

„...GOD KNOWS WHETHER WE WILL EVER SEE OUR RECOVERY FROM THIS MISERY...” (CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN ŠTEFAN TERBÓTS, LAND-STEWARD OF SZÁDVÁR, AND ŠTEFAN KOHÁRY, THE GENERAL-CAPTAIN OF FILAKOVO FORTRESS IN 1678)

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KOMJÁTI, Z. I. „...God knows whether we will ever see our recovery from this misery...”. (Correspondence between István Terbóts, Land-Steward of Szádvár, and István Koháry, the General-Captain of Filakovo Fortress in 1678). *Vojenská história*, 3, 30, 2026, pp 23-42, Bratislava.

The publication presents the hardships of Szádvár, which belonged to Torna County in the 17th century, and the surrounding settlements in the second half of 1678, when the Kuruc troops led by Michal Teleki and Imrich Thököly launched an attack to seize Upper Hungary. In the Szádvár Castle, there were estates belonging to two landowners: Count Pavol Esterházy, the General of Border Castle System of the Mining Town, and Countess Mrs. Csáky. Štefan Terbóts, the land-steward of Pavol Esterházy, frequently exchanged letters with Štefan Koháry, the General-Captain of Filakovo, on his landlord's orders. From the previously unprocessed contemporary letters, it can form an excellent picture of the life and actions of the Kurucs who settled in Torna and Gemer Counties and of the German garrison stationed at Szádvár, as well as of their impact on Szádvár and of all the almost superhuman effort with which Štefan Terbóts, faithfully loyal to his lord, strove to preserve the economic strength of the Szádvár estate. The publication also reflects a wide range of contemporary noble and peasant behaviours: loyalty to the King, support for the Kurucs, and unreliability.

Keywords: Szádvár, Pavol Esterházy, Štefan Koháry, Torna County, Michal Teleki, Kuruc Military Operations, 1678

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The Anti-Habsburgian freedom fighters (their contemporary name was „bujdosók” or „kurucok”) launched a widespread attack in summer of 1678, penetrated deeply into Upper Hungary, and achieved remarkable success. The Kuruc forces commanded by Mihály Teleki and supported by French and Polish auxiliary troops captured several border castles and fortified places during their advance.¹ The commanders of the remained fortresses and border castles being loyal to the Sovereign, endeavoured to strengthen and reinforce the garrison so as to defend them against the expected siege.

Szádvár Castle located in Torna County was functioned as a central of demesnes of two magnate family. One of them was Count Pál Esterházy whose demesne was managed by István Tebóts land-steward (the contemporary Latin name: “provisor” or “præfectus”). The other owner was Mrs. Count Pál Csáky. Her land-property was also managed by another land-steward. Although the two land-stewards managed two separate economic units, they got on well in each other and stayed in mutual agreement in the castle. In the time of the Kuruc invasion of 1678, the land-stewards merged their manorial heyducks into a squad

¹ MAKKAI – SZÁSZ, *Erdély*, p. 863–864; TRÓCSÁNYI, *Teleki*, p. 228–231; HÓMAN – SZEKFŰ, *Magyar történet*, p. 358–359

for the sake of the defence. But they were thoroughly enlightened upon the fact that the man-power was far from not enough for repelling an attack, so István Terbóts (who, based on the worked-up correspondence, nevertheless played a kind of unspoken leadership role in the management of Szádvár) appealed to Pál Esterházy that it would be quite salutary if “...*Your Lordship direct some 25 good free heyducks* [=such foot-soldiers who were not registered and enlisted durably to any royal garrison] *from Filakovo to us, the situation of the castle would not be so imperiled...*”² Pál Esterházy, was not being a landlord of Szádvár, but also the General of the Border Castle System of the Mining Towns probably suggested him to write a letter directly to István Koháry, General-Captain of Filakovo Fortress, because he could consider the actual situation and made decisions about the directing of the free heyducks. The land-steward did so in the middle of July.

In this letter dated from 14th of July, Terbóts asked Koháry to send 30 free heyducks from Filakovo without any further delay. The land-steward attached importance to it, because the Kuruc Supreme Commander, Mihály Teleki had called upon the defenders of Szádvár several times to deliver the fortress, otherwise the Kurucs would retaliate by burning and massacring the garrison (including the wives and children of the heyducks). They decided to preserve the castle at any costs, but the man-power consisted of altogether 18 persons. Terbóts and his comrades expected the arrival of the Kurucs near to Szádvár at 16th or 17th of July. The land-steward wrote the following lines about the strategic and combat morale role of Szádvár: “...*If any reinforcements will not come to Szádvár, and will fell into the hands of the rebels, and they will gain ascendancy over the region, and then essential border castles will be fallen, which will be to considerable harm of the Country and to the detriment of His Majesty...*”. Thus, István Koháry would do a great favour to both possessors in preserving the integrity of their demesnes, at the same time could prevent the destruction of the garrison, and last but not least, he could also promote the service of the Sovereign by ordering the requested 30 free heyducks there. István Terbóts requested to transfer them for only 1–2 months, and promised to provide them with abundant supplies and pay, both in money and in wheat. In addition, the foot-soldiers of Filakovo might have a great opportunity for plundering, because the Cossacks and Polish auxiliary troops belonging to the Kurucs conduct daily raids around Szádvár in very small squads and they were difficult for them to move quicker with the driven livestock. So they could easily ambush and raid them.³ István Terbóts even approached Franciscus Ferdinand de Märfeld, the colonel of the German volunteer corps in Szendrő Fortress to have an effect on Koháry regarding the sending of the 30 free heyducks.⁴ István Koháry soon wrote a letter to Pál Esterházy, with which he sent together the letters of Terbóts and Märfeld. In the letter, the General-Captain wrote to his superior that he had

² Hungarian National Archives, Land Archives Budapest (HU MNL OL), f. P 125, 4711th roll № 4058., (Documents of Palatine Pál Eszterházy), István Terbóts's letter to Pál Esterházy (Szádvár, 3rd of July, 1678.). The original text is: “...*Ha Fülekről parancsolna vagy huszonöt jó szabad legényeket ide küldeni, mégis nem volna oly periculumban a vár állapotja...*”.

³ HU MNL OL P 125, 4721st roll № 6535., fol. 1–4., (Documents of Palatine Pál Eszterházy), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 14th of July, 1678.). The original text is: “...*Ha Szádvárának segítsége nem lesz, és rebellisek kezébe esik, mindjárt nagyobb erejek lévén, derekas helyek is elcsúsznak utána, aki nem kevés ártalmára fog lenni az országnak, és kárára Öfelségének...*”.

⁴ HU MNL OL P 125, 4720th roll № 6329., (Documents of Palatine Pál Eszterházy), Ferdinand Franciscus de Märfeld's letter to István Koháry (Szendrő, 1678. július 14.): “...*Ante Domini Provisores Szatvarienses cum magna Animi motione heri mihi scripserunt, qualiter Rebelles arcem illam sibi tradi gravissima comminatione expostulent, et quoniam ibidem pro defensione pauci, nostrique Equites et Pedites Hungari propter combustem Civitatem sint sine habitatione, illuc pro auxilio 30 Equites totidem Haidones misi, qui quomodo eo pervenerint, nullam inde adhuc habeo relationem...*”.

ordered Terbóts to hold Szádvár at all costs. He also advised him not to surrender the castle to the Kurucs following the bad example of other captains. Besides, there is no serious attack threatening them that he should fear, especially since they will certainly receive 30 border soldiers from Szendrő.⁵

In the second half of July, Szádvár found itself in an even worse situation. Although the Kurucs did not actually lay siege to it, and the garrison received military assistance from Szendrő twice, the behaviour of the Imperial soldiers (who replaced the Hungarian border soldiers who stayed for only a week) outraged so much the manorial heyducks that except for two of them, defected to the Kurucs anchoring into Torna Castle (Turniansky hrad).⁶ Terbóts definitely wanted to equilibrate the number of the Imperial soldiers with Hungarian pedestrian infantry, and at the beginning of August he repeatedly asked István Koháry to send the free heyducks from Filákovó to Szádvár.⁷ Since the replacement of the German garrison in Szádvár was scheduled for the end of the month, sending Hungarian troops there became crucial, which Paul Esterházy was also aware of. Moreover, István Terbóts, sometimes sending the letters through Koháry, sometimes delivering them by other means, was constantly begging his landlord for confirmation. That is why the general wrote the following lines to the General-Captain of Filákovó: “...If my afore-mentioned land-steward requires Your Lordship, do not resent to send some twenty or twenty-five soldiers, who could be assigned to the settlement’s defense, and appoint such an officer of them, being worthy of trust, and who will not turn into Kurucs, like the heyducks of Mrs. Pál Csáky...”⁸ István Koháry replied to Esterházy in about two weeks. He explained that he does not consider it advisable, nor does he see a way to send soldiers from the Filákovó garrison to Szádvár. These are chaotic times, and he cannot be sure that even the people he considers most loyal would not converted to the rebels, if given the chance, or if they were to feel the urge, or perhaps find themselves under compulsion. Anyway, there are German soldiers there, who would not be any worse at defending than the free heyducks he sent, and even if they are rough, they are more reliable.⁹

Terbóts accepted the refusals, yet he tried two more times to request the Filákovó free heyducks for Szádvár, but not as reinforcement for the garrison. At first, in early Septem-

⁵ HU MNL OL P 125, 4706th roll № 2812., (Documents of Palatine Pál Eszterházy), István Koháry’s letter Pál Esterházy (undated, but based on certain context, it was written in Filákovó, after 14th of July, 1678.); The same can be found: MERÉNYI, *Koháry István*, s. 78–79, letter № XIII.

⁶ Torna Castle was handed over to the Kurucs by Pál Semsey, after massacring the German garrison. — TRÓCSÁNYI, *Teleki*, p. 230

⁷ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 229–230., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts’s letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 1st of August, 1678.); HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16939., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts’s letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 6th of August, 1678.)

⁸ HU MNL OL C 1287th roll № 14285., Štátny archív Banská Bystrica (ŠABB), Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), Pál Esterházy’s letter to István Koháry (Šintava, 21st of August, 1678.). The original text is: “...ha említett tisztartóm requirálni fogja Kegyelmedet, ne nehezteljen valami húsz avagy huszonöt hajdút odaküldeni, kik az városnak defenziojára lehessenek, rendelvén oly tisztviselőt elejbe, az kihez ember bízassék, s kurucokká ne legyenek, mint Csáky Pálné Asszonyom hajdúi...”

⁹ HU MNL OL P 125, 4706th roll № 2767., (Documents of Palatine Pál Eszterházy), István Koháry’s letter to Pál Eszterházy (Filákovó, 10th of September, 1678.) — However, it must be added that sometimes even the German soldiers were not reliable, as it was precisely the unpaid Imperial garrison that handed over Szádvár to the Kurucs led by Pál Wesselényi in the spring of 1675. Carlo Strassoldo, the commander-in-chief of Upper Hungary, was able to retake the fortress only in the autumn.— <http://www.szadvar.hu/szadvar/tortenet> [13th of January, 2026.]

ber, he asked for 50 people for at least a week, to scare the Kurucs of Torna Castle so much that they would surrender the castle.¹⁰ Secondly, he turned to István Koháry for help, when the garrison of the rebels began harvesting the vineyards of the two Szádvár demesnes. At that time, Terbóts requested 60 foot-soldiers for a short period, who would act as law enforcement alongside the two land-stewards in collecting the vineyard tithe. In addition to providing full care at the castle, Terbóts – just as he did in his July letter – also offered the soldiers of Filákovo the opportunity to plunder, as the Kurucs had gathered 1,500 sheep near Torna Castle.¹¹

In the letters written by István Terbóts, three main themes can be distinguished. One theme is the behaviour of the Kuruc troops stationed in Torna County and Torna Castle, as well as the attitude of the County Magistrate, which was triggered by the Kuruc attack. From 28th of June, Kuruc troops moved into Torna Castle (however, Cossack and Polish auxiliary troops also stayed there for a very short time!¹²), and among their first acts was extorting and plundering the surrounding area. For example, around 8th of August, the people of the castle drove away all the cows and sheep of a wealthy man named Sylvester from Smolník, and 25 mounted Kurucs drove 60 preyed horses from Rožňava to Torna Castle.¹³ A few days before 15th of August, the soldiers from Szádvár captured three Kurucs in the village of Jablonov nad Turňou. At that time, the Kuruc Captain of Torna Castle ordered the inhabitants of Jablonov nad Turňou, Hrušov and Silická Jablonica to go to Szádvár and put all their efforts into bringing the three mentioned prisoners out on the 16th, because if they return without them, he would burn down their villages to the ashes. Terbóts could under no circumstances have released the prisoners, because the Headquarters of the Border Castle System of Upper Hungary was already aware of them, so the responsibility would have definitely rested on him.¹⁴ In his letter dated from 19th of August, Terbóts once again mentions the issue of the Kuruc prisoners: as for the two land-stewards, they will under no circumstances release the captives, and if the German officer would want to release them for a ransom, they would oppose him. Terbóts also reported that a large part of the nobility of Torna County (refusing to participate in the insurrection) had fled home from Mihály Teleki's camp. Because of this, the Kuruc Captain of Torna Castle was ordered to have them arrested, and even the Magistrate of the County was instructed to convene a general assembly [=generalis congregatio or vármegyegyűlés] by the 20th of August, the main topic of which would be the renewed fulfilment of the insurrection. According to Terbóts, the nobility would not appear in large numbers at the general assembly, as the German garrisons of Szendrő and Szádvár threatened them with the confiscation of their livestock, and had even begun execution in some places. The Kurucs of Torna County temporarily fell into a disadvantage in mid-August, as

¹⁰ HU MNL OL C 1299th roll № 16452., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 5th of September, 1678.). The land-steward of Szádvár specifically asked Koháry to bear witness to the loyalty of the dispatched soldiers : „...It would be necessary to have a letter from Your Excellency with them, addressed to me, so that I could be more certain about them, and they could claim to be your messengers, because otherwise we would not dare to trust them or boldly meet with them...”

¹¹ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16941., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 30th of September, 1678.).

¹² HU MNL OL P 125, 4721st roll № 6535., fol. 1–4., (Documents of Palatine Pál Eszterházy), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 14th of July, 1678.).

¹³ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 220–222., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 9th of August, 1678.)

¹⁴ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16940., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 15th of August, 1678.).

evidenced by their laxity towards the nobility, which rather accepted the orders and instructions of the Imperial garrisons. This is also indicated by the fact that from Torna Castle, the main stronghold of the Kurucs, the garrison of Szendrő easily recovered the sheep and cows that had recently been plundered in Smolník. According to Terbóts, the Kurucs are so few in number that it is possible they would flee from the fortress one evening due to the sense of threat caused by the royal troops' numerical superiority.¹⁵

In the second half of August, the condition of the Kurucs of Torna County deteriorated even further, mainly due to the retreat of Mihály Teleki's main camp.¹⁶ According to Terbóts' letter, the Transylvanian noble recently learned from certain Croatian and German prisoners that the Imperial main army encamped nearby must engage in battle with the rebels at all costs. Teleki immediately retreated from Prešov to Vranov nad Topľou. The Imperial counteractions were not delayed: General Metternich¹⁷ laid siege to Torna Castle on 22nd of August. Since the Kurucs led by András Ruskai and András Váradi Lakatos were determined not to surrender the fortress under any circumstances, they constantly harassed the besiegers with sorties, and, in a demonstration of their resolve to hold out to the last, even raised the red flag. For this reason, the General had cannons brought from Szendrő to begin a systematic siege. Terbóts himself wanted to punish those Kurucs who had escaped from Szádvár to Torna Castle, but since he could not get through to the besiegers due to the defence of the castle to identify them personally, he asked General Metternich that „...*even if the surrender of the castle is conditional, His Lordship should have those who broke their word as unbelievers brought to him...*”

István Terbóts also reported to István Koháry, on how the life of Torna County changed with the weakening of the Kurucs. In July, at the rebels' call, the county leadership ordered an insurrection [=generalis insurrectio or nemesi felkelés] of all the nobles; the assembled people immediately joined Mihály Teleki's main camp. The members of the magistrate (the substitute Deputy-Lieutenant [=substitutus vice comes or helyettes alispán], the two Noble Judges [iudex nobilium or szolgabíró], and the three assistants of the Judge Nobles [=iuratus assessor or iurassor or nemesi ülnök]) behaved inconsistently: they apparently did not appear in person at the Kurucs, but instead hired and sent peasants suitable for soldiers in their place.

Their disingenuousness was also evident in the fact that, despite repeated explicit requests from the land-stewards of Szádvár, they were unwilling to deliver written orders coming from the rebels' camp to them, and of their own accord, they always convened the general assembly that decreed the insurrection in favour of the Kurucs, and moreover, neither Terbóts nor Mrs. Pál Csáky's land-steward was invited to the secretly held meetings. Those who were negligent or reluctant about the general insurrection were threatened with fines and the devastation of their estates. The county nobility, in general, willingly joined the Kurucs, as Terbóts also put it: “...*they [i.e. the nobility] cannot say that the Kurucs drove them to the camp; many of them were inclined to go of their own accord, for some of them had left before, of their own free will...*” During the temporary Kuruc retreat that manifested from

¹⁵ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 216–217., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 19th of August, 1678.)

¹⁶ On 13th of August, Mihály Teleki decided to retreat because General Jacob Leslie set out from Liptovský Mikuláš with the Imperial relief troops to join General Stefan Würmb's units stationed in Levoča, and together they would launch an offensive against the Kurucs.—TRÓCSÁNYI, *Teleki*, p. 232.

¹⁷ István Terbóts only wrote down the Metternich family name. Unfortunately, more precise details about the general in question could not be discovered. It is highly likely that he belonged to the Winneburg–Beilstein branch of the Metternich family. More information can be found here: <https://de-academic.com/dic.nsf/dewiki/948829> [6th of April, 2026.]

mid-August, most of the nobles from Torna County, who were in Mihály Teleki's camp, immediately returned home; however, some still remained, whose names Terbóts could not specify exactly, but he firmly stated that there were people from almost every village.¹⁸

The siege of Tornavár did not last long: around 29th of August, the garrison's Kuruc troops went on a raid and drove away the cattle that Terbóts had gathered from the demesne of Pál Esterházy from under Szádvár.¹⁹ At the beginning of September, the number of the Kuruc garrison in Tornavár suddenly increased. Based on various reports, István Terbóts listed two reasons to Koháry for the enemy's man-power increase in numbers. According to information from one of the officers, the Kurucs are gathering because they want to retreat, surrender and abandon the castle, and remove all the belongings inside. According to another source, the Kurucs really do want to stay, since „...*they have raised a great horn...*” [=completely heartened up] ever since General Metternich stopped the siege, and now they are preparing to harvest the grapes from the vineyards around Szádvár. This is also shown by the fact that brand new barrels were transported up to the castle, and according to Terbóts, they will completely take down everything (taking advantage of the absence of the imperial troops), if 300 of them aggregate.²⁰ Besides the Kurucs, there were also Polish auxiliary troops in Torna Castle, and on 11th of September an inhabitant of Szendrő named Péter Szűcs was beheaded for some crime, and his son was taken prisoner. On the 12th, in order to alleviate the provisioning problems of the increasingly numerous garrison, the Kurucs were compelled to drive sheep away from Miklós Andrássy's demesnes across the mountains as well.²¹ And the grape harvest they had indeed begun; for example, on the 18th, 30 Kuruc foot-soldiers went out to Pál Esterházy's demesne and transported the produce to Torna Castle in dorsels and tubs.²² As the German garrison at Szádvár practically did not intervene, the Kurucs from Tornavár continuously harvested the vineyards of the two owners until the end of September (even at night) and immediately made must from it. István Terbóts was compelled to turn to István Koháry to send some heyducks of Fiľakovo, so that he could at least harvest the remaining grapes with the peasants and collect the vineyard tithe. The land-steward also complained to Koháry about the increasingly brazen raids: since the Kurucs (especially the manorial heyducks who had defected from Szádvár) knew that the German soldiers did not engage in pursuit, they boldly drove off the livestock of the local „labanc” [=loyal to Habsburgs] lords with only a small number of men. For example, recently, just four mounted Kurucs stole all the sheep and swines of Mrs. Pál Csáky from right near the walls of Szádvár, flouting the guards.²³

István Koháry could not send soldiers from Fiľakovo to Szádvár, and thus the land-stewards could not collect the wine tithe. Even though Terbóts tried to direct to himself the serfs of the demesnes with the harvested grapes, the marauding Kurucs looted a certain part of

¹⁸ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 227–228., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 24th of August, 1678.)

¹⁹ HU MNL OL C 1299th roll № 16452., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 5th of September, 1678.).

²⁰ Ibid № 16453., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 9th of September, 1678.)

²¹ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 231–232., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 13th of September, 1678.). This letter coincides with HU MNL OL C 1299th roll № 16454.

²² Ibid fol. 218–219., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of September, 1678.).

²³ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16941., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 30th of September, 1678.).

it from them. The three Kurucs captured in mid-August in Jablonov nad Turňou escaped from the German guards towards at dawn on 12th of October. The prisoners were kept in the „guardhouse”, and they were also shackled. They managed to break through the wall under the built-in iron grille and descend down the castle wall. The guards standing at the castle gate and on the wall were so loud and careless, that they heard nothing and noticed nothing of the sounds of the escape.²⁴ The three fugitive Kurucs visited the villages of Jablonov nad Turňou, Hrušov and Silická Jablonica a few days later, accusing the locals of assisting in their capture, and demanded 300 forints for their two-month imprisonment, the harms suffered during their captivity, and for the weapons and belongings taken from them.²⁵

During October, the raids of the Kurucs from Torna Castle aimed to collect the remaining wine in the villages, consume it (as they did on 22nd of October in the village of Szögliget), and confiscate all the property of the inhabitants, who remained loyal to the Sovereign, especially the money. Terbóts was very worried about the situation of the serfs, because not only did the Kurucs take all their crops, but the central government's offices also relentlessly collected the usual dues, as before.²⁶ In addition, the rebels from Torna Castle also demanded the peasants to provide wagon-traffic and food supplies, making it impossible to serve Szádvár anymore. That is why a glimmer of hope appeared before Terbóts, when he heard that more than 1,500 Imperial soldiers had gathered in Szepes County to march against Torna Castle, and allegedly they would begin the siege on 4th of November, because cannons had been requested from Szendrő that day to be brought to the stronghold of the Kurucs.²⁷ However, the siege did not take place and remained „*in suspensio*” [=in abeyance], because General Jacob Leslie preferred to re-capture Putnok Castle from the Kurucs. Regarding military actions, around Szádvár and Torna Castle, only minor raids took place in early November, with varying results. For example, the Kurucs from Torna Castle attacked drunken Croatian soldiers in the village of Hrušov, killed two of them, and took two of their horses. On another occasion, Imperial cavalry soldiers pursued some rebels of Torna Castle, capturing three of them and taking them along.²⁸

István Terbóts not only reported to István Koháry about the events taking place in the immediate vicinity of Szádvár and Torna Castle, but he also received much more instructions from Pál Esterházy, namely to inform the General-Captain of Fiľakovo about general news as well. (Of course, Terbóts also requested the most important news about Fiľakovo in almost every one of his letters.) However, the military reports sent by the land-steward not only informed Koháry about the military situation, but their contents and copies also reached Esterházy himself, as the command in Fiľakovo ensured this.²⁹

²⁴ Ibid № 16944., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 12th of October, 1678.).

²⁵ Ibid № 16937., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of October, 1678.).

²⁶ Ibid № 16942., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 23rd of October, 1678.).

²⁷ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 223–226., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 3rd of November, 1678.).

²⁸ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16943., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 8th of November, 1678.).

²⁹ It can be stated with certainty that four letters reached Pál Esterházy's hands as attachments or copies. In chronological order: HU MNL OL P 125, 4721st roll № 6535., fol. 1–4., (Documents of Palatine Pál Eszterházy), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 14th of July, 1678.): they sent this in its original form; HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 220–222., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 9th of August, 1678.) = HU MNL OL P 125, 4721st roll № 6536.; HU MNL OL C 1299th roll № 16452., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 5th of September, 1678.) = HU MNL OL P 125, 4721st roll

In his letter dated from 14th of July, István Terbóts reported that the Kurucs had captured Diósgyőr, are now aiming to take Ónod, and according to their plans, they also intend to lay siege to Szádvár.³⁰ In a letter from early August, he reported on the events that took place between the 5th and the 9th. The main camp of the anti-Habsburgian rebels is besieging Prešov, but a smaller part, led by Páter Józsa³¹, headed towards Levoča to hinder the path of the Imperial relief army.

The city is being shelled by the Kurucs with 8-pound cannons, and they have already fired eight grenades, but so far they have not done much damage to the ramparts and wall fortifications. Disagreement arose between the French and Polish auxiliary troops and the Kurucs, which Terbóts phrased as follows: „...the Poles and the French are very angry with the Hungarians for not allowing [Prešov] to be occupied, as they had promised them free profit. But those [= the Kurucs] feel pity for all those peoples trapped there along with the Christianity, because they ruthlessly and indiscriminately force everyone into their power and influence...”. There were also reports coming to Szádvár, that troops from Transylvania and Wallachia would soon arrive to support the Kurucs.³² In his next letter, he informed István Koháry that the Imperial relief army – mainly consisting of cuirassiers – had moved into the Counties of Liptó and Szepes and was heading toward Prešov. Famine broke out in the main camp of the Kurucs, and on top of that, many illnesses occurred. Mihály Teleki recalled the smaller raiding Kuruc units back to the main camp, probably with the aim of assembling all his forces to engage the Imperial army in battle, so as not to end up like they did at Ďurkov in the autumn of 1672.³³ However, the battle did not take place between the two sides, because the main Kuruc army withdrew towards Trebišov.³⁴

At Koháry's request, the land-steward described the circumstances of the retreat of the Kuruc camp in more detail in his letter dated the 24th. Discerning the Imperial superiority, the troops of Páter Józsa and Imre Thököly sent ahead to scout them, crossed the mountains

№ 6537.; HU MNL OL C 1299th roll № 16453., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 9th of September, 1678.) = HU MNL OL P 125, 4721st roll № 6538.

³⁰ HU MNL OL P 125, 4721st roll № 6535., fol. 1–4., (Documents of Palatine Pál Eszterházy), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 14th of July, 1678.)

³¹ Páter Józsa (first name: István) held high ecclesiastical positions: he was a canon of the Eger Chapter, dean of Pata (1678–1679), and parish priest of the parishes belonging to the market town of Tállya (1662–1679). He belonged to the Jesuit order's convent in Košice and received important and serious assignments in the process of re-Catholicization; for example, in Prešov, he converted the majority of the Lutheran population to the Roman Catholic faith. His ambivalent and unsteadfast personality manifested itself from 1676 onwards, when he sometimes sided with the royal faction and sometimes with the Kuruc faction, and based on certain indications, he even amassed valuable loot for himself, which he kept in Boldogkő Castle. Between 1676 and 1679, he was a notorious figure in Hegyalja and Zemplén County, and the area around Tállya also lived in fear of him. He died in October of 1679, but it is not known whether he was killed by the men of Kuruc Captain János Fekete or was beheaded in Tállya by the order of General Stefan Würmb. More information about his life can be read here: JÓSA – ULRICH, *A németiszögyéni*, s. 56–62

³² HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 220–222., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 9th of August, 1678.). The original text is: „...az Lengyel és Francia igen haragusznak a Magyarokra, hogy [ti. Eperjes] megvételeire nem bocsátják, minthogy szabad nyereséget ígértenek nekik. De amazok [ti. a kurucok] szánják az sok odaszorult néppel együtt az kereszténységet, mert ők kíméletlenül és személyválogatás nélkül mindeneket fegyver alá hányanak...”.

³³ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16940., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 15th of August, 1678.).

³⁴ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 216–217., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 19th of August, 1678.) — To the withdrawal of Mihály Teleki: MAKKAI – SZÁSZ, *Erdély*, p. 864.

north of Lúbovniansky hrad to return to Teleki. On the way, they captured nine Imperial soldiers, who were immediately taken before the rebel Supreme Commander for interrogation. The prisoners said that the Imperial Army had been given orders by the Court War Council [=Consilium Aulicum Bellicum or Udvari Haditanács] to force a battle at any cost, even if it meant suffering a total defeat. Teleki was so frightened by this news that he immediately convened a war council, and that night he „...*slipped away with his camp, and all night, with great commotion...he made his way to Vranov nad Topľou...*”. Here, several smaller units split off from the main camp and dispersed in various directions under independent command, mostly moving to the Trans-Tybiscaan Region, while many (mainly the noble insurgents) returned to their homes. After this, the main camp moved in the direction of Trebišov, also mentioned in the letter of the 19th, and then towards Ung County, so that the Poles and the French could return to Poland through the passes there.³⁵

Terbóts provided information about the Upper Hungarian military events next time on the 5th of September. The Imperial army was stationed at Rakamaz and pursued the Kurucs retreating to Carei. Mihály Teleki left the Kuruc main camp and barred himself in Chioar Fortress. According to news from Transylvania, the French and Polish auxiliary troops „...*would have been divided over the Hungarians...*”, and they would have returned to Poland long ago if it had not caused them any harm.³⁶

Four days later, Terbóts sent more interesting news to István Koháry. The Imperial army arrived at the Fortress of Szatmár and continued to pursue the main Kuruc force, which „...*scattered back and forth after Mihály Teleki's entry into Transylvania...*”. The French and Polish auxiliary troops are stationed at the passes leading to Poland, but they have neither separated nor intended to cross them. Páter Józsa went to Boldogkő Castle with his own adherents to take the plundered goods with him. However, he had to leave empty-handed, as the castle's garrison had pledged loyalty to Leopold I., and not only did they refuse to let the Kuruc leader in, but they even shot at him.³⁷

On the 13th, Terbóts reported to the General-Captain of Fiľakovo that the Imperial main army was stationed around the mountain passes, because he had received news that the auxiliary troops positioned at the passes were receiving additional support from Poland. Therefore, the Imperial General's goal is to prevent the merger. However, taking advantage of the main army's absence, the group of Kurucs, that had retreated to the northern part of the Great Plain, suddenly launched an offensive and appeared again near the Castle of Ónod. The Kuruc commanders issued two orders to the Magistrate of Gömör County: to proclaim the personal insurrection of the nobles at the county assembly, and to take all the possessions and livestock of the population behind the fences of the churches, because if the Kuruc soldiers find anything in the houses, they will immediately confiscate it and use it for their own needs. Páter Józsa marched from Boldogkő to Levoča, and confiscated all the royal free town's cattle. The town elders offered 1,000 Thalers for their return, but the priest-turned Kuruc leader refused to hear of an agreement for anything less than 2,000 Thalers.³⁸

On 18th of September, the land-steward once again brought new informations to Koháry. Apparently, Imre Thököly, moving northward, had entered Szepes County with the Kuruc

³⁵ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 227–228., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 24th of August, 1678.)

³⁶ HU MNL OL C 1299th roll № 16452., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 5th of September, 1678.).

³⁷ Ibid № 16453., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 9th of September, 1678.)

³⁸ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 231–232., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 13th of September, 1678.).

troops at his disposal.³⁹ The young commander took the town mayor of the market town of Rožňava as a prisoner along with his father, blaming the town's population, partly because György Harsányi was recently attacked by loyal border soldiers during his plundering tour, and partly because a Kuruc was recently shot on the street and was also wounded. Gömör County sent envoys (Márton Dobos and Mátyás Istvánffy) to Thököly in order to negotiate the release of the two nobles. Gömör County offered 1,000 Thalers to avoid a personal insurrection; Borsod County similarly tried to obtain the exemption. It seems that by paying money, they can indeed be exempted from going to war, as according to the Kuruc leadership, there are already enough fighters from the two counties in their effectives. However, both counties experienced plenty of severe atrocities, as several of the Kurucs „...treated the womenfolk horribly...”, often to the extent that some died of the rapes. On the 17th of September, Páter Józsa arrived in Rožňava with 350 cavalymen, having harvested grapes from Pál Esterházy's demesne of Jablonov nad Turňou, and immediately set off after Imre Thököly, just as David Petneházy's cavalry did on the 18th. According to the news, all three are heading from Szepes towards Trenčín County to force the local nobility there into insurrection, then return, and, joining with the Polish auxiliary forces near Lubovniansky hrad, turn southward again. Not far from Ónod, a large number of Kuruc foot-soldiers are assembling, but it is not yet known, what their goal will be. Terbóts had no information about the Imperial army.⁴⁰

The next letter regarding the general military situation, dated from the 12th of October, arrived for István Koháry from Szádvár.

In this, Terbóts asked the General-Captain to inform him of the truth: is Imre Thököly really being held captive by Pál Esterházy, because lately this news has been spreading around Szádvár.⁴¹

On the 18th of October, István Terbóts informed Koháry that through Torna County, a large number of Kurucs were marching westward every day, towards Banská Bystrica, and people were even openly talking about the fact, that Imre Thököly had completely captured Zvolen and several mining towns. (Although Terbóts added that Koháry might have more knowledge and information about these reports, being closer to the respective locations).⁴² On the 3rd of November, the land-steward of Szádvár sent the following news to Koháry: on the 30th and 31st of October, Izrael Papp, Gergely Bakos, and Pál Semsey were heading through the Görgő Valley towards Rožňavská Baňa with about 450 infantrymen and 100 cavalymen to overtake the armies of Imre Thököly and Colonel Cristoph d'Alendy de Boham. This smaller body of troops was already stationed in Štítnik on the 1st of November. Terbóts also reported on the movement of another, smaller Kuruc unit (about 100 infantrymen and 100 cavalymen) heading in the direction of Putnok, which was also rushing after Imre Thököly and the auxiliary troops, and they are expected to join the unit led by Papp–Bakos–Semsey around Hrachovo.⁴³ On the 8th of November, Terbóts wrote to the General-Captain that General Jacob Leslie spent the night in Aggtelek from the night of

³⁹ See the events of Imre Thököly's autumn campaign of 1678: TRÓCSÁNYI, *Teleki*, s. 236–241; HÓMAN–SZEKFŰ, *Magyar történet*, s. 359; KOMJÁTI, *Fulminis instar*, s. 5–38.

⁴⁰ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 218–219., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of September, 1678.).

⁴¹ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16944., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 12th of October, 1678.).

⁴² HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16937., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of October, 1678.).

⁴³ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 223–226., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 3rd of November, 1678.).

the 7th to the 8th; István Barkóczy was also staying in his company. The Imperial camp set off towards Szendrő and will likely continue its march towards Putnok.⁴⁴

The letters written by Terbóts also magnificently reveal the inner life of Szádvár in the second half of 1678. The garrison was constantly fluctuating: at first, the land-stewards armed the castle's heyducks, but since their numbers proved to be quite insufficient to repel a potential siege, they turned for help to the garrisons of Szendrő and Fiľakovo, as I have previously detailed. In the month of July, Hungarian infantry and cavalry did indeed arrive from Szendrő, but they could only stay for a short time, for a week. Then the German Commander of Szendrő sent a 36-man Imperial infantry unit to Szádvár in place of them, but without the knowledge of the General of the Border Castle System of Upper Hungary. With the abuses and violence of the German garrison, it was almost as if a new era began in the lives of the original inhabitants of Szádvár.

The lieutenant of the 36-man unit had not even settled in yet, but he immediately started giving orders and arbitrarily took control of the landlords' property: „...*The Lord's [=Pál Esterházy] manor-cattle are already being butchered by them with their own authority, against my will, and I cannot resist them. They threaten me with beatings, shackles and imprisonment, that without a commission I do not want to comply with all their wishes pro voto, and I cannot bathe them in wine at will...*” The lieutenant even wanted to take the key to the cellar that stored the highly valued wines. Terbóts could have complained about them in Szendrő, because soon an order arrived from there, instructing the soldiers not to dare demand more than was offered from the goods and foods of the people of Szádvár, but to cover their own provision from their own pay. But the Germans did not want to stop their actions; in fact, their behaviour so outraged the members of the Hungarian garrison, that seventeen of them (breaking their every previous oath) deserted and joined the Kurucs, who had entrenched themselves in Torna Castle.⁴⁵

On the night of the 5th of August, one of the Imperial corporals woke Terbóts, who was just getting ready to sleep, to immediately give wine to the German soldiers. The land-steward was unwilling to do this, so the corporal began shouting at him, and, taking several more privates with him from the „bakehouse”, drove out the women and servants working for Mrs. Pál Csáky, who were in the midst of taking out the bread designated for them, and had the still-hot food forcibly taken away. That very night, they also broke into Pál Esterházy's cellar and, wasting the wine in a terrible manner, got themselves dead drunk. The extravagance of the Germans upset István Terbóts so much, that he seriously began to consider resigning from his position as land-steward, since in just a few days such damage and shortages had occurred to the assets that he could not possibly account for them. He thinks the only solution would be if Pál Esterházy will be informed, either by him or by Koháry, about the abuses committed by the Germans settled there without the knowledge of General of the Border Castle System of Upper Hungary. Either take away the current ones from here, or send Hungarian forces who care about the interests of their compatriots and do not exploit them.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16943., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 8th of November, 1678.).

⁴⁵ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 229–230., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 1st of August, 1678.). The original text is: „...*Már az Úr [Esterházy Pál] majorság-marháit magok autoritásával akaratom ellen kedvekre vágják, ellenek nem állhatok. Magamat veréssel, vassal és tömlőccel fenyegetnek, hogy commissio nélkül pro voto minden kívánságuknak nem akarok eleget tennem, és a borban őket akaratjok szerint nem fűroszthetem...*”

⁴⁶ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16939., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 6th of August, 1678.).

The commander of the German troops in Szendrő, Märfeld, around 7th of August (after the arrival of Terbóts's latest complaints), punished the officers accused of misconduct, especially the one who, being „rowdy” searched for wine every night, going from house to house, and whether he got a drink or not, invariably quarreled badly with the locals, disturbing the quiet ordinance. Märfeld then strictly ordered every member of the garrison that from now on they should truly manage with their own pay and the food provided by the people of Szádvár. So the violent demandingness had ceased a few days ago – Terbóts joyfully informed the General-Captain of Fiľakovo.⁴⁷

However, the tranquillity didn't last more than a week. The lieutenant, in fact, did not want to let in the village mayors from the surrounding settlements, who were supposed to give an economic report to the land-stewards. Mrs. Csáky's land-steward informed the German officer of this, but he insisted that the villagers should not be allowed to enter inside the castle, and he did not care that this would cause damage to the estate owners. The argument escalated, and in the end, the lieutenant took the castle keys from Mrs. Pál Csáky's land-steward (perhaps Terbóts handed them over to him, symbolically, so that he wouldn't take responsibility?) Terbóts was aware that the replacement of the German garrison members would soon become an agenda item, but until that happened, they would still cause a lot of trouble, as they had suddenly become emboldened, having the key ring with them, which allowed them to enter every economic room.⁴⁸

Sometime around the turn of July–August, the German lieutenant, „*threatening with dungeon, shackles, and beating*”, forbade Terbóts from sending the cattle gathered from Pál Esterházy's estates to Vígľaš, which would have offered greater safety due to the raids by the Kurucs. He was compelled to keep the animals at the foot of the castle walls until the end of August, when the rebels really plundered them all. According to Terbóts, the damage caused to Pál Esterházy was solely attributable to the foolish order of the German lieutenant. On the 4th of September, Aragon, deputy to Colonel Märfeld accompanied by a captain arrived at Szádvár from Szendrő so as to investigate the abuses that had occurred after the August inspection, after all. After the investigation, Aragon only left the lieutenant and his subordinates with the same instructions as before: to cover their living expenses from their pay, to eat the food allotted to them, and under no circumstances to touch the incomes and crops of the landlords of Szádvár.⁴⁹

However, a few days later the Germans completely ignored Aragon's orders. They left the lodging assigned to them on their own accord and moved into Pál Esterházy's palace. The highest quality wine taken from the General's broken-open wine cellar was outrageously wasted; for example, half a barrel was consumed by them on the night of September 12th to 13th. They regularly caused such clamorousness, that István Terbóts, who lived in the palace's service apartment, had been unable to sleep for days because of them. Among the damages caused, the land-steward considered it particularly serious that the Germans had fired into the palace wall for amusement. Terbóts emphasized that he exposes himself to enormous dangers by serving the General, and that he must endure a great deal out of respect for him, especially considering that the Imperial infantry has also touched his own property: „...*I write to Your Majesty with a good soul, if you were to pay a hundred pieces*

⁴⁷ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 220–222., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 9th of August, 1678.)

⁴⁸ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16940., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 15th of August, 1678.).

⁴⁹ HU MNL OL C 1299th roll № 16452., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 5th of September, 1678.).

of gold for a year, I would not undertake such a sad, troublesome and dangerous service, whom I must silently forfeit for the mercy of His Majesty the Gracious Lord. What little manors I had to live on were killed and consumed before my eyes, and in the end they pluck me out of everything...". Terbóts has already written to Szendrő to replace the current German garrison, which is stationed there „...*sine commissione Generalatus* [=without the permission of the Upper Hungary General]...”, and to place Hungarian border soldiers there instead. Märfeld already regretted having stationed German troops at Szádvár and promised their prompt replacement. But he cannot do this until the conditions are unsuitable for the other garrison. Another problem was that, upon hearing their nearby replacement, the Germans of Szádvár became even more insolent and made statements asserting that they would not leave until a „*revocatio*” arrived from the Headquarters of the Border Castle System of Upper Hungary. Terbóts therefore asked István Koháry to write as soon as possible to Märfeld and to the Hungarian Captain of Szendrő, urging them to try, as far as possible, to replace the Germans with Hungarians, because until the exchange of the garrison takes place, many more damages are likely to occur.⁵⁰

It emerged from the following letter of the land-steward in charge that the Germans committed their abuses deliberately, in order to return to their original posts: „...*These Germans, with their many frequent abuses, intend nothing other than, through some means, to have everything revoked from the Lord His Excellency [Pál Esterházy] at the Generalate [Border Castle System of Upper Hungary], whose wives are in Ecsed, Szatmár, Ónod, and Kálló respectively, thus depriving them of reason. In particular, this Commandant, who only married last year, is still preoccupied with his wife, whom he has not been able to see for a long time, and cannot even send anyone with a letter to her in Ecsed...*”. Terbóts reported that their current “mania” is that they started heating hard already in mid-September and constantly demanded firewood deliveries from the villagers. When Koháry, in his second letter arriving on the 18th, informed him that he had written to Märfeld about the soldiers’ misconduct, Terbóts considered it very appropriate.⁵¹ The German garrison usually stayed in the castle, lived off it, and did not even move to chase the Kurucs, who plundered the livestock of Szádvár, which also counted as a black mark in Terbóts’s eyes.⁵²

The German garrison at Szádvár was replaced on the 11th of October, but the new soldiers were also Imperials. The fifty musketeers from the Strassoldo Regiment caused damage on the very first night – even if indirectly: the sentinels on the castle walls were talking so loudly that on the 12th, at dawn, the Kuruc prisoners who had been held in the castle for two months escaped, taking advantage of the musketeers’ inattention.⁵³ However, the new German garrison also committed abuses: „...*the Felt babel [feldwebel = sergeant] arrogantly claimed a free table service for himself, his wife, his three children, and his servant*

⁵⁰ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 231–232., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts’s letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 13th of September, 1678.).

⁵¹ Ibid fol. 218–219., István Terbóts’s letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of September, 1678.). The original text is: „...*Ezek a németek az sok rendbéli alkalmatlankodásokkal nem egyebet intendálnak, hanem hogy valami medium által az Úr Ónagysága [Esterházy Pál] Generálátusnál [Felső-Magyarországi Főkapitányság] való instantiájából mind revocáltassanak a regimennekhez, kinek Ecsedben, kinek Szakmárott, kinek Ónodban és Kállóban lévén feleségeik, azokhoz veszett az eszek. Kiváltképpen ez a Commendant, [aki] csak tavaly házasodván, még mindig a feleségén töpreng, hogy régtől fogva nem láthatta, embert sem küldhet levelével hozzá Ecsedbe...*”.

⁵² HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16941., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts’s letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 30th of September, 1678.).

⁵³ Ibid № 16944., István Terbóts’s letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 12th of October, 1678.).

/: who had never been used to it even in Szádvár :/ insulted both of us terribly, and /: salvo honore :/ benamed both of us as deceivers, moreover, also hideous rebels, threatening us with beatings and drawing his cutlass half from its sheath..." Among the further demands of Sergeant Hans Letsnik (from the Staff Company of the before-mentioned Infantry Regiment) was that Terbóts and the other land-steward provide them with enough firewood for sixteen ovens, for his own stove, and for heating the guards stationed at the watch. With this, he wanted to force a new habit on them, because until now, the two landlords had only determined the firewood supply for the garrison and the commander; based on this, the guard post received 3 wagon-loads for a week, and the garrison commander received 2 wagon-loads. So far, the soldiers have been carrying wood on their backs from the forest to heat their own quarters. Now, the sergeant wanted to draft the peasants for the general delivery of firewood for the entire German garrison, a task that was completely impossible due to the ever-decreasing capacity of the estates. However, the Germans did not concern themselves with this; they needed warmth, and for this reason, they had already dismantled a few wooden buildings within the castle grounds to use them for firewood.

Terbóts also reported to Koháry that the lieutenant of the former garrison broke into Pál Esterházy's cellar a total of five times during his stay in Szádvár, made his soldiers drink large quantities of wine, and even on the turn of the 10th and 11th of October, he selected one of the landowners' cattle, herded them up to the castle, had them slaughtered there, and took the raw meat with him. He also caused damage to the castle by having most of the iron tools, polearms, lances and equipment necessary for the maintenance of the howitzers removed from the warehouse shortly before his departure, and having them loaded onto wagons to take with him. The lieutenant still wanted to exact revenge on Terbóts for the reports, as he sent a letter to the commander of the new garrison in which he attempted to cast aspersions upon the land-steward before the sergeant. István Terbóts asked István Koháry to kindly write to Pál Esterházy as soon as possible, since the current German garrison has proven to be just as troublesome as the previous one, and his effective intervention with the Court War Council would be greatly valuable. Terbóts had already informed Märfeld that this garrison was no different from the previous one, but he bitterly stated that *„...it is useless for writing about to the Commendant of Szendrő, because no satisfaction arriving from there, it is nothing more than a mere recommendation, which is just a nice word...”*⁵⁴

Moreover, a few days later, Märfeld instructed the two land-stewards of Szádvár to supply the Germans stationed there with flour. The food was therefore to be provided to the soldiers unconditionally against a receipt, and the military commissariat of provisions would later pay the landowners for the consumed quantity. Terbóts and the other land-steward did not believe that this would ever take place, and ultimately, the two owners would bear the loss, as they would deduct the price of the flour from their due payments. Thus, the two land-stewards decided that they would only handle the crops if they received permission for distribution from both Pál Esterházy and Mrs. Pál Csáky, and they would disregard the demands of the commander at Szendrő.

The commander of the Imperial detachment stationed at Szádvár did not cease his violent behavior; on the contrary, he became increasingly aggressive: *„...The German officer is rude, clingy, and absolutely demands the free table service, disgracefully dishonours and insults us... He terribly threatens both of us, saying that if we do not comply*

⁵⁴ Ibid № 16937., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of October, 1678.). The original text is: *„...a felt Babel [feldwebel = őrmester] szabad asztalt hatalmasul praetendálván rajtunk, magának, feleségének, három gyermekének és szolgájának /: aki még Szádvárában sohasem uszáltatott :/ mindketteinket rútul elszidalmazott, és /: salvo honore :/ hunczfutozott, azon kívül rebellisezett, veréssel és koszperddel fenyegetőzven ellenünk...”*

with all his wishes, he will have our hands and feet tied together and have us thrown from the bastion...". In addition, behind their backs, he also wrote letters to Szendrő and Košice to deny supplies to him and his soldiers.⁵⁵ He was even able to place István Terbóts under house arrest on the 6th of November and station a guard at his apartment door, claiming that he was refusing to provide for them. Then he nevertheless became afraid that he would not actually be able to justify his fabricated and baseless accusations (since his action had caused great offense and outrage), and on the 8th, he lifted the land-steward's detention, merely demanding that Terbóts ask him for forgiveness. However, the land-steward was not willing to do this, primarily because he did not consider himself guilty of anything.⁵⁶

The letters written by István Terbóts also depict the difficulties of Szádvár's economic life, which were intended to inform Pál Esterházy—through István Koháry. Terbóts considered the most important matter to be that the revenues of the manor had significantly dwindled, for both the Kurucs, with their relentless raids, and the members of the German garrison, through their negligence, greed, and wasteful practices, had thoroughly depleted them. In addition, most of the livestock perished due to a dangerous disease, leaving practically only four cattle remaining; therefore, Terbóts could not even engage in breeding. Moreover, the owners of these four animals were constantly compelled by the Kuruc forces from Torna Castle to provide transportation services. Not to mention that the Imperial troops stationed in Szendrő and Szádvár also requisitioned these same animals for their own transport needs, and it was even possible that the Border Castle System of Upper Hungary might have ordered the Magistrate to ensure that the inhabitants of the county villages took care of the transport for the field armies. As a result, not only was there no time for agricultural work, but both the productivity of the serfs and the existence of their tools were put at risk due to demands coming from multiple directions. The population of the villages belonging to Szádvár was therefore completely exhausted and worn out in every respect, reported István Terbóts to the General-Captain of Fiľakovo in several of his letters.⁵⁷

Among the letters, there were also private requests. István Terbóts's brother-in-law, István Laczkovics, lived in Fiľakovo, where he was the scribe of Mihály Tassy, the Deputy-Lieutenant (vice comes or alispán) of Heves and Külső-Szolnok County. Laczkovics took Terbóts's little daughter with him to Fiľakovo, while leaving his own infant son in Szádvár. Since he was very concerned about the condition of his daughter (given that there was plague around Fiľakovo and he had received news that she was very ill), on the 24th of August, Terbóts requested István Koháry that, if possible, he hand over to Laczkovics the private letter that he was sending along with the official mail, and if the scribe wishes

⁵⁵ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 223–226., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 3rd of November, 1678.). The original text is: „...A német tiszt garázda, kötődő, absolute megkívánja a szabad asztalt, rútul becstelenít és szidalmaz bennünket...Szörnyűképpen fenyegetőzik mind a ketteink ellen, hogy kezünket-lábunkat összekötöttén, kivettet a bástyán, ha kívánságának mindenben eleget nem teszünk...”.

⁵⁶ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16943., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 8th of November, 1678.).

⁵⁷ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 218–219., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of September, 1678.); HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16937., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of October, 1678.) and № 16942., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 23rd of October, 1678.); HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 223–226., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 3rd of November, 1678.).

to write something as well, that he kindly send it along with it.⁵⁸ However, Terbóts did not receive a reply from his brother-in-law, so in his letter of 9th of September, he changed his strategy: the letter to be sent now should be delivered to Mihály Tassy, the deputy notary, since he is Laczkovics's employer, and moreover, the two men's homes are very close to each other. It would be very important, because Terbóts definitely wanted to make sure whether his little daughter had recovered or had already passed away.⁵⁹ Laczkovics has already responded to this letter and requested plague medicine from his brother-in-law. Terbóts sent her „angelica” [the root of the herb known as *Archangelica officinalis*⁶⁰] along with instructions for use, and even provided a detailed description of where to find and recognize this plant. (The condition of the little girl remains unknown.)⁶¹

When the parameters of the available letters are examined, it becomes clear that there was regular and mutual correspondence between István Terbóts and István Koháry.

Date of the letter written by István Koháry	Date of Arrival at Szádvár	Date of István Terbóts' reply letter
no data available	no data available	1st of August
3rd of August	5th of August	6th of August
8th of August	9th of August	9th of August
12th of August	no data available	15th of August
17th of August	19th of August	19th of August
21st of August	24th of August	24th of August
3rd of September	5th of September	5th of September
7th of September	9th(?) of September	9th of September
no data available	13th of September	13th of September
no data available	18th of September (on that day, two letters arrived from Koháry)	18th of September
no data available	no data available	30th of September
no data available	12th of October	12th of October
15th of October	18th of October	18th of October
20th of October	no data available	23rd of October
before the 31st of October	31st of October	3rd of November (the reply letter of October 31 was intercepted by the Kurucs)
6th of November	8th(?) of November	8th of November

⁵⁸ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 227–228., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 24th of August, 1678.)

⁵⁹ HU MNL OL C 1299th roll № 16453., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 9th of September, 1678.)

⁶⁰ RÉVAI Nagy Lexikona, s. 614.

⁶¹ HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 218–219., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of September, 1678.)

Shortages can only be found at the end of August–beginning of September, in the second half of September, in the first half of October, and around the turn of October–November. Observing the persistent correspondence trend, all indications clearly suggest that the missing documents fell into the hands of the Kurucs. Terbóts himself wrote on the 1st of August, that almost every letter he sent was being intercepted by the enemy's omnipresent soldiers.⁶² On two occasions, the land-steward of Szádvár could be absolutely certain that the letter had indeed fallen into the hands of the Kurucs. One such incident occurred at the end of October. On the 31st of October, István Terbóts received a message from Koháry via an inhabitant of Tornaľa named János Vas, and on the same day he wrote his reply, which also had to be taken back to Fiľakovo by the same temporary postman. However, János Vas was captured near Aggtelek by the Kurucs of the Putnok garrison, taken into the castle, threatened with beheading, and deprived of the letter; he barely managed to escape their grasp. He only returned to Szádvár on 3rd of November, and thus Terbóts had to rewrite the content of the letter from the 31st.⁶³

The other interception of letter was undoubtedly occurred before the 12th of October. István Terbóts sent tucker-bags filled with apples and pears to István Koháry several times this month, so that in addition to letters, he could also please the General-Captain with such valuable and rare fruits (according to the land-steward, the summer of 1678 had produced a poor harvest at the estates of Szádvár). However, the peasant delivering the first consignment was stopped by the „*Philistines of Putnok*”, taken into the castle, had both the letter addressed to Koháry and the tucker-bags of fruit taken from him, and was beaten several times before being released.⁶⁴ Terbóts immediately prepared another consignment of fruit, but this second attempt was also unsuccessful: instead of the peasant of Gemer village transporting apples and pears, another fellow countryman arrived with Koháry's letter and the empty tucker-bag, and the General-Captain wrote to him that he had still not received the fruits he had sent.⁶⁵ However, on the third attempt, the fruits were successfully transported from Szádvár to Fiľakovo. Terbóts also promised additional consignments of apples and pears, as he saw a good chance that with the onset of colder weather, the Kurucs would be moving less on the roads: „...*I am working so that... I can send [the fruits] by horseback from a certain person. Perhaps it slightly reduces the vagabonds roaming up and down, especially as the weather turns colder, and one can more boldly take them away...*”.⁶⁶

⁶² HU MNL OL P 2257, 667th unit, 7th item, B, fol. 229–230., (Correspondence of István II. Koháry (1649–1731)), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 1st of August, 1678.)

⁶³ Ibid fol. 223–226., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 3rd of November 1678.)

⁶⁴ HU MNL OL C 1302nd roll № 16944., (ŠABB, Archive of the Koháry Family, Pars V.), István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 12th of October, 1678.).

⁶⁵ Ibid № 16937., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 18th of October, 1678.)

⁶⁶ Ibid № 16942., István Terbóts's letter to István Koháry (Szádvár, 23rd of October, 1678.) — On the 3rd of November, the land-steward reiterated his promise to send the fruits: „...*I am unable to offer Your Excellency any gratification at the moment, as it would be intercepted by thieves. If there could be any way to put an end to the wandering up and down of so many vagabonds, I will endeavor, to the best of my ability, to send some fine fruit to Your Excellency...*”.

Z. I. KOMJÁTI: „...GOTT WEISS, OB WIR JEMALS WIEDER VON DIESEM UNGLÜCK BEFREIT WERDEN...“ (DIE KORRESPONDENZ ZWISCHEN STEPHAN TERBÓTS, VERWALTER DER HERRSCHAFT DER BURG SZÁDVÁR, UND STEPHAN KOHÁRY, OBERHAUPTMANN DER BURG FILECK, AUS DEM JAHR 1678)

Die im Komitat Torna gelegene Burg Szádvár war im Sommer 1678 durch die Kuruzen ernsthaft bedroht, nachdem während ihres Einfalls die bedeutenderen Burgen der Umgebung in rascher Folge erobert worden waren. Die Aufständischen führten täglich militärische Unternehmungen in der Region durch und forderten zugleich die Burgbesatzung zur Übergabe auf. Zu dieser Zeit befand sich Szádvár im Miteigentum von Paul Esterházy und der Witwe Paul Csákys. Die Aufgabe der Verwalter der Herrschaft bestand darin, die Verteidigung der Burg zu koordinieren und zu organisieren, wobei sie sich lediglich auf die herrschaftlichen Heiducken stützen konnten. Stephan Terbóts, Verwalter des Paul Esterházy gehörenden Herrschaftsteils, wandte sich mit einem Hilfesuch an seinen Grundherrn, da ihm bewusst war, dass er die Burg mit einer derart geringen Besatzung nicht verteidigen konnte. Auf Empfehlung Paul Esterházy's ersuchte Terbóts Stephan Koháry, den Oberhauptmann der Burg Fileck, um die Entsendung von 25 bis 30 Mann zur Verstärkung der Burgbesatzung. Terbóts schrieb Koháry wiederholt mit der Bitte um die Entsendung freier Heiducken, doch konnte der Filecker Hauptmann seinem Ersuchen nicht nachkommen, da er selbst mit erheblichen Schwierigkeiten konfrontiert war. Daraufhin wandte sich Terbóts an den Kommandanten der Festung Szendrő. Von dort erhielt er zwar Soldaten, jedoch lediglich für die Dauer einer Woche. Anschließend wurden der Burg deutsche kaiserliche Truppen zugewiesen. Die deutschen Soldaten machten sich in Szádvár schwerer Übergriffe schuldig. Die ihnen zugeteilten Vorräte genügten ihnen nicht. Darüber hinaus verlangten sie von den Verwaltern der Herrschaft weitere Lieferungen und eigneten sich bei Gelegenheit verschiedene Güter sogar gewaltsam an. Die erlangten Vorräte verbrauchten sie dabei häufig rücksichtslos. Ihr verantwortungsloses und arrogantes Verhalten führte schließlich dazu, dass die besoldeten Heiducken zur Burg Tornau desertierten und sich den Kuruzen anschlossen.

Obwohl das Kommando in Szendrő mehrere persönliche Inspektionen vor Ort durchführte, setzten die deutschen Soldaten ihre Verfehlungen fort. (Die Behauptung, die ungarische Besatzung habe nach der Nachricht vom Anmarsch Emmerich Thököly's die deutsche Besatzung ermorden wollen, um zu den Kuruzen überzulaufen, ist jedoch unzutreffend).

In seinen Briefen informierte Stephan Terbóts Stephan Koháry regelmäßig über die Ereignisse in der Umgebung von Szádvár: über die täglichen Überfälle der auf der Burg Tornau stationierten Kuruzen, über die Abgaben und Kontributionen, die sie den Untertanen auferlegten, sowie über die wechselnde Haltung des Komitats Torna und des lokalen Adels während der erfolgreichen wie auch misslungenen Feldzüge Michael Telekis. In den Briefen wird zudem der Verfall des Wirtschaftslebens thematisiert, der durch willkürliche Requisitionen kuruzischer oder kaiserlicher Truppen verursacht wurde sowie weitere Aspekte.

Z. I. KOMJÁTI: „...BOH VIE, ČI SA EŠTE NIEKEDY DOŽIJEME VYSLOBODENIA Z TOHTO NEŠŤASTIA...“ (KOREŠPONDENCIA MEDZI ŠTEFANOM TERBÓTSOM, SPRÁVCOM PANSTVA HRADU SZÁDVÁR, A ŠTEFANOM KOHÁRYM, HLAVNÝM KAPITÁNOM FIĽAKOVSKÉHO HRADU Z ROKU 1678)

Hrad Szádvár nachádzajúci sa v Turnianskej stolici bol v lete roku 1678 vážne ohrozený kurucmi, pričom počas ich vpádu boli v krátkom čase za sebou dobyté významnejšie hrady

v jeho okolí. Povstalecké oddiely denne podnikali operácie v uvedenom regióne a zároveň vyzývali posádku hradu, aby sa vzdala. V tomto čase bol Szádvár v spoločnom vlastníctve Pavla Esterházyho a vdovy po Pavlovi Csákym. Úlohou správcov panstva bolo koordinovať a organizovať obranu hradu, pričom sa mohli spoliehať iba na panských hajdúchov. Štefan Terbóts, správca časti panstva patriacej Pavlovi Esterházymu, sa obrátil na svojho zemepána so žiadosťou o pomoc, pretože si uvedomoval, že s malou posádkou hrad nedokáže ubrániť. Na odporúčanie Pavla Esterházyho požiadal Terbóts Štefana Koháryho, hlavného kapitána Fiľakovského hradu, o vyslanie oddielu 25 až 30 mužov na posilnenie posádky. Terbóts opakovane písal Kohárymu vo veci vyslania slobodných hajdúchov, no fiľakovský kapitán jeho žiadosti nemohol vyhovieť, keďže sám čelil vážnym problémom. Preto sa Terbóts obrátil na veliteľa pevnosti Szendrő. Odtiaľ síce dostal vojakov, avšak iba na jeden týždeň. Následne boli na hrad pridelené nemecké cisárske jednotky. Nemeckí vojaci sa v Szádvári dopúšťali závažných prechmatov. Nestačili im pridelené zásoby, ale od správcov panstva požadovali ďalšie, a keď sa im naskytla príležitosť, dokonca si viaceré komodity brali násilím. Získané statky pritom neraz bezohľadne míňali. Ich nezodpovedné a arogantné správanie napokon spôsobilo, že platení hajdúsi dezertovali na Turniansky hrad a pridali sa ku kurucom.

Hoci veliteľstvo v Szendrő vykonalo na mieste niekoľko osobných inšpekcií, nemeckí vojaci vo svojich priestupkoch naďalej pokračovali. (Nie je pritom pravdivé tvrdenie, že uhorská posádka chcela po správe o príchode Imricha Thökölyho povraždiť nemeckú posádku, aby mohla prejsť na stranu kurucov). Vo svojich listoch Štefan Terbóts pravidelne informoval Štefana Koháryho o udalostiach v okolí Szádváru: o každodenných prepadoch kurucov usadených na Turnianskom hrade, o dávkach a kontribúciách, ktoré ukladali poddaným, ako aj o meniacom sa postoji turnianskej stolice a miestnej šľachty počas úspešných i neúspešných vojenských ťažení Michala Telekiho. V listoch sa spomína aj úpadok hospodárskeho života spôsobený svojvoľnými rekviráciami kuruckých alebo cisárskych vojsk a ďalšie momenty.

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