

# 'I do not find him, howsoever our great Enemy, to have deserved such an end': Reactions to the Assassination of Albrecht von Wallenstein, c.1634–1700\*

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Shortly after 10 p.m. on 25 February 1634, a party of thirty imperial soldiers descended on the market square of Eger, in Bohemia.<sup>1</sup> Seven men entered one of the finest residences in the prosperous town and climbed the stairs to the lodgings on the first floor, killing one servant and wounding another during their ascent. The soldiers found their target, an ailing and unarmed 50-year-old man in his nightshirt, who was dispatched with a single stab wound to the chest with a partisan, which killed him almost immediately. The assassins elected not to throw the corpse out of the window onto the street, instead giving it the slightly more dignified treatment of rolling it in a carpet and dragging it down the stairs, before transporting the body to Eger castle to join those of four imperial officers who had been ambushed and slain whilst dining there earlier that evening.<sup>2</sup> The decision of the killers not to defenestrate the corpse was perhaps a final act of respect for their victim, the former imperial generalissimo Albrecht von Wallenstein, whom they had just assassinated on the orders of Emperor Ferdinand II. The bloody events at Eger sent shockwaves far beyond the borders of Bohemia, and the news of Wallenstein's assassination reverberated around Europe.

Wallenstein was one of the most colourful and controversial figures of the Thirty Years War. The German polymath Friedrich Schiller—who would go on to pen a trilogy of plays about Wallenstein in the late eighteenth century—wrote in his history of the conflict that the death of the generalissimo, coming fifteen months after that of his great rival King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, made the war 'in statesmen and heroes [...] less amusing and interesting for my readers'.<sup>3</sup> Wallenstein has been described as 'arguably the best organizational mind of the war' and a 'strange breed

\* I thank Peter H. Wilson for his comments on an earlier draft of this article. The quotation in the title is taken from The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA): SP 80/9 f. 10: Account of Wallenstein's death, undated.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Eger is the German-language name for the town of Cheb, today near the western border of the Czech Republic, and should not be confused with the city of Eger in northern Hungary.

<sup>2</sup> G. Mann, *Wallenstein: His Life Narrated*, trans. C. Kessler (London, 1976), pp. 838–44.

<sup>3</sup> F. Schiller, *The History of the Thirty Years War in Germany*, trans. Captain Blaquiére, 2 vols (London, 1799), vol. 2, p. 251. For a discussion of Wallenstein's depiction in Schiller's history of the conflict see H. Mannigel, 'Entstehung und Wandel des Wallensteinbilds Schillers in der "Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Kriegs"', and A. Beise, 'Schillers "moderner" Wallenstein im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Rezeption der ersten Buchausgabe', in J. Bahlcke and C. Kampmann (eds), *Wallensteinbilder im Widerstreit: eine historische Symbolfigur in Geschichtsschreibung und Literatur vom 17. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 2011), pp. 107–31 and 133–46 respectively.

of condottiere and statesman' to whom Ferdinand owed his successes in the first half of the war.<sup>4</sup> He is also credited with systematizing the practice of 'contributions' as a means of military funding and with being the last of the traditional mercenary captains, who became extinct with the development of the centralized modern state.<sup>5</sup>

Numerous works have been devoted to various aspects of his life and character, such as his health and his obsession with astrology, as well as the role that historical memories of his life played in Germany in the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> However, Wallenstein remains a largely mysterious figure. The title of his most recent English-language biography refers to him as 'the enigma of the Thirty Years War', and a major collection of essays was published under a title reflecting his perplexing life and legacy.<sup>7</sup> This ambiguity is especially true with regard to his death, with successive generations of scholars questioning whether he was wrongly murdered as a result of 'monkish intrigues' and political machinations at the imperial court in Vienna, or if he was justly executed for seeking excessive self-aggrandizement and aiming to destroy the ruling Austrian Habsburg dynasty.<sup>8</sup>

It is not, however, the purpose of this article to cut through the scholarly Gordian knot of the question of Wallenstein's guilt. The primary focus here will instead be how the essentially 'German' political event of Wallenstein's assassination was received in

<sup>4</sup> W. P. Guthrie, *Battles of the Thirty Years War: From White Mountain to Nordlingen* (Westport, CT, 2002), pp. 197–8; A. E. J. Hollaender, 'Some English Documents on the End of Wallenstein', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 40, 2 (1958), pp. 358–90, here p. 361; H. Mannigel, *Wallenstein in Weimar, Wien und Berlin: das Urteil über Albrecht von Wallenstein in der deutschen Historiographie von Friedrich Schiller bis Leopold von Ranke* (Husum, 2003); Bahlcke and Kampmann, *Wallensteinbilder im Widerstreit*.

<sup>5</sup> F. Redlich, 'Contributions in the Thirty Years' War', *Economic History Review*, 12, 2 (1959), pp. 247–54, here p. 254; F. H. Schubert, 'Wallenstein und der Staat des 17. Jahrhunderts', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 16 (1965), pp. 597–611; J. A. Lynn, 'How War Fed War: The Tax of Violence and Contributions during the Grand Siècle', *Journal of Modern History*, 65, 2 (1993), pp. 286–310, here p. 296; P. H. Wilson, 'New Perspectives on the Thirty Years War', *German History*, 23, 2 (2005), pp. 237–61; D. Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> J. Matiegka and J. Malý, *Les caractères physiques d'Albert de Wallenstein, duc de Frýdltant* (Prague, 1934); E. Vlček, 'Diagnóza zdravotního stavu Albrechta z Valdštejna: stanovená na základě nejnovějších průzkumů jeho kosterních pozůstatků', *Časopis lékařů českých*, 115, 22 (1976), p. 678; J. Mixa, 'Neues über die Krankheit Wallensteins', *Medizinhistorisches Journal*, 18, 3 (1983), pp. 256–9; A. Geiger, *Wallensteins Astrologie: eine kritische Überprüfung der Überlieferung nach dem gegenwärtigen Quellenbestand* (Graz, 1983); K. Bauer, 'The Two Faces of Astrology: The Relationship of Wallenstein and Kepler', in J.-P. Boudet, M. Ostorero and A. P. Bagliani (eds), *De Frédéric II à Rodolphe II: Astrologie, divination et magie dans les cours (XIIIe–XVIIe siècle)* (Florence, 2017), pp. 391–415; L. Vargová, K. Vymazalová and L. Horáčková, 'A Brief History of Syphilis in the Czech Lands', *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*, 11, 2 (2019), pp. 521–30; K. Cramer, *The Thirty Years' War and German Memory in the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln, NE, 2007), pp. 94–140; F. Krobb, 'Wallensteins Tod in der Geschichtsschreibung: die frühen Flugschriften und Schillers Geschichte des dreißigjährigen Kriegs', *Daphnis*, 47, 3–4 (2019), pp. 313–43.

<sup>7</sup> G. Mortimer, *Wallenstein: The Enigma of the Thirty Years War* (Basingstoke, 2010); B. Emich, D. Niefanger, D. Sauerer and G. Seiderer (eds), *Wallenstein: Mensch—Mythos—Memoria* (Berlin, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> Schiller, *History*, vol. 2, p. 250; J. Pekař, *Wallenstein, 1630–1634: Tragödie einer Verschwörung*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1937); H. R. von Srbik, *Wallensteins Ende: Ursachen, Verlauf und Folgen der Katastrophe* (2nd edn, Salzburg, 1952); A. Ernstberger, 'Für und wider Wallenstein: Stimmen und Stimmungen in Franken und der Oberpfalz zum Tode des Generalissimus', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 74 (1955), pp. 265–81; C. Kampmann, *Reichsrebellion und kaiserliche Acht: politische Strafjustiz im Dreißigjährigen Krieg und das Verfahren gegen Wallenstein 1634* (Münster, 1992); I. Mieck, 'Wallenstein 1634: Mord oder Hinrichtung?', in A. Demandt (ed.), *Das Attentat in der Geschichte* (Cologne, 1996), pp. 143–63.

a number of pro- and anti-Habsburg countries and states. What follows is thus not an exhaustive pan-European study but rather an examination of how the news was depicted in various formats within particular areas, ranging from diplomatic and private correspondence to newsprint, poetry and stage plays.

The topic of the early modern news industry has seen a considerable scholarly output in the last two decades, with details of the development of continent-wide news networks and discussions of the importance of the news trade for wider society and political culture being of considerable value.<sup>9</sup> This article uses the diplomatic correspondence from Charles I of England and Scotland's agents and ambassadors to offer an understanding of how the news of the assassination—as well as reports of the emperor's motives and Wallenstein's alleged plans—differed in the retelling at various pro- and anti-Habsburg courts.

The depictions of Wallenstein on stage and in printed news also reveal the anxieties and concerns in the early and mid-seventeenth century on a variety of issues, such as the destructiveness of the European war and the dangers of royal favouritism. By the later seventeenth century, the generalissimo was even being portrayed as a successor and precursor to notorious rebels. In addition to showing how foreign news could be used to clothe domestic concerns, this article intends to contribute to the fruitful scholarship on printed news in early modern Europe by complementing the work of Joad Raymond, Jason Peacey, Jayne Boys and others on early modern news networks.<sup>10</sup> By comparing German-language newsbooks and pamphlets on the massacre at Eger, the article identifies the sources used by publishers to produce their own narratives of the assassination. It is useful, however, to provide a brief overview of the meteoric rise and equally spectacular fall of one of the most controversial figures of the Thirty Years War.

### I. Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583–1634)

Born into a minor branch of a Bohemian aristocratic family in 1583, Albrecht Wenzel Eusebius von Wallenstein entered imperial service in 1619 and was a major beneficiary of the land transfers following the defeat of the Bohemian rebels at the Battle of White Mountain in November 1620. By 1624, Wallenstein had accumulated property spanning approximately 2,000 square miles, and the resulting revenues allowed him to make a series of loans worth 1.6 million florins to the cash-strapped Ferdinand II. The emperor rewarded his faithful creditor with frequent promotions in military rank and social status. By 1629, Wallenstein had not only raised an army with a paper strength of 100,000 troops for Ferdinand and won a string of military victories, but had also been promoted to the rank of *General-Oberster Feldhauptmann* (or, generalissimo), ennobled as

<sup>9</sup> Recent examples include J. Raymond and N. Moxham (eds), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2016); J. W. Koopmans, *Early Modern Media and the News in Europe* (Leiden, 2018); J. Hillgärtner, *News in Times of Conflict: The Development of the German Newspaper, 1605–1650* (Leiden, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> See J. Raymond (ed.), *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain* (London, 1999); J. Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013) and J. Peacey, 'European News Culture during the English Revolution: Nouvelles Ordinaires de Londres (1650–1660)', *Media History*, 23, 2 (2017), pp. 241–55; J. E. E. Boys, *London's News Press and the Thirty Years War* (Woodbridge, CT, 2011). See also J. Schleck, "'Fair and Balanced" News from the Continent: English Newsbook Readers and the Thirty Years War', *Prose Studies*, 29, 3 (2007), pp. 323–35.

Duke of Friedland and awarded the great hereditary duchy of Mecklenburg. Despite being dismissed by Ferdinand in August 1630 at the insistence of the emperor's Jesuit confessor and the prince electors, Wallenstein was reinstated with unconstrained plenipotentiary and military powers in April 1632, following Swedish intervention in the war and several decisive victories for Gustavus Adolphus's forces. The generalissimo and the Swedish king clashed repeatedly in the summer and autumn of 1632, before the latter perished leading his troops to a narrow and costly victory at the Battle of Lützen on 16 November. Scarcely fifteen months later, Wallenstein was accused in a proclamation by Ferdinand II dated 18 February 1634 of 'an unheard-of faithless breach of oath and barbaric tyranny for which there are no parallels in history'. One week later he was dead.<sup>11</sup>

By early 1634, Wallenstein had become isolated from the leading political figures of the empire and its allies, and he had spent much of 1633 in Silesia, far from other senior imperial officers such as Johann von Aldringen, Matthias Gallas and Ottavio Piccolomini, who soon became disillusioned with their commander's inactivity and had established a conspiratorial network by August 1633.<sup>12</sup> Wallenstein's actions throughout 1633 appeared irrational. Not only did he seem to be unwilling to press his advantage over the Swedes and Saxons in the turmoil following the death of Gustavus Adolphus and a mutiny of the Swedish troops in late April 1633, but he swiftly released the commander of the force he had defeated at the Second Battle of Steinau on 11 October 1633.<sup>13</sup> The generalissimo was also slow to respond to Maximilian of Bavaria's pleas to defend Regensburg before it fell to Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar in November 1633, and he refused to obey an order from the emperor to mount a winter campaign to recover the city and to establish winter quarters on enemy territory.<sup>14</sup> Instead, Wallenstein quartered his troops on Habsburg lands and established his own headquarters at Pilsen, in Bohemia, from 26 November 1633.<sup>15</sup> Such repeated disobedience created a breach between Wallenstein and the emperor and supposedly confirmed what months of suspicion had suggested: that the generalissimo was planning to defect to the enemy with his entire army. This allegation was supported by damning testimony from Piccolomini, who was regarded as a trusted subordinate of Wallenstein but in reality headed the cabal of disgruntled imperial officers against their commander, who accused him of planning to eradicate the Austrian branch of the Habsburg dynasty.<sup>16</sup>

There is no certain evidence that Wallenstein planned to defect, but he had been in contact with the Saxons and Swedes throughout 1633 in an attempt to negotiate a peace settlement, even though the Swedish chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna, remained unconvinced that the imperial generalissimo genuinely sought peace.<sup>17</sup> Whilst the very

<sup>11</sup> Quotation from Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 219.

<sup>12</sup> P. H. Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy: A New History of the Thirty Years War* (London, 2009), p. 536; T. M. Barker, *Army, Aristocracy, Monarchy: Essays on War, Society, and Government in Austria, 1618–1780* (New York, 1982), p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> Wilson, *Thirty Years War*, p. 537.

<sup>14</sup> Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 200; Wilson, *Thirty Years War*, p. 537.

<sup>15</sup> Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 200.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>17</sup> D. Parrott, 'From Military Enterprise to Standing Armies: War, State, and Society in Western Europe, 1600–1700', in F. Tallett and D. J. B. Trim (eds), *European Warfare, 1350–1750* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 74–95, here p. 85; Wilson, *Thirty Years War*, pp. 515, 539.

act of Wallenstein independently engaging in negotiations was regarded as treason in earlier scholarship, subsequent works have argued that his commission permitted him to conduct peace talks without consulting the emperor.<sup>18</sup> However, Wallenstein truly sealed his own fate in January 1634, when he summoned his colonels to Pilsen and got them to sign an oath swearing personal loyalty to him.<sup>19</sup> Although more recent scholars have interpreted this action as Wallenstein either wishing to reassure himself of the fidelity of his officers or as ‘a symbolic gesture’ warning the emperor not to try dismissing him, it served only to convince the imperial court that there was no alternative but to remove the controversial generalissimo.<sup>20</sup> Ferdinand convened a secret tribunal on 24 January and on the same day produced an imperial decree informing the army that Wallenstein was dismissed from his post. Piccolomini, Gallas and Aldringen were authorized to arrest their former commander and his co-conspirators and bring them to Vienna or to ‘eliminate them from the numbers of the mortal’, if necessary.<sup>21</sup>

## II. The Massacre at Eger: 25 February 1634

Wallenstein set out west from Pilsen with approximately 1,300 men on 22 February and commanded Walter Butler, the Irish Catholic colonel of a 900-strong dragoon regiment, to join him. Butler, together with the Scots Lieutenant-Colonel John Gordon and Major Walter Leslie had already been identified by Piccolomini as willing assassins by the end of January.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately for Wallenstein, Gordon and Leslie were also the commandant and second-in-command respectively of the imperial garrison at Eger, the generalissimo’s intended destination. Wallenstein’s force arrived in the afternoon of 24 February, the day that he received the first official confirmation of his dismissal by the emperor. Gordon surrendered his lodgings for Wallenstein’s use, and suitable accommodations were found for his leading officers while the rest of his force remained camped outside the town walls.<sup>23</sup>

The following evening, Wallenstein and his senior officers were invited to dine at Gordon’s new lodgings at the castle. Although the ailing generalissimo declined, Gordon, Leslie and Butler were joined by Wallenstein’s second-in-command, Field Marshal Christian von Ilow, and by Lieutenant Field Marshal Adam Erdmann Trčka, the Bohemian Protestant Count Vilém Kinsky and Heinrich Niemann, the captain of Wallenstein’s bodyguard. After dinner, Leslie received the pre-arranged signal that the outer gate was locked and sent a message to the two parties of six armed men led by Major Geraldine and Captain Devereux of Butler’s dragoon regiment who were waiting in the anterooms adjoining the chamber.<sup>24</sup> According to subsequent reports, Geraldine, Devereux, and their twelve soldiers burst into the dining room and shouted, ‘Who is a

<sup>18</sup> Hollaender, ‘Some English Documents’, p. 358; S. Davies, *The Wallenstein Figure in German Literature and Historiography 1790–1920* (Leeds, 2010), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Mann, *Wallenstein*, pp. 764–7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 768; Wilson, *Thirty Years War*, p. 537; Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, pp. 209, 215.

<sup>21</sup> Mann, *Wallenstein*, p. 799; Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 217.

<sup>22</sup> Wilson, *Thirty Years War*, p. 538; D. Worthington, *Scots in Habsburg Service, 1618–1648* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 159–61.

<sup>23</sup> Mann, *Wallenstein*, p. 835.

<sup>24</sup> Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 230; Worthington, *Scots*, pp. 163–4.

good servant of the emperor?', at which point Butler, Gordon and Leslie leapt to their feet and drew their weapons with the response 'Long live Ferdinand.' Kinsky was immediately killed in his seat and the other targets, together with two of their servants who rushed to their aid, were slaughtered in a brief skirmish.<sup>25</sup> While Gordon remained at the castle, Leslie admitted more Irish dragoons to patrol the town and inform the guard of what had transpired, and Butler led a party of thirty men to Wallenstein's lodgings and waited outside as Devereux delivered the death blow to their former commander.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the failure to find concrete evidence of Wallenstein's alleged treason beyond the Pilsen oath, there was remarkably little backlash within the imperial army after the slaying of their generalissimo. The successful assassination was regarded by leading imperial military and political figures as a demonstration of divine favour for Ferdinand and the house of Habsburg.<sup>27</sup> The emperor's son, the king of Hungary, was announced as the new commander of the imperial army in April 1634, and the properties of Wallenstein and his supporters—totalling a value of approximately 13 million florins—were confiscated and used to settle arrears of pay for the soldiers, as well as richly reward the conspirators.<sup>28</sup> Butler, Gordon and Leslie were all elevated to the rank of imperial count and received substantial estates which had previously belonged to Wallenstein and Trčka, whilst the members of the assassination squads each received a bounty of 500 imperial thalers.<sup>29</sup> The actual assassin, Devereux, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and received a reward of 1,000 thalers as well as an estate in eastern Bohemia worth 40,000 florins.<sup>30</sup> Aldringen was granted an estate worth 94,000 gulden, although he did not live long enough to enjoy it, for he was killed in the Battle of Landshut five months after the assassination. Piccolomini received an estate worth over 200,000 florins.<sup>31</sup> The main beneficiary was, however, Gallas. In addition to being appointed second-in-command of the imperial armies under the emperor's son, Gallas received estates worth 500,000 florins, which reportedly made him the largest landowner in Bohemia.<sup>32</sup>

### III. Reactions to Wallenstein's Death in Diplomatic Circles

The news of Wallenstein's assassination prompted a range of responses throughout Europe. The Venetian ambassador in England reported that the events at Eger 'come as a great relief to all those who openly side with the house of Austria', whilst epistolary evidence shows that notable Protestant figures were divided in their reactions.<sup>33</sup> To

<sup>25</sup> Wilson, *Thirty Years War*, p. 540.

<sup>26</sup> Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 231.

<sup>27</sup> R. Bireley, *Ferdinand II: Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578–1637* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 264–5.

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, *Thirty Years War*, p. 541.

<sup>29</sup> Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 233; Worthington, *Scots*, pp. 168–9.

<sup>30</sup> Worthington, *Scots*, p. 169.

<sup>31</sup> Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 234; Mann, *Wallenstein*, p. 867; A. Becucci, 'Ottavio Piccolomini (1599–1656): A Case of Patronage from a Transnational Perspective', *International History Review*, 33, 4 (2011), pp. 585–605, here pp. 589–90.

<sup>32</sup> Mann, *Wallenstein*, p. 867; Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 234.

<sup>33</sup> A. B. Hinds (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice* (hereafter CSPV), Volume 23, 1632–36 (London, 1921), p. 206 (31 Mar. 1634).

those who viewed Wallenstein as the leading military figure of the popish forces, intent on extirpating Protestantism, his assassination was a cause for celebration. Others, however, lamented the generalissimo's death and the thwarting of his supposed defection as a lost opportunity to weaken the emperor. For example, the Church of Ireland bishop of Ardagh wrote to Samuel Hartlib in May 1634 that 'my heart hath bin still downe in the Germane affayres, since [Gustavus Adolphus's] decease. But now is revived againe since the slaughter of Wallenstein'.<sup>34</sup> In contrast, Sampson Johnson, the chaplain to the diplomat Sir Robert Anstruther, reported to the Protestant ecumenicist John Dury that the emperor 'gott as great a victory by [Wallenstein's] death as ever by one mans [...] the army they report in all order againe & the great riches of Wallenstein and his complices satisfied the souldiers'.<sup>35</sup>

The reaction to the news within Charles I's privy council seems to have been one of uncertainty. Sir John Coke wrote to his fellow secretary of state Sir Francis Windebank that 'what wil bee the effects [of Wallenstein's assassination], tyme will discover', supporting the Venetian ambassador's observation that 'the wisest, and those of the government in particular, seem to refrain from forming an opinion until they can see better what results such a great change is likely to produce'.<sup>36</sup> It appears that the royal councillors expected that the assassination would weaken Ferdinand II's hold over his own army, based on several reports of disorder within imperial camps. Indeed, the Venetian ambassador recorded a conversation with a secretary of state some six weeks after the assassination in which he was informed that the king and his advisers were astonished that Wallenstein's death 'had not, as the first advices seemed to indicate, been followed by consequences more disadvantageous for the Imperialists that they had heard had been the case so far'.<sup>37</sup> Certainly, Coke had previously received word from an agent in Frankfurt am Main that the events at Eger—described in the letter as 'of so great moment that it dwarves all other matters'—would result in considerable instability in the imperial army.<sup>38</sup>

Such reports clearly demonstrate how the news of Wallenstein's actions and death was interpreted and received in various European courts, both pro- and anti-Habsburg powers as well as active participants and non-combatants. For example, the English agent in Paris Henri de Vic wrote about 'the effects of astonishment & mortification which the newes of Wallensteins death produced in this Courte', as Louis XIII's councillors reportedly had hoped the generalissimo was about to defect away from the emperor.<sup>39</sup> French hopes of Wallenstein's defection were also reported by Balthazar Gerbier, the English resident agent in the Spanish Netherlands, who claimed from Brussels that 'French negotiants [...] moved [Friedland] to his rebellion'.<sup>40</sup> De Vic

<sup>34</sup> University of Sheffield: Special Collections: Hartlib Papers 5/16/1a-2B: John Richardson, Bishop of Ardagh to Samuel Hartlib, 5 May 1634.

<sup>35</sup> University of Sheffield: Special Collections: Hartlib Papers 42/13/9A-10B: Sampson Johnson to John Dury, 8 Apr. 1634.

<sup>36</sup> TNA SP 16/262 f. 129: Secretary Coke in Newmarket to Secretary Windebank, 14 Mar 1634; *CSPV: 1632–36*, p. 206 (31 Mar 1634).

<sup>37</sup> *CSPV: 1632–36*, p. 209 (7 Apr 1634).

<sup>38</sup> TNA SP 81/42 f. 41: Sir George Douglas [in Frankfurt?] to Coke, 3/13 Mar. 1634.

<sup>40</sup> TNA SP 78/95 ff. 143 and 183: Henri de Vic in Paris to Coke, 6/16 Mar. and 22 Mar./1 Apr. 1634.

<sup>41</sup> TNA SP 77/24 ff. 111v–112: Balthazar Gerbier in Brussels to Coke, 21 Mar. 1634.

asserted to Secretary Coke that a ‘very greate summe’ of French money had been paid ‘amongst Wallensteins counsels’, and that Cardinal Richelieu had ‘greate designes in Germany’ which appeared to have been grounded on the generalissimo’s intended defection.<sup>41</sup> The ‘effects of astonishment & mortification which the newes of Wallensteins death produced’ in Paris were such that Cardinal Richelieu feared that an attempt would be made on his own life. In response, the cardinal reportedly took a number of security measures including doubling the number of sentinels at his gates, maintaining a round-the-clock guard for his own protection, recruiting two companies of musketeers to expand his household guard and insisting on being accompanied by two troops of horse ‘whensoever hee goeth abroad’.<sup>42</sup>

The same claims as those made by de Vic can be found in the letters of John Dury, who had several contacts who moved in diplomatic circles. Dury wrote to Sir Thomas Roe, the former ambassador to the Mughal and Ottoman empires who had led an important embassy to Gustavus Adolphus in 1629/30, that ‘the French Court doth mourne for the death of Wallenstein’.<sup>43</sup> Dury also claimed that ‘it is thought for certain [that] Wallenstein hadde contracted with the French King & hadde received two millions in hand’, with the loss of such funds meaning that Louis XIII was ‘not well able to pretende in his designes’.<sup>44</sup> Although de Vic’s reports do not prove that Wallenstein’s supposed treason had French backing, facilitating the generalissimo’s defection would certainly have been in keeping with Richelieu’s preferred strategy prior to 1635 of assisting potential allies with subsidies as a way of weakening the Habsburgs without committing France to overt intervention.<sup>45</sup>

From the court of the duke of Savoy, John Hales reported that ‘we really believe here (not without some secreat rejoicing) that Wallestain hath suffered a vyolent death, for some secreat plot held against his Master the Emperor—and especially for attempting the Crowne of Bohemia’.<sup>46</sup> However, this view was not held by everyone in Turin, as Hales also wrote that ‘others assume, that [Wallenstein] did not Sinne, in any such conspiracy, only his desire of drawing from the Emp.r his pretended [peace], and to keep his colonels from being disbaunched by the Spaniards [...] was the only ground of these aspertions and for wch he hath lost his Life’.<sup>47</sup> In pro-Habsburg territories, the reaction to Wallenstein’s assassination was decidedly more celebratory. The correspondence of Balthazar Gerbier professed that many people rejoiced upon hearing the news of Wallenstein’s assassination, and that the thwarting of his ‘treason’ was celebrated in Brussels, with the archbishop of Mechelen ordering ‘publicke thankes

<sup>41</sup> TNA SP 78/95 ff. 143 and 183: Henri de Vic to Coke, 6/16 Mar. and 22 Mar./1 Apr. 1634.

<sup>42</sup> TNA SP 78/95 f. 183: Henri de Vic to Coke, 22 Mar./1 Apr. 1634.

<sup>43</sup> TNA SP 16/263 f. 41v: John Dury in Westminster to Sir Thomas Roe, 19 Mar. 1634; J. Reeve, ‘Sir Dudley Carleton and Sir Thomas Roe: English Servants of the Queen of Bohemia and the Protestant International during the Thirty Years War’, *Parergon*, 32, 3 (2015), pp. 151–81.

<sup>44</sup> TNA SP 16/265 f. 140v: John Dury in Westminster to Sir Thomas Roe, 16 Apr. 1634.

<sup>45</sup> D. Parrott, *Richelieu’s Army: War, Government and Society in France, 1624–1642* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 101–2; Wilson, *Thirty Years War*, p. 380. Daniel O’Connell certainly believed that Richelieu was in communication with Wallenstein about rebelling against Ferdinand II in exchange for French support for his supposed pretensions for the Bohemian crown: D. P. O’Connell, *Richelieu* (London, 1968), pp. 297–8.

<sup>46</sup> TNA SP 92/20 f. 121: John Hales in Turin to Secretary [Coke?], 8/18 Mar. 1634.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*



[...] rendred throughout their churches'.<sup>48</sup> In addition to Wallenstein's alleged plan to abandon Ferdinand II's cause, Gerbier reported in a letter to Secretary Coke dated 17 March that 'its given out here he was to kill the Emperour and the King of Hungary'.<sup>49</sup> However, only a few days later he wrote that 'the treason is much enlarged' and that Wallenstein was reportedly intending to 'exterminate the house of Austria' by murdering the emperor and his two sons—Ferdinand, king of Hungary, and Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria.<sup>50</sup>

Such an escalation in reports of Wallenstein's alleged intentions—undoubtedly the product of the deliberate release of 'evidence' by the Habsburgs—can be seen in the correspondence from Hamburg of the Scottish-born diplomat Sir Robert Anstruther. In early March, Anstruther reported to Secretary Coke that the late generalissimo allegedly 'had good intelligence both with the Elector of Saxe and Duke Bernard of Weymar; and [...] had intention of surrendering some strong Places into their hands'.<sup>51</sup> Whilst certainly potentially treasonous activity, such allegations stop far short of the accusations being circulated at Brussels around the same time of a plot to extirpate the imperial family. However, such a tale had clearly reached Hamburg within a month, as Anstruther wrote on 11 April that he had received intelligence that 'it is given out in the Imperiall Court that the late Duke of Fridland [...] had marvellous designes, to the prejudice of the Emperor and his house [...] and of procuring to himself the chiefest and most absolute Power in the whole Empire'.<sup>52</sup> This allegation mirrors earlier reports from Frankfurt that Wallenstein 'offered presently to deliver to Duke Bernhard both Pilsen and Eger. And so to goe presently to Vienna against the Emperor'.<sup>53</sup>

Diplomatic correspondence clearly highlights the rumours which were rife in the wake of the massacre at Eger. In addition to reports of the extent of Wallenstein's alleged treasonous ambitions, such reports show who contemporaries believed was responsible for the generalissimo's murder. Numerous diplomatic missives profess intelligence that Butler and Gordon were the ones who slew Wallenstein.<sup>54</sup> In addition, Gerbier reported from Brussels that the marquis of Aytona—the interim governor of the Spanish Netherlands—felt it necessary to dismiss rumours that Spanish interference had led Ferdinand to dismiss Wallenstein, claiming instead that 'the Germans unanimously fell on him & were as eager to fall from him as he from the Emperour'.<sup>55</sup> Gerbier also appears to have revelled in the grislier and more humiliating details of Wallenstein's fate, which proved to be simply hearsay. For example, he wrote to the duchess of Buckingham—the widow of his assassinated patron—that Wallenstein's corpse had been thrown out of the window of his quarters and dragged up and down

<sup>48</sup> TNA SP 105/10, unfoliated: Gerbier in Brussels to Sir John Coke, 7/17 and 21 Mar. 1634.

<sup>49</sup> TNA SP 105/10, unfoliated: Gerbier in Brussels to Sir John Coke, 7/17 Mar. 1634.

<sup>50</sup> TNA SP 105/10, unfoliated: Gerbier to Coke, 21 Mar. 1634.

<sup>51</sup> TNA SP 75/13 f. 164: Sir Robert Anstruther in Hamburg to Coke, 1/11 Mar. 1634.

<sup>52</sup> TNA SP 75/13 f. 180: Sir Robert Anstruther in Hamburg to Coke, 1/11 Apr. 1634.

<sup>53</sup> TNA SP 81/42 f. 40: Extract of Sir George Douglas Letters dated Frankfurt, 24 Feb. and 3 Mar. 1634.

<sup>54</sup> TNA SP 105/10, unfoliated: Gerbier to Coke, 7/17 Mar. 1634; TNA SP 75/13 f. 164: Anstruther in Hamburg to Coke, 1/11 Mar. 1634.

<sup>55</sup> TNA SP 105/10, unfoliated: Gerbier to Coke, 21 Mar. 1634.

the street before being decapitated so that his head could be sent to the emperor in Vienna.<sup>56</sup>

Reports from Arthur Hopton, the English resident agent in Madrid, further demonstrate how the assassination of Wallenstein and his alleged plot against the emperor fuelled the already-whirring European diplomatic rumour mill. In mid-April 1634, Hopton wrote to Secretary Coke that Philip IV had summoned the duke of Aarschot, one of the leading political figures in the Spanish Netherlands, and ‘asked him some questions (they say concerning Fridlande conspiracy)’.<sup>57</sup> However, nine days later, Hopton confided that ‘it was conceived the business might have some connection with that of Fridland [...] because the afternoon before the Duke [of Aarschot] was arrested there came an Extraordinary from Germany’.<sup>58</sup> It later emerged that Aarschot was not imprisoned owing to any suspected connection with Wallenstein, but rather because he was accused of participating in the 1632 ‘Conspiracy of Nobles’, which sought to divide the Spanish Netherlands between the Dutch Republic and the kingdom of France.<sup>59</sup>

The evidence of diplomatic correspondence also provides an insight into how news and intelligence was spread to—and circulated around—various European courts. For example, the English resident secretary in Venice obtained a copy of an official letter received by Ferdinand II’s representative in the city which provided justification for the actions at Eger and forwarded it to his correspondents.<sup>60</sup> Another source of information which had become increasingly important for diplomats abroad over the early modern period was the intelligence contained in European news publications.<sup>61</sup> For example, Gerbier wrote in mid-March 1634 of having received news letters about Wallenstein’s assassination from Nuremberg, Salzburg and Frankfurt.<sup>62</sup> Such printed accounts were often sent to Secretary Coke in London.<sup>63</sup> In early March Anstruther sent Coke news publications concerning the events at Eger and the emperor’s public disposing of his former generalissimo ‘just as I have gotten them (wch you will I hope excuse) not having had time to have them translated’, and de Vic’s missive from Paris dated 16 March was accompanied by the particulars of the assassination ‘as they have been published here’.<sup>64</sup> The following month Anstruther also sent his masters in London a ‘Latine relation; lately dispersed in Vienna, about that Duke’s death’ as well as an ‘Apology published by Butler

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, Gerbier to the Duchess of Buckingham, 14 Mar. 1634.

<sup>57</sup> TNA SP 94/37 f. 24: Arthur Hopton in Madrid to Coke, 6/16 Apr. 1634.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 28: Hopton in Madrid to Coke, 15/25 Apr. 1634.

<sup>59</sup> V. Hyden-Hanscho, ‘State Services, Fortuitous Marriages, and Conspiracies: Trans-territorial Family Strategies between Madrid, Brussels, and Vienna in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 19, 1 (2021), pp. 40–62, here p. 58.

<sup>60</sup> TNA SP 99/34 f. 167: Thomas Rowlandson in Venice to [unspecified], 10 Mar. 1634.

<sup>61</sup> J. Peacey, ‘“My Friend the Gazetier”: Diplomacy and News in Seventeenth-Century Europe’, in Raymond and Moxham, *News Networks*, pp. 420–42, here p. 421.

<sup>62</sup> TNA SP 105/10, unfoliated: Gerbier to Coke, 7/17 Mar. 1634.

<sup>63</sup> See accounts in the State Papers Foreign: Holy Roman Empire such as TNA SP 80/9 ff. 4–5, 12: *Account of Wallenstein’s Death* [in French], 29 Mar. 1634, and *Brief relation of Wallenstein’s Treason*, undated.

<sup>64</sup> TNA SP 75/13 f. 164: Anstruther in Hamburg to Coke, 1/11 Mar. 1634; TNA SP 78/95 f. 143: de Vic in Paris to [Coke], 6/16 Mar. 1634.

and Gordon, justifying themselves for what they have done on the person of that Generall, and on those of his complices'.<sup>65</sup>

#### IV. Wallenstein's Assassination in Newsprint

Unlike Gustavus Adolphus and Johann Tserclaes von Tilly, general field marshal (*Generalfeldmarschall*) of the imperial and Catholic League forces, Wallenstein rarely featured in the print media during his lifetime in spite of his prominence and remarkable rise to the rank of generalissimo.<sup>66</sup> However, the events at Eger swiftly generated a media feeding frenzy in the subsequent weeks and months. The first printed reports of the assassination emerged by the first week of March, and as details spread from Eger to the nearest centres of news production, in Nuremberg, Augsburg and Regensburg, some fifty-seven pamphlets and broadsheets devoted to the incident were produced and circulated within the European news network.<sup>67</sup> Hans Medick writes that the reportage was initially dominated by the 'Protestant side', which became increasingly critical of the emperor—assigning moral responsibility for the assassination to Ferdinand and emphasizing the lack of due legal process against the generalissimo—and that resistance from the imperial court meant that official printed justifications only emerged from late March.<sup>68</sup> Many publications were accompanied by detailed images of Wallenstein's death and the massacre of his officers. As news publishers were dependent on the intelligence they received, there was—almost inevitably—a wide divergence in the finer details of Wallenstein's final moments as well as speculation about the motives behind his assassination. Notable differences between printed reports include the identity of Wallenstein's killer, with some claiming that Gordon or Leslie delivering the *coup de grâce*. In addition, whilst numerous publications asserted that the generalissimo's controversial diplomacy with the emperor's enemies was driven by a desire to end the war, others argued that Wallenstein had initially intended to resign his command as the emperor wished but was persuaded otherwise by his officers and became determined to remain in his role until his troops received their long-overdue payment. Finer points of contention between German-language accounts also include whether Wallenstein was slain standing up or in his bed and what his last words were: many asserted that he departed this earthly realm with a simple 'Ach Gott'.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>65</sup> TNA SP 75/13 f. 180: Anstruther to Coke, 1/11 Apr. 1634.

<sup>66</sup> S. S. Tschoop, 'Albrecht von Wallenstein in der zeitgenössischen Publizistik: zu den Rahmenbedingungen und Konjunkturen medialer Kommunikation im Kontext des Dreißigjährigen Krieges', in Emich *et al.*, *Wallenstein*, pp. 103–29, here p. 103.

<sup>67</sup> H. Medick, 'Wallensteins Tod: auf den medialen Schlachtfeldern des Dreißigjährigen Krieges', *Daphnis*, 37, 1–2 (2008), pp. 111–30, here p. 117; Hillgärtner, *News*, pp. 157–8. For early examples of reports of Wallenstein's assassination see Anon., *Ordentliche Zeitungen* (11 Mar. 1634), unpaginated; Anon., *Gründliche und gewisse Beschreibung: Welcher gestalt Ihre Fürstl. Gn. Von Wallenstein/ sampt etlichen vornehmen Obristen zu Eger seynd jämmerlich ermordet und umgebracht worden* (n.p., 1634); Anon., *Kurtze Aber doch Warhafftige Relation dessen was von dem 12. Januar dieses lauffenden 1634. Jahrs an biß auff den letzten Februarii mit Albrecht von Wallenstein gewesen Herzog zu Mechelburg Fridlandt Sagan und Großglogaw* (n.p., 1634).

<sup>68</sup> Medick, 'Wallensteins Tod', pp. 124–5.

<sup>69</sup> For examples of German newsbooks on Wallenstein's assassination see J. R. Paas, *The German Political Broadsheet, 1600–1700*, 14 vols (Wiesbaden, 1985–2017), vol. 7, pp. 92–104. See also Medick, 'Wallensteins Tod', pp. 117–20.

Although several historians have examined how Wallenstein's assassination was addressed in contemporary Central European newspapers, the treatment of the massacre at Eger in newsprint further afield has been largely overlooked.<sup>70</sup> For example, while Medick states that the assassination can definitely be described as an European or transnational media event, he goes no further than saying that news of Wallenstein's death spread as far afield as England, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands in 1634.<sup>71</sup> In the news press of anti-Habsburg states, Wallenstein's supposed peaceful intentions and the lack of proof from the imperial court of his alleged high treason resulted in a positive depiction of the generalissimo and disapproval of the emperor's actions.<sup>72</sup> For example, Swedish newspapers lauded Wallenstein as a great and virtuous enemy, criticizing the underhand tactics of the emperor and his leading military and political advisers in arranging the assassination, although Golo Mann suggested that this editorial stance was an attempt to 'sow discord in the imperial army, to confuse minds, and to excite passion'.<sup>73</sup> In 1636, a Stockholm-based printer published a tract by one of Wallenstein's last battlefield opponents in which he discussed the events at Eger. Heinrich Matthias von Thurn, one of the ringleaders of the 1618 Defenestration of Prague, had been defeated and captured by Wallenstein at the Second Battle of Steinau, in October 1633, but his swift release following the surrender of all strongholds under his command increased suspicion against the generalissimo at the imperial court.<sup>74</sup> Thurn evidently sought to protect his own reputation by denying that he had received presents and gifts from Wallenstein or that he had been in secret communication with him.<sup>75</sup> Although Thurn attributes Wallenstein's actions in late 1633 and early 1634 to a desire for peace, he argues that this wish was the result of God's will rather than any kindness from the generalissimo. While this statement may reflect a conscious decision not to appear too friendly towards Wallenstein as a result of the suspicions following his swift release, Thurn openly lamented the murder of Count Kinsky, who, he claimed, loved the emperor with his heart and soul.<sup>76</sup>

Even countries and states which were not officially active participants in the Thirty Years War in 1634 saw the publication of tracts on the downfall and death of Wallenstein, which underlined the considerable contemporary interest in the shocking events at Eger. For example, Italian authors were greatly preoccupied with the subject, and the emperor was subjected to so much slander in publications in Venice that

<sup>70</sup> S. S. Tschopp, 'Albrecht von Wallensteins Ende im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Flugblattpublizistik', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 24 (1997), pp. 25–43; Hillgärtner, *News*, pp. 157–8.

<sup>71</sup> Medick, 'Wallensteins Tod', pp. 121–2.

<sup>72</sup> Tschopp, 'Albrecht von Wallenstein in der zeitgenössischen Publizistik', pp. 116–17.

<sup>73</sup> Mann, *Wallenstein*, p. 856.

<sup>74</sup> Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 193.

<sup>75</sup> H. M. von Thurn, *Abgenötigte doch rechtmässige und warhaffte Beantwortung und Ablahnung der Calumnien und Iniurien damit ich hernachbenandter in der ausgegangenen deduction welche eine Justification sein soll der Execution so mit dem Fürsten von Wallenstein vohrgangen Ehrenrührigerweisen bin angegriffen worden Menninglichen, sonderlich dem unpaßionirten, warheitliebenden Leser zur Nachricht und Information, den Calumnianten aber zur Scham und Confusion an tag gegeben* (Stockholm, 1636), pp. 22–3.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22–6.

the republic's ambassador in Vienna was forced to address the issue.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, some Venetian publications also criticized Wallenstein. In *Ribellione e Morte Del Volestain, Generale della Maesta Cesarea*, written by the nobleman Giovanni Francesco Loredan under the penname Gnaeo Falcidio Donaloro, it was claimed that Wallenstein sought to place himself above the emperor.<sup>78</sup> This publication includes copies of the oath taken by Wallenstein's subordinates at Pilsen as well as a declaration written by Gallas in Ferdinand II's name denouncing the oath.<sup>79</sup> In contrast to other published reports on the events at Eger, the *Ribellione* claimed that Gordon absented himself from the assassination of Wallenstein and that the generalissimo was slain by an unnamed soldier, showing how variations in intelligence resulted in differences in published news across Europe.<sup>80</sup>

In the case of England, news of the massacre at Eger arrived in London scarcely two weeks after the event, and on 19 March the 20-year-old Ralph Verney received a letter from a friend in London which claimed that 'the towne hardly did ever more abound with newes then now it doth. It says that Wallesteine; by command of the emperor, is murderd in Germany.'<sup>81</sup> The letter provides an insight into what Joad Raymond has referred to as the 'nearly pathological interest in reading and hearing news' of the early modern British public.<sup>82</sup> Andrew Pettegree claims that the news of 'an increasingly uncontrollable free agent put to death on the orders of his former imperial master' was reported 'without regret', and Jayne Boys simply comments that the assassination temporarily revived an interest in foreign news in London, which had been in decline following the death of Gustavus Adolphus.<sup>83</sup>

The most detailed descriptions of Wallenstein's assassination in the London press came in two publications of 1634. The first, *The History of the present warres of Germany A Sixt part*, was uncertain what perspective to take regarding Wallenstein's downfall and described him as someone who 'had always plaid both the Foxe and the Wolfe, well to serve his Master' but 'could not escape the trap, which envie had laid for him at the Imperiall Court'.<sup>84</sup> The eventual assassination of Wallenstein is portrayed as the product of an escalation of misunderstandings and self-preservation. The generalissimo reportedly summoned his officers to Pilsen to announce his decision to relinquish his command, but he was persuaded by his subordinates to continue in the post until

<sup>77</sup> Mann, *Wallenstein*, pp. 859–60. For examples of Italian reports see [D. Spinelli], *Vallestain Iscolpato di Acia Steddalidde s.l.ch.* (Venice, 1635), and the handwritten transcripts of *Relatione al Imperadore, dal Famoso Conte di Wallenstein, Duca di Fridland and Discorso sopra la morte di Valstain* held by the British Library: Add MS 5471, ff. 317–358v and Add MS 8300, ff. 205–214v.

<sup>78</sup> G. F. Donaloro, *Ribellione e Morte Del Volestain, Generale della Maesta Cesarea* (Venice, 1634), pp. 10–11, 40–1.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53–8.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>81</sup> Hollaender, 'Some English Documents', p. 365; James Dillon in London to Ralph Verney, 19 Mar. 1634, in J. Bruce (ed.), *Letters and Papers of the Verney Family down to the End of the Year 1639* (London, 1853), p. 159.

<sup>82</sup> J. Raymond, 'The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century', *Prose Studies*, 21, 2 (1998), pp. 109–36, here p. 109.

<sup>83</sup> A. Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know about Itself* (New Haven, 2014), p. 218; Boys, *London's News Press*, p. 233.

<sup>84</sup> N. Butter and N. Bourne, *The History of the present warres of Germany A Sixt part: Gathered out of the best intelligences, and reduced into times, places, and actions: Briefly brought down from October last past, to our Lady day 1634* (London, 1634), pp. 138–9.

he received the means to pay the arrears owed to his troops. After Wallenstein's rivals reported his action to the emperor—leaving out 'no argument or exaggeration to make the thing more odious'—Ferdinand proclaimed that the soldiers were absolved of their loyalty to their former commander, in turn leading Wallenstein to join with the anti-Habsburg forces because he 'easily perceived the danger which hung over his head'.<sup>85</sup> This publication also provides accurate details about the assassination itself, including identifying Devereux as Wallenstein's murderer; it even provides a list of the deceased as well as the names of the assassins.<sup>86</sup> However, it should be noted that the *History* also repeated invented claims of massacres of Wallenstein loyalists in Prague and Pilsen.<sup>87</sup>

The second detailed account of the events at Eger published in London in the immediate wake of the murders was *The Relation Of the death of that great Generalißimo (of his Imperiall Majestie) the Duke of Meckleburg, Fridland, Sagan, and the great Glogaw &c. Together with the cause thereof*.<sup>88</sup> This publication also portrayed Wallenstein as a noble figure who sought peace and ultimately became the victim of jealousies at the court in Vienna.<sup>89</sup> The reliance of English news publishers on the output of their continental counterparts can be clearly seen in the *Relation*. In addition to providing translations of relevant documents which were clearly sourced from abroad—such as the oath taken by Wallenstein's soldiers at Pilsen and Ferdinand II's proclamation of 24 January 1634—the publication repeats the allegation contained in several German-language pamphlets that Gordon personally killed Wallenstein.<sup>90</sup> The *Relation* claims that Gordon snatched a partisan out of the hands of one of his own guards and proclaimed, 'thus shall dye all that doe rebell against the Emperour', before delivering the lethal blow.<sup>91</sup> Although such embellishments are absent in diplomatic correspondence and other English-language relations of the assassination, they are found almost verbatim in at least one German report of the killing, which described Gordon as declaring, 'Also müssen alle sterben, so gegen den Kayser rebelliren', before dispatching the generalissimo.<sup>92</sup> In the following years, the assassination of Wallenstein would be referenced in the English news press as an example of the horrors of the continental war. For example, the author of *The vvarnings of Germany* in 1638 recalled 'the bloody tragedy acted by the Imperialists at Eger, where the

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 139–41.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143, 160.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>88</sup> N. Butter and N. Bourne, *The Relation Of the death of that great Generalißimo (of his Imperiall Majestie) the Duke of Meckleburg, Fridland, Sagan, and the great Glogaw, &c. Together with the cause thereof. A copy of the oath taken by his commanders (to be faithfull unto him) but a little before the same. Vpon which followed the mandate of his Imperiall Maiestie. For his apprehension, and the successe thereof, all which we have received from special hands. And by which you may perceive the great distraction of the imperiall army* (London, 1634).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5–16.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>92</sup> Anon., *Eigentlicher Abriß wie das der General Friedlandt von dem Obristen Leichtnampt Jordan zu Eger ist erstochen worden Anno 1634* (1634), reproduced in Paas, *German Political Broadsheet*, vol. 7, p. 98.

Imperiall Generalissimo Duke Fridland himself, with 4. Others chiefe Commanders, was murthred, and massacred'.<sup>93</sup>

## V. The Massacre of Eger in the Arts

The assassination of Wallenstein prompted a flourishing of literary output. In addition to a variety of epitaphs in Latin and German, the fate of the late generalissimo inspired a number of poetic works which reflected the entire spectrum of views regarding the events at Eger.<sup>94</sup> For example, whilst the Spanish satirical poem *La toma de Valles Ronces* portrays Wallenstein as being undone by his excessive ambition for the Bohemian crown, *De morte Ducis Fridlandiae Dialogus* blames Spain for his downfall, claiming that 'none at Austria's court, unless he be Spaniard, shall dare to deserve well of Austria's house' and that 'he was German. That was his crime.'<sup>95</sup> A Horatian ode penned by the Jesuit Jacob Balde, a member of Maximilian of Bavaria's inner circle, claimed that Wallenstein's fate was an inevitability similar to those of 'wicked' historical ingrates such as Crassus and Sejanus, whereas the Lutheran writer Johann Rist fashioned him as a tragic hero whose fate was intended to prompt contemplative reflection in the reader.<sup>96</sup> One common feature of such poems, regardless of the writer's opinion on Wallenstein, was a comment on the irony of a man whose fame and fortune came from war being duke of Friedland—literally the 'land of peace'.<sup>97</sup>

In addition to literature, Wallenstein's assassination was depicted in the visual and performing arts across Europe almost immediately following the events at Eger. For example, in the second half of the 1630s Pietro Paolini painted *Eccidio degli ufficiali del generale Wallenstein*, an artwork showing the massacre of the generalissimo's officers at Eger castle.<sup>98</sup> The fall and death of Wallenstein also formed the basis of theatrical performances in German, Italian, Spanish or English which were staged in numerous European capitals in the mid- and later 1630s.<sup>99</sup> Although such works frequently strayed into the realm of historical fiction, Siobhan Talbott has recently

<sup>93</sup> L. Brinckmair, *The warnings of Germany By wonderfull signes, and strange prodigies seene in divers part of that country of Germany, between the yeare 1618. and 1638... Together with a briefe relation of the miserable events which ensued. All faithfully collected out of credible High Dutch chronicles, and other histories by L. Brinckmair Captaine. As also a learned and godly sermon preached before the lords the States at Norrimberg. Anno 1638* (London, 1638), p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> British Library, Add MS 8300, f. 217; Anon., 'Wallensteins Epitaphium', in U. Maché and V. Meid (eds), *Gedichte des Barock* (Stuttgart, 1980), p. 55; Mann, *Wallenstein*, p. 858.

<sup>95</sup> J. M. Díez Borque, 'Spanish Literature during the Thirty Years' War', in K. Bussmann and H. Schilling (eds), *1648: War and Peace in Europe*, 3 vols (Münster, 1998), vol. 2, pp. 359–68, here p. 366; Mann, *Wallenstein*, p. 858.

<sup>96</sup> W. Kühlmann, 'War and Peace in the Literature of the Seventeenth Century', in Bussmann and Schilling, *1648: War and Peace in Europe*, vol. 2, pp. 329–37, here p. 332; J. Rist, *Als die wunderbahrel oder vielmehr ohnverhoffte Zeitung erschalle daß der Hertzog von Friedland zu Eger wehre ermordet worden*, quoted in Maché and Meid, *Gedichte*, pp. 70–1.

<sup>97</sup> Mann, *Wallenstein*, p. 857; Kühlmann, 'War and Peace', p. 333.

<sup>98</sup> P. Burke, 'The Crisis in the Arts of the Seventeenth Century: A Crisis of Representation?', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 40, 2 (2009), pp. 239–61, here p. 254.

<sup>99</sup> Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 240; T. Vetter, *Wallenstein in der dramatischen Dichtung des Jahrzehnts seines Todes* (Frauenfeld, 1894), p. 29; J. C. Loftis, *Renaissance Drama in England and Spain: Topical Allusion and History Plays* (Princeton, 1987), p. 167; H. W. Sullivan, 'The Politics of Bohemia and the Thirty Years' War on the Spanish Baroque Stage', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 87, 6 (2010), pp. 723–78, here p. 750.

asserted that an examination of dramatizations of occurrences alongside contemporary historical evidence can produce ‘a more holistic understanding of historical events’.<sup>100</sup>

It should be noted that the generalissimo was already being portrayed theatrically prior to his assassination. Mateos Fragozo penned a work titled *La vida de Frislán*, and the early months of 1634 saw Wallenstein being used as a propaganda tool to promote the Catholic cause on the Madrid stage, such as in a now-lost play by Pietro Calderón and Antonio Coello y Ochoa titled *La Muerte del rey de Suecia*, which had been commissioned by Philip IV’s leading minister, the count-duke of Olivares.<sup>101</sup> However, when news of the events at Eger and Wallenstein’s alleged treason arrived in Madrid in late 1634, all performances of this positive depiction of the generalissimo were hastily cancelled and one German visitor to the Spanish capital noted that ‘praise [of Wallenstein] became transformed into the greatest of all contempt and ignominy’.<sup>102</sup> In May 1634, Álvaro Cubillo de Aragón penned a one-act Eucharistic allegory in which Wallenstein is literally demonized in the dramatis personae as ‘EL DEMONIO que es el DUQUE FRISLÁN’, and he is shown engaging in a long heretical altercation with Christ on the transubstantiation of the Host before meeting his end at Colonel Butler’s sword.<sup>103</sup> Olivares commissioned another play by Calderón and Coello in the summer of 1634. In *El prodigio de Alemania*, Wallenstein is shown as an excessively prideful traitor seeking revenge on Emperor Ferdinand II for his first dismissal in 1630. In contrast, Captain Devereux and Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, named De Bros and Cordón in the play, are portrayed as loyal and noble soldiers. The former is depicted as a romantic figure in a secondary plot and is rewarded with the hand of a baroness following the assassination.<sup>104</sup>

Several plays staged in London in the mid- and late 1630s also referenced the death of Wallenstein. For example, one character in Philip Massinger’s *The Bashful Lover*, penned in 1634 or 1635, spoke of ‘The General that gave way to cruelty’ who ‘Did feel the hand of heaven lie heavy on him/ When most secure: We have had a late example.’ As this description does not tally with anything in the plot of the play, it can only refer to the fate of the late imperial field marshal, who was associated with atrocities against German Protestants in the minds of the English populace.<sup>105</sup> Similarly, an exchange between the characters of Confidence Rapture and Sir Walter Peregrine in Act 4, Scene 1 of James Shirley’s *The Example* can only be an allusion to the death of Wallenstein and the confiscation of his lucrative estates:

<sup>100</sup> S. Talbott, ‘“Causing Misery and Suffering Miserably”: Representations of the Thirty Years’ War in Literature and History’, *Literature & History*, 30, 1 (2021), pp. 3–25, here pp. 4–5.

<sup>101</sup> Díez Borque, ‘Spanish Literature’, p. 361.

<sup>102</sup> H. W. Sullivan, ‘The Wallenstein Play of Calderón and Coello, *Las proezas de Frislán, y Muerte del Rey de Suecia* [?] (1634): Conjectural Reconstruction’, *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, 52, 2 (2000), pp. 93–111, here p. 95; H. Welch, *Wahrhaftige Reiss-Beschreibung, aus eigener Erfahrung von Teutschland, Croatien, Italien, denen Insuln Sicilia, Malta...and etc.* (3rd edn, Stuttgart, 1664), pp. 251–3.

<sup>103</sup> Sullivan, ‘Politics of Bohemia’, p. 768.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 764–6; A. M. Rueda, ‘Albrecht von Wallenstein según Calderón y Coello: verdad y poesía en *El prodigio de Alemania* (1634)’, *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, 64, 1 (2012), pp. 89–110.

<sup>105</sup> P. Edwards and C. Gibson (eds), *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1976), vol. 4, pp. 291–2.



RAPTURE Ist true what lon'd fame scatters of the great Generall's revolt?

PEREGRINE Wee have

But the relation.

RAPTURE He is slaine for certaine.

PEREGRINE There was an execution.

RAPTURE And what treasure Was taken by the enemy? They talke  
Of Millions.

PEREGRINE Enough to keepe the Eagle

In a good diet.<sup>106</sup>

However, the most overt dramatic depiction of the assassination at Eger to grace the London stage in the later 1630s was *The tragedy of Albertus Wallenstein late Duke of Fridland, and generall to the Emperor Ferdinand the second* by Henry Glapthorne.<sup>107</sup> Although we cannot know for certain which sources Glapthorne used as a basis for his work, some details of the play mirror what was relayed in printed reports. For example, as in the *Relation*, Gordon is depicted as striking the killing blow to the generalissimo, and the playwright portrays the assertion made in the *History of the present warres of Germany* that Wallenstein was the victim of machinations at the imperial court and that he had been prepared to relinquish his command until persuaded otherwise by his officers. Leslie is depicted as persuading Wallenstein to rebel before encouraging Gordon and Butler to report the generalissimo's actions to the emperor in pursuit of fame and financial reward.<sup>108</sup>

It should be noted that Glapthorne takes considerable artistic licence and Wallenstein's downfall in the play is spectacular. In addition to allying with the elector of Brandenburg and duke of Saxe-Weimar to avenge his treatment by 'a malicious and ingratefull Prince', Wallenstein here is the villain of a gruesome secondary plot which revolves around the actions of his two fictional sons and earned the work its reputation as 'one of the most lurid political plays of the popular theatre'.<sup>109</sup> Wallenstein is portrayed as murdering his younger son, ordering the execution of the chambermaid with whom the son had fallen in love and slaying a page whilst in a disturbed state of mind.<sup>110</sup> Already plagued with 'strange horrors' by the time he arrived in Eger, when Wallenstein is stabbed in the back by Gordon he describes his death as 'heavens justice [...] Not for my ambition, but my cruelty'.<sup>111</sup>

It has been suggested that Glapthorne's play, in which the title character was referred to as 'the Duke' and 'Traytor-Duke' before being stabbed to death by an assassin, was a direct allusion to the duke of Buckingham, who was murdered in August 1628.<sup>112</sup> Such

<sup>106</sup> J. Shirley, *The Example. As it was presented by her Majesties Servants At the private House in Drury Lane* (London, 1637); W. Gifford and A. Dyce (eds), *The Dramatic Works and Poems of James Shirley*, 6 vols (London, 1883), vol. 3, pp. 334–5.

<sup>107</sup> H. Glapthorne, *The tragedy of Albertus Wallenstein late Duke of Fridland, and generall to the Emperor Ferdinand the second. Written by Henry Glapthorne. The scene, Egers, And acted with good allowance at the Globe on the Banke-side, by his Majesties Servants* (London, 1639), unpaginated.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, Act 2, Scene 1.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*; M. Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 229; F. Krobb, 'Transnational Crisis Management: Glapthorne's Albertus Wallenstein and Gryphius's Carolus Stuardus', *Angermion*, 12, 1 (2019), pp. 1–16, here p. 2. Wallenstein's only son was born in November 1627 and died two months later; see Mortimer, *Wallenstein*, p. 110.

<sup>110</sup> Glapthorne, *Tragedy*, Act 4, Scene 1 and Scene 3.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, Act 5, Scene 3.

<sup>112</sup> C. Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London, 1977), p. 29; Heinemann, *Puritanism*, p. 230.

an interpretation is hardly surprising. The dangers of corruption and court favouritism were particularly popular subjects on the Jacobean and Caroline stage, resulting in the production of a number of stage-works on infamous historical favourites such as Sejanus and Hugh Despenser the Younger.<sup>113</sup> At least thirty plays in which royal favourites featured as central characters were licensed between 1625 and 1640 alone.<sup>114</sup>

The apparent allusion to the duke of Buckingham was reinforced by the fact that when Glapthorne's play was published in 1639, it was prefaced with Latin verses by Alexander Gill the Younger celebrating the assassination—albeit without praising the emperor—as divine justice for the death of the Protestant hero Gustavus Adolphus in his clash with Wallenstein at Lützen.<sup>115</sup> Gill had been brought before Star Chamber in late 1628 for toasting Buckingham's assassin John Felton, claiming that 'he was sorry Felton had deprived him of the honour of doing that brave act', as well as disparaging the king for being easily led astray by the duke and having 'wit enough to be a shopkeeper'.<sup>116</sup> For these remarks Gill was sentenced to lose his ears in the pillory and be stripped of his degrees and his ministry and was fined £2,000. However, following his father's intervention with Archbishop Laud, the fine was mitigated and he escaped mutilation, and he was pardoned in November 1630.<sup>117</sup>

It is tempting to see parallels between the duke of Buckingham and Glapthorne's depiction of Wallenstein and his fate: both of them were elevated to ducal status and assassinated. The fact that the published version of the play was accompanied by verses penned by a notable critic of Buckingham seems to reinforce this notion. However, this latter point was most likely a coincidence to which scholars have ascribed more significance than is warranted. Aside from their rank and deaths, there is in fact nothing in the text to suggest that Glapthorne's portrayal of the imperial generalissimo was intended as a commentary on the late royal favourite. It is true that the earl of Bristol had accused Buckingham of high treason in May 1626.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, many of the charges levelled at Buckingham, such as military incompetence and financial corruption, were never levelled at Wallenstein, and Glapthorne's title character lacks many of the tropes of the 'Ganymedeian' or 'Monstrous' royal favourites who regularly appeared on the Jacobean and Caroline stage as vehicles to comment upon Buckingham's influence over

<sup>113</sup> C. Perry, 'Yelverton, Buckingham, and the Story of Edward II in the 1620s', *Review of English Studies*, 54, 215 (2003), pp. 313–35; S. C. Keenan, 'Staging Roman History, Stuart Politics, and the Duke of Buckingham: The Example of *The Emperor's Favourite*', *Early Theatre*, 14, 2 (2011), pp. 63–103, here pp. 63–5.

<sup>114</sup> M. DiGangi, 'A Beast so Blurred: The Monstrous Favorite in Caroline Drama', in A. Zucker and A. B. Farmer (eds), *Localizing Caroline Drama: Politics and Economics of the Early Modern Stage, 1625–42* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 157–82, here p. 158.

<sup>115</sup> Vetter, *Wallenstein in der dramatischen Dichtung*, p. 25; Heinemann, *Puritanism*, p. 230.

<sup>116</sup> D. Cressy, *Dangerous Talk: Scandalous, Seditious, and Treasonable Speech in Pre-Modern England* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 143–4.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>118</sup> A. Bellany and T. Cogswell, *The Murder of James I* (New Haven and London, 2015), pp. 232–3; D. Coast, '"Reformation" or "Ruin"? The Impeachment of the Duke of Buckingham and Early Stuart Politics', *Historical Research*, 90, 250 (2017), pp. 704–25.

the first two Stuart kings.<sup>119</sup> There is no suggestion in the play that Wallenstein owed his position to a homoerotic relationship with Ferdinand II, and his decision to commit ‘treason’ is presented as an act of self-preservation, for it is suggested that both the emperor and Wallenstein himself were misled by venomous advisers.

The verses penned by Gill, which celebrate the action of Wallenstein’s assassination but without praising either the perpetrators or the emperor in whose name it was carried out, reflect the difficult position Glapthorne faced in writing a work centring on the massacre at Eger. Indeed, none of the real-life characters are portrayed positively, and the prime agitators for Wallenstein’s removal such as Piccolomini and Gallas are completely absent. After all, the audience of the play would still have been committed to the anti-Habsburg side in the continental war.<sup>120</sup> Some scholars have compared Glapthorne’s portrayal of Wallenstein to various Shakespearian tragic characters: he was ultimately a victim of his own ambition like Julius Caesar; as with Brutus, he saw the spirit of a person close to him whom he had personally slain; and, similar to Coriolanus, he was a significant military figure raised from the nobility to a position of high influence but was undone by his own arrogance and the political machinations of people on his own side.<sup>121</sup> Glapthorne initially portrays Wallenstein as a wronged hero, willing to surrender his command until led astray by Leslie, but any sympathy is lost with his later actions. It is possible that Glapthorne wanted to prevent his being seen as glorifying someone who was regarded as a traitor. This is certainly the message of the final lines of the play, which condemn Wallenstein’s actions and warn against any treacherous activity: ‘thus every Traytor shall, instead of a Crowne, meet his owne Funerall’.<sup>122</sup> It is strange, however, that this moralistic message is delivered by the character of Leslie, the self-serving key architect of Wallenstein’s downfall and murder in the play.

This negative depiction of Leslie, as well as the other Scots and Irish conspirators, is notable.<sup>123</sup> Talbott even claims that Glapthorne was ‘wary of presenting the Scots as heroic’ because of continuing hostilities resulting from the Union of the Crowns in 1603.<sup>124</sup> Glapthorne’s attitude towards Wallenstein’s assassins was certainly different to the approaches of Calderón and Coello, who looked favourably on anyone who defended the empire.<sup>125</sup> To attribute the unfavourable portrayals of Leslie, Gordon and Butler simply to English prejudices is, however, unsatisfactory. Indeed, the nationalities

<sup>119</sup> C. Perry, ‘The Politics of Access and Representations of the Sodomite King in Early Modern England’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 53, 4 (2000), pp. 1054–83; DiGangi, ‘A Beast so Blurred’, pp. 158–62; D. Coast, ‘Rumor and “Common Fame”: The Impeachment of the Duke of Buckingham and Public Opinion in Early Stuart England’, *Journal of British Studies*, 55 (2016), pp. 241–67, here pp. 245–9.

<sup>120</sup> Heinemann, *Puritanism*, p. 230.

<sup>121</sup> Vetter, *Wallenstein in der dramatischen Dichtung*, p. 30; R. Wilson, ‘Against the Grain: Representing the Market in *Coriolanus*’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 6, 2 (1991), pp. 111–48, here p. 114; A. Parr, ‘The Caroline Globe’, *Yearbook of English Studies*, 44 (2014), pp. 12–28, here p. 22.

<sup>122</sup> This interpretation is also shared in Krobb, ‘Transnational Crisis Management’, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> D. Horsbroch, ‘Wish You Were Here? Scottish Reactions to “Postcards” home from the “Germane Warres”’, in S. Murdoch (ed.), *Scotland and the Thirty Years’ War, 1618–1648* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 245–69, here pp. 259–60; D. Worthington, *British and Irish Experiences and Impressions of Central Europe, c. 1560–1688* (Farnham, 2012), p. 167.

<sup>124</sup> Talbott, ‘“Causing Misery and Suffering Miserably”’, pp. 19–20.

<sup>125</sup> Rueda, ‘Albrecht von Wallenstein según Calderón y Coello’, p. 94.

of the conspirators were also viewed with suspicion by Bohemian propagandists, who noted that no ‘German’ soldier had been involved in the plot.<sup>126</sup> It is also unsurprising that a play written in the later 1630s would single out Leslie as the key figure amongst the Scots and Irish conspirators. Whereas Butler had perished by the end of 1634 and John Gordon appears to have remained a colonel and possibly died in 1637, Leslie had been given a seat on the Imperial War Council, promoted to lieutenant field marshal, and had acted as a Stuart–Habsburg intermediary at the Electoral Diet of Regensburg in 1636.<sup>127</sup> By 1639, therefore, Leslie had become the best-rewarded and best-known of Wallenstein’s British assassins.

It was perhaps the lack of an overt or potentially controversial political message regarding the ongoing Thirty Years War itself which led to Glapthorne’s play evading the controversies which followed the staging of other contemporary continental political events on the early modern English stage, such as Christopher Marlowe’s *The Massacre of Paris* and Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess*.<sup>128</sup> Even so, we do not know how many times Glapthorne’s play was performed, and it does not appear to have been revived following the restoration of Charles II, although it was being performed in the German territories by the last decade of the seventeenth century.<sup>129</sup>

## VI. Wallenstein in the Late Seventeenth Century

In the later seventeenth century, writers no longer doubted Wallenstein’s alleged ambitions for the Bohemian throne and the overthrow of Ferdinand II. The first German novel, *Simplicissimus*, a near-contemporary and semi-autobiographical account of experiences of the Thirty Years War which was first published in the late 1660s, mentions the events at Eger. In a chapter in which the narrator muses on the value and dangers of prophesies, he asks, ‘What good did it do von Wallenstein, the Duke of Friedland, that they prophesized to him that he would be crowned king to the sound of music? Do we not know how he was sung to sleep at Eger?’<sup>130</sup> This passage suggests that Wallenstein’s alleged royal ambitions and his assassination were widely known by the late 1660s, as we can assume that the author’s likening of a partisan between the ribs to a lullaby was a piece of irony which would not have been lost on the reading audience.

In his memoirs written in the early 1670s, Sir James Turner, who had served in anti-Habsburg armies during the Thirty Years War, described Wallenstein as ‘that haughty Captain General’ who ‘stained all his fair actions and eminent services, with

<sup>126</sup> Worthington, *Scots*, p. 167.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167–74, 204.

<sup>128</sup> F. Levy, ‘The Decorum of News’, in Raymond, *News, Newspapers and Society*, pp. 12–38, here pp. 28–9; P. Kewes, ‘Contemporary Europe in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama’, in A. Hadfield and P. Hammond (eds), *Shakespeare and Renaissance Europe* (London, 2004), pp. 150–92, here p. 160; G. Taylor, ‘A Game at Chess: A Later Form’, in G. Taylor and J. Lavagnino (eds), *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 1825–85, here p. 1825; L. Steveker, ‘English News Plays of the Early 1620s: Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* and Ben Jonson’s *The Staple of News*’, in S. F. Davies and P. Fletcher (eds), *News in Early Modern Europe: Currents and Connections* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 215–29, here pp. 215–16.

<sup>129</sup> Vetter, *Wallenstein in der dramatischen Dichtung*, pp. 30–1.

<sup>130</sup> H. J. C. von Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus, The German Adventurer*, trans. J. C. Osborne (Knoxville, 2008), p. 304.

the black and infamous Crime of Treason'.<sup>131</sup> Thomas Frankland's 1681 *The Annals of King James and King Charles* similarly asserted that the generalissimo 'practised against the Emperour and Empire' with the Swedes, and that 'his Ambition and Treachery at last brought him to the untimely end'.<sup>132</sup> Even Jean-François Sarrasin, who acknowledged that 'Invectives or Flatteries fill up the room of Truth' in the debates concerning Wallenstein's guilt, argued that he 'determin'd to attempt the usurpation of Bohemia, not being able to vanquish the motions of his vext and ulcerated mind, nor resist that cruel passion for Great[n]ess, which never left him in repose'.<sup>133</sup>

In the decades following the generalissimo's assassination, his life story was held up as a cautionary tale on the dangers of excessive ambition and the threat to rulers of elevating their subjects to exalted ranks. For instance, the marquess of Argyll advised in a 1661 treatise that 'Princes must have a care they suffer not any subject, to grow near them in such grandeur and puissance' as 'if that greatness once be radicated, it is almost impossible to pull it up without the absolute ruin of those who attempt it, as of late experience Wallenstein Duke of Friedland'.<sup>134</sup> Numerous European writers drew comparisons between the story of Wallenstein's supposed treason and examples of other individuals who conspired to overthrow their monarchs. For example, Jean-Nicolas de Parival likened Wallenstein to Charles de Gontaut, duc de Biron. Biron had been appointed admiral of France and marshal of France by Henri IV and yet conspired to overthrow the Bourbon dynasty, dismember the kingdom of France and become ruler of an independent Burgundy, resulting in his execution in 1602. Parival's assessment of Wallenstein as an 'ungratefull Minister' who 'from an ordinary Gentleman, was risen to so much greatnesse, that he could climbe no higher, without being a Traitour, and a Parricide' was shared by English royalist historians who saw many similarities between the alleged ambitions of Wallenstein and the actions of Oliver Cromwell.<sup>135</sup>

One such comparison is likely contained in William Sanderson's *A Compleat History of the Life and Raigne of King Charles from his Cradle to his Grave*, published during the last year of Cromwell's life. Sanderson described Wallenstein as an 'ungratefull Servant' who was raised 'from an ordinary Gentleman, to be Prince of the Empire and *Generalissimo* of all his Forces in Germany', a career path which mirrors Cromwell's ascendancy from a minor gentry family to eventual commander-in-chief of the New Model Army and lord protector of the Commonwealth. The royalist Sanderson, who was later knighted by Charles II and appointed a gentleman of the Privy Chamber, was also convinced of the legitimacy of Wallenstein's assassination, proclaiming that 'ambitious persons

<sup>131</sup> Sir James Turner, *Pallas armata, Military essayes of the ancient Grecian, Roman, and modern art of war written in the years 1670 and 1671* (London, 1683), pp. 255–6.

<sup>132</sup> T. Frankland, *The annals of King James and King Charles the First* (London, 1681), p. 429.

<sup>134</sup> Quotations from a translation of Jean François Sarrasin's 1651 publication *La Conspiration de Walstein* contained in Anon., *A Collection of Select Discourses out of the Most Eminent Wits of France and Italy* (London, 1678), pp. 93, 114.

<sup>134</sup> Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll, *Instructions to a son by Archibald, late Marquis of Argyle; written in the time of his confinement* (London, 1661), p. 131.

<sup>135</sup> J.-N. de Parival, *The history of this iron age wherein is set down the true state of Europe as it was in the year 1500: also, the original and causes of all the warrs, and commotions that have happened: together with a description of the most memorable battels, sieges, actions and transactions, both in court and camp from that time till this present year 1656*, trans. B. Harris (London, 1656), p. 159.

falling into perfidy are justly thus served'.<sup>136</sup> Although it cannot be definitively proven that Sanderson intended to draw a comparison between Wallenstein and Cromwell, there is no ambiguity in James Heath's 1663 biography of the late lord protector, the first study of Cromwell ever written. In addition to comparing Cromwell to Tommaso Aniello (Masaniello), the fisherman who led a revolt against Spanish rule in Naples in 1647, Heath likened 'Old Ironsides' to Wallenstein, who rose 'from an obscure and wasted Barony [...] and thence aspired to the Imperial Diadem'.<sup>137</sup> Heath's work has been roundly criticized and John Morrill condemns it as 'scurrilous, mendacious, malicious' and a 'pile of vomit' regurgitated by an embittered royalist. Yet it is nevertheless useful in providing an insight into the views of Wallenstein in the decades following his assassination.<sup>138</sup>

## VII. Conclusion

An assessment of the reaction to—and depiction of—the events at Eger in the territories examined in this article provides a useful insight into the distribution of intelligence and news in the early modern period. The correspondence of diplomats and ambassadors as they scrambled for information about how and why Wallenstein was killed allows historians not only to trace the transmission of intelligence to various pro- and anti-Habsburg courts, but also to assess the significance of continental news publications. In addition, a comparison of newspapers and pamphlets on the massacre from various German cities with those published in England, Sweden and Italy highlights the news networks linking publishers across Europe, as we can identify which publications provided the information that was reprinted for the different markets.

The references to and depictions on stage of Wallenstein's demise also show exactly what kind of information about him had been received in different parts of Europe by the time the plays that have been discussed here were written. However, by the late seventeenth century, Wallenstein's reputation had shifted, even in countries and states which reported more favourably about the generalissimo at the time of his assassination. Following various rebellions in continental Europe and the War of the Three Kingdoms and the Protectorate in the British Isles, the generalissimo was no longer depicted as a noble and tragic figure but rather as a power-hungry would-be regicide. Albrecht von Wallenstein had already become irrelevant on the military and political stage when Devereux burst into his chambers on the night of 25 February 1634. He nonetheless remained present in the European consciousness well into the late seventeenth century.

<sup>136</sup> Sir William Sanderson, *A compleat history of the life and raigne of King Charles from his cradle to his grave collected and written by William Sanderson, Esq.* (London, 1658), p. 191.

<sup>137</sup> J. Heath, *Flagellum, or, The life and death, birth and burial of Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1663).

<sup>138</sup> J. Morrill, 'Rewriting Cromwell: A Case of Deafening Silences', *Canadian Journal of History*, 38, 3 (2003), pp. 553–78, here p. 564.

## Abstract

Albrecht von Wallenstein was one of the most colourful and controversial figures of the Thirty Years War, and his dismissal by the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II and eventual assassination was one of the most talked about events of the conflict. This article examines how the downfall of the imperial generalissimo and massacre of his subordinate officers at Eger, in Bohemia, were viewed and reported across Europe at various pro- and anti-Habsburg courts. In addition to assessing how Wallenstein's demise was discussed in diplomatic circles, the article addresses how the events at Eger were portrayed in newsprint published in the German states as well as further afield in Sweden, England and the Italian states. An examination of political and private correspondence, as well as a comparison of news publications from across the continent, provides valuable insight into how information and intelligence were collected and disseminated throughout early modern Europe. By examining the depiction of Wallenstein's downfall in the arts, such as poetry and stage plays in various European cities in the immediate aftermath of the assassination and in the mid- and later 1630s, it is also possible to determine what information had been received in different locations at different times. The final section of the article addresses how Wallenstein's reputation had changed by the end of the seventeenth century, with the result that he was almost universally regarded as a notorious rebel and would-be regicide.

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