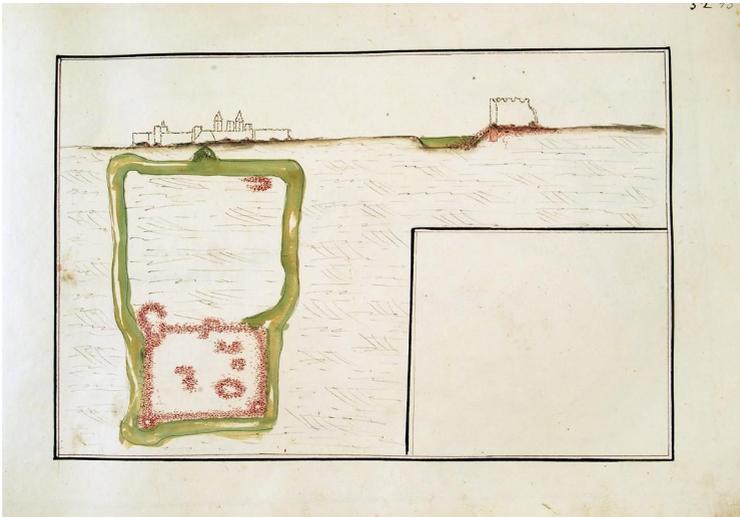


PH.D. THESIS

GEZA KAS

**FORTRESS DESTRUCTION IN OUR COUNTRY AFTER THE
EXPULSION OF THE TURKS
(1699 – 1702)**



PILISCSABA

2010

I.

The Ph.D. Thesis is about the fortress destructions that were ordered during the period between the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) and Rákóczi's War of Independence (1703). These are alive in common knowledge as remarkable examples for the Habsburg's anti-Hungarian behaviour. Even today though, history has not developed the theme thoroughly, it has only given a conventional answer to the problem: with the expulsion of the Turks the former border fortress system became superfluous. The empty treasury could not and did not want to maintain it, so it had to be destroyed in order that it would not become a home to thieves. The Thesis wishes to fill this long-felt gap.

The interval of our study is a highly untreated part of our country's history: right after the Treaty of Karlowitz most historical studies deal with the outbreak of Rákóczi's War of Independence. Though it is a very short period, it links the Turkish Era – already disappeared in most parts of the country – with the 18th century's Hungary developing within the Habsburg Empire. During these few years we can study directly the social and economical effects of the warlike situation – permanent because of the Turkish conquest. These lead to numberless conflicts the solution of which became the most important task of the following century. The plans of the period between 1699 and 1703 can be regarded as preparations for this process.

II.

The thesis wishes to examine the fortress destructions with paying attention to the contemporary state systems and international relations. The theme cannot be thoroughly elaborated without knowing the Habsburg Empire's geopolitical situation and the Court's diplomatic field. To achieve this, the author has found new sources that complete the known basic researches. Among these the '*Deputatio des Status public-oeconomico-militaris*' and the manuscripts of major-domo Ferdinand Bonaventura Graf von Harrach – leader of the *Deputatio* – should be mentioned. These conceptualise the ideas appearing during the elaboration of our country's new military arrangement plan, moreover, the views and conflicts of the Court unions as well.

The new data of these fonds are completed by the government executives – first of all, by the documents of the Court Chamber and the Court's Council of War – which were the most important leaders of the execution. For our study, the protocollum-series of the Court's Council of War are extremely precious. From them, the content of the documents selected during Joseph 2nd can be more or less reconstructed. The county nobility's general assembly added interesting information about the work-process.

Altogether, the Thesis is founded on the three great collections of the 'Österreichisches Staatsarchiv': the 'Haus-Hof-und Staatsarchiv', the 'Finanz-und Hofkammerarchiv' and the

'Kriegsarchiv', together with the sources of the Hungarian National Archives.

III.

The main scientific achievements of the Thesis are the discovery of those political, military and economical considerations and their process of changing which are behind the fortress destructions.

During the four years of our study, fortress destructions were ordered three times. First, following the regulations of the Treaty of Karlowitz, smaller posts had to be destroyed along the new Habsburg-Ottoman border, on Ottoman territory, and, by the end of marking the border on territories under imperial control as well. The aim of this regulation of the contemporary treaties like the one of Rijswijk (1697) was indeed born to ensure the peace, in other words to prevent the Turks from marauding. This is different from the former Habsburg-Ottoman treaties, regarding the Ottoman dominance and lack of adequate natural obstacles. With destroying the fortresses the Ottoman border posts disappeared, most regiments stationed in the central fortresses, thus the garrisons' marauding became difficult and could be prevented from imperial part more easily. Together with this, the execution of fortress destructions resulted in the fact that vilájet-centres along the Ottoman border stayed without exterior defence zone, which was beneficial for the imperial regiments in a possible Habsburg-Ottoman conflict. This was of primary significance at Temesvár and Belgrád, as they meant

basically the first line of border defence, and their occupation meant the acquisition of large territories. Officer of the engineer corps, Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, the leader of marking the border was charged with the execution of the destructions. With the help of the borderside commanders he fulfilled the task conscientiously. Several times during the work-process he got into conflict with local Ottoman leaders who did not manage to save the posts from destruction.

The western constraint of the Habsburg Empire, i.e. the problem of the Spanish succession ended the well-lasting negotiations and work. From that time on, Vienna made efforts to fix and build up the southern border. Altogether, along the Una, the Sava, the Danube and the Tisza the fortresses of Jaszenovác, Dubica, Ógradiska, Dobož, Bród, later Novi and New-*Novi*, as well as Titel, Becskerek, Zsablya, Becse, Kis-Kanizsa, Csanád, Fönlak, Lippa, Facsád, Lugos, Lugosegres, Boksánbánya, Zsidóvár, Versec, Karánsebes and Mehádia were demolished.

Parallel to border-marking, the '*Deputatio*' worked out the Empire's new military arrangement plan in Vienna. In this, military affairs were adjusted to the Empire's new border, with attention to strategic, economic and political points of view. The empire was in a very severe condition at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries: the treasury was empty, the army used up enormous sums, the Hungarian military site had been almost completely destroyed and its inhabitants were rebelling. At the same time, the new defence system had to be quickly rebuilt at the southern border, the worn-out

territories had to be got straight, and reconstruction had to be started at the occupied territories in order that they would fit as soon as possible into the economic life of the Empire.

The basic dilemma that defined everything else was how to cut military expenses. Erasing certain expenses – for example those for marking the new southern border, building the border defence system and building citadels in order to stabilize the Habsburg domination in Transylvania – meant endangering the state's safety, so they were not touched. As a result, the army's disarmament got into the centre of debates.

The Court's Council of War and the so-called 'Militärpartei', referring to the Empire's safety was arguing for keeping the army's staff number until the new border defence system and southern fortresses were built, but the Court Chamber and the so-called 'Merkantilpartei' wanted to cut the expenses with discharging the superfluous army. Followers of the former view agreed to increase taxes again in order to get the covers required, while supporters of the latter view wanted to lighten the territories' burdens by the disarmament.

The result of the negotiations was a compromise: they accepted the Council of War's view about the practical questions of the army's disarmament – the number of staff was reduced, that of the officers was not – and about the placement of the army: to protect the recently occupied territories they moved 14 956 people to Transylvania and 29 354 people to Hungary. The Chamber's view was accepted in the case of the army's supply and the soldiers' pay.

The two groups were opposed again in the case of fortress destructions: the Chamber regarded fortresses as endless consumers of money – the fewer the better –, so they proposed to demolish several remarkable fortresses, for example at Kanizsa and Székesfehérvár. Contrary to them, the Court's Council of War – the members of which feared the Ottomans more because of their war experience – made statements about fortresses very carefully, as they might be needed. Finally, as a solution of compromise, they ordered the destruction of only those fortresses that had lost their defensive function and endangered the country's internal peace – in other words, fortresses that could become home to thieves. In the Court's terminology they meant not only 'people errant' by them, but also the hiding Kurucs, because of whom the Habsburg Empire was unstable in the country. As we can read it in the '*Deputatio*':

'...Meanwhile, we must not wait with the destruction of the other superfluous places, as they are dangerous in their present condition, and it would be harmful if – God save us – there would be an uprising and those opposing us would ensconce themselves in them.'

Thus in 1699, certain fortresses – Gyula, Ecsed, Szentjobb, Szepesvár, Litava, Liekava, Léva, Simontornya, Tata, Veszprém, Pápa, Körmend, Dombóvár, Kaposvár, as well as smaller fortresses near Lake Balaton, once opposite to Kanizsa like Zalavár were put on the list of those to be destroyed. Like this, we can see that internal politics played the major role in the Decree's birth: Vienna's aim was to pacificate the country and to put the elements opposing the

dynasty into an impossible situation. It is evident at places where there had been strong Habsburg dominance, like in Bohemia or Moravia, where fortresses were not demolished in spite of the evacuations. In the case of the Vlachs – who were strongly linked to the Court – and the Racz they did not insist on ending peasant soldiers' privileges, not even in territories lying farther from the border; that is, to demolish the superfluous fortresses they gave orders as parts of the steps taken against the always rebelling, unreliable Hungarian military and half-military elements.

The execution of the destruction however did not take place at most places, work was in progress only in the territory protected by the fortress of Arad, for the Council of War did not want to destroy the former border defence system until the new border was marked and the new border defence system was built, in order that the new occupied territories would not stay without defence. At the two fortresses mentioned above, demolition was only partial: at Gyula, the external palisade was destroyed, at Ecsed the external hornwork of the decaying fortress was demolished.

However, the arrangement plan - created after a year's work – lost its topicality by the following summer. Because of the Spanish succession's problem the Court was again preparing for war against Louis 14th. This significantly changed the former order of importance: the marking of the border was accelerated, the fortresses were more or less finished, and marching to the new theatre of war became a task of primary importance.

But as the economic situation of the Empire did not change basically during the peace of one year, sources could only be used within narrow limits. Because of this, strength was not sufficient to meet the Council of War's need, so this lack was compensated by the redeployment of troops to the western part of the Empire – to North-Italy and the Rhine. As a result, from the 44 310 soldiers stationing in Hungary and Transylvania in 1700, only 21 887 stayed by the summer of 1701.

Because of the tense situation in Hungary, this 50% evacuation endangered the Habsburg power, as the strength that stayed in the country was not enough to control the Carpathian basin. In this situation, the Court feared an armed outbreak of the Hungarian discontent atmosphere.

'...as His Majesty has to face not only a strong power, namely the Ottoman Porte, but the territory and its inhabitants as well who, as the examples show sufficiently, are prone to rise up because of the unaccustomed taxes, and have an aversion to the nature of the German government – consequently, their loyalty must not be trusted. If the fortresses and mainly the borders are not properly defended as well as supplied with all equipment and strong army in order to be able to oppose every unexpected uprising, then it can be feared that the Hungarian people will try to get rid of the burden that was put on them, while the troops of His Majesty are committed to another war...'

As a consequence, the head of the Council of War, Heinrich Franz von Mansfeld ordered the empty fortresses' destruction as a

condition of further troop-evacuations. It can be seen that the Council of War's view changed as a result of the economy's and the foreign policy's situation: while in 1699 they were reluctant to demolish the superfluous fortresses, by 1702 they regarded it as a condition of winning the Spanish War of Succession. That is, in the upmost conduct of war, the decision to execute the fortress destruction was born.

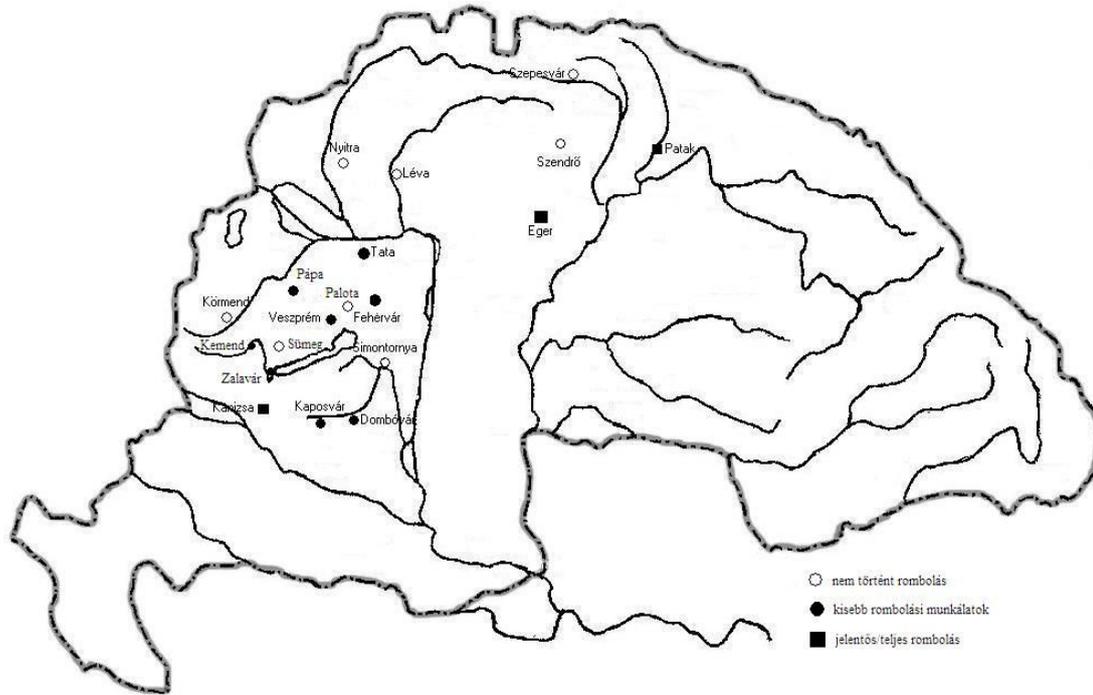
Because of the above mentioned facts, fortresses were selected very carefully. A basic criterion was that the fortresses to be demolished should not belong to the new system of border defence and they should not control main routes, i.e. the valley of the Danube, the Drava and the Tisza. Apart from this, other points of view could be the following:

- a) they should be fortresses defended by imperial-royal army – by this they could set more military force free for the western operations;
- b) they should be fortresses having several defensive rings – by this the military chances of the expected uprising would weaken;
- c) they should be of strong economy and a big population, thus the inhabitants could be better controlled;
- d) by the destructions they can facilitate the incoming of the imperial army to the country from the west.

On the basis of these points they decided the destruction of Szendrő (points a and b), Sárospatak (a and b), Szepesvár (a), Eger (a, b and c), Székesfehérvár (a, b, c and d), Palota (d), Simontornya

(d), Nyitra (b and d), Léva (a), Tata (b, c and d), Pápa (b, c and d), Veszprém (a, b and d), Kanizsa (a, b and d), Zalavár (d), Körmend (c and d), together with the fortresses around Lake Balaton and the fortresses of Kaposvár (d) and Dombóvár (d).

Apart from listing the fortresses concerned, the Decree regulated the execution of the destruction as well, and in a very detailed way. Nevertheless, the united procedure was not realised, local concerns (landowners and their relationships), possibilities (available work force, money and time) and the attitude of those trusted with the execution all influenced fortress destructions. Altogether, from the 19 fortresses to be destroyed only one (Kanizsa) was demolished completely (5,2%), two (Eger and Sárospatak) became totally defenceless (10,4%), the external ramparts were destroyed at 8 fortresses (Pápa, Tata, Veszprém, Székesfehérvár, Zalavár, Kemend, Dombóvár and Kaposvár, 42%), and in 8 cases destruction was not executed (Palota, Körmend, Sümeg, Nyitra, Léva, Szepesvár, Szendrő and Simontornya, 42%).



The execution of the Decree of fortress destruction of 1702¹

¹ ○: not destroyed; ●: partially destroyed; ■: destroyed.

It can be seen that they realised only scarcely more than 50% of the Court's conception to end the superfluous fortresses' military role. Despite this we can make it clear that the most important aims of the Court's Council of War were realised, because fortresses of regional importance and having modern defence system lost their military significance. In the case of the other fortresses they were satisfied with half-work already, i.e. with destroying a part of the walls, thus making the fortress impossible to be defended. However, when the fortresses' fate was decided, they did not take Vienna's plans into consideration, but they were influenced by local possibilities and interests.

On the basis of the Thesis's results of research it seems that the Decree of Fortress Destruction of 1699 was born as part of a new military organization to be created step by step in time of peace, mainly because of internal political reasons. As a consequence, even the Council of War itself did not urge the execution of the Decree, so it was not realised with the exception of Gyula and Ecsed. The Decree of 1702 was issued because of the outbreak of the Spanish War of Succession – with this they wanted to prepare the withdrawal of further troops from the Carpathian basin and make the probable outbreak of the Hungarian uprising impossible. As a result, the Court's Council of War wanted to execute the Decree quickly, and they succeeded only in the most important cases. Thus, the majority of the fortresses concerned played their last military role in Rákóczi's War of Independence, after which they lost their significance.

IV.

Conferences

2005. PPKE BTK Doctoral Conference of Historical Science: *The debate of Pál Széchenyi, Archbishop of Kalocsa with the Council of War*

2005. The 25th Conference of Schleiningen Gespräche: *Die Burgschleifung und die Familie Batthyany* (Fortress destruction and the Batthyány family)

2006. PPKE BTK Doctoral Conference of Historical Science: *Military arrangement plans after the Treaty of Karlowitz*

Life and work of Pál Széchenyi. Memorial Conference 08.10.2010
Nagyecenk

Publications

The townscape of Zengg in the 14th century on the basis of the estate descriptions. In: Sic itur ad astra 2005. 1-2. 103-116.

The Batthyány family and the fortress destruction. In: Batthyányak évszázadai. Tudományos Konferencia Körmenten. 2005. 27-29 October. Editor Zoltán Nagy. Szombathely, 2006. 145-148.

The debate of Pál Széchenyi, Archbishop of Kalocsa with the Council of War about the fortress of Sümeg. In: Mindennapi élet a török árnyékában. Khronosz 1. Editor Zsuzsanna J. Újváry. Piliscsaba, 2008. 115-125.

Comparing two camp equipment (1683-1684) of palatine Pál Eszterházy. In: Hadtörténeti Közlemények 535-550.

Review

The review of Richard PERGER, Ernst Dieter PETRITSCH: Der Gasthof 'Zum Goldenen Lamm' in der Leopoldstadt und seine türkischen Gäste. In: Keletkutatás Autumn 2002 – Autumn 2006. 237-242.