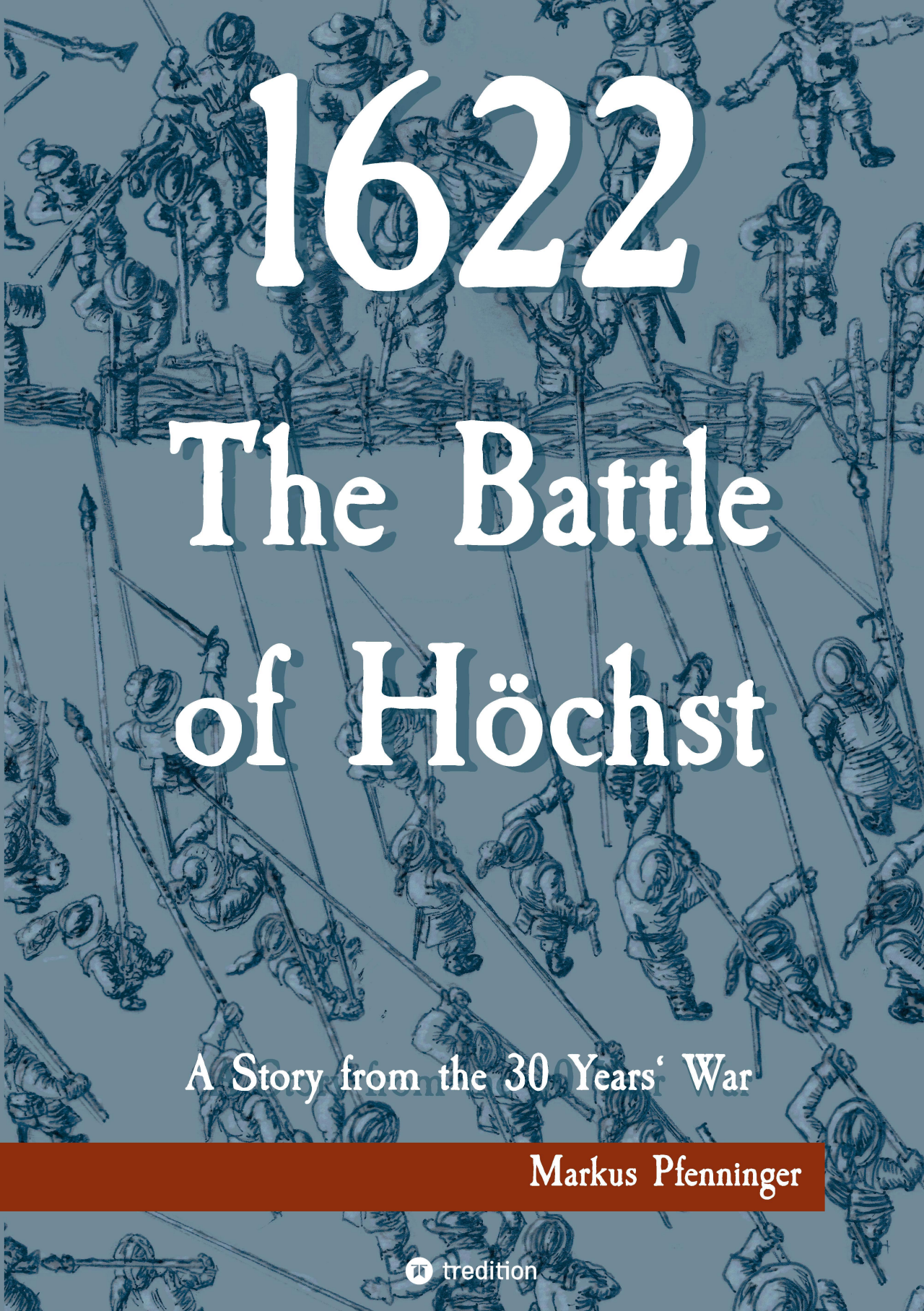

1622

The Battle of Höchst

A Story from the 30 Years' War

Markus Pfenninger

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The antecedence

The Battle of Höchst is now understood to be part of the 30 Years' War, which lasted from 1618 - 1648. But at the beginning of 1622, of course, people could not have known that the conflict, which had begun as a regional dispute in Bohemia, would last so long and almost bring the entire Holy Roman Empire to ruin. The armed conflicts had begun in the summer of 1618, but until then only limited parts of the empire had been directly affected. Before that, the empire had experienced a 60-year period of relative stability and peace following the religious peace of Augsburg in 1555, which led to economic prosperity. In the west of the empire, the war had only arrived in the summer of 1620, so there was still hope that the war would soon be over.

But what was the reason for the conflicts? As so often in history, a long, complex chain of circumstances and causes led to the war that subsequently resulted in the Battle of Höchst. In order to better understand the actions of the people involved, it is therefore necessary to at least sketch the prehistory.

The Bohemian Rebellion

It all began when the Bohemian Estates, representing the privileged part of the Bohemian population, broke with the Austrian Habsburgs and elected Frederick V Count Palatine of the Rhine as king. The Kingdom of Bohemia had been an important part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation for centuries.

At the beginning of the 17th century, the Bohemian throne had been occupied by Catholic Habsburgs for about a hundred years. However, most of the Bohemian population and also the nobility adhered to one form of Protestantism or another. After Emperor Matthias began in 1612 to gradually revoke the promises of religious freedom made by his predecessor Rudolf II in 1609, the situation escalated under his successor Ferdinand in 1618. Ferdinand was an ardent Catholic - one could also say a religious extremist - who immediately tried to initiate a re-Catholicisation of Bohemia and to revoke all privileges. Since this was done in breach of their chartered rights, the Bohemian Estates resisted. On 23 May, representatives of the Estates entered the seat of the Habsburg administration, Prague Castle, and brought

the hated governors present before an improvised court. After a heated argument, three Habsburg officials were finally thrown out of a window several metres above the ground. Throwing magistrates with whom one disagreed out of windows had a certain tradition in Prague. Almost 200 years earlier, such a defenestration had already been the trigger of the Hussite wars, which were also religiously motivated. But while all those who fell then were beaten to death to make sure, this time things went off without a hitch. Since

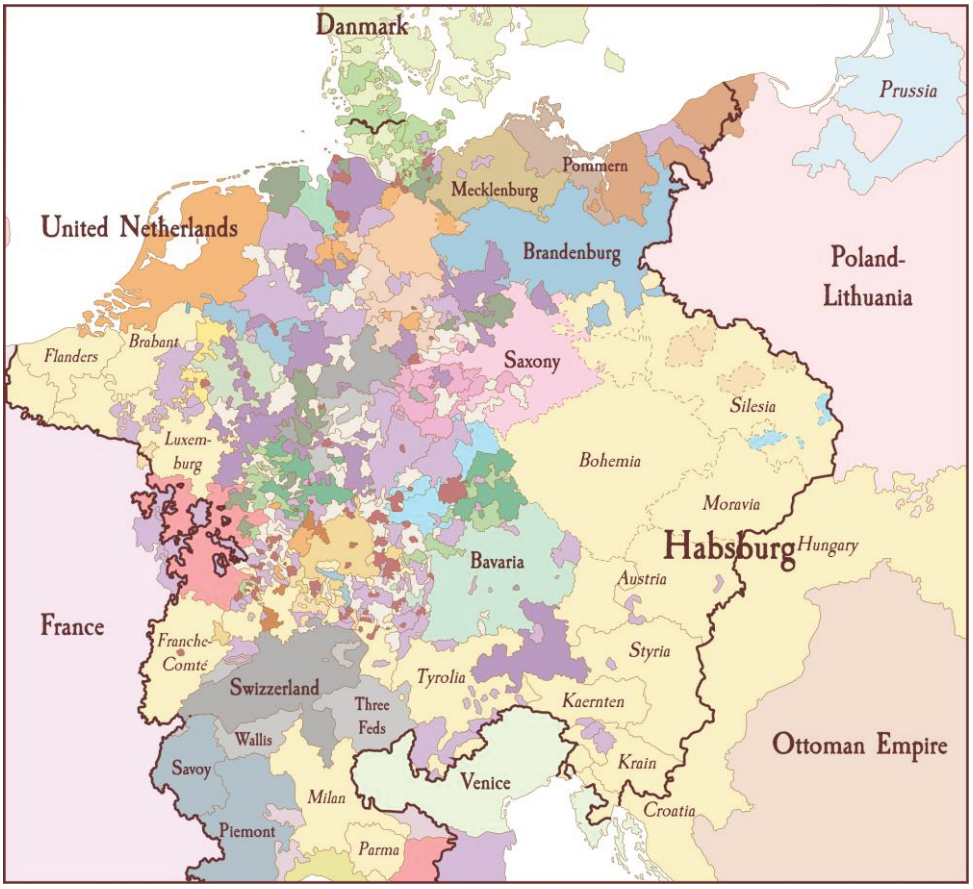


Figure 1

Map of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation around 1618. This map is a gross simplification, in reality the territorial relations were much more complicated. The territories in which a Habsburg ruled are coloured light yellow. Ecclesiastical territories are coloured purple of various shading. Territories of similar colouring within the dark, thickly marked imperial border were held by different members of related ruling families, for example those of the Wittelsbach in shades of green, Hohenzollern in blue, Saxony in pink.

there was a dung heap under the window, the Habsburg magistrates got off lightly. That the insurgents were serious, however, was shown by the fact that they still shot at the fugitives, albeit in vain.

However, this blatant attack on imperial authority sealed the break with the Habsburgs. The Bohemian Estates formed a thirty-member Directory as an interim government, declared the Habsburg regent deposed and began to build an army. At the same time, they sought the support of other protestant forces in Europe, such as the Netherlands, England and the pro-Protestant Union, an association of Protestant imperial princes and Scandinavian kings.

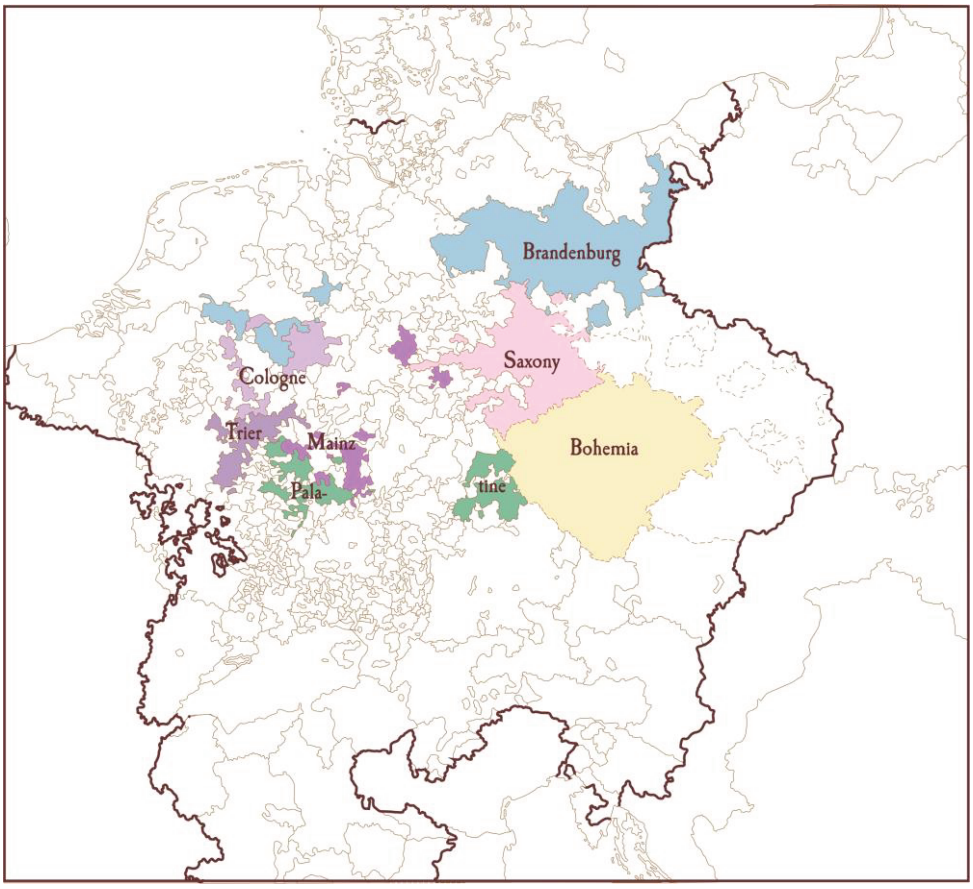


Figure 2

The territories of the seven electors. The Archbishops of Trier, Cologne and Mainz were of course Catholic. After the Reformation, the Duke of Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg and the Count Palatine of the Rhine were protestant. The decisive vote regarding the denomination of the future emperor thus came from the Bohemian king.

To finance their plans, they began confiscating property from the Catholic clergy; seizing each other's church property was a popular form of fundraising among all parties. At first, the insurgents also had some military successes, including the army of the war entrepreneur Ernst from Mansfeld, who was financed by the Duke of Savoy and will be discussed in detail later. The Viennese Court initially reacted in a haphazard and confused manner to these developments, which culminated in the Bohemians refusing to recognise Ferdinand, who initially succeeded him as King of Bohemia after the death of Emperor Matthias in March 1619. In the summer of 1619, the Estates adopted a new constitution for Bohemia that provided for an elective kingship. Whether they were allowed to do so under the imperial constitution was

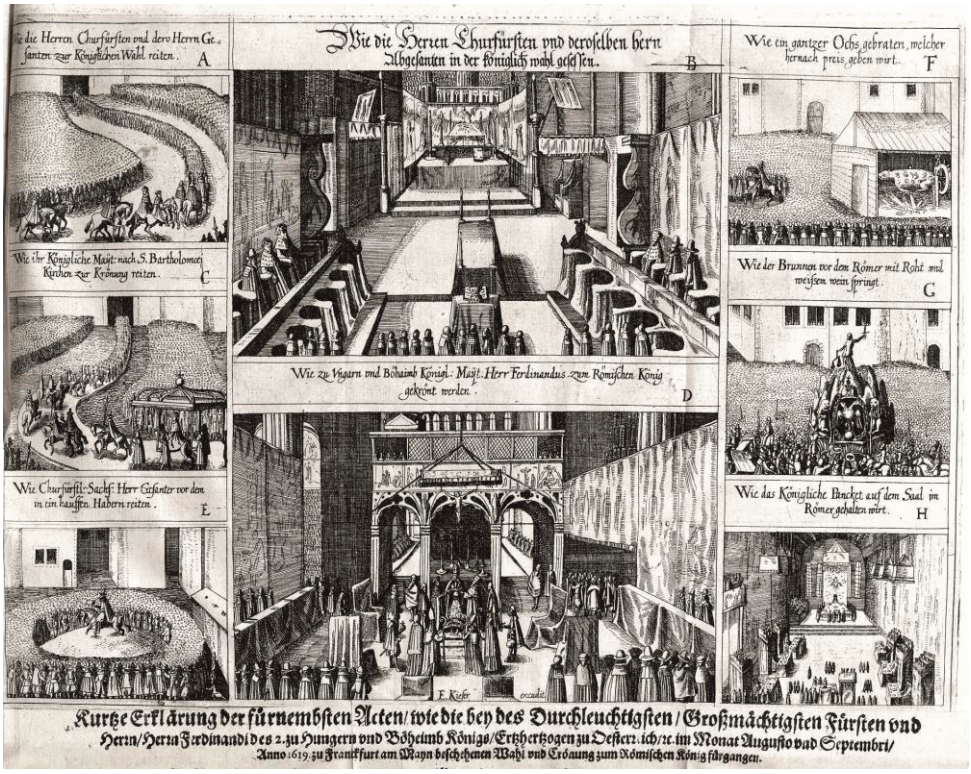


Figure 3

Print of a leaflet on the coronation of Ferdinand II in 1619. The roasted ox and the red and white wine donating Justitia fountain in front of the city hall, called "Römer" certainly did not harm the popularity of the event among the population. Such leaflets were the first mass media through which large parts of the population were informed about important events.

disputed; in any case, Ferdinand fumed. Shortly afterwards, the Estates elected Frederick Elector Palatine, still very young at 26, as king.

This was a momentous decision for several reasons. It is true that the Electoral Palatinate was one of the politically most important secular dominions of the empire and, since the Reformation, one of the leading Protestant powers. However, in view of the fragmented, multiply divided territory, the economic and military potential of the Electoral Palatinate clearly lagged behind other dominions such as Saxony or Bavaria. The Bohemian Directory nevertheless expected this election to bring them the support of Protestant England in particular, because Frederick was married to Elizabeth Stuart, the only daughter of King Jacob I, who was English, Scottish and Irish king at the same time. But the support of the Calvinist governor of the Netherlands, Moritz of Orange, and the King of Denmark was also counted on. Nevertheless, Frederick was only second choice, because the powerful Lutheran Elector John George I of Saxony had previously declined the Bohemian offer with thanks, which in retrospect turned out to be a wise decision. In addition, Frederick was a convinced Calvinist and thus belonged to a more radical form of Protestantism, which most Lutherans in the empire and even his own subjects met with scepticism and rejection.

What was most serious, however, was that this election seriously threatened the Habsburg dominance of the empire. At the beginning of the 17th century, this Holy Roman Empire comprised several dozen principalities, duchies and even kingdoms that were practically independent but recognised the emperor as head of the empire. It stretched from Holstein to northern Italy and from Flanders to present-day Slovakia. In addition to most of the German-speaking area, it also included French, Italian, Czech, Polish speaking population and several other languages. The empire was a federation of dominions which recognised the imperial laws, the imperial jurisdiction and the decisions of the imperial diet, in which they were partly involved through the election of kings, the imperial diet and other estates' representations at the same time. Since the empire also provided for a certain unification of currencies, it was not unlike the EU in some respects. In this constitution, the College of Electors had the task of electing the king of the empire, who thus also automatically claimed the title of emperor from 1508 on. It consisted of seven members, so there could be no stalemate. Since 1592, the election and coronation took place in Frankfurt am Main. Three of the electors were the Catholic archbishops of the bishoprics of Mainz, Cologne and Trier. Three other electors were secular and Protestant since the Reformation: the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony

and the Margrave of Brandenburg. The decisive vote thus fell to the last elector, the King of Bohemia.

Since the strictly Catholic Habsburgs had held the Bohemian throne for the last hundred years, it was clear that they also provided the emperor of the empire, for the Catholic side of the Electoral College was thus assured of the majority of votes. However, with the election of Frederick, Count Palatine of the Rhine, as King of Bohemia, the majority of the electors would have become Protestant. On top of that, the unification of two votes in one person would have led to a dangerous concentration of power. The Habsburgs could not accept this under any circumstances.

The first thing Ferdinand did at the imperial election on 28 August 1619 in Frankfurt am Main was therefore simply to ignore Frederick's election as Bohemian king in Prague the day before and vote for himself as Elector King of Bohemia. Interestingly, the Electoral Palatine delegation also voted for Ferdinand in the second ballot, after Maximilian of Bavaria had renounced in favour of Ferdinand, who was thus unanimously elected King and Emperor. Among the Protestant princes of the empire there were many who were critical of the superiority and Catholic zeal of the Habsburgs, but who, in case of

Figure 4

Siege of Vienna by the Bohemian rebels in 1619. The direct threat to the capital of the Austrian Habsburgs certainly did not contribute to Ferdinand II's leniency after the suppression of the uprising.

doubt, preferred a stable empire and therefore, like the Saxon elector, pledged their neutrality.

Start of the Bohemian War

Ferdinand immediately sent troops under the Count of Bucquoy to Bohemia. In order to secure his offensive diplomatically and financially, he turned to Spain, where Philip III, also a Habsburg, sat on the throne. For several decades, the Spanish Habsburgs had been trying to prevent the final secession of seven protestant reformed provinces of the Netherlands in a bloody war that was fought extremely cruelly by both sides. These provinces could afford an extraordinarily high standard of living and one of the best armies in the world due to an economic boom fuelled by the emerging East Asian trade, but also an industrial revolution driven by peat, wind and water power. Because of the increasingly difficult war, which threatened them with the loss of the economically strongest part of their empire, the Spaniards had no need of a Calvinist emperor in the empire who was positively disposed towards the secession of the Netherlands. They therefore generously supported the

Figure 5

Emperor Ferdinand II and Duke Maximilian I of Bavaria. The picture on the left shows Ferdinand around 1624, on the right is Maximilian, painted around the same time.

notoriously poor Ferdinand II with money and troops. In addition, Emperor Ferdinand II turned to the Pope and an association of Catholic imperial princes, the League. Ferdinand made a special deal with the founder of the League, Duke Maximilian I of Bavaria, who had been established in 1609, in October 1619. Maximilian raised an army of 30,000 men under the League's supreme commander, Jean T'serclaes de Tilly, to support the Emperor. It remained, however, under the control of the League and thus himself. The troops for the League were mainly recruited in Bavaria, which is why they were sometimes referred to as Bavarian, sometimes as League troops. Maximilian was guaranteed reimbursement of the war costs for their recruitment and deployment. And on top of that, he was promised the fulfilment of a long-cherished wish in the event of victory: the transfer of the Palatine territories to Bavaria, including the Palatine electoral dignity tied to them. In the event of victory, Maximilian would thus be promoted to the premier league of imperial princes for all to see, which in any case corresponded to his self-image (an early example of the Bavarian "*mia san mia*" – we are what we are). These alliances resulted in imperial, Spanish and League troops fighting on the Catholic side, not always under a unified

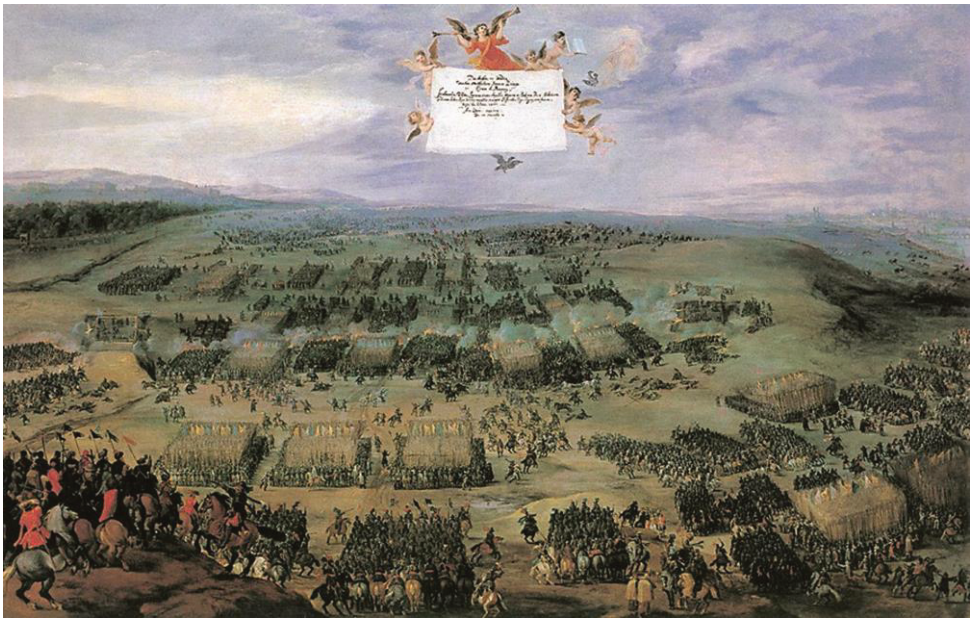


Figure 6

The Battle of White Mountain (Czech: Bitva na Bílé hoře) near Prague on 8 November 1620. The Protestant troops of the Winter King had the more favourable position on the hill in the background, but were nevertheless crushed.

supreme command. One can imagine that this often led to problems because the acting parties had similar but not identical interests.

After the Bohemian insurgents initially still achieved successes and even threatened Vienna itself, the Emperor's diplomatic offensive gradually led to their extensive isolation. At the same time, the military build-up on the imperial side began to have an effect. In August 1620, the League army finally marched into Bohemia. From the west, Tilly and the imperial army advanced on Budweis, while Christian from Anhalt, as commander of the Bohemian troops, advanced via Moravia towards Prague. The decisive battle finally took place at White Mountain near Prague on 8 November 1620. The heavily outnumbered Bohemian Estates army and the hired mercenaries occupied the strategically better positions, but they were poorly paid, exhausted and undisciplined. They were crushed within two hours.

The insurgents lost about 5,000 men, while the butchers bill on the imperial side counted about 700 dead. However, the imperial victory was not only due to their military superiority; the mercenary leader of the Elector Palatine army,

Figure 7

Execution of the leaders of the Bohemian Uprising on 21 June 1621 in Prague. On the Old Town Ring, 27 men were executed between 5 and 9 am. Twenty-four of them were beheaded according to their noble status. The three traitors of common rank were hanged. The executioner, Jan Mydlář, and his assistants were paid the equivalent of a burgher's house.

Count Ernst from Mansfeld, was paid 100,000 guilders by the emperor to stay away from the battlefield with his troops.

Immediately after receiving the news of his defeat, King Frederick fled Prague and Bohemia with some representatives of the Directory and his court. He had ruled in Bohemia for little more than a year, which earned him the derisive name "*Winter King*". Frederick reached The Hague in the Dutch States General via Silesia and Brandenburg. On the way, he and his wife tried to find allies in northern Germany, which they succeeded in doing, at least with Christian of Brunswick.

With this complete victory and the expulsion of Friederich from the Bohemian throne, the matter could have been largely settled. The Habsburgs had regained the Bohemian throne, Ferdinand had been elected emperor, the Catholic powers of the empire were more united than ever and had demonstrated their military might - actually ideal conditions for winning the Bohemian subjects back to Habsburg rule through well-measured concessions and for expanding their own power in the empire through a wise and measured policy.

But Ferdinand was personally offended. While the execution of 27 leaders of the uprising for *lèse majesté* was still understandable, the expulsion of several tens of thousands of families and the confiscation of the estates of 650 noble families to pay off the war debts testified to a certain will to destroy his opponents. But even this would probably have remained an internal Bohemian affair without major repercussions for the entire empire.

Extension to the Palatinate

But Ferdinand went one step further and imposed an Imperial ban on Frederick. In it, he declared that Frederick would lose all his offices, fiefdoms and titles in the empire, that no one was allowed support him in any way whatsoever and that anyone could seize him to bring him to punishment. The proclamation of a ban, i.e. the complete expulsion from society, on criminals who could not be apprehended, was a very old punishment that was not often applied. Even in the text of the Imperial Execution on Frederick, which represents indictment, plea and sentence in one, Ferdinand's personal indignation at the perceived insolence of Frederick's accession to the Bohemian throne can still be felt.

For Frederick, everything was now at stake. He would even have to fight for his Electoral Palatinate hereditary lands. But other Protestant rulers of the Empire and all of Europe were also worried by this outrageous measure. In January 1621, the Danish King Christian IV invited various Protestant dukes, as well as the envoys of England, the Dutch States General, Sweden, Brandenburg and Pomerania, and the Winter King to a meeting of the Protestant Union in Holstein. Although this meeting lasted until March, the parties could not agree on any common measures and finally dissolved the Union. Although this meeting remained unsuccessful, the Palatine side was not willing to simply surrender to its fate. The Palatines brought up the idea of involving Christian IV in the war by promising to give him the bishoprics of Münster and Paderborn, in which he had long been interested, in the event of victory. Someone suggested using these ecclesiastical territories in the meantime as a recruiting and deployment area for support troops for the Lower Palatinate, since they were easy to reach from the Netherlands. The ecclesiastical territories of Münster and Paderborn were, according to the imperial constitution of the time and the Augsburg Religious Peace, completely legal and undisputed property of the Catholic Church, guaranteed by the Emperor. These territories also had nothing to do with the war in Bohemia and the Palatinate; they did not even contribute financial contributions to the League's war effort. And the subjects and citizens living there, whose property and lives were at stake, played no role at all in these considerations.

After the dissolution of the Union, Frederick was alone again when he set off for the United Netherlands to implement this plan and asked the States General for financial support in his struggle. However, he was accompanied by a young nobleman, Duke Christian of Brunswick. The latter had probably fallen madly in love with Frederick's wife, the only slightly older Elizabeth Stuart, and vowed to regain the Bohemian crown for her. Perhaps to get rid of the rival, perhaps because he no longer had much to lose, Friederich granted the militarily completely inexperienced Christian a patent to recruit troops in his name and lead them to the Lower Palatinate. In May 1621, Christian set out to recruit mercenaries near Hamburg. This was all completely illegal, but apparently such trivialities did not matter to either of them.

Meanwhile, the battle for the Electoral Palatinate was already in full swing. The Palatinate's hereditary lands essentially consisted of two spatially separate areas: the rural Upper Palatinate on the border with Bohemia in the east, characterised by early industrial iron production, and the Lower Palatinate on the Upper Rhine with its capitals Mannheim and Heidelberg, consisting of many enclaves and exclaves. As early as August 1620, troops from the Spanish Netherlands under General Ambrosio di Spinola had attacked the Lower Palatinate. Besides Spaniards, Walloons and Germans also fought in these units. With an army of about 23,000 men, they succeeded in bringing the areas of the Lower Palatinate on the left bank of the Rhine largely under control, with the exception of the fortress of Frankenthal, and established a stronghold near Oppenheim. As the Dutch War of Independence against Spain broke out again at the beginning of 1621 after a twelve-year truce, Spinola was called away to Brussels in the Spanish Netherlands. He handed over command of the troops in the Lower Palatinate to Gonzalo Fernández de Córdova, who continued the siege of Frankenthal.

Figure 8

Frederick V of the Palatinate, the Winter King and his wife Elizabeth Stuart. Both were portrayed by Michiel van Mierevelt in 1623. As they were in exile, they had enough time to sit for the painter at length.

In Bohemia, Mansfeld, now fighting for Frederick again, tried in vain to hold western Bohemia and Pilsen against Tilly's troops until March. In the Upper Palatinate, Mansfeld gathered the remaining Electoral Palatinate troops at Waidhaus and held the border to Bohemia against the advancing Tilly until September 1621. During this time, Mansfeld negotiated on his own initiative with imperial envoys to change sides and enter imperial service. This would have been the end of the war. However, when the supply of his troops was no longer guaranteed, he broke off the almost completed negotiations and withdrew with his army to the Lower Palatinate. During this time, Frederick was in exile in the United Netherlands, where he tried to obtain support. The negotiations and their breakdown by Mansfeld, however, showed that the decisions on whether and how to continue the war for the Electoral Palatinate were no longer made by the outlawed Elector, but only by his mercenary leader. By now, at the latest, Frederick had become a puppet.

Once in the Lower Palatinate, Mansfeld and his army forced the Spanish to end the siege of the fortress of Frankenthal in October. The Spaniards, however, remained in the Palatinate on the left bank of the Rhine. Tilly

Figure 9

Peter Ernst II von Mansfeld. As a war entrepreneur, he had no interest in a peaceful solution to the conflict. On the contrary, he tried everything to prolong the war whenever possible.

followed Mansfeld with the League army and chose the Odenwald as his base of operations and winter quarters. Although the League troops were more disciplined and better paid, quartering soldiers was always a great burden on the civilian population, as they had to pay for their upkeep.

Mansfeld led his army to winter quarters in Lower Alsace. The various lords and even more so the population there had nothing to do with the whole war, but that was of no concern to the war entrepreneur. On the contrary, the loot from the plundering enabled him to strengthen his army. But he could not advance further south, into Upper Alsace, because troops of the Habsburg bailiff of Upper Austria, Archduke Leopold, were employed there.

Christian of Brunswick Begins his War

Meanwhile, Christian of Brunswick tried to keep his promise and come to Mansfeld's aid in defending the Palatinate. Over the summer he had recruited infantry and cavalry in northern Germany with rather poor success. In particular, he failed to recruit officers in sufficient numbers.

At the beginning of the 17th century, there were practically no standing armies. Those who wanted to wage war were therefore dependent on recruited mercenaries. Normally, the future warlord entrusted these

Figure 10

Recruiting of troops. On the left, a clerk sits in front of an advertising drum and enrols interested recruits. If they pass the examination, they receive a handout equivalent to several months' wages for a journeyman craftsman.

recruitments to a private person. This person advanced the money for recruitment and equipment in order to be paid later by the warlord or to be promised a corresponding share of the booty, territories or titles. The actual recruitment of recruits was carried out by officers who had also been recruited in the territories assigned to them. Once this had been agreed with the territorial lord, the proverbial advertising drum was beaten, the flute blown and flags waved to draw the attention of potential recruits to the recruiters. If the territorial lord's approval was lacking, advertising was done quietly in pubs and at markets. As an incentive to enlist, there was an hand out money that could amount to several months' wages for a craftsman. However, the recruits were later charged for their equipment. Uniforms, especially in the Protestant armies, did not exist at first; the soldiers wore their civilian clothes. Those who took the recruiting money and registered on the recruiting roll had to go immediately to a prescribed muster ground under threat of death. There the recruits were tested for their physical and mental fitness. Men between the ages of twenty and forty were to be recruited. However, since the recruiting officers were paid per man, children and veterans over fifty were often recruited as well. The most sought-after were "tried servants", i.e. men who had already served in an army. Those who were deemed fit had to swear an oath to the flag and were thus bound to loyalty and obedience for an indefinite period. The warlords, for their part, could dismiss the troops at any time at will or at the state of their coffers. The duties of the soldiers were laid down in so-called letters of articles. Everything was regulated in them: Pay, oath, obligations, abdication, care of weapons, conduct in camp, entrenchment work, when looting and plunder were permitted and much more. The soldiers were subject to strict military jurisdiction upon successful muster. According to most of these articles, theft, arson, robbery and mistreatment of the population were strictly forbidden and in some cases punishable by death. Insubordination or disrespect of superiors, as well as rape and scuffles between comrades, were punishable by corporal punishment. Treason, mutiny and desertion were punishable by death everywhere. To ensure that the article letter was not forgotten, it was read out publicly in the camp every week.[1]

In the case of Christian of Brunswick, the handout money and weapons came from Holland and England, but also from his own revenues. Since there was no provision for continuous payment, the Brunswick troops were recruited on

[1] See supplements for an account on structure and organisation of a regiment.

booty rather than on regular pay. This also explains the fact that professional mercenary applications were far fewer than those of soldiers of fortune and men from social fringe groups. Accordingly, it was difficult, or even not intended, for the officers to maintain the discipline of the men in territories on whose resources they were dependent. However, this problem affected most armies of the time to varying degrees.

Towards the end of September 1621, a march column recruited by Christian on behalf of Frederick, consisting mainly of infantry, set off in the direction of the Lower Palatinate. The enterprise ended in complete disaster. The poorly armed, undisciplined infantry was repeatedly hindered and stopped by troops of the respective sovereigns, who were understandably less than enthusiastic about the march of an irregular army through their territory. Therefore, Christian's infantry had to take long detours, which did not help their motivation.

When a mercenary band had reached a certain size, it was difficult for the authorities through whose territories it passed to take action against it. For territorial defence and certain police tasks (such as the coordinated hunt for criminals), the sovereigns only had militias at their disposal, for which the towns and municipalities had to provide a certain number of men fit for military service and who were called together by specially tasked boards as needed. Due to the often militarily limited quality of these peasants and

Figure 11

Christian von Braunschweig's enemy-of-the-priesthood coin. With this he staged himself as God's revenge.

craftsmen, this so-called "*Ausschuss*" troops - literally "board" troops - became in German synonymous with defective and inferior things.

Towards the end of October, however, the greater part of this army was encircled in the area of Gandern, part of the Eichsfeld, in their quarters by such Brunswick Landwehr troops and after a short battle were forced to surrender or defect. A remnant of about 250 men fought their way through the following days to the Kinzigtal near Schlüchtern. There, on 4 November, they learned that Tilly had occupied the lower Kinzigtal. The troops then finally disbanded. This failed enterprise had cost the Protestant side a great deal of money for recruiting and equipping the troops. It had also led to immense damage to the land and people along the line of march.

The recruitment of the cavalry took longer, a total of 18 companies of about 80 horsemen each came together with their horses. They gathered west of the Weser at the end of October, where they were mustered in mid-November and set off south. This was not done without first plundering Corvey Abbey in order to be able to receive regular pay in the coming months. The technique of letting the conquest of ecclesiastical territories finance themselves by plundering them was called "*tying the horses to the fence*".

In general, Christian of Brunswick attached great importance to "public relations" from the very beginning. Not only did he have his mercenaries act particularly ruthlessly, even for that time, but he also made sure that the general public found out about it. For example, he had coins struck from the captured church treasures, which he staged as God's revenge. On one side was a sword arm stretching out of the clouds, on the other side the saying, "Christian , Gottes Freund der Pfaffen Feindt" ("Christian, God's friend, the enemy of the clergy"). Coins as propaganda instruments were popular at this time; his father already used so-called mocking coins as a means of political confrontation. Christian of Brunswick was particularly fond of threatening and made a real art out of it. He let it be known: "*If we should be attacked in the slightest, then you can be sure of it. That we will rage their lands that they will regret it and their children's children will have to complain about it*". The demands for contributions to towns were handed over on slips of paper, singed at the four corners, as an indication of what was in store for the town if it did not comply. All this brought him into the news spread throughout the empire, which quickly dubbed him the "*Tolle Christian*" or the "*Tolle Halberstädter*". Depending on one's point of view, the "*Toll*" stood for foolhardy or rabid.

Many princes, including many Protestants, apparently tended towards the second interpretation. They sent warnings to Christian of Brunswick to stop his actions, even his Halberstadt cathedral chapter asked his brother, the reigning Duke of Brunswick, to exert a moderating influence on Christian. He was even offered considerable sums of money if only he would stop his enterprise. His own relatives in Celle did not allow him to march through their territories. His brother and mother begged him to desist from his venture, which would only bring disgrace or worse to the family. In October, the Duke of Brunswick even took armed action against his brother's marauding soldiers. He then turned to plundering the Abbey of Celle, whose elected bishop was also a relative. As late as December 1621, Emperor Ferdinand Cristian of Brunswick offered complete amnesty and recognition of his ecclesiastical offices if he would lay down his arms. All was in vain, the Tolle Christian was hell-bent on continuing to live up to his reputation.

Initially, Christian from Brunswick, on his way south, succeeded in a surprise attack on the Kurmainz stronghold of Amöneburg at the beginning of December. The League army command took this advance so seriously that they immediately sent an army group under Count Anholt from the Odenwald to central Hesse. After some minor fighting, a major engagement occurred near Kirtorf on 20 December, unintentionally by both sides. Contrary to orders, Spanish units had ventured too far forward and unexpectedly encountered Brunswick troops. Despite this favourable tactical situation, Christian of Brunswick was unable to take advantage of the situation. Anholt brought up more troops, which decided the battle in his favour. After this first serious contact with the enemy, Christian of Brunswick gave up his plan to unite with Mansfeld for the time being and preferred to retreat to Paderborn Abbey for the winter to plunder. Meanwhile, the League troops went to their winter quarters in the Bergische Land, the area around Remscheid, Solingen and Wuppertal.

The weather and the seasons have always played a major role in warfare. At the beginning of the 17th century, the peak of the "Little Ice Age" had been reached, which on the whole brought much colder winters and wetter summers than today. Although smaller military operations such as looting and raiding could also be carried out in winter, larger campaigns were only possible in the warmer half of the year. In 1621, winter set in early after an exceptionally wet autumn. An exceptionally long and severe period of frost began at the turn of the year and lasted until February. It was so cold that it was possible to cross the frozen Rhine with heavy teams for a long time. In

addition, there were large amounts of snow, especially in Hesse. After the thaw set in at the end of February, the roads were so abysmally slushy until the beginning of April that major troop movements with artillery were out of the question.

Christian of Brunswick used the winter break to raise the money needed to enlarge his army by further raids against the towns and villages of Westphalia. In the process, he seems to have finally acquired a taste for the personal exercise of violence, for he later boasted publicly of the rapes he had committed there. Since his army had no permanent funding and the English and Dutch grants had been used up, or rather wasted, he could not promise any pay apart from the expected booty. In February, the Brunswick army already consisted of 8,000-10,000 soldiers, plus about the same number of carters, cooks and others. To feed such a large number of people was only possible "from the countryside" without a sovereign basis; the peasants' supplies had to be plundered.

Events at the Beginning of 1622

At the beginning of April, the weather improved to such an extent that larger operations became possible again. However, Christian from Brunswick did not yet think of setting out for the Lower Palatinate to support Mansfeld. At first he tried in vain to capture the town of Geseke. Only when Anholt's troops, with the support of the Electorate of Cologne, recaptured one town after another from the Brunswickers and slowly advanced on the main Brunswick army, did Christian of Brunswick decide to leave Westphalia at the beginning of May. In doing so, he took five Jesuit priests with him as hostages, probably also for personal entertainment, although the order had already paid the agreed ransom for them. With 6,800 horsemen and 8,000 infantrymen, he reached Bovenden on the river Weser on 9 May.

In the meantime, the fighting intensified again on the Upper Rhine. The Spaniards were still in the Palatinate on the left bank of the Rhine. Cordova had his headquarters in Kreuznach, but the bulk of the troops were still in camp near Oppenheim. At Gernsheim, the Spaniards had also built a permanent ship's bridge across the Rhine, the ends of which were fortified and secured by detachments. The Spanish troops could therefore cross the river at any time to intervene in the fighting on the other side of the Rhine. These units received supplies of money, troops, weapons and food without major

problems along the Rhine from the Spanish Netherlands from the regent of the Spanish king, Infanta Isabella, who resided there.

Tilly had used the winter to occupy the entire Odenwald, including a Palatine enclave, Veste Otzberg, so that he dominated the area from the Main to the Neckar. The Protestant Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt made no secret of his sympathy for the imperial cause and supported the League troops with rations. The imperial Catholic allies thus had the Lower Palatinate largely surrounded. In early March, Tilly reconnoitred the Rhine crossing points at Germersheim and Mannheim with a smaller army. Afterwards, the League troops began to prepare the siege of Heidelberg, one of the two residences of the Palatine Elector, by systematically conquering the castles and positions located in the Neckarbergland and held by Palatine troops.

Over the winter, however, a new enemy emerged for the League on the Upper Rhine. The Protestant Margrave George Frederick of Baden-Durlach handed over the reins of government to his eldest son and began to raise an army, but

Figure 12

Infanta Isabella and her commander Cordova. Left: Isabella Clara Eugenia de Austria y Valois, governor of the Spanish king in the Netherlands and certainly one of the most powerful women of her time. Right: Don Gonzales Fernandez de Cordova, general of the imperial troops in the Lower Palatinate.

for the time being without officially and openly intervening in the conflict. The Margrave was an extensively educated man who had also studied military theory. Apparently, he now wanted to put these theoretical studies into practice. His mercenary army was about 12,000 strong and included a comparatively large amount of artillery. For the time being, it was encamped near Durlach.

Ernst from Mansfeld started the campaign season by moving his troops northwards from Lower Alsace towards Germersheim, Speyer and Frankenthal in mid-March. He crossed the Rhine with larger cavalry units in order to advance against ligist positions there. In addition, he once again simultaneously negotiated with the enemy, in this case the Infanta Isabelle, who ruled the Spanish Netherlands from Brussels in the name of the king, for the conditions of his change of sides.

With the arrival of Count Palatine Frederick from The Hague at Mansfeld's camp in Germersheim on 23/24 April, the latter was naturally unable to continue negotiations with his warlord's enemies. Instead, the Palatine army immediately crossed the Rhine there. Frederick endowed Count Ernst from Mansfeld with the title of "Field Marshal General of the Bohemian Crown", which revealed much about the Bohemian ex-king's lack of sense of reality. The following day, the Margrave of Baden-Durlach also set out to join Mansfeld's army. The latter moved north along the Bergstrasse towards Wiesloch, from where Tilly approached with part of his forces. The first fighting broke out on 26 April. The following day, 27 April, the fighting began south of Mingolsheim, which was burnt down by the Palatine troops. Through the thick smoke, the League troops mistook the diversion of the Palatine baggage train for a general retreat and attacked. But when they were through the burning village, Mansfeld's army awaited them in battle formation on a slope and immediately counterattacked. This came so unexpectedly that the League troops were thrown back on the burning village. Tilly was wounded in this engagement, about 2000 of his men died, while on the Palatine side only about 400 were killed. However, the Bavarian troops were able to retreat in good order to Wimpfen without being pursued. On the same day, the Margrave of Baden-Durlach also declared his entry into Frederick's war against the Emperor and the Empire.

After Frederick, in recognition of the victory, had also raised Mansfeld to the rank of Prince of Hagenau, a territory that did not belong to him, the two Protestant armies were united on 29 April. They wanted to advance together

against Tilly. However, this advance degenerated into a kind of slapstick. The two armies took turns overrunning each other because each wanted to form the right wing. It is important to know that the outmost right position in a battle formation was considered the most honourable. And even in the 17th century it was therefore still due to the troops serving the highest-ranking commander. This understanding of honour still stemmed from the times when men went into battle with shields on their left arm. While the right side of all men was covered by the shield of the man to their right, the men on the far right of the battle line had no one to cover their open side. Therefore, the bravest of the brave, or those who thought they were, stood there.

With this manoeuvre, the margrave challenged Frederick's primacy; it was thus a question of who was in charge in the Protestant army. After a few days, Frederick and Mansfeld no longer played along. They moved with the much larger Electoral Palatinate army to Ladenburg, which was held by a Spanish garrison, in order to obtain a free crossing of the Neckar with its conquest. In doing so, the Protestant troops violated a fundamental rule of the art of war, which says never to separate an army. The Margrave moved his army of about 12,500 men, including 2500 horsemen and a lot of artillery, on towards the upstream Neckar crossing at Wimpfen.

Figure 13

Battle of Wimpfen. The time of the decisive explosion of the ammunition wagon in the background is depicted. The Baden army's wagon castle can be seen in the middle ground.

There Tilly's troops had recovered after the defeat at Mingolsheim. Wimpfen played a major role in the League's strategic planning, as the supply routes from Bavaria ended there. In the meantime, Spanish troops under Cordova had arrived from Oppenheim for reinforcements, which immediately boosted the morale of the Bavarian units. These 6000 men with 1800 horsemen had crossed the Rhine and the ensuing plain to make their way to the Neckar via the small roads of the Odenwald. On the evening of 5 May, the Baden troops arrived in front of Wimpfen and lined up in battle order. Smaller skirmishes ensued, but had to be ended as night fell.

On 6 May, the battle came to a head. The artillery fought duels all morning and there were several horse skirmishes, but nothing decisive happened. At noon, the guns were even completely silent. In the early afternoon, Tilly's troops surprisingly attacked the right wing of the Baden army. The Lorraine horsemen standing there were no match for the attack and fled. Around 17h30 there was an explosion in the Baden ammunition depot, either due to careless handling of powder or a lucky cannon hit. In any case, this explosion was too much for the morale of the Margravial troops, a panic broke out and they fled. The Imperial-League troops pursued and captured the wagon train. The escape of the Baden troops was made difficult by the Neckar and a flooded stream, so that the ligist cavalry was able to slay many of those who fled. By evening, the Baden army had ceased to exist.

Margrave Georg-Friedrich rescued himself injured to Stuttgart. There he finally resigned his rule in favour of his son to avoid imperial reprimands for his family. This manoeuvre was only partially successful. As early as August 1622, the Emperor reversed a recently completed unification of the Baden margravates, thus considerably reducing the power of the Baden-Durlachers in retaliation for the uprising. As early as 13 May, however, the margrave was back in Durlach and again attempted to raise an army. A few thousand men were still gathered, which he immediately added to the Mansfeld army.

The victory at Wimpfen averted a serious setback for the efforts of the imperial-ligist party to conquer the Lower Palatinate. On the other hand, Maximilian of Bavaria, despite all his efforts, had not come any closer to his goal, since the electoral dignity was tied to the domination of the entire Electoral Palatinate territory. On the contrary, his commander Tilly had experienced the strength of the Electoral Palatinate army at Mingolsheim and had only with difficulty averted a fatal defeat. Whether a victory against the

united Protestant armies would have been possible at Wimpfen was also more than questionable.

For the outlawed Elector Frederick, on the other hand, the situation had not changed for the time being. Despite the morally important victory at Mingolsheim, he only controlled parts of the Lower Palatinate, which continued to be surrounded by Catholic troops in strong positions. However, by separating the armies, as was to be seen, he had gambled away his last chance of getting out of the Bohemian adventure reasonably lightly. A complete crushing of Tilly's league army might have provided the space for negotiations to lift the imperial ban and at least leave him the rule over the Lower Palatinate. What role his commander Mansfeld played in this fatal decision to part ways is unclear. As a war entrepreneur, his business model depended on continuing the war as long as possible, not on a quick decision. He had already proven that he put his personal advantage above the interests of his clients with his betrayal in Bohemia and the current negotiations with the Infanta.

Now time was playing against Frederick, as the maintenance of his large field army was expensive and time-consuming. And letting them plunder his own country was not an option for obvious reasons. After the reduction of the Baden army, however, his army was not strong enough to turn against the Spaniards in the west and Tilly in the east at the same time. This would have been necessary, however, in order not to risk being attacked in the rear by the respectively other army.

Into this situation came the news that Christian of Brunswick had finally set out from Westphalia with his raised army to support Frederick. These troops could well have made the difference and put the Electoral Palatinate army on the offensive against its imperial Catholic adversaries. And it was precisely for this reason that the League army command under Tilly knew that they had to prevent a unification of the Protestant armies at all costs.

The main actors

This chapter briefly introduces the main characters and the city of Höchst. The aim is not to provide an exhaustive outline of their entire biographies or the history of the city. However, since many actions and events cannot be understood without knowing the background of the persons and the conditions in the city, they will be summarised up to the beginning of the events we are dealing with here.

Jean T'serclaes de Tilly

At the beginning of 1622, Tilly was 62 years old. He was born into an old noble family in February 1559 in the castle of Tilly near Gemblons in Brabant. His father Martin was a seneschal of the county of Namur, general and imperial court war councillor and a high official in the Spanish Netherlands. Besides a brother four years his senior, Tilly had two younger sisters. The very religious mother Dorothea from Schierstädt came from East German nobility and was responsible for the children's early education. In 1565, when Tilly was six years old, his father made the fatal mistake of signing a petition to the Spanish government, which classified it as a rebellion. Under the rule of the Duke of Alba, this led to the expropriation and banishment of the family in 1568. The mother gave her two sons to Jesuit education in 1569 as a relief for the family coffers, first to Chatelet, later to Cologne. The Jesuit schools were known for their excellent education, but also for the paramilitary drill of their pupils. This seems to have suited the young Tilly very well, however, because it was there that he discovered his talent for fighting. The strong religiosity, the strict hierarchy and discipline and the unconditional obedience of the "soldiers of God", as the Jesuits were also called, shaped Tilly for life.

When Tilly was fifteen years old, his father was rehabilitated after he had taken a vow of loyalty. He also got his family assets back. Nevertheless, the family was not wealthy enough to buy Tilly a patent and thus enable him to pursue an officer's career. He nevertheless joined the Spanish army at the age of 17 and served for seven years as a common soldier under Octavio from Mansfeld in the army of the governor of the Spanish Low Countries, the Duke of Parma Alessandro Farnese. He learned the soldier's trade literally "*from der*

Pike auf" – German for "from ground up", as recruits were first trained as pikemen.

Pikemen wore a breastplate and were armed with a 3-5 metre long lance made of ash wood with a steel tip. For close combat they had a sword, rapier or rapier, later also pistols. Mastery of the lance in formation required strict discipline and regular drill. Their use in formations called "*Tercio*" made the Spanish infantry the strongest on the continent in the second half of the 16th century and were still a significant force on the battlefield at the beginning of the 30 Years' War.

In 1583, Tilly joined the Bavarian army in the Cologne War. In this conflict, the Counter-Reformation forces succeeded in preventing the conversion of the archdiocese of Cologne into a hereditary Protestant duchy. With this change of armies, Tilly finally reached the lowest rank in the officer's career; he became an ensign. At the age of 24, he was relatively old for this. Ensigns of 14

Figure 14

Jesuit College of St. Peter in Cologne. Here Tilly received part of his school education. He also discovered his vocation as a soldier through military drill.

years were nothing unusual at that time. But from then on things went steadily upwards, he literally fought his way through the ranks.

Two years later he was again found in Spanish service in the siege of Antwerp under Farnese. During this time he had the opportunity to become acquainted with Farnese's command. Throughout his life, Farnese remained a great role model whom he admired for his organisational, tactical and strategic skills. In particular, the religiousness and discipline of the troops, supported by regular pay, made a lasting impression on Tilly.

In 1588, at the age of 29, he entered Lorraine service as a cavalry captain in a cuirassier regiment. This rank corresponded to that of a captain in the infantry. He distinguished himself personally as a regimental commander in various battles during the 8th Huguenot War. This attracted the attention of the French king, who wanted to recruit him for his army. However, because Tilly did not want to be in breach of contract, he declined with thanks. After being mustered out, he followed the Emperor's call to Hungary for the Turkish Wars in 1594. This war against the "infidels" suited the deeply religious Tilly very well. He had also made something of a name for himself on the battlefields of Europe, for on the recommendation of Archduke Ernst he became adjutant to the supreme commander Duke de Mercoeur. Here he was able to gain insight into the tasks of a large command. But he did not only remain a staff officer; in the victorious battles of Mezö-Keresztes and Stuhlenweißburg he again fought in the front line. He was severely wounded several times, but recovered completely thanks to a very good constitution.

At the turn of the century, at the age of 41, he was appointed Obrist, i.e. regimental commander, by Rudolf II. Tilly had thus gained access to the upper echelons of command. Through further successful personal service in the battles before Ofen, he was appointed Feldzeugmeister, the commander-in-chief of the artillery, in 1602 and Field Marshal, the highest rank in the army, in 1605. Without belonging to the higher nobility, one could not normally rise higher as a professional soldier.

A considerable part of Tilly's military success as a troop leader was due to his legendary good relationship with his soldiers. Thus, the common soldiers, but even the officers, called him "Father Jean". Having risen from the ranks himself, he knew about their hardships and material needs. He therefore lobbied his warlords vehemently on their behalf and did his utmost to ensure that they were well provided for in terms of pay, food, quarters and booty. His strict principle of merit was also well received by the troops: if a man had

proved himself, Tilly lobbied for his promotion, while he refused to approve further advancement to officers who did not enjoy the respect of their men. In the field, he did not risk the lives of his men lightly, for all his offensive orientation, and not least he put his own life at risk by leading them "from the front". His troops repaid him for all this with reliability, relatively strict discipline and good fighting morale, which led to further successes and in turn strengthened his good reputation among them.

However, Tilly's understanding attitude towards his soldiers also had its negative sides. If looting or attacks on captured enemies occurred in enemy territory after battles, Tilly rarely took decisive action. To what extent it was within the power of commanders at this time to completely prevent such crimes is questionable, but in this respect he often failed to live up to his own standards and those of his warlord. He himself was also able to order drastic

Figure 15

Jean T'serclaes de Tilly. Portrait painted by an anonymous painter around the time of the Battle of the White Mountain near Prague. The painting is probably the most naturalistic portrait of Tilly.

measures against defeated enemies or their real or supposed supporters, which would be clear war crimes by today's standards, but were also considered exceedingly harsh at the time.

Throughout his career, Tilly lived a very ascetic life, which was certainly very conducive to his extraordinarily good physical constitution into old age. However, this did not mean that this craftsman of war did not value material things. As an adherent of the achievement principle, he wanted to be adequately rewarded for his work. He was not only concerned with the money itself, but primarily with the recognition that came with it, which he also actively and penetratingly demanded in case of doubt. He does not seem to have had any other interests besides military service; he does not seem to have existed as a private person. Nothing is known about any closer relationships; he apparently followed the ideal of a warrior monk. Through his decades-long career in the military, through all ranks, discipline and subordination had become second nature to him. Because of his humble origins and corresponding lack of background and connections, Tilly had also not developed any political ambitions. He was completely absorbed in the ideal of service.

In 1608, Tilly was drawn into the efforts of Archduke Matthias to replace his idle and eccentric brother Rudolf II as emperor. Since he refused the offer of Matthias, under whom he had served in the war, and backed the rightful but soon deposed emperor, his career was almost over.

Maximilian I, Duke of Bavaria, however, opened up the possibility for him to take over the military leadership of the Bavarian army and the army of the Catholic League, founded in 1609, as lieutenant general. Maximilian reserved the supreme leadership as Generalissimus; the Lieutenant General was thus his deputy, still ranking above a Field Marshal. In addition, Tilly was given the rank of Bavaria's second-highest civilian official, with correspondingly generous pay. The League, founded by Maximilian in a leading role, was an alliance of the Catholic estates of southern Germany to defend the peace of the land and Catholic interests. This confessional orientation suited the deeply religious Tilly very well. It was even more in his interest that this position was linked to the building of a Bavarian army, which was to become 20,000 strong as the core of the League troops.

In the following ten years, the longest period of peace in Tilly's career, Tilly took care of building up the army, a militia for national defence and the fortress expansion. Maximilian, fifteen years younger than Tilly, had built an

almost absolutist, modern state out of a heavily indebted duchy by establishing an efficient civil service that could afford a large, well-equipped army. In building it up, Maximilian and he developed over time into a real team that worked closely together in a spirit of trust. This was supported by the similar personalities of both. Deep Jesuit piety, high self-discipline and a sense of duty were common to both. Maximilian's authentic princely authority and will to shape things complemented Tilly's solitary obedience and unconditional loyalty perfectly. The two communicated often and regularly; Maximilian also took care of details. Tilly did not resent him for this, but appreciated the clear directives that enabled him to implement the will of his warlord. The two men were also personally close to each other, which was expressed in their letters by their mutual concern for each other's health and well-being, which went far beyond mere politeness.

With the League's intervention in the Bohemian uprising in 1620, the most successful part of Tilly's career began at the comparatively very old age of 61. This command was his last great chance to increase his fame and that of the Catholic Church and to make himself immortal. With the army he had trained himself, he had the appropriate tool at hand to do so. However, he had little room for mistakes and setbacks; these would not have been forgiven so easily due to his lack of family background. In military circles, Tilly already had an impeccable reputation as a professional, competent military man, but until then he had not yet come into the public eye. This was now to change decisively.

Christian of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel

Christian of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel was twenty-two years old at the beginning of 1622. He was born on 26 August 1599, the third son of the Lutheran Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel and his second wife Elisabeth of Denmark. The Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel family was one of several lines of the Guelphs, so powerful in the Middle Ages, and together with that of Celle still the most important. His father, although a Protestant, was one of the most important advisors to the Habsburg Emperor Rudolf II and spent a long time at his residence in Prague, where he died in 1613. He was considered one of the most educated rulers of his time, who endeavoured to develop his country, reformed the national defence and even wrote quite successful plays. However, this did not stop him from dabbling in alchemy,

burning over a hundred people as witches and expelling the Jews from his country. His mother was a sister of the King of Denmark, Christian IV, who was also one of the godfathers of her son Christian.

Christian was his mother's declared favourite and was known from childhood to be very headstrong. The Danish princess will have passed on to her children a consciousness in keeping with their status as part of the Protestant nobility. He was taught by tutors whose idea of education was to read mainly historical works with their charges. In 1611, at the age of 13, he travelled to the United Netherlands Provinces. Not much is known of this trip, except that he learned French while there and otherwise had his fun with horseback riding, hunting, ball games and swimming. In 1613 his father died, and he was succeeded as reigning duke by his brother Frederick Ulrich, eight years his senior. Irritatingly, all sons of dukes who were in principle entitled to inherit also held the title of duke at this time, including Christian. With the usual number of children in ruling families at the time, there were therefore often duchies with a lot of dukes, although only one of them actually ruled.

Figure 16

Two portraits of Christian of Brunswick. The left picture shows him at the age of about 20 in 1619, the right one was painted one year later. In both pictures, the young duke is depicted as an officer on horseback, wearing a cuirass and carrying a rider's pistol.

In 1615, he stayed at the Protestant university in Helmstedt with his brother Karl Heinrich, who was twelve years younger. This university was under the patronage of the Dukes of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel and was known for its rigorously Lutheran-Orthodox theological faculty as well as the excessive tendency of its students to fight each other in duels. With several hundred students enrolled, it was one of the larger universities in the German-speaking world in the 1610s. When his little brother died of smallpox after only a few months, Christian left the university again.

Since his brother Rudolf, who was six years younger, also died in the university town of Tübingen when he was not quite 14, Christian was elected bishop at the age of 17 by the cathedral chapter of Halberstadt in his place. In doing so, he followed the family tradition, as his two younger brothers and before them his father had previously held this office. The strange constellation that Protestants could also occupy Catholic bishoprics was due to the Augsburg Religious Peace of 1555. This established the well-known rule "*cuius regio, eius religio*", i.e. he who rules also determines the religion of his subjects. But there was a kind of protection for Catholic church property, including the bishop's seats. If the (Catholic) bishop died, the body of the cathedral chapter responsible for electing the new bishop could also elect a Protestant to the bishop's seat if there was a corresponding Protestant majority. Of course, this person was not recognised by the Catholic Church and thus not inducted into the ecclesiastical office. However, they could be recognised and officially enfeoffed by the emperor as administrators for the secular rule, which the prince-bishops also exercised. However, since the holders in any case drew the income of the monastery, such an administrator's office was a popular position of provision for younger princes who were not entitled to succeed.

His mother ensured that Christian was actually elected bishop in 1616 at the age of 17 with massive electoral assistance in the form of bribes. Since, as expected, he was confirmed in office neither by the emperor nor by the Catholic Church, he could officially only use the title Administrator of Halberstadt. But this did not change the fact that he drew the considerable income of the monastery. In addition, he subsequently acquired the offices of provost of Brunswick and abbot of Michaelstein with the corresponding income. However, he never seems to have developed an interest in taking care of these offices and the responsibilities that went with them.

Up to this point, Christian from Brunswick's life had been no different from that of many of his peers. He grew up privileged and sheltered and could have led a carefree life with his sinecure without effort or work. As long as his ruling brother did not produce a legitimate successor, which was also rather unlikely in view of his unhappy marriage, he could even hope to rule Wolfenbüttel one day. Something was obviously missing in his life, however; he dreamed of great deeds, as he knew them from the knightly legends and the reading of his school days.

When the Bohemian Revolt broke out in 1618, he followed it intensively in the media, as did the whole of Europe. This term seems to have fallen out of time here, but in fact the 30 Years War was the first media war about which the entire European population was informed not long after the fact, but almost in real time through various pamphlets, newspapers and biannual publications. It was probably mainly thanks to these diverse printed matter that the war, which took place in a wide geographical area with many different actors and over a long period of time, was understood as a coherent event. And the hunger for information about the war was great. Many people could read, and those who could not were read to. The first periodical newspapers appeared, informative pamphlets were published in large numbers, there were schematic pictorial representations of the events of the war, which aimed to record and disseminate the facts, or what the editors thought they were. In addition, there were biannual summaries of events and pamphlets with discussions of the reasons for the war and possibilities for alliances, with fluid transitions to partisan propaganda. The Brunswick court, like every princely house, was well supplied with such printed matter. In contrast to the vast majority of the Lutheran imperial estates, who supported the imperial position in the conflict, the Bohemian and anti-Catholic propaganda seems to have caught on with Christian of Brunswick. Raised as a Protestant and without a real task at an impressionable age, he seems to have radicalised himself under the influence of propagandist pamphlets.

These pamphlets were often cleverly constructed, as they appeared to be aimed only at defending one's own threatened denomination and its vested rights. This threat was made plausible by accusing the other parties of disturbing the peace and of warmongering. In the process, no allegation was then too outlandish or too far-fetched. The Jesuits in particular were accused of secret intrigues to undermine Protestant causes. A (forged) secret manual for Jesuits to secure the influence of the world's powerful for the benefit of the Roman Church was even said to have been "discovered" by Christian of

Brunswick. If at least he himself was convinced of the authenticity of his "discovery", then the fight against the aspired tyrannical world domination by the devious lawbreakers of the opposing party must thereby appear to him as a justified, even inevitable war.

In any case, in the year of the outbreak of war, his decision matured to become active himself. At first, Christian of Brunswick wanted to go to war as a knight in shining armour for the Bohemian estates. In accordance with the self-image of his rank, he did not want to do this as a simple soldier. In 1619 he offered the Bohemian directorate to recruit a cuirassier regiment for them as an Obrist. Cuirassiers were the heavy cavalry of the time. They wore ¾ body armour that reached to the knees, plus a closed helmet or balaclava. However, they were

Figure 17

Anti-Jesuit propaganda. Such propagandistic pamphlets, which accused the other side of conspiracy or striving for world domination, were distributed by the hundreds throughout the empire. The transition from sincere reporting to propagandistic influence was fluid. Even then, it was not easy to distinguish fake news from serious journalism.

not armed with lances, but with two mounted pistols and a pallash, a heavy mounted sword. Mainly noblemen served in cuirassier units. On the one hand, because only the very wealthy could afford the expensive equipment, and on the other, because at least visually they came close to the knights of the Middle Ages, the great model of their rank. Christian of Brunswick dreamed of going to war as a cuirassier, for at that time, still without any military experience, he had a portrait painted of him by a painter who was in great demand at the time, Paulus Moreelse, in cuirassier armour and holding a mounted pistol. The picture shows a very young man with a daring hairstyle and a somewhat forlorn look that does not seem to fit properly with his extremely martial get-up.

Although his ruling brother reluctantly gave him permission to recruit troops in his territory, the enterprise did not make much progress. The Bohemian estates were, unsurprisingly, sceptical about the offer of a militarily completely inexperienced twenty-year-old and did not want to bear the costs and consequently did not grant him a recruiting patent.

Instead, in April 1620, he went to the Dutch States General to serve in the army of Moritz of Orange, Count of Nassau-Dillenburg. The latter was elected governor of the United Netherlands, as well as its captain-general of land and naval forces. Since the 1590s, he had fundamentally reformed the armed forces. He waged war according to scientific principles and referred to ancient models. Strict discipline, thorough training, daily drill and regular pay were the pillars on which he based his approach. By reducing the size of tactical units and using more artillery and firearms, he achieved great success in the Dutch fight for freedom against the Spanish Habsburgs.

For Protestant princes' sons, his army was thus one of the places where the modern military craft could be learned. Christian of Brunswick served for a few months as a cavalry captain in a cavalry unit of eight companies. During this time he took a liking to life among soldiers. However, as there was still a truce in the Dutch War of Independence, he was unable to gain any combat experience in active service. In general, he seems to have been less concerned with his training as an officer than with leading a dissolute life. This was not unusual for young officers from a good family. In any case, during this period, despite his secure income, he accumulated large debts, about which his mother complained to him.

In January 1621, the Danish King Christian IV invited the leaders of the Protestant Union to a meeting in Segeberg in Holstein. Frederick, who had

been expelled from Bohemia, also took part in this meeting with his wife Elisabeth. Christian of Brunswick was also there, either as part of a Dutch delegation, or at the invitation of his Danish godfather, or on his or his family's initiative. There the idea came up to recruit troops in the predominantly Protestant north of Germany and to lead them to the south to relieve the oppressed Lower Palatinate. Christian of Brunswick was enthusiastic about the idea and agreed to take on the task. In keeping with his rapturous enthusiasm for chivalry, he declared this to be a minneservice to the only slightly older Elizabeth Stuart, with whom he must have fallen a little in love.

More than with any other actor in this phase of the war, the question of Christian of Brunswick's motivation to break with his family, to go into the field for Frederick of the Palatinate, to plunder and murder, and in particular to demonise the Catholic Church in the process, arises. His prospects of gaining his own rule in the process were vague at best and presupposed a great many imponderables. Personal enrichment does not seem to have been an important motivation for him either, for as far as is known, he used the very largest part of his booty for the further expansion of his army. As a Lutheran, he had no direct confessional motive for supporting the Calvinist Frederick; moreover, he never stood out personally as particularly religious. He had suffered no injustice from the emperor or the church; in any case, he never cited the non-recognition of the bishop's election by the emperor and the pope, from which one could construct a motive, as a reason for his actions. And a political agenda of his own is certainly not to be seen.

Rather, it seems to have been an ominous mixture of various factors that turned an inconspicuous aristocratic scion into the "Tolle Halberstädter". On the one hand, as an after-born son, he had no preordained mission in life, but a strong urge to excel. In addition, he had lost his father during puberty. His brother, who was himself overburdened with the role of reigning duke, could offer no substitute. Nothing is known of other mentors or influential friends. He was thus at a critical age without a male role model. If he sought these role models from his school literature, he mainly encountered heroes who had achieved fame and prestige through military feats. The chivalric self-image of the nobility also meant that one had to fight recognised injustice, even and especially when it was inflicted on others. The omnipresent propaganda of more radical Protestant circles about the fight against and removal of the Palatine Elector from power by the Emperor and the Church, especially the Jesuits, offered just such a narrative of injustice. This propaganda made use of drastic images that portrayed the Church and especially the Jesuits as a satanic,

devious power. These narratives could easily awaken in a Protestant adolescent the desire to come to the aid of his "own party's" unlawfully oppressed fellow believers, especially since he had grown up in a family in which conspiracy theories about witches and Jews played a major role. A letter to the Bishop of Würzburg and Bamberg, which he wrote in May 1622 during the campaign, gives a very good insight into his world of thought. It reveals a surprising and thought-provoking similarity in the argumentation between modern-day conspiracy theorists and extremists on the one hand and Christian from Brunswick on the other. The letter was mainly intended for the public to justify his planned invasion of the bishop's territories. In order to make it easier to understand, the letter was translated into modern language.

"*He [Christian from Brunswick] had heard for some time that the bishop, in spite of his assurances and his required neutrality, had let himself be tempted by the incitement of the wretched Satan and his accursed Jesuit followers to send the mercenaries recruited by his monastery not only to Bohemia and to unite with the Bavarian prince, right at the beginning, when the fortunes of war did not mean well for the Protestants. ....*"

First of all, the bishop is accused of not having acted on his own initiative, but through incitement by the devil and Christian of Brunswick's favourite enemy, the Jesuits. These are typical elements of the more radical Protestant, anti-Imperial and anti-Catholic propaganda, which the intended audience could easily identify and tune into what was to come.

"*... but also to work more intensively to bring foreign nations into the empire, so that the Protestants would be sucked to the marrow and the resulting unrest would be used; no doubt to draw the Spanish monarchy, which had already been advising accordingly for many years, into conflict, to press down the fatherland and Protestant freedom, and thereupon to introduce the Tridentine Council as well as the tyrannical Inquisition and to weigh down the consciences of the poor people with the threatened loss of their highest bliss.* "

In addition to a factual accusation, the support of the League by troops recruited by the bishop, Christian from Brunswick immediately unpacks the mother of all right-wing conspiracy theories: the planned exchange of populations by sinister powers to the detriment of his own group, garnished with the horror scenario of an impending popist dictatorship.

"*However this conspiracy for the downfall of German liberty was conceived, it could not be approved, for which reason he wanted to ask him to desist from his irresponsible*

plan to withdraw his army from the Lower Palatinate, which had hitherto been famous above all for cruel tyranny. "

Likewise, the centuries-old battle concept of the threat to German freedom, meant as the curtailment of the privileges of the estates by centralising tendencies, by princes or the emperor, was invoked. Christian from Brunswick also finally outed himself here as a classic supporter (and not originator) of these conspiracy theories by admitting that he also did not know exactly "how this conspiracy was laid out", but that he was against it in any case. Afterwards, he accuses the bishop of acting unpriestly by interfering in the war only to secure the Catholics the majority of voting rights in the electoral assembly:

" *... and, moreover, remembering, as an academic with a doctorate, that such cruel tyrannies would have been irresponsible even among the pagans, and that it would be more appropriate for him, as a shepherd of souls, to lead in a sweet voice, means, by peaceful means, onto the right path, than to persecute with fire and sword, and even to pull the skin over the ears, which was rather an unpriestly activity", besides, the expedition undertaken into the Lower Palatinate would be directly contrary not only to the sense of justice, but also to the Treaty of Ulm, all princely promises and the imperial statutes, in which the sole intention was to drive out the rightful elector and to transfer the electoral right to other, much less entitled relatives, so that in the electoral college the majority of votes would always remain on the papal side. And that the Protestant estates, German liberality would be suppressed the longer the more.*"

He must have momentarily forgotten that he himself was an elected bishop who had intervened in the war without any justification for exactly the same reason, only on the Protestant side.

"*[...] Be witness before God and the esteemed posterity that everything he has done up to now and, if his admonition should not find a hearing, will still do, is for the restoration of peace in the beloved fatherland.*"

With this justification before posterity, it also became clear that the desired posthumous fame was an important motive for the young duke. The assertion that everything he had done so far and still wanted to do served peace was so obviously cynical that he could only have firmly believed in it with the delusion of a fanatic, without realising how untrustworthy and downright ridiculous he was making himself before the public. Christian from Brunswick was therefore not a typical, profit-oriented war entrepreneur, like Ernst from Mansfeld, for example, who did not care about the reason for the war and who

negotiated with both sides for the sake of his own advantage, but a radicalised man of conviction.

To what extent these or other motives played a role in the decision to intervene in the war himself, however, takes a back seat to the determination with which Christian from Brunswick pursued and implemented his plans despite all setbacks. The confrontation with the reality of the war and misery he had conjured up did not dissuade him from his plan, on the contrary. Although he had yet to prove himself personally in battle, he had found his calling in the role of the leader of a robbing, plundering, raping and murdering army.

The Citizens of Höchst on the Main

The old town of Höchst is situated a few hundred metres below the tributary of the Nidda into the Main on an alluvial sand hill. The site has been inhabited since the Stone Age; "Hostat" was first mentioned in a document in 790 on a deed of donation to the Lorsch monastery. In the 12th century, Höchst came under the rule of the Electorate of Mainz or Kurmainz, under which it was still in the 17th century. In 1356, Emperor Charles IV granted Höchst town and market rights in the face of resistance from Frankfurt. Its location about halfway between Frankfurt and Mainz, both on the river and on the road, was ideal for an Kurmainz customs post. This was protected by a castle, which later developed into a palace, and the town by a city wall. A barrier chain across the river ensured that passing ships actually paid their duty. At the beginning of the 17th century, the town prospered. The castle was modernised and served as a summer residence for the Archbishop of Mainz. This was Johann Schweickhard from Kronberg from 1604.

The regular fairs in Frankfurt and the shipping traffic on the Main ensured steady customs revenues. The 400-500 inhabitants lived mainly in their own

Figure 18

Höchst on the Main. Largely accurate bird's-eye view of Höchst seen from the west. The Electoral Palace can be seen in the foreground on the right.

houses; of the 128 house owners, only eight had two houses and one had three. There were three inns, some of which still exist today. There were very many trades represented in the town: Carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, shoemakers, bakers, barrel makers, blacksmiths, carpenters, roofers. Butchers, millers, locksmiths, glaziers, wainwrights, white binders, ropemakers, bathers, barbers, publicans, schoolmasters and printers are all documented from the time before the Great War. In addition, there were the servants of the castle. Despite its location on the river, there were only eight boatmen's and fishermen's families in Höchst. Some noble families also had houses and farms in Höchst. Craftsmen who produced goods for daily use had a hard time in Höchst, because even then the citizens preferred to go to Frankfurt for shopping. One opportunity for them to do so was the two market ships that travelled between Frankfurt and Mainz every day and met in Höchst for a midday rest.

In addition to their income from crafts, the citizens lived from agriculture, which most families did on the side. Thus 69 families had their landed property in and around Höchst. Cattle breeding was also widespread in the Nidda meadows due to the large "Allmen", communally used cattle pastures,

Figure 19

The Höchst Allmen. The cities common pastures in the marshy Nidda meadows at the time of the 30 Years' War can be imagined as shown in this painting from the 19th century.

and was an important branch of the economy. The "Allmen" were marshy areas that extended from the banks of the Nidda to the road to Sossenheim and were surrounded on all sides by a dense thorn hedge and, in the north-western part, by the Sulzbach stream. To prevent cattle from running away and damaging the surrounding fields, these hedges were carefully maintained and, where necessary, newly planted. The town council often invested large sums of money from the town treasury for this purpose. The Höchsters also had the right to drive pigs into the Schwanheim forest, for which they employed their own pig herder. The citizens of Höchst were able to sell the proceeds of their farming at their market, which had been held every Tuesday on square before the castle since 1355. The market has existed uninterruptedly since then until today.

Like almost all communities in the 17th century, the citizens of Höchst were thus able to provide themselves with most of what they needed for daily life. However, with one important exception: there was a shortage of wood. The immediate surroundings were sparsely wooded and Höchst had no forests of its own elsewhere. This led to exceptionally high prices for firewood for the people of Höchst. To prevent this fuel shortage from leading to social injustice, because the rich could buy wood at low prices in the summer and the poor were left with expensive wood in the winter, the town organised a central wood purchasing system. Representatives of the council bought the year's supply of firewood for the whole town from timber merchants in Taunus and Spessart and financed it from the town's coffers. The wood supplied was stored in the town's wood yard and sold to the townspeople at cost price when needed. The general scarcity of wood and the low level of building activity due to the lack of space within the city walls also meant that almost no timber was stored in Höchst.

Höchst was the central administrative seat for a total of 46 towns, including Hofheim, Eppstein, Königstein and Heddernheim. The Höchst office itself included Sossenheim, Schwanheim, Nied, Griesheim, Sindlingen, Wicker and Weilbach. A "*Amtmann*" or bailiff conducted the government business of the office on behalf of the archbishop. He was responsible for the entire administration, reported to the electoral administration in Mainz and concluded the necessary contracts in the name of the elector. He was also responsible for the defence of the city and the office. Therefore, he commanded the garrison of the castle, which consisted of five armed horsemen in times of peace, and convened the committee, the militia of the office, as needed. Because there was not yet a separation of administration and justice, he was

also the chief judge of the office, responsible for the "high" trials, i.e. those in which the accused were threatened with torture and corporal punishment. The position of bailiff was awarded for life by the elector, usually to persons from the lower nobility who had a thorough legal education. There were many noble families throughout the empire who had specialised in filling such high administrative positions since the Middle Ages and had their young men trained accordingly.

The bailiff Johann Philipp Knebel from Katzenelnbogen came from such a family and took office in Höchst in 1618 at the age of 30. He was born on 5 November 1588 as the son of Philipp Knebel and Anna Kämmerer from Dalberg. The Dalbergs were a noble family who also had property in Höchst; the noble's town house is still inhabited today. Knebel was quite wealthy by birth, so he inherited half of the lower castle in Neuweier, south of Baden-Baden, from his mother. Johann Philipp Knebel had just married when he took

Figure 20

Portrait of Johann Philipp Knebel at the age of 42. In high society it was customary to have portraits made of oneself - it was simply part of the job. But as you can clearly see in the comparison of this portrait with the rulers' pictures above, the quality you got was definitely dependent on your wallet.

office; the year before he had married Maria from Spiring. However, he did not have much luck with his wives; by the time of his death in 1659, he had been married four times because his first three wives each died prematurely and childless. Only with his fourth wife did he have four children.

In addition to obedience and loyalty to his elector, the highest duty of a Amtmann (bailiff) was to care for his subjects. By his oath of office, he was required to offer everyone an "open ear, just judgement and protection in case of danger". He was assisted by a *Schultheiss* (equivalent to Sheriff), who was his representative in court and sovereign matters and also investigated criminal cases, a clerk, a registrar and an usher. The bailiff had his official residence in the castle and received a very adequate salary. However, since such a powerful position invited its abuse, as it did at all times, the bailiffs were expressly forbidden to exercise violence against the subjects, he was not allowed to engage in any trade, acquire any land in the office without permission and employ his subordinates for his personal benefit. It is obvious to see the most common abuses in the list of prohibitions.

Subordinate to the Amtmann was the Schultheiss, also a state official, who was appointed for life by the elector. In the 1620s, Johann Valentin Arbogast was given the office. As he was also mayor and councillor, he must have come from the Höchst citizens. The position of Schultheiss was one of the lower officials. This meant that any freeman could apply for the post, provided the candidate had knowledge of practical law and state administration. The job was in great demand, so that the bailiff, to whose rights the filling of the post belonged, could usually choose between many more or less suitable candidates. The Schultheiss had to implement the orders of the Amtmann and was responsible for public order and safety. Thus he was also the early modern counterpart to the Ordnungsamt (Municpal Law Enforcement). In addition, he was the superior of the village sheriffs, who performed similar tasks in the villages of the office. He had to be able to contribute to the defence of the town and was therefore obliged to keep a horse suitable for this purpose. He kept the keys of the town gates and handed them out to the town guards every evening and took them back in the morning. In times of war, he had to organise the quartering of the passing troops and collect the war contributions from the citizens. The Schultheiss also saw to it that the citizens looked after the town's property. He supervised the town prison and was the superior of the town beadle, the police servant, who was, however, paid by the town. At this level, too, there was no separation of government and justice. The Schultheiss was responsible for the lower court system and was assisted in this by 12 elected

jury members (Schöffen). He presided over high trials, but had to leave the judgement to the bailiff. While the people rarely had to deal with the bailiff, there were plenty of opportunities for the bailiff to make himself unpopular with the citizens.

For the inhabitants, the bailiff and the sheriff were the authorities whose actions made the rule of the sovereign, the archbishop of Mainz, tangible for the population. These officials guaranteed the legal order and collected the taxes. In return, they ensured that the interests of the citizens were also heard by the electoral administration.

However, a large part of the administration and organisation of city life was taken over by the citizens of the city themselves. However, only by the citizens. About one fifth of the city's inhabitants were also citizens. This meant that they were men, had a certain amount of wealth as heads of families and were thus eligible for the council and as mayors and could vote. The larger part of the population, i.e. women, servants, day labourers and so on, were thus excluded from political participation, at least formally.

There was a considerable fluctuation of the population in the town; only about one third of the citizens in the 1609 census had also been born in Höchst. Höchst had two mayors with equal rights, each elected for one year. They acted as liaisons with the sovereign authorities and administered the town

Figure 6

View of Höchst from the southern side of the Main. On the left is the new Electoral Palace, followed on the right by the (river) Main Gate and St. Justin's Church.

treasury. They were accountable to the bailiff and the citizens. Because the position was honorary, it placed a considerable burden on the actual business of the elected mayors due to the high expenditure of time. For this reason, as a rule, two different citizens ran for office each year; the burdens were shared. The mayors were assisted in their work by a town clerk. The two balance and market masters provided the main income for the town treasury. As the only female functionary, the midwife was also paid from the town treasury. The mayors carried out what was decided by the town council. The councillors were also elected from and by the citizenry. They were the contact persons for the citizens in case of complaints and enquiries.

As citizens of the town, however, the citizens of Höchst had not only rights but also duties. Citizens of military age were obliged to guard and defend their town. Three citizens each had to be on guard duty every day for 24 hours, from 5 pm to 5 pm. The watch began with the watchkeepers reporting punctually to the home of the town constable to be relieved. He was also elected by the citizens, but had to be confirmed by the bailiff. There was some payment

Figure 22

Citizen militia during an exercise in the field. The picture is called "Militia in Ambush", but this seems rather unlikely given the relaxed attitude and lack of armament of most of the members.

associated with the office, which made it quite attractive. The town constable issued the weapons and assigned the guards. The guards were responsible for collecting the toll on entering the town and denying entry to dubious characters. Höchst had three city gates, one to Frankfurt, one to Mainz and one to the Main. The gates were closed at 7 pm in the evening, in summer they were open until 10 pm. At night, the guards were assisted by four paid covert guards on the walls and on rounds.

Even in peacetime, guard duty was a great burden on the citizens, for with about 90 men fit for military service, each had to allow for a full day's loss of earnings about every 12 days. It was possible, however, to pay for a replacement man, either per day or for a whole year, but not many could afford it. In order to practise the use of weapons, there had been first one and later two marksmen's guilds in Höchst since 1360. Every citizen was expected to be a member of one of them. There were 12 fixed shooting days per year, and the marksmen also competed against other guilds at shooting festivals in the area. The citizens of Höchst were therefore all quite skilled marksmen who were extremely experienced in the use of their weapons. In addition to muskets, the Höchst arsenal also included rifled guns and long-range, large-calibre, powerful double-hooked rifles with which the city walls could be

Figure 7

Detail from the group portrait of a Dutch marksmen's guild. The picture reflects very well both the military character and the social significance of the citizens' marksmen's guilds and their exercises: good equipment with weapons suitable for warfare meets fine clothing and social drinking.

defended. On the shooting days and even more so at the festivities, there were considerable quantities of wine, paid for partly by the town and partly by the elector, to make participation attractive. In general, communal drinking was an integral part of public life at certain events. The wine served was free of charge for the participants. The people of Höchst were not restrained in this respect, so that the electoral administration occasionally complained about the high costs incurred for wine.

All in all, the people of Höchst led an orderly, quiet life at the beginning of the 17th century, which hardly differed from the conditions in many other small towns in the empire under the rule of a sovereign. A certain level of prosperity had been achieved, civic engagement had brought the town prestige and office, all in all it got on well with its neighbours and the elector's rule did not weigh too heavily on the town. All right - the weather could have been better and fewer taxes and duties would not have been bad either - but when would that ever have been different?

This changed, however, with the outbreak of war in 1618. Although the fighting initially took place in faraway Bohemia, times became noticeably more uncertain. This led to reduced trade on the river, which meant lower customs and market revenues. The war ensured that burnt-out peasants, resigned soldiers, deserters and other uprooted people were increasingly on the roads of the empire. Out of sheer material need, these "ailing" soldiers, the marauders, had to take what they could get and formed gangs. The Elector of Mainz therefore concluded a protective alliance with the Landgraves of Hesse-Darmstadt, the Counts of Nassau-Idstein, Nassau-Saarbrücken Nassau-Wiesbaden and the Free Imperial City of Frankfurt in 1620. Troops of horsemen were formed and allowed to pursue marauding hordes beyond the respective state borders in order to secure trade and change. In addition, more checkpoints were set up on the main roads and the side roads were made impassable by cutting the bridges. In Höchst, the Kurmainz garrison of the castle was reinforced and the guard duty was doubled by the citizens.

In 1620, the war touched the Höchst area directly for the first time, when troops of the imperial general Anhold passed through on the army road to the north and plundered Oberliederbach and Unterliederbach as they marched past. In the course of the conquest of the Lower Palatinate by the Spaniards, soldiers of Spinola's army were quartered in Höchst over the winter. For the citizens, this meant that they had to provide accommodation for the soldiers assigned to them and also feed them, whereby the soldiers were entitled to

certain amounts of bread, beer and meat per day. This alone placed an enormous burden on the inhabitants, who did not produce too many surpluses and had to rely on selling them. Although the troops were actually allies, all mercenaries at that time were not so careful with the property of others and often harassed the female population. But this was only a prelude to the events that were to come for Höchst.

The war parties get into position

Retreat across the Weser

After the pressure on Christian from Brunswick's troops in Westphalia from the imperial league forces increased, the Brunswick army command decided at the beginning of May 1622 that the time had come to march. Only, where should the army turn and what route should it take? Christian of Brunswick dreamed of marching directly to Bohemia, defeating the imperial troops there and thus restoring his adored Elisabeth Stuart to the throne as promised. Strategically, this would not have been a bad move in principle, because it would have forced the other side to withdraw troops from the Upper Rhine theatre, which would have reduced the pressure on Frederick and Mansfeld

Figure 8

Tercio. Battle formations of pikemen surrounded by a "hedge" of musketeers were the dominant infantry formation in the first years of the war. The pikemen were mainly there to protect the musketeers from cavalry with their lances. In the course of the war, the ratio shifted more and more towards more musketeers.

in the Lower Palatinate. Only this plan would have made it necessary to march through Electoral Saxony. The Elector of Saxony, Johann Georg I, was more inclined towards the imperial position, but had initially remained militarily neutral in the conflict. In the meantime, however, he supported the imperial troops with his army in crushing the remnants of the Bohemian uprising. His determined resistance to a march through by Christian's army was therefore to be expected. Since most of the Saxon troops were tied up on the Silesian-Moravian border and in Lusatia, Christian of Brunswick thought he had a good chance of a breakthrough in view of his numerically impressive army.

The reality, however, was different. Most of his troops, especially the infantry, were freshly recruited. The reports indicate that it consisted largely of new recruits, not "tried servants". The armament with the latest Dutch muskets was not bad, but there was a lack of pikes, so that some of the foot troops had to be armed with clubs. Above all, however, the army lacked the necessary drill.

The combat tactics of the infantry at the beginning of the 17th century were based on mixed formations of pikemen and musketeers that could manoeuvre quickly and in a coordinated manner in close formation. At the beginning of the war, the Spanish tercio was the measure of all things in battle formations. Originating from the force clusters of the Landsknecht era, this formation combined spearmen and musketeers. The basic idea behind it was that a square of men carrying 3-5 m long spears could not be attacked from any side by enemy cavalry. For horses can be made to do much, but not to gallop into a wall of iron spikes. With the development and spread of firearms, however, this was no longer necessary: the cavalry rode in formation in front of such a tercio, the front rank fired their mounted pistols at the enemy soldiers, swung off to the left, loaded their pistols while rejoining the formation at the rear. For obvious reasons, this manoeuvre was called Caracole, in translation “snail”. Only when the tercio was sufficiently weakened by this constant fire and threatened to break up as a formation, did the shock attack take place at a gallop with the sabre. And disbanded, possibly even fleeing foot troops had always been the easy victims of cavalry.

So in order to protect a rather static infantry formation like the tercio from a caracole, it had to be able to keep the attackers at bay. That's where the musketeers came in. With their much greater range than mounted pistols, their muskets were effective protection. Around the core of pikemen, 3-5 rows of musketeers were simply placed. In addition, smaller squares, also made of musketeers, were formed at the corners of the formation. The musketeers

loaded and fired under the protection of the long lances and could retreat into the interior of the formation if necessary.

The pikemen usually wore a breastplate with short leg pockets, as well as an open helmet as protective equipment. This offered a certain degree of protection against cutting and stabbing weapons, but as a pressed mass-produced item made of sheet steel, it was not bullet-proof. For close combat, the pikemen were armed with sword or rapier, dagger and increasingly with pistols. The musketeers largely dispensed with protective equipment in favour of better mobility; only an iron hat cross was worn under the hat as a more or less poor substitute for a helmet. The muskets initially weighed up to 7.5 kg and therefore had to be supported on an iron fork to fire. The muzzle-loaders fired bullets up to 20 mm in diameter. The effective range was at most 100 m, after which the effect of the bullets diminished considerably. Since the barrels were smooth bored for faster loading and had a larger diameter than the bullets fired from them, the accuracy of muskets was not good. Beyond 75 metres, at best every second bullet found its target. Since the musketeers did not fire at individual soldiers in battle, but at larger, densely stacked formations and thus at large targets, accuracy did not play a major role. The armament for close combat corresponded to that of the pikemen. In the course of time, as firearms improved, their importance increased and the numerical

Figure 25

Cavalry attack two large tercios as a "caracole".The musketeers of the tercios engage in firefights with the cavalry units filing past them. After firing their rider's pistols, the musketeers of the tercios turn left and gather for the next attack.

ratio of musketeers to pikemen grew; at the beginning of the war it was about even.

Although such a tercio was rather defensive by basic design, the force of its many hundreds of men could also make it very effective when attacking another such formation, especially if the enemy formation was already weakened by musketeer fire or cavalry charges. In battle, tercios were placed in 2-3 rows on gap, like a chessboard. This allowed each formation to operate independently and come to the aid of other tercios when needed, or to fill gaps that had been created. Cavalry advancing into such a formation of tercios was exposed to fire from several sides at once.

Figure 9

Soldiers of the 30 Years' War. This painting brings together the most important types of soldiers in the 30 Years' War. From left to right. The rider on the pinto is an arquebus rider and thus belongs to the light cavalry. The other two riders belong to a cuirassier unit; one is armed with a lance, the other carries the typical rider's pistols in the holsters on either side of the saddle. On the right side of the picture, a musketeer in the typical equipment with 12-apostle bandolier, musket and rapier sword, as well as a pikeman with his 3-5m lance over his shoulder, protected by helmet and upper body armour, stroll along.

One can imagine that it was not easy to move such a complex formation of many hundreds to thousands of men in a coordinated manner without the formation getting attackable gaps or disintegrating altogether. If just one man stumbled, he could drag many others with his lance. The terrain therefore played a major role in the deployment; on steeper slopes, over obstacles or on difficult ground, this formation could de facto not be used for an attack or retreat.

In order to be able to fight in such a formation at all, it was therefore necessary for the individual to first perfectly master the use of his weapon. According to Johann Jacobi from Wallhausen's "Kriegskunst zu Fuß" (Art of War on Foot), published in 1615, the correct handling of the pike, which could be up to 5 m long, required 33 individual steps, that of a matchlock musket even 43. Even with daily practice, it took months of training to master the handling of it

Figure 10

Exercise manual for pikemen. The graphic shows a small part of the manoeuvres a pikeman had to master with his main weapon, a 3-5m lance. There were several textbooks for infantry training available at the time.

safely in battle. To be able to do this in the formation for defence and attack required further, permanent training. Setting up the tercios alone could take half an hour or more, even for trained units. In addition, the orders, trumpet, drum and flag signals of the officers, musicians and flag bearers placed in the middle of the tercios had to become second nature to the soldiers so that they could obey them without thinking, even in stressful combat situations. That is why the soldiers were drilled by their sergeants on the parade ground whenever the army was not marching.

The newly recruited men in Christian from Brunswick's army simply did not have time for this drill. Added to this was their lack of combat experience. A certain number of the men may have already been in battle, but for the most part not with their current regiments, and they had not yet fought together and did not know to what extent they could rely on each other.

The war-experienced colonels of the Brunswick army were only too aware of all this and therefore tried to bring plans to the attention of their youthfully enthusiastic warlord that did not amount to an early confrontation with well-trained troops. In addition, Frederick and Mansfeld pressed for a quick unification because they wanted to bring about a decision in the Lower Palatinate. A direct route there would have led through the Protestant Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel. Its ruler, Moritz, had been behaving very ambivalently for some time. On the one hand, he admired Christian of Brunswick, calling him a "Teutonic hero", but on the other hand he did not want to take sides prematurely before it was clear who would have the upper hand. Landgrave Moritz had assembled and recruited quite a large army with which he marched through his county. A march through Hesse-Kassel would have kept the Brunswick column within reach of Anholt's troops. Anholt would certainly not have let this opportunity to attack pass. So the decision was made to cross the Weser at Höxter and move in the direction of the Eichsfeld exclave belonging to Kurmainz. This left all options open for the time being - directly into the Electoral Palatinate, into the bishoprics of Upper Main or into Bohemia.

The troops, with their armoury, which lay in various towns in Westphalia, were ordered to assemble at Höxter in mid-May 1622. This redeployment lasted several days and did not go unnoticed by the enemy. Up to that point, the Imperial League troops had tried to drive the units, which were spread far and wide across the country, out of their fortified places, which was a laborious business. The departure, however, offered Anholt the opportunity

to decisively weaken or even crush the assembled army of the Brunswick. He was determined to seize this opportunity, especially since he estimated the combat value of the Brunswick army to be similarly low as Christian's own colonels. Anholt immediately sent cavalry units ahead to disrupt the withdrawal. Several smaller skirmishes ensued, but they did not decisively slow down the withdrawal. Anholt himself waited impatiently with about 8,000 men for the announced reinforcement by Spanish troops under Commissar General Ochoja to attack Christian from Brunswick's army before crossing the Weser. The meeting point was arranged halfway between Paderborn and Höxter for noon on 19 May.

In the meantime, the Brunswick army and train gathered in front of Höxter. Their troop strength at this time was probably about 18-20,000 men. If the leadership of the Brunswick army had had even a little confidence in the striking power of their army at this point, this would have been a good opportunity to confront Anholt's vastly outnumbered troops in order to decisively weaken the imperial forces, at least in Westphalia. Instead, the Brunswickers did everything they could to cross the Weser as quickly as possible to avoid a confrontation.

The town of Höxter belonged to the Duchy of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel and was therefore subject to Duke Friedrich Ulrich, the brother of Christian from Brunswick. The latter continued to strongly disapprove of his brother's actions and did everything in his power to prevent Christian's army from entering his territory. There was indeed a bridge over the Weser in Höxter, but it was not suitable for crossing with an army. Therefore, a ship's bridge was to be built. The construction of ship or barrel bridges was a common means at that time to be able to cross larger flowing waters with troops. To do this, barges were lashed together sideways at regular intervals, fastened to the two banks and with anchors in the river, and beams were laid across them. A roadway was then laid on top of these with planks. In some cases, the barges, beams and planks necessary for this were even carried by the armies in their baggage train, in order to be independent of their availability on the ground.

This was not the case with Christian from Brunswick's still brand-new army, so the necessary material had to be procured locally. To prevent the construction of a ship’s bridge, the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel ordered all ships on the Weser to be destroyed. However, in view of Christian's army encamped directly in front of his city and the reputation that preceded it, the local commander decided not to listen to his duke for once in this case and

immediately provided the necessary material. With regard to the further course of the campaign, the rapid construction of a solid ship's bridge for a large army near Höxter is interesting in that it shows that there was someone in the Brunswick army who was familiar with its construction and had an appropriate team of pioneers at his disposal. Colonel Knyphausen was commissioned to build the bridge, and he was also to play a leading role in the further course of the undertaking.

His full name was Dodo from Innhausen und Knyphausen, and he was born in Lütetsburg in East Frisia in 1583. In 1602, at the age of 19, he began his military career in Dutch service. He was apparently a real natural, for he rose to the rank of general of the artillery in just a few years under governor Moritz of Orange. He cured a wound in his East Frisian homeland, where he assumed public office in 1607 and married richly in 1610. The fortune of his wife Anna from Schade enabled him to establish himself as an independent war

Figure 11

Ship bridge over a small river. The construction of ship bridges to cross rivers with an army was everyday life in the 30 Years' War. In most armies of the time, there were officers and pioneer units that could build such a bridge in a few days or even hours - if the appropriate material was available.

contractor from 1615. However, compared to the big names in the business such as Wallenstein, who provided the emperor with entire armies, or Mansfeld, he was rather a small fish. For all his profit orientation, Knyphausen was not completely arbitrary in his choice of dominions he served, but confined himself to the Protestant side throughout his life. At first he served as colonel of a regiment, i.e. leader of a unit of about 3,000 men, for the Hanseatic cities in their struggle against the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. At the outbreak of the Bohemian-Kurpfalz War, he entered the service of the Winter King and represented his interests in northern Germany. From 1620 onwards, he served in his own battle-hardened regiment in the army of Christian of Brunswick. The fact that he had previously fought on behalf of the Hanseatic League against the father of his new employer apparently did not bother either of them. He and his men quickly became indispensable as one of the few trained, battle-hardened units.

The ship's bridge was completed on 19 May and work immediately began on moving the troops to the other side. The artillery and parts of the infantry followed on the same day. The crossing progressed agonisingly slowly because only a few teams, troops and wagons could cross the bridge at a time so as not to overload the structure. Meanwhile, Anholt waited for the Spaniards at the agreed meeting point. But it was noon and the Spaniards did not come. Instead of immediately joining the pursuit as requested, Ochoja had first tried to retake Soest. When they finally arrived at the agreed meeting point on the evening of 19 May, it was too late to continue the pursuit that day because it would soon have become too dark.

The crossing of the Weser by the Brunswick troops continued during the night. The next morning, only a few infantry units and large parts of the cavalry were left on the western bank of the Weser. Christian from Brunswick quartered a few companies of cavalry in Brakel, a few kilometres to the southwest. He set off at daybreak in the direction of the bridge - not a minute too late, for at 8 a.m. the first Imperial League cavalry units were already coming through the village. Anholt had sent them in pursuit with the first light of day and followed with the bulk of the army in quick march. Shortly after Brakel, the first pursuing horsemen met Christian's rearguard and began to engage them in skirmishes. Parts of the Brunswick cavalry turned back and drove the attackers back to Brakel. This gave the majority of the Brunswick units still on the west bank of the Weser the opportunity to retreat across the bridge. In the meantime, the main body of the Imperial League units had passed through Brakel in the late afternoon and towards evening began to attack the fortified

bridgehead on the left bank of the Weser. This was manned by horsemen of Carpzow's regiment. After they had repelled Anholt's first attack, they took advantage of the falling darkness to render the ship's bridge useless. This required nothing more than cutting the ropes on the western side, so that the bridge, now only tied on the far bank, was driven by the current to the eastern bank. The soldiers themselves crossed the Weser by swimming on the back of their horses.

Anholt seethed at the missed opportunity and also wanted to cross immediately to continue the persecution. But Ochoja, whose orders were limited to the liberation of the Catholic monasteries in Westphalia, refused. It was no use, Anholt had to accept that Christian of Brunswick's army had for the time being managed to escape by the skin of its teeth.

Tilly's Dispositions

While the Imperial League troops were recovering from the victory at Wimpfen on 6 May 1622 over the army of the Margrave of Baden-Durlach, Tilly's army command was bustling with activity. After the hard-fought victory had stabilised the situation for the imperial party, further measures for the conquest of the Lower Palatinate could now be planned. Tilly still hoped that Anholt and the imperial troops from the Spanish Netherlands could prevent the departure of Christian from Brunswick's army. For this reason, he initially turned his attention back to Mansfeld.

After the separation of the Protestant armies, the latter had turned to Ladenburg in order to conquer the city, which was occupied by a Spanish garrison, and succeeded in doing so on 8 May. Thereupon Mansfeld marched with the main force of his army to the left side of the Rhine to turn against the Spanish Rhine bridge at Gernsheim. Since this bridge was absolutely necessary for the unhindered passage of the Spanish troops across the Rhine from their base camp at Oppenheim and thus for their intervention on the battlefields on the right bank of the Rhine, it played a central role in the strategic considerations of the Imperial League's army command. Consequently, Tilly returned to the Bergstrasse with a strong contingent on 11 May and thus threatened to stab Mansfeld in the back. Mansfeld was therefore forced to abandon his enterprise and retreated back to Worms.

The Hare-and-Hedgehog strategy of the Imperial League's army command, to keep Mansfeld's army on the move by constant pinpricks and changing threats from three sides, worked. The Electoral Palatine Hare did have the advantage of the inner line, i.e. the shorter connections, but what use was that if the Imperial-League Hedgehog was always there first? In addition, the supply situation for the Electoral Palatinate army became increasingly precarious. The

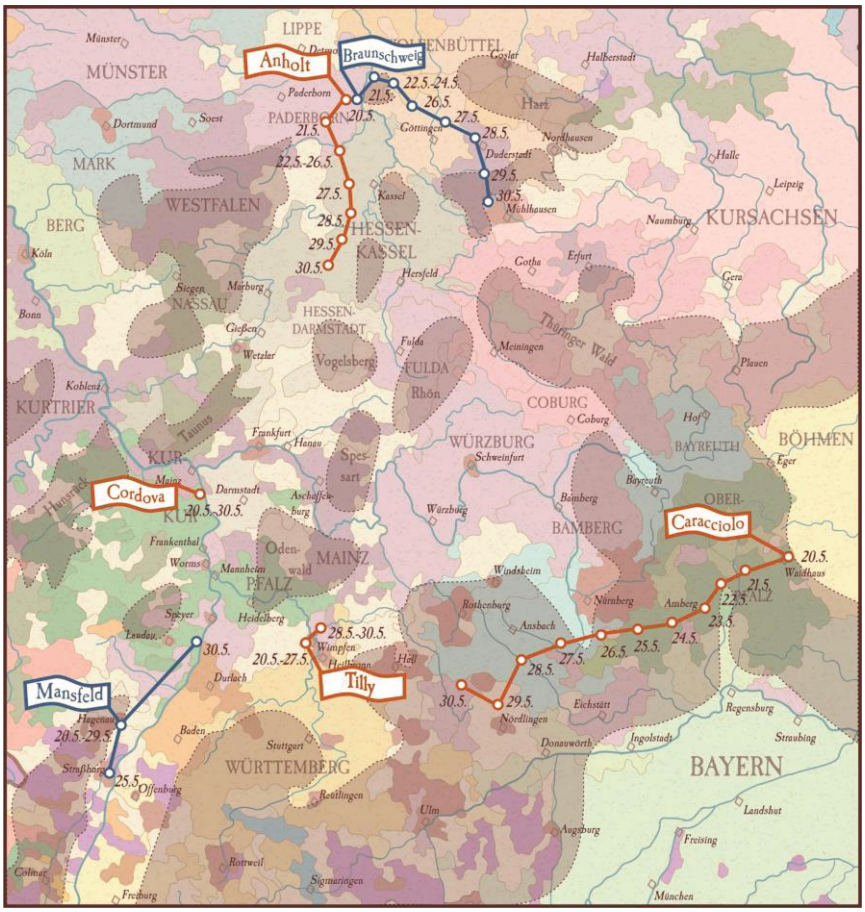


Figure 12

Operations of the war parties after Christian of Brunswick crossed the Weser on 20th May until the end of the month. Christian of Brunswick moved slowly in the direction of the Kurmainz Eichsfeld with its main town Duderstadt. Anholt allowed himself and his soldiers a few days' rest in Warburg and then set off for Aschaffenburg. Mansfeld plundered Alsace. Tilly's and Cordova's troops recuperated in the camps at Wimpfen and Oppenheim. The contingent led by Caracciolo marched through the Upper Palatinate to meet up with a Bavarian unit at Fremdingen.

large Electoral Palatine field army had now been in constant action in the Lower Palatinate for several months, so that the reserves of the countryside were slowly being depleted. Although, after the experience of Mingolsheim, Tilly still considered the Mansfeld army too strong to attack directly, if they pushed the game a little further, it was foreseeable that the constant attrition would have an effect. It was in this situation that news reached Mansfeld from lower Alsace that Hagenau, his retreat in the principality newly bestowed upon him, was about to fall. Archduke Leopold, in line with the overall imperial-ligist strategy, had used Mansfeld's involvement in the Lower Palatinate theatre of war to recapture the lost Habsburg territories in Alsace.

Mansfeld set off from Worms on 14 May to march to Hagenau. In doing so, he caught the imperial troops on the wrong foot. A determined attack by two regiments of the mounted Electoral Palatinate vanguard was enough to put the Archduke's troops to flight. The Archduke Leopold had to break off the siege and retreated southwards on 17th June. A vigorous pursuit over the next two days almost completely wiped out the Archduke's army. Mansfeld seized the opportunity of his presence in Alsace with a victorious army at his back and on 19.5 demanded considerable contributions in kind from the free imperial city of Strasbourg, as well as 200,000 Reichstaler. He did this under the pretext that Strasbourg had supported the Archduke. The support of an imperial commissioner by an imperial city directly subordinate to the emperor against a would-be prince officially subject to imperial banishment had been perfectly legitimate, but with 15,000 men under arms outside the city, the council did not want to start an in-depth constitutional discussion. So they supplied provisions for a few days and explained that they first had to make so much money liquid. The Strasbourg city fathers were quite right to assume that events would soon call Mansfeld and his army back to the Lower Palatinate. In fact, Mansfeld had his new subjects in Hagenau pay homage to him as prince and returned to the lower Neckar on 23 May. There was never any more talk of the money.

In the meantime, news had reached Tilly of Anholt's unsuccessful interception and Christian from Brunswick's escape across the Weser. It now had to be seriously expected that this army would either push into the Lower Palatinate to the direct relief of Frederick and Mansfeld, or move via the territories of the Bishop of Würzburg and Bamberg into the Upper Palatinate or even further into Bavaria or Bohemia. Both had to be prevented at all costs. Tilly did not believe in a move through Saxony to Bohemia, for he did not instruct Anholt to support the Saxon elector.

Instead, Tilly, in consultation with his warlord Duke Maximilian, set in motion a truly large-scale operation. First, Anholt in Warburg, where his troops were recovering from the forced marches in pursuit of the Brunswick Armada of the previous days, received instructions on 25 May to proceed immediately by direct route to Aschaffenburg. Anholt's contingent, consisting of 32 companies of horsemen with about 3200 men and 12 ensigns of infantry in the same strength with 2 field pieces set out on 27th May. A direct route inevitably had to lead through the territory of the Landgrave Moritz of Hesse-Kassel, who was lobbing between the parties. Although he had raised an army that could have stopped Anholt's troops, he allowed them to pass through unhindered.

Since Ferdinand's military mop-up operations after the Bohemian uprising were largely over, the troops of the imperial forces stationed there were freed up for the war in the west of the empire. At the beginning of May, a train of several smaller units of Walloons, Neapolitans, Germans and Lorraine with a total of 6700 men had started moving in Bohemia under the Neapolitan Maestro del Campo General Don Tommaso Caracciolo. In addition, there were 800 horsemen under the Baron d'Inchy and 10 guns. They had orders to join Cordova's army on the Rhine. They passed the Bohemian border at Waidhaus on 20th May. At about the same time as Anholt, Caracciolo received Tilly's directive to first unite with a Bavarian contingent under Herbersdorf and then move to Würzburg in order to be able to prevent the Brunswick army from invading from the north if necessary. These instructions were delivered to him by the newly appointed Commissar General Hans Christoph from Ruepp, a close associate of Tilly. The war commissars were an innovation introduced by Maximilian in the Ligist army. Their task was to establish something like an orderly military administration and logistics, and thus to bring army expenditure under sovereign control. This also meant that, although they were under military command and worked for it, they reported directly to Maximilian and thus also controlled the military leadership, at least indirectly.

Caracciolo initially insisted on his order to join Cordova on the Rhine, which he had received from the Infanta Isabella. As a fifty-year-old field marshal in the service of the Spanish crown, he did not want to obey the orders of a much younger official who was not even a commissioned officer. It took Ruepp several hours to convince him that Tilly was in supreme command of all the imperial troops and that, if he followed his instructions, he would also be acting entirely in accordance with the wishes of his regent. So he finally resigned himself to his fate and set off for the agreed rendezvous point with the Bavarian reinforcements, which he met at Fremdingen on 29 May.

Christian in the Eichsfeld

After Christian of Brunswick's army had happily left its pursuers behind by its successful last-minute crossing of the Weser, it turned south-east towards the Kurmainz's exclave of the Eichsfeld in present-day Thuringia. The size of his army at this point is estimated to have consisted of 82 companies of cavalry with about 8,000 men and over 12,000 infantry and very little artillery. Over the next few days, more freshly recruited troops joined the army. In fact, however, the army, like any of the 17th century, was much larger.

An essential part of warfare in the 17th century was the redeployment of armies. This involved moving enormous quantities of men and material, which required masterful logistics. For this reason, the number of troops actually on the move is at best only half the truth, because a functioning army at that time included many more personnel, the so-called "Tross" or baggage train.

Figure 30

The train of an army in the 30 Years' War. In addition to the soldiers and technical personnel, at least as many civilians usually travelled with the armies: the soldiers' families, sutlers, whores, musicians and many more.

The troop consisted of the charioteers, grooms, craftsmen such as blacksmiths and carpenters, as well as cooks and field shepherds, all of whom were necessary for the army to function. In addition, there were the families of the soldiers and officers and their staff, as well as merchants and innkeepers. In addition, there were musicians, prostitutes and other characters who hoped to gain protection and profit from the military campaign. Therefore, at least as many people travelled along in the train as in the fighting troop. The equipment and baggage were transported on hundreds of baggage wagons, most of which were pulled by at least one draft animal. These wagons were not standardised; there were two- and four-wheeled, two-horse, three-horse and four-horse, open, closed, covered wagons.

It can therefore be assumed that the Brunswick army train comprised more than 40,000 people, over a thousand wagons and up to 20,000 mounts and draught animals such as horses, mules, donkeys and oxen. In addition, there were the cattle for slaughter, at best bought, but mostly requisitioned or found "ownerless", which were looked after by specially hired cattle herders. In order to be able to classify these figures, one must bear in mind that Frankfurt am Main, one of the larger cities in the empire, had about half as many inhabitants at that time. Since the supply of the Brunswick army was not regulated, they lived off the land, i.e. they requisitioned food and fodder for the animals from the rural population, which had to give it up more or less voluntarily. The constant movement of the armies was therefore not only due to the military situation, but was often simply a necessity in the search for sufficient food for people and animals. According to the letters of the articles, an ordinary soldier was entitled to about one kilogram of bread, one pound of meat and three litres of light beer, while the higher ranks, who had to help feed their servants, were entitled to many times that amount. The hard-working draught animals and cavalry horses also devoured enormous quantities of fresh fodder, hay and oats every day. Those not enlisted in the company rolls had to see where they got their food. Therefore, it was often this group that the civilian population suffered most from. The fourier officers responsible for feeding the troops thus had to raise at least 20 tons of bread, 10,000 kg of meat corresponding to a choice of about 500 sheep, 100 pigs or 30 cows and 600 hectolitres of beer for the Brunswick army every day. This was not always possible, so that the troops often suffered from hunger due to the high physical strain of marches, entrenchment work, drills and battles. This led to a bad mood, which erupted in violence against the civilian population, but also within the troops. On top of that, the men's health suffered in the long run. Since agriculture in the 17th

century, also as a result of the Little Ice Age, produced only few surpluses, the passage of an army not only triggered the economic ruin of a region due to its enormous demand for food, but often brought starvation directly to it. Where armies had passed through, often literally no grass grew.

The main occupation of a soldier in the 30 Years' War was therefore marching. Through the preserved diary of the mercenary Peter Hagendorf it is known that in 22 years of service he covered more than 25,000 km, i.e. on average more than 1000 km per year on foot. There is no reason to assume that he was an exception in this respect; as a soldier you got around very far.

A day of marching started very early for the army and the troop. The bugle sounded an hour before sunrise. Since the departure was to take place with the rising of the sun, there was not much time, at least for the vanguard, to get ready, to take down the bivouac tents if necessary, to load the wagons and to form up in ranks. With the rising of the sun, the vanguard set out. Depending on the officers' knowledge of the area, local guides were recruited to lead the way. If obstacles were to be expected, the bridge master and his assistants were also represented at the front of the platoon to level paths, reinforce bridges and remove obstacles if necessary. Depending on the situation, the light cavalry was sent out in small squads to the front and the flanks as a cavalry screen to

Figure 31

Army on the march. The units marched together in loose order. In the middle of the procession was the train with its hundreds of wagons.

scout out the location of enemy or allied formations and thus prevent unpleasant surprises.

Then followed the main body of troops, marching separately according to their units. The units marched together in loose order. In the middle of the procession was the train with its hundreds of wagons. This was also subject to military command and was commanded by a special officer, the general wagon master. He was supported by a kind of military police, the profosses, who enforced order in the train, if necessary by using force. All civilian personnel also walked alongside the wagons in this section of the army train. Behind the actual train came the artillery. Depending on their size, each of the guns, weighing up to two tons, was pulled by up to eight horses. Bullets, cartridge ammunition and powder were transported separately on other wagons. In addition, there were wagons with spare carriages and the necessary technical equipment. Up to a dozen teams were necessary per gun, with drivers and grooms. Together with the operators, there were at least 20-30 soldiers per gun. Since the guns were a preferred target during transport due to their low mobility, the danger of the powder charges and thus their high vulnerability, they were guarded by a detachment of particularly reliable musketeers during the march. The last to arrive was the rearguard, whose strength and composition depended on the respective threat situation. In any case, this marching position behind the column was not very desirable; if one was not exposed to the swirling dust of the units marching ahead, as in summer, one had to fight through the bottomless mud of the largely unpaved roads churned up by thousands of hooves and feet in the other seasons.

An army march could stretch for several kilometres. It was often the case that the last units had not yet left the night camp when the advance units arrived at the next camp. Average marches of 5-10 km per day for an army with a full train were the rule. In an emergency this could be increased up to two or three times, but not for more than a few days. Even with normal marching performance, the army had to take a rest day or two every few days.

An army on the march also rarely spent the night together in one place. Rather, the quartermasters, i.e. the officers responsible for the quarters, often assigned them whole areas of land as quarters, whereby the units were then assigned to individual places which they had to supply. Who had to go where was instructed by the quartermaster, usually of the rank of captain, who was directly subordinate to the regiment's colonel. He worked closely with the

other officers responsible for logistics, the Provisions Master, the Profoss and the Master of Guard.

An army in this period was absolutely dependent on the existence of reasonably good roads to get from one place to another. It is true that the cavalry and, if need be, the foot troops could make progress off the roads, albeit slowly. But this was impossible for the artillery and the train. But this also explains why one could not simply avoid an approaching enemy, or where one could expect an enemy army with some certainty and where not.

The advance of Christian's army towards the Eichsfeld through the territory of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel was spread out over various roads, as no threat was expected here and the Eichsfeld was to be reached as quickly as possible. The very day after the crossing of the Weser, Christian from Brunswick made demands for contribution from Holzminden to the Eichsfeld. The reason he gave was the Eichsfeld's participation in the destruction of his troops in the autumn of the previous year. As already reported, this destruction had indeed taken place near Gandern in the territory of the Eichsfeld, but the troops of his brother and his relatives from Celle had played the major part in it. However, this did not prevent Christian of Brunswick from demanding the enormous sum of 150,000 Reichstaler - for the "*avoidance of fire and sword*", which he "*undeterrably would let take effect*" in case of refusal. This sum corresponded roughly to the entire budget of a town like Paderborn with its 4-5000 inhabitants - for 30 years. Obviously the officials of Kurmainz were not overly impressed by the threat, for they began to haggle over the amount. After several days of tough bargaining, they had negotiated the sum down to 100,000 Reichstaler, 20,000 payable immediately, the remaining 80,000 in two months. Just like the councillors of Strasbourg, the officials were obviously counting on the fact that the army would certainly not be on their doorstep anymore by then, in order to lend weight to their demands. But because

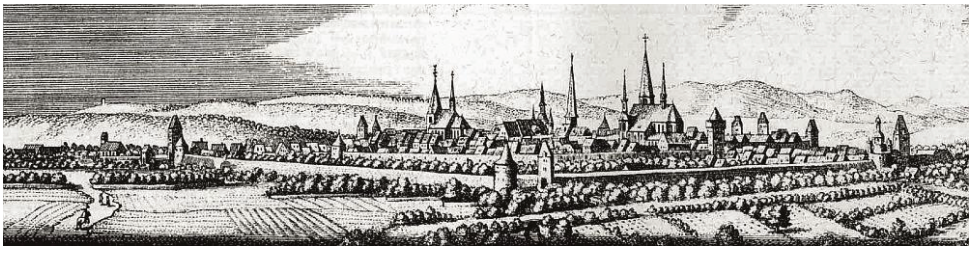


Figure 32

Duderstadt, capital of the Kurmainz exclave of Eichsfeld in western Thuringia.

Christian from Brunswick was already in swing with utopian demands, he asked 200,000 Reichstaler from Mühlhausen, which was under the protection of the Elector of Saxony, otherwise he would take up quarters there.

Meanwhile, Christian of Brunswick was in no hurry to join his allies. Despite further urgent orders from Frederick and Mansfeld, he left his troops in the vicinity of Katlenburg until 29th May. Through further influx and local advertising, these had swelled to 22,000 men in the meantime. This mass of troops near his border worried the Saxon Elector Moritz, especially as he had heard rumours of a planned passage through Saxony. Only, the bulk of his troops were still tied up in Lusatia and on the Saxon-Moravian border, where they were helping to crush the remnants of the Bohemian uprising. He therefore activated about 10,000 men of the Saxon committee, which was considered the best in the empire after the Bavarian one, and went himself to Langensalza. Since the free imperial city of Mühlhausen also sought his protection, he chose its *Landwehr* as a defensive position. Many free imperial cities had built such defences to protect their territory. They consisted of ramparts and ditches and were often protected by dense hedges of beech, hornbeam and brambles. Such land defences made it difficult for bands of robbers to approach unnoticed or to escape. The country roads leading through them were often secured at the breakthroughs with lookouts, small fortifications with redoubts, barriers and a tower.

The Mühlhausen Landwehr drew up in a semicircle along the border and leaned against the Hainich hills on one side. Moritz placed infantry at the waiting posts and stationed the cavalry and the rest of the infantry in the centre of the semicircle in order to be able to quickly supply reinforcements to any threatened position. Despite these sensible measures, it was questionable how long the defence could have withstood a determined attack by the Brunswickers. Elector Moritz was aware of the low military value of the troops at his disposal - one of his muster officers, for example, reported that a "*... part of the village horses and their horsemen is thus constituted that such Your Electoral Mercy might have had a good laugh on a merry carnival*". For this reason, he sent for "proper" troops, which, however, took several days to reach the far west from the east of the country.

On 29 May, the Brunswick army entered the Eichsfeld. This exclave of Kurmainz was a typical low mountain landscape as can be found in large parts of Germany to the present day with villages between fields and wooded hilltops in the west of present-day Thuringia. Since the 11th century, the

archbishops of Mainz had possessions there, which were expanded over the centuries through acquisitions. By the beginning of the 17th century, after the Reformation, the area had been largely re-Catholicised by the Jesuits and was fully integrated into the Kurmainz electoral administrative structures.

The Brunswick troops were widely distributed throughout the area, and the headquarters were established in Seeburg. Since many inhabitants had fled into the forests before the quarterings, it was easy for the soldiers to thoroughly loot their houses. Whatever horses and livestock were found were stolen. Anyone who resisted was maltreated or shot on the spot. The Kurmainz officials of the Eichsfeld offered passive resistance by at least hiding the supplies of weapons and ammunition. The army did not move on until 3th June, leaving behind a largely destroyed country.

In the Eichsfeld, Christian from Brunswick's bold plan to move through Saxony directly to Bohemia was finally buried. On the one hand, the Brunswick army command did not even trust its troops to successfully confront the Saxon committee troops, let alone fight the advancing regular units; on the other hand, the calls from the Lower Palatinate for a rapid move became increasingly urgent. On 4th June. the army left the Eichsfeld under great precautions against a Saxon flank attack. Christian of Brunswick had apparently come to terms with the new realities only reluctantly, for as soon as he was out of reach of the Saxons he grumbled that he would have "*given 5000 ducats for it if the Elector of Saxony had declared himself an enemy*".

The occupation of Darmstadt

The situation of the Electoral Palatinate army in the Lower Palatinate became increasingly precarious at the end of May. The land could no longer feed the troops for much longer. The Lower Palatinate was surrounded on three sides by Imperial League troops and, as the last months had shown, every action of the Electoral Palatinate army against one of these positions ended with the units not attacked threatening to stab them in the back or cutting off their retreat routes. The only way out of this dilemma was to quickly unite with the army of Christian of Brunswick, who, however, was still plundering in Thuringia and did not seem to respond to the increasingly urgent calls to finally move into the Palatinate as quickly as possible. Frederick and Mansfeld therefore decided to seek their salvation in the only direction where there were no enemy troops, the Landgraviate of Hesse-Darmstadt in the north of the Lower Palatinate. This promised to solve two problems at once: since the Landgraviate had so far been spared the war, the troops could be supplied there and more provisions could be requisitioned. On the other hand, by conquering a firm place along the Main, they hoped to enable Christian from Brunswick's army to cross the river without danger. The only problem was that the Lutheran Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt, Ludwig V, had not openly taken up arms against the Lower Palatinate and an invasion could therefore not be easily justified according to the rules of "just war". One might think that the two of them did not care about such niceties by now, and for Mansfeld that was certainly true. But Frederick, if he wanted to keep at least his hereditary

Figure 33

View of Darmstadt. Residence of Landgrave Ludwig V "the Faithful".

lands, was dependent on the goodwill of his peers, but also of the public. That is why he tried to justify his actions by carefully formulated accusations and demands to Landgrave Ludwig V of Hesse-Darmstadt, which were also immediately published throughout the empire. Ludwig V was indeed officially neutral, but his interests and sympathies were with the order of the Empire and thus with the rightful Emperor. That he therefore supported the armies of Cordova and Tilly in every way except with his own troops was an open secret. Moreover, in the spring he had entered into the aforementioned protective alliance against marauders with some of his neighbouring princes, including the Archbishop of Mainz, which was directed not least against roving Palatine patrols. As a culmination of this barely veiled opposition, he had tried behind Frederick's back to persuade the Heidelberg councillors to surrender fixed places to Tilly. The Palatine-Mansfeld army command thus already had reasons to suspect Ludwig V of a certain hostility.

On 2 June, Mansfeld and Frederick therefore invaded the Landgraviate from Speyer with an army of 12,000 foot soldiers, 4,000 horsemen and 12 cannons and occupied Darmstadt. They disarmed the guards of the castle and Frederick quartered himself there with his retinue. The landgrave was now a de facto prisoner in his own castle. Mansfeld, who was already suffering from health problems when he left Mannheim, lodged in the town hall. Meanwhile, the troops roamed the countryside and plundered right up to the city walls of Frankfurt-Sachsenhausen, the district south of the Main.

Over the next few days, the Electoral Palatinate army command made exorbitant demands for tribute to the landgrave in "negotiations". They also demanded the immediate surrender of the fortress of Rüsselsheim. This strong fortress was located on the Main and would have been an ideal crossing point for Christian from Brunswick's army. Under the protection of the 73 fortress cannons, any attack on the crossing army would have been doomed to failure. Louis V bravely resisted any such demands, while Frederick took no part in these negotiations, preferring to dine lavishly at the landgrave's expense and play badminton in the palace garden as compensation. On 5th June, the situation came to a head when the Elector Palatines demanded one of the Landgrave's sons, Johann, as a hostage.

The landgrave conferred with his councillors in dismay and decided to flee at the next opportunity. And that opportunity came immediately. The Margrave of Baden-Durlach Georg-Friedrich had scraped together the scattered remnants of his army after his heavy defeat at Wimpfen a month before and

arrived in Darmstadt on the evening of 5 June with 6,000 infantrymen, 1,200 horsemen and eight pieces. The quartering and provisioning of the arriving troops and the merry reunion with their allies kept the officers of the Electoral Palatinate so busy that they did not notice the Landgrave's preparations for flight. At midnight, the Landgrave, accompanied by his threatened son and a valet, left the castle in inconspicuous dark clothing. In the tanner's quarter of the town they dived through the city wall under the barrier of the Darmbach outlet. This must have been a very disgusting affair, for it was not for nothing that tanners always settled as far downstream as possible in settlements, as they polluted the water with the fat and meat residues of the hides and the leather tanning materials like urine. The fugitives happily made their way out of the town and set off on foot towards the fortress of Rüsselsheim.

But they did not get far. When the landgrave, already 45 but fit from hunting, wanted to climb over a fence near Büttelborn, a patrolling Baden horseman became aware of the noise and arrested the landgrave and his son, thinking they were looters. The valet managed to escape. The horseman took his prisoners to his officer, Duke Magnus of Württemberg, to whom they revealed their identities. The escape had failed.

The next day, the landgrave was officially captured. This move against a formally neutral imperial prince cost Frederick further sympathy among his colleagues and in the press. Mansfeld, who was already unwell when he left the Electoral Palatinate, was now seriously ill. It is not clear whether this mysterious illness was an acute attack of gout or even a stroke; in any case, he had to be supported and carried one arm in a sling. Whether Mansfeld was unable to think clearly due to the illness, his officers or Frederick had taken command is unclear; in any case, the Electoral Palatinate army command made some questionable and almost fatal decisions over the next few days.

In the meantime, Tilly's dispositions to rally the League imperial troops were almost complete. Anholt's group had moved directly through Upper Hesse and the Wetterau past Friedberg via Hanau to Aschaffenburg, the pivot of Tilly's strategy. From here, Tilly could easily reach the Rhine-Main plain via the city's well-protected bridge, move into the Wetterau , which at this time included the entire North Main plain from Hanau to Mainz, on the north side protected from flank attacks by the Main or support Caracciolo with a march across the Spessart if Christian from Brunswick, coming from Fulda, moved along the route of today's A7 or A71 towards Würzburg.

The skirmish on the Lorsch Heath

By crossing the Wetterau in front of Christian from Brunswick, Anholt's corps had overtaken the Brunswick army. It stood ready in Kahl am Main from 4th June. Meanwhile, Caracciolo's group had met the Bavarian reinforcements under Herbersdorf in Fremdingen and moved north with them as ordered. Shortly before Würzburg, the two groups separated again, Herbersdorf moving west to join Tilly in Armorbach, while Caracciolo reached the city on 5th June. If you trace the marching movements of the two army groups, you can see that a unit without a large train could move much faster. Both the Anholt and Caracciolo groups, with their several thousand men, were able to cover an average of slightly more than 24 km per day for many days in a row; the daily marching distances varied between 11 and 45 km. They covered 215 km in nine days or over 500 km in a month.

As further measures, Tilly had also moved the Spanish cavalry from Oppenheim to the northern Odenwald, where they quartered in the valleys. For the time being, the Spanish infantry remained in their permanent camp on the left bank of the Rhine. He himself had moved his headquarters from Wimpfen to Armorbach. He sent his infantry to Ostheim near Aschaffenburg. He now had 18,000 men at his disposal around Aschaffenburg and in the Odenwald. This was still less than the number of troops he faced from the

Figure 34

Würzburg with the Marienberg fortress on the left bank of the Main. As member of the Catholic League, the bishop was also considered an enemy by Christian of Brunswick. The promise of rich pickings in the prosperous city certainly did not hurt this classification.

Electorate of Palatinate, but he saw himself in a better position. As long as the two Protestant armies did not unite, Tilly was confident that he could beat either of them. All the pieces of the puzzle were in place, now he was ready to seize the initiative.

Since Christian from Brunswick was still on the Werra and it would therefore in any case take several days before this army could intervene in the action, Tilly first turned against the Mansfeld army. On 6th June he went to Babenhausen and ordered the march via Dieburg to Darmstadt for the next day. At the same time, he ordered the Spanish cavalry in the north of the Odenwald to be ready for a flank attack.

The Electoral Palatinate army command was informed of these developments in fragments at best. Since the Landgrave refused to surrender Rüsselsheim and they had neither the time nor the necessary resources for a successful siege of the cannon-laden fortress, they planned to move with the entire army via Dieburg to Steinheim opposite Hanau and to establish a safe crossing of the Main for the Brunswick army there. They thus ventured directly into the range of Tilly's army. On the morning of 7th June, the army of the Electorate of Palatinate set off eastwards towards Dieburg with the captured landgrave and his son. Around noon, the army's leaders appeared in front of the city walls of the small town, which belonged to Kurmainz. A trumpeter rode in front of the city walls and demanded the immediate surrender of the city. At that time, the trumpeters of the cavalry units were often used as heralds and messengers. However, the city flatly refused to open its gates.

In the course of the day, the rest of the army arrived in front of the town. The Mansfeld army was surprised that Dieburg, well fortified but not adequately garrisoned, refused to surrender against such a superior force. It must have been clear to those in charge that the town would not be able to withstand a storm in several places at once. According to the laws of war at the time, a city that refused to surrender three times was then released for plundering by the storming army. This was because the attacking soldiers exposed themselves to particularly high dangers when storming a fortified city and many would perish. To compensate them for this risk, and probably also because they could not be controlled after such a nerve-wracking attack anyway, the looting and ill-treatment of the population was tolerated for a fixed period of time, usually one day, but in the case of a large, rich city, up to three days. Only then did the provosts, the military police of the time, attempt to restore military order and

discipline. The defenders of Dieburg thus took a high risk by refusing to surrender.

But since it was already late and tomorrow would also be a good day for looting, it was decided to postpone the attack until the next day. The army set up a bivouac camp, posted guards and cavalry patrols and went to rest. The next morning, the soldiers were preparing for the attack when scouts reported the approach of Tilly's troops from the direction of Babenhausen. At the same time, reports arrived of Spanish cavalry activity in the valleys of the Odenwald. Now it became clear to everyone why Dieburg had not simply surrendered - the garrison knew that the relief force was already approaching.

The leadership of the Electoral Palatinate had obviously not been prepared at all for an imminent confrontation with Tilly's forces; they did not even seem to have reckoned with the possibility, for they hastily ordered an immediate retreat. The army of the Electoral Palatinate just about managed to withdraw without coming into contact with the enemy. It went in the direction of Groß-Gerau to try again with Rüsselsheim. Tilly, as always very cautious and sensing a trap, was slow to follow.

Whether Mansfeld was able to participate in these decisions or not, the indecisive back and forth in any case showed signs of incipient panic. Landgrave Ludwig continued to steadfastly refuse to surrender the fortress of Rüsselsheim. As a result, Count Palatine Frederick finally lost his already not very strong nerves. He threatened to bring Landgrave Ludwig V there as a human shield to protect him from the attacking troops "*then we would see whether the cannoneers of the fortress dared to shoot at their master*". They

Figure 35

Fortress Rüsselsheim. The Hesse-Darmstadt fortress was equipped with 73 cannons and was intended by Frederick and Mansfeld as a place of passage for Christian von Braunschweig's army across the Main - if they had got their hands on the fortress.

bivouacked for the night near Groß-Gerau, but on the morning of 9th June it suddenly became clear to the Palatine army command that they had manoeuvred themselves into an extremely precarious position. Tilly was advancing from the east, the Electoral Palatinate army had the Rhine at its back near Groß-Gerau in the west and the Main with the enemy fortress of Rüsselheim on its left flank in the north. Since there was no undefended crossing point within reach across either river, these two points of the compass failed as lines of retreat. When Cordova, as requested by Tilly, started to cross the Rhine with the Spanish infantry in the south near Germersheim, Mansfeld's army was in danger of being caught between Tilly's hammer and the Spanish anvil without a way out. The hastily started retreat along the Bergstrasse, the link between Frankfurt and Heidelberg along the Odenwald, almost turned into a downright rout because the Spanish cavalry, reinforced by Bavarian cavalry units led by Tilly himself, also approached the Bergstrasse through the valleys of the Odenwald and put incessant pressure on the rearguard. The Croats in Imperial League service ferreted out stragglers and looters from the Palatine ranks and killed them.

In addition to the regular cuirassiers and arquebus cavalry, the imperial-ligist armies also included light cavalry units made up of southeastern European mercenaries who were referred to generically as Croats, Crabats or Cravats.

Figure 36

Croatian horsemen. These light cavalry troops were led on the ligist-imperial side as an independent branch of arms. Since they often acted independently of the main army and had to feed themselves, they were particularly feared by the rural population.

Armed with sabres, daggers, pistols and arquebuses, their armament was similar to that of the arquebus riders; however, they fulfilled other tasks and were led as a separate branch of arms. They were used for reconnaissance, flank protection and above all for pursuing fleeing or scattered troops. Originating in the "little war" on the Austrian military frontier against the

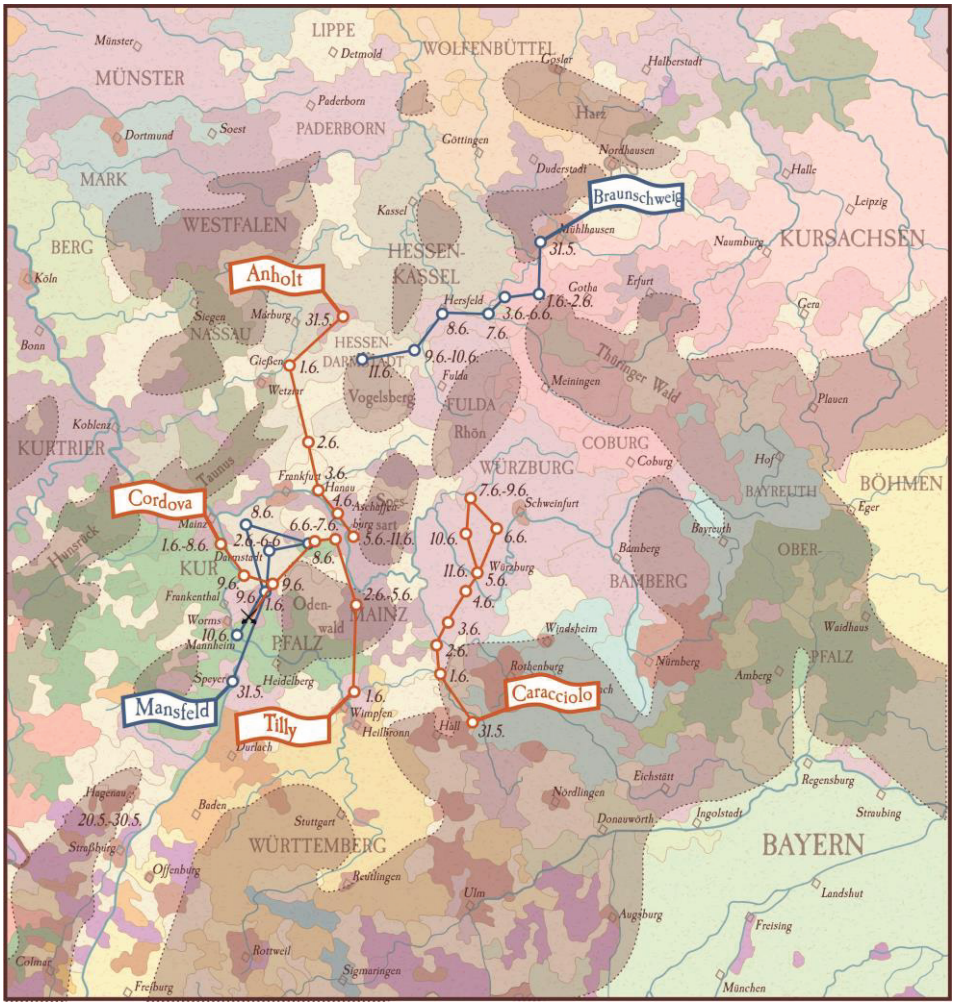


Abbildung 13

Movements of the war parties at the end of May, beginning of June 1622. The army group of Anholt was already ready for further operations in Aschaffenburg as of 5th June. Christian von Braunschweig's army moved rather leisurely through western Thuringia and Upper Hesse. Caracciolo's group, reinforced by Würzburg troops, routed Christian von Braunschweig's army passes from Thuringia into the Würzburg and Bamberg area until it became clear that he would move into the Rhine-Main area.

Ottomans, they fought both on horseback and on foot. Since they often travelled independently in small squads, it was even more difficult for the army command to monitor discipline with them than with the regular troops. Since they also had to provide for themselves on their extensive patrols, it was often these Croats through whom the rural population first came into contact with the war, and then often to their lasting detriment. Moreover, because they rarely took prisoners, but killed enemies wherever they found them, they soon gained a reputation for extreme cruelty and mercilessness. Through their tradition of wearing neckerchiefs in the colours of their commanders' coats of arms, they at least made a lasting contribution to European fashion, for this custom was adopted by other units even during the war and has survived in the form of the "cravat" to this day.

The army of the Electoral Palatinate passed the fortified border fortifications near Zwingenberg in the evening. The incursion of Frederick and Mansfeld into the Landgraviate of Hesse Darmstadt caused damage amounting to about 1 million Reichstalers. At any rate, that was the sum reported to the landgravial administration by the offices in the aftermath of the events following a comprehensive survey. The assaults, rapes, other abuses and murders, some of which are known, were not centrally recorded. For the sake of justice, it must be said that for this damage was done mainly, but not only, by the troops of the Palatine Winter King; the passing Imperial League troops also had their share.

Mansfeld left 800 musketeers under the command of a Colonel Goldstein at the border fortifications with the task of repelling the pursuing horsemen. They succeeded at first; the musketeers repulsed several attacks by the Croats, who then decided to wait for infantry to arrive. This enabled the exhausted main body of the Electoral Palatinate army to make a short night's camp between Bensheim and Lorsch during the night of 9th and 10th June.

At dusk, between 3 and 4 o'clock, the attack of the ligist infantry on Goldstein's position began. Under fire from the musketeers, their comrades filled the ditch in front of Schanze with bundles of brushwood and used ladders from the surrounding farms to climb the rampart. In view of the great superiority, Goldstein soon saw himself forced to evacuate the position and retreat with his men in the direction of the Palatine Landwehr along the Weschnitz. As soon as the barricade at the customs post was cleared, however, the Croats began their relentless pursuit. Under the pressure of the attacks, the Palatine musketeers could not maintain their order for long and thus their only hope

of getting away. The musketeers were completely routed and their leader, Colonel Goldstein, was captured wounded in the head. He was brought before Tilly to learn his fate. For according to the rules of war at that time, the commander and soldiers of a small unit could not expect to be spared after a capture if, despite being ordered to surrender, they resisted a much larger army without any prospect of success. Fortunately for him, however, Goldstein was able to produce Mansfeld's order slip, which had commanded him to do so. Tilly spared him.

The Spanish and Bavarian cavalry followed the rearguard as fast as they could, cutting down any stragglers along the way. Mansfeld, who was with the rearguard, had decided to have the crossing over the Weschnitz defended. To this end, he first had the bridge over the Weschnitz thrown down, which,

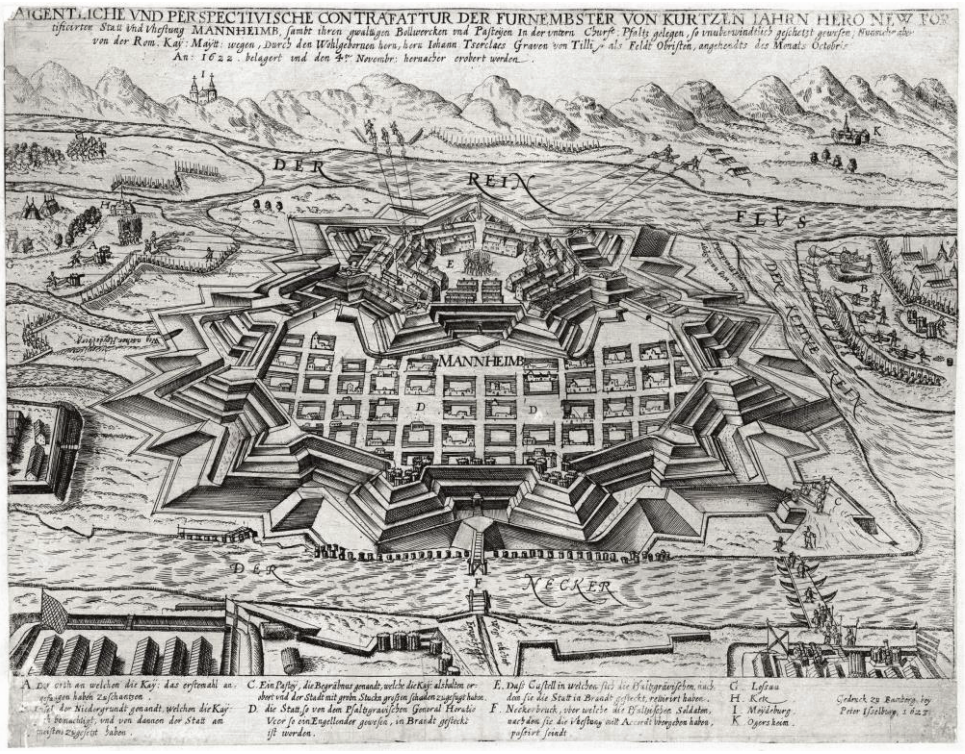


Figure 38

Fortress Mannheim. The engraving from a bird's eye view shows the planned layout of the city as a fortress at the mouth of the Neckar into the Rhine.

however, resulted in the loss of several hundred baggage wagons with loot and equipment, which could thus no longer follow. He had the infantry line up along the stream and sent his cavalry to meet the Bavarians and Spaniards. A fierce cavalry skirmish developed, in which the Imperial League units maintained the upper hand. The Electoral Palatine cavalry retreated disorderly towards Mannheim, with the Bavarians and Spaniards following. Meanwhile, the Bavarian infantry approached. So the infantry of the Electoral Palatinate rearguard found themselves cut off, the soldiers threw away their weapons and tried to take refuge in the forests and villages of the surrounding area. This was a very bad idea. The villagers, who had been harassed and exploited by one side and the other for months, seized the opportunity to take revenge on the defenceless soldiers and cut them down with scythes and flails. The rest was taken care of by the following Bavarian troops.

The Electoral Palatinate army had suffered heavy losses in men and material, while those of the Imperial League army were only slight. Exactly how many casualties there were is unknown because, as is very often the case, reports from the two camps differ greatly. Apart from obvious propagandistic motives of reporting too low or too high numbers, there could also have been another, factual reason for these systematic differences. While the victorious troops counted the enemy dead on the battlefield and, due to the lack of uniforms, could not make a distinction between killed soldiers and train personnel, the defeated side only reported the number of soldiers as casualties who did not appear at the next muster after the battle. The train personnel were not recorded in the pay roll. In any case, the battle cost the lives of at least 2,000 Electoral Palatines, and there were also dozens of dead on the Imperial League side. Even though the Kurpfälzer rearguard was almost wiped out, the main part of the Kurpfälzer army managed to retreat over the Neckar bridge under the protection of the fortress walls of Mannheim. Tilly's army could not follow them there, but did not want to, either.

For Tilly had achieved his goal for the time being on the evening of 10th June: Mansfeld's army was weakened, demoralised and, encamped at Mannheim, no longer a relevant factor for the moment. He must have been quite pleased with himself, because as a pupil of the Spanish school of war he had succeeded in manoeuvring his opponent into a strategically unfavourable position and thus inflicting damage solely through skilful troop dispositions, quick reactions and appearances in unexpected places. And all this without exposing his own troops to the always incalculable risk of a battle with heavy losses. So he could now turn to Christian of Brunswick's army unweakened.

Electoral Palatinate or Würzburg? - First plunder!

After leaving the Eichsfeld, the procession of Brunswick's army passed through the territory of Duke Johann Ernst of Saxe-Eisenach with his consent. The train of the main part of the army passed southwest of Eisenach from the Creuzburg stage, but the city still did not escape entirely unscathed. A troop of soldiers, who had actually only moved into the town to buy cannonballs, rioted in the streets and fired into the air. In the process, two roofs caught fire, causing major devastations. They also kidnapped a rich citizen, whom they probably accused, not unjustly, of being a coin swindler, a so-called "*Kipper and Wipper*".

The years 1621-1623 were the peak of the Kipper-und-Wipper period, which led to a strong devaluation of money and impoverishment, especially of the urban population. This was ultimately due to the fact that the monetary value

Figure 39

A tipper and wipper workshop. Coins with a high precious metal content are sorted out by balances, melted down and newly minted with the addition of inferior metal. In this way, money could be created without actually having to own the silver for it. This did not work for long and ended in inflation.

of the coins in circulation was directly linked to their gold and silver content. The economic upswing of the last decades, which was accompanied by an increased need for representation on the part of the many princely courts and the widespread fear of war, which led to the hoarding of money for mercenary armies, ensured, among other things, a constantly increasing demand for money. This demand could neither be met by the declining domestic silver production nor by the Spanish gold and silver imports from the colonisation of South America. In addition, there was a considerable increase in population, which contributed significantly to the relative expansion of the urban population through rural exodus ("*city air makes you free*"). Since the productivity of agriculture did not increase at the same rate, higher demand contrasted with constant production. All this led to a sharp rise in prices. Some sovereigns, but also private individuals, tried to profit from this by depreciating the precious metal content of coins. While the sovereigns were able to achieve this seemingly magical increase in money by issuing correspondingly poorer coins from their official mints, private coin fraudsters had to rely on other methods. They sorted out coins in circulation with a high content of precious metals ("*tipping*") with the help of rapid scales ("*wipping*"), melted them down and made more coins from them by adding copper, lead or bronze, but with a lower content of precious metal. This deterioration in the quality of the coins did not go unnoticed, of course, and caused prices to rise further. In particular, people who received a fixed amount as remuneration, such as soldiers, were strongly affected by this devaluation of money. People suspected of being responsible for this misery were correspondingly unpopular, and Central Germany was one of the centres of coin counterfeiting. Kidnapping the suspect to extort a ransom was therefore quite a popular measure among the common people in Eisenach.

The approach of Christian from Brunswick's army to the borders of Fulda Abbey caused naked panic there. The abbot Johann Friedrich from Schwalbach left his post and fled to Gießen, his cathedral dean to Neustadt. The Jesuits of the diocese disguised themselves as peasants and set off for Bamberg. The army quartered in the area of Vacha on 7 June, where a delegation from the ecclesiastical principality delivered to it 40,000 Reichstaler to avoid arson plunder. Contrary to today's usage of the word, an arson plunder did not consist of burning everything down, but of threatening so credibly that the chosen victims would hand over their riches in order to avoid the arson. This did not exclude the occasional exemplary torching of a farm or village to increase payment morale. It was even more effective - and this is what the

Brunswickers practised here - if they did not blackmail each farmer and village individually, but went straight to the authorities of the area in question and collected from them for not laying waste to their territory. The laborious refinancing by collecting the money from the rural population was thus left to the local authorities. The armies of the time even had their own troops specialised in the effective setting of fires and commanded by a fire chief as an officer.

In addition to the day-to-day business of extorting and plundering the lands that had been traversed, Christian from Brunswick now had an important strategic decision to make about how to proceed. There were two possibilities at this point: Either to move north of the Vogelsberg through the Wetterau to the lower Main, in order to unite with Mansfeld there. He had received a messenger from Darmstadt on 5th June. and therefore assumed at this point that Mansfeld had firmly occupied the Landgraviate of Hesse-Darmstadt and was trying to enable him to cross the Main safely at the fortress of Rüsselsheim. The alternative was to move towards Fulda to march between Vogelsberg and Rhön or via Meiningen towards Würzburg. This route was more in line with the Brunswicker's ideas, since the bishoprics of Würzburg and Bamberg, which had so far been spared from the war and were prosperous, promising rich booty. An attack on these dioceses would have forced the imperial-ligist side to withdraw forces from the theatre of the Lower Palatinate in order to protect the freshly conquered Upper Palatinate or even Bavaria. Along one of these routes, there was also the possibility for the Brunswick army to reach the Main at Hanau via the Schlüchterner Ridge and the Kinzig Valley if necessary. It is no coincidence that these routes correspond to the course of today's

Figure 40

View of Fulda. The clerical leadership fled the city in panic when the arrival of Christian von Braunschweig's army was reported at the borders of the church's territory.

motorways A5, A7, A71 and A66 respectively. For thousands of years, the major transport axes that could be used by armies have often followed the same natural landscape features.

Since the Brunswick army command had learned of the presence of Caracciolo's troops, it had already sent cavalry patrols under Count Styrum from Eisenach in the direction of Würzburg in order to learn more about these defensive measures. The existence of these patrols is still known today mainly because on their way they raped women and shot some peasants in Thann in the Rhön, among other places. Near Rannungen they encountered the positions of imperial troops. What they saw there obviously did not please them.

Army Group Caracciolo had arrived in Würzburg on 5th June and, with the reinforcement of a few ensigns of Würzburg soldiers, had immediately moved on to the north. On the heights Rannungen - Hammelburg they occupied the passes and fortified them with field entrenchments. When they were manned by trained troops, such quickly erected defensive works of earth, wood and wattle with ramparts and ditches as well as bastions became veritable obstacles even for an army. Redoubts were constructed in such a way that they consisted only of projecting angles and so any part of the rampart, especially the long sides, could be taken under fire from more than one position within the fortification. Their capture required a lot of time and was associated with

Figure 41

Field redoubt with bastions at the corners. Such entrenchments could be quickly raised with soil and were veritable obstacles for attacking troops.

high losses for the attackers. The troops of the 30 Years' War were very skilled in their layout, as extensive finds still prove today.

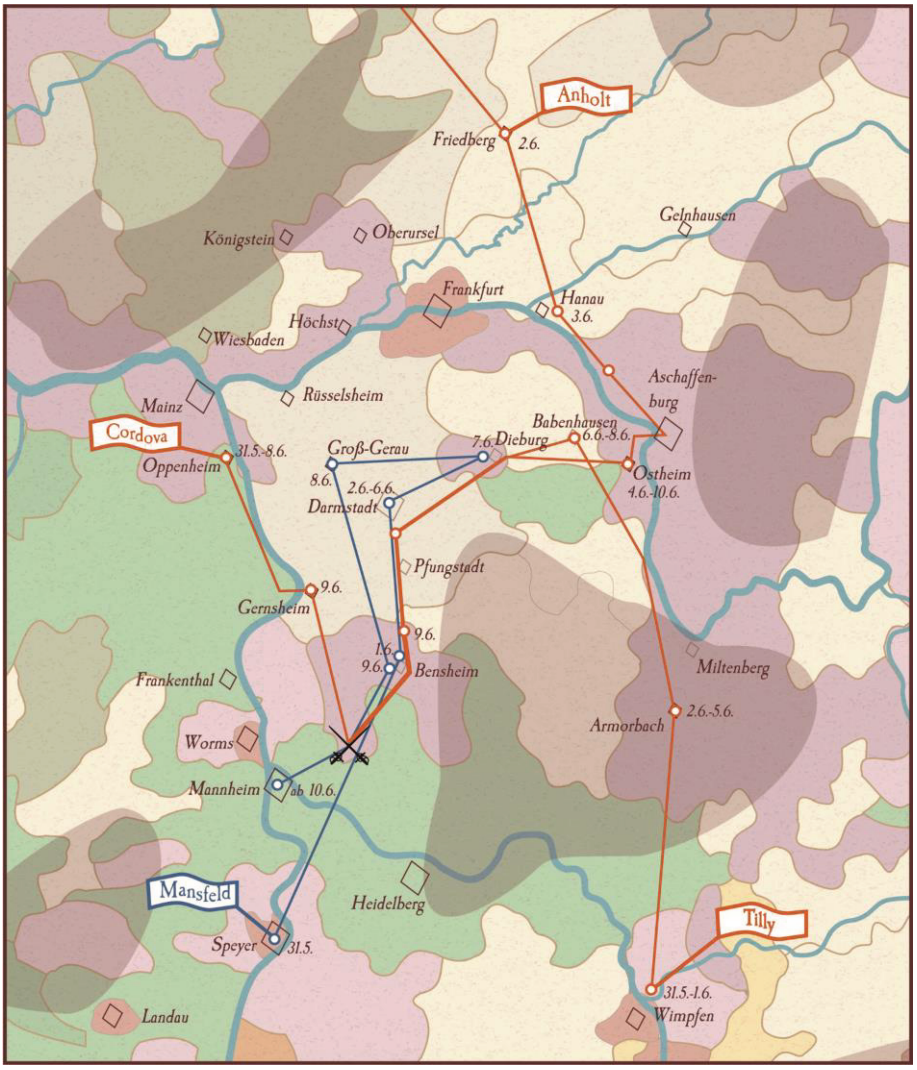


Figure 42

The troop movements in the course of Mansfeld's invasion of Hesse-Darmstadt in early June 1622 in detail. The somewhat confused decisions of the Electoral Palatinate army leadership ended in a hasty retreat and the engagement on the Lorsch Heath. Afterwards, Mansfeld retreated to Mannheim and Tilly had free rein to turn his attention to Christian of Brunswick.

Whether it was the reports from Styrum's returning reconnaissance troops about the strong resistance to be expected or the still urgent calls from Frederick and Mansfeld to finally move to relieve the Lower Palatinate, the Brunswick army command decided in any case to avoid confrontation with regular troops one more time. From Vacha, the army took the road southwest towards the Lower Main. On Wednesday, 8th June, the Brunswick force encamped in the area of Hersfeld. From there, the army moved into the parts of Hesse-Darmstadt north of the Main River the next day. The town of Alsfeld surrendered without resistance, was forced to surrender 6,000 Reichstaler of plunder and was nevertheless released for plundering. Since the army command of Brunswick had no idea of the impending disaster of the Electoral Palatinate army in southern Hesse and the long marches of the last few days had scattered the army, the troops remained at Alsfeld on Friday for rallying and regeneration.

On Thursday, 9th June, it became a certainty for Caracciolo that Christian of Brunswick would not advance on Würzburg, but had chosen the route via the Wetterau to the lower Main. In accordance with his orders, he left most of the Würzburg troops in the fortifications, sent messengers to Tilly and set off with his units in rapid marches to cross the Spessart Mountains directly to join Tilly on the Main.

After Tilly had driven the Mansfeld army out of Hesse-Darmstadt, he took up quarters in Eberstadt after the battle on the Lorsch Heath on 11th June. He had already been tormented for several days with an inflamed foot caused by a boot that was too tight. This is probably also the reason why he took up quarters there for a few days instead of going to the centre of his strategic planning in Aschaffenburg. Nevertheless, he did not remain idle. On hearing that the Brunswick army was moving through the Wetterau towards the Frankfurt area, he sent out a flood of directives in all directions. He instructed the Kurmainz towns and fortresses west of Frankfurt to prepare for defence. From Würzburg he ordered a master bridge builder with material for a ship's bridge to cross the Main from Hanau to Steinheim. Cordova also received the order to Oppenheim to meet in Aschaffenburg with all his troops on the coming Thursday, 16 June.

Christian from Brunswick also received the news of Mansfeld's retreat to Mannheim from an officer patrol in Schotten on 11th June. This is still known today because the innkeeper in whose inn this conversation took place overheard it. After the retreat of the Braun-Swiss troops, the innkeeper passed

on what he had heard to the sovereign authorities, who systematically questioned the population to record the war damage and wrote reports about it. The officers of the Electoral Palatinate also informed Christian of Brunswick that Tilly was making preparations to prevent him from crossing the Main. The Electoral Palatinate army command therefore instructed him to cross the Main at Höchst; he could count on support from Mansfeld.

The deadly race for the Main crossing had begun.

The race

Atrocities on the Way through the Wetterau

The news Christian of Brunswick had received in Schotten on Saturday 11 June about Tilly's preparations to intercept Christian of Brunswick's army before it crossed the Main finally quickened the pace of the march. On Sunday, Nidda, 15 km away, was reached. Despite the haste with which the army command drove the soldiers, they had plenty of time to rob the area and mistreat people, as many eyewitness accounts describe in the most drastic terms. Women and children were raped by the dozens, regardless of their status or age. Dying people were dragged out of their beds to search for valuables under their mattresses. Those who did not hand over their belongings voluntarily were

Abbildung 14

Raid on a farm. The painting by Sebastian Vrancx very drastically illustrates the looting of a farm, as happened by the thousands during the war. What is remarkable is that the peasants seem to be defending themselves resolutely.

tied up and abused. Those who still refused were tortured, for example by having a leg held in the fire or an ear cut off. Heads were squeezed with ropes until blood ran from every orifice, genitals were burned, people were hung by their fingers until they broke free. And those who had nothing were still hanged for the amusement of the soldiers.

The population was considered fair game by the mercenaries. The soldiers saw themselves as something better than the peasants. They were bound by serfdom to the land they worked and needed the consent of their landlord to marry, for example. Even though the concept of serfdom did not even exist in the 17th century, 'everyone was aware of the differences in personal freedom between peasants, burghers, nobility at all times. In a way, men who joined an army were able to free themselves from what was perceived as a very static

Figure 44

Burning Land. By the painting of Philips Wouwerman one can imagine the burning Wetterau . The Brunswick war campaign plundered every accessible village and set it on fire, darkening the sky over the countryside. The soldiers carried off not only all the livestock they could get their hands on, but also people, like the farmer here on the right, who is being led away by the soldiers.

system. Although the soldiers were actually much more restricted in their personal freedom by their article letters and often exposed to the arbitrariness of their superiors, they felt that the real power they exercised every day over burghers and peasants made them the "*truly free men*". In addition, the tribute system meant that failure to receive pay and rations often made extorting money and food from the population an existential matter for the soldiers and their dependents in the troop. For the soldiers, looting was not infrequently a matter of bare survival. This mixture of a sense of superiority on the one hand and the precarious conditions in the closed world of one's own company, which depended on each other for better or worse, almost inevitably led to the devaluation of all other people and thus to the justification of any cruelty towards anyone who got in the way of their interests. This indescribable brutalisation, described in many sources, also led to increasing bitterness on the part of the rural population and the desire for revenge, because the looting also called their survival into question. As had already become apparent after the battle on the Lorsch Heath, the peasants, who had already been victims of looting, took every opportunity to kill soldiers who had lost the protection of their units after a defeat and whom they could get hold of. In doing so, they were often no less cruel and sometimes caused greater losses to the armies than the actual fighting. Nevertheless, it was the passing armies, in the case of the Wetterau in the early summer of 1622 that of Christian from Brunswick, from which this war misery emanated and which thus became a life-threatening danger for the peasants.

For everything, really everything, that had any value was taken along by the Brunswick host on their journey through the Wetterau: Horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats were carried away, all supplies of wine, fruit and grain were loaded onto the wagons. But also everything made of metal, such as household items, cutlery, pots and kettles, even bells and brewing kettles were torn down and taken away. Because they were often used as hiding places for valuables, but also out of sheer arbitrariness, the stoves in the houses were smashed. When a plundering army came to a place, the first place the soldiers would go was usually the churches, because that was where the population fled to try to bring their belongings to safety. In the martial law of the time, churches and mills were actually taboo because of their importance for the population, but also for the armies. But if the officers could not or would not ensure the discipline of their troops, these filled treasure chests were irresistible to the mercenaries.

In addition to the soldiers' raid, Christian of Brunswick also demanded 12,000 Reichstaler in plunder from the county of Nidda. In view of the continuing devastation, the bailiff initially refused to pay this. He wondered, not without good reason, what he was supposed to protect the county from and where he was supposed to get the money from if everything had already been looted. In order to convince him to find money from somewhere, the fire chief was brought to Nidda to prepare the place for arson. He had already lit the fuses when the bailiff backed down and assured Christian from Brunswick's secretary of payment.

On the following day, the fate of the plundering also hit the town of Echzell, which belonged to the Landgraviate of Hesse-Darmstadt. Colonel Knyphausen's regiment raged there. The soldiers apparently did not care what creed the village belonged to - in this case Protestant - but they still looted it. There is also evidence of mass rapes in which several women died. Not all soldiers of the Brunswick army agreed with the brutal actions and some voiced their protest, which, however, remained unheard. All in all, the financial damage here also ran into the hundreds of thousands of talers. Incidentally,

Figure 45

Looting of a village. The village depicted is Wommelgen in Flanders, but the atrocities committed also took place in the Wetterau in this or a similar way.

the population held their landgrave responsible for the disaster that had been brought upon them, for after all, it was said, he could have saved the area from devastation by paying a correspondingly high ransom - just as Fulda had done. So the fact that the area around Darmstadt had also been plundered and that the landgrave was still the prisoner of Friedrich from Mansfeld, they either didn't know or didn't care - after all, the government is always responsible for everything.

Meanwhile, on the territory of the Electorate of Mainz, preparations for the invasion of the Brunswick army had begun on Tilly's orders. In Oberursel, with its approximately 500 inhabitants, a lieutenant with perhaps a dozen soldiers was responsible for preparing the defence. In order to create a clear field of fire in front of the town walls, trees had been felled over the weekend and the fences, hedges and sheds of the gardens, which surrounded the town in a dense ring, had been pulled down. Now there was nothing left to do and all that could be done was to wait. The militia of the marksmen's guild had armed themselves and patrolled the ramparts. In the course of Monday, more and more refugees arrived from the Wetterau, seeking safety from the marauding Brunswickers. The news they brought of the enemy army's advance made the young lieutenant increasingly nervous. The short night from 13th to 14th June, shortly before the summer solstice, brought no relief.

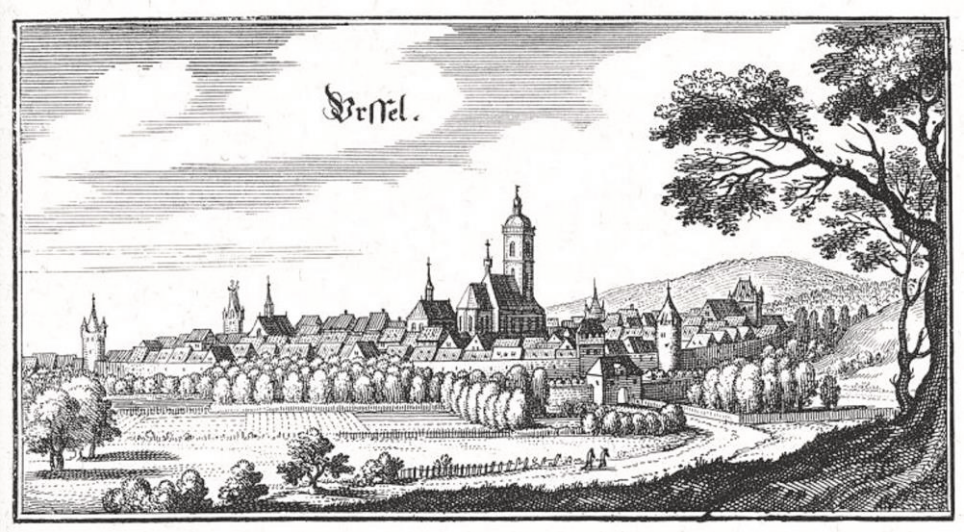


Figure 46

View of Oberursel. The small town of Kurmainz was prepared for defence against Christian of Brunswick, but the lieutenant in charge preferred to flee to the fortress of Königstein.

When the first cavalry patrols of the vanguard of the Brunswick army appeared in front of the city in the course of Tuesday, the lieutenant's nerves finally failed him. He gathered his men and withdrew with them to the protection of the Königstein fortress, leaving the population to its fate.

It was clear to the citizens of Oberursel that they would not be able to withstand a serious attack by the Brunswickers. In order to save at least part of their property, they packed their most important belongings and hid with their cattle in the forest near the Hohemark. They left the town in the hands of the Brunswickers, whose contingents gradually arrived in the course of the day. However, the citizens' hiding place was betrayed or the scouts had observed their departure. In any case, the cavalry tracked down the fugitives in the forest and drove them back to the city together with their cattle. Christian of Brunswick then imposed a fine of 400 talers on the town for this escape. He definitely had a special sense of humour.

The army quartered in and around Oberursel, but also in Homburg vor der Höhe. In the meantime, it had become clear to the colonels of the Brunswick army command that Christian from Braunschweig, due to his lack of experience, was to be involved only pro forma in really important military decisions for the good of all. Dodo from Knyphausen had gradually taken over the actual command. That is why Knyphausen set several measures in motion that very evening. The most important thing was to lead the army together with the train across the Main as quickly as possible. To this end, the occupation of the town of Höchst and its castle was indispensable, for a crossing would not have been possible under the fire of the Kurmainz garrison from its walls. Moreover, the Brunswickers expected Mansfeld's army to move from the south towards Höchst as promised, or even to be already there. For this reason, Knyphausen ordered his regiment and four companies of cavalry to get ready immediately for a night march to Höchst, despite the day's strenuous march of almost 40 km through the June heat from Echzell to Oberursel. One can vividly imagine the enthusiasm of the soldiers.

Furthermore, Knyphausen wanted to make sure that there were no larger formations of Tilly moving on the southern bank of the Main that could have made a crossing difficult or even prevented it. He therefore sent Lieutenant Colonel Pfaff with 120 horsemen for reconnaissance. While the rest of the army rested in their quarters or bivouacs after the extremely strenuous marches of the last few days through the Wetterau, both squads set off again in the evening after a short rest.

The Skirmish of Obertshausen

Meanwhile, Tilly's further preparations for the confrontation with the Brunswick army were progressing, but it did not look as if the Imperial League armada would be able to prevent the union of the two protestant armies in time. While Christian of Brunswick arrived at Oberursel on 14 June, barely a day's march away from the planned crossing point, Anholt was still waiting with his troops at Ostheim, the Spanish infantry was just getting ready to cross the river on the left bank of the Rhine at Oppenheim the next day to reach the agreed meeting point at Aschaffenburg, and Caracciolo was quartering in Miltenberg that day. However, Tilly, who was still in Eberstadt to cure his foot, was aware of the importance of the possession of Höchst to the Brunswickers' transition plans. Should the Brunswick army succeed in crossing the Main, nothing would stand in the way of the unification of the Protestant armies and he would be confronted with a considerable superior force. This had to be prevented at all costs. However, as he could not accelerate the gathering of his troops, he sent a small force from Ostheim in the course of the day, consisting of two companies of Croatian cavalry and 200 musketeers, about 360 men in all. They were to move along the southern bank of the Main to Höchst as quickly as possible in order to reinforce the garrison there. With such reinforcements, it would have been possible for the Kurmainz garrison and the citizens to hold the town until Tilly had approached with his combined troops from Aschaffenburg. If all went well, they could reach Höchst in two days.

This small force did indeed make good time; when darkness fell shortly before eleven o'clock that June night, they had already covered more than 30 km. They camped for a short night's rest in an open field outside Obertshausen. The area was and still is characterised by hedge-lined grassland where cattle were bred for the local leather processing industry. On one of these pastures, the soldiers, tired from marching through the heat of the day, simply settled down along the road. The Croats unsaddled their horses and let them graze a little way from the road. No special safety precautions were taken, such as the construction of a fortified marching post - Mansfeld's troops were licking their wounds after the retreat from Darmstadt near Mannheim and the Brunswick army, they believed, was still standing somewhere north of the Wetterau. Enemies were therefore not to be expected. It was a balmy early summer evening; after the long and exceptionally cold winter, it had suddenly become

very hot at the end of May and this heat had now lasted for a few weeks. Nevertheless, the soldiers lit a few fires to prepare a small supper. After the guards had been divided up and posted, the Bavarians and Croats rolled themselves into their blankets or coats to get a few hours' sleep before tomorrow's straining march to Höchst.

With the first light of the day at just before four, the tambour beat the drum far too early to wake them. The soldiers peeled themselves out of their dew-damp blankets, stretched their stiff limbs and gathered their things. The Croats had been up a little longer, fed and groomed their horses and began to put on their saddles.

At that moment, the first ones heard it. The unmistakable thunder of many horses' hooves at a gallop quickly approaching. Before anyone could react, a company of horsemen chased along the road in rows of four from behind the hedge and fired their wheellock pistols at the shocked Bavarians and Croats. Then, at a trumpet signal, they swung to the left to charge in a broad front directly into the encamped musketeers, firing their weapons at close range. The effect was terrible, several men went down immediately, others could not get up fast enough and were caught under the hooves of the charging horses. Those who resisted were cut down with the sabre. Organised resistance was out of the question, so the survivors of the attack held their weapons above their heads as a sign of surrender.

Most of the Croats, who were camped with their horses in the pasture a little further away from the road, still managed to swing themselves into their saddles or on their bare horseback to flee. Then the hedge in their flank exploded in a volley of musket fire. Horses and men went down, while the dismounted arquebusiers of the Second Brunswick Cornet stepped out of the hedge, using pistols and sabres to add to the chaos created by the volley. Nevertheless, the majority of the Croats managed to escape.

The success of the surprise attack by the Brunswickers was complete. Sixty men of the Imperial League relief force lay dead on the ground or were so badly wounded that they were killed by the Brunswickers. About one hundred Bavarians and Croats had surrendered in time and were captured, the rest managed to escape. Even a flag of the Croats had been captured by the Brunswickers. The garrison of Höchst would get no reinforcements.

Where had the Brunswick horsemen come from so suddenly? The two cavalry companies under Lieutenant Colonel Pfaff, which had set off from Oberursel

the night before, had moved direction southeast, passing north of the Landwehr surrounding Frankfurt and had reached the Main near Dörnigheim in the middle of the night. There was an old ford at the eastern edge of the village that had already been used in Roman times. The Brunswickers had heard about this crossing possibility from the son of the Isenburg count Wolfgang Heinrich in their army and had taken along a guide from his unit who was familiar with the area. Nevertheless, crossing the river at night was a risky undertaking, even though a waxing crescent moon already provided sufficient light that night. The river had plenty of water after the long, rainy winter, so that the horses barely kept their footing in the ford and the soldiers had to take care that their firearms did not get wet.

Once on the south bank, the cornets moved past Mühlheim on the road to Lämmerspiel and Hausen. Behind Hausen, the vanguard became aware of several columns of smoke rising over open fields, clearly visible from a distance in the moonlight. While some of the vanguard soldiers dismounted and crept up cautiously, the others stopped the advance of the main column. Covered by the hedges, the scouts were able to approach the carelessly encamped Bavarians and Croats undetected. They reported what they had seen to Lieutenant-Commander Pfaff, who decided to attack at daybreak. He ordered one of the two cornets to dismount, bypass the pasture to the east and position themselves behind the hedges. This way, with the prevailing west wind, the enemy would not be able to "*smell the fuse*", i.e. perceive the glowing fuses of the muskets ahead of time, which could have given away the ambush. He himself would attack with the other company across the road, so that the unsuspecting troop would be caught between two fires.

Since the Brunswick infantry did not have enough weapons for every soldier, the muskets and sabres of the Bavarians and Croats who had been killed, captured or had fled were welcome booty that was divided among the horsemen for transport. After the dead had been relieved of their personal belongings, the procession of prisoners formed up between two Brunswick squadrons and set off again in the direction of the Dörnigheim ford barely two hours after the surprise attack. The remaining horsemen stayed on the southern side of the Main to confirm the reports of the jawboned questioned prisoners that they had been the only Imperial League units in the area. Except for the dead left behind, the Obertshausen pasture was as peaceful as the evening before.

The Siege of Höchst

After the two cavalry companies had withdrawn from the Brunswick camp near Oberursel, from Knyphausen's regiment, reinforced by four companies of Arquebuse horsemen and two guns, set out to cover the 15 km to Höchst during the night. The possession of the town was indispensable for a safe crossing of the Main and time was pressing. The Brunswick army command knew that Tilly would try to prevent the crossing with all his might. Since a peaceful surrender of the Kurmainz Höchst was not to be expected, they wanted to conquer the town in a coup.

The troops therefore had some petards with them. These explosive devices consisted of a cup-shaped vessel made of bronze or wrought iron filled with fast-burning black powder. This was mounted on a solid board with a matching hole, with the help of which the device could be hung, jammed or

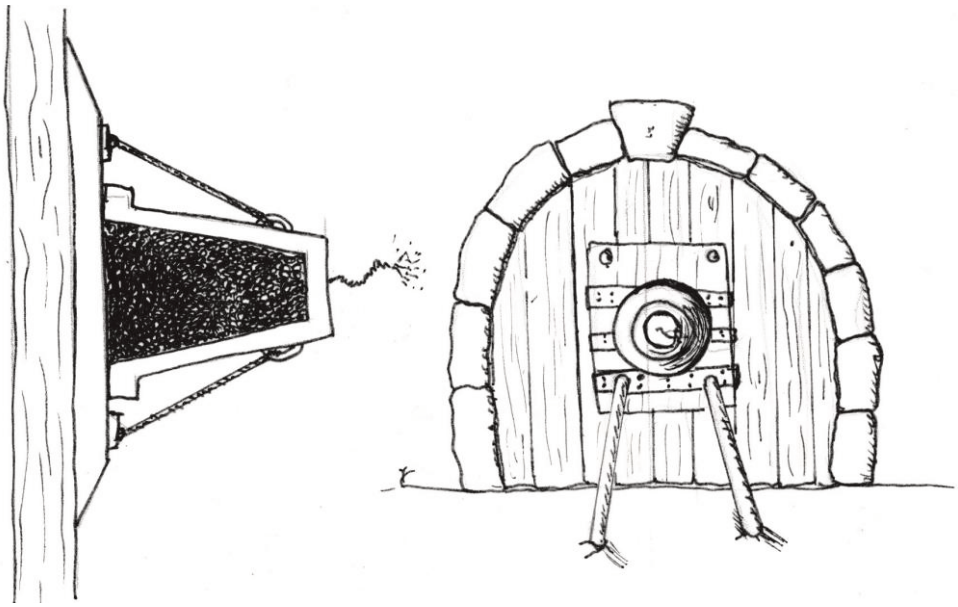


Figure 47

Functional principle and use of a petard. A bronze or iron cylinder filled with black powder was hung or clamped on a reinforced board at the gate to be blown up, ignited with a fuse. If it went well, the petard blew open the gate. This did not work at the Höchster city gate.

screwed as close as possible to a gate. When well dammed and detonated with a fuse, the explosive charge would act directly on the gate, either breaking a hole in it or destroying it altogether.

The column made slow progress in the moonlit night because of the cannons and the wagons with the petards. From Weißkirchen they went via Steinbach and Eschborn to Sossenheim. There they came across the Kurmainzer Straße, which connected Frankfurt with Mainz and also led through Höchst. As Knyphausen led his men down the hill through the village to the Sulzbach bridge, he noticed the marshy lowlands to the right and left of the road. On the other side of the stream, a hill rose gently on the right, its flanks bordering the stream floodplain there to the west. To the left of the bridge, the stream, coming from the north, also turned sharply to the west. The area behind it was not easily visible at night because of the dense hedges, but the cattle bells revealed that it was probably a pasture in the Nidda lowlands. Behind the bridge, the road to Höchst led slightly uphill again, on a ledge between the hillside and the stream 10 metres below. Should the need arise, this narrow point could be defended quite well against a larger army with some fortification, even with little artillery. He decided to make a note of this spot.

Now, however, the Brunswickers had to reach Höchst before daybreak in order to take the city with a surprise attack. Once the place was taken, it would certainly not take more than a day, or at most the night, to build a usable ship's bridge with the material that was surely abundantly available in the city. In another two days the whole army would be set across the river as at Höxter, especially if Mansfeld, as promised, waited on the other side to ensure a safe crossing with his artillery. Until then, Tilly could not possibly manage to reach them here.

The morning of Wednesday, 15 June, was already dawning when the regiment finally passed the narrows and set off on the last mile and a half to Höchst, whose walls and towers could already be glimpsed in the distance. Shortly before daybreak, the troops arrived in front of the western city gate. It was closed, as it was every night. Knyphausen had the musketeers take up positions on the right and left of the road in the gardens of the city in front of the moat fed by the Liederbach and get ready to storm the city gate. He sent out the horsemen to surround the town on the whole land facing side so that the inhabitants could not flee and no messengers could leave the place. So far nothing was stirring on the walls and the Brunswickers hoped that the citizens would continue to be so sleepy. Knyphausen had the petards loaded from the

wagons and brought to the front. Four men each carried the heavy equipment and two gunners, who knew their way around the petards, accompanied them. When they arrived at the gate, they were shocked to find that the gate did not have a smooth surface, but was reinforced with massive beams at regular intervals. This made the attempt to place the petards completely pointless, because the explosion pressure between the beams would have fizzled out ineffectively before it even reached the actual gate. They suppressed a curse and retreated as silently as possible.

After a short deliberation, Knyphausen decided to break open the gate with the cannons. It would probably take more than two shots with the 14 kg bullets from the two half-cartaunes to destroy the gate in such a way that the musketeers could enter. So much for the element of surprise. But they had already lost a lot of time and the longer it took now, the more likely they would be discovered. The operators rolled the guns side by side to within a stone's throw of the gate and began to make preparations to load them. At that moment a shot followed by a volley from the walls shattered the morning silence.

The Brunswickers' nocturnal approach had by no means gone unnoticed in Höchst. The guards had been doubled again for a few days, so that the Brunswick armada was spotted shortly after Sossenheim by one of the towers in the city wall. The guards immediately informed the town constable and the sheriff Arbogast. He in turn immediately brought the news to the bailiff Johann Philipp Knebel from Katzenellbogen. In accordance with the orders of Tilly and the Bishop of Kurmainz, he did not hesitate for long and ordered the garrison to proceed as quietly as possible to the walls. The town constable had alerted the rest of the vigilantes and issued all the weapons with plenty of ammunition. The vigilantes met up with the garrison on the market square, where the bailiff took command. All the refugees from the surrounding villages, who had been taking refuge in the town with their cattle for days, were also camped there. He sent the older citizens, the refugees fit for military service and the less good marksmen to the other neuralgic points of the city fortifications, especially the places where the city wall jutted into the river. There it was necessary to prevent the Brunswickers from entering the city unnoticed through the river. He led the rest of the garrison, and especially the riflemen, into the positions of the city wall around the Frankfurt Obertor. He instructed them not to fire until he himself had fired the first shot. He had hardly reached an embrasure on the tower above the gate when the Brunswickers made arrangements to bring the two half-cartauns into position.

He had a loaded musket handed to him, aimed at the commanding gunner and fired.

Immediately afterwards his signal shot was picked up by the riflemen on the walls, and a volley from nearly forty guns came down on the unsuspecting Brunswickers. The effect was devastating. Many gunners immediately went down, the others hurriedly threw away their equipment and tried to take cover with the other soldiers beyond the range of the muskets. Dodo from Knyphausen was also wounded with the first volley. He had received a rifle bullet in his left arm.

For the citizens did not only shoot with the inaccurate muskets, but they also had some of the new-fangled, rifled guns. These were much more difficult to load because each bullet had to be carefully wrapped with a small greased leather lobe and this package had to be carefully pushed down the barrel with the ramrod, but on the other hand the shots were accurate even at distances of up to 300 paces. Now the years of training of the Höchst shooters paid off. As soon as a Brunswicker ventured out of cover, the Höchst riflemen took aim at him from the cover of the wall and often succeeded. Their continuous fire inflicted considerable losses on the Brunswick regiment, while the musket fire of the attackers bounced off the city walls largely without effect.

And the rifles were not the only dangerous weapon at the disposal of the citizens' militia. There were also some double-hooked rifles. These rifles, which were over two metres long and weighed almost 20 kg, shot lead bullets of 25-30 mm in diameter and thus weighed 100 g or more. Since the massive tubes could be loaded with a lot of powder, they achieved a long range with a penetrating power close to that of modern heavy machine guns. Bullets from these double hooks could penetrate earth-filled bulwarks and 2 cm thick oak planks. Such rifles could only be used from special mounts or from fortress walls that could support their weight and absorb the enormous recoil. The Höchsters used these rifles to fire at the two guns in front of the gate, thus ensuring that no Brunswickers could approach them.

Knyphausen raged. Not only was he himself wounded. The wound turned out to be a through-and-through bullet. It was painful, but well bandaged it did not prevent him from continuing to command, at least for the time being. The surprise attack had failed completely, he had already lost dozens of men and if he didn't do something quickly, it would continue and demoralise his men. To do this, these civilians were really showing him up; his men had to lie in cover outside the range of the Höchst rifles, while their own guns stood

around outside the gate - right in front of their noses, but completely out of reach. And with each additional minute that this unplanned siege lasted, they lost precious time.

So he had a trumpeter come and blow the signal for negotiations. Thereupon the defenders ceased firing. Together with the trumpeter, he went to within a hundred paces of the gate and announced that if the city was taken with a storming hand, "*the children in the womb should not be spared*". If, however, they declared themselves willing to surrender, they would be spared and citizens as well as soldiers would be allowed to leave with sack and baggage. The bailiff Johann Philipp Knebel of Katzenellbogen explained that they were not thinking of surrendering, but "*they wanted to defend themselves to the utmost*".

The defenders of the city were of the opinion, with good reason, that they would be able to defend the city against the Brunswick vanguard through the joint efforts of the citizens' militia and the garrison until relief came from the League troops. This had been announced to them by messengers, so that they believed they would receive support in the course of the day. As long as the attackers had to concentrate on one gate because of their relatively small numbers, the Höchst defenders therefore had every reason to be confident. They had plenty of ammunition and the upper hand because their concentrated barrage fire from the cover of the walls prevented the besiegers from getting to their own guns, with which they could have opened the gates. As soon as Knyphausen had retreated back into cover, they resumed firing.

In the course of the morning, Knyphausen concluded that things could not go on like this. He had lost over a hundred men and had achieved practically nothing so far. A second request to surrender was also met with silence from Höchst. He therefore sent a messenger to Christian from Brunswick in Oberursel with a request for reinforcements. Actually, it was less a request than a demand, but since the Obristen still needed the "*Tollen Halberstädter*" as a figurehead because of his reputation and his far-reaching connections, it could do no harm to keep up appearances. He only hoped that he had formulated the request in such a way that the inexperienced Christian realised the urgency of his request and acted accordingly. Around noon, he received word that more regiments had been deployed. In addition, the messenger informed him of the victory of his colleague Pfaff at Obertshausen during the night. When he then called on the Höchst garrison to surrender for the third and last time, he could not help rubbing this news in their faces after they had refused his demand.

This was not good news for the people of Höchst. They had firmly reckoned with Tilly's relief. So far they had done extremely well. Only two citizens had been fatally shot by Brunswick bullets, and it was not yet clear whether a third would survive his serious injuries. They had, on the other hand, hit dozens of attackers, and in the square in front of the Frankfurter Tor alone there were around fifteen casualties. But having just refused the demand to surrender for the third time, they could no longer hope for any reprieve should the Brunswickers conquer the city. And that this would happen sooner or later, the bailiff, the sheriff and the mayors had no doubt. With their current garrison, they could repel any assault on a single gate, but as soon as the attackers seriously attacked several points of the wall at the same time, their forces would no longer be sufficient to repel them. So now they had to come up with another plan.

Meanwhile, the firefight between the besieged and the Brunswick troops had largely died down. The whole area was shimmering in the heat of the early summer afternoon, the grain was already chest-high and the currants were ripening in the gardens. There was not a soul in sight, only the river was bustling with cargo ships, boats and barges. The Brunswick troops had retreated into the available shade of the gardens out of reach of the Höchst snipers. Most of them were fast asleep, having been on their feet for almost thirty hours since setting out from Echzell at dawn the day before, covering more than fifty kilometres in that time and coming through a firefight in which many of their comrades had fallen. The Brunswickers enjoyed their well-deserved rest, because apart from the odd shot from the wall at a careless comrade, nothing happened anyway.

At about 4 p.m. it was reported that the advance guard of reinforcements was approaching from Sossenheim. The injured Knyphausen, who had also rested a little, received the arriving troops, assigned them places along the wall and admonished them not to venture too close to the wall at first because of the snipers. Around 6 p.m., all the troops had taken up their positions. In the meantime, the shooting from the city had eased even more. To be precise, none of the besieged had shown themselves on the walls for half an hour. Knyphausen sent for the trumpeter again and sounded the horn to negotiate. No reaction from the city. Next, the colonel had the cannons recovered. No one took the musketeers under fire. Knyphausen then sent two companies of musketeers to bypass the city fortifications, which jutted into the river on the bank, from both sides. The musketeers marched to the bank of the Main, took their muskets over their heads, waded through the shallow water around the

fortifications and were gone. The Brunswickers waited tensely outside the gates. For an endless quarter of an hour nothing happened. Then slowly the gate opened and Brunswick musketeers stepped out onto the bridge over the moat. With that, it became a certainty: the citizens of Höchst and the garrison had disappeared.

Bailiff Knebel was sitting with his young wife Maria in the bow of a river barge as it glided past Flörsheim with the current. Behind them rowed some Mainz soldiers of the garrison, followed by three other barges with the other Mainz officials and the rest of the Kurmainz soldiers. They had been the last to leave the town and were now on their way to Mainz to report to the electoral administration. The majority of Höchst's inhabitants had made their way upstream to Frankfurt to seek refuge behind the walls of the free imperial city. Höchst and the Electoral Palace with all their supplies were lost for the time being, but hopefully its people were now safe. Apart from a few old and sick people who had refused to leave their homes and the few who were leaning towards the Protestant side anyway and therefore wanted to try their luck with the Brunswickers, the city was empty.

Since the news that the Brunswickers would probably try to take Höchst, the young bailiff had not only prepared the defence of the city, but also made a plan to evacuate his subjects. He had arranged for all available boats, shops and barges to be ready below the customs gate on the Main. This place was not visible from the banks side outside the fortifications. The individual vessels were assigned to the various city quarters and the council members responsible for their respective quarters were entrusted with the organisation of their evacuation. In addition, there were some barges for the refugees from the surrounding dependent villages. Each family was to keep only their most important belongings ready so that they could quickly occupy the boats in case of emergency.

After the bailiff had learned from the grandiose surrender request of the enemy commander that a quick relief by Tilly was no longer to be expected, he had ordered the evacuation. The citizens were led in quarters through the customs gate to the Main and boarded the boats there in an orderly fashion. So that the Brunswickers would not notice the escape, they had sent the barges off one by one so that they would not be noticed in the busy traffic on the river. After the Mainz officials and their families had also boarded the last boats in the afternoon, the last Mainz soldiers cleared the walls and made their way through the deserted alleys to the Main. Half an hour later, the Brunswickers

entered the city through the open customs gate without encountering any resistance.

Knyphausen's mood did not improve when he saw that the citizens had left the city unnoticed under his eyes. For the second time that day he was paraded by the Höchsters. To make matters worse, he had asked the town to surrender three times to no avail, so the soldiers now insisted on their right to loot the town, even if they did not have to take it by assault. This would probably destroy many things that might still be needed. But much worse was that the discipline of the troops could not be reckoned with in such a sacking for some time. They would now enter the city unregulated and take revenge on anyone who might still remain for the death of their comrades and the humiliation they had suffered. Then they would search the houses for remaining valuables and smash everything to pieces. Only when there was nothing left to loot would they fill their stomachs with the food that had not yet been spoiled by the search and get senselessly drunk. Tomorrow at the earliest, Knyphausen could expect the provosts to restore order. At least this Wednesday was lost for the Brunswickers to build the urgently needed ship's bridge.

The preparations

Thursday, 16th June 1622

The citizens of Höchst, led by their second mayor, had largely fled to Frankfurt. The free imperial city was very concerned about neutrality in the conflict, after it had suffered quite a shipwreck in the middle of the previous century with its partisanship for the Protestant side in the Schmalkaldic War. The Höchster had arrived at the gates of the city in the course of the previous evening. The Kurmainzer Amtmann Knebel had given them a prepared letter with which they were to ask the city council for temporary admission. This has been preserved and reads:

"*Noble, honourable, highly learned, prudent, well-meaning mayor and council, generous gentlemen. Your E.F.W. is more than aware of the sad situation in which we, the citizens of Höchst, have been placed by the Brunswick war armada (God have mercy); because we now have to make our escape to Frankfurt and are staying there for several days, we have been ordered by the younger mayor, at the behest of the bailiff, to once again humbly request protection from you honourable, prudent and wise*

councillors for a few more days, until we can safely return home to our family. It is therefore our most diligent request to Your E.F.W. that you will be kind enough to tolerate us poor exiles here for a little while longer, in the hope that the Almighty will turn everything around in the desired peace and happy prosperity (so that we can return to our domestic life) when we want to go home. The Almighty, who is a helper of the poor displaced widows and orphans, will reward your E.F.W. abundantly for this, and we are also willing to reciprocate this for ourselves with our small services during our lives. Your E.F.W. we humbly await and request your most favourable and conclusive resolution, your E.F.W., humbly, all the expelled citizens of Höchst".

They were granted admission; the letter had done its work. This prepared letter, which implies that the population of Höchst was to arrive in Frankfurt united, also shows that the flight had not happened spontaneously and unorganised as a reaction to the course of the siege, but must have been prepared as an option in advance.

The relationship between Frankfurt and Höchst as an outpost of Kurmainz had always been complicated. On the one hand, both sides cooperated in defence against marauders, as evidenced by the corresponding covenant of 1621. There was also long-term cooperation in the escort of merchants who

Figure 48

View of Frankfurt from the west. The importance of the Main as a traffic artery for the city becomes clear from the large number of ships, boats and barges on the river.

wanted to go to the trade fairs in Frankfurt, although not always without friction. On the other hand, the Höchst town charter and customs office had always been a thorn in Frankfurt's side, and Frankfurt was also in a long-standing legal dispute with the Elector over the ownership of vineyards in the Rheingau. The loyalty of the Höchsters was also not entirely clear, even if the Kurmainz rule was quite tolerable. The Höchst merchants, for example, steadfastly refused to use the official Mainz measures, preferring instead to stick to the units of the Frankfurters, with whom they did more business. And last but not least, although they fought bravely and successfully under the leadership of the Kurmainz bailiff, they preferred to flee to Frankfurt.

The city of Frankfurt had been the central escape point for the rural population of the entire surrounding area threatened by war. Surrounded by Landwehr defences, the city was fortified with ramparts and water-filled moats and a few strong bastions in addition to the medieval city walls. Therefore, it was largely protected from quick attacks; only a prolonged siege by a large army, as in Magdeburg a few years later, could have led to a violent capture. This relative safety made Frankfurt attractive in uncertain times, and so the rural population brought themselves and their most valuable possessions to safety there. Even some princes, including two sons of Landgrave Ludwig of Hesse Darmstadt, who were able to flee from Electoral Palatinate occupation, sought protection in the imperial city. Depending on whether they had relatives in the city, could afford a room in one of the overcrowded inns, or were dependent on the charity of the church or the citizens, the refugees were accommodated more or less comfortably. The streets were lined with wagons carrying the refugees' goods, and every free space in the hospitals, convents and churches was filled with refugees. However, the city was simply not designed for such a large number of inhabitants and both the general supply situation and the hygienic conditions were soon no longer the best. Epidemics threatened to break out and the cramped conditions in the city caused tensions between the refugees and the inhabitants. Everyone hoped that the current crisis would soon be resolved, ideally by the Brunswickers moving on as quickly as possible. This would avoid a battle at the gates of Frankfurt, which would place further burdens on the city. The people of Höchst also hoped that they could return to their city as soon as possible - or to what the Brunswickers would have left of it.

The next morning the situation in Höchst was halfway back under control of the Brunswick army command, although many soldiers had not yet returned to duty because they were still sleeping it off somewhere in the city. The

Höchsters had been very thorough with their evacuation; apart from a few old and sick people and a mentally ill priest from the Antonite monastery, whom the soldiers even castrated before beating him to death, there had been no one left in the city on whom the soldiers could vent their frustration at the humiliation they had suffered at being beaten by civilian citizens. The Brunswickers were all the more thorough in destroying the furniture of the houses. Windows were torn out and beds smashed. The stoves in particular were gladly smashed as a symbol of the bourgeois sedentary lifestyle and the centre of the house. In addition, they often contained secret compartments for storing non-flammable valuables. Nevertheless, the loot was rather small because the inhabitants had had enough time to take their most valuable possessions and an in particular their money with them.

However, the rapid construction of a ship-bridge was more important for the army as a whole and Christian from Brunswick's strategic goals than the personal enrichment of the soldiers. For this reason, Knyphausen first placed four ensigns of his regiment in the castle as a garrison. Situated in the south-western corner of the city, its walls dominated the intended place of passage at their feet. Since the castle was also secured against the city by a deep, water-filled moat with a bridge and gate, a garrison could cover a crossing even if the rest of the city had already fallen into the hands of the enemy. Now it was time to secure the necessary material for the construction of the ship's bridge. Knyphausen instructed the bridge master together with the provision master to take an inventory of the supplies and materials available in the city and to have them secured by the provosts right away.

The result was catastrophic. There were plenty of foodstuffs that the army could put to good use, including several thousand tons of grain, 700 tons of oats, 700 tons of flour, stocks of hay and straw, and lots of cattle that the refugees had brought into the city. Military supplies were also found in heaps in the castle: 60 hundred pounds of powder, 20 hundred pounds of lead, several hundred pounds of fuses, muskets, double hoes and even three small pieces. But there was hardly any material needed to build a bridge. Above all, there was a lack of boats and barges to carry the bridge. With the comparatively small number of watercrafts belonging to the few Höchst fishermen and boatmen's families, the Höchst and Mainz crews had set off, certainly also with the intention of making the construction of a bridge more difficult. Although it was possible to use empty barrels instead of ship hulls as floats, this was not such a durable solution. Moreover, there was practically no timber available in the city for the superstructure and the roadway. If they

could not quickly get the material for a bridge elsewhere, there would be no bridge. Cut off from any means of retreat, they would have to fight.

The loss of the relief force for Höchst prompted Tilly to further accelerate the preparations for the march. Already on Tuesday, Cordova had crossed the Rhine with the Spanish infantry, encamped near Roßdorf on Wednesday and was expected near Aschaffenburg in the course of the day. Anholt's troops and the Spanish cavalry were already encamped there. Caracciolo, coming from Miltenberg, had taken up quarters in Wörth and was also expected to reach Aschaffenburg in the course of the day. Tilly himself had set out from Eberstadt on Wednesday and, moving via Dieburg, would join his force on Friday for the departure. If they managed to get to Höchst in time, they would be able to use the concentrated Imperial League forces against the Brunswick armada.

Aschaffenburg was central to Tilly's strategy because of its location and the bridge over the Main. The town at the beginning of the Lower Main had blossomed with the completion of the new Johannisburg Castle about ten years before by the Archbishop of Mainz, Johann Schweikhard from Kronberg. The latter had treated himself to a new residence in the Upper Archbishopric, the largest contiguous part of his electorate scattered over large parts of the empire, to celebrate his consecration in 1604 and had begun construction directly a year later. The city's bridge was well secured by several redoubts on

Figure 49

Aschaffenburg from the western bank of the Main. On the left, the new castle of the Archbishop and Elector of Mainz. In the foreground the fortified bridge over the Main. The engraving gives a good impression of the crossing of the Main by the imperial ligist troops on 17th June 1622.

the left bank of the Main and, apart from the Old Bridge in Frankfurt, was the last fixed crossing of the Main before it flowed into the Rhine opposite Mainz. Via the Main, the army could be easily supplied by the allied bishoprics of Würzburg and Bamberg, but also by the Upper Palatinate and the home state of Bavaria. As long as this crossing was in ligist hands, the troops on the Upper Rhine had a secure line of retreat. They could also operate north of the Main, as now planned, without having to move through Protestant territories or rely on the uncertain cooperation of the free imperial city of Frankfurt.

Nevertheless, Tilly was worried that Mansfeld would not hold still near Mannheim forever and might in turn try to occupy Hesse-Darmstadt or even attack Frankfurt. In that case, it might take too long after the action against the Brunswickers to have to move again with his entire armada to Aschaffenburg in order to be able to cross the Main there for a campaign against Mansfeld. He therefore ordered the master bridge builder of Würzburg to bring everything necessary for a ship-bridge to Steinheim and to build such a crossing over the Main there.

Meanwhile, Christian of Brunswick decided to move his headquarters to the city after Knyphausen had conquered Höchst. It took the whole day to move the remaining units, and in particular the train from Oberursel to Höchst. As there was by far not enough room for the whole army in the town, a large camp was set up outside the gates to the east and north of the town walls. Within the camp, an area was divided off and surrounded by a palisade to accommodate the prisoners from the battle at Obertshausen, as well as other prisoners such as the Jesuits from Paderborn. Meanwhile, the Brunswick army command was discussing how to proceed. While Christian from Brunswick, misjudging the balance of power, was counting on an open confrontation with Tilly, his colonels wanted to avoid it if possible. Everyone was disappointed by the absence of Mansfeld, although he had promised his support. It was agreed to try to buy the material for the bridge in Frankfurt as soon as possible. Since this would affect Frankfurt's neutrality, it would need the approval of the council, which would certainly not negotiate this with the Brunswick bridge master. Higher-ranking officers would probably be needed as negotiators. But given the delays that had already occurred, it had to be expected that the bridge would not be finished before the Imperial League army arrived. So a plan was also needed to confront the superior army without jeopardising the crossing or risking the entire army.

Burning, entrenching, haggling

Friday, 17th June

On the morning of 17 June, a Friday according to the Catholic calendar, the Imperial League forces crossed the bridge at Aschaffenburg and marched through the town. The population was already used to the frequent troop movements in and around the city in recent months, so the procession only attracted the attention of a few boys and the usual idlers. The march lasted several hours; while the last units only entered the bridge from the Ostheim bank, the first had long since left the city near the castle through the Hanau Gate in a northerly direction. Merian's engraving from 1646 gives a very good impression of this scene, even though the troops depicted there are probably Swedish units. Since haste was needed, the troops marched with light baggage and not with the regular train. Nevertheless, the troops were followed by several baggage wagons and a large artillery train, for the imperial army carried 18 guns.

These cannons, called cartaune, semi cartaune, etc., depending on their calibre, usually fired iron balls with a diameter slightly smaller than the cross-section of the barrel opening. These bullets weighed 42 pounds, or about 21 kg, for a cartaune, and correspondingly less for the other calibres. In combat, after a shot, the barrel first had to be wiped out with a kind of large bottle brush dipped in vinegar water before the next charge, thus simultaneously removing any powder residue and cooling it. The new powder was poured in with a special powder scoop, usually about a quarter of the bullet weight. Then the powder was compressed with a punch, not too tightly, and sealed with a plug made of tow and straw. The cleanly wiped bullet was then placed in the barrel and rolled onto the charge. A powder flask was then used to put a finer powder into the firing hole, which led onto the powder charge in the barrel. Once the gun was aligned on axis with the target and the gunner had adjusted the inclination of the barrel according to the distance of the target with wedges under the barrel, everyone stepped back from the gun and the charge was ignited by the gunmaster with a fuse attached to a special holder on a long stick. Driven by the recoil, the gun carriage rolled back quite a distance and was balanced back into position by the operators. The range of the pieces was up to 2000 metres, but beyond 600-700 metres the accuracy of the hits diminished greatly and the penetrating power of the bullets also decreased.

Nevertheless, the effect on densely stacked foot troops was devastating, especially if the bullet bounced on hard ground in front of the target and then ricocheted flat. If a row in the tercio was hit, it could kill or seriously injure a dozen or more men at once. Aiming accuracy was also of secondary importance in the large, deeply echeloned infantry formations of the time. If you had the range right and the direction was reasonably correct, you would hit someone. If enemy units approached the artillery position, cartridge or hail

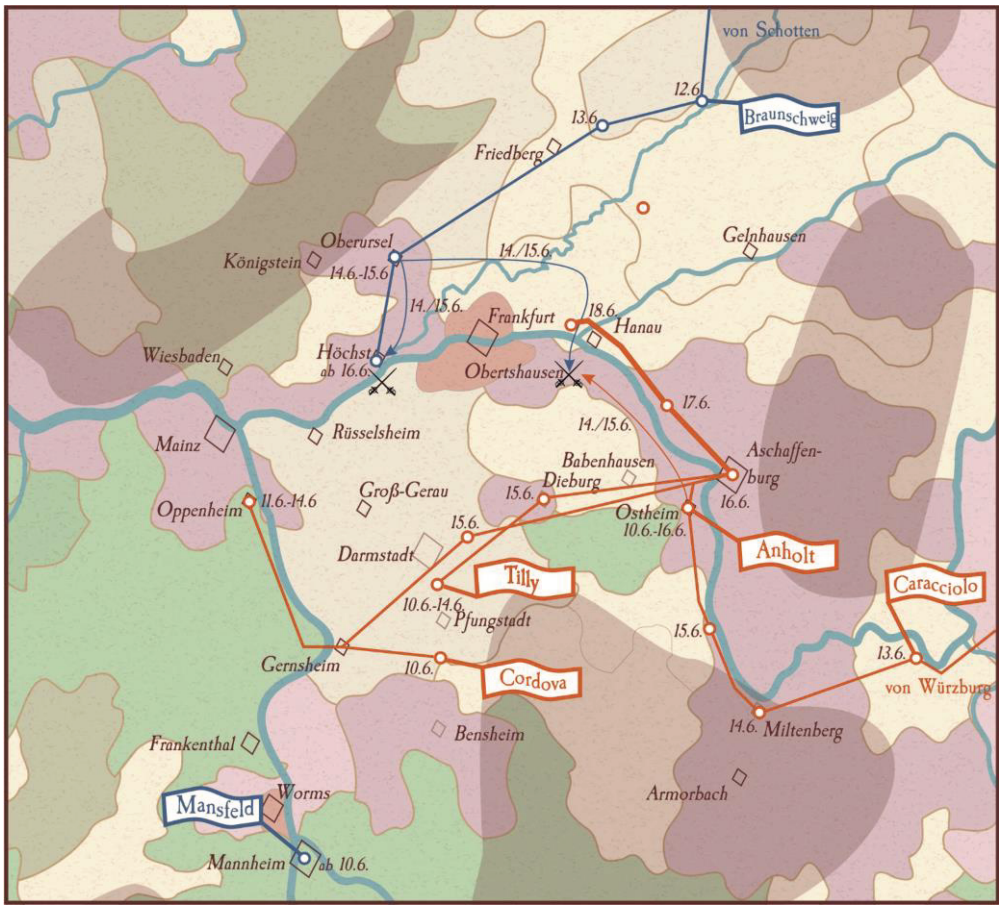


Figure 15

War Theatre Rhine-Main. Operations between 10th June and 18th June 1622. While the Electoral Palatinate army under Mansfeld remained near Mannheim, Christian von Braunschweig reached Oberursel on 15th June and after the capture of Höchst moved his headquarters there on 16th June Tilly massed his troops near Aschaffenburg and advanced from there on the northern side of the Main against Frankfurt from 16th June. During the night of 18/19th June, the army camped in the open field between Hanau and Frankfurt.

ammunition could be loaded in addition to the bullet or instead of it. These were pouches, boxes or cans made of cloth, leather, wood or tin, filled with musket balls, nails or simply stones or scrap metal. When fired, these containers ruptured and turned the cannon into a huge shotgun. At the right distance, such a charge could hit many soldiers or horsemen and their horses at the same time, tearing large gaps in their ranks - with a corresponding demoralising effect on the rest of the troops.

The great weakness of artillery in the 17th century was its rate of fire. The time between two shots was very long - not because the operation was so complicated, but because the barrels had to cool down between shots. More than 5 shots per hour were not possible, otherwise there was a danger that the barrels would burst. The 18 guns of the Imperial League Armada were thus able to fire an average of one shot every 40 seconds or 90 shots per hour. In battle, if there was enough time to prepare, the artillery positions were therefore secured with ramparts, ditches and bulwarks. If the position was nevertheless in danger of being overrun by the enemy and the cannons lost, the gunners carried copper nails which they drove into the firing holes. This prevented the enemy from immediately using the pieces against their own troops. Cavalrymen also carried nails for the same reasons. In this way they could render the enemy's artillery useless, even if they could only take his positions for a short time.

The cannons of the 17th century were cast in bronze and weighed 1.5 -2.5 tons, depending on the calibre. They were mounted on carriages with iron-shod wheels and were pulled by 4-6 horses. The accessories, ammunition and the different types of powder were transported on separate wagons, so that each cannon was accompanied by a considerable number of wagons. Ultimately, the artillery train determined how fast an army could march. Tilly's troops had no problems in this respect on their march to Höchst. The armada made good progress on the well-built road along the river and reached Hanau in the early evening, which they bypassed to bivouac in the open field between Hanau and Frankfurt. They were still at least a day and a half's march from Höchst.

There was no idleness in the Brunswick camp either. A delegation of officers had set out for Frankfurt with plenty of gold to buy the necessary materials, especially ropes, raft trees, boards and iron fittings. There they were received by the Frankfurt City Council and allowed into the city, but there was no consensus on whether to help the Brunswickers. At first, the faction that wanted to maintain strict neutrality prevailed and therefore rejected the deal.

The Brunswickers remained stubborn, but after the strains of the last months they also made extensive use of the opportunities offered by the big city and enjoyed themselves to the best of their ability. In doing so, they were extremely boastful. The good citizens were shocked to learn that Brunswick officers swore loudly and publicly to the devil.

Christian of Brunswick sent out the cavalry to plunder the villages in the vicinity and to have them prepared for burning. After all, the duke's motto, "*God's friend and the priests' enemy*", had to be put into practice. The Brunswick horsemen did a great job. The Kurmainz towns of Kalbach, Obererlenbach, Stuttlingen (this hamlet no longer exists today), Oberursel, Sossenheim, Stierstadt, Kirdorf, and Weißkirchen were thoroughly looted and prepared for burning. But even Soden and Sulzbach, both belonging to Frankfurt, were not spared on this day. Most of the population had taken refuge in the forests with their livestock and movable property, but there were always some who did not want to or could not come along. For example, the mother of a Wendelin Stroh from Sossenheim ultimately burned to death in her bed because she was "*unable to escape due to weakness*".

In the meantime, the infantry was not idle either and prepared defensive positions along the Nidda. There were two crossings that came into question: the bridge at Nied and the crossing at Rödelheim Castle. The fishing village of Nied, under Hanauian rule, was completely destroyed so as not to provide cover for the Imperial League troops in the event of an attack on the bridge. The bridge itself was not destroyed, but a stronger unit of musketeers was stationed there and the bridge barricaded. Around Rödelheim, the forest was cut down, and positions and barricades were built from the trunks, which were manned by several hundred musketeers. In addition, the castle of the Counts of Solms-Rödelheim, located on an island in the Nidda, was occupied. It is not entirely clear whether or not this occupation was done with the consent of Count Friedrich zu Solms-Rödelheim; in any case, the Count and Knyphausen had fought on the same side both in Holland at the beginning of the century and in the Hanseatic War against the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel in 1615. Since they were both officers, they probably knew each other well.

Preparations for the construction of the bridge also began in Höchst. Since there were no more boats and barges far and wide, the bridge builder gathered everything he could find in large barrels to use as floats. Since the Höchst people traded according to Frankfurt measurements, there were plenty of

barrels that held one "ohm" - that was 1432 litres. The barrels were about one metre fifty high, had a diameter of one metre at the ends and weighed 120 kg. Since the distance to be covered was about 175 metres, 150-160 barrels had to be driven up, checked for tightness and, if necessary, repointed. [2]

The bank areas had to be prepared at the intended crossing point by backfilling and excavation in such a way that the dredging trucks could roll onto the bridge's roadway and back down again without any height offset. In addition, large, thick posts had to be driven into the embankment on both sides of the Main to which the floating structure could be securely attached with ropes. Since the nights were very short so close to the summer solstice on St. John's Day, work on the bridge could be done almost around the clock. But all these preparations would have been useless if the urgently needed material for the actual bridge would not soon arrive.

Figure 16

Skirmish between cavalry units. Depiction of a cavalry skirmish as fought by Christian of Brunswick's cavalry with imperial ligist cornets south of the Main.

[2] See Supplement for construction of barrel bridge.

Saturday 18th June.

The morning began with good news for the Brunswickers. Colonel Pfaff's troops operating south of the Main had encountered two more cornets of Bavarian horsemen and had also beaten and dispersed them by a surprise attack. This was important beyond the morale-boosting victory, for larger enemy mounted formations on the southern bank could have scuppered all plans for retreat. But apparently Tilly had only sent smaller formations that the Brunswick cavalry, by all accounts excellently mounted, could deal with.

On top of that, the horsemen had also made rich booty, for they had intercepted a convoy from Hesse-Darmstadt with which the young Landgrave, who had been taken hostage by Mansfeld with his father, was to be brought to Frankfurt after his release. While the young landgrave was able to escape and arrived safely with his companions in Frankfurt with his brothers who had already fled there, the stolen wagons were taken to the camp in Höchst. There they were placed with the hundreds of other wagons on which the Westphalian loot of the Brunswickers was stacked.

The militarily experienced officers around Colonel Knyphausen urged Christian from Brunswick to take measures to secure their endangered position. Without a secure crossing of the Main, the Brunswick army found itself in a precarious position between the Taunus - or the "Höhe" – height -, as the low mountain range was then called - and the river due to Tilly's army approaching from the east. Any further evasion to the west would have had to end at the Rhine at the latest. A possible line of retreat for an army, however, would have been the old trade route from Frankfurt to Cologne, whose passage over the heights was, however, dominated by the Kurmainz fortress of Königstein. Christian from Brunswick therefore led his body regiment on horseback to Kronberg and Königstein to reconnoitre the state of defence of the fortress and, if the opportunity arose, to take it in a coup. This would not only have solved the problem of a safe retreat, but could also have remedied the Brunswick army's serious lack of artillery, for the fortress was amply stocked with cannon. The Brunswick artillery train, on the other hand, carried only 3 larger pieces and two smaller field guns. The fortress, however, had been put in a state of defence and had been further warned of the enemy's approach by the arrival of the fugitive Oberursel garrison. The gate was closed, the cannons extended and the ramparts manned. There was no chance of the fortress being taken by surprise attack. The Brunswick arquebusiers turned

their horses and had to leave without having achieved anything. In this situation the feared news reached Christian from Brunswick: the tops of the cavalry of the Imperial League army had been sighted to the east of Frankfurt.

After the march from Hanau, the Imperial League troops gathered in an open field about a mile from the city and thus also outside the Frankfurt Landwehr defences. This Landwehr was part of the city's defence system. It consisted of a system of dense thorn hedges and ditches that stretched around the city walls at a distance of about two kilometres as a buffer zone. The passages were secured by control posts, i.e. fortified observation towers with barriers. Most of the watchtowers, such as the Bockenheimer and Friedberger Warte, still exist today. Defendable farmsteads, such as Gutleuthof or Hellerhof, were also integrated into the Landwehr system. Within the Landwehr circumfence were many gardens, but also, for example, the Frankfurt gallows near the accordingly named "*Galgenwarte*", which is now less deterrently called "*Galluswarte*". Established in the 15th century, the Landwehr no longer played a major military role, but served as a certain protection against marauding people and quick surprise attacks by enemy cavalry units.

Tilly's troops had only covered about 15 km that day. With another forced march, the army could have easily reached the Nidda that day. However, Tilly had certain news through his Croatian scouts that the Brunswickers' improvised bridge over the Main was not yet finished and would not be in the

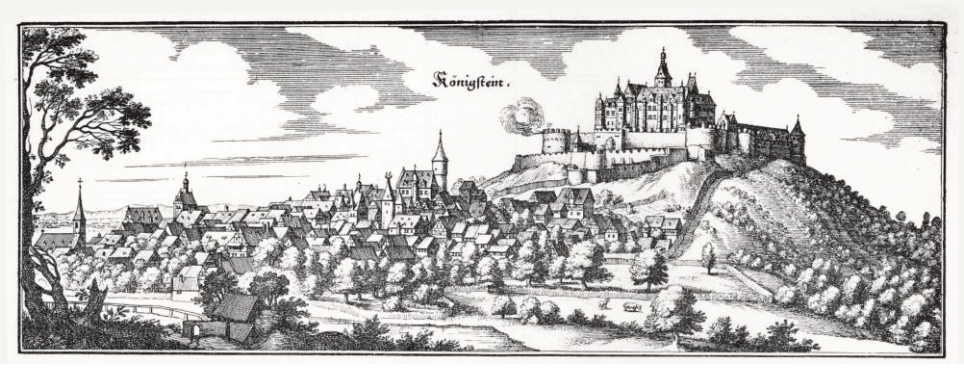


Figure 17

The Kurmainz fortress of Königstein. The fortress guarded the trade route from Frankfurt to Cologne over the Höhe, as the Taunus was called at the time. The road was reconnoitred as a possible line of retreat by Christian von Braunschweig.

next few hours. There was therefore no immediate need for action. Such a march would only have dispersed his troops further and they would thus have come into the Brunswickers' range one after the other. Therefore, he decided to gather the army at this safe place for the time being and allow the soldiers a few hours of rest. However, he had the cavalry patrol around Frankfurt to prevent the Brunswickers from receiving help from the city. A considerable number of Brunswick officers who had been in the city were surprised by this development and could no longer get to their troops. As the citizens of Frankfurt noticed with some satisfaction, they also suddenly stopped acting in a pompous manner.

Sunday, 19th June.

In view of the imminent confrontation between the armies of Christian from Brunswick and Tilly, the Frankfurt Council had decided in the course of the previous day to provide the Brunswickers with material for the construction

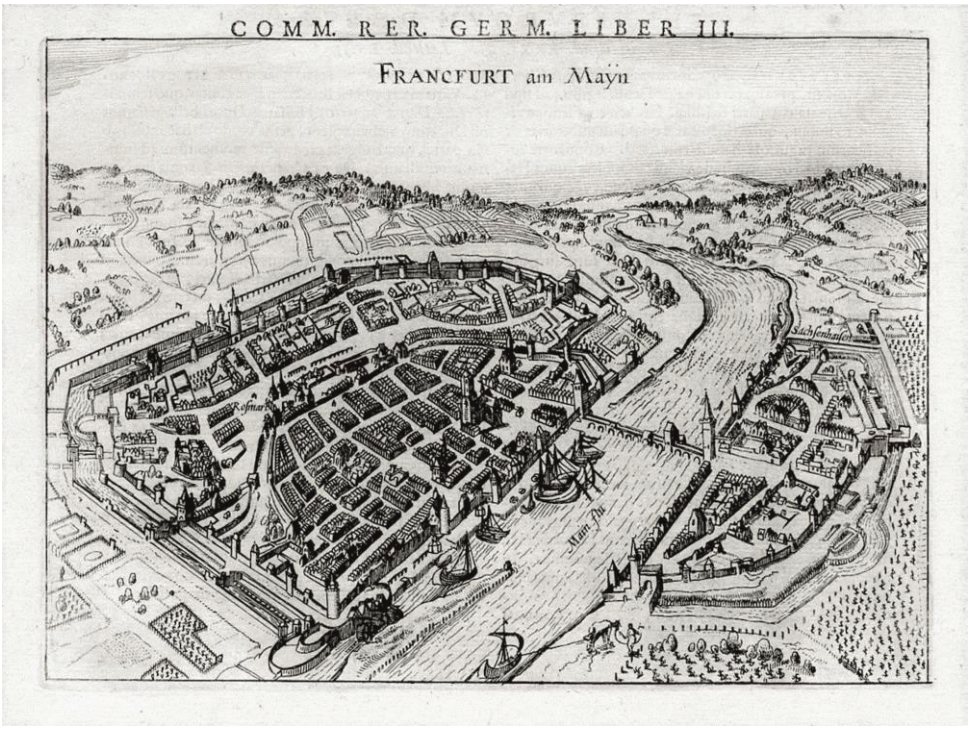


Figure 183

The Free Imperial City of Frankfurt am Main. From the walls of the city fortifications, the refugees could see their villages burning.

of a bridge, in accordance with the old rule of war, "*that one should build the enemy a golden bridge and help him to it*". This rule goes back to the realisation that it is better not to fight a fleeing enemy, but in case of doubt even to actively support him in his flight, so that he does not lose face and, for lack of a way out, delivers a desperate battle that also does more harm than good to the attacker. Since in this case the Frankfurters were at least officially not a party to the conflict at all, it cannot be ruled out that this was a protective claim to justify to Tilly the good deal with the Brunswickers. In this case, the "golden" bridge may only have meant that ultimately the offer of the Brunswickers over the purchase of the material was high enough to risk Tilly's wrath.

In any case, the council sent construction timber, boards, fittings, ropes and anchors down the Main together with a squad of carpenters. Since the preparatory work had been completed, work could begin immediately on the bridge. Although it would not be nearly as durable as the bridge at Höxter, the duke decided that speed was preferable in view of the advancing enemy.

The fire master was ordered to set fire to the prepared villages. The rising column of smoke from Sossenheim was the signal for the fire guards in the other towns to set them ablaze as well. The citizens and refugees on the walls of Frankfurt were thus able to see their homes and the villages in the surrounding area destroyed in one fell swoop. Those who did not despair at the sight hoped for the opportunity to retaliate.

But this was not to remain the only spectacle that was offered to the observers on the outdated Frankfurt city fortifications on this Sunday. In the afternoon, the entire imperial-ligist armada paraded, battle-armed unit by unit, with flags flying, directly in front of the city's moat in the direction of the Bockenheimer Warte. Cavalry reconnaissance had reported to Tilly and his staff that the bridge at Nied was well fortified and easy to defend because of the steep banks. Therefore, the army command decided to advance via Rödelheim towards Höchst. The entire baggage was left behind in the east of Frankfurt under the guard of a few ensigns of musketeers. The late departure of the army on this day is probably explained by the fact that it was a Sunday according to the Gregorian calendar and therefore a field service was held in the camp of the Catholic troops before the march. Services before the battle were common practice, and the deeply religious Tilly attached great importance to them, as some pictures prove. He was nevertheless aware that only a few soldiers in his army were truly religious; many were not even Catholic.

The units of the imperial-ligist army marched in an order that allowed them to move directly from the march into the planned order of battle. The vanguard was formed by Anholt's units. Because the crossing at Rödelheim was entrenched and also occupied by the Brunswickers, Anholt sent his 24-year-old captain Count Gottfried Huyn de Geleen ahead with several hundred musketeers to capture and secure it. According to the Count's recollections, the firefight lasted almost the rest of the day. But finally the young officer succeeded in driving the Brunswick musketeers out of their positions in the floodplain forest of the Nidda without any casualties of their own, so that by the evening only the castle itself, situated somewhat away from the actual crossing, was still in Brunswick hands.

Count Huyn de Geleen made a impressive career for himself in the further course of the war. After Anholt's death, he took over his regiment as commander-in-chief and eventually became sergeant-general and even rose to the rank of field marshal. He was taken prisoner several times, but was always exchanged. Before the end of the war, he took his leave of the army in 1647 and took over the Landeskomtur of Alden Biessen in the Spanish Netherlands, a position comparable to an Amtmann, which he held very successfully. He died in Maastricht in 1657, aged just under 60.

The main part of the army camped in full armour for the few dark hours within the Frankfurt Landwehr near the Bockenheimer Warte, roughly where the

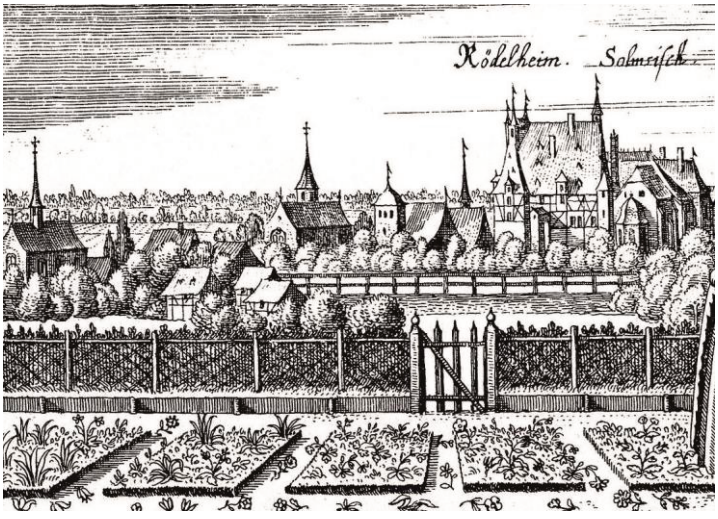


Figure 54

View of Rödelheim. The castle of the Count of Solms-Rödelheim at the crossing of the Nidda was used by Brunswick troops to briefly halt the advance of Tilly's troops.

university library and the Palmengarten can be found today. Tilly's and Cordova's soldiers were used to the hardships of such campaigns and had been through worse than camping out in the open on a warm June night. Most were battle-hardened veterans who had fought on a variety of battlefields across Europe. Many had been in this war since the Battle of White Mountain. Tilly's troops had narrowly escaped disaster at Mingolsheim, thanks in part to their good discipline. Together with the Spanish troops, they had won at Wimpfen and on the Lorsch Heath. That is why they were not worried about the upcoming battle; they trusted each other and they trusted Tilly, whom they knew would not expose his men to senseless danger.

The Brunswick infantry had been preparing the planned positions at Sossenheim all day. Redoubts and palisades were prepared along the Schäferberg slope opposite Sossenheim. In front of these positions was the swampy lowland of the Sulzbach, about 100 m wide. On the other side, the terrain rose again quite steeply and led to a plateau on which the gardens of the Sossenheim residents were located and which extended to Eschborn. This cut in the terrain with the difficult terrain at the bottom made offensive operations by approaching Tercios practically impossible.

To the north, a few hundred metres from the village, an old, little-used country road led along. This country road had once been the old Roman road from the legion's base in Mainz to Nida, today's Heddernheim. Today, motorway 66 follows its course over long stretches. At its bridge over the Sulzbach there was a gallows called "*Gericht zum tiefen Wege*" (court to the deep path) because the road here sloped steeply down to the stream. This bridge was thrown down by the Brunswickers to prevent circumventing actions by the Imperial League troops on their left flank. Attempts to circumvent further afield were made difficult by the Sulzbach lowland, which was also swampy to the north, and would have been detected early enough from the Schäferberg by the wide-open terrain.

On the other side of the Sulzbach, five redoubts were thrown up in the village along the road from Rödelheim to cover the crossing over the small stone bridge. Although already located more on the right flank of the Brunswickers, this was the key position that had to be held if the breakthrough of the Imperial League troops was to be prevented. What exactly these positions looked like is unfortunately not known. Probably the still smoking remains of some larger houses were removed from their foundation walls and then fortified. Other battle reports speak of five fortifications, one behind the other, concentrically

grouped around the bridge. However, since the terrain in Sossenheim rises quite rapidly from the bridge towards Rödelheim, this is not plausible because only the garrison of the outermost position could have intervened in the battle without shooting their comrades in the lines in front in the back. Five independent entrenchments, on the other hand, could cover each other and thus bring many more gunners into action at the same time.

The right flank of the Brunswickers was unproblematic to defend. After crossing the bridge, the road from Sossenheim to Höchst led along a rather steeply rising terrain of 15-20 metres difference in altitude at the lower end of which ran the marshy lowland of the Sulzbach, which turned sharply to the southwest directly after the bridge. The slope was overgrown with dense thorny hedges, which in peacetime very effectively prevented the cattle grazing on the commons between the Nidda and the Sulzbach from reaching the higher fields and gardens. Now this impenetrable slope with the swamp in front of it made any attempts to circumvent the Brunswick positions impossible and therefore did not need to be specially fortified.

While some of the infantrymen were shanning in the heat of the summer day, preparations were being made in the camp for the crossing. The wagons with the military equipment not needed for the battle and the booty were packed and made ready, because they were to cross the river first. In addition, the fireworkers prepared some surprises in the camp and in the city. The crew of the castle prepared its defence by setting up double hook rifles and small guns. Meanwhile, work on the bridge was feverish. Because there were no suitable barges for a proper ship-bridge, large barrels were emptied, sealed and fixed in a wooden frame as floats. Despite the help of the Frankfurt carpenters, construction progressed slowly.

Towards evening, the troops returned to camp from the entrenchment work, except for a few guard ensigns. The cavalry, which had been roaming in the Vordertaunus until then, was now also assembled again in front of Höchst. While the work on the bridge continued all night by torchlight, the Brunswick soldiers spent the night in camp. The mood there was tense, because it was not clear what would happen the next day. The scouts had reported a large number of enemy units; probably the Spanish and Bavarians together would have considerably more soldiers in their ranks. Would the Brunswick troops be able to resist long enough to allow the passage of the non-military cortege, which had swelled considerably in recent months and in which many of the soldiers' families were travelling? Or would they have to be left behind by the

withdrawing troops and abandoned to their fate? Among the foot soldiers themselves, the majority were facing their first ever major battle. While some dreamed of the heroic deeds they would perform tomorrow, others hoped that they would endure the terror, stand their ground and survive. Even for the tried servants in the Brunswick Armada, the last war in the service of the Hanseatic League had been some years ago and they had not grown younger in that time. It was a different story for the horsemen, some of whom already had battle experience from the previous year, even if not in a major battle. They were also less concerned about their safety, as they could always make off on their good horses if things went badly.

The Brunswick army command was worried because a significant number of officers had not made it out of Frankfurt in time. These men would be sorely missed tomorrow in leading the inexperienced troops. In addition, Knyphausen's arm injury was making him worse and worse; to what extent he would be fit for action the next day would have to be seen. Either way, this time they had not managed to escape the grasp of the imperial ligist troops in time. Therefore, the fate of the Brunswick army would be decided tomorrow in a battle.

The battle

4 a.m. : The march to the battlefield

The sky had been clear all night and so close to the summer solstice it was almost daylight at 4am on Monday 20th June 1622. In Höchst and the surrounding camp, the drums were stirred and the trumpets blown. The guards at their posts fired their muskets into the air to remove any powder that had become damp overnight from the pan and barrel. The horsemen gave their horses, which were tethered just outside their tents, a generous helping of oats to keep them through the day's exertions, while the grooms gave them a final grooming before putting on their saddles. The pikemen put on their armour while the musketeers checked that their ammunition containers, also called the 12 apostles because of their number, all contained the right amount of powder and a bullet. Rapiers and daggers were sharpened one last time, although the soldiers had hardly done anything else last night. The ensigns freed the precious flags from the leather covers in which they were transported.

In the city, the officers stepped in front of the residences they occupied, mounted their horses and waited for Christian of Brunswick to ride out of the castle with his retinue to join him. He, however, had already been at the river a little longer with his command staff, because at about 4 o'clock the news came that the barrel bridge was now ready for use. The bridge looked solid enough: the barrels as floating bodies to the right and left of the roadway were held in place by crossbeams between them, which in turn were connected to four longitudinal beams, one on the outside and one on the inside of the barrels. On the inner two longitudinal beams, massive planks were nailed to form the roadway of about one and a half span widths. The whole construct was held in place with massive ropes on the banks and anchors in the stream. The duke expressed the expectation that now, after all, the evacuation could proceed quickly. The bridge master, however, pointed out that the Frankfurters had only supplied rather thin beams and too few iron fittings for their connections. The load-bearing capacity of such a bridge was also in

principle much lower than that of a proper ship-bridge and also much more susceptible to uneven loading - the carters had to be careful to stay in the middle of the bridge. The wagons also had to keep a good distance from each other to prevent rocking and local overloading due to stagnation. Together with the wagon master, they had determined the order in which the wagons were to cross the bridge. First the wagons with the duke's war chest and booty, then the wagons with the ammunition and other regimental equipment not needed in battle. Only then would it be the turn of the soldiers' wagons and the civilian entourage - if they could hold off the enemy long enough. Christian of Brunswick was confident that this would certainly be the case, his colonels were more sceptical. Together they rode through the Mainz Gate back into the city to join the waiting armada.

The units gathered with their flags outside the camp in front of the Frankfurt Gate on the road to Sossenheim. There, one could see the small, approximately half-metre square flags of thirteen equestrian regiments and the large, 2 x 2 metre flags of seven infantry regiments. But how many soldiers actually fought in Christian from Brunswick's army on that day is disputed. This is not surprising, because not even the commanders themselves had precise figures. This uncertainty about the actual size of armies runs through all accounts of the 30 Years' War. While the numbers and identities of the fighting units are often known, their actual strength often deviated dramatically downwards from the nominal one. This is normal to some extent in any era, because not all soldiers of a unit are always fit for service, are on leave or have been seconded to other duties. But since in the days of the war entrepreneurs in the 17th century the owners of the regiments, and at a lower level the leaders of the sub-units, were paid a flat rate for every man they led into the field, there was a great incentive to adjust these figures upwards and collect for ghost soldiers who had never existed. If one follows the information that the duke had provided to the city of Eisenach in May as justification for the food to be delivered, he bid for 25,000 foot soldiers and 7,000 horsemen. Many authors consider the number of foot soldiers to be too high and that of the horsemen even too low, although it is difficult to imagine with what motivation he should have underestimated. Estimates vary between 8,000 - 15,000 infantrymen and 6,800 - 8,300 cavalrymen. However, how many there were exactly - something between 15,000 and 21,000 men in total seems plausible - not all of them were now on their way to the battlefield. A few ensigns of musketeers each occupied the castle in Rödelheim, guarded the crossing at Nied and the construction of the bridge, or the cavalry on the southern side of

the Main. Also absent were the cavalrymen operating on the south side of the Main and the scouts in the Taunus.

At the same time, the soldiers of the allied imperial and ligist army also finished their bivouac at the Bockenheimer Warte and prepared to march off. As they had no tents with them, their clothes had become damp from the dew. Now in the freshness of the early morning they were quite stiff and could do with a march. Here, too, the army gathered behind their flags on the marching road, namely the one from the Bockenheimer Warte to Rödelheim. Since the Catholic troops were organised a little differently, here there were 132 companies of horsemen, 82 ensigns of Bavarian and allied foot soldiers and 6 regiments of Spanish infantry. For this army, too, exact figures are difficult to determine, but there is broad agreement that the allied armies were superior in both infantry and cavalry by at least a factor of 1.5, rather more. The difference, however, was particularly marked in the artillery. While the Brunswickers could only lead 3 half-cartoons into the field, Tilly and Cordova had 18 heavy guns with them.

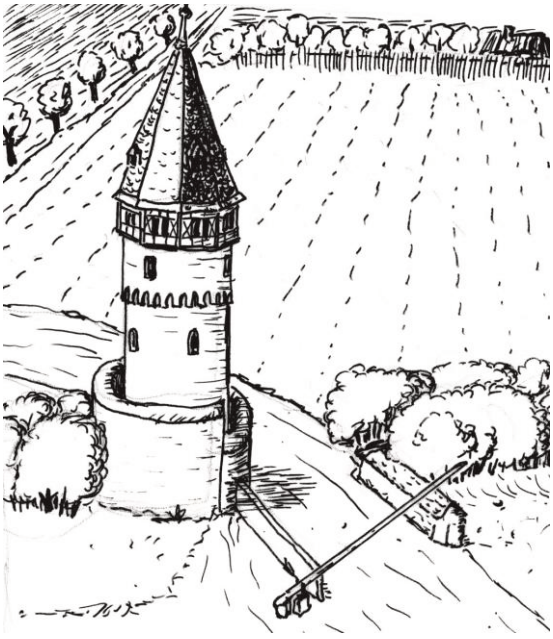


Figure 55

Bockenheimer Warte. With a tower and barrier, the Warte controlled the passages in the Landwehr, here on Bockenheimer Landstraße. The Imperial League troops passed this control post early in the morning of 20 June 1622 on their way to Rödelheim.

When the sun rose at shortly after 5 o'clock, both armies started moving almost simultaneously. After a short march of barely 40 minutes, the Brunswick army reached the prepared positions and the guards posted there. The Köchler regiment, armed mainly with muskets, about 1000 men strong, moved into the five redoubts on the eastern side of the Sulzbach, which had been built from the rubble of the destroyed village. Musketeers detached from their regiments occupied the two redoubts at the ends of the front line along the Sulzbach lowland as well as the palisades in between. Behind them, on the gentle slopes of the Schäferberg sloping down to the east, the pikemen took up positions in their regiments. Not all soldiers in the Brunswick army had muskets or pikes. Quite a few were armed with so-called Danish clubs, others had only rapiers and daggers. The three pieces were placed between the musketeers and the regimental formations. The hedges south of the road, which were actually there to keep the cattle grazing on the Höchster Allmen in the Nidda lowlands from running into the village and onto the fields, were also manned by musketeers. Along the road behind and on the plateau of the Schäferberg, the cavalry took up positions. The choice of the Brunswick position behind the Sulzbach lowland, which was difficult to cross, and the

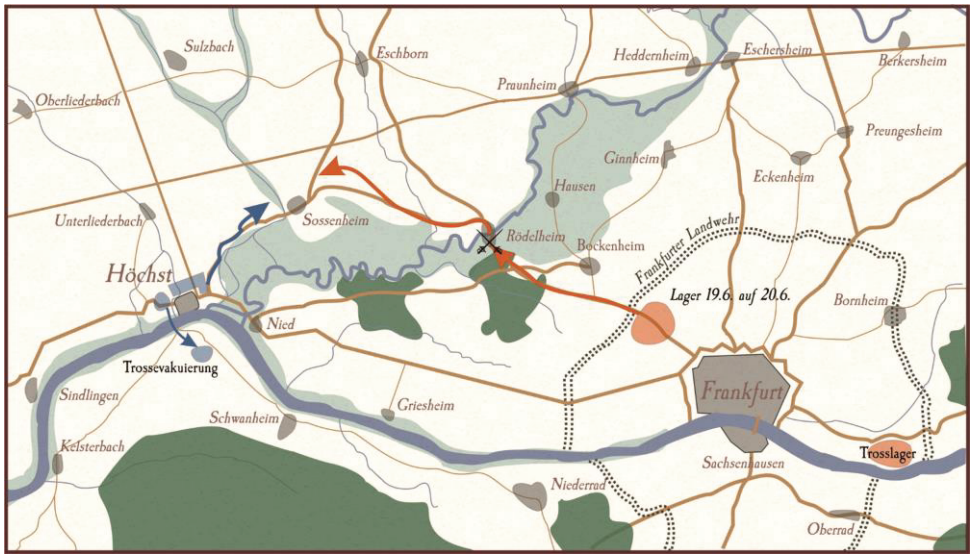


Figure 56

Monday, 20th June 1622, early in the morning. The Brunswick army moved from its camp near Höchst to the prepared positions near Sossenheim. The Imperial League army had spent the night within the Landwehr near the Bockenheimer Warte and moved via Rödelheim, where there was a stalling battle at the castle, to the battlefield.

impenetrable hedges of the Allmen showed its purely defensive character - own offensive actions were not planned. The Brunswickers' plan was to hold off the Allied armada until at least the bulk of the troop had an opportunity to cross the Main. The first line of defence was to be the positions at the Nidda bridge in Rödelheim. However, as could be seen from the low number of troops, this was only intended to delay the advance towards the actual defensive position near Sossenheim. When the imperial ligist troops had been beating their brains in vain against the fortifications in Sossenheim for a while, the Brunswickers wanted to retreat in an orderly fashion under the protection of the cavalry to the bridge and, under cover of fire from the garrison of the castle, begin their retreat across the bridge. Perhaps they even hoped to be able to repel the attacks of Tilly's troops until nightfall, in order to then be able to retreat under the cover of darkness.

Until then, however, there was still a long way to go. By 7 a.m., all units of the Brunswick army were in their designated positions. As the sun rose higher and higher, getting warmer and shining in their faces, they had nothing to do but wait for the arrival of the enemy armada.

6 a.m.: The engagement at Rödelheim

The advance guard of the allies reached the Nidda bridge near Rödelheim, which Huyn de Geleen had captured yesterday in the course of the afternoon and secured overnight with his men, at about a quarter past six. However, as the first ensigns approached the bridge, a volley of musket fire burst from the embrasures and windows of the castle. of the vanguard were hit and collapsed, the others hastily retreated out of range. Although the road leading to the bridge was still within firing range of the castle and there were at most 200-300 musketeers there, their fire could seriously disrupt the advance and cause considerable losses.

Storming the ancient castle would take too long and also claim many victims. So Anholt reported to Tilly that the artillery was needed in front. Immediately a battery set out, and the units marching ahead made way for it on the road. In the meantime, an imperial trumpeter called on the garrison to surrender the small fortress immediately, which was met with silence. Meanwhile, the first battery of artillery reached the castle and were brought into position. About a

quarter of an hour later, the gunners had placed their four guns out of musket range, loaded and aimed. At the command of the gunmaster, the gunners detonated the charge and the bullets struck the walls and towers, causing considerable damage in the ramshackle castle. The cannons were readjusted by the cannoneers, reloaded and fired. Then a white flag appeared over the walls.

In the castle, Friedrich from Solms-Rödelheim had seen with horror that the imperial-ligist troops were literally bringing out the heavy guns. Although the lord of the castle had more or less voluntarily given his castle to the Brunswickers as a position to hold off the allied forces, due to the old friendship with his brother-in-arms Kynphausen, a bombardment with heavy artillery was something completely different. To prevent the foreseeable destruction of his property, he urged the commanding officer in Brunswick to comply with the surrender demands immediately.

This guy was in a quandary. He realised that his mission to stop the advancing troops would soon be over. But he could not surrender his position without a fight; Christian of Brunswick would have court-martialled him for that. Therefore, he waited for the first two salvos before agreeing to surrender. He could not have waited much longer, given the damage caused by the shelling. He and his men would not have been spared once the castle had been shot to pieces. And with the old walls, that could be the case with the very next volley. The Brunswick officer therefore offered to cease hostilities if he could leave unmolested with his men and weapons. Tilly, not amused by the delay anyway, immediately agreed. The Brunswick musketeers made off as fast as they could in the direction of Sossenheim, escorted at a distance for a while by some Croats.

Shortly before 9 o'clock, the allied armada started moving again. The disruptive action had successfully delayed the advance by almost three hours. In the meantime, mounted arquebusiers reconnoitred the enemy’s positions. Their commander, Captain d'Aiguier, reported to Tilly and Cordova on the Brunswick dispositions. Tilly immediately realised that the decisive point of the Brunswick position was the Sulzbach bridge on their left wing. That was where the battle would be decided. And was relieved that he would be in command on this side, because Cordova, as the royal general, was entitled to the position of honour on the right flank.

Tilly's position as commander-in-chief of the Imperial League troops was not easy at this point. He was convinced of his abilities, which he had acquired in

the course of his long career. However, his reputation as a commanding general, despite his advanced age of 63 for an active military man, was not yet so great in early 1622 that he could claim primacy by virtue of that authority alone. It is true that his energetic actions had decisively influenced the Battle of the White Mountain in favour of the Catholic troops, but there de Bucquoy had been in supreme command and thus had taken the credit. Tilly's personal record as sole commander in the war for the Lower Palatinate, for all the strategic skill he displayed, was mixed at best: the victory at Wimpfen and, to a lesser extent, at Lorsch was countered by the defeat at Mingolsheim. On top of that, the League troops were massively supported by Cordova's Spaniards in all their victories. Now imperial troops were under his supreme command, but the imperial generals were also always in contact with the Infanta in Brussels. She occasionally had other ideas and expressed them in letters to her subordinates. This often brought the Spaniards into conflicts of loyalty. In the Spanish army, strict obedience was apparently emphasised even in the higher ranks, and thus the scope for initiative was limited for the officers when opportunities arose. An example of this was the Spanish officer Ochoja's strict insistence on his orders despite the possibility of preventing Christian from Brunswick's southward move at the outset by vigorously supporting Anholt in May in Westphalia. In addition, there was the proverbial pomposity of the noble Spanish commanders, always concerned with formalities and respect for their rank. This attitude did not fit in at all with Tilly's performance orientation and pragmatism. As later letters show, Tilly did not consider Cordova a good soldier either. However, Tilly and his war commissioners handled this potentially very conflictual situation extremely diplomatically and skilfully. This was demonstrated, for example, by the successful persuasion of Caracciolo, whom Rupp persuaded to follow Tilly's orders to support Würzburg, contrary to his original orders. All in all, the cooperation between Tilly and the Spanish generals went surprisingly smoothly, at least in the result.

10 a.m.: The armies are in sight

At about the height of Eschborn, the Imperial League troops took up battle formation. On the right wing, the imperial troops under Cordova, divided into two tercios. The right tercio consisted of Spaniards, Walloons, Italians and Lorraine, the left of Germans. Before that, three units of musketeers who were detached from their tercios and thus acted as Forlorn Hopes. The Imperial

cavalry took up positions in two separate blocks under d'Inchy and de Silva on the far right flank, while Cordova's cavalry units were placed between the infantry tercios and in reserve behind them. The Bavarian infantry was positioned in three large blocks directly in front of Sossenheim: two smaller ones in front, the largest in the centre behind. In front, likewise, two Forlorn Hopes of Musketeers, who were to play a special role in the coming battle. The Bavarian cavalry were positioned in their units to the right and left of the largest Bavarian tercio; given the unsuitable terrain for cavalry, no special role was envisaged for them, at least in the early stages of the battle. In the centre in front of this battle line, the artillery was deployed. Then the entire armada slowly advanced.

Abbildung 19

Around 10 a.m.: The parties approach within sight of each other. Coming from Rödelheim, the Imperial League army lines up in battle order: on the right wing, the Imperial Spanish troops in two tercios, to the right of them and behind them the cavalry, in front of them three Lost Bunch musketeers. On the left wing, the Bavarian-Ligist infantry in three tercios, two in the front line, the largest in reserve behind. Behind on the left, the cavalry, in front two lost heaps of musketeers. The artillery with 18 guns in an open triangle in front, first taking fire on the three guns of the Brunswickers, then on their infantry drawn up in chequerboard pattern on the eastern slopes of the Schäferberg.

The entire terrain of the plain between the Main and the heights of the Taunus consists of gentle undulations whose crests run from northwest to southeast. The area is extraordinarily fertile and was therefore intensively used for agriculture. By the middle of June, the grain in the fields was already standing tall, the old varieties were growing over men's height, so that at first only the spits of the pikemen could be seen from the Brunswick positions of the advancing Catholic army. At first the advance went easily up the bump, on the western slope of which lay Sossenheim. At the top of the knoll, approximately where the road from Rödelheim turns from northwest to southwest, the Brunswick position came into view - at least for the troops marching on or near the road and thus not obstructed in their view by the

Figure 20

Artillery in battle. Just as in Höchst, artillery is used here directly on the battlefield without special emplacements.

grain. The reports emphasise the good order of the Brunswickers on the eastern flanks of the Schäferberg. This is not so much a mountain as a gentle hill which, as the name suggests, was used as sheep pasture at the time.

The Brunswickers immediately opened fire from their three cannons. Their hope was to inflict as much damage as possible to the enemy troops before the imperial-ligist artillery could play out their superior numbers. Unfortunately for the Brunswickers, the barrel of one of their guns exploded with the first shot. The gunners had loaded a little more powder because of the long firing range. Nevertheless, an intact barrel would have been able to withstand this without any problems. Possibly the shelling of the Höchster during the siege of the city a few days earlier had invisibly damaged the barrel. Some of the gunners standing close to the gun paid for the misfortune with their lives.

As soon as the imperial artillery had left the area of the fields and the field of fire became clearer in the gardens of the Sossenheimers, they returned fire in the advance. In the first few minutes of the artillery battle, the imperial cannon put a Brunswick cannon out of action with a direct hit. Whether luckily or excellently aimed, the Brunswickers withdrew their last cannon from the front because an artillery duel simply no longer made sense when they were 18 times outnumbered. Instead of exposing their last cannon to the targeted fire of the superior forces, they brought it to Höchst where it could still be used to cover the crossing.

The Spanish and Bavarian gunners set up their guns in the form of an open triangle, with the left battery firing to the right at the enemy's left wing and vice versa. This had the advantage over a vertical placement of the guns of firing diagonally through the infantry formations and thus always hitting something, while a straight shot could rush between two rows without doing any damage. The Brunswick formations were between 300 and 500 metres from the Imperial Brigade batteries, the first ranks at about the same height and the further ranks in succession then up the gentle hill. At this distance, such large targets were almost impossible for the experienced artillerymen to miss, and the rising terrain was ideal for ricochet shots, in which the iron balls did not bore into the slope but, like stones on water, bounced several times and bounced away flat before rolling out when all their energy had been expended. Since the pipes always had to cool down between shots, the rhythm of the detonations was rather leisurely. The eighteen rough pieces of the Bavarians and Spaniards could together fire a shot about every 40 seconds without damaging the barrels.

The shelling claimed many casualties in the Brunswick infantry formations - the exact number is not known, but may range in the several hundreds - but the greater effect was probably psychological. Standing around on a slope like oversized targets and being at the mercy of good gunners with no possibility of fighting back had unnerved even more disciplined troops. Then there was the enervating wait, lasting endless seconds for the next shot that you didn't know whether it would hit you or not. Then you would see the powder cloud at the muzzle of one of the tiny-looking guns on the other side of the valley before you heard the bang. The whole valley was filled with the peculiar roar of the flying bullet. The Brunswick army will have quickly learned that the bullets you only heard and did not see were harmless to you. But when they came at you like a dark pencil line in the sky, then it became dangerous. The impact was dull, and since it hadn't rained in a while, the ground was hard enough for the bullets to bounce off and rush flat through the rows. When they hit, they shredded the men. Limbs, guts with contents, and blood splattered

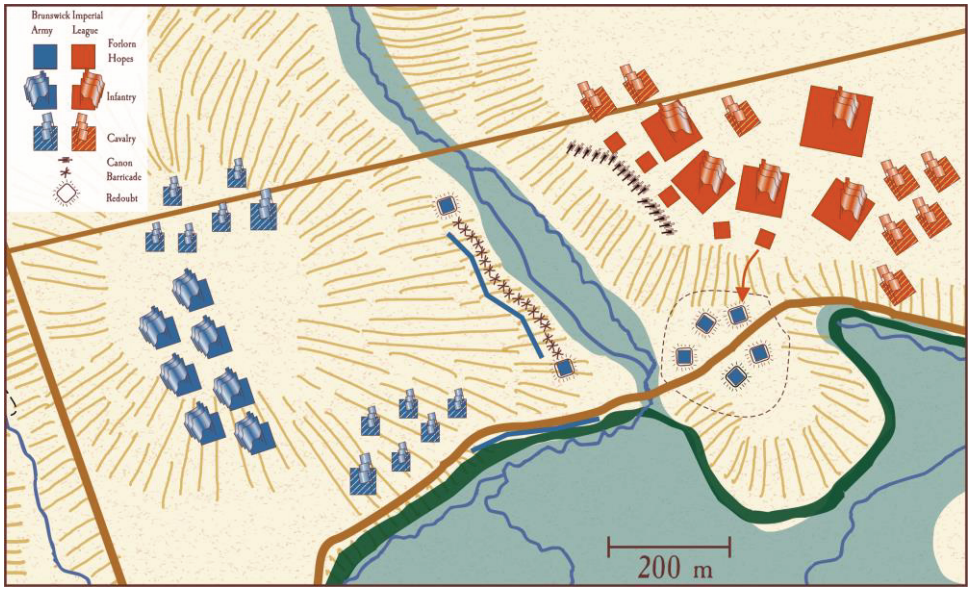


Figure 59

Shortly after noon. Retreat from the artillery fire. The Brunswickers have withdrawn their troops behind the crest of the Schäferberg to avoid the fire from the Imperial League artillery. Tilly then pulled the artillery forward to the edge of the terrain towards the Sulzbachaue, the tercios followed suit and von Magnis gave the order to take the redoubts in the ruins of Sossenheim with his musketeers.

through the area, sullying the bystanders. Splinters from the pikes and armour flew around and bore as projectiles into the unprotected arms and legs even of soldiers standing further away. The wounded screamed and were brought to the rear while the sergeants replenished the ranks with soldiers from the rear. In the heat of the day, the stench of blood and faeces was hard to bear. Flies were soon buzzing by the thousands around the Brunswickers standing in the sun, clumping onto the scraps of flesh lying around. For many, this situation may have been the first time the thought occurred to them that it probably wasn't such a good idea to join the Duke's army after all.

1 p.m.: The Artillery Bombardment shows Effect

Around 1 pm, after about two hours of constant shelling, during which the Imperial League artillery was able to fire about 150-160 rounds, the Brunswick army command decided not to wait until the inexperienced men could no longer stand the shelling and began to flee. They therefore withdrew the entire formations behind the crest of the Schäferberg, where they were out of sight of the gunners. Only the musketeers in the valley and in Sossenheim remained in their positions.

Tilly then had the artillery advance to the edge of the Sulzbach valley. There, however, regular artillery positions were not built, but the pieces were used like field artillery, which did not actually exist at the time. By standing 10-15 m above the valley floor on a ridge, they could fire over the heads of the advancing musketeers and thus support them.

During the previous two days, the Brunswickers had provided the remains of the village of Sossenheim, which had been burnt down for this very goal, with five redoubts. For this purpose, they had used the foundations of the destroyed houses and fortified them with beams and raised earth walls to form these fortifications. The positions were each manned by about 200 musketeers from the Köchler regiment. Because the 43 actions required to load and fire a musket took several minutes, even for trained riflemen, such a large number was necessary to guarantee a reasonably steady fire from such a position. This strong outpost on the eastern side of the Sulzbach would have stood in the flank of the Ligist army in the event of an attack and could thus pose a threat to the imperial forces, especially the relatively immobile artillery. In addition, the redoubts secured the small bridge of the Kurmainzer Strasse over the Sulzbach, over which the Brunswickers could bring reinforcements. It was

imperative that this outpost be removed so that the Imperial League army could advance in a broad front on the larger part of the Brunswick armada.

Tilly had the Obrist-Wachtmeister of Schmidt's regiment, Franz Magnis, a Bohemian descendant of successful Italian merchants, come to him and ordered him to take the outpost with 300 musketeers, whatever the cost. Magnis was 24 years old at the time and had already proved himself at the Battle of the White Mountain by smashing two enemy regiments entrenched at a strong house with his regiment and capturing many officers. Having risen to the rank of Obrist-Wachtmeister, he had administrative duties in the regiment and divided the guard duties; later this rank became Major. Tilly knew that Magnis was very ambitious and aspired to an even higher rank. This was his chance to distinguish himself further. He seized it - and how.

Tilly obviously used the mission-type tactics, although this term did not yet exist at the time. He explained the strategic importance of the bridge to Magnis and gave him the task of capturing it, without telling him in detail how to do it. This was evident from the fact that Magnis first reconnoitred the enemy position himself. He provided him with the necessary resources in the form of the Forlorn Hopes. Such a procedure fitted in well with Tilly's performance orientation, for in this way younger officers could prove themselves in a limited independent command and recommend themselves for higher tasks - or not. Since Tilly had already used this procedure in a similar way the day before when he conquered the Rödelheim Bridge with Huyn de Geleen, it is obvious to see this as a leadership principle he applied regularly.

So Magnis mounted his horse and rode west along the road towards the village with some of his soldiers and officers to take a look at the field entrenchments and develop a plan of attack. Since the Brunswickers initially left them unmolested, they had probably misjudged the distance to the redoubts and ventured a little too far ahead. For suddenly fire was opened from the nearest redoubt. His horse was hit and collapsed under him. He tried not to get under the dying horse when another bullet hit him on the breastplate and he fell. His comrades thought he was fatally shot and went to rescue him. To the joyful surprise of his men, however, he immediately jumped up again and pulled off his dented breastplate. He saw that the redoubt was completely enveloped in dense powder smoke and ordered it to be assaulted on the spot.

In their eagerness to seize the unexpected opportunity to kill an enemy officer, the Brunswickers had fired almost all their muskets in the redoubt and were celebrating their success. But they could now no longer see anything because

of the dense powder vapour created by the black powder of the volley. The attack of the shock troop from the smoke therefore took them completely by surprise and before they could do anything about it, the Bavarians were on the low rampart firing pistols and muskets into the densely packed Brunswickers, drawing their rapiers and stabbing the stunned defenders. Those who did not immediately fall victim to the attack dropped their muskets and fled the redoubt. The first redoubt was conquered, four remained.

Magnis immediately ordered the rest of his men into the captured redoubt and had the redoubt still occupied by Brunswickers on the other side of the road taken under fire. By firing non-stop, they forced the defenders to take cover. This enabled another assault force under Magnis to approach the second redoubt unmolested and take it by storm as well. This time, however, things did not turn out so well for Magnis and he was hit and wounded by a bullet below the right knee during the assault. However, after initial treatment, the wound did not hinder him at the moment and he was able to continue the fight.

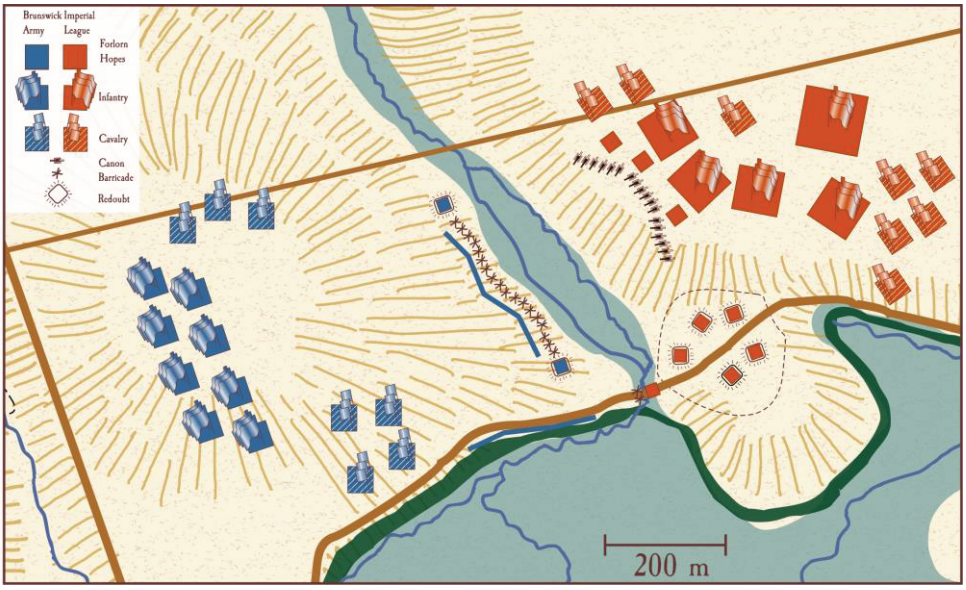


Figure 60

Later in the afternoon. Sossenheim and the Sulzbach crossing are taken. Franz Magnis and his musketeers had finally taken the redoubts in Sossenheim and occupied the bridge over the Sulzbach in a battle fiercely fought by both sides.

Further musketeers from Bavarian and imperial regiments were ordered to Magnis to occupy the redoubts that had already been captured. Following a tried and tested pattern, Magnis attacked the next redoubt with his men. The Brunswick defenders, however, had learned from the fate of the first two redoubts and now fired back, despite the danger of being hit. Therefore, this time the storm did not go off without casualties on the Bavarian side. Some soldiers fell. Nevertheless, Magnis still successfully led his unit to capture the fourth and fifth redoubts at the foot of the slope near the bridge over the Sulzbach. He had lost nearly two dozen of his men, but that was a small price to pay compared to the enemy losses, in which the entire regiment was routed and the commander was killed, as well as the tactical advantage gained.

While fierce fighting took place in the ruins of the village and at the Sulzbach Bridge, the vast majority of soldiers in both armies had a rather quiet afternoon. The tercios of the imperial-ligist troops and the cavalry had not yet been called into action, nor had they yet been seriously fired upon. They stood in their armour in the heat of the June afternoon on the plain outside the village and further north in the gardens, sweating and doing nothing. The Brunswick infantry, too, having at last been drawn out of direct fire behind the crest of the hill, had largely had their rest and were thus able to recover somewhat from the losses of the morning. But this calm was soon over.

3 p.m.: Sossenheim is taken

After the outpost had fallen and the Sulzbach Bridge had been taken, it was clear to the colonels of the Brunswick army that their position could not be held much longer and that the general attack by the Spanish and Bavarians was now imminent. Without artillery they would hardly be able to stop it. If they withdrew now, they could still take the army relatively undamaged under the cover of the cavalry to Höchst and there, under the protection of the castle, move the troops to the other side of the Main. But Christian of Brunswick was against this proposition. He felt that the proposal to retreat without having crossed swords with the enemy was an attack on his knightly honour. Besides, according to the reports from Höchst, by far not all the booty was brought on the other side of the Main. He therefore ordered a massive counterattack with several infantry regiments and parts of the cavalry. The infantry was to seize the bridge again, while the cavalry was to try to eliminate the artillery.

First, at about half past three, Christian of Brunswick sent the musketeers of his body regiment, as well as some horsemen, to attack the fifth redoubt held by Magnis near the Sulzbach bridge. Also due to lack of cover, several attacks were repulsed by the disciplined firing of imperial musketeers. In addition, Magnis had the Sulzbach Bridge barricaded with beams from the burnt houses and manned with musketeers.

The calm did not last long, however. The Bavarian guards in the higher entrenchments reported the approach of several squadrons of cavalry and several infantry regiments with pikes and muskets at around 4 pm. Magnis knew that his few hundred musketeers would not be able to withstand such a massive attack for long. He therefore immediately reported the Brunswick counterattack to Tilly in the rear and asked for reinforcements. Tilly immediately ordered Anholt to reinforce the captured outpost with the two regiments of Hovelberg and Trucksäs by advancing on his right. He also

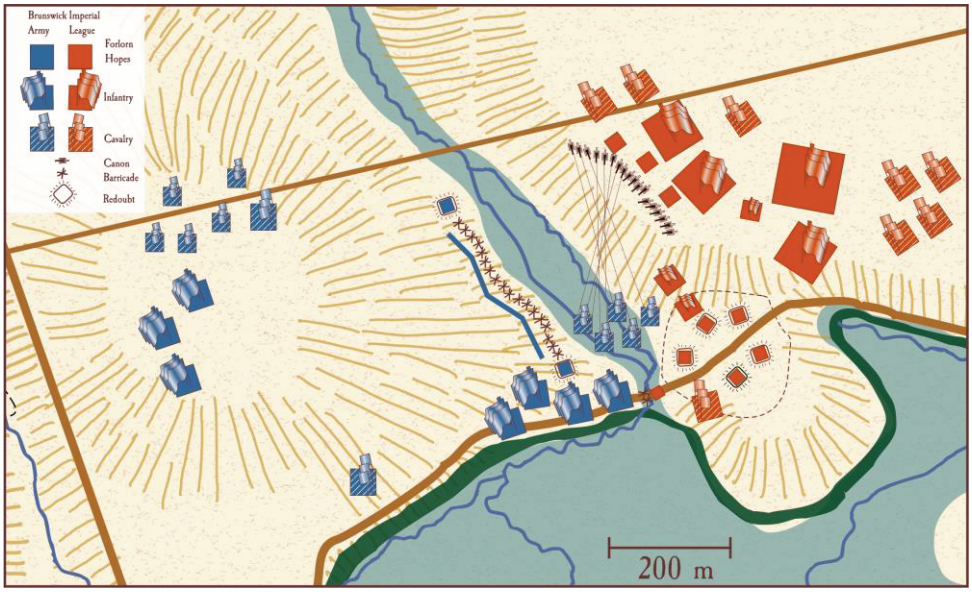


Figure 61

Around 5 pm. The Brunswick counter-attack. In an attempt to retake the bridge and positions, the Brunswick leadership threw several infantry regiments against them. This attack failed due to the support of the captured positions by two infantry and one cavalry regiment. At the same time, the cavalry tried to attack the Imperial League artillery. However, the horses got bogged down in the mire of the Sulzbach lowlands and suffered heavy losses from hailstorm ammunition.

ordered the cuirassiers under Eynatten to move forward and support the outpost.

Magnis did see that the requested reinforcements were on their way to their positions, but also that they would not arrive in time, as the Brunswick tercio was only 300 paces away from the bridge. Moreover, the Brunswick horsemen were attempting in large numbers to bypass the bridge through the marshy creek bed on his right. Since he could not hope to survive this attack in position, he had ordered a sortie of 600 of his musketeers and led them in open formation against the square. He had the tercio attack both in front and on the flanks. Such a tight formation as the tercio, while developing irresistible force when advancing on another closed unit or position, was completely helpless against a mobile enemy acting in small, flexible groups. Normally, an open rifle formation would have been an easy target for the cavalry, but they were trying to attack the imperial artillery on the left of the Brunswick tercio on the terrain shoulder above the Sulzbach.

The cavalry was the showpiece of the entire Brunswick army. All contemporary reports without exception praised the very high quality of the horses. In contrast to the foot troops, the Brunswick cavalry also had a certain amount of combat experience from the battle at Kirtorf, the retreat across the Weser and the smaller skirmishes of the last few days. Christian of Brunswick also saw himself primarily as a cavalry leader, as his portraits from this period show, all of which depict him in cuirassier armour and with a mounted pistol. Now he deployed his favourite troops for the first time in a major battle. One after the other, the squadrons rode from their positions on the slopes of the Schäferberg along the road towards the Sulzbach. When they reached the meadow, which they had to cross at an angle to reach the artillery positions, the riders found that their horses sank into the marshy ground up to their ankles and could only move forward with difficulty. The attack threatened to falter before it had even really begun.

In the meantime, the artillerymen had also noticed the impending horsemen's attack and loaded their cannons with hail ammunition. Once the gunners were aligned, the south-facing battery fired a volley at the approaching squadrons. The effect of the cartridge bullets on the densely packed mass of horses and men within point blank firing range of the guns was terrible. Rows and rows of hit horses went down, screaming, flailing and hurting the surrounding horses and thrown riders with their hooves. In the meantime, the crowd in the morass was getting stronger and stronger, because more cavalry was pushing

from behind. While the mounted officers were still trying to bring order to the disbanded ranks and continue the attack, the second volley crashed into the chaos. That was too much for the survivors. Those who could, turned their horses and tried to get to safety out of range of the cannons. The imperial ligist gunners fired one last volley into the fleeing horsemen, whose attack had thus collapsed after 24 hail shots. They left dozens of dead and dying horses and riders behind.

5 pm: Counterattack and retreat

The Brunswick infantry attack against the bridge had also stalled due to the approaching Bavarian reinforcements. Therefore, his colonels were finally able to convince Christian from Brunswick to now begin the planned retreat to the bridge at Höchst. Not much had been lost yet, there had been sensitive losses,

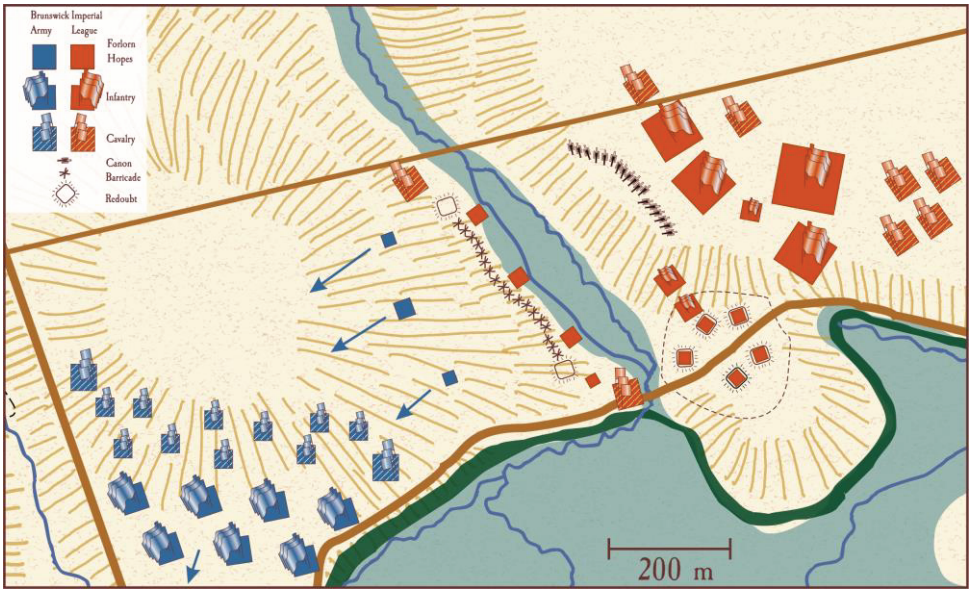


Figure 62

Shortly after 5 pm. After the counterattack had failed, the Brunswick army withdrew in good order. The remaining musketeers in the positions on the Schäferberg also retreated immediately at the first attack by Imperial League musketeers. Since Tilly and his staff could not see the terrain behind the Schäferberg, they feared a trap and initially sent out only two cavalry regiments for reconnaissance and pursuit.

but the army was still largely intact. Even if some of the spoils had to be abandoned.

First, the infantry regiments that had not yet been deployed withdrew from their positions on the western slope of the Schäferberg towards Höchst. The foot formations that had just been deployed were withdrawn along the road and the badly battered cavalry squadrons also retreated behind the Schäferberg out of sight of the Spaniards and Bavarians. Only the detached musketeers remained in their positions along the stream for the moment.

Meanwhile, the imperial army command was satisfied with the progress of the battle. After the bridge had been won as the critical point on which the artillery could also advance to Höchst, all that remained was to drive the remaining Brunswick musketeers on the right wing out of their positions along the stream and occupy them. Then the Imperial League army could advance from

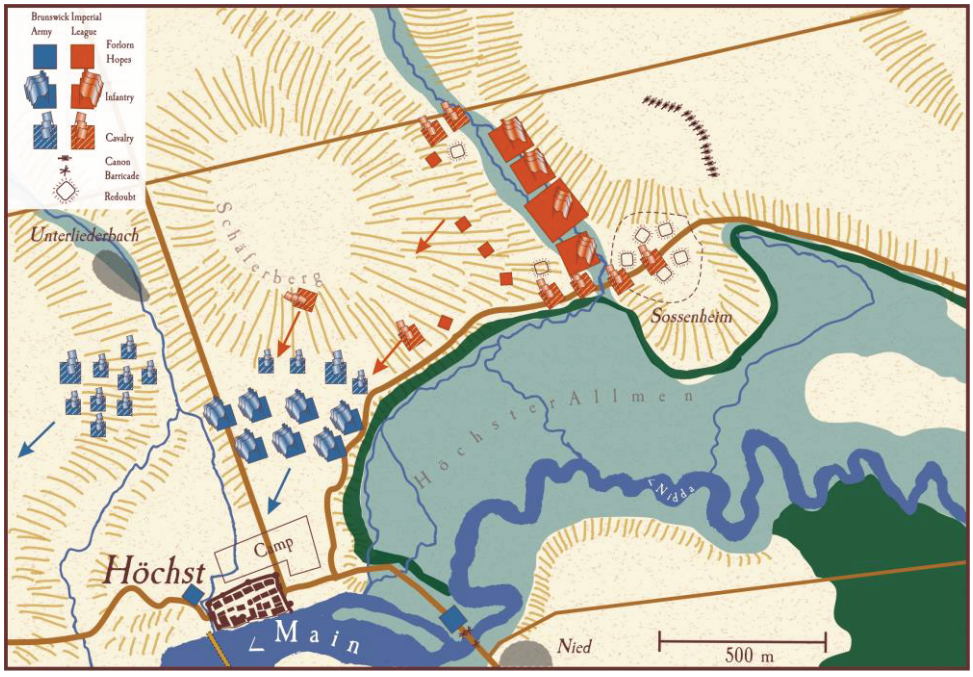


Figure 21

Retreat becomes flight. After it became clear that the Brunswick army was indeed retreating, Tilly gave the order to cross the Sulzbach. In the meantime, Christian of Brunswick, without consultation, detached himself from his army with several cavalry regiments. The latter therefore believed that the battle was lost. The order began to disintegrate.

its positions far behind the main battle line on a broad front and, covered by the captured positions, dare the difficult crossing of the Sulzbach. In preparation for this manoeuvre, Cordova sent his three Forlorn Hopes in the strength of about 500 men each under the command of Caracciolo across the stream to attack the entrenchments.

Then something happened that Tilly and Cordova had not expected. Even before the Spanish musketeers reached the enemy positions, the Brunswickers manning them also retreated in good order behind the crest of the Schäferberg. The entire Brunswick position now lay empty, except for the fallen, in front of the united Catholic armada.

Tilly, Cordova and the other officers were irritated by this situation, because in their opinion the battle had only just begun. At the same time, they became suspicious. Tilly wanted to avoid at all costs a situation like the one at Mingolsheim, where he had misinterpreted a movement of the train as a retreat of the enemy and had sent his troops to attack prematurely. The Imperial League army command also considered a mining of the Brunswick positions possible, even if at first glance no burning fuses were to be seen. A trap also did not seem out of the question to them, because in order to cross the Sulzbach in a broad front, they would have had to first disband the infantry formations in order to form them again on the other bank. During this manoeuvre, the army would have been extremely vulnerable if the Brunswick troops and especially the cavalry were simply lurking out of sight behind the hill to strike at the appropriate moment. Nor could the arrival of the Mansfeld troops, which was expected anyway, be ruled out, which would have created a completely different situation. It was already after 5 o'clock in the afternoon, but it would still be light for at least five hours. Enough to defeat - or be defeated by - more than one army that might be waiting behind the hill. Tilly and Cordova therefore decided to pursue the enemy first with small forces of cavalry and musketeers in order to gain intelligence on the situation. On the left wing they sent forward the musketeers of Magnis and the cuirassiers of Eynatten, on the right wing the Spanish cavalry under Baron d'Inchy took up the pursuit.

The Brunswick army, however, had not laid any kind of trap, but retreated in an orderly fashion combat ready across the fields outside the city, while leaning against the Kurmainzer Strasse to Höchst. Everything seemed to be going according to plan for the Brunswickers; they had shaken off the enemy

for the time being; the situation was largely under control. Then Christian from Brunswick made a fatal mistake.

Christian of Brunswick was apparently still reeling from the disastrous result of the counterattack he had ordered on the Sulzbach Bridge. Although there is no indication that he had personally participated in this attack, the horrific effect of hail ammunition on his beloved cavalry must have made a deep impression on him even as he watched from the Schäferberg. While he was certainly not the youngest in his army at 23, this was his first real battle and he had the responsibility for the army on top of that. This was obviously too much for him.

Without consulting his commanders, he gathered his best mounted units around him and set off with them from the retreating army. Knyphausen, who had been dragging himself along more badly than he could manage since his severe wounding outside the walls of Höchst a few days before, had already had himself brought to Frankfurt at the beginning of the retreat in order to finally have his shot-through arm treated. Without the duke, who had fled, and without Knyphausen, the Brunswick army was practically leaderless from this point on. The Brunswick infantry naturally caught on to the dismounting movement of their admired young commander and most of their cavalry. According to the tactical textbook, the cavalry should have covered the infantry's retreat by constantly caracoling against the following troops. But suddenly there was no one behind them and the trumpets of the Bavarian cavalry could already be heard from the Sulzbach valley, announcing the pursuit.

But these trumpet signals were only a ruse of war. While the Bavarian cuirassiers were still getting ready for the pursuit, some musketeers from Magnis' unit blew cavalry charge signals and emitted loud war cries, so that it sounded as if the entire allied cavalry was about to charge. In fact, however, at first only a few Spanish and Bavarian horsemen set off after the retreating troops. Reports quickly reached the imperial army command that it was a genuine retreat by the Brunswickers. There was no sign of a trap or even the arrival of the Mansfeld troops. Nevertheless, Tilly did not rush things. He had the army break up the formations, cross the Sulzbach in a broad front, line up again in battle formation on the slopes of the Schäferberg and advance further.

At the bridge in Höchst, meanwhile, the evacuation of the train continued unabated. Despite the haste with which the evacuation had been proceeding since dawn, hardly more than 300 wagons had crossed the river so far. The

improvised bridge required a certain distance between the wagons, which is why no more than five of the heavy equipment wagons could travel on the bridge at the same time. Carters and wagon masters did their best, but time and again the horses balked on the narrow bridge, which tilted ominously to one side every time one of the heavy wagons got even a little off track[3].

The attack signals of the Imperial League cavalry made the soldiers in the retreating formations of the Brunswickers even more nervous. Their mood was bad. They had taken a beating all day from the devastating artillery fire,

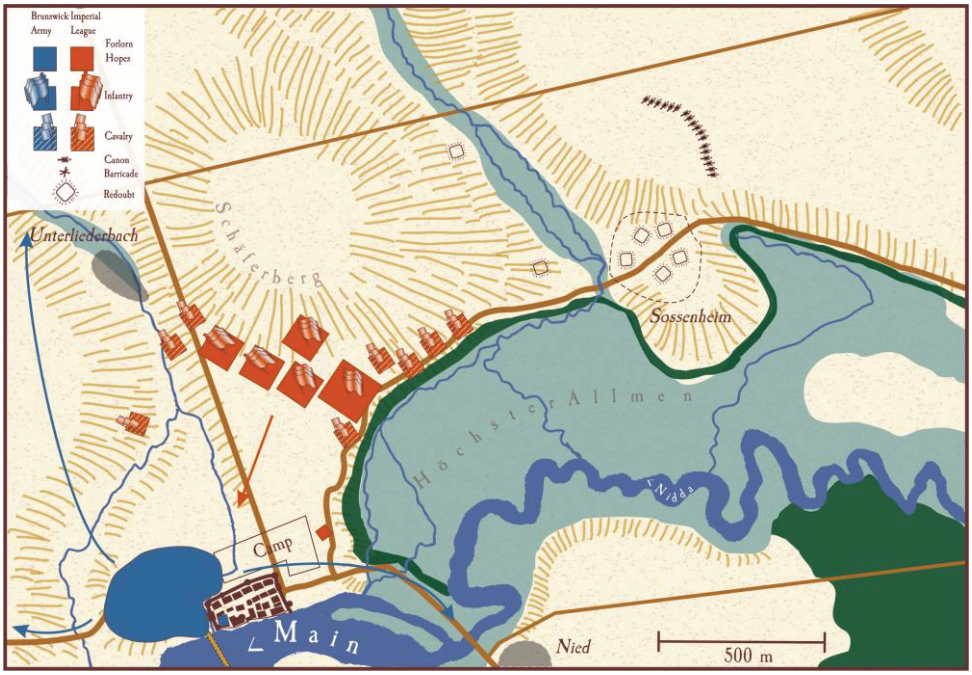


Figure 64

Around 18h. The Imperial League army has crossed the Sulzbach and is advancing on a broad front in battle formation against Höchst. After a few units of the Brunswick army had initially crossed the barrel bridge in order, the remaining order finally disintegrated and everyone tried to save themselves as best they could. The bridge was no match for this disorderly onslaught and broke apart. Hundreds of fleeing people lost their lives in the incident.

[3] See calculations for the load-bearing capacity of the bridge in the supplement.

in some cases without even being able to see the enemy, let alone defend themselves against it. The only Brunswick unit that had actually been in close combat with the enemy had defended its positions in Sossenheim long and tenaciously. Now it had been completely routed, had lost its flag and its commander had fallen. The survivors had joined other regiments. Now the first enemy mounted units were also coming into sight on both wings, and their own cavalry, which could have offered some protection, had for the most part made off with the commander in chief. They felt abandoned and betrayed.

In this situation, the absence of the many officers remaining in Frankfurt was particularly detrimental. A fighting retreat in formation is necessarily a slow undertaking that demands a great deal of discipline from those involved. Perhaps the missing officers could have persuaded their troops to hold formation because that was their best chance of survival. But as it was, more and more soldiers believed that the battle was lost - even their admired duke had finally made off with his much-praised horsemen. And now to retreat here step by seemingly infinitely slow step was too much for some, especially as the saving bridge was only a good quarter of a mile away. Besides, the camp with the loot and the families was still there. After more and more soldiers threw down their weapons and ran towards the bridge, order could no longer be maintained and the previously orderly retreat turned more and more into a disorderly flight.

Meanwhile, Christian of Brunswick arrived at the river with his horsemen. It is not recorded where this happened exactly, but since according to all sources he encountered a peasant, it is unlikely that it was directly at Höchst. Its population with the inhabitants of the surrounding villages had all fled or were dead. Since the way to the upstream fords would only have led over the barricaded Nidda bridge, the location will have to be sought further downstream, perhaps near Sindlingen, Kelsterbach or Okriftel. In any case, he bribed the local man with a lot of money to show him a passable ford. The ford was apparently quite passable, because according to the reports, the water only reached the horses' saddle girths. This means that the Brunswick army command could have started the evacuation to the southern side of the Main already days ago - if they had found out about the location of the fords in the surrounding area a few days beforehand and had let the army and its train cross them, at least in part.

In any case, the squadrons accompanying their duke made it safely across the river and set off together with the duke to the south in search of Mansfeld.

Neither the duke nor his escort apparently thought about securing the south bank for the troops crossing and the booty located there. Other cavalry units, which had also broken away, tried to swim through the river with their horses at other places. However, the Main was apparently more difficult to cross than the Weser a few weeks earlier; in any case, many riders died in the attempt, including a Count of Löwenstein. The fact that this name has survived is due to the fact that the newspaper reports of the time carefully reported the names of all the nobles who were harmed in battles. This was obviously more important to their readers than, for example, the exact number of other casualties.

The pursuing Spanish horsemen of d'Inchy fought intense battles with the last remaining cavalry cornets of the Brunswick infantry - which Christian of Brunswick obviously did not count among his best and had simply left behind. The cuirassiers of Eynatten also reaped a bloody harvest among the retreating Brunswickers, especially the "blue" Isenburg regiment "with the red hats", which was supposed to cover the retreat, paid a high price in blood.

In the meantime, word had spread in the Brunswick camp that their own army was retreating; the cloud of dust from the troops approaching the bridge could not be overlooked over the plain outside the city. All the irregulars had been promised that they could cross the bridge once the army equipment had been brought across. Now, however, their own armada was already retreating, although many wagons were still jammed in front of the bridge. It became clear to them that they would not cross the river before the army. Panic broke out among the camp inhabitants, sutlers, whores and soldiers' families. If the Spanish and Bavarian troops came, they would all be fair game. They were particularly afraid of the Croats, who had a reputation for being particularly merciless. Some therefore made their way down the hill to the Nidda bridge in the hope of reaching Frankfurt. Others tried to reach the Taunus heights in the North before their way would be cut off by the advancing troops. Most of them, however, tried to get to the barrel-bridge. The ensigns assigned to guard the bridge had every effort to keep the fearful crowd away from the entrance to enable the back flooding troops to cross first.

The fear of a trap had made Tilly hesitate for a long time before ordering the pursuit. Then the crossing of the Sulzbach and the subsequent re-arrangement in battle formation had cost a lot of time. Thus, apart from the activities of the two cavalry regiments, there was no real pursuit. Some contemporary commentators gave as the motivation for Tilly's hesitant pursuit that he did

not want to drive the fleeing Brunswickers into a desperate situation. It had often happened in history that defeated armies had risen above themselves in such a hopeless situation and inflicted great losses on the actually superior attackers or even defeated them. This was common strategic knowledge among officers of the time and so it is not impossible that Tilly and Cordova actually followed this maxim. The Spaniards and Bavarians therefore advanced rather leisurely in good battle order across the fields and gardens between Sossenheim and Höchst, which had already been trampled down by the Brunswicks. Their left wing leaned against the Kurmainzer Straße, the right wing almost reached the Liederbach.

19h: Flight and disaster

Shortly after 6 p.m., the first Brunswick troops arrived at the bridge and crossed in relative order. It was only when musket fire was heard from the other end of the city at just before seven that panic broke out among the

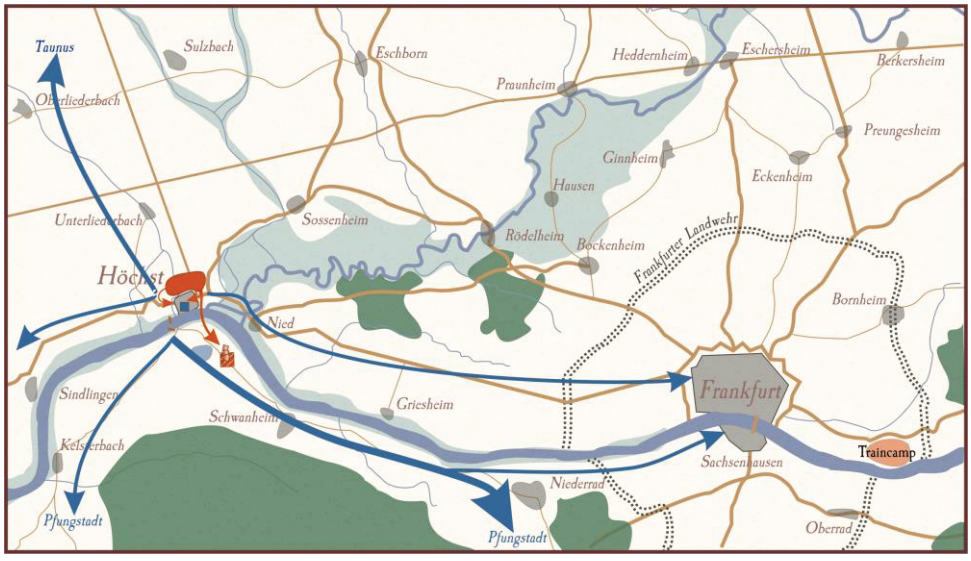


Figure 65

Escape routes. Those who remained on the north bank after the bridge accident fled to Frankfurt, the Taunus or down the Main. The units that made it across the river lost all cohesion and fled without order and abandoning their weapons towards Darmstadt. While some musketeer units took the city and the castle, Croats and other units crossed the Main in pursuit of the Brunswickers fleeing south-west and plundered the largely abandoned train.

waiting crowd of soldiers and troops, and everyone tried to get onto the bridge as quickly as possible. The barrel bridge could probably carry the weight of 2000 people at most - if they walked across it in an orderly and slow manner. The crowd of train personnel and soldiers, however, was in a panic. There was heavy jostling, people were pushed off the roadway into the river. The uneven load caused the bridge to rock and tilt in sections, with hundreds falling into the floodwaters. Only a few, including Wolfgang Heinrich from Isenburg, the leader of the rearguard, were saved with difficulty; most drowned in the Main. The bridge was badly damaged on a length of 18 feet, effectively cutting off the crowd remaining on the north bank. They tried to run to safety along the river or towards the Taunus. Others hid in the gardens or in the attics and cellars of the town's houses.

Those who had made it across the river turned partly towards Frankfurt, partly towards Darmstadt. All order had broken down, the officers had lost control of their units, everyone was saving themselves as best they could. Most of the soldiers threw away their weapons and armour to move faster. As defence against possible pursuers, the heavy muskets without ammunition and the long spears would have been of little use anyway, and when fleeing they were only a hindrance. The parts of the troop that had already evacuated to the south side were waiting for orders as to where they should turn now.

Figure 66

Looting after the battle. The dead on the battlefield were stripped of their belongings, down to their shirts, first by the soldiers and the victorious party's entourage, then the inhabitants of the surrounding area took what was left.

When these did not come and more and more defeated troops passed them, the wagon drivers tried to follow them. Only a few wagons, including, according to several reports, two wagons fully loaded with money from the Westphalian loot, could be saved. However, many of the heavily loaded loot and equipment wagons got stuck in the wet meadows of the Schwanheimer Bruch (brook). Infected by the panic, the wagon drivers unhitched the draft animals and made off with them as well.

In the meantime, the first Imperial League troops had also arrived on the Main. The bridge was so damaged that the Catholic troops could no longer use it to pursue the beaten Brunswick army with larger contingents. The Croats, however, were able to cross by swimming with their horses and were therefore sent for the job. But other units also went to the south side, sometimes without orders, to loot the abandoned wagons and to slay scattered Brunswickers.

The musket fire that had caused the panic at the bridge came from battles in the Brunswick camp at the eastern city gate. There, musketeers from Anholt's regiment under Huyn de Geleen tried to enter the city. The Brunswick units assigned to guard the camp engaged in a fierce firefight with them, but were soon forced to retreat into the city. When Anholt's musketeers had fought their way to the gate, de Geleen was hit in the arm by a musket ball. Almost simultaneously, a buried barrel of black powder, whose hidden fuse the Brunswick defenders had lit before retreating into the city, exploded. De Geleen suffered such severe burns from the explosion that the doctors who treated him in the following weeks had already given up hope. But he recovered slowly and continued to fight in the war for many years. As the flutter mine had claimed many casualties among the attackers, the survivors withdrew.

They were replaced by a unit in which the 23-year-old Augustin Fritsch served. This soldier, who was still a simple musketeer at the time, made a career for himself in the course of the war, was ennobled and wrote his memoirs as the city commander of Weiden in the Upper Palatinate after the war. His unit took over the attack on Höchst, from whose walls the Brunswickers fought back fiercely with muskets and double hooks. But since the attackers had already worked their way to the foot of the wall, the shelling could no longer do them much harm. The Brunswickers finally retreated into the safety of the castle.

The explosion of the fluttering mines was not the only incident involving black powder that evening. Since no pursuit was possible, most regiments of the

Imperial League army had nothing to do after arriving at Höchst. So Walloon troops drove a few remaining skirmishers from the Brunswick camp in the gardens outside Höchst and started looting what they had left. They broke open a few barrels to see what was inside. One musketeer bent over to look inside. Unfortunately, his tobacco pipe, which he had lit to celebrate the victory, fell into the barrel filled with black powder. The barrel exploded, as did twenty others standing nearby. The musketeer, his captain named Gascon and one hundred other Walloons met their deaths as a result - more than Imperial League soldiers in the actual battle.

The capture of the camp also freed the Brunswick prisoners. These were mainly the survivors of the night battle at Obertshausen. In addition, the five Jesuits abducted from Münster regained their freedom in this way. In the meantime, the town of Höchst itself was also completely in the hands of the imperial-ligist troops. The fighting in the streets had ended. All the Brunswickers encountered were slain without further ado. Only the castle was still held by about 400 occupiers. Tilly had a heavy gun brought to the castle gate and threatened to use it to gain entry. The garrison, in turn, threatened to blow up the entire castle and themselves with the abundant powder reserves before surrendering. It was therefore agreed that the crew would be allowed to leave unmolested. As a sign of their right to leave freely, the Brunswickers were to carry white sticks in their hands. At nine o'clock in the evening, all fighting was over. The dying, however, was to continue.

The consequences

The great dying

When the next day, Tuesday 21th June, dawned, the crew of the castle departed as agreed, with white staffs in their hands. What happened to them then is not entirely clear. Most newspaper articles and the report compiled from them in the Theatrum Europaeum speak of the fact that they were almost all killed despite Tilly's promise of free departure. This had happened at the instigation of Franz Winand Freiherr from Eynatten, colonel of a cuirassier regiment, who had told Tilly about the atrocities committed by the occupiers in Höchst. Allegedly, they had massacred innocent women and children and castrated an old, feeble-minded priest before killing him. These reports appeared in local newspapers the following day and were not corrected in the days that followed, as many other reports were. On the contrary, the first report still spoke of the agreed free withdrawal, and it was only the next day that the massacre was reported. Since these reports were not tendentious reports by a party, but reports that were recognisably seriously endeavouring to present an objective picture, these sources weigh heavily. The only astonishing thing is that none of the reports, which are based on the statements of eyewitnesses or even their self-testimonies, mention this massacre. These eyewitnesses, such as Augustin Fritsch, were mainly from the Catholic side, but otherwise the latter had no problem recording the liquidation of already defenceless opponents in their reports. Such an egregious breach of promise, however, would have been difficult to reconcile with an officer's honour, even after new facts became known, and was perhaps therefore concealed.

There are two contradictory accounts in the Höchst legends regarding the fate of these occupiers. On the one hand, there is said to have been a memorial cross donated by the citizens of Höchst at the site of the massacre for a long time. Secondly, there is the legend that the Brunswick commander of the castle, a certain Zuckschwerdt, was allowed to marry the daughter of a Höchst citizen with whom he had fallen in love, in return for not having blown up the castle. Since the surname of the alleged commander has already been proven in Kronberg in the 16th century, this story is very romantic, but probably not true.

What is completely undoubted and indisputable, however, is that on that day after the battle dozens, if not hundreds, of Brunswickers were pulled out of their hiding places in the city and slain on the spot. No distinction was made between soldiers and train personnel, who in case of doubt could not have been distinguished from each other anyway. The scattered were also hunted down in the gardens, bushes and fields of the surrounding area. Not only soldiers were involved in the hunt, but especially the peasants of the surrounding villages, who had returned to the remains of their dwellings in the meantime. They had previously suffered particularly from the looting members of the train and were now paying them back in a particularly cruel way. There is also talk in various reports that even Brunswick soldiers who had surrendered and were provided with passes by the Imperial League army to return home were nevertheless slain by peasants and Croats on their way. In Kronberg, 65 Brunswickers who had taken refuge there were forced out of town by the population when called upon by pursuing horsemen and handed over to the imperial-ligist troops. In the field outside the town, they were all executed by them without much ado.

In Höchst, the bodies of the slain Brunswickers were first simply thrown into the river. It was said that the fishermen downstream had made such a rich haul of money, jewellery and clothing that they no longer needed to work for the rest of their lives. The saying went that whoever of the Brunswickers did not have at least a hundred talers sewn into his clothes could probably not have been a good soldier. It is unlikely that the bodies were thrown into the river without first being searched for valuables, but in the accident on the bridge many will have drowned in the Main with and perhaps because of their booty. After all, 100 talers weighed almost 3 kg. Later, the drowned and slain were pulled out of the river and buried in a mass grave.

But some Brunswickers still managed to escape the day after the battle. Four hundred horsemen, who had been hiding on the banks of the Main, found two barges somewhere and were able to escape to the southern bank. But they were anything but safe there. For south of the Main, larger bands of Croats were roaming around, hunting down scattered troops. The whole field between Frankfurt and Kelsterbach is said to have been full of dead Brunswickers and their horses for days.

Already in the night after the battle, many scattered Brunswickers arrived at the closed gates of Frankfurt, among them many seriously wounded like Dodo from Knyphausen. This put the city council in a predicament. On the one hand,

the city was already overflowing with refugees, but on the other hand, out of Christian charity, the injured could not be easily denied treatment. On top of that, they feared Tilly's wrath because of the accommodation of the Brunswick officers who had not made it to their units in time before the arrival of the Imperial League army. So a compromise was decided upon. The seriously wounded were allowed access to the city, but all the officers and their escorts were sent away in return.

They rode straight to their deaths. Together with the thousand or so uninjured soldiers who were not allowed into Frankfurt, the 185 officers made their way in direction Mannheim. They left the city in Sachsenhausen through the Affentor. Near the Schwanheim Forest, they were ambushed by the Croats and were all cut down. Only one officer escaped the slaughter.

However, the larger part of the Brunswick troops managed to escape. Initially still in their units, they made their way south immediately after the crossing. However, when the bridge broke and the first Croats crossed the river, many threw away their weapons and armour to be faster. They marched as fast as they could on all roads and paths throughout the evening until they noticed torch signals in the falling dusk and headed towards them.

The number of casualties in the battle and afterwards is difficult to estimate. First independent contemporary estimates put the number of fallen, drowned or deserted Brunswick soldiers at around 6000. This fits in with the figures from the first muster of the Brunswickers after the battle. There, after a few days, during which scattered soldiers continued to arrive, 5000 horsemen and 8000 foot soldiers are said to have gathered. Together this would have been 19,000 soldiers at the beginning of the battle and this figure agrees very well with most estimates of the strength of the Brunswick army.

However, these were certainly not all the casualties on the Brunswick side. As already mentioned, the armies of the time were accompanied by at least as many train followers, and in the eyes of the soldiers these people were just as legitimate a target as the regular units, especially as they were difficult to distinguish. The peasants took revenge on any Brunswick people they could get their hands on anyway. But these dead were not counted in the official casualty statistics. Even if many were able to save themselves, it is certainly not exaggerated to assume that there were as many "civilian" dead from the Brunswick train.

On the Imperial League side, there were only minor losses during the battle. A few dozen remained on the battlefield, mainly among the musketeers who had led the attack on the outpost at Sossenheim. The vast majority of the army, however, did not even have to be deployed at all during the battle. More casualties resulted from the explosions during the capture of Höchst and the camp. The wounded, of whom there were also a considerable number on the Catholic side, were also brought to Frankfurt for treatment. There they contributed to the further overcrowding of the hospitals and convents. Due to the poor hygienic conditions, red dysentery, a bacterial febrile diarrhoeal disease, soon broke out in the city. Naturally, the epidemic was not confined to the soldiers. In this year, the mortality statistics of the city show 1785 dead citizens, which meant a 240% excess mortality compared to the annual average of the previous decade. This meant that what the Frankfurt Council had feared and wanted to prevent by supplying materials for the completion of the bridge had come to pass.

Withdrawal of the Imperial League Army

This delivery of materials also got the city into trouble with Tilly. Tilly officially complained to the city and demanded the extradition of those responsible. He also ordered that the seriously wounded Colonel Knyphausen be taken into custody for later extradition. Knyphausen was then immediately placed under arrest in his quarters and guarded; later, after some correspondence, in which even Christian from Brunswick intervened, the extradition proceedings came to nothing and Knyphausen was released. The demand for the extradition of those responsible for the material deliveries, on the other hand, was simply silently ignored. Tilly also ordered the Frankfurt troops to lend him draught horses, officially for the transport of guns. But his army actually needed them rather to transport the loot won; because transporting the guns to the battlefield had not been a problem. But since the Brunswickers had unhitched the horses from many of the baggage wagons in order to flee, the Imperial League troops now lacked them for the transport of the loot. This consisted of several hundred wagons, some sources even speak of thousands, which had now come into the possession of the imperialist troops. To the great astonishment of the council, the requisitioned horses were actually brought back to Frankfurt from Seligenstadt a few days later. Nevertheless, Tilly had apparently really set his sights on Frankfurt. As late as August, he wrote to the Council that "", not only because of the Knyphausen

affair, but also because "*according to the Victori received at Höchst, the two war generals, Count from Tilly and Don Gonzalis de Cortuba, are not shown the slightest cortesia, with wine, worship or congratulations*". He therefore advises the city "*to pay homage to General Tilly [Cordova was already in the Netherlands] with oxen or other victuals of lemons, bitter orange &c. so that he is better served than with money*". The Frankfurters were wise enough to comply with this request and Tilly "*Thanks [...] for the 6 oxen revered to him*" a few days later, but did not miss the opportunity to urge the Council to "*give the local citizens the order to abstain from ill-considered and opprobrious ventilations from now on*".

The people and council of Frankfurt must have thought their bit on this unrealistic and presumptuous demand, but in the meantime they had other problems to solve. For example, the council had apparently not been satisfied with the military measures taken to protect the city during the crisis, because only ten days after the battle, the city commander Obrist-Leutnant Johann Wilhelm von Beerenkott was suspended from duty and dismissed at the end of July. The command was taken over by some members of the council. In addition, several hundred Brunswick soldiers were taken into service by the city, initially for 3 months, and were already armed and sworn in on 29 June. It is not clear whether these were scattered soldiers or a whole unit, for which actually only the ensigns who guarded the Nied Bridge and the garrison of the castle would have come into question, if the latter were not slain after all.

Since there was nothing more for the Imperial League troops to do, they marched out of Höchst again on Tuesday, 22 June. They left a small garrison in Höchst and in Rödelheim. They had made rich booty. Several hundred wagons containing most of the looted goods and extorted money from the Brunswick raid through Westphalia, Thuringia and Hesse had fallen into their hands. Apparently no one thought of returning the goods to the original owners. At the behest of Maximilian, who never missed an opportunity to save money when it presented itself, the captured weapons and armour were used to equip his own troops. On their way back, the Bavarian and Spanish troops plundered the villages in the north of Frankfurt that had so far been spared. The withdrawal went first back to their baggage wagons in the east of Frankfurt and further to the meanwhile erected ship's bridge to Steinheim. As rainy weather had set in after the long period of fine weather, Tilly allowed his troops two days of rest here. Some soldiers understood this rest to mean the looting of Steinheim and Bürgel. Cordova and his troops continued directly across Hesse-Darmstadt to Oppenheim, where they were encamped.

The hero of the battle, however, Franz Magnis, to whose great efforts the capture of the key positions in Sossenheim was owed, was especially decorated by Tilly. Since he was still suffering from a knee wound received in battle, he was allowed to travel by stagecoach from Frankfurt to the Imperial Diet in Pressburg to deliver the news of victory to the Emperor. He reached the imperial court after 14 days, well provided with Tilly's letters of assessment. There, at the Emperor's behest, he was personally raised to the rank of baron by the Imperial Chancellor, taken into imperial service as a

Figure 22

Full-body portrait of the freshly ennobled Franz von Magnis from the Polish National Museum in Posen. The long leather shaft of his right boot is clearly visible. He had suffered a wound to this leg in the battle of Höchst.

commander-in-chief and given an annual pension of 1000 Reichstaler. He had achieved his great goal of bringing the family into the nobility with his participation in the campaign since the Battle of the White Mountain. But apparently he had seen enough of war and retired from active military service after a brief episode in the Valtellina, where he substituted for an officer as commander. Later, he nevertheless rose to the rank of field marshal general in more administrative functions, and his family was elevated to the hereditary rank of imperial counts. A full-length portrait of him has survived, which he probably had made in 1622 to commemorate his elevation to the nobility. It shows a serious young man looking confidently at the observer. In the picture, he is dressed in expensive fashionable garments, which, however, lack any military reference to his rank; even the sword, which was obligatory for all nobles, is rather hidden. His leg clothing is conspicuous. While his left leg is in a light leather boot that reaches below the knee, its right counterpart reaches up to the breeches on his thigh. This right leg he exposes conspicuously to the viewer. His knee injury suffered in battle was probably still bothering Franz, now *from* Magnis, so he needed a supporting boot. At the same time, he took the opportunity to highlight the sacrifice he had made in the service of the emperor for everyone to see by his choice of the conspicuous boot and his posture.

Who had Actually Won the Battle?

In view of the course of events described here, this question may at first seem absurd. Nevertheless, the success of the united imperial-ligist army under Tilly has been doubted several times and the confrontation was interpreted as a great strategic success of the Protestants. In purely formal terms, the matter was clear: in all military history, whoever claims the battlefield is the victor. And that had undoubtedly been the combined Spanish and Bavarian armies. However, it was argued that they had failed in their strategic objective, which was to prevent the unification of Christian of Brunswick's and Mansfeld's forces. Moreover, Christian of Brunswick had not even intended to win the battle. His primary goal would have been to hold off the attack of the imperial army by fighting a rearguard action until the most important part of the troops had crossed the river. His supporters claim that he had succeeded brilliantly by saving his war chest, which would have been more important than the soldiers. On top of that, he would have actually supplied the majority of his army to Mansfeld.

Indeed, some Bavarian officers apparently regarded the victory as minor. They "*could not boast so highly of this victory / because three armies fought in conjunction with only one / three men against one / and six pieces of artillery against one; but Hertzog Christian would still have been to be praised / that he presented himself chivalrously and did not take flight*". However, this does not read as if they thought they had not clearly won. Rather, the condescending wording is reminiscent of player interviews after a football match in which a selection of players from Real Madrid and Bayern Munich won 5:1 against Eintracht Brunswick without any effort and the players of the winners then congratulate the defeated, lower-ranked team for having the courage to have competed at all. Regardless of the inferior numbers, the completely inexperienced Brunswick army had indeed not been a match for the battle-hardened Catholic veterans.

In the opinion of many contemporaries, however, Tilly had missed the opportunity to push Christian from Brunswick's army towards the Main by vigorous pursuit after its retreat and to destroy it there. This was held against him, as was the failure to bring a strong contingent of horsemen to the south side of the Main to prevent the crossing from there. Tilly never commented on these accusations. Even his warlord Maximilian reproached him in a letter from August for not commenting on these public accusations, which were made from all sides. Yet the action leading to the "*veritable disintegration*" of the Brunswick army was precisely the kind of warfare with which Tilly had succeeded in this war up to this point. He had mainly, through skilful offensive manoeuvring and limited striking, rendered the enemy unable to fight, at least for the moment. And he had done so without damaging or even unduly risking his own troops. With the disintegration of Brunswick's units unfolding right before his eyes, there was no need at all to send his troops into high-loss hand-to-hand combat against desperate soldiers. He could watch within striking distance as the Brunswickers practically disintegrated themselves. Nevertheless, the Brunswick army command's plan of a purely defensive action almost succeeded and a retreat across the Main with a largely intact army with the Westphalian booty was within the realm of possibility.

The first factor that was decisive for its downfall was the valiant defence of Höchst by its inhabitants and the Mainz garrison under bailiff Knebel. Even though they ultimately had to retreat in the face of overwhelming forces, their courageous and determined resistance did delay the construction of the bridge over the Main by a decisive 24 hours. With one more day to get the army and the train across the Main, a battle could probably have been avoided.

However, due to Christian from Brunswick's, to put it charitably, ill-considered withdrawal with parts of the cavalry, the whole retreat ultimately turned into a chaotic disaster. No regiment escaped unscathed, most of the men had thrown away their weapons and armour, and order was completely lost after the crossing of the Main for lack of leadership. The breach of the bridge had certainly contributed to this, but in the end it was not decisive because the bulk of the army had crossed it before. The events of the day had turned the Brunswick army, which had initially presented itself in good order on the battlefield, into a disbanded, demoralised and beaten bunch, which had also lost most of its weapons and armour. Thus Mansfeld officers made very disparaging remarks about the condition of the Duke's troops when they arrived.

Participation in Christian from Brunswick's campaign later had even legal consequences for some officers, if they were also connected with ruling houses. The Isenburg prince's son Count Wolfgang Heinrich, who had contributed a regiment of infantry to the campaign at his own expense, was charged with breach of the peace and high treason together with his father in Vienna after his capture near Stadtlohn in 1623. This charge was based, among other things, on the plundering of Schwanheim, which belonged to the Amt Höchst, in 1622. One of the foundations of this trial was the complaint of the Elector of Mainz to the Emperor about the destruction of his property by the troops of Christian of Brunswick. He sent this complaint to the imperial court as early as 21 June, the day after the battle.

But a considerable number of men rejoined Christian of Brunswick in the course of the days after the battle and money was also saved. The question is whether this was so much that it would have been possible for the Duke to adequately equip, feed and pay his remaining army again. All accounts agree that he "*took his best things / including 2 wagons of money / away*". Even though he may have been able to salvage other personal booty such as valuable art treasures, only the immediately available coined cash was crucial for the payment and maintenance of the troops. The two wagons had obviously not contained all the cash he had available before Höchst. There are reports from Mainz that five more wagons with money from the Westphalian booty had been intercepted. But were the two remaining wagons with money sufficient to maintain the army? Since exact figures are not available, estimates have to be made as to what sums could have been packed onto two wagons. According to various sources, a four-wagon team could not pull more than 1.5t on bad roads, which were to be expected in this situation. Neglecting the weight of

the wagons themselves and the boxes in which the money must have been packed, this would have been a maximum of 3 tons of freight with two wagons. Since a Reichstaler weighed exactly 29.23 g, that would have been coins worth a little over 100,000 Reichstalers or 136,000 guilders - provided they were only coins of genuine grist, i.e. those where the value was covered by the silver content, which was very unlikely. Even if more horses were harnessed to the wagons or the wagons were overloaded, the maximum sum of minted money that could have been on two wagons was in no case far above the values given above.

How long could one maintain an army of about 8000 foot soldiers and 5000 horsemen with such a sum? The cost of raising a regiment of 3,000 men on foot in the 30 Years War, including advertising and equipment, was estimated at 135,000 guilders. For the annual upkeep, 450,000 guilders had to be reckoned with, i.e. 12.5 guilders per man and month. In addition to pay, this sum also included rations and the higher salaries of the non-commissioned officers and officers. The upkeep of horsemen with their horses was naturally more expensive, there 300,000 guilders a year were estimated for a regiment of 1200 men, corresponding to 21 guilders per man and month. Christian of Brunswick himself, in a demand for tribute to the city of Eisenach, had estimated the value of the provisions for his army, which he put at 25,000 foot soldiers and 7,000 horsemen, at a good 50,000 guilders - for three days alone.

In other words, if the sources about the amount of wagons saved are to be believed, Christian of Brunswick was as good as bankrupt. With the sum still at his disposal, he could barely sustain his remaining army for another month, let alone raise new troops or only even adequately rearm the existing ones. There can be no question of his being able to contribute substantial funds for the continuation of the war for the Lower Palatinate and thus achieve a strategic goal of the Protestant forces. On the contrary, the supply of his defeated, demoralised and poorly equipped units was an additional burden for the already exhausted Lower Palatinate and thus for Frederick and his commander Mansfeld.

The two probably saw it similarly, for with the defeat at Höchst - for nothing else had the battle become due to the complete failure of leadership by the overstretched Christian of Brunswick - Frederick de facto gave up the war for the Lower Palatinate. The influx of the Brunswick armada had been neither the military reinforcement he had hoped for nor a financial relief. Mansfeld, quite as was his way, was already starting negotiations again with all sorts of

parties about the further use of himself and his army. George of Baden-Durlach resigned his troops on the day of defeat and withdrew from the war altogether. Most of the formerly Baden troops were taken into service by Mansfeld, so that his army briefly grew to over 30,000 men. Together with the remnants of the Brunswick army, this added up to a substantial force, but its sheer size of over 40,000 made it impossible to continue to stay in the Electoral Palatinate without the possibility of supplies and payment. This was all the more so as extensive garrisons of the fortresses of Heidelberg, Mannheim and Frankenthal, as well as several smaller strongholds, also wanted to be supplied.

On 22th June, the war council in Mannheim therefore decided that the field army should move to Alsace. Before that, Frederick made Mansfeld General of the Electoral Palatinate Army and Christian of Brunswick his Lieutenant General of the cavalry. This, too, is an indication that, with the exception of parts of the cavalry, practically the entire army of the duke had left the flag in the days following the battle, probably for lack of pay. As a result, almost none of the surviving leaders of the foot regiments still present at Höchst reappeared on the march to Alsace and later to the Netherlands. The strength of the combined troops of Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick invading Alsace was given as no more than 25,000-30,000 men. The strength of the united Electoral Palatinate field army would therefore have been reduced by 15-20,000 men in the few days after the battle through desertion or abdication. Since it is very unlikely that Mansfeld had dismissed the experienced soldiers sworn to him, the majority of these departures will have come from the ranks of the Brunswickers.

Only a good month and several devastations, lootings and other war crimes in Alsace later, Frederick honourably dismissed his two army commanders and their armies in the camp near Zabern on 26 July. The most important reason he gave was that he was also completely destitute. It took until autumn for all the Electoral Palatinate towns and fortresses on the Upper Rhine to be conquered by Tilly, but already at that moment the battle for the Lower Palatinate was finally lost for Frederick.

Lack of support from Mansfeld

Why did Mansfeld not move to meet Christian of Brunswick on the Main as promised, after Tilly had cleared the Bergstrasse by 15th June at the latest in

order to move to Aschaffenburg and thus the way north would have been clear for him? He had assured Christian from Brunswick of his support there by an officer patrol in Schotten on 11th June after instructing him to cross the Main at Höchst.

In fact, however, it was not until the day of the battle that the Electoral Palatinate cavalry with a few musketeers moved out from Mannheim to the north. And this only because the cannon thunder from Sossenheim was heard by the guards on the city wall. Such a long-distance acoustic effect of the battle sounds intuitively unlikely given the distance of a good 60 km between the two places, but has been credibly documented from many wars since that time and is physically plausible under certain circumstances. The Electoral Palatinate cavalry passed Zwingenberg coming from Mannheim at about 5 pm. At Pfungstadt the Mansfeld horsemen halted at nightfall and tried to rally the scattered Brunswick troops by torchlight. They climbed onto the roofs and burned hay. In the process, several roofs caught fire and the houses burned to the ground. The assembled remnants of the shattered Brunswick troops were first quartered in Bensheim before being led to Mannheim the next day. The passage of further scattered troops continued until noon the next day.

When Christian of Brunswick met up with Mansfeld at Bensheim, he was understandably in a bad mood. He remarked that he would have wanted to go to Bohemia if he had not been summoned here, only to have failed to meet him as promised and instead abandoned him. It is true that he would hardly have reached Bohemia with his army, but otherwise he was not wrong in his lament.

However, Frederick and Mansfeld had good reason to believe that Christian of Brunswick would not need their support. The conflicts in the 30 Years' War were not only fought out with campaigns and in battles. Diplomacy also played an important role at all levels, although often unfortunately not a very successful one. In any case, peace negotiations had been underway in Brussels since April, aimed at ending the current conflict. At the beginning of June, a ceasefire was agreed upon there. However, only the emperor's envoys and the representatives of Spain, the United Netherlands and England took part. Two of the direct parties to the conflict, Frederick of the Palatinate and Maximilian of Bavaria, were not represented. This proved to be a decisive mistake.

More than a week before the battle, on 12th June, a ship with an English legation had arrived in Mannheim from these same Brussels negotiations, coming up the Rhine via Cologne. The English envoy, Lord Chichester,

instructed Frederick on behalf of his father-in-law Jacob I, who had taken part in the Brussels negotiations, to immediately cease all hostilities and under no circumstances to cross the borders of the Lower Palatinate with his army anymore. Another English envoy reached Christian of Brunswick on 17th June to persuade him to ceasefire as well. Both were assured that the Infanta Isabelle had sent an order to Tilly and Cordova instructing them also to abide by the agreed truce. Therefore, Frederick and Mansfeld could assume that Christian of Brunswick would be able to cross over unmolested, even without support. Frederick adhered to the terms of the truce because it gave him further hope of maintaining his rule over the Lower Palatinate. However, through his cavalry patrols, which reported the approach of Tilly and Cordova to him, Christian of Brunswick knew better. Why, however, he did not contact Mansfeld, even though parts of his cavalry were operating south of the Main, probably remains his secret.

In fact, another high-ranking English envoy reached Isabella's Tilly and Cordova in the middle of their preparations to cross the Main at Aschaffenburg. While Cordova, as always, was inclined to obey the orders of his king's representative, Tilly insisted on his supreme command. He himself would take his orders only from Maximilian as the supreme leader of the Ligist troops, and from him nothing had been heard regarding an interruption of the fighting.

A truce or even a final peace that would have left Frederick in control of the Lower Palatinate would thus not have been in Maximilian's interest at all. Only complete and actual rule over the entire Electoral Palatinate would, according to the treaty with the Emperor, bring him the longed-for electoral dignity. At this point, Maximilian had already invested several million reichstaler in the war, which he could have written off to the wind in the event of an early peace agreement. Not to mention the end of his far-reaching ambitions. All this was perfectly clear to Tilly and his war commissioners, and that is why they acted in the interests of their warlord. Cordova, in view of the favourable military conditions, had not been difficult to convince that successfully preventing Christian of Brunswick from uniting with Mansfeld by destroying his army would solve more future problems than ignoring the royal order would create. So they stalled the envoy for several days, pointing to the lack of instructions from Munich, and meanwhile pressed on with their preparations. Tilly's anticipatory obedience was confirmed by Maximilian in a letter two days after the battle with the words that he had done "*right and well*" with his reply to the English envoy.

When Friedrich and Mansfeld then heard the sound of cannon fire from Höchst on the morning of 20th June, they both knew immediately that it had been a big mistake to have relied on keeping the armistice and that their plans had suffered a serious setback. They only sent the cavalry to collect the remnants of the Brunswick army and, if necessary, to repel pursuers.

The Fate of the Protagonists

Hardly any of the main actors survived the war. Almost all of them, through their actions or intransigent attitudes, either contributed to the war escalating from a regional conflict to a European catastrophe or to the fact that no compromise could be found to end it. But only Tilly died from an injury sustained on the battlefield.

Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor of the German Nation, lived until 1637, keeping his promise and conferring the electorship on Maximilian as late as 1623. Unfortunately, diplomacy was not his strong point and so he did not sufficiently consult the Protestant electors about this step. This pushed them to the side of his opponents. Through his resolute, if not fanatical, counter-reformation policy, which he sought to spread throughout the empire, he was an important reason for the continued prolongation of the war.

Maximilian of Bavaria achieved all his goals. From 1623 he was Elector of the Empire. Strengthened by this position, he tried to set his own political accents and thus at times came into conflict with Emperor Ferdinand. With his large, powerful army, he also continued to play an important role in military warfare. His subjects paid the price for his ambitions, for Bavaria was devastated several times by foreign troops, especially the Swedes in the further course of the war. He was the only one of those named here to survive the war. The possession of the Upper Palatinate and the electoral dignity were confirmed in the Peace of Münster and Westphalia. This has not changed much to this day: the Upper Palatinate still belongs to Bavaria and the Bavarian prime ministers are usually not entirely unimportant when it comes to electing the federal chancellors. After the war, Maximilian immediately took care of the reconstruction of his state. In order to have financial leeway, the first thing he did was to dismiss his troops and actually managed to free the ducal treasury from all war debts within only three years. On his death in 1651, he left his successor a country that was badly damaged but structurally intact.

His military commander Tilly subsequently developed into the most successful general of the 30 Years War, winning more battles than anyone else. He owed these successes to the good cooperation with Maximilian and the resulting limitation of his responsibility to the immediate military-tactical events. When in 1630, in addition to his command of the League troops, he was also given command of the imperial forces in place of Wallenstein, he was overwhelmed by the fullness of power and the political dimension of the new position. Although recent historiography absolves Tilly of direct blame for the devastating fire that destroyed Magdeburg in 1630, the siege itself and its consequences were nevertheless his responsibility. His fortunes in war turned with the crushing defeat at the Battle of Breitenfeld in 1631 by the combined Swedish-Saxon army. Tilly died in Ingolstadt in April 1632 from an injury sustained in battle. Aged 73, he was leading a cavalry charge to prevent the Swedes from crossing the Lech at Rain when a bullet from a double-hooked rifle shattered his thigh. He was taken to Ingolstadt, where it took him another 14 days to die.

The former Elector of the Palatinate and King of Bohemia Frederick V went to the Netherlands, where he formed a government in exile that nobody cared about. He was forced by his father-in-law Jacob I to accept a truce for the Palatinate in 1623. Insisting on the return of his Palatine territories and reinstatement as Elector, negotiations with the Emperor failed to reach an agreement, although he even begged his pardon for accepting the Bohemian crown. He had finally lost the electoral dignity to Maximilian, also from the House of Wittelsbach. Otherwise, he led a rather luxurious life of idleness in exile, with hunts, walks and other pleasures. In October 1632, Frederick apparently contracted the plague, which he succumbed to in Mainz at the end of November, barely 36 years old. First brought to the crypt in Frankenthal, his body then made an odyssey through France due to the further events of the war in the 1630s, where it somehow got lost.

After Ernst from Mansfeld had negotiated with all sorts of powers, including the Catholic King of France, to keep his army after the withdrawal from the Palatinate, he accepted the offer of the United Netherlands and moved north with then about 14,000 men to lift Spinola's siege of Bergen-op-Zoom. At Fleurus in southern Belgium, Cordova opposed them with an even smaller force. Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick forced a breakthrough at great cost and actually helped to end the siege. Shortly afterwards, however, they were abdicated by the Dutch because their rebellious troops did not fit into the extremely disciplined Dutch army. Mansfeld then occupied his home in East

Frisia, but was forced to dismiss his troops in early 1624. Shortly afterwards, he entered English service and led an expeditionary army of 15,000 men on the road from Calais to the Netherlands so badly that, without much fighting, barely 5,000 were left at the beginning of 1625. With these he took part in the unsuccessful liberation of Breda. With the remnants of his army, he submitted to King Christian of Denmark under pressure from his backers and was promptly badly beaten by Wallenstein at Dessau in April 1625. He then decided to unite in Hungary with Bethlen Gábor, the Prince of Transylvania and leader of an anti-Habsburg uprising in Hungary, to attack the Emperor directly in Vienna. Pursued on the move by Wallenstein, he reached Hungary, where winter ended operations without a decision. On his way to Venice to raise fresh money, Mansfeld suffered a stroke in the mountains near Sarajevo, from which he died in a remote hut in November 1626 at the age of 46.

Christian of Brunswick first withdrew from the Palatinate with Mansfeld as one of his officers. In the Battle of Fleurus in August 1622, he and his cavalry forced a breakthrough through the Spanish lines. However, he suffered a bullet wound above the left elbow. A few days later, his left forearm had to be amputated, which was done amid a drum roll and trombone fanfares so that he could not be heard shouting. He had a prosthesis made and announced in his typical manner that he still had the other arm to fight with. In the winter of 1622/23 he moved with Mansfeld to East Frisia, but fell out with him and moved to the Lower Saxon Imperial District. Pursued by Tilly, he tried to bring himself and his army to safety in the Netherlands, but was cornered shortly before the border in August 1623. In the battle of Stadtlohn, his newly raised army was almost completely destroyed. Unsurprisingly, Christian was again able to escape to the Netherlands with some of his horsemen. He then rejoined Mansfeld in his unsuccessful campaign with the English expeditionary army. After its failure, he finally separated from Mansfeld in the autumn of 1625. At the beginning of 1626, his brother, the reigning Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, was deposed due to his inability to govern and the government was transferred to Christian. He immediately raised troops for the campaign of his godfather, Christian of Denmark. Before they could go into action, however, he fell seriously ill and died at the age of 26 in June 1626, rumoured to have been eaten by worms like Herod. Although such an end would have fitted his life perfectly, it was probably just propaganda and the real reason for his untimely demise is to be sought in late effects of his severe arm injury.

The Consequences for Höchst

The people of Höchst had not had much to gain from their courageous and decisive action. But at least the vast majority of them were still alive and were able to return to their town quite quickly after the withdrawal of the Imperial League troops. There, however, little was the same as before. What the population had not been able to take with them on their flight was lost. The houses were still standing, but most of the furnishings, stoves and windows had been destroyed. Even though the population supposedly profited greatly from the loot that the imperial-ligist troops were unable to remove, this will have been little consolation to many for their desolate homes. Bailiff Knebel also returned to Höchst and, together with the mayors, took over the coordination of the reconstruction work.

How many deaths there had been among the local civilian population in the Rhine-Main region since the Brunswick invasion is not known. Although a considerable number of people may have died as a direct result of the invasion, it was rather the longer-term consequences that caused the population problems. The destruction of crops and gardens by the operating troops alone led to hunger in the medium term among the population of the area, which was now largely homeless. The lack of food in turn made the people susceptible to disease.

As so often in the course of this long war, the end of the battle for the Lower Palatinate could also have meant the end of the war. But it was to go on for an endless 26 years. And so the Battle of Höchst was only the first of many more blows that Höchst and the region had to absorb. In the end, more than a third of the population were dead, killed by the war, hunger and epidemics. It was to take more than 100 years before prosperity in the region returned to pre-war levels.

After note

One of the surprises in writing the story was that there were very few at least remotely likeable characters among the actors. Most of the protagonists are total failures as role models for today. This began with the spoilt, inexperienced aristocratic scion Christian from Brunswick, who started his own war at the age of 21 for no good reason, incited by fake news and conspiracy theories. And he did not desist from it when he turned out to be completely unsuited for the role of organiser and commander, but on the contrary found his pleasure in robbing, plundering and murdering. He brought misery and ruin not only to all the regions through which he passed, but also to his own soldiers, whom he simply abandoned on several occasions.

Count Peter from Mansfeld was practically the ideal embodiment of the unscrupulous war entrepreneur whose only loyalty was to himself and who did not shy away from outright treachery. He would have (and did) do anything to prolong the war as the prerequisite for his business model. In the case of his warlord, Count Palatine Frederick, personal ambition tragically far outweighed his abilities as a politician and ruler. But all this only became problematic because the aristocratic status into which these men were born without their merit gave them the opportunity to pursue their goals at the expense of those around them.

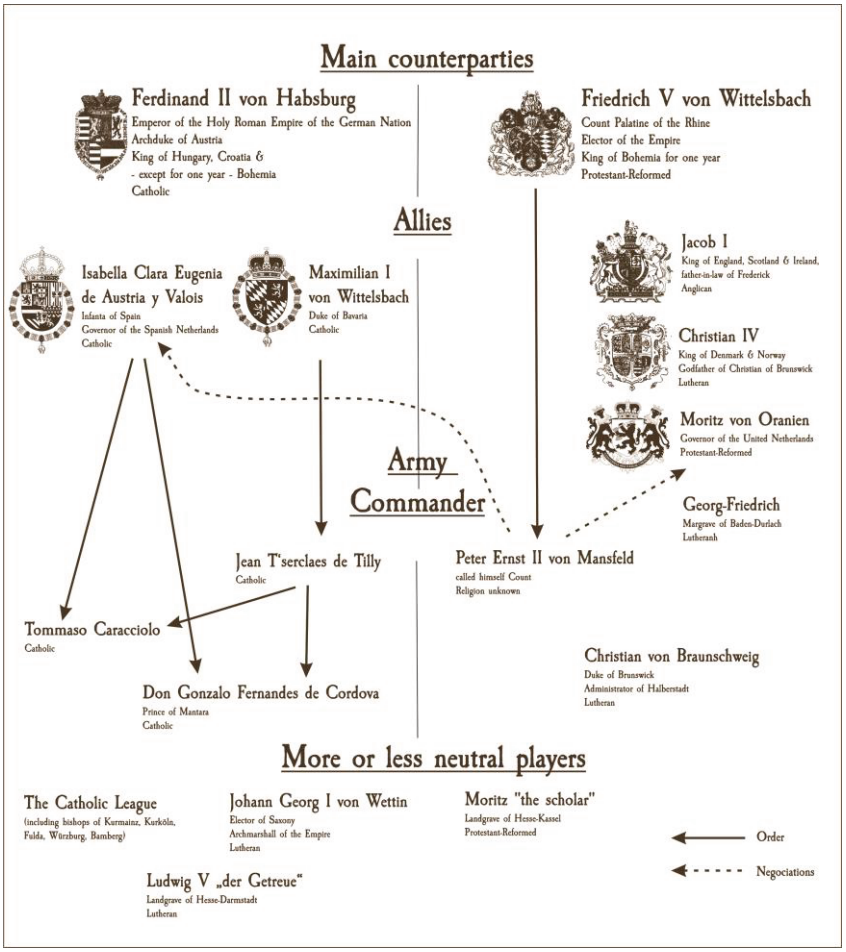
On the Catholic side, the situation was hardly any better. Emperor Ferdinand put his personal grievance above the coronation of Frederick and his almost fanatical faith above the welfare of the Empire. He thus created the conditions for a regional conflict to turn into an empire-wide war in which almost all the relevant European powers were ultimately involved. Because his (religious) political ambitions also exceeded his political and military possibilities, he enabled Duke Maximilian of Bavaria to profit from the crisis. Although the latter achieved all his goals, Maximilian also failed to find the means to end the war in time, so that in the end his country was also devastated and his subjects paid the price for his ambition. His commander Tilly was, after all, an extremely capable troop leader with outstanding strategic-tactical skills who at least took good care of his soldiers. Rising from their ranks, he led them from the front until the end, exposing himself to all dangers. However, this closeness to the troops probably also meant that he did not live up to his own expectations of their discipline. In the end, the civilian population suffered little less under his troops than under others.

But there were also bright spots in this story. The Kurmainz bailiff Knebel and the citizens of Höchst, by their resolute and efficient military defence of their hometown, ultimately cost the Brunswick army the decisive day that would have put them out of reach of the Imperial League army. But when their situation became hopeless, they did not sacrifice themselves and their loved ones in a seemingly heroic last stand, but cunningly made their way to safety as planned. This exemplary balance between courageously resisting injustice and protecting the lives of those entrusted to their care makes Knebel and the citizens of Höchst the true heroes of this story.

Supplement

Overview of the Conflict Parties

The graphic gives an overview of the persons mentioned in the book who are directly involved in the conflict. They are roughly divided into the main actors, their most important allies, the army commanders, as well as more or less voluntarily involved persons whose position among the conflict parties illustrates their point of view.



Organisation and Strength of the Regiments

Regiments were the largest administrative unit in the armies of the 30 Years War. They were led by an Obrist, who was often also the "owner" of the regiment, which usually bore his name. In battle, the Obrist was often represented by a Lieutenant Obrist. He was assisted in his duties by various officers who were equal in rank to the captains of the ensigns (see below). This staff included the Obristwachtmeister, who performed administrative duties. The rank of major developed from this function. The Quartermaster worked with the Fouriers of the Fähnlein in quartering and supply. The profoss with his own men was something like military police and jurisdiction in one person. The provisionmaster or paymaster handled the pay. Since many officers could not read, the regimental secretary had an importance for the function of a regiment that could not be underestimated.

A regiment of foot consisted of 10-20 ensigns or companies. An ensign had a nominal strength of 300 men. At the beginning of the war, an ensign consisted of

100 pikemen
160 musketeers
20 halberdiers
20 round tartiers

In the course of the war, these proportions changed more and more in favour of the musketeers, the halberdiers and round shield fighters practically disappeared. The target strength of the teams was practically never reached and so it is difficult to state the absolute strength of the regiments. In addition, there were the officers and other functionaries who were listed on the muster roll on the first page, the prima plana. The Musterrolle was used to keep a record of the names of the soldiers in a company. The Prima Plana was usually composed as follows:

1 captain
1 lieutenant as his deputy
1 Ensign, quasi the officer's apprentice
1 sergeant as the highest non-commissioned officer
1 chaplain for the spiritual needs
1 fourier, who was responsible for the rations
1 guide

2 corporals as further non-commissioned officers
1 drummer and 1 piper each, who not only had a musical function as the captain's signallers in battle
2 Trabants as protective guards for the captain
1 cook
1 servant for the captain

This was very similar in the cavalry, except that the individual cornets or squadrons were made up of 80-100 horsemen and the titles were somewhat different. So the captain there was called Rittmeister. In the cavalry, trumpeters were used as signalmen, who often also took on messenger duties.

Currency and Value of Money

In this book we often talk about more or less large amounts of money in (Reichs)talers or guilders. Their relationship to each other and to all the other coins, such as hellers, pfennigs, kreuzers and so on, that are known from this period, should be briefly explained here. It would also be interesting to know what the value of these coins is today, in order to be able to better classify the sums mentioned.

First of all, the much simpler point, that of the currency. Even though the names of the coins differed greatly from place to place in the empire, they followed a common system that was actually not that complicated. The first attempts to standardise the currencies in the empire were made at the beginning of the 16th century. But it was not until the Imperial Coinage Order of 1566 that a generally accepted system was established. This was done on the basis of the Reichstaler, abbreviated Rtl. This was a currency coin, which meant that its value was determined by its precious metal content. The decisive factor for its value was therefore not the mintage, which varied from place to place, but the silver content. This was determined in such a way that 9 Reichstalers were to be minted from one Cologne mark of silver. This was referred to as a 9 taler mint foot. This Cologne mark was not a monetary unit but a unit of weight of 233.8123 grams that had existed since the Middle Ages. The individual "Reichstaler" had a "raw" or total weight of 29.23 g and, with a silver content of 889/1000, a fine weight of 25.98 g. The term taler was derived from the colloquially shortened *Joachimstaler Guldengroschen*, a previously very popular large silver coin from silver-rich Saxony.

The success of the Reichstaler coin meant that its weight and silver content were soon also used as a supra-regional unit of account. So, let's say, a merchant from Alsace could order muskets at three Reichstalers a piece in Suhl in Thuringia or barrels of salted herrings at 5 Rtl. in Lübeck, but he did not have to find actual Reichstaler coins to pay, but could convert his own local coins into the corresponding amount on the basis of their silver value. Conversely, if the context was not clear, one soon had to speak of species talers or minted talers if one meant the real coin and not the unit of account.

One Reichstaler already represented a considerable value, so that smaller coins were necessary for daily expenditure. These were variable in time compared to the Reichstaler because of their silver content, which was not always fixed. The systematic deterioration of coins through the tipper and wipper has already been dealt with in the main text. For the time dealt with here, however, we can assume that people would have accepted the following system as the valid one: 1 Reichstaler = 24 Gute Groschen = 36 Mariengroschen = 1.5 Gulden (guilder) = 90 Kreuzer = 360 Pfennige = 720 Heller.

In southern Germany, the largest coin in which people traditionally reckoned was the guilder. As the name suggests, this was originally a gold coin. But as the need for money increased, the name was transferred to a large silver coin. In the monetary system of the 17th century, the value of a guilder was fixed at 2/3 Reichstaler, so that the corresponding amounts were easy to convert into each other and both units were used side by side without comment. Confusingly, the abbreviation for the guilder is Fl., which derived from the Florentine florin, a gold coin.

Converting historical sums of money into present-day amounts is extremely difficult, and some historians take the well-defended position that it is both impossible and pointless. This is because the values and production methods of many things are so fundamentally different that a direct comparison of their prices then and now does not go far. Salaries are also often difficult to compare because in very many cases a considerable part of the remuneration was in kind or rights of use, the value of which is difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made here to get at least a vague impression of the present-day value of the sums we are talking about here. This in no way claims to be scientifically correct, but is only intended to provide a rough guide. Today's prices and salaries refer to the year 2021.

Comparing the silver value of the coins in today's prices does not get you very far. Thus, at a current silver price (Aug. 2021) of 0.72€/g, a Reichstaler would

be worth just 18.71€, which would be completely undervalued. This can be seen from the fact that the new town hall in Höchst, still a stately building today, would have cost just €38,400 with this conversion, even though the construction in 1593-1595 had kept many craftsmen's families in work for months to years. An experiment with food is also difficult. A pound of beef cost 2.5 kreuzer in Dresden in 1625, which according to the above conversion table is equivalent to about 0.028 reichstalers. Today you pay about 5€ for 500g of roast beef in the supermarket, so one Reichstaler would be worth 180€. But beef had a much higher value then than it does today, so this rate also undervalues the Reichstaler.

The cash salary of a magistrate like Knebel was 104 Reichstaler per year, in addition to payments in kind and rights of use. If one assumes today's high officials, such as mayors, district councillors or district presidents, one must assume about 700-1000€ for the Reichstaler in order to arrive at a remuneration appropriate to the office. This is slowly leading in the right direction. In 1625, a journeyman bricklayer in Dresden earned 4 Groschen and 6 Pfennigs per day. If we assume that he worked about 20 days a month - because Sundays and holidays were not paid - then he earned the equivalent of 2.6 Reichstalers a month. Projected over the year, he earned just under 31 talers. According to information from various websites, a journeyman bricklayer today will earn between €26,000 and €36,000 per year gross in 2021, so that here, too, with the assumed rate of €700-1000/ Reichstaler, one arrives at a thoroughly comparable ratio.

But also in other areas where the value of things or services can be assumed to be comparable over time, one arrives at similar results. For example, the comprehensive catering of 22 high officials on the occasion of an accounting at noon and in the evening cost the town of Höchst 7 guilders, 13 groschen and 6 pfennigs in the 1610s. Applying the above rates, one arrives at a bill of 3608 - 5224€ for the town, i.e. between 164 - 237€ per person for two meals of high standard including drinks, which does not seem unreasonable by today's standards. A normal, but state of the art musket, like thousands of them were made in the Suhl workshops for the war, cost 3-4 Reichstaler per piece. Today, the value of the new Bundeswehr ordnance rifle, which is said to cost €3125 per piece, would be equivalent to that. Here, too, the assumed value ratio of 700-1000€ per Reichstaler is plausible.

Correspondingly, the war damage caused, for example, by Mansfeld's invasion of Hesse-Darmstadt, which the Hesse-Darmstadt administration put

at just under 1 million Reichstaler, would be a modern equivalent of 700,000,000-1,000,000€. This also seems exceedingly realistic.

Calculation of Load-bearing Capacity of the Barrel Bridge

There are good reasons to assume that the bridge the Brunswickers built across the Main in Höchst was not a ship-bridge, but at least partly a barrel bridge. The only contemporary source that explicitly speaks of the type of construction of the bridge, the *Meterani Novi*, even clearly states that the bridge was lying on wine barrels. In Höchst there will also have been no ships or barges at all after the inhabitants fled. There is no mention of barges or ships in the detailed lists of material supplied by the people of Frankfurt. Moreover, the description of the damage (broken to 18 feet) speaks for a more segmented barrel bridge.

Barrels were the containers of the Middle Ages and the early modern period: available everywhere in large quantities, not only wine but all kinds of goods were transported in them. To ensure that they could be moved and stacked easily, that the quantities of goods transported in them were easy to calculate and that the barrels also fitted through the doors, gates, hatches and so on intended for them, they were standardised in terms of their dimensions and volumes. This made it possible to make plausible calculations about the load-bearing capacity of the bridge.

The Höchsters traded a great deal with Frankfurt and, to the constant annoyance of their bishop, mainly used the latter's measures. The most common large barrel in the city was therefore probably the Frankfurt piece barrel of 8 ohms, which corresponded to 1154.5 litres. Such a barrel was about 150 cm high and had a diameter of about 120 cm at the belly and 100 cm at the ends. Built in oak, such a barrel weighs 120 kg without filling.

In a barrel bridge, two barrels are clamped together with six beams so that they form a segment. The buoyancy of such a segment can be easily calculated:

> Volume of the float * effective density of the float = displaced volume * density of the medium (in the case of water 1000 kg/m³).

Which proportion of the construction protrudes from the water or is below the surface is determined by the quotient of the densities.

The calculations of the load capacity carried out here are based on some idealised assumptions, such as uniform beam thickness, identical, good and dry timber and so on. Consequently, they are conservative in the sense that the real bridge, which was certainly improvised from all kinds of available materials, was less rather than more loadable.

The weight of the beam construction is about 240 kg per segment for 15 x 15 cm spruce beams (density ~470 kg/m³). The planks for the roadway, if also made of spruce, might have weighed another 130 kg. Per segment, about 5 kg of ropes and iron fittings, nails, etc. must have been added. To prevent such a segment from completely collapsing, it may be loaded with a maximum of 2000 kg. But already at 1500 kg, the barrels are completely submerged, which makes the bridge unstable. With two heavy draught horses, that's already close. Above all, a single segment would be pushed about 70 cm deep into the water at this load. To what extent other segments absorb such a local load and thus prevent local sinking depends on the stiffness of the construction. Because these connections were made with iron fittings and ropes, both of which, according to the sources, were rather scarce during the construction of the Höchst Bridge, this is what will have been lacking above all.

Today, the river is about 110 m wide at the crossing point, and on maps made before the river was regulated, this point also looks as it does today. So about 61 segments or over 120 barrels were needed to cross the river. With a reasonably safe carrying capacity of 1.5 t per segment, the entire bridge could carry just over 90 t. Assuming that a four-horse wagon takes up about 12 metres and weighs 5 t with horses (4 x 700 kg), wagon (500 kg), freight (1500 kg) and crew (200 kg), the nine wagons that fit on the bridge in terms of length would not have been a problem for its carrying capacity. However, this load would have submerged the bridge by more than 50% or 60 cm, which would have put a lot of stress on the fragile structure in the longitudinal direction. More realistic is rather a maximum of 4-5 cars on the bridge at the same time. In this case, the bridge only dips 15-20 cm. In contrast to a ship's bridge, where transverse loads are distributed over the entire hull of the supporting ships, barrel bridges are more susceptible to unilateral loads. The carters therefore had to be very careful to stay in the middle of the bridge so that no twisting forces occurred in the bridge.

At the normal marching speed of the train on a good road, such cortege wagons made about 50 m a minute. The swaying, narrow bridge, where one

had to be careful to stay in the middle, could certainly only be crossed much more slowly.

So if one proceeded carefully and had enough time, even such an improvised barrel bridge could certainly serve to get an army's train across a river reasonably safely. Assuming about 10 minutes for a crossing, 300-400 wagons could be brought across the Main in the 12-14 hours that the Brunswickers had between the completion of the bridge and the army's retreat. That was no more than about a quarter of the train.

The situation is different when it comes to the bridge's load-bearing capacity for people. At 1500 persons, each weighing 75 kg, it becomes critical, and at

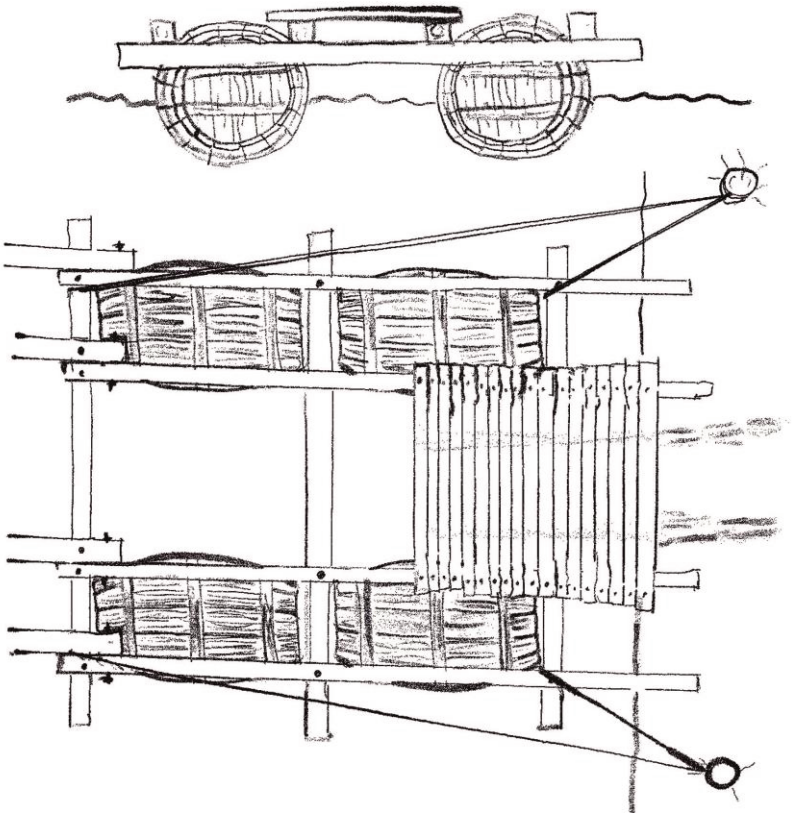


Figure 68

Construction principle of a drum bridge. Top: The barrels are only clamped into the supporting structure. Bottom: View from above.

2000 the bridge is completely overloaded. At this number, there would not even be an excessively large crowd on the bridge; it would be about the same as before the entrance to a stadium. However, if a panicked crowd wants to cross the bridge, there will inevitably be areas where the local density exceeds the carrying capacity of the loaded segments and the bridge is completely submerged up to the carriageway. If the two sides are then loaded differently, it can happen that one or more barrels come free on the less loaded side and the carrying capacity there suddenly approaches zero. The people there fall into the flow, thereby relieving the bridge, which recoils and also releases the barrels on the other side, which are only clamped under the construction. This means that the bridge is no longer passable over a wide section, if the longitudinal connections are not already broken by the sudden shear load.

Acknowledgements

Without the Corona pandemic, this book would probably never have been written. It would still be nice if it were over soon.

The sense of history was awakened in me by my father, who retold the Iliad and the Odyssey to me as bedtime stories. This passion was further developed by various teachers, such as the English teacher Mrs. Göbel, who read to us from "The Eagle of the Ninth Legion" by Rosemary Sutcliff in the lessons before the holidays. My Latin teacher Mrs Heiland also kept up the interest in history. But the greatest merit in this respect goes to Dr Klaus Richter, whose great way of conveying history through stories was only surpassed by his profound and comprehensive knowledge.

In contrast to our dog Fritz, who is a total failure as a truffle hunter, my wife Anne has always dug up new sources with unerring flair and was also the first critical reader. Frank Reinhardt also took it upon himself to read a first draft and make valuable comments. My thanks also go to Countess Magnis, who provided me with documents on the life of her family's ancestor. Whenever some source was not available online, Chiara Siebert got it for me from the university library - many thanks for that. Liam Langan was a great help in correcting the English version – sláinte, Liam!

Written Sources

All events described in this book are based directly or indirectly on sources from the period. Wherever necessary for the narrative and its understanding, details have been added according to historical knowledge of the time.

In reconstructing the events of the battle, I have primarily followed accounts that are recognisably based on eyewitnesses or even written directly by them. This resulted in an astonishingly consistent picture, if one takes into account that the individual participants in the battle could not have had an overview of all the events, but only of their immediate area. All this was only possible because many original sources have now been digitised. This makes it possible to do great research without having to leave the house during the Corona pandemic.

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Continuatio Manßfeldischer Kriegshandlung/ Das ist/ Kurtze und doch eigentliche Beschreibung/ was sich seitt verschienen Monats Martii, auff gegenwertige Zeit/ in der Undern Pfaltz/ im Elsaß/ und sonsten zwischen den Keyserischen/ Bayrischen/ und Pfältzischen oder Manßfeldischen unnd Braunschweigischen Armeen zugetragen und verloffen : Darbey sonderlich und außführlich zufinden/ 1. Die Schlacht vor Wimpffen zwischen Mons. Tylli und dem Marggraven from Baden 2. Das Treffen vor Hagenaw/ zwischen Ertzhertzog Leopoldo unnd Pfaltzgraff Friederichen unnd Manßfelder als Pfältzischen Gesandten 3. Das Treffen bey Höchst/ zwischen der Keyserischen Armada unnd Hertzog Christian from Braunschweig/ [et]c. 4. Die Schlacht bey Fluro und Namur/ zwischen Don Cordua, unnd der Manßfeldischen und Braunschweigischen Armada. S.l. 1622. Zugänglich über https://books.google.de/books/about/Continuatio_Man%C3%9Ffeldischer_Kriegshandlu.html?id=ODRFAAAAcAAJ&redir_esc=y

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Junckelmann M (Hrsg. 2007) „Der Du gelehrt hast meine Hände den Krieg" Tilly, Heiliger oder Kriegsverbrecher? Begleitpublikation zur gelichnamigen Ausstellung in Altötting. Gebr. Geiselberger, Altötting.

Biographical details on Tilly.

Eickhoff S, Grothe A, Jungklaus B (2012) Ihre letzte Schlacht – Leben im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Begleitpublikation zur gleichnamigen Wanderausstellung. Theiss.

In-depth information on soldiering and army life during the war.

Heilmann J (1868) Kriegsgeschichte From Bayern, Franken, Pfalz und Schwaben from 1506 bis 1651, II. Band, 2. Abtheilung. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, München. https://books.google.de/books?id=1afnwgEACAAJ&hl=de&output=html_text&num=13

Includes Tilly's original report to Maximilian, written on 23.6. in the camp near Dörnigheim. Otherwise inaccurate but reasonably neutral account of the events of 1622.

Körber, Esther-Beate: Der Dreißigjährige Krieg als europäisches Medienereignis, in: Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO), hg. Vom Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mainz 2015-09-01. URL: http://www.ieg-ego.eu/koerbere-2015-de URN:urn:nbn:de:0159-2015083106 [JJJJ-MM-TT].

Very good guide to assessing and classifying contemporary press reports.

Opel JO (1872) Der dänisch-niedersächsische Krieg. 1. Band Der niedersächsische Krieg 1621-1623. Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, Halle. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11003807-7

Summary of the Brussels negotiations and the events in northern Germany based on solid research work.

Wertheim H (1929) Der tolle Halberstädter Herzog Christian from Braunschweig im Pfälzischen Kriege, 1621-1622: ein Abschnitt from dem Dreissigjährigen Kriege. Internationale Bibliothek, Berlin.

Source-based, factually very well researched, but in its uncritical, almost enthusiastic partisanship for Christian of Brunswick almost unbearable account of the campaign.

Klopp O (1861) Tilly im dreißigjährigen Kriege: Bis zur Zeit des Friedensschlusses from Lübeck 1629. Cotta, München. https://books.google.de/books?id=OYlOAAAAcAAJ&hl=de&output=html_text&num=13

Uncritical glorification of Tilly, poorly researched.

Reitzenstein K (1891) Feldzug des Jahres 1622 am Oberrhein und in Westfalen bis zur Schlacht from Wimpfen. Zipperer's Buchhandlung, München. https://books.google.de/books?id=2nMPAwAAQBAJ&hl=de&output=html_text&num=13

Knowledgeable, source-based account of the events of the war before the events told here with a military-historical focus.

Image Sources

Pamphlets

There is a whole series of prints that were published close to the time of the Battle of Höchst and which therefore come into question as a source. However, most of the artists had obviously never seen Höchst with their own eyes. What all contemporary illustrations have in common is that they can only be used to a very limited extent as sources of information on the course of the battle.

All the illustrations therefore contradict each other in several important details about the initial battle formation and the course of the battle. This begins with the far too large scale of the tercios and does not end with their arbitrary placement somewhere in the landscape. There is not even agreement on whether the ship's bridge was downstream or upstream from Höchst. Moreover, the geographical features depicted in practically all the illustrations testify to the authors' profound ignorance of local conditions; only the Merian illustration depicts Höchst and the surrounding area in detail, but also uses the battle only to fill the picture.

The pamphlets apparently satisfied more the demand for a visual representation of the event for a society in which many could not read than the demand for an exact depiction of the facts. The Battle of Höchst, unlike many other battles of the war, was further complicated by the fact that there were very few, if any, independent eyewitnesses other than the participants of the two armies. The surrounding area was largely deserted because the local residents had fled. There was also no place from which the battlefield could be easily seen or a town from whose walls one could have safely followed the encounter. And the actual eyewitnesses had other things to do in the days after the battle than to give detailed information to the forerunners of photojournalists.

List of contemporary images and locations of digital availability:

Eigentliche Figure Deß herrlichen Sigs/ welchen die Keyserische unnd Bayrische Armata dem from Halberstatt/ underhalb Franckfurt/ nechst bey Högst den 20. Junij diß 1622. Jahr

glücklich erhalten. s.l. 1622. Zugänglich über: https://www.europeana.eu/item/368/item_Y6BLUIESKONYJWO33XWCW5EIH5RSRG3Q. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek - http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00100216-7. CC BY-NC-SA

Wahrer und gewisser Bericht/ sambt Figure/ welcher gestallt Hertzog Christian zu Braunschweig/ das Churf: Maintzische Stättlin und Schloß Höchst eingenommen/ auch wie dessen Armada from der sämbtlichen Keyserlichen Armeen den 20 Junii N. oder 10. A. C. dieses lauffenden 1622. Jahrs/ bey Höchst geschlagen und zertrent worden. Druck, s.l. 1622. Zugänglich über: https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=1.28/SET=2/TTL=4/SHW?FRST=3

Matthäus Merian d. Ä.. Wahre Vorbildung des Stättlein Höchst, und der beliegenden Gelegenheit, sampt der Schlacht so zwische des Kays. und Braunsch. Armee gesche 1622|PRAELIUM PROPE HOECHSTAM AD MOENUM. Ickstadt, Griesheim, S. 23. Zugänglich über: https://www.lagis-hessen.de/de/subjects/xsrec/current/8/sn/oa?q=YToxOntzOjM6Im9ydCI7czo3OiJIw7ZjaHN0Ijt9

Bellus N. Contrafactur des Treffens zwischen der Kays: Bayr: Spanisch und Braunschwigen Armaden bey Höchst. Zugänglich über: https://exhibits.stanford.edu/renaissance-exploration/catalog/dp846sr0975

Eigentliche Figure das Treffen belangendt, welches zwischen der Kayserlichen Armada und dem from Halberstadt underhalb from Francfort nechst bey Hochst gehalten. Geschehen den 20. Juny. 1622. Zugänglich über: https://www.lagis-hessen.de/de/subjects/xsrec/current/195/pageSize/50/sn/oa/mode/base?q=YToxOntzOjU6InNhY2hlIjtzOjY6IlJlaXRlciI7fQ==

Abb. in Richer J (1623) Mercure françois ou suite de l'histoire de nostre temps, sous le regne Augute du tres-chrestien roy de France et de Navarre, Louys XIII. Paris 1623. Zugänglich über: Bibl. 2207-8, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10719015-2

Paintings

There is one painting mentioned in several sources and treatises, the "Bataille d'Hoechst" by Pieter Snayers, which is said to be in the museum in Brussels. Since Snayers is known for his meticulous research and visited most of the sites himself, his battle paintings are considered to be a fairly reliable source about the relevant battles. Accordingly, this painting might have been an important source of information about the Battle of Höchst. Strangely enough, however, this painting was nowhere to be found during my research.

In fact, the painting is listed in the Nouvelle Biographie Nationale Volume 7 ("Bataille de Hoechst, près Francfort : l'union catholique avec Tilly repousse les protestants commandés par Christian d'Halberstadt, duc de Brunswick (20

juin 1622)" with detailed provenance ("8 tableaux dont 4 proviennent de la vente Salamanca, Paris, 1867. Ed. Fétis leur consacra une notice détaillée") and it is also listed in the catalogue of the Brussels Museum for the year 1900 (Le Musée de Bruxelles, Tableau anciens, Notice, Guide & Catalogue, Wauters A-J. 1900, Weissenbruch, Brussels). In the Bulletins des Commisions Royale d'Art et d'Archeologie 1867 (sixieme année), Bols-Wittouck, Brussels, the aforementioned Edouard Fétis proves in detail in the chapter "BATAILLES DE PIERRE SNAYERS, NOUVELLEMENT ACQUISES PAR LE MUSEE DE BRUXELLES" that one of the four pictures is supposed to be the Battle of Höchst. On the basis of the precise description given there, which also includes an identification of the prominent equestrian figure at the bottom right of the picture as Christian from Brunswick, it can be clearly identified as the present inventory no. KHM 1832 of the Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van Belgie. There, however, it is titled "De slag bij Thionville 1639" (https://www.fine-arts-museum.be/nl/de-collectie/peeter-snayers-de-slag-bij-thionville-1639?artist=snayers-peeter-1). The above-mentioned auction in Paris in 1867 is given as provenance ("Herkomst: Gekocht op de veiling markies de Salamanca, Parijs 3-6.06.1867, nr. 111"), so that it is undoubtedly the same painting.

And indeed, a comparison with two other versions of the same painting (KHM 1815 https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/7539/?offset= 5&lv=list and Schloß Nàchod, illustrated in Sennewald & Hrncirik (2018) Peter Snayers SchlachtenPainter 1592 - 1667, Zeughausverlag, Berlin) and especially with Snayer's paintings of other phases of the same battle (KHM1814 https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/7540/?offset=6&lv=list and KHM 1816 https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/7538/ ?offset=4&lv=list) it is clear that, for example, the red castle depicted is identical to those in the other paintings, which undoubtedly depict the relief battle at Thionville.

So it's all just a historical attribution error? Possibly, but there is some evidence to suggest that although KMSKB 1832 was undoubtedly painted after the models of the Battle of Thionville, it is supposed to depict a different battle, probably that of Höchst. After all, it hung under that title in Spain for centuries, so it was probably sold there by Snayers with that designation. There is also clear evidence in the painting that KMSKB 1832 at least does not depict the Battle of Thionville:

- In the central background on the left there is a characteristic redoubt in the other two paintings, connected by a rampart and ditch to the

castle (Grancourt) in the foreground. This apparently freshly raised redoubt is also clearly visible in the KHM 1814 painting, which depicts the same terrain from a slightly different angle. On KMSKB 1832 there are gardens covered with trees at this point. If one looks closely, the shape of the redoubt is still vaguely discernible, but the painter has clearly taken pains to integrate it inconspicuously into the landscape; an impartial observer does not see a newly constructed, functional military installation at this point.

- To the right of the castle there is a strictly arranged avenue of trees facing each other with a high recognition value in all paintings. In KMSKB 1832, this avenue is broken up into a loose group of trees.

- While in the Czech copy and KHM 1814 the defeated troops are retreating from the battle line in the right-hand area of the picture in a relatively orderly fashion, in KMSKB 1832 the front line is collapsing chaotically and the troops are fleeing in panic.

- The direction of flow of the river is reversed in KMSKB 1832. This can be seen in the flow eddies of the ship's bridge: from the direction of the flow, the ship's hull is subjected to laminar flow, behind which eddies form and the water foams. In the first two pictures, the vortices are on the right side of the bridge, so the water flows from left to right. This corresponds to the direction of flow of the Moselle from south to north at Thionville, when looking from the eastern to the western bank, where the town is located. Not so with KMSKB 1832: here it flows from right to left, which corresponds to the direction of flow of the Main when looking across the river at Höchst from the southern bank.

- The hills in the background appear to be much higher and more heavily wooded in KMSKB 1832 than in its two counterparts.

- In KMSKB 1832, Snayers has omitted a group of trees bordering the view to the right in order to depict the light horsemen of the victorious party setting off across the river in pursuit. This event is not known for Thionville 1639, but for Höchst 1622 it is.

- The fleeing individuals on KMSKB 1832 wear the civilian mix of clothing typical of the mercenary armies of the Bohemian-Palatinate War. In the other two images, at least the officers seem to be dressed very French.

- In my opinion, the most convincing indication that KMSKB 1832 is not meant to depict the Battle of Thionville is the flags of the losing army. Whereas in all other images of this battle these flags in blue with gold fleurs-de-lis indicate, historically correctly, that they are French troops retreating, the defeated troops on KMSKB 1832 have unidentifiable flags with a blue cross on a white background (the Brunswickers had blue and white flags in some cases). Why would Snayers disguise the identity of the French army if the image is actually meant to depict the Battle of Thionville?

-In addition, Fétis' identification of the prominent figure in the foreground is also convincing because of the overall reference to van Dyck's portraits of Christian of Brunswick. Another argument in favour of this attribution is the mounted pistol held in a conspicuous manner by the horseman identified as the commanding officer by the trumpeter accompanying him. In contrast to other military leaders with their marshal staffs, Christian of Brunswick had himself portrayed twice with such a pistol.

In the other two versions of the picture, there is no such prominent person who inevitably provokes the question of identity in the viewer. Identification with a person known to have played a role in the Battle of Thionville does not suggest itself. And as Fétis also details, the story of the Battle of Höchst, with its key events (especially as depicted in Snayer's certainly accessible Mercure francois), can be told very well through the painting.

The correspondence of the disposition of the armies in relation to a castle and a ship's bridge with some prints about the Battle of Höchst is also striking. An attacking army pushing an outnumbered one towards a fortified place with a ship-bridge, the battlefield bordered on one side by a major tributary to the great river, with a larger fortified town in the background. In particular, the prints "Eigentliche..." and by Merian in the Theatrum about the encounter at Höchst, the general scenario is strikingly similar to all three versions of the late battle phase of Thionville.

So it is easy to imagine that Snayers also noticed this general similarity when he received a commission from Spain for a painting of the Battle of Höchst. It is also conceivable that there was still a draft of the Thionville painting in his workshop that could be reworked without difficulty. All that had to be done was to make the local characteristics such as the redoubt disappear inconspicuously and to adjust the direction of the river - who in Spain would

notice that the Höchst castle looks different and is located in a small town? Especially since most of the Spanish participants in the battle after 1639 were already dead (like Don Gonzalo de Cordova in 1635) or would never get to see the painting anyway.

Either way, as a reliable source for the Battle of Höchst, Snayers' painting unfortunately does not come into question, unlike many of his other battle paintings.

List of illustrations

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