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The Life of Soldiers during the Long Turkish War (1593–1606)

This study is concerned with the everyday lives, survival strategies, and social composition of the German armed forces who served in the border fortresses and field units of the Imperial and Royal Army during the wars against the Ottoman Empire that were fought on the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This study shows that these troops enlisted to escape poverty and starvation, sometimes serving without weapons, and that their families often followed them onto Hungarian battlefields. As the rich source materials analyzed here demonstrate, however, their new positions confronted them with even greater challenges than they had faced previously, including the day-to-day threat of mortality, epidemics, the vicissitudes of the weather, and the constant deprivations caused by idle mercenaries. They strove to support themselves through fraud and deceit, as well as by forcefully plundering their surroundings; nonetheless, volunteering for military service did not provide them with a permanent solution to the problem of earning a living.

Keywords: Long Turkish War, German-speaking military in the Kingdom of Hungary, survival strategies, subsistence

Introduction

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a significant number of German-speaking soldiers served on the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, some of them in the strategically important strongholds of the Hungarian border-fortress system that had been created along the Hungarian–Ottoman frontier starting in the late 1520s.¹

Hungarian historians have recently discussed the military's coexistence with civil society, primarily townsfolk and the nobility, and in the cases of Győr, Kassa (Kosice, Slovakia), Keszthely, and Murány (Muráň, Slovakia), such research has shed light on both the advantages and the disadvantages of this forcible cohabitation. In general, it is clear that military objectives far outweighed the interests of locals, whose freedoms and economic activity were restricted in

1 Géza Pálffy, "A török elleni védelmi rendszer szervezetének története a kezdetektől a 18. század elejéig," *Történelmi Szemle* 38, no. 2–3 (1996): 163–217.

numerous regions. For instance, the army sometimes established connections with local handicraft industries, thereby creating competition for local guilds. And at the same time, while the presence of the military created markets, foreign infantrymen in Kassa, for example, also developed relationships with the families of German citizens there.² Another significant portion of the mercenaries from the Holy Roman Empire arrived in Hungary during one or another of the military campaigns of the sixteenth century: 1527, 1540, 1551–52, 1566. At the end of military operations, these hired forces tended to scatter and leave the country. However, when the continuous conflict between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire escalated into all-out war again in 1593, it created a new situation. At the conclusion of certain military operations, a significant portion of these field troops did not disband, but rather found winter accommodations and remained in the Kingdom of Hungary. However, until recently, we have had little information about such soldiers. International historical scholarship, though, has long dealt with important issues like the social composition of the armed forces, everyday life in military camps, conflicts between soldiers and citizens, and the role of women in the military.³

With respect to the social composition of the armed forces and the everyday lives of soldiers, the 'Thirty Years' War stands at the forefront of both traditional and more recent German historiography. From the second half of the twentieth century onward, military, social, cultural, legal, and technological historians have examined the development and position of the army in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, exploring its everyday life as if the military were its own society, or an anthropologist's small community.⁴ On the basis of such research,

2 Géza Pálffy, *A császárváros védelmében. A győri főkapitányság története 1526–1598* (Győr: Győr-Moson-Sopron Megyei Győri Levéltára, 1999), 185–92; István H. Németh, *Várospolitika és gazdaságpolitika a 16–17. századi Magyarországon*, 2 vols. (Budapest: Gondolat–Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2004), 280–370; Ferenc Vég, *Birodalmak határán – a Balaton partján: Keszthely végyárváros a XVI–XVII. században* (Budapest: Históriaantik, 2007); Béla Sarusi Kiss, "Deutsche Soldaten in den ungarischen Grenzfestungen des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Geteilt-Vereinigt. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Königreichs Ungarn in der Frühneuzeit (16–18. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics and István Fazekas (Berlin: Osteuropa-Zentrum Verlag, 2011), 157–80.

3 Fritz Redlich, *De praeda militari. Looting and Booty 1500–1815* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1956); Barton C. Hacker, "Women and Military Institutions in Early Modern Europe: A Reconnaissance," *Signs* 6, no. 4 (1981): 643–71; John A. Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008); Olaf van Nimwegen, "The Transformation of Army Organisation in Early-Modern Western Europe, c. 1500–1789," in *European Warfare*, ed. Frank Tallett and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 159–80.

4 The most important are as follows: László Peter Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts: Sozialgeschichtliche Studien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994); Bernhard R. Kroener,

they have offered up finely shaded portraits of the social composition of the armed forces—that is, of the economic, demographic, social, and climatic factors and changes which led a significant portion of the population to see military service as a fundamental means of survival. In addition to archival sources, German historians have recently turned toward soldiers' diaries and memoirs, which are especially useful for historical examinations of the way war was experienced and remembered in the period. From the Long Turkish War, however, we know of only one short soldier's diary.⁵ Thus in the course of my research, I have gathered together official documents issued by military leaders and also relied on the sporadic data to be found in the works of contemporary historians. On the basis of these materials, I have sought answers to questions like the following: Why—or better yet, instead of what—did these soldiers undertake such dangerous service? What sort of martial virtues did they embody? How did they support themselves and their families? And what were their lives like in the camps?

Beckoned by the Enlistment Drum

Prior to the present study, there has been no comprehensive research on this subject. Only Antonio Liepold's 1998 monograph has dealt with the role played by the gentry of the Holy Roman Empire and the Austrian Hereditary Lands in the wars against the Ottomans in the sixteenth century.⁶ German historiography and my own research would suggest that, generally speaking, all social strata—from vagabonds to aristocrats—were represented among the ranks of the cavalry and infantry that served in the Hungarian theater of operations during the Long Turkish War. In the case of the mounted soldiers, medieval military traditions continued to be observed. According to Lazarus von Schwendi's

“Vom Landsknecht zum Soldaten. Anmerkungen zu Sozialprestige, Selbstverständnis und Leistungsfähigkeit von Soldaten in den Armeen des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in *Von Crecy bis Mohács. Kriegswesen im späten Mittelalter*, (Vienna: Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, 1997); Antonio Liepold, *Wider den Erbfeind christlichen Glaubens. Die Rolle des niederen Adels in den Türkenkriegen des 16. Jahrhunderts: Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe III. Geschichte und ihre Hilfswissenschaften. Band 767* (Frankfurt am Main–Berlin–Bern–New York–Paris–Vienna: Peter Lang Verlag, 1998); Hans Medick and Benjamin Marschke, *Experiencing the Thirty Years War. A Brief History with Documents* (Boston–New York: Bedford and St. Martin's, 2013).

5 “Tagebuch der Feldzüge des Regiments des Obristen Georg Freyherrn Ehrenreich. Besonders beim Gran und Eperies von 27. Juli 1604 bis 26. Octobris 1606 ausgeführt,” in *Sammlung kleiner, noch ungedruckter Stücke, in welchen gleichzeitige Schriftsteller einzelne Abschnitte der ungarische Geschichte aufgezeichnet haben*, vol. 1, ed. Martin Georg Kovachich (Ofen: n.p., 1805), 288–445.

6 Liepold 1998, passim.

Cavalry Appointments (*Reiterbestallung*), the decrees of the Imperial Diet of 1570 in Speyer included a directive that only noblemen were to enlist in the cavalry.⁷ It was also common for hired horsemen to be selected from among the vassals of the recruiting colonel (*Obrist*).⁸

In addition to the recruiting “enterprisers” (*Militärunternehmer*) and captains (*Hauptmänner*), there were also large numbers of Southern German noblemen (from Bavaria, Tyrol, Württemberg, and Swabia), as well as wealthy urban patrician youths in the infantry. Their roles were not limited to offices on the staffs of colonels or in the *prima plana* that directed these units (*Fabne*); they also enlisted as *Doppelsöldner*, mercenaries who volunteered for frontline duty in exchange for double pay. A good example is the *Doppelsöldner* registry for Karl Ludwig Graf zu Sulz’s infantry regiment, dated July 16, 1602. According to this document, those equipped with a round shield (*Rundschieber*) included even persons of baronial descent, like Ulrich and Hans Leonhard Freiherr zu Spauer.⁹ One year later, Georg Leschenbrandt reported that large numbers of men from the nobility and gentry (*Herren- und Rittenstand*) of Lower Austria had shown up to enlist in Georg Andreas von Hofkirchen’s infantry unit.¹⁰ In hopes of opportunities for advancement, many captains became *Doppelsöldner* during the reorganization and merging of regiments, as Emperor Rudolf II’s letter to Archduke Matthias mentions in relation to Hans Premier zu Stöbing’s regiment.¹¹ The majority of these men had originally held the rank of private first class

7 Wilhelm Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi oberster Feldhauptmann und Rath Kaiser Maximilian’s II* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller Hof- und Universitätsbuchhändler, 1871), 173, 177–78, 193; Fritz Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser [Entrepreneur?] and his Work Force. A Study in European Economic and Social History* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1965), 43.

8 Brage Bei der Wieden, “Niederdeutsche Söldner vor dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg: Geistige und mentale Grenzen eines sozialen Raums,” in *Krieg und Frieden. Militär und Gesellschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Bernhard R. Kroener et al. (Paderborn–Munich–Vienna–Zürich: Schöningh Verlag, 1996), 98. The German military ranks mentioned in this article do not correspond cleanly to those of the Anglo-American hierarchy. Obrist is roughly analogous to Colonel, Gefreite to noncommissioned officer, and Hauptmann to captain.

9 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA) Kriegsarchiv (KA) Hofkriegsratsakten (HKRA) Wien Expedit (Exp.) 1602. Juli No. 15); Reinhard Baumann, *Das Söldnerwesen im 16. Jahrhundert im bayerischen und süddeutschen Beispiel. Eine gesellschaftsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, *Miscellanea Bavarica Monacensia* 79 (Munich: Wölfle Verlag, 1978), 66–68, 96; Wieden, “Niederdeutsche Söldner vor dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg,” 94; Kroener, “Vom Landsknecht zum Soldaten,” 82; Liepold, *Wider den Erbfeind christlichen Glaubens*, 133–35.

10 ÖStA HKRA Wien Exp. 1603 August. No. 99.

11 ÖStA KA HKRA Wien Registratur (Reg.) 1601. Oktober No. 136.

(*Gefreite*), often given to soldiers of noble blood, either in the 'colonel's unit or his deputy's.¹²

What led these noblemen to enter the service of a military enterprisers? Like advantageous marriages, enlistment in the military had become an important means of improving one's lot. The pay and the spoils of war could make it financially profitable, and it also served as a strategy for social advancement. And beyond these possible gains in income and prestige, the desire for adventure also played a part in the decisions of the counts, lords, and youthful members of the urban elite who signed up. In addition, the revival of the idea of a crusade against the Ottoman Empire was also a motivating factor for members of the nobility and the urban elite.¹³ Most of the noblemen who fought in the infantry were prevented by their poor financial situations from serving in mounted units.¹⁴

However, the vast majority who enlisted were ordinary men from villages and cities. In keeping with a medieval practice called *Gleve*, aristocratic horsemen maintained entourages (*lange Reibe*) of six to twelve persons who escorted them into battle.¹⁵ The main body of the infantry was also recruited from among the commoners. In the case of noblemen, financial necessity tended to mix with the desire for personal glory; commoners' main reason for showing up to enlist was to make a living. The population explosion in sixteenth-century Europe created a surplus of labor and a price surge, which, together with the so-called little ice age and the resultingly poor crop production, had a severe effect on living conditions.¹⁶ The hope of monthly payment and the loot enterprisers promised attracted the impoverished, who were struggling to supply themselves and their

12 József Kelenik, "A kézi lőfegyverek jelentősége a hadügyi forradalom kibontakozásában. A császári-királyi hadsereg fegyverzetének jellege Magyarországon a tizenöt éves háború éveiben," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 104, no. 3 (1991): 118.

13 See the study by Brian Sandberg in the present issue. Jan Paul Niederkorn, *Die europäischen Mächte und der "Lange Turkenkrieg" Kaiser Rudolfs II (1593–1606)* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1993), 390–91; Wieden, "Niederdeutsche Söldner vor dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg," 97–98; Liepold, *Wider den Erbfeind christlichen Glaubens*, 125–27; Péter Sahin-Tóth, "A francia katolikus ligától Kanizsáig. Henri de Lorraine-Chaligny életpályája (1570–1600)," in *A középkor szerete. Tanulmányok Sz. Jónás Ilona tiszteletére*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay et al. (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 1999), 453–65.

14 Baumann, *Das Söldnerwesen im 16. Jahrhundert*, 69; Kroener, "Vom Landsknecht zum Soldaten," 81–83.

15 Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, 173, 177–78, 193; Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser*, 43; Liepold, *Wider den Erbfeind christlichen Glaubens*, 96, 125.

16 Kurt Klein, "Die Bevölkerung Österreichs vom Beginn des 16. bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts (mit einem Abriß der Bevölkerungsentwicklung von 1754 bis 1869)," in *Beiträge zur Bevölkerungs- und Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, ed. Heimold Helczmanovszki (Vienna: Im Auftrag des Österreichischen Statistischen Zentralamtes 1973), 47–111. Peter Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts: Sozialgeschichtliche Studien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 85.

families with more and more expensive food on smaller and smaller wages.¹⁷ These included the suburban poor (guild apprentices, day laborers, domestic servants),¹⁸ craftsmen in under-remunerated professions (bakers, weavers, fabric dyers, tailors),¹⁹ and agricultural workers who had lost their means of subsistence to population growth and the resulting fragmentation of property (peasants, servants, day laborers, and farmhands).²⁰ Wandering beggars, drifters, criminals, clergymen, and students also enlisted in the military,²¹ and even women gave soldiering a try.²² Thus, the hierarchy within the army faithfully imitated the established structure of society. This is why Brage Bei der Wieden referred to the sixteenth-century German army as a “parallel society” (*Nebengesellschaft*).²³

The 1570 edicts (*Artikelbrief*) decreed that pikemen and gunmen had to own both proper armaments and uniforms in order to be mustered.²⁴ However, penniless recruits from the fringes of society possessed neither.²⁵ Even in the second half of sixteenth century, military enterprisers had to buy weapons in bulk, thus enabling anyone to enlist for mercenary service. By the time of the Long Turkish War, this state of affairs had become permanent, as the following two accounts demonstrate. On June 1, 1595, the monarch ordered his comptroller’s office (*Buchhalterei*) to send the financial accounts for *Oberhauptmann* Hans Geizkofler’s three units to Michael Zeller, the military cashier in Hungary. According to this document, equipping the 900-man unit required 5410 *Gulden*, 9 *Kreutzer*, and 2 *Pfennig*, while the soldiers’ monthly wages amounted to 8565 *Gulden*.²⁶ An account from January of 1601 is even more telling about the armament needs of the entire force. According to it, there were only 1430

17 Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser*, 127.

18 Reinhard Baumann, *Georg von Frundsberg, Der Vater der Landsknechte und Feldhauptmann von Tirol* (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1984), 46; Friedrich Edelmayer, *Söldner und Pensionäre. Das Netzwerk Philipps II. im Heiligen Römischen Reich* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2002), 256.

19 Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland*, 58–70.

20 Baumann, *Das Söldnerwesen im 16. Jahrhundert*, 85; Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland*, 72–87.

21 Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, 173, 177–78, 193; Bernd Roeck, *Außenseiter, Randgruppen, Minderheiten. Fremde im Deutschland der frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 76; Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland*, 88–96.

22 Tobias Coberus, *Observationum medicarum castrensium Hungaricarum decades tres* (Helmstadt: Fridericus Lüderwaldus, 1685), 44.

23 Wieden, “Niederdeutsche Söldner vor dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg,” 97–98.

24 Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, 199–200.

25 Friedrich Blau, *Die deutschen Landsknechte* (Kettwig: Phaidon Akademische Verlag-Gesellschaft, 1985), 25.

26 ÖStA Hofkammerarchiv (HKA), Niederösterreichische Gedenkbücher, 1595–1596. Bd. 157, fol. 127r–29v.

handheld firearms in the Vienna armory at that time, while another 19,990 were to be obtained before the next campaign.²⁷ The *Cavalry Appointments* directory regulated weaponry and uniforms for mounted soldiers. Enlisted noblemen were instructed to provide their entourages with proper apparel that would protect both the soldiers and their equipment from the elements. In addition, every sixth retainer was to be armed with a fine musket.²⁸ Impoverished soldiers, recruited from the periphery of society, tended to arrive for enlistment without any weapons.²⁹

The actual military value of Western mercenaries is subject to question; Géza Perjés considered them to be the scum of society.³⁰ Whether evaluating their performance in the infantry or the cavalry, it is hard to give a precise answer. It is arguable that horsemen from high-born families would have had the requisite knowledge of techniques for fighting from the saddle. The documents show, however, that this was not always true of their entourages. On July 19, 1598, Johann Eustach von Westernach, in describing the enlistment of Georg Friedrich von Hohenlohe's black riders, reported that counts and noblemen recruited many young boys and demanded that they receive the same payment as experienced soldiers.³¹ Apparently, this problem was a persistent one: Hermann Cristoph von Russworm, sent to investigate the rebellion of 600 Dutch mounted gunmen, advised Archduke Matthias that Philipp Graf zu Solms' soldiers should be retained with monthly payments and renewals (*reductio*) because they were tried and tested soldiers who knew the enemy well, and were thus of more use to the emperor than an inexperienced band of recruits.³²

The case was the same with the infantry: there are examples both of mercenaries' merit and of their incompetence as well. An undated and anonymous fragment, annotated by Gundaker von Liechtenstein, asserted that hired forces should be well-versed in wielding their weapons, which experience was at least partly dependent on their financial status.³³ Our sources from the

27 ÖStA KA Bestellungen (Best.) 1601/672; József Kelenik, "A kézi lőfegyverek jelentősége," 49.

28 Janko, *Lažarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, 173, 177–78, 193; Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser*, 43; Liepold, *Wider den Erbfeind christlichen Glaubens*, 96, 125.

29 Baumann, *Das Söldnerwesen im 16. Jahrhundert*, 66.

30 Géza Perjés, "Az Oszmán Birodalom európai háborúinak katonai kérdései (1356–1699)," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 14 (1967), 339–70.

31 ÖStA KA HKRA Prag. No. 17.

32 ÖStA KA HKRA Wien Reg. 1603 Juli. No. 75.

33 Eugen Heischmann, *Die Anfänge des stehenden Heeres In Österreich* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1925), 48.

Long War suggest a wide variety of experience levels among the troops. In June of 1598, Westernach and Zacharias Geizkofler, in describing the muster of Johann Friedrich von Mörsburg's regiment, reported that among the *Doppelsöldner*, those wielding "short arms" and two-handed swords had been fighting in wars for periods ranging from 10 to 30 years, and that even the least experienced among them had served for 5 or 6 years—in Italy, Brabant, the Netherlands, France, Burgundy, or Hungary. The two commissioners lavished praise on the regiment's musketeers as well. Their report says that of a thousand such soldiers, there were perhaps 25 or fewer who had no previous combat experience. They reported that quite a few of the gunmen had served on French, Dutch, Piemontese, or Hungarian battlefields, and that the others were strong, if fairly old. The latter remark was not a random addition by Geizkofler and Westernach. The document also states that the military enterprisers had not found enough arquebusiers, and that there were too few musketeers to reassign any of them to the arquebusiers. Thus the two muster officers were forced to register many inexperienced youths.³⁴ This is a single but not isolated example which clearly illustrates the range of experience in the infantry brigades of the Imperial and Royal Army. All in all, some of the soldiers, especially the *Doppelsöldner* and musketeers, were considered skilled warriors. Some weeks later, after inspecting Ludwig Graf zu Sulz's infantry regiment, Westernach reported that most of the enlisted were strong, healthy, battle-tested soldiers who could be truly useful to the emperor.³⁵ In addition, there are many references suggesting that a large portion of the soldiers who were dismissed enlisted again in newly formed regiments, and that many commissioned muster inspectors had favorable opinions of these soldiers as well.³⁶ In contrast, elements of the *Bestellungen* and professional reports indicate that there were rookies who had joined the ranks of the arquebusiers and were unskilled in the use of their weapons.³⁷ In my opinion, however, this was not a significant problem. It was natural that inexperienced recruits from the fringes of society would begin their service among the arquebusiers. On the one hand, they could afford only the cheapest weapons, and on the other, much more practice would have been required to learn the weaponry techniques and battlefield formations of the *Doppelsöldner*. Unlike polearm-wielding soldiers, gunmen could learn the basic skills for handling their weapons in just a couple

34 ÖStA KA HKRA Prag 1598. No. 18.

35 Ibid., No. 17.

36 Ibid., No. 18; ÖStA HKRA Wien Exp. 1603 August. No. 99.

37 ÖStA KA Alte Feldakten (AFA) 1602/3/5; Heischmann, *Die Anfänge*, 45–47.

of days, and they could move more freely on the battlefield, even in the more closed *tercios*, or pike-and-shot formations. Their lack of experience did not necessarily put them at a tactical disadvantage either, as volley firing could do great damage to their Ottoman opponents.³⁸ The only problem arose when an arquebusier, in hopes of greater payment, decided to enlist the following year as a musketeer or *Doppelsöldner* without having mastered the given weapon. According to Geizkofler's 1603 report, this was common in the Imperial and Royal Army. It must also be noted that such efforts to earn promotions and the consequent higher wages were standard career strategies not limited to the arquebusiers.³⁹

Based on the above observations, I would argue that neither opinion at either extreme is correct: I do not think that a completely unprepared mass of soldiers from the Holy Roman Empire was assigned to the Hungarian theater of operations. But it would also be a mistake to assume that a fully professional, well-trained infantry and cavalry entered the fray against the Ottoman army during this fifteen-year war. In reality, there are examples that illustrate both cases: we find unqualified greenhorns alongside mercenaries who had fought in numerous campaigns and knew their weapons well.

Regular Wages as the Basis of Subsistence?

Even though more volunteers usually showed up at musters than could be enrolled, and even though several units enlisted more recruits than the *Bestallung* called for,⁴⁰ the total sum designated for payouts to mercenaries increased steadily over the course of the Long Turkish War. This phenomenon is apparently the result of three closely interrelated factors. The negotiated payments were dependent on (1) food prices, which were increasing due to the aforementioned little ice age, (2) the lobbying efforts of war contractors, and (3) the interests of recruited mercenaries.⁴¹ Sources describing the frequency and the amounts of the payments mercenaries actually received are fairly limited, thus we can only conjecture based on the written records to which we have access. In my

38 Kelenik, "A kézi lőfegyverek jelentősége," 87, 94.

39 Heischmann, *Die Anfänge*, 45–48.

40 ÖStA KA Best. 464/1593; ÖStA KA AFA 1594/4/7; ÖStA KA AFA 1594/6/3; ÖStA KA Best. 580/1598; ÖStA KA Best. 653/1600; ÖStA KA Best. 695/1601; ÖStA KA AFA 1605/12/1; Kelenik, "A kézi lőfegyverek jelentősége," 99–100.

41 Zoltán Péter Bagi, *A császári- királyi mezői hadsereg a tizenöt éves háborúban. Hadszervezet, érdekérvényesítés, reformkísérletek* (Budapest: Históriaantik Könyvkiadó, 2011), 213–34.

opinion, however, it is logical to look at the various kinds of payments made to mercenaries, from their enlistment and muster until their disbandment.

The first sum of money to which an enlisted soldier was theoretically entitled was the *Anritt-* or *Laufgeld*, an advance payment that enabled an enrolled soldier to travel from the location of his recruitment to the site of his unit's muster inspection. Soldiers from distant provinces who enlisted in newly formed units were likely to receive this money. However, it was not always enough to cover all their expenses, as the distance between the towns where they were recruited and ultimately inspected could be several hundred kilometers; sometimes prospective soldiers simply spent this money on drinks at nearby taverns.⁴² In some cases, the recruit might get an advance on his first monthly payment, which was recorded on the muster registry. Troops who had already served on Hungarian battlefields could expect to receive this sort of advance again if they continued their service. In December 1597, for instance, Zacharias Geizkofler and Bartholomäus Pezzen negotiated with Seifried von Kollonich and Heinrich Matthias von Thurn, convincing them to remain in their regiment for an *Anrittgeld* of 4 *Gulden* and a monthly wage of 12 *Gulden*. However, these negotiations ultimately failed, and thus these advances were never disbursed.⁴³

Soldiers did not always receive the *per diem* promised to those who were awaiting inspection. Payments to Tettau's horsemen, for instance, began on the 10th day of the month, not on the date of their muster. In his July 16, 1598 report, the commissioned inspection officer explained this seeming bonus payment by noting that the horsemen had never received the *Nachtgeld* they had been promised.⁴⁴ In most cases, however, the problem was not a failure to distribute the assigned sums, but rather that the amounts were too meager to keep up with ever-increasing food prices, which made it difficult for soldiers to provide for themselves, their relatives, or their horses.

Like the advances, the first monthly payments following a muster also seem to have been uncertain. In their report on the 1598 muster of the Mörsburg regiment, Westernach and Geizkofler noted that the soldiers were dissatisfied with their negotiated payments. Among other grievances, they complained that they had hardly received any of the money for their third month of service,

42 Krüger, Kersten, "Kriegsfinanzen und Reichsrecht im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," in *Krieg und Frieden. Militär und Gesellschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Bernhard R. Kroener et al. (Paderborn–Munich–Vienna–Zürich: Schöningh Verlag, 1996), 49.

43 ÖStA KA HKRA Prag 1597. No. 9.

44 Ibid., 1598. No. 23.

and that their first month's payments had gone almost entirely toward their weapons expenses. In their opinion, the prices for the gear prescribed by the *Capitulatio* for *Doppelsöldner*, musketeers, and arquebusiers (11, 9, and 6 *Gulden*, respectively) were too high; they were also concerned that they would not receive the remaining two months' payment in full.⁴⁵

In the period between the first month's payment and the next muster, military enterprisers often received only an advance for the following months, out of which they had to distribute their underlings' wages. On November 2, 1604, Giorgio Basta summoned the colonels (*Obristen*) of his army and told them that their infantry and cavalry would receive their pay and uniforms only in Kassa. As a token, they handed out 2 *Gulden* to each soldier. However, the soldiers would not receive another payment until January of 1605, and this was not a full month's wages either, but merely another advance collected from the towns around Eperjes (Prešov, Slovakia). By June 19, 1605, this lack of wages had led to threats of mutiny. The infantrymen of the Puchheim regiment protested in front of the house of the judge in Eperjes, demanding full payment of the five month's wages that had been denied them. The situation was resolved by the colonel's deputy, Lazarus von Schwendi, who ordered that money and supplies be handed out to the soldiers.⁴⁶

However, even these advances were not always paid. Having arrived at a muster of Walloon infantrymen, Geizkofler and Pezzen wrote in their December 3, 1597 report that though the officers had received the assigned funds, they did not disburse them to the sick.⁴⁷ In January of 1598, commissioned inspector Jakob Püchler reported the following from a Walloon army muster at Érsekújvár: the officers of Alphonso Montecuccoli's cavalry had requested that their advances not be deducted from their balances because their military enterpriser, though he had received the money, had never paid it to them.⁴⁸ Russworm, Sulz, and Mörsburg described similar experiences in their 1604 reports.⁴⁹ To this day, no documents confirming that the soldiers received their siege and battle payments have ever surfaced.

45 Ibid. No. 18.

46 "Tagebuch der Feldzüge des Regiments des Obristen Georg Freyherrn Ehrenreich. Besonders beim Gran und Eperies von 27. Julii 1604 bis 26. Octobris 1606 ausgeführt," in *Sammlung kleiner, noch ungedruckter Stücke*, 299, 308, 331.

47 ÖStA KA HKRA Prag 1597. No. 9.

48 Ibid., 1598. No. 26.

49 Ibid., Wien Exp. 1604 Mai. No. 89.

The army cashier sometimes issued extraordinary payments. As prescribed in the *Bestallungsbrief* and in the *Artikelbrief*, troops who took part in a successful siege or battle were entitled to an extra month's pay.⁵⁰ On October 7, 1598, Westernach sent a fairly strange letter to the Emperor from the military camp in Buda. After the capture of Víziváros, the colonels and their troops, who had been hired with imperial funds, demanded their siege bonuses. However, the imperial army commissioner would only disburse this money if the Christian troops were to take the castle itself; otherwise, he argued, the already secured lower castle would be lost again.⁵¹ In December of 1601, Archduke Matthias informed the troop commanders who had taken part in the capture of Székesfehérvár and the consequent battle at Sárrét that the Emperor had denied their requests for siege and battle bonuses, along with their pleas to be compensated for the damage done to their regiments.⁵² The reason behind the Court Military Council's decision may well have been a chronic lack of money, given that the regiments of those making these demands—Hofkirchen, Adolf von Althan, Preiner, and Hans Wendel von Pernhausen—had participated in both military operations.⁵³

Whether soldiers resigned or continued their service, the commissioned muster officer would negotiate their pay with the military enterpriser who had enlisted them. In the former case, even if their agreements specified the payments to be made to the soldiers (or to their widows and orphans), such stipulations were not always honored. In some cases, not even this final payment—already diminished by deductions for advances and food expenses—would be fully paid in cash. Instead, soldiers were issued bills of credit, the so-called *Restzettel*, in the amount they were owed,⁵⁴ which bills could be redeemed at the army cashier's office.⁵⁵ In many cases, colonels, other officers, or sometimes even civilians would purchase these bills of credit from the soldiers and demand compensation for them at a later date.⁵⁶

The situation for soldiers who continued their service was hardly better. As one captain of a reenlisted Walloon infantry unit explained in a letter in

50 Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, 202.

51 ÖStA KA HKRA Prag 1598. No. 24.

52 ÖStA KA HKRA Wien Reg. 1601 Dezember. No. 37; ÖStA KA HKRA Wien Reg. 1601 Dezember No. 53.

53 HHStA Hungarica Allgemeine Akten Fasc. 140. Fol. 134r–137v; Gusztáv Gömöry, "Székesfehérvár visszavétele 1601-ben és újbóli elvesztése 1602-ben," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 5 (1892): 611–13.

54 Heischmann, *Die Anfänge*, 193–95.

55 ÖStA KA AFA 1596/1/9 ½.

56 Heischmann, *Die Anfänge*, 193–195.

February of 1596, the proposed inducement to re-up (a half-month's pay plus food) was insufficient, especially considering that his soldiers had not received the first month's pay promised by the *Accordo*. They thus demanded that they be dismissed and provided with documents of passage that would enable them to return home.⁵⁷

It is not surprising, therefore, that military enterprisers in the Hungarian theater of operations had to offer their mercenaries “incentives”. On the one hand, mercenaries were motivated by these irregularly issued monthly payments; on the other, as Parker has demonstrated in the case of the Netherlands' Spanish army,⁵⁸ continually rising food prices also compelled them to enlist.

Alternative Means of Making a Living

As mercenaries had to provide for themselves and their families, they had to seek other sources of income in addition to—or instead of—their “normal” pay, which came only irregularly, or not at all for months. Petty fraud, the systematic looting of their environment, and family members' incomes helped them mitigate the severity of their destitution.

Minor Circles of Deception

Even the *Artikelbrief* accepted at the Imperial Diet of 1570 in Speyer contains several paragraphs addressing soldiers' various cons, swindles, and schemes. According to this document, the swapping of weapons and gear between mercenaries was prohibited. It also defined the length of the month to be served and the corresponding payment, and also recommended execution for those who deserted or took unauthorized leave after receiving their wages. It also made it a capital offence to enlist as a mercenary under two different captains or in two different places, which some did in hopes of doubling their money. To eliminate this possibility, recruits were supposed to fill out their muster documents with their given and family names, as well as their place of origin. Officers were obliged to ensure that everyone served in the campaign with their own weapons

57 ÖStA KA HKRA Wien Exp. 1596 Februar. No. 113.

58 Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567–1659*, 162–64.

and armor. In addition, enterprisers had to make sure not to enlist anyone from another infantry unit or from the cavalry.⁵⁹

Apart from the types of fraud referred to in the *Artikelbrief*, there are other instances of deception in the contemporary sources. An order issued by the *Hofrat* on April 12, 1600 prohibited enterprisers from enrolling vineyard laborers (*Hauer*) for military service. Their enlistment was discouraged as they sometimes deceived both the vineyard owners and the recruiting captains. They did not do their work in the wineries, nor did they show up at the musters, stealing and damaging crops as they migrated to and fro.⁶⁰

It also happened that enterprisers and enlisted men were partners in such schemes, the unit commander secretly dismissing his soldiers and keeping their wages for himself. To keep his ruse from being discovered, the commander would hire day laborers at minimal cost to “stand in for the roll call” and then depart, as related by a patent issued on November 10, 1600.⁶¹

Pillaging as a Means of Survival

Plunder and pillage were everyday activities for the enlisted, from their muster and encampment until their disbandment, despite the fact that the *Artikelbrief* recommended the death penalty for anyone who engaged in such acts.⁶² Even so, it did little to discourage them. On the one hand, as Zacharias Geizkofler pointed out in his report dated January 11, 1597, the Dutch cavalry was accustomed to pillaging and marauding.⁶³ The next year, Martin Crusius, a Greek professor at Tübingen University, noted in his journal that Georges Bayer de Boppard’s Walloon infantrymen had caused extensive damage at Pfuhl (near Ulm), going so far as to burn down 17 houses.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the soldiers’ daily payments were insufficient to sustain them. In his May 15, 1598 letter to Rudolf

59 Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, 199–201, 206, 208; Hans-Michael Möller, *Das Regiment der Landsknechte. Untersuchungen zu Verfassung, Recht und Selbstverständnis in deutschen Söldnerbeeren des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Frankfurter historische Abhandlungen 12 (Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag, 1976), 29.

60 HHSStA MEA Mandate, Patente und Passbriefe in Kriegssachen (MPP) Konv. 1. Fol. 116r.–17v.

61 Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser*, 50–51.

62 Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, 202, 205.

63 Johannes Müller, “Der Anteil der schwäbischen Kreistruppen an dem Türkenkrieg Kaiser Rudolf II. von 1595 bis 1597,” *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben und Neuburg*. *Achtundzwanzigster Jahrgang* 28 (1901): 246–47.

64 Péter Sahin-Tóth, “Egy lotaringiai nemes a ’hosszú török háborúban’: Georges Bayer de Boppard,” in *Változatok a történelemben. Tanulmányok Székely György tiszteletére*, Monumenta Historica Budapestinensia XIV, ed. Gyöngyi Erdei et al. (Budapest: Budapest Történeti Múzeum, 2004), 303.

II, Archduke Matthias reported that mercenaries from the Russworm infantry regiment, while waiting for their muster in Lower Austria, received four *Kreutzer* a day with which to provide for themselves and their families. However, as the author argued, this was so meager—not even enough to buy bread—that the soldiers simply stole whatever they needed to survive from poor local subjects. Thus, the Archduke proposed a doubling of the daily payment for those waiting to be mustered. In addition, he allowed taxes on the locals to be decreased or eliminated altogether.⁶⁵

The most problematic form of tax increase levied on local subjects was the repeated postponement of the day of muster. According to a detailed note compiled by members of the Lower Austrian nobility in 1602, Hofkirchen's 3000 infantrymen waited to be mustered at Krems for 36 days. Sulz's regiment had to wait 42 days at Tull for the muster commissioners. Hans Ernst von Sprinzenstein's unit had to stay idle for 73 days until their muster. In addition, the mounted arquebusiers hired by the Lower Austrian noblemen were given an extra 20,000 *Rheingulden* over and above their allotted wages in hopes of stopping their harassment of poor local subjects.⁶⁶

The prolongation of marches also imposed significant burdens on local populations. According to the aforementioned note, 3000 Walloons spent 14 days on a march over land and water across Lower Austria; the infantry hired by the Upper Austrian nobility spent 10 days; the Salzburg army 16 days; and Philipp Otto Graf zu Salm, Wild- und Rheingraf's 500 riders took 23 days. On such occasions, local inhabitants had to provide supplies not only for the troops, but for the commissioned inspectors as well, not to mention the constant abuses of power they had to endure.⁶⁷

The armies that appeared at muster sites for disbandment also caused great damage. As the waiting time for the muster increased, so did the burdens on the local population. Note the following data from the compiler of the previously cited Lower Austrian registry: Kollonich's 1000 horsemen, while waiting to be disbanded in the area of Marchfeld and Ebzersdorf, parasitized the population for 21 days, while the 2000 Austrian infantrymen at Hainburg did likewise for 21 days. One thousand soldiers from Salzburg did so for 5 days at the Schwadorf estate, while the infantry hired by the Upper Austrian noblemen spent 46 idle

65 ÖStA KA Best. 621/1599.

66 HHStA Kriegsakten (Ka) Karton (Kt.) 31. Konv. 1590–1603. Fol. 100r-v.

67 HHStA Ka Kt. 31. Konv. 1590–1603. Fol. 100v.

days in the vicinity of Fischamand.⁶⁸ Geizkofler and Pezzen seem justified in suggesting in their December 3, 1597 report that the quickly and competently executed muster, reorganization, and disbandment of the Royal and Imperial troops stationed at Pozsony (Bratislava, Slovakia) saved the subject population approximately a hundred thousand *Gulden*.⁶⁹

Those who remained in service were ordered into winter encampments by the Court's Military Council. As this was enormously expensive, Rudolf II recommended in an October 1601 letter that wages for these months should be decreased, or that two month's payment should simply be skipped.⁷⁰

To spare Austria, Walloons were usually quartered in Hungarian territories, where nearby counties, towns, and villages were to provide for them. However, as they were underpaid, soldiers often "acquired" supplies from the vicinity of their accommodations.⁷¹ In the records of the patrician conclaves of Sopron, Vas, and Zala counties, there are recurrent entries complaining about instances of Walloon and French extortion in their villages, which led them to petition Archduke Matthias to have these soldiers transferred.⁷²

The German military was quartered in Lower Austria, usually in Vienna, either in the towns and villages along the Hungarian border or in the territory of Habsburg Hungary.⁷³ Their payments for extended service were, again, erratic or missing, which led them to take essentials like food and firewood from local subjects by force. The February 23 entry of the Court Military Council's 1595 protocol relates that Andreas Medwe was sent to Helckendorf to investigate crimes committed by the mercenaries of Jakob Hannibal von Raitenau's regiment, including the murder of a peasant.⁷⁴ Some months later, in December of 1595, Raitenau's German soldiers were again involved in a series of incidents. Because of the aforementioned huge amount of unpaid wages,⁷⁵ the remaining army that was housed on the outskirts of Vienna began systematically robbing

68 Ibid., 100v–101r.

69 ÖStA KA HKRA Prag 1597. No. 9.

70 ÖStA KA HKRA Wien Reg. 1601. Oktober. No. 136.

71 ÖStA KA AFA 1599/8/12.

72 Irén Bilkei and Éva Turbuly, *Zala vármegye közgyűlési jegyzőkönyveinek regesztái 1555–1711*, I, Zalai Gyűjtemény 29 (Zalaegerszeg: Zala Megyei Levéltár, 1989), 632. c., 640. c., 656. c., 665. c.; Éva Turbuly, *Sopron vármegye közgyűlési jegyzőkönyveinek regesztái 1595–1608*, II. rész (Sopron: Győr-Moson-Sopron Megye Soproni Levéltár, 2002), 231. c., 243. c., 244. c., 295. c.; 410. c., 432. c.

73 ÖStA KA AFA 1595/12 /1 ¼; HStA MEA MPP Konv. 2. Fol. 146r–47v; Heischmann, *Die Anfänge*, 228–45.

74 ÖStA KA Hofkriegsrat-Wien Pr. Exp. Bd. 194. Fol. 196v. 1595. 23 Februar.

75 ÖStA KA AFA 1595/12/1 ¼.

the population. Their transgressions ceased only when certain key figures were captured and executed on December 20.⁷⁶

The army that was stationed in Upper Hungary also imposed a great burden on the population of the neighboring counties. This is why the local nobility petitioned the Emperor on April 30, 1603 with a detailed depiction of the soldiers' plundering of the locals. According to their petition, they had complained several times about the damage done by soldiers of various nationalities, especially mounted gunmen wearing white, green, and blue coats, serving in Szatmár (Satu Mare, Romania). They divided the villages among themselves, confiscating wood, hay, and straw by force and without payment. Village judges and subjects were coerced into trading at prices that were set by the plunderers. Thus, one *véka* (an obsolete unit of measurement) of oats normally went for for one *Gulden*, but it also happened that soldiers would demand not one, but two, or even four *véka* in exchange for this fee. If there was no fodder in the village, the population would be forced to travel to the market in Kassa or elsewhere to purchase the required supplies. And while market prices fluctuated, soldiers would pay for their foodstuffs, wine, and fodder only according to a set list of prices, and thus villagers were sometimes forced to do this shopping at a loss.

In the winter, depending on the conditions, three or four of these mounted gunmen would chose a county and move into a village. Once there, they would demand food of the best available quality, also requisitioning free provisions for their wives or children or companions. First they would be given beer, and when it ran out, they would want the best wine. If there was no wine, they would send the locals away to find some, sometimes to sources miles away. All in all, they indulged themselves, keeping kitchens and cellars open all day and night. This caused the locals to complain, as they did not have so much that they could satisfy their guests, who forced the peasants to do their bidding by beating them or threatening them with weapons. They also looted houses, taking pillows, beds, geese, hens, and swine, and even this was not enough, as they often seized everything that had not been buried. As long as the soldiers were there, they would want a half *véka* of fodder—nearly equivalent to a Prague bushel—for each horse. And if that was not sufficient, peasants would be sent to the market to buy more.

76 Hyeronimus Augustinus Ortelius, *Chronologia oder Historische Beschreibung aller Kriegsempörungen und Belagerungen in Ungarn auch in Siebenburgen von 1395* (Nürnberg: n.p., 1602 [Reprint: Győr: Pytheas Kiadó, 2002]), 101r-v.

The author of this document goes on to discuss the coming of spring. Villagers were afraid of further damage, suspecting that, beyond the usual seizures, the soldiers would confiscate lambs, pigs, geese, and other poultry. On top of all this, some of the mounted gunmen, unsatisfied with the aforementioned goods, came with wagons and took the wheat, barley, and oats that the serfs had grown and had it milled for their own use. These soldiers committed such plunder not once or twice or four times, but as often as they fancied. Thus—the noblemen’s complaint asserted—our villages had survived the Tatars (that is, the Ottoman Turks), only to be destroyed by our own mounted soldiers. Not only did the nobles worry that their tax-paying serfs were being plundered and impoverished, they were increasingly disturbed by the mercenaries’ failure to distinguish nobles from commoners. They ravaged estates and occupied empty houses, treating everyone equally.

The local nobility argued in this petition that the soldiers of Johann Baptista Pezzen’s regiment had done the greatest damage. They looted, plundered, and pillaged everywhere, in the courtyards and castles of noblemen, clergymen, and laymen alike. They butchered countless cattle, they abused virgins and women of good reputation, they committed murder and other despicable acts—it is a wonder that the earth did not open up and devour them.⁷⁷ And thus the Court ordered the Szepes Chamber in Kassa to investigate the complaints of the Upper Hungarian nobility, which also included the assertions that Pezzen’s infantry regiment had taken three or four thousand (!) horses and that the plundered goods of a single captain had filled eight wagons.⁷⁸

This pillage and plunder was naturally accompanied by violence and destruction, and military leaders struggled against such viciousness, both in their camp regulations and in the *Artikelbrief*. Thanks to these efforts, certain provisions of the two documents forbade the abuse or dishonoring of women in labor, the pregnant, virgins, the elderly, preachers, priests, and parish clerks. They likewise forbade the looting or destruction of churches, monasteries, hermitages, and schools. For all such transgressions, clauses 8 and 9 of the *Artikelbrief* held out the possibility of the death penalty.⁷⁹ In article 53, Schwendi also forbade, under threat of execution, the destruction of crops, mills, and bakers’ ovens, by which provision he hoped to safeguard the army’s food sources. In addition, in article 54, the drafters of this document emphatically stressed that the aged and infirm,

77 ÖStA HKA Hoffinanz (HF) Hoffinanz Ungarn (HFU), rote Nummer (RN). 77. Fol. 699r-712v.

78 Ibid., 78. Fol. 336–38 rv.

79 Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, 200.

clerics, women, and small children—that is, the unarmed and those incapable of bearing arms—should never be beaten or killed; anyone who committed such a crime was to pay for it with his life. Schwendi also used the threat of death to ward off another recurrent form of hooliganism—anyone who pilfered or set fire to a military camp without the express command of his colonel was to be executed.⁸⁰ Of course, these official prohibitions had little actual effect on everyday practice, as exemplified by the sacking of Beszterce (Bistrita, Romania) in February of 1602. However, neither in its death toll nor in the volume of plundered wealth did this incident measure up to the losses suffered by the rich city of Magdeburg, which was sacked in 1631 by the soldiers of the Catholic League, and where 20–30,000 citizens were slaughtered.⁸¹ Thus, the Long Turkish War was marked by pillaging, plundering, and ransacking, just like other European theaters of war. However, the volume of such depredations permanently circumscribed the growth of the cities of the Kingdom of Hungary and Transylvania, so that neither in population nor in economic terms did they ever reach the size or potential of similar cities in Western Europe.

Wives and Children

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the motley crews that accompanied the armed forces were made up primarily of women and children.⁸² In antiquity, it was not regarded as extraordinary for a mercenary to set off on a military campaign with his wife, or even his entire family. Even into the nineteenth century, their presence was generally described as a common military obligation.⁸³ Based on communications from the Long Turkish War and the Thirty Years' War, it is possible to come up with a rough estimate of the number of people who stayed in military camps but did not fight. In a patent dated April 28, 1601, Rudolf II informed the magistrates of Grundramsdorf, Neudorf, and Biedermasdorf that Captain Dietmayr Schiffer's 200-man battalion, then in the service of the Pope, was to be dismissed if it were to come to any of these three villages.

80 Ibid., 206–07; Fritz Redlich, *De praeda militari. Looting and Booty 1500–1815* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1956), 10–18.

81 Olaf van Nimwegen, The transformation of army organisation in early-modern western Europe, c. 1500–1789, in *European Warfare*, ed. Frank Tallett and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 172.

82 Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland*, 241.

83 Christa Hämmerle, “Militärgeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte. Von den Chancen einer Annäherung,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 9 (1998): 125.

According to this document, these soldiers were accompanied by 19 women and children (*Trossweib und Bubeln*).⁸⁴ At the end of February, 1632, after a short siege, the defenders of Buxtehude surrendered the stronghold entrusted to them to Swedish troops, who, in exchange, promised the Imperial Guard and their companions a safe withdrawal. A short time later, 501 soldiers, 335 women, and 367 children abandoned the city.⁸⁵ In all probability, they belonged to a regiment of Albrecht von Wallenstein's army, then stationed at Forchheim, near Bamberg, at the muster of which the enterprisers listed 2258 soldiers, 916 women, and 521 children.⁸⁶ Johann Jakob von Wallhausen, on the other hand, in his 1615 work *Kriegskunst zu Fuß* (Warfare On Foot), reckoned that the recruitment of 3000 soldiers would mean the presence of 4000 women and children (!) in their camp.⁸⁷ This number does not appear to be an exaggeration, given that in 1573 it was assumed that approximately 5000 various people (footmen, servants, wives, prostitutes, and children) and as many as a thousand horses would accompany a 3000-man Spanish regiment going off to war.⁸⁸

Enterprisers were generally of the opinion that the wives and children in the camps were merely useless, hungry mouths⁸⁹ who slowed the army down, contributed to rising food prices, and lowered morale. Accordingly, they renewed their efforts to restrict or even prohibit the hiring of married mercenaries.⁹⁰ In spite of this, there were many of them in the Christian armies of the Long War and their contemporaries viewed their presence as common, even customary. As Ferenc Dersffy wrote in his August 13, 1597 letter to the lord lieutenant (*supremus comes* or *főispán*) of Árva county, György Thurzó of Bethlenfalva: "... with the Germans, as they cannot be without them, there are many women."⁹¹ Four years later, Peter Casal wrote to Graz from the Christian encampment at

84 HHSStA MEA MPP Konv. 2. 160rv.

85 Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland*, 241.

86 István Czigány, *Reform vagy kudarc? Kísérletek a magyarországi katonaság beillesztésére a Habsburg Birodalom haderejébe. 1600–1700* (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2004), 46–47.

87 Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland*, 227.

88 Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567–1659*, 87; Barton C. Hacker, „Women and Military Institutions in Early Modern Europe: A Reconnaissance,” *Signs* 6, no. 4 (1981): 647–48.

89 ÖStA KA AFA 598/4/ad 2; ÖStA KA HKRA Prag 1598. No. 18; ÖStA KA HKRA Wien Reg. 1603 Juli. No. 140.

90 Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567–1659. The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' Wars* (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), 175; Czigány, *Reform vagy kudarc?*, 46.

91 Géza Pálffy, *A pápai vár felszabadításának négyszáz éves emlékezete 1597–1997* (Pápa: Jókai Mór Városi Könyvtár, 1997), 149.

Kanizsa that in the two regiments hired by Gianangelo Gaudanzi di Madruzzo, Baron d’Avy, he had seen more women than men.⁹²

The women and children traveling with the army were not just useless idlers to be fed; they took part in the everyday life and work of the camp and tried to help their families earn a living. For example, they participated in the construction of siege ramps. Casal, who personally took part in the siege of Kanizsa in 1601, mentions several times in his letters that the women worked alongside the men and that several of them were even shot.⁹³ They also took part in the cleaning of the camp lavatories and in nursing the sick and the wounded.⁹⁴

In addition to carrying all the family’s belongings, women cared for the children and looked after the animals. They washed officers’ clothes for money, occasionally begged for alms, and sometimes hurried to the battlefield to loot corpses with their husbands.⁹⁵ To sustain their families, they often risked their lives by looking for food outside the camps. According to Casal’s description, food was so scarce in the camp of the Christian army besieging Kanizsa that in early September of 1601 every able person left the camp armed with huge poles, walking as far as a mile to beat the fruit from the region’s apple and plum trees. In their hunger, many gorged themselves, devouring all the fruit in sight and subsequently falling ill.⁹⁶

Enterprisers also seem to have taken advantage of the presence of family members in the camps, as it happened more than once that women and children dressed themselves in army garments before a muster and thus deceived the mustering officer. The military enterpriser could then pocket the payments meant for those who were serving only on paper, after honoring these supplementals” with a few coins. Such troublesome experiences can be inferred from the *Bestallung* issued in Preiner’s name on March 15, 1602. It emphasized that enterprisers were not to enlist young kids (*Buben*), but men skilled in warfare. In addition, Geizkofler’s report, dated January 18, 1603, in reinforcing the edicts of the 1603 Imperial Diet in Regensburg, suggested that it would be necessary to

92 Albrecht Stauffer, “Die Belagerung von Kanizsa durch die christlichen Truppen im Jahre 1601,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 7 (1886): 275.

93 Stauffer, “Die Belagerung von Kanizsa,” 285, 291, 294.

94 Coberus, *Observationum medicarum castrensiū Hungaricarum*, 45.

95 Hans Wilhelm Kirchhof, *Militaris disciplina, das ist Kriegs-Regiments historische vnd außführliche Beschreibung, Wie, vnd was massen, solches bey vnsern löblichen Vorfahren, ... gehalten, vnd auch nach vnd nach verbessert worden* (Frankfurt a. M.: Brathering Verlag, 1602), 107; Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland*, 244.

96 Stauffer, “Die Belagerung von Kanizsa,” 285.

set up a permanent army because youngsters were enlisting at every recruitment drive, especially among the arquebusiers, and that they were useless and a waste of food.⁹⁷

Whether in the Long Turkish War or the Thirty Years' War, if her husband left her or was killed in battle, the situation of a mercenary's wife could change quickly. If she could not support herself or find a new husband—that is, in many instances—she had no other option than to prostitute herself to survive. After a while, these women came to be regarded just like those who had joined the campaigning army as prostitutes in the first place.⁹⁸

A Final, Desperate Move: Desertion, Insubordination, or Mutiny

Soldiers' dissatisfaction was directly proportional to their unpaid wage bills and their hunger. The Christian army that besieged Kanizsa in 1601 included mercenaries from Central and Southern Italy who could not tolerate the Hungarian climate and often deserted the army in groups of twenty or thirty.⁹⁹ In the spring of 1602, some privates and infantrymen from the Althan regiment, fed up with their unpaid wages, left their winter encampment and deserted to Vienna. The Emperor distributed a patent throughout the city and the entirety of Lower Austria, warning residents to keep their gates closed and to check every passage, ferry, and customs checkpoint if necessary. Upon capture, these deserters' full names were to be reported and they were to be kept under strict surveillance.¹⁰⁰ In that same year, the remaining soldiers of Johann Baptista Pezzen's regiment left their appointed winter quarters and marched back to Austria.¹⁰¹

One year later, Russworm had to investigate the revolt of 600 Dutch mounted gunmen who had been hired by Solms in Upper Hungary. According to his report, the soldiers' disaffection and their ransacking of the region had been caused by the failure to pay them, and he recommended that this be kept in mind in sentencing both the leaders and the participants in this mutiny.¹⁰²

97 Heischmann, *Die Anfänge*, 45–47.

98 Baumann, *Landsknechte*, 155–62; Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland*, 248–52.

99 Stauffer, "Die Belagerung von Kanizsa," 301; Ortelius, *Chronologia*, 208r.

100 HHStA MEA MPP Konv. 2. Fol. 190r.

101 ÖStA KA HKRA Wien Exp. 1602. Mai. No. 13.

102 Ibid., Reg. 1603 Juli. No. 75.

As described in a letter written to Rudolf II in May of 1604, another thousand soldiers, these from the Mörsburg infantry regiment, also revolted over delinquent payments. This group left their appointed winter quarters in the town of Szentgyörgy (Durdevac, Croatia), marched to Lower Austria, and occupied Schwechat. However, when Sulz and Bernhard Leo Gall's infantry and cavalry arrived to confront them, they disavowed their mutiny and gave up their five chief leaders.¹⁰³

There is no doubt that the largest mutiny of mercenaries during the Long Turkish War was the revolt at Pápa. By August or September of 1599, the French and Walloon infantry brigades in the military camp at Esztergom were on the verge of open revolt. By disbursing some money, Geizkofler, the Court Military Council, and the Court Chamber managed to resolve the precarious situation, but only temporarily. In June of 1600, the French army, still lingering at their winter quarters in Pápa, revolted over insufficient supplies and overdue wages. It took a proper siege to retake the stronghold from them, and some of them even defected to the Ottoman army.¹⁰⁴ Considering all this, it is no surprise that Karl von Liechtenstein's professional report argued that it was inadvisable to enlist additional French troops, given their unreliability. He also advised against hiring new Walloon mercenaries because their long marches to the battlefield greatly increased their cost, and their casualties could not be easily replaced. It must also be noted that Liechtenstein was of the opinion that the climatic conditions in the Hungarian lands made Italians unfit for imperial service there; he also considered Cossacks marauders rather than soldiers.¹⁰⁵

Weather and the Troops

In addition to the constant hardships soldiers faced, like mortal danger and unpaid wages, we have to consider two more influences on their everyday lives: weather and epidemics. The so-called “little ice age” was the period of intensified glaciation between the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries. One of its coldest periods took place at the turn of the seventeenth century. By the

103 Ibid., 1604 Mai. No. 118.

104 Caroline Finkel, “French Mercenaries in the Habsburg–Ottoman War of 1593–1606: the Desertion of the Pápa Garrison to the Ottomans in 1600,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55, no. 3 (1992): 451–71; Péter Sahin-Tóth, “Hitszegő hitetlenek. Francia-vallon katonák lázadása Pápa várának ostrománál (1600),” in *Ad Astra. Sahin-Tóth Péter tanulmányai – Études de Péter Sahin-Tóth*, ed. Teréz Oborni (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 2006), 299–363.

105 Heischmann, *Die Anfänge*, 32.

end of the sixteenth century, the hot, dry summers of the 1550s were turning colder and colder, with more and more precipitation. Alpine glaciers started to grow in the mid-1580s and kept advancing until the turn of the century, and as a result, the average annual temperature dropped by 1.2-1.4 degrees Celsius. Summers became cooler and rainier, while winters became colder and harsher, and this climate change also affected the Carpathian Basin. The cold period that started in the middle of the sixteenth century was at its worst between 1595 and 1602.¹⁰⁶

In the 1570 *Artikelbrief*, Schwendi required both infantry and cavalry to wear good coats or cloaks in order to protect themselves and their firearms from the cold.¹⁰⁷ Of course, this directive was not always obeyed. Westernach wrote in his October 7, 1598 report to the Court Military Council that due to the cold, many men were lying sick in their tents and in makeshift huts.¹⁰⁸ One month later, muster inspector Kulner reported from the muster of the Preiner regiment that a large part of the infantry had fallen ill as a result of the cold weather and their poor garments.¹⁰⁹ In a volume published in 1685, Tobias Kober wrote that bronchitis and the common cold were regular problems in Hungary, especially in the encampments. Most soldiers were affected, and often suffered from the resulting sore throats and pulmonary diseases. Afflicting the whole body, these ailments contributed to the so-called “Pannonian languor” (*“languores Pannonicos”*). Old soldiers protected themselves with aqua vitae (*pálinka*, or *vino sublimante*), often drinking it in the morning. Mörsburg prohibited his infantrymen from consuming spirits, but Kober convinced him that *pálinka* was indeed useful during cold season. However, the wise doctor also added that its consumption could be harmful in hot weather. Some aqua vitae could drive thickened mucus out of the throat, but it was thought to cause one’s bile to boil when the weather was hot. Thus he advised Mörsburg to consider the suitability of the weather and the season, particularly in the Hungarian encampments. Having served as field medic to the Imperial and Royal Army in 1596 and 1597, Kober thought that the various natural phenomena that scourged the Christian army during the

106 Antal Réthly, ed., *Időjárás események és elemi csapások Magyarországon 1700-ig* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1962), 102–17; Lajos Rácz, *Magyarország éghajlattörténete az újkor idején* (Szeged: Juhász Gyula Felsőoktatási Kiadó, 2001), 56–62; Wolfgang Behringer, *A klíma kultúrtörténete. A jégkorszaktól a globális felmelegedésig*, trans. Judit Tarnói (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 2010), 117–39.

107 Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, 200.

108 ÖStA KA HKRA Prag 1598. No. 22.

109 Ibid. No. 25.

siege of Buda in 1598 were actually the work of Turkish sorcerers and Satan himself.¹¹⁰

Christian and Ottoman sources both mention that the weather during the siege of Kanizsa in the autumn of 1601 was rather cold and wet. This greatly slowed the preparations for the siege, as the almost constant rainfall on the already sodden swamplands made digging siege ramps and filling the moat impossible. For example, their supposedly decisive assault was to start on October 28 because the Imperial and Royal forces had been able to start the digging for the ramps only nine days earlier. Then, a great snowfall rendered the continuation of the siege impossible. The incessant rain, followed by snow and freezing dawns, made the conditions almost unbearable for the starving soldiers. The Southern Italians, who had never known such dire weather, suffered the most. To provide material for the sandbags they used to fill the moat, soldiers were forced to cut up their tents, which meant sleeping in the trenches under the open sky. It was no wonder that they froze to death *en masse*, or deserted to escape these terrible conditions. On their march toward Kanizsa, Russworm's armies suffered similar losses. Although they had brought tents, they were unable to pitch them, and thus 3000 men and women and 300 horses would perish along the way.¹¹¹

However, disease resulted not just from the rain and the cold, but also from the heat. According to Ortelius, hot weather contributed to the illnesses and deaths of soldiers in the month of August in both 1596 and 1598. In both instances, dehydration led to fatigue and eventually to death.¹¹²

Hygiene in the camps was also a serious problem. Fronsberger's work contains an undated set of regulations which established strict sanitary procedures for camp latrines and abattoirs in hopes of preventing epidemics.¹¹³ However, outbreaks of contagious diseases could not be avoided. As a result of haphazard burial practices and a lack of basic hygiene, an epidemic broke out during the

110 Coberus, *Observationum medicarum castrensium Hungaricarum*, 5–9.

111 Stauffer, "Die Belagerung von Kanizsa," 265–313; Imre Karácson, trans., and Gyula Szekfű, ed., *Török történetírók, vol. 3 (1566–1659)* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1916), 162–64, 306–307, 309–34, passim; Florio Banfi, "Gianfrancesco Aldobrandini magyarországi hadivállalatai," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 41 (1940): 150–54; Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata*, 340–44, passim; Ortelius, *Chronologia*, 207r–12v, passim; Balázs Sudár, "Kanizsa 1601. évi ostroma török szemmel," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 118, no. 4 (2006): 1025–58, passim.

112 Ortelius, *Chronologia*, 112, 153.

113 Leonhard Fronsperger, *Von Schanzen vnnnd Befestigungen vmb die Feldtlager auffzuwerffen*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1573), XXIIIv; László Takáts, Endre Szemkeő, and László Vámos, "Magyarországi tábori kórház szervezési és működési elve 1692-ben," *Orvostörténelmi Közlemények/Communcationes de Historia Artis Medicine* 10 (1977): 58.

siege of Esztergom in 1595; its casualties included deputy commander Karl von Mansfeld.¹¹⁴ Kober also reports that one year later, a physician who had arrived with the troops from Upper Austria also died during an epidemic at the siege of Hatvan. When the defenders' artillery forced his camp into retreat and he was out tending to the wounded, Leonhard Rauwolff drank from the Zagyva river ("*Hadwaniensis aquae*"), at which point, according to Kober, the urine and feces in the water poisoned him. The old medic was ignored in the camp, was not treated adequately, and eventually died of constant diarrhea that September.¹¹⁵ Two years later, as the Christian army was retreating to the Szigetköz, the flooding Danube soaked their camp. The resulting epidemic afflicted Adolf von Schwarzenberg, Bernhard Leo Gall, and Geizkofler, but in the end, only a few of their cohort would die of it.¹¹⁶

Conclusion

The entirety of Austro-Hungarian and European society was represented in the Imperial and Royal Army at the end of the sixteenth century. We find soldiers who enlisted out of a sense of Christian duty, impoverished nobles, and citizens seeking honor and adventure. As in the 'Thirty Years' War, however, it was the penniless who made up the great mass of the armed forces. Trying to escape poverty and starvation, these initially unarmed recruits and their families had to face everyday dangers in the Hungarian theater of war: mortal violence, destitution caused by unpaid wages, epidemics, and exposure to the elements. They strove to survive through fraud and deceit, as well as by looting and ransacking their environment. Already by the end of the fourteenth century, their rulers had been trying, through various decrees, to prohibit such "solutions", but in vain—their everyday survival strategies simply did not comport with the norms set down for them by the authorities.¹¹⁷

Joining the military did not solve the long-term problem of subsistence. Even so, it happened more than once during the Long Turkish War that more people showed up at a muster of a regiment than could be accommodated. For many, there was no way to return to their former lives. They spent the time

114 Gábor Kazinczy, ed., *Illésházy István nádor följegyzései 1592–1603* (Pest: Eggenberger Ferdinánd Magyar Akadémiai Könyvtár, 1863), 23; Istvánffy, *Magyarok dolgairól*, 207.

115 Coberus, *Observationum medicarum castrensiū Hungaricarum*, 16–17.

116 Ortelius, *Chronologia*, 153.

117 Redlich, *De praeda militari*, 6–18.

between their terms of service wandering about as vagrants (*gartender Knecht*), waiting to be mustered again.¹¹⁸

These roving, armed soldiers and their families, meanwhile, tried to support themselves by means of minor (or more serious) criminal acts, often imposing significant burdens on local populations. However, these methods allowed soldiers to secure a living for themselves and their families only in the short term. And because of they were under-housed and perpetually malnourished, their constitutions were even less capable of withstanding the climatic ordeals and accompanying illnesses that confronted them on the battlefields of Hungary.

It is important to reiterate that among the soldiers who arrived in the Kingdom of Hungary in this period, we find the unprepared and unqualified alongside mercenaries who had fought in numerous campaigns and knew their weapons well. Therefore, it is incorrect to assume that every recruit who reached the Hungarian theater of war would have been completely unprepared militarily; however, it would be equally irresponsible to assert that they were all trained professionals.

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118 Baumann, *Landsknechte*, 131–35; Roeck, *Außenseiter, Randgruppen, Minderheiten*, 76; Burschel, *Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland*, 273–91; Bagi, *A császári-királyi mezői hadsereg*, 332–34.

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