

43 Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 202–230; Parker, *Dutch Revolt*, pp. 199–221.

44 Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 233–253.

Spanish crown in other conflicts, the Dutch commanders were also actively seeking improvements of their troops and technology, contributing important elements towards a European “military revolution”.<sup>45</sup> While success in warfare and the economic sphere brought the young republic what became known as a “Golden Age”<sup>46</sup>, the provinces allegedly maintained a “siege mentality steeped in suspicion”.<sup>47</sup> The United Netherlands thus refused offers for peace negotiations made by the new Spanish governors, Isabella, the daughter of Philip II, and her husband, Archduke Albert.<sup>48</sup>

Apart from twelve years of truce between Spain and the Dutch Republic (1609–1621), fighting continued in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Historiographical work, enthralled by debates of origins and causes of revolution, has often treated this part of the wars rather summarily.<sup>49</sup> Recent research, however, is no longer surprised by the duration of the Dutch Revolt<sup>50</sup> and emphasizes the insecurity of Dutch independence even after the mid-1600s.<sup>51</sup> The operations of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, among them the exhausting siege of Ostend, were a decisive part of the Netherlands’ state formation process.

Simon Schama has highlighted how the years of armed conflict from the 1570s to 1648 contributed to a new, specifically Dutch national culture. It linked moral uneasiness with political and economic success to an ambivalent attitude towards the military.<sup>52</sup> Allegedly, the Netherlands only employed military power in the “defense of freedom”<sup>53</sup> against raging threats from the outside. The violent encounter at Ostend, in which the important stronghold was lost, can be read as a *topos* of formative disaster, much like the moralistic messages inherent in Dutch prints of beached whales and other catastrophic events.<sup>54</sup> The struggle and the encounters it engendered formed the place – both physically and in representations. At the same time, the place with its natural and social circumstances contributed to the shaping of self and others, helping to differentiate the emerging Dutch republic from the Spanish monarchy and those provinces in the south

45 G. Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*, Cambridge, UK 1988, pp. 18–23; Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 267–271; O. van Nimwegen, *The Dutch Army and the Military Revolutions, 1588–1688*, Woodbridge 2010.

46 See for the persistence of this *topos*, e. g. H. J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age*, New Haven 2007; A. T. von Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, Cambridge, UK 1991; A. Goldgar, *Tulipmania: Money, Honor and Knowledge in the Dutch Golden Age*, Chicago 2007; C. H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age*, Cambridge, MA 2008.

47 Israel, *Dutch Republic*, p. 256.

48 *Ibid.*, pp. 254–255.

49 Thus, e. g. Parker, *Dutch Revolt*, pp. 225–266; Anton van der Lem speaks of “geregelde oorlog” already for 1584–1609 (chapter 6 of his *De Opstand in de Nederlanden (1568–1609)*, Utrecht 1995; web-version: <https://dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/dutch/verhaal/Pages/default.aspx> [accessed 21 March 2018]).

50 Geoffrey Parker asked “Why Did the Dutch Revolt Last Eighty Years?”, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 26 (1976), pp. 53–72, and provided a world-historical answer.

51 E. g. from an economic history perspective M. t’Hart, *The Dutch Wars of Independence: Warfare and Commerce in the Netherlands, 1570–1680*, London 2014.

52 S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, New York, 1997 [original edition 1988], pp. 238–253.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 254.

54 See for their interpretation as portents of warning *ibid.*, pp. 130–150.

that remained with the Habsburg Empire. A closer look at the events around the port of Ostend shows how this collective dynamic related to peculiar spatial experiences of the siege and to their (published) representations in print publications. Like political acts and military operations, the latter have to be regarded as activities that contributed decisively to the making of the place and the violent encounters of the siege.

After the military successes of the 1590s, Oldenbarnevelt and the regents of Holland were hoping to continue the expansion of the young republic in the new century. For the campaign season of 1600, they envisaged the conquest of Flanders, despite misgivings of Prince Maurice of Orange, the military commander. The States General and Oldenbarnevelt took up their headquarters at Ostend, the strongly fortified republican enclave in Spanish-controlled territory. Maurice's troops gained a costly victory at the battle of Nieuwpoort (30 June 1600), but withdrew from Flanders soon after.<sup>55</sup> The following four years were marked by strategic "stalemate"<sup>56</sup>, but not by a decline in fighting or war expenditure.

The central operation of the years 1601–4 was the siege of Ostend. Archduke Albert and the states of Flanders, harassed by enemy sallies from the town, had decided to reduce the rebel stronghold.<sup>57</sup> Against the well-entrenched defenders, however, the Archduke's troops could hardly make any inroads. The defending garrison, first commanded by the English general Francis Vere, then by changing Dutch governors, was continually supplied by means of a new harbor, which proved viable through more than three years of operations.<sup>58</sup> The contending parties expended immense resources on the siege and the number of human casualties amounted to tens of thousands dead.<sup>59</sup> Ostend was becoming "an enduring symbol of the Low Countries struggle"<sup>60</sup>, from which withdrawal without loss of face was impossible.

The town gained fame as a peculiar place of violent siege warfare "throughout Christendom"<sup>61</sup>. Its symbolic value arose because the siege coincided with the emergence of a market of news. The expanding mail systems allowed for compilation and redistribution of news at urban centers of communication.<sup>62</sup> As the siege was drawing to a close in

55 Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 257–259.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 259.

57 J. L. Motley, *History of the United Netherlands*, vol. iv: *From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Years' Truce – 1609*, New York 1868, pp. 61–62.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 62–64.

59 While Christopher Duffy, the doyen of the history of siege warfare, subscribes to the number of 40 000 casualties (C. Duffy, *Siege Warfare: The Fortress in the Early Modern World, 1494–1660*, London 1979, pp. 88–89), John Lothrop Motley gives more than 100 000 (Motley, *History*, iv, p. 216).

60 Israel, *Dutch Republic*, p. 260.

61 Motley, *History*, iv, p. 67.

62 See for this momentous communicative development: J. Raymond et al. (eds.), *News Networks in Seventeenth-Century Britain and Europe*, London 2006; the connection to the imperial mail service is made clear by W. Behringer, *Im Zeichen des Merkur: Reichspost und Kommunikationsrevolution in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Göttingen 2003; the relationship of hand-written and printed news is investigated by H. Böning, *Handgeschriebene und gedruckte Zeitung im Spannungsfeld von Abhängigkeit, Koexistenz und Konkurrenz*, in: V. Bauer et al. (eds.), *Die Entstehung des Zeitungswesens im 17. Jahrhundert: Ein neues Medium und seine Folgen für das Kommunikationssystem der Frühen Neuzeit*, Bremen 2011, pp. 23–56.

1604, a publisher offered a first comprehensive siege journal at the Frankfurt book fair.<sup>63</sup> Dutch information on the operations was translated into German and compiled into a day-by-day account. The text was enriched by spectacular visual material, probably also largely of Dutch origin, and brought up to date in three instalments.<sup>64</sup> Contemporary translations of the text attest to the craving of a European reading public for information about the fate of the besieged place. A French version of the first German volume<sup>65</sup>, completed by information about events from 17 June 1604 to the end of the siege in September<sup>66</sup> and by material from unknown sources, formed the basis for Edward Grimeston's English text.<sup>67</sup> Ostend as a physical and symbolic place of siege was thus embedded in a long row of circulations of information: from the besieged town itself, by way of ships that left port under Spanish fire, to the republican States General; from them to their agent in Cologne, Henricus Bilderbeke,<sup>68</sup> and his publisher; from Germany to France and on to England. A closer look at Grimeston's representation of the siege reveals how representations generated in these circulations connected the narrative and visual place-making activities of the Dutch in the European news market back to the war landscape at Ostend.

For his overview plan of the siegeworks, Grimeston relied heavily on the foldout map of his German predecessor, which in turn was based on a Dutch plan produced in the camp of Prince Maurice.<sup>69</sup> Grimeston's depiction strengthened the original's three-dimensional effects of a bird's eye view, associated with popular traditions of the visual genre of the 'siege view',<sup>70</sup> while the original approximated more closely an exact ichnographic plan. Besides the ships and buildings also depicted in the Dutch engraving and the German print, Grimeston replaced an insert on the top left by an image of the most spectacular siege engine developed for the Spanish attackers, a mobile drawbridge – seen from the side and in larger scale.

63 At least, no earlier version has been identified so far. See the detailed study of the different Dutch siege accounts by A. E. C. Simoni, *The Ostend Story: Early Tales of the Great Siege and the Mediating Role of Henrick Van Haestens*, 't-Goy-Houten 2003.

64 *Belägerung der Statt Ostende: Journal: Tagregister und eigentliche beschreibung [...]*, 3 vols., [Frankfurt] 1604–1605.

65 *Histoire remarquable et véritable de ce qui s'est passé par chacun iour au siege de la ville d'Ostende, [...]*, Paris 1604.

66 These are the contents of the second and third instalment of the German text, probably also circulating in French translation, but of which I have not been able to find a print.

67 Grimeston, *True Historie*.

68 Identified as the compiler of the siege journal by Simoni, *Ostend Story*, p. 192.

69 According to the title page of the German publication, the accompanying map was produced by Maurice himself and given to the Duke of Florence. The Dutch original is digitally reproduced by the Rijksmuseum (Permalink <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=urn:gvn:RIJK04:RP-P-BI-1040>); it names an unidentified "Wolff" and Flor[is] Balt[hasar], possibly Balthasars van Berckenrode, who indeed accompanied Prince Maurice's campaigns] as its creators (see for the same attribution L. P. Sloos (ed.), *Warfare and the Age of Printing: Catalogue of Early Printed Books From Before 1801 in Dutch Military Collections*, Leiden 2008, p. 137).

70 See for an account of the development of siege views: M. Pollak, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, UK 2010, pp. 109–153.



place. It occupies, in de Certeau's Clauswitzian metaphor, the privileged position of "strategy".<sup>73</sup>

Another siege view, by the Dutch printer Batista van Doetechum, exemplifies the material upon which the comprehensive journal could build. It depicted the spectacular general storm attempted by the Spanish on 7 January 1602. Considering its bilingual title-vignette (in Dutch and French), it was from the beginning intended for international audiences. Despite the difference in orientation, the engraving followed some of the same pictorial conventions as Grimeston's siege view. It made no attempt at all to erase the multiple movements of the siege and even included the dead bodies of the victims of this storm attempt scattered around the fortifications. Despite being "fixations" of moving events, these visual representations were not merely "procedures for forgetting".<sup>74</sup> As acts of remembering, they were creative constructions joining the published texts they accompanied (in this case a brief account of the course of the siege until the failed storm attack) in making a place of violence of European interest.

The narrative parts of the siege journal complemented the visual material by addressing change caused by the violence of war over time. Three examples shall demonstrate the place-making linkages between text and war-related alterations in the spatial layout of Ostend. The first was the construction of a new harbor. Because the "West hauen [haven, AFK]" marked in Grimeston's plan was too close to the Spanish artillery for safe passage, the town depended on "the hauen of entrance" through a natural channel (the "goller" in Grimeston's text) to the east. As this was also taken under fire, the defenders constructed a new port on the safer north side of the town, marked in the printed plan "place of ye new hauen". Presumably echoing Dutch original accounts used in his German source, Grimeston's text repeatedly praised the efforts of harbor construction by the besieged.<sup>75</sup> The written account made very clear that the safe harbor was vital for the defense. Tirelessly, it recorded the exact numbers and loads of the ships which entered and left Ostend through-out the siege.<sup>76</sup> Only the ships' loads of victuals, munitions, building materials, and fresh troops secured the survival of garrison and town over more than three years. Restructuring spatial layout of the port city under Spanish artillery fire even permitted a kind of ephemeral normality in the war of position at Ostend. Much like in the largely static frontlines which Kurt Lewin encountered in World War I, zones of existential danger contracted into specific points, e. g. those regularly hit by enemy fire.<sup>77</sup> Despite attempts by the Archdukes' forces to render the entrance to the harbor impassable, life

73 Ibid., p. xix.

74 Certeau, *Practice*, p. 97.

75 E. g. Grimeston, *True Historie*, pp. 28, 75, 89 etc.

76 Only in the entry for 15 March 1602 the account started to summarize: "The comming in and going of the ships was in a maner like all the rest of this yeare, as in like sort their ordinary shooting, the which the reader may imagin by that which hath bin written and that which followeth." (Ibid., p. 143.)

77 Lewin, *Kriegslandschaft*, p. 317.

around the well-known danger points continued and was presented as strikingly unperturbed in spite of occasional sacrifices.<sup>78</sup>

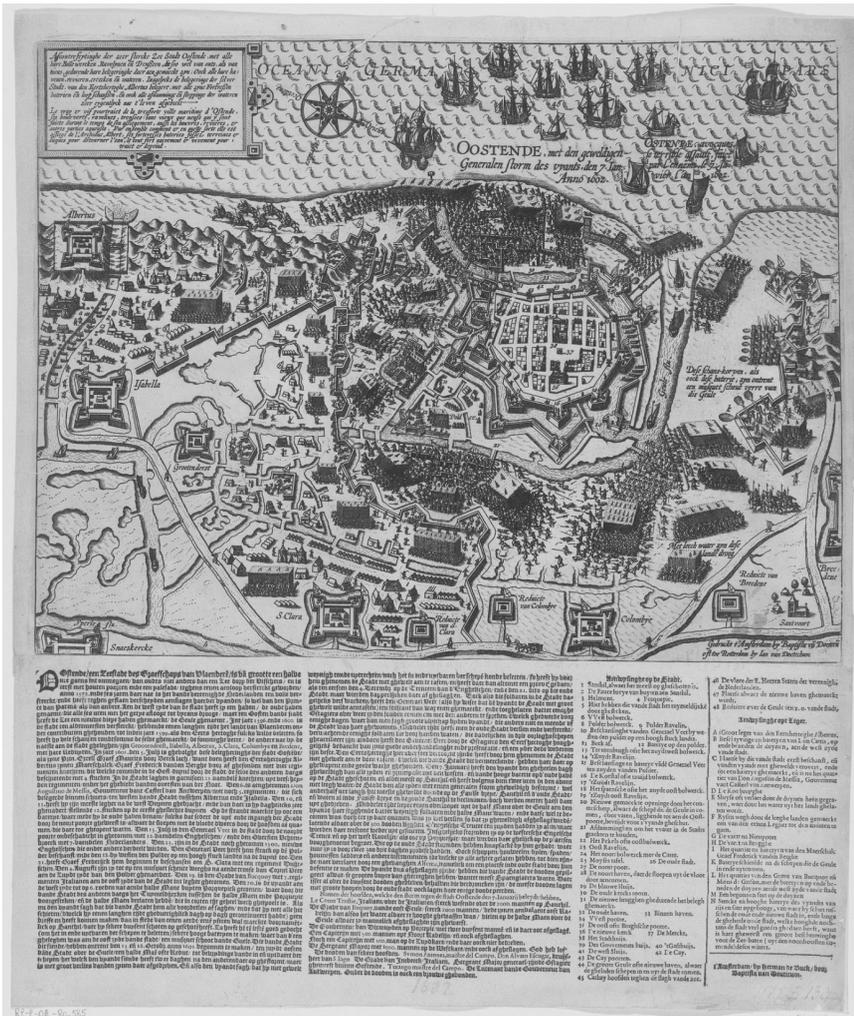


Image: One-sheet broadside print: Bestorming van Oostende, 1602, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (Frederik Muller Historical Prints, FMH 1162-B), Permalink: <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=urn:gyn:RIJK04:RP-P-OB-80.585> (accessed 9 November 2018).<sup>79</sup>

78 Thus e.g. the death of “one boy only” from a fierce Spanish artillery attack on incoming ships in the moonlight night of 13 August 1601: Grimeston, True Historie, pp. 11–12.

79 A German version of this image, attributed to the Cologne printers Franz and Abraham Hogenberg and attesting to the spread of Dutch publications, is in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Munich), see <http://www.gbv.de/vd/vd17/12658406P> (accessed 20 August 2018).

The stalemate in the costly operations around Ostend was only broken in the fall of 1603, when the Genoese Ambrogio Spínola arrived on the scene in the Archdukes' service. He ordered the systematic construction of approach trenches and the undermining of the town's Western fortifications.<sup>80</sup> As Spínola's troops inched towards the *corps de place*, conquering one outwork after the other, the besieged city was spatially reconstituted in a second way: The besieged, commanded by the Baron of Berendrecht, constructed a new counterscarp. It cut off about half of the area of the town, but allowed for continued resistance in spite of the enemy's spectacular advance.<sup>81</sup> The Spanish forces were now no longer attacking from the dunes around, but from the town's own outworks. New visual depictions of the state of operations in the second and third instalment of Grimeston's German source demonstrated the altered situation by showing little Spanish flags planted on the respective works, their artillery turned towards the town center. The space enclosed by those works flying the striped flag of the United Netherlands diminished, but continued to exist.<sup>82</sup>

Within their stronghold, the defenders of Ostend started to construct another site of last resort in the summer of 1604, a new citadel defiantly named "Nova Troia", the new Troy. As they were running out of earth for building bulwarks and bastions, they dug up the improvised graveyards containing the victims of the previous three years of fighting.<sup>83</sup> Although its antique name, according to Homer, threatened ten more years of siege, Nova Troia was not put to the test after all. By a new spatial move of the operations and their published story, the defenders managed to re-expand their room for manoeuvre once more even though Ostend capitulated on 20 September 1604.

The third and final spatial re-constitution of the siege of Ostend was a decisive re-definition of the place in question. As the States General had decided to send Maurice of Orange with a relief army to Ostend, in order "to raise the siege from the saide Towne, or at the least to annoy the Arch-duke in some other place"<sup>84</sup>, the story acquired a new stage of action. An account of the operations of Maurice's army in the spring and summer of 1604 supplemented the narration of the fate of Ostend. His "Excellencie" was shown to take one enemy fort after another, while Spínola was forced to divide his army between the siege of Ostend, Maurice's foray, and a band of mutinous soldiers.<sup>85</sup> The publications thus opened up an additional geographical-military field of action, partly replacing the restrained space of the besieged town. Relieving Ostend eventually proved impossible, but Maurice and his troops successfully proceeded towards Sluys (Sluis), another Flemish port town to the northeast of Ostend.

80 Motley, *History*, iv, pp. 181–190.

81 *Ibid.*, pp. 190–194.

82 E. g. *Belägerung der Statt Ostende*, vol. ii, [title image].

83 Motley, *History*, iv, p. 194–195.

84 Grimeston, *True Historie*, p. 199.

85 *Ibid.*, pp. 200–209.

In Spanish hands since 1587, Sluys was besieged and re-taken for the United Netherlands by Maurice's Anglo-Dutch force on 18 August 1604.<sup>86</sup> As part of Zeelandic Flanders, the town contributed to the territorial consolidation of the United Provinces. Grimeston's text emphasized the defensive value of this port town, "exceeding strong both by Arte and Nature"<sup>87</sup>, as more than equivalent to embattled Ostend. Very subtly, the text now began to introduce a new motivation for resistance there. Ostend was no longer defended for itself, but so that "Prince Maurice might the better effect his desseigne vpon Escluse"<sup>88</sup>. Indeed, Spinola's relief army was defeated before Sluys on 17 August. After its retreat, Maurice and the States General easily conquered this valuable foothold "in the maine of Flanders, whereby they had good meanes to draw all the warres into Flanders into the enemies Country"; the States General therefore "thought it needlesse to be at any further charge" for the hopeless defense of Ostend.<sup>89</sup> It was determined that the embattled garrison should surrender.

Even the capitulation of Ostend was still presented as a success for the Dutch rebels. While the modern historian Motley judged that governor Daniel de Hertaing, Lord of Marquette, and his council of war surrendered "at their last gasp",<sup>90</sup> Grimeston and his German source presented matters differently. Sustaining a positive self-image for the beleaguered Dutch, their essential message was that the defenders had managed to keep the paths of circulation open throughout the siege. Before the surrender, they were able to ship out everything that made Ostend a valuable fortress and a living town. While Grimeston's English text mentioned "all the principall ordinance and munition" being removed,<sup>91</sup> the third volume of the original German account went into more detail. It described how on 19 September, besides ordinance, ammunition, and victuals, those persons were shipped out, who could not necessarily expect mercy: "alle personen/da man einich vermuten auf hatte/das sie nit in gnad solten auf und angenommen worden", i. e. [Calvinist] preachers, engineers, artillerymen, miners, fireworkers, instrument makers and "new Geux", presumably deserters from the Spanish camp.<sup>92</sup> The governor surrendered the town, and the garrison departed on 20 September 1604 "with the honors of war"<sup>93</sup>, a symbolic recognition of their valiant defense. The inhabitants of Ostend, except "one old man, and a woman or two" also fled, so all that was left for Archduke Albert and Infanta Isabella to take were "heapes of earth and sand".<sup>94</sup> With the living circulations kept up by the defenders cut off, with the routes constituting the hodological space of the besieged town destroyed, the place of Ostend ceased to exist – at least for the rebellious provinces.

86 Motley, *History*, iv, pp. 199-213.

87 Grimeston, *True Historie*, p. 210.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 214.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 221.

90 Motley, *History*, iv, p. 214.

91 Grimeston, *True Historie*, p. 222.

92 *Belägerung der Statt Ostende*, vol. iii, [no pagination].

93 Motley, *History*, iv, p. 215.

94 Grimeston, *True Historie*, p. 224.

### 3. A School of War: The Place of Violence and Cultural Boundary Formation

The siege of Ostend and its published representations exemplify Michel de Certeau's conception of stories as spatial practices. He expresses their formative power in the words of the linguist Jurij Lotman: "every description is more than a fixation,' it is 'a culturally creative act.'"<sup>95</sup> This points to the creation of cultures and cultural identities by way of spatial acts expressed in narrative form. Certeau, whose work has been described as generally dominated by "the figure of alterity"<sup>96</sup>, by conceptions of otherness, remarks that any (spatial) interaction brings forth boundaries, which are at the same time points of distinction and contact.<sup>97</sup> The participants of the siege of Ostend, though opponents in a violent war situation, were involved in joint acts of place-making, in which cultural identity and alterities for the United Netherlands were successively established. The published representation of the siege was crucial in this respect.

In Grimeston's narrative account of the siege as well as in his German source, nationality was crucial for the designation of soldiers' groups. Thus, the text explicitly identified the "English men"<sup>98</sup>, fighting under their own "Generall of the English"<sup>99</sup>, Sir Francis Vere, as a distinct set among the defenders. The conflict between the States General, Maurice, and Vere, who was striving to obtain independent jurisdiction over all English forces in the Netherlands,<sup>100</sup> was passed over in silence. Instead, the English troops' military actions were all presented positively, just like the arrival of British ships, frequently laden with "good English Beere"<sup>101</sup>. Though it did not mention confessional solidarity or other grounds for cooperation, the text thus appealed to an English readership. When an English traitor was discovered inside Ostend in early November 1601, the account declared that he had "serued the enemy long, and bene Captaine [...] in their armie"<sup>102</sup>. Apparently, acculturation was to explain his treasonable correspondence with the Spanish and his plotting. While the valiant English defenders were accorded a legitimate part in the re-formation of the besieged place, e. g. by their construction of underground barracks in town squares,<sup>103</sup> the traitor had "crept into Ostend"<sup>104</sup>. The dangerous individual was depicted as furtively invading a closed space, from which it was forcibly dispelled after discovery through an English informant.<sup>105</sup> The illicit and dangerous circulations initi-

95 Certeau, *Practice*, p. 123.

96 M. Füssel, *Einleitung: Ein Denker des Anderen*, in: Id. (ed.), *Michel de Certeau. Geschichte – Kultur – Religion*, Konstanz 2007, pp. 7–19, at 7.

97 Certeau, *Practice*, pp. 126–129.

98 First instance: Grimeston, *True Historie*, p. 13.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

100 D. J. B. Trim, *Vere, Sir Francis (1560/61–1609)*, in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004; online edition, 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/odnb.emedia1.bsb-muenchen.de/view/article/28209> (accessed 27 October 2016).

101 Grimeston, *True Historie*, p. 89.

102 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

103 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

104 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

105 *Ibid.*, p. 67–68.

ated by the man had to be cut off in order to protect the town in the eyes of the defenders. This was effected by torture and confession as well as by the narrative account, which made clear that it was not his nationality which made him undermine the defense effort. The traitor Conisbye was presented as the ultimate other for both Dutch and English defenders.

While differentiation from the allies was minimized except for the national designation, distinction from the enemy was highly important. The text complained that the enemy army attracted “all kindes of lewde people [...], from Italie, Spaine, Germanie and all other forraine Countries”<sup>106</sup> to its service. In their diversity, the Archduke’s forces were typical for early modern military forces.<sup>107</sup> Nonetheless, the printed account was at pains to emphasize the role of the Spanish as the main opponent. Thus, a key bulwark was tauntingly named “Spanish”<sup>108</sup>, and a party returning from a sally brought back “Spanish Hattes”<sup>109</sup> as a sign of their success against the enemies.

Potent, yet inherently ambivalent objects of othering were the corpses left behind by the violent encounter. The furious, but failed general storm on 7 January 1602 offered plenty of opportunities for bodily othering. One of the dead was presented as a particularly remarkable curiosity. As townspeople and soldiers were searching the victims for valuables and re-usable weapons or clothes after the battle, “they found a young Spanish woman neere vnto Sand-hill, in mans apparel the which (as they might gesse by her wounds) had beene slaine at the assault, she had vnder her apparel a chaine of Golde set with precious stones, with other Iewelless and siluer”.<sup>110</sup> In the appendix to the first part of the German publication, a drastic depiction of the attack was accompanied by an insert presenting the cross-dressing soldier-woman, “Spenica femina Inter mortuos reperta Induta virile habita”.<sup>111</sup> There was no further comment to guide the readers’ interpretation of this curious case. Yet, marking the strange corpse as Spanish clearly differentiated it from the deaths of women in the defenders’ camp, presented as wives and mothers,<sup>112</sup> who presumably died properly attired.

The Anglo-Dutch siege account used male victims of the general storm in order to give the othering of the enemy another bodily dimension: “The 8. of January there were great numbers of dead bodies seene before the olde towne 40. and 50. on a heape all naked: they were all goodly young men and black, as *Spaniards* and *Italiens*.”<sup>113</sup> Calling the skin color of the Spaniards and Italians black introduced a naturalization of alterity. The acknowledgment of their good physical constitution indicated at the same time that the

106 Ibid., p. 110–111.

107 F. Tallett, *War and Society in Early-Modern Europe, 1495–1715* (War in context), London 1992, pp. 88–90.

108 E. g. Grimeston, *True Historie*, p. 55.

109 Ibid., p. 48.

110 Ibid., p. 108.

111 *Der Belägerung von Ostende. Appendix [...], [s.l.] 1604, [image entitled] Furbildung des Blutigen Sturms und gewaltigen Anfalls[...]*.

112 E. g. Grimeston, *True Historie*, pp. 33, 90, 131.

113 Ibid., p. 112.

violent contacts at the boundary of encounter still engendered a certain degree of mutual respect.

Living and dead at Ostend jointly participated in the constitution of a place in which new boundaries of alterity and identity were drawn. The experience of warfare there took on a larger meaning in the struggle between Dutch and Spanish. The siege story derived from the initial German publication established an enduring metaphor by calling the city “an *Academie* and an excellent Schoole, for Gouvernours, Capitaines, Souldiers, Ingeneurs, Phisitions, Surgions, Pilots and Mariners”<sup>114</sup>. The military personnel who had gone through this school of war appeared to have acquired superior skills and even superhuman powers for the struggle against the Spanish. The text mentioned the defense of the fortress of Wastendonck (Wachtendonk on the lower Rhine) against a Spanish surprise attack in 1603. In only three hours, the experienced garrison had brought the fortifications to a state of defense and put up a fierce fight, “to the great amazement of the Spaniardes, who said they could not be men, seeing the Canon did not force them to retire a foote, or els that euery one had a new life in his cofers.”<sup>115</sup> Even a brief spell of service in the war landscape of Ostend was presented as an experience that turned soldiers into impressive fighters in the larger cause of Dutch independence.

The place constituted in practices and (published) representations of the siege of Ostend took on a meaning that reached far beyond the local while still being closely connected to it. Participants as well as observers partook in the constitution of political, religious, or (proto-)national, identity and alterity along, but also across the siege trenches. The place of siege was obviously much more than an empty geometrical container for larger processes of state-building. It was actively made by operative military and representational practices of relating in violent encounter.

#### 4. Room for Manoeuvre: Place, Space, Violence, and Identity

The story of Ostend, as recounted all over 17<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, offers no simple heroic message. The victors conquered a devastated town. The defeated defenders had to retreat from the place they had vowed to hold. The siege is therefore difficult to fit into a canon of national historical icons. This is at least partly due to general characteristics of siege warfare. Sieges brought physical destruction and existential danger for soldiers and civilians alike. Their conditions made morally ambiguous practices or outright atrocities very likely.<sup>116</sup> These in turn undermined the siege’s symbolic or propagandistic use.<sup>117</sup> Yet, the

114 Grimeston, *True Historie*, The Author to the Reader [no pagination].

115 *Ibid.*

116 See for this problem in another early modern conflict A. Fischer-Kattner, *Colchester’s Plight in European Perspective: Printed Representations of Seventeenth-Century Siege Warfare*, in: Ead., and J. Ostwald (eds.), *The World of the Siege* [forthcoming].

117 Cf. for the 20<sup>th</sup> century the questionable use made of the German blockade of Leningrad (1941-4) in Soviet culture, see e. g. L. A. Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 1941–1995: Myth, Memories, and Monuments*, New York 2006.

denouement at Ostend also contains elements of success. For the Spanish side, the town's conquest had removed a dangerous enemy enclave in the loyal province of Flanders, and it had reinvigorated military hopes in Ambrogio Spínola.<sup>118</sup> The rebellious States General had consolidated their position, both in regard to territory – with the capture of Sluys – and to national identity – as the cultural boundaries drawn at Ostend were to prove stable through further Spanish attacks, the Twelve Years' Truce concluded in 1609, and the internal crisis of the following years.<sup>119</sup> The imagery of a place under siege formed at Ostend was easily transferred to the new Republic as a whole, represented as an embattled stronghold stoutly defended against 'foreign' attacks.<sup>120</sup>

Applied to a peculiar historical instance of violent encounter, the theoretical concepts of space and place complement each other in valuable ways. Although Michel de Certeau defined the respective terms in a peculiar manner, his insights connect extremely well to primary source material and current debates. Structural, comparative aspects of space are thus reintegrated with the particular, circulatory, and relational character of living place. Histories of violent encounter thus underline the mediatory stance taken by the geographer John Agnew, who is trying to reconcile recent theories of space and place.<sup>121</sup> The published accounts of the siege of Ostend confirm that contemporaries used elements of both to make sense of warfare's violence.

German philosopher Bernhard Waldenfels has coined a fitting term for the inseparable features of measurable, trans-personal space and experienced, bodily place: "Ortsraum"<sup>122</sup>, which could approximately be rendered as *space*. Locality generally combines different modes of experience, simultaneously evoking feelings of ownership and estrangement. A topographical approach thus helps to explain how violence emerges in encounters.<sup>123</sup> Military operations might therefore be regarded as an extreme case, yet not as contrary or an exception to other spatial practices in encounter.

Thus, the siege of Ostend, connected to later instances of positional warfare through the spatial theories of Kurt Lewin, exemplifies the value new concepts of place-making add to a spatial reading of encounter. Even in situations that appear static, the existence of 'distinguished' paths and circulations is crucial for the emergent constellation of the confrontation. Barriers in hodological space contribute to the formation of new routes for the dynamic movements of life. Even under conditions of military violence, human actors create *places* by way of acts as well as representations, in which self and other mutually constitute each other while struggling about room for manoeuvre. Violent en-

118 Parker, *Dutch Revolt*, pp. 236–237.

119 See Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 421–432.

120 Apart from the abovementioned contemporary source material collected by Simon Schama, the same imagery still persists in modern scholarship, thus Jonathan Israel calls his chapter on the years 1621–8 "The Republic under Siege": Israel, *Dutch Republic*, p. 478.

121 J. Agnew, 5 Space: Place, in: P. J. Cloke and R. J. Johnston (eds.), *Spaces of Geographical Thought: Deconstructing Human Geography's Binaries*, London 2005, pp. 81–96.

122 B. Waldenfels: *Topographie der Lebenswelt*, in: S. Günzel (ed.), *Topologie: Zur Raumbeschreibung in den Kultur- und Medienwissenschaften*, Bielefeld 2007, pp. 69–84, at 76.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

counters clearly do deserve further attention in analyses of the connections between space, place, and cultural identity.