

## Christian sources

### 1

Miklós Zrínyi to the Imperial War Council<sup>1</sup>  
(Translated from Latin)

Légrad, 5 July 1661

Your Excellencies, Noble Counts!

There is complete silence on the Ottoman side and there is no news of any suspicious movement, so I cannot stop wondering from where Your Excellencies received news about the machinations of the Ottomans and the preparations of the commander in Buda directed against me and my fortress,<sup>2</sup> for which Your Excellencies counsel me against building this fortress. Engineer Wassenhoven<sup>3</sup> also tried to do it when he returned to me. I can see from this that Your Excellencies do not have accurate information about the state of the matter. So I respectfully request that you also consider my arguments more closely. If you do so, I am confident that you will not dissuade me from this work, but will instead most readily support me with advice and deeds.

It is not possible to describe the place itself and the suitability of its geographical position in a letter, Wassenhoven can better inform your Excellencies about it. In military terms, however, I can say that 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. And if the Ottomans would have seized this hill (as they wanted to), neither Kapronca, nor any other fortress could have withheld them from the invasion of Slavonia. The truth is that, over the last sixty years, no one has observed this place, but the current pasha, who, accompanied by two thousand men, came here last May. He personally inspected everything with the greatest attention, and would have occupied it, if I had not prevented him from doing it in time. So that was the first reason why I could not delay any longer. If the plans of the pasha had not forced me to do so, I would, of course, have waited for a better occasion. Yet, even if he had not wanted to occupy this place, I would still have had to take it into possession, for the following reasons:

1. Since the flooding Drava had so badly damaged Légrad that many houses collapsed into it and the fortress itself was only twenty feet from the water, for half a year I could not be certain if

---

<sup>1</sup> Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 116–119. (For the original letter in Latin see The Complete Works of Miklós Zrínyi 1958. II. 540–544. Translated into Hungarian by Csaba Csapodi.)

<sup>2</sup> Against Zrínyi-Újvár.

<sup>3</sup> For Guislain Segers d'Ideghem von Wassenhoven, the Chief Military Engineer of Inner Austria see Domokos 2012.

the fortress itself would not also fall in the river. Where could I have gone then, where could I have translocated the fortress when absolutely no place was safe from the flood.

2. This site is so close to Légrád that cannonballs can be fired here from there. Moreover, since I have been in the Muraköz, over two hundred men have been abducted from here, because every single person heading for Légrád or Kotoriba can be seen from the hill, as if from a watchtower, and they can be captured with impunity.

3. There are nine outposts between Légrád and Kotoriba, which I have to maintain partly at my own expense and partly from royal pay. However, the money arrives so late and it is so little as if nothing came. So I cannot defend this line at my own expense any longer. The hill saves a lot of money for me because it substitutes six outposts, and although more soldiers will be needed here than at those six outposts, the soldiers are easier to support here because they are provided with vines, arable land and everything else they need. The area around Légrád, on the other hand, has been so devastated by the floods that many soldiers are considering leaving.

4. In the event of war or, at least, a kind of peace that has been so far, or if the Ottomans attack Komárom<sup>4</sup> (as they did a few years ago) or if they want to cause trouble in another part of the country, I cannot take help anywhere, even if only five hundred Ottomans occupy this hill. This is the case even if they do not build a fortress here. Now, however, if I set my feet here, the path of the Ottomans' retreat can be blocked at once, whether they want to go on raids to Styria or anywhere else; so by no means will they dare to attack.

5. If there was a war with the Ottomans, there would be no other secure place in the whole borderland to accommodate an army than this fortress, from where Kanizsa, Berzence, Segesd and Szigetvár could be attacked from safety. If only this place had been known when Kanizsa was besieged! Germany and Italy would not remember Kanizsa with such great sadness now.<sup>5</sup>

6. 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.

7. Once this fortress is rebuilt, it will not be easy to attack via Muraköz and Csáktornya.

The reasons above urge me to build the fortress and inspire every good Christian who protects the country and is a faithful servant to the emperor.

However, there are objections and apparent obstacles, so let us examine them:

1. It is said that the Ottomans will complain about the violation of peace because it is included in the terms of the peace that no more fortresses are to be built.

2. The undertaking is already obviously overdue, because the Ottomans are so much stronger than us that if they launch an attack on some pretext, we will not be able to withstand them at all.

3. Without the knowledge of His Majesty, I should not have commenced this work.

<sup>4</sup> Kiskomárom in Zala County.

<sup>5</sup> Based on the Latin transcription, Zrínyi referred to the attempt to take back Kanizsa in 1601: "Utinam illo tempore, quo *Canisam Christiani obsederunt*, locus iste cognitus fuisse, Germania, Italia tam lugubrem memoriam Canisae hujusque non teneret." Zrínyi Miklós összes művei 1958 [The Complete Works of Miklós Zrínyi 1958]. II. 542. On this, see *Kelenik* 2012.

My answers to these are the following:

1. The Ottomans should not complain at all. Are they allowed to do what they rebuke us for? They have built three or four strongholds, and they are also prepared to reconstruct the fortress at Behigat, which was burnt down by the Hungarians last year. Furthermore, in Croatia, they built more fortresses than I did. Unlike them, I am not building this fortress on an Ottoman territory, but almost on my own property, ten steps from the Mura River, and in a distance of a cannon-shot from Légrád. After all, this place belonged to one of my great-grandfather's inner men, who fell in battle along with him during the siege of Szigetvár. It needs to be added that in a quarter of a mile from here, there was a small fortification called Bajacsa, which also had a garrison after the occupation of Kanizsa,<sup>6</sup> but it was afterwards abandoned due to the unsuitability of the place. It is easy to reason that this is the same place.

2. I deny that the Ottomans would be stronger than us. I deny that they were so arrogant that merely because of one such thing they would change all their plans, give up Transylvania, leave the Venetians, and come here with their entire army, just to avenge the construction of this fortress.

3. Certainly, I admit that I should have notified His Majesty of this before I started, but the pasha's plan prevented me from doing so. I wanted to inform His Majesty at a more convenient time. I am otherwise aware that all good subjects are obliged to undertake such unpleasant deeds that are advantageous for the country, and should not transfer them to their lord. I was also guided by trust and loyalty in my actions.

I will now return to the letter by Your Excellencies. You say this is why Buda's commander set out against me, but your Excellencies ought not to believe this under any circumstances. I am closer to this peril and pay more attention to my own troubles, but I have not heard anything about it so far. If, however, they come and I do not receive help from anyone, I will still readily stand in service of all Christendom to the last drop of my blood, as far as God allows and helps me to do so. And those who leave me alone in this useful endeavour out of vile fear, or even hinder me, will be summoned by me before God's judgment seat to face his terrible judgment. If the engineer is not allowed to work for me any further, I will send him back to Your Excellencies and continue the work as God instructs me. I let Your Excellencies decide which is better (because this work must be completed): to construct this fortress well or badly? The fortress is already half-built and can no longer be left unfinished, because the Ottomans would be able to complete it in a fortnight, along the marked lines, and I would not be able to demolish, even if I wanted to, because the work is so advanced. Instead, I expect the grace and goodwill of Your Excellencies in returning the engineer, who can stay here with me in safety until His Majesty orders otherwise. I wish a happy long life to your Excellencies.

Written at Légrád, on 5 July 1661.

<sup>6</sup> The palisade fortification at Bajcsavár was built in 1578 at the expense of the Styrian Estates. In the sixteenth century, it belonged to the Vend Generalate, and was abandoned by the Christians only after the 1609 fall of Kanizsa. For this, see *Leopold Toifl: Bajcsavár története stájer levéltári források alapján* [The History of Bajcsavár Based on Styrian Archival Sources]. In Weitschawar / Bajcsa-vár 2002. 39–401. See also *Kelenik* 2012.

## 2

Miklós Zrínyi to the Judges and Senators of the Town of Varasd<sup>7</sup>*(Translated from Latin)*

Zrínyi-Újvár, 25 July 1661

Noble, Generous, Excellent and Circumspect Lords, my most respected Friends and Neighbours, I send my regards and offer my most ready services to you.

I have no doubt that Your Excellencies are fully aware how useful the work is that I have not only started, but have for the most part completed, and in which I was proud to enjoy the benevolence of my friends and neighbours. In the same way, I believe that Your Excellencies bear the same goodwill towards me as my other neighbours, and seek to promote the good of the country with no less enthusiasm. Therefore, guided by this trust, I kindly ask Your Excellencies to send to me your serfs for a week's work, which I wish to recommend to Your Excellencies through my *familiaris* and secretary, Gábor Jurevics. I do hope I will not be disappointed in the good neighbourhood that I have always had with Your Excellencies, and you will support the work that is also highly useful for all Christendom. For my part I will also earnestly strive for good neighbourliness at every single opportunity. I wish you a long life.

Written at Zrínyi-Újvár, on 25 July 1661.

Your Excellencies' well-wishing friend and neighbour

Comes Nicolaus a Zrin

---

<sup>7</sup> Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 120. (For the original letter written in Latin see *Csapodi* 1962. 743. Translated into Hungarian by *Csaba Csapodi*.)

Miklós Zrínyi to János Gersei Pethő<sup>8</sup>  
(*Translated from Croatian*)

Zrínyi-Újvár, 8 August 1661

My Respectable and Illustrious Lord, my most respected Friend

Since all my neighbours in the region have helped me out with day labourers in this good work that is useful for all Christendom, I also request Your Excellency to send some craftsmen to help for a few weeks, and that they also bring axes. To Your Excellency, My Noble Count, I am sending György Peharnik, who will orally inform Your Excellency in more detail. In reliquo,<sup>9</sup> may God preserve Your Excellency in good health!

Written in our fortress Zrin, on 8 August 1661.

A most ready servant to Your Respectable and Illustrious Lordship

C Nic a Zrin

<sup>8</sup> Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 121. (For the original letter written in Croatian see László–Lebár 1984. 722–723. Translated into Hungarian by *Hermina László* and *Mária Lebár*.)

<sup>9</sup> In the future.

Miklós Zrínyi to the Graz Council of War<sup>10</sup>  
(Translated from Latin)

Csáktornya, 26 March 1662

Excellent and Noble Counts, my most respected Friends and Neighbours

In these highly perilous times, I, my new fortress<sup>11</sup> – built to defend both my island<sup>12</sup> and the entire neighbourhood, – and the island itself are threatened with complete destruction wrought by the sworn enemy of all Christendom. I receive different news about the preparations of their campaign almost every day. In the current state of affairs, lest I seem to do nothing about the preparations, which are certainly directed against me, I must take action, as far as my strength and talent allow. However, I must admit that I am utterly inadequate to bear such a burden on my own, so I have no other choice but to seek help and turn to my friends and neighbours, who are threatened by the same peril and doom. In this perilous and common distress, the first of my friends and neighbours are the Noble Orders and Estates of the Principality of Styria. What I wrote to them will be disclosed to Your Illustrious Lordships in more detail from the attached copy of my letter.<sup>13</sup> The enemy seeks my complete destruction. If Your Illustrious Lordships do not take steps with me to avert the peril, then I will perish with my men, and Your Illustrious Lordships will shortly follow me. If in this great misery and menacing doom I can truly count on the help of the Orders and Estates, I will also do everything relative to my own capabilities, even by shedding my blood and risking my life, so that all my neighbours could honestly and confidently testify to my loyalty for the posterity. If, however, I fail to receive the necessary help demanded by defence, I must limit my actions, withdraw myself from this great danger, and mind my own safety. That is why I wanted to kindly approach Your Illustrious Lordships, and request Your Lordships most humbly to support the decision of the Noble Orders and Estates, and discuss the matter of help in this great, common misery and menacing doom in order to defend me together with themselves from the imminent danger, as I will defend them – with your consent – as much as it is possible. If you are willing to help me, you will do something very dear to God, commended and welcomed by the whole of Christendom, and especially by our most excellent lord, His Imperial and Royal Majesty, useful to yourselves and your descendants, while for me, who keeps watching and fighting for their safe survival, it will be a great comfort. I entrusted my true and confidential friends, respectable and magnificent Baron János Listi of Köpcsény, and generous masters, István Vitnyédy of Muzsaj and Miklós Guzics of Turan,<sup>14</sup> handing over this

<sup>10</sup> Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 125–126. (For the original letter written in Latin see *Csapodi* 1962. 747–748. Translated into Hungarian by *Csaba Csapodi*.)

<sup>11</sup> Zrínyi-Újvár.

<sup>12</sup> Muraköz.

<sup>13</sup> I.e. from the copy of his letter written to the Styrian Estates on the same day. (See Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 122–124.)

<sup>14</sup> István Vitnyédy was attorney in Sopron, a well-known figure in contemporary politics, one of Zrínyi's "noble servants". János Liszti (III) was in close relationship with the Zrínyi family, he was a confidant of the ban, and about one hundred volumes from his library were transferred to the Zrínyi Library in Csáktornya. Miklós Guzics is the confidant of Zrínyi, the Captain of the fortress in Szredicskó belonging to the ban's border fortress system. He was also present at the hunt on 18 November 1664, which ended with Zrínyi's death.

---

piece of writing, to explain these matters in more detail orally. I ask Your Illustrious Lordships to give unconditional credence to the meaning and validity of their words. I expect Your Illustrious Lordships' written response through them, so that I could keep myself to that. I wish you a long life and fortunate governance.

Written in the fortress of Csáktornya, on 26 March 1662.

Your Illustrious Lordship's most ready servant, friend and neighbour.

The Last Will and Testament of Miklós Zrínyi<sup>15</sup>

– Detail –

*(Translated from Latin)*

Csáktornya, 6 April 1662

[...] Finally and at last: We built Zrínyi-Újvár and our stronghold from its foundations in a desolate place, with a lot of labour and our own sweat, effort and at enormous costs. This site is so important that without it our Island of Muraköz cannot remain safe. So, if that fortress and stronghold can be preserved as it is and be further improved in accordance with our intentions so that it can be defended even more securely, we will inseparably annex it to our Muraköz property. We can freely decide about this, because we have obtained it in our own strength, and with our effort and sweat, and therefore we can leave this fortress and stronghold to our beloved wife and daughters. Our other estates that we have acquired ourselves, namely Tvadorc (Vas County), Safarszkovesz or Ráckanizsa, with its appurtenances, Hlapsina, with its appurtenances, Széchy Island, with its appurtenances (in Zala and Vas Counties) – unless we decide otherwise about the whole or a part of these estates, which we reserve the right for – may be left by us to whom we wish. Still, for a more appropriate management of these estates and the preservation of our position in the Muraköz, we attach them to Csáktornya, the centre of our estates and that of the Muraköz Island, so that they would be possessed with the same right as we acquired them [...]

---

<sup>15</sup> Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 188. (For the original letter written in Latin see Zrínyi Miklós összes művei 1958 [The Complete Works of Miklós Zrínyi 1958]. II. 610–611. Translated into Hungarian by *Csaba Csapodi*.)



Miklós Zrínyi to Leopold I<sup>16</sup>*(Translated from Latin)*

Military camp under Zrínyi-Újvár, 27 June 1664

Although I always receive Your Majesty's letters with the utmost respect, it has never given me greater comfort than the last piece of gracious writing, which gave me sincere hope that Count Montecuccoli will bring Your Majesty's powerful help in our current need and will boldly attack and repel the enemy. However, while I trust and rejoice over my most reasonable hope, and look forward to beginning our military operations with some notable actions, I realise too late that here nothing mattered less than trying to do anything meaningful concerning the enemy and – as in the past years – the only objective has been to preserve and protect the army. In this way, My Most Excellent Lord, not only the honour of Your Majesty's armies will be lost, but also one stronghold after the other, and they will certainly be followed by the provinces and countries. Therefore, many things force me to uncover our affairs sincerely before Your Majesty, and I am also compelled to do so by my commitment to Your Majesty's service and my fidelity. I am ascertained that Your Majesty's armies can never be glorious or victorious if they fight like this all the time. I am writing briefly to Your Majesty to send information about the current affairs, which is fully supported by the experience of previous years. After the Grand Vizier attacked my new fortress with all his might, I successfully defended it with Your Majesty's small army that was available here, and I would also defend it now. If the defence of the fortress and the Mura had been my only responsibilities, I would never have wished for the arrival of either Count Montecuccoli or his army: two or three regiments of Your Majesty's army would have been sufficient to facilitate the task. Nevertheless, I certainly hoped that at least we would not be expelled completely from here; moreover, as the rest of Your Majesty's army expanded, I kept asking Count Montecuccoli day and night to speed up his travel. He himself eventually arrived earlier than the army, yet everything necessary was there in due time. We already have so many Hungarian and German troops that we could clash with the enemy not only out of necessity but also with good chances. We have about twenty thousand Hungarian and Croatian, as well as the same number of German soldiers. Although with this army we cannot surpass the power of the enemy, we are equal to that. Nevertheless, the intention to venture anything against the enemy was and still is so far from this force that we have not undertaken even the smallest sortie from the fortress. The enemy was so emboldened by these that, keeping the Christian army in sight, they approached the rampart of the fortress through their attacks. If we do not provide support within a few days, they will undoubtedly occupy the fortress before the eyes of this whole army. I see no other reason why our army is doing nothing than what the generals claim, that is, we have to wait for the entire army and the auxiliary forces of the Duke of Baden<sup>17</sup> so that we could clash with the enemy with full might. However convincing these arguments may seem, they pose a grave danger, for we have information that the Ottoman army, even though with small troops, is growing day by day, and it is also certain that two more pashas are going to arrive within two weeks. Our army, on the other hand, is not only

<sup>16</sup> Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 159–162. (For the original letter written in Latin see *Csapodi* 1962. 754–756. Translated into Hungarian by *Csaba Csapodi*.)

<sup>17</sup> Margrave Leopold Wilhelm of Baden-Baden (1626–1671), the Commander-in-Chief of the German imperial auxiliary unit.

losing its prestige by doing nothing, but it is also diminishing at an unprecedented rate due to diseases, and it is completely wrecked by the shortage of food, as well. In addition, the Hungarian and Croatian soldiers, who have never received any pay, cannot stay here for more than eight days because they have only brought bread with them; and whatever I had, I have already distributed among them. Verily I say, My Most Excellent Lord, the number and willingness of the soldiers is decreasing every hour, while the enemy is increasing to the same extent and even more. I do not plan to put everything to the decision of a general attack, either. Instead, I have trust in sorties from the fortress and raids on the camp from another direction: with these, even if the enemy cannot be completely bewildered, we could keep them away and – what is most important – preserve the fortress intact until the rest of the armies arrive. However, I was not able to persuade the generals concerning any of these, and accordingly, no action has ever been taken. With the few Hungarian soldiers who were with me at the beginning, I launched two successful attacks: on both occasions a few hundred Ottoman soldiers fell, and once we seized the pasha's flag, as well. Tomorrow, I am sending my brother<sup>18</sup> to try to do something with the Hungarians, the Croats, and the few hundred Germans, whom I had a hard time obtaining. Your Majesty, however, needs to be aware, and please do not judge from the empty and dubious claims of my rivals: as we could infer from the accounts of all the fugitives, the enemy has somewhat over thirty thousand soldiers. Even the higher ranking prisoners of war themselves – who are fully aware of the Ottoman affairs – are forced to admit this. Even if all this can be questioned, at least a copy of the record that Your Majesty's ambassador sent me yesterday through one of my most loyal men supports what I say. And here nothing is worth anything. More credit is given to the senseless babble of a fugitive who says that the army consist of a hundred thousand soldiers than to my most well-founded statements. This also makes the soldiers lose their courage and they rightly complain to Your Majesty that we do not attempt to do anything good. My Most Excellent Lord! I beg you most humbly to take into consideration what I have to tolerate from the undisciplined men of our army, as well. The cruelty of no enemy, not even the mad rage of the Tartars, can be compared to what this unfortunate island is forced to tolerate now, which I have defended against so many enemies for forty years with no little sweat and blood of mine. The destruction did not leave any church untouched. No living soul has remained in the villages; all the crops have been cut unripe, so they cannot even be used to feed the horses of the army. I keep silent about the murders and other atrocities so as not to offend Your Majesty. But still: I am compelled not to do anything about these, with no hope of remedy from the generals. What is more, to tell the truth to Your Majesty, all these deeds most clearly testify to the malice of Count Montecuccoli against me.<sup>19</sup> God is my witness that all this would affect me only as much as the slightest smoke and it would not bother me if I knew or hoped that Your Majesty would benefit from it, but it is a long way from reality. I must admit that no other malicious deed has ever put me under greater pressure. I beg Your Majesty to consider if I still have any means to protect myself or even to stay alive after all this? Yet, may God be praised for all that I can endure. I wish Your Majesty fortune and good luck.

Written in the military camp of Zrínyi-Újvár, on 27 June 1664.

<sup>18</sup> Péter Zrínyi (1621–1671).

<sup>19</sup> The events that happened under Zrínyi-Újvár renewed the old disagreement between the two soldiers. For more details see Nagy–Hausner 2011. The motifs of the memoir addressed to Leopold, distributed in print all over Europe a few weeks later, begin to take shape in this letter.

Miklós Zrínyi to the Graz Council of War<sup>20</sup>  
(Translated from Latin)

Csáktornya, 30 June 1664

I am writing to your Excellencies with great pain in my soul that this morning before the eyes of our larger army, my new fortress<sup>21</sup> – completely intact, without being undermined or destroyed by cannons – has been seized and occupied by the Ottomans merely with swords, which is an utterly unheard of thing, not recorded by any historian before. So this is the long-awaited and hoped-for help! Count Montecuccoli never allowed us to draw a sword to defend this fortress. This urged me to run to His Majesty with this post, but today the Hungarian noble lords pleaded me again to return, and so did Lord Montecuccoli. While I am waiting here and considering my return, I receive the sad news that the fortress had been occupied. I ask Your Excellencies to take action immediately and demonstrate to His Majesty that any huge army in the world would lose several fortresses and countries if they kept fighting like this. From here, I will return to the camp, which is reportedly rather perplexed. I will defend the Mura crossing (even if I have to fight alone), and I will not back down till the last drop of my blood, because this is the time and place for all the citizens of the country to die. I do not write anything more about the future; I let everything to be taken care of. May God bless Your Excellencies with good fortune.

Csáktornya, 30 June 1664.

Lord Wassenhoven will inform Your Excellencies in more detail orally. I cannot write any more due to my pain. There is already news of the siege of Sárovar, but this is not certain.

<sup>20</sup> Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 162. (For the original letter written in Latin see Zrínyi Miklós összes művei 1958 [The Complete Works of Miklós Zrínyi 1958]. II. 583–584. Translated into Hungarian by Csaba Csapodi.)

<sup>21</sup> Zrínyi-Újvár.

The memoirs of Miklós Zrínyi to Leopold I<sup>22</sup>  
*(Translated from Latin)*

Vienna, 17 July 1664

I was just about to set off when I received a letter from Your Most Excellent Majesty written this month, on 3 July. According to this, Your Majesty was informed that I had left the camp and went to Csáktornya, and then graciously ordered and instructed me to join Your Majesty's camp, as the relief troops were to be united under the command of the Margrave of Baden,<sup>23</sup> and the military operations were to begin only now, and my presence would make the Hungarian soldiers wait more persistently and enthusiastically in the camp. Having read Your Majesty's letter, I decided I would definitely stay now. However, after careful consideration of the reasons above, I realised that the situation envisioned by Your Majesty had completely changed, and all our war plans had been turned upside down.

The Grand Vizier was definitely about to destroy the fortress after its occupation. Thus, on the seventh day of this month, he set fire to the buildings in the fortress and detonated some of them with mines. According to the unanimous statements of the fugitives and prisoners of war, he himself was considering retreating to Kanizsa within two days. Upon hearing this news, Count Montecuccoli (although he had previously promised me to take our chance with united forces), changed the previous war plan without contacting or notifying me. He summoned the Margrave of Baden to the border of Styria, and sent the French somewhat further away so that there would be no contact between the armies for the time being. What is more, when I informed Count Montecuccoli himself of my departure, he told me that he would also set off as soon as he learnt about the Grand Vizier's leave, and would follow him, even if taking a longer route. That is how and why our hoped-for military enterprise was abandoned and came to nothing.

As far as the Hungarian and Croatian armies are concerned, they gathered with enthusiasm and in quite a good number. When, however, they found that there was no serious intention for fight, nor any opportunity to gain glory, they consumed the little food they had brought with them, and went home. It was only Count Batthyány<sup>24</sup> that remained there until my departure. I supplied his soldiers with bread at my own expense, as far as I could. Nevertheless, because the Grand Vizier was approaching his estates and those places were in obvious danger, he was forced to leave, as well. So now there is no Hungarian and Croatian army in the camp other than that of Count Nádasdy.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, he stated that he was not subordinate to me but to Count Montecuccoli and would do nothing on my instructions. Having considered the aforementioned once again, I found no reason that would have necessitated my presence in the camp in the slightest degree. After all, neither schemes nor plans were made (unless individually, of which I had no knowledge). If I had stayed there without any rank, honour, or honesty, alone, only with 20–30 of my men (because there could be no more of them than that, as I shall relate it below), I would have only subjected myself to the laughter of my

<sup>22</sup> Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 213–222. (For the original letter written in Latin see Zrínyi Miklós összes művei 1958 [The Complete Works of Miklós Zrínyi 1958]. II. 585–597. Translated into Hungarian by Csaba Csapodi.)

<sup>23</sup> Margrave Leopold Wilhelm of Baden-Baden (1626–1671), the Commander-in-Chief of the German imperial auxiliary unit.

<sup>24</sup> Kristóf Batthyány.

<sup>25</sup> Ferenc Nádasdy.

enemies. Well, I do not believe that Your Majesty would wish this service from me and that it would be Your Majesty's gracious will.

And the reasons that force me to come before Your Majesty are certainly such that I had to flee here, to the royal throne, unless I wanted the whole country and Your Majesty's provinces to perish with me. Yet, as I have not yet been able to inform Your Majesty why the siege of Kanizsa has stopped due to my engagements and the ever-renewing obstacles, I humbly plead with Your Majesty to listen to my most faithful account.

I am well aware, My Excellent Lord, that affairs concluding with an unfortunate outcome can never be painted with such a delicate brush that it would not seem as if the apologist was at fault. Nevertheless, I am not afraid of this, but I am only too happy to have the opportunity to honestly inform Your Majesty of the course of the events. By no means do I want to refer to ill fortune, like those who apologise for their mistakes because it is obvious that the occupation of this place have always been prevented by insignificant incidents. Greater zeal, willingness to fight, better organisation of the things needed, and more rational decisions could easily have led to a more fortunate turn of the events, and according to some, even to good luck.

Above all, however, I must honestly inform Your Majesty of what I not only surmise but (on the basis of the most obvious inferences) I dare positively say that with the exception of General Pucher, a general from Bavaria – who has always shown great zeal in this siege and in all other military operations – I did not experience any good intention or goodwill on the part of the senior officers or generals during this siege. The others all openly grumbled about joining battle too early, little or no pay, sustenance, fodder, and other, less significant reasons, although I solved all of these beyond my humble means. This was also overtly promulgated before the soldiers. Opinions secretly circulated by senior leaders, as well as the dangers of siege, to which they had long become unaccustomed, alienated soldiers from the idea of siege. Preparations were carried out like before some kind of loathed drag hunt. Some work was seemingly done, but a whole world separated it from enthusiasm and will, and consequently, from eager readiness for action. Count Hohenlohe<sup>26</sup> quite clearly expressed his aversion to this noble enterprise; not only with his words, but also with his delay and unwilling arrival. I will not repeat his words here, for his deeds throughout the siege speak loudly enough. Yet none of the generals dared outright refuse to take part in the siege.

When we successfully finished the winter campaign and occupied Babócsa, Berzence and Segesd, set fire to the Eszék Bridge, destroyed the countryside all around, and it seemed that the time had come for the siege of Kanizsa and terminate the sixty-three year old occupation of the Styrian borderland, I felt it was my obligation to make a humble suggestion for that. I will briefly summarise everything.

First, I wanted to hear the closer views of the privy councillors and members of the War Council, so I wrote to them. Through Wassenhoven, I communicated to them the results of the entire campaign, and at the same time that this was a good opportunity to take Kanizsa. I asked them – if they agreed with me – to communicate their views directly to Your Majesty and to shortly prepare the necessary steps. Kanizsa had to be besieged before Easter, because otherwise there was a danger that the Grand Vizier (who would undoubtedly try by all possible means to come to the aid of the fortress that the fate of the whole countryside depended on) would drive us out of there. Whether they liked this good opportunity, no one knows better than Your Majesty. They strongly and enthusiastically urged

<sup>26</sup> Count Wolfgang Julius Hohenlohe (1622–1699), commander of the auxiliary units of the Rhenish Alliance.

the siege and promised me all the armament if Your Majesty pleases to send the thirteen thousand infantry soldiers whom I had requested for the enterprise. Eventually, on 18 March, Your Majesty made a resolution and ordered that this military enterprise should be started as soon as possible, which would be of great use not only for these provinces but also to the whole of Christendom. In addition, the military equipment prepared – while Wassenhoven was waiting for Your Majesty's gracious decision in Regensburg for twenty-four days – was to be transported here as quickly as possible.

Seeing this, Your Majesty's court and privy councillors sent Wassenhoven, who had returned from Regensburg, to me and insisted that I set a day for the siege. I need to admit, it seemed that a great deal of time had already been wasted, but when I could clearly see Your Majesty's gracious will from this letter and the zeal of the Styrians, I set the siege for 8 April. When Your Majesty graciously approved this, and the Styrians also agreed, promising that there would be no lack of the necessary things, I immediately communicated this to the Hungarians as well, and implored them to appear in as large numbers as possible on the set day. However, when I sent the same message to the Germans in Styria, some replied that they could not be there before 12 April, while others said that they could not come at all.

The War Council tried in every way to persuade them to set out, but they could achieve nothing. In the meantime, the set days passed, the Hungarians gathered together, but then they returned home very dispirited. This is how the most suitable occasion for battle passed, and I already believed that nothing would come out of the matter, and I would not have regretted it, because it was obvious that, with such a small army, it was impossible to besiege Kanizsa and defend ourselves against the relief army – which was certain to arrive as we wasted so much time. I humbly reported this to Your Majesty, and also informed the court councillors in detail, when Count Strozzi, Your Majesty's Lieutenant General, finally arrived, accompanied by Colonel Holst (as an artillery commander), some other artillery officers and two engineers. I could see that all this was arranged in a way that if I had objected, it would have appeared that the siege did not take place only because of me. Since there was still no report about the enemy's gathering, I agreed to inspect Kanizsa with Strozzi, Holst and Wassenhoven.

So on 19 April, we approached Kanizsa with the gathered army. We found that the swamps were not as large as we believed them to be. Finally, considering there on the spot what needed to be considered, we did not find it hopeless to seize the fortress unless we were prevented from this by the enemy's rescue army. This possibility could never be ruled out.

In the meantime, Count Hohenlohe also returned and we decided to meet in Graz, but, so as not to lose even more time, it seemed more advisable to change the plan and hold the war council on 21 April. For this, the Styrians delegated Baron Johann Christian Galler, who, considering everything during the council, offered and promised everything necessary on behalf of his principals that Wassenhoven and Holst wanted. Thus, by joint decision, we set 28 April as the day of the siege so that the army would no longer be stationed at the quarters, and we would not miss the entire opportunity. Hohenlohe received the matter rather unenthusiastically. He said we ought to wait until the grass grew again. But when we came together in my new fortress on 27 April, we found that the armament had not yet arrived despite that it had been promised.

In the meantime, however, the troops were rallying. Due to lack of the armament mentioned above we would have gladly cancelled the siege, yet preparations seemed to have reached a point where we could no longer stop without damage to the honour of Your Majesty's arms. This was the case all the more because Johann Senkmeier, Victualling Commissioner to the Court Chamber, claimed that everything had happened according to the promise given and the supplies would arrive the following day.

On 28 April, we surrounded Kanizsa according to the plans and expelled the enemy from the suburbs with the first storm. Soon afterwards, we marked out the place of the communication trenches and batteries. However, while we were waiting for the artillery unit and other necessary things for nine days, the menacing danger opened the enemy's eyes, who were initially so perplexed that they did not even know what to do. It was only on the third day that they began to surround the place with earthen embankments; they had failed to do so before.

The second reason why we could not take Kanizsa was not only that we had wasted so many days – which were very valuable in view of the enemy's rescue army – but that we had even contributed to the fortification of the unprepared town with our negligence. Additionally, another trouble was added to this, namely that we wanted to give an important role to the artillery unit in the siege and decided not to deploy them until all the cannons and mortars were in a position to put the fortress to flames with a single concentrated fire, and fuel the fire with grenades and incendiary bombs so much that it would be impossible to extinguish it. This fire would undoubtedly have damaged Kanizsa to such an extent that it could not have withstood the attack for long. However, some bombs were fired from Count Hohenlohe's camp, where there was a mortar – we did not have any. Seeing this, the enemy soon realised our intent and quickly demolished the rooftops, so that the bombs would have no effect (but they were worth of nothing anyway because they either exploded in the air or did not ignite in time).

The third and main reason we could not take Kanizsa was that even if the grenades had been better, we could hardly have achieved anything with them – as it was shown by experience when we received proper grenades on 2 May – because whenever we set Kanizsa on fire, the enemy could easily extinguish the small flames by removing flammable materials. It was also a great problem that, despite our expectations and to the surprise of us all, our cannons were so burnt and damaged after a few shots that when we needed to fire them, they could hardly be used. This inhibited our activities for a while, and gave the enemy the courage and opportunity to set fire to these approach trenches to our great detriment on 21 May (as they also tried it on 6 and 8 May, when the Hungarians were making the trenches, but they were unsuccessful then).

The fourth reason was that the promised thirteen thousand infantry soldiers did not arrive. Initially, Strozzi had one thousand five hundred soldiers, Spick had one thousand two hundred men (because the others remained in Radkersburg and Ferslangfeld), Spaar had one thousand two hundred, and the League had four thousand soldiers. That made altogether seven thousand nine hundred soldiers. Although there were also nine hundred Bavarians and finally one thousand seven hundred soldiers served under Colonel Munfort, there were still only ten thousand five hundred men in total. As a result, there were not enough men available for the numerous guard duties and other tasks, and so we had to do without a lot of things, which – if we had had an army of thirteen thousand five hundred soldiers from the beginning – would have eased the siege.

There are many other matters that have considerably hindered us, but it would be insipid to Your Majesty to read a detailed account of everything and would only cause distress. Therefore, because what has happened cannot be undone, I resolved to explain very briefly at least the four major reasons why we were not able to seize Kanizsa, so that Your Majesty would see that we failed not for lack of opportunity, but for lack of armament requested and promised, as well as the necessary goodwill. But even so, Kanizsa got into such a state that – as we later learnt it from the prisoners – if we had stayed there for another five or six days, the Ottomans would have been forced to give it up. For the bastion, which could have prevented us from crossing the moat, was demolished on the last days with the new cannons to such an extent that neither cannons nor people could be kept in it any longer.



It is clear from this, even if we ignore everything else, how much damage was caused by postponing the siege from 8 to 28 April, and we lingered idly for nine more days. Everything goes wrong for the unlucky, and one mistake creates another. When the news first spread of the approach of the Grand Vizier, the members of the council manfully decided to die on our embankments than give up the work we had begun, and we only humbly pleaded with Your Majesty to send us help. But as the Vizier got closer, we modified our plans and left so hurriedly that I will never be able to think about it without pain. I resisted, withstood, and protested, but in vain. Hohenlohe urged, and Strozzi demanded that we leave the site. When I asked about the reasons, they replied that the enemy had sixty thousand soldiers, and we had so few that we would not be able to defend our embankments. But how did they know that the enemy was so huge in numbers? Wassenhoven twice clearly denied this, but to no avail; the reason was maybe that they at last had the opportunity to leave. Nevertheless, that was not true, because the enemy had less than twenty thousand men back then. If Hohenlohe had joined us as I asked him, we could have easily defended the line. However, he did not even want to hear about it and demanded that we go over to him, leaving our camp behind.

I was powerless to keep them here as I intended to, so I had to run with them, whether I wanted to or not. Moreover, I also failed to achieve that we, sending our luggage forward, retreat in an orderly fashion. Confusion caused total disorganisation, and lots of things were lost. Yet, these were not the only erroneous actions. When it came to where the camp should be set up, I definitely recommended that we station the infantry on the hill, in front of my fortress. This way we could still have kept Kanizsa occupied to some extent, we could have secured Zrínyi-Újvár and the Mura, and we would have had the opportunity of wreaking havoc on the enemy every day. However, no one listened to me. We crossed the Mura and camped in a low-lying, waterlogged area and let the enemy have the hill.

The Grand Vizier noticed this, and he followed us on the fourth day. He set up his camp on the hill not far from the fortress. Then again, I suggested Hohenlohe and Strozzi that this was a good opportunity to attack the enemy. I proposed that we should attack at night when they were tired and there was still disorder in their camp. We had nothing to fear, as we could easily retreat any time. However, they did not even want to hear about it, as if I had proposed them the greatest nonsense. Consequently, the enemy found enough courage to cross the Mura with two hundred men and entrench themselves on the island. However, we did away with them. If I had not seen it with my own eyes, I might not believe anyone else that in broad daylight, maybe around eleven o'clock, five hundred Ottomans came over and started to entrench themselves a gunshot away. Furthermore, they constructed a defensive line across the hill on the same day. I demanded again that we oust them at night, but to no avail.

So the enemy came closer day by day, and the more I asked to disturb them, the less anything happened, because all things were postponed until the arrival of Count Montecuccoli. We waited very impatiently, but I had to face Scylla when I wanted to avoid Charybdis. Because after his arrival, he immediately took actions in a way that I could easily understand his intentions. He removed the commander from his office and made himself the defender of Muraköz and the fortress.

I could have resisted, but hoping that after the arrival of Lieutenant General Spork, we would try to do something valiant against the enemy – as he promised in the council – I decided to remain silent. After his arrival, however, Spork did not mean to do any such thing; instead, he insisted that we should wait for the Margrave of Baden. Meanwhile, I could not achieve the slightest thing in defence of the fortress. What is more, when one night I wanted to send two thousand Hungarians to the fortress, the commander appointed by Montecuccoli replied that I may as well send them, but he



would not let them in unless he received a written order to that effect. When I was informed about this, I already knew what his plans were, so I gave up again.

The enemy kept approaching every day, while our soldiers were raiding the Muraköz. They broke into churches and raped women, but none of them wanted to fight a battle. They did not even want to defend themselves, but rather died without fighting back. What an unheard-of thing! Fifty Ottomans, armed merely with swords, managed to expel three hundred and fifty Germans out of the moat and ramparts, and killed many of them. There was only one man who fired his rifle, but none drew a sword. Montecuccoli seemed angry, and he even said he would impose an exemplary punishment, but that, too, remained a mere threat.

But why should I bother Your Majesty with more details of these shameful things? In the end, fifty Ottomans ousted all our men out of the moat and rampart. They not only killed many Germans by climbing over the walls of the fortress, but they also bewildered them so much that they all immediately left their posts and fled in a disorganised manner towards the bridge. The Ottomans entered the fortress through a small gate left open by the soldiers running scared from the rampart, and ruthlessly butchered everyone who was still in the fortress.

May Your Most Gracious Majesty judge if Count Montecuccoli had a genuine intention of defending the fortress when, without my knowledge, he prepared everything by undermining the ramparts and bastions in a way that he could detonate the fortress at the first sign of an enemy attack? (As a matter of fact, the bastions were blown up before anyone tried to climb on them.) The day before the fortress was taken, the commander – evidently by the instruction of Count Montecuccoli – also ordered that my one hundred soldiers who were in the fortress should leave, because – he claimed – there were enough Germans. Moreover, when on the last night Count Batthyány asked him to let his two hundred soldiers enter the fortress, his request was rejected. Perhaps they feared that they would have defended the fortress longer than it was considered desirable. Last year, as few as one hundred and twenty Germans and one hundred and fifty Hungarians defended the fortress against three completely unexpected and most violent sieges, causing great losses to the enemy. And now one thousand nine hundred soldiers and an enormous army have disgracefully lost the fortress.

It was a great help, indeed! My fortress was taken from me, Muraköz was destroyed, and the serfs were driven away or slain. These are enormous losses for me. However, they do not hurt me nearly as much as the fact that my soldiers, who throughout so many years defended not only Muraköz but also Your Majesty's province, Styria, were expelled from their homes and forced to flee with their wives and children, not to mention the disgrace that was brought upon Your Majesty's arms in this way.

These are the reasons, My Most Excellent Lord, which compelled me to rush to Your Majesty and find out what I can do now? My estates are ravaged, my serfs are scattered, and I am deprived of my soldiers in the devastated and uninhabited Muraköz lying open to the enemy. For forty years, I have defended this region against the enormous power of the Ottomans with lots of sweat and blood shed by me and my men, and now my ruination has come from where I was supposed to receive help, in which I placed all my trust and hope. And my greatest pain of all is that I could neither serve Your Majesty nor benefit Christendom, and now with merely one sword on my side I await Your Majesty's orders.

Written in Vienna, on 17 July 1664.

A humble and loyal servant to Your Most Gracious Majesty

Comes Nicolaus a Zrinyo

*Pál Esterházy: Mars Hungaricus*<sup>27</sup>

– Detail –

(Translated from Latin)

*Chapter Thirty*

Seeing our soldiers running, the Grand Vizier happily entered the fortress of Kanizsa, and comforted the besieged. Not long after reorganising the fortress guards, he decided in his fit of anger to attack Zrínyi with the pagan army, because it was he that inflicted damages on them. He wasted no time and approached Zrínyi-Újvár with his camp on the third day. Zrínyi fought back, and after some minor clashes causing severe damages to the Ottomans, he returned to his fortress. Zrínyi urged Hollach<sup>28</sup> and Strozzi<sup>29</sup> to place their camp between the enemy and the fortress, but without success.

The Grand Vizier started considering the siege the following day, when he saw that our men crossed the Mura River and set up their camp in a low-lying, waterlogged place, voluntarily relinquishing the hill adjacent to – or rather in the immediate vicinity of – the fortress to the enemy. He seized the opportunity, and occupied the unprotected hill and camped there exultantly,<sup>30</sup> because from there Zrínyi-Újvár could be occupied without much effort, whereas for us, it was very difficult to receive help because of the nearby river that had to be crossed for getting into the fortress.

Zrínyi-Újvár, once called the fortress of fools, was used by the Zrínyi family, who transferred this place to one of their meritorious servitors as an act of benevolence. Over time, however, when Sziget, Babócsa and soon Kanizsa fell, this place became completely destroyed. It was unusable and stood in ruins<sup>31</sup> until it was finally rebuilt in its current form by the magnificent Count Miklós Zrínyi, Ban of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, with the intention of placing the Ottomans in Kanizsa under pressure, especially because he could clearly see the suitability of this place for causing damage to the enemy by sorties made from there (for it was neighboured by Kanizsa to the north, Segesd and Berzence to the east). It was his wish to call this fortress Zrínyi-Újvár, after his own name, in order to distinguish it from their other fortress found in Croatia, which was occupied by the Ottomans. So from a small castle it turned into some kind of fortress. It was located in the close vicinity of the hill, from which it is separated by a deep ditch. To the north, there was a lake made with arduous work, while to the south and west (that is, in the direction of the island), it was surrounded by the Mura River. As it was erected on a relatively high elevation, it could be approached with difficulty by those coming from the direction of the island. There are no rocks or cliffs here, as the whole area is sandy, and therefore, although it was built as a fortress with tremendous effort, it cannot be called a fortified

<sup>27</sup> *Esterházy* 1989. 159–167. (For the original Latin text see *Esterházy* 251–257. Translated into Hungarian by *Emma Iványi*.)

<sup>28</sup> Count Wolfgang Julius Hohenlohe (1622–1699), commander of the auxiliary units of the Rhenish Alliance.

<sup>29</sup> Pietro Strozzi, an Italian Lieutenant General. He met his death under Zrínyi-Újvár in 1664.

<sup>30</sup> *Esterházy* here cites the Memoir of Zrínyi almost word by word. Cf. Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 219–220.

<sup>31</sup> We slightly modified the Hungarian translation by *Emma Iványi* as suggested by *József Kelenik*. See *Kelenik* 2012.

place, mainly because the hills rise so high above it that it could have been quite conveniently attacked with cannons from several places. But let that be enough about Zrínyi-Újvár.<sup>32</sup>

So the Grand Vizier, having occupied the hills, gave the order to build an embankment for cannons opposite the eastern bastion. On the third day, they shot their cannons from there, but they did little harm to us. On the same day, the Janissaries began to dig their way towards the fortress, and also made a trench across. Seeing this, Zrínyi turned to Hollach and Strozzi again and made a suggestion on how to attack the enemy. He proposed to cause turbulence in the camp with an unexpected attack, and argued that there was no need to be afraid, because even if the enemy got the upper hand, they could easily access the fortress nearby. He suggested that they should not wait until the enemy approached, but rather torment them incessantly with various sorties and cause them as much damage as possible every day. However, his speech fell on deaf ears.

So when the enemy observed that our men did nothing, they became so self-assured that two hundred Janissaries crossed the Mura River, and in their audacity they did not even shy away from entrenching themselves on the island, and would have finished what they started if, under compulsion, the Christians had not deployed all their forces against the enemy.<sup>33</sup>

With his imperial musketeers, Strozzi was the first to launch a strike on the Ottomans digging in the ground quite busily. When auxiliary troops arrived, he himself fell onto the enemy, he slew a lot of them and put the others to flight. But in the end, while he was dauntlessly pursuing the barbarians, he fell gloriously defending Christendom leaving his immortal memory to posterity. He was hit by two bullets shot by the Janissaries – one on his thigh and the other on his forehead. Our men were so exacerbated by the tragic fate of their commander that they spared no one of the enemy; all of them were cut down and slain.

This, then, was the end of Count Strozzi, a most noble leader, who was a much too reckless and at the same time valiant soldier. It is odd that he almost never supported Count Zrínyi's proposals, which I myself perceived on many occasions in astonishment.<sup>34</sup>

After the Janissaries were thus expelled from the island, the enemy, seeing their soldiers die, did not attempt to cross the river any more. Zrínyi, on the other hand, did not stop from taking a toll on the Ottomans by means of daily sallies with Croats and Hungarians. He cut off many of them or carried them into captivity.

In the meantime, His Excellency Count Raimondo Montecuccoli, Imperial Field Marshal, arrived. His presence brought some comfort to Zrínyi and Hollach, because they could hardly wait for him to join them. After sorting out the matter of the fortress, he set up his camp at Légrad.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The "other fortress" found in Croatia and occupied by the Ottomans was Zrin. It was the ancient home of the Zrínyi family located near the River Una flowing into the Sava, to the south-west of Kosztójnica (today Hrvatska Kostajnica in Croatia), which was already held by the Ottomans at that time.

<sup>33</sup> The same again by Zrínyi: "Then again, I suggested to Hohenlohe and Strozzi that this was a good opportunity to attack the enemy. I proposed that we should attack at night when they were tired and there was still disorder in his camp. We had nothing to fear, as we could easily retreat any time. However, they did not even want to hear about it... Thus, the enemy found enough courage to cross the Mura with two hundred men and entrench themselves on the island." Zrínyi Miklós válogatott levelei 1997 [Selected Letters by Miklós Zrínyi 1997]. 220.

<sup>34</sup> Archbishop György Lippay also blamed Strozzi for the failure of the siege of Kanizsa in his letter written to Wesselényi on 16 June 1664. He acknowledged, on the other hand, that he had fallen fighting against the Ottomans under Zrínyi-Újvár. (OL E 199 Kamarai lt. Wesselényi lt. 4. cs. Missiles.)

<sup>35</sup> Montecuccoli arrived under Zrínyi-Újvár on 15 June. Here again, Esterházy adopts the method of Zrínyi's anti-Montecuccoli pamphlet: first he exalts Montecuccoli, and then he exposes him in the narrative with

He was followed by His Excellency Lieutenant General Spork and his army of five thousand cavalry soldiers, who also encamped there, as well as Baron Spaar and His Serene Highness, Duke Sulzbach,<sup>36</sup> who were also Imperial Field Marshals and arrived with large numbers of infantry soldiers and artillerymen. They were followed by His Illustrious Highness, Count Ferenc Nádasdy and Pál Esterházy at the head of five thousand Hungarians, as well as many other counts and barons.

Our army was already so large that, even if it could not surpass the strength of the enemy, it was apparently equal to them, all the more so because His Excellency, Count Péter Zrínyi came to help from Croatia accompanied by other distinguished Croatian lords and an army of approximately ten thousand men. Furthermore, we also expected the powerful imperial army, led by the His Serene Highness, Duke and Margrave of Baden, as well as the army of His Majesty, King of France, led by Their Excellencies Field Marshal Count Polcin and Deputy Field Marshal Count La Folliada, consisting of six thousand most excellent soldiers. They were followed by His Serene Highness, Duke of Württemberg and his three thousand soldiers.<sup>37</sup> From them, one could expect a certain victory.

In the meantime, the enemy got closer to the fortress day by day and besieged it with their cannons incessantly.

For us, the bridge built over the Mura to the fortress was very beneficial, because new soldiers could be sent to the fortress every day to replace the exhausted ones. When the enemy realised this, they established a gun emplacement opposite the bridge, and by towing cannons to that place, they caused enormous damage to the ships, which were destroyed little by little. They also erected two other embankments, and shot at the walls of the fortress with their cannons day and night. Our men, on the other hand, resisted valiantly and did no little harm to the barbarians on a daily basis, so much so that we expected that the siege would cease sooner or later, as our forces had increased considerably.

### *Chapter Thirty-One*

While these things happened at Zrínyi-Újvár on both sides, Zrínyi decided to carry out some kind of notable raid on the Ottomans with the Hungarians and Croats. After sending out his scouts, he found that this could be implemented without difficulty. Accordingly, he collected two thousand men and visited Count Montecuccoli. Disclosing his intention to the Imperial Field Marshal, he asked for some German auxiliary troops. He argued that he may not only be able to drive the enemy away from the mines, but also take the batteries of cannon themselves. Even if he would not be able to acquire the cannons of the enemy, he could make them unusable.

They held a discussion about this, while our men encountered a serious calamity. Some of Zrínyi's chief officers sallied out of the fortress and fell on the enemy. Zrínyi's most successful soldier, an excellent valiant man was the first to attack the enemy, and after causing great destruction among the Janissaries, he fell gloriously, hit by a bullet. His body was brought back to the fortress by his

---

hard facts. It should be noted here that Zrínyi and Esterházy were not the only ones who had low opinions about Montecuccoli. Their views were shared by György Lippay, who said that the good opportunity "will be washed out of our hands by Lord Montecuccoli". (In the letter cited above: OL E 199 Kamarai lt. Wesselényi lt. 4. cs. Missiles.)

<sup>36</sup> Prince Philip Sulzbach, Prince Elector, Lieutenant General.

<sup>37</sup> The Duke of Baden: Leopold of Baden. La Follida: Count D'Aubusson François Feuillade (1618–1697). In 1664, he was the lieutenant to Coligny in the French army sent to Hungary. The Prince of Württemberg sent Duke Eberhard Ulrich with the army. By 20 June, everyone had arrived except for Leopold of Baden, Spar and Coligny, and there were as many as thirty thousand soldiers. *Széchy* V. 1902. 104; *Perjés* 1965. 368.

companions. The unfortunate death of this most valiant chief officer (who had done much without Zrínyi, but Zrínyi had already done less without him) filled the entire Pannonian army with great pain and wrought tears from their eyes; indeed, many, even from other nations, mourned him as if he had been one of them.

He was called Farkas Kis, a Turk by birth. He fled from the Ottomans and took up Christianity. He stayed in Kiskomárom for a while, and caused lots of trouble to the enemy. Zrínyi noticed his brave deeds and wished for his service. He accepted Zrínyi's invitation and became such a faithful and valiant servant to him that he stood out high among his comrades in the school of Zrínyi, and therefore he was always the dearest man of his lord. Under Zrínyi, he caused several hundreds of thousands of Florins worth of damage to the enemy, which made the whole country admire his military virtues. His body was later taken from the fortress to Légrád and buried there.

Finishing the discussions, it was decided that although raiding was the right thing to do, but it was not feasible, as the enemy established a lot of firing positions, and from those they could shower a hail of bullets on our men, as if they were forts. So Zrínyi's plan came to nothing due to the contradictions of others.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, the approaching enemy worked tirelessly to dig ditches for the mines, and getting closer to the moat, they finally made mines, and our men worked tirelessly to make the countermines.

When, on a certain evening, the enemy fired all their cannons and small firearms at the fortress every day, we detonated the countermine. Then behold! the mass of earth flying high due to the fire lit in the deep killed many of the enemy. As a matter of fact, I myself watched it from the fortress as we sent several of our enemies to the next world. The power of the explosion blew them up together with their hoes and other tools.<sup>39</sup> The sight was, of course, welcome to us, especially when we heard the wailing and shouting of the enemy from the bastions. Having accomplished this, we tirelessly dug ditches needed for our mines and caused a lot of harm to the enemy every day. Zrínyi started to urge the Imperial Field Marshals again to disturb the enemy, to which they had finally contributed. In accordance with collective will, his brother, Count Péter Zrínyi, marched with three thousand German and six thousand Hungarian and Croatian soldiers towards Berzence to attack the enemy camp from behind. At the same time, a sortie was to be made from the fortress against the enemy's mine ditches and batteries of cannons. And all this could have been achieved if the enemy had not learnt about our plan – due to the treason of a deserting musketeer – that was about to be put into action. As soon as they got to know this, they were watching vigilantly in both directions, and thwarted this whole good opportunity. As a result, Count Péter Zrínyi was forced to return to camp without accomplishing anything, and the attack came to nothing.

At the same time, a part of the enemy's army was sent towards the River Rába to plunder. Passing by Batthyány's border fortress district,<sup>40</sup> they burnt many villages to ashes, cut down lots of serfs or took them captive, and some nobles also fell into the hands of the enemy. A few days later, they returned to their camp with plenty of loot. The Grand Vizier welcomed them joyfully, for on that day, in addition to the customary noise of trumpets and whistles and the drum beats, they also signalled their rejoicing with more frequent cannon shots than usual, which we heard on the walls of

<sup>38</sup> Zrínyi refers to this plan in his report to Leopold I. The letter written by Pál Esterházy on 15 June also contains information about the death of Farkas Kis, *Esterházy* 1989. 325.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. the letter written by Pál Esterházy on 24 June 1664, *Esterházy* 1989. 326.

<sup>40</sup> The border fortress district facing Kanizsa, the Captain General of which was Kristóf Batthyány at that time.

the fortress. As we later learnt from those men who escaped over to us, the reason for this was the same thing we suspected.

### *Chapter Thirty-Two*

The seventh week had come, and the barbarians were still unable to seize Zrínyi-Újvár, even though many of them had fallen from them, and therefore they had little or no hope of taking the fortress. However, they did not get discouraged. What is more, they were engaged in digging trenches day and night. They were trying to break through the walls with their cannons, while our men resisted persistently. Suddenly, we do not know for what unfortunate reason, a fire broke out accidentally on the biggest bastion of the fortress where the grenades and other firearms were stored. The unexpected explosion tore the men and cannons into pieces and threw them high into the air with a huge rumble, bringing great misfortune on us. The pain of Zrínyi, the commander of the fortress, was exacerbated by the death of his most valiant soldier, András Horváth,<sup>41</sup> who perished from the same fire while taking care of the cannons and causing considerable damage to the enemy. After Farkas Kis, this was Zrínyi's favourite man for his expertise in military science and considerable experience.

When all this happened, everything turned worse eventually, and the hope of defending the fortress gradually turned into despair. I remember that after this misfortune, Zrínyi, this big-hearted hero, often cast his tear-filled eyes on his fortress as something that would soon be lost; especially after seeing the advancement of the enemy day by day and the alienation of our men from him. Moreover, even the Christian army started to plunder his estates, loot the churches, rape and kill his miserable people.<sup>42</sup> I remember how often he complained to me about these things in private, with tears in his eyes, while referring to the fortress no longer as his own, but as the fortress of the enemy. This noble soul born to battle could not suppress his grief too long. So as not to see the disgraceful end of his fortress, he left the camp for Csáktornya, which was also his own fortress, after saying farewell to me and a few more men.<sup>43</sup>

Surely I could not watch without compassion the great misfortune of this Mars of Pannonia, without whom, the Pannonians could expect nothing but peril, like the sheep when their shepherd is lost.

I went to the fortress that day, and indeed, the cannons had already started to be removed from the bastions and the fortress and were transported together with other military equipment to the island. Additionally, gunpowder was poured at the feet of the bastions in order to detonate the fortress. From these, as if I could only see it in a mirror, I could easily understand what these men were up to.<sup>44</sup> On the following day, the Hungarians and the Croats held a discussion among themselves and they unanimously agreed that Miklós Zrínyi should be called back from Csáktornya, because even his

<sup>41</sup> András Horváth was in Ottoman captivity in Kanizsa for a while in 1654, but escaped and took part in the winter campaign. In early 1664, he remained in the Fortress of Babócsa as a member of the guard. Cf. *Hunyady* 1980. 77, 80.

<sup>42</sup> Zrínyi also writes about this in his memoir on 17 July.

<sup>43</sup> After the meeting on 26 June, seeing that he could not achieve anything, Zrínyi decided to go to Vienna to make a complaint. On 27 June, still in the camp under Zrínyi-Újvár, he wrote a letter of complaint about Montecuccoli to Leopold I. Two days later, on 29 June, he travelled to Csáktornya. See the letter by Pál Esterházy, dated 31 June, *Esterházy* 1989. 327. Cf. *Klaniczay* 1964. 768.

<sup>44</sup> See the letter by Pál Esterházy dated 24 June, *Esterházy* 1989. 326. The bastions were undermined in advance so that they could be blown up after the fortress was evacuated. One day before the occupation, the German commander of the fortress even sent away Zrínyi's one hundred men.

mere presence would be more beneficial for the case than the workings of others. By collective will, I was dispatched with the letter and arrived there before next dawn. The sorrowful Zrínyi was still in bed, and I comforted him as much as I could in the midst of frequent sighs. I gave him the letter that His Excellency Field Marshal Count Montecuccoli, Their Illustrious Highnesses Count Ferenc Nádasdy and Count Péter Zrínyi, as well as other counts and magnates wrote to him.<sup>45</sup> Finally, after a two-hour conversation, having put forward a lot of arguments, I managed to persuade him to come back to the camp, it was not easy though. When I returned to the camp with the same letter rejoicing, and passed by Zrínyi-Újvár, alas, I saw the tragic turn of the situation. I witnessed what no Christian should have seen. The Ottomans, when they cleverly found out that there were not any cannons in the fortress and that according to all signs our men had lost hope, left their approach trenches and launched a general attack on the fortress. Around seven o'clock in the morning, the assault began with loud battle cries. First, about fifty Ottomans rushed to the advance bastion, and since no Hungarian army had been allowed to enter the fortress for five days, more than three hundred of our men were driven away merely with swords, many Christians were butchered and the advance bastion mentioned above was taken.<sup>46</sup> They did not stop there, but expelled our soldiers out of the moat and from the counter breast-work called "falsa bracha",<sup>47</sup> and drove them purposefully to higher-lying parts. Eventually, in the course of a second assault, they could enter the fortress through the small gate that was left open by our men fleeing fearfully. The Ottomans started to slay them, and they became so confused that they could not think about defence any more. All of them left their weapons and posts behind in disorder and fled to the bridge in horror, while some officers tried to hold them back, in vain. When they got there, many of them fell into the river as the bridge collapsed in the middle. In the meantime, the Ottomans occupied the fortress to the eternal disgrace of Christianity.

I watched this tragedy with tearful eyes. I saw that hundreds of Christians drowned in the water miserably and witnessed that the triumphant Ottomans walked around the walls of the fortress and penetrated the houses without fear. Finally, I saw that the enemy hang their flags on the fortress walls with great arrogance. What caused me even greater pain was that I had persuaded Zrínyi to return and he had to see these terrible things.

This is how Zrínyi-Újvár was taken.

<sup>45</sup> Montecuccoli was uncomfortably affected by Zrínyi's leave and possible complaint, so he even wrote to Vienna to make him stay, *Klaniczay* 1964. 768. According to all signs, Zrínyi liked Esterházy perhaps the most among the Hungarian nobles. That is why he was sent on this difficult mission. See also Pál Esterházy's *Memoirs*, *Esterházy* 1989 on page 309, and his letter dated 30 June 1664, *Esterházy* 1989. 327.

<sup>46</sup> Esterházy cites again Zrínyi describing the seizure of the fortress on 30 June.

<sup>47</sup> "Falsa bracha": a firing position constructed in the moat on the side of the fortress, from where the moat could be kept under fire. (Explanation by Géza Perjés.)



*Raimondo Montecuccoli: Relazione della campagna dell'Armata Cesarea  
nell'Anno MDCLXIV<sup>48</sup>  
(Translated from Italian)*

[4r] When Field Marshal<sup>49</sup> Count Montecuccoli received the order written by His Imperial Majesty himself on 4 June 1664, ordering him to leave Vienna immediately and travel with the letter to Graz and Zrínyi's island<sup>50</sup> to take over the command of the army, two opposing feelings came over him. On the one hand, the blind obedience to the command, on the other hand, the military aspects, knowing the weakness of the army, were in conflict. The pain and suffering of riding to Pécs in winter<sup>51</sup> [and] the unsuccessful siege of Kanizsa, in which many of the old, experienced soldiers perished, [furthermore] the frequent adversities and illnesses made the army weary and fearful. The constant fight, which did not leave even a breath of time for the soldiers, [4v] ruined their clothing, [as well as] completely broke their souls and consumed their strength. All this decreased the number of experienced soldiers to a minimum. Additionally, the new recruits could be hardly used for anything worthwhile as in any situation they were more of a trouble being completely inexperienced. They were not even trained how to carry their weapons, let alone use them. The Ottomans, on the other hand, were well-rested, proud and victorious, as they managed to take Berzence and Babócsa<sup>52</sup> without any resistance, they supported Kanizsa, and there were many of them.

In addition to the fact that [the plan for] the campaign had already been turned upside down – as most of the campaign season had already passed and the site of the battle had been shifted to difficult and disadvantageous terrain, where the warehouses had not been prepared either (they had been set up along the Danube) – the transportation [of reinforcements] was not possible either, and the join of the imperial army could only be achieved late and with great difficulty.

In Montecuccoli, the tendency to obey prevailed, [5r] so he only sent an apology to the Emperor<sup>53</sup> in advance saying that if anything [ill-fated] happened, it would not be his fault. Furthermore, he most humbly protested [against the assumption] that he wanted to spare his effort, care, fatigue, blood, life in the service of His Majesty. Nevertheless, he strongly hoped that imperial justice would not want to accuse him in the future, or to oblige him to consider those matters that were based on the ideas and intricate actions of others, or resulted from causes unconnected to him [Montecuccoli].

On the 8<sup>th</sup>, he left Vienna with the letter and stopped for a short time in Graz to discuss with the officials<sup>54</sup> there about the things necessary for the war. He arrived in camp marked with an 'A' on 15 June.

<sup>48</sup> *Relazione della campagna dell'armata cesarea nell'anno MDCLXIV*. Unpublished to this day. Place of preservation: ÖStA KA AFA 1664/13/29. fol. 1–42. (Translated from Italian into Hungarian by Mónika F. Molnár and Levente Nagy, with notes and comments by György Domokos.)

<sup>49</sup> *Marescial di Campo*, that is, Feldmarschall in German, which was, of course, different from the rank of the modern military hierarchy. It indicated the commander-in-chief of the army.

<sup>50</sup> That is, to the Muraköz.

<sup>51</sup> That is, Zrínyi's winter campaign.

<sup>52</sup> These were seized from the Ottomans by allied forces during the winter campaign mentioned above.

<sup>53</sup> It is evident that Montecuccoli here refers to the events of campaign that took place in that year.

<sup>54</sup> That is, the officials of the Inner Austrian War Council.



By that time, Zrínyi's fortress had already been attacked and besieged by the enemy. The imperial army, for the reasons mentioned above, was exhausted, tired, reluctant, and above all, it was short of officers, [5v] because most of them were wounded.

The fortress and the Mura crossing had to be defended. (The left side where the enemy camped was hilly, dominating [*i.e. over the neighbourhood*], and covered with a forest. Furthermore, the bend of the river was also favourable to them. The opposite bank was flat, low-lying, and defenceless.) Over several miles, men could not even take shifts in the trenches because their numbers had decreased so much, and because there were less than 2,500 infantry and 500 cavalry soldiers in service of the allied forces. At the discussion held on 17 [June], Count Zrínyi said that men in the Hungarian border fortresses were in complete uncertainty – because they had not received their payment for years – and therefore they could not be counted on at all. The defence of the fortress and the border required f10 [6r] quintals<sup>55</sup> of lead, so there was often a shortage of ammunition and victuals. This stronghold was not built on the model of fortifications (neither its geographical location, nor the structure itself, nor the area allowed that), but to defend – together with a redoute<sup>56</sup> – the bridgehead that ensured the passage over the Mura towards Kanizsa, and to cover the troops that went on raids in peacetime. It was therefore a worthless place: with no moat, no *contrascarpa*,<sup>57</sup> no *forma*,<sup>58</sup> no wings,<sup>59</sup> and no earth<sup>60</sup> inside. It was completely open towards the water: and it was indeed very likely to fall at any hour of the attack. It was also dominated [*i.e. by the adjacent heights*], and it was also unsuitable for sorties on account of the steep slope and the hills opposite. [*It was*] confined, where only a few people could fit without confusion and hindering one another. Consequently, it was not worth defending it.

[6v] The enemy attacked [*the fortress*] with united forces, but the Christians could only help with minor troops, as they could cross exclusively<sup>61</sup> over the bridge, which was constantly watched by the enemy and kept under fire. Thus, he [*i.e. Montecuccoli*] would not have even started to defend if he had not taken into account what others said, namely that he did not want to help the fortress, but to demolish it with countermines<sup>62</sup> and to level it to the ground as soon as possible, to burn it down and to blow it up, even before they came to the end. The military considerations did not justify that the life of even one soldier should be put at risk. Military practice had already shown that such small fortlets, which were built on the side of a river where the enemy's army camped and to where only small reinforcements could be sent under the enemy's nose, were normally given up. Baron D'Avancour repeatedly advised us to do so, [7r] committing himself to build a better one in eight days after the enemy's army left. In spite or because of the reasons above, or to gain time to gather Christian forces

<sup>55</sup> A contemporary quintal was approximately 50 kg.

<sup>56</sup> *Ridotto di campagna*, a redoute, was a simple rectangular camp rampart, possibly surrounded by a ditch and/or a row of stakes. Glossarium Artis 1979. 90.

<sup>57</sup> *Contrascarpa*, the outer side of the moat; in contemporary terminology it sometimes also included the covered road, the castle plane and the shooting bench behind the breastwork. Glossarium Artis 1979. 135.

<sup>58</sup> It is not quite clear what Montecuccoli meant by this word. The word *forma* was primarily used for the casting mould of cannons. Gran dizionario teorico-militare. Italia, 1847. 325. Here it perhaps refers to the irregular floor plan of the fortress and the makeshift (?) structure of its walls.

<sup>59</sup> *Fianchi*, a bastion wing, two sides of the bastion perpendicular to the curtain wall.

<sup>60</sup> A literal translation, but presumably the word "earth" here refers to the earthwork of the fortress walls, which, in Montecuccoli's opinion, was not thick enough.

<sup>61</sup> The original term used here was *difilare*, which means "going straight". Here, however, it apparently indicated that one could cross only over the bridge.

<sup>62</sup> The Italian word used there was indeed *contramina*, which at first glance seems meaningless. It is very likely though that Montecuccoli meant here the countermines prepared in advance for the case of an enemy attack.

coming from different places, and to keep the enemy busy so that they could not start another action elsewhere, and to make them lose there [*under the fortress*] as many people and horses as possible, a [*military*] council was held on the 17<sup>th</sup>, where the following issues were discussed:

1. How could the stronghold be defended from being occupied?
2. If the stronghold no longer be held, how can the bridge be demolished and the Mura defended?

The following decisions were made:

1. From the very first day, it seemed impossible to prevent the loss of the stronghold, still
2. it has to be defended by all human means possible, including well shafts,<sup>63</sup> countermines, mine chambers,<sup>64</sup> traverse dykes,<sup>65</sup> entrenchments,<sup>66</sup> palisades,<sup>67</sup> caponieres,<sup>68</sup> [7v] buried bombs, hand and large grenades, counter-batteries, and the like;
3. to change and replace soldiers every day so that they could bear great fatigue and constant vigilance better;
4. to replace Count Jacopo Leslie, Lieutenant Colonel to Spick,<sup>69</sup> who had been the commander of the fortress from the beginnings, with Tasso, Lieutenant Colonel to Strozzi, despite the allies' reluctance to do so.

On 18 June, the Croats and dragoons arrived at the camp.

On 19 June, the German cavalry and Hungarian soldiers led by Nádasdy and Batthyány arrived.

On 20 June, [*the*] defence of the Mura was [*re*]organised.<sup>70</sup> A stretch of the river was assigned to each unit, and they had to defend them with trenches and guards, namely

1. the area from the confluence of the Mura and the Drava to the fortress [8r] belonged to the imperial army;
2. the area from the fortress to Kotoriba belonged to the League;
3. above Kotoriba, there was Count Zrínyi, as well as the Hajdús of Nádasdy and Batthyány.

Furthermore, they gave an order for a major attack to be launched on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, as follows:

1. 2,200 German infantry soldiers and 500 Hajdús led by a commander;<sup>71</sup>
2. one of two 600-strong units<sup>72</sup> should launch an assault, and the other should stay in reserve;
3. the men should stand at the foot of the hill one hour before sunrise;

<sup>63</sup> The *pozzo* was a vertically dug well-like pit to detect the mines of the enemy. Gran dizionario teorico-militare 1847. 535.

<sup>64</sup> The word *forrello* literally means "cavity". In military terminology, it was used to indicate the chamber dug at the end of the mine corridor, where gunpowder was kept. Gran dizionario teorico-militare 1847. 326.

<sup>65</sup> A dyke constructed perpendicular to the direction of the attack. Glossarium Artis 1979. 163–164.

<sup>66</sup> The *tagliata* was "a separate embankment consisting of simple trenches with or without breastworks. It was used to protect the gorge of bastions, narrow passages and roads". Gran dizionario teorico-militare 1847. 707.

<sup>67</sup> A palisade made out of tree trunks, but in a general sense, could mean any kind of military structure that impeded the movement of the enemy.

<sup>68</sup> It was originally a covered emplacement made at the bottom of the dry ditch. Glossarium Artis 1979. 129–132.

<sup>69</sup> The rank "lieutenant colonel" is, of course, a modern concept. It is used here for the lack of a better one. The *tenente colonello* was the deputy commander of the regiment at this time.

<sup>70</sup> Evidently, the banks of the Mura River had already been protected.

<sup>71</sup> The General di Battaglia was the commander of the detachment allotted for attack.

<sup>72</sup> Although the original term *battaglie* also indicates "battalion", which in this period referred to an unspecified number of military units dedicated to a specific task, the meanings "team" and "grouping" were also common. As it cannot be decided clearly which sense of the word was used here, we took the more general meaning.

4. the weapons should include many half-pikes, guns, *Kurzweweher*,<sup>73</sup> bundles of brushwood, hatchets, and hand grenades.

On the 21<sup>st</sup>, the infantry arrived.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, men stood prepared in the fortress already at night to leave one hour before sunrise, as agreed. However, it was raining all night, [8v] the ground and the steep, sloping part of the hill turned so soggy that it was extremely slippery and unusable, which prevented the action from being carried out.

The men had to retreat, and they were ordered [by *Montecuccoli*] to carry out the attack on the following morning.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, however, it [*i.e. the action*] was thwarted again by a soldier, who had escaped from the fortress to the enemy on the previous night. He betrayed and disclosed the enterprise. He [*i.e. Montecuccoli*] could see that the enemy had strengthened the guard of the nearest trenches; they had twelve more ensigns<sup>74</sup> than usual, and so did their cavalry. With God's help, this misfortune [*i.e. the failure of the action*] was perhaps the lesser evil for us, because when he [*i.e. Montecuccoli*] took into account how cramped the place where our men were supposed to climb on the hillside as well as the quality of the enemy's closed and densely spaced trenches with the entire, united Janissary corps in them, he was doubtful about the success of the action.

[9r] On the 26<sup>th</sup>, a discussion was held again to decide whether something could still be done against the enemy, and we agreed unanimously that

1. it would be a very risky undertaking to attack the enemy in their own positions, frontally, where the slope, the forest, the bend of the Mura were advantageous to them, all the more so because we had to cross the river, and pass through the hillside, the forest and the dykes, before their eyes;

2. all in all, however, the other solution did not seem less dangerous and risky either: to flank [*the Ottoman camp*], and [*for this*] to cross the Drava twice, first near the Ottoman camp, and second at a lower-lying place, where the two rivers meet towards Ternia.<sup>75</sup> Then everyone would have to find their own place again [*i.e. to deploy*]. In the meantime, the defensive lines along the Mura would be left with either no or few guards in them.

[9v] 3. At every moment it seemed that the enemy was trying to attack us and cross. So if it seemed to be a good idea to clash with them, why not let them come? Why not receive them where we are in a more advantageous position instead of approaching them?

4. So we had to wait for the imperial troops coming with the Margrave of Baden and make the right decision then.

At midday on the 27<sup>th</sup>, the enemy launched an attack against the ravelin,<sup>76</sup> yet – with heavy casualties on both sides – we managed to repel it. During this, the fatigued enemy made a final attempt to seize the fortress and to take their cannons and equipment on the other side of the Mura, but in

<sup>73</sup> There is no Hungarian equivalent to this. It was a short, stabbing weapon used rather as a badge of power by junior officers.

<sup>74</sup> The term *insegne* also means “flag”, but in this case it could refer to anything that was used as a unit badge in the Ottoman army, e.g. horsetail bunchuk standards. The reinforcement apparently refers to the troops serving under the flags.

<sup>75</sup> Dernia.

<sup>76</sup> Montecuccoli used the term *mezza luna del forte* here, which literally means “crescent”. In the official and technical use of the term, it indicated a wedge-shaped defensive work placed in front of the tops of bastions. However, due to its shape, the ravelin was sometimes also called in this way. Elsewhere, Montecuccoli used this latter term. *Glossarium Artis* 1979. 85.

both cases they encountered considerable resistance, until on the 28<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant Colonel Tasso, who was the commander [*of the fortress*], wrote [*a letter*] asking to consider [10r] the condition of the fortress, which was now indefensible, the men were afraid and the palisades – which served as protection – had been burnt by the enemy.

On the 29<sup>th</sup>, the enemy advanced so far under the fortress that the fired cannonballs could no longer reach them (and large bombs were thrown into the enemy's trenches, causing severe losses to them). The deteriorating situation came to an end, as the enemy with their entire force left their trenches and evaded, approaching from the side where the [*fortress*] line was open and did not run to the river. At that time all the chief officers – D'Avancourt, Tasso, Rumling, Buttler and Rossi – wrote letters, because they decided to call back from the trenches<sup>77</sup> the guards attacked from all sides, so that the expected repression of these forces would not cause even more confusion and fear among the rest of the soldiers. Similarly, [*they decided that*] the cannons should be moved back, and it happened accordingly.

[10v] Early in the morning on the 30<sup>th</sup>, the enemy set off a mine at the top of the ravelin of the fortress,<sup>78</sup> just when Generals Montecuccoli and Sparr were standing on the bastion and inspected the fortress. Then they [*i.e. the enemy*] took their position on the ruins of it [*i.e. the ravelin*], and likewise they took their position on both sides, where the wings had already been destroyed, and covered themselves with bundles of sticks and hives filled with earth.<sup>79</sup> The generals – seeing that there was no defence left but a simple breastwork<sup>80</sup> with a small ditch and a palisade – ordered Tasso to set the wooden structures and the shacks on fire in time, to recall the soldiers, to set off the mines that had already been filled, to demolish the place, to withdraw the guard beyond the bridge, and then to demolish it as well when he finds that this rampart<sup>81</sup> can no longer be defended. The commander considered that he would be able to hold [11r] it until the following day. Yet, as soon as the generals had left and arrived at the camp, the enemy started to assault the above-mentioned rampart<sup>82</sup> so fiercely that the defenders were confused and – with no time left to destroy either the fortress or the bridge – they fled to the other side of the river in complete turmoil, losing many officers and approximately eight hundred men. The [*Christian*] army retreated there either crossing the bridge – that collapsed due to the excessive weight – or swimming. The enemy did not want to let them [*i.e. the running soldiers*] succeed in crossing the Mura in that turmoil. However, the defence that had been positioned there earlier with good foresight stood their ground so valiantly that after two hours of fierce fight, the enemy, prevented in their intentions, was forced to retreat because they could not achieve their goal, even though they lost a great many soldiers.

<sup>77</sup> Apparently, these were trenches dug by themselves or the ditches in the ravelin, or possibly the *fausse braye* mentioned by Esterházy.

<sup>78</sup> See Domokos 2012.

<sup>79</sup> The term *rondaccia* originally meant a certain kind of round shield. However, by definition, here it referred to round cannon hives filled with earth.

<sup>80</sup> Montecuccoli used the term *tagliata* here, which equally meant an obstruction built out of tree trunks and covered trench.

<sup>81</sup> The term *riparo* – that is, rempart in French – originally indicated the whole length of the fortress walls, but it could also refer to the wide, flat top of bastions and curtain walls behind the parapets. Glossarium Artis 1979. 167–171.

<sup>82</sup> *Rintrincamento* could refer to a simple rampart, but also a defensive work built behind the shattered wall to prevent the enemy from breaking into the fortress. Glossarium Artis 1979. 146–147.

[11v] However, the enemy made repeated attempts and renewed his efforts, using those advantages that their own side offered to them: the dominating heights, the large amount of wood, and the protrusions formed by the river bend. In contrast, the positions of the Christian army were lower [*lying*], and its area was uncovered and open, completely exposed to the enemy fire. With extra effort, deep trenches had to be made there, which joined the camp and the ditches along the river. However, redoutes could not be constructed, as was customary, for the opposite height greatly hindered this. Instead, dig deep pits<sup>83</sup> and wide ditches had to be dug into the ground in which three people could fit side by side. Finally the enemy, seeing that they could not break [*i.e. the resistance of the Christian army*].

[12r] on 7 July, detonated the mines, burnt them down, and razed the fortress to the ground. From this, it is clear how weak they considered this fortress to be, because they did not want to keep it or use it.

On the 8<sup>th</sup>, the Ottomans pretended that they left, but they did not leave. Perhaps they waited for us to march away and leave the Mura crossings unguarded, and then they would quickly return and seize them.

---

<sup>83</sup> The word *caldaie* literally means “cauldron”. Here, it was apparently used for the pits where soldiers could find shelter from gunfire.