

Fulminis instar
The Advance and Presence of Imre Thököly's Troops near
the Mining Towns area of Lower Hungary in the autumn of 1678

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Abstract: The Hungarian social strata discontented with the economic, political and military reforms of the Habsburg Absolutism unleashed an uprising in 1670, which was almost right away eliminated by itself due to the inorganization, and the royal forces easily closed it down. The rebels (also known as “refugees” or “Kurucs”) went into exile before the retaliatory measures, settled in Transylvania and the Ottoman Occupied Territories, and foraged into Upper Hungary in every year from 1672 with the aim to establish a new and independent Hungarian state. But the Kurucian leaders entirely fell back upon the support and benevolence of Mihály Apafi, Prince of Transylvania, and the Pashas of the eastern part of the Ottoman Occupied Territories, moreover, they had no any qualified warlords, so they were not able to gain significant and permanent success until 1678. But one of the Kurucian leaders, Imre Thököly, adventured himself on an undertaking in September of 1678: counterplotting two Imperial armies, he launched a lightning-fast offensive from the Spiš County, passed through the Liptov, Orava and Turiec Counties, finally penetrated into the Trenčín County, moreover, he almost reached Bratislava and Moravia. Then he suddenly turned into south-eastward with his whole army, and in the course of a month, occupied each mining town in the Hron River territory, and seized several border castles with Imperial and loyal garrisons without any serious fight. Thököly moved and acted “as fast as the lightning”, and he totally amazed, terrified and made indecisive the commanders of the border castles having German and Hungarian loyal garrisons, as well as the aldermen of the mining towns, who rather preferred the voluntary submission and the abandonment of their posts than undertaking the desperate and forlorn resistance. But it can be stated that the success of Imre Thököly's army in the autumn of 1678 was not exclusively caused by his ingenuity and captainship abilities glorified by the posterity, but his adversaries' momentary shock, fright and confusion superabundantly contributed to it. Not only the serfdom and the lower-ranked social strata joined gladly to the Kurucs in the mining towns region, but under pressure, the members of magnate families. This was only a short time submission, because as soon as the Imperial troops approached to the mining towns from two directions, and Thököly was caught in the middle, every person temporarily adhered to him, dropped away, and returned to the Emperor Leopold I's allegiance. And Imre Thököly compelled to give up his every autumnal conquest, and slowly drew back to his point of departure, to Upper Hungary, and later to Transylvania. However, there was an achievement. With Imre Thököly's appearance in the conduct of war in 1678,

quantitative and qualitative changes came into existence in the history of the Kurucian movement: the military operations also spread to territories in Lower Hungary, the Kurucian manpower was significantly increased, and due to them, the movement also grew up to the “adulthood” of its diplomacy, as such a military power demonstrated by Thököly, expedited the Sovereign and his advisors to enter into discussion about armistice or peace treaty. The fact can be also stated that the Kurucian military action in the autumn of 1678 raised hope for those social strata which was expecting the continuation of the struggle with the Habsburg absolutism.

Keywords: Imre Thököly, Kurucian Uprising in the 1670s, Mining Towns of Lower Hungary, Military history, Hungarian Kingdom.

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Fulminis instar — that is to say: similarly to the thunderbolt. György Bezzegh, a magistrate member of the Zvolen County, characterized the awesome and shocking phenomenon with this phrase that the Kurucs, previously seeming hesitant and unsure, conquered the Mining Towns near the Hron River and seized essential border castles with Imperial garrison in course of hardly two weeks.¹ About Imre Thököly's life, epoch and activity, besides Dávid Angyal's two-volume opus from 1888/1889², four collections of studies were also issued in the past decades³, but none of the speakers and authors treated the specific events of the Kurucian offensive of the autumn of 1678 with greater detail. Therefore, my present paper can be considered a work to fill a gap, if only in the sense that I based its writing for the most part on archival sources from the correspondence of persons loyal to the Sovereign. The selected title is not only relevant that it precisely expresses the rapidity in gaining dominance, but also implies that the Kurucs lost very quickly (as bolt from the blue sky) occupied territories seized during a month: on 3rd of

¹ BENCZÉDI, László: *A Thököly-felkelés társadalmi és politikai alapjai*. In: Benczédi László (ed.): *A Thököly-felkelés és kora*. Budapest : Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983. p. 9.

² ANGYAL, Dávid: *Késmárki Thököly Imre I-II.*: http://real-eod.mtak.hu/8949/1/MagyTortEletrajzok_43_THOKOLY_IMRE.pdf [downloaded and seen: 3rd of October, 2023.]

³ BENCZÉDI, László (ed.): *A Thököly-felkelés és kora*. Budapest : Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983; KÓNYA, Peter (ed.): *Gróf Imrich Thököly a jeho povstanie – Thököly Imre gróf és felkelése*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Prešovskej univerzity, 2009; GEBEL, Sándor (ed.): *Az „üstökös kegyeltje”. Késmárki Thököly Imre, 1657–1705. Thököly Imre születésének 350. évfordulója alkalmából rendezett nemzetközi tudományos konferencia anyaga (Hajdúszoboszló, 2007. szeptember 25–26.)*. Hajdúszoboszló : Hajdúszoboszlói Önkormányzat kiadványa, 2010. (Hajdú Múlt Műhely 1.); CINTULOVÁ, Erika – KUČEROVÁ, Marta (eds.): *Rod Thököly/A Thököly nemzetség : Zborník príspevkov z odbornej medzinárodnej konferencie konanej pri príležitosti 360. výročia narodenie Imricha Thökölyho: 25.–26. septembra 2017 na Kežmarskom hrade./Thököly Imre születésének 360. évfordulójából rendezett nemzetközi tudományos konferencia tanulmánykötete, Késmárki Vár, 2017. szeptember 25–26.* Kežmarok/Késmárk : Vydavateľstvo Kežmarského múzea/a Késmárki Múzeum kiadványa, 2018.

October they camped offensively under the walls of Zvolen, but on 3rd of November stationed on the same place — defensively, under Imperial attack, and day by day they were drawing back eastwards and south-eastwards, toward Transylvania and the Ottoman occupied territories.

Imre Thököly's name and his troops were first mentioned in a letter from 12th of August: the Kurucian leader crossed over the mountain passes beyond Kežmarok on 10th or 11th of August towards Poland; at the same dawning, György Harsányi with altogether 500 mounted and foot soldiers billeted in Dobšiná, and started on their way northwards to overtake Thököly.⁴ According to the information dated from a week later, Imre Thököly really stood in the Spiš County and Castle of Stará Ľubovňa.⁵ But it seems that Thököly did not start his planned offensive westwards, instead he moved his way to an area between Mukačevo and the Tisza River⁶, then he went to the Great Plain, to the Ottoman occupied territories. Few days later, on 7th of September, he ferried across the Tisza again by Tiszacsege, reached on the 13th Včelince in the Gemer County, on the 17th he reached Batizovce⁷ and Spišská Nová Ves⁸ in the Spiš County, then he turned to the west and enforced general insurrection upon those counties situated in his route direction.⁹ About 19th of September, the Kurucian troops stepped into the Liptov County¹⁰, and about 25th of September they penetrated into the Trenčín County. Moreover, some units threatened also the Hont County, due to that, István Koháry's mother, Judit Balassa had to move to Trnava.¹¹ Imre Thököly looked up his ancient, family demesnes in the Orava County, and made

⁴ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, hereinafter: MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 295. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Michaelangelo Jacquemod's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Muráň, 12th of August, 1678): „...Tökölius cum suis Perduellibus cesserit & effugerit per passus Kesmarkiensis. Hodie Harsany cum quingentis circiter auditus est noctasse in Oppido Dobssina, illi autem fieri tam pedites quam equites, opinior intendit ad Emericum Teökely...”

⁵ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 146–147. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése). Michael Angelo Jacquemod's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Muráň, 20th of August, 1678).

⁶ ANGYAL, 1888. p. 178.

⁷ TRÓCSÁNYI, Zsolt: *Teleki Mihály (Erdély és a kuruc mozgalom 1690-ig)*. Budapest : Akadémiai Kiadó, 1972. p. 236.

⁸ ANGYAL, 1888. p. 178.

⁹ MNL OL, P 125, 4706th roll № 2768. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). István Koháry's letter to Pál Esterházy (Fiľakovo, 16th of September, 1678).

¹⁰ MNL OL, C 1276th roll № 12554. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). István Palágyi's letter to István Koháry Istvánnak (Krásnohorské Podhradie, 19th of September, 1678).

¹¹ MNL OL, C 211th roll № 1579. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars IV.). Judit Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Trnava, 25th of September, 1678).

their serfs sworn oath of allegiance to himself. The Kurucian troops occupied the Castle of Ružomberok, and its Imperial garrison of 227 men were massacred. In the last days of September, the Kurucs reached the castle of Bojnice area, and reduced to ashes the demesnes of the royal General Károly Pálffy, and similarly they also devastated György Szelepcsényi's castle (he was the Archbishop of Esztergom) in Bánovce nad Bebravou.¹² Thököly and his 12,000-strong army camped at Žilina from 27th of September to 28th at dawn. The count called on the Trenčín County to announce "general insurrection" and join his camp. On the morning of the 28th, István Petróczi set out with a squad towards Zliechov on reconnaissance, and some of the men of this raid even rode under the Castle of Trenčín, shooting at the gate. In the manor in a village of Čachtice, they were so scared of the Kurucs that they didn't even dare to start the grape harvest.¹³

Town of Prievidza especially come off badly due to the invasion of the Thököly-forces: "...the Kurucs gave a *salvaquardia* of 100 [= protective squad] to the inhabitants of Prievidza, and they handed over the soldiers 600 Forints. But nevertheless, the *salvaquardia* closed the gates of the town, and set it in blaze to ashes. The folk is also burnt among the walls, and the Kurucs threw even the women and children to the flames! Lo! the Kurucs do keep their plighted word in this way!..." In the course of the further Kurucian devastating, villages of Oslany and Chynorany also burnt to ashes, then Thököly's main forces suddenly turned towards southeast, and camped near Žiar nad Hronom. In opinion of Bálint Balassa, who was the General-Captain of Krupina and the County Lord Lieutenant [= *Supremus Comes*] of the Hont County, their aim was probably seizing of Banská Štiavnica and the other mining towns.¹⁴

It gives good evidence of the Thököly troops' rapidity that an Imperial officer from the garrison in Banská Bystrica marched with a bigger military unit to the frontier of the Liptov County to attack them, but by the time of his arriving, the Kurucian main forces already rampaged in the middle of the Orava County, so the Imperial officer (being kept in mind mainly the defence of the mining towns) was compelled to return on 22nd

¹² ANGYAL, 1888. p. 179.

¹³ MNL OL, G 12, XII.1., 2nd box, fol. 132. (Archive of the Thököly Independence of War – Correspondence (1672 – 1691)). István Nemessányi's letter to Péter Persith (Čachtice, 28th of September, 1678).

¹⁴ MNL OL, C 1297th roll N^o 15944. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Bálint Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Krupina, 30th of September, 1678). The original text: "...A kurucok a privigyeknek száz lovast adtak *salvaquardiaként*. A lakosok hatszáz forintot is adtak a *salvaquardiának*. Azután pedig azok mégis bezárván a város kapuit, nekigyújtották a helyet, és porrá tették azt. Az emberek is benn égtek, gyermekeket, asszonyokat is a *salvaquardia* behányta a tűzbe! Lám, így tartják meg parolájukat a kurucok!..."

of September.¹⁵

We can learn about military objectives of the Anti-Habsburgian troops at the end of September from two Kurucs' record of evidence. István Pataki and János Bertók were captured by the garrison of the Levice Castle, and they said that if the army will not encounter any resistance, the Kurucs will launch attack in the direction of Trnava and Bratislava, and then they will invade Moravia from there. But if they will experience significant resistance from imperial and court loyal concentrations, they will turn towards Nové Zámky, and – after presenting 3,000 gold forints for the Pasha – they will ask him for permission to pass through the subjugated territory towards the Danube, and even eastwards.

The captives professed about the manpower that the Kurucian army commanded by Imre Thököly consisted of 11,000 – 12,000 men. The number of the Hungarian Kurucs was 4,500 persons, but Páter Józsa's joining would be expected with 600 – 700 mounted soldiers and 1,300 foot-soldiers. The Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian army was Imre Thököly, and the Seconds-in-Command were János Szűcs, János Pataki, István Úri and György Tállyai. The auxiliary French troops also took part in the operation with 3,000 – 3,500 men. The French Commander was Prince and General Christophe d'Allendy de Boham who had three Seconds-in-Command. The Polish troops being similarly consisting of 3,000 – 3,500 men who were led by an unknown Polish magnate who was allegedly the brother-in-law of the Polish-Lithuanian King Jan (John) III. Sobieski. The number of the mounted Cossacks and Moldavians belonging to the Poles was 500 – 600 men. The payment of the French, Polish and Cossack-Moldavian troops was financed by General Boham, but the Hungarians got no money from anywhere, and were only enticed with promises.

The captives also told that neither the Kurucian, nor the auxiliary forces had artillery equipment: neither by the army in the field, nor on any places in depots.¹⁶

In the very end of September, Thököly's certain mounted units really crossed over the River Morava, and caused serious damages to the inhabitants, besides awfully scared them. Hearing that, Pál Esterházy, General of the Border Defence Line of the Mining Towns, immediately made his way from Eisenstadt to the Castle of Šintava so as to strengthen the

¹⁵ MNL OL, C 1057th roll № 698. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.) Unreadable named German officer's letter to István Koháry (Banská Bystrica, 22nd of September, 1678).

¹⁶ MNL OL, P 125, 4748th roll № 11328. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai) Record of evidence of the Kurucs' imprisoned in Levice (Levice, 1st of October, 1678).

defence of the border castle.¹⁷

In the very beginning of October, the Thököly's army really encamped near Žiar nad Hronom. Departing from this place, a mounted unit of approximately 5,000 started the offensive on 3rd of October toward Zvolen, where set Zolná¹⁸ in flames, then it encamped by Hájniky¹⁹, not too far from the town walls.²⁰ The remain part of the Kurucian army arrived at morning of 5th of October under the walls of Zvolen, and the county magistrate right away swore fealty to Thököly. The town surrendered until 4 o'clock afternoon, but the fortress did not open the gates, so the besieging has begun.²¹ The defenders initially "*...neither from the fortress, nor from the town fired only a round at them at all, as the Hungarians sent a message for the defenders that even if only two men would be shot by them, then, all the way, they would perish and slay them by fire and sword...*"²²

The Kurucian army occupied fortress in Zvolen between 10 and 11 o'clock on 6th of October.²³ During the attack, 28 German defenders were killed by the Kurucs. Three of the survivors: the wounded Marquis Bagni (Commander of the fortress) and his two underlings were imprisoned, and the largest part of the garrison (200 mounted soldiers and 100 musketeers) was forced to take an oath of allegiance to Thököly. The Kurucs promptly settled in: Mihály Földváry was appointed to garrison leader. Few days later he demanded surrender of victuals from various nearby settlements, among them from some Koháry demesnes.²⁴ Besides Földváry's Hungarian garrison, there was a French unit led by a Captain named Ray in Zvolen, and a Hungarian mounted unit led by András Nagy,

¹⁷ MNL OL, C 1000th roll № 4683. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Imre Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Eisenstadt, 2nd of October, 1678): *„...Dominus Comes Generalis ex abrupto Sintaviam transmittitur propter rebelles transeuntes in Moraviam et depredantes sat magna incommodo Moravorum...”*

¹⁸ Nowadays settlement part of Zvolen.

¹⁹ Nowadays settlement part of Sliach.

²⁰ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 139–140. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése). Pál Gyürky's letter to István Koháry (Halič, 4th of October, 1678).

²¹ MNL OL, C 1057th roll № 704. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Pál Gyürky's letter to István Koháry (Halič, 5th of October, 1678); MNL OL, C 1299th roll № 16424. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Tamás Ebeczky's letter to Ferenc Barátnaky (Halič, 5th of October, 1678).

²² MNL OL, 40575th roll № 832. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Péter Balassa's letter to Pál Verebélyi, Land-Stewart of Sitno Demesne (Banská Štiavnica, 7th of October, 1678). The original text: *„...sem a várból, sem a városból semmi lövést nem tettek hozzájuk, mert megüzenték nekik a magyarok, ha csak két embert ölnek is meg, [akkor] tüzzelevassal rajtuk lesznek...”*

²³ MNL OL, C 1131st roll № 7506. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). György Lendvay's letter to István Koháry (Čabrad', 8th of October, 1678).

²⁴ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 95–96. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése). János Czingely's letter to István Koháry (Krupina, 10th of October, 1678).

former cavalry officer of the Kálló Fortress, so the Kurucian garrison consisted of altogether 1,500 men. Their above-mentioned ordering letter was titled to villages belonging to Divín and Modrý Kameň, and certain (but actually not mentioned) settlements of the Novohrad County, and demanded immediate conveying of 12 cartloads of hay, 80 "*kilas*" (= 5,000 kilograms) of oat, 100 loaves of bread, one beef cattle, 100 hens, 20 geese, 40 "*icces*" (= 32 litres) of butter and exactly not written quantity of wheat and wine per "*portam*" [= after one soccage]. In case of fulfilling, they promised the all-in-one protection for them (even offering the payment for the victuals!), but if they would realize the negligence of the peasants, menaced with a military execution of 3,000 persons and combustion completely ("*by fire and sword*") carried out.²⁵

It was just clearly seen on 5th of October that the Kurucian army also wanted to subjugate Banská Štiavnica, as both from the Mining Chamber of Banská Štiavnica and from the free royal town itself demanded to pay 9,000 – 9,000 Forints.²⁶ Imre Thököly sent an envoy to Banská Štiavnica and promised not to do any harm to the town in return of pecuniary contribution. Thököly demanded that the Kurucian captives taken so far would be released. Next day a delegation of 20 men went to Thököly's camp carrying valuable presents, together with the mentioned captives. Yet on that day, the town-dwellers waited for another Kurucian delegation.²⁷ Accordingly, on 7th of October, Banská Štiavnica handed the Kurucs over 10,000 golden forints, 50 "*gyras*" (= 12.3 kilograms) of raw silver and several barrels of wine. The Kurucs had three more claims: further paying of 40,000 forints; 1,000 persons for recruiting to the Kurucian army; delivering the Jesuits and the Imperial soldiers into their hands, otherwise "*...will not stay a stone standing in Banská Štiavnica...*"²⁸ According to a certain source, the German garrison remaining in the castle started preparing "*fiery kaptas*" [= foot-clothes immersed with flammable materials] so that if the town surrendered, they would set fire to the houses so that the Kurucs would benefit as little as possible from the occupation.²⁹ Nevertheless, town of Banská Štiavnica surrendered, and

²⁵ MNL OL, C 1302nd roll № 16920. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Letter of the commanders of the Hungarian–French garrison settled in Zvolen to certain settlements (Zvolen, 10th of October, 1678).

²⁶ MNL OL, C 1299th roll № 16424. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Tamás Ebeczky's letter to Ferenc Barátnaky (Halič, 5th of October, 1678).

²⁷ MNL OL, 40575th roll № 832. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Péter Balassa's letter to Pál Verebélyi, Land-Steward of Sitno Demesne (Banská Štiavnica, 7th of October, 1678).

²⁸ In the same place, № 836. Scribe Albert Késmárky's letter to Judit Balassa (Castle of Sitno, 7th of October, 1678).

²⁹ MNL OL, C 1087th roll № 6499. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Scribe Albert Késmárky's letter to Judit Balassa (undated, but based on its content, written in the

the vanguards of the Kurucian army arrived on 16th of October. The town-dwellers were awfully frightened, because had to know that the whole army wanted to march through the streets, moreover, the citizens were obliged to host for a dinner Imre Thököly who arrived to the town on 17th of October.³⁰

After seize of Zvolen, the heavier cannons were towed out of the citadel, and the Kurucian forces went to the direction of Banská Bystrica, conveying also 100 long ladders, as they were informed that the German garrison entrenched itself in the church district. The army was commanded by Imre Thököly, since the time of penetrating the Zvolen County it was increased by the thousands, and approximately consisted of 16,000 men. The nations of the army were encamped apart from each other, and sprang up in the same way, created units of 500–500 persons. One of such groups headed for the direction of the castle of Halič, but returned without success to the main forces by 10th of October.³¹ (Pál Gyürky correctly denounced on 5th of October, that the Kurucs will make an attempt to acquire Halič within 3–4 days.³²) Town of Banská Bystrica surrendered on 10th of October, the German garrison was released unharmed out of the citadel, and the insurgents let the Germans march out with their baggage, together with their supporters.³³ The Kurucs swore the town-dwellers in to consign those assets and values being stowed away in safety by the noblemen of the castle of Fil'akovo, and confiscated all of them. When the concerned persons were informed about that fact, they got angry very much with István Koháry, who previously suggested the transporting of the ready-to-escape things to the absolute safety of the well-defended mining town.³⁴ (The noblemen's angry was increased

beginning of October, 1678).

³⁰ In the same place, N^o 6500. Scribe Albert Késmárky's letter to Farkas Koháry (Banská Štiavnica, 17th of October, 1678).

³¹ MNL OL, C 1064th roll N^o 5720. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Imre Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Divín, 10th of October, 1678); MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 95–96. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése) János Czingely's letter to István Koháry (Krupina, 10th of October, 1678); MNL OL, C 1087th roll N^o 6499. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Scribe Albert Késmárky's letter to Judit Balassa (undated, but based on its content, written in the beginning of October, 1678).

³² MNL OL, C 1057th roll N^o 704. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.) Pál Gyürky's letter to István Koháry (Halič, 5th of October, 1678).

³³ MNL OL, C 1056th roll N^o 301., enclosure of the letter (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.) copy of the letter of the Prior of the Piarist monastery of Brezno, which letter was sent to Michael Angelo Jacquemod, Land-Stewart of Castle of Muráň (Brezno, 14th of October, 1678); MNL OL, C 1087th roll N^o 6438. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Pál Verebélyi's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, 14th of October, 1678).

³⁴ MNL OL, C 1294th roll N^o 15519. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V) Péter Balassa's letter to Judit Balassa (Dobrá Niva, 12th of October, 1678); MNL OL, C 1087th roll

that the same situation had already happened after the Kurucian occupying of Zvolen.³⁵⁾

The Kurucian army arrived at Brezno on 9th of October, at 2 p.m., approximately three battalions of Hungarian, Polish, Cossack and Tartar cavalymen appeared near the town walls. Apart from the prior, only two monks and an organist named Glycer were inside the monastery, as well as refugee residents from the Spiš Region, especially from the village of Spišské Vlchy. The Kurucs threatened the prior that they would do a sacrilege in the temple, and he together with his nine adjuncts would be beheaded, if the town-dwellers show any resistance. Taking advantage of the inebriated defenders' carelessness, at 11 o'clock in the evening the Kurucs set fire to several buildings (from substitute town notary Jakab's house to Mister Chmellius's house). The Kurucs demanded the town magistrate to gather 6,000 loaves of bread, 10 oxen, 2 large-scale tubs, 30 "mérós" (= 1875 kilograms) of oat, and geese, ducks, spice, salt, honey, butter, all kind of meat foods, vegetables, 500 eggs and 3,000 sandals with buckles. On 11th of October, the stocked food was run out, and the sentinels at the gates were fed with prune, ground walnut, garlic and bran. On the 12th of October, the town aldermen went out to the Kurucian camp, but before departure they had requested blessing from the prior. Then by suppertime, one of the aldermen returned with the "salvaquardia" [= protective squad for the town] of Polish, Cossack and Tartar soldiers, and they took counsel with each other for a rather long time. There were no atrocities in the town, but outside the walls, in the farm buildings of the monastery, approximately 300 Kurucs were settled and ravaged the surrounding crofts. On 13th of October, in the morning, the head of the aldermen and the three-nation "salvaquardia" went to the refugees coming from Banská Bystrica, then at about 10 o'clock a Kurucian delegation departed towards the castle of Muráň, and one of the aldermen of Brezno was compelled to take side with it.³⁶

№ 6438. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Pál Verebélyi's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, 14th of October, 1678).

³⁵ MNL OL, C 1131st roll № 7506. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) György Lendvay's letter to István Koháry (Čabrad, 8th of October, 1678).

³⁶ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 301., enclosure of the letter, (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.) Copy of the letter of the Prior of the Piarist monastery in Brezno, which letter was sent to Michael Angelo Jacquemod, Land-Stewart of the Castle of Muráň (Brezno, 14th of October, 1678.) Jacquemod also wrote to István Koháry on 11th of October, informing him that the surroundings of Brezno were actually set in fire by the rebels, what he could see with his own eyes during a day from the walls of the Muráň Castle. MNL OL, C 988th roll № 7324. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars IV.) Michaelangelo Jacquemod's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Muráň, 11th of October, 1678): „...hostis Suam Excursionem ad Briznam usque exerit Incendium Ejusdem abhinc ingens visum est hesterna nocte, ubi nam illud factum, et quomodo nulla adhuc cocta notitia, an Circa Briznam, an vero ulterius...”

György Bezzegh, one of the magistrate members of the Zvolen County, moved from Ostrá Lúka to Banská Bystrica because of the Kurucian advance in the beginning of October. He remained there even after the Kurucian takeover, and from there he wrote to Koháry about the occupation of the mining town and the nearby castle of Slovenská Ľupča.³⁷

The Garrison of Kremnica (though many Croatian and German defender fled from the town on 14th of October) declined handing it over to Thököly, so the Kurucian Chief-in-Command had to start the blockade on 15th of October. As there was no proper equipment having been disposable, the Kurucian foot-soldiers had to tow on their own the cannons under the walls.³⁸ The surrender occurred only after the attack against the walls, and after the massacre all of the (200 German) defenders.³⁹ About 17th of October, 1,000 mounted Kurucs set out to the Valley of the Upper-Hron so as to scout the area situated northwards to the castle of Muráň, but they did not approach to the castle.⁴⁰

On the basis of an archival source we know, that in the middle of October there was a smaller Kurucian squad of 12 in the castle of Šášov, situated near Žiar nad Hronom. In the letter-writer's opinion, they would probably re-occupy the mountain castle only by means of cannons.⁴¹

We can get new information about the conquest of the towns around the Hron River between 10th and 20th of October from the pen of a Jesuit priest, hiding himself in the Banská Bystrica area. The Kurucs handed over the civil management of Banská Bystrica to István Géczy, then they collected the belongings of the nobility from town and castle of Fil'akovo (Füle), especially the houses around the market square were searched for them. The convent of the Jesuits in Banská Bystrica, and the gardens and stables belonging to it, were looted and burned. The German garrison of Kremnica was massacred. The Franciscans of Brezno were not subjected to any atrocities, but László Wesselényi, who occupied the castle of Slovenská Ľupča, imprisoned the parish priest there. By 20th of October, 4,500 refugees from the Liptov County had arrived at the Hron River

³⁷ MNL OL, C 1123rd roll № 7045. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) György Bezzegh's letter to István Koháry (Banská Bystrica, 12th of October, 1678).

³⁸ MNL OL, C 1287th roll № 14397. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) István Horváth's letter to István Koháry (Halič, 17th of October, 1678).

³⁹ MNL OL, C 1135th roll № 555. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.) Imre Ballassa's letter to István Koháry (Divín, 20th of October, 1678).

⁴⁰ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 303. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.) Michaelangelo Jacquemod's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Muráň, 18th of October, 1678).

⁴¹ MNL OL, C 1316th roll № 18025. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Judit Ballassa's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, about 15th of October, 1678).

and fled either to Levice, Krupina and Fil'akovo, or to Bratislava and Vienna, and it is also quite certain that the whole of Austria was frightened at the sight of the refugees and hearing the news of the Kurucian attacks.⁴²

After seizing Kremnica, Imre Thököly and the main body of his army headed towards Banská Štiavnica and Krupina, then the Kuruc main army landed under the castle of Bzovík (Bozók).⁴³ Concerning the surrender of Krupina we know the following: on the 6th of October, hearing about the destiny of the Zvolen fortress, General-Captain Bálint Balassa was terrified and deserted out of the border castle. Then, after five hours later, the Croatian part of the garrison followed his example. Three days later, the German part of the Garrison also abandoned its post⁴⁴, many of them moved to the town. (The Croats and the major part of the Germans together with their family escaped to Levice.)⁴⁵ The town-dwellers firmly declared to retain the morale, and offered dogged resistance against the Kurucs, in spite of having been already threatened by Imre Thököly.⁴⁶ The Kurucian leader hardly after his arriving into Banská Štiavnica on 17th of October ordered 30 noblemen of Krupina that they would immediately take up arms and join to him in Banská Štiavnica on horseback, otherwise “...even the little ones will also be put to the edge of sword...”.⁴⁷ In his letter dated from 20th of October, Imre Balassa already wrote about 40 noblemen of Krupina, who actually returned to Imre Thököly's allegiance.⁴⁸

We can attain knowledge about the capitulation of town of Krupina and its fortress from an attestation which was written and subscribed by County Deputy Lieutenant (in Latin: *vice comes*, or *alispán* in Hungarian) and other three noblemen of the Hont County by the special request of the County Lord Lieutenant Bálint Balassa. According to their attestation,

⁴² MNL OL, G 12, XII.1., 2nd box, fol. 213. (Archive of the Thököly Independence of War – Correspondence (1672 – 1691)) a Jesuit priest's letter to the parish priest of Muráň (without place, 20th of October, 1678).

⁴³ MNL OL, C 1087th roll № 6438. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Pál Vrebélyi's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, 14th of October, 1678).

⁴⁴ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 299. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.) Ádám Balassa's letter to Ádám Forgách (Castle of Modrý Kameň, 9th of October, 1678).

⁴⁵ MNL OL, C 1087th roll № 6499. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Scribe Albert Késmárky's letter to Judit Balassa (undated, but based on its content, written in the beginning of October, 1678).

⁴⁶ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 95–96. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése) János Czingely's letter to István Koháry (Krupina, 10th of October, 1678).

⁴⁷ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 304. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.) Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 18th of October, 1678).

⁴⁸ MNL OL, C 1135th roll № 555. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.) Imre Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Divín, 20th of October, 1678).

the following facts can be stated: even if Bálint Balassa had stayed in the castle, the town would not have been able to defend itself due to the enormous strength of the Kuruc troops. And if the German and Croatian troops had not abandon their posts, Krupina would still be fallen into the Kurucs' hands. The four noblemen personally made sure of these facts when travelled to Thököly's camp situated in a village of Ostrá Lúka, by the Hron River, so as to enter into negotiate about the capitulation. The Kuruc army definitely wanted to occupy Korpona, and the fact that they harboured a terrible anger against Bálint Balassa, who they definitely wanted to kill, stimulated the Kurucs to hurry.

Bálint Balassa continually laboured for organizing the defence of Krupina, and tried to eliminate the hampering factors, but he failed. On the one hand, the pauperage of the town did not want to leave the town fortress, so their feeding was devolved upon the General-Captain. On the other hand: he had only altogether a "*quintal*" (= 100 kilograms) of gunpowder and leaden bullets, which had been delivered at the last minute from Banská Štiavnica. Thirdly, he had no skilled artillerymen, only three locksmiths designated by the town council would serve by the cannons, but they were such unqualified that they exploded themselves on the occasion of repelling of an Ottoman raid. Thus, Bálint Balassa went out of the border castle in a hurry that he did it not only for his fear, but by his sober mind, as if the Kurucs approaching under the walls would hear about the General-Captain's presence inside the border castle, then the siege would be more ferocious, and the Kurucs would brutalize even the innocent dwellers.

Nobody from the garrison joined to Bálint Balassa when he left. He took only his small-numbered attendants and servitors with himself; but only taking a few minutes after his leave, the border soldiers made a dash at his left assets and realties and totally preyed upon them. Then János Szántó, the Deputy-Captain, and the other officers such as Ferenc Ivanics, Croatian commander, the magistrates of the Hont County (such as *vice comes* János Szelényi, György Gerhart and Pál Gerhart), head of the town council and some aldermen were assembled. After seriously exhorting about his tasks of defending, they placed the destiny of Krupina under the Deputy-Captain's care.

The occupation of Krupina was also done by capitulation, but the negotiations started only on the brink of the Kurucs' arriving. The main point was that the defenders would not fire only a round at the approaching Kurucs; otherwise the agreement would be cancelled, and each person with no selection would be massacred, and the whole town would be burnt to the ground. The large part of the noblemen did not agree with

the fact of the capitulation, but neither even with the delivery of the Ottoman prisoners to the Kurucs, nor their joining to the rebel army, but they endured under the pressure of necessity.⁴⁹ The Kuruc garrison arrived to Krupina on 20th of October⁵⁰, and István Koháry informed Pál Esterházy about the submission of the town to the Kurucs on 21th of October.⁵¹

On 22nd of October, 200 Kurucian foot-soldiers were billeted as garrison in Bzovík⁵², and on 23rd of October the garrison of Krupina consisted of 300 mounted Kurucs.⁵³ In the end of October, approximately from 20th of October, the garrisons and border castles being loyal to the Sovereign also capitulated before the Kurucs. This fact was noted relevantly by Farkas Koháry in his letter: *„...the Kurucs are so easily seizing the border castles as if they are merely taking a walk...”,* when he heard about the capitulation of Modrý Kameň on that day.⁵⁴ And one of the skilled servants of Koháry family wrote that the Kurucs seemed to gain fabled abilities, as *“...they have miraculous craftsmanship to take border castles...”*.⁵⁵

The Kurucs boasted themselves about the easy conquest. Gáspár Mónay, a nobleman from the Abaúj County, wrote to the Transylvanian Gáspár Kornis so: *“...God has directed and led us successfully so far in this land, apart from the Siege of Ružomberok. Our enemy did not give battle with us. We have seized the Mining Towns, town of Zvolen and its fortress, Divín and Víglaš and Halič have also surrendered, Bzovík has been neutralised, moreover, Krupina has already been in our hands...”*.⁵⁶ A letter, dated

⁴⁹ MNL OL, P 125, 4748th roll № 11331. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). Attestation about capitulation of Krupina to the Kurucs in the autumn of 1678 (Krupina, 22nd of January, 1679).

⁵⁰ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 298. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Čabrad', 20th of October, 1678).

⁵¹ MNL OL, P 125, 4706th roll № 2769. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). István Koháry's letter to Pál Esterházy (Fiľakovo, 21st of October, 1678).

⁵² MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 305. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 22nd of October, 1678).

⁵³ In the same place, № 306. Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 23rd of October, 1678).

⁵⁴ In the same place, № 307. Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 26th of October, 1678). The quoted text in original: *„...a kuruc sétálásképpen veszi a várakat...”*

⁵⁵ MNL OL, C 1087th roll № 6500. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Scribe Albert Késmárky's letter to Farkas Koháry (Banská Štiavnica, 17th of October, 1678). The original text is: *„...csodálatos mesterségek vagyon a várvételekhez...”*

⁵⁶ MNL OL, C 1302nd roll № 16878. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Gáspár Mónay's letter to Gáspár Kornis, General-Captain of Marosszék (Kurucian camp by Bzovík, 28th of October, 1678). The original text is: *„...Isten szerencsésen hordozott és vezetett még eddig ezen a földön, az egy rosenberki [= rózsahegy] ostromon kívül. Az ellenség harcot nem állott, a bányavárosok, Zólyom várost és várat úgy vettük meg, Divényt, Véglest feladták, sok hűséggel Gács várát, Bozók neutralisált [= semlegesítették],...sőt Korpona is a mienk...”*

from 30th of October in the camp by Dobrá Niva, written and cryptographed by the Kurucs, but later intercepted and deciphered by the loyal border soldiers, contained these proud lines about the conquest of the royal border castles: “...*God has already done all the Mining Towns into our hands! Besides, the German garrison of the castle of Vígľaš has surrendered, and we have released them with amicably. Castle of Divín has been already surrendered by the German garrison, which has been joined us, similarly Count Imre Balassa who has promised to recruit soldiers for us. Castle of Halič has also surrendered, the Captain with the garrison have returned to our allegiance, similarly Modrý Kameň has done the same, where we have renewed and left Count Ádám Balassa in the position of General-Captaincy, and we have settled the border soldiers’ pay. We have done the same in Krupina, and its Deputy-Captain János Szántó has been commissioned to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel of the field troops...*”.⁵⁷

The troops of Thököly suddenly turned to north-eastwards from Krupina, seized the castle of Vígľaš, and the castle of Divín was the following aim on 22nd of October. At last the Kurucian army set off to the castle of Halič. The landlord, Count Ádám Forgách resided permanently behind the walls in the first part of October, and he left the castle with his attendants, heading for westwards on the morning of 13th of October, and only the land-stewards remained there.⁵⁸ The land-stewards, headed by János Makfalvay, were forced to host Imre Thököly and his companion on the 23rd of October, then swore allegiance to him on the 24th, and this way they saved Halič Estate from destruction. The Kurucian army continued its march: firstly it had a rest by Ľuboreč, then reached castle of Modrý Kameň, and on the third day encamped by castle of Bzovík.⁵⁹

So, after occupying the castles of Vígľaš, Divín and Halič, Thököly finally planned to attack the castles of Modrý Kameň and Levice.⁶⁰ But as

⁵⁷ MNL OL, 40575th roll № 835. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Solution of an intercepted and partly deciphered letter (Kurucian camp by Dobrá Niva, 30th of October, 1678). The original text is: „...*Már Isten az egész bányavárosokat kezünkbe adta. Azon kívül Végles várát is az benne való német feladta, kit békével bocsátottunk [e]. Divény várát is az német feladta, ki is mind mellénk állott, Balassa Imre Uram is, ki is hadat fogad számunkra. Gács Vára is magát feladta, és az kapitánya praesidiumjával együtt megesküdt, úgy Kékkő Vára is, ahol Balassa Ádám Uramat találván az főkapitányságban, tisztiben meghagytuk, az praesidiumnak megfizettünk, Korponán hasonlóképpen, kinek vicekapitánya, Szántó János Uramat mezei főkapitánnyá tettük...*”

⁵⁸ MNL OL, C 1287th roll № 14398. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). István Horváth’s letter to István Koháry (Halič, 13th of October, 1678).

⁵⁹ KOMJÁTI, Zoltán Igor: *Állandó tűztől övezve. A füleki végvár hadtörténete Koháry II. István főkapitányságának idején (1667–1682). (Discussiones Filekienses IV.)*. Fil’akovo : Vydatel’stvo múzea vo Fil’akove – Füleki Vármúzeum kiadványa, 2019. pp. 115–116.

⁶⁰ MNL OL, P 125, 4719th roll № 6164. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). György Farkas’s letter

the result of a certain and hitherto unrevealed reason, he omitted the important border castles. But nevertheless, after submission of Modrý Kameň, between 26th and 29th of October, a Kurucian unit returned and ventured upon seizing Fortress of Fil'akovo by the special order of Count Thököly, though without any success.⁶¹

Leopold I. evaluated István Koháry's heroism, loyalty and steadiness, had been manifesting at the time of the Kurucian attack against Fortress of Fil'akovo, and gave thanks to him, and gifted him a golden necklace with a pendant of His Majesty's engraved portrait.⁶²

The Kurucian main forces encamped by Bzovík at the very end of October⁶³, when were informed about the concentration of the loyal troops and their advance to east direction, and the entire army (except the casualties and ill) set off to Žiar nad Hronom.⁶⁴ Based on another source, the Kurucs marched to Kremnica, but by all means their aim was to defend the occupied mining towns, where the specific coinage has been made by an order of Imre Thököly: "*...as copious and strong companies of Germans are gathering near Bojnica, the Kurucs have decided to defend the Mining Towns, where during the occupation, profaned His Majesty's*

to Bálint Balassa (Levice, 23rd of October, 1678).

⁶¹ MNL OL, C 1293rd, roll № 15291. (ŠABB, Koháry-család levéltára, Pars V.). Letter of the Court War Council to István Koháry (Vienna, 7th of November, 1678.): *...Percepimus ex literis Eiusdem vigesima sexta et nona elapsi mensis Octobris, quanto studio et alacritate contra rebellium obsidionem se præparaverit, omniaque necessaria pro defensione Confiny sibi concrediti disposerit, nec non sub noctis silentio rebelles sibi que associatos proprius accedere ausos, cum aliqua suorum iactura retrocedere cægerit rebellis Tökely adhortatorys spretris atque contemptis. Fecit in hoc rem strenui & fidelis commendantis muneri convenientem, quam devotam erga Cæsaream Regiamque Majestatem, Eadem Sacratissima Majestas gratia sua clementer recognoscere non intermittet. Interea speramus Præsidium Filekiense ab obsidione rebellium pro tempore fore liberum & securum, post cædem et stragem haud exiguum secunda et Tertia huius inter Montanas Civitates, ysdem illatam quam Exercitus Cæsarius & Regius prosequi non desistet donec respiscant, et se gratiæ Regiæ accommodent, aut perseverantes pertinacia omnino deleantur...*

⁶² MNL OL, C 1293rd № 15314. (ŠABB, Koháry család levéltára, Pars V.). Thanksgiving and donation letter of Leopold I. to István Koháry (Vienna, 13th of December, 1678): *...Informati sumus te hisce disturbys Rebellium insultibus, et machinationibus generose opposuisse, neque minis, neque violentiæ illorum invasioni cedendo, præsidium tibi concreditum sedulo conservasse. Cum igitur præclaris hisce actionibus raræ fidelitatis et constantiæ palmam merueris, tuique olim genitoris pro Patria gloriose occumbentis vestigijs insistendo singularem Laudem tibi comparaveris. Ideo hocce tuum fidele servitium gratum Nobis accidit, non dubitantes te ita continuaturum et gratiæ Nostræ augmentum ulterius promeriturum, interea iussimus in signum Cæsareæ ac Regiæ Nostræ Clementiæ catena aurea cum effigie Nostra te remunerandum...*

⁶³ MNL OL, C 1302nd roll № 16878. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Gáspár Mónay's letter to Gáspár Kornis, General-Captain of Marosszék (Kurucian camp by Bzovík, 28th of October. 1678).

⁶⁴ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 309. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabraď, 30th of October, 1678).

coinage: on the head, they have left the Blessed Immaculate Mary's Portrait, but on the tail, instead of His Majesty's Portrait, they have put the Blazon of Hungary with this circumscription: 'Pro patria et pro lege et mori & vivere' [=For the Country and the Laws and death or alive].⁶⁵ In turn, Pál Csáky was afraid that the Kurucs aggregated near Žiar nad Hronom would march to the border castle of Levice after few days.⁶⁶

For increasing and keeping the morale, Imre Thököly immediately ordered the certain part of the money either taken by the time of the occupation of the mining towns, or the newly coined to be distributed among the Kurucian soldiers as their payment.⁶⁷ The Kurucs engaged in battle with the Imperial troops by Handlová.⁶⁸ The Kurucian marching toward Bojnice began on 31st of October, but Károly Pálffy's army "...did not let them beyond the Valley of Handlová...". Hundreds of Kurucs died in the battle (among them several persons originating from Banská Štiavnica), double than the German goners. The loss of Thököly's troops was increased because the population of the villages around Handlová turned against them as they fled towards Zvolen. On 3rd of November, the Imperial troops encamped accurately on that place where the Kurucs had stayed one month earlier (Zolná-Hájniky), while Thököly's army halted on the line of Slatinka–Lieskovec. The German forces consisted of 8,000 men, as Károly Pálffy had returned to Bojnice with his 2,000 soldiers, but they expected a reinforcement of 20,000 coming from Bratislava. The Kurucs also expected reinforcements, for Páter Józsa with thousands of men who were just about to rallying around town of Rimavská Sobota. Imre Thököly ordered the 400 Kurucian defenders left behind in Zvolen not to let the town perished, and in case of the Imperial siege, rather they

⁶⁵ MNL OL, C 1302nd roll № 16965. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Unknown person's letter to Ádám Czobor (Lučenec, 31st of October, 1678). The original text is: „...mivel Bajmóc tájára alkalmas compagnia németek érkeztenek, a [kurucok] a bányákat fogják őrzeni, mivel azokat occupálván, az Őfelsége pénzét is dedecorálták, meghagyván egyfelől cum reuello Boldogságos Szűz képét, másfelől az Őfelsége képe helyett Magyarország címerét verék, ilyen körül való írással: 'Pro patria et pro lege et mori & vivere'...”

⁶⁶ MNL OL, P 125, 4702nd roll № 1636. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). Pál Csáky's letter to Pál Esterházy (Levice, 1st of November, 1678).

⁶⁷ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 159–160. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése). Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad, 3rd of November, 1678).

⁶⁸ The history literature refers to Žiar nad Hronom as the place of the battle, but really that was situated farther toward north-west with about 15 kilometres. BENCZÉDI, László: *Rendiség, abszolútizmus és centralizáció a XVII. század végi Magyarországon (1664–1685). (Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből 91.)*. Budapest : Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980. p. 86.; TRÓCSÁNYI, Zsolt: *Teleki Mihály (Erdély és a kuruc mozgalom 1690-ig)*. Budapest : Akadémiai Kiadó, 1972. p. 237.; BÁNLAKY József: *A magyar nemzet hadtörténelme*: <https://mek.oszk.hu/09400/09477/html/0016/1354.html> [downloaded and seen: 15th of January, 2024]

would withdraw into the citadel.⁶⁹

Another piece of news that reached Čabrad' via Hronský Beňadik and Levice wrote about the battle northwest of Žiar nad Hronom so: "...the Land-Steward of the Hronský Beňadik Dominium wrote to Pál Csáky that the Army of His Majesty battled with the Kurucs by a meadow situated north-westwards to Žiar nad Hronom, and the enemy faced about and routed and began to flee toward Zvolen. Yesterday evening some people arrived to here [= Čabrad'] from Zvolen, who had set off there to buy their wine, and spoke that the soldiers of His Majesty are staying now in Zvolen...".⁷⁰ The Imperial troops were also encamped near Zvolen on 6th of November.⁷¹

After the Battle of Handlová, a certain part of the Kurucs were entirely demoralised and fled toward the occupied territories ruled by the Turks. One of the land-stewards of the Čabrad' Demesne suggested Koháry that the border soldiers of Fil'akovo would take big loots, if they make a dash at the Kurucs fleeing toward Ottoman fortress in Szécsény.⁷²

Imre Thököly conceded that he would temporarily give up his plans for the offensive, and immediately endeavoured to enter into relations with the royal part for an armistice, after he had led the Kurucian main camp to Divín Castle. Pál Szalay was the delegate of the Kurucs⁷³, who had already travelled to Vienna earlier for a reconcile negotiation in October.⁷⁴ Pál Szalay had set off to Vienna just after 1st of November again, and he reported about the results of his errand to Thököly on 8th of November, who ordered him to return to the royal part, specifically

⁶⁹ MNL OL, 40575th roll № 837. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Judit Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, 6th of November, 1678).

⁷⁰ ŠABB, Rodový archív Coburg-Koháry, Pars I., Documents, correspondence and other writings, № 541. Pál Rácz's letter to Ferenc Sótér (Castle of Čabrad', 5th of November, 1678). The original text is: "...[garam-]szentbenedeki prefektus uram írta [Csáky Pál] ónagyságának, hogy az Ófelsége hadai megütköztvén a kurucokkal, [Garam-]Szentkeresztben fölül való mezőben, hátat adott az ellenség, és Zólyom felé szaladva ment. Amint hogy tegnap este érkeztek haza némelyek, kik Zólyomba mentek volt boroknak eladása végett, azok is azt beszélték, hogy Ófelsége népe vagyon immár Zólyomban..."

⁷¹ MNL OL, C 1087th roll № 6432. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Pál Verebélyi's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, 6th of November, 1678).

⁷² ŠABB, Rodový archív Coburg-Koháry, Pars I., Documents, correspondence and other writings, № 541. Pál Rácz's letter to Ferenc Sótér (Castle of Čabrad', 5th of November, 1678).

⁷³ IVÁNYI, Emma: *Közvetítési kísérletek a bécsi udvar és Thököly között*. In: Benczédi, László (ed.): *A Thököly-felkelés és kora*. Budapest : Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983. p. 130.

⁷⁴ MNL OL, C 1287th roll № 14313. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Mihály Teleki's letter to Pál Szalay (Kővár, 26th of October, 1678). – Mihály Teleki asked Szalay to give information about the negotiations of Vienna, naming himself as "...the one who resting under the shadow of the Turkish Sultan...", while he named Szalay as "...the person who leaning beneath the robe of the Roman Emperor..."

together with Pál Gyürky. Imre Thököly wrote a letter to the mentioned person, which would have to be forwarded by Land-Steward of Halič János Makfalvay to the addressee.⁷⁵ Pál Gyürky also received letter from Pál Szalay: his presence would be absolutely necessary in the course of the armistice negotiations, and what is wanted and desired by or Archbishop of Esztergom Szelepcsényi, or the Sovereign Leopold I. Thus, he would set off to the Divín Castle on 9th of November, early morning, but he would not bring along more than five horses so as they would move swifter and easier.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, István Koháry's immediate superior, Pál Esterházy, also started organizing the offensive against the Kurucs: the general reached out to Leopold I to allow an additional 1,000 soldiers to be recruited to the garrisons not yet occupied by the Kurucs (Fil'akovo, Levice, Nitra, Šintava), in addition to the 1,000 men already stationed there. This meant for Fil'akovo that the number of the mounted soldiers might be even raised up to 400 persons. Esterházy also disposed of the long-awaited pays for the soldiers, so as he would receive the names of the 400 mounted soldiers from Koháry and the others from the other three border castles, he would immediately set off for the re-occupation of the Mining Towns.⁷⁷ I must refute here Dávid Angyal's statement, who wrote the fact in his two-volume book's first part that Pál Esterházy gathered the Imperial and Hungarian forces of the border defence system of the Mining Towns by Lešt' on 21st of October which was praised by István Koháry in his letter written to Ádám Forgách.⁷⁸ Namely, in the above-mentioned letter from 29th of October, Pál Esterházy clearly write: "**...I have already had shivers for three days and I have been convalescing for further nine days, and after extensive medical attendance, thanks for God, I am a shade better, and as God will give my entire health back...I immediately set off and visited all the border castles one by one, wherever the enemy will be discovered...**" Pál Esterházy and István Koháry could not be next to Lešt' on 21st of October, just because the General-Captain of Fil'akovo wrote a letter to his superior, staying in the border castle on that day.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ In the same place, № 14400. Imre Thököly's letter to János Makfalvay (Kurucian Camp by Divín, 8th of November, 1678).

⁷⁶ In the same place, № 14401. Pál Szalay's letter to Pál Gyürky (Kurucian Camp by Divín, 8th of November, 1678).

⁷⁷ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 127-128. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése). Pál Esterházy's letter to István Koháry (Šintava, 29th of October, 1678).

⁷⁸ ANGYAL, 1888. p. 189.

⁷⁹ MNL OL, P 125, 4706th roll № 2769. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). István Koháry's letter to Pál Esterházy (Fil'akovo, 21st of October, 1678). The original text is: „...*Én immár kilenc*

Pál Esterházy indicated by letter to István Koháry that he was under preparation for starting eastwards, so the General-Captain would gather those border soldiers being available for encamping, and when he would reach next to Fil'akovo, they join to the united forces.⁸⁰ Pál Esterházy – during his encamping by Fil'akovo, approximately on 29th of November – sent letters calling for submissions to the commanders of the border castles being still in Kurucian hands, and promised that in case of capitulation only Hungarian garrison would be settled in.⁸¹

The swearing of the re-occupied border castles' garrisons and their incorporation into the border defence system constantly happened. Bálint Balassa, General-Captain of Krupina, did not return with the Royal forces, and János Szántó, former Deputy-Captain, had converted to the Kurucian side, had sworn to Thököly's allegiance and become a Lieutenant of the field troops, so János Hatvani-Kis had to dispose of reconverting of the returned garrison to the Sovereign's allegiance. On the 29th of November, the new Deputy-Captain swore the mounted soldiers in, who had been served in Krupina, joined to the Kurucs, but realizing the failing of the Kurucs, at last they decided to reconvert to the allegiance of the Sovereign. Their number was approximately 80 persons. As the town-dwellers of Krupina were completely unarmed, so he also allowed the reconverted Hungarian foot-soldiers to enter into Krupina, and they were similarly sworn in by Zsigmond Lintner, Imperial war scribe of the fortress. The Deputy-Captain allowed the foot-soldiers into the border castle for the reason that even on that day the German part of the garrison also arrived, and he was feared of the atrocities. He did not want the unarmed dwellers to be occasionally attacked and harmed by the Imperial soldiers seeking for victuals. When the German garrison arrived into Krupina, the Deputy-Captain and the German officer entered into compromise about the common co-existence, and they agreed that the Germans would try to being tolerant toward the reconverted Hungarian part of the garrison.⁸² The garrison of Modrý Kameň was sworn in the Sovereign's allegiance in December.⁸³

naptól fogvást, a harmadnapí hideglelés miatt, igen alkalmatlanul lévén, feles orvoslások után, legyen Istennek hála, már jobban vagyok, és mihelyest Isten előbbeni egészségemet megadja....azonnal veszem utamat végházról végházra, arrafelé, amerre az ellenség van...."

⁸⁰ MNL OL, C 772nd roll N^o 1581. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars IV.). Pál Esterházy's letter to István Koháry (Šintava, 6th of November, 1678).

⁸¹ MNL OL, P 125, 4710th roll N^o 3960. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). György Szelepcsényi's letter to Pál Esterházy (Vienna, 15th of December, 1678).

⁸² MNL OL, P 125, 4706th roll N^o 2717. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). János Hatvani-Kis's letter to Pál Esterházy (Krupina, 29th of November, 1678).

⁸³ MNL OL, P 125, 4751st roll N^o 11722. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). Text of swearing in-dited by István Koháry for the Border Soldiers of the castle of Modrý Kameň (December of

Two problems arose in November of 1678 all over the re-occupied territory. 1. Several letters were intercepted by the Kurucs raiding and cruising throughout the roads, and as a consequence, György Bezzegh also heavily got angry, and he mainly blamed those rebels settled in the castle of Divín for the lost information.⁸⁴ 2. The German garrisons' depredations also came into prominence: Archbishop Szelepcsényi's demesne of Bzovík was preyed by the musketeers of the returned garrison⁸⁵, and János Czingely complained against the Commander of the German garrison conducted into the Krupina Citadel, who forced almost all wealthy citizens to accept the billeting of five-five musketeers into their house; the dwellers had to give an all-out provide for the soldiers, but they were often discontented with the service.⁸⁶

As we can read above, had been informing of the success and advance of the Kurucs, Bálint Balassa, General-Captain of Krupina, intentionally abandoned his post and escaped westwards. Among others, he reached Vienna, where he was arrested and taken into prison in January 1679. As Balassa was the Lord-Lieutenant of Hont County [= *supremus comes*] at the same time, due to his arrest, the usual county procedures also came to a halt. István Koháry applied for being took measures by the county, but János Czingely, magistrate member, replied that the county was not able to function, because of the demission of the former magistrate members in the autumn of 1678, and due to the Kurucian offensive, the General Assembly of Election [= *sedes restauratoria* or *sedes electitia*] was not be called together. And it would not happened within a short time, because of the Lord-Lieutenant's absence who was imprisoned in Vienna: "...I am truthfully writing to Your Lordship, that Lord-Lieutenant Bálint Balassa went to Vienna and was arrested and cast into prison...It will be fortunate for us, if the Garrison of this place is not transferred to Bzovík..."⁸⁷ Sometime in the first quarter of 1679, Bálint Balassa was released, but he fell ill due to the coldness of the dungeon, so he did not

1678). And MNL OL, P 125, 4706th roll № 2772. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). István Koháry's letter to Pál Esterházy (Fiľakovo, 22nd of December, 1678).

⁸⁴ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 88. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése). György Bezzegh's letter to István Koháry (Banská Bystrica, 26th of November, 1678); MNL OL, C 1123rd roll № 7033. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). György Bezzegh's letter to István Koháry (Banská Bystrica, 29th of November, 1678).

⁸⁵ MNL OL, P 125, 4710th roll № 3960. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). György Szelepcsényi's letter to Pál Esterházy (Vienna, 15th of December, 1678).

⁸⁶ MNL OL, C 1292nd roll № 15057. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). János Czingely's letter to István Koháry (Krupina, 30th of November, 1678).

⁸⁷ MNL OL, C 1123rd roll № 7122. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). János Czingely's letter to István Koháry (Krupina, 6th of January, 1679). The original text is: "...Válósággal írhatom Nagyságodnak azt is, hogy Balassa Bálint Uram felment volna Bécsbe, megarestáltatott volna...Az itt levő Præsidium szerencse, ha Bozókba nem transferáltatik..."

able to appear before General Jacob Leslie and pay his devoirs to him, who took upon himself to issue a letter of exoneration to avoid the examination of the Aulic War Council. So, he asked Koháry to hand the enclosure letter over to the General, and he would also take him into his patronage and by means of the double and well-intentioned intercession, Balassa would be escaped from the severe (but not deserved) judicial proceeding.⁸⁸

Although the Emperor Leopold I inclined to permit the armistice negotiations, however, the Kurucs *en masse* got across the Tisza River, partly for moving to their winter quarters, and on the other hand, they regarded themselves weak for launching a bigger offensive action. Imre Thököly encamped by Rimavská Sobota on 27th of November⁸⁹, then he went to Putnok on 1st of December.⁹⁰ Pál Szalay arrived to Bratislava, where he was already expected by György Szelepcsényi, Archbishop of Esztergom, and Ádám Forgách, Royal Judge of Hungary [*iudex Curiae Regiæ*]. All three promptly set off to Vienna.⁹¹ Johann Paul Hocher, Chancellor of the Court, György Szelepcsényi and Ádám Forgách⁹² were entrusted by the Sovereign with entering into a discussion with Pál Szalay over the armistice. According to the Archbishop, the negotiations came to a halt for the reason that the Kurucian delegate “...does not have the solid authority for the negotiations, but he only read some instructions...” The royal negotiators told Szalay that until he would not be authorized by Imre Thököly to act with full powers, there would be no progress in the ratification of the armistice.⁹³

The armistice came into force by the first days of December, which enabled the transition and passage, but travelling warrant or patronage and approval of a significant military commander at least could be often needed. Boldizsár Osztrólczky, who was living in Krupina, had a son named István, who came into Thököly's service in October, but he passed away a couple of weeks later. The father asked Koháry for writing a travelling warrant, so as he would go to the Kurucian camp for his son's three

⁸⁸ MNL OL, C 1064th roll № 5721. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Bálint Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Vienna, without date, because it was torn from the paper, but on the basis of its content, it was written in the first quarter of the 1679 Year).

⁸⁹ MNL OL, P 125, 4701st roll № 1214. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). Pál Bélyteky's letter to Pál Esterházy (Fil'akovo, 27th of November, 1678).

⁹⁰ MERÉNYI, Lajos: Koháry István levelei Eszterházy Pál nádornak, 1670–1682. In: *Magyar Történelmi Tár*, vol. IV, 1903, nr. 1, p. 82., letter № XVII. (Fil'akovo, 1st of December, 1678).

⁹¹ MNL OL, C 1123rd roll № 7033. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). György Bezzegh's letter to István Koháry (Banská Bystrica, 29th of November, 1678).

⁹² IVÁNYI, 1983. p. 130.

⁹³ MNL OL, P 125, 4710th roll № 3960. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). György Szelepcsényi's letter to Pál Esterházy (Vienna, 15th of December, 1678). The original text is: „...nem hozott semmi solida plenipotentíát, hanem csak instructiót...”

servants, five horses and his values. The General-Captain immediately prepared the required document.⁹⁴

The castle of Divín was not surrendered by the Kurucs, but they permanently stayed there until the spring of 1679, when they were under the royal forces' siege and were chased out of the walls.⁹⁵ Imre Thököly and Prince Boham appointed Bernard Sculten, French Major to the Commander of the garrison, and there were Hungarian, French, Polish and Cossack soldiers under his command. He heavily burdened the economic capacity of the inhabitants of the surrounding territories with his forced demands under the pretext "...as the garrison can not be fed with wind and air...", so he demanded the village mayors of several settlements situated in the Novohrad and Minor Hont Counties in an ordering letter dated from 6th of December to appear in Divín within 3 or 4 days, where he would tell them the quantity of the victuals needed to be conveyed.⁹⁶ The French Commander ordered other villages in the Novohrad County on the next day that the village mayor would go to the castle for a parley concerning the victuals.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ MNL OL, C 1057th roll № 707. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Boldizsár Osztroluczky's letter to István Koháry (Krupina, 21st of December, 1678) and travelling warrant penned by István Koháry for Boldizsár Osztroluczky (Fil'akovo, 22nd of December, 1678).

⁹⁵ KOMJÁTI, Zoltán Igor: *A füleki helyőrség harcainak jellegzetességei Koháry II. István főkapitányságának idején (1667–1682)*. In: ĐURIANOVÁ, Mária (ed.): "Za Boha, král'a a vlast!" Koháryovci v uhorských dejinách. (Zborník príspevkov z odborného seminára, ktorý sa konal 23. – 24. septembra 2015 v Múzeu vo Svätom Antone.) / „Istenért, királyért, hazáért!" A Koháry család a történelmi Magyarország viszonylatában (a 2015. szeptember 23–24-én Szentantalon tartott tudományos konferencia kötete). Zvolen/Zólyom – Svätý Anton/Szentantal : Národné lesnícke centrum vo Zvolene/Zólyomi Nemzeti Erdészeti Központ – Múzeum vo Svätom Antone/Szentantali Múzeum, 2016. p. 25.; KOMJÁTI, Zoltán Igor: „...Akár egy, akár másfelől csak veszendő félben lenni..." *Koháry István és a füleki helyőrség harcai a kuruc felkelők ellen (1672–1682)*. In: ILLIK, Péter (ed.): *Különvélemény. A mainstream magyar történelem határán*. Budapest : Unicus Műhely Kiadó, 2017. pp. 68–70.; KOMJÁTI, 2019. pp. 78–79.

⁹⁶ MNL OL, C 1057th roll № 457. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Bernard Sculten's letter to settlements in the Novohrad and Minor-Hont Counties (Divín, 6th of December, 1678). The settlements situated in the Novohrad County were the following: Poltár, Veľke Dravce, Pinciná, Boľkovce, Nitra nad Ipl'om, Holiša, Opatová, Tomášovce, Vidiná, Podrečany, Gregorova Vieska, Mýtina, Pila, Dobroč, Kotmanová, Lovinobaňa, Uderina, Točnica, Cinobaňa, Turičky, Mládzo, Ozdín, Rovňany, Málinec, Krná, Hradište, Uhorské and České Brezovo. The names of the settlements situated in the Minor Hont County: Hrnčiarске Zalužany, Sušany, Veľká Sucha and Ožďany.

⁹⁷ In the same place, № 458., Bernard Sculten's letter to settlements in the Novohrad County (Divín, 7th of December, 1678). These were the concerned settlements: Ipolytarnóc, Litke, Mihálygerge, Kisgerge, Liptagerge, Karancskeszzi, Karancslapújtó, Baglyasalja, Karancsalja, Etes, Karancsság, Ságújfalu, Sóshartyán, Nógrádmegyer, Szalmatercs, Endrefalva and Piliny.

If the civil inhabitants refused to fulfil the Kurucs' demands, they violently drove the cattle and other living-stock to Divín. The Land-Steward of Pál Esterházy's Demesne of Očová tried to ask for mediation from István Koháry, even he might have an influence on the Kurucs of Divín that the sheep being under his charge not to be harmed by them, as they had driven Countess Csáky's 700 sheep off few days ago.⁹⁸ István Koháry then warned the hostile garrison of Divín that they would give up the continuous threatening and the exaggerated conveying, and suggested them to be contented with that quantity of the taxable victuals which had been formerly collected by land-lord Imre III. Balassa.⁹⁹

The Reaction of the Inhabitants

The Kurucs coerced by force the noblemen of the counties throughout the territory of the Mining Towns to take up arms on the occasion of the „general and particular insurrection”, as it used to be a custom earlier in their conquest in Upper Hungary during the summer.¹⁰⁰ The Magistrate of the Zvolen County converted to the Kurucs'side even before the occupation of the town and the citadel.¹⁰¹ On the basis of another archival source, 1,000 armed persons for the inhabitants right away joined to the Kurucian camp.¹⁰² Imre Balassa informed Koháry in the beginning of October that several noblemen from the Zvolen County and also town-dwellers continually crowded to Imre Thököly's camp. He named Pál Kürtössi, István Mednyánszky, István Oroszlány, a certain Ebeczky, and mentioned other thirteen persons with no name, who went to the Kurucian Camp from the territory of the Novohrad County.¹⁰³ Several dwellers of Banská Štiavnica travelled to Zvolen for swearing an oath, but in the middle of October, when they realized that there was no need for their presence, and, in other respects, Imre Thököly set off south-westwards, they went home and began to rumour about various news,

⁹⁸ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 136. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése). Letter of the Land-Steward of Pál Esterházy to István Koháry (Očová, 8th of December, 1678).

⁹⁹ MNL OL, C 1315th rolls № 17794. (ŠABB, Rodový archiv Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). István Koháry's letter to the Kurucian leaders staying in the Divín Border Castle (Fil'akovo, 25th of December, 1678).

¹⁰⁰ NAGY, László: *Thököly hadserege*. In: BENCZÉDI, László (ed.): *A Thököly-felkelés és kora*. Budapest : Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983, p. 43.

¹⁰¹ MNL OL, C 1057th roll № 704. (ŠABB, Rodový archiv Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Pál Gyürky's letter to István Koháry (Halič, 5th of October, 1678)

¹⁰² MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 95–96. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése). János Czingely's letter to István Koháry (Krupina, 10th of October, 1678).

¹⁰³ MNL OL, C 1064th roll № 5708. (ŠABB, Rodový archiv Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Imre Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Divín, 7th of October, 1678).

mainly the invincibility of the Kurucs.¹⁰⁴ One of the Kurucian leaders praised so: “...*My army, thanks to God, is very numerous, the effective is more and more gathering every day, entire counties adhere to my side!...*”¹⁰⁵

As we can see above from the case of Zvolen and Banská Štiavnica, the threatening was an ordinary manner to reaching the submission, but the coercion together with threatening were not rare at all. The Land-Steward of Bálint Balassa in Modrý Kameň compelled to stay in the border castle after the occupation together with the garrison converted to the Kurucian side. Either Ádám Balassa, General-Captain, or the whole garrison were aware of his loyalty to the Sovereign. So, he was ignored and neglected from the arrangement of the crucial and important affairs, and moreover, he was threatened in that way: “...*Openly, in the presence of the whole garrison and the serving noblemen, Ádám Balassa, His Lordship, forbade me to write only just a letter from the alphabet to anyone, because I will be beheaded, when he returns from the escort of Thököly. Later he made the formerly Deputy-Captain Péter Horváth admonish me not to write a letter of alphabet to anyone or even to Bálint Balassa, My Count Lordship, otherwise I will be beheaded. Thus, I did write neither to the Kurucian General, nor to other General of His Majesty. And when the letter of István Koháry His Lordship written under the name of General Leslie arrived to the castle, there was no reply to him, instead of it, Péter Horváth copied and forwarded it to Imre Thököly, and I was threatened again that Thököly will issue order to my beheading, if I give an answer to István Koháry His Lordship. They said to me that Ádám Balassa His Lordship messaged to me, that if I even write any letter to My Lord [= Count Bálint Balassa], right away I will be thrown from the very edge of the walls into the depth...*”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ MNL OL, C 1316th roll № 18025. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Judit Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, about 15th of October, 1678).

¹⁰⁵ MNL OL, C 1302nd roll № 16878. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Gáspár Mónay's letter to Gáspár Kornis, General-Captain of Marosszéék (Kurucian camp by Bzovik, 28th of October, 1678). The original text is: „...*Seregünk, Istennek hála, elég, minden nap gyűl az hadunk, vármegyék állanak mellénk...*”

¹⁰⁶ MNL OL, P 125, 4737th roll № 9891. (Eszterházy Pál nádor iratai). Attestation of Bálint Balassa's Land-Steward about the capitulation of Modrý Kameň (undated, but based on its content, written in the turn of 1678/1679). The original text is: „...*az egész sereg előtt és nemesség előtt megtiltotta Ónagysága [= Balassa Ádám], hogy egy bötűt leírjak, mert bizony elesik a fejem, mihelyt visszajött Thököly kíséréséből. Horváth Péter által is admonédaltott, amikor a táborra ment maga, úgymint akkori vicekapitánnyal, hogy ha írok csak egy bötűt is akárkinek, gróf úrnak, Ónagyságának [= Balassa Bálint] is, elűteti a fejemet. És így sem a kuruc generálisnak, sem az Őfelsége generálisainak [nem irtam]. Amikor Koháry István Uram Ónagysága írt volt is gróf Leslie generális neve alatt, nem hogy választot adtak volna innen, de Horváth Péter kezéhez devedniálván azon levelek, paríálván Thököly kezéhez küldötték a leveleket, [és] fővéttel fenyegettek Thököly Urammal, Ónagyságával, ha csak választ*”

It might occur that the noblemen called upon by Thököly did not obey to him, instead of it, they went to Fil'akovo, under the protection of István Koháry. Certain noblemen from the Hont County did not join to Thököly's army, but they escaped to Fil'akovo. They wrote a letter from there to General Jacob Leslie that they would persevere in the loyalty toward the Sovereign, and want to take part in the fights against the Kurucs. General Leslie thanked their zeal, and considered their faithfulness as admirable thought. He stated to rely on them, and asked them not to forget joining to his cavalry army coming from Košice, and after another joining with the loyal forces led by Pál Esterházy, they would commonly annihilate the danger caused by the rebels.¹⁰⁷

The serfdom's rather Pro-Kuruc behaviour¹⁰⁸ is turned out by the text of Farkas Koháry: "...because I fain sent spies and explorators throughout the roads, but I give whatsoever order, the peasantry do not feel like fulfilling it, even if I chase them by stick, as they are inclined to obey to the Kurucs than to their land-lord...". Mihály Gyürky (appointed to the District Prefect [*iudex nobilium*] of the Hont County by the short-period Kurucian regime) issued an order to every settlement that 5–5 riflemen would have to be enlisted per "*portam*" [= after one soccage] and sent to the Kurucian camp. Twelve young bondsmen went into service and joined up to the Kurucian garrison of Modrý Kameň on 31st of October, and right away got their pay for a month. Thus, the reinforcement of the Kurucs was solved by the bondsmen free-will joining.¹⁰⁹ Judit Balassa was in a thundering rage about the Pro-Kurucian behaviour of the serfdom living in those villages belonging to the Sitno Demesne: "...But I will not give even 10 Forints for the saving of the demesne folk! Protect themselves, disobedient blighted and scallywag persons, because I am very angry with them! It is high time to take to task for their disobedience! They must be taught that they only obey to their land-lords either in wartime or in peacetime, and not doing the things in their own way as now have happens. They are totally disobedient!..."¹¹⁰

adok is levelekre Koháry István Uramnak is. Azután prohibeálták aztat is, hogy gróf Uramnak, Őnagyságának se írjak, mert bizony ki vettetnek a várfokon, Ádám úr [azt] üzente...

¹⁰⁷ MNL OL, C 1302nd roll № 16896. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) General Jacob Leslie's letter to the noblemen coming from Krupina and stayed in Fil'akovo (Košice, 20th of October, 1678).

¹⁰⁸ VARGA, János: *A Thököly-kor parasztsága*. In: BENCZÉDI, László (ed.): *A Thököly-felkelés és kora*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983. pp. 56–57.

¹⁰⁹ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 159–160. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése) Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 3rd of November, 1678). The original text is: "...mert örömet kémekeket és embert küldenék mindenfelé, de bármit parancsol az ember, mintha bottal hajtáná reá, nincs kedve a parasztságnak, majd inkább hajtván az kurucsághoz, mint maga urához..."

¹¹⁰ MNL OL, C 1316th roll № 18025. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Judit

High-ranked commanders of the border castles might also apply for pardoning to the Sovereign, regretting for swearing a fealty to Thököly. Ádám Balassa in November of 1678, Bálint Balassa and János Szántó in January of 1679 tried to reconvert to the allegiance of Leopold I. Last person sent one of his servants to István Koháry on the occasion of the General Assembly of the Hont County celebrated on 16th of January 1679, so as to initialize the rehabilitation of him before Pál Esterházy.¹¹¹

The Ottoman–Kurucian Relationship in the Course of the Campaign

According to our recent knowledge, only one Ottoman military action happened in the mining towns area in October of 1678 — the demolition of Banská Hodruša situated near Banská Štiavnica. Although either in Eger or in Drégelypalánk were gathered large numbers of Ottoman warriors for the reason of coming to Imre Thököly's assistance, but none of them meddled into the Kurucian conquest.¹¹² Banská Hodruša was attacked by the Ottoman garrison of Esztergom either on the 7th of October or on the 8th: "...today, at dawn, the Turks from Esztergom, a selected troop of 300, went to Banská Hodruša, and made a dash at the little town by Kurucian style. They massacred the men, whoever had been caught, and the women together with the little boys and girls were all driven off, in turn, the buildings and the furnaces were set in fire and burnt to the ground by the Turkish raiders...".¹¹³ Based on another archival source, the Turks gathered near the castle of Nógrád (Slovak: Novohrad) and were blamed for the tragedy of Banská Hodruša.¹¹⁴ And according to the third information, 200 persons were taken as captives and driven off by the Turks after the combustion.¹¹⁵

Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, about 15th of October, 1678). The original text is: „...De én csak tíz pénzt se adok a jószágért, oltalmazták magukat, szófogatatlan kutyafiai, olyan nagy nehezteléssel vagyok reájuk! Meg is kell őket tanítani, úgyhogy tanulja meg: mind háborúban, mind békességes időben urának szavát fogadni, ne maga feje és akaratá után járni, mint most! Semmi szót nem fogadnak!...”

¹¹¹ MERÉNYI, Lajos: Koháry István levelei Eszterházy Pál nádornak, 1670–1682. In: *Magyar Történelmi Tár*, vol. IV., 1903, nr. 2, p. 232., letter № XVIII. (Krupina, 17th of January, 1679).

¹¹² MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 299. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Ádám Balassa's letter to Ádám Forgách (Castle of Modrý Kameň, 9th of October, 1678).

¹¹³ MNL OL, 40575th roll № 836. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Scribe Albert Késmárky's letter to Judit Balassa (Castle of Sitno, 7th of October, 1678). The original text is: „...ma hajnalban az esztergomi török, háromszáz lovas válogatva, Hodrusbányára ment, és ottan kuruc lédon a városkára rátört. A ferfiját, amelyet kaphatott, levágta, az asszonyemberét és a leánykákat és gyermekeket mind elvitte, a helyeket és a hutákat megégette, porrá tette...”

¹¹⁴ MNL OL, C 1131st roll № 7506. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). György Lendvay's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 8th of October, 1678).

¹¹⁵ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 95–96. (Koháry István (1649 – 1731) levelezése). János Czingely's letter to István Koháry (Krupina, 10th of October, 1678).

A group of 60 led by Deputy-Captain János Szántó conveyed the imprisoned Turks from Krupina to Nógrád on 2nd of November, so as to gain the backing-up of the Ottoman dignitaries. For this reason, the Hungarian delegation even intended to hand over money recently coined by the Kurucs in Kremnica to the Ottoman Commander of the Border Castle belonging to the Vilayet of Buda.¹¹⁶

Bondsmen from Szokolya being in relation with the Ottoman garrison of Nógrád informed their landlords that a large group of Ottoman soldiers set off from Nové Zámky to Zvolen along the Valley of the Hron as an equilibration to the Kurucian retreat in early November.¹¹⁷

The Situation of Čabrad' and Sitno during the Kurucian Advance

The areas around Čabrad' and Sitno were the two foremost demesnes of the Koháry family in the Hont County. It seems that Farkas Koháry was continually staying in the Čabrad' Castle from the middle of October, while his mother was living in the castle of Sitno similarly from the middle of the month.

One of the biggest problems of Farkas Koháry was the defence of the castle, mainly the task of increasing the defenders' manpower. Though he endeavoured to collect the domanical hajduks, but continuously wrote to his brother to Fil'akovo, so as he would sent regular foot-soldiers from there: *"...It remains to be seen within five or six days that the Devil will bring the Kurucs here, or he will not. Surely, I do not mind if we are more in number than twenty persons, and then we will show our true colours..."*. He ordered the demesne villages to cart slaughtered sheep, geese and hens into the castle under the amercement of 40 Forints. Farkas expressed his dismay about the delay of the Imperial forces: *"...I cannot believe that the armies and Generals of His Majesty are watching with closed eyes the rampaging of the Kurucs! It will come to no good for us, because we are now between the devil and the deep blue sea!..."*¹¹⁸ On the 20th of October, Farkas renewed the swearing of the demesne folk to the defence, but in his opinion, there was a lack in the number of the trained

¹¹⁶ In the same place, fol. 159–160. Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 3rd of November, 1678).

¹¹⁷ MNL OL, 40575th roll № 837. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Judit Blassa's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, 7th of November, 1678).

¹¹⁸ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 304. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 18th of October, 1678). The original texts are: *"...Ha az ördög ezt a kurucságot erre hozza, öt vagy hat nap alatt elvállik. Bizony nem bánndám, ha ezek még húsz emberrel volnának többel a várban, annál inkább [tudnánk] a fogunk fehérjét megmutatnunk..."*; *"...Én nem tudom, hogy ily behunytt szemmel nézik ennek a kurucságnak az insolentiáját az Őfelsége hadai és generálisai! Semmi jó vége nem lesz: elől tűz, hátul víz!..."*

foot-soldiers. He mentioned as an example, that Levice had got a reinforcement troop of 300 musketeers few days ago. The abandonment of certain servants put the defence to trouble, for example, the cook hired from Krupina returned home, so there was no person for preparing meal for the defenders and the other servants.¹¹⁹ In principle, on 22nd of October there were enough defenders for Farkas to stand sentinels to each crucial point of the castle walls, but yet he looked for sending trained infantrymen from Fil'akovo. "...*This piece of land is almost being occupied by the Kurucs, and with a respect of it, it will be needed that if we have got further ten men...*". But Farkas extremely worried about the behaviour of the bondsmen. Partly, the desired victuals were not surrendered by them, so he detailed some domanial hajduks to Čabradský Vrbovok and Čelovce to confiscate fat stock from the dwellers. Namely, there was a need for meat, because the domanial hajduks were not satisfied with the one pound of meat as a daily ration. They demanded to get one and a half pound during the readiness time. Farkas Koháry granted this quantity to them, moreover, wine was also distributed among them three times a week by his order; and besides the wine the artillerymen got beer each day. The attitude of the bondsmen also put Farkas to trouble, as they were inclined to convert to the Kurucs, they were contemptuous of his orders, and ambiguously fulfilled the mail-carrying: they were to be sworn in returning to Čabrad', if they were sent towards Bzovík or Banská Štiavnica.¹²⁰ The following day he wrote again that rather he lacked further ten persons for the defence, but steadily stated to his elder brother: "...*Being take care of my ancestors' and our honesty, if it will be necessary, I will not surrender this castle of ours neither by threatening, nor by written document, and Your Lordship be always sure in this fact! I might not deserve that Your Lordship benames me as brother, if I do not want to defend and protect this castle, then I would have gone from Halič to Fil'akovo, or would not have returned from Ádám Forgách's escort...*".¹²¹ Being sure in the solid defence of Čabrad', István Koháry wrote a letter of order to Dávid Komjáthy, one of the serving noble of the family, to give

¹¹⁹ In the same place, № 298. Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 20th of October, 1678).

¹²⁰ In the same place, № 305. Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 22nd of October, 1678). The original text is: "...*Ez a föld majd mind kuruc, melyre nézve, bárcsak tízzel lehetnénk még többen, igen kívántatnék...*"

¹²¹ In the same place, № 306. Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 23rd of October, 1678). The original text is: "...*mind régi eleink és magunk becsületére vigyáztatván, hogyha a szükség [úgy is] hozza, ezen lakóhelyünket ijesztgetésre vagy papirosra fel engedném adatni, arra soha ne gondoljon Kegyelmed! Nem is érdemleném, hogy Kegyelmed öccsének mondana, mert ha nem akartam volna megmaradását és oltalmazását ennek a helynek, akkor vagy Gácsból Fülekre mentem volna, vagy Forgách Uramtól meg nem tértem volna!...*"

Farkas an absolute help in his every endeavours concerning the organizing the defence, and would hold the discipline and order among the domanial hajduks and other servants. The familial noble took an oath to help Farkas in everything, to maintain discipline over the common people, to be faithful unto death, and to protect Čabrad' even at the cost of his life. That fact is cleared from Komjáthy's letter that a small unit of foot-soldiers commanded by Mihály Becskereký arrived to the castle for strengthening the defence.¹²² Farkas allegedly wrote five or six letters to his elder brother for sending the soldiers of reinforcement so far, but were probably intercepted by the Kurucian patrols. He also wrote several times that he might even offer 50 – 60 Forints from the incomes of the family for their pay, but now fifteen more soldiers would be needed, because Modrý Kameň had been seized by the Kurucs. So, they were threatening Čabrad' from two directions (partly from north, from Krupina and Bzovík, and now, from east), and, in opinion of Farkas, the Castle would be besieged within two days.¹²³ But it did not occur till 30th of October, but Farkas's annoyance remained due to the attitude of the bondsmen. Neither the order of the landlord, nor any fine, and nor threatening had any effect on them, and Farkas could not add only one rifleman to the defence forces since middle of October. The population of the villages mostly fled to the forests from the attacks of the Kurucs and were more inclined to join the Kurucs than to serve their landlord in Čabrad'. Farkas managed to coerce 13 bondsmen for the repairing works. The bondsmen were supplied by their own villagers, but they were afraid of the Kurucs, so that only at midnight covertly brought the victuals to the gate of the castle. Many of the 20 domanial hajduks began to grumbling, and regretted their stay in the castle after the expiry date of their one-year-contract. And the two hajduks regarded as the most loyal, wanted to escape from the castle, and their families were secretly sent out, but then they were caught and imprisoned. Finally they were released because of the dire need of the defenders' number. Farkas Koháry had a deep grudge against them. "...*The scoundrel folk do not think on their reputation and honour...*" – he summarized so his message. He counted fortunate thing that trained and experienced foot-soldiers arrived from Fil'akovo at last. Farkas Koháry aimed at portioning out extra meat, wine and beer either for the regular soldiers, or for the domanial hajduks. But he strictly forbade that they would organize a raid for taking the horses of the wounded Kurucs left behind in Bzovík. Farkas wrote to

¹²² MNL OL, C 1131st roll № 7522. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Dávid Komjáthy's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 23rd of October, 1678).

¹²³ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 307. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad', 26th of October, 1678).

his elder brother that he had sent lesser number of news henceforth, because the persons living in Krupina who helped to forward the messages (János Szántó, Deputy-Captain of the garrison, János Czingely and János Szelényi, magistrate members of the Hont County), now “...all of them have been inclined to the Kurucs...”, and might even angle the information’s content, emphasizing the Kurucs’ power.¹²⁴

In the first days of November, Čabrad’ was not attacked at all, however, according to Farkas’s information, Thököly “...had malware intent for seizing our castle...”, but he suddenly set off from Bzovík to Žiar nad Hronom. Mihály Gyürky, one of the District Prefects designated to by the Kuruc, announced in each village in the District of Bzovík that 5 – 5 bondsmen “*per portam*” would be equipped and armed with a rifle and directed to the Kurucian main camp. As plenty settlements belonged to the Koháry’s Demesne of Čabrad’, so Farkas asked his elder brother, whether he would let the bondsmen joining to the Kurucs, or would take measures against their hiring?¹²⁵ On the 7th of November, the registered foot-soldiers of Fil’akovo and the two artillerymen asked Farkas Koháry to be dismissed from the service, as their contract term was expired, moreover, they would like to see their families. Thus, the Baron sent message to Fil’akovo, to István Koháry for their dismissing, or he would direct another military unit to Čabrad’ at least, because they would like to leave the castle by all means. Meanwhile, Kurucian soldiers of Krupina took some domanial hajduks from Čabrad’ as captives. Farkas Koháry immediately wrote a letter to János Szántó for their releasing, mentioning the fact, that if it would be necessary, the soldiers from Čabrad’ might just take captives from the Kurucian garrison of Krupina. János Szántó rapidly arranged the prisoners to be released.¹²⁶ The pressure on Čabrad’ eased even more in the coming days. The Kurucs drew back towards the Novohrad County and Bzovík was also evacuated. On the eve of their abandonment, the Kurucs organized a farewell feast, and the drunkards began to shooting with the arquebuses, and as the consequence of their irresponsibility, the entire stock of gunpowder has exploded, and the castle burnt out totally. Next day Dávid Komjáthy and Mihály Becskerekely walked through to the ruins for eyeing up, and got acquainted from the civil inhabitants that there was a garrison of 45 (30 foot-soldiers and 15 mounted soldiers) settled into the castle and commanded by János

¹²⁴ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 309. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Farkas Koháry’s letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad’, 30th of October, 1678).

¹²⁵ MNL OL, P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, fol. 159–160. (Koháry István (1649–1731) levelezése). Farkas Koháry’s letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad’, 3rd of November, 1678).

¹²⁶ MNL OL, C 1056th roll № 310. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Farkas Koháry’s letter to István Koháry (Castle of Čabrad’, 7th of November, 1678).

Madách. The all foot-soldiers returned to Fil'akovo, though Farkas Koháry offered extra payment for their further service. Only Mátyás Tóth and seven other foot-soldiers remained looking for István Koháry's appearance and his newer dispositions.¹²⁷ Albeit the castle of Čabrad' was not damaged during the Kurucian advance, the settlements of the demesne were preyed upon by the rebels and the grabbers: "...It can be clearly seen that on such a hideous and paganish manner they treat the villages and the dwellers throughout the demesne! They regarded themselves as Christians, nevertheless, they made a dash at the temples of the villages and perished, devastated them! The Rascians from Krupina were even worse than the Kurucs: batted on the poor bondsmen of His Lordship of mine, seized their goods and values and brought themselves to Krupina. Some of them gained such quantity under the pretext of the Kuruc-supporting being enough for even 10 years of prosperity..."¹²⁸

The other large demesne centre of the Koháry family in the Hont County was situated in the castle of Sitno. The demesne was under the direction of Judit Balassa in October of 1678, who mainly stayed in the castle building. On 4th of October, she wrote to her son (who left Halič and returned to Fil'akovo for organizing the defence on 3rd of October) that, due to the Kurucs encamping by Zvolen, the inhabitants of the Sitno demesne did not want to obey her orders. They partly fled to the woods before the soldiers' coercion, but others, the great mass, showed intent for converting to the Kurucian side and presented various gifts to the rebels. The Kurucian troops did not set off toward Sitno on that day yet: "...here I have been in great tranquillity so far. The Kurucs know very well that they can find only poverty and misery in Sitno..."¹²⁹ By the middle of October, when Thököly's army set off towards Banská Štiavnica, the possibility of the siege of the Sitno Castle got radically larger. Judit Balassa wrote these words about the plans of the Kurucs: "...The Kurucs always menaced the Sitno demesne, stating that lot of military actions were

¹²⁷ MNL OL, C 1315th roll № 17837. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Farkas Koháry's letter to István Koháry (undated, but on the basis of its content, it was written in the castle of Čabrad', between 7th and 10th of November, 1678).

¹²⁸ ŠABB, Rodový archív Coburg-Koháry, Pars I, Listiny, korešpondencia a rôzne písomnosti, № 541. Pál Rác's letter to Ferenc Sótér (Castle of Čabrad', 5th of November, 1678). The original text is: "...Megtetszik, minemű pogányul bántak itt a körül-belül levő falukon. Keresztényeknek tartván magokat, [mégis] minden falukban levő templomokat felverték és pusztították! Ezek a korponai rációk még hamisabbak voltak: uram ónagysága szegény emberekin [élősködtek], mindenüket Korponára hordották be, tíz esztendeig is megérzi némelyik avval, amennyit szerzett a kurucság színe alatt..."

¹²⁹ MNL OL, C 1087th roll № 6433. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Judit Balassa's letter to István Koháry (undated, but on the basis of its content, it was written in the castle of Sitno, on the 4th of October, 1678). The original text is: "...Itt még jó békeességben voltam, tudják azt [a kurucok], hogy itt csak a nyomorúság vagyon..."

launched against them, and got angry about those deeds...They are also saying that I should rather be all over Thököly with valuable gifts, and then either I, or the demesne will remain...". But the landlady did not tend to do so, instead of it, she endeavoured to organize the defence of the castle "with a round-a-clock alertness", as she promised to his eldest son, the General-Captain of Fil'akovo.¹³⁰ When Judit Balassa sent Pál Verebélyi, her Land-Steward, to Ostrá Luka so as he would discuss with Péter Balassa about the values of the Count, then the Magnate quite urged the conveying of the assets because of the inevitable Kuruc attack and the preying after the occupation. Moreover, he exhorted his aunt to send delegate to the Kurucs as soon as possible, and surrender to them, and asked for pardon about the resistance till now.¹³¹ Another Koháry servant, Scribe Albert Késmárky, left for Banská Štiavnica on the 15th of October. He got there at midnight, and saw that the people who had joined Thököly's camp just then returned to their places of residence. The Scribe got that information from them that a Kuruc army of at least 5,000 men set off to Sitno to occupy it on the 16th of October, and a Kurucian vanguard detachment have just been on the road towards Sitno to admonish Judit Balassa to surrender.¹³² However, the attack was cancelled, and Albert Késmárky, staying in Banská Štiavnica and collecting the pieces of information there, overheard a conversation of a Kurucian company resting in an apothecary on the 17th of October. According to that conversation they actually planned the siege of Sitno, because they thought that enormous quantity of values was stored behind its walls.¹³³ But Sitno was kept off by the Kurucian troops, and Judit Balassa wrote these words to her son on the 6th of November: "...I have been vexed and tempted by nobody so far, neither with oral threatening, nor with any messages...".¹³⁴

¹³⁰ MNL OL, C 1316th roll № 18025. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Judit Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, about 15th of October, 1678). The original text is: "...a kurucok igen fenyeketik a szitnyai jószágot, mondván, hogy sok csatát indítottak ellenek, és amiatt haragudnának....Azt is mondák, hogy én kedvét keressem a Thökölynek szép ajándékkal, úgy megmaradok magam is, a jószág is..."

¹³¹ MNL OL, C 1087th roll № 6438. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.). Pál Verebélyi's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, 14th of October, 1678).

¹³² In the same place, № 6436. Scribe Albert Késmárky's letter to István Koháry (Banská Štiavnica, 15th or 16th of October, 1678).

¹³³ MNL OL, C 1087th roll № 6500. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars V.) Scribe Albert Késmárky's letter to Farkas Koháry (Banská Štiavnica, 17th of October, 1678).

¹³⁴ MNL OL, 40575th roll № 837. (ŠABB, Rodový archív Koháry-Coburg, Pars I.). Judit Balassa's letter to István Koháry (Castle of Sitno, 7th of November, 1678). The original text is: "...énnekem eddig senkitől nem volt háborgatásom, sem írás, sem üzenet által való kísértésem..."

Zhrnutie

Fulminis instar. Postup a prítomnosť vojsk Imricha Thökölyho v oblasti banských miest v Dolnom Uhorsku na jeseň 1678

V prezentovanom príspevku sa snažíme poukázať na to, že zvýšenie kuruckej vojenskej sily, podporovanej cudzími vojskami, ako aj Thökölyho príchod na politickú scénu v roku 1678, viedlo v kuruckom hnutí ku kvantitatívnemu nárastu ich sily, ktorého priamym dôsledkom bolo podmanenie si civilných správnych úradov (predovšetkým v stoliaciach a v slobodných kráľovských mestách), ale aj opevnených, ale nedostatočne chránených hradov. Operácia pod vedením Imricha Thökölyho bola prvou skutočne úspešnou ofenzívou v dejinách kuruckého hnutia, keďže dovtedy (od roku 1670) existovali s cisárom Leopoldom I. iba dohody menšieho významu o amnestii sprostredkovanej sedmohradským kniežat'om. No od jesene 1678 (po tom, čo kuruci ohrozili nitriansku pevnosť a obsadili banské mestá a rôzne pohraničné hrady lojálnymi posádkami, aj keď len na krátky čas) sa im dostalo z cisárskej strany oveľa viac pozornosti, začali byť braní do úvahy a viedenský dvor s nimi začal rokovania o prímerí a mieri. Administratíva Banskej komory a vysoké vojenské vedenie boli bleskurýchlym útokom kurucov úplne šokované a nedokázali správne posúdiť svoje rozhodnutia a správanie, čo bolo podmienené ich nervozitou. Vojenský vodcovia a úradníci buď ušli, alebo sa vzdali Thökölyho armáde, čo kuruci náležite využili. István Terbóts v liste z 3. novembra o správaní „porazených“ výstižne napísal tieto riadky: „...je ľahké zmocniť sa takého hradu, ktorý nebol dobrovoľne ubránený... Kuruci nehľadájú mužov s levím srdcom, ale tých so zajačím, ktorí sa dajú ľahko ovládať bičom a klamstvom. Čudujem sa, že pán gróf Balassa zamenil istú milosť a dobrotu Jeho Veličenstva za prázdne sľuby a neisté postavenie na strane rebelov, a to bez akýchkoľvek záruk. ...podľa mňa to nebude dobré...“. A relevantné sú aj slová Štefana Koháryho: „...nepriateľ môže obsadiť tie miesta, na ktoré je s plným vedomím a srdečnosťou vpustený...“ Evidentné je aj to, že keď cisárske vojská získali nad kurucmi prevahu, „porazení“ obnovili svoju vernosť panovníkovi a požiadali o odpustenie. Imrich Thököly pomocou taktiky ľahkej jazdy získal krátkodobo víťazstvá a územia, chýbali mu však vycvičení pešiaci, ktorí by boli schopní udržať pohraničné hrady. Napríklad veľkú časť pomocných francúzskych mušketerov zadržal Mihály Teleki pri Kővári, najmenej 400 – 450 kilometrov od stredoslovenských banských miest. V neposlednom rade možno konštatovať, že k takmer „geniálnemu obrazu“ Imricha Thökölyho, ktorý bol vytvorený neskoršími generáciami, samozrejme prispel fakt, že jeho protivníci boli

príliš vystrašení na to, aby sa pustili do boja proti nemu. Ich spôsob a správanie dali Thökölymu kľúč k úspechu a triumfu; ak by však preukázal väčšiu nezlomnosť a zostal by na svojom poste, zisky kurucov by boli väčšie. Úspešná kurucká ofenzíva z roku 1678 sa však zapísala do bežného dobového vedomia a na Imricha Thökölyho z tej doby hľadeli pozorne a brali ho do úvahy pri dôležitejších rokovaniach, aj keď ho v skutočnosti nebrali do úvahy vzhľadom k jeho statusu rebela.