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## The History of the Regiment of Johann von Pernstein\*

### INTRODUCTION

Today all of the world's military forces consist of precisely defined organisational units, where the bearers of each title and rank exactly know their tasks and purview. However, this transparency was not characteristic of the military organisations at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In these organisations, a person well-versed in warfare was bestowed with tasks and authority for a definite time period. In other words, the emperor hired an *Obrist* or *Obristhauptmann* or *Hauptmann* or *Rittmeister* or captain to recruit, organise, arm, move to the theatre of war and lead infantry or cavalry (consisting of a certain number of soldiers), a regiment, a battalion or battalions (*Fähnlein* or *Fahne*), or company or companies within the framework of a contract for a fixed time period (usually for three, or occasionally six month).<sup>1</sup> On the basis of available groups of various sources, one can get an insight into the everyday lives of mercenaries who were employed in the service of the Habsburg Empire at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century (like in the case of histories of regiments which were fashionable in 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century). This study examines the history of the infantry regiment hired and led by Johann von Pernstein during the Long Turkish War (1591/93–1606). However, before venturing into the discussion of the history of the regiment, it is worth briefly looking at the life of the *Obrist*.

### THE CAREER OF JOHANN VON PERNSTEIN UNTIL HIS ASSIGNMENT AS OBRIST

Johann von Pernstein (*Jan z Pernštejna* in Czech) was born non 30 July 1561 from the marriage of Vratislav von Pernstein (*Vratislav z Pernštejna* in Czech) and Maria Manrique de Lara; in other word, he was the descendant of a Czech-Moravian and a Spanish aristocratic family. His father, true to this Catholic confession, counted as a very influential person in the Habsburg court, as he had close, as it

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<sup>1</sup> For the use and meaning of various offices, see: Bagi, *Pápa a Fuggerzeitungokban*, pp. 11–29.

were friendly, ties to Archduke Maximilian, who later became Holy Roman emperor as well as Czech and Hungarian king. He participated in the Schmalkaldic War (1546–1547), and then in the company of Archduke Maximilian, who was three years older than him, he attended the wedding ceremony of Philip II of Spain and Mary Tudor on 25 July 1554, in Winchester Cathedral in London. In his way back home, he was dubbed as a knight of the Distinguished Order of the Golden Fleece in Antwerp. He was the first among the Czech-Moravian nobles who was granted with this prestigious distinction. Archduke Maximilian held the fate of Pernstein's father at his heart, since Maximilian, who had been elected as emperor in 1564, appointed him as Czech Lord Chancellor (*Oberstkanzler von Böhmen*) in 1567, and then in 1572, the emperor sent him to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów*) with Wilhelm von Rosenberg (*Vilém z Rožmberka* in Czech) in order for them to support his second son, Archduke Ernest's claim to the Polish throne. The Czech Lord Chancellor and the Master of the Horse drowned in the Danube on 27 October 1582 in a ship accident.<sup>2</sup>

As a loyal subject of the Habsburg family, Johann carried out both military and political assignments that were far from being uncommon in the age. After he had married his own cousin, Anna Maria Manrique de Lara y Mendoza on 3 February 1587, in Vienna, he joined the army of one of the best generals of the age, Alessandro Farnese, the Prince of Parma, then governor of the Spanish Netherlands. It is also known that he commanded his own unit in 1591 there. After that, Rudolf II commissioned him along with Salentin von Isenburg and Simon Graf zu Lippe to mediate between the Spanish king and the orders of the Netherlands that revolted. However, this mission failed. After his diplomatic failure, he joined the army of Peter Ernst I von Mansfeld, the new governor of the Spanish Netherlands, in 1593. In the same year Johann participated in the campaign along the Oise against Henry IV Bourbon, during which he took the castle of Neuville with two German infantry regiments, two cavalry companies, and artillery of the same amount. In the next two years he continued warring in the Kingdom of France. He took part in the siege of Cambrai under the command of Pedro Henriquez de Acevedo, Count of Fuentes in 1595. Leading his troops, Pernstein stormed at the rift breached into the wall of the city on 2 October, after which the French defenders surrendered the citadel on 9 October.<sup>3</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was still believed that Pernstein had already participated in the siege of Esztergom in 1595.<sup>4</sup> However, in fact he appeared in the Hungarian theatre of war only in the next year, in 1596. At that time, the emperor appointed Pernstein, who had gained military experience in the Spanish Netherlands, as one of the most important major officers of the Christian army led by Archduke Maximilian: he became *Obrist-Feldzeugmeister* who was in charge of acquiring and

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<sup>2</sup> Schweigerd, *Oesterreichs Helden*, p. 470.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

supplying munitions and artillery.<sup>5</sup> He participated in the campaign in this position; he fought at the siege of Hatvan (between 15 August and 3 September 1596) and in the battle of Mezőkeresztes (between 24 and 26 October 1596) too.<sup>6</sup>

In the next year, until the May of 1597, he took part in retaking Tata in this military position too. The fortress defending the only ford across the swamps of the Danube floodplain and the Által-rill was occupied by the advancing main Ottoman army in July 1594. By possessing this strategically vital location, on the one hand, the Turkish and Tatar troops stationed in Győr could be effectively severed from their supplies. On the other hand, the overland route between Komárom and Esztergom could be secured.<sup>7</sup> Pernstein is supposed to have had the idea that one night they had to raid the enemy, and during the raid they could use the new weapon, the firecracker. The first prototype of this weapon was imported by Karl von Mansfeld in 1595, from the Netherlands, though; it seems that on the basis of his own experience, its effect was not entirely unknown to Pernstein either.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the *Obrist-Feldzeugmeister* went to Érsekújvár (present day Nové Zámky, in Slovakia) on 20 May, and presented his plan to Miklós Pálffy, the *Obrist* of Mining Town and Esztergom, who accepted it. The available Christian corps, which had been stationed in Érsekújvár, Komárom, and Esztergom in the winter, marched under Tata in order of battle on the night of 22 May, after passing near Almás. Three cavalymen who had been sent ahead and spoke sophisticated Turkish made the gate guards believe that they were carrying food from Buda to Győr. As night approached and they were afraid of the enemy's attack, they asked for permission to spend the night under the walls. After they had acquired it, the twenty select Spanish and Walloon mercenaries pushed the cart carrying firecrackers meant to implode the gate onto the bridge over arching the moat. When it came to pass, Pernstein lighted the fuse of the weapon. After the explosion the Walloons invaded the fortress, who were followed by Benedek Pogrányi's 500 hajduks from Esztergom, and by the 200 chosen German riflemen of Johann Baptista Pezzen. Moreover, as a diversion, an additional contingent of 300 Hungarian infantrymen attacked the western side of Tata with ladders. The well-organised assault carried out unusually at night could not be resisted by the small number of Ottoman forces called to the defence. Most of the defenders were slaughtered and the rest who survived the attack fled to the tower of the castle. The Christians launched an attack against the tower only at dawn: they bombarded it and led

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<sup>5</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Exp. B. No. 494, fol. 477r, 14 June 1596; Pr. Prag Exp. B. No. 496. fol. 166v, 26 June 1596. ÖStA KA, HKR, Pr. Exp. Bd. 198, fol. 13r, No. 82, 23 June 1597; Pr. Exp. Bd. 198, fol. 394v–395r, No. 15, 4 January 1597; Pr. Exp. Bd. 198, fol. 565r, No. 11, 11 July 1597; Pr. Reg., Bd. 199, fol. 2r, No. 3, 1 February 1597; Pr. Reg., Bd. 199. fol. 5r, No. 2, 2 April 1597; Pr. Reg., Bd. 199. fol. 11v, No. 143, 26 June 1597.

<sup>6</sup> Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata*, pp. 186–262.

<sup>7</sup> Kelenik, "Tata helye", pp. 59–76 and 47–48.

<sup>8</sup> Karl von Mansfeld wanted to use a weapon during the 1595 siege of Esztergom which had worked in the battles of the Netherlands. He planned to "endeavour to implode and destroy" the Párkány gate of the Viziváros. *Mansfeldische Histori, Schlacht vnd herzliche Victoria in Ungern...* (s.l., 1595), fol. 6r; Istvánffy, *Magyarok dolgairól*, p. 198.

charges against it from multiple sides. They took it soon and killed its defenders or took them prisoners.<sup>9</sup> Some of them became enthusiastic on account of the successful attack and thought if they had an army double the size of the troops who participated in the Tata assault (6–7,000 mercenaries), then they could retake Győr, as the success of the Christian caused great terror among the Turkish.<sup>10</sup>

Although Pernstein earned great fame and renown with the attack, he could not hold his position as *Obrist-Feldzeugmeister*. His position was taken over by another, not less apt warrior, Ruprecht von Eggenberg.<sup>11</sup> Pernstein was then ordered to set up an infantry regiment.

#### THE RECRUITMENT AND MUSTER OF THE PERNSTEIN INFANTRY REGIMENT, AND ITS MARCH TO THE BATTLEFIELD

The emperor or, less frequently, the orders of the Austrian or imperial provinces commissioned renowned and war-experienced peers<sup>12</sup> to recruit and set up mercenary companies of varying manpower which fought as part of the military force of the Habsburg Empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As has been pointed out above, Pernstein met all of these criteria. The documents assigning him to hire 3,000 infantrymen were issued not long after the success at Tata, on 4 June 1597, by the Aulich War Council (*Hofkriegsrat*).<sup>13</sup> Although at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century various mercenary troops were hired and later disbanded through a series of personal bargains in the military forces of the Habsburg Empire, but at the level of the documents necessary for issuing these mandates, in the case of the infantry (as well as in the cavalry) a worked-out and well-designed form or scheme had already been in use.

The first type of document included the patent or *Bestallungsbrief* (letter of commission) issued for the *Obrist*, which enlisted the instructions and tasks that were needed to set up the regiment. Pernstein's patent ordered to hire infantrymen for six months instead of the commonly agreed three months. Moreover, if need be, they had to stand in arms for a longer period. The hired unit was ordered to a set location of muster, and the calculation of their military pay started at the day of the muster. Its sum amounted to 4 Rhenish florins "in line with the old custom". Those who had been hired had to purchase (or supplement) their weapons, and pay for their food and accommodation. In order to prevent abuses and because of

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<sup>9</sup> ÖStA HHStA, Hungarica, Fasc. 130, fol. 11–17. ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Exp. B. No. 514, fol. 40v, 13 February 1598; Pr. Reg. B. No. 516, fol., 41r, 24 February 1598; Pr. Reg. B. No. 516, fol. 56v, 6 March 1598. For its edition as regesta, see: Jedlicska Pál, *Adatok Erdődy báró Pálffy*, pp. 622–625. For the analysis of the events, see: Kelenik, "Tata helye", pp. 51–54 and 56–57.

<sup>10</sup> ÖNB, Fuggerzeitung Cod., 8970. fol. 559r–560r.

<sup>11</sup> ÖStA KA, HKR, Pr. Reg., Bd. 199, fol. 11v, No. 143, 26 June 1597.

<sup>12</sup> In his book published in 1588, Daniel Wintzenberger argues that the assigned person has to be a count or a baron on the basis of the *Bestallung* (commission) issued by Emperor Charles V in 1543. Wintzenberger, *Beschreibung einer Kriegsordnung*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> ÖStA KA, Best. 537/1597.

the various monetary units used in the empire, the exchange rates of the florin / florins was set (1 florin = 15 *fillér* (ca. shilling) = 60 krajcár (ca. deniers / pennies)). In case the soldier's pay was not settled because of the enemy or other reason, the emperor asked for the mercenaries' patience. After a successful siege or battle, the month that had begun had to be paid to the members of the regiment. At the end of the campaign, if the emperor did not request the continuation of the regiment's service, the mercenaries were dismissed and were paid a half month's military pay. The *Bestallungsbrief* also stipulated that those who had been hired had to serve in accordance with the instructions and orders of the emperor or the warlord substituting the monarch – on land or sea – with the full or half regiment, battalion, group, or as the battle situation required. Further instructions were detailed in the *Artikelbrief* (letter of provision) upon which the mercenaries took an oath. The *Bestallungsbrief* was authenticated by the seal and signature of the emperor.<sup>14</sup>

The second type of document includes the record of *Bestallung* (commission) known as *Bestallungsverzeichnis* (catalogue of commission) in which the assistants of the *Obrist*, its closest crew, the *prima plana* or *Erste Platt*<sup>15</sup> and the *Hauptmann* as well as the assistants' pay were defined and listed. In general, the latter was not expressed in money, but the product of multiplication of a mercenary's monthly pay was given. It meant that the *Obrist* was paid the wage that was worth seventy-five times more than a hireling's pay; in other words, the *Obrist's* pay was a monthly 300 florins. The *Bestallung* record issued for Pernstein, however, contains that the *Obrist* and his own crew had to be paid 800 florin per month, while his deputy, the *Obristleutnant* had to be paid 300 florinsflorin for the same period.<sup>16</sup>

The *Bestallung* record of Pernstein precisely defined the wage of the officers leading the battalions too. Accordingly, a monthly pay of 250 florins were paid to the *Hauptmann*, 40 florins to his deputy (*Leutnant*) and 60 florins to the ensign (*Fähnrich*).<sup>17</sup> The monthly pay of the other officers serving in the *prima plana* amounted to 232 florins.<sup>18</sup>

It has to be noted that both the *Obrist* and his deputy were interested in increasing the monthly pay of the *Hauptmanns*, since in the first two battalions the *Obrist* and his deputy held the position of *Hauptmann*. In the case of Pernstein it is also known that he managed to negotiate an extra income for himself. The *Obrist* asked for alimentering two additional positions in every battalion in a way he requested. It meant that he could dispose of these soldiers' pay too. What is more, it was the Aulich War Council that interceded in the matter with the emperor in July 1597, on behalf of Pernstein.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, it cannot be ruled out either that this sum was meant as compensation for the incompletely paid wage of the *Obrist-Feldzeugmeister*, because it had not been fully paid by the end of July.

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<sup>14</sup> ÖStA KA Best. 537/1597

<sup>15</sup> Neither "Staat der hohen Ämter", nor "prima plana" has a Hungarian equivalent.

<sup>16</sup> ÖStA KA Best. 537/1597

<sup>17</sup> ÖStA KA, Best. 537/1597.

<sup>18</sup> ÖStA KA, HKRA, Prag 1597 No. 9.

<sup>19</sup> ÖStA KA, HKR, Pr. Reg., Bd. 199, fol. 14r, No. 115, 15 July 1597.

It was also registered in the *Bestallung* record which province paid for the whole expenditure of the regiment, or if it should be paid from the fund raised by the Holy Roman Empire for the purpose of fighting against the Turks. In the case of Pernstein, the wages of the mercenaries were meant to be paid from the fund collected by the Moravian orders for the purpose of fighting against the Turks.<sup>20</sup>

The third type of document involves those capitulations and agreements which defined the mode of organisation of the German and Walloon–French–Lorrainian infantry troops. In the first phase of the Fifteen Years' War these documents contained the number of the battalions of the regiment to be raised, and the ratio of the musketeers, shooters and double-pay mercenaries who were enrolled in those units. In addition to this, it also disposed of how the hirelings should be equipped with arms and how they should be replaced. Moreover, it detailed the amount of advance payment the mercenaries should get as well as it defined the exact location of the muster and its expected beginning. A capitulation from the Aulich War Council was also handed over to Pernstein. The document testifies about three very important regulations regarding the setup of the regiment. On the one hand, the venue of the muster was set as Brno, while the end of July was appointed as its time. The hirelings had to be warned about not harassing and encumbering the inhabitants of the city and its neighbourhood. Moreover, the Aulich War Council assigned one and a half million florins for the *Laufgeld* (advance payment) which the hirelings had to live on in the period between the recruitment and the muster.

On the other hand, the document defined the composition of the battalions. In accordance with it, the double-pay mercenaries could hire 120 mercenaries among those who wielded a pike or a halberd or a broadsword, and who wore breast- and backplate as well as a helmet in battle, while 80 mercenaries as musketeers, and 85 hirelings as plain shooters. The latter included the *prima plana* of the battalion that had 15 soldiers in it. Thus, a battalion consisted of 300 mercenaries in total.

Thirdly, the document detailed additional extra incomes. It was necessitated by the fact that the Obrist had to take care of the appropriate arms and equipment, so the Aulich War Council raised an extra sum of 4000 florins for this purpose. Furthermore, when setting up every battalion, an additional 400-florins allotment (*Vorlehen*) had to be disbursed. This type of acquittance was offered for managing the period (occasionally several months) between two wage payments for soldiers at the expense of the next month's wage.<sup>21</sup>

Today Pernstein's recruitment patent (*Werbepatent*) cannot be found in the *Kriegsarchiv* in Vienna, but he must have been in possession of one, on the basis of which the *Hauptmanns* of the hireling or the commissioned could start recruiting the given unit or regiment at the assigned venue. The document contained the name of the recruiting officer, the number of battalions to be recruited, and the size of the unit. Also, it named the cause of the campaign, and the fact that the mercenaries were meant to be recruited by the emperor for the purpose of fighting

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<sup>20</sup> ÖStA KA, Best. 537/1597.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

against the Ottoman Empire. The employer asked the leaders of the imperial province or town concerned to support the work of the recruiters not only while hiring but also at the muster and marching to the theatre of war too, obviously, for the appropriate payment. The imperial assembly at Worms in 1495 obliged the ruler to ask for permission from the authorities of the territory designated for recruitment. If the *Hauptmann* in charge of recruiting could not produce such a document, then he was arrested and deported.<sup>22</sup>

The other document that was handed over to Pernstein but has become unavailable since then was the so-called *Artikelbrief*. As one of the elements of Maximilian I's military reform at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, this type of document was introduced to ensure the discipline of the *Landsknechts* (German-speaking mercenaries). In its original form, it was a bilateral treaty, since it contained not only regulations for mercenaries but also obligations for the person who hires the mercenaries. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the *Artikelbrief* became a collection of unilateral military penal code, from which the rights of the soldiers were removed.

In the Fifteen Years' War, the *Artikelbrief* compiled by Lazarus von Schwendi and accepted by the imperial assembly of Speyer in 1570 was used when swearing in the hired infantry after the muster.<sup>23</sup> The document consisting of 74 articles was designed to maintain discipline and order in the camp. It debarred hirelings from intemperance, gambling, harassing the population, missing sermons, brawling, using weapons without permission, leaving their designated post, missing alarms, keeping contact with the enemy, theft, and plundering mills and bakeries. In addition to this, the *Artikelbrief* also disposed of what should be done with the loot and the prisoners, the compulsory acceptance of designating the accommodation, and that among the mercenaries only those could travel with baggage who were unwell. Only the wives of the hirelings could stay in the camp, other, libertine women had to leave. In most of the cases, if the mercenaries violated any condition set forth in the document, they had to suffer the death penalty.

However, the *Artikelbrief* included other instructions too. Similarly to the *Bestallungsbrief*, the 10<sup>th</sup> point defined the wage of those hired: a monthly 4 florins, in other words, a daily 15 *fillérs* (shillings) or 60 *kreuzers* (deniers). In exchange for that the emperor who hired them required and demanded that the double-pay soldiers or those who joined battalions with firearms should have full weaponry and armor always in top shape,<sup>24</sup> and be well-versed in battle. In the case of the musketeers and simple shooters, the document emphasised that if they proved to

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<sup>22</sup> ÖStA HHStA MEA, Ma Fasc. 4. A document without a folio number.

<sup>23</sup> For the formation and development of the *Artikelbrief*, see: Möller, *Das Regiment der Landsknechte*, pp. 31–51; Pálffy, *Katonai*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>24</sup> One of the points appended to the *Artikelbrief* prepared by Schwendi richly described the armaments and equipment of the soldiers of a 400-member battalion. In accordance with this point, 100 armoured infantrymen should have had long pikes and pistols. 50 soldiers had to wield broadswords and halberds, as well as each should have been equipped with a pistol. Moreover, 50 mercenaries among the double-pay soldiers had to fight only with pikes. In addition to this, shooters were required to wield helmets and rapiers by the prescription. Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, p. 211; Kelenik, “A kézi löfegyverek jelentősége”, p. 84.

be unacquainted with using their weapons while on guard or in battle, then death penalty should be meted out on them. In addition to this, the mercenaries were required to wear an overcoat or coat in order to protect themselves and the firearms of those who were equipped with them from cold and rain. In the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 47<sup>th</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, and 50<sup>th</sup> article of the *Artikelbrief*, the ruler obliged the assignee not to damage him with any abuse during either the musters or on the battlefield.<sup>25</sup>

The recruitment and organisation of the Pernstein regiment had already begun when the documents were compiled. The *Hofkammer* (Court Chamber) of Prague received a reminder on 23 May, that it should inform the leader of the Moravian province, Ladislav Berka *Landeshauptmann* about the regiment.<sup>26</sup> Six days later, on 29 May, he sent his instruction. According to this, on the one hand, Berka had to take measures at the designated place of the muster to prepare for receiving the mercenaries. On the other hand, he had to pay 3,000 *koronas* (crowns) to Pernstein or the person assigned by him for the *Laufgeld* of those hired.<sup>27</sup>

The recruitment and the acquisition of the armaments and equipment of the infantrymen commenced, since it had to be taken care of not by the mercenaries, but by the *Obrist*. Pernstein asked for *Passbrief*, that is, permission, which was eventually granted to him, at the *Hofkammer* of Vienna on 20 June, to acquire and transport these items.<sup>28</sup> It seems that the chamberlains in Prague supposed that they had acquired more from the military equipment than what the regiment actually needed. Therefore, they ordered the *Landeshauptmann* on 23 July, to equip 600 infantrymen, who were paid and sent by the Moravian orders and stationed in Fülekk (present day Fil'akovo, in Slovakia), from the remaining stocks of Pernstein's mercenaries.<sup>29</sup> However, Berka's letter dated to 30 July, testifies that the battalion was supplied with gunpowder and lead (*Kraut und Lot*) by the city of Brno.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, the expenses meant to finance the regiment were started to be collected that was a serious challenge for the various court and feudal governmental authorities. The office of *Hofkammer* responsible for issuing and expediting military affairs (*Kriegsexpedition*) reminded the chamberlains of Prague in June 1597, what kind of expenses they may encounter from the recruitment to the first muster: the *Vorlehen* (agreed loan) negotiated in advance and the *Lauf-* and *Liefergeld* (operation and supply cost).<sup>31</sup> The latter was a daily allowance meant to finance the troops' waiting at the location of the muster before the commencement of the muster.

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<sup>25</sup> ÖStA KA, Best. 464/1593; ÖStA HHStA MEA, Reichstagsakten, Fasc. 57, fol. 88v–100v; Lünig, *Corpus juris militaris*, pp. 70–75; Meynert, *Geschichte der K. K. österreichischen Armee*, pp. 54–60; Janko, *Lazarus Freiherr von Schwendi*, pp. 198–211.

<sup>26</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Exp. B. No. 504, fol. 101v, 23 May 1597.

<sup>27</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 507/508, fol. 125r, 29 May 1597.

<sup>28</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Wien Exp. B. No. 502, fol. 471v, 20 June 1597; Pr. Wien Reg. B. No. 510, fol. 161r, 20 June 1597.

<sup>29</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 507/508, fol. 199r–v, 23 July 1597.

<sup>30</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Exp. B. No. 504, fol. 159r, August 1597.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 124r, June 1597.

The *Court Chamber (Hofkammer)* of Prague took steps to resolve the matter. In his letter dated to 11 June, Berka already pointed it out to governmental authorities that Hans Georg Vogl had already sent 30,000 florins from the taxes collected by the Moravian orders, so the money necessary for the *Laufgeld* of Pernstein's regiment was already at their disposal.<sup>32</sup> When this information became known to the Prague chamberlains, they reminded the master of military expenses, Michael Zeller, to send one of the officers of this office to Berka who was in charge of Moravian tax affairs, and to the local provincial judge (*Landesrichter*), Jan Haugwitz, in order to receive the sum that had already been collected. From this sum, a *Vorlehen* worth of 4,000 florins had to be distributed to each battalion in a way that this sum was to be later deduced from the second- and third-month wages of soldiers. In addition to this, the officeholder of the master of military expenses was obliged to disburse the *Liefergeld* from this received sum, too, among those waiting for their muster in Brno.<sup>33</sup>

On the same day, the Court Chamber of Prague sent messages to Haugwitz and Berka informing them about the same, with the addition, on the one hand, that the first-month wage of the regiment, for which they devoted 34,000 florins, had to be prepared. On the other hand, until the arrival of Zeller's officer, they had to disburse the *Liefergeld* among the hirelings.<sup>34</sup>

The chamberlains of Prague issued another instruction on 2 July. It ordered Berka, Haugwitz, and the Moravian Vice-chamber (*Unterkammer*) to command Andrea Seidl, the officer of the tax-collecting authority (*Rentdiener*), to deliver the additional 3,718 florins meant to finance the Pernstein regiment (and the recruitment and first-month wage of further 500 mounted shooters and 5,000 husars hired by the Moravian orders too) to the master of military expenses in Vienna upon acknowledgement of receipt.<sup>35</sup> This sum assigned to pay the *Lief-ergeld* had to be repaid later, because they were not financed from the Turkish aid, but from taxes levied for other reasons.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, they had to report the muster as well as the circumstances of the disbursement to the Prague Chamber.<sup>37</sup> On the very same day, Archduke Maximilian was informed that the Moravian orders dispatched Zacharias Eißenteter to survey the muster of Pernstein's infantry.<sup>38</sup>

Those who had been hired appeared in ever greater numbers in the city of Brno and its vicinity which had been assigned as the location of the muster. At the same time, on the one hand, the head of the Moravian province endeavoured to collect the sum needed to pay the first-month wage of the Pernstein regiment. It is known from an instruction dated to 16 July, and written to Haugwitz and the head of the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, fol. 131v, July 1597.

<sup>33</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 507/508, fol. 153v, 21 June 1597.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, fol. 161r–v, 21 June 1597.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, fol. 174r, 2 July 1597.

<sup>36</sup> In order to supplement this, money was allocated from the (purchase) tax of beer levied as regalia in the districts of Olomouc and Brno. Ibid, fol. 316r, 22 October 1597; Ibid, fol. 329r, 5 November 1597.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, fol. 174r, 2 July 1597.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, fol. 175v, 2 July 1597.

Moravian Vice-chamber, Niklas von Hradik as the dispensers of collecting and managing the Turkish aid that they had to give the money still missing from the first-month salary of the regiment to Friedrich von Žerotín and Berka.<sup>39</sup> The Court Chamber of Prague informed the master of military expenses on 20 July, that it ordered its officer, Niklas Knoblach, in possession of 10,000 florins to survey the muster of Pernstein's infantrymen.<sup>40</sup> They wanted to avoid the raiding and plundering of the countryside with disbursing the money.<sup>41</sup> In his letter dated to 28 July, and related to this matter, Berka informed the Court Chamber of Prague what sum of money was transferred to those hirelings who had appeared so far.<sup>42</sup> However, the damage done to and in Brno from the muster of the regiment to its departure was still quite significant. According to an instruction compiled by the Prague chamberlains on 10 October, the sum of the damage was 402 florins, 21 kreutzers, and 3 denarii, which had to be reimbursed for the citizens.<sup>43</sup>

In the meantime, already in July, the Aulich War Council ordered Christof von Egg to survey the muster of the regiment.<sup>44</sup> So, in addition to plodding away at collecting the missing money to pay the first-month wage of the soldiers, Berka had to help von Egg's work too.<sup>45</sup>

The muster commenced on 1 August, in the premediated way in Brno, but it did not happen without inconvenience. On the one hand, the sum of the monthly pay differed in the case of the double-pay soldiers, the musketeers, and occasionally, the shooters too.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 191v, 16 July 1597.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 191v, 6 July 1597; *Ibid.*, fol. 197r, 20 July 1597.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 191v, 16 July 1597.

<sup>42</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Exp. B. No. 504, fol., 158r, August 1597.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 210r, October 1597; ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 507/508, fol. 304v, 10 October 1597.

<sup>44</sup> The Aulich War Council ordered Hans Graf to act as muster clerk serving under Egg. *Ibid.*, fol. 336v, 18 November 1597.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 207v, 30 July 1597.

Name of the Hauptmann of the battalion	120 double-pay soldier	80 musketeers	85 shooter	<i>prima plana</i> (15 persons)	Total
Johann von Pernstein <i>Obrist</i>	1796 florins	715 florins	516 florins	582 florins	3,609 florins
Leonhard Ehrgott <i>Obristleutnant</i>	1672 florins	777 florins	516 florins	582 florins	3,547 florins
Centurius Pflueg	1687 florins	743 florins	510 florins	582 florins	3,522 florins
Peter Recodius	1797 florins	798 florins	510 florins	582 florins	3,687 florins
Jonas Schlieben	1747 florins	787 florins	510 florins	582 florins	3,626 florins
Arnold von Heiden	1717 florins	762 florins	510 florins	582 florins	3,571 florins
Georg Welser	1858 florins	773 florins	516 florins	582 florins	3,729 florins
Hans von Eichen	1603 florins	782 florins	510 florins	582 florins	3,477 florins
Alex Arnoldi	1766 florins	788 florins	516 florins	582 florins	3,652 florins
Georg von Kollonich	1647 florins	782 florins	510 florins	582 florins	3,548 florins
Total:					36,486 florins

It can be seen from the table that in the case of the shooters, fewer allotment was paid in four battalions with 516 florins (the battalion of the *Obrist* and its deputy, Georg Welser and Alexander Arnoldi), while in further six battalions the allotment was decreased with six florins. However, in the case of the double-pay soldiers and musketeers no accordance similar to the above mentioned one can be found. All this can be explained by the fact that mercenaries hired in this category included numerous persons who had already served in Hungarian or other battlefields many times, or they could demand higher wages due to their social prestige and formerly held high position. These people serving in these battalions could represent their interest with such force that the assigned commissioner was obliged to accept their demands, and fix the sum of the monthly pay in a differentiated manner. Due to this, the monthly costs of the regiment increased from the originally planned 34,000 florins to 36,486 florins.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, Egg took issue with the *Obrist* himself. The instruction handed over to the commissioner stipulated that the emperor intended to employ the mercenaries for three months in line with the old German custom. Contrary to this, Pernstein held to the half year period agreed in the *Bestallung*. The protracted negotiation was finally resolved by the *Obrist* loudly stating that he was willing to take an oath (that is, to enter into service) only for the already determined six-month

<sup>46</sup> ÖStA KA, HKRA, Prag 1597 August, No. 9.

service. The commissioner of the muster had no other option but to accept Pernstein's demand.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, the tenacity of the *Obrist* caused another unforeseen problem. The Turkish aid collected by the Moravian orders by the beginning of August for the muster was insufficient to pay for the first-month wage of the mercenaries. This was communicated by Berka to the chamberlains of Prague in his letter dated to 5 August.<sup>48</sup> Precisely 4,000 thalers were missing, for the raising of which the Court Chamber of Prague ordered Haugwitz and Hradki to obtain a loan that would be paid back from the sums which would later arrive as further Turkish aid.<sup>49</sup> In September 1597, Pernstein's insistence that six months should be served resulted in that the court should have raised wage for three additional months.<sup>50</sup> The Court Chamber of Prague ordered Berka on 28 September to spend the 24,000 thalers gained from the taxes paid after beer-houses and other taxes on financing the Pernstein infantrymen and the Walloon cavalrymen as well as shooters.<sup>51</sup>

However, Pernstein's mercenaries had already been located near Győr. After the muster, the regiment began its march to the Hungarian theatre of war through Lower Austria. The Aulich War Council gave mandates to Bernhard von Puchheim and Dionisi Knozer to escort the mercenaries to Pozsony (present day Bratislava, in Slovakia) and from there to Komárom (present day Komarno, in Slovakia), while taking heed to avoid any affray, heist or loot.<sup>52</sup>

#### THE PERNSTEIN INFANTRY REGIMENT IN BATTLE

The army of Archduke Maximilian left the camp in Óvár (present day Mosonmagyaróvár, in Hungary) on 9 August 1597, and began the siege of Pápa on 23 August, that was given up by the Ottoman defenders a week later in return for their free passage.<sup>53</sup> After the successful offensive, the main army of the Christians returned to Hédervár situated next to the Danube. In the Hédervár camp, the leaders of the Christian army discussed the possible future directions of continuing the campaign. The opportunity to attack Buda, Székesfehérvár, or Veszprém was raised too.<sup>54</sup> Eventually, however, on the basis of the news he had received, on 4 September, Archduke Maximilian decided to lead his undermanned army agais

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 10.

<sup>48</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Exp. B. No. 504, fol. 161r, August 1597.

<sup>49</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 507/508, fol. 207v, 30 July 1597; *Ibid.*, fol. 219r, 5 August 1597.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 270v, 6 September 1597.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 289v, 28 September 1597.

<sup>52</sup> ÖStA KA, HKR, Pr. Reg. Bd. 199, fol., 284r, No. 148, 22 August 1597.

<sup>53</sup> Pálffy, *A pápai vár*, pp. 63–81; Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata*, pp. 269–271.

<sup>54</sup> Banfi, "Gianfrancesco Aldobrandini", p. 224.

Győr, since he counted that it is sufficient to seal off the also undermanned Ottoman army from the supplies and they would give up the strategic location bestowed on them because of famine.<sup>55</sup>

The Christian army reached Győr on 9 September and began to encircle the fortress. Archduke Maximilian ordered additional infantry and cavalry units as reinforcement to the camp. According to a report jotted down on 10 September in Győr, the arrival of Pernstein's regiment was expected in the next few days.<sup>56</sup> The diary of Giorgio Basta informs the reader that infantrymen arrived in the vicinity of Révfalu on 13 September, on the left bank of the Danube in the Szi-getköz. They could not cross the river on this day, because the pontoon bridge had not been constructed yet. This was finally finished on 14 September.<sup>57</sup>

The infantrymen of Pernstein did not remain in the vicinity of Győr for too long. It was decided that they had to banish the Ottoman army of Szentmárton that threatened the Christian camp. Archduke Maximilian sent Pernstein's regiment, 1,000 mounted shooters of Seifried von Kollonich,<sup>58</sup> and 200 Hungarian cavalrymen of Ferenc Nádasdi to attack the castle. Upon seeing the approaching Christian troops, the defenders fled to Csesznek.<sup>59</sup> As a consequence of this, after leaving more than 200 cavalrymen and infantrymen behind, the attackers returned to the camp encircling Győr.

Archduke Maximilian ordered the infantrymen of Pernstein, some cavalrymen and four falconettes to Újváros on 17 September in order to incapacitate the defenders to get reinforcements from this side either.<sup>60</sup> However, the small army could cross the River Rába and encamp next to the Rivel Rábca only on the following day.<sup>61</sup> Afterwards, they started to prepare their drill trenches and ramparts opposite the *Bécsi kapu* (Vienna Gate) which were reinforced night and day, and thus they endeavoured to reach the watertrench. In the meantime, Pernstein had a high-standing gun-site constructed, where the cannons they brought were placed.<sup>62</sup>

The defenders had a guard at the *Bécsi kapu* that was reinforced with field cannon. They kept the new Christian ramparts under heavy fire with their rifles and the cannon.<sup>63</sup> A report sent from Vienna on 27 September, communicated the news of the death of Rudolf von Kinsky. On 19 September, Kinsky and Pernstein were laying in bed next to each other. A projectile shot from a mortar or a howitzer from the fortress hit the stud on the top of Pernstein's tent, and the ball then fell

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<sup>55</sup> ÖNB, Fuggerzeitung Cod. 8970, fol. 321v–322v, 317r, 296r, 293r–v, 277r–v, 286r–v, and 244r–v; ÖStA KA, Alte Feldakten 1597-9-30; OSzK, Kt., Fol. Ital., 64; Kelenik, "Egy fogoly török", pp. 71–77; Ortelius, *Chronologia*, fol. 132v; Hegyi, *A török hódoltság várai*, pp. 1495–1496.

<sup>56</sup> ÖNB, Fuggerzeitung Cod. 8970, fol. 309r–310r.

<sup>57</sup> OSzK, Kt., Fol. Ital., 64.

<sup>58</sup> Pálffy, *A pápai vár*, p. 58.

<sup>59</sup> OSzK, Kt., Fol. Ital., 64.

<sup>60</sup> OSzK, Kt., Fol. Ital., 64.

<sup>61</sup> OSzK, Kt., Fol. Ital., 64.

<sup>62</sup> ÖNB, Fuggerzeitung Cod. 8970, fol., 229r–230v, 235r–v, and 286r–v; Ortelius, *Chronologia*, fol. 135v–136r.

<sup>63</sup> Ortelius, *Chronologia*, fol. 136r.

on the head of Kinsky. It splitted his skull and part of the brainwater leaked away, but Kinsky was still alive then, and the medics tried to bandage it. However, this did not help, and he died soon, on 22 September.<sup>64</sup>

Somewhat later, Pernstein died, too, which was reported by Istvánffy in the following way:

“And it came to pass on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of Saint Michael’s month that when Prestensky left for visiting the ramparts and cannons, and wanted to mount a horse, and had spent some time without being on guard, the enemy targeted him from the bastion and hit him with a grand iron ball, killing him instantly.” [“S történék Szent Mihály havának 28. napján, hogy mikoron Prestensky az sáncokat és álgúkat látogatni indulván, lóra akarván ülni, és őrizkedés nélkül valami keveset mulatozna, az ellenségtől az bástyáról mintegy célra arányoztatván, egy igen nagy vasgolyóbis arányozva találásával, mindjárást elszaggatván elveszne.”]<sup>65</sup>

Therefore, the Hungarian Livius dated Pernstein’s death to 28 September. Contrary to this opinion, according to Basta, who resided in the camp, Pernstein lost his life two days later, on 30 September. Basta described the circumstances of Pernstein’s death differently. He stated that in the afternoon of that day, Pernstein departed with his 40 shooters to that island which is located between the River Rábca and the Danube, in front of the Várbástya (Castle Bastion) in order to scout the area. The *Obrist* wanted to launch an attack against the fortress from this location. When the besieged discovered Pernstein in the Island, they attacked him. Although the infantrymen retreated in a very orderdly manner, yet 16 shooters among them perished. Moreover, Pernstein, when he wanted to whirl away on horseback, was shot on his shoulder and died.<sup>66</sup>

Finally, upon hearing the news of the Ottoman army’s approach, Archduke Maximilian ordered his troops to move to Szigetköz.<sup>67</sup> Most of the Christian army crossed the river by the evening of 3 October, and then set up their camp one and a half mile from Győr. Basta’s diary informs us that the remaining infantrymen of Pernstein could not join the main forces immediately, as the besieged dammed up the River Rába by constructing an earthen rampart. A cavalry unit was sent to help those being caught in the trap with the order to retreat to the direction of Óvár.<sup>68</sup>

Although the regiment has not been mentioned by the sources anymore, it is certain that Pernstein’s mercenaries were present in the Christian army led by Archduke Maximilian that moved to Vác passing by Esztergom and took part in the Vác-Verőce battle fought between 2 and 9 November too.<sup>69</sup> This is alluded to by the report of Zacharias Geizkofler, *Reichspfenningmaister* (in Hungarian:

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<sup>64</sup> ÖNB, Fuggerzeitung Cod. 8970, fol. 241r–242r; OSzK, Kt., Fol. Ital., 64.

<sup>65</sup> ÖNB, Fuggerzeitung Cod. 8970, fol. 229r–230v; Istvánffy, *Magyarok dolgairól*, p. 282.

<sup>66</sup> OSzK, Kt., Fol. Ital., 64.

<sup>67</sup> ÖNB, Fuggerzeitung Cod. 8970, fol. 219r–v.

<sup>68</sup> OSzK, Kt., Fol. Ital., 64.

<sup>69</sup> Tóth, *A mezőkeresztési csata*, pp. 276–278.

birodalmi fillérmester) dated to 10 October, and addressed to the Court Chamber of Prague, in which Geizkofler discussed the status of the infantries of Pernstein and Hans Reinhard von Schönberg as well as the Walloon infantry.<sup>70</sup>

#### THE DISBANDING OF PERNSTEIN'S REGIMENT

In accordance with the emperor's intention, the unit was disbanded (*Abdankung*) when the period of recruitment expired. Then, the surviving mercenaries were paid off, disarmed, and their flag was torn off from the flagstaff, thus indicating the end of their service. However, this did not go so smoothly in practice. The court sent Zacharias Geizkofler and Bartolomäus Pezzen in November 1597, to arrange the muster and disbanding of the remaining 1200 infantrymen of the Pernstein regiment.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, for two reasons they were hindered in complying with their mandate. On the one hand, the sum collected by the assistance of the Moravian orders and intended to finance the muster and retirement did not arrive. On the other hand, the mercenaries showed no willingness to participate in this occasion, because, in accordance with the mandate of the emperor, their regiment would have been disbanded only after a 4-month service. Therefore, the infantrymen demanded that they serve their full 6-month term set out in their *Bestallung*. They referred to the fact that they would have condoned their recruitment for 4 months. This was, however, refused by the commissioners assigned to the muster, as they claimed that the emperor could not pay more than the wage for 4 months and a half-month sum for the mercenaries' resignation.

Another problem was caused by the fact that, as has been mentioned above, the majority of the double-pay soldiers were mustered with a very high wage. Thus, the commissioners tried to convince the soldiers as well as the officers to sign an *Accorodo* that was about paying a 4-and-half month sum. They refused to comply, but the muster commenced eventually on 1 December 1597. The parties agreed that after the deductions had been made, 43,806 florins had to be disbursed among the mercenaries as a compensation for the missing 3-month wage, and among the *Hauptmann* an additional sum of 600 florins for their compliance.<sup>72</sup>

Notwithstanding this agreement, raising 44,406 florins meant a considerable problem for the court. As the Turkish aid of the Moravian order, the total sum of which was 77,128 florins and 13 kreutzers,<sup>73</sup> did not cover the costs of setting up the regiment, the 4-and-half-month wage of the soldiers, and other expenses, thus additional resources had to be found to finance these costs. The reply the Court Chamber of Prague gave to Lazarus Henkel on 27 November 1597, showed that, among others, they hoped to get a 50,000-florins loan from him to pay for the discharge of the regiment.<sup>74</sup> However, it is known that the whole sum was not

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<sup>70</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Exp. B. No. 504, fol. 214v, 22 October 1597.

<sup>71</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 507/508, fol. 341r, 29 November 1597.

<sup>72</sup> ÖStA KA, HKRA, Prag 1597 Dezember, No. 9.

<sup>73</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 516, fol. 76r, 18 March 1598.

<sup>74</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 507/508, fol. 340r, 27 November 1597.

available even at the beginning of the following year, since it is clear from the reply of the Prague chamberlains sent to Henkel on 30 January 1597, that he did not pay in 30,000 florins from the total sum of the loan.<sup>75</sup> As a consequence of this, Berka was forced to acquire a loan of 28,000 thalers from the Moravian Tax Revenue Office (*Rentamt*).<sup>76</sup>

It is worth shortly looking at the further fate of those mercenaries who remained alive. It is known from the reports of Johann Eustach von Westernach, Imperial Chief War Commissioner (*Reichskriegskommissar*), and Geizkofler that in June 1598, at the Krems muster of Johann Friedrich von Mörsburg's regiment the hired mercenaries were not satisfied with the wage agreed in the original *Bestallung*. The more experienced soldiers among the double-pay ones wanted seven, six, but at least five wages (28, 24 and 25 florins) for their services. Notwithstanding this demand, Westernach and Geizkofler, who were delegated to the muster, managed to negotiate a decrease to two, two and a half, three, and four wages, and distributed these sums among the battalions. Thus, it came to pass that the designated sum for the monthly wage of the regiment consisting of 3,880 persons increased to 44,137 florins. Those dissatisfied with the agreed wage, however, left the place of the muster, referring to the fact, among others, that in the previous year they got higher pays in Pernstein's regiment.<sup>77</sup> In hope of a better wage, these soldiers moved to the muster location of the corps of Hans Preiner zu Stübing and Hermann Christof von Russworm. The *Reichspfennigmeister* and Chief War Commissioner pointed out nonetheless that most of them could be mustered for a lower sum of payment, as the best among them had already been selected out by Mörsburg.<sup>78</sup> Contrary to this, in June 1598, the delegated commissioners reported about the muster of the regiment recruited by Russworm that almost all of the officers and mercenaries were there who had previously served under Pernstein.<sup>79</sup>

#### INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

The above investigated show that in line with the fashionable histories of regiments in the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century, it is possible to examine the recruitment, armament and everyday lives of mercenaries in service of the Habsburg Empire at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century. Obviously, the scarcity of available sources means a bottleneck for researchers, but the endeavour is not impossible nonetheless. Each and every such case study brings us closer to understand the operation, problems, and hardships of the military organisation of the age.

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<sup>75</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 516, fol. 17v, 30 January 1598.

<sup>76</sup> ÖStA FHKA, AHF, Pr. Prag Reg. B. No. 516, fol. 49r, 2 March 1598.

<sup>77</sup> ÖStA KA, HKRA, Prag. 1598 Juni, No. 18.

<sup>78</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>79</sup> ÖStA KA, HKRA, Prag. No. 16.

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