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**FROM THE LONG TURKISH WAR (1593-1606)
TO THE LIBERATION OF VIENNA (1683)**

Edited by
Alessandro Boccolini and Ovidiu Cristea



EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: LA RIVISTA

Il Comitato redazionale e scientifico è lieto di presentare al pubblico la rivista scientifica *Eastern European History Review*.

Con un carattere internazionale e interdisciplinare, una cadenza annuale e una fruibilità *open access* la rivista focalizza i propri interessi sulle dinamiche occorse nell'Europa Orientale durante tutta l'età moderna (XIV-XIX). *Eastern European History Review* è espressione del Centro Studi dell'Università della Tuscia CESPoM (Centro Studi sull'età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna) nato nel 1997 per intuizione del Prof. Gaetano Platania, Direttore Emerito della Rivista.

L'iniziativa editoriale che presentiamo nasce dall'evidente mancanza in Italia di una rivista scientifica relativa alla storia dell'Europa centro-orientale in Età Moderna, nonostante la penisola abbia giocato un ruolo fondamentale per la Storia e la Cultura di una parte integrante del continente, a torto considerata come lontana e periferica.

Consapevoli di questo, il Comitato ha posto quale obiettivo primario della *Eastern European History Review* quello di offrire uno spazio di riflessione e di discussione su temi che appartengono alla storia dell'Europa centro-orientale, e insieme alle relazioni - politiche e culturali - che questa vasta area del Vecchio Continente ha avuto con l'occidente d'Europa, e l'Italia in particolare, incoraggiando il dialogo tra studiosi e esperti di settore, e tra differenti approcci della ricerca scientifica.

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EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY REVIEW: THE JOURNAL

The Editorial and Scientific Board are proud delighted to present the *Eastern European History Review* under the aegis of Sette Città Editore.

The *Eastern European History Review* is an international and interdisciplinary annually online and open access peer-reviewed journal about studies on Central and Eastern Europe in the Modern Age (XIV-XIX). The Journal is also the expression of the Study Center CESPoM (Centro Studi sull'età dei Sobieski e della Polonia Moderna – Center Study on the Age of Sobieski and Modern Poland) of the University of Tuscia, born in 1997, from an idea of Prof. Gaetano Platania, today Director Emeritus of this journal.

It publishes articles with significant approaches and original interpretations in all research fields concerning Central and Eastern Europe, with specific attention to the History sciences.

The editorial initiative we present comes from the obvious lack of a journal, in Italy, concerning the history of Central and Eastern Europe during the Modern Age, this despite its fundamental role in the history and culture of that part of the continent, wrongly considered distant and peripheral.

Quite the contrary is true, in fact. Main objective of the journal is to create a space for reflection and discussion on topics pertaining to Central and Eastern Europe, but also relations with Continental Europe, encouraging dialogue between scholars and experts in the field, and between different approaches of scientific research.

The Editorial and Scientific Board

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**"NOTABILI SUCCESSE NEL VIAGGIO DELL'UNGHERIA":
A TESTIMONY ABOUT THE OTTOMAN CAMPAIGN OF 1596**

ABSTRACT: The Ottoman victory at Mezökeresztes, was reflected in a multitude of letters, reports, and prints from the period. Among the testimonies of participants in the events is that of Edward Barton, England's ambassador to Constantinople. Along with the report sent from Belgrade to his superior, Sir Robert Cecil, Barton also directed other letters to friends and collaborators about the unfolding events. An Italian version of one of his reports contains a complete description of the campaign from the moment of departure from Istanbul until the sultan's return. Even if the information contained in the document does not significantly change the perspective on the main events and the outcome of the expedition, the way in which the information is structured, as well as the things that are left unsaid or quickly dismissed, tell us something not only about the author, but also about the stakes involved and the problems posed by "travel accounts".

KEYWORDS: Edward Barton; Battle of Mezökeresztes; Long Turkish War; Mehmed III; Eger.

I libri non sono fatti per crederci, ma per essere sottoposti a indagine.
Di fronte a un libro non dobbiamo chiederci cosa dica, ma cosa vuole dire
Umberto Eco, *Il Nome della Rosa*

Going on a journey implicitly means facing the unexpected. When the voyage involves being an eyewitness to a war, the risks multiply exponentially. The enemy, the weather, sometimes hunger, thirst, or disease can be obstacles that are difficult to avoid. In any case, the experience is an exceptional one, and if the "traveller" finds the time to write down his impressions, then his testimony is an important source for historians. Even if the evidence in question are not without pitfalls, like any historical document, even if we may wonder about the difference between the experience lived and that recorded in writing, and even though many of the things conveyed may seem unclear, doubtful, contradictory, etc., the text of a participant in the events remains an important piece in any attempt to reconstruct the event in question.

This is the case with the source that inspired the following pages. If we are to go by the first words ("Havendo io Oduardo Berton"), it would be an Italian translation of a report by the English ambassador in Constantinople, Edward Barton, covering the entire experience of the Ottoman expedition to Hungary (1596), from the moment of departure to the epilogue. The text does not add significant new data to what is already known. Moreover, some details and the lack of personal insights concerning the war question the authorship of the report¹.

¹ As Paul Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat at War. Edward Barton's Attendance of the Ottoman Campaign in Central Hungary (1596)", *Revue*

In 1596, the departure of English diplomatic representative alongside the Ottoman armies seems to have been planned long before the renewal of military operations. This was not unusual. There were precedents², and the context explains quite well the reasons for Barton's presence in the sultan's camp. Moreover, in 1596, the ambassador was not a mere observer, but seems to have had a diplomatic mission in the opening of peace negotiations between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. As in previous years, in parallel with the war, the two camps were trying to settle a peace, and Barton seems to have played a key role as it was previously in the Polish-Ottoman relations³. This would explain why Thomas Glover, Barton's secretary and author of a detailed report on the experiences of the 1596 campaign, made a point of noting in a marginal note to his text:

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If any think it ill that a Christian Ambassador should accompany the Turke in this warre against Christendom: they may please to understand that his intents were to doe service to the Christians, if occasions were offered for peace: as also he did in deliverie of the Emperor Servants here mentioned⁴.

Roumaine d'Histoire, 28/4 (1989): 429-49 rightly points out, the report sent from Belgrade to Sir Robert Cecil offers "a colourful description of the road and of the places". By comparison, the Italian version is much more succinct and lacks the aforementioned colour. For the ideological stakes of the battle of Mezökeresztes (Haçova) in the Ottoman camp, see Jan Schmidt, "The Egri Campaign of 1596: Military History and the Problem of Sources", in Id., *The Joy of Philology. Studies in Ottoman Literature, History and Orientalism (1500-1923)*, I: *Poetry, Historiography, Biography and Autobiography* (Istanbul-N. Jersey: The Isis Press – Gorgias Press, 2010), 107-21 and, more recently, Ethan Menchinger, "Myth, Miracle, and Political Theology in the Ottoman Empire", *Turcica*, 55 (2024): 71-103.

2 Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 432; Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire. Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (Oxford: University Press, 2015), 353-360, 415 notes that in 1548, the French ambassador, Gabriel de Luetz, Baron d'Aramon, accompanied Suleiman the Magnificent on his campaign against Persia; in 1569 a Polish emissary was invited to join the Turkish-Tatar troops sent against Moscow. Finally, according to the same author, in 1596 Savary de Brèves, the French ambassador, was also invited, but refused due to lack of funds. In fact, if we are to believe the Venetian bailo Marco Venier, the French ambassador should have accompanied the Ottoman fleet. Venier claims that de Brèves agreed to participate on condition that the Porte would bear the expenses. See *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy*, vol. 9: 1592-1603, ed. Horatio F. Brown, IX (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1897) 184, no. 404.

3 Malcolm, *Agents*, 415-29 with a detailed discussion of sources and context.

4 "The Journey of Edward Barton Esquire, her Majesties Ambassador with the Grand Signior, otherwise called the Great Turke, in Constantinople, Sultan Mahumet Chan. Written by Sir Thomas Glover, then Secretary to the Ambassador and since employed in that Honorable Function by his Majesty, to Sultan Achmet", in *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes. Containing a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Land Travels by Englishmen and*

It is difficult to say whether Thomas Glover's explanation was an attempt to pre-empt criticism or a response to rumours already circulating in diplomatic circles in Istanbul. It is a fact that among the Western ambassadors, the Queen Elisabeth I's representative was the only one who took part in the expedition (the Venetian bailo, Marco Venier, wished, in his turn, to accompany the sultan's army, but his efforts were in vain)⁵, which could have been interpreted as a great favour, but also as proof of the ambassador's pro-Ottoman sympathies.

After intense preparations, delayed by the death of Koça Sinan Pasha on 3 April 1596⁶, and, above all, by the efforts of the Mehmed III's mother, Safiye, who tried to persuade her son not to leave Constantinople⁷, the sultan eventually left the capital on June 20, and the English ambassador at the beginning of the following month, July 2/12⁸. The campaign's target does not seem to have been established from the beginning. Most likely, the Ottomans' intention was to take Transylvania out of the fight in order to weaken the Habsburg camp⁹. This is supported by several documents contemporary to the expedition, as well as by the general context. Also,

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Others, vol. 8 (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1905), 304. The intervention in support of the members of the imperial embassy is also mentioned in Barton's letter to Master Sandy, English consul in Aleppo, *ibid.*, 315.

5 This refusal reinforces the idea that Barton's presence had less to do with the prestige of the Queen of England than with the Porte's desire to make peace. Edward Barton had played a key role in mediating the tense relationship with Poland in previous years, and it was hoped that the presence of the English ambassador would have the desired effect in the negotiations with Rudolf II.

6 See Marco Venier's report of June 6, 1596, *Calendar of State Papers*, IX, 217, no. 465, which insists on the detail that Sinan Pasha's death brought some uncertainty regarding Barton's presence in the Ottoman camp.

7 For the power wielded by Safiye Sultan, see Leslie Penn Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 126-27, 238-39; for the sultana's role in delaying preparations in 1596, see the testimony of Bailo Marco Venier (*Calendar of State Papers*, IX, 217, no. 465), which also recounts an anecdote. Safiye allegedly asked one of the sultan's favourites, "a woman of unique beauty", to beg him not to go to war. Mehmed III became enraged and allegedly killed the favorite with his own hands. From that moment on, no one dared to bring up the subject in front of the padishah. For other anecdotes about the sultana mother and criticism of her role in the empire's politics, see Nicolo de Lucha's testimony analyzed by Ovidiu Cristea, "Unfinished Stories. A 'travelogue' by Nicolo di Lucha in the Ottoman Empire (1597)" (forthcoming).

8 Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 432.

9 The text of Mehmed bin Mehmed's chronicle supports a similar interpretation. See *Cronici turcești privind țările române*, vol. I, eds. Mihail Guboglu, and Mustafa Mehmet (Bucharest: EAR, 1966), 423-24. In contrast, a letter of John Sanderson to Sir Robert Cecil seems to support the opposite view see *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant, 1584-1602*, ed. Sir William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931), 156; For Barton's peace mission, cf. Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 434; Tamás Kruppa, "Pasquale Bruti tolmács kalandos prágai követsége 1596-ban", *Lymbus*, 3 (2005): 27-47; Malcolm, *Agents*, 415-29.

the dispatch of Barton's dragoman, Pasquale Dabri (Brutti), to Prague together with members of the imperial embassy (released as a sign of goodwill) would suggest that the sultan tried to avoid further straining relations with the Habsburgs. It was only the conquest of Hatvan by Archduke Maximilian that caused Mehmed III's army to focus his attack against Habsburgs' territories.

AN ITALIAN REPORT OF EDWARD BARTON?

A detailed description of first part of the campaign has already been published and analysed by Paul Cernovodeanu based on a report sent by Eduard Barton to Sir Robert Cecil on 8/18 August 1596¹⁰. However, an Italian version kept in the Vatican archives, allegedly written by Barton, includes a full description of the expedition from the departure of the sultan until the return to Constantinople¹¹.

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One may wonder how the report ended up in the Holy See's archives, who translated the document and whether the text really belongs to Barton. The first two questions seem to be related. In a previous case, a letter sent by Barton to the Prince of Transylvania, Sigismund Báthory, on 14 May 1595 was translated on 22 June 1595 *de verbo ad verbum* in Prague; due to the fact that the document was preserved among the *Dispacci Germania* one may assume that the translation was ordered by the Venetian ambassador in Prague at that time, Tommaso Contarini¹². The Venetian bailo, in Constantinople, Marco Venier, was also able to obtain documents of other Christian representatives at the Ottoman court¹³. Nevertheless, in both Contarini and Venier cases, it will be difficult to explain how the documents arrived in the Vatican archives; at most, one may consider them an unauthorised copy of a Venetian translation.

A more plausible way could be through Ragusan mediation. It is well known the role of the Republic in the exchange of information between the Western world and the Ottoman Empire¹⁴. Also, in 1596, Barton mentions in the report to Robert Cecil that:

we be arrived in Sophia, where findinge merchantts of Ragusa and by them putt in hope to have our let<ers> conueyed as well to Constant<ino>ple as by Ragusa to Venice¹⁵.

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- 10 Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 429-449.
 - 11 Mss. Urb. Lat. 836 accessible on the website https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Urb.lat.836_f.443r-450r. [last accessed 28.08. 2025].
 - 12 The document is published by Tamás Kruppa, "Okmányok és iratok a tizenöt éves háború időszakából (1594–1597)", *Levéltári közlemények*, 76/2 (2005): 57-8.
 - 13 *Calendar of State Papers*, no. 392, 180 (on January 1595 he attached to his report the correspondence between the Grand Vizier, Sinan pasha and the Polish Chancellor, Jan Zamoyski). In the same report he includes a letter of the French ambassador, Savary de Brèves and another one of Edward Barton.
 - 14 See Ivan Dujcev, *Avvisi di Ragusa. Documenti sull'Impero Turco nel sec. XVII e sulla Guerra di Candia* (Roma: Pont. Inst. Orientalium, 1935); Malcolm, *Agents*, 91-7.
 - 15 Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 446

However, this solution faces a major obstacle: the account was written after the sultan and the English ambassador had returned to Istanbul. Thus, even if Barton sent from Sofia dispatches home through the Ragusans, they could only contain information about the beginning of the campaign. Among Barton's reports sent in 1596 there is no one which describes the full campaign so that the Italian text appears to be different. Under these circumstances, one may wonder, whether the British ambassador is indeed the author of the document. The beginning of the text ("Havendo io Oduardo Berton Ambasciatore d'Inghilterra in Constantinopoli appresso Sultan Mehemet hauto comandamento [...]"/ I, Eduard Barton, ambassador of England in Constantinople to Sultan Mehmed, have received orders[...])¹⁶ along with the epilogue ("io l'accompagniai fino all'ultimo giorno et havendogli publicam[en]te baciato le mani, me ne partij per Casa mia in Galata"/ I accompanied him until the last day, and after kissing his hands, I left for my home in Galata) seems to cast away any doubts. The author of the text wanted to convince his readers that the testimony belongs to Queen Elizabeth I's representative in Istanbul. However, there are some errors difficult to explain which cast doubt on Barton's authorship. A similar conclusion would also be supported by the absence of certain details that are nevertheless present in reports written by Barton during the expedition addressed either to Robert Cecil, to his collaborator John Sanderson, or to the English consul in Aleppo. The Italian text has also little in common with a text written by Thomas Glover – Edward Barton's secretary – which contained a detailed account of the expedition from the departure until the conquest of Eger (12 October 1596)¹⁷.

The Italian document preserved in the Vatican archive begins with a brief description of the size of the ambassador's suite. The sultan provided Barton with 36 camels and four carriages ("carozze") for the staff of the Habsburgs' embassy ("corte de Ambasciator Cesareo"), who were to be taken into Barton's custody. The details seem to be accurate as the number of camels is confirmed by other sources¹⁸. The detail regarding the number of camels also has an anecdotal aspect. A report by the Venetian bailo, Marco Venier, notes that, at the time when the Ottomans were also considering the presence of the French ambassador on the expedition, he was to receive 36 camels as well¹⁹. In this way, the Ottomans tried to avoid creating problems of precedence and to show their equal appreciation for both kingdoms.

The Italian report mentions that the English ambassador set off on July 20, twenty days after the departure of the sultan and his army. However, the date does not seem to correspond. Mehmed III's departure for Belgrade seems to have taken place on

16 See the document in the Appendix.

17 Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 304-15.

18 The English abstract of Marco Venier's report in *Calendar of State Papers*, vol. 9, no. 465, 217; see also Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 305, mentions the same number and adds that for every six camels, there were two caretakers.

19 Unfortunately, the Venetian reports from 1595-1596 written by Marco Venier are no longer available; a summary in English can be found in *Calendar of State Papers*, IX, 217, no. 465.

June 20²⁰, while Barton's took place on July 2, according to Glover's notes²¹. Since the probability that the English secretary was mistaken is quite low, it could be assumed that the mistake in the Italian version was either a translation error or a *lapsus calami* by the author of the text. The time interval between the departure of sultan and that of the ambassador seems also to be incorrect. If we accept the dates of June 20 and July 2, respectively, then we can deduce that Barton set out in pursuit of Mehmed III 12 days later, not 20 as the Italian text claims. Moreover, in one of his letters, the English ambassador hoped to catch up with Mehmed III before Belgrade²².

The first place mentioned by the Italian text is Selymbria (*Cellebria*)²³, the testimony drastically summarizing the information from Barton's and Glover's texts. The towns of Adrianople, Philippopolis, Sofia, Niš, and Belgrade are briefly mentioned with few details. The report mentions the time it took to cover the distances and short descriptions of the cities resumed usually to general remarks. Thus, Selymbria is described as an "ancient and famous city", Adrianople as "a famous city", Philippopolis as "ancient" (the only detail mentioned concerns were some gardens on the islands of the Maritsa River), while Sofia and Niš are described as *ruined*. This is in stark contrast to Barton's report to Robert Cecil or Thomas Glover's account. These are much more detailed and offer a different picture of the places visited. The report to Sir Robert Cecil says that Philippopolis "was worthy the view" and that the region was fertile, although, due to Ottoman tyranny, it was "desolate and almost all uninhabited"²⁴. Even more different is the description of Sofia. Instead of the ruin, the city is described as a very populous one with active trade ("more populous and merchant like than any other towne")²⁵ and much appreciated hot baths. Like any commercial city, Sofia was also an active centre of news; on the way, the ambassador had learned that the Tatars had defeated the prince of Transylvania, but in Sofia, the Ragusans knew the opposite: it was the Transylvanians who had won a great victory, and the khan's brother had been seriously wounded and had escaped with great difficulty²⁶. Later, in his report to Robert Cecil, Barton returned with more details.

20 This date is provided by two publications by Bernardino Beccari v. Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documents relating to the history of the Romanians* III/2 (1576-1600) (Bucharest: Soccec, 1888) doc. 539, 501-03(501) and doc. 541, 505-06; cf. Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 432 and n. 16, who also compares with the Ottoman chronicles.

21 Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 305; we can deduce that the date in the Italian text is erroneous from the fact that a letter from Barton to Sanderson tells us that the ambassador arrived in Adrianople on July 10. See Foster, *The Travels of John Sanderson*, 150.

22 Foster, *The Travels of John Sanderson*, 150

23 Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 305 adds the detail that they arrived at 11 a.m. Glover's text mentions in detail, at each stop, the provisions received by the ambassador from the local qadis.

24 Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 446; Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 307.

25 Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 446.

26 Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 446.

The Transylvanian Prince, Sigismund Báthory, besieged Timișoara and, despite the fact that his artillery had damaged the fortifications, he retreated when he learned that the sultan had sent two viziers and the Tatars to support the besieged. The Tatars, believing that the prince had retreated out of fear, set off in pursuit, but were defeated and "the prince of Tatars was grievously wounded, barely escaping"²⁷.

All these details are missing from the Italian report, which mentions Prince Sigismund only once, when it refers to the junction with Archduke Maximilian's troops 15 miles away from Eger ("15 miglia lontano da Agria verso maestro").

At Belgrade, the Ottoman camp resembled a real city. Barton joined the Ottoman encampment and set up his 12 tents. The city is briefly described, with a special note on the fortifications. The text emphasizes the preparations of the Ottomans, who were building bridges, and the imminent arrival of the artillery that had been transported on the Danube. It is curious that there is no mention of the exceptional favour that the sultan showed to the English ambassador. In addition to the members of the Habsburg embassy released in Istanbul, Mehmed III ordered the release of six other subjects of the emperor imprisoned in Buda²⁸.

In Belgrade, the doubts about the Ottomans' target seemed to be dispelled. The idea of a campaign against Transylvania was abandoned in favour of saving Hatvan and confronting the Habsburg armies. Initially, the sultan tried to save the city besieged by the imperials by sending Giaffer Pasha and Cigalazade Sinan Pasha along with the Tatars in support, but the reinforcements arrived too late. The city had been lost, the fortifications destroyed, and the Ottoman garrison massacred. This last detail was important in the subsequent course of the campaign.

After learning of the fall of Hatvan, the Ottomans headed for Eger, where they allegedly arrived on September 18²⁹. The reasons for this choice are not explained in the report, but according to the chronicler Mehmed bin Mehmed, Eger was the "lock and key" to the conquest of Vienna³⁰.

Once they reached the walls of the fortress, the Turks fired all their cannons and arquebuses for three quarters of an hour to frighten those under siege³¹. The next

27 Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 447.

28 We learn these details from Barton's letter to Sanderson sent from Belgrade on August 8, 1596. See Foster, *The Travels of John Sanderson*, 153; cf. Glover's text, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 307-08, which, however, mentions an audience in the tent of Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha.

29 The date seems incorrect. A letter from Barton to John Sanderson redirected on November 13/23 to Sir Robert Cecil mentions 12 September as the moment of the arrival of Ottoman troops in front of Eger. The text is published in Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 313-15; Sanderson's version in Cernovodeanu, "An English Diplomat", 448-49. 12 September is also the date mentioned by Glover himself in "The Journey of Edward Barton", 310. In fact, Glover's chronology closely follows that of Barton's letter to Sanderson. The chronological error would suggest either that Barton's memory failed him or that the Italian report was written by someone else.

30 Quoted by Jan Schmidt, "The Egri Campaign of 1596", 107-21.

31 This detail is missing from the letter to Sanderson; moreover, the number of cannons in the Italian text - 1,500 (!) - is certainly exaggerated.

day, the Ottoman camp did not make a move, but the Christians used their artillery continuously. However, they were unable to prevent their opponents from installing their cannons in four locations³². After four days, the besieged, fearing that the city walls would not hold, decided, under cover of night, to retreat to the citadel and set fire to the city³³. The chronology seems, once again, to be flawed. According to the imperial Captain Claudio Cogonara, sent to support the besieged by Archduke Maximilian, his forces entered Eger on the evening of September 14. According to the same captain from Parma, the Ottoman army did not appear until the morning of September 20³⁴.

The siege then continued for 20 days, with the Christians defending themselves courageously under continuous artillery fire. The Italian text omits a detail mentioned in Barton's letter to John Sanderson, but also by Captain Claudio Cogonara, who defended Eger. At one point, a woman (according to Barton's letter)³⁵ or a Hungarian (according to Cogonara, who claims he could not tell whether the gesture was intentional or not)³⁶ allegedly set fire to a barrel of gunpowder, which caused panic and favoured the Ottomans' actions. In the days that followed, the situation became increasingly unfavourable for the besieged. After a fierce "assault" on October 12, the garrison decided to surrender in exchange for permission to retreat³⁷. The date seems to be confirmed by the testimony of Claudio Cogonara,

32 According to the letter to John Sanderson (Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 313), the artillery was placed in six distinct locations under the command of: the Grand Vizier, the Beylerbey of Rumelia, the Beylerbey of Aatolia, the Agha of the Janissaries, the eunuch Giaffer Pasha, and finally Mehmed Djerrah Pasha. Cigalazade Sinan Pasha had been given command of the light cavalry with the mission of going out on reconnaissance to prevent the arrival of a force in support of the besieged. The error regarding the number of locations for the Ottoman artillery raises another question about the author of the Italian report.

33 The letter to Sanderson gives the date as September 13, just one day before the arrival of the Ottoman troops. The Italian text places it four days later, which, if we take into account its chronology, would be September 22. The chronology poses further problems. In addition, the letter to Sanderson states that the retreat was made because of the small number of defenders. See Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 314: "the defendants being few in number and distrusting their own strength, left the defense of them and retired themselves within the Castle".

34 Henrik Marczali, "Közlemények a párisi nemzeti könyvtárból", *Magyar Történelmi Társulat*, 23 (1877): 113-22 (114 for Cogonara's arrival, 116 for the appearance of the enemies).

35 Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 314: "a woman in the Castle setting, by chance, fire on a Barrell of Powder and the Souledeirs of the Castle thinking it was a Mine fired in the Castle, for feare thereof retiring themselves, gave the Turkes courage to enter a small but strong Bastion [...]".

36 Marczali, "Közlemények", 118: "Alle 27 per opera d'un ongaro, fosse causato permedi-tata non saprei dirlo, nel balvardo verso la montagna s'avesse [...] fuoco in un barile dove era un poco di polvere et abbuggi alcuni soldati".

37 The letter to Sanderson places the surrender on October 2 (Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton"). As in other situations, failure required finding someone to

who claims that on that day, the "three nations, namely the Hungarians, Germans, and Walloons, decided to surrender the place, and the Hungarians negotiated with the Turks and agreed to leave with their weapons, horses, and baggage"³⁸. Although the condition was accepted, the Christian troops were subsequently slaughtered, with the exception of a few commanders who were taken into custody by the Grand Vizier, *Damad Ibrahim Pasha*. The text does not explain the reason for the breach of the agreement, but another contemporary of the events, Giovanni Marco Isolano, linked the act to the massacre of the Ottoman garrison in Hatvan by the imperial forces³⁹. The same reason is explicitly stated by Barton in his letter to John Sanderson⁴⁰.

The last part of the text insists, as expected, on the antecedents and the unfolding of the battle of Mezőkeresztes (Haçova) on October 24-26, 1596. The Italian version is interesting because, unlike many of the news items that circulated at the time⁴¹, it seems to reflect the perspective of the Ottoman camp. For this reason, a comparison with some of the news that originated in the imperial camp is not without interest. The Italian text ascribed to Barton estimates the army initially led by Archduke Maximilian at 30,000 soldiers ("although others say there were more"), but that, after joining forces with Sigismund Báthory's troops and those led by Pálffy, it would have had no less than 80,000 men. The figure seems very high, but other testimonies offer even higher numbers. Thus, Antonio Dall'Oglio, one of the survivors of the battle, estimated that after the Christian troops joined forces, there were "centomilia soldati fra tutte le nationi ma piu cavaleria che fanteria e con 70 pezzi d'Artiglieria"⁴².

blame; Governor Pál Niary and military architect Claudio Cogonara blamed each other. Archduke Maximilian, who waited to join forces with Sigismund Báthory's troops, leaving the garrison to fend for itself, could just as well have been blamed. Cogonara's report on the siege of Eger was published by Henrik Marczali, "Közlemények", 113-22.

38 Marczali, "Közlemények", 121: "3.nazioni unite, cioè Ongari, Tedeschi et Valloni si risolsero di render la Piazza, et gl'Ongari trattarno con Turchi et per quanto dissero accordarsi di uscire con ar-mi, cavalli et bagaglie". The Turks took control of the city the following day, October 13.

39 *Călători străini despre Țările Române*. Supliment III (Bucharest: EAR, 2022), 94: "Our soldiers were allowed to leave so that they could then be cut to pieces in revenge for the cruelties committed by our troops at Hatvan, a reason which, however, does not excuse the perfidy of the Turks".

40 Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 314-15.

41 See, for example, the documents and analysis by Zsuzsa Kovács, "Accounts of the Battle of Mezőkeresztes in the Pinelli Collection of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan", in *Şerefe. Studies in Honour of Prof. Géza Dávid on His Seventieth Birthday*, eds. Pál Fodor, Nándor E. Kovács, and Bendek Péri (Budapest: Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2019), 265-79. See also Isolano's estimates in *Călători străini*. Supliment III, 94.

42 Report to Colonel Francesco Cololongo, Biblioteca Ambrosiana Milano (hereinafter B.A.M.), G 271 inf, doc. 117, 156r-159r. Dall'Oglio estimated that the prince of Transylvania had contributed no fewer than 22,000 men. We intend to return to Dall'Oglio's testimony in a future study. For estimates of the two

Significantly lower numbers are given by another eyewitness, Colonel Orfeo, whose report was used by the Venetian ambassador to Prague, Francesco Vendramin⁴³ and also by the Franciscan, Giuseppe Melfi⁴⁴ “provinciale d’Austria”⁴⁵.

To test the strength of his opponents, the sultan sent Giaffer pasha on a reconnaissance mission with 5,000 horsemen. After a brief skirmish, he retreated⁴⁶, bringing back information about the location and number of the enemy. A letter from Barton to the English consul in Aleppo states that the failure would have led to the dismissal of Giaffer pasha and of the Beylerbey of Rumelia⁴⁷.

The sultan’s entire army advanced towards the enemy and stopped three miles away. On the 25th, two hours after noon (“due ore dopo mezzo di”), the battle began and lasted until nightfall. The text mentions a detail that also appears in other sources. The Turks were repelled several times, but the Christians did not pursue them. The night passed without further incident (“senza rumore o fattione alcuna”). The confrontation resumed the next morning, following a similar scenario. The Ottomans attacked the imperial positions, and the Christians repelled them each time. Two hours before nightfall, the imperial troops launched a general counterattack and reached the sultan’s camp, causing panic. The Ottoman artillery in that place could not be used “per l’infinita moltitudine di Turchi che tra essi erano scampati”. It was astonishing, says the author, to see the utter confusion that had taken hold of a huge army of 1,000,000 (sic) men. Some fled on camels, others in carts or on horses. Everything had turned into a rout.

In this situation, in which the battle seemed lost, some Ottoman chronicles place a dialogue between the sultan, who wanted to flee, and *the hoca* Sa’du’d-din, who urged the sultan not to leave because God’s will could give victory to the armies of Islam⁴⁸. The Italian text makes no mention of this, but adds a dramatic detail. Mehmed III, with only a handful of subjects remaining around him, stood with his sword in one hand, while with his left he wiped his tear-filled eyes. Seeing himself abandoned, he cried out to his troops to ask if they had another master. To this image, intended to inspire pity, a detail is added. The sultan wore an old and cheap vest (*una veste vecchia et di poco prezzo*), but one that had been brought to him from Mecca and

armies, see also Schmidt, “The Egri Campaign”, 109 and n. 2.

43 *Calendar of State Papers*, IX, 244, no. 516; Vendramin’s full report of November 27 was published by Tamás Kruppa, “Pasquale Bruti”, *Lymbus*, 3 (2005): 39-40.

44 B.A.M. Ambrosiana, G 271 inf, doc. 118, 160r-62r.

45 According to Vendramin Orfeo’s report frightened Rudolf II’s councillors: *il colonello Orfeo colla sua sincera relatione ha smarrito assai tutti questi ministry* see *Calendar of State Papers*, IX, p. 244, no. 516; Kruppa, “Pasquale Bruti”, 39-40.

46 The Italian text says that the Turks lost 40 cannons on this occasion. A similar account in Dall’Oglio (B.A.M., G 271 inf, doc. 117, 156v) which claims that the Turks had 42 cannons and that, following the clash “si misero in fuga tanto che forno tagliati e rotti assai de loro li quali lasciorno il passo con tutta l’Artigliaria (my emphasis) con poca perdita di n[ost]ra gente”.

47 Glover, “The Journey of Edward Barton”, 316.

48 Analysis in Schmidt, “The Egri Campaign”, 110 ff.

to which the miraculous victory that followed was lately attributed. The cause of the reversal of the situation was said to be the greed of the Christians. Seeing their enemies fleeing, they showed negligence and lack of military discipline and began to plunder the enemy's camp. The horsemen dismounted and threw down their lances and arquebuses in order to gather more booty, which allowed the Tatars, who had remained in reserve until then, to launch a counter-attack. From another direction, the imperial forces were struck by Cigalazade Sinan Pasha, so that in the end, the Christians retreated, "lasciando a noi una vista miserabile di si gran rotta". The defeat must have saddened the author, who states that he saw what happened with his own eyes and with great pain. This picture of the climax of the battle differs significantly from Barton's description of the events in his letter to the English consul in Aleppo. The sultan's fear is mentioned, but it is added that, encouraged by his commanders (*chiefe Officers*), he took his bow and shot three Christians ("with his bow and arrows shot thrice and, as some say, slew three Christians"). These three arrows were given to Mehmed III by *Hodjee or the Schoole-master* when the Christians entered the camp, along with an incantation to be recited when the arrows were shot⁴⁹. In this version, too, the Tatars are said to have had a major impact alongside Hassan Pasha, Beylerbey of Rumelia and commander of the rearguard⁵⁰. The role of Cigalazade Sinan Pasha is also mentioned, who is said to have been embraced by the sultan for his merits in achieving success.

The scenario presented in the Italian text broadly corresponds to other accounts of the battle from both the Christian and Ottoman camps, with the difference lying in the details⁵¹. The author of the text emphasizes that he saw what happened with his own eyes, but we are left to wonder how safe his own life was in the general commotion. In addition, the account may have been influenced by things that happened after the battle. The detail about the old vest worn by Mehmed III gives the impression of a post factum interpretation. In the turmoil of battle, who could have established a causal link between a garment brought from Mecca and what was to happen?

However, the account does not add much after the epilogue of the clash. It is correct that, in the chaos that engulfed the Ottoman camp, the governor of Eger⁵², managed to escape, and that, after two days of rest, the sultan hurried home, arriving in Constantinople 50 days after the battle. He was received with great pomp and a great celebration was organized in honour of the victory. It is known that the sultan issued

49 Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 320.

50 Glover, "The Journey of Edward Barton", 318; the role of Hassan Pasha is also emphasized by Giovanni Marco Isolano (*Călători străini*. Supliment III, 96): "Hassan Pasha, who had been sent to attempt the crossing upstream and had failed, observing that Ibrahim Pasha was being pushed back toward the camp, returned in great haste and with great benefit to his own forces. Not only was his arrival timely, but it caused much concern to our troops on the right flank".

51 Schmidt, "The Egri Campaign", 107-21; Zsuzsa Kovács, "Accounts of the Battle of Mezőkeresztes", 265-79.

52 The text does not name him, but it is Pál Nyari; another officer, Claudio Cogonara, who had taken part in the siege of Eger, also escaped with him.

a “letter of victory” (Fethnâme) to be read in cities and markets⁵³. Finally, Barton, if it is indeed he who is speaking, adds that he accompanied the sultan to the end and that, after kissing his hand, he returned to his home in Galata⁵⁴.

CONCLUSION

What is the value of this report? To suggest an answer, one should establish who is speaking and to whom it was addressed. If we refer literally to the text, the answer would be undisputable: Edward Barton. The beginning and the end leave little room for doubt. However, there are discrepancies between the Italian version and texts that were certainly written by the English ambassador or his close collaborators, so as to maintain at least some caution. What seems certain is that we are not dealing with an Italian translation of the report to Sir Robert Cecil⁵⁵, nor with any of the known letters from English diplomatic representatives in the Levant. The former contained information about the events that took place until the departure from Belgrade; those to John Sanderson or to the consul in Aleppo refer to phases of the campaign that took place after the departure from Belgrade. The text in question is a general presentation of the expedition’s adventures, in which the final part, referring to the return from Hungary, is sent by telegram as if it were of no interest.

Regardless of the identity of the author of the document, the text, like any “travelogue”, contains many pitfalls, ambiguities, and, like any testimony, combines what is said with what is considered implicit, but also with aspects that are passed over in silence⁵⁶. It is interesting, for example, that Thomas Glover insists on exonerating his superior for accompanying the Ottoman troops, while the Italian version I have presented does not mention the attempts to make peace between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. Glover states that Barton’s presence alongside the sultan was intended to help the Christians, an allusion, of course, to Pasquale Dabri’s dispatch to Prague with peace proposals for Rudolf II. However, the Italian text makes no mention of this. This is a strange omission, especially since the letter to John Sanderson mentions that, in Szolnok, Barton sent his dragoman (Pasquale Dabri) with members of the imperial embassy to Buda. There, Dabri obtained the additional release of other subjects of the emperor and headed for the court in Prague, with Barton hoping to receive good news soon.

There is only one very brief reference to the Grand Vizier, Ibrahim Pasha, who was

53 Schmidt, “The Egri Campaign”, 112.

54 Another English traveler, Fynes Moryson, describes Barton’s residence in 1597 as follows: “Master Edward Barton, the English ambassador at this time, dwelt upon the top of the hill, in a fair house within a large field, and pleasant gardens compassed with a wall”. See Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary Containing His Ten Yeeres Travell through the Twelve Dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland & Ireland* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1907), 92.

55 Text published by Cernovodeanu, “An English Diplomat”, 446-48.

56 On this last point, Barton makes no mention of any intention on the part of the sultan to withdraw before the decisive battle and leave command to the grand vizier, Ibrahim Pasha. On this point, see Schmidt, “The Egri Campaign”, 108/7.

one of the promoters of the peace treaty with the Habsburgs. Other testimonies suggest that a discussion between Ibrahim Pasha and Edward Barton took place in Belgrade, where the steps to be taken to start negotiations with the court in Prague were established. There is no mention of Ibrahim's replacement as Grand Vizier after the battles of Mezőkeresztes.

The scant information regarding Sigismund Báthory is also quite difficult to explain. There is only one mention of his forces joining with those of the imperialists. Then there is no further reference, although the report to Robert Cecil and the peace negotiations with Transylvania, in which Barton was involved⁵⁷, could have been reflected, at least briefly, in the Italian text.

Another peculiarity of the Italian text is related to the description of the battle of Mezőkeresztes. It does not contain any errors or implausible details (such as the 1,500 cannons mentioned during the siege of Eger), but neither does it excel in terms of detail. It is a fairly accurate overview, but lacks the personal touch found, for example, in a letter from Edward Barton to the English consul in Aleppo. The letter in question mentions the topography of the place, the places of worship near which the Christians had fortified their position, certain details related to the battle (e.g., the fact that, at one point, the Janissaries managed to penetrate the Christian trenches, but, lacking support, were eventually repelled), the rain that fell at the end of the first day of fighting, etc. At the risk of being wrong, the Italian text does not seem to have been written by an eyewitness, not only because the above-mentioned details are missing, but also because, overall, it lacks a personal touch. The only one of its kind, already mentioned, refers to the sultan's vest, but even this detail could have been learned later.

The author's ambivalence towards the warring camps is also interesting. His participation in the Ottoman army and Thomas Glover's aforementioned excuses would suggest that Barton was accused of sympathizing with the Porte. However, the sadness expressed in the account of the Christians' defeat seems to suggest the opposite. The final paragraph, which states that the Ottomans suffered heavier losses and that the sultan's troops did not pursue them because they were not numerous enough, also supports this view. At least this last statement does not seem to correspond to the truth. Other testimonies suggest that darkness favored the Christian army, whose retreat was carried out in great disorder. However, the account seems to gloss over some important aspects, such as the replacement, after the battle, of Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha with Cigalazade Sinan Pasha. The latter had undoubtedly contributed to the victory, but the Italian report focuses on the Tatars, who are said to have initiated a counterattack. From Ottoman sources Naima, who used earlier chronicles, recalls that the Tatars and their commander Feth Ghirai played a role in turning the situation around on the right flank⁵⁸.

As a result, the Italian text is a unique testimony that does not seem to resemble

57 Several important documents from 1596 on this subject are published by Kruppa, "Okmányok", 51-92.

58 Naima, *Annals of the Turkish Empire from 1591 to 1659 of the Christian Era*, ed. Charles Fraser (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1832), 87.

other texts by Edward Barton⁵⁹. The text is unique in its detail regarding the old vest worn by the sultan, which is said to have brought him luck, as well as the mention at the end of the account of the orderly retreat of the units led by Col. Sig[no]r Palfi e Marchese di Bergamo (sic)⁶⁰. The reports from the Christian camp signed by Orfeo and Giuseppe Melfi do indeed mention that during the night the two commanders considered recovering some artillery pieces, but that, faced with the impossibility of transporting them, they had to give up.

The source analysed is therefore not without interest, but the particularities already mentioned, the lack of a recipient, and the fact that the document has been preserved in the Vatican archives leave many questions unanswered. There is also no general conclusion regarding the campaign, which in turn would require an explanation. However, it is a specific feature of history to leave certain questions unanswered, or at least in the shadows. Ultimately, I believe that sometimes the most important thing a scholar must learn to say is “I don’t know”.

APPENDIX

*Relatione dell’Ill[ustrissi]mo Oduardo Berton (sic) Ambasciator d’Inghilterra delle cose piu notabili successe nel Viaggio dell’Ungheria al Gran Sultan Mehemet 1596*⁶¹

Havendo io Oduardo Berton Ambasciatore d’Inghilterra in Constantinopoli appresso Sultan Mehemet hauto comandamento dal Gran Vizir di dover seguitare il Gran Signore nel suo viaggio dell’Ungheria et essendo stato fornito per ordine di esso Gran Sig[no]re di trentasei cameli per portare le mie bagaglie et tende et di quattro Carozze per levar la Corte de Ambasciator Cesareo⁶² a me data in custodia accompagnato da diversi Gentilhuomini Inglesi che se trovavano a Constantinopoli con la mia famiglia partiti di sera li 20 di luglio di quest’anno 1596, 20 giorni dopo la partita de Constantinopoli di detto Gran Sig[no]re et havendo quel giorno alloggiato tre miglie lontano da Constantinopoli il giorno seguente mi posi in viaggio et in tre di arrivai all’//433v antica e famosa Citta di Cellabria (sic)⁶³ situata al Mare dove riposai una notte di dove partendo in quattro giorni arrivai alla famosa Citta d’Andrinopoli nella quali fermai doi giorni si per rinfrescare i Cavalli si per provvedere ad altre cose necessarie per il viaggio alli 23 di detto Mese uscito d’Andrinopoli arrivai in sei picciole giornate all’antica Citta di Filipopoli et all’hora non godei d’altro che alcuni giardini poste in certe Isolette prodotte (?) da un fiumicello che

59 An analysis of Ottoman sources was undertaken by Schmidt, “The Egri Campaign”, 113 ff.

60 This refers to Charles, Marquis of Burgau, illegitimate son of Archduke Ferdinand II of Austria. He commanded troops in the Netherlands and on the Hungarian front during the “Long War”; see the entry by Heinrich Benedikt in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* on the website <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/ppn129216038.html> [last accessed 19.01. 2023].

61 Mss. Urb. Lat. 836 accessible on the website [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Urb.lat.836, f. 443r-450r](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Urb.lat.836,f.443r-450r) [last accessed 28.08. 2025].

62 Friedrich von Kerkwitz, Rudolf II’s ambassador to the Porte.

63 Selymbria

da Tramontana la bagna. Qui reposatomi un giorno presi il camino verso la Citta di Sofia luogo antico e ruinato dove in quattro giorni arrivai il vigesimoquarto di presso Belgrado dove giunsi in 12 giornate havendo a mezzavia alloggiato una notte a Nissa Citta ruinata. Gionto a Belgrado trovai il Gran Signore accampato in una gran Pianura con il suo essercito che dava//444r forma d'una gran citta; dove anchor io drizzai le miei Padiglioni al numero di dodici. La Citta di Belgrado e smurata ma ha un Castello fortiss[im]o sopra un Monte che l'arriva sopra tenuto ben munito da Turchi; appresso il Castello entra il Danubio (sic) sopra il quale e fabricata la Citta. Il fiume Sava d'ugual grandezza e un miglio lontano dalla Citta verso Greco entra nell'istesso Danubio et medesimamente un altro fiume nominato Tissa d'altra tanta grandezza.

Il Gran Sig[no]re era inviato tre di avanti di noi et altri sette giorni aspetto ivi il restante del suo essercito et l'Artellaria che era condotta per il Danubio.

Alli 29 di Agosto ci partessimo da Belgrado et passamo la Sava sopra un ponte di barche fatto a posta tre miglia lontano dal quale il Gran Sig[no]re norivo il suo Padiglione sotto un Colle appresso il Danubio aspettando l'essercito che in sette giorni passo il ponte continuando il di et la notte et era largo tanto il ponte che doi Carri a fronte potevan camminare. Da questo luogo alli 14 detto si parti//444v. il Gran Sig[no]re col suo essercito et ando a picciole giornate si per aspettare che si finisse il Ponte cominciato sul Danubio come per dar commodita a suoi soldati di transcorrere et alli 20 detto passo il Ponte sotto un Castello detto Varadin che e sopra un Colle fornito benissimo d'Artellaria sotto le mura del quale corre il Danubio di dove arrivammo alli 6 a Segedin (sic) posta sopra la Tissa, Citta gia importante ma ora di puoco conto; in mezzo della quale vi e un Castello fabricato da Sulimano che arriva alla Tissa. Quivi hebbe nova il Gran Signore che li Christiani assediavano Hatvani et che si sarebbe preso se non haveva soccorso onde mando Giaffer Bassa et il Cigala con buon numero de soldati et anco il Tartaro con 30m suoi, ma prima che giongessero hebbe nuove che la Citta era presa e ruinata//445r. e li Turchi tutti tagliati a pezzi et che li Christiani erano tornati ad Agria. Cinque di dopo che partimmo da Seghedin a Kolnoschi (sic) scontravamo il sopradetto Bassa mandato per soccorrere Hatvani. Questo Kolnoschi e posto sopra la Tissa et ha un Castello in mezzo di essa molto forte. A questo luogo arrivo per acqua l'Artellaria del Turco et ivi ci formassimo sei di nei quali s'attese a sbarcare l'Artellaria et a pagare soldati. Alli 18 di settembre arrivammo all'assedio d'Agria e per spaventare i Nimici fecero spavare tutta l'Artellaria che erano al numero di pezzi 1500 (!) e li Giannizzeri tutti li loro Archibugi con tal grido di tutto l'essercito che per tre quarti d'hora parve ruinase il Cielo. Li Turchi il di seguente non si mossero ma li Christiani non cessavano dalla Citta tirare con l'Artellaria a danno di Turchi. Questa notte fu piantata parte dell'Artillaria Turchesca per battere la Citta et la notte seguente fu piantata in quatro luoghi. Onde quelli della//445v. Citta credendo che il Turco volesse quel di dar l'assalto alla Citta et temendo la debolezza delle mura il quarto di dopo l'assedio, doi hore avanti di, havendo salvate tutte le robbe e monitioni nel Castello misero fuoco nella Citta che se bruscio tutta il di seguente intorno. Duro tanto l'assedio vinti giorni nei quali la muraglia del Castello del continuo era battuta et si davano molti assalti ma li Christiani si diffendevano valorosamente et si fecero anco alcune mine da Turchi et essi Christiani uscivano spesso a scaramucciare.

Alli 12 Ottobre fu dato un feroce assalto onde li Christiani non si conoscendo atti a far piu difesa fecero segno di volersi rendere il che fecero con patto di volersi

partir salvi con le lor bagaglie alche il Turco acconsenti ma nell uscire li Christiani avvicinati alli Giannizeri furrano tutti morti le donne prese et //446r. con tutta la robba et li putti schiavi si salvo solamente il Governatore et doi o tre dei principali che furono dati in guardia ad Abraim (sic) Bassa Gran Vizir.

La Citta d'Agria e posta in una valle fra dui Monticelli quali son poi circondati da altri Monti grandi. La Muraglia della Citta non e forte et puo girare tre Miglia Italiani nel mezzo della quale corre una fiumara da un Castello a Tramontana posto sopra un Colle che da queste parti che guarda la Citta e a forma d'un dirupo sassoso et e inespugnabile da quella banda; dall'altra e fabricato esso Castello rincontro a un Monticello che lo batte da questa parte i Turchi fecero le lor mine e batterie, nondimeno il luogo e di incredibil fortezza essendo fornito d'Artellaria et d'huomini quali due cose li mancavano durando questo assedio.

Massimiliano con 30m huomini se ben altri dicono piu, era in Strigonia per doi giornate lontano//446v d'Agria aspettando la venuta del Transilvano et havendo nuova della sua venuta l'ando ad incontrare a mezzo il viaggio e 15 miglia lontano da Agria verso maestro et vennero insieme con altri che venivano dall'Allemagna sotto il governo del Sig[no]r Palfi che in tutti facevano la somma di 80m come ho inteso da uno che era prigionero de Tartari. Il Turco havendo riposato l'essercito dieci giorni et atteso a riparare la Muraglia et mettere conveniente presidio nella Citta d'Agria hebbe avviso che li Christiani erano accampati sopra una fiumara che corre per la Campagna d'Agria dove immaginandosi che non fossero cosi forti mando Giaffer Bassa con 5m Cavalli oltra alcune fantarie ma li Christiani di cio avvisati gl'incontrarno a mezzo camino e facilmente gli posero in fuga// 447r non essendo durato il combattere piu di un mezz'hora perche li Turchi lasciando 40 pezzi d'Artellaria in preda di Christiani con perdita di molti di loro si fuggirono al Campo, referendo che li Christiani erano al numero de 200m.

Cio inteso il Gran Signore ordino che l'essercito fosse apparecchiato per il giorno segue[n]te nel qual giorno si mosse verso li Christiani a passo lento a quali s'avvicino tre miglia. Il di seguente cioe alli 25 d'Ottobre doi hore dopo mezzo di, un miglio lontano da Christiani si comincio una scaramuccia che duro fin' alla notte con morte dell'una et l'altra parte et li Christiani fuggavano spese volte i Turchi ma temendo dell'andar troppo lontano se ritiravano. Venuta la notte i Turchi se accamparono dove il giorno havevano combatutto con Christiani parte si ritiravano a suoi Padiglioni e parte si fecero forti in un Monastero mezzo miglio lontano dal suo Campo. Tutta la notte si passo senza rumore //447v o fattione alcuna ma con buone guardie. La matina seguente si comincio a scaramucciare il che si fece tutto quel di due hore avanti notte. Per ordinario li Christiani davano la caccia a Turchi e poi pian piano si ritiravano seguiti da Turchi e quelli rivolgendosi verso di loro subito fuggivano non havendo mai havuto ordine tutto quel giorno aspettare doi incontri de Christiani il che fu caggione che due hore avanti notte dessero un assalto generale sopra li Turchi quali con puoca fatica furrano posti in fuga. All' hora li Christiani gia risoluti di qualche havevano da fare passarono la fiumara seguendo li fuggitivi dove s'incontrarono con altri squadroni de Cavalli Turcheschi quali medesimamente posero in fuga seguendoli sin alli //448r Padiglioni onde l'Artellaria de Turchi che era da quella banda non poteva far danno a Christiani poiche per l'infinita moltitudine de Turchi che tra essi erano scampati non si potevano adoperare si che li Christiani seguendo la vittoria andorno verso gl'alloggiamenti de Turchi et alcune Bande loro posero l'insegne sopra il Thesoro del Gran Signore che era appresso il suo Padiglione. Era cosa di stupore il vedere la gran confusione che era in cosi

grand'essercito ascendendo un 1 000 000 (sic) huomini altri fuggivano con Cameli, altri con Carozze altri con Cavalli onde il tutto si vedeva pieno di fuga.

Il Gran Sig[no]re vedendo che di 40m Cavalli che erano alla sua guardia nessuno faceva testa solo con li suoi Cicoglani e Cochi se ne stava alla porta del suo Padiglione con la spada nuda in mano posata sopra la spalla et con la sinistra si sciugava gl'occhi ch'erano pieni di lacrimi havendo una veste vecchia et di poco prezzo in dosso che gl'era stata portata dalla Mecha alla quale attribuiscono la Vittoria quasi per miracolo havuto gridava alli suoi che fuggivano se havevano altro Sig[no]re che lui e perche l'abbandonavano. Li Christiani veduta la brutta fuga de nemici fatti gran securi della Vittoria con puoco risgardo e con minor disciplina militare si volsero alli robbam[en]ti.

Onde li Cavallieri smontati da Cavalli li fanti buttare le piche et gli Archibugi per poter meglio rubbare diedero occasione a Tartari che erano da 30m sotto il governo de Titigora fratello del Re de Tartari che gli vennero adosso lasciando adunque il Colle dove fin all'hora erano stati fermi con impeto grande urtorno nei Christiani li quali subito si misero in fuga //449r essenda da un altra parte assaltati dal Cicala, il quale havendo inteso il pericolo nel quale era il Gran Signore, era venuto con alcune bande di Cavalli et vedendo che li Tartari erano per assalire li Christiani disordinati, con grandissimi gridi li venne adosso e fracasso con puoca fatica havendogli trovati senza li suoi Archibugi e fuor dell'ordinanza. Li Christiani essendo la maggior parte di loro a piedi et li Nimici a Cavallo furorno la piu parte morti e quelli che si salvorno che era la terza parte dell'essercito Christiano lasciata l'Artegliaria e tute le Bagaglie si ritirorno al monte, lasciando a noi una vista miserabile di si gran rotta. Et se bene li Christiani fanno la rotta minore per non sbigortire i Populi e veramente che loro habbino havuta in quelle parti son gia molti Anni. Il che ho veduto io con miei proprij occhi e non senza doglia grandissima//449 v. Li Christiani sacchegiarono gl'alloggiamenti et i Turchi fuggivano.

Il Governatore d'Agria che era prigionie nell'alloggiamento de Abraim Bassa p[rim]o Visir se ne fuggi e si salvo il giorno doppo la battaglia. Il Gran Signore si fermo doi giorni per aspettare li soldati che erano andati a dar la Caccia a Christiani.

Alli 29 d'Ottobre il Gran Signore s'invio verso Kolnoschi et il mede[si]mo giorno tre miglia lontano d'Agria dove si fermo tre di et alli 3 di Novembre con tutto il suo essercito se parti per Constantinopoli in fretta si che in cinquanta giornate dopo la sua partenza dal luogo della battaglia che si dimanda il luogo la pianura del Cochie per le medesime strade che era andato ritorno a Constantinopoli et io l'accompagnai fino//450r all'ultimo giorno et havendogli publicam[en]te bacciate le mani, me ne partij per Casa mia in Galata.

Il Gran Signore fu ricevuto in Constantinopoli con allegrezza e Pompa incredibile e furono publicate feste e Triomfi per la Vittoria. Li Turchi il giorno della giornata havendo rebuttato i Christiani non han[o] passato il fiumicello perche erano pochi e sopragionse la notte nella quale i nostri che s'erano ritirati ne gl'alloggiamenti col sig[no]r Palfi e Marchese di Bergamo (sic) son partiti quietamente senza la saputa de Turchi si che son morti piu Turchi che Christiani.

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