

Introduction

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, it has become commonplace to study early modern Venice through the lens of contemporary ideals of multiculturalism and ‘pacified forms of globalisation’.¹ Scholars often describe Venice as a peaceful republic of merchants and a key agent of cross-cultural exchange, but they rarely attempt to integrate this benevolent view with the city’s colonial practices in the Mediterranean and armed conflict with the Ottomans. They invariably agree with Frederic Lane’s view from his classic *Venice: A Maritime Republic* that the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204 ‘made Venice an imperial power’ but uncritically reiterate his sweeping generalisation that the Venetians were ‘predisposed more toward peace than war’. For Lane, the Republic’s history was supposedly marked by a ‘contrast between Venice of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on the one hand and Venice of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on the other’. He believed that this transition proved his ‘general rule’ that all sea powers initially rely on violence and later settle around ‘peaceful commerce’.² Largely premised on an evolutionist cliché which contrasts ‘medieval brutality’ with an allegedly peaceful modernity, this teleological interpretation projects an image of early modern Venice that worryingly resembles the idealised depictions of the Republic found in its own official iconography. A further consequence of this approach is that the crucial relationship between Venetian republicanism and imperial naval power has not yet received the scholarly attention it deserves. In addition, the neglect of the imperial dimensions of Venetian republicanism has obscured the extent to which overseas colonialism and military expansion defined metropolitan life and shaped the cultural history of Venice in the long run.

This book examines the interplay between war, communication, and republican politics during the War of the Morea (1684–99), Venice’s ‘last

¹ Tarak Barkawi, *Globalization and War* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 172.

² Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1973), 2, 23, 392. For studies that have taken a different perspective, focused on Venetian military organisation, war, and territorial expansion, see Note 78.

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imperial venture'³ in the Mediterranean. The war was part of the wider counteroffensive against the Ottoman empire launched by a Holy League involving Austria, Poland, Venice, the Papacy, and Muscovy (Russia) following the failure of the second Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683.⁴ The crushing defeat of Kara Mustafa Pasha's army at the gates of the Austrian capital was viewed as a turning point in Ottoman expansionism, affecting contemporary European perceptions of the 'Turk' in a number of fundamental ways. Although recent studies have revised the traditional view that the Treaty of Karlowitz, which ended the war in 1699, marked the beginning of Ottoman decline, this was the first peace agreement between the Sublime Porte and a Christian coalition, whereby the sultan acknowledged territorial losses by accepting clearly demarcated borders.⁵ For Venice, the war resulted in the impressive acquisition of the peninsula of the Morea (Peloponnese) and the island of Santa Maura, as well as parts of Dalmatia. Commenting on 'the glory of the unusual conquests over the sworn enemy of Christianity,' the official historiographer of the Republic at the time, Pietro Garzoni, recorded the emotions that 'the grandeur of the successes' stirred in Venice: 'pleasure' and 'marvel to see the age of our grandfathers superseded by ours in the number of victories and the expansion of dominions'.⁶

Garzoni's remarks should not be simply interpreted as yet another example of the myth-making function of early modern Venetian historiography. For the last quarter of the seventeenth century was a time when both elite and ordinary Venetians truly felt they were living through momentous events that made their lives seem to be a part of history. It is surprising therefore that, despite the high symbolic meaning given to

³ Peter Topping, 'Venice's last imperial venture', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 120.3 (1976), 159–65.

⁴ Kenneth M. Setton, *Venice, Austria and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 1991); Ekkehard Eickhoff, *Venezia, Vienna e i Turchi. Bufera nel sud-est europeo 1645–1700* (Milan: Rusconi, 1991).

⁵ Rifaat A. Abou-El-Haj, 'Ottoman diplomacy at Karlowitz', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 87.4 (1967), 498–512, and his 'Ottoman attitudes towards peace-making: the Karlowitz case', *Der Islam* 51.1 (1974), 131–37; Colin Heywood and Ivan Parvev (eds.), *The Treaties of Carlowitz (1699): Antecedents, Course and Consequences* (Leiden: Brill, 2020). Also, Dana Sajdi, 'Decline, its discontents and Ottoman cultural history: by way of introduction', in Dana Sajdi (ed.), *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 1–40; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Alan Mikhail and Christine M. Philliou, 'The Ottoman empire and the imperial turn', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54.4 (2012), 721–45.

⁶ Pietro Garzoni, *Istoria della Repubblica di Venezia in tempo della Sacra Lega contra Maometto IV, e tre suoi successori, gran sultani de' Turchi* (Venice: Gio. Manfrè, 1705), dedicatory epistle.

the war by its contemporaries, no monograph has ever attempted to synthesise its effects on Venetian society and culture.⁷ This is all the more astonishing given that the Venetian patriciate adopted a belligerent foreign policy during a period traditionally identified with the Republic's alleged withdrawal from the Levant and definitive turn towards western Europe.

From a military viewpoint, the war stands out as the only Venetian–Ottoman conflict in which the Republic defeated its life-long adversary for domination in the Mediterranean since the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Although Venetian success was largely the consequence of the fragmentation of the Ottoman army across multiple fronts, this was the second time (the first being 1463) in which Venice embarked on successive offensive campaigns to capture Ottoman territories. Similarly, from a political viewpoint, the acquisition of new colonial space overseas enhanced the legitimacy and popularity of the ruling Venetian elite at home. If by 1669 the loss of the three kingdoms of Negroponte, Cyprus, and Candia had deprived Venice of all its royal crowns, the conquest of the kingdom of the Morea at the end of the seventeenth century returned to Venice its regal identity and restored its status as an imperial power. A prevalent trend in the current historiography is to downplay the significance of this conquest on the grounds that the Ottomans would win back the Morea during the last Venetian–Ottoman war (1714–18). This interpretation, however, is premised on an anachronistic perception, which assesses the conquests of the late seventeenth century through the lens of events that took place three decades later. In addition, it rests on a deterministic logic that downplays important developments in earlier periods because they do not easily fit the linear narrative of the Republic's irreversible decline in the eighteenth century.

In contrast to the commonly held view that the conquest of the Peloponnese was nothing more than 'a passing episode' in the history of Venice,⁸ this book maintains that this event was far from ephemeral or inconsequential. Simply put, the ensuing analysis shows that the War of the Morea contributes greatly to a better understanding of late seventeenth-century Venetian society, politics, and culture. It does so in two important respects: first, by providing a corrective to the idea that Venetian foreign

⁷ For collective works, see Mario Infelise and Anastasia Stouraiti (eds.), *Venezia e la guerra di Morea. Guerra, politica e cultura alla fine del '600* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2005); Laura Marasso and Anastasia Stouraiti (eds.), *Immagini dal mito. La conquista veneziana della Morea (1684–1699)*, exhibition catalogue (Venice: Fondazione Scientifica Querini Stampalia, 2001).

⁸ Benjamin Arbel, 'Venice's maritime empire in the early modern period', in Eric R. Dursteler (ed.), *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 143.

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policy was always driven by a kind of political pragmatism, devoid of the cultural and ideological elements of its time; and secondly, by illuminating the intimate relationship between overseas expansion and the domestic politics of culture.

The first point relates to the importance of ideas to Venetian foreign policy. Although the new diplomatic history has done much to illuminate the field of Ottoman–European relations, the study of the ideological contexts of early modern international politics has not progressed at an equivalent pace.⁹ With particular reference to the period following the Peace of Westphalia (1648), most scholars have reduced international relations to a mere quest for power, thus leaving little scope for consideration of such factors as culture, ideology, and religion.¹⁰ This realist approach is often combined with long-lived essentialist assumptions about Islam that link Ottoman military practice to a religious ideology of holy war against Europe.¹¹ A parallel tendency prevails in Venetian historiography, which for the most part assumes that Venice was inherently more peaceful because its ruling class knew how to separate religion from politics, following the famous dictum ‘First we are Venetians, then Christians’. Reportedly expressed by some senators after Lepanto but actually adopted during the Interdict, this position has been arbitrarily applied to the entire history of the Republic, confusing its independent stance towards the Papacy with an allegedly pragmatic policy towards the Ottomans that was guided by economic and strategic calculations rather than religious/ideological motives.

As will be shown throughout this book, Venetian politicians and merchants may have been practical, calculating men dedicated to the pursuit of state interest and commercial profit, but this did not make them

⁹ Julian Raby, ‘The Serenissima and the Sublime Porte: art in the art of diplomacy, 1453–1600’, in Stefano Carboni (ed.), *Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art & New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 90–119; Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić (eds.), ‘Cross-confessional diplomacy and diplomatic intermediaries in the early modern Mediterranean’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 19.2–3 (2015), 93–259; Michael Talbot and Phil McCluskey (eds.), ‘Contacts, encounters, practices: Ottoman–European diplomacy, 1500–1800’, *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 48 (2016), 269–415.

¹⁰ Notable exceptions are Steven C. A. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650–1668* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Daniel Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe: Religious Conflict, Dynastic Empires, and International Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); David Onnekink and Gijs Rommelse (eds.), *Ideology and Foreign Policy in Early Modern Europe (1650–1750)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

¹¹ For a refutation of this view, see Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500–1700* (London: Routledge, 1999).

necessarily immune to wider cultural and ideological influences. Viewing imperial warfare as a mere question of rational cost-benefit analysis would not have made any sense to them because all matters of foreign and colonial policy were bound up with ‘the profit and honour of Venice’ (*proficuum et honorem Venetiarum*)¹² – an expression of Ciceronian derivation used in Venetian official documents to denote that reputation and material gain, symbolic and economic considerations, were inseparable. Similarly, religion was not distinct from politics but played a substantial part in the debate that took place within the patriciate before the outbreak of the War of the Morea in 1684. ‘This is a war of God’, argued patrician Pietro Valier when he addressed the Senate to support a new armed confrontation with the Ottomans.¹³ In a letter to its emissary to Istanbul Giovanni Cappello, the Senate in turn stressed that the Republic joined the League motivated ‘by concerns of religion and by its own interest in making its dominions secure from the continuous oppressions’.¹⁴ As we shall see, textual and visual media similarly blended martial enthusiasm with religious argument to justify military action against Islam. Bellicose patriotism and popular piety were tightly tangled together in hybrid politico-religious processions and festivals. While religion was not the primary cause of war, it would be misleading to separate out a sacred and a secular sphere in that period, especially when the enduring ideal of crusade mobilised imperial politics and gave war a holy character.

My approach to Venetian foreign policy falls within the critical paradigm of international relations theory. As Robert W. Cox, the leading scholar in this field, has noted, there are three categories of forces which interact at any time to form a world order and define the parameters of war and peace: material capabilities, ideas, and political institutions. This entails that close attention must be equally given to the social forces, ideas, and institutions that make up each state actor in a given world

¹² Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 283–95; Arbel, ‘Venice’s maritime empire’, 236.

¹³ Camillo Contarini, *Istoria della guerra di Leopoldo primo imperatore e de’ principi collegati contro il Turco dall’anno 1683 sino alla pace*, vol. 1 (Venice: Michele Hertz and Antonio Bortoli, 1710), 258; Foscarini, *Historia*, 172; Garzoni, *Istoria della Repubblica di Venezia in tempo della Sacra Lega*, 47, 55.

¹⁴ Dores Levi-Weiss, ‘Le relazioni fra Venezia e la Turchia dal 1670 al 1684 e la formazione della Sacra Lega’, *Archivio veneto-tridentino* 9 (1926), 105; Amy A. Bernardy, *Venezia e il Turco nella seconda metà del secolo XVII* (Florence: Civelli, 1902), 78–80; Domenico Caccamo, ‘Venezia e la Lega Santa. Disimpegno in Italia ed espansione nel Levante (1682–1686)’, *Atti e memorie della società dalmata di storia patria* 12 (1987), 119–42; Sergio Perini, ‘Venezia e la guerra di Morea (1684–1699)’, *Archivio veneto* 153 (1999), 45–91.

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order.¹⁵ Venetian foreign policy was premised on a fusion of pragmatic calculations and institutionally reinforced cultural and ideological conceptions, but the balance between them varied depending on the specific international and domestic contexts in which it unfolded. In particular, the Venetian patriciate decided to join the Holy League in 1684 partly for geopolitical reasons, including the need to resolve the military security issues of the *Stato da mar*, avoid isolation and expand its sphere of influence overseas. However, a key factor behind this decision was the perception of the war with the Turks as a ‘holy war’ that could secure high prestige abroad and enhance patrician political power at home. The recapture of the Peloponnese (formerly partially occupied by Venice from 1204 to 1540) also appeared to validate reason of state discourse regarding the relationship between political reputation and territorial expansion. As sixteenth-century theorist Girolamo Frachetta maintained, ‘it befits the dignity and reputation of a great prince to attempt to recapture those states that once belonged to his ancestors and then came to the power of others’.¹⁶

This book questions the stark distinction between imperial warfare and domestic politics that has long dogged Venetian historiography. This distinction reflects a wider tendency in studies of war which, as Simone Weil observed many decades ago, erroneously ‘consider war as an episode in foreign policy, when above all it constitutes a fact of domestic policy, and the most atrocious one of all’.¹⁷ In the case of Venice, the War of the Morea offered a sense of common purpose that strengthened the in-group loyalty of the patriciate: a ruling class that appeared increasingly divided between rich and poor nobles, old and new families, and oligarchic and democratic tendencies.¹⁸ Military struggle against the Turks and ideals of heroic virtue had always been closely tied with Venetian republican patriotism, and a new armed conflict with the sultan appeared as a source of self-legitimation that could counterbalance the economic and demographic crisis of the patriciate. This was most strikingly the case after the notorious aggregations, namely the sale of nobility titles to

¹⁵ Robert Cox, ‘Social forces, states and world orders: beyond international relations theory’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10.2 (1981), 127–55; Robert Cox with Timothy J. Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Girolamo Frachetta, *Il seminario de’ governi di stato et di guerra* (Venice: Combi, 1647), 124.

¹⁷ Simone Weil, *Formative Writings 1929–1941*, ed. and tr. Dorothy Tuck McFarland and Wilhelmina Van Ness (Oxon: Routledge 2010), 174.

¹⁸ Piero Del Negro, ‘La milizia’, in Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi (eds.), *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima, Vol. 7: La Venezia barocca* (Rome: Istituto dell’enciclopedia Treccani, 1997), 511.

wealthy merchants and foreigners to raise money in times of war.¹⁹ In that context, the cachet of military prestige remained strong. As the public historiographer Michele Foscarini put it in 1685, ‘we are summoned to fight for glory’.²⁰

Related to the idea of reputation as a tool of politics, the second point raised concerns our understanding of the place of war and empire-building in Venetian culture and society. Historians have typically portrayed the War of the Morea as an irrational, ‘quixotic’ venture, inspired by a ‘politics of sentiment’ towards long-lost territories overseas.²¹ Yet, to paraphrase J. H. Elliott, to exclude war and empire from the study of early modern Venice would be ‘equivalent to writing the life of Sancho Panza with no mention of Don Quijote – an engaging exercise, no doubt, but hardly very enlightening’.²² Recent studies have expanded our knowledge of various aspects of Venice’s maritime state, from colonial administration to the family connections, trade networks, and movement of people across Venetian and Ottoman territories.²³ Yet to date scholars have tended to pay less systematic attention to the cultural politics of Venetian expansionism. We know relatively little about the impact of empire on metropolitan popular culture and imagination. Similarly, texts and images representing colonial subjects have been routinely left unexamined.

¹⁹ Alexander Cowan, ‘New families in the Venetian patriciate, 1646–1718’, *Ateneo Veneto* 23.1–2 (1985), 55–76; Roberto Sabbadini, *L’acquisto della tradizione. Tradizione aristocratica e nuova nobiltà a Venezia (sec. XVII–XVIII)* (Udine: Istituto editoriale veneto friulano, 1995); Dorit Raines, ‘Idee di nobiltà nel dibattito sulle aggregazioni (1685–1699 e 1704–1718)’, in Infelise and Stouraiti (eds.), *Venezia*, 78–97, and her ‘Strategie d’ascesa sociale e giochi di potere a Venezia nel Seicento: le aggregazioni alla nobiltà’, *SV* 51 (2007), 279–317. Cf. Pietro Garzoni’s speech against new aggregations (1684) in Anastasia Stouraiti (ed.), *Memorie di un ritorno. La guerra di Morea (1684–1699) nei manoscritti della Querini Stampalia* (Venice: Fondazione Scientifica Querini Stampalia, 2001), 31–37.

²⁰ Michele Foscarini, *Historia della Repubblica veneta* (Venice: Combi and La Noù, 1696), 210.

²¹ Eickhoff, *Venezia*, 454; Ernesto Sestan, ‘La politica veneziana del Seicento’, in Vittore Branca (ed.), *Storia della civiltà veneziana*, vol. 2 (Florence: Neri Pozza, 1979), 7–22.

²² J. H. Elliott, ‘A question of reputation? Spanish foreign policy in the seventeenth century’, *Journal of Modern History* 55.3 (1983), 475.

²³ Monique O’Connell, *Men of Empire: Power and Negotiation in Venice’s Maritime State* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012); Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England, 1450–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Erin Maglaque, *Venice’s Intimate Empire: Family Life and Scholarship in the Renaissance Mediterranean* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018).

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By privileging culture as a category of historical analysis, this book offers a more refined understanding of the constitutive role of empire-building in the cultural and political history of Venice. Rather than confining war to high politics alone, it documents the ways in which a wide variety of cultural artefacts, media and communicative practices were informed through and through by military conquest and imperial ambition. In doing so, the book adopts a holistic view of communication which, as Ruth Finnegan proposes, ‘is not confined to linguistic or cognitive messages but also includes experience, emotion, and the *unspoken*’.²⁴ According to this expansive view, communication is not just information transfer, but also encompasses context, meanings, symbols, and multisensory forms of interaction and participation. This brings me to consider a broad array of cognitive and affective modes of communication that transformed war at a distance into a mediated experience: news pamphlets, histories, poems, novels, orations, but also visual images, material artefacts, and festivals. In analysing these communicative resources, I follow Lisa Gitelman’s definition of media as ‘socially realised structures of communication, where structures include both technological forms and their associated protocols, and where communication is a cultural practice, a ritualised collocation of different people on the same mental map, sharing or engaged with popular ontologies of representation’.²⁵ My aim is to identify patterns of representation, symbolic practices, and social transactions that came to shape what ordinary Venetians knew about the war with the Turks. Above all, I hope to show that we can fruitfully study the relationship between Venice and the Ottoman empire by putting centre stage not just peaceful modes of contact like trade, travel, and diplomacy, but also war, another form of entanglement whose connecting force is consistently overlooked in current historiography on the early modern Mediterranean.

The Cultural History of War

In recent years, scholars outside Venetian studies have examined the relationship between war, society, and culture in the analytical framework of what is now known as ‘the new cultural history’²⁶ of war. The roots of

²⁴ Ruth Finnegan, *Communicating: The Multiple Modes of Human Communication*, 2nd ed. (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 5.

²⁵ Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 7.

²⁶ Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 208; Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

this subfield of research can be traced back to the 1970s, when anthropological and literary methods were rapidly reshaping conventional historical writing. A pioneering work in this direction was Georges Duby's *Le Dimanche de Bouvines*, a study that uses a single medieval battle as a lens through which the structures of feudal society are revealed, while also discussing the history of the remembrance of this event from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries.²⁷ Since then, scholarly interest in the social and cultural history of war has extended to various periods and geographical regions. Despite important differences in scope and subject matter, these studies have broadly concentrated on two main topics: the sociocultural dimensions of warfare and its impact on those who stayed at home. In the first case, military historians have explored issues of army strategy and organisation, the role of societal culture in shaping combat motivation and performance, and the experiences of ordinary soldiers in the battle zone.²⁸ In the second case – which is the one that interests me here – scholars have adopted the analytics of culture to investigate the effects of war on the daily lives of civilians, the articulation of war memory with issues of class, gender, and nation, and the ways in which cultural representations and practices produce war's multiple meanings.²⁹

In the field of early modern Italian studies, John Hale suggested as far back as 1962 that the history of war should be extended beyond the battlefield to 'exploit the sources which reveal the workings of opinion and imagination'.³⁰ Since then, many scholars have studied the best-known military event of the sixteenth century, the Battle of Lepanto (1571), and traced its impact on Venetian visual arts, literature, and culture.³¹ More recent work has drawn attention to other Venetian

²⁷ Georges Duby, *Le dimanche de Bouvines 27 juillet 1214* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973). See also Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), which inspired what is now a massive scholarship on the cultural legacies of WWI.

²⁸ E.g. Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in 20th-Century Warfare* (London: Granta Books, 1999); Wayne E. Lee (ed.) *Warfare and Culture in World History* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Stephen Morillo with Michael F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).

²⁹ E.g. George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Nicola Di Cosmo (ed.), *Military Culture in Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Mary A. Favret, *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime* (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010).

³⁰ John Hale, 'War and opinion: war and public opinion in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries', *Past & Present* 22 (1962), 32. See also his 'War and public opinion in Renaissance Italy' [1960], in J. R. Hale, *Renaissance War Studies* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), 359–87.

³¹ E.g. Gino Benzoni (ed.), *Il Mediterraneo nella seconda metà del 500 alla luce di Lepanto* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1974); Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City,*

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military engagements, examining them from a history-of-information perspective.³² Yet this work does not explicitly position itself within the analytical framework of the cultural history of war, but is more specifically interested in the history of print, the public sphere, and the mechanics of early modern information.

Although the new cultural history of war is not defined by a fixed set of clear ground rules, it primarily deploys an interpretative method of analysis aiming to understand the narratives of meaning generated by armed conflict and organised violence. Because war is a liminal experience, insofar as it is about survival and security, it touches the very core of human identity and existence. As Elaine Scarry argues, war unmakes the world with its unlimited violence, but also rebuilds it by giving rise to acts of creativity and imagination.³³ The cultural history of war addresses symbolic acts that orient the apprehension of war's experience. In the words of Jay Winter and Blaine Baggett, it explores the 'hopes and dreams, the ideas and aspirations, the exhilaration and the despair, both of those remote from power and of those who led them'. In short, 'cultural history is the story of the way they made sense of the war and its consequences'.³⁴

This book investigates the cultural forms and imaginative processes that constituted the War of the Morea as a meaningful political and military event in Venice. The notion of culture adopted here is based on the social construction of meaning. This is the so-called broad definition of culture associated with the field of cultural studies pioneered by Stuart

and *Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Cecilia Gibellini, *L'immagine di Lepanto: la celebrazione della vittoria nella letteratura e nell'arte veneziana* (Venice: Marsilio, 2008); Benjamin Paul (ed.), *Celebrazione e autocritica. La Serenissima e la ricerca dell'identità veneziana nel tardo Cinquecento* (Rome: Viella, 2014).

³² Mario Infelise, 'The war, the news and the curious: military gazettes in Italy', in Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (eds.), *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2001), 216–36; Catherine Koumarianou (ed.), *Avvisi 1570–1572: The War of Cyprus* (Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2004); Margaret Meserve, 'News from Negroponte: politics, popular opinion and information exchange in the first decade of the Italian press', *Renaissance Quarterly* 59.2 (2006), 440–80; Massimo Rospoche and Rosa Salzberg, 'An evanescent public sphere. Voices, spaces, and publics in Venice during the Italian Wars', in Massimo Rospoche (ed.), *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2012), 93–114; Johann Petitjean, *L'intelligence des choses: Une histoire de l'information entre Italie et Méditerranée (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2013).

³³ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

³⁴ Jay Winter and Blaine Baggett, *1914–18: The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century* (London: BBC Books, 1996), 11.