



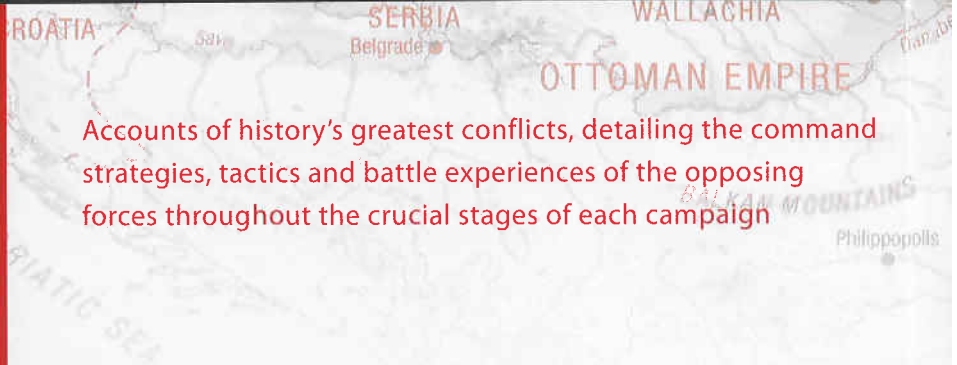
# VIENNA 1683

Christian Europe repels the Ottomans



**SIMON MILLAR**

**ILLUSTRATED BY PETER DENNIS**



Accounts of history's greatest conflicts, detailing the command strategies, tactics and battle experiences of the opposing forces throughout the crucial stages of each campaign

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In the late summer of 1682, Sultan Mehmed IV decided to undertake a direct assault on Vienna, the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. The city had witnessed the army of the Ottoman host before: 154 years previously, Suleiman the Magnificent and his 120,000 troops had failed to capture the city. In September 1683, the Islamic host returned to the city's gates, quickly capturing its outer fortifications. John III Sobieski and Charles Sixte of Lorraine led a large Christian coalition to relieve the city, crushing the Ottoman forces at the battle of the Kahlenberg on 12 September. This book provides a detailed account of the campaign, which marked the beginning of the decline of Ottoman domination of eastern Europe.

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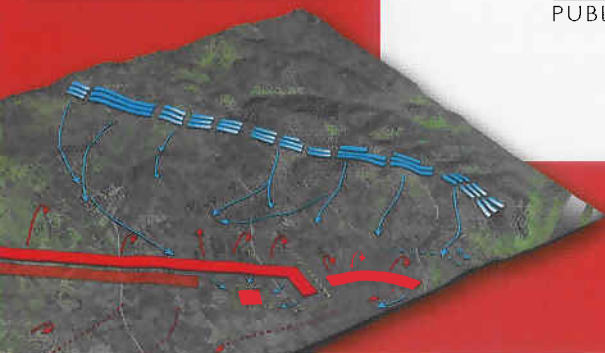
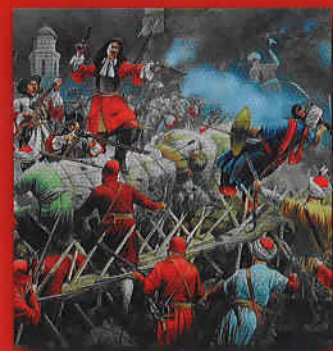
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CAMPAIGN • 191

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*Series editors Marcus Cowper and Nikolai Bogdanovic*

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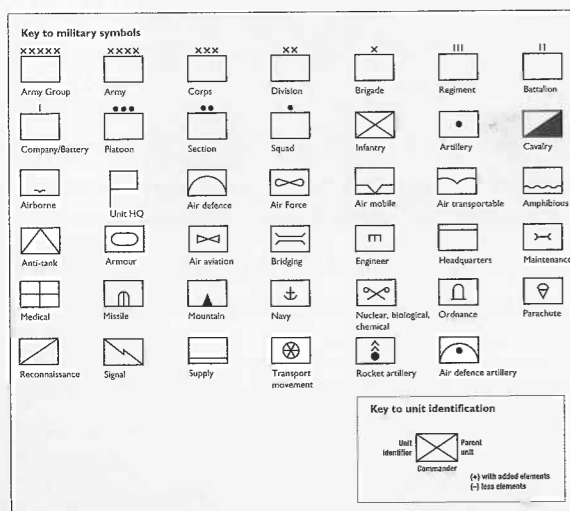
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# INTRODUCTION

In the late summer of 1682, the Ottoman sultan Mehmed IV decided to undertake a direct assault on Vienna, the capital of his great rival for European power, the Holy Roman Empire. The city had witnessed the army of the Ottoman host before: 154 years previously, the great sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, with a host of 120,000 Janissaries, *sipahi*, Arab auxiliaries and camp followers, had marched through the mountains of Macedonia and Serbia on their way to besiege the city. In the spring of 1683, the magnificently coloured host returned to the city's gates, intent on forcing Islam on Christian Europe.

## THE CRESCENT RISING

From the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the accession of Sultan Mehmed II, the Ottomans had been in continuous conflict with the Christian powers of Europe, for the most part with stunningly successful results. They had continued to spread the influence of Islam into the Balkans and around the Mediterranean Sea; Serbia (1459), Bosnia (1463), Moldavia (1504), Syria (1516), Egypt (1517), Cyrenaica (1521), Rhodes (1522), Hungary (1541), Transylvania (1541), Tripoli (1551), Cyprus (1571) and Tunisia (1574) had all succumbed to the might of Ottoman foreign policy. Successes had been few and far between for the Christian states of Europe; Malta (1565), Lepanto (1571) and the first Siege of Vienna (1529) were the few notable moments when Ottoman aggrandizement had been stopped in its tracks.

The first 50 years of the 17th century in Europe were dominated by the Thirty Years War (1618–48) and the western European powers were fortunate that at this time the quality of Ottoman leadership started to decline. In 1603, Sultan Mehmed III died and his 14-year-old son Ahmed succeeded him. Ahmed I proved to be a less than inspiring leader, and, if it had not been for the election of the pro-Ottoman Stefan Bocksa as the prince of Transylvania in 1601, it is doubtful if the Ottomans would have had their final fanfare of successes in 1605 when the fortresses of Veszprém, Visegrad and Gran were retaken. The Austrians and the Ottomans were exhausted after 13 years of war, and in 1606 the Peace of Zsitva–Torok was signed. Ahmed died in 1617 aged only 28, and, as his son Osman was a minor, his brother Mustafa succeeded him. Mustafa showed himself to be completely inept as a ruler, and in 1618 Osman followed in his father's footsteps and ascended to the throne aged only 14. The young sultan became



Constantinople, now known as Istanbul. Captured by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, it became the capital of the Ottoman empire.

Osman II, and within two years was at war with Poland. As so often in Ottoman wars with the European powers, it was a Christian vassal of the Sultan who was the catalyst for the conflict. On this occasion in 1620 it was the Protestant Prince of Transylvania, Bethlen Gabor. In 1618, Gabor had sided with the cause of the rebellion in Bohemia that was to escalate into the Thirty Years War. Part of his campaign was to besiege Vienna, which obligated Sigismund III of Poland to come to the aid of his brother-in-law, the emperor. The Polish king was thwarted by the Polish *diet* (parliament), who refused to allow the use of Polish troops. In order to honour an agreement with the emperor signed in 1613, Sigismund was forced to hire, out of his own purse, mercenaries, who went on to defeat Gabor in 1619.

An opportunity for revenge came in 1620, when Osman II, with the desire to emulate Suleiman the Magnificent, went to war with Poland. Gabor, smarting from his defeat at Vienna in 1619, had been conspiring with the sultan for revenge, and their gaze rested on Gratiani, the ruler of Moldavia, who was friendly towards Poland. Osman wore his ancestor's magnificent armour and at the head of the Ottoman army invaded Moldavia, who appealed to Poland for help. With Gratiani promising 25,000 troops, a Polish army of 8,000 under Hetman (commander) Zolkiewski marched into Moldavia; a mere 600 Moldavians rallied to the Polish banners. The Poles were heavily outnumbered, and, having withstood 11 days of attacks at his camp at Cecora on the Prut river from the Ottoman army under Iskander Pasha, Zolkiewski ordered a retreat. The Poles carried out one of the most difficult military operations, a withdrawal in contact. After eight days of continuous attacks, discipline in the Polish army broke down and disaster ensued. The Ottomans decisively defeated Zolkiewski, whose head was sent to Sultan Osman II as a trophy.

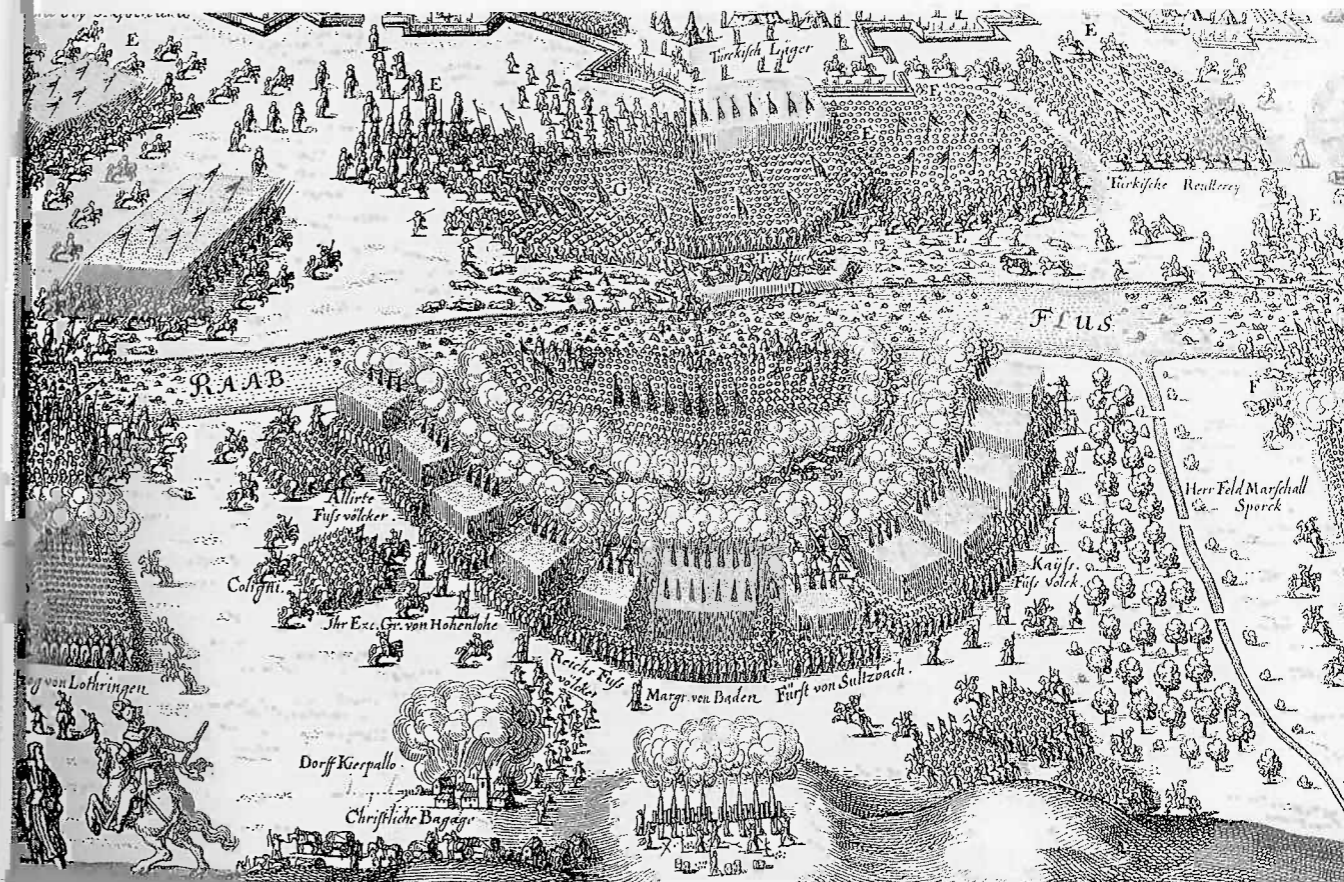
It took a military disaster for the Polish politicians to do what they should have done in the first place. With the people of Poland wanting revenge, the *Diet* agreed to the provision of an army of 40,000 to avenge the defeat. In 1621 the army of Cossacks and Poles was concentrated near Lvov and under the command of the Hetman Chodkiewicz marched into the Ukraine. On hearing from his spies that a huge Ottoman army was on its way to intercept him, Chodkiewicz ordered his army to fortify their

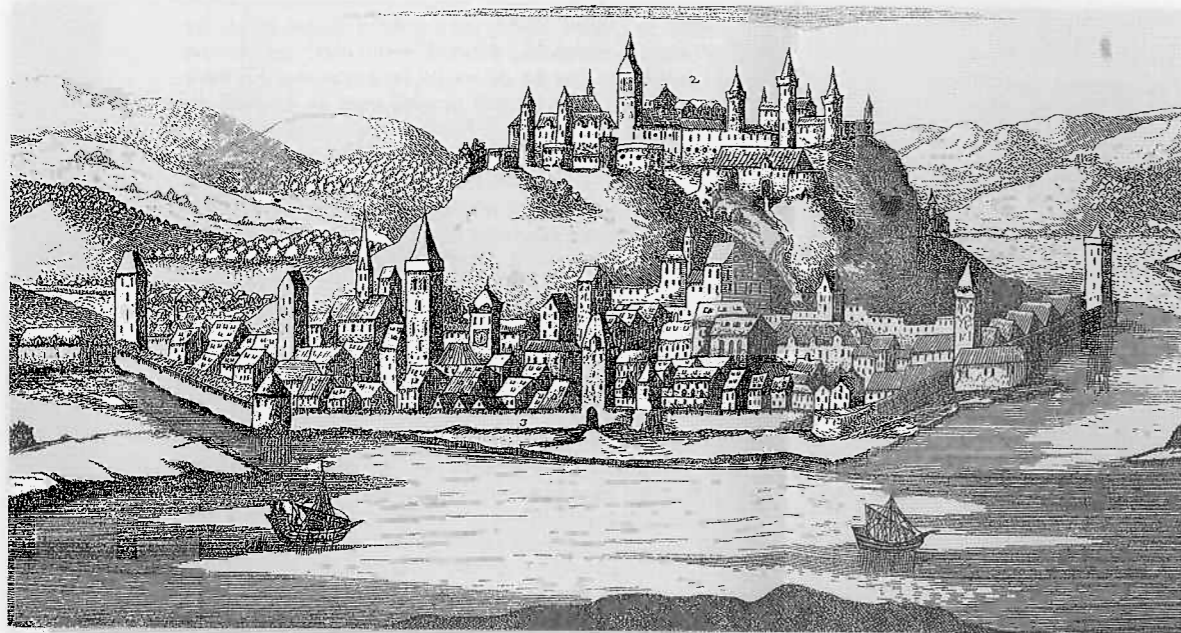
encampment and await the Ottoman host. The Ottoman army, three times the size of the Poles and under the personal command of Sultan Osman II, surrounded the Polish camp at Chocim on the River Dniester. The siege of the Polish camp lasted for five weeks, and with no progress made a negotiated settlement was reached, with the Poles promising to contain Cossack raids and the Ottomans those of the Tatars. Whilst the Poles were satisfied with the victory and returned to Poland, the return of Osman to Istanbul was ignominious. The Janissaries – the power behind the Ottoman throne – deposed Osman as sultan in May 1622 and had him strangled shortly afterwards. The weak and inept ex-sultan Mustafa was returned to the throne. It did not take long for the Janissaries to regret this move, and once again he was replaced, this time by the 12-year-old Murad. The first years of Murad IV's reign saw conflict with Persia, which lasted until 1639 and hindered any Ottoman attempt to take advantage of the unrest in Europe resulting from the Thirty Years War. In 1640, whilst firmly in control of his empire and with a victorious war with Persia behind him, Murad died. His successor was his brother Ibrahim, who once again, let Ottoman eyes rest on Europe.

The raiding activities of the Knights of Malta proved to be the catalyst. Whilst the sea-power Venice did not approve of such behaviour by the Knights, it could not close its ports to them, particularly those on Crete. In 1644 a squadron of the Knights of Malta encountered an Ottoman convoy, captured it and headed to Crete. Over the winter of 1644/45 the Ottomans prepared for war and in 1645 invaded Crete, taking the town of Canea. The war was to last 24 years, with the Ottomans at first in the ascendancy. In 1647, however, Ibrahim was deposed in favour of his seven-year-old son Mehmed IV. The administration of the empire during his minority was

The Battle of St Gotthard, 1 August 1664.

Count Raimondo Montecuccoli, the skilled Italian and Imperial commander who defeated the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of St Gotthard.





Belgrade was captured by the Ottomans in 1521. It was recaptured by the Austrians in 1688, lost again, and finally recaptured in 1717 by Eugene of Savoy.

inefficient and constant struggles for power at court led to an ineffective prosecution of the war with Venice, but it was not abandoned. The Grand Vizier Mehmed Koprulu came to prominence as a result of the Venetian campaign of 1654–56, which culminated in a sea battle in the Dardanelles, hailed as a second Lepanto by Venice. The young sultan had political power removed from him and placed in the hands of the highly capable Grand Vizier. From this time and until his death in 1661, Mehmed Koprulu took firm control and steadied the ship of state. He led successful campaigns against Venice and defeated the attempt of Prince Gyorgy Rakoczi to liberate Transylvania from Ottoman rule. He was succeeded as Grand Vizier by his son Ahmed, who promptly launched a war against Hungary in 1663. The initial campaign was a success, but when the Ottoman army returned the following year they found a much-improved Imperial army under the command of the brilliant Italian general Raimondo Montecuccoli. The Ottoman army was before Komárom and, whilst negotiations took place for a treaty, Ahmed decided to force the issue and advanced up the left bank of the River Rába and encountered the Imperial army at St Gotthard. Ahmed made the mistake of attacking before he had brought all his force across the river, and received a crushing defeat at the Battle of St Gotthard (1 August). The resulting peace treaty of Vasvar was to last for 20 years, until 1683. After the reverse, Ottoman attention was focused on acquiring Crete and helping the Cossacks in the Ukraine achieve independence from Poland and Russia. Crete was captured in 1669 when, after the surrender of Candia, the Venetians abandoned the island. The campaigns to help the Ukrainian Cossacks in 1672–73 were to be Mehmed Koprulu's final successes. After initial successes in capturing the fortress of Kamanice Podolski and advancing as far as Lvov, the Ottoman army was defeated at the second battle of Chocim in 1673, by an army led by John III Sobieski. The subsequent Treaty of Zuravno in 1676, saw most of the Ukraine pass into Ottoman hands; two weeks later, Koprulu died. His successor, Kara Mustafa, had Imperial Austria in his sights.

Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor (1640–1705).



## THE THREAT FROM THE WEST

Throughout the 17th century Imperial Austria had to deal with political and military threats on her western and eastern borders. While the Ottoman Empire troubled the east, in the west it was the fleur-de-lis of France that cast a shadow. In 1556, following the abdication of Charles V, the Habsburg lands had been divided into two distinct branches. As a result the Spanish Habsburgs became the greatest threat to France; with their lands now including the Netherlands, Franche-Comté and Lombardy, France felt restricted. The entry of France into the Thirty Years War in 1635 was the start of its rise to hegemony. Imperial Austria was the first to suffer. The semi-independent Imperial fiefdom of Lorraine was occupied, as were numerous

**TOP**  
John III Sobieski waited in Cracow (shown here) from 29 July to 10 August in order for his army to gather.

**BOTTOM**  
A view of the city of Vienna.





Sultan Mehmed IV (1642-92).

strategically important gateways, including the fortress of Breisach, which gave access into the Reich. The Austrian withdrawal from the Thirty Years War and the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 did not make Austrian diplomacy any easier in the west. The borders of France had moved 100 miles farther east, and she had gained the Lorraine bishoprics, Metz, Toul and Verdun. The French push towards the Rhine, under some rather dubious legal claim, continued with the acquisition of Alsace and the fortress of Breisach, and was a serious threat to the Imperial position in southern Germany. The Franco-Spanish conflicts continued until the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, by which France gained Roussillon, Cerdagne and large chunks of the Spanish Netherlands.

In 1661, on the death of the powerful Cardinal Mazarin, Louis XIV came of age and began to direct French foreign policy. The War of Devolution (1667-68), with Louis at the head of the French army and aided by Condé, was an outstanding success. The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle rewarded France with portions of the Spanish Netherlands, including the fortress cities of Charleroi, Tournai, Courtrai, Ath, Douai and, most important of all, Lille. The Dutch War (1672-78) was born out of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, where Louis felt he had fallen short of dictating the settlement in the Spanish Netherlands. Louis wanted to punish the Dutch for not giving him a free hand against the Spanish, and, after declaring war, the French armies led by Condé and Turenne marched north through Liège into the United Provinces, whilst an army under Luxembourg was on the Rhine. French successes on land and sea ended with the Treaty of Nijmegen in 1679. The French gained Franche-Comté, Freiburg and most importantly they continued to occupy Lorraine. The Sun King was rising over the Imperial lands in the west.

Buda (now part of Budapest) was the capital of Ottoman Hungary.



## A TIME OF JIHAD

On 6 August 1682, in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, Sultan Mehmed IV called a meeting with the highest officers of his government. Among those summoned to his presence was the Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa; this was to be his moment of triumph, for at long last the sultan and his ministers had agreed to his proposal to disregard the existing peace treaty (not due to expire until 1684) with Leopold I, the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor, and mount a military campaign the following year with the full military might of the Ottoman empire.

Meanwhile, on 11 August in his royal hunting lodge at Laxenburg near Vienna, Leopold I met with his counsellors to discuss the proposal to either continue the peace or go to war with the Ottomans. Leopold's task was complicated by the threat posed by France and the long-standing westward orientation of Austrian policy. The peace treaties signed in Nijmegen in 1678 and 1679 may have brought the Dutch Wars to a close, but Louis XIV's vigorous foreign and military policies meant that Austria had far more to fear from her western borders than from her southern ones with the Ottoman Empire. Leopold's counsellors were of the opinion that further concessions to France would damage Habsburg power and reputation, which would need to be upheld if they were to thwart Louis's claim to succeed the childless Charles II of Spain when he died and claim the crown for Austria. There was also the growing threat from Imre Thököly's rebellion in Austrian-controlled Christian Hungary; in 1681 it had received a boost when the Pasha of Buda sent some of the sultan's troops to support the rebellion, and their assistance helped bring about the fall of numerous Habsburg fortresses in Slovakia. In early 1682 further troops were sent to reinforce the rebellion, this time drawn from Ottoman garrisons in Serbia and Bosnia. Although Leopold and his counsellors were not aware of this at the time, at the meeting in the Topkapi Palace on 6 August 1682, Mehmed, urged on by Kara Mustafa, went a stage further and recognized Thököly as 'king' – but only of a united Hungary under Ottoman domination.

To compound the Austrian dilemma, Leopold's counsellors had ignored the dispatches of the Austrian envoys to the Ottoman court, George Kuniz and Albert Caprara, which were particularly startling in their pessimistic assessment of the chances of renewing the peace treaty. With the Ottomans determined on war at the earliest date possible, the stage was set for the Ottoman host to invest Vienna within 12 months.



John III Sobieski, King of Poland (1629-96).

# CHRONOLOGY

- 1453 Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople, renaming it Istanbul.
- 1459–1541 Ottoman expansion into Europe; Serbia (1459), Bosnia (1463), Moldavia (1504), Hungary (1541) and Transylvania (1541) fall.
- 1529 The first Ottoman siege of Vienna is defeated.
- 1565 The Ottomans are repulsed at Malta.
- 1571 The great naval battle of Lepanto takes place; the Ottomans are defeated.
- 1605 The fortresses of Veszprém, Visegrad and Gran are retaken by the Ottomans.
- 1606 The Peace of Zsitva-Torok is signed.
- 1618–48 Thirty Years War rages across Europe.
- 1618 Bethlen Gabor, Prince of Transylvania joins Protestant rebels.
- 1619 Gabor is defeated outside Vienna.
- 1620 Ottoman war with Poland. Gabor allies with the Ottomans and an invasion of Moldavia takes place. The Polish suffer a disaster at Cecora on the River Prut.
- 1621 The Battle of Chocim: Poles and Cossacks under Hetman Chodkiewicz defeat the Ottomans.
- 1622–39 Ottoman war with Persia.
- 1645–69 Ottoman war with Venice. The Ottomans invade Crete and capture Canea.
- 1647 Seven-year-old Mehmed IV becomes sultan.
- 1648 The Treaty of Westphalia ends the Thirty Years War.
- 1654–61 Mehmed Koprulu is Grand Vizier.
- 1661 Mehmed Koprulu dies and is succeeded by his son Ahmed.
- 1663 Ottoman war against Habsburg Hungary.
- 1664 The Battle of St Gotthard: Montecuccoli defeats the Ottomans. The Peace of Vasvar – intended to keep the peace for 20 years.
- 1667–68 The War of Devolution; France invades the Netherlands. The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1668) brings this to a halt.
- 1669 The Ottomans capture Crete.
- 1672–73 Ottoman campaign to help the Ukrainian Cossacks. John Sobieski defeats the Ottomans at the second battle of Chocim (1673). The Treaty of Zuravno (1676) brings Polish–Ottoman hostilities to a halt.
- 1676 Kara Mustafa becomes Grand Vizier.
- 1672–78 The Dutch War pitches England and the United Provinces against each other. France declares war on the United Provinces (1673).

The Treaty of Westminster (1674) ends the war between England and United Provinces. The treaties of Nijmegen (1678–79) also halt hostilities.

- 1681 The Pasha of Buda supports Imre Thököly's rebellion in Hungary.
- 1682 Mehmed IV, advised by Kara Mustafa, decides to disregard the existing peace treaty with Leopold I, due to expire in 1684.
- 1682 The sultan departs Istanbul for Adrianople (12 October). The Grand Vizier with the main army departs on 19 October. The Ottomans make camp at Adrianople (December 1682–March 1683).
- 1683 **April** The Ottoman army departs Adrianople (2nd), reaching Sofia on the 17th and Nis on the 24th. Charles Duke of Lorraine is appointed commander of the Imperial army on the 10th. A Habsburg council of war is held in Vienna on the 21st.
- May** Mehmed IV enters Belgrade (3rd). Austrian and Bavarian troops rendezvous at Kittsee (6th). Kara Mustafa is made Commander-in-Chief on the 13th. Imperial forces are outside Győr (19th). The Ottoman army departs Belgrade on the 20th. Kara Mustafa departs Belgrade on the 24th. The Imperial forces turn away from Esztergom (31st).
- June** The Ottoman army reaches Osijek (2nd). Lorraine withdraws to Komárom (9th). The Ottoman army departs Osijek on the 15th, reaching Buda on the 20th. Imperial forces arrive at Győr on the 22nd. The Ottomans reach Székesfehérvár on the 25th, departing there on the 28th.
- July** The Ottomans arrive at the fortress of Győr on the 1st; the next day they mount an attack, and Lorraine withdraws. Lorraine is at Berg on the 5th/6th. Imperial success at the 'affair' at Petronell (7th). Leopold departs Vienna on the 7th. An Imperial council of war is held in Vienna on the 12th. Kara Mustafa and the Ottomans

arrive outside Vienna the next day. Ottoman bombardment of Vienna begins on the 14th. The first Ottoman mine attack takes place on the 23rd. The Austrians start countermining on the 26th. Lorraine defeats Thököly at Pressburg (Bratislava) on the 30th.

**August** The first Ottoman success of the siege comes on the 12th, capturing part of the ravelin. An Austrian raiding party for food is a success on the 19th. A major Austrian sortie takes place on the 25th.

**September** An Ottoman mine brings down part of the Palace Bastion on the 2nd. A major Ottoman attack takes place on the 4th. The Löbel Bastion is severely weakened by double mine attack (8th). A Christian relieving force assembles at Tulln (6/7th). A Christian army sets off through the Wienerwald on the 10th. The Battle of Kahlenberg takes place on the 12th. Sobieski enters Vienna on the 13th. Leopold I arrives at Vienna on the 14th. The Imperial–Polish Army departs Vienna on the 17th.

**October** Lorraine and Sobieski confer at Visvar on the 2nd, and the attack on Neuhäusel is postponed. Sobieski is repulsed at the first battle of Párkány on the 7th. Lorraine destroys the Ottomans at the second battle of Párkány on the 9th. Lorraine recaptures Esztergom on the 22nd.

**December** Kara Mustafa receives the 'silken cord' on the 25th.

- 1686 Buda is recaptured on 2 September.
- 1687 Lorraine defeats the Ottomans in the Battle of Harsány on 12 August.
- 1691 Ludwig Wilhelm of Baden (Türkenlouis) defeats Grand Vizier Mustafa Koprulu in the Battle of Slankamen on 19 August.
- 1696 John III Sobieski dies on 17 June.
- 1699 The Treaty of Karlowitz is signed on 26 January between Imperials and Ottomans.

# OPPOSING COMMANDERS



Markgraf Herman von Baden, who was president of the Hofkriegsrat at the time of the Ottoman invasion.



Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden (1655–1707) – the future Türkenlouis. He won the Battle of Slankamen in 1691 and was an ally of Marlborough in the Blenheim campaign.

## THE IMPERIAL FORCES

### *Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor (1640–1705)*

As the younger brother of Ferdinand IV of Hungary, Leopold was originally intended for the church. However, when his brother died of smallpox in 1654 he was thrust into the limelight. He was destined to steer his country through the turmoil of the Thirty Years War and to deal with the two greatest threats to his country at the end of the 17th century – France under Louis XIV, and the Ottoman empire's last attempt to conquer Europe – not to mention the dissent in Hungary. Leopold was a firm believer in his right to be an absolute sovereign and regarded himself as such; greatly influenced by the Jesuits, he was intolerant and bigoted, particularly when dealing with his Protestant Hungarian subjects. Leopold was the epitome of the Habsburgs' bad looks; he was small in stature with stunted bones and teeth broken by scurvy. However, his constitution was strong and healthy, and he enjoyed outdoor pursuits, especially activities related to hunting and riding. He was happiest when with his books, composing music and painting.

Leopold was elected emperor in 1658, over a year after his father's death. The tensions with France were to last the whole of his 45-year reign. Directed by the able Cardinal Mazarin, France continuously attempted, and at times managed, to gain influence with the German Princes that made up the Holy Roman Empire, and at the same time encouraged the Ottoman Turks in their attacks on the empire. The wars lasted throughout the 1670s and 1680s and into the new century with the War of the Spanish Succession. On the whole the wars (the first of which ended with the Treaty of Nijmegen, and the second – the War of the League of Augsburg – with the Treaty of Rijswijk) were unfavourable to the Holy Roman Empire and its German-speaking princes. It was not until French power received a mortal wound at the Battle of Blenheim (1704) during the War of Spanish Succession that the tide of disappointing defeats was reversed. Leopold's internal problems came mostly from Hungary and were the result of his desire to suppress Protestantism. The uprisings were treated with severity and it was not until 1681, after yet another Hungarian rebellion, that certain grievances were dealt with and a less caustic policy adopted. This slightly softer approach did not prevent the Hungarians rising in revolt once again in 1682, aided this time by the Ottomans.

Transylvania had always been a troublesome province; in 1663, when the Ottomans interfered in the affairs of the province, Leopold's first war

with the Sublime Porte (the name given to the sultan's court) began. The war started with some desultory operations, and it was only after Leopold's personal appeal to the Diet of Regensburg that the princes of the empire sent assistance to the campaign of the great Imperial general Raimondo Montecuccoli. After this the war did not last long, for in August 1664 the Imperial forces gained a notable victory at the Battle of St Gotthard. The Treaty of Vasvar provided generous terms for the Ottomans, but for Leopold the jewel was the 20-year truce with the sultan.

### *John III Sobieski, King of Poland (1629–96)*

The most famous of all the Polish kings, Sobieski's achievements at Vienna have straddled the centuries, and he remains an impeccable hero to many Poles today. Born into a wealthy and distinguished family from Volhynia (western Ukraine), he learnt from an early age that the prosperity of his family was bound up in the fortunes of the frontier province. In 1648, at the end of a two-year tour of Europe where he studied military science and fortifications, he returned to Poland and was engulfed in the Cossack rebellion (1648–54) of Bohdan Khmelnytsky. Raising and commanding his own banner of cavalry (100–200 men) his military talents were quickly revealed, and following a crushing Polish victory at the Battle of Berestechko (1651), where he fought with distinction, he was sent by King John II Casimir to be the Polish envoy at the Ottoman court. Whilst there he studied the Ottoman military traditions and tactics and learned the Tatar language. In 1655 the First Northern War erupted, and Sweden overran Poland in what became known as the 'Bloody Deluge'. Sobieski was part of a Greater Polish regiment that capitulated at Ujscie and swore allegiance to Charles X Gustav of Sweden. In less than a year, however, he returned with his unit to the Polish side and fought for the Polish king in the two three-day battles at Warsaw, where he commanded his 2,000-strong Tatar cavalry force with such distinction that he was promoted to be Crown Standard Bearer. He was a strong supporter of the French faction and remained loyal to the crown during Lubomirski's Rebellion (1665–66) and he was promoted to Crown Field Hetman in 1665. After the victory over the Cossacks and their Tatar allies at the First Battle of Podhajce (1667) he was promoted to Grand Crown Hetman, the highest rank in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and that of the commander-in-chief of the entire Polish army. The victory that really set him on his way to greatness was at the Battle of Chocim (1673) where he defeated the Ottomans in a monumental struggle and captured its powerful eponymous fortress. With news of the battle and of the death of King Michael Korybut Wisniowiecki spreading simultaneously across the country, Sobieski soon became a strong candidate for king. The following year he was elected as the new monarch, and in February 1676 he was crowned John III Sobieski.

Sobieski was the model warrior hero for his time, spiritually sharp with a strong Catholic faith, and a decisive and vigorous man. Unlike Leopold, he tolerated Jews and Protestants within his realm. He attempted to provide Poland with a stronger institution of government and desired to establish permanent borders and security for Poland, notably in his attempt to establish an international coalition against Islam. In spring 1683, spies uncovered Ottoman preparations for a campaign, ostensibly against the southern borders of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth; as a result, Sobieski began to fortify the cities of Lvov and Cracow and ordered universal military conscription.



Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria (1662–1726). The 'Blue Elector' personally led 10,000 Bavarian troops during the campaign to relieve Vienna. After a brilliant campaign in Hungary, he returned Bavaria to the pro-French camp and alongside Louis IV was defeated in the War of Spanish Succession.



George III, Elector of Saxony (1647–91). Saxony, like Bavaria and Brandenburg, was well versed in vacillating between supporting France and Austria after 1648. During the Vienna campaign, however, John George III gave his total support to his emperor, Leopold I. Saxony provided a small, well trained contingent to the relieving army.



Charles Sixte, Duke of Lorraine and Bar (1643-90).



Rüdiger von Starhemberg (1638-1701).

### *Charles Sixte, Duke of Lorraine (1643-90)*

Following the death of his older brother Ferdinand in 1659, Charles Sixte became the titular Duke of Lorraine. However, his uncle, Duke Charles IV, refused to recognize his claim, and with the Duchy of Lorraine occupied by the French, who were converting their military occupation into a sovereignty recognized by international treaty, Charles Sixte was a refugee from the lands he claimed title to. As a young man he moved from court to court, and was involved in numerous proposed marriages that came to nothing. In 1662 he settled in Vienna and found refuge in the Habsburg court, taking up service in the Imperial army. He first distinguished himself under Raimondo Montecuccoli at the Battle of St Gotthard (1664) against the Ottoman Turks. At the same time he was unsuccessful in his attempts to be elected as King of Poland and to marry the Archduchess Eleonora Maria Josefa of Austria, the dowager empress's daughter, being hindered by his lack of a suitable title. His luck began to turn when campaigning with Montecuccoli in the wars against Louis XIV, where he commanded the cavalry. In 1675, with his uncle dead, the majority of states now recognized him as Duke Charles V of Lorraine. A year later he was made a field marshal in the Imperial army, and in 1678 the emperor allowed his marriage to Eleonora to take place, conferring on him the title of Viceroy of the Tyrol. He failed to recover his duchy through the diplomacy that ended the war with France in 1679, although his personal advisers continued to scheme for this for the rest of his life, aided by the dowager empress. With the death of Montecuccoli in 1680, Leopold reserved by patent the supreme command of Habsburg armies in the field for any future war. By 1683 he was in poor health and looked unfit for active service; however, his looks belied his stamina, ability and willingness to make decisions.

### *Count Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg (1638-1701)*

Von Starhemberg was the son of Conrad Balthazar von Starhemberg, a rich nobleman from lower Austria, whose family's position at the Habsburg court was secure and whose wealth was not dependent upon it. Ernst Rüdiger had distinguished himself in the campaigns against the French during the Dutch War (1672-78). It was his reputation as a brave and competent soldier and his strong-willed personality that saw him given military command of Vienna in 1683. His reward for the defence of Vienna was promotion to field marshal and being made a minister of state, followed in 1691 by becoming president of the war council.

## THE OTTOMAN FORCES

### *Sultan Mehmed IV (1642-93)*

Known as the 'the Hunter' because of his love of outdoor pursuits, Mehmed IV's reign is notable for the brief revival in Ottoman fortunes. He was the son of Ibrahim 'the Debauched', and his mother was a Russian concubine. He ascended to the Ottoman throne at the age of seven, and his rule of 39 years changed for ever the position of the sultan, by effectively giving executive power to his grand viziers. His ascension marked an end to a turbulent period for the Ottoman dynasty; of the previous sultans, Mustafa I had been deposed twice and two were killed, including Ibrahim I, his father, who was strangled after being deposed. During his minority years, factions led by his mother

and his grandmother (mother of Ibrahim) vied with each another for control, and eventually fought each other to a standstill. Mehmed's childhood was a miserable one, and as such he had simple aims in life: to survive for as long as possible and to hunt. This meant that he had no desire to take the reigns of power and run the empire. He was, therefore, very much under the influence of his immediate entourage and guided by the successive viziers Sivash and Ipsir, who were men of ability. As he became older, and his passion for hunting prevailed, he determined to maintain the Koprulus in office as grand viziers; it was this decision that brought stability to the Ottoman empire. With it, however, came a weakening of the sultan's position, for the grand viziers, left to govern as they saw fit, enjoyed what was tantamount to a separate power base.

The first of his viziers was the infamous, but particularly able, Mehmed Koprulu, who zealously repressed all elements of disorder in the empire, including the influence of the court and harem. Mehmed IV saw his grand viziers (Mehmed and Ahmed Koprulu) regain the Aegean islands from Venice and achieve success against Transylvania (1664) and Poland (1670-74). The last of them was Kara Mustafa Pasha, whose desire to conquer Europe took his master into the disastrous adventure that was to end at Vienna.

### *Kara Mustafa Pasha (1634-83)*

Kara Mustafa's early years are shrouded in mystery. According to the Venetian Giambattista Donado, ambassador to Istanbul, he was the son of a fruit and vegetable peddler from a humble village in Asia Minor. In another account he is from the village of Merzifum in Anatolia and the son of a sipah, a soldier who held a non-hereditary estate from the sultan. Whatever his true background, his rise to power began when he was taken into the household of the influential Koprulu family. His big break came when Mehmed Koprulu was made governor of Damascus and raised Kara Mustafa to the rank of silahdar. Thereafter his appointments included Aga and the influential post of telhisi (messenger) responsible for bearing the grand vizier's messages to the sultan. In time he was promoted to a vizier and made Vali of Diyarbekir. On the death of Mehmed Koprulu, his son Ahmed Koprulu became grand vizier and Kara Mustafa was made Kapudan Pasha, commander of the imperial fleet, and took part in the successful campaigns to regain the Aegean islands. With Ahmed Koprulu campaigning in Hungary in 1663, he was made deputy grand vizier, and with this his influence over Mehmed IV increased. Kara Mustafa saw further active service in the Polish campaign of 1672, where he was present at the sieges of Khotin and Kamanice Podolski. As the plenipotentiary, he negotiated the peace settlement which added Podolia to the Ottoman empire and saw the western Ukraine recognized as an Ottoman protectorate.

In 1676 when Ahmed Koprulu fell ill, Kara Mustafa took over his public duties; when the grand vizier died, he took over his job. His political interest lay in the empire's northern borders. Russia was active and the instability of the Hungarians and Cossacks required attention. In 1677 he led an unsuccessful campaign against the Russians with the aim of bringing the Cossacks back into line. The campaign of 1678 was more successful, with the capture and destruction of the stronghold of Cehrin. To help maintain order on these turbulent borders he had fortresses built on the Dnieper and Bug rivers. In 1681 the Russian campaign ended with a truce. This left the problem of Hungary. In 1682 Kara Mustafa recognized the dissident Hungarian Imre Thököly as ruler of all Hungary, and at the same time refused



Georg Friedrich Fürst zu Waldeck (1620-92).



Johann Heinrich von Dünewald (1620-91). He was an able leader of the Imperial cavalry in the relief of Vienna, and the subsequent campaign to oust the Ottomans from Hungary.



The Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha (d. 1683).



Count Imre Thököly de Kesmark (1657–1705). Thököly continued to campaign against Leopold after Vienna. In 1690 his campaign in Transylvania ended with victory over the united forces of General Heister and Count Michael Teleki, his kinsman. However, he was part of the defeated Ottoman forces at Slankamen (1691) and Zenta (1697). He settled in Galata near Istanbul and died in Nicomedia in 1705.

to re-negotiate the Treaty of Vasvar. There is some evidence to suggest that, apart from extending the borders of Islam northwards, part of Kara Mustafa's plan in refusing to re-negotiate the treaty was that he saw himself leading a conquering army into the Christian heartland of Western Europe, imposing Islam and setting himself up as the governor and de facto sultan. However, it was not to be, and in December 1683 the Aga of the Janissaries arrived in Belgrade with instructions, from Mehmed IV, to recover the seals of office from Kara Mustafa. Kara Mustafa was then executed by strangulation with a silken bowstring.

### *Count Imre Thököly de Kesmark (1657–1705)*

Imre Thököly came from a noble family whose estates were in Austrian-ruled northern Hungary, a fertile breeding ground for anti-Habsburg, Protestant dissent that constantly sought to rebel against Imperial governance. His father, Stephen Thököly, played an important part in the rebellion of 1670; he was killed defending his castle at Orava, and his estates were confiscated by Leopold I. Following this, the 13-year-old Imre fled to Transylvania, where he took refuge with his kinsman Michael Teleki, the chief minister of Michael Apafi, Prince of Transylvania. Whilst there, Thököly came into contact with refugees from Royal Hungary (modern-day Slovakia), who looked to him for leadership in their cause.

Discontent among the Hungarians came to a head in 1673, when Leopold I suspended the Hungarian constitution, deprived hundreds of Protestant clergy their living, condemned many to the galleys as slaves and appointed Johan Caspar Ampringen as the effective dictator, who meted out severe reprisals to the Protestant dissidents. Emboldened by promises of support from Louis XIV, the anti-Habsburg rebels rose once again in rebellion in 1678 and chose Thököly as their leader. Thököly took command of the rebel army, and it was not long before eastern Slovakia and the central Slovak mining towns were under rebel control. In 1680, reinforced with 10,000 Transylvanians and a Turkish army under the Pasha of Oradea, he was able to compel Leopold I to grant an armistice. In 1681 Leopold I restored religious and political freedom in Hungary, but Thököly considered these concessions insufficient and once again began to plot against Leopold. In 1682 he married Countess Helen Zrinski, the widow of Prince Francis I Rakoczi.

Thököly's continuing distrust of Leopold made him turn to Mehmed IV for support to make himself master in Hungary. Mehmed IV recognized him as King of Upper Hungary (comprising eastern Slovakia and present day north-eastern Hungary), provided that Thököly paid an annual tribute of 40,000 thalers. During the course of 1682 Thököly captured many fortresses from Leopold I, and in so doing extended his dominions as far as the Váh River. In 1683 he held two Diets, but they did not grant Thököly what he desired, namely financial subsidies and a levy en masse, fearing that he would sacrifice Upper Hungarian independence to the Ottoman alliance. During the Ottoman campaign against Vienna in the same year, Thököly materially assisted the Ottomans, but was once again party to a defeated cause.

## ORDER OF BATTLE

### IMPERIAL AND POLISH FORCES

#### OUTSIDE THE CITY (UNTIL 14 JULY)

##### **Prince Charles Sixte of Lorraine**

Infantry: 21,000  
Cavalry: 11,000  
Hungarians: 5,000 (Esterházy)  
Total: 37,000 men

#### INSIDE THE CITY (14 JULY–12 SEPTEMBER)

##### **Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg**

Infantry: 72 companies  
Cavalry: 1 regiment of cuirassiers  
City guard  
Total: c. 12,000 men

#### RELIEVING FORCE AT THE BATTLE OF KAHLENBERG

##### **John III Sobieski, King of Poland**

##### **Imperial**

##### **Duke of Sachsen-Lauenburg**

Infantry: 7 battalions  
Cavalry: 42 squadrons

##### **Saxon**

##### **John George III, Elector of Saxony**

Infantry: 6 battalions  
Cavalry: 12 squadrons

##### **Bavarian**

##### **Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria**

Infantry: 8 battalions  
Cavalry: 19 squadrons  
Circle (Kreis) troops

##### **The Prince of Waldeck**

Infantry: 6 battalions  
Cavalry: 7 squadrons

##### **Polish troops**

##### **Stanislaus Jablonowski, Great General of the Crown**

Infantry: 3 brigades  
Cavalry: 3 brigades  
Hussars: 3 brigades

### OTTOMAN FORCES

#### AT THE SIEGE OF VIENNA

##### **Kara Mustafa, Grand Vizier**

##### **Right wing**

##### **Beylerbeyi of Diyarbekir, of Aleppo, of Anatolia**

20 Ortas  
5 x 8–24-pdr cannon  
20 smaller artillery pieces

##### **Centre**

##### **Kara Mustafa, Janissary Aga and the Beylerbeyi of Rumelia**

Dismounted Portal and Provincial forces  
5 x 8–24-pdr cannon  
20 smaller artillery pieces

##### **Left wing**

##### **Beylerbeyi of Timisoara, of Sivas**

20 Ortas and 500 technical troops  
5 x 8–24-pdr cannon  
20 smaller artillery pieces

Totals: in the siege lines identified above – 15–20,000 men

To cover the siege and raid the countryside – c. 70,000

# OPPOSING ARMIES

## THE IMPERIAL FORCES<sup>1</sup>

After the Thirty Years War, various states realized that a permanent body of paid troops was vital to their survival. With the maturing of the princely state as a sovereign entity and the growth of the emperor's authority, the Austrian forces began to develop into a standing army. The administration of this was carried out by the Court War Council, or Hofkriegsrat. The financial activity of the Hofkriegsrat was dependent on the Court Chamber or Treasury. The Hofkriegsrat had been in existence since the early 16th century, but it was only with the rise of the Ottoman menace, the 'hereditary enemy', that it really developed. The role of the Hofkriegsrat was to act as the highest military administrative office, to provide the staff and chancellery of the Imperial high command and to advise the emperor on military matters. This last role ensured the field commanders received their orders from the emperor, who had been advised beforehand. However, the Hofkriegsrat was able to provide the field armies only with as many troops as the Court Chamber was able or willing to finance. Despite flaws, the Hofkriegsrat's field armies gave a good account of themselves in battle, particularly over their (technically less progressive) Ottoman adversary.

During the Thirty Years War the development of the concept of an infantry regiment underwent a significant change, with Albrecht von Wallenstein and the emperor replacing the colonels of regiments as the overall organizers and recruiters. Critically, this meant that the commander-in-chief now ensured that the regiment was equipped, organized and led to a common standard. It was under Montecuccoli that the regiment was reduced in size and the battalion came into existence as the tactical formation of choice. Regiments of 2,040 men were divided into ten companies, but campaign strengths were much lower. Montecuccoli also reduced the amount of pikes per company (the pike would remain in service until 1699), with a new company made up of 48 pikemen, 88 matchlock men and eight shieldmen. The flintlock did not come into regular service until 1699, and the majority of troops in 1683 carried the old matchlock. The bayonet was just coming into use, but only in the very basic 'plug' form that fitted into the barrel of the matchlock. The cavalry at this time consisted of cuirassiers, the newly created dragoons, and hussars. Once again Montecuccoli set to work on developing the tactical

This Austrian infantryman wears a greyish-white coat with coloured cuffs. Uniforms for infantrymen were becoming more standard during the late 17th century, but were still very civilian in their appearance. (Peter Dennis)



<sup>1</sup> For reasons of space, this section concentrates on the Imperial military establishment (plus the Polish-Lithuanian forces), as opposed to exhaustively covering the myriad of armies of the Holy Roman Empire that came to the aid of Austria during the Battle of Vienna.

formation best suited for the arm: the squadron. A regiment of 800–1,000 sabres was made up of five squadrons. Montecuccoli also developed the tactic of using three ranks against the Ottomans, but two ranks against European enemies. The weapons of the cuirassier were the straight-bladed *pallasch* (backsword), a carbine and a brace of pistols. The dragoon carried a sword and a matchlock, which in time was changed to the flintlock.

Imperial artillery consisted of two types: the Dynastic (or *Haus*) Artillery owned and paid for by the state, and the Provincial or Land Artillery. The Thirty Years War saw the reduction in the amount of types of calibre, more flexible tactics and the lightening of the carriages. A significant change was that the civilian artillerist, who was highly skilled, motivated and well paid, took on more of the trappings of a soldier. The Imperial artillery in 1683 had 12 classifications ranging from the Full Carthoun (full cannon) at 48-pdr through the Field Demiculverin (saker) at 9-pdr to the Serpentine at ½-pdr. Seventeenth-century cannon were not fast-firing weapons, and the size of the weapon would determine how many rounds could be fired – 30 shots daily for a full cannon and 100 for a smaller regimental piece (3-pdr) being acceptable. A good arsenal carried a multitude of projectiles, iron ball, chain-shot, bar-shot and cartouche (grape, canister shot). Shell ammunition for the howitzer had developed well, along with incendiary devices and illumination rounds, particularly important for night action during a siege. The artillerist's arsenal was completed by the 'murder stroke', a cart loaded with incendiaries, ball and grenades that was rolled downhill towards an enemy.

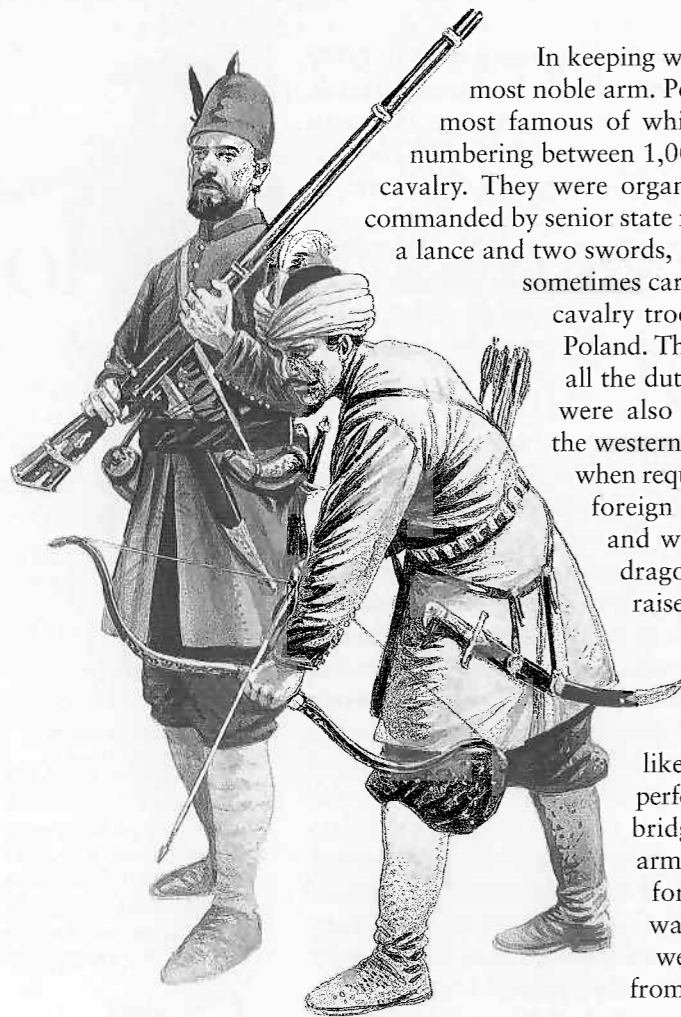
## The Polish-Lithuanian army

The army of this dual monarchy was an intriguing mix of the western and eastern approaches to war. Although John III Sobieski was head of state in Poland and Lithuania, the two nations maintained separate military structures – however, the internal organization of the armies, their tactics and equipment were the same. The standing army in 1683 was not large, mustering some 11,000 men; this was augmented in time of war by the General Ban – the raising of the nobles – although they did not have to serve outside the national borders, and if there was no money to pay them they were perfectly entitled to go home. The Polish-Lithuanian army recruited by various other means. Many were noble volunteers, who responded to the law that no man could hold public or ecclesiastical office unless he had served in the armed forces. The levy or conscription was also used, which augmented the infantry, with the state providing one sabre, musket and axe to one man in 12, who then became a foot soldier. Other methods comprised traditional recruiting, paid for by papal subsidies and the royal chest; the hiring of mercenaries; mobilizing vassals, such as the Cossacks; and, finally, relying upon allies, like the Tatars.

The ideals of chivalry were still present in the Polish-Lithuanian army of the period, which accounts for the infantry being very much the poor relation to the cavalry. Infantrymen were recruited by a *rotameister* into a grouping of 150–200 men. The most reliable infantry in the Polish-Lithuanian army were those raised from the Foreign Autorament. These were paid volunteers, organized into western-style regiments (of up to 600 men, in four companies) commanded by a colonel. They were armed with matchlock muskets and pikes, and were clothed in a Polish-style uniform. Whilst grenades were used at this time (not just for sieges, but for breaking up cavalry attacks too), the plug bayonet was little in evidence.



An armed citizen during the defence of Vienna. (Peter Dennis)



An Ottoman *Tufekci* infantryman and archer. (Peter Dennis)

In keeping with the ideal of chivalry, the cavalry was the most noble arm. Polish and foreign elements were present; the most famous of which were the glamorous Winged Hussars, numbering between 1,000 and 4,000 men, who were used as heavy cavalry. They were organized in 1683 by companies, which were commanded by senior state functionaries. The Hussars were armed with a lance and two swords, a sabre and a *pallasch*; a pair of pistols was sometimes carried. The Cossacks the largest contingent of cavalry troops in 1683, and were raised from all over Poland. They were mostly unarmoured, and carried out all the duties expected of light cavalry. However, they were also capable of providing fire in the form of the western caracole (a mounted advance in ranks) and when required they could charge like the Hussars. The foreign cavalry were more western in appearance and were divided into two types, the reiters and dragoons. Many of the reiter regiments were raised in Silesia and Prussia and were equipped in the same style as the cuirassier in the western armies. Dragoons (who were nothing more than infantrymen who travelled on horseback) were organized like the infantry and carried muskets. They performed a multitude of tasks, from constructing bridges to scouting and foraging. The artillery arm in the Polish army was manned mostly by foreigners, and during the mid 17th century was brought up to western standards. There were only 28 Polish cannon at Vienna, ranging from 2-pdrs to 4-pdrs.

## THE OTTOMAN ARMY

The Ottoman army of 1683 was made up of five elements. The first was the standing army, the *kapu kulu* or 'servants of the Porte'. Its soldiers were paid from the public purse, and it consisted of gunners (*topcu*), the sappers and miners (*lagunci*), armourers and munition carriers (*cebeci*), the horsemen (*sipahi*) and the famous Janissaries. The second component of the army was the *toprakli*, or 'landed ones'. They provided the heavy cavalry, the territorial *sipahi* and also some less-well-off nobles who were cuirassiers (*cebeli*) or were also required to act as artillery hands and trench labourers. The border provinces provided the third element of the army, the *serhadd kulu*. These irregulars rallied to the call for arms in times of particular need, and were made up of numerous troop types: the mounted volunteers provided for heavy cavalry (*gomullu*), the light horse (*be li*) and the mounted rangers (*deli*), while the infantry were composed of the garrison troops (*azab*), the peasant militia (*seymen*) and pioneers (*muselem*). The fourth type of soldier comprised the local troops (*yerli kulu*), raised by government administrators. They provided fusiliers (*tufekci*) and border fort gunners (*icareli*). The fifth and final element of the army was the auxiliaries from the nations who paid tribute to the Porte: the Crimean Tatars, Moldavians, Wallachians and in

1683 the Magyar rebels. Their lack of reliability under fire and their tenuous allegiance to the Ottoman cause meant that their employment in battle was always a calculated risk. Within these elements the Ottoman soldiers were organised into *ortas*, the equivalent of a regiment in western armies.

### Ottoman siege warfare

There were three aspects to an Ottoman siege: the trench attack, the artillery bombardment and the mine attack. The formal siege began with the trench attack and the digging of the approach trench (*sigian jol*), directly towards the fortress; from this, at frequent intervals to the left and right, the parallel trenches (*meteriz*) were dug, which curved, at the end, backwards towards their own lines forming the place for the musket battery (*joffek tabiesci*). The initial placement of the cannon and mortar batteries would be behind the first of the parallel trenches, with musketeers in their allotted place. As the parallels approached the fortress the danger from sorties grew, and so the ends of the parallels were dug to meet the musket battery of the previous parallel. The parallels were ideal for launching attacks against the fortress, and by the time the Ottomans had got close to the fortress they would have carried out numerous ones. During their attacks the pioneers with the assaulting parties would have used fascines, sandbags and woollsacks to fill in any ditches they came across that might cause the assault to lose momentum.

The artillery attack was a weak point in Ottoman siege warfare during the second half of the 17th century. Their methods were still very old fashioned; batteries were sited behind the first parallels and not moved forward into the approaches, or they were sited on hilltops. The artillery kept up a continuous bombardment of the fortress, leading Montecuccoli to write: 'they have such a quantity of powder that they fire off more ammunition uselessly or capriciously than we do for essential purposes', which delighted the Ottoman troops but achieved very little. To add to their lack of penetration of fortress walls, the massive size of their guns wrecked the plank gun platforms, which, together with the use of wedges to adjust the elevation of their guns, had a detrimental effect on the accuracy of fire.

The Ottoman miners were very efficient, and as a result the mine attack was always given prominence in an Ottoman siege. The Ottomans employed an unusual method of measuring the distances to the ramparts; accounts describe how, during the hours of darkness, a skilful and enterprising miner would carry a stone attached to a piece of string to the spot where they wished to open the gallery. He would then stand or lie down and throw the stone to the foot of the wall, cut the string, and pull the stone back to an entrenchment, the string's length would be measured and thus the length of the mine gallery calculated in feet. The galleries were arch shaped and only three or four feet high, which was smaller than western mining methods dictated. However, the smaller gallery meant the charge would work well, for, having laid the mine, there was less space to block up with sandbags. The chamber, where the mine was laid, was semi-circular in design; the floor was covered with a cloth and the powder was laid out on this.

The defenders of a fortress had to be eternally vigilant, and an obstinate defence in depth was the only method of overcoming the repeated storming parties launched by the Ottomans. Defenders also found that countermines were a useful way of disrupting Ottoman efforts; the sortie, or sally, from the fortress would often founder on the complicated Ottoman siege lines.

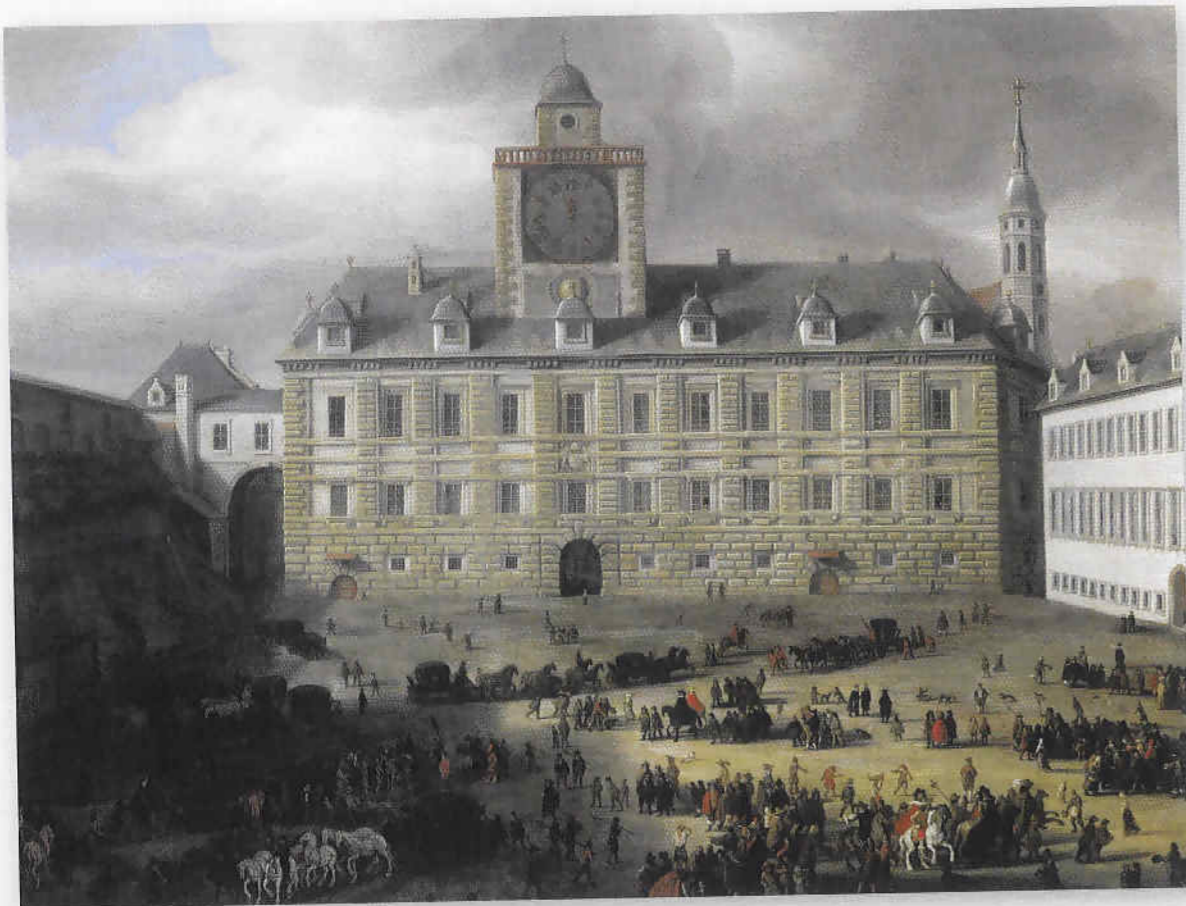
An Ottoman *azab* infantryman. (Peter Dennis)



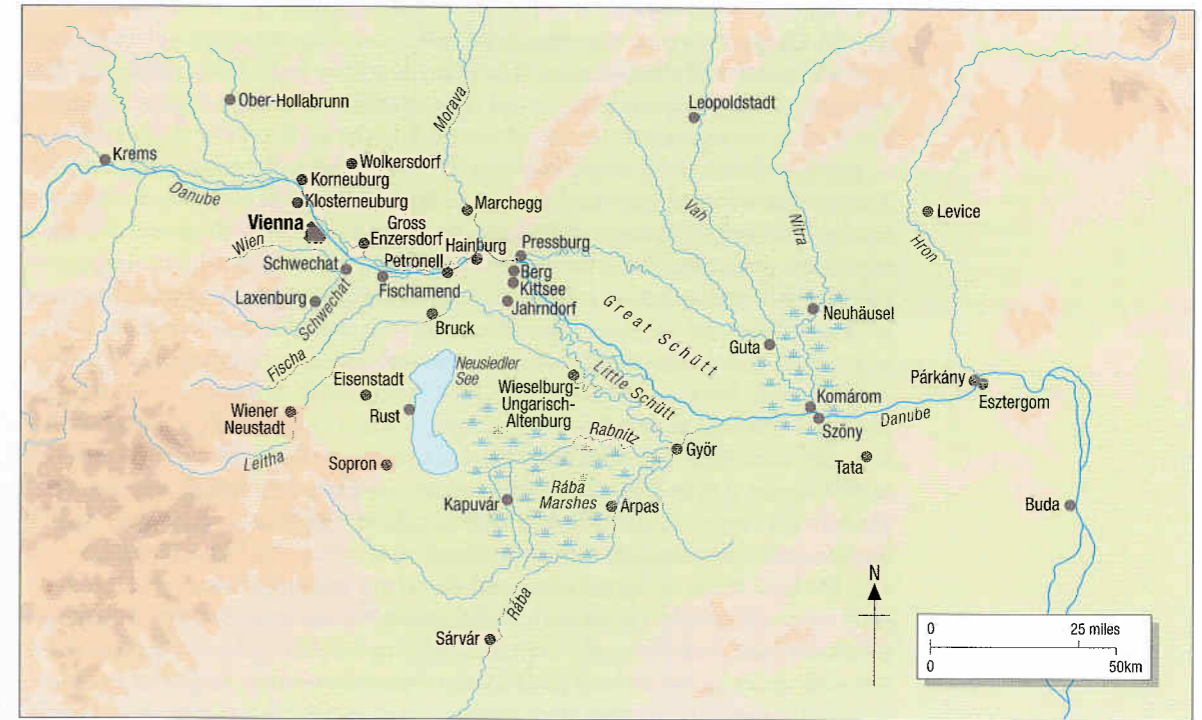
# THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS

In the autumn of 1682 the preparations for mobilization and the campaign against Vienna were almost complete. The Ottoman forces were nearing readiness for the departure from Istanbul to the traditional assembly point at Adrianople (Edirne, in Thrace), and the sultan's tent had been erected on the Cyrpyci Meadow on 24 September. The mobilization had been an enormous undertaking, requiring detailed and extensive planning. Roads and bridges were repaired with new ones constructed where necessary along the route of march from Istanbul to Belgrade. Inspectors had been sent out into all parts of the empire to ensure the Ban was promptly executed, with the message

The Hofburg Palace in Vienna, providing a view of the Amalienburg, built between 1575 and 1588. (Samuel van Hoogstraten/akg-images)



## Vienna and the River Danube in 1683



that the concentration was to be completed in the spring at Belgrade. Whilst this was going on, the border garrisons and fortresses went onto high alert and carried out improvements to their defences. Even the Ottoman fleet played their part, and moved into the Aegean to patrol the Adriatic coast of the Balkans and secure the coastline from assault.

By 6 October the Janissaries had arrived at the camp on the Cyrpyci Meadow; on 10 October the sultan arrived and on the 12th his harem followed. Amid great pomp and ceremony the Imperial party set off for Adrianople on 12 October. The grand vizier and the main army did not depart from Istanbul until 19 October, and marched steadily to reach Adrianople. They arrived some time before the Imperial party, who had indulged themselves on the way, with the sultan enjoying the thrill of the hunt; he did not reach the Thracian city until 7 December. The army was to spend the next four months in Adrianople. One final attempt at offering peace in return for the cession of Győr took place, but this was flatly refused by Leopold I and his advisers in Vienna. Thus, on 15 March the sultan's tent was again set up in an open field and the horse-hair *tughra* (pennant) was planted facing north. Within a few weeks the Janissaries were leading the march north, with the sultan and his entourage following soon afterwards. It had been agreed that the sultan would go as far as Belgrade; from that point onwards, Kara Mustafa would be in overall command. The Ottoman army leaving Adrianople was a great spectacle, with its tiger skins, sable belts and hunting dogs: Caprara, the Habsburg envoy to the Porte, remarked how the sultan's carriage was 'gilded, with small mattresses, silk cushions, drawn by eight grey-white steeds, as well as a sedan chair, likewise gilded and borne by four asses.' Amid all the splendour a sudden squall blew the sultan's turban to the ground, and this was not received as a good omen.



## THE OTTOMAN MARCH NORTH

As the Ottoman army marched through the Balkans on the great Roman highways, each of the columns was preceded by a large flock of sheep. The villagers along the route were forced to supply goods such as tent poles, straw, hay and other items for the whole army. As ever, an army on the march was as much a threat to its own people as the enemy was. To ensure the villagers did not take to the hills and forests to hide, guards stood watch until the sultan had gone by; they were then free to desert the village to avoid the rapacious attention of the Asiatic troops following on behind. Some villagers even set fire to their own homes. The plan had been for the Ottoman army to reach Belgrade by forced marches, with no time for rest except at night; heavy rain turned the roads into a quagmire and overexertion of the troops required the host to slow down. On 8 April, with the army complaining loudly, a rest was decreed for three days. Sofia was reached on 17 April and a further two days' rest was ordered; more time was lost with another rest day at Niš on 24 April. The army resumed its march on 25 April, the rains still hindering progress, and Belgrade was finally reached on 3 May, with Sultan Mehmed IV entering the city in triumph that same day. The River Danube was bridged using 50 pontoons, and the army started to cross. At the same time it was decided to send part of the artillery train (comprising 19 medium field culverins and 40 larger siege cannons) upstream to Buda by boat. Each day new contingents arrived to swell the Ottoman host gathering at Belgrade, from all corners of the Ottoman empire – Arabs, Greeks, Armenians, Kurds, Macedonians, Serbs, Bosniaks, Bulgars, and Tatars – giving the army its unique look and feel. For Kara Mustafa, the 13th of May was a great day: he was nominated with great ceremony by the sultan as commander-in-chief, and the seals of office were handed over. This was followed by a great review, with all the contributing nations parading before the sultan, who watched the proceedings from a platform erected especially for him.

Meanwhile, the ambassador Caprara learnt that the Austrians and Poles had reached an alliance, and urged the Ottomans not to continue with their endeavour. This final attempt to renew the truce failed. Dispatches from the Austrian minister for war, Hermann von Baden, requested the release of the Habsburg envoy, and also with great courtliness expressed hopes for a settlement. Kara Mustafa did not respond to the dispatches, but still did not formally declare war. On 20 May the grand vizier stood beside the sultan as they watched the Janissaries at the head of the Ottoman army depart Belgrade and march north. With the rains still causing discomfort, Kara Mustafa followed after his army on 24 May. The sultan remained behind to enjoy the pleasures of Belgrade. Progress towards Vienna was slow, and they eventually arrived in Osijek on 2 June, only for Kara Mustafa to be confronted with another problem, this time of the Ottomans' own making. For six months Ottoman engineers had been constructing a bridge over the River Drava; it was not yet ready, and the enforced delay of 12 days further frustrated Kara Mustafa. Time would tell if the delay would cost Kara Mustafa his goal of Vienna and access to the European heartland.

One of the visitors to the camp was Imre Thököly, the leader of the Hungarian rebellion, who had numerous audiences with the grand vizier and was named as 'King of Hungary'. Before he left Osijek on 14 June, it is likely that he was informed of the plan to lay siege to Vienna. Meanwhile, the first, disquieting news of the Imperial forces filtered through: they had laid siege

to Neuhausel on the River Nitra. A relief force under Ibrahim Pasha, the governor of Buda, was sent out. When the news of this force reached Imperial ears, the siege was broken off; the Ottomans were at Esztergom (Gran) and promptly turned about and marched to join the main army. Serban Cantacuzeno, the Voivode of Wallachia, finally caught up with the Ottoman host at Osijek just in time to be part of the great march north to Buda on 15 June. The route was via Székesfehérvér, which was reached on 25 June; it was discovered that the wells on the line of march had been contaminated. Before reaching Székesfehérvér the fast-riding Tatars swept into the Ottoman encampment as it rested for a few days near Lake Balaton; they were split between the advance guard of the army and as an independent corps, under their leader Murad Girey Khan, to carry out their preferred function of striking fear into the countryside, ahead of the main army.

### *The council of war*

The Ottomans had a tradition of making joint decisions, and Kara Mustafa knew that he had to have the agreement of his commanders as to the objective before the army would be able to continue with any purpose. Within his grand vizier's tent, Kara Mustafa laid before his commanders the plan to capture Győr and Komárom, and then declared that his preferred option was to conquer the whole country, with their final destination as Vienna. Kara Mustafa received the consent of the council only after directly asking the governor of Damascus for his opinion of the plan. His response, 'It is for thee to command and for us to serve,' was just what Kara Mustafa wanted to hear. His position as the army commander now gave him the authority to decide when the attack on Vienna would take place.

Having received further reinforcements, this time Levantine troops, the Ottoman army departed Székesfehérvér on 28 June and crossed the border into Habsburg territory. Divided into three columns, with the advance guard leading, the army headed north-westwards to carry out the first of the sultan's commands, the capture of Győr. Whilst Kara Mustafa disagreed with this plan, as the more direct route to Vienna was via Wiener Neustadt, he was in no position to disobey the sultan's wishes. The grand vizier was also alert to the movements of the Austrian forces of Charles Sixte, Duke of Lorraine and determined to destroy the Austrian field army if the opportunity arose. On 1 July the Austrian fortress guns defending Győr opened fire on the Ottoman army as it appeared before them.

A view of Vienna from the south in 1683.



## THE HABSBURG PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

As the threat of Ottoman invasion loomed ever larger, the fundamental problem facing the Habsburgs was that Emperor Leopold I remained unconvinced (until early December 1682 at least) that it would ever take place. This, together with the small size of the Habsburg army, the tumbledown state of the Imperial fortifications, and the parlous state of the Imperial treasury, meant that Austria was in grave danger. To add to these great problems, the decision was yet to be made as to who should take command of the Imperial forces in the field.

When the lists showing the state of the Imperial forces were drawn up in early 1683, it became clear that the army was not sufficiently large or in the correct dispositions to meet the enemy. The audit of the army showed that 220 squadrons of horse and 224 companies of foot were spread across Moravia, Silesia, Western Hungary, and Upper Hungary, Inner, Upper and Lower Austria and the empire, giving a rough total of 17,600 horse and 44,800 foot. The war council decided that the size of the army needed to deal with the Ottoman threat would be 80,000, made up of 23 infantry regiments, 17 cuirassier and 7 dragoon regiments of horse. To meet this establishment, Leopold issued further patents for nobles to raise regiments in January, February and March. To be added to these totals was the Polish corps of three-and-a-half cavalry regiments being raised by Prince Jerzy Lubomirski. The 20 regiments of the Hungarian and Croatian Militia set up in 1682 were also increased. The decision was taken by the war council that the rendezvous for the army would be Kittsee, on the Danube, near Pressburg (modern-day Bratislava).

The decision to move the forces from the northern and eastern parts of the empire was easily taken, but movement from the west was more problematic. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, there was the aggressive policy in the west of Louis XIV, and secondly, a treaty concluded with Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria required the emperor to leave 15,000 men available at all times for the defence of the empire in the west. In the end, only 7,500 men were left to fulfil the treaty obligation with Maximilian II; the remainder marched to join the forces gathering at Kittsee. The initial rendezvous date had been set for 14 April 1683, but it became clear that this was too ambitious, and it was remanded to 6 May.

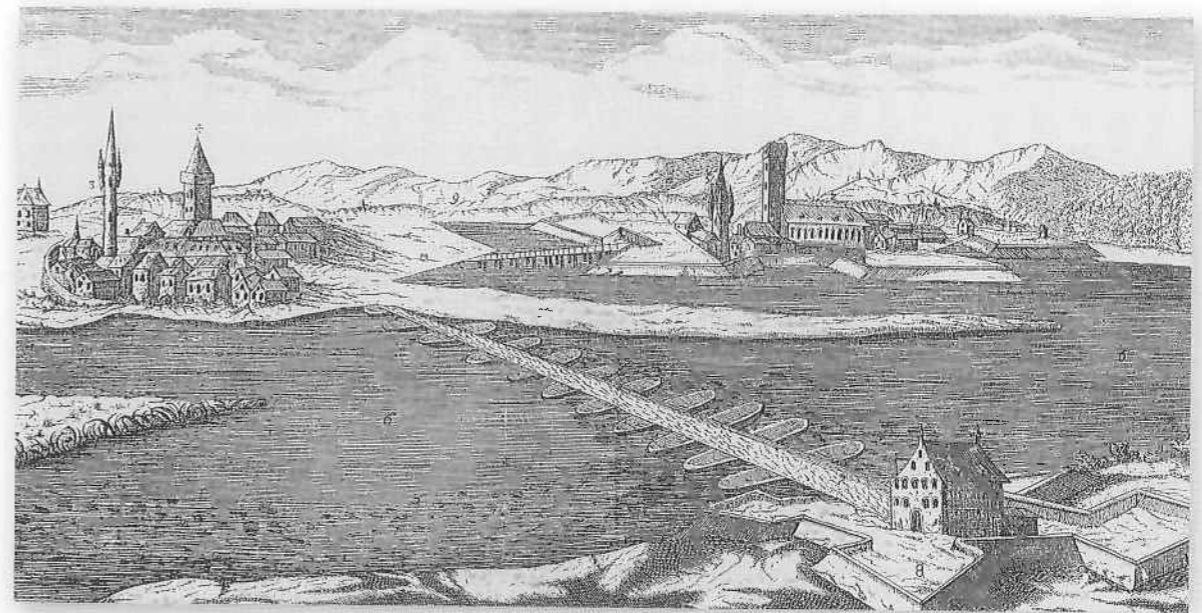
The Imperial coffers were crippled by debt and Leopold's credit among lenders was nil; as an example, the interest on loans from the Thirty Years War still remained unpaid. The coinage was debased, corruption was rife in the civil and military administrations and the effects of the recent plague on commerce had not yet been finally dealt with. On top of this the provincial Diets were frequently able to frustrate Leopold's requests for financial assistance for governmental financing. The situation was so parlous that Leopold had no option but to go to the Diets for help. The response was disappointing. He went to the Lower Austrian Diet with a request for 876,000 florins and came away on 31 March with only 650,000 florins, after a great deal of haggling. Even this amount had conditions applied to it – only 120,000 Florins would be paid at once with a further 100,000 florins in the form of a loan and deductible from the total. The remainder of the amount agreed would be paid only in 1684 and after they had deducted any costs that the province might have to bear as a result of military operations. The Upper Austrian and Styrian Estates were equally parsimonious with their

support. A one per cent capital levy was raised against ecclesiastical property, but this was not always paid and the church in Rome did not use its influence immediately. The result of this was that Leopold was nearly 4,000,000 florins short, and had it not been for contributions from the curia and friendly foreign powers Kara Mustafa and his Ottoman host would likely have succeeded. The financial situation meant that many of the regiments remained understrength, partly because of the lack of money to recruit more men and also because they were nearly always kept so. The fortresses such as Győr and Vienna were made defensible only just in time, although there was no shortage of *matériel*.

The question as to who should command the army was another vexing one for Leopold. Unlike Maximilian II Emmanuel of Bavaria and John III Sobieski, Leopold did not aspire to command forces in the field. His decision was made harder due to the squabbling among his political and military grandees, who all had their favourites and held strong opinions as to who should be in command. In the previous war against France and the Ottomans, Montecuccoli had retained ultimate authority by having supreme command in the field and being president of the War Council. Herman von Baden, the new president, was under pressure by various factions not to copy Montecuccoli and instead to hold Leopold to his promise that Charles Sixte of Lorraine would be appointed field commander. In due course Lorraine's party was successful, and he was instructed to be in Vienna by 10 April to discuss the forthcoming campaign. The council of war was to be held on the 21st.

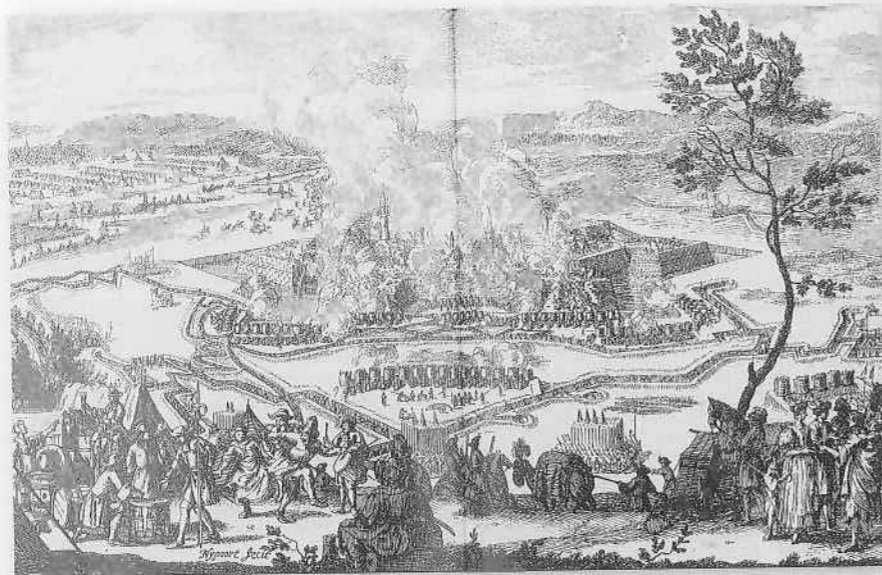
The minister of war, Herman von Baden, had devised a plan over the preceding few years based on carrying out a position defence type of warfare, whereby the enemy was forced into attacking powerful fortresses to no avail. To facilitate this, in 1681 he had engaged George Rimpler, a brilliant Saxon military engineer with a rising reputation to match that of Vauban. The plan he outlined was to have the main field army consisting of 14,400 infantry and 28,600 cavalry in position in the area of Komárom. He also placed General Schultz with a strong force of 8,000 men and the 2,700 Poles under General Lubomirski further north on the River Váh, and had troops from Styria and

A view of Komárom (Comorn). The city was garrisoned by Imperial troops throughout the campaign.



Croatia guard against any Ottoman incursion further south against Graz. Magyar troops covered the gaps; Esterházy with 5,000 men would be along the lower Váh, and Batthyány with 6,000 men on the Rába River from Körmend to Győr. During the summer of 1682, Rimpler had carried out an inspection of the fortresses of Győr, Komárom, Pressburg, Leopoldsburg and Trencin and recommended that they were renovated. By the end of the year he had come to the conclusion that Győr was the most important fortress and the lynchpin for any defensive tactics. In December 1682 the Council of War agreed to the refurbishment of the defences of Győr, the repair and modernization of Vienna's defences and better defences for Wiener Neustadt along with better defences on the line of the March and Leitha rivers. The work started in early 1683 but due to a lack of finance work progressed slowly. The conference on 21 April enabled Charles of Lorraine as the field commander to express his views. He had a fundamentally different approach as to how the campaign should be run. He believed in the manoeuvring of his enemy into a position where it would be advantageous for him to give battle. He had heard reports that the Ottoman army was large and that their goal was to capture Győr and/or Vienna. He proposed regiments still in the Imperial lands be summoned back and that the Poles under Sobieski be asked to move towards Hungary rather than the Ukraine. He also was of the opinion that the centre corps needed a force large enough to man the fortresses required, but also to give a field army the fighting power to deal with the Ottomans. The decision, it was concluded, would be left to conferences to be held at the rendezvous point – Kittsee. The announcement of the appointment of Charles of Lorraine to command the field army was made public on the same day.

The Imperial suite and society from Vienna travelled to the rendezvous point and witnessed the Mass held on 6 May, where the troops received a blessing and a special papal indulgence. The spectacle of 21,000 infantry, 11,000 cavalry and Esterházy's force impressed the onlookers, but many of the Hungarians looked askance at the small numbers and had great misgivings. Many wondered whether to transfer their allegiance to Thököly or remain loyal to their king-emperor. On 7 May the discussions as to the plan of campaign, held over from the meeting in Vienna began in earnest.



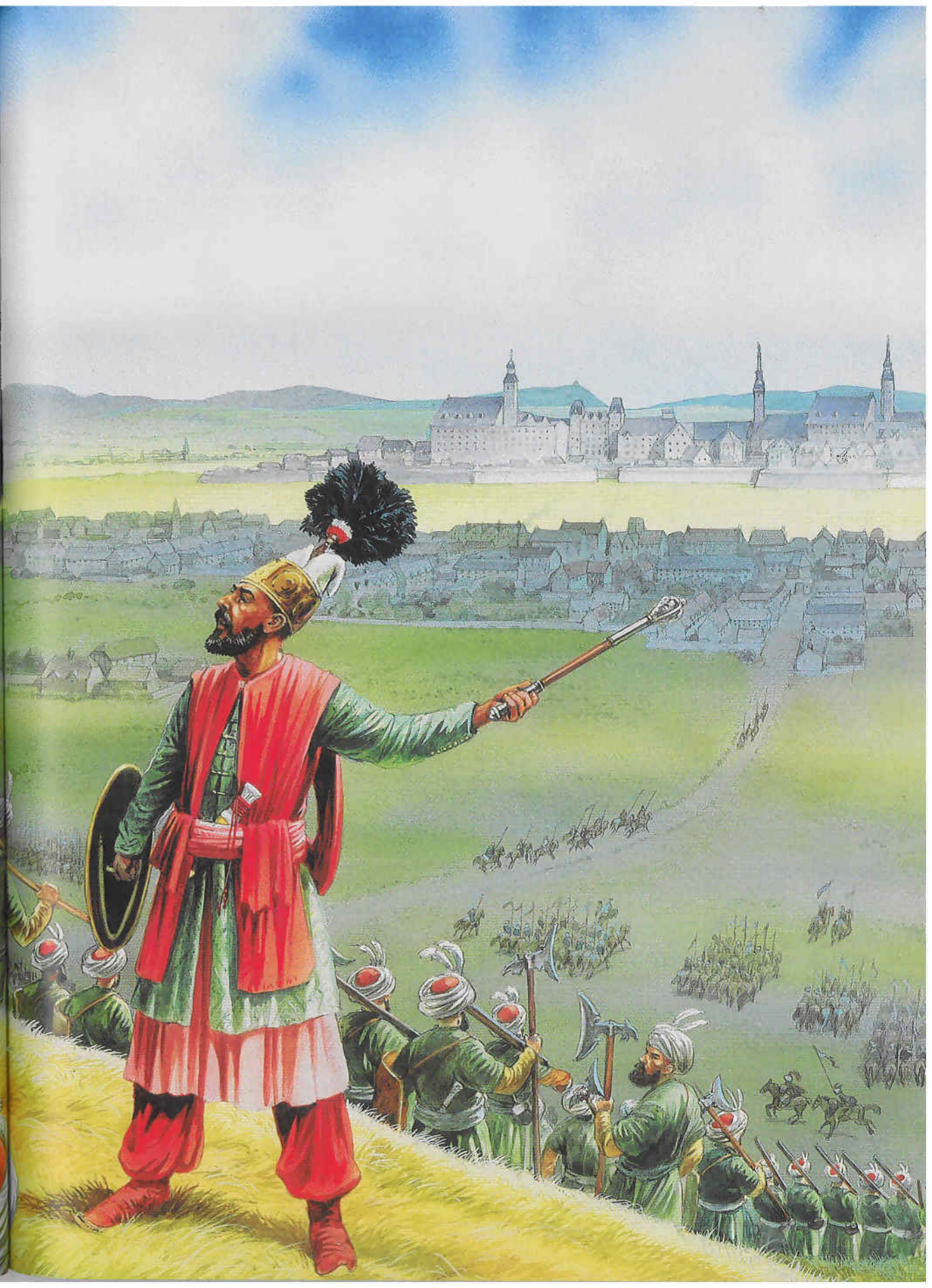
The Austrian siege of Neuhäusel. Charles Sixte of Lorraine unsuccessfully tried to capture the city from the Ottomans in June 1683. It was eventually stormed and captured in 1685.

Charles of Lorraine proposed that a force should capture Esztergom and Neuhäusel before the arrival of an Ottoman relief force. His argument was threefold; firstly that the reputation of the Imperial force would receive a boost by being seen to be proactive; secondly that seizing the initiative would put the Ottomans on the back foot and create dissatisfaction with Kara Mustafa; and finally it was felt that Sobieski's Poles would be more favourably disposed to helping their cause, by being seen to do something offensively. Defensively the meeting confirmed the Baden-Rimpler plan of static defence. At a second meeting on 9 May, Leopold gave permission for Charles to attack either of the two fortresses identified, but he was specifically tasked with ensuring the security of Győr and Komárom and to forestall any attempt to ravage the hereditary lands of the Habsburgs.

## THE OPENING MINUET OF THE IMPERIAL FORCES

Whilst Charles of Lorraine marched from Kittsee in two columns for Esztergom, the Hungarian patriots Batthyány and Count Draskovi went ahead and carried out preparations for making the rivers into a greater obstacle than they already were. Both had managed to persuade Leopold to let the Hungarian people show their devotion to him, by defending their own lands. With the help of Hungarian labour, redoubts were built at the eastern end of five bridges across the Rába in the area of the Rábaköz Island, near Győr and three bridges further upstream. A further 42 crossings were also given some protection in the form of palisades on the eastern bank and chevaux de frise as obstacles in the river beds. Provided the defences were manned with determined and well led troops they were perfectly defensible positions.

By 19 May, Lorraine with his army had reached the outskirts of Győr and they continued on their march towards Esztergom, via Komárom. Camps were set up at Gömörs and Szöny, whilst the army waited for cannon and ammunition to arrive that was being transported down the river. Lorraine did not waste time and carried out a reconnaissance of Esztergom, although he was concerned by the conflicting reports reaching him of the direction, size and speed of the Ottoman advance. There was also a certain amount of discontent in the camp over the plan to attack Esztergom, which was debated at a council of officers on 26 May. The troops were ordered to march and did so on 31 May only to have the order countermanded soon afterwards by Lorraine himself. The reason is that he had heard a reliable report that Kara Mustafa had crossed the bridge at Osijek and concluded that any further advance would expose his flank to an attack. He returned to camp dejected, to receive intelligence that the Ottoman advance was not as quick as he had thought and a letter had arrived from Leopold encouraging him to attack an Ottoman fortress or engage the Ottomans in a battle before the main body arrived. Lorraine reconsidered his options and proposed again to attack Esztergom, but received opposition from his generals and so decided on an attack against Neuhäusel, which his generals with a certain amount of pique approved. Weeks had been wasted with order and counter order, but Lorraine started for Neuhäusel, by crossing the Danube at Komárom. It became apparent that heavier artillery and more of it would be required to subdue the Ottoman stronghold and this was requested from Vienna. The attack on Neuhäusel initially went well, with rapid progress being made in the first three days with the outer works quickly taken and troops lodged on the island

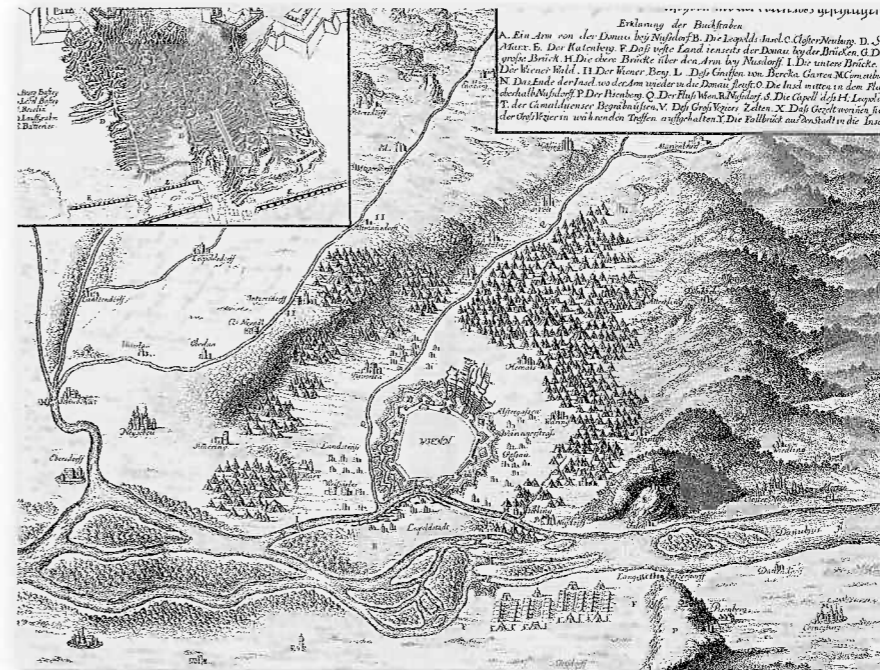




### THE OTTOMANS ARRIVE BEFORE VIENNA (pp. 34–35)

On 14 July 1683 the Ottoman Turks arrived before the Habsburg capital. The Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa (1) and his party approached the city from the south and were soon on the forward slope of a hill overlooking the city. Ottoman commanders followed the custom of having richly embroidered and fur-lined clothes, which were a mark of rank and of how esteemed the bearer was in the sultan's eyes. The standard bearer (2) is from the *kapu kulu* cavalry, one of the elite cavalry formations in the Ottoman army. The Janissaries were part of the sultan's personal troops and were always recruited from slaves or prisoners. Documents captured at Vienna show that the Janissaries made up one quarter of the invasion force. The Ottoman 'uniforms' were designed along Persian lines and remained unchanged from the 15th to the 19th centuries. The *bascavus* Janissary officer (3) is a senior officer. His uniform is more elaborate and the transparent shirt beneath his kaftan reflects his close association with the sultan and was often worn on campaign. The *kethudasi* Janissary officer (4) is a middle-ranking officer. His two plumes may indicate either rank or an extra award for bravery. The mace (5) was a popular weapon among officers and may also have indicated status. Messengers were an important part of any

army and the *peyk* (6) was one of the sultan's messengers. He was responsible for conveying the sultan's orders and direction to his commanders; the sultan's complete trust in him is reflected in the ornate uniform and splendid brass helmet. His duties in reality went further than just carrying messages for he was able to report to the Sultan what he saw with his own eyes. The *azab* infantry (7) were a very successful organization and were rivals to the Janissaries. They were volunteers who were only paid when on campaign. From the 16th century they were recruited from the frontier regions and were armed with matchlocks and *teber* (axes, 8). They had a uniform coat similar to that of a Janissary, likely to be of one colour; it is thought green was predominant, but there may have been other colours. The Wienerwald (9) dominates the plain that Vienna sits on and it was from these woods that the relieving army was to attack the besieging Ottoman army on 12 September 1683. The fortifications protecting Vienna (10) had been surveyed in 1674, when the defences were not in a good state, but from 1680 onwards there were improvements with repairs to bastions, walls and ravelins. The walls that faced the Ottomans in 1683, however, were still old and potentially inadequate. (Peter Dennis)



The Ottoman camp around Vienna.

opposite the inner defences of the garrison. By 8 June however, Lorraine was once again in despair as he received another letter from Leopold questioning the need to attack Neuhäusel and stressing the need to protect Austria and preserve the army. He was also frustrated by the lack of support he was getting from his command, with at times deliberate obstruction by some senior officers, particularly Leslie who had not examined the road conditions before bringing forward extra artillery, which all got stuck in deep mud. With negative generals and the Hungarian rebels and Tatars on the move, Lorraine had no option but to withdraw back to Komárom and had the army on the move on 9 June. A great opportunity to take an Ottoman fortress garrisoned by only 1,200 Janissaries and 700 cavalry had been lost, thanks to meddling from Vienna. By 12 June he was in better spirits and at Komárom he was at least in a position to observe the Ottoman approach march and react accordingly. On 20 June Lorraine received intelligence that Kara Mustafa was moving towards Győr and Lorraine also marched with his 12,500 infantry and 9,500 cavalry to Győr arriving on 22 June.

The first task for the Austrian force on arriving at Győr was to complete the refurbishment of the fortress's defences as directed by Rimpler. Lorraine's plan was to frustrate the Ottomans by holding the town with the help of the field army and to do this he decided upon resting his left wing against the town and his right against some swamps further south, behind the Rába River. To assist in the defence of this line, redoubts were constructed to guard the fords in front of the army and some dragoons were sent north and south of the position to disrupt any outflanking movement attempted by the Ottomans. Meanwhile Marsilgi had been recalled from Neuhäusel to the Rábaköz region to complete the defences. As for the reliability of the loyal Hungarians, this was soon put to the test, and circumstances were not favourable for Charles Sixte of Lorraine. They had seen the small size of the Imperial army, the withdrawal from Neuhäusel and indecision on the Imperial side about how to conduct the campaign. Now they had Thököly

threatening fire and brimstone against those who remained loyal to Leopold, and his declarations also carried a similar message from Kara Mustafa. It is not surprising that many Hungarians came to terms with the rebels. During this time Charles of Lorraine had a steady flow of messengers arriving at his tent to give him the latest intelligence reports on the movement of the Ottoman host. On 28 June Lorraine himself led a raid into the surrounding countryside to denude it of any supplies that might be of use to the enemy, and it was not long before smoke billowing above the horizon heralded the arrival of the Ottomans.

The Ottomans reached Győr during the morning of 1 July, and all who witnessed their arrival remarked at the enormous size of their army as it spilled on to the plain before the city. Their engineers immediately set about sounding out the depth of the river bottom and the strength of the current. By midday they had detached the advance guard upstream towards the Rábaköz on the southern bank to search for more fordable places. During the afternoon the Ottoman engineers constructed battery positions in preparation for a forced crossing. The Imperial troops were given a sense of the vast size of the Ottoman army that night as they set up camp, and at two o'clock on the morning of 2 July Charles of Lorraine was woken and surveyed the array of fires and lanterns that marked the size of the enemy encampment. Ottoman troops appeared to be preparing for action, so Charles instructed his army to take up their line of battle, and the batteries opened fire to keep the Ottomans away from the edge of the river.

Charles, however, was not going to stay and fight. Remembering the instructions from Leopold not to risk the Imperial heartland, he resolved to withdraw. Three regiments of foot were sent into Győr to provide reinforcements for the garrison. Charles's plan was to withdraw and position himself so that he could support Győr (if this turned out to be the object of the Ottoman advance) or continue his withdrawal to protect Vienna. To carry out this plan he sent the infantry and artillery to the Little Schütt, an area of land between the Danube and the Duna rivers from where they could support Győr and the cavalry retired to Wieselburg-Ungarisch-Altenburg (present-day Mosonmagyaróvár, in north-western Hungary). The withdrawal continued throughout the day of 2 July and as Charles reached Wieselburg-Ungarisch-Altenburg an attack by the Tatars was driven off. On 3 July the withdrawal continued, but only as far as Deutsch Jahrndorf, where Charles halted for two days, hoping to gain a clear idea of what was going on. He soon received reports that Győr was the objective of Kara Mustafa, and thus believing that he need not withdraw any further, he sent 800 cavalymen under Colonel Heisler to recover some ground near the Neusiedler See. On 5 and 6 July, Charles moved to just inside the Austrian border at Berg. Here he received a dispatch from General Leslie at Győr, stating that he intended to withdraw the infantry and artillery westwards unless he received orders to the contrary by 4 July. The message did not reach Charles in time, but he still replied that Leslie was to stay put and not leave Győr to its fate. To Austria's great fortune, Leslie continued his withdrawal.

Events now started to go against Charles, for at nine o'clock on 7 July he was told when out riding that a large Ottoman force was in Wieselburg-Ungarisch-Altenburg; he himself could see the large dust clouds on the plain below. He believed this to be the main Ottoman army marching for Vienna, an impression reinforced by the tales of weary survivors of the small rearguard he had left in the town. They had not been able to destroy the



bridge, and as the situation was discussed with his staff Charles saw further dust clouds; the Ottomans had bypassed his position. He issued orders: the baggage and the main body of cavalry were ordered to move to Fischamend, General Leslie was to continue his march to Vienna via Pressburg, von Starhemberg was to depart immediately for Vienna and take command, and finally Count Auersperg was sent to warn Leopold. The first messengers were captured by the Ottomans, and it was only the enterprising Lieutenant-Colonel von Hasslingen who made it through the Ottoman lines to the other Imperial corps; the latter had been out of contact with Lorraine for six days now, and had to force march to escape the Ottoman net.

The Ottoman siege lines before Vienna provided a fascinating spectacle, with camels and other exotic animals present.

## THE AFFAIR AT PETRONELL

Petronell was located within the estate of the Traun family, and lay not far from the Danube. It was here that the 9,500-strong Imperial rearguard fought a sharp skirmish with some 6,000 Ottomans. The event started when a group of Tatars fell upon the baggage train; the attack was beaten off when units from the main body charged into the fray and the Tatars melted away. At the same time, however, a second group of Tatars was attacking the Imperial rearguard; thinking that the baggage train and main body were continuing the retreat, two regiments of the rearguard were thrown into disarray and routed – even Charles of Lorraine bringing up fresh squadrons of horse from the reserve could not get them to stop and fight. The Imperials were lucky, for the left wing remained firm, repelled the Ottoman rush and mounted a counterattack, which forced the Ottomans to leave the field. The Imperial cavalry did not follow up their success, and Charles was even more anxious to get to Vienna as soon as possible.

## KARA MUSTAFA BEHOLDS VIENNA

Whilst the affair at Petronell was being decided, the bulk of the Ottoman host was leaving the environs of Győr and crossing the Rába and (on 9 July) Rábca rivers. These were Kara Mustafa's Rubicon, for once beyond this point there could only be one of two outcomes: capture Vienna and be fêted, or fail and feel the wrath of the sultan. On 10 July Kara Mustafa was in Wieselburg-Ungarisch-Altenburg, and on 11 July the centre column reached the Austro-Hungarian frontier near Gattendorf. The medieval town of Hainburg was a local strongpoint and had resisted repeated Tatar attacks for over a week, but at the end was unable to repulse a strong Ottoman attack on the 11th. The local town burghers who had not fled the town and resisted the Ottomans were executed, their heads rolling at Kara Mustafa's feet in the evening. The next day more heads were presented to Kara Mustafa before he went to inspect the smouldering ruins of the town, which had been put to the torch. On 13 July, Kara Mustafa and the leading elements of the Ottoman army were in the village of Schwechat, only 7½ miles from Vienna; he rested there for a short while, and then with an escort of 10,000 cavalrymen continued to observe the lie of the land around Vienna, in order to decide where the approach trenches should be constructed. A brief skirmish ensued when a small force of Imperial dragoons came out to meet the Ottomans; both sides claimed victory as the forces disengaged, but there was no clear outcome.

Kara Mustafa, meanwhile, had taken himself off to a favourite villa of Leopold's, the Neugebäude, reputedly built on the very spot where Suleiman the Magnificent's tent was pitched during the first siege in 1529. The Ottomans were so impressed with the baroque architecture, gilded roofs, marble walls and beautifully laid out gardens that they refrained from torching it. Their plans for Vienna, however, were very different.

## THE SIEGE OF VIENNA

The atmosphere in Vienna as the Ottoman host gradually moved across the Hungarian plains was relaxed, and little seemed to ruffle the feathers of the courtiers in the palace or the barrow boys in the city. The news of the withdrawal from Győr, however, proved disquieting, particularly as the city defence works were incomplete and the garrison was tiny, comprising the city guard and half a regiment of foot – roughly 2,000 men. While Leopold remained impassive, hunting at Perchtoldsdorf on 3 and 6 July, his mother the dowager empress did not, and moved from the outlying Villa Favorita into the Hofburg Palace within the city walls. Plans for the departure of the Imperial family were put in place, but Leopold was determined to remain in Vienna. With tales of Tatar incursions and a steady stream of refugees arriving at the city gates, matters came to a head; on 5 July the citizens of Vienna rioted and smashed the windows of Bishop Emerich Sinelli's palace. On the same day various edicts were issued: older monks and nuns, and foreigners, were to leave the city, landlords of inns were ordered to be more diligent in keeping a record of whom they were lodging and the peasantry were to block off the



A rather overdramatized picture of the clash between the Imperial forces and the Ottomans on the Prater Island, which took place as the siege started.



rides through the Vienna woods. Conferences about the state's financial predicament were suspended when dispatches arrived from Charles of Lorraine indicating that the Ottomans had entered the hereditary Habsburg lands. Wild rumours of the clash at Petronell were also in circulation, and so it was decided that the court should leave the city as soon as possible. Before taking his leave of the capital, Leopold signed two important documents: the first recalled all the regiments available from the Imperial lands, and the second ordered General Schultz to retire to the River Váh. He also dashed off urgent appeals to the princes of the empire for their support. He was to be gone from Vienna for nearly three months.

Rumours that Charles Sixte of Lorraine had been defeated in battle and that the city was to be left to the Ottoman infidels resulted in nearly 60,000 people fleeing Vienna, among them many court officials. However, clear heads and brave hearts still remained. The mayor, Burgomaster Liebenberg, and his council announced that Count Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg had been appointed with supreme powers by the emperor to defend the city. Von Starhemberg, however, was still with the main army and had not yet arrived. Preparations for the impending siege went ahead; firewood and other timber was brought inside the walls, householders were told to take measures to store water in their roof space, and the militia was called up. On 8 July von Starhemberg arrived, with Charles of Lorraine not far behind. Von Starhemberg quickly set to work repairing and improving the city walls the next day, ordering all those who could to help with this, with Burgomaster Liebenberg and the burghers setting an example. Soon the clergy were helping and even practising musketry, with Bishop Sinelli's blessing.

On 10 July it was confirmed that the Ottoman army was heading for Vienna, which stiffened the defenders' resolve, and soon emplacements were completed and guns mounted on numerous bastions. That evening the joyous news was received that 1,000 men of von Scherffenberg's infantry regiment were not far away, closely followed by half of von Starhemberg's own regiment. The next day was filled with further feverish activity, and an important council of war was held on how best to defend Vienna. It was agreed to strengthen the city's defences with as many men and supplies as possible, and that Charles of Lorraine would continue to retire north with the main army over the Danube, to make preparations for the relief of the city at the earliest available opportunity. On 12 July Charles of Lorraine sent five regiments of foot over the Danube, in the area of the Marchfeld, to secure the far bank, leaving a further seven to secure the home bank. A further council of war was held and decided that the suburbs had to be destroyed in order to deny the Ottomans covered approaches and shelter. That night, Vienna was illuminated by burning buildings, which destroyed many of the interiors but failed to entirely demolish those made of brick and stone.

Meanwhile, the Tatars had swept around the feeble defences erected in the Vienna woods and were threatening the bridge at Krems, which was vital to the Imperial army for future operations. To ensure the security of the bridge, Charles of Lorraine dispatched a regiment of Croats, one of dragoons and two squadrons of cuirassiers, who arrived just in time to drive off a raiding party of Tatars.

The burning of the suburbs continued on 13 July, carried out by some of the infantry. Whilst this was going on, lead elements of the Ottoman army arrived mid morning in St Ulrich and attacked some of the inhabitants who had not yet fled. They spared no one in their bloodlust, cutting down men,

**OPPOSITE**  
The Ottoman batteries fire  
upon Vienna. (akg-images)



women and children. The Croats and dragoons guarding the torching operation charged them, and after killing a hundred or so Ottomans were forced to withdraw. The city walls were almost breached before the siege had started when some sparks from the flames flew and settled on some stores on the landing stage, setting fire to it. Had the flames been fanned by the breeze and passed over the walls to the nearby arsenal and powder stores, they almost certainly would have exploded. Alert to the potential catastrophe von Starhemberg and his officers salvaged some of the lumber stores, while the burgomaster with some of the citizens rushed and doused the flames on the palisades. An explosion would have torn a gaping hole in the defences and left the city at the mercy of the Ottomans.

On 14 July Charles of Lorraine finally determined on the garrison. It was to consist of 72 companies drawn from ten regiments of foot, a regiment of cuirassiers and the city guard – in all about 12,000 men. Their exact dispositions are unknown, but, that said, nearly 1,000 were placed on or near the Löbel and Palace bastions, approximately 2,000 were spread over the remaining bastions and the remainder were kept in reserve, ready to deploy where they would be best needed. Command of the city guard fell to the Marchese degli Obizzi, the artillery to Christoph von Börner, and George Rimpler acted as chief engineer.

Meanwhile, on 14 July, whilst the burning of the suburbs was underway, Kara Mustafa moved to the slopes looking down towards Vienna from the south. From here, he surveyed the valley of the Wien, the canal, the Danube, the hills of the Wienerwald behind the city, and the lie of the land around the suburbs. Over the preceding days his engineers had been making their plans, and now the time had come to finalize the plan of attack. The conclusion was that the best place to breach the fortifications was the sector next to the emperor's palace, the Hofburg. It was here that the River Wien curved away from the walls, with a gentle gradient leading down to the glacis and counterscarp, and the ground appeared to be well drained. This position would also allow the artillery to site their cannon on rising ground, allowing close cooperation with the engineers to achieve a concentration of their power. With the decision made, orders were given for the Ottoman headquarters to be set up in Ottakring and the main encampment to be set up south and west of the River Wien in the villages of Hundsturm and Gumpendorf. In reality the camp stretched to Heiligenstadt and circled west and north as far as Rossau. A covering force remained on the right wing, south and east of Vienna near St Marx. Fittingly, the Ottoman encampment took the form of a huge crescent.

## THE OPENING MOVES

Kara Mustafa left his sumptuous quarters in the afternoon of 14 July and rode into the suburb of St Ulrich. Here he detailed the positions his army was to take up. He was to be in the centre facing the Palace Ravelin, and with him were to be the Janissary Aga and the Janissary first deputy commander and the Beylerbeyi ('Commander of Commanders') of Rumelia with his dismounted Portal and provincial forces. The artillery in this sector comprised five 8–24-pdr cannon and 20 smaller pieces. On his right, opposite the Burg or Palace Bastion, were the Beylerbeyi of Diyarbekir, the Beylerbeyi of Aleppo, and the Beylerbeyi of Anatolia; the fourth Janissary commander was

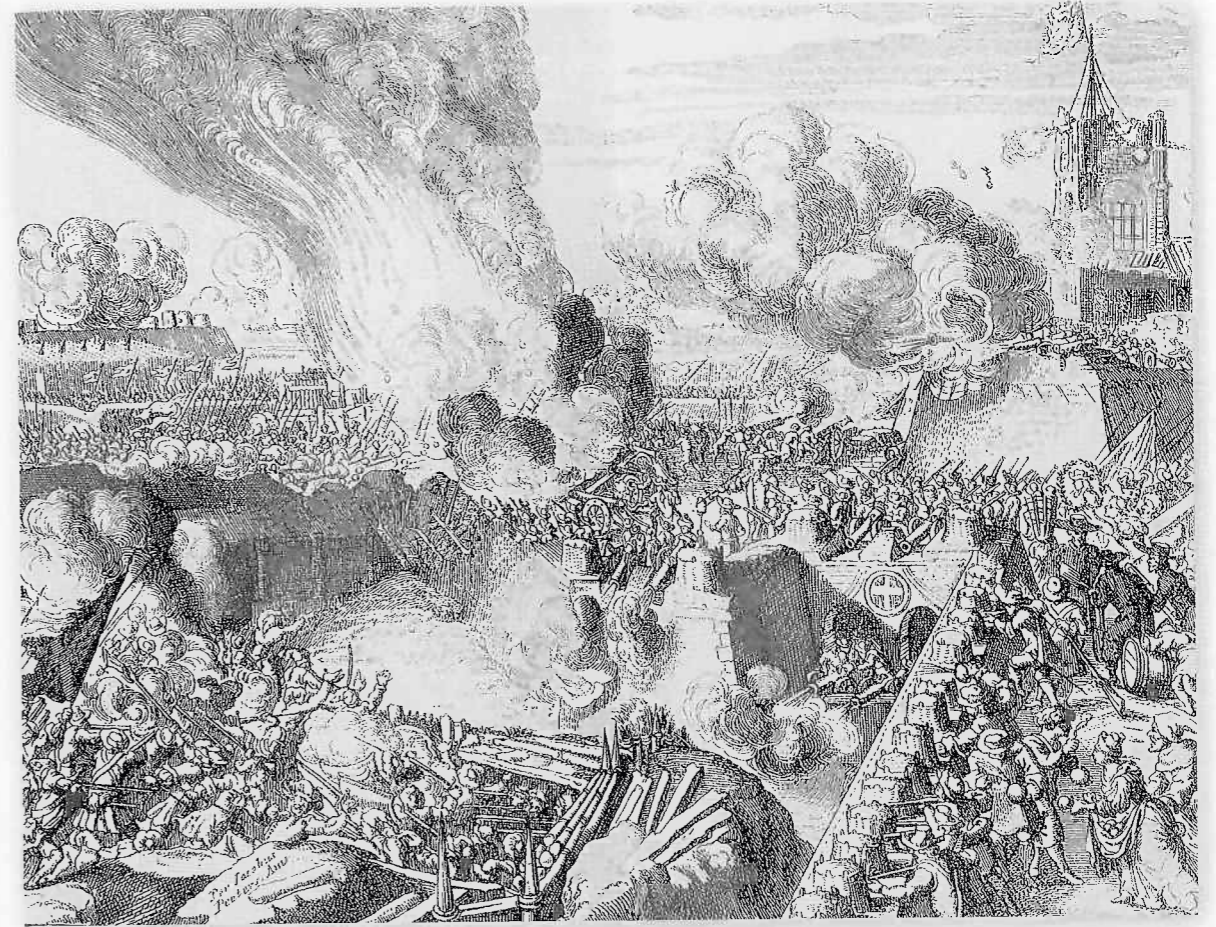
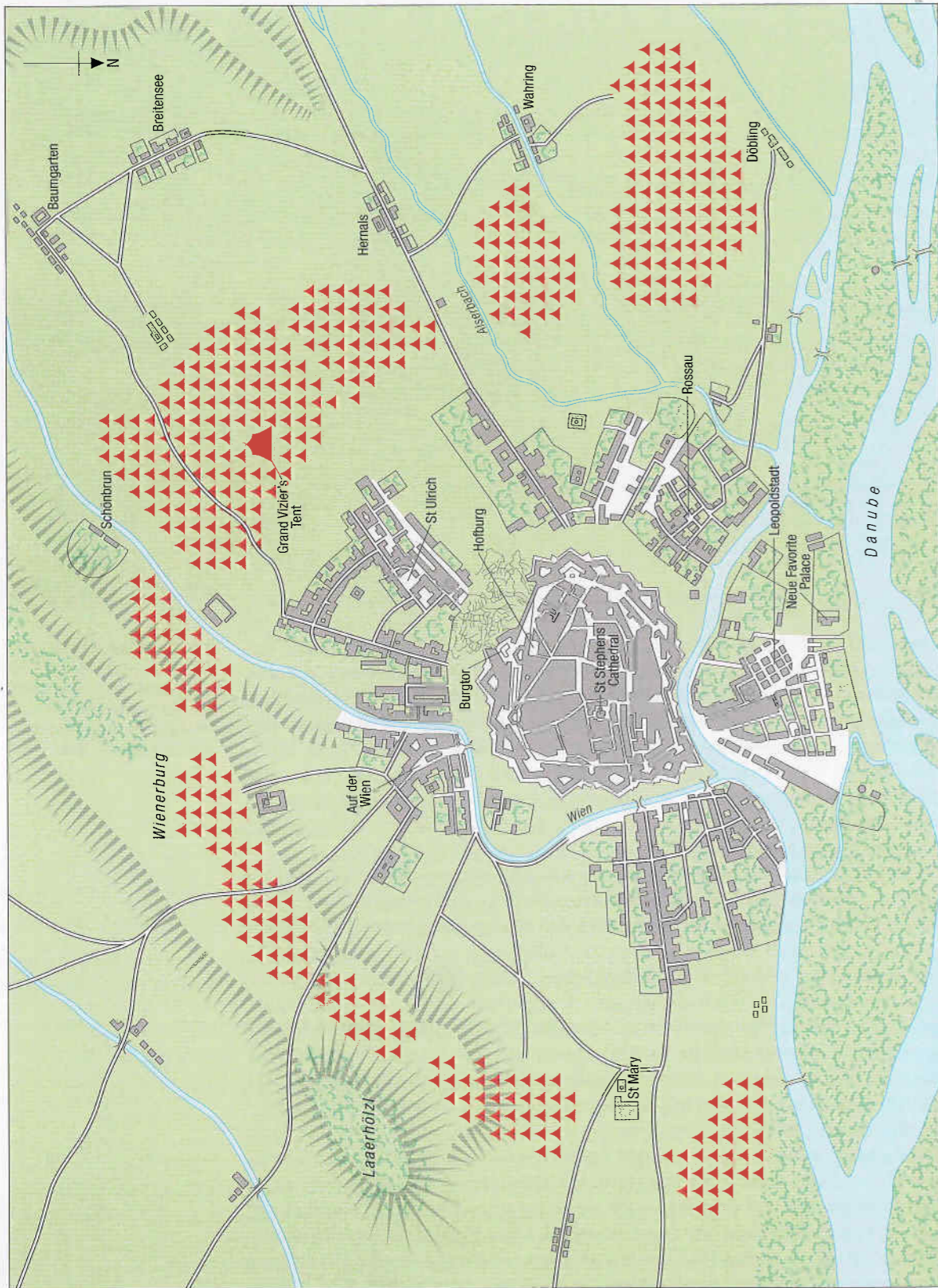


also in this sector with 20 *ortas*, five 8–24-pdr cannon and again 20 smaller pieces. Opposite the Löbel Bastion to the left of Kara Mustafa was the Beylerbeyi of Timisoara and the Beylerbeyi of Sivas with their forces, together with the next highest Janissary officer with 20 *ortas* and 500 technical troops; they had the same allocation of artillery as the right-hand sector. In total, between 15,000 and 20,000 troops were allocated to the siege; the remaining 70,000 or so were required to seal off the fortress, provide protection for the siege itself, act as reserves and carry out raids with the Tatars in the surrounding countryside.

Sieges at this time took on a formal pattern, and were subject to certain conventions, with the Ottomans observing these as well as any other nation. It would thus have been of no surprise to von Starhemberg to see an Ottoman officer with a small escort ride up to the walls and hand over a document to one of his Croat soldiers. The summons read: 'Accept Islam, and live in peace under the sultan as Christians; and if any man prefer, let him depart peaceably, taking his goods with him! But if you resist, then death or spoliation or slavery shall be the fate of you all!' Von Starhemberg declined the offer, and ordered the work to continue walling up the gates. With this refusal Kara Mustafa ordered the bombardment to commence. The heavy artillery batteries had not yet been put into position and so the first day's bombardment was carried out by lighter pieces totally unsuited to siege warfare. At the same time, the Ottoman engineers began construction of their approaches and parallels, with work on this carrying on through the night. A special bunker was constructed for Kara Mustafa in Neubaugasse. Within 24 hours a massed battery had been completed on the hill behind Laimgruben. Each sector constructed at least two approaches, which were

The Ottoman siege works drawn by Daniel Suttinger. The Löbel Bastion is to the left and the Palace Bastion to the right, behind which can be seen the Hofburg Palace complex.

## The siege of Vienna



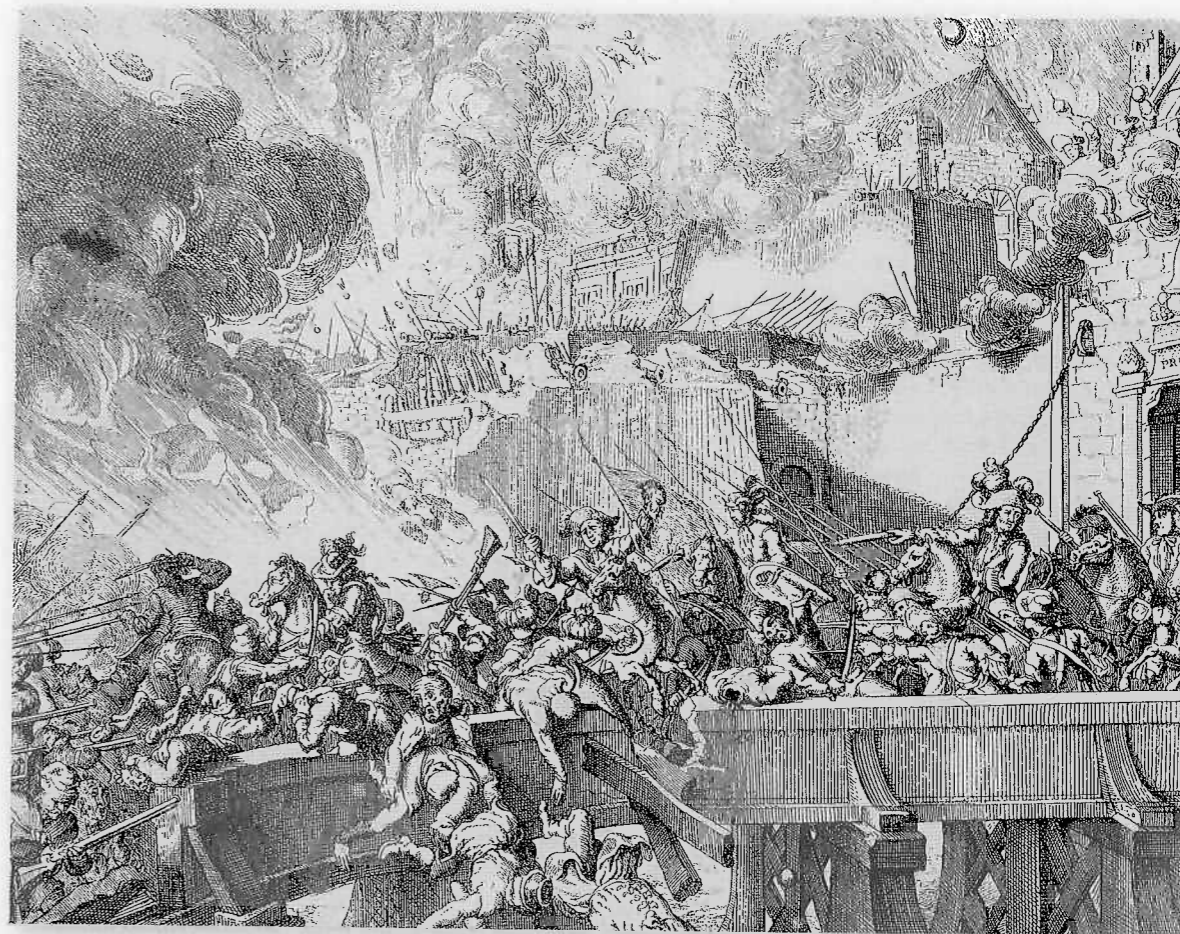
linked farther up on the glacis by the same parallels. The trenches were at least six feet wide and tall enough for a man to stand up and be protected from musket fire, but as the trenches got closer to Vienna boards, sandbags and earth were laid over them to protect the besiegers from hand grenades and shells launched by the defenders. With this protection the construction parties were able to work safely and swiftly, and despite the rocky and stony ground made good progress. However, casualties were suffered. The gamekeepers of Count Kiemannsegg, posted on the Burg Bastion, soon began to demonstrate their marksmanship, including no less than Kiemannsegg himself. He aimed and cocked his gun at an Ottoman officer 450 paces away, who had jumped out of the trench onto the glacis and was parading back and forth, holding a cane and impertinently twirling his moustache; Kiemannsegg's rifle cracked and the Ottoman fell dead.

Von Starhemberg was now able to understand his opponent's tactics and moved his artillery into position, with the strongest concentration near the Hofburg. During the day von Starhemberg was wounded by flying brick splinters on the Löbel Bastion, and was incapacitated for a while. The first sortie was conducted on the night of 15/16 July. Whilst not all the attackers followed their officers into the Ottoman lines, those that did were able to chase the Ottomans out of their forward trenches without loss. Despite the sortie, by the morning of 16 July the Ottomans were only 200 paces from the salient angles of the counterscarp.

A general view of the Ottoman siege lines and Austrian defence. Note the mine exploding in the middle distance.

At this time, Charles Sixte of Lorraine was still on the far side of the Danube. Having received news that another powder shipment was due to arrive, he tried to restore contact with the garrison in Vienna and ordered the rebuilding of the first and second spans across to the Prater Island. Three dragoon regiments under General Schultz were on the far side when they were attacked by Ottoman cavalry, who were part of a large force carrying out the encirclement of Vienna. The outnumbered Austrians and Lubomirski's men were driven back across the island and onto the first span, where (with foresight) some Austrian artillery had been placed; the pursuing Ottomans received a salvo of canister shot at point-blank range. The Ottomans attacked the span again, but after the loss of numerous senior officers, gave up and watched as the Austrians burnt the rebuilt spans. The Ottomans now turned their attention to Leopoldstadt, which was soon in flames. The encirclement continued with the Beylerbeyi of Damascus moving his contingent into St Brigid's Meadow, along with 30 small cannon. The disaffected Moldavian and Wallachian contingents put bridges up across the Danube Arm for communication and also to prevent the passage of boats. The garrison in Vienna had already disassembled their own drawbridge over the Arm, and had bricked up the Rothenturm Gate; they were now completely cut off.

With the total encirclement of Vienna now complete, and their engineering works proceeding at a quick pace, the Ottoman besiegers were soon talking about the 'final victory'. However, by committing his main force to attack the Burg and Löbel bastions Kara Mustafa had shown himself to be a bold but unimaginative commander. Inside Vienna, von Starhemberg directed that the gallows be erected, giving a clear message to potential traitors, and with the number of dead expected to rise a cavernous hole was dug. As the Ottoman trench parties continued to dig their way closer to the counterscarp, the level of their works started to rise, enabling them to fire down onto the Austrian defenders. This also reduced the effectiveness of the defenders' sallies, and helped to dislodge the troops in the two glacis salients, which were prerequisites for the Ottomans to start their mining operations under the counterscarp. The counterscarp had to be secured before they could cross the moat to attack the ravelin, bastion and curtain wall. The defenders were not idle and they countered this activity by erecting palisades and traverses at the most vulnerable points. They further strengthened each point by putting out posts armed with sharp sickle blades, caltrops and posts and boards studded with nails. Von Starhemberg realized that sooner or later he was going to have to give up the counterscarp, and gave orders for the erection of secondary defence works in the ditch. He also started to develop the retrenchments on top of the ravelin. The defence of the covered ways was being carried out with great determination and the Austrians held out longer than expected. On 19 July another sortie was led by Guido von Starhemberg (cousin to Ernst, the commander) into the Ottoman trenches; however, with the piles of loose earth making it difficult to get out of the trenches again, the majority of the 100-strong party were cut down and it was decided to cease this form of defence for a while. Artillery, in the form of mortars and hand grenades, was used to oppose the Ottoman advance. The hand grenade soon became an important weapon as the siege progressed, and it is thought that the Austrians expended almost their entire arsenal of 80,000 of these weapons during the course of the siege.



## THE FIRST MINE ATTACK

On 22 July the Ottoman artillery bombardment became much more ferocious. Von Starhemberg had predicted the event, ordering the population to inspect their cellars and report any sounds of scraping underground. All was quiet on Friday 23 July until between six and seven p.m., when the first mines exploded. As the Turks had advanced their trenches they had lost more and more casualties as a result of mortar-fired shrapnel; as a consequence, they had resorted to digging a subterranean passage, at the end of which a mine was laid. The passage negated the effect of the blast of the mines, and so did not kill as many of the Viennese defenders as they had wished. However, they did manage to establish themselves in the resultant craters that interrupted the line of the counterscarp.

On Sunday 25 July another (more powerful) mine was exploded in the area opposite the Löbel Bastion, although once again the effect was not as great as the Turks had desired. It blew up only a small portion of the palisading and killed relatively few defenders. In contrast, the 'volunteers' who stormed out of their trenches immediately after the blast were met with a hail of crossfire from the Austrian defenders; they suffered heavy casualties and were driven back. It was not until after dark that the Austrians were able to fortify the breach. The Austrian casualties had been light, but Guido von

The Viennese defenders repel an attack after a mine has exploded.





### AN OTTOMAN ATTACK ON THE CITY WALLS IS REPELLED (pp. 50-51)

On Thursday 12 August the greatest calamity to date occurred for the defenders of Vienna. The Ottomans exploded two mines simultaneously, the explosions were so powerful that the ravelin was rocked and the entire city trembled. The dirt thrown up by the blast provided a ramp across the moat, broad enough to accommodate 50 charging men. With the Ottomans advancing, the defenders quickly threw up a chevaux de frise and then a palisade made of wool and sandbags. Defenders had various means of making life difficult for attackers when a breach or gap had been opened up. The chevaux de frise (1) was made by planting spears or sharpened stakes through a large timber beam. During the 17th century Austrian infantry were issued with boar spears for this purpose. With a chevaux de frise to hinder the enemy, the defenders would then erect a makeshift palisade from wool and sandbags (2) to give them some protection. Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg (3) was an inspirational commander and leader of the defence of the city. On 12 August he was not well, but was carried to the scene of the action. The dress for officers at this time was almost civilian in its design and he wears tall

riding boots, which were popular mounted or dismounted. It was not uncommon for senior officers to wear a breastplate (4) when in a battle. The adult male citizens (5) of Vienna were expected to bolster the military garrison and play their part in the defence of the city. They would have been armed with ageing matchlocks, pikes and any other weapons available. In a fight such as this, the limitations of the slow-loading matchlock came to the fore. Having fired his weapon, the plug bayonet (6) enabled an infantryman to use his matchlock as a short stabbing pike and as a club. The pike (7) enabled the attackers to be kept at a distance and provided protection for a matchlock musketeer. The Ottomans also realized the limitations of matchlock muskets and it was very common for the bow and arrow (8) to be used. This weapon was fast loading, accurate and enabled the firer to acquire targets very quickly. The tufekci (9) were newly recruited infantry in the 17th century. They were highly disciplined troops and skilled marksmen. Their tufek matchlocks (10) were of the latest Ottoman design and in the hands of the right man were highly accurate. (Peter Dennis)

Starhemberg had suffered a serious wound. These attacks and counterattacks set the pattern for the following week. During this time, Kuniz, the Imperial envoy held captive by Kara Mustafa, managed to get two messages into the city on 22 and 25 July using his valet Jakob Heider as the messenger. These gave von Starhemberg important information on conditions in the enemy camp and increased the defenders' morale. Heider was captured on his way back after delivering the second message; he saved his life by throwing away von Starhemberg's reply, but the Ottomans were suspicious of him and he was locked up.

Over the next few days, in spite of an incessant mortar, musket and hand grenade barrage, the Ottomans attempted to improve their works, and on Thursday 29 July they exploded two mines simultaneously. The result was far more pleasing for Kara Mustafa. A long section of palisading had been overturned, the parapet behind it wrecked and a huge crater reaching into the moat had been formed; many of the defenders were also buried by the upheaval of earth or blown to bits. Other defenders and senior officers rushed to the scene, and it was decided to occupy and fortify the gap with fascines and wool bags to prevent the Ottomans from gaining access to the moat. As a result, 200 men jumped over the traverse into the crater and were met not by a determined Ottoman assault, but by musketry and hand grenades, allowing them to establish themselves only six feet from the Ottoman trenches. The lack of energy among the Ottomans gave the defenders time to throw up some makeshift defences within two hours. On 30 July another mine was exploded near the Palace Bastion and tore off the top of the covered way; the Ottomans rushed into the attack and a fierce fight ensued, but the Austrians found the position too costly to hold and withdrew.

The Ottoman mines and bombs were taking their toll on the defences and it was becoming more and more difficult for the defenders to repair the outer works. Von Starhemberg, knowing that at some stage the fight was likely to



An underground encounter between Ottoman miners and Austrian counterminers beneath the Palace Bastion.

be inside the city walls, began preparing for this eventuality. He issued lists of assembly points for the burghers and other untrained personnel, and ordered that the bells and chimes should be silenced except for the striking of the hour from the church towers. In addition, the great bell of St Stephen would only ring out to summon the citizens for the worst of all emergencies – the entry of the Ottomans into the city. The 31st of July was something of a bizarre day, for not only were the Christian defenders listening to their bands playing rousing music with drum and pipe, but the Ottomans were also commanded to strike up as the sultan's special envoy, Ali Aga, left the camp to return to Belgrade. As the music played, both sides fought desperately in front of the Burg Bastion.

## COUNTERMINING

Towards the end of July, the Austrians had begun countermining operations. The volunteers who offered their services to von Starhemberg were not proficient in these demanding techniques. Throughout the last week of July and the first week of August every foot of ground in front of the Burg and Löbel bastions was fought over. On 2 August, to von Starhemberg's great satisfaction, the amateur Viennese counterminers, led by Captain Hafner, were able to detonate a mine opposite the Löbel Bastion, killing many Ottoman besiegers, whose legs, torsos and arms mingled with the falling debris and settled with the dust. During this first week of August a pattern was set of artillery fire dominating the morning activities, the exploding of mines in the afternoon and early evening, closely followed by an assault or sortie. The hours of darkness would be taken up with repair work.

The 3rd of August saw the Turks launch a determined assault, and they were able to establish themselves in the ditch opposite the ravelin. It was during this time that the Austrian defences were most vulnerable; on 5 August their counterminers committed a grievous mistake and blew up an Austrian sector of the defences, which encouraged the Ottomans to push their lines across the moat to the ravelin the next day. Amid fierce fighting the defenders, led by von Starhemberg himself and 100 men of his own regiment, temporarily repelled the Ottomans. Between the 7th and 9th of August two further mines were exploded by the attackers, giving them footholds in the ditch, and although the defenders fought desperately to repel the attacks they were unable to dislodge the Ottomans. On 10 August no Ottoman mine was detonated, but the fighting was still fierce, with officer casualties particularly high. The Ottomans continued to work their way forward from the counterscarp into the moat, whilst the cannon from the bastions fired onto the Ottoman batteries as they advanced. The garrison withdrew their heavier pieces of artillery from the area to the main city wall. Slowly, despite a constant rota of one defending detachment after another taking post on the ravelin and counterscarp, the defenders were forced out as the Ottomans edged themselves forwards.

By 12 August a general air of disquiet and unease settled amongst the defenders – nothing of serious note had happened for some time. However, the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by the explosion of two huge mines. The defenders were aware of the threat, for the counterminers had forewarned the officer commanding at the time that they could not detect the location of the next Ottoman mine attack. All the same, the simultaneous



**OPPOSITE**  
The Battle of Pressburg, 29 July 1683. It was here that Charles Sixte of Lorraine intercepted Imre Thököly and decisively defeated the Turko-Hungarian force. (akg-images)

A view of Pressburg (modern-day Bratislava) in 1683.

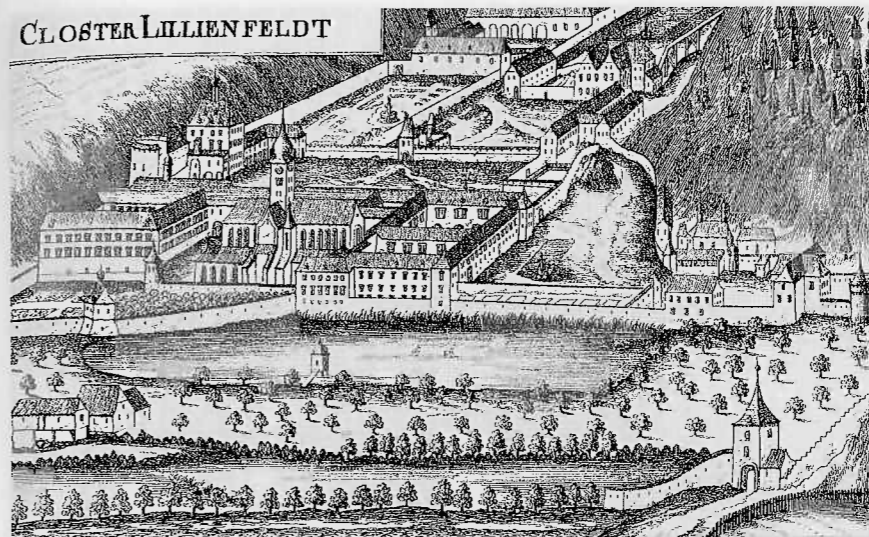


explosions are said to have rocked the city. Once the dust and debris had settled, the Viennese were shocked to see that the spoil excavated by the blast was enough to form a causeway to the level of the entrenchment on the ravelin, and was suitably wide for 50 attackers abreast. Soon the Ottomans were advancing, their horsetail standards swaying as they clambered up the causeway. The defenders threw up chevaux de frise, palisades, wool sacks and sandbags. The fight lasted an intense two hours, with any weapon that came to hand being used. Initially, the Ottomans lost some of their footing, but it soon became apparent that the defenders would not be able to dislodge them completely and von Starhemberg had to concede that the Ottomans now held part of their objective – the ravelin.

### THE TATAR RAIDS, THÖKÖLY'S THREAT AND THE IMPERIAL MANOEUVRES

Whilst the drama was unfolding at Vienna, the Ottoman irregular forces – comprising Tatars, Magyars and others – ranged far and wide, bringing a savage, destructive warfare to the rural populous in particular. The ancient warning system, made up of beacons lit to flash the warning from hilltop to hilltop, was not prepared properly – and thus no one knew of the raids in advance, and no one recorded the routes taken. In the first week of July the irregular war bands rode through the Wienerwald, and by the time the Ottoman army had arrived outside Vienna were some 50 miles ahead near Melk and riding on to the River Ybbs. By this time the peasants had assembled a small force, and when some of the raiders went upstream and crossed over, for the first time the raiders met resistance and were turned back. Others had turned south from the Leitha Valley and set Breitenbrunn ablaze; Eisenstadt, Rust and Sopron were all visited. The workers in the fields had been hearing rumours for weeks, and since the start of July had ceased reaping the fields. As the war bands approached, the peasants negotiated with them so that they would be spared the worst excesses of the invasion.

In Habsburg Hungary, the Ottoman-aligned rebel Imre Thököly had witnessed a rise in popularity. He was able to act as a shield against the worst excesses of the Ottoman invaders, and at the same time enabled the Ottomans



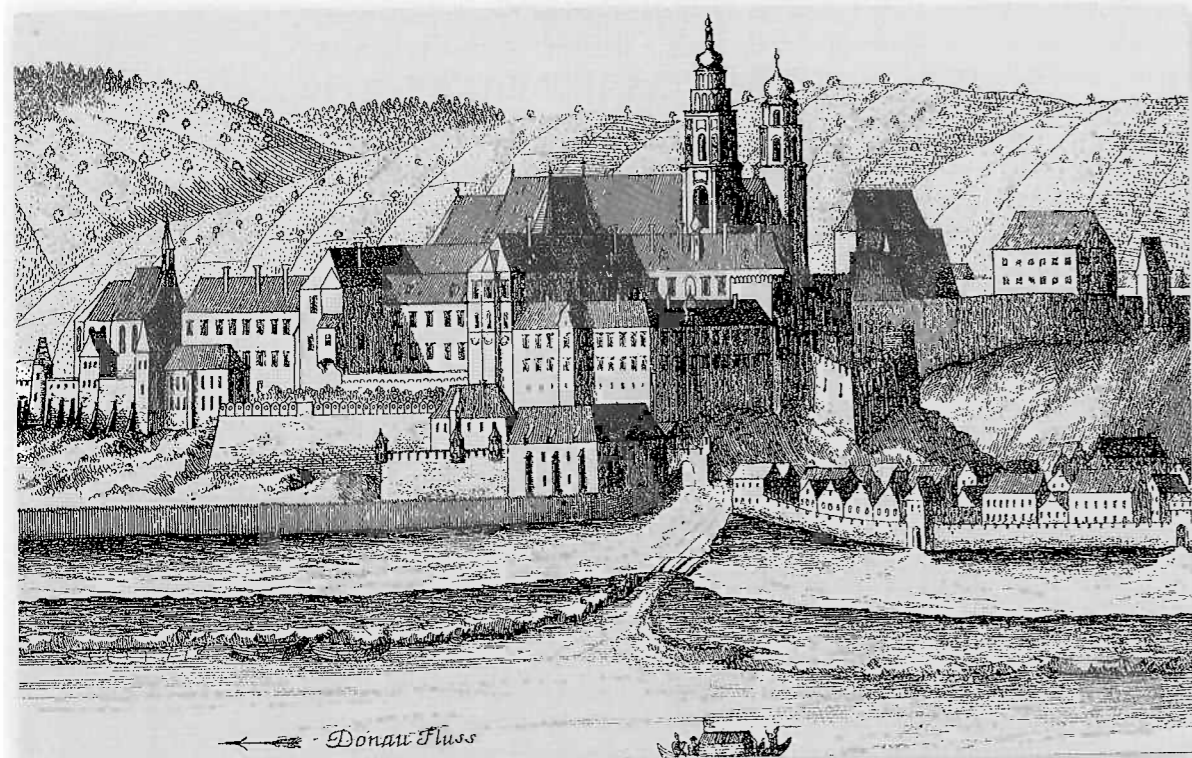
Lilienfeld Monastery, whose monks successfully repelled Tatar attacks.

to quickly gain control of large tracts of land without too much fighting. Resistance, however, did remain: the small garrisons of Forchtenstein, Wiener Neustadt and Eberfurth confronted the Ottomans and a series of savage raids and counterattacks, burnings and sacking of villages brought devastation to the Burgenland. To the south of Vienna and in the Wienerwald, the Ottoman irregulars were killing and capturing more than anywhere else; the towns of Mödling, Baden and Perchtoldsdorf were all sacked between 12 and 16 July. Although many of the inhabitants had managed to flee, those that remained were subject to intense savagery. Pockets of resistance were growing, though. The monks at Lilienfeld successfully repelled an attack, and further north on the road from Vienna to St Pölten the Gräfin Pálffy held out in her castle. With the countryside swarming with the raiders, the fear was that a relieving force would have great difficulty in fighting its way through to Vienna.

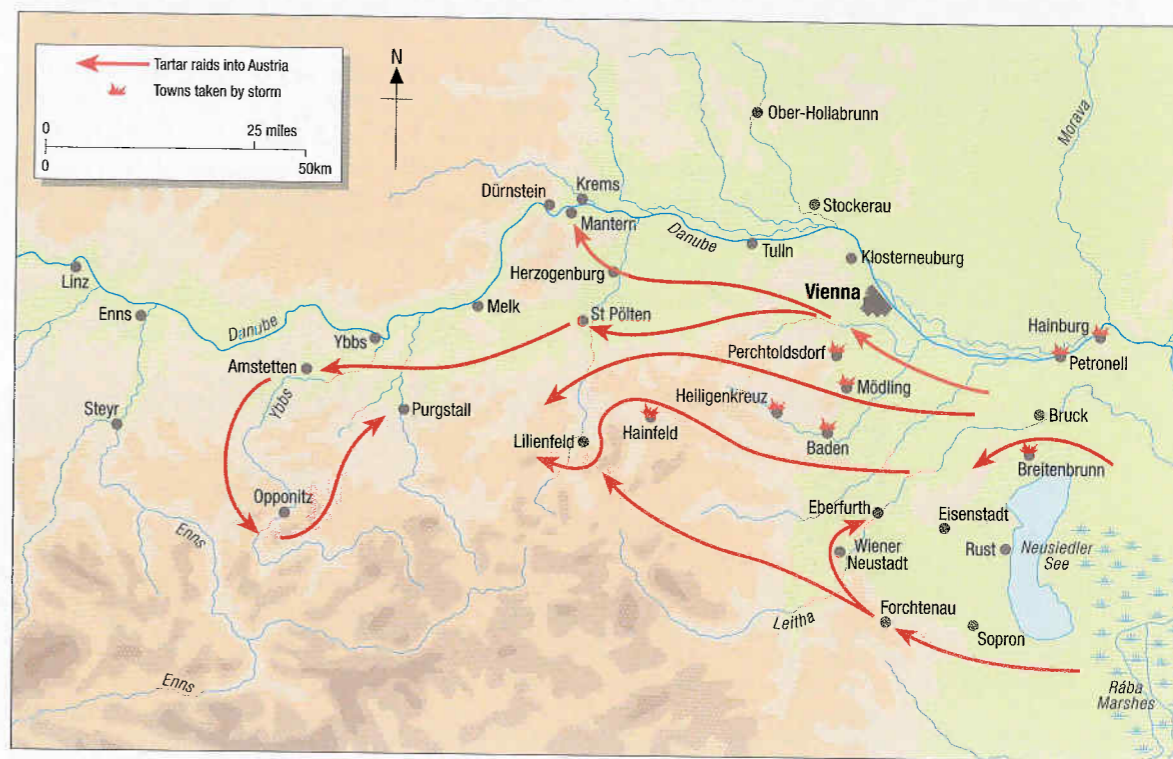
During this time the Habsburg field army had been pushed to the north bank of the Danube. After the sharp exchange with the Ottoman cavalry outside Vienna on 16 July, the Imperial rearguard also retired to the north bank. Charles Sixte of Lorraine had been defeated by being manoeuvred out of position. In the third week of July Charles's 10,000 men (mostly cavalry) were camped at Jedlese. The lack of infantry, vital for holding ground, limited what he could properly achieve. He did, however, carry out some limited but useful actions. In Klosterneuburg, an Augustinian monastic stronghold some six miles upstream from Vienna on the south bank of the Danube and on the edge of the Wienerwald, the monks and townspeople had determined to resist the Ottomans; to assist them, Charles moved a few troops across the river. The dragoons under Colonel Johann Heinrich von Dünwald were sent further upstream to Krems, and were soon reporting success in thwarting the Tatar raiders. As the month of July went by, Charles decided to withdraw infantry from Győr and by 24 July he had received reinforcements in the form of two infantry regiments, the Baden and Grana. Lubomirski, who was at Olmütz with his six companies of Polish horse, was also summoned to the camp at Jedlese. As July came to a close, Charles sent envoys to John III Sobieski King of Poland, John George III of Saxony in Dresden and Leopold in Passau (the Bavarian capital), all pleading for the instant departure of troops so that Vienna could be relieved without delay.

During July, Imre Thököly rode through the Slovakian hills with the aim of threatening Pressburg. Moving ahead of him, agents summoned the larger towns to promise obedience to the Magyar 'king', and by 19 July the burgomaster of Pressburg was in negotiation with these agents, isolating the Imperial garrison in the citadel. Thököly appeared on 27 July. Using an Ottoman-built bridge over the Danube at Pressburg, Thököly planned to cross the river and head straight for Charles Sixte of Lorraine's encampment opposite Vienna. This, he reasoned, would compel Charles to withdraw once again to the west. Charles, however, reacted in a positive manner and was waiting for him. He sent Major Ogilvie with the Baden Regiment to try to stiffen the garrison at Pressburg; the regiment was cut to pieces and had to return. Undeterred, Charles marched to Marchegg on the Morava, where he learnt that Thököly was marching with 25,000 Magyars and Ottoman Turks to Pressburg. With the full responsibility of command resting on his shoulder, Lorraine determined to cross the Morava and attack Thököly, risking the dreadful consequences should defeat be inflicted on him. The Morava was forded during the late afternoon of 28 July. With the Austrian dragoons leading, his force rode through the night along the valley that led up to the crest of the hills overlooking Pressburg. As dawn broke, the dragoons under Louis of Baden were deployed in the vineyards closest to one of the suburbs and the citadel, unsure whether Thököly had been warned about their presence. Charles of Lorraine came forward and saw that the two enemy camps were some distance apart. Ogilvie was again dispatched, this time with 200 foot to strengthen the garrison, which he succeeded in doing. At first light Baden summoned the town to surrender, threatening to open fire on it; the burgomaster speedily gave way to him, though not before three hundred of Thököly's soldiers had managed to escape.

Klosterneuburg. Two Ottoman attacks on this monastery were unsuccessful.



## The Tatar raids into Austria



The battle that followed on 30 July was a confused affair. Baden and others convinced Charles of Lorraine to attack the main body of Magyars and Ottoman Turks outside the town. Initially the Austrian dragoons were spread out on the broad slope between the hills and the Danube, as the heavy cavalry deployed into their battle positions. The dragoons then moved to the flanks, with Lubomirski and his Poles on the right flank nearest the river, and Tetwin with the remaining Poles and the Veterani and Pálffy regiments on the left. Once the attack commenced it became clear that the Magyars did not have the morale to withstand the Austrians and that the Ottoman Turks alone were not strong enough; their situation was not helped by the fact that Thököly and many other Magyars had already withdrawn earlier in the morning. The battle turned into a running chase as only the lighter Austrian horse, particularly the Poles, pursued the retiring Magyars and Ottoman Turks. Charles lost control for several hours as Lubomirski, Tetwin and their men and the Veterani and Pálffy regiments dashed across the plain, returning at dusk loaded with spoil. Charles had the bridge over the Danube dismantled and the supplies of *matériel* and livestock taken into the castle. Pressburg once again professed loyalty to Leopold; the threat of Thököly had been promptly and successfully dealt with. By 31 July Charles was back in Marchegg, and on 3 August was at Enzersdorf, where he successfully dislodged the Turks from the bridgehead they had put up having crossed to the north bank of the Danube. Between 6 and 20 August Charles was at Angern, from where he was able to deal with Thököly's arsonists who were wantonly burning villages and ravaging the countryside. This was a random and merciless form of warfare, resulting in a high loss of civilian life and great destruction of property.



Whilst all this was going on, gathering news on the state of Vienna was of prime importance. After two weeks at Marchegg and Angern, it became clear to Charles and his staff that after four weeks the siege of Vienna was making only slow progress and that reinforcements were slowly being organized. These would come in the form of 9,000 Bavarians and 8,000 Franconians, who were likely to be in striking distance of Vienna by mid August; 10,000 Saxons, to arrive by the end of August; and (hopefully) 20,000 Poles, who would not arrive before the first week of September. It was a simple calculation for Charles; the longer he waited, the greater the relieving force would be – but also the more likely a successful Ottoman assault on the Imperial capital.

## THE SECOND MONTH OF THE SIEGE

After the great explosion on 12 August, von Starhemberg busied the garrison and civilian labourers in strengthening the defences. They concentrated on the Palace Bastion and, to its rear, the remnants of a medieval wall known as the 'Spaniard', which consisted of a tower fronted by a ditch. The Spaniard was prepared and the bastion received a palisaded retrenchment and obstacle pit. The defenders also erected log traverses in the space between the retrenchment and the ditch of the Spaniard. Nothing could be done to reinforce the Löbel Bastion, due to the flaws in its design.

Whilst the defenders toiled away, the Ottomans were busy preparing and placing another mine under the counterscarp opposite the Palace Bastion. It was exploded on 14 August, forcing the Austrians to give up the last part of the covered way. On 15 August the attackers entrenched themselves in the ditch in front of the Löbel Bastion, and threw up a crescent-shaped barricade as a means of defence, which held 200 men. The Austrians launched two separate sallies, which managed to burn and wreck the Ottoman works; luck favoured them, as the flames, fanned by the wind, ignited the counterscarp and destroyed wool bags, gabions and lumber. The Janissaries who were manning this sector did not return to the area for 12 days, a crucial delay in the eventual salvation of the city.

However, the Ottomans continued to press ever closer to their goal. On 18 August a much less effective sortie was launched; it was bloodily repulsed with the death of Colonel Dupigny, whose dragoons were now dismounted, but once again the Ottomans were slow to profit from their success. On 19 August a raiding party was sent out through the Carinthian Gate and returned with vital supplies in the form of 32 oxen. Over the next few days more mines succeeded in churning up the moat in the area of the Palace Bastion and the ravelin. The fighting also carried on underground, and on one occasion the miners of both sides encountered each another beneath the ravelin, whilst on the surface the defenders used any means possible to repel Ottoman attacks, particularly boiled water and pitch, kept ready in heated kettles.

As August was coming to a close, both the defenders and attackers were close to exhaustion; this did not stop von Starhemberg from planning a major sortie on 25 August. After a planning conference on the Löbel Bastion, the sortie was launched at four o'clock in the afternoon. The Ottomans were forced to give ground as far as their trenches and one of their batteries. However, the Austrians were unable to 'spike' the Ottoman guns and were



soon facing a counterattack as the Ottomans gathered in strength and threw them back. Some 200 soldiers were lost in the sortie. Two days later von Starhemberg ordered another sortie and formidable assault parties were launched against the Ottomans in the moat in front of the Palace Bastion. A good deal of damage was done to the Ottoman siege lines, but this did not stop the gradual movement of the Ottomans towards the main bastions, and slowly more and more of the ravelin fell into their hands. As they closed in on the ravelin, they started to concentrate their attacks against the two bastions. On 2 September a large mine brought down part of the Palace Bastion wall; the defenders, under Captain Heistermann of von Starhemberg's regiment, suffered heavy casualties when the enemy set fire to the timbers around them – although they managed to hold on until the next day. At this point, von Starhemberg realized that he had to give up the ravelin.

The next attack came during the afternoon of 4 September, when another mine was exploded, catching the defenders by surprise. The mine shook the houses and when the defenders rushed to the Palace Bastion, they saw that a huge hole had been rent to the left of the tip of the bastion. Through a gap 30 feet wide, the Ottoman troops could be seen advancing into the breach, their flags and standards waving in the wind, with cries of 'Allah! Allah! Allah!' as they hurled themselves at the defenders. Now was a desperate moment; individuals worked their muskets feverishly, unleashing volley after

On 6 September 1683, von Starhemberg watches an Ottoman attack being defeated. This was to be one of the last major Ottoman assaults.

volley and then individual fire, as others tried to stop the gap with planks, sacks and ready made chevaux de frise. Reinforcements soon arrived amid a continuous shower of bombs and arrows, as the Ottomans made use of the multitude of tunnels and passages in their works to rush men forward. The struggle lasted two hours, and at the end the defenders had taken upwards of 150 casualties, and the Turks reportedly many more. The exhausted and weary defenders realized that, although Kara Mustafa had failed, they could not hope to hold out indefinitely by their own efforts. The end was in sight, for both sides.

The next point of attack for the Turks was to be the Löbel Bastion. The defences had been prepared: barricades had been set up, and the duties of the guards carefully explained and laid down in detail. On 8 September two mines were exploded; the tip of the bastion and a part of the left-hand wall gave way at once. Immediately, the Ottomans launched into the assault through the withering fire from defenders behind the barricades. The defenders put up a desperate resistance, and after an hour the attackers withdrew. The defences were temporarily repaired, but the Ottoman tactics soon became clear. Having attacked both the Palace and Löbel bastions and severely weakened them, they were now advancing their works across the moat on both sides of the ruined ravelin, their objective being the exposed curtain wall behind. At the same time, work was under way to weaken the two bastions further. Von Starhemberg's weary garrison consisted of no more than 4,000 fit effectives, but he continued to strengthen the defences and even prepared some of the houses behind the Palace and Löbel bastions, making them compact fortresses, and stationing troops there to be ready for immediate action wherever they were needed. Luckily for the defenders, the Turks were unable to keep up the pressure, and during the night of 7/8 September rockets were seen rising into the night sky from the area of the Wienerwald – the first signs of a relieving force. The problem this posed Kara Mustafa was a great one, for he lacked experience in commanding a force caught between a determined garrison and a powerful relieving army.

# THE BATTLE OF KAHLENBERG

## THE MARCH THROUGH THE WIENERWALD

The relieving force heading for Vienna comprised the Poles under John III Sobieski; the Saxon contingent led by John George III of Saxony, heading through the mountains and plains of Bohemia; and the contingents of Louis of Baden, Maximilian Emanuel of Bavaria and the Prince of Waldeck, with the Bavarians and Franconians approaching along the Danube. On 3 September a conference had been held at Stadeldorf, where it was decided that if Leopold did not appear amongst the relieving forces, Sobieski would command the combined forces on the day of battle. At the same conference it was agreed that all were to rendezvous at Tulln on the south bank of the Danube, and cross the river no later than 6/7 September; the new bridges at Tulln were assigned to the troops of Sobieski and Charles of Lorraine, and the bridge at Stein to the Saxons. The concentration of forces, completed on 8 September, took a full three days to achieve, with the Bavarian, Franconian,

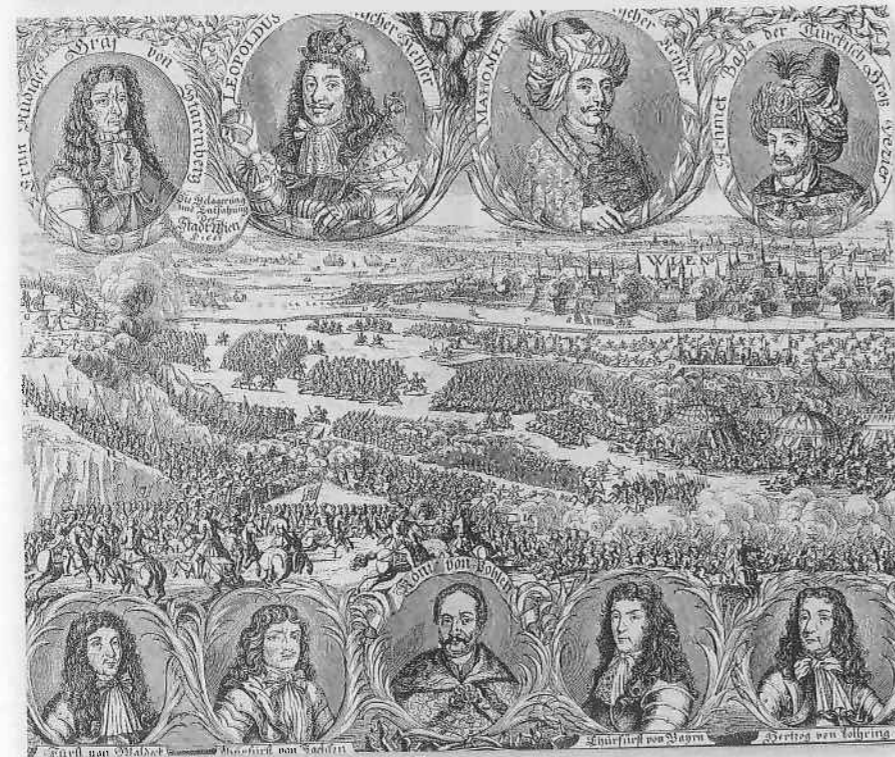


A clash between the Christian relieving army and Ottoman Turks in the Wienerwald before the Battle of Kahlenberg.

A romanticized version of John III Sobieski's meeting with Charles Sixte of Lorraine on the morning of the battle. The friar Marco d'Aviano can be seen behind Sobieski.

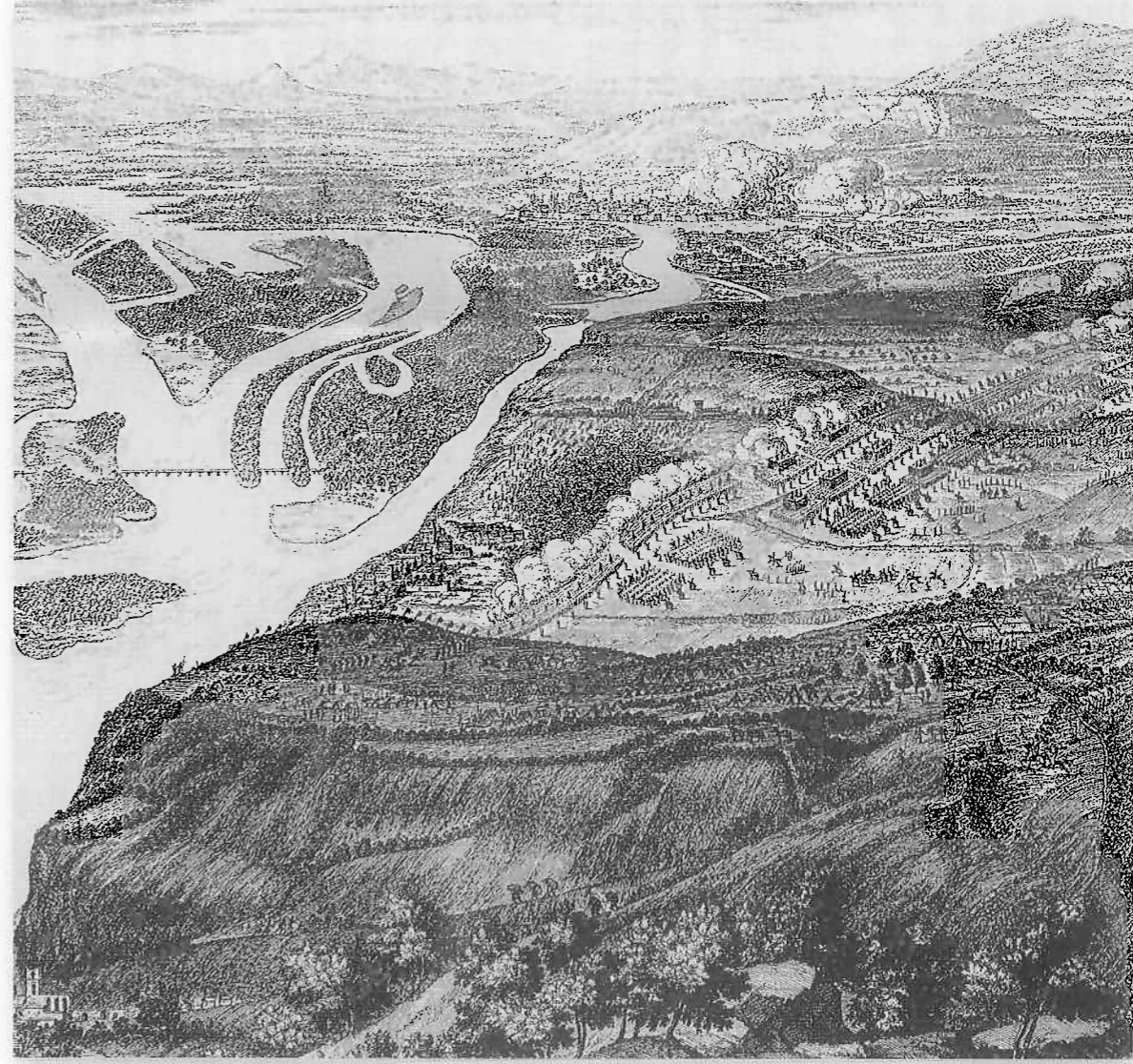


The combatants at the siege of Vienna and the Battle of Kahlenberg.



Saxon and Austrian troops encamped around St Andra and the Poles between Tulbing and Königstetten; on 9 September the whole army moved from the plain around Tulln.

Meanwhile, on 7 September, Colonel Heisler with 600 horse had been dispatched to the crest of the Kahlenberg to light a fire and signal to the garrison of Vienna that a relief was imminent. It should be noted that the whole of the ridge of the Wienerwald above Vienna was referred to as the Kahlenberg in 1683, so the exact position of his signal is not known. In



the camp at Tulln another conference was held to determine the order of battle. After a certain amount of wrangling, it was decided that the Imperial force would consist of a left, centre and right wing, with the Poles on the right wing proper. The Imperial force would be commanded as follows: the left wing of Imperial infantry and cavalry mixed with Saxons, by Charles Sixte of Lorraine, with the Saxons commanded by their Elector; the centre by the Prince of Waldeck, with the Bavarian and Franconian infantry; and on the right the Bavarian, Franconian and Imperial horse were to be commanded by the Duke of Sachsen-Lauenburg.

On 10 September, guided by Imperial huntsmen with local knowledge of the ground, the march through the Wienerwald began. Charles of Lorraine split his force, sending the majority of the cavalry around the northern edge of the Wald close to the Danube. The remainder marched through the woods. Both were to converge on Klosterneuburg. Sobieski set off with his infantry and cavalry to traverse the Wienerwald via Kierling and Kirchbach; the slopes were excessively steep and hauling the artillery carriages and carts proved to

A panoramic view of the Battle of Kahlenberg. However, the battle lines of the relieving army were not nearly as regular as illustrated here.

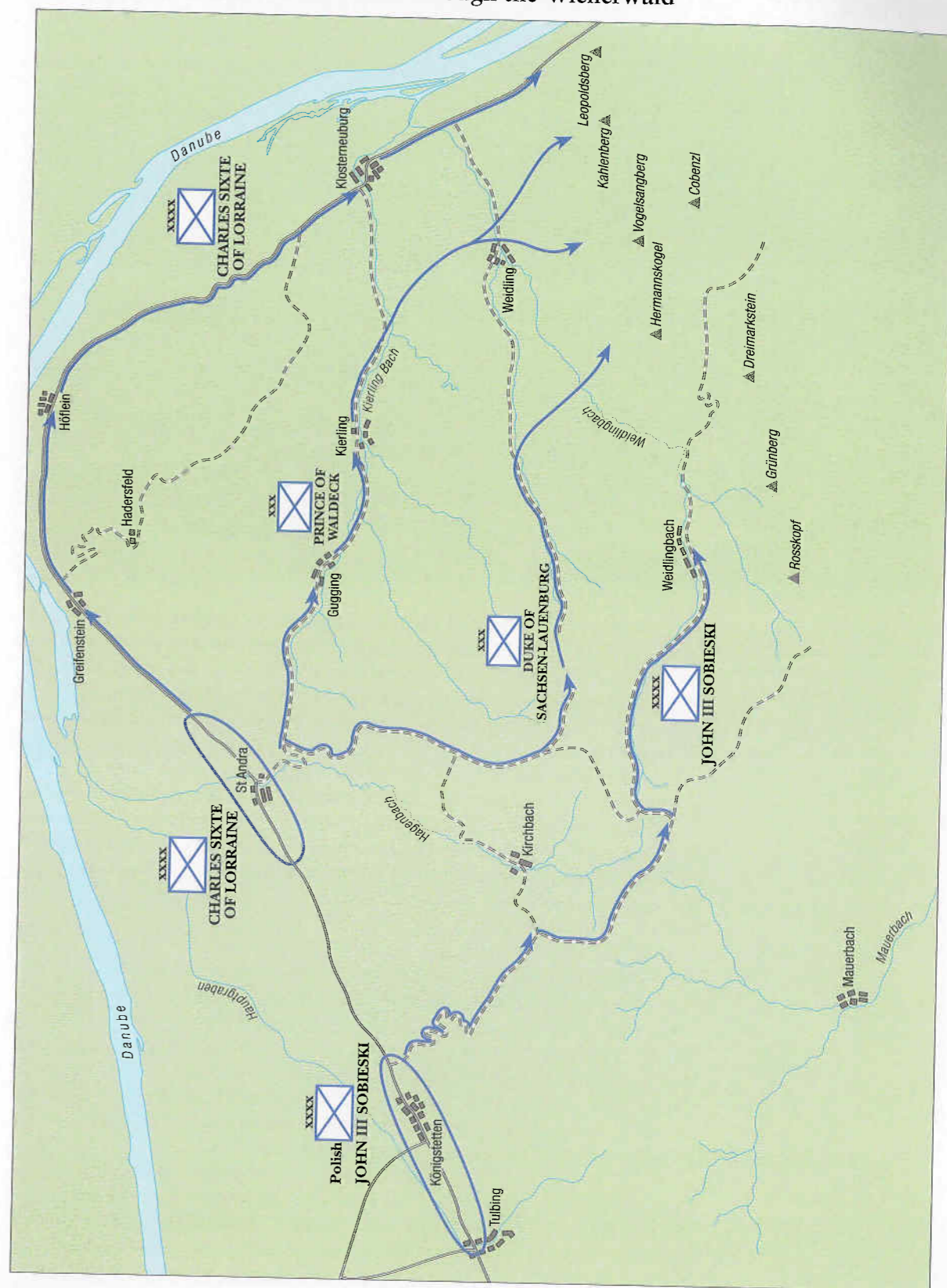
The opposing sides concentrate their forces on Vienna



be particularly arduous. In the centre, Waldeck and Sachsen-Lauenburg split: the infantry marched through the Kierling Wald into the Rötgraben, whilst the horse trotted into the Upper Weidling valley. The Imperial headquarters was set up in the town of Weidling. The day of marching was tiring for all, with many tracks and roads almost unusable and rugged terrain hindering progress, with the result that the artillery lagged behind. By the evening of 10 September they were still short of the ridge overlooking Vienna.

That night, Sobieski rode over and conferred with Charles of Lorraine. As they looked at the great ridge still to be climbed, it was agreed that it could not be attempted at once, and plans were made to do this on 11 September instead. It was determined that the ruined monastery of St Joseph, atop the St Joseph's Berg (now the Kahlenberg height), should be taken, lest Kara Mustafa decided to reinforce the weak observation post he had already established. During the early morning darkness of 11 September, a small force

The march of the Christian forces through the Wienerwald





This engraving demonstrates the confused nature of the battle, and in particular shows the attack of the Poles on the Ottoman camp.

of 60 musketeers clambered up and ejected the Ottomans, who fled back down the ridge. Rockets were fired up into the early morning sky to cheer the garrison in Vienna. By dawn, on a rainy and windy day, the rest of the army was on the march; by eleven in the morning the Imperial troops were on the ridge, where they immediately started to throw up rough entrenchments protected by chevaux de frise. The artillery arrived only during the night; the steep and muddy tracks had required double and sometimes triple teams to allow passage of the guns, and the 12-pdrs had to be left behind altogether. The Poles were some way behind, and only made it into the valley behind the ridge on the afternoon of 11 September. Their ascent of the ridge started in the early evening and some of the infantry and most of the artillery did not arrive in the valley until after dark, only starting their climb on the morning of 12 September.

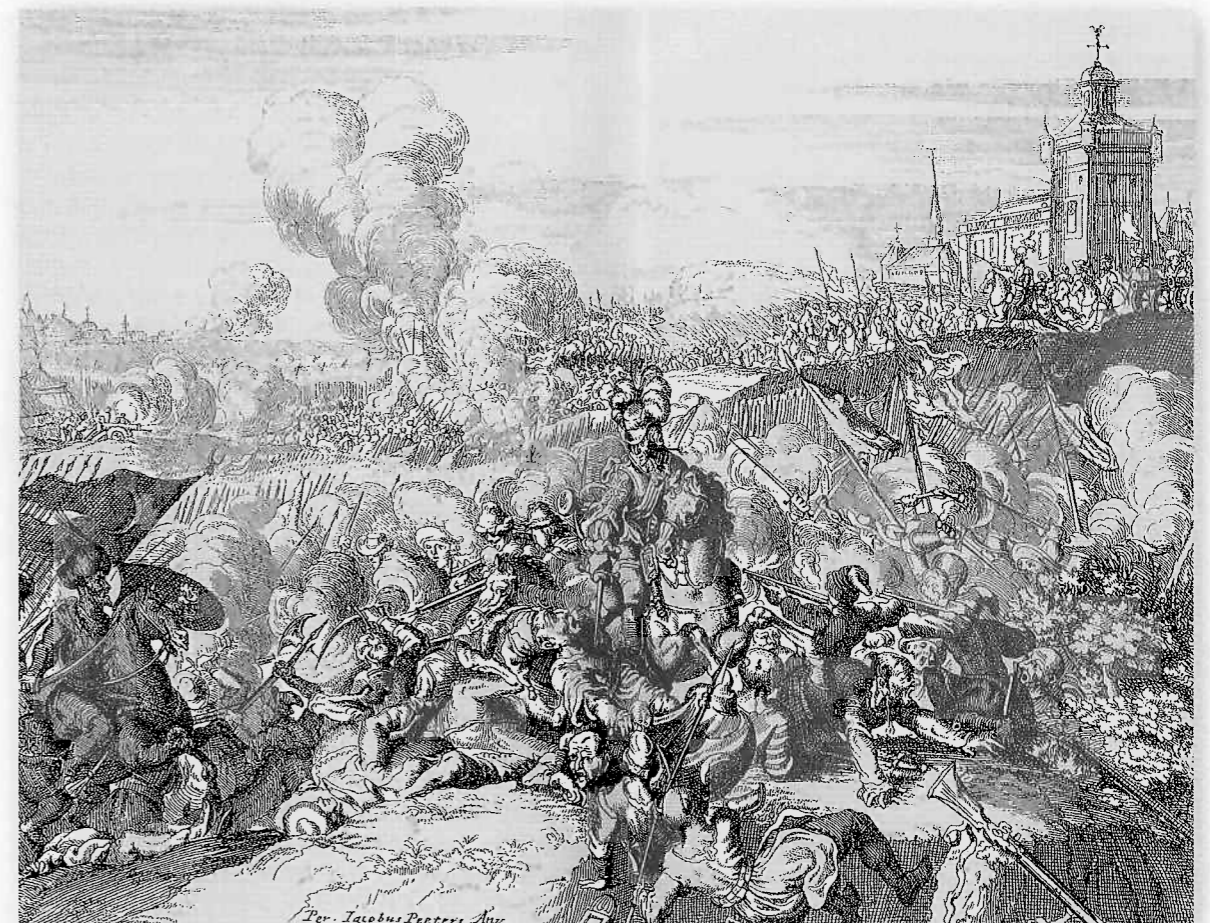
It would be safe to say that the occupation of the ridge overlooking the Ottoman encampment did not progress as smoothly as had been hoped. The view of the ground that greeted the commanders of the relieving army now gave them cause for concern, especially Sobieski; for where they had hoped for the contours to gently slope away towards the enemy camp, they now saw precipices, ravines, densely wooded slopes and further ridges in the foreground, with the more level ground in the distance. The ground was also dissected by countless vineyards, hedgerows and stone walls. As to how the attack would unfold, the decision was left for conference early the next morning, 12 September. In the meantime, they continued to look down on to the vast plain surrounding Vienna, covered with tents and pavilions, innumerable horses, camels and oxen, swarms of Tatars skirting the foot of the Wienerwald, and the belching siege guns pouring a tremendous fire upon the city, distinguishable only by the steeples and tall geysers of fiery flames.

## KARA MUSTAFA'S PREPARATIONS FOR BATTLE

Kara Mustafa had given little or no thought to planning for the Christian leaders gathering together a relieving army and bringing it into the field to face him. Instead, he had concentrated solely on the siege. An Austrian prisoner taken on 4 September gave a detailed (but exaggerated) account of the size and composition of the approaching army of 80,000 foot and 40,000 cavalry. On 8 September another prisoner was taken and gave the news that the Christian army was at Tulln, with 200 cannon. Councils of war were held on 8 and 9 September; some wanted the whole of the Ottoman army to re-align and face the threat from Charles of Lorraine. Kara Mustafa, however, wanted to maintain pressure on the besieged city and counter the new threat. On the morning of 9 September, this second course of action was agreed and dispositions made.

It is difficult to assess properly the size of the force assigned to deal with the Christian army. It is known that some 60 cannon were redeployed from the siege works, along with 6,000 infantry. Approximately 22,000 cavalry were deployed; overall, the Ottoman force numbered between 28,000 and 60,000. A cavalry vanguard of 5,400 under Kara Mehmed of Diyarbekir was moved into a position at the foot of the Kahlenberg behind the ruined village of Nussdorf and the Nussberg. The remaining 17,600 were under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, tasked with resisting the Christian left and right

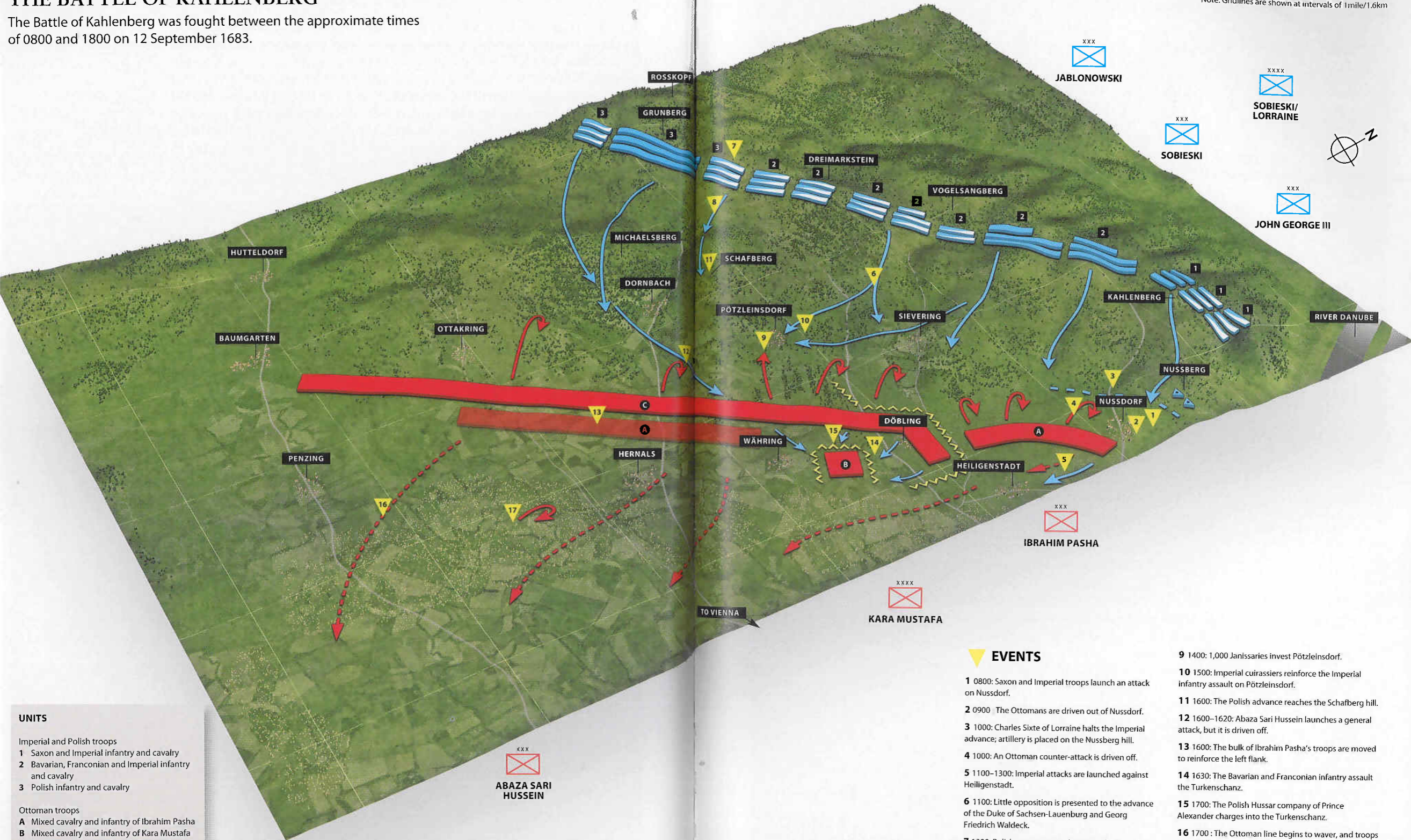
The Franconian and Bavarian Imperial contingents attack the centre of the Ottoman line.



# THE BATTLE OF KAHLENBERG

The Battle of Kahlenberg was fought between the approximate times of 0800 and 1800 on 12 September 1683.

Note: Gridlines are shown at intervals of 1 mile/1.6km



- UNITS**
- Imperial and Polish troops
- 1 Saxon and Imperial infantry and cavalry
  - 2 Bavarian, Franconian and Imperial infantry and cavalry
  - 3 Polish infantry and cavalry
- Ottoman troops
- A Mixed cavalry and infantry of Ibrahim Pasha
  - B Mixed cavalry and infantry of Kara Mustafa
  - C Mixed cavalry and infantry of Abaza Sari Hussein Pasha

## EVENTS

- 1 0800: Saxon and Imperial troops launch an attack on Nussdorf.
- 2 0900 The Ottomans are driven out of Nussdorf.
- 3 1000: Charles Sixte of Lorraine halts the Imperial advance; artillery is placed on the Nussberg hill.
- 4 1000: An Ottoman counter-attack is driven off.
- 5 1100-1300: Imperial attacks are launched against Heiligenstadt.
- 6 1100: Little opposition is presented to the advance of the Duke of Sachsen-Lauenburg and Georg Friedrich Waldeck.
- 7 1300: Polish troops appear between the Dreimarkstein, Grunberg and Rosskopf hills.
- 8 1400: The Polish advance reaches the Michaelsberg hill.
- 9 1400: 1,000 Janissaries invest Pötzleinsdorf.
- 10 1500: Imperial cuirassiers reinforce the Imperial infantry assault on Pötzleinsdorf.
- 11 1600: The Polish advance reaches the Schafberg hill.
- 12 1600-1620: Abaza Sari Hussein launches a general attack, but it is driven off.
- 13 1600: The bulk of Ibrahim Pasha's troops are moved to reinforce the left flank.
- 14 1630: The Bavarian and Franconian infantry assault the Turkenschanz.
- 15 1700: The Polish Hussar company of Prince Alexander charges into the Turkenschanz.
- 16 1700: The Ottoman line begins to waver, and troops start to flee the battlefield.
- 17 1800: Kara Mustafa leads one final attack with his personal escort, but to no avail.



The capture of an Ottoman standard at the end of the Battle of Kahlenberg. Initially it was thought to be the Muslim Holy Banner, though it is more likely to have been Kara Mustafa's personal banner.

wing. The 6,000 infantry under the command of Abaza Sari Hussein were responsible for defending the ground between St Ulrich and the bank of the River Wien. On the right wing, defensive positions were fortified and entrenched where possible, in particular Nussdorf. On the Ottoman left a number of points were prepared with ditches and covered by cannon, but otherwise they intended to make use of the hedgerows and the walls and buildings of the many vineyards. Kara Mustafa was to remain in his headquarters, which was also considered the inner core of the Ottoman defence, surrounded by his private Janissary corps and his red-coated Albanian bodyguard. During 10 and 11 September the preparations were intensified, and at the same time fresh intelligence indicated that the main attack would be from the area of the Kahlenberg; to counter this threat, Kara Mustafa decided to redeploy the majority of the Pasha of Buda's force to behind the vanguard as dismounted cavalry. This was to have the effect of weakening the defence of the Ottoman centre. The two armies then settled down for the night to await events of the following morning.

## THE BATTLE OF KAHLENBERG

The Imperial army was busy long before dawn. The heavier artillery started to arrive and General Leslie was busy constructing a battery position (redoubt) on the forward slope of the Leopoldsberg. At about five a.m., the

Ottomans in the area of Nussdorf were spotted preparing to mount an attack from the Nussberg, just north of Nussdorf, with the object of interrupting the construction of the redoubt. Thanks to an observant officer, the Austrian commander the Count of Fontaine was alerted to the threat, and formed up his two battalions. They were soon reinforced by the Duke of Croy and extra battalions, and a united front was presented. The fight that followed was short, sharp and bloody, but convinced the Ottomans to retire.

Whilst the action in the area of the Nussberg was under way, Sobieski was making his way over to Charles of Lorraine for the council arranged the day before. Charles, in the meantime, had started to set the whole left wing in motion, in response to the advance en masse of the Ottoman right from its encampment. Not long afterwards he sent orders for Sachsen-Lauenburg and Waldeck to advance from their stations on the thickly wooded Dreimarkstein, Hermannskogel, Cobenzl and Vogelsangberg slopes. Charles of Lorraine also rode to meet Sobieski and told him of his decisions. Sobieski expressed his agreement and went to attend mass given by Marco d'Aviano in the burnt-out Church of the Camaldolites. The sun soon rose to herald a bright sunny Sunday 12 September, shining on the descending Christians. One Ottoman observer noted that it was 'as if a flood of black pitch was flowing down the hill, smothering and incinerating everything that lay in its way.'

The battle that unfolded consisted of a series of muddled local encounters and Kara Mustafa, Sobieski and Charles of Lorraine struggled to direct their forces in a coherent way that conformed to a tactical plan for the battle. The ground at times looked even, but in reality was split with deep ravines and

The mêlée in the Ottoman encampment towards the end of the battle.









### THE CHARGE OF THE POLISH WINGED HUSSARS (pp. 74–75)

The Christian army assembled to relieve Vienna arrived in the vicinity on 11 September 1683. The Battle of Kahlenberg was fought the following day. As the sun rose on a bright sunny morning, the dauntless array of the Christian army became apparent to the Ottomans. At about five in the afternoon, John III Sobieski ordered the Hussar company of Prince Alexander Sobieski to charge into the centre of the Ottoman lines. A *towarzysz* (1) was a companion of the *rotmistrz* (company commander); he was a nobleman, not always wealthy and raised a *pożet* (retinue). The lance (2) was an eastern lance or *kopia*; the length could be anything between 13ft and 19ft, but it is likely that most were 17ft long. It was constructed of cheap wood, normally pine, and was kept as light as possible. The *kopia* was in effect a one-use, throwaway weapon system. The lance pennants (3) were uniform in each company and reflected the colours of the company flag; they were a mixture of colours but mostly followed a heraldic combination. Some pennants were up to 12ft long, but the ones used on campaign were probably 3–4ft in length. Ottoman cavalry

made far more use of armour than the Mamluks of Egypt, and the style of dress did not change much over time. The *sipahi* (4) were an elite arm of the Ottoman cavalry. They were lightly equipped, yet the quality of their weapons indicated the size of a *sipahi's* fief. The *sipahi* were given the place of honour on the battlefield, by being on the right flank; if the war was in Europe the Rumelia *Sipahi* had the honour, if in Asia the Anatolia *Sipahi*. Pistols (5) were only accepted by the *sipahi* after 1600 and were not considered to be chivalrous weapons. The Levant infantrymen (6) were recruited in Anatolia and were Muslims armed with muskets, swords and later pistols. Their uniform, however, had a distinct Balkan provenance and was similar to that worn by Bosnian frontiersmen in the 18th century. Their cap (7) was unusual in that the brim was cut into four flaps. The matchlock musket (8) had a greater bore than those in the west and was longer and heavier. Although the flintlock musket was entering service in European armies, it could be unreliable in dusty conditions and so the Ottoman infantryman retained his matchlock for as long as possible. (Peter Dennis)

vineyards, surrounded by high walls. The fighting was from ridge to valley and from valley to ridge, with troops continually moving in and out of dead ground; horse and foot became intermingled and, in the confusion of the battle, units were moved across the front on the initiative of battalion commanders to support others when in difficulties. This was mission command at its most fluid.

The battle first developed on the Christian left in the area of the Nussberg and Nussdorf, where the fight for control of the Nussberg consumed more and more troops as both sides committed ever greater numbers to the struggle. General Heister's Saxon and Imperial dragoons, having rounded the shoulder of the Leopoldsberg, waited for further orders in Kahlenbergdorfl. By eight a.m. the Austrian artillery had managed to get onto the Nussberg and was able to bring more accurate fire down upon the Ottomans in Nussdorf. At ten a.m. Charles of Lorraine halted movement on his immediate left, and the troops had a much needed rest and reorganization.

It was now that the Ottomans launched an attack against the whole of the Imperial line. They were repulsed and thrown back onto the flat ground in the area of Schreiberbach and the Nesselbach, where they rallied and made one more effort. The Imperial foot began to waver and the cuirassiers were thrown in to bolster the line; in the end, with the Saxons launching an attack on Ibrahim Pasha's left flank, the Ottomans were pushed back. The Austrian Grana Regiment had reached the outskirts of Nussdorf, only to be thrown back by an Ottoman counterattack. The Ottomans defended the ruined village with great energy, utilizing every bit of cover the walls and gardens afforded, but their predicament was a perilous one. Charles of Lorraine now organized an overpowering attack. He called forward General Heister's dragoons and made them dismount; then together with Hermann von Baden's infantry, they forced an entry into the village. After a fierce fight, reinforced by John George III leading his Saxons against the enemy's left flank, the Ottomans were finally driven out to the south. Charles of Lorraine now pressed his forces onwards into Heiligenstadt, and in so doing tied up an ever greater proportion of Ibrahim's force. With more and more Christian troops following up, Heiligenstadt was occupied without great difficulty.

Further inland, Sachsen-Lauenburg and Waldeck with the Bavarians and Franconians were fighting numerous isolated engagements with the Turks. As the Christian infantry advanced they extended their lines, bringing up their cannon. The lines of infantrymen disappeared and reappeared as they moved in and out of the gullies. The cannon were pushed on, firing at intervals, up to 50 paces ahead at a time; the infantry would then catch up, halt and fire a volley to clear the way. This tactic was repeated time and again and the Ottomans, defeated in detail and short of manpower, were forced back. By midday Charles of Lorraine had managed to establish a front line from Heiligenstadt on the left to Grinzing and on to Sievering.

It was about this time, between midday and one o'clock that the focus of the battle began to change. For various reasons, most notably the terrain that hindered their deployment, the Poles had taken longer to get into their starting positions, but by one o'clock were ready. The ground was problematic for the Poles, and it would not be until they reached the 'plain' before Vienna that Sobieski would be able to make best use of his greatest asset – the cavalry. Abaza Sari Hussein, leading his troops from the front, resisted the Polish attack as best he could, but the inexorable advance of pike-armed infantry, musketeers and the fluttering feathers of the famed Hussars continued. To



The confused nature of the battle is beautifully illustrated in this picture. In the foreground, John III Sobieski is portrayed in a heroic pose. In the centre of the picture Maximilian II Emanuel can be seen just behind some of his Bavarian cavalry. (akg-images, artist unknown)

support the attack, Katski's artillery fired overhead from elevations behind the Poles, helping to clear the way with caseshot. By two o'clock the Polish line had reached the Michaelsberg, and a great cheer rose from the Imperial troops on the left as the Polish left wing became visible.

All was not quite perfect, though, for between 1,000 and 1,500 Janissaries had infiltrated the vineyards around Pötzleinsdorf. The infantry sent to dislodge them by Sachsen-Lauenburg was having a hard time, and it was not until three o'clock, when cuirassier reinforcements arrived, that the Janissaries were driven out. The Polish advance then continued. Over the next hour the Schafberg was seized by a costly assault; Jablonowski (on the right) captured the Heuberg, then, in the area of Mariabrunn, fended off the only attack made by the Tatars. Having reached the more level ground beyond the Schafberg at around four o'clock, the Poles were able to deploy in a more orderly fashion.

Realizing that he was in danger of being outflanked on his left, Kara Mustafa now brought from his right the bulk of Ibrahim Pasha's force. Whilst this bolstered his line, it did not make manoeuvre for the Ottomans any easier, as their new battle line was so thick that not all the troops could take part in the ensuing struggle. The first action was when Sobieski, as was the custom, sent forward a company of 150 Crown Hussars from Sieniawski's wing to reconnoitre the ground. The small force crashed through the first Ottoman line only to be engulfed by the second, and after a while it was forced to retreat, having lost nearly a third of its men. The next action, probably carried out before the new Polish battle line had formed, was when Sieniawski sent out another company of Polish Winged Hussars to deal with a supposedly imminent Ottoman attack. The assault was conducted with dash but with too few men, and further hussars, dragoons and light cavalry had to be committed. It appears that the Ottomans had managed to draw the Poles into

a trap, by pretending to retreat and pulling them into the heart of the Ottoman mass on the left wing. The local Ottoman commander now thought the time was right for a counterattack and threw forces against the Polish right, where the escaping cavalry had taken shelter behind four German infantry battalions, attached to the Polish army and deployed on the Heuberg. Once again, Sachsen-Lauenburg sent troops to rescue the situation on his right flank. Two dragoon regiments – those of Schultz and Styrum – supported by Rabata's cuirassiers struck the right flank of the Ottoman attack, and after a hard-fought *mêlée* the Ottomans fell back. With the threat over, Jablonowski completed his task of gaining control of the Gallitzenberg on the far right, and with all the heights in Austrian hands Sobieski was able to establish an unbroken front.

Charles of Lorraine had not been idle on the left wing. He had been aware for some time that his men were desperate to get back into the action and ordered them to attack the Ottoman camp, which was probably the strongest part of the Ottoman line, on the high ground behind the Krottenbach and Döblingerbach. The time to strike was just right, for the Ottomans had been weakened by the dispatch of most of Ibrahim Pasha's force to the left wing; those that remained formed line of battle and sited their cannon against the Saxon and Austrian infantry. Charles gave the order to advance, and the musketry volleys issuing from the advancing squares had a devastating effect on the already shaken Ottoman front. At the same time the Bavarians and Franconians started their assault on the Turkenschanz, which had the Holy Banner flying above it.

Further to the right, Sobieski, heartened by the energy of the Imperial forces on his left, had also seen that a decision needed to be made before dark; sensing that the Ottomans were close to beaten, the line of the Polish Royal Army began to move forwards. With the cry of the day's password '*Jezus Maria ratuj*' ringing in the air, the Imperial infantry paused to gaze in awe as the Polish Winged Hussars, resplendent in shining armour and with tiger and leopard skins hanging from their shoulders, lowered the tips of their lances and advanced in Sobieski's favoured chequerboard formation, their 'wings' fluttering on their backs. At their head was Sobieski himself, with his glittering staff not far behind. The great mass of cavalry was only able to pick up speed slowly, and still had to traverse several vineyards before it could cross swords with the Ottoman horse, which had advanced into the open ground in the Baumgarten-Ottakring-Weinhaus area. Once clear, however, Sobieski and the leading units clashed with the Ottoman outriders, and still moving forwards, he ordered Prince Alexander's Company of Hussars to charge towards the middle of the camp. With the company's standard flying in the breeze, it charged into the Ottoman lines; there was an audible shattering of lances as they struck home. Without immediate support there were many casualties among the Hussars, but the Ottomans recoiled from the shock of the assault. With their resolve shaken by the desertion of Ibrahim Pasha and the steady advance of the Imperial forces on their right, the Ottomans retreated back onto their left wing. One more counterattack was launched by the Ottomans against Jablonowski, in a desperate attempt to stem the Polish advance. This was parried with consummate ease by the Hetman, who sealed victory for the relieving force by pressing on into the middle of the Ottoman encampment. It signalled the end for the Muslim front, which disintegrated and fled the battlefield in a disorderly mob, carrying those behind towards the River Wien and safety.

Whilst his left and right flanks were collapsing, Kara Mustafa in the Ottoman centre saw that the flag of the Prophet (the Holy Banner) was in danger, and gathering about him his retinue intervened personally. The risk of being cut off and annihilated, though, meant that most of those around him dashed back towards the main camp in the hope of saving their lives and their property. Having rescued the banner, Kara Mustafa and his closest followers withdrew to his pavilion. Realizing his adventure was at an end, Kara Mustafa sent out three orders: the first was that those in the trenches, who had continued to bombard Vienna throughout the day, should retire; the second was that all equipment should be destroyed; and the third was that all captives should be executed. Luckily for the latter, it was too late for the third order to be carried out effectively. When Jablonowski's force reached the executioner's tent, Kara Mustafa led his entourage in a final desperate attack, lance in hand. His pages and bodyguard all fell, and he himself was only prevailed upon to leave with the remonstrance that his death would mean the destruction of the army. At about six p.m., picking up his personal treasure and the Holy Banner, he fled through the rear exit of his pavilion and joined his fleeing army. The siege of Vienna was over.

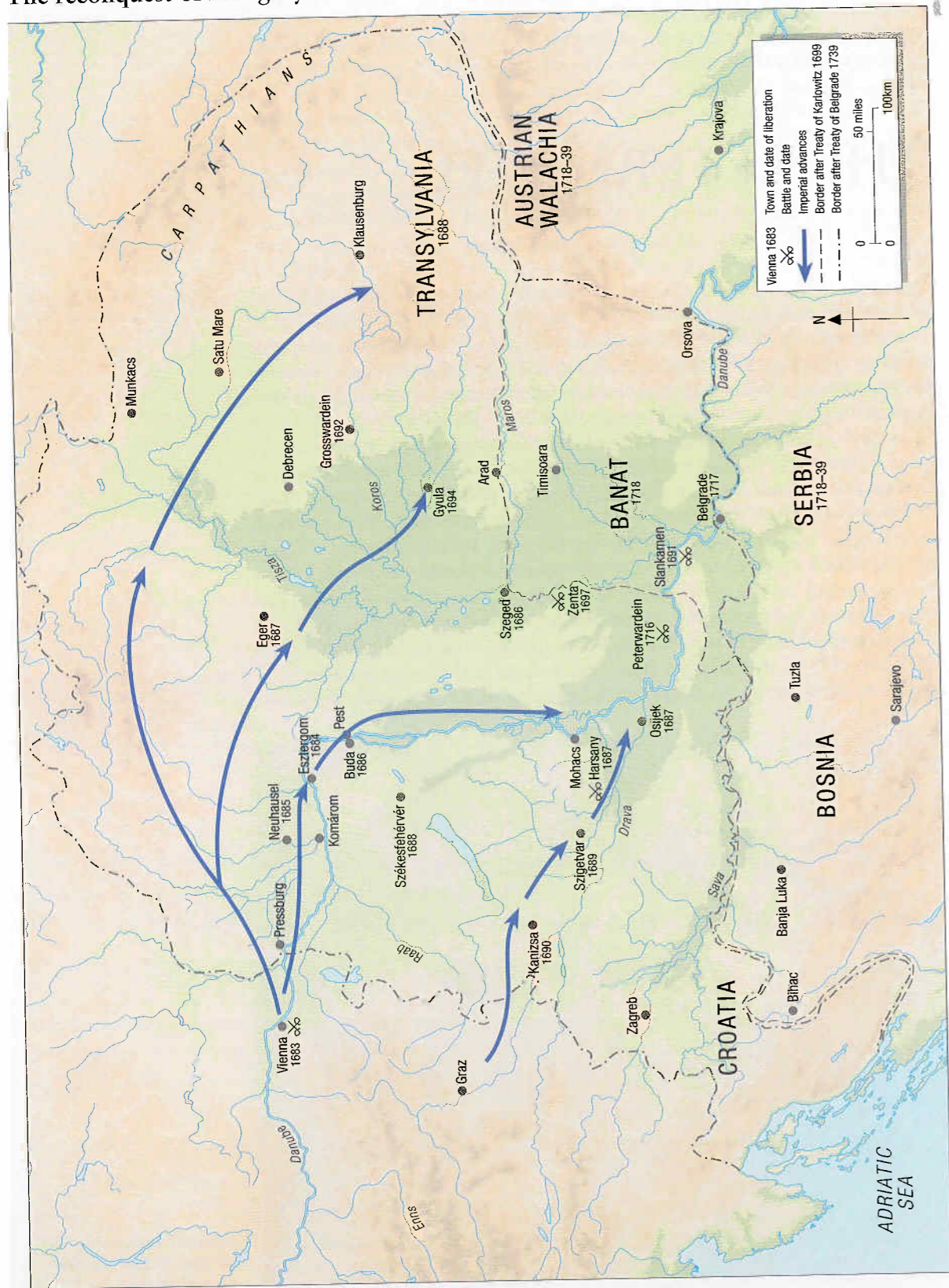
## THE AFTERMATH

Tensions among allies often rise after a successful campaign, and it was to be no different after the relief of Vienna. The following day, Monday 13 September, Sobieski and a number of German commanders and princes inspected the remains of the Ottoman siege lines. They then entered Vienna to attend a banquet hosted by von Starhemberg, where proud boasts echoed around the hall: given friendship between them, they would drive the Ottomans deep into Hungary by the end of the year. Next followed a mass in St Stephen's where the Viennese crowds thronged around the hero Sobieski. However, by entering Vienna before the Emperor Leopold, he had severely put the latter's nose out of joint. Leopold and his followers believed that the honour should have been his before any other prince. Sobieski, however, had many enemies in Poland, and with a flair for self-publicity he was not going to let a moment like this pass him by. Besides, had not his gallant Poles carried the brunt of the Ottoman final attack and arrived in their encampment first? As he wrote home to his queen on the evening of 13 September from one



Emperor Leopold I arrives at the scene of the great battle on 14 September.

The reconquest of Hungary



**ABOVE**  
The Ottoman troops can be seen in the foreground in the marshy banks of the River Hron, in this depiction of the Battle of Parkany. (akg-images/Martin le Jeune)



**LEFT**  
The Imperial encampments around Esztergom (Gran) during the siege. (akg-images/Martin le Jeune)



Leopold I and Sobieski meet at Schwechat to the east of Vienna on 14 September. Leopold expressed his gratitude for the role Sobieski played in the relief of Vienna, and Sobieski in turn praised the Habsburg soldiers.

of Kara Mustafa's finest pavilions: 'the Grand Vizier's ostrich is dead, his parakeet flown away... here are treasures galore, rich furnishings and captured standards.' To Pope Innocent XI, he wrote that same evening: 'We came, we saw, and God conquered.'

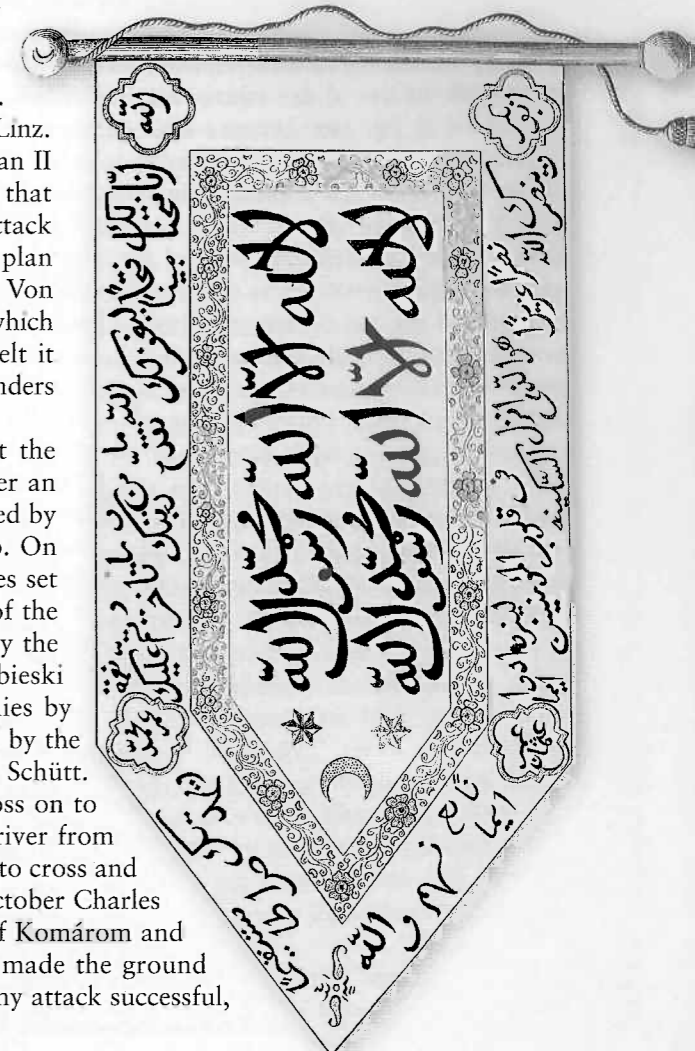
Charles Sixte of Lorraine was not at the banquet given by von Starhemberg because of a difference of opinion with Sobieski. Charles had wanted the speediest pursuit possible of the Ottomans, but Sobieski had declared this to be out of the question as his army had marched the furthest

the day before, was exhausted and needed to rest. Charles pressed home his argument, and it was agreed that the army would move in the course of the afternoon. Charles spent his time making preparations, but again Sobieski refused to move his army that day. Tuesday 14 September saw Leopold arrive at Vienna and Charles was required to receive and escort him, repeating the ceremonial inspections, banquets and thanksgivings. Meanwhile, Sobieski was outside the city protesting that his advance was held up by the unwillingness of his allies to depart. Later that day the tension was relieved slightly when Leopold and Sobieski met at Schwechat, where the Polish troops were camped. Their meeting passed off reasonably, and Leopold inspected the Polish troops.

The next problem to beset Charles of Lorraine was the desire for some of his German allies to depart home. The first to leave, very abruptly, was Elector John George III of Saxony. On 15 September his troops left the allies' camp and began their long march home. It is likely that he felt his troops were being excluded from any credit due, despite their fine performance in the battle. The next to go was Waldeck. He wanted to call a halt to any further campaigning against the Ottomans, as in his view the defence of the empire's land in the west required attention, particularly as Louis XIV's troops were marching across Hainault and threatened the Rhineland. He also pointed out that his Franconian troops could not advance further without the consent of the Franconian princes. Waldeck therefore took his contingent back to Linz. Further discontent manifested itself: Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, let it be known that he wanted an independent command to attack Neuhäusel. Charles was dismayed at this plan and threatened to resign if it was adopted. Von Starhemberg was promoted to field marshal, which upset the Duke of Sachsen-Lauenburg who felt it an affront to his own status, and other commanders expressed their discontent too.

The news from Győr and Komárom that the Ottoman army was in disarray looked to offer an opportunity too good to miss, and it was agreed by the confederates that they must finish the job. On 17 September, with the Poles leading, the allies set off on the march, keeping to the right bank of the Danube. The countryside had been ravaged by the Ottomans and Charles of Lorraine and Sobieski agreed that their first task was to find supplies by quartering on ground not previously occupied by the enemy – essentially below Pressburg on the Schütt. Serious delays occurred before they could cross on to the Schütt, for the boats had to come down river from Tulln. Finally, on 23 September they managed to cross and the boats moved down to Komárom. On 2 October Charles and Sobieski conferred at Vasvár, just north of Komárom and decided that the persistent wet weather had made the ground around Neuhäusel too waterlogged to make any attack successful, so the advance continued towards Párkány.

Kara Mustafa's banner, captured during the battle, was sent to Pope Innocent XI as a war trophy.





Pope Innocent XI (1611–89). From the moment of his accession to the head of the Catholic church in 1676, he was a firm believer that the priority of Christendom during the late 17th century was dealing with the Ottoman threat to Europe.

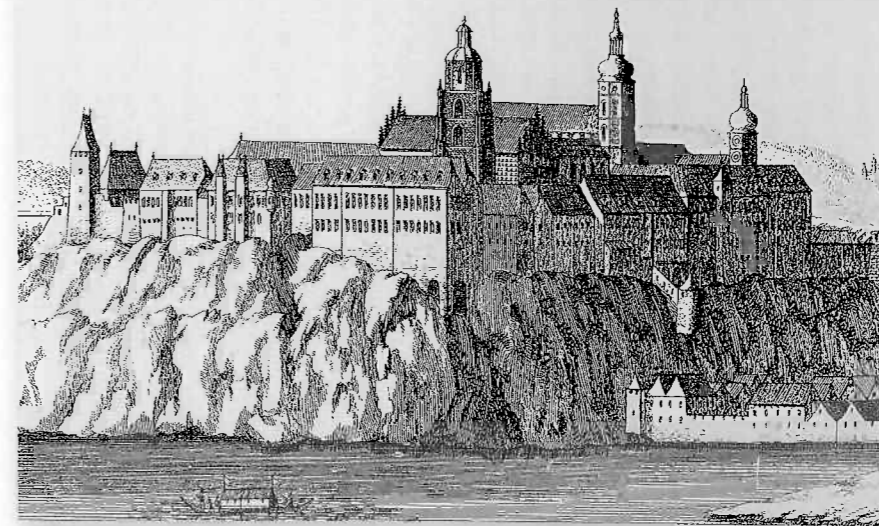
In the meantime Kara Mustafa had reached the outskirts of Győr on 14 September, preceded by some of his troops, most of whom had left the field of battle before receiving orders to do so. The disintegration of his army continued, with fighting between those who wanted to continue their flight and others loyal to their commander. The revolt was crushed in a few days. Kara Mustafa looked around for scapegoats for the defeat, which he blamed on treachery: retribution was to be had. The first to lose his head in the camp outside Győr was Ibrahim Pasha of Buda, followed by other senior commanders. Kara Mustafa then composed an eloquent dispatch of apology of what he had done and why, and sent it to the sultan in Belgrade. He then set about trying to reorganize and energize his scattered command and moved on to Buda.

## THE BATTLE OF PÁRKÁNY

On 6 October the Poles were close to Párkány, the German cavalry were further back, while the infantry under von Starhemberg were still on the Schütt. Charles of Lorraine and Sobieski had agreed that the next day should be one of rest, but for some reason Sobieski changed his mind and with 5,000 cavalry attacked the Ottomans under Kara Mehmed Pasha of Diyarbekir in Párkány. The whole affair was handled badly by the Poles; the Ottomans made excellent use of the uneven ground, and as reinforcements came across the bridge from Esztergom they were thrown into the fray. Throughout the fight, Sobieski and his other commanders were in grave danger of being captured, and just managed to scamper back the eight miles in total disorder towards their foot and artillery. Further disaster was averted by the timely intervention of the Imperial cavalry. The Poles lost nearly 1,000 men and their mood was one of shame and rage.

The next day, 8 October, the infantry under von Starhemberg arrived. The forces facing each other at Párkány were now approximately 16,700 Imperial troops and 8,000–10,000 Poles against Kara Mehmed Pasha's (at most) 8,700 men. Sobieski had a small rebellion on his hands, with the anti-Sobieski faction wanting to move into winter quarters or go home, while others wanted to delay any further advance until the Bavarians had caught up. Sobieski, however, wanted to make amends for his earlier lack of judgement and to continue the advance. Charles of Lorraine pointed out that the Ottoman forces opposing them were small, and was able to get the dissenters to agree to their king's view. It was decided, however, that the Imperial troops would take the lead and that Charles of Lorraine was in command.

When Kara Mustafa received the trophies of the first action at Párkány, together with the request for reinforcements from Kara Mehmed Pasha, he clearly saw an opportunity to make amends for earlier mistakes and ordered a major part of the Ottoman reserve, 8,000 elite cavalry, to make for Párkány. Imre Thököly and the Tatars were also urged to move to Párkány, but held back just outside artillery range. The Ottoman reinforcements arrived on the night of 8 October and the next morning the Ottoman army of 16,700 arrayed itself in line of battle, with the left anchored on Párkány and the right on the higher wooded ground, from where Thököly was expected to appear. Apart from 1,200 Janissaries stationed in the outskirts of Párkány, the remainder of the force was mounted. The sole means of escape for the Ottomans was the pontoon bridge across the Danube, but, emboldened by

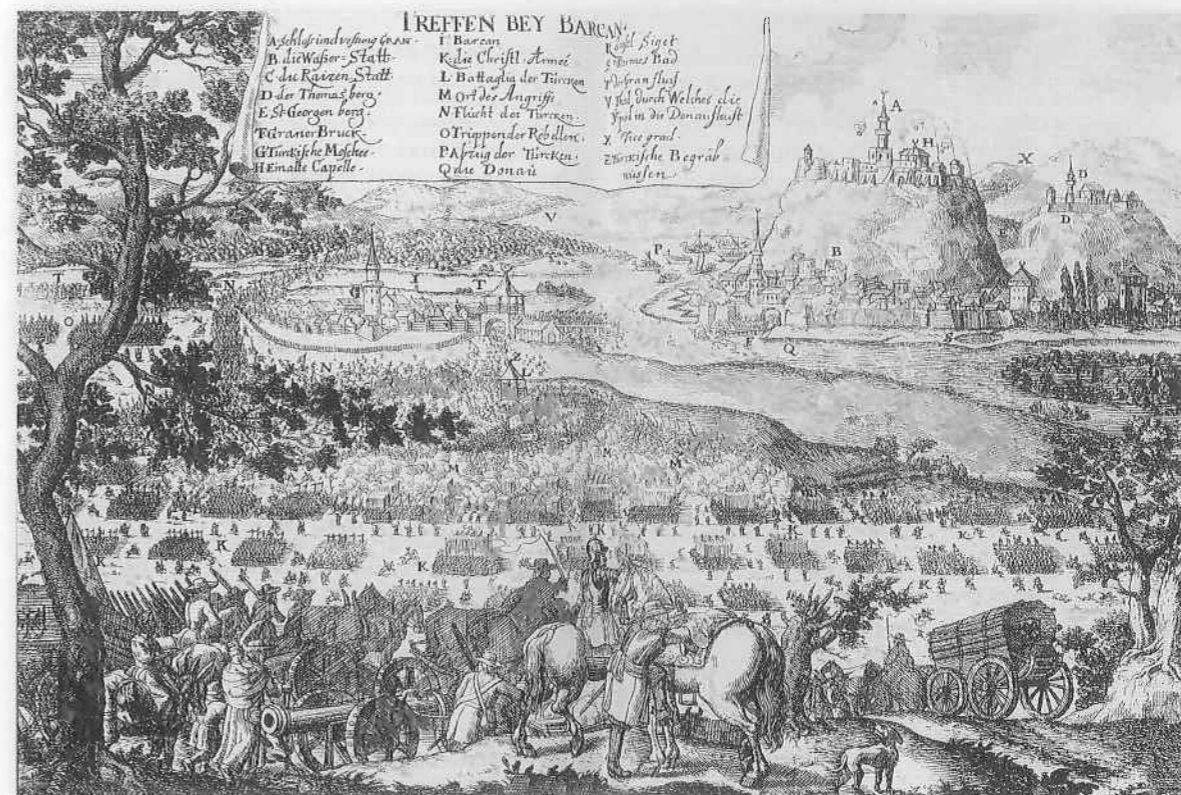


The monastery at Melk, where Leopold awaited events and news on the day of the Battle of Kahlenberg.

the previous action, Kara Mehmed believed he had the beating of the Imperial army. The latter formed up in three lines with von Starhemberg in the centre with his 7,600 foot soldiers. On the right was Ludwig Wilhelm of Baden (Türkenlouis) with 4,500 cavalry and on the left von Dünewald with the remaining 4,500 Imperial cavalry. The Poles were split between the two wings, Sobieski on the right and Jablonowski on the left.

Considering attack to be the best means of defence, the outnumbered Ottomans dashed out of their positions and attacked the Christian line. The

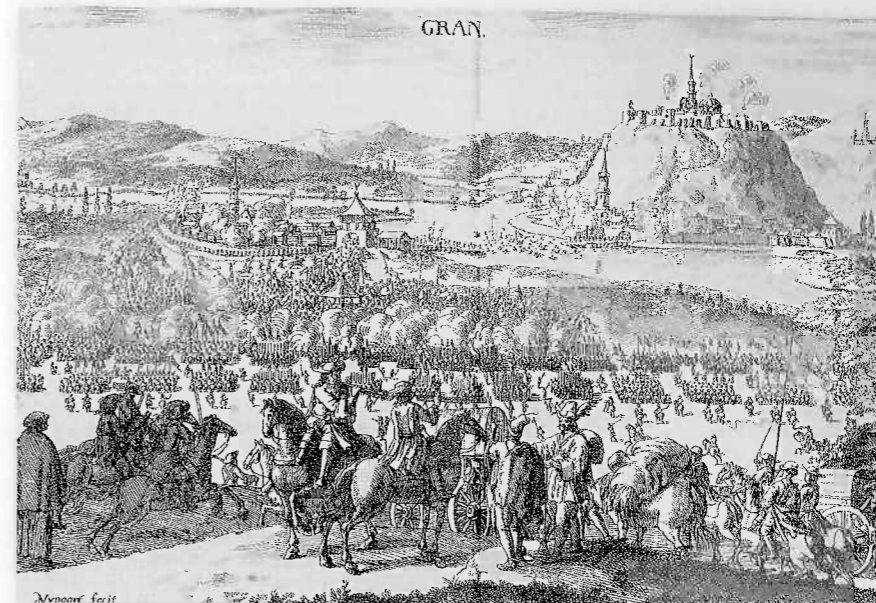
The Battle of Párkány. After a rash attack on 7 October by John III Sobieski which was easily defeated by the Turks, Charles Sixte of Lorraine inflicted a crushing victory with his Imperial troops at the second battle on 9 October.



the defeat of the Ottomans at the Battle of Párkány. The collapse of the bridge can be seen in the background at the point marked 'C'.



crisis for the Imperial left wing came when 2,000 *toprakli* cavalry split and charged towards Jablonowski. His infantry, protected by a *chevaux de frise* and artillery, repelled the first charge with the aid of the Hussars, but Jablonowski called for support and soon Charles of Lorraine sent Austrian dragoons and cuirassiers to his aid, and the attackers reeled back in disorder. The Ottoman centre also swung to its right to try its luck against the Poles, but avoiding von Dünewald's cavalry. This in turn exposed their flank, and Charles of Lorraine took the opportunity to attack. This was the beginning of the end for the Ottomans. The combined Austro-Polish cavalry pushed them back to the walls of Párkány and into the marshy banks of the River Hron, where great carnage was done. As this was unfolding the corps of von Baden, von Starhemberg and Sobieski delivered their own blows, which smashed into the Ottoman line and made it crumple; only the Janissaries in the gardens of Párkány put up any further resistance. The Imperial artillery had been brought up and was firing at the fugitives as they streamed across the pontoon bridge; it soon gave way under their weight. Thousands were marooned on the wrong side of the Danube and the Austrians brought up a further five cannon. What followed was carnage; some Ottomans jostled to try to scramble onto the ruptured bridge and were raked by canister shot and musketry fire, while others, stripped naked in a vain attempt to swim the river, plunged into the swirling waters either astride horses or clinging to pommels. Most were drowned or shot, and soon the Danube and its banks were awash with corpses, to the extent that a few Ottomans managed to use them as means of getting across the river. The Austrians had granted quarter wherever possible when asked for and yet it is estimated that Ottoman casualties were in the region of 9,000 killed and 1,500 captured. Kara Mehmed Pasha and only 800–900 men had managed to cross before the bridge collapsed, with a further 2,000 crossing the river by other means. The Battle of Párkány was a great strategic victory. The Christian army moved down the river to Esztergom, as Kara Mustafa left Buda for Belgrade to explain face to face with the sultan the events. However, Mehmed IV had already departed Belgrade, a move that probably sealed the grand vizier's fate.



Joined by 1,200 Bavarians and 1,200 Brandenburgers, Charles Sixte of Lorraine besieged Esztergom (Gran). The Ottoman garrison had little stomach for the fight and surrendered the city.

The Imperial pontoons were in place at Esztergom on 19 October and at the same time a contingent of 1,200 Brandenburgers arrived, as did Maximilian II Emanuel with 1,200 Bavarian horse. On 22 October the siege began. The Ottoman garrison, however, had little stomach for the fight and surrendered with full honours of war. On hearing this, Kara Mustafa ordered the execution of many of the senior commanders who had been engaged at Esztergom. When the sultan's messengers arrived in Belgrade from Adrianople with his decision that a new government be formed, a plan was swiftly made by Kara Mustafa's commanders. Afterwards the Aga of the Janissaries and the sultan's messengers presented themselves to Kara Mustafa, who was requested to hand over his seals office and then received the executioner's cord. The day was 25 December, the Christian festival of Christmas.

The success of the Vienna campaign focused Leopold's attention on his eastern front and what has become known as the Great Turkish War continued with successes at Buda (1686), Harsány (1687), Slankamen (1691) and Zenta (1697), and with setbacks too, until the Treaty of Karlowitz was signed in 1699. However, the struggle against the Ottomans would continue into the 18th century, but they would never threaten the Austrian capital again.

# THE BATTLEFIELDS TODAY

In the intervening years since the siege of Vienna, the city has expanded to meet the needs of each new generation. Little remains of where the Ottoman encampment was pitched, the siege lines, the old city walls, and the site of the great battle of Kahlenberg. In 1683 the city covered approximately 1/20th of the ground that the present city does, and in terms of population in 1700 Vienna had 110,000 inhabitants compared to 1,660,534 (2,165,357 metro area) counted in the 2005 census. The city walls survived Napoleon ordering them to be destroyed in 1809, only to be pulled down in 1857 to make way for a ring road, which today comprises the Schottenring, Dr Karl Renner Ring, Burgring, Opernring, Kärtner Ring, Schuberting, Parkring, Stubenring and, facing the modern Donaukanal, the Franz Joseph Kai. Sadly, there remains little to give an impression of what was once there.

Inside the modern ring road effectively lies the old city of 1683, referred to as baroque Vienna. Many buildings are new and old palaces enlarged, but there are still some gems to visit, among them the Hofburg. This was the seat of Austrian power for six centuries and in the buildings today the architectural development over this time can be seen. The oldest part is the Schweizerhof, which in its original form consisted of a fortress with a tower in each corner. The Schweizertor leads through into a courtyard with the Leopoldschinertrakt on the left, built by Emperor Leopold I. The Amalienburg, built in 1575 for Emperor Maximilian's son Rudolf, and the Reichskanzleitrakt sit opposite Leopold's palace. Napoleon did raze part of the city wall, and some of the space left around the Hofburg was later transformed by the Habsburgs into a landscaped garden opened to the public in 1918.

St Stephen's Cathedral (Stephansdom) dominates the skyline in the centre of old Vienna. A church has stood on the site for over 800 years. One of the towers was not completed, as, according to legend, Hans Puchsbaum, the master builder, broke a pact with the devil by uttering a holy name, and the devil then caused him to fall to his death. The Johannes Capistrano, on the exterior north-eastern wall of the choir, is a pulpit built to celebrate the victory over the Ottomans at Belgrade in 1456. It is worth visiting, as, although the baroque statue was erected in the 18th century, it depicts a saint trampling on a defeated Ottoman invader. Although he was a minor player at the victory over the Ottomans in 1683, Prince Eugene's Winter Palace is worth visiting. It has a lovely rococo fountain in the courtyard, and Prince Eugene became the most famous of all the Habsburg commanders in their struggles against Louis XIV and the Ottoman Turks.



## ABOVE

A view over the city of Vienna. St Stephen's Cathedral can be seen on the right, with the Kahlenberg height behind (akg-images/Hervé Champollion)



## LEFT

A view across the River Danube towards the Kahlenberg height. Although the landscape is much altered today, the vines covering the slopes of the Kahlenberg give an indication of how difficult it was for the Imperial and Polish troops to advance and close with the enemy. (akg-images/ Hervé Champollion)

The Prater Island lay outside the city in 1683, and today has been much built on. It has a lovely Hauptallee, lined with chestnut trees, which stretches for three miles. The home of the Vienna Boy's Choir lies in the Augarten Palace and park. This attractive building is built on the site of the Alte Favorite erected by Leopold I, and the Ottomans marvelled at its beauty – before destroying it. The present building was put up in 1700 and boasts the oldest baroque garden in Vienna.



osterneuburg today.  
kg-images/Hervé  
hampollion)



St Joseph's Church, on the  
Kahlenberg. It was in the  
ruins of this chapel that Marco  
d'Aviano conducted mass for  
John III Sobieski prior to the  
Battle of Kahlenberg.



The Kahlenberg, at 1,585ft (484m), is the highest point of the Wienerwald and provides the visitor with a spectacular view of Vienna. While many of the vineyards have been modernized or are more recent, it is very easy to imagine the difficulty that the relieving army had in traversing the ground as they advanced to meet the Ottomans. On the Kahlenberg is the small church of St Joseph; it is dedicated to John III Sobieski, as it lies on the foundations of the Church of the Camaldolites, where he received mass before setting out against the Ottomans on 12 September 1683. The Wienerwald is much easier to traverse today, but the woods and steepness of the slopes make one realize how difficult it must have been for the Imperial and Polish soldiers to take up their battle positions. Klosterneuburg still stands at the northern end of the Wienerwald overlooking the Danube. It is bigger today than at the time of the siege, but it must have been equally impressive then, for it withstood the Tatar raids. Further afield, the fortified church at Weissenkirchen provides further evidence of the measures taken in past years to protect property and people against the ravages of the Ottoman Turks. Closer to Vienna the Turkenschanz is all that remains of the ground that may once have been the centre of the Ottoman resistance at the Battle of Kahlenberg.

When visiting one of Vienna's many fine bars or cafés, you may wish to reflect on the origins of the croissant and cappuccino. There is a school of thought that the croissant was invented in Vienna, either during the siege of 1683 or the earlier siege of 1529, when, with bread running low, a daily ration was fashioned into a crescent as a reminder of the shortages and that the enemy outside the gates was to blame. After the battle in 1683 the Austrians discovered many bags of coffee in the Ottoman camp and made full use of it; Franciszek Kulczycki opened the first coffee house in the city (and one of the first in Europe). It is also said that the Capuchin friar Marco d'Aviano (beatified in 2003), who played a key role in uniting Christian Europe against the Ottoman threat in 1683, invented the cappuccino by adding milk and honey to sweeten the bitter taste of coffee.

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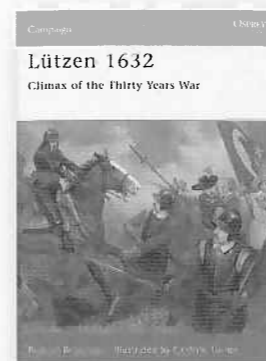
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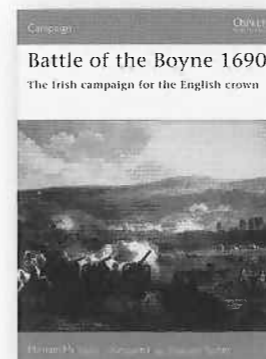
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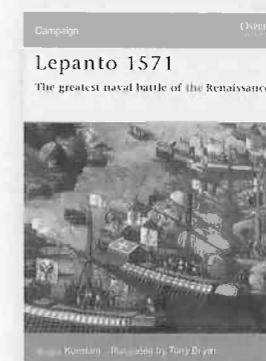
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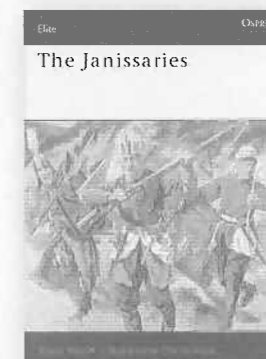
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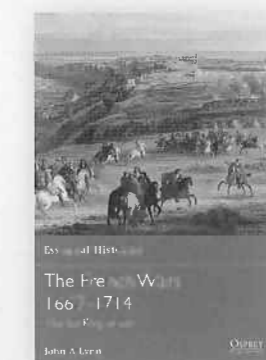
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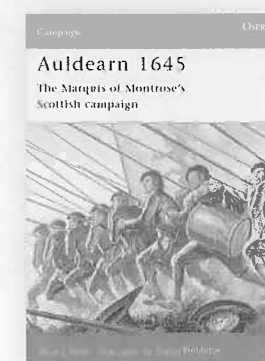
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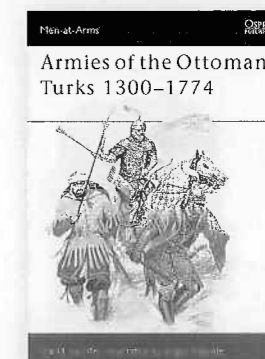
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