

The Research History of Zrínyi-Újvár

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Historical research, both Hungarian and international, relating to the fortress of Zrínyi-Újvár has long been seeking answers to the following questions: 1. Where did the fortress stand and what was it like? 2. What role and significance did it have, if any, in the struggles of Miklós Zrínyi and his contemporaries against the Ottomans? The first question was raised due to the destruction of the fortress and the complete vanishing of its remains by the mid-eighteenth century. As a result of that, the fortress had ceased to be indicated on maps by then. It is not shown on the 1784 map sheets of the First Military Survey of the Habsburg Empire (*Josephinische Landesaufnahme*) conducted under the reign of Emperor Joseph II, and it was not included in the so-called Country Description, a written supplement to the maps, either.¹ At the end of the nineteenth century, Károly Eötvös, describing Zala County in his work written about the Austro–Hungarian Empire, could but sadly record the following: “The fortress, once a historic landmark, has now disappeared without a trace, and even the place where it stood, can hardly be determined.”²

Zrínyi-Újvár in the seventeenth–twentieth-century historiography

The role and significance of Zrínyi-Újvár was already controversial during its existence. On 5 July 1661, Miklós Zrínyi, who had the fortress built, informed the members of the Imperial War Council (*Hofkriegsrat*) about the military reasons for the construction: “In military terms [...] this place is the shield or bastion of the whole Muraköz, and even of the entire border region of Slavonia, from here to the south beyond the Drava. The one who holds this hill, has control over the Muraköz and the two rivers, the Mura and Drava, too [...]. Once this fortress, as I hope, is successfully completed with a little help of His Imperial Majesty, I can promise Your Excellencies that Kanizsa will soon be in distress and thousands of Christians will be freed from the yoke of Turkish tyranny, and Styria will be able to enjoy peace and tranquillity without fear, even if Kanizsa remains on the hands of the Turks.”³ In his last will and testament written in April 1662, Zrínyi described the role of his fortress in a similar way: “We built Zrínyi-Újvár and our fortress from its foundations in an unoccupied place, with immense work, including our own sweat. The constructions demanded great effort and enormous costs. This place is so important that our Muraköz

¹ Janko 1995. 40.

² Eötvös 1896.

³ Miklós Zrínyi to the Imperial War Council, Légrád 5 July 1661. See pages 271 and 272 of the present volume.

Island cannot remain safe without it.”⁴ One year later, on 30 April 1663, Zrínyi mentioned Zrínyi-Újvár again in his letter addressed to Giovanni Sagredo, the Ambassador to Venice in Vienna: “My fortress, although it may be different from Breisach or Dunquerque, you need to know, Your Highness, is stronger in terms of its location and construction than Ivanics, Szentkereszt, Petrinja, or any other place along the border, with the sole exception of Kapronca. The claim that it is not meant to defend Styria but my island is ignorant and envious speech [...] because retaining or losing Styria depends on retaining or losing the island, since Styria is immediately adjacent to it and has no other defence.”⁵

Underlying the cited lines were the criticisms of Zrínyi-Újvár. In the spring of 1662, the Imperial War Council in Vienna, which was the central governing body responsible for defence operations against the Ottomans, instructed Colonel Jacob von Holst, a military engineer, to “find out whether it is a place as it is said to be, that is, whether it is capable of defending itself against an army, and whether it can be fortified any further in a clever way”. The surveyor allegedly found the fortress indefensible and reported that “it cannot be restored because of its position”.⁶ Zrínyi denied this statement. In his letter to Sagredo, he rejected the unfair comparison with significant and well-built fortifications, such as Breisach or Dunquerque along the border of France. He compared Zrínyi-Újvár in the Hungarian (and Croatian–Slavonian) system of strongholds to Ivanics (today Ivanić, then a seat fortress in the Varaždin Generalate, reinforced with bastions along the small Lonja River), Petrinja in Zágráb County (which was a strong fortress as early as the sixteenth century due to financial support it received from the Styrian Estates), and Kapronca (today Koprivnica, one of the most important strongholds in the Slavonian defensive line of fortresses at that time).

This disagreement already contained the seeds of future opposing interpretations, which turned into a fierce debate following the fall of Zrínyi-Újvár on 30 June 1664. After the occupation of the fortress, Zrínyi rushed to Vienna, where he addressed a bitter memorandum to Emperor Leopold I on 17 July 1664. He blamed Montecuccoli for the unsuccessful siege of Kanizsa and the fall of Zrínyi-Újvár.⁷ On the basis of at least nearly one hundred printed newspapers, reports, and historical works,⁸ relating to the siege of Zrínyi-Újvár, he also informed the foreign public and diplomatic circles about his views. In 1664, the pro-Habsburg publicity temporarily lost battle against Zrínyi’s large-scale propaganda.⁹

The counter-attack began with the active participation of the gravely offended Count Raimondo Montecuccoli in the second half of the 1660s. One of the most important contemporary works, which until today has greatly influenced international opinion of the events that took place in Hungary, is the *Historia di Leopoldo Cesare* by Gualdo

⁴ The last will and testament of Miklós Zrínyi, Csáktornya (today Čakovec, Croatia), 6 April 1662. ZMVL 1997. 188.

⁵ Miklós Zrínyi to Giovanni Sagredo, Csáktornya, 30 April 1663. ZMVL 1997. 135.

⁶ *Priorato* II. 1672. 106–107.

⁷ Miklós Zrínyi to Emperor Leopold I, 27 June 1664, military camp below Zrínyi-Újvár; Miklós Zrínyi to Leopold I, 17 July 1664, Vienna. ZMVL 1997. 159–162, 213–222.

⁸ The catalogue by Ilona Hubay comprises 68 leaflets that discuss the events of 1664. Hubay 1948. 135–148. Katalin S. Németh significantly expanded the number of these while preparing the Hungarica catalogue of the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel. Németh S. 1993. The material was further expanded by G. Etényi in 2003. See also R. Várkonyi 1975 for an analysis, as well as for the levels and genres of the pro-Zrínyi propaganda literature of the 1663–1664 war. R. Várkonyi 1975. 65–67; Bene 1993b. 650–668.

⁹ Bene 1993b. 661.

Galeazzo Priorato, a court historian to Emperor Leopold I. The manuscript of this significant historical work recording the emperor's deeds was revised, on the author's request, by Montecuccoli.¹⁰ The Count of Vicenza, who belonged to the leading intellectuals of contemporary Europe, enjoyed the support of the emperor. The text of the *Historia* was read out in the making to Leopold I, who recognised the enormous potentials for propaganda inherent in this imperial work, and fostered its preparation with financial support and the provision of subordinate officials, as well as by giving him access to the state and office archives. The emperor had Viennese engineers engrave copperplates with depictions of "all the battles and sieges, along with the maps of all the countries where the fights took place".¹¹



Figure 1.

Copperplate engraved by Cornelis Meysens representing Zrínyi-Újvár and its surroundings in the Historia di Leopoldo Cesare by Gualdo Priorato

Source: Priorato II. 1672. 404–405.

¹⁰ Corrections and additions by Montecuccoli: ÖStA KA Nachlasse Mémoires B/492/167. *Annotazioni all'istoria di Transilvania e d'Ungheria del Conte Gualdo Priorato e riflessioni soprano alcuni passaggi dell'istoria Transilvania di Betlino*. Published by Ausgewählte Schriften. III. 1900. 363–381. On the relationship between Priorato and Montecuccoli, and the role of the latter in finalising the text of the work, see Luraghi 1988. 257; Martelli 1990. 1055–1056; Bene 1993b. 661; Bene 1993c. 49–56.

¹¹ Bene 1993c. 53.

Montecuccoli, as it is suggested both by his emendations of the published text and the concordances with his own works, took great care to rephrase the passages in the *Historia* about Zrínyi and his fortification according to his own taste.¹² The goal of his comments was twofold. Firstly, they were aimed at raising doubts about the significance of Zrínyi-Újvár. Secondly, they were meant to exaggerate the role of Count Zrínyi in the unfortunate course of events. Ultimately, these two threads converged in one point, which was the questioning of Zrínyi's military skills.¹³ The second volume of the *Historia di Leopoldo Cesare*, published in 1672, reflects Montecuccoli's opinion at the very first mention of Zrínyi-Újvár relating to its 1661 construction: "This was a private man's work and was designed by an inexperienced military engineer, so it was not as strong and remarkable as the ignorant believed it to be. The experts were of the opinion that it was not even as good as a closed rampart [*ridotto di campagna* – a temporary fortification of a military camp]."¹⁴ Montecuccoli wrote about the 1664 siege of Zrínyi-Újvár the following: "It was not easy to hold that small palisade for hours, not to say for days or weeks. However, it is widely known as one of the most important fortifications in Europe, and the reputation of the whole imperial army depends on this."¹⁵

Montecuccoli's negative evaluation found its way without any source criticism into French,¹⁶ Austrian, and Italian historical and military works¹⁷ of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through the propagandistic biography of Emperor Leopold I by Priorato and the popular editions of *Della Guerra col Turco in Ungheria* by Montecuccoli, a work of military science that was published several times in the eighteenth century. In this latter work, Montecuccoli repeated word for word his low opinion of Zrínyi's military deeds and Zrínyi-Újvár.¹⁸ Franz Wagner, an Austrian Jesuit who translated the above-mentioned work by Montecuccoli into Latin, recalls the views of the imperial general and Priorato concerning Zrínyi-Újvár in his biography of Leopold I. His rejection of Zrínyi's qualities as a military strategist is based on similar arguments.¹⁹ Cesare Campori, the Italian author of the first scholarly biography of Montecuccoli, also adopted this view in his work published in 1876.²⁰

¹² Bene 1993b. 661. The narration of the siege of Zrínyi-Újvár is, for example, almost literally identical to the text of the summary report written to the Emperor by Montecuccoli: *Relazione della campagna dell'Armata Cesarea nell'Anno MDCLXIV*. ÖStA KA AFA 1664/13/29. (We are thankful to Mónika F. Molnár for the translation and interpretation of the report.) Cf. Priorato II. 1672. 410–416.

¹³ In various notes, General Raimondo Montecuccoli described Zrínyi as an inexperienced and unskilled soldier: *Ausgewahlte Schriften* III. 343, 377. (The latter: Testa 2000. 198) and IV. 120.

¹⁴ Priorato II. 1672. 31–32. Cf. Raimondo Montecuccoli: *Della guerra col Turco in Ungheria*. In: *Luraghi* II. 428–431; *Rónai Horváth* 1891. 305–306. Nagy–Hausner 2011. 717–724.

¹⁵ "In somma si fece ogni cosa per mantenerlo, già che s'era imbeuuto il Mondo, che quella bicocca, che non era buona per sostentarsi hore, non che giorni, e settimane fusse vna delle piu importanti Fortezze d'Europa, e che da essa dipendesse la reputatione dell'armi Imperiali..." Priorato II. 1672. 411.

¹⁶ *Perjés* 1999. 309; Montecuccoli 2017; Montecuccoli 2019. 26–29.

¹⁷ *Perjés* 1999. 309.

¹⁸ Montecuccoli went even further in his *Della guerra* and described the fortress as follows: "When someone entered the fortress, he had to ask where the stronghold was, and the soldiers called it a sheepfold." See Montecuccoli 2019. 214.

¹⁹ Wagner I. 1719. 142–144. Montecuccoli: *Commentarii bellici iuncto Artis bellicae systemate*. Translated by Wagner. Vienna, 1718. Borián 2004. 158–162.

²⁰ Campori 1876. 395.

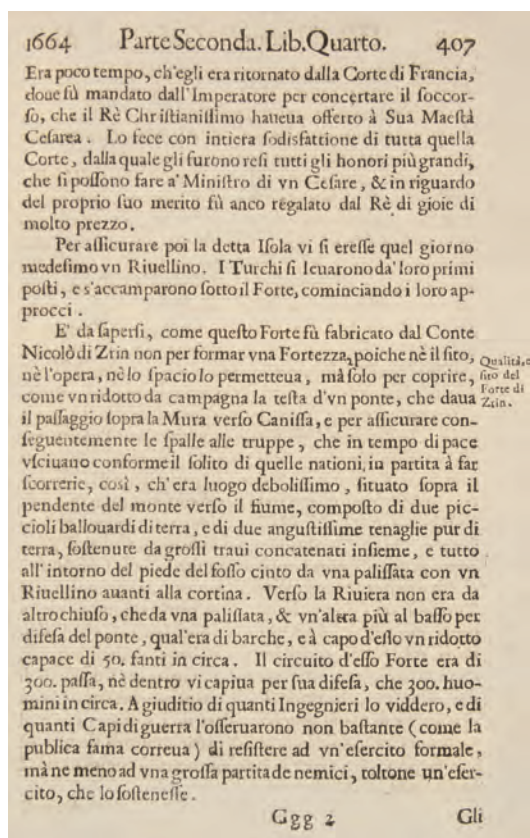


Figure 2.

Gualdo Priorato on Zrínyi-Újvár

Source: Priorato II. 1672. 407.

The traditional evaluation of Zrínyi-Újvár offered by Montecuccoli, Priorato and Wagner was not questioned by late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Hungarian geographical and historical works. They only slightly modified this point of view, supporting it with further oral and written sources. The manuscript of the description of Zala County, a part of the *Notitia Hungariae* by Mátyás Bél, was written in the 1730s. It says about Zrínyi-Újvár, among other things, the following: “Wagner describes the location of the fortress and its armament in a competent way, but with criticism. »That fortress, so to speak, was built by Zrínyi, who erected it as a guardian of the bridge placed over the Mura River and as a refuge for the Croats from the enemy threatening the region of Kanizsa with their constant raids. It was constructed in an unsuitable location. It is rather some kind of shelter, as they say, which is usually erected to defend the camps and to provide support during the siege of cities. It has several other deficiencies, because neither is it surrounded by a ditch, nor are the sides of the ditch designed for defence. The rampart is raised from the ground to such an extent that even its base can be fired by cannons, and the fortification itself is so cramped

that if there are but a little more people in it, they bump into each other, hence its humorous military name, the ‘sheepfold’. Yet what makes it most unsuitable is that the guards can be spotted and counted from the top of the nearby hills, making them unable to leave the base and make sorties. As far as its river frontage is concerned, it is only blocked with stakes. Apart from that, the fortification allows unimpeded entry for horsemen.»²¹

Thereafter, Zrínyi-Újvár is next mentioned in mid-eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century works by Ferenc Kazy, Miklós Schmitth, Ferenc Károly Palma, György Pray and István Katona, who were members of the Jesuit Historical School. They were the first to collect data about Zrínyi’s deeds, and reported about the fortress and the events of struggle against the Ottomans.²² István Katona, for example, relates the story of the fortress in volume 33 of *Historia critica Regum Hungariae* published in Buda, in 1804. He draws on the *Commentarii Bellici* by Raimondo Montecuccoli, the *Historia Magni Leopoldi* by Georg Wagner, works by János Bethlen, and handwritten records, such as the letter written by Zrínyi to the War Council of Graz on 30 June 1664, as well as his memorandum addressed to the emperor. Katona published the texts of the latter two.²³

This interpretative approach seeking to collate and balance the Italian, Austrian and Hungarian sources went through a dramatic change in Hungarian (military) historiography after the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence in 1848–1849. The first document representing this shift was an essay entitled *Zrínyi Miklós a költő* [Miklós Zrínyi, the Poet], written by Pál Vasvári, one of the leading figures of the revolutionary Hungarian youth, in May 1848. This was the moment when the negative image of Montecuccoli, along with the conflict between Zrínyi and Montecuccoli first emerged in what was later called national romantic Hungarian historiography. Discussing the 1664 siege of Zrínyi-Újvár, Vasvári named Montecuccoli the “favourite” of the Viennese Court, and blamed him for losing the stronghold, “as if he was ready to surrender the fortress to the enemy” by commanding the Hungarian and Croatian guards out of the fort. “Is not what Montecuccoli is doing the execution of some secret order of the dark cabinet?” he asked.²⁴

The affirmative answer to this question was formulated as a fact in scholarly literature about Zrínyi in the second half of the nineteenth century, its main elements being the “numbing malevolence” against Zrínyi in the court of Vienna, the cowardly “Italian tactics” of avoiding battles, and lastly, the assassination of Zrínyi himself. The greatest supporter of this interpretation focusing on the conflict between Zrínyi and Montecuccoli was Jenő Rónai Horváth, a captain (later a general) in the Hungarian army and a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, whose inaugural speech was entitled *Zrínyi Miklós (a költő és hadvezér) hadtudományi elvei* [The Principles of Military Science of Miklós Zrínyi (Poet and Military Leader)].²⁵ Rónai Horváth dedicated several studies to the praise

²¹ *Zala megye a XVIII–XIX. században* [Zala County in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries]. 1999. 57. It is a translation by Béla Szőke of a manuscript preserved at the Batthyány Collection of the Cathedral Library of Esztergom, under record No. Hist. I. hhh.

²² For the Jesuit historians’ assessment of Zrínyi and their source interpretation, see Borián 2004. For early nineteenth-century Austrian historiography about the events of 1663–1664, including the deeds of Zrínyi and Montecuccoli, see also: Die Feldzüge 1828.

²³ Katona XXXIII. 1804. 585–588. Borián 2004. 263–264.

²⁴ Vasvári 1956. 78–79.

²⁵ Rónai Horváth 1889.

of Zrínyi as a military commander. In his work concentrating on the events of 1664, he dealt with the environment, architecture, and general strategic significance of Zrínyi-Újvár at length. He also introduced Montecuccoli's low opinion and included a drawing of the fortress made by the count, adding that: "The explanation is to be found in the hatred between Montecuccoli and Zrínyi. The more inferior Zrínyivár ("Zrínyi's Fortress") was shown and the more discredited Zrínyi was in the eyes of the Viennese Court as someone who had exposed the country to the dangers of war, the greater Montecuccoli's glory was, as he was the one who managed to hold off the Ottoman army of superior strength for weeks, even from this sheepfold. The fortress may have had some deficiencies in terms of technical matters, and the environment was certainly also disadvantageous, which made defence difficult. Nevertheless, considering the firing range of the guns at that time, it can hardly be believed that the bridge could be shot at from the surrounding elevations. In spite of all these, it is certain that Zrínyivár provided excellent services in defending Muraköz for four years. Additionally, beginning with the time when the southern army had withdrawn beyond the Mura River, it formed an excellent stronghold for defending the front line along the Mura. It depended only on this 'sheepfold' that Montecuccoli still found an army beyond the Mura in mid-June, and thanks to its weak rampart, he had time to wait for the arrival of the imperial army. Consequently, Zrínyivár was undoubtedly of considerable military value, and it should be noted that he who had made the most of Zrínyivár, namely Montecuccoli, disparaged it the most."²⁶

This was how the underlying ideas of the so-called Zrínyi–Montecuccoli conflict²⁷ developed in the nineteenth century. It was only in the early 1960s that Géza Perjés, an outstanding Hungarian military historian, convincingly demonstrated that this conflict had, in fact, nothing or little to do with military science.²⁸ It also turned out later that the two allegedly disputing parties were the least involved in the debate.²⁹ The "debate" which was initially about Zrínyi's practical role and later about his historical significance, eventually outlived not only Miklós Zrínyi, who died shortly afterwards, but also his opponent, shaping posterity's understanding of the events for centuries to come.³⁰

During the debate, Zrínyi-Újvár and its judgement slowly receded into the background, and it was finally forgotten for a while. On the "imperial" side, this may as well be considered intended. Immediately after the events, it perhaps did not seem the best idea to mention this issue which was such a delicate topic concerning the balance of power, and a painful loss for the Hungarians. Later, it can be presumed, Montecuccoli's influence prevailed. He consciously tried to underrate both the stronghold and its significance.

It has been known since the monumental edition of Montecuccoli's works by Alois Veltzé in the late nineteenth century that Priorato had the sections of his work discussing Zrínyi revised by Montecuccoli, who carefully reviewed the text and reshaped it according to his own taste.³¹ Twentieth-century historians specialising in this period are still

²⁶ *Rónai Horváth* 1891. 307–308.

²⁷ For the debate, see *Barker* 1972; *Perjés* 1982; *Perjés* 1999; *Hausner* 2010; *Nagy–Hausner* 2011. 693–708.

²⁸ *Perjés* 1961–1962.

²⁹ *Nagy–Hausner* 2011. 724–726.

³⁰ *Hausner* 2013. 118–128.

³¹ *Ausgewählte Schriften* I. LXXIV–LXXVIII; Cf. *Luraghi* 1988. 257; *Bene* 1993b; *Bene* 1997; *Nagy–Hausner* 2011. 717–724.

likely to refer to the work by Priorato and Montecuccoli without any source criticism. For example, the monograph by Austrian historian Georg Wagner, which is to this day the most comprehensive study of the mid-1660s and the Battle of Szentgotthárd, justifies Montecuccoli on the basis of Priorato's work, ignoring the findings of the Hungarian historical scholarship. To cite but one example, he refers to Zrínyi as a "furious and hot-headed soldier".³² Practically, Montecuccoli's opinion was adopted, supplemented with more recent scholarly arguments, by Italian scholars, in particular by Fabio Martelli, the author of a monograph on Montecuccoli, and by military historian Raimondo Luraghi, the editor of the works of Montecuccoli.³³ Having also consulted Hungarian works on Zrínyi, American historian Thomas Barker, who wrote the most thorough study about the relations of the Italian strategist with the Hungarians and the differing views about Zrínyi-Újvár among foreign scholars, expressed a more balanced view.³⁴

Zrínyi-Újvár in geographic literature and country descriptions – attempts at localisation

In the 1720s and 1730s, János Matolai attempted to identify the location of Zrínyi-Újvár while collecting data for the country description published by Mátyás Bél. The sketches made by Matolai for the description of Somogy County in Mátyás Bél's manuscript of the *Notitia Hungariae* have been preserved to us. They depict the fortress of "Serény-Újvár", also known as "Új-Zerén", on the ultimate peak of the Légrád vineyard, called Új-hegy.³⁵

In addition to the sketches by Matolai, contemporary maps (by M. Seuter, Josip Bedeković, C. Weigelius),³⁶ as well as an image of Zrínyi-Újvár in the book by Burckhard Puerkenstein on military and mathematical sciences, published in Augsburg, in 1731, suggest that the memory of Zrínyi-Újvár was still alive at the beginning of the eighteenth century.³⁷ Subsequently, the existence and the location of the fortress were forgotten, and the surviving ruins, which had already been "completely destroyed, formed only small mounds".³⁸

The name of the one-time stronghold re-emerges only decades later, in a statistical work of Hungary by Elek Fényes. When describing rivers, lakes, and marshes in Somogy County, the author notes in connection with the Drava, that "it meets the Somogy Hills at Légrád, where the (Zerinvár) earth mound of the Zrínyis, the Lord Lieutenants of Somogy County, once stood."³⁹

³² Wagner 1964. 114–120, 479, 526–527. Reviewed by Ágnes R. Várkonyi: *R. Várkonyi* 1975. 90. Cf. *Perjés* 1962. 28–41; *Bene* 1996. 406; *Perjés* 1982; *Perjés* 1997. 810–811.

³³ Martelli 1990; Luraghi 1988. 24, 99, *passim*. Cf. *Bene* 1996. 394.

³⁴ Barker 1972. Barker primarily draws on monographs by Tibor Klaniczay (1965) and Géza Perjés (1964). Cf. Nagy–Hausner 2011. 733.

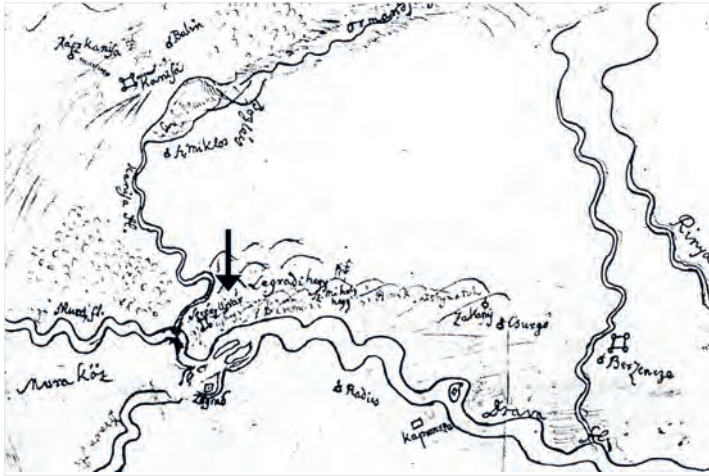
³⁵ Drawings by Matolai: The Manuscripts Archive of the OSZK KT Fol. Lat. 277 Minuta Clarissimi Mathiae Belii Comitatus Békés, Veszprim, Ugocsa, Simig, Sala Albensem ac Tolnensem concernentia. fol. 120v, 131r.

³⁶ On the maps, see *Petrić–Feletar–Feletar* 2001. 25–29.

³⁷ *Puerkenstein* 1731. Cf. *Széchy* IV. 1900. 177, 182.

³⁸ Zala megye a XVIII–XIX. században [Zala County in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries]. 1999. 60.

³⁹ *Fényes* 1841. 194.



Figures 3–4.

Sketches by János Matolai depicting the site of Zrínyi-Újvár in the 1720s and 1730s

Source: The Manuscripts Archive of the OSZK KT Fol. Lat. 277. fol. 120v., 131r.

For a long time afterwards, researchers relied solely on the surviving descriptions, drawings, and copperplates. However, the latter, in particular, caused considerable confusion in identifying the location of the fortress. Several authors writing about the subject “could not even determine which bank of the Mura River the fortress was situated on”.⁴⁰ We will not discuss these here in detail, but focus on the localisation attempts in the past decades, which mostly involved field surveys and making site plans.

⁴⁰ Vándor 1992. 67.

Géza Perjés tried to resolve the uncertainties regarding the location of Zrínyi-Újvár in the chapter *Új-Zrínyivár építése* [The Construction of Új-Zrínyivár] of his book on Zrínyi, which was published in 1965.⁴¹ He made a map with orientation and scale, which placed the fortress back to the left bank of the Mura River, where Kanizsa was also found, on the slope of the final ridge of the Légrád vineyard. Perjés, who did not go to the field himself, was doubtful about the appropriateness of this site plan, stressing that it was very difficult to express a definite opinion concerning the location of the fortress because “the surviving drawings are not indicative of the exact place of the fortress, or its layout. To complicate matters further, the course of the Mura River also changed over the past three hundred years.”⁴²

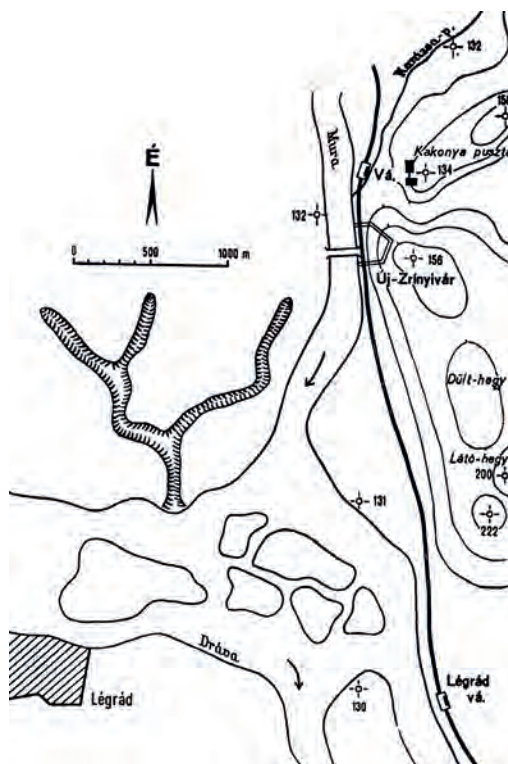


Figure 5.

Sketch map of Zrínyi-Újvár by Géza Perjés

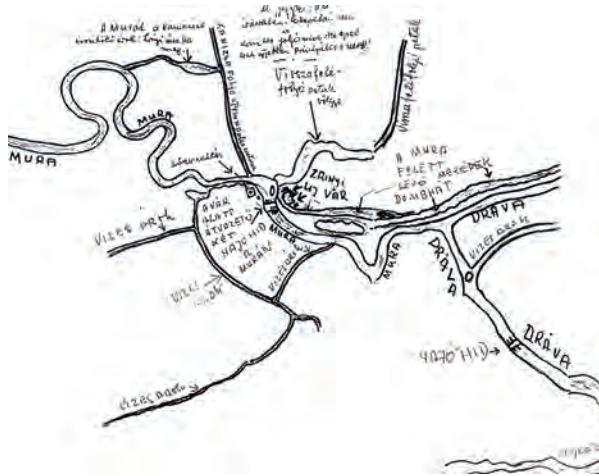
Source: Perjés 1965.

This sketch map shows the original courses of the Mura River and the Kanizsa Stream in the 1660s. However, presumably to facilitate orientation, the railway tracks and stations built in the nineteenth century, as well as the names of the hills and elevation points of vineyards

⁴¹ Perjés 1965. 309–314. (Perjés 2002. 334–339.)

⁴² Perjés 1965. 313. (Perjés 2002. 338.)

A desire for the “re-discovery” of the stronghold emerged at local and regional levels in the 1970s.⁴³ Investigations into local traditions, as well as the interpretation of the surviving depictions of the fortress by cartographer Pál Hrenkó⁴⁴ assisted the work of archaeologists from Somogy and Zala Counties. Based on Montecuccoli’s sketch and a contemporary representation in the legacy of Pál Esterházy (1635–1713), who was an eyewitness, as well as field surveys, Hrenkó set the location of the fortress on the highest point of the ridge, which he marked as 156 metres high. The site plan by Hrenkó on a scale 1:11.000 shows only the most important hydrographic features existing today (Mura, Principális-csatorna [Main Canal], Visszafolyó-patak [Backflow Stream], the latter marked nameless), and the contour lines. The author did not try to indicate the place and shape of the fortress on the map.⁴⁵ In his 1972 university thesis, László Vándor accurately located the site of Zrínyi-Újvár on the plateau of the vineyard belonging to the village of Őrtilos, in Somogy County.⁴⁶ However, without an archaeological excavation, he did not attempt to identify the location of the fortress in the field today.



Source: Vándor 1992. 67.

⁴⁶ Vándor 1992. 67.

condition.”⁴⁷ Péter Németh believed that he was the first to have seen the remains of Zrínyi-Újvár in the field. What makes, however, his finding less convincing is that the fortress is known today to have had no bastion(s) in the north-west, and the built bastions were not necessarily “Italian bastions”, either.

In 2005, archaeologists Kálmán Magyar and Gyula Nováki carried out a field survey around Őrtilos with the aim of finding the remains of the fortress. However, they were unable to find any definite trace of the defensive lines near in the area that was cut through with trenches and showed considerable differences in height: “The sides of the former fortress could not be determined with certainty. At its highest part, there are many brick shards. The size and layout of the fortress could only be determined by excavation. In 2003, a monument was erected to the north-west, on a large plain, which can be accessed on a staircase.”⁴⁸

A new paradigm in the research of Zrínyi-Újvár

As can be seen from above, none of the two questions raised by earlier research in Zrínyi-Újvár could satisfactorily be answered in the past centuries. There are three main reasons for this. The first is the scarcity of written and pictorial sources. The second is the circumstances that had made exploration of the site impossible for a long time.⁴⁹ Finally, the third reason is to be sought in the dominance of narratives explaining everything in light of the controversy between Zrínyi and Montecuccoli. As no significant increase can be expected in the number of written (archival and narrative) and pictorial sources about Zrínyi-Újvár,⁵⁰ new paradigms and methods were needed to proceed. Rising above a biased national perspective was possible only due to cross-border and interdisciplinary research programs at the end of the twentieth century.

⁴⁷ Rippl-Rónai Museum, Kaposvár, Archaeological Archives 107/1988. Cf. Magyar–Nováki 2005. 108, 182.

⁴⁸ Magyar–Nováki 2005. 108.

⁴⁹ Until the 1990s, the potential area of the fortress belonged to a heavily guarded border zone, which made field survey extremely difficult at the beginning. Finding the remains of the fortress was not an easy task, either. Its walls were raised from locally extracted soil and organic materials, and after the siege, it was levelled to the ground in the closest sense of the word.

⁵⁰ The collections of royal and imperial central administrative bodies and Hungarian family archives are not likely to yield a significant amount of new information about Zrínyi's activities and the construction of Zrínyi-Újvár. In this respect, the records of the Styrian Provincial Archives (*Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv*) in Graz, and in particular the fonds of the Inner Austrian Imperial War Council (*Innerösterreichische Hofkriegsrat*), founded in 1578, may offer novelties as it has a large number of little-researched documents that had been spared from major scrapping. Most recently, these were discussed by József László Kovács: Kovács 1998. In 2012, fifty-four copies of the fonds of the *Steiermärkische Landesarchiv Militaria* were obtained by the research group established for the exploration of the archaeological and historical resources of Zrínyi-Újvár. Most of the documents selected by Austrian archivists include correspondence of the Inner Austrian Privy and War Council (*Innenösterreichische Geheim und Kriegsrat*), which discuss Zrínyi-Újvár and the fortification of Muraköz. The German-language documents were translated by Ferenc Csóka. In addition to the Habsburg central and provincial offices, the Ottoman narrative sources and official documents also contain novelties. Research in these has already produced considerable results, influencing the assessment of the role of Zrínyi-Újvár. See Sudár 2012a; Sudár 2012b, and a paper by Balázs Sudár in the present volume. The most thorough study of the visual resources of the fortress to date: Szalai–Szántai II. 2006. 158–161.

In 1996, under the leadership of the Croatian Institute of History, an international project called *Triplex Confinium* was launched, which was supervised by Drago Roksandić. Within the framework of this project, Croatian territories were examined as the borders of large empires. One of the main research topics in this program was the history of the region along the Drava River, from the Late Middle Ages to the mid-twentieth century.⁵¹ On the part of Croatia, this research project gave fresh impetus to processing the history of Novi Zrin [Zrínyi-Újvár].

In order to explore the site of the fortress, a group of Croatian experts led by Dragutin Feletar, a member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences, carried out a field survey of the site in 2001. Their findings were published in a monograph on the fortress. This was a pioneering volume, which synthesised historiographic and cartographic research, and demonstrated a thorough knowledge of Hungarian scholarship, as well. Drawing on László Vándor's topographic reconstruction, the fortress was placed in a vineyard belonging to Őrtilos, a village in Somogy County, and its precise geographical position was also given. According to this, the fortress lay at a latitude of 46 degrees 19 minutes 30 seconds north, and a longitude of 16 degrees 53 minutes 30 seconds east.⁵² Croatian researchers accepted the results of the Hungarian scholarship and the conclusion that the one-time stronghold was situated across the border, on the other side of the Mura, in the territory of today's Hungary.

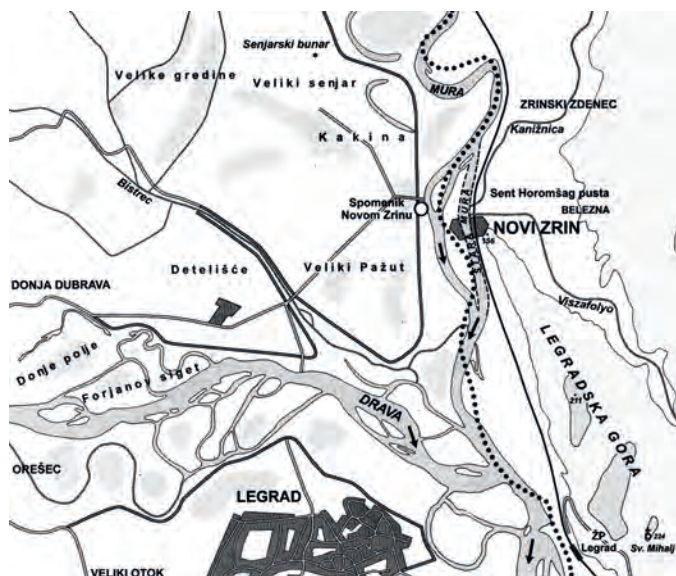


Figure 7.

Cartographic representation of the position of Zrínyi-Újvár in the Croatian monograph

Source: Petrić–Feletar–Feletar 2001. 37.

⁵¹ See *Ekonomika i ekohistorija: časopis za gospodarsku povijest i povijest okoliša*, 7. (2011) 1, studies in a special issue of the *Ekohistorija Drave* (Environmental History of the Drava).

⁵² *Petrić–Feletar–Feletar 2001. 15, 37.*

After the real and virtual boundaries could be crossed, the actual field work could be started. The research initiated by archaeologists eventually produced results with the involvement of a wider community and the use of new methods. At the request of Ferenc Szakály, Miklós Zrínyi Military Academy (later University of National Defence, today the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training at the National University of Public Service), the Institute and Museum of Military History, as well as several corps of the Hungarian Defence Forces joined the research and the related cultural initiatives.⁵³ Thereupon, a new element of research appeared as the military community approached this question from a new angle. As a result, Zrínyi-Újvár became the subject of military history and battlefield investigations. For the latter, the terrain proved to be advantageous, as the fortress existed for merely three years, and only one single major armed conflict, the 1664 siege, is related to it. Moreover, the traces of this can be found largely outside the fortress, and not on the territory of the stronghold which was subsequently destroyed.⁵⁴ Setting the exact location of the fortress meant significant help for the exploration of the battlefield, as well as for the (re)interpretation of the sources. This was reciprocated, as identifying and recording certain elements of the siege in the field also helped to clarify the uncertainties related to the location and layout of the fortress. The extensive, all-round research has “recruited” many new processes and technologies, producing more diverse results than ever before.

⁵³ Papp 2012. 123.

⁵⁴ Négyesi–Padányi 2012. 73.