European Mercenaries in the Armies of Post-Mughal Successor States, 1775-1849

The Case of Acculturation

Jorran Klaassens

1039202

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Supervisor: Dr. J. J. L. Gommans

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Content

Introduction

In the highly unlikely case that one would find oneself lost on one of the countless cemeteries in Agra, the city of the world-famous Taj Mahal in northern India, one might stumble upon some strange looking graves. With a mixture of European and late Mughal architectural styles, names that seem to originate from all around Europe and dates that refer to pre-colonial times in that area, these graves are a monument to a turbulent chapter in India's history. Looking at some of the graves, the men in whose memory they have been erected appear to have had good fortune. For example, the tomb of Dutch Colonel Jan-Willem Hessing is a remarkable downsized copy of the nearby Taj Mahal. This version, known as the Red Taj, houses the graves of Hessing and his wife, is about 20 meters square and 30 meters high and built in red sandstone.[1] Buried among the graves in northern India are Europeans that fought as mercenaries for Indian princes and generals, most of them in the eighteenth century. In the vacuum that arose with the gradual decline of the Mughal empire after the death of emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, a century of violent disintegration broke out. During this period, local governors of the Mughal Empire as well as leaders of different ethnical groups that had been suppressed under Aurangzeb's regime started revolting against their Mughal rulers. These successor states fought each other for the power in their region, turning the Indian subcontinent into a turbulent theatre of war.[2] These young and unstable states recruited hundreds of Europeans to fight for them, especially from 1775 onwards.[3] Looking at the architectural style of some of the gravestones and tombs of these men, it appears that they became attached to local culture during their Indian employment, and, at least partially, adopted an Indian culture for themselves. This view is shared by another historian-*cum*-novelist: William Dalrymple.

[1] E. A. H. Blunt, *List of Inscriptions on Christian Tombs and Tablets of Historical Interest in the United Provinces of Oudh and Agra* (Allahabad 1911), 2.
[2] R. Barnett, *North India between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals, and the British 1720-1801* (London 1980), 3
[3] Inayet Ali Zaidi, "European Mercenaries in the Indian Armies: AD 1750-1803," *Studies in History* Vol. 27 No. 1 (2011), 58.

When reading this authors' bestseller *White Mughals*, this idea of Europeans in India being captured by the mysterious Indian culture, which was generally unknown back then gets solidified. In his highly regarded work, Dalrymple tells the story of Englishman James Achilles Kirkpatrick in India, tracking his life through extensive archival research. [4] Kirkpatrick was in service of the East India Company and ultimately became Resident of the city of Hyderabad, the highest-ranking company official on the Deccan plateau, a region on the Indian subcontinent. Kirkpatrick was notorious among other contemporary Company officials because of his deep entanglement with local Mughal culture. Not only did he marry a woman from the local noble Shustari family, Khair-Un-Nissa Begum, creating a diplomatic incident between the local Hyderabadi rulers and the Company, he also became what Dalrymple describes as a "white Mughal", building up strong personal relations with the local elite and adopting many of their customs on for example clothing, food and lifestyle. Dalrymple's work not only narrates James Achilles Kirkpatrick's life, but also draws an image of a large number of Europeans that became highly attached to Mughal culture in the precolonial period of the British Empire. In this period of relative lawlessness and among violence, one could find harmonious societies with different religions and backgrounds living together, where Europeans blended in with native Muslim and Hindu Indians.

Did the European mercenaries of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century merge with Indian culture and become acculturated into their employer's society to the same degree as Kirkpatrick did? Or was he an outlier? The idea that many more Europeans became white Mughals and formed a harmonious society together with their equally enlightened Indian counterparts comes across as incredibly Romantic. Although Dalrymple's biography-like work is impressive to say the least, it is quite apparent that the author spent most of his effort on creating a thorough picture of James Achilles Kirkpatrick, and used his life to argue for his vision of eighteenth century transculturated societies. Almost entirely based on a single case, Dalrymple's work is not sufficient to

[4] W. Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India* (London 2003).

make these generalizations, let alone refer to it as a golden age of harmony between East and West.[5] This thesis aims to help shed more light on this subject, which has largely been neglected in historiography by researching the Indian acculturation of another group of Europeans, the European mercenaries in northern India in the late eighteenth century. A group that Dalrymple also specifically points towards to prove his point in *White Mughals*.[6] The European mercenaries of the eighteenth century form an interesting group of people that crossed into a largely unknown world through opportunism and ambition. If acculturation on the scale that Dalrymple argues existed, it should be expected that it can be found in this group also, as the mercenaries were among the few that had no official agenda for their home country. The limitation to only mercenaries is also done in order to limit the scope of this research rather than including all Europeans who ventured in the country, such as the many trading company diplomats and missionaries. Nonetheless, because of the heterogeneous nature of this mercenary group, considering their nationalities, (social) class and employers, a comprehensive picture should arise of the Europeans in India.

With this is mind, the main research question of this thesis is: To what degree did European mercenaries in the service of northern Indian armies become acculturated into the societies of their employers between 1775 and 1849? Acculturation is a concept mostly utilized in anthropology, sociology and psychology, and this essay will apply a widely used definition to this specific historical context. This definition of acculturation is given as the behavioral phenomenon which occurs when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups.[7] This concept has been applied on Europeans in India before, most notably in Collingham's *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947*. This work focusses on the physical experience of British officials in India from 1800 until 1947, and the first chapter describes the "Nabobs" of early colonial India.

[5] *Ibidem,* 501.
[6] *Ibidem,* 142.
[7] R. Redfield, R. Linton and M. Herskovits, "Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation", *American Anthropologist* Vol. 38 No. 1 (1936), 149.

These “Nabobs” took over a number of the local customs of the Indian elite in the late eighteenth century, in order to survive the harsh Indian climate.[8] Collingham describes this as an active strategy by the British to show their power: “[…] By allowing India to infiltrate the norms which governed his relationship with his body, every Briton in India engaged in a process which made India his own country.” [9] This process of acculturation reversed when the English started the policy of Anglicization from around 1800 whereby a strict separation from Indians and their customs started.[10] Some scholars, including Collingham also use the concept of “transculturation” as described by Fernando Ortiz in *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* when talking about the influence of two different cultures on each other. This research, however, aims to analyze the one-way traffic of European acculturation into Indian culture, and the definition of transculturation therefore does not need special attention.[11] It should also be noted that the concept of acculturation is also liberally used in the sense that it is impossible to form a precise, single definition of the culture wherein the European mercenaries could acculturate into. The post-Mughal successor states of eighteenth century India were a mishmash of Mughal and local cultural elements, with Muslim, Hindu and other religious elements in it. While researching eighteenth-century India, one must be aware of this cultural diversity.

The reason for the chosen timeframe and region is to maintain some kind of connection between the different cases. The first European mercenary in service of an Indian that I have been able to trace has been dated to the early seventeenth century, when Mughal princes in Agra hired an Englishman named Finch in their army.[12] This adventurer acted in an entirely different theatre as the mercenaries that will be analyzed in this essay. This thesis will focus on the mercenaries in service of the Mughal successor states.

[8] E. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947* (Oxford 2001), 23.
[9] *Ibidem*, 33.
[10] *Ibidem*, 51.
[11] F. Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham 1995), 102.
[12] C. Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India 1785 to 1849* (Lahore 1929), 2.

This thesis will focus on European soldiers for hire who fought in the northern half of the Indian peninsula and left behind some accessible (i.e. published) archival materials. The mercenaries included in this essay fought for at least one of three powers in the region. First of all, the Maratha Confederacy was the largest power in the area, employing at least more than one hundred Europeans in their armies at one time.[13] The second power that will be included in this thesis are the Sikhs, a large powers in the area and one of the last enemies of the British until the former's defeat 1849. The Sikhs often fought other states in the region and also employed of a number of European mercenaries. The third included group of mercenaries fought under Begum Samru, a woman who remained loyal to the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II, who reigned from 1759 to 1806.[14] Samru formed her own independent state out of her estates in the vicinity of Delhi, and it represents the numerous tiny successor states that formed along the boundaries of former Mughal regional entities in this thesis. These tiny states together formed a frontier region, not yet conquered by the British and not powerful enough to make a significant impact in regional arena on their own. These states generally stood at the mercy of Marathas, Sikhs or the British, but together formed a significant portion of the Indian peninsula and thus should be included in this research.

The most important sources for this thesis are the texts that these European adventurers left behind in the form of memoirs, biographies that were written on their initiative or with their assistance and other primary material that gives us insight into their lives. Many of their memoirs and letters have been published in the last two centuries. The most famous examples of European mercenaries in Indian service are probably Irishman George Thomas and Benoît de Boigne from the Duchy of Savoy. The story of Thomas, who rose from the lowest ranks of Irish society to nobleman in India is one that captures the imagination. His life was documented by travel companion W. Franklin in the last years of Thomas' life, and provides an invaluable insight in Thomas' career.[15] This memoir

[13] Zaidi, "European Mercenaries", 63.
[14] J. Keay, *Farzana: The Woman who saved an Empire* (London 2014), 150.
[15] W. Franklin, *Military memoirs of Mr. George Thomas; who, by Extraordinary Talents and Enterprise, rose from an Obscure Situation to the Rank of a General, in the Service of the Native Powers in the North-West of India* (London 1805).

was the main source of later works about Thomas' life like Hennessy's *Raj from Tipperary* that apart from Franklin's work relies on a meager body of sources and because of that is not much more than a summary of the *Military memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*.[16] Benoît de Boigne, who rose to lead a highly successful Maratha army, left his own memoirs in the form of his *Memoire sur la Carrière Militaire et Politique de M. le General de Boigne*.[17] Other memoirs of European mercenary that have proven to be a valuable resource are the *Military Memoirs of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner* that were republished in 2012 and the memoirs of Lewis Ferdinand Smith.[18] Some biographies are arguably primary sources as well, as they have been written in the days of their subject or because it includes an untouched collection of primary material. Examples of this are the biographies of Captain Little and Claude Martin.[19] Readers of the material need to be aware of some obvious deficiencies regarding the objectivity of their narratives. Most of these men often switched sides to former enemies or back to their European countrymen, who often mistrusted them. One could imagine their memories about their former employer might be written down in a way that would show their allegiance to their new partners. Apart from that, one must also be aware of some of the more usual discrepancies between written memoir and reality, such as half-faded memories being presented as truth and possible romanticizing of one's own actions. Keeping these challenges in mind, the sources still provide an invaluable corpus of information about the "native" lives of European mercenaries in India.

The academic body of work on India is seemingly endless, as both Mughal and colonial India never seem to run out of fashion as a topic of interest in the field of History. The tumultuous eighteenth century in India has been a popular topic as well, as it saw the downfall of one world

[16] M. Hennessy, *The Rajah from Tipperary* (London 1971).
[17] C. De Boigne, *Memoire sur la Carrière Militaire et Politique de M. le General de Boigne* (Chambery 1830).
[18] J. Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1 & 2*(Cambridge 2012); L. Smith, *A Sketch of the Rise, Progress & Termination of the Regular Corps, Formed and Commanded by Europeans, in the Service of the Native Princes of India, with the Details of the Principal Events and Actions of the late Maratha War by Lewis Ferdinand Smith, Late Major, in Dolwut Rao Scindea's Service* (Calcutta 1805).
[19] E. Moore, *A Narrative of the Operations of Captain Little's Detachment, and of the Maratha Army, Commanded by Purseram Bhow; During the Late Confederacy in India, Against the Nawab Tippoo Sultan Bahadur* (London 1794); R. Llewellyn-Jones, *A Man of Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century India: The Letters of Claude Martin 1766-1800* (Delhi 2003).

power and the rise of the next, in a wild period of wars between the different successor states. There are two main themes of debates about this century.[20] The first discussion is on the causes of the Mughal Empire in the first half of the century, while the second discussion is on the transformation of the EIC from a commercial company to a political entity not shying away from large military campaigns. Some works include some passages about the European mercenaries, although most authors hesitate to say much more than some generic lines about their existence.[21] One can see an increased popular interest in India's own history as well, as stories like that of Begum Samru have recently been described in mainstream Indian media and general websites.[22]

There is a small body of material specifically about the European mercenaries in India. But there are significant problems with these works. First of all, most of these works are very outdated, and written in a narrative style that does not hold up in modern day scholarship. The prime example of this is Herbert Compton's *A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan from 1784 to 1803*.[23] This book describes the life of three important mercenaries in India; Benoît de Boigne, George Thomas and Pierre Perron and features an elaborate list and description of dozens of lesser known adventurers in the country. Although it has proven to be a valuable resource for historians interested in this subject, it was written in a time that history had not been developed to the more analytical and methodological field of academic research that it is today. Compton was not the detached historian that one would expect today, nor does he try to be. His work is full of unnecessary judgements about the character of the men he describes. It is evident that Compton was a romanticist, nostalgically looking back to more adventurous times and people. Nonetheless, it

[20] S. Alavi, (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century in India: Debates in Indian History and Society* (New Delhi 2002), 3.
[21] F. Perlin, "The Problem of the Eighteenth Century" in: P. Marshall (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?* (New Delhi 2003), 56; R. Barnett, *North India between Empires*, 73; T. Roy, *An Economic History of Early Modern India* (Milton Park 2013), 27.
[22] https://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/O-zone/a-date-with-begum-samru-of-sardhana/ (as consulted on September 15th, 2017); https://swarajyamag.com/magazine/the-incredible-story-of-begum-samru (as consulted on September 10th,2017); http://www.centralmethodist.church.faithweb.com/rich_text.html (as consulted on September 10th, 2017).
[23] H. Compton*, A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan from 1784 to 1803* (London 1892).

is thanks to Compton that many of the names of the mercenaries have withstood the test of time. To a lesser degree, Grey's *European Adventurers of Northern India 1785 to 1849*, Bidwell's *Swords for Hire: European Mercenaries in Eighteenth-Century India* and Hutchinson's *European Freebooters in Moghul India* share similar problems as Compton's work.[24] These authors also tend to romanticize their subject, highlighting certain feats of heroism on the battlefront of men like De Boigne and Skinner, or the loyalty of Thomas to his former mistress Begum Samru.[25] On top of this, a sharp-eyed reader will see that these works are to a large degree based on Compton's work, with a marginal layer of veneer in the form of new primary sources and some additional secondary literature added to the bodies. Some other secondary material, like Hennessy's *The Rajah from Tipperary*, which discusses Thomas' life, face the same problems.

The second issue with these works is that they almost entirely focus on the military careers of the European mercenaries in India. They offer detailed descriptions of the campaigns that these men ventured in, but not about their position in and their opinion of the societies that must have been nothing that they would have been used to in their home countries. Although this says nothing about the quality of these works, as the military careers of the mercenaries are an interesting and important subject, it leaves many questions about their experience of India unanswered.

This thesis aims to fill part of this void, by focusing on the cultural aspects of European mercenaries instead of the military. Although it is difficult to make generalizations about the attitudes of these men towards Indian societies, as readers of sources about this subject cannot be entirely sure about the discrepancy between one's feelings and one's actions, this thesis aims to deromanticize the image that exists on acculturation of European mercenaries in India. Partly because of the outdated, sometimes unscholarly literature on the subject and partly because of popular works like Dalrymple's *White Mughals*, an incorrect image about the mercenaries' attitude

[24] Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India;* S. Bidwell, *Swords for Hire: European Mercenaries in Eighteenth-Century India* (London 1971); L. Hutchinson, *European Freebooters in Moghul India* (London 1964).
[25] C. Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India 1785 to 1849*, 42; L. Hutchinson, *European Freebooters in Moghul India*, 84.

towards Indian societies might be prevalent. The romantic claims that Dalrymple makes in his work about a homogeneous society into which Europeans blended in and lived together with natives is far from the truth and needs to be revised.

In order to do this, this thesis will be divided in three thematic chapters. As the current historiography about this subject is scarce and incomplete, this thesis will have to lay a solid foundation upon more specific analysis can be done. The first two chapters provide this foundation. Chapter One introduces the reader to the setting of late-eighteenth-century northern India wherein the mercenaries operated in service of their Indian employers. It will also examine the societies wherein they lived during their employment, looking at Mughal and regional influences in the successor states. This opens up the road to later analysis and judgement of the acculturation of European mercenaries in Indian post-Mughal cultures, providing the possible indicators of acculturation of later chapters. The second chapter analyzes the different backgrounds of the European adventurers in India, and gives an account of the most notable European mercenaries that left sources used in this thesis.

Together these chapters provide the necessary understanding of both the supply side and demand side of the European military labour market of northern India.[26] Although part of the foundation and not directly answering the main research question, they are still necessary, for a number of reasons. First of all, the period was of a highly chaotic kind, wherein former subjects of the Mughal emperor fought over the spoils of the power vacuum left by the disintegration of the Mughal empire, often switching alliances and leaders.[27] This had its effect on the mercenaries that fought the wars of their employers, because it opened up many opportunities for service for them. Secondly, the backgrounds of the European mercenaries in India reflected on their careers in India. In

[26] D. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput & Sepoy: The ethnohistory of the military labour market in Hindustan, 1450 – 1850* (Cambridge 1990), 3.
[27] C. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of Expansion 1770-1870* (Cambridge 1983), 50.

order to say anything about them, one must understand their backgrounds. This is important, because it has not been done before by other scholars.

The third and final chapter will zoom in on the sources and will account for the largest body of text for this thesis. The chapter focusses on the acculturation of the European mercenaries along different themes; clothing, marriage, religion, customs and loyalty. The chapter also takes time to analyze the sources to see if there was a possible difference in degree of acculturation between British and non-British European mercenaries. The reason for this is that the British formed a special group within the European mercenaries. With the British East India Company becoming increasingly powerful during the second half of the eighteenth century they also conquered territory and became a political power in India. For the British mercenaries in Indian service it would be much easier to return to British territory after their service, as reaching British territory could be done in a matter of weeks instead of the months that the other Europeans had to travel to home territory. This would also mean that other employment would be easier to find for the British than for example the French, who were not on good terms with the British. One can argue that this would mean that the British did not feel the need of acculturation into local society as much as the other mercenaries did, because they could go back to their 'home' base much easier if their service did not turn out as expected. It is likely that French mercenaries felt more pressure to adjust to their employers' culture because their options were more limited. On the other hand, one could argue that the British mercenaries acculturated more to Indian culture because they felt attracted to these cultures compared to British society and made a voluntary choice to become an agent for one of the successor states voluntarily.

In any case, through the separate analysis of British and non-British mercenaries any discrepancy between these groups should become clear. The chapter will finish with a hypothesis about the nature of acculturation of the European mercenaries in service of the Indian successor states. Combined with the first two chapters, this will present a thorough, albeit still explorative

examination of the European mercenaries in the service of the post-Mughal successor states. With this, we can evaluate whether John Hessing, the mercenary buried in the Red Taj was buried as an Indian or as a European.

Chapter 1:

Demand of European Mercenaries on the Military Labour Market of Northern India

The following chapter will focus on the political arena of the region as well as local cultures in the post-Mughal successor states in which the European mercenaries lived and fought. The first part of this chapter will outline the political and economic developments of northern India from around the turn of the eighteenth century, when the last years of the reign and the death of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb ushered an era of unrest in the region. The period analyzed ends around 1849, when the Sikh state was finally overturned by the British and the era of European mercenaries came to its conclusion. As mentioned above, the most important players in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century India were the Mughals, the Sikhs, the Marathas, and the British. Other players like the French East India Company and smaller post-Mughal successor states played smaller but still noteworthy roles, and will also be included. This part of the chapter also zooms in on the larger military labour market of northern India in this period, as other mercenaries were also active in the area. Through a thorough reading of mostly secondary literature, it will help understand the theatre in which the mercenaries operated and what position they took in the societies of their employers. As will be illustrated in later chapters, some mercenaries made use of the regional chaos in order to pursue their own interests.

The chapter also zooms in on some of the most profound cultural aspects of the successor states and will give an account of both Mughal and local influences on these successor states. Especially the Maratha and Sikh states had mixed cultural aspects of both Mughal and local origin. By doing so, this part of the chapter identifies certain features of the post-Mughal successor states that will help make the concept of acculturation of European mercenaries in post-Mughal societies

measurable. Together, the chapter gives a complete account of the demand side of the eighteenth century military labour market of post-Mughal successor states.

Although the Mughal Empire encompassed the largest territory in its history due to the successful conquests of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb to the South, the empire was in crisis. Some fifty years after Aurangzeb's death, the Mughals saw themselves virtually powerless in their palaces in Delhi.[28] The imperial system that had held up for centuries had crumbled almost entirely, and Mughal emperors were now increasingly dominated by those who were previously their subordinates.[29] The cause of this rapid decline of Mughal dominance has been a widely discussed topic. While some authors pick out a series of specific events as the cause that ultimately led to the Mughal downfall, other authors see more continuous patterns of decline that had started even before Aurangzeb's reign leading to this collapse.[30] Another, more traditional school of thought usually emphasizes the economic downfall of the Empire, in combination with the idea of imperial overstretch that the Mughals seemingly faced as a result of their continuous expansionist campaigns, leaving Delhi unable to effectively control all of their regions.[31] More recently, authors emphasize a longer and more complex process of localities forming their own identities that ultimately led to the Mughal Empire falling apart.[32] Whether it was a more complex process or not, all schools of thought agree that the increasingly successful deference of local powers against the Mughal Empire was the direct reason for the Mughal downfall.

As the Nawabs, referring to the honorary title of Mughal governors, became aware of their masters' inability to preserve order after the economic crisis following Aurangzeb's southern campaigns, they seized the opportunity to defect.[33] Because Nawabs were directly appointed by the

[28] J. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire Vol. I: 1739-1754* (Calcutta 1964), 212.
[29] M. Edwardes, *King of the World: The Life and Times of Shah Alam Emperor of Hindustan* (London 1970), 32.
[30] Barnett, *North India between Empires*, 3-4.
[31] *Alavi, The Eighteenth Century in India,* 2.
[32] Perlin, "The Problem of the Eighteenth Century", 55.
[33] T. Roy, "Rethinking the Origins of British India: State Formation and Military-fiscal Undertakings in an Eighteenth Century World Region" in: *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 47 No. 4 (2013), 1133.

Mughal emperor and often dismissed at random, there was often a level of friction between the two. But whereas in the seventeenth century, the emperor could rely on his other subordinates to provide him with the necessary military power to overthrow the defector, this was not the case anymore in the eighteenth century following the increasing number of defective Nawabs, and revenues that were previously brought in by the Nawabs dried up.[34] The dismissal of Mughal dominance did not result in formal independence, as the Nawabs' authority was still based around a Mughal system whereby the Mughal Emperor was formally acknowledged as the highest ruler.[35] The Nawabs emphasized their growing power by moving their residence from Delhi to their regions.[36] They also started to appoint their own successors and some established their own mint.[37] These changes made the nawabs *de facto* the sovereign rulers of their regions, although the Mughal Emperor retained his formal, *de jure* position.

The eighteenth century thus saw a fragmentation of Mughal power into smaller units. The largest powers that filled the void of the Mughals from around halfway through the eighteenth century were the Marathas and the Sikhs.[38] The Marathas were in the process of establishing their own empire in western and central India until the East India Company ultimately overpowered them.[39] The forming of this empire started on the Deccan plateau in the seventeenth century, with the proclamation of the empire in 1671 by Shivaji.[40] The Marathas played a large role in the downfall of the Mughal Empire, with aggressive campaigns to enlarge their sphere of influence. This ultimately resulted in a territory that encompassed most of the western and central parts of the former Mughal

[34] Barnett, *North India Between Empires*, 3.
[35] *Ibidem*, 22.
[36] Perlin, "The Problem of the Eighteenth Century", 56; Barnett, *North India between Empires*, 55.
[37] K. Chatterjee, *Merchants, Politics & Society in Early Modern India Bihar: 1733-1820* (Leiden 1996), 32.
[38] R. Kaushik, R., "Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare and Indian Societies, 1740-1849", *The Journal of Military History* Vol. 69, No. 3 (2005), 658.
[39] B. Cohn, "Political Systems in Eighteenth-Century India: The Banaras Region" in: P. Marshall (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?*, 123.
[40] V. Dighe, "Rise of the Peshwas – Balaji Vishwanath" in: R. Majumdar (ed.), *The Maratha Supremacy* (Bombay 1977), 44.

Empire.[41] This Empire was at the height of its power at around 1770.[42] The death of Madhav Rao I marked the beginning of the end for the Marathas. Unable to keep his Empire together on his own, new leader Madhav Peshwa gave semi-autonomous powers to his most powerful allies, thus establishing the Maratha confederacy. After this, internal struggles for power hampered outward expansion.[43] Until European mercenaries were hired to help bring the Maratha army to modern standards, the Marathas mainly relied on a large cavalry for their warfare. The army usually operated in small contingents and was able to perform quick strikes against their opponents, raiding and plundering lands.[44] Enemies were often too slow to react because they relied on a cumbersome supply train, while Maratha raiders could live of the lands they attacked. Although the complete history of the Maratha Empire is out of scope for this thesis, it should be clear that the state in its form as a single Empire or later as a confederacy of different Maratha states, rose to become the largest power in India halfway through eighteenth century.[45] They became the mightiest opponent for the English until 1818, when the Empire lost the third Maratha war and officially became a subsidiary of the British Empire.

Another powerful faction was formed by the Sikhs of the Punjab region in the Northwest corner of the Indian subcontinent. This religious group had become a regional political power as the Mughal authority faded in the eighteenth century. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Sikhs did not yet form a unified state; they were a confederacy of numerous smaller chiefdoms called *misls*, often in conflict with each other.[46] In the absence of any significant external pressure, Sikh chiefs started a process of outward expansion from 1764 onward, when they conquered the Sarhind region near Delhi.[47] Although internal conflicts for power were frequent, for outward expansion Sikh chiefs formed a loose but unified coalition until 1799. In this year, the Sikh state was established by

[41] P. Marshall, P. (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?*, 3.
[42] S. Gordon, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Marathas 1600-1818*, (Cambridge 1993), 184.
[43] H. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs Vol. III: Sikh Domination of the Mughal Empire (1764 – 1803)* (Delhi 1980), 23.
[44] S. Sen, *Military System of the Marathas with a Brief Account of their Maritime Activities* (Calcutta 1928), 85.
[45] T. Roy, *An Economic History of Early Modern India* (Milton Park 2013), 23.
[46] H. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs Vol. III,* 30.
[47] *Ibidem,* 37.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh who unified the *misls*. Singh was able to form a modern-style army that has been said to be a close match to match the British in the region.[48] The Sikh state kept its independency until 1849, partly through strong leadership of Singh but above all because of its geographical position, as far away from the British as possible.[49]

Apart from larger and more stable entities like the Maratha and Sikh states and states, a large number of successor states developed in the former Mughal Empire. These successor states were often formed around the borders of old Mughal provinces.[50] As a result of the diminishing Mughal power in Delhi, certain groups, such as former Nawabs, merchants, warriors or certain caste groups tried to rise to power. Whereas the Marathas and Sikhs were successful in taking power in their region, thereby creating a stable base for their states, other successor states were not as successful in creating stability through continuous power struggles.[51] As a result, many states were vulnerable to surrounding powers. In the course of the late-eighteenth and early- nineteenth centuries, these states were absorbed into either the Maratha Empire or by the British East India Company.[52]

Although the late-eighteenth century was chaotic at the political level, it has been argued that it was not a period of total economic downfall in India. The main economic determinant in the Mughal Empire, agriculture, did not collapse after the establishment of the successor states.[53] Although increased violence came at a cost for merchants as safety on roads diminished, trade did not come to a standstill. On the contrary, with the increased presence of European merchants in India export figures rose enormously.[54] Spices, garments and other Indian products were in high

[48] F. Singh Bajwa, *Military System of the Sikhs during the Period 1799-1849* (Delhi 1964), 35.
[49] Roy, *An Economic History of Early Modern India,* 33.
[50] Marshall, *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History*, 10.
[51] D. Peers, *India under Colonial Rule 1700 – 1885* (Harlow 2006), 20.
[52] *Ibidem*, 19.
[53] Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, 31.
[54] I. Habib, "The Eighteenth Century in Indian Economic History" in: S. Alavi (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century in India: Debates in Indian History and Society* (New Delhi 2002), 70.

demand in Europe. Merchant families became increasingly powerful during the second half of the eighteenth century.[55]

Amidst this new political dynamic, the European trading companies tried to pursue their economic interests. Following the dominance of the Portuguese in the sixteenth and the Dutch in the seventeenth centuries, the eighteenth century was the era of the English East India Company (EIC). With the Far East Indies firmly in the hands of the Dutch, the English and - to a lesser degree their French counterpart - turned to the Indian peninsula as a prime target in the East.[56] However, until about halfway through the eighteenth century, the EIC employed a highly restrained policy in India. The Company tried to stay out of every conflict as much as possible to retain an economically viable operation.[57] Both the English and French companies initially operated from a number of lightly fortified trading posts and factories along the coast, established and run with permission from local rulers.[58] With a conservative London Office, aimed at making profit at the lowest possible cost it was virtually impossible for the EIC to pursue more ambitious goals, minimizing political and military involvement on the edge of a vast empire.[59]

This first signs of change in this strategy can be dated back to 1744, when the English and French trading companies were affected by the European wars of their home countries. Economic competition also became a military one. These conflicts were mostly European, however, and violent clashes between Europeans and Indian armies did not yet occur on a significant scale.[60] However, both Companies made alliances with local rulers. When peace in Europe returned after 1748, French and English Companies were prohibited from direct confrontations by their governments. Through a number of proxy wars through their allies, often with help of European material, both trading

[55] Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars,* 31.
[56] Bryant, *The Emergence of British Power in India 1600-1784*, 6.
[57] Roy, "Rethinking the Origins of British India", *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 47 No. 4 (2013), 1138.
[58] A. Das Gupta, *Merchants of Maritime India, 1500-1800* (Aldershot 1994), 1138.
[59] Bryant, *Emergence of British Power,* 5.
[60] *Ibidem,* 6.

companies tried to increase their sphere of influence.[61] From 1760 onward, a gradual change of policy took place, whereby the English East India Company increasingly started to use violence towards Indian powers through which large territories were acquired, driving the EIC away from its relatively restrained attitude. [62] The reason for this change of strategy has been discussed in scholarly literature, though no single answer has satisfied all authors. Whereas some authors see this as a clear set-out top-down policy of the English Company, other authors see it as an unwanted but irresistible bottom-up process wherein "local agents were unable to resist exploiting the opportunities that arose from time to time to acquire substantial financial resources for the Company […] by assuming political and military dominance over increasing areas of the subcontinent."[63]

The main opponent for the English in India were the French, with whom hostilities in Europe continued to take place in all corners of the world after the Austrian Succession war of 1740-1748.[64] The threat of war with the French after the uneasy peace in Europe prompted the English East India Company to invest heavily in its military capabilities. After the French East India Company was defeated in 1761, the English started using their military power against Indian forces as well, attempting to build a greater sphere of influence.[65] In 1784, the English government nationalized the Company's political activities through the Pitt's Act. This meant that the Company's interests in the country were now backed by the British state directly, which meant that military activities no longer had to be paid for by the Company itself.[66] After this, the British employed a more aggressive strategy against Indian states, thereby gradually developing the nature of the British presence in India from a commercial into a colonial one. Into the thirty or so years that followed, the government-backed Company gradually took control over most of the Indian peninsula, through

[61] J. Lawford, *Britain's Army in India: From its Origins to the Conquest of Bengal* (London 1978), 103.
[62] T. Roy, "Rethinking the Origins", *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 47 No. 4 (2013), 1136.
[63] Bryant, *Emergence of British Power, 25*.
[64] J. Black, *War and the World: Military Power and the Fate of Continents 1450-2000* (New Haven 1998), 111.
[65] Bryant, *Emergence of British Power,* 209.
[66] *Ibidem, 324*.

direct confrontations with their enemies and the subordination of less military prominent Indian rulers.[67]

The eighteenth century in India thus saw a development of increasing conflict between numerous regional (and international) factions. During the conflicts between European powers and Indian powers, it became apparent that the traditional Indian style of warfare had become obsolete. This was a result of gradual improvements on both organizational and technological fields in European militaries from the Sixteenth century onwards.[68] While the Indian armies halfway through the eighteenth century still mostly relied on large numbers of unorganized cavalry, complemented by some artillery and infantry, European armies relied on relatively highly disciplined units of infantry working together with artillery and small units of cavalry. The typical Indian army heavily depended on the highest commander because further hierarchical structures were almost non-existent.[69] Chaos in the ranks could ensue if the leader disappeared from sight for only a short amount of time.[70] In contrast, the modern European army was subdivided into smaller units with their own leaders that could act independently and thus allowed for a far more flexible army. The regular training of European troops also meant that ranks would break far less often when under pressure, and maneuvers could be carried out swiftly and orderly.[71] It also allowed European artillery to fire at a far higher rate and more precise than the artillery of the Indians, as every step of loading a gun was perfected during training.[72] This type of professional military was very expensive as it meant maintaining a standing army which had to be maintained in peacetime, and as such was only made possible by the economic developments and state formation in Europe in the early modern era.[73]

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[67] A. Majed Khan, "The Twilight of Mughal Bengal" in: P. Marshall (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?* (New Delhi 2003), 364.
[68] Kaushik, "Military Synthesis in South Asia:", 652.
[69] *Ibidem,* 657.
[70] J. Gommans, "Indian Warfare and Afghan Innovation during the Eighteenth Century" in: *Studies in History* Vol. 11 No. 2 (1995), 266.
[71] Kaushik, "Military Synthesis in South Asia", 653.
[72] Bidwell, *Swords for Hire*, 8.
[73] Roy, "Rethinking the Origins of British India" in: *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 47 No. 4 (2013), 1137.

One of the most notable examples of Indian military obsolesce against European armies can be found in 1746, when a few French companies destroyed an entire Indian army of the Carnatic Nawab at Adyar. Being lured into an ambush and being heavily outnumbered, the French forces were able to defeat the Indian army through disciplined and trained artillery fire that was highly effective against the frontally charging Indian cavalry. The maneuvers of the infantry brought chaos to the Indian army, that expected the French to flee at the sight of their overwhelming numbers.[74] The events at Adyar caused a shock among Indian military leaders. The cavalry based armies that had been the dominant army style for centuries in the Mughal Empire had proven to be obsolete against modern armies. Indian commanders saw the devastation that the English and French army could wreck upon their ranks and started contracting Europeans to modernize their armies in order to keep up with modern trends of warfare. Significant numbers of Europeans were available to meet this demand, whose origins will be discussed in chapter two. Apart from hiring Europeans, the Marathas were able to build upon the lessons learned during previous conflicts and modernize parts of their armies themselves. Even before European mercenaries were hired to command these armies, the Marathas increasingly employed infantry and artillery instead of irregular cavalry.[75] However, in order to fully transform their army, it was still seen as necessary to employ Europeans, as this was a highly skill-based form of warfare and these experienced forces were needed to train and lead these new forces.

The hiring of outsiders itself was not a new occurence in Indian armies. For centuries, military commanders, merchants and others that needed protection on the Indian peninsula had relied on large numbers of mercenaries in their armies and as bodyguards. [76] Large standing armies were not common in the region, as the cost of maintaining them was too high for landowners. Mercenary armies provided a solution for this problem, as they could be hired whenever a situation called for

[74] Bidwell, *Swords for Hire*, 10.
[75] R. Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India: The Struggle for Control of the South Asian Military Economy* (Cambridge 2003), 43.
[76] Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput & Sepoy,* 4-5.

military action and just as easy be sent off. For example, the collection of taxes by local holders of revenue yielding estates, *Jagirdars,* was generally outsourced to mercenary armies, as local population often did not pay their tributes without putting up a fight against their landholder.[77] Some groups were particularly famous as mercenaries. When the Marathas were still under Mughal control, they were often hired by Mughal lords to fight their battles, as their fighting skills and courage were highly regarded.[78] It was also not uncommon to hire mercenaries beyond the state's borders. Afghans, Iranis and Turanis from surrounding regions were also often hired for their military service. Local mercenaries often hired themselves out to European forces as well. In fact, the armies of European forces generally consisted of a majority of these *sepoys* under European command.[79]

The hiring of Europeans was however not based on the same premises as other mercenaries in the military labour market of post-Mughal successor states. They were not hired to carry out specific military objectives, but in order to import the European fighting style that had impressed the state leaders so much at Adyar. What these leaders failed to realize was that the modern European army relied on a highly developed centralized state, capable of collecting the necessary funds for maintaining a trained and disciplined standing army. [80] Although it is not entirely clear why, the Indian successor states were not able to cope with these increasing costs. Most likely, the often fragile state apparatuses of these states lacked a highly developed centralized control over finances that was necessary to conduct the modern warfare with standing armies of professionals. Apart from that, the frequent wars had reaped the states' stable tax base of the as farmlands were destroyed and commerce became less regulated in many Indian successor states.[81] Although the armies of the Marathas and Sikhs did have some modern features as they had developed infantry and artillery, their tax income was not stable enough to guarantee a steady pay for their troops. As a result, mutinies were common among Maratha and Sikh armies, and army leaders had difficulty controlling

[77] *Ibidem,* 7
[78] Sen, *Military System of the Marathas,* 7.
[79] Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company,* 36.
[80] Kaushik, "Military Synthesis in South Asia", 651.
[81] Roy, "Rethinking the Origins of British India", 1132.

their armies to the extent necessary for modern warfare.[82] In the end, the native armies of the Mughal successor states were unable to fully reorganize their armies to modern standards. Because of this, they were not able to match the increasingly powerful British on the battlefield.

With the limitations of this thesis, it is impossible to give a complete overview of the cultures and societies of the post-Mughal successor states wherein the European mercenaries worked and lived. Further research on the European mercenaries could shed more light on the cultures wherein they operated, as the Indian successor states' societies were very complex. With the downfall of the Mughal Empire came increased influence of regional powers, but Mughal elements could still be found all over the Indian peninsula during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The different societies wherein the mercenaries operated thus can be seen as hybrids with shared elements of the late Empire and increasing regional identities. However, this is not the complete picture. Within regions, cultural and religious differences were as widespread as ethnic differences.[83]

One important shared cultural aspect of almost all different groups in India was the deep imbedding of a military culture in all levels of society. In essence, every man with a weapon or horse could be a warrior that in the tumultuous political state of affairs in the region and could hire himself out to a ruler that would always be in need of fighters.[84] This was common throughout the region. Higher up, merchants and military brokers were also invested in the constant state of conflict in eighteenth century India. War was not the ultimate struggle of power to them, but most of all a possible lucrative business opportunity.[85] Any man that could carry a weapon was in essence part of the military labour market of northern India.[86]

[82] Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India*, 46.
[83] J. Grewal*, The New Cambridge History of India: The Sikhs of the Punjab* (Cambridge 1990), 5.
[84] Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India*, 57.
[85] *Ibidem,* 58.
[86] Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput & Sepoy*, 4.

Conclusion

This chapter has set the scene of northern India in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and with that has laid the foundation for further research about the European military labour market of the post-Mughal successor states. The chapter has mainly focused on the political developments that led to the downfall of the Mughal Empire, the rise of its successor states and the developments that led to the English dominance above other European players. A short account of the most important cultural characteristics has also been given, although the complexity of different ethnic groups and religions prohibits brief conclusions to be made about the societies wherein the European mercenaries of northern India lived. Even so, a brief but clear image arises of the theatre wherein the Europeans operated so that further analysis become possible.

From the early eighteenth century onwards, a process of disintegration of the Mughal Empire started. Regional entities along the lines of former administrative districts or around ethnic and religious groups became increasingly independent from Mughal authority in Delhi. The effect of disintegration was enlarged as diminishing tributes from a number of regions meant a decrease in military power that was pivotal to Mughal control of its Empire. Starting in the second half of the eighteenth century, Maratha power had surpassed that of Delhi and the Mughal Emperor merely retained a figurehead position used by others to ratify their power. The rise of the successor states heralded decades of political instability on the Indian peninsula, with countless wars between the young states in search of greater power.

In the midst of the political chaos in the former Mughal Empire, European trading companies tried to gain a foothold on the continent in their perpetual search of profit. In the eighteenth century, France and Great Britain were starting to eclipse Dutch, Danish and Portuguese influence on the Indian subcontinent. After mainly indirect violent struggles between the two companies, the British turned out the dominant European power in India. After this, the Company increasingly started to use violent tactics as a way of securing revenue. In the last four decades of the eighteenth

century, the East India Company transformed from a non-aggressive trading company into a political and territorial power that was not shy to use violence to pursue their goals. The English East India Company in this sense became a post-Mughal successor state themselves.

In wars between European and Indian powers, it became clear that the Indian model of warfare had become obsolete against a modern Western army. In general, the armies of the Indian successor states had not developed much for hundreds of years. The typical Indian army consisted of large masses of irregular cavalry, which relied numbers and crude frontal storm tactics. Because of a lack of training and organization, an army's morale was always low and desertion and mutinies were a regular problem. Artillery was also used, although irregular calibers and lack of training of crews made them hardly an asset on the battlefield. In Europe, warfare had developed for centuries into a system whereby commanders relied on highly trained and drilled infantry units that were capable of maneuvering and withstanding pressure from enemies. Europeans were also superior in the use of artillery. Through training, they were able to fire far more rapidly and accurately than any Indian army. In several cases, Indian armies were humiliated by far smaller European units of soldiers. In order to be able to defeat Europeans changes would have to be made. This was partly done by the hiring of Europeans in the Indian armies to import the European military revolution in their own armies. The hiring of outsiders was in itself not a new feat, as the use of mercenaries was very common in the armies in the region. It was very common for anyone in financial trouble to hire himself out to someone that could use their service. However, Europeans were not hired *en masse* as soldiers, but more as experts that could command or train the armies and with that transform them into modern armies.

The Europeans came into heterogeneous societies wherein both Mughal as well as many regional elements were present. In some regions, the Muslim elite had still retained their power. In other regions, certain ethnic groups had made use of the power vacuum and had seized power. In the Northwest of the former Mughal Empire the Sikhs, a religious group, were able to seize power.

Although this meant that certain groups had become more dominant and accordingly had a larger cultural influence on society, the successor states all were highly heterogeneous entities that consisted of multiple religious and ethnic groups. Further research on this subject in required.

The next chapter focusses on the general background of the European mercenaries in Indian service and will introduce the most important ones. Whereas this chapter has set out to set the scene for the demand side of the European military labour market of post-Mughal successor states, the next will focus on the supply side of that same market.

Chapter 2:

European supply on the military labour market of northern India

This chapter deals with the background and general achievements of the European mercenaries in the post-Mughal successor states. The chapter starts with a general assessment of the background of the Europeans who became mercenaries in Indian service. The European mercenaries identified came from more than fifteen European countries and also differed from each other in terms of their socio-economic position in these home countries. It is important to be aware of this, because this heritage often influenced their behavior during their careers as soldiers of fortune. An assessment of their achievements in service of their Indian employers will also be made in order to understand their impact in the Indian societies of their employers. To get a clearer and more contemporary picture, the most notable mercenaries who left their archival sources will be introduced, in order to get a closer understanding of the motivation of these men to venture into Indian service and their lifestyle. The mercenaries discussed in depth are Benoît de Boigne from Savoy, George Thomas from Ireland, James Skinner who was half English, half Mughal, Alexander Gardiner from England and Lewis Ferdinand Smith, who was also English. Although they did not leave their own sources, Frenchmen Jean-Francois Allard and General Avitabile and Italian General Ventura will also be briefly discussed because their colleague Alexander Gardiner has described them in detail during their Sikh service and they played important roles in the Sikh army in the first half of the nineteenth century. Later in this thesis, some other mercenaries will also be featured, but as they did not leave their own sources or played (relatively) minor roles, they will not be further introduced in this chapter. Through this analysis, the chapter sheds light on the supply side of the European military labour market in the Indian successor states, which will help understand the mercenaries' behavior in the societies of their employer.

Although the first mercenaries in Indian armies were active from the beginning of the seventeenth century, the last half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century was the golden age for these Europeans. In this period, violence between different Indian successor states was at its peak, with Sikh, Maratha, British and numerous other armies engaged in one or more conflicts. At least 179 European were active in India in this period.[87]

As Inayet A. Zaidi has described in his general assessment about the income of European mercenaries in India, the backgrounds of these adventurers differed significantly. Among the 179 mercenaries he counted are 15 nationalities:

Nationality	Mercenaries
French	79
English	28
Irish	8
Eurasian	7
German	4
Scottish	4
Dutch	4
Portuguese	3
Neapolitan	2
Savoyard	1
Hungarian	1
American	1
Alsatian	1
Venetian	1
Hanoverian	1
Unidentified	32
Total	179

Source: S. Inayet Ali Zaidi, "European Mercenaries in the Indian Armies: AD 1750-1803", 57.

The notable high number of French mercenaries is most likely due to the collapse of the French Empire in the period 1754-1761. After this, the French East India Company never ventured into large military campaigns again, and a large number of French soldiers were left without work.[88]

[87] Zaidi, "European Mercenaries in the Indian Armies: AD 1750-1803", 56. While Inayet Ali Zaidi counted 179 mercenaries, I estimate that dozens of names have been forgotten through time as James Skinner speaks of several hundred Europeans in Maratha service alone.
[88] Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India,* 8.

Instead of making the expensive trip to France, a large number of soldiers stayed in India in search for work as this was easily found in one of the armies of northern India. Eventually, the lure of a good contract as a mercenary in an Indian army became so attractive that after 1815 some former Napoleonic officers even ventured to India from Europe. These men were General Ventura, who was originally Italian, and General Jean-Francois Allard and General Avitabile. They travelled to India mostly on foot and came into service of Ranjit Singh in 1820.[89] They received the title of General in Indian service. General Ventura became the driving force behind the reorganization of the Sikh army into modern brigades. Ventura became wealthy as he was paid up to 2500 rupees per month, almost 500 times more than an ordinary Indian soldier and was also occasionally awarded with *jagirs* or estates. Ventura returned to Europe a rich man in 1843 and lived a comfortable life in Paris in retirement.[90] While Ventura raised brigades of infantry, General Jean-Francois Allard was given the task of forming a corps of cavalry in the style of the European armies.[91] He too became wealthy, receiving the same pay as Ventura.[92] Allard died of natural causes in 1839 and left a large family in India. Alexander Gardiner described that Allard was apparently so close to Ranjit Singh that his servants were afraid to tell him of Allard's death, as it would be too big of a shock to bear for the Sikh Lord.[93] This attests to the special position some European mercenaries had with their employers. General Avitabile came to India some years after Ventura and Allard, after first serving some time in the Persian army. In service of Ranjit Singh he became governor of Wazirabad and later of Peshawar and its armies in service of Singh. Avitabile was able to retire in 1843 with help from the British, whom he helped in their campaign against the Sikh empire, which was quickly disintegrating after Ranjit Singhs death. Avitabile went back to Europe, having acquired a large fortune of more than one million rupees.[94]

[89] A. Gardiner and H. Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller: Colonel of Artillery in Service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (Edinburgh 1898), 300.
[90] *Ibidem,* 305.
[91] *Ibidem,* 313.
[92] *Ibidem*, 314.
[93] *Ibidem,* 315.
[94] *Ibidem,* 325.

Mercenaries of other European nationalities were often former international crewmembers of one of the European trading companies active in India.[95] The lure of high pay and easy promotions was the most obvious reason to desert their employer and join one of the Indian warlords. Pays ten times as high compared to service in one of the East Asia companies was not uncommon for a mercenary.[96] George Thomas, an uneducated sailor in the service of the English East India Company quickly deserted the Company when he arrived in India around 1781. Without any military experience, Thomas came in the service of some minor Indian noblemen before he was hired in the mercenary army of Begum Samru.[97] Showing talent, he rose to a senior officer's position in Samru's army until he was unexpectedly fired from her service in 1792. Some authors see a plot of jealous French officers in the service of Samru as the reason behind this, although this has not been proven. Thomas himself refrains himself from talking about the subject and starts his narrative after this period.[98] After this, Thomas formed his own mercenary army and through successful campaigns acquired the Hariana *jagir* which he ruled quite successfully until it ultimately was conquered by the Marathas under General Perron. Having lost his *jagir,* but still in the possession of a modest fortune, Thomas died in 1802 on his way back to Ireland.[99]

Another reason for the desertion of their European employer was that it was an opportunity for Company employees to escape the conservative and discriminatory systems for promotions that often favored the nobility.[100] James Skinner is an interesting example of this. Being born from an English Company servant father and a Mughal mother, Skinner faced discriminatory policies in the English army's officer's corps, denying him promotions.[101] Eager to pursue a military career, Skinner was able to enlist in the Maratha army which consisted of dozens of Europeans. In service of General Perron, Skinner showed talent and rose to be the commander of different army units throughout his

[95] Bidwell, *Swords for Hire,* 14.
[96] Compton, *A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, 381.
[97] *Ibidem*, 109.
[98] Franklin, *Military memoirs of Mr. George Thomas,* 17.
[99] *Ibidem,* 332.
[100] Zaidi, "European Mercenaries in the Indian Armies", 60.
[101] Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1*, 81.

career, leading them into several battles with insubordinate Maratha vassals and other enemies.[102] After the English defeated the Maratha's, Skinner was offered service in the English army and was appointed command of a native regiment of cavalry in the English army. This regiment, known as "Skinner's Horse", is still active today as a part of the Indian army.

Some Europeans came to India not as Company employees, but in search for employment in Indian service. Among Europeans it was often believed that India was a region of endless opportunity to acquire wealth.[103] Employment in an Indian army meant an opportunity for lower-born Europeans to rise to commanding and independent positions with according pay if they showed talent.[104] Benoît de Boigne from Savoy is an example of these adventurers. After a short career in the Irish Brigade in the French army and the Russian army, De Boigne travelled to India in search of employment after a tip from a European merchant he met in Russia.[105] De Boigne became one of the most famous European mercenaries in India as the first European commander of the Maratha army. Although his role has recently been downplayed somewhat by Randolf Cooper, he can still be credited in reforming the fiscal structure of the Maratha army to a system whereby regular pay was more or less guaranteed.[106] This significantly helped reduce mutinies among soldiers and helped create a disciplined army.

Alexander Gardiner was another adventurer that came to India in search of employment and his case exemplifies the high demand of Europeans and the almost legendary status as military experts that they had in the region. With hardly any military experience and no education, Gardiner immediately found employment in the army of Ranjit Singh after his arrival in 1832 as an instructor for Singh's artillery, without ever having fired a single gunshot. Thanks to an English step-by-step manual that Gardiner found in a case of gun parts, he was able to successfully fire some shots for his

[102] *Ibidem,* 151, 173.
[103] Zaidi, "European Mercenaries in the Indian Armies", 58.
[104] Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India,* 4.
[105] Compton, *A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, 18.
[106] Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India*, 49.

employer and his court, proving his worth. [107] Gardiner was assigned to the command of the entire Sikh artillery, with an additional 800 infantry and 400 cavalry as defensive troops. [108]

The European mercenaries in India of the late eighteenth century can be subdivided in three groups based on their roles in the native armies: The first group consists of mercenaries who stood at the head of their own contingent of soldiers and were hired as a group by an Indian lord. The leader of this contingent received a fixed pay from his client that he used to pay his soldiers. These will be referred to as independent mercenary commanders. The second group of European mercenaries were directly employed by the Indian lord and were hired to give training to his employers' troops. This was more of a consultant than a commander as the leading of the army was still a task of the employer. The employer was also responsible for the pay of the troops. These are referred to as advisors. The third group of Europeans were the soldiers and lower ranking officers who fought either under the command of a European or an Indian. This group will be referred to as subalterns.[109] All three categories influenced the warfare of their Indian employers in their own way, although the independent mercenary commanders like general de Boigne had the most influence in reorganizing the Indian war machine to the western style. Lewis Ferdinand Smith was a British mercenary in service of the Marathas and falls under the group of subalterns. He has mainly withstood the test of time due to his memoirs, not through his own achievements in his Indian service. He served under both General de Boigne and General Perron and took part in numerous campaigns. He is also recorded to have fought George Thomas and his private army sometime around 1800.[110]

The European mercenaries in India were generally paid well, although the amounts earned varied immensely.[111] The mercenaries who stood at the head of their own contingent of soldiers were usually the best off, although their pay depended on the strength of their armies and still varied

[107] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 181-182.
[108] *Ibidem,* 183.
[109] Zaidi, "European Mercenaries in the Indian Armies", 70.
[110] Compton, *A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*,399.
[111] *Ibidem*, 16.

a great amount. While army commanders like De Boîgne and Perron earned great fortunes in their service for Maratha leader Scindea, George Thomas' prospered far less as the head of his army.[112] Until Thomas received his own estate or *jagir* from his patron, Thomas often had problems financing his own army.[113] Mercenaries that fell under the heading of the second and third groups were generally also compensated well. Compared to the EIC, wages in service of De Boigne's army were between 23 and 62 percent higher than in English service.[114]

There was one drawback to Indian service, however. The Indian lords were notoriously incapable to pay their army on time. Pay arrears of several months was considered normal in the armies, and mentions of pay arrears of up to three years have been recorded.[115] The mercenaries had few other options than to hope that their employer would come up with the necessary payments, and stay with their party. [116] The pay arrears from Indian chiefs was not only a problem for the European soldiers, but was prevalent throughout their entire armies.

If we look at the quality of the European mercenaries in India, we see that the individual capabilities of these men varied highly. The reputation of Europeans as military men was so high, that almost any European could find employment in one of the Indian armies if he wanted to. Europeans were seen as the key to modernizing by several Indian leaders, not only in the military field, as well as beyond. When Sikh leader Ranjit Singh heard about the existence of steam ships that could move without sails or rowers from one of his European employees, he promptly ordered his European general Ventura to build him one, although he had absolutely no experience with ship building. Together with Alexander Gardiner, Ventura built a barge that somewhat resembled a paddleboat, although it had to be powered by men turning the paddles. Singh was happy nonetheless, most likely because he had no idea what a real paddleboat should look like and greatly

[112] Zaidi, "European Mercenaries in the Indian Armies", 70.
[113] Hennessy, *The Rajah from Tipperary*, 68, 95.
[114] Zaidi, "European Mercenaries in the Indian Armies", 71.
[115] *Ibidem,* 72.
[116] Compton, A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, 116.

rewarded his "expert" ship builders.[117] Because almost every European could find employment in the Indian armies, the military achievements of the European mercenaries also varied. While some, like Benoît de Boigne, George Thomas and James Skinner rose to be famous army commanders, of whom heroic stories were written, most of the mercenaries did not rise to be such celebrities in Europe. The scholarly work about the European mercenaries mainly focusses on the battlefield achievements of the select group of famous adventurers, with some short descriptions about the lesser men. Because of the previous focus on military achievements, this selection is understandable. However, a problematic picture of the capabilities of the mercenaries arises. Most of the Europeans, however in demand they were, only played minor roles in the Indian armies as gunmen, soldiers or low-ranking officers. While a considerable number died in battle, most of the mercenaries however died of bad dietary habits and disease during their service.[118]

If judgements are to be made about the success of the European mercenaries, one should not investigate the individual fighting skills or heroic actions, but look at the performance of the armies they worked for. The most important Europeans in the armies were not hired for their individual fighting capabilities, but in the hope that they could apply the lessons of the European military revolution to the Indian armies. There are several examples of Indian armies showing signs of a modernized western army after Europeans were hired on a significant scale after 1750. A famous example of this is the battle of Lalsot in January of 1785 where a Maratha army fought the armies of some small successor states. During this battle, a western-style brigade of some 1300 men, led by Benoît de Boigne defeated an entire army of India's former fighting elite, the light cavalry. Through well-executed maneuvers and disciplined shooting of both his infantry and small artillery, de Boigne was able to bring chaos to the opposition's untrained light cavalry.[119] As the bulky enemy army was unable to answer to the tactical maneuvers of de Boigne's army, their only option was to storm his

[117] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 202.
[118] Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India,* 7-8.
[119] De Boigne, *Memoire sur la Carrière Militaire et Politique,* 67.

brigade. This was answered by the rapid firing of de Boigne's artillery, which quickly forced them to retreat. The battle was over rather quickly, and the old fighting elite of India had suffered a humiliating defeat.[120]

There are other examples of European success with the Indian armies as well: George Thomas's private army was notorious on the battlefield. Although it seemed that Thomas did not excel in sophisticated tactical planning on the battlefield, he was able to create a tight unit of soldiers that showed loyalty and discipline to their commander on the battlefield. This was rather unusual on among traditional armies, where desertion was not uncommon. With his private army, Thomas was very successful during a number of engagements, especially against Sikh and Maratha armies.[121] General Allard in service of Ranjit Singh had set up a regiment of cavalry in a regular, disciplined European fashion, and was very successful. According to Gardiner, during the Anglo-Sikh war, the British were very impressed by these troops and could barely surpass their quality.[122] However, because the Indian Lords were not able to transform their entire fiscal system to a system that brought in enough income to finance these expensive standing armies, their armies could never be transformed completely. In the end, it proved that just hiring Europeans as military experts was not enough to turn the Indian armies to the same level as the British army.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to set the scene of the socio-economic background and contribution to the Indian armies of the European mercenaries in that region in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century. The next chapter will dive in deeper on the experiences, behavior and opinions of the European mercenaries towards the societies of their employers and will assess whether they acculturated into the cultures of their employers. With the first two chapters, further analysis about the European mercenaries has been given some much needed context that previous authors did not

[120] Bidwell, *Swords for hire,* 45.
[121] Franklin, *Military memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, 151, 170.
[122] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 312.

include in their works. This important due to the complex and chaotic theatre wherein the mercenaries operated.

With the upcoming post-Mughal successor states frequently in conflict, northern India was a frequent theatre of war. In the second half of the eighteenth century, these native powers faced new competition in the form of the European merchant companies, especially from England and France. The victories of the European powers over native armies created a demand for European mercenaries that could help the Indian army commanders modernize their armies. These mercenaries were readily available as trade company employees sought better employment, and the French East India Company left India leaving many former employees behind. After some time, some Europeans even travelled to India to find employment.

Employment in Indian armies meant a chance of obtaining lucrative contracts for Europeans that in European service had no chance of comparable opportunities due to the prevailing conservative and discriminatory systems in these companies, which favored men of high birth. In service of an Indian service, anyone that showed promise could make a career for himself and obtain promotions. Some of the mercenaries became exceptionally wealth during their Indian service, but even for an ordinary soldier in service of an Indian army, pays were far higher than for the same rank in European service.

Because the lure of service in an Indian army was high and the armies would hire as many Europeans as they could, the military skill of the European mercenaries varied highly. Only some, like Benoît de Boigne and George Thomas rose to the top. Many only served to be low ranking officers in the armies of the post-Mughal successor states. Some of the European mercenaries that were assigned a leading role in their employers' army were able to modernize their units to a modern standard. However, the armies were never entirely reorganized. This was mostly due to the high cost of maintaining a western style army, as explained in chapter one. The smaller mercenary contingents have some impact on the battlefield against other Indian powers. Most notably was the Maratha

army, whose European style contingent under command of Benoît de Boigne and later General Perron were well known. However, as the Indian armies were only partly reorganized, it was outclassed by the army of the English, who by the end of the eighteenth century had conquered large parts of the Indian subcontinent and were now the dominant power.

Chapter 3:

Acculturation in post-Mughal successor states

The following chapter looks at the degree of acculturation of European mercenaries in the armies of the post-Mughal successor states. By analyzing the memoirs they left, the chapter sets out to find evidence for this possible acculturation, mainly through the perception of the mercenaries themselves. The chapter consist of two parts. It starts with a thorough examination of these memoirs in order to be aware of possible biases of these men writing about themselves and other mercenaries. They might very well have tried to create a different image of themselves in order to achieve some kind of goal, which would affect their writing. After this, the chapter takes a closer look at the subjects by looking for the evidence of acculturation. This will be analyzed in context of the broader narrative of the political affairs and cultural developments of the post-Mughal successor states and the careers of the mercenaries, as shown in chapter one and two. The chapter focuses on a limited number of aspects that could indicate whether or not acculturation occurred at the mercenaries. The analysis focuses on loyalty, dress, marriage, religion and social habits of the mercenaries while in service of the Indians.

Throughout this chapter, a hypothesis will be tested about the degree and nature of acculturation of the European mercenaries in service of the post-Mughal successor states. The derived statement runs contrary to William Dalrymple's White Mughals argument, namely that European mercenaries retained their European identity as much as possible. Finally, the chapter will analyze the possible differences in the degree and nature of acculturation between British and non-British mercenaries. For the British, who could return to home territory in a matter of days as British territory was in the same region, it could be expected that there was less pressure to acculturate into local societies. For other Europeans, the journey home would be far more costly and time

consuming, as they had to return to Europe. For them, the need to blend in with their employer would probably be greater as their options were more limited than those of the British.

A number of mercenaries authored autobiographical works of some sort, often with the help of a travel companion or friend. The degree to which these works have been taken into consideration by scholars of the period varies highly. The memoirs of George Thomas have been republished several times and has also inspired later works to be written about the Irishman.[123] The military memoires of Benoît de Boigne, commander of the Maratha army is also a more well-known inspiration for secondary works, such as *Fountain of the Elephants* by Desmond Young to be authored.[124] Other works, like the memoirs of Alexander Gardiner have received less scrutiny, although they also provide an interesting insight in the lives of the mercenaries. In addition to their autobiographical nature, the mercenaries often mention fellow Europeans in their works, in their roles as colleagues or opponents on the battlefield. This helps widen the perspective on the subjects and helps to draw a more precise picture of the mercenaries.

The most prominent concern with these works is that they were mostly written after their return to British controlled territory, based on notes from the period of service of the mercenaries. It might very well be possible that these men tried to regain connection with fellow Brits or the British state by altering their memories, consciously and sub-consciously. In the memoirs of Lewis Ferdinand Smith, no opportunity to compliment the "glorious Company" about their success in India and their good treatment of enemies is being passed on.[125] While this could pose some problems about the credibility of the views these men had when in service of an Indian army, the fact that these mercenaries would cover up their past in itself does say something about their attachment to their former employers. The fact that all the mercenaries researched in this essay returned to British territory already challenges Dalrymple's view that these mercenaries were an exemplary group of

[123] Hennessy, *The Rajah from Tipperary*.
[124] D. Young, *Fountain of the Elephants* (London 1959).
[125] Smith, *A Sketch of the Rise, Progress & Termination of the Regular Corps*, 40.

Indianized men that assimilated into the post-Mughal societies. Another potential issue with these memoirs is that the authors might have tried to enhance their achievements, be it from a sense of pride or in order to impress possible following employers. While this does seems the case in a number of examples, as Randolf Cooper has shown, this should not pose a significant problem for this particular strand of research.[126] With common sense and comparative analysis with other works, this possible deficit should not pose significant problems.

Although the memoirs of the European mercenaries together form an impressive corpus of material, they mainly focus on the military achievements and legacy of these men. Most of the texts are about their experiences in different campaigns on the Indian peninsula. This means that concrete examples of acculturation, or the lack of it, are scarce. This, however, does not allow for scholars like Dalrymple to construct an image based on a small number of European mercenaries to make a point about the values and perceptions on Indian societies by Europeans in India. Focusing on the group alone shows a different picture. Through a close reading of the memoirs, one can definitely see signs about the behavior of mercenaries outside of the battlefield and their views on the societies of their employer. Also, while on the one hand this might limit the credibility of the argument for acculturation, as references are not as common as one might hope for, the focus of these men on military efforts says something in itself. The mercenaries hired themselves out because they were willing to fight for money for the highest bidder, not because they were interested in other cultures.

This brings us to an important point about the mercenaries, especially the independent mercenary commanders and advisors, who had leading roles in their service. As they imported a European organizational and fighting style into Indian armies, it was better for them to adhere to their European identity as much as possible. Their European ways and looks were the unique selling point to their employers, as it was exactly this identity was sought after by the Indian army commanders.

[126] Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India*, 12.

Instead of acculturing into the post-Mughal societies, the Europeans felt pressure to stay as European as possible. It would be odd if a European tried to westernize Indians by applying European organizational and fighting styles with order, sobriety and discipline, while at the same time adopting local customs and habits of their employers. As a result, the European mercenaries of the Indian armies created a brand as military experts for themselves, that included an appearance and way of living as European as possible. For example, a widely used innovation by the European mercenaries was the introducing of practical uniforms for their soldiers that helped to establish order and visibility amongst ranks. Colonel James Skinner introduced a famous uniform that combined European functionality and local colors to his cavalry regiment in the Maratha army.[127] The European officers' corps of Ranjit Singh also introduced a partly European uniform with a blue version of the British red coat included in it.[128] Applying European features to Indians, it would have illogical for Skinner or Gardiner to transform themselves with local dress. European mercenaries in service of Indian armies thus were attached to their European identity because it was the product they were exporting and thus strengthened their economic position. The brand that the Europeans created worked. Wherever Europeans went, they could find service in the native armies of India, even if they did not have any military experience. Hiring Europeans meant importing the modern world. This brand was not limited to military skill, as shown by the example of Ranjit Singh the ordering of his steamship to be built.

Clothing

When looking at portraits of some of the Europeans in Indian service, it is clearly visible that the European military dress generally remained in fashion with themselves as well. Portraits of George Thomas (see illustration 1, page 71), James Skinner (illustration 2, page 72) and Benoit de Boigne (illustration 3, page 73) show that the European mercenaries generally refrained themselves from

[127] Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1*, 108.
[128] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 320.

"going native". In the portraits they commissioned, uniforms in a clear European style are visible. Some mercenaries have designed their uniforms somewhat frivolously, with generous amounts of gold decorations and artwork. As a mercenary, these men would generally have every freedom when it came to their clothing, as there was no one holding them back in their European designs. And as a commander with authority, their uniforms had to impress their subordinates.

Some employers tried to get their European mercenaries to wear traditional clothes. But this was generally resisted by the mercenaries. Gardiner recalls that despite pressure from his employer to dress according to Sikh tradition, General Court kept attached to his European clothing.[129] One exception is an image of Alexander Gardiner in his military uniform of his time as an artillery commander in the Sikh army of Ranjit Singh (see illustration 4, page 74). His checkered European suit is complemented by a turban in the same checkered fabric. Gardiners beard also doesn't seem very European, although it is difficult to judge whether a beard is in European or Sikh fashion. However, the turban and beard are no sign of an Indianization by Gardiner. His and other Europeans' contracts with their Sikh employer stipulated that they would take over a number of Sikh habits, such as growing beards and wearing turbans.[130] The portraits of Jean-Francois Allard and Jean-Baptiste Ventura that also show somewhat large beards endorse the existence of these contracts (see illustrations 5 and 6, pages 75 and 76). It therefore cannot be seen as a sign of acculturation whereby Gardiner truly connected with the culture of his employer. It was part of a contract of military service, which benefited Gardiner economically. German mercenary Walter Reinhardt was one of only few mercenaries that changed his dress completely to native fashion. After employment with Kassim Ali Khán in Calcutta Reinhardt started to dress in the same style as his employers.[131] This is also confirmed by James Skinner in his memoirs, although they did not meet in person.[132]

[129] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 306.
[129] *Ibidem*, 327.
[130] *Ibidem*, 306.
[131] Compton*, A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, 403.
[132] Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1*, 284.

Marriage

Another element of the contracts between European mercenaries and their Sikh employer was that they would have to marry native women.[133] In Sikh service, Jean-Francois Allard was an exception to this rule. He stipulated that he could marry a European woman in the area.[134] In other instances, there are signs that many of the European mercenaries married local women. George Thomas was married to one of the favorite dancing girls of his former employer, Begum Samru.[135] James Skinner also married several Indian wives when he was in Maratha service.[136] In his memoirs, he also recalls a lot of the European mercenaries in service of the Maratha's marrying one or more native women.[137] Marrying local women could point towards acculturation of the European mercenaries into local societies. Direct ties with Indians were made through this institution. However, there are a number of reasons that weaken this claim. First as has been mentioned, some mercenaries were bound by contract to marry locally. Although emotional ties probably would have played a role, the primary reason for them was economic, as it would help enforce the contracts with their employers. Second, many mercenaries that married local women did this because there were hardly any European women in the area where they were employed. As the regions were most of the mercenaries operated were politically instable, and very dangerous, only few European women ventured to go to the inlands of the Indian peninsula before the British East India Company governed the region. Ventura was the only mercenary that married a European wife. As most of the mercenaries stayed for years in service of their Indian employers, it is no surprise that they would marry a native wife. The practicality of this is highlighted by the third reason, namely that most of the mercenaries abandoned their Indian families when they returned to Company territory or Europe. After his peaceful surrender to the Maratha's, George Thomas was allowed to leave his former kingdom with all his personal possessions to British governed territory. He left his family behind when he travelled

[133] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 306.
[134] *Ibidem*, 308.
[135] B. Banerji, *Begam Samru*, 67.
[136] Compton*, A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, 396.
[137] Bidwell, *Swords for Hire*, 222.

to Calcutta on his way back to Ireland.[138] Upon deserting the Maratha army to go back to Company territory, most European mercenaries left their wives behind in Agra.[139] Benoît de Boigne, who had left the Maratha's earlier in 1795, did take his Indian wife and two children back to France and later Britain, but more or less turned his family European rather than himself turning Indian. His wife, who changed her name from Noor to Hélène when she came to Europe, found it difficult to change to European ways of living. This ultimately led to their divorce.[140]

Religion

One argument of William Dalrymple to show the acculturation of the European mercenaries in India is that many became Muslims. A handful of them did, such as German mercenary Anthony Pohlman.[141] Another mercenary that Dalrymple looks upon as being Indianized was Walter Reinhardt 'Sombre', but he appears to have remained Christian for his entire life.[142] These men appear to be some of the few European mercenaries that more or less blended in the society of their employers. Dalrymple's image of the European mercenaries seems to be mainly built around these two.[143] For Reinhardt, his blending in into Indian society makes sense, because after his execution of English prisoners of war in 1763, his chances of a future return to European controlled territory was virtually zero, as the Company saw Reinhardt as an enemy for the rest of his life.[144] Reinhardt's wife, the Begum Samru was also a devoted Christian who used much of her fortune to construct a cathedral in her home country.[145] Most of the other mercenaries stayed Christians, often even trying to help Christianity grow in India. Paolo di Avitabile was a devoted Christian, actively practicing his religion.[146] Benoît de Boigne also was a devoted Christian who refused to convert to Islam in service of the

[138] Franklin, *Military memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, 331.
[139] Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1*, 250; Bidwell, *Swords for Hire*, 211.
[140] Compton*, A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, 97.
[141] *Ibidem, 382*; Dalrymple, *White Mughals,* 141.
[142] J. Keay, *Farzana: The Woman Who Saved an Empire* (London 2014), 84.
[143] Dalrymple, *White Mughals*, 141.
[144] *Ibidem, 89*.
[145] Banerji, *Begam Samru*, 117.
[146] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 319.

Maratha's just like the rest of the European corps in the Maratha army.[147] On the contrary, de Boigne did convert his Muslim wife to Christianity.[148]

Customs

Of course, the adoption of certain features of Indian cultures was inevitable. The mercenaries had to adopt some of the local customs. First and foremost, dietary habits changed for the mercenaries when they entered service. It would have been impossible for anyone to adhere to a European diet on the Indian peninsula, as the climate was unsuitable for many European types of food. However, the European habit of eating high quantities of meat was maintained by almost all Europeans in India. Although the typical "Indian" diet mainly consisted out of vegetables, especially after Mughal influence grew less and local influences grew at the end of the eighteenth century, Europeans kept eating meat. Collingham has shown that most Europeans in India consumed large quantities of meat, especially because it was cheap since demand was low.[149] Although it had negative effects on their health as a meat-focused diet did not match well with the humid and hot climate in India, Europeans kept to this dietary habit as it was a sign of European dominance.[150]

In other ways, a lack of acculturation can also be found when looking at habits concerning dining. Especially in regions where Europeans were numerous, the mercenary officers often refused to dine alongside "natives". While attending a dinner with the European mercenaries in service of the Maratha army, George Thomas was not allowed to take his Indian officers inside of the dining tent in the Maratha camp, where negotiation about Thomas' surrender would take place.[151] Earlier, Thomas had described the segregation of Europeans and Indians during dinner during his time in service of Begum Samru. The mainly French officers' corps of Samru refused to eat with native officers and

[147] De Boigne, *Memoire sur la Carrière Militaire et Politique*, 146.
[148] Bidwell, *Swords for Hire*, 183.
[149] Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 27-28.
[150] *Ibidem,* 28.
[151] Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1*, 233.

soldiers.[152] In the sources analyzed, there is only one mention of an official dinner where both European and Indian officers were present. However, this was not social meeting. In January of 1803, disagreement between General Perron and his employer Scindea had to be resolved. Scindea was invited to a *durbar* with his entire officers' corps, which at that time consisted of about thirty Europeans and three hundred natives.[153] They would meet with Scindea and his personal staff in order to relieve tension. However, Perron refused to take his three hundred native officers, and the following meeting between the thirty Europeans and Scindea was an uneasy affair which had the opposite result of what was intended.[154]

Europeans were aware of some local customs within the post-Mughal societies and used them on some occasions. For example, when meeting a man of power, such as an army commander, it was a custom to bring *nuzrs*, of gifts to men of authority to show respect to their authority. If accepted, the receiver welcomed the gift-givers' presence and would stand in for their security. The European mercenaries were aware of this tradition and often used this method to get accepted at a new employer when switching sides. Especially in the Maratha Empire, it was a common practice to bring *nuzrs* for anyone that wished to establish relations with powerful men. When James Skinner was one of the first of the Maratha army to enter the left-behind enemy encampment after a battle against the Rajah Luckwa in 1798 and found some very valuable jewelry, he made sure to give the most valuable piece to his employer as a tribute to his authority.[155]

Many Europeans learned local languages. When working in a commanding position or as a trainer in an Indian army, or alongside natives, it was absolutely vital to speak a native language in order to have fluent and quick communication on the battlefield. A translator between Europeans and Indians would slow down communication immensely. James Skinner spoke Hindu and Persian.[156] George

[152] Bidwell, *Swords for Hire*, 243.
[153] Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1*, 244.
[154] *Ibidem,* 245.
[155] *Ibidem*, 153-155.
[156] *Ibidem,* 79.

Thomas, although illiterate, spoke Hindu fluently.[157] Gardiner, Avitabile, Allard and Ventura all knew Hindu.[158]

Loyalty

Besides these examples of engagement with local customs and habits in the Indian successor states, this is where these sources are found lacking. All mercenaries focus their memoirs mainly on their experiences and contributions on the battlefield and not their experiences as a member of an Indian society. Some other minor traces are visible from the sources. For example, the fact that George Thomas spoke highly against a local custom in northern India where newborn girls of the Rajput caste were often murdered to avoid the possibility of them bringing shame to their families. In his view, this was plain murder.[159] Apart from what has been mentioned here, no real details of the mercenaries' view towards Indian societies can be found in these sources. However, we can still learn about the mercenaries' bonding with local societies if we look at the loyalty that these mercenaries showed towards their employers or their country of origin in Europe. Someone who went from employer to employer in different regions in a short amount of time would probably have an economic motivation and not have been very attached to their employer's society. This was most likely not limited to the European mercenaries and common in the entire military labour market of northern India, but it goes to show that these mercenaries did not see themselves as part of the societies where they worked. Also, someone that remained loyal to their country of origin, helping the British agenda or returning to Europe immediately after service can hardly be described as acculturated. On this subject, the sources tell us a lot more.

A large number of European mercenaries worked for several employers in succession. As the mercenaries' main concern was accumulating wealth while being exposed to the least amount of danger, a lucrative contract with another employer was often reason for them to switch sides. As the

[157] *Ibidem,* 235.
[158] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 301.
[159] Franklin, *Military memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, 141.

European mercenaries were in high demand, Indian army leaders often tried to entice the Europeans to desert their employer to join their ranks by offering higher salaries. Walter Reinhardt for example served more than fourteen different employers. In a number of cases, higher salaries or more senior positions were offered, in other instances, he switched sides because the odds on the battlefield were against his employers.[160] George Thomas also switched sides multiple times. He started his mercenary career with a rebellious group of bandits, came into service of the Begum Samru who remained loyal to the Mughal king in Delhi, took service for a Maratha lord and finally became an independent mercenary at the head of his own state.[161] In fact, most of the mercenaries who served the frontier region between the English and Maratha's with its many small states had more than one employer. It seems that only Ranjit Singh and Scindea were capable of maintaining their mercenaries for the majority career, as they usually offered the highest salaries to Europeans and were quite stable sources of employment for the mercenaries.[162]

There is one thing that becomes very apparent from all the primary source material. Almost all of the mercenaries remained loyal to their European country of origin or showed friendliness towards other western nations. Dr. Harlem, an American mercenary in service of Ranjit Singh's army was a true patriot, who kept close to his American identity, and took his American flag everywhere he went.[163] This became most apparent after a British decree in December of 1802 following rising hostilities between the British and Mahratta's that stated that no foreigner was allowed in the Maratha army anymore.[164] The British saw that the European mercenaries played a pivotal role in the success of the Maratha's and used every tactic to weaken their opponent. The decree was an easy way of stripping away important power from the Maratha's, that is, if the mercenaries would follow it. The lure of following the British decree was further strengthened because the British offered the mercenaries if they would come over and took service with them that they could expect the same

[160] Compton*, A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, 403.
[161] Hennessy, The Rajah from Tipperary, 26; Franklin, *Military memoirs of Mr. George*, 115.
[162] Zaidi, "European Mercenaries in the Indian Armies", 71.
[163] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 327-328.
[164] Bidwell, *Swords for Hire*, 216.

pay.[165] Almost all of the mercenaries, except for some Frenchmen, did.[166] Immediately upon hearing this decree, the British officers in Perron's army declared that they wanted to remain loyal to Great Britain and refused further fighting. The French Perron understood their stance and responded by sending them back to British territory.[167] James Skinner, who was born in India and thus had no real tie with Britain had doubts on whether he should join the British, was eventually persuaded to join the other Europeans as well. He was persuaded by Lord Lake, whose hospitality impressed Skinner greatly.[168] Some mercenaries wanted to leave service, but were not allowed to do so because they were not under direct command of Perron and their Indian commander saw this as treachery, punishable by execution. While some of them managed to escape from this sudden imprisonment, some mercenaries like Majors Dodds and Ryan did not manage to leave unseen and died at the hands of their employer.[169]

For the French officers in Maratha service, the lure of coming over to the British side was naturally far less. The two countries had been enemies of and on again for centuries and at that moment were facing each other in the Napoleonic wars. The French officers were hesitant to join the British, but eventually a group came over, of which General Perron himself was the most notable one. Earlier, he had advocated a stance of opposition against the British, as he saw himself as an extension of French foreign politics and thus saw the British advance in India as a threat for the French power.[170] However, he must have sensed that the Maratha dominance was nearing its end, and managed to escape from already suspecting native officers into British territory where he was received by Lord Lake.[171] With this, the British had succeeded in their strategy to weaken the Maratha army: in the second English- Maratha wars, the Maratha army was only supported by a

[165] Smith, *A Sketch of the Rise, Progress & Termination*, 49.
[166] Bidwell, *Swords for Hire*, 219.
[167] Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1,* 250.
[168] *Ibidem,* 259.
[169] Smith, *A Sketch of the Rise, Progress & Termination*, 53.
[170] Smith, *A Sketch of the Rise, Progress & Termination*, 3.
[171] *Ibidem,* 32; Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1*, 253.

small number of French officers.[172] Some years earlier, Benoît de Boigne had said that he would refuse to fight against other western powers.[173]

In other parts of the Indian peninsula mercenaries also remained loyal to their country of origin or to fellow western countries. George Thomas, even at the height of his power continually expressed his loyalty towards Britain. During his wars with Sikh forces in the Punjab, he stated that "he had the honour of planting the British Standard on the banks of the [river] Attock".[174] As the king of his small state, he always was of the opinion that he would serve the British when the frontier would shift towards his borders, "Thomas desired to be an instrument of conquest for his country", Skinner would later recall.[175] Further up North, Europeans also stayed loyal towards their home country or fellow Europeans. General Allard not only was a mercenary in Ranjit Singh's army, he also did diplomatic work for the French in the capital Lahore.[176] Ventura and Avitabile both went over to the British before war had started between the two countries.[177]

All over the Indian peninsula, almost all European mercenaries showed little to no loyalty towards their employer and kept seeing themselves as British, French or other citizens of European nations. It has become clear that there was a distinct economic motivation for the Europeans to join the ranks of Indian rulers. When options that were more lucrative arose, the mercenaries had no problem in abandoning their employer for a better paying one. Cultural connection with the society of their employers was not a criterion when switching sides. It was a simple case of the highest pay against the lowest risk of getting killed. This labour market was disturbed with the imminent conquest by the ever-growing Company territory. In the end, almost all of the European mercenaries were still European in their minds, and especially for the British mercenaries it was no option to attack their home country. Of the many French mercenaries in Indian service, only few would fight

[172] Smith, *A Sketch of the Rise, Progress & Termination*, 36.
[173] De Boigne, *Memoire sur la Carrière Militaire et Politique*, 159.
[174] Franklin, *Military memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, 133.
[175] Skinner, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner Vol. 1*, 238.
[176] Gardiner and Pearse, *Soldier and Traveller*, 315.
[177] *Ibidem,* 311, 326

the British in the end. They either felt uncomfortable fighting them as a servant of a strange country, or the lure of security and continuation of pay in British territory had grown too big. In the end, these mercenaries did not feel attached to the Indian states to keep on fighting for their causes.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out to find traces of acculturation of European mercenaries in the service of the armies of post-Mughal successor states by looking at the memoirs they left. Although some authors have claimed that the European mercenaries were an example of Europeans that blended in in the societies where they worked, it was expected that this would not be the case when closely reading the memoirs. In fact, one could expect an increased attachment to European ways because this was the unique selling point of these mercenaries in the labour market of mercenaries on the Indian subcontinent. Europeans were seen as great modernizers and thus were in great demand. Acculturing into Indian societies would mean that their unique selling point would diminish, and economic opportunities would become less. As has become apparent, by far the most important reason for Europeans to join Indian armies was the lure of becoming wealthy in a short amount of time. The sources seem to confirm this hypothesis. Only few examples of Europeans acculturing into Indian societies could be found. In a number of cases, these signs of acculturation can be traced back to the contracts of the mercenaries with their Indian employers that stipulated the adaptation of some local customs. However, these adaptations were economically motivated, and thus cannot be seen as acculturation. Instead, a significant amount of evidence showing that Europeans kept to their western ways as much as possible. Apart from an economic motivation to keep a European brand, their loyalty was still with their home country.

The chapter has analyzed the mercenaries' memoirs on five aspects that can be seen as signs of acculturation; clothing, marriage, religion, lifestyle and loyalty. When looking at clothing, it has been shown that most Europeans kept their European clothing style. This has both been described in memoirs, and also becomes clear when looking at a number of portraits that were commissioned by

the mercenaries. All show a distinct European style. In some cases, mercenaries were obliged to take on a native dress by their contracts. This was especially the case in the army of Ranjit Singh in the Pubjab. The portrait of Alexander Gardiner, officer in that army shows this as well, as he wears a turban with his European suit.

As of clothing, there is no distinct indication that the European mercenaries acculturated into India, rather that they stayed European. The clauses in the contracts of the mercenaries in service of Ranjit Singh also extended to another field, namely marriage. The European mercenaries were also obliged to marry an Indian wife. Only General Ventura was allowed to marry a European wife. In other parts of northern India, European mercenaries also married local Muslim or Hindu women. While this could indicate acculturation, one must take note of two factors: First, there were hardly any European women on the region that were not governed by the British. There was hardly any other option for Europeans to marry someone than to marry locally. As the mercenaries were generally away for many years, it is no surprise that they took local wives. Second, the European mercenaries left their wives when they returned to Europe most of the time. It appears that the marriage to local wives was a temporary solution for them.

When looking at religion, we see that most of the mercenaries kept to Christianity and that only incidentally a mercenary converted to Islam. Instead, a number of mercenaries made efforts to spread Christianity in the region.

Looking at lifestyle of the European mercenaries, a more diffused picture arises. While the mercenaries took over features of some local customs, they also kept attached to a large number of European ones. Generally, the customs that were adopted by Europeans were formal manners that could help them increase their position with their employer, resulting in increased economic benefits. Other traces indicate that a lot of mercenaries kept as much of a European lifestyle as possible, with a diet that consisted out of a lot of meat, a large consumption of alcohol and segregation of the Europeans from other officers.

While all these aspects indicate that Europeans did not acculturate into post-Mughal societies, the strongest evidence that shows this comes when we look at the loyalties these mercenaries held. The evidence is twofold. First, most of the mercenaries served different employers that often fought each other as well. Some mercenaries served as much as eleven different employers. This shows that the European mercenaries hardly felt attached to their employers, and their motivation was a pure economic one with high benefits against the lowest risk. Second, the mercenaries remained attached to their country of origin. Most of the mercenaries returned to their home country after they served time in India and accumulated some wealth. British mercenaries stayed British, French mercenaries stayed French, and so on. With some exceptions, European mercenaries did not fight against the rising British power in the region, even if this went against direct orders from their employers. They did not want to fight fellow Europeans and if they would, knew they could not win. With the rise of British power in the region, the time of the mercenaries had ended, as the financial gains did not measure up to the risk of fighting that power.

Conclusion

This thesis has set out to study European mercenaries in the armies of post-Mughal successor states in the period 1775 until 1849. By simply answering the question of "To what degree did European Mercenaries in the service of northern Indian armies became acculturated into the societies of their employers between 1775 and 1849?", this thesis would present a less than thorough analysis of the period and topic. A brief assessment of mercenaries' backgrounds and the background of the societies they were introduced to was necessary to lay the groundwork for further analysis, as this had not been properly done before. Earlier works mainly focused on individual military achievements of the most famous European mercenaries like Benoît de Boigne and George Thomas. However interesting and rich these sources may be, they neglect other important features of this interesting group of people and are generally outdated. Instead of focusing on the many notable military achievements of these mercenaries during their Indian employment, this thesis thus has focused on their social backgrounds, the backgrounds of the society they worked in and their possible adaptation of an 'Indian' way of living.

In order to find out about the views of the mercenaries on post-Mughal societies, this thesis has turned to the many memoirs they left behind. This was no easy task as the sources are scarce. Although the mercenaries often had written elaborate memoirs about their experiences, they mostly focused on their military efforts and refrained from talking too much about their personal cultural views. It is therefore no surprise that all earlier works had been about the military aspects of the European mercenaries. However, through close analysis of the memoirs, one can still form get a grip on the degree of acculturation of the mercenaries in northern India. This is helped by the fact that the mercenaries often mentioned each other in their works. By putting these memoirs against the light of the background of the European military labour market of northern India in this period, it is possible to say something about this. The fact that the European mercenaries did not speak about

their personal views on Indian societies also says something on the degree of their acculturation: if one would be highly acculturated into these societies, we would probably read a lot more about it in their memoirs.

One author that did claim that the European mercenaries in the service of northern Indian armies was William Dalrymple, who claimed that "most freelances adopted ways of living and several converted to Islam".[178] His notion seems to be mainly based around one or two European mercenaries that willingly or unwillingly burned their bridges behind them and as such had no option to return to Europe if they wanted. This is no acculturation out of free will but out of necessity. Dalrymple has left out important sources that tell another story. It seems that he wanted to give his work, that bases its conclusions mainly on an East India Company employee some additional strength by bringing in a whole extra group of Europeans that were active in India in the same period. The story that has been written here shows a different picture.

The first chapter focused on the political and cultural background of northern India after the fall of the Mughal Empire and before and during the rise of the British East India Company as a territorial player in the region. Most of the chapter has focused on the political background, as this is vital to understand why European mercenaries were active in the region. Moreover, it is difficult to compress the heterogeneous characters of the post-Mughal societies into a few pages, so the chapter limited itself to some of the shared features. With this analysis, the chapter has set the scene for the demand side of the European military labour market or northern India.

From the early eighteenth century onwards, the Mughal Empire disintegrated to give way for a large number of successor states that were formed around former administrative districts or strong regional ethnic groups like the Marathas and Sikhs. These young states were generally multi ethnic and religious, with Muslims, Hindus and other religions living together, but generally with one of these groups in power. The establishment of these numerous young states sparked decades of

[178] Dalrymple, *White Mughals*, 142.

violence on the Indian peninsula with each of the post-Mughal successor states trying to increase their sphere of influence. However, this political chaos did not cause an economic crisis in the region. Trade flourished through the increased connections with the rest of the world through the European trading companies that pursued their search of profits. These trading companies did not shy away from using violence to enforce their economic interests in the region. Especially the French and English trading companies became entangled in numerous conflicts, also as a result of the ongoing wars between their home countries.

When European armies faced an Indian army, it became clear that the Europeans had a distinct advantage against the Indians as a result of a long military revolution that had taken place over past centuries. While most Indian armies relied heavily on large masses of irregular cavalry, complemented with unorganized artillery, the European armies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were built around smaller, highly trained and disciplined units of infantry that worked together closely with equally trained and disciplined artillery units. This tight organization helped commanders to better control the movements of their units. In some instances, small European armies devastated huge Indian armies of cavalry. As a result, Indian army commanders started to look for ways to modernize their own armies. The hiring of Europeans as mercenaries to import the lessons of the military revolution was one of the most important responses.

The second chapter looked at the backgrounds of the European mercenaries, their contribution to the armies of their employers and introduced the mercenaries that had left their archival sources that were used in this thesis. During the time of the post-Mughal successor states at least 179 Europeans were active as mercenaries in Indian armies, although this number is likely higher. Most of the mercenaries were French, as the downfall of the French East India Company had left many without employment. The European mercenaries often had come to India in the service of one of the European trading companies that were active in India, and had escaped this brutal and poor environment in search of more lucrative contracts with Indian employers. Some other

mercenaries, such as Alexander Gardiner came as travelers by land to the region. In any case, the Europeans were attracted by the lure of capital that the wealthy region could be able to provide them with. In the service of Indian armies, the mercenaries generally fulfilled one of the following roles: As an independent military commander at the head of their own contingent of mercenaries, as a military advisor that was hired by an Indian army to train this army to modern standard or as a mercenary that fought in service of an Indian army or an army of a European independent military commander.

The almost mythical status of India as a place of endless economic opportunity was partly true for the European mercenaries in the sense that they were generally paid far better than in service of one of the European companies in the area. Service in one of the Indian armies also meant that they could escape from discriminatory systems of these companies that greatly benefited well-born men. For someone of low birth, it was almost impossible to acquire a high position in the companies. In Indian service, anyone that showed military talent could potentially get a lucrative contact. Especially the independent military commanders were often able to acquire large sums of money in their native service. The problem with the service in Indian armies was that their Indian employers were notoriously bad in paying their army in time. Sometimes, pay arrears were as high as one or two years. The lure of high pay attracted all kinds of men to the Indian successor states. Some of them had military experience, some did not. Some proved to be invaluable to the armies of their employers, others were not as talented.

The last chapter has dug into the sources as deep as possible to find traces of these mercenaries acculturing into the societies of their employers to see if William Dalrymple's statements were supported by the contents of these memoirs. The chapter looked at a number of aspects that can been seen as signs of acculturation: dress, marriage, religion, habits and loyalty. It turned out that this was not the case. On the contrary, it became clear that with some exceptions, the European mercenaries remained attached to their identity for a number of reasons. As of

clothing, most Europeans kept dressing themselves in a European fashion. Some mercenaries that did wear local clothing were forced to do so through contract, as was the case with the employees of Ranjit Singh. Although Europeans mercenaries often married Indian women, they almost all left them when they returned to English territory after their service. Second, as there were hardly any European women in the successor states, the European mercenaries had no other choice than marrying native women if they wanted to marry. Most of the mercenaries stayed Christians and did not convert to Islam or Hinduism, as Dalrymple argued. Instead, some European mercenaries like James Skinner and George Thomas actively sought to expand Christianity in India. The European mercenaries did take over some local habits during their service, such bringing precious gifts to powerful men to show respect. On the other hand, many European habits were retained as well. The European mercenaries kept to their high meat diet, consumed large amounts of alcohol and often segregated themselves from Indian officers and refused to dine with their Indian equals.

The strongest indication that European mercenaries did not acculturate into Indian societies can be found when we look at their loyalty. Economic opportunity generally was the only motivation for the Europeans to join the Indian armies. It was quite normal for a mercenary to join another Indian army if they offered a higher pay or service with another army was deemed safer. northern India was also deemed a tempory workplace where one could acquire wealth in a short amount of time before going back to Europe. On top of that, almost all of the mercenaries that survived their Indian service returned to Europe or European territory in India. When the British East India Company became the most powerful player in the region and threatened Indian powers, almost every European mercenary deserted their Indian employer to retire in Europe or find employment in service of the Company. The East India Company had promised the mercenaries the same pay that they had in service of their Indian employer and with that had simply become the most desirable employer with the highest pay against the lowest risk.

Looking at all the evidence, it seems that there was more than just a lack of acculturation of the European mercenaries in Indian service. It seems that these men actively held on to their European identity. And there was a good reason for it: their European identity was what made them so sought after with the Indian leaders. The leaders of the Indian armies wanted to import a European product, the military revolution of the West to their army and thus were looking for men from Europe in order to do this. Men with a European identity were almost automatically seen as military experts and thus could get lucrative contracts in Indian service. A European identity thus was not only accepted within the Indian armies, there was economic pressure to retain this European identity.

On top of that, connection with Indian culture hardly played a role with the European mercenaries in service of the post-Mughal successor states. With some exceptions, the European mercenaries hardly acculturated into the societies of the post-Mughal successor states where they were employed. The mercenaries were opportunistic men that had found a way out of conservative and discriminatory systems in Europe as a mercenary for an Indian army where it was possible to build up a career despite their low origin. In their service, the mercenaries had the highest chance of becoming wealthy. British mercenaries still saw themselves as British, French mercenaries still saw themselves as French.

With this conclusion, this thesis argued a contrary view than the findings in William Dalrymple's White Mughals. Although he claimed that the European mercenaries almost all Indianized, this was hardly the case. Although the extensiveness of his archival research on Company official James Kirkpatrick is admirable, it seems that in his search for a larger test group to increase the impact of his findings, he has acted all too liberally. Although one might understand why Dalrymple did this, it is the task of a scholar to base himself on the sources that are available, instead of using some of them to prove a point. In the end, John Hessing, the Dutch mercenary that was buried in the Red Taj in Agra was part of a group of western men, and not of Indianized Europeans.

Other literature about the European mercenaries in Indian service did not focus on almost anything other than the military achievements and other feats of the careers of these men. With this, this thesis has shown some light on an under researched area. This lack of research invites other scholars to look at the same group of people if new sources turn up, or look at other groups of mercenaries from the same perspective. Acculturation is an interesting subject and perfectly fits in the field of Global History. Especially in times where there is a tendency to find and focus on differences between groups of people, it could be worth to look at similarities and shared values. To look at people from different parts of the world living together and accepting differences. While this thesis has found that in this specific case one cannot speak of acculturation, it has become clear that for decades, Europeans lived and worked in vastly different societies and were allowed to be different. Examples like this are useful to be shown today, hopefully we can learn from the past.

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Illustrations

1. **George Thomas**

GENERAL GEORGE THOMAS.

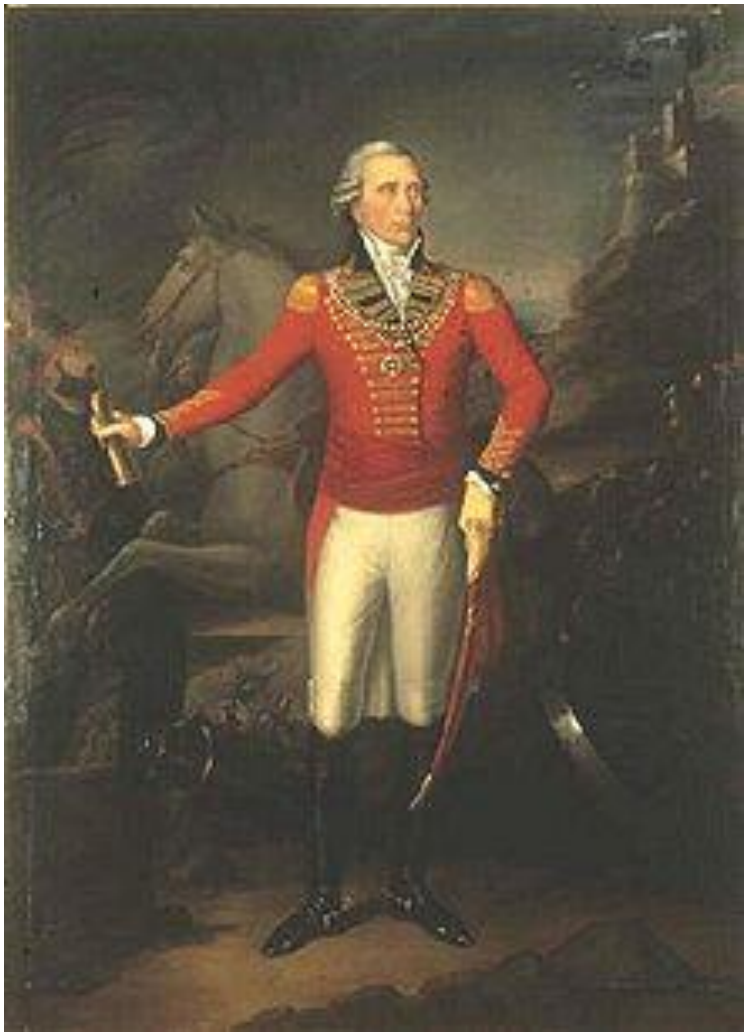
Obit. August 1802 Æat. 46

Illustrations

2. James Skinner

Illustrations

3. Benoît de Boigne



Illustrations

4. Alexander Gardiner

Illustrations

5. Jean-Baptiste Ventura

Illustrations

6. **Jean-Francois Allard**