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A Hungarian-Croatian Aristocrat from a new Perspective. Military Career of Péter Zrínyi/Petar Zrinski (1621–1671)*

Peter Zrinyi's (†1671) name became inseparable from his participation in the conspiracy led by palatine Ferenc Wesselényi (also known as Zrinsko-Frankopan plot) which is the most examined period of his lifetime. The Croatian historiography has been focusing on his role in the movement, still considering him an early representative of the thought of independence. Peter Zrinyi's literary activities have been researched relating to the political ones too. His military career, however, is practically unexamined; not even its major stages are known. Hungarian historians having national sympathies could also be blamed for this backlog due to the fact that they totally neglected his person pushing Nicholas Zrinyi forward in his stead. The present paper aims to outline Peter Zrinyi's advancement from a new perspective, namely in interaction with that of Nicholas Zrinyi. As we will see, the first decade spent together in Muraköz had played an important role that Peter oriented himself towards Croatian territories.

Keywords: Zrínyi Péter/Petar Zrinski, Zrínyi Miklós /Nikola Zrinski, Frangepán/Frankopan family, Croatia, Muraköz/Medimurje, Military Frontier



Prelude

The upcoming 400th anniversary of the birth of Miklós VII Zrínyi/Nikola Zrinski (1620–1664) and that of Péter IV Zrínyi/Petar Zrinski (1621?–1671) is expected to offer an exceptional opportunity to summarize and reconsider our knowledge of the oeuvre of the brothers, both in Hungary and abroad. It is urged by the fact that the monographs dedicated to the unprecedented compound and manyfold life's work of Miklós Zrínyi provide us antiquated elements.¹ For instance, the portrait of the „poet and general” is considerably idealized owing to the romantic-patriotic approach of history which

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¹ SZÉCHY 1896–1902; KLANICZAY 1964.

dominated the Hungarian historiography in the second half of the 19th century. In the interest of rethinking his course of life, good progress has been made for almost two decades.² In the case of Péter Zrínyi, however, this undertaking is still expected to be done.³ Until then we can rely on few aged and inaccurate studies serving political concepts of that time, in the future, too. It is partly due to this that he is still regarded by the Croatian scientific research as an early representative of the thought of independence as well as a martyr of the national issue. This notion, as is well known, met the demand of the Croatian right wing parties that opposed both the Habsburg dynasty and the dualistic state organisation in the 1870s.⁴ Miklós Zrínyi, who was living mostly on Hungarian soil writing vernacularly, had been 'monopolised' by the domestic historians by that time, so he did not fit this role.⁵ Miklós is still less known than his brother south of the Dráva (Drava) River. No wonder that the elder Zrínyi brother's prosaic works were translated into Croatian as late as the 1990s(!).⁶ The succeeding generations of Hungarian historians, however, practically until now, did not regard it as their duty to research on the younger brother who spent most of his lifetime on Croatian territories.

The contemporaries associated Miklós Zrínyi with intelligence while attributing raw martial skills to Péter which still dominates both the Hungarian and the Croatian historiography.⁷ The impartial examination of Péter Zrínyi's life is heavily hampered by the circumstance that his person attracted attention almost exclusively in the broader context of the conspiracy (known as the Wesselényi or Zrinsko-Frankopan plot), which resulted in a revolt in 1670.⁸ Besides, his activities relating to the so-called Literary Circle of Ozaly (Ozalj) raised some interest.⁹ The joint backlog of the Hungarian and Croatian research can be illustrated by the fact that not even the major stages of his military career have been listed so far. The present paper aims to fill this gap by overwiewing Péter's advancement with special regard to the first decade spent in Muraköz (Međimurje). The examination will be effected from a new perspective, namely by synchronizing Péter's course of life with his brother's timeline. As we will see, the path of life of the Zrínyi brothers can be studied and interpreted in interaction with each other, only.

Muraköz/Međimurje as training school

The first and decisive stage of Péter Zrínyi's military career was Muraköz which almost exclusively belonged to the Croatian-Hungarian count family

² PÁLFFY 2014. p. 867–880.

³ REISZIG 1897. p. 809–846; KUKULJEVIĆ 1868. 211–224; PAULER 1867. p. 89–118, 231–265.

⁴ SOKCSEVITS 2011. 73–82; ŠTEFANEC 2009. p. 391–410; BLAŽEVIĆ–COHA 2009. p. 137–167.

⁵ HAUSNER 2015. p. 123–154.

⁶ SOKCSEVITS 2011. p. 73

⁷ RÁTTKAY 1652. The Croatian translation RÁTTKAY 2001. On the conception of the chronicle see: BENE 2000.

⁸ ŠIŠIĆ 1908. p. 9–125; PAULER 1876.

⁹ BENE 2017. p. 37–78; PAJUR 2014. p. 55–68.

until his apprehension.¹⁰ The younger brother resided in Csáktornya (Čakovec) not only during his terms of office as Croatian-Slavonian ban (1665–1670) but he also had spent the first decade of his adulthood (1637–1647) between the Dráva and Mura Rivers. The early fightings with the Turks he was engaged in prepared him for taking an active role in the counter-Ottoman border defence system later. The borderline of the Hungarian Kingdom, as is well known, overlapped with that of the Csáktornya estate. That was basically nothing else but the narrowest buffer zone between the Ottoman-held territories and the Austrian Hereditary Lands. No wonder that the populace of the domain, which lay no more than 15 km away from the Ottoman stronghold of (Nagy)Kanizsa, was in arms under the command of the Zrínyi brothers.¹¹ Péter Zrínyi possessed half of the Muraköz estate after the brothers had divided it equally in June 1638. They did the same in the case of the Ozaly and Ribnik estates. The Slavonian holdings, however, such as Rakovec and Verbovec (Vrbovec), which had been recovered from the Erdődy family as late as 1613, and Bosjakó (Božjakovina) were subject to unique methods.¹² The Brod (na Kupi) estate remained undivided, only its incomes were separated between the two brothers. In the course of the division of the littoral lands in 1641, Péter as the younger son laid claim to the port of Buccari (Bakar), Grobnik castle and the village of Gerovo, following his ancestors' example.¹³ In return, Miklós entered into possession of Buccarica (Bakarac), Porto Reé (Kraljevica), Szelca (Selce), Czirkvenica (Crikvenica) as well as the castles in Vinodol. The previous generation halved the Croatian and littoral family holdings in the same manner. The cutting of the Muraköz estate in two also modelled the procedure of their father's, György V (1599–1626) with his brother's, Miklós VI (?–1625) effected in 1616/1617.¹⁴

The defence of Muraköz based on the stipendiaries paid by the treasury, the number of which amounted to half a thousand men in the middle of the 17th century. They were commanded by the captain of Légrád (Legrad) and Muraköz, which title was conferred upon Miklós VII. Zrínyi in May 1640, as far as we know, for the first time.¹⁵ The aforementioned agreement of 1638 stipulated that the elder brother occupied the captaincy over the royal soldiers stationed in Légrád and elsewhere in Muraköz.¹⁶ Therefore, the appointment two years later just approved the former arrangement of the family. The territorial separation and the almost complete possession of the area must have played a crucial role that Muraköz served as a special

¹⁰ VEGH 2017b. p. 261–275.

¹¹ VEGH 2017a. p. 217–246.

¹² MU 2010. p. 93–204.

¹³ MNL–OL MKA E 148 NRA Fasc. 319. No. 39.

¹⁴ ŠTEFANEČ 2007. 90. NSK Zbirka rukopisa i starih knjiga [Collection of Manuscripts and Old Books] R 5129. Miklós Zrínyi to Gergely Pethő. Ozaly, 20 February 1617.

¹⁵ ÖStA KA ZSt. Sr. Bestellungen. Karton 9. No. 1331. (3 May 1640).

¹⁶ MU 2010. p. 163.

hereditary border district in the 17th century.¹⁷ In other words, the Court War Council ceded the management of this border zone along the Mura river to the Zrínyis as a kind of compromise. Similarly, the Batthyány family was allowed to direct the confines opposite Kanizsa from 1633 onwards, likewise by right of succession.¹⁸ By the way, Péter Zrínyi became imperial chamberlain before March 1639, following his brother who was honored with this dignity in December 1637.¹⁹ At the age of eight, Miklós was appointed stableman-in-chief as early as 1628, obviously as a recognition of his father's services.²⁰ Surprisingly, the diplomas issued on behalf of the Habsburg monarch call Péter (hereditary) constable-in-chief too.²¹ To our present-day knowledge, however, Miklós bore this dignity alone. It is also unlikely that the chancellery mixed up the brothers, although the contemporary iconography provides us plenty of examples of mistaking one Zrínyi brother for the other.²²

The royal soldiery dislocated along the Mura River was efficiently supported by the private armies of the prevailing possessors of the Csáktornya estate. The most archaic contingent of the armed forces of the Zrínyis was that of the noble servants' (called *familiaris* and *servitor*) who were granted some land along with serfs inhabiting them in exchange for their military service. They were required to arm some retainers in proportion to the size of their possession, as well. The agreement of 1638, which cut in half the Muraköz estate equally, testifies to a developed structure suggesting that was inherited from the previous generation.²³ That year as high as 65 % (!) of the stock of serf plots (*sessio*) were held by noble servicemen as opposed to 48 % in 1672.²⁴ This date they possessed 193 and a half serf plots on Péter Zrínyi's half which fell to the treasury in 1670. In comparison, on the other part of the estate held by Miklós' pupils 256 whole, a half and one-third units like this.²⁵ The explanation for the significant difference might be that Péter Zrínyi had revoked much land for the purpose of enlarging his own share, without compensating their beneficiaries. This partly dates back to the first period of his ownership (1638–1649).²⁶ His victims got back their fiefs from 1678 onwards, after the Hungarian Chamber had taken possession of Péter Zrínyi's former holding.²⁷

¹⁷ VÉGH 2017a. p. 217–246; VÉGH 2017b. p. 59–70.

¹⁸ PÁLFFY 2014. p. 321–356.

¹⁹ PÁLFFY 2007. p. 52; HDA–681 Vlastelinstvo Čakovec. Kutija 9. No. 1184.

²⁰ BITSKEY 1998. p. 324–325.

²¹ ÖStA KA HKR KIA Militärgrenze VII. 104, 112; FHKA SUS Reichsakten. Karton 207. No. 37.

²² CENNERNÉ 1997. p. 111, 113, 196.

²³ MU 2010. p. 155–161.

²⁴ MZPÖ 1991. p. 100–104.

²⁵ MU 2010. p. 277–278, 247–248; MZPÖ 1991. p. 195.

²⁶ NSK Zbirka rukopisa i starih knjiga [Collection of Manuscripts and Old Books] R 6471 Nikola Zrinski No. 5097, 5098.

²⁷ MNL–OL E 202 Acta Zrinyiano-Frangepaniana. 1st volume 153–196, 216–217; HDA-785 Obitelji Zrinski i Frankopani. Komorska uprava Zrinsko-Frankopanskih posjeda. [Zrinski and

In 1650, as is well known, Miklós Zrínyi distributed arable lands among the peasants inhabiting the villages Hudosán (Hodošan), Goricsány (Goričan) and Gyurgyánc who were exempted from all of their duties as serfs in exchange for doing military service.²⁸ This date is generally and unquestioned accepted as the year of the establishment of the peasant soldiery at the Muraköz estate.²⁹ As a matter of fact, this branch of service existed as early as the previous decade. Miklós and Péter obliged the populace of eight villages to do military service in 1639, in return for which the brothers renounced their subjects' unpaid work that was due to them as landlords.³⁰ The reason for this move was admittedly that the Zrínyis did not find enough armed men to guard the chain of watch-towers erected on the right bank of the Mura. The residents of some of the villages in question were willing to stay there by being granted this reduction, only. The remaining settlements, however, which had already been abandoned, were intended to be resettled by this measure.³¹ The Ottoman garrisons of the vilajet of Kanizsa were incessively attacking the neighbouring Muraköz in the 1630s and 1640s in order to subject the inhabitants of the area to taxpaying.³² It can be stated that military and economic considerations jointly resulted in establishing the peasant soldiery at the estate. From our perspective not the act itself but its exact date is relevant. Regarding that this occurred in 1639, i.e. during the Zrínyi brothers' shared ownership, even Péter could be named as initiator.

The most numerous contingent of the Zrínyis' private army was that of the free soldiers' (*libertini*), whose majority lived in Légrád, that was located in Muraköz in the early modern times.³³ Although being unpaid, these armed men were commanded after all by the captain of the given border castle appointed by the ruler, just like the registered and salaried royal soldiers. On other occasions, however, their landlord had jurisdiction over them laying claim to their services, including the military ones, so they were subject to a double dependency.³⁴ In contrast to the peasant soldiers, they were freemovers due to the fact that they usually came from outside the Muraköz estate. Another difference was that the free soldiers took and cultivated as many arable lands and vineyards as they could depending on their capacity. The peasant soldiers, however, had standardized piece of land and fields at their disposal assigned to them by the landlord. The free soldiery of Légrád, curiously, earned their living by trade, especially in salt owing to the favorable location of the border town and the lack of lands.³⁵ During the

Frankopan families. Chamber administration of the Zrinski and Frankopan estates]. Grgur Pavešić 3.1.5.4.1.6. 163–200, 240–241.

²⁸ MRÁZ 1957. p. 125.

²⁹ CZIGÁNY 2004. p. 88; RÁCZ 1969. p. 120–121; ZIMÁNYI 1960. p. 287.

³⁰ MNL–ZML IV.1.b. Acta congregationalia. Box No. 1. 1640. Released by VÉGH 2011. p. 182–183.

³¹ Ibid.

³² ZMÖM 2003. p. 472, 474–477, 479–480.

³³ VÉGH 2017a. p. 231–232.

³⁴ VÉGH 2009. p. 444–445.

³⁵ ÖStA FHKA SUS Handschriftensammlung. Hs. 450. fol. 11–13.

winter campaign of 1664, even a thousand free soldiers could have been mobilized in Légrád alone, while leaving enough soldier behind to defend the bordertown.³⁶ The division of 1638 allowed Péter Zrínyi to appoint a lieutenant as their commander which he instantly did.³⁷ This officer was not subordinated to Miklós Zrínyi as the captain of the royal-held soldiery stationing in Légrád, but he was expected to cooperate with the latter. In case of emergency, however, even the leader of the free soldiers was inferior to the elder Zrínyi brother.³⁸

The captaincy of Turnische (Podturen), which comprised four villages including the name giving one, was separated both from a territorial and a legal point of view. This part of possession had been purchased by Péter Zrínyi in 1644 for 9000 Hungarian Forints as a pawn, but he seems to have remained in Ádám Batthyány's (1659) debt with the price.³⁹ Although it was a reasonable and cross-generation effort on the Zrínyis' part to enlarge the proportion of their holding in Muraköz, the acquisition of these villages may primarily be explained by military needs.⁴⁰ The Zrínyis, as mentioned above, erected a line of watches (in Hungarian *góré*, in Croatian *čardak* deriving from the Ottoman-Turkish term *çardak*) alongside the Mura, the guardians of which monitored the border river. They alarmed the armed forces of Muraköz by firing a shot right after catching sight of the Ottoman raiders.⁴¹ The efficiency of this system can be illustrated by the fact, that it served as a model for both the defence structure operating on the Rába, and that to be set up along the Vág after the fall of Érsekújvár (Nove Zamky) in 1664.⁴² Péter Zrínyi was probably prompted by the circumstance that the string of sentinels would have had a gap without obtaining the four riverbank settlements owned by the Batthyánys.

Watching and learning?

Péter Zrínyi, as we have seen, took an active role in organizing the defence of Muraköz. The defence structure of the area lying between the Mura and Dráva Rivers was supplemented by the captaincy of Turnische on his initiative. In all likelihood, the separation of the free soldiers of Légrád was also prompted by him. The fact itself that the introduction of the peasant soldiery dates to the joint possession of the Zrínyis allows us to conclude that the younger brother might have been the promotor of this move, as well.

³⁶ NÉMETH 1989, p. 574.

³⁷ MU 2010, p. 163; MNL-OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 54110. Légrád, 14 July 1638. Péter Zrínyi to Ádám Batthyány.

³⁸ MNL-OL MKL A 14 Insinuata Consilii Bellici No. 78. (7 May 1640).

³⁹ KOLTAI 2012, p. 463. MNL-OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 54150. Ribnik, 1645. Péter Zrínyi to Ádám Batthyány.

⁴⁰ VÉGH 2015b, p. 161.

⁴¹ To their localization see: ACSÁDY 1888, p. 258–259.

⁴² VÉGH 2011, p. 176.

The independent activity of Péter Zrínyi is expressively illuminated by the example that in 1639 he made himself master of artillery knowledge through the German gunman of the castle of Csáktornya. Moreover, he intended to prove it by passing a kind of exam in front of Ádám Batthyány, the captain-general of the confines opposite Kanizsa and a number of cannoneers.⁴³ Until the division of the Muraköz estate in 1649 he had a private army numbering a couple of hundred men at the head of which he engaged in struggles with the Ottoman forces. In February 1641, for instance, he drove away the cattles of the Ottoman garrison of Kanizsa, because of which the authorities wanted him as disturber of the peace to appear before the Court War Council.⁴⁴ To his raids on Ottoman-held territories Péter obviously sought to be backed by the general of the confines of Slavonia and Petrinja, who resided in Varasd (Varaždin), in the vicinity of Csáktornya.⁴⁵ In October 1643, the younger Zrínyi and the general marched on Kanizsa together proving that at least some of his requests had been answered by the latter.⁴⁶ Péter also participated in the raid of May 1647 which caused a great stir due to the death of the young and popular Farkas (Vuk) Erdődy.⁴⁷

Péter Zrínyi often had to replace Miklós during his absence, especially in the first years of the 1640s.⁴⁸ As is well known, between 1642 and 1644 Miklós was engaged in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) conducting light cavallery units to the imperial battlefield.⁴⁹ In March 1645, Péter Zrínyi almost died while chasing the enemy which had entered the Muraköz. In the darkness he fell into the Mura, and only his young servant prevented him from drowning.⁵⁰ It is to be noted that Péter occasionally guarded the Muraköz alone as early as this period. For example in 1639, when he took quartier in Belice during Miklós' journey to Croatia.⁵¹ While being away, Miklós probably ceded the command of his private troops to Péter. Possibly, he did the same in the case of the royal soldiery stationed in Légrád and Muraköz, which, however, had to be approved by the Court War Council of Vienna in advance.

⁴³ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 54116. Csáktornya, 12 April 1639. Péter Zrínyi to Ádám Batthyány. RÁTTKAY 1652. p. 242.

⁴⁴ MNL–OL MKL A 14 Insinuata Consilii Bellici No. 82. (22. February 1641)

⁴⁵ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 54118. Csáktornya, 27 October 1639. Péter Zrínyi to Ádám Batthyány. No. 54151. Csáktornya, 11 April 1646. Péter Zrínyi to Ádám Batthyány.

⁴⁶ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 35744. Légrád, 20 October 1643. Mátyás Pandúr to Ádám Batthyány.

⁴⁷ ÖStA HHStA Fasc. 306. Konv. A. Ungarn. Zrinyische Akten. fol. 45–48; ZMÖM 2003. p. 508–509.

⁴⁸ RÁTTKAY 1652. p. 242.

⁴⁹ KELENIK 2016. p. 118–127. Cf. BAUER 1941. p. 117–136.

⁵⁰ RÁTTKAY 1652. p. 242; TAKÁTS s. d. a. p. 144.

⁵¹ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 9759. Belice, 1639. Saturday. Gergely Darabos to Ádám Batthyány.

The conflicts between the Zrínyi brothers also suggest that the scenario, according to which Péter assumed a passive, second-rank role in the shadow of his famous elder brother, doing nothing else but watching and learning in the first decade of his adultery, can not be true. Following Miklós' appointment as captain of Légrád and Muraköz in May 1640, the monarch confirmed and specified the family agreement concluded just two years ago, exactly because of the differences between the brothers, concerning especially the free soldiery.⁵² The most numerous but least stable branch of the private army of the Zrínyis seems to have been a neuralgic issue in the relationship of the brothers. Miklós and Péter Zrínyi set their controversy about the heyducks of Légrád straight at the general assembly in Pozsony (Bratislava) in 1646 by means of Ádám Batthyány as captain-general of the Transdanubian district. Palatine János Draskovich (Ivan Drašković, †1648), however, was slow in confirming it insofar as he died meanwhile.⁵³ In 1646 the brothers had an argument about the legacy of their uncle's widow, Erzsébet Széchy, too.⁵⁴ Miklós and Péter Zrínyi applied for the Alsólendva (Lindava) estate, which fell to the treasury in the middle of the 1640s, individually, which could also be interpreted as the younger brother's aspire for acting autonomously.⁵⁵ Facing Miklós Zrínyi's priority as captain of Légrád and that of the other border castles in Muraköz, which was resulted from his unchallengable first-born status, the ambitious Péter had no choice but to turn to other border zones.

At the Croatian-Littoral confines

Péter Zrínyi's marriage to Anna Katalin Frangepán (Ana Katarina Frankopan) in October 1641 might have been ultimative means. His future father-in-law, Farkas Kristóf Frangepán (Vuk Krsto Frankopan, †1652) held the office of the captain-general of the Croatian-littoral confines from 1626 onwards which was a unique phenomenon. Normally, the Károlyváros (Karlovac)-centred frontier was headed by the prominent representatives of the estates of Carniola and Carinthia, which financed this border tract.⁵⁶ That time Gáspár Frangepán (Gašpar Frankopan, †1653) and his younger brother, György (Juraj, †1661), Farkas Kristóf's sons, were managing the border districts of Ogulin and Tounj, respectively, so Zrínyi had good reason to hope for getting a position through his father-in-law, too.⁵⁷ The Frangepán kindred traditionally had great influence on the Croatian borderland, indeed. It is illustrated by Farkas Kristóf Frangepán's appointment and his office bearing lasting for a quarter of a century. Péter Zrínyi's interest in this area can also be explained by the fact, that the Slavonian Zrínyi estates were mostly located south of the Kulpa (Kupa) River, which means, that these were protected by

⁵² MNL-OL MKL A 14 Insinuata Consilii Bellici. No. 78. (7 May 1640).

⁵³ ZMÖM 2003. p. 117.

⁵⁴ SCHÖNHERR 1887. p. 724–726.

⁵⁵ ÖStA FHKA AHK HFU R. Nr. 175. 1646. Nov. fol. 42, 44–45.

⁵⁶ PÁLFFY 1997. p. 281–282.

⁵⁷ LOPASIĆ 1889. p. 466–470.

the Croatian border castle line and not the Slavonian one. Besides, the military service in the latter would have offered him fewer chances of promotion, because the Styrian estates, which subsidized this tract on their own, reserved not only the position of the general but those of the border district captains to themselves. The captaincy of Petrinja made the sole exception being headed hereditarily by the Erdődy family.⁵⁸ By the way, Péter's choice of wife was not only conscious but also irregular. The most powerful peer families of Croatia, as is well known, have been opposed to each other for almost a century as a result of Miklós IV Zrínyi's (Nikola Zrinski Sigetski, †1566) policy of assets.⁵⁹ It is no surprise, that until Péter's marriage there were no family relations between the two families. His matrimony, however, eased the tensions merely temporarily. Miklós Zrínyi's marriage to Mária Euzébia Draskovich (Marija Euzebija Drašković, †1650) in 1646 could be effected after the future bride had broken off her engagement with György Frangepán, triggering new conflicts.⁶⁰

Despite being backed by his newly-won family, Péter Zrínyi had to wait for his assignment until April 1647 when Ferdinand III appointed him captain-in-chief of Sichelberg (Žumberak) which also comprised the captaincy of Szluin (Slunj).⁶¹ As such, Péter commanded the migrants called uskoks who fled Ottoman territory but he consistently named himself captain of the cavalymen of Károlyváros, as well.⁶² György Ráttkay's (Juraj Ratkay) chronicle relates that Péter entered negotiations with the monarch himself about receiving the abovementioned position at the general assembly held in Pozsony in 1646–1647.⁶³ Probably, being also present, Miklós Zrínyi also carried on talks with the ruler about getting the dignity of the Croatian-Slavonian banus, which was vacant since János Draskovich had been promoted to the palatinate in autumn 1646.⁶⁴ Turning back to the younger Zrínyi, he received the doubled captaincy of Sichelberg on condition that he committed himself to taking part in the Thirty Years's War at the head of a light cavalry regiment raised by himself.⁶⁵ His participation was solicited after the Swedish armed forces had invaded Moravia. By the way, Péter volunteered to take part in the conflict as early as 1644, but his proposal was declined that time.⁶⁶

In 1647, Péter Zrínyi was committed to recruiting 600 horsemen at his own expense whereas the remaining four companies of his regiment were raised by the monarch.⁶⁷ Two of his brother's companies were also added to

⁵⁸ PETRIĆ 2012. p. 102–127.

⁵⁹ VARGA 2016. p. 161–166.

⁶⁰ BENE 2015. p. 620.

⁶¹ ÖStA KA HKR KIA VII. 104. Released by LOPAŠIĆ 1885. 275–277. On the uskoks lately Bracewell 1992.

⁶² HDA–681 Vlastelinstvo Čakovec. Kutija 9. No. 1200.

⁶³ RÁTTKAY 1652. p. 242.

⁶⁴ SZÉCHY 1896. p. 192–197.

⁶⁵ RÁTTKAY 1652. p. 242–243.

⁶⁶ ÖStA KA HKR Prot. Exp. Bd. 290. (1644) fol. 189, 223, 449.

⁶⁷ MNL–OL A 14 Insinuata Consilii Bellici No. 135. (20 April 1647).

Zrínyi's unit so he commanded a cavalry of 1200 men as a result.⁶⁸ Fortunately, György Rátkay, who attended the campaign as an army chaplain, left us a detailed report on the fightings of the detachment in Moravia and Thuringia.⁶⁹ It is worth mentioning that Rátkay openly voiced his aversion to Zrínyi's appointment as captain of Sichelberg because of being coupled with preconditions, which was contrary to the common practice.⁷⁰ The chronicler had bias toward the Zrínyi bothers, who might have sponsored the publishing of his writing.⁷¹ Being attached to the Zrínyis, especially to Péter, it is reasonable to think that this passage perpetuated the opinion of the younger brother himself. Turning back to the field operations, Zrínyi was allowed to return home at the end of the year. The majority of his soldiers, however, remained on the battlefield taking part in the struggles of the next year which turned to be the last one.⁷² By the way, Zrínyi, similarly to his brother and father, applied to the War Council of Vienna for being appointed commander of the Croatian-style light cavalry units during the campaign season, but his request was not granted.⁷³

The new positions of the Zrínyi brothers might have given an impetus to the new division of the family holdings. The preamble of the agreement concluded in March 1649, generally speaking, reveals that the aforementioned contract of 1638 turned out to be fruitless.⁷⁴ As a result of the repeated exchange, Péter took possession of the estates lying on the Kulpa River such as Ozaly, Ribnik, Brod as well as Bosjakovina, increasing his power in the region. In return, Miklós exclusively possessed the Csáktornya estate, which was the most valuable of all the holdings, and those of Rakovec and Verbovec located in Körös county. The elder brother held the possessions in Transdanubia just like the palace in Vienna.⁷⁵ This cut broke off the family traditions which expected the parties to halve the estates in question, equally. The reasons, which overwrote the former practice, can only be revealed by examining the relationship between the brothers, but it must have been Péter who initiated this move. The estates lying south of Száva (Sava), which were adjacent to one another, obviously served as a solid hinterland for Péter Zrínyi giving preference to him in case of applying for a position. Besides, being an officer of the Croatian-Maritime confines, he was able to organize the defence of his estates easier by mobilizing the royal soldiers of his border district(s) if required.

In January 1658, the high captaincy of Zengg (Senj) was conferred upon Péter Zrínyi along with the border district of Ottocsác (Otočac), which was

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ RÁTKAY 1652. p. 245–246.

⁷⁰ RÁTKAY 1652. p. 242–243.

⁷¹ BENE 2000. p. 19.

⁷² ÖStA KA HKR Prot. Reg. Bd. 297. (1648) fol. 309.

⁷³ ÖStA KA HKR Prot. Exp. Bd. 296. (1647) fol. 363, Reg. Bd. 289. (1643) fol. 212, 407; BALLAGI 1882. p. 124.

⁷⁴ MNL–OL MKA E 148 NRA Fasc. 319. No. 30.

⁷⁵ ÖStA FHK A AHK HFU VUG Karton 70c. No. 153. fol. 2–8.

similarly separated from the remaining territory of the confines by the Kapella mountain-range.⁷⁶ The border castles submitted to Zengg and Ottocsák together were often referred to as the 'Maritime Border' (*Meergrenze*). Their detachment was significantly enhanced by the circumstance that these were sustained by the estates of Carniola while the royal soldiery of the other border districts of the confines were subsidized by the province of Carinthia. Péter Zrínyi as captain-in-chief of Zengg commanded the second-largest stronghold of the confines semi-independently.⁷⁷ By the way, Zrínyi's 'promotion' resulted from the resignation of Albrecht von Herberstein that triggered a reshuffle of the positions at the Croatian-Littoral confines.⁷⁸ For instance, Zrínyi's resignation as captain-in-chief of Sichelberg enabled his younger brother-in-law, György Frangepán, captain of Tounj to take over the aforementioned double-captaincy.⁷⁹ Zrínyi, however, was managing the littoral border zone only for a short time, in all likelihood by the end of 1661.

In January 1662, he surprisingly appears as the head of the less prestigious high captaincy of Ogulin, which was interpreted in such a manner that Zrínyi was relieved of his former position.⁸⁰ The exchange was, as a matter of fact, an adequate measure on the part of the Inner Austrian War Council. After the death of Gáspár Frangepán in 1653, the captaincy of Ogulin got under the direct command of the captain-general, who resided in Károlyváros.⁸¹ On behalf of him successive delegates were administering the border district, including three vlach villages at the estate of Bosiljevo owned by the Frangepáns. The residents of the settlements in question got involved in borderline incidents with the subjects of the Brod estate of the Zrínyis.⁸² The Austrian officers substituting the captain-general were apparently not able to master the conflict.⁸³ Péter Zrínyi, however, on the one hand as captain-in-chief of Ogulin, on the other as landlord of the estate of Brod headed both of the quarelling parties, so he could put an end to the hostilities. Zrínyi's resignation as captain-in-chief of Zengg was not disadvantageous for him from a financial point of view either, because the difference in the wages was compensated.⁸⁴ His repeated appointment as captain-in-chief of Sichelberg and Szluin before January 1662 while keeping the high captaincy of Ogulin resulted from György Frangepán's death the year before.⁸⁵ Frangepán was not only captain-in-chief of Sichelberg but also deputy captain-general of the

⁷⁶ ÖStA KA HKR KIA VII. 112; LOPAŠIĆ 1885. p. 308–309.

⁷⁷ KASER 1997. p. 170.

⁷⁸ LOPAŠIĆ 1885. p. 403–406.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ ÖStA KA ZSt. IÓHKR Bd. 19. fol. 3. 1662. Jänner. We owe thanks to Vedran Klaužer for this data. KUKULJEVIĆ 1868. p. 215.

⁸¹ LOPAŠIĆ 1885. p. 403–406.

⁸² *Ibid.*; KASER 1997. p. 190–194.

⁸³ LOPAŠIĆ 1885. p. 403–406.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ LASZOWSKI 1951. p. 134.

Croatian-Maritime confines, thereby the latter position fell also vacant. This office was assigned to Péter Zrínyi, too, so he became second-in-command of the confines.⁸⁶

The presentation of Péter Zrínyi's military service, however, would be incomplete without listing his remarkable engagements bringing fame and appreciation to him. Fortunately, the autograph notes of him made on the death row help us do this easily.⁸⁷ Zrínyi's first noteworthy victory dates back to October 1649, when returning from Ottoman territory he crushed the enemy led by Aga Deli Badankovich, the captain of the stronghold of Krupa. The Ottoman commander, who was chasing him at the head of the joint garrisons of Krupa and Bihács (Bihać), was also killed in action worsening the Ottoman's defeat.⁸⁸ Péter Zrínyi took the oath of royal councillor the next month which suggests a connection with this combat.⁸⁹ He also joined the Christian troops commanded by Herbart von Auersberg, the captain-general of the Croatian-Maritime confines, who defeated the Ottoman forces at Visibaba in 1655.⁹⁰ Zrínyi's most remarkable action which was echoed throughout Europe, however, was the destroying of the troops of Ali Csengics, the pasha of Bosnia, who entered the territory of the high captaincy of Ottocsák in October 1663. Commanding less than 2000 soldiers, Zrínyi gained victory over the Ottoman forces despite being outnumbered as many as four times.⁹¹ The importance of the battle is reflected by the fact that the royal diploma declaring Péter Zrínyi ban of Croatia and Slavonia, detailed the triumph while not even mentioning the former ones.⁹²

Far away from the borderland

Péter Zrínyi seems to have often been far away from the border district(s) entrusted to him. In February 1664, for instance, accompanied by his brother-in-law, Ferenc Kristóf Frangepán (Fran Krsto Frankopan) he arrived at the general assembly of the Holy Roman Empire in Regensburg where he informed the estates about the winter campaign led partly by his brother.⁹³ Shortly, they were joined by Guislan Segers d' Ideghem van Wassenhofen, the military engineer known as the architect of the stronghold of Zrínyi-Újvár who was similarly sent there by Miklós Zrínyi.⁹⁴ Together they sought to

⁸⁶ The charter declaring him ban titulates him captain-in-chief of Ogulin too. HDA-785 Obitelji Zrinski i Frankopani. Članovi obitelji Zrinski. Zrinski Petar 1.2.15.1.3.1. Released by DEŽELIĆ 1908. p. 334-335.

⁸⁷ ÖStA HHStA Fasc. 306. Konv. A. Ungarn. Zrinyische Akten. fol. 45-48. As an excerpt RAČKI 1873. p. 549-550.

⁸⁸ RÁTKAY 1652. p. 257-260.

⁸⁹ LASZOWSKI 1939. p. 101.

⁹⁰ KUKULJEVIĆ 1868. p. 214.

⁹¹ PETÁK 1985. p. 682-689.

⁹² HDA-785 Obitelji Zrinski i Frankopani. Članovi obitelji Zrinski. [Zrinski and Frangepán families. Members of the Zrinski family] Petar Zrinski 1.2.15.1.3.1.

⁹³ BENE 2001. p. 73-82.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

persuade the estates to support the offensive operations in the future as well. Péter Zrínyi took the opportunity to campaign for his appointment as captain-general of the Croatian-Maritime confines.⁹⁵ He might make himself at home in the city that served as a political centre of the Holy Roman Empire. An undated letter of him testifies that the younger Zrínyi visited the city not for the first time. Judging from its context, this might happen as early as the dawn of his adultery.⁹⁶ Provided that this journey also coincided with a general assembly, it might have occurred in autumn 1640. Zrínyi also attended the coronation ceremony of Emperor Leopold I in Frankfurt on 1 August 1658, where, according to his statement, he represented his nation on his own.⁹⁷ In the summer of 1654, he was staying at least for one month in Graz waiting for his captain-general. Here he got to know of the death of the Hungarian ruler, Ferdinánd IV, who was succeeded by the aforementioned Leopold (1657–1705).⁹⁸ The end of the year 1656 saw him in Vienna.⁹⁹

Péter Zrínyi spent the Lent in Venice in 1654. This apparently offered him the opportunity to discuss his planned maritime undertaking with the decision makers of the republic.¹⁰⁰ Zrínyi supposedly armed five ships and half a thousand men at his own expense for the operation.¹⁰¹ Péter set sail in the port of Kraljevica putting out to the Adriatic in May 1654.¹⁰² He allegedly took part in the fightings at the bay of Kotor (Kotori) visiting Perast.¹⁰³ Zrínyi himself mentioned among his merits that he had intercepted a smaller Turkish galley (*galiota*) with only one vessel and 25 men on board.¹⁰⁴ This might have been the action in the scope of which Zrínyi took prisoner a citizen of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) heading to Bar, too.¹⁰⁵ It is to be noted, that Zrínyi intended to sail to Crete, the straits as well as to 'Barbaria' as early as spring 1653, in order to support the war efforts of Venice in the Aegean (1645–1669).¹⁰⁶ The military cooperation of Venice and Péter Zrínyi, however, dates back to the decade before. We already know that the younger Zrínyi brother made a visit to Venice in 1644, where he allegedly had talks

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 54169. Regensburg, 18 October. Péter Zrínyi to Ádám Batthyány.

⁹⁷ ÖStA HHStA Fasc. 306. Konv. A. Ungarn. Zrinyische Akten. fol. 48.

⁹⁸ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány family] Missiles. No. 54163. Graz, 12 July 1654. Péter Zrínyi to Ádám Batthyány.

⁹⁹ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 54166. Vienna, 3 December 1656. Péter Zrínyi to Ádám Batthyány.

¹⁰⁰ BENE 1993. p. 653.

¹⁰¹ ÖStA HHStA Fasc. 306. Konv. A. Ungarn. Zrinyische Akten. fol. 48.

¹⁰² KOŠČAK 1954. p. 197, Takáts, s.d. a. p. 200.

¹⁰³ KUKULJEVIĆ 1868. p. 213.

¹⁰⁴ ÖStA HHStA Fasc. 306. Konv. A. Ungarn. Zrinyische Akten. fol. 48.

¹⁰⁵ KOŠČAK 1954. p. 197.

¹⁰⁶ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 54160. Ozaly, 8 March 1653. Péter Zrínyi to Ádám Batthyány.

over occupying the office of the general of Zára (Zadar).¹⁰⁷ According to this, he would have been entitled to recruit 600, his deputy-to-be, Gáspár Frangepán 300 men at the Venetians' expense.¹⁰⁸ It may not be a coincidence that Miklós Zrínyi also offered his service to the Republic of St Marcus approximately the same time.¹⁰⁹ To our knowledge, one of the brothers intended to visit Venice in 1645, again.¹¹⁰ Whoever it was, he probably did not do it for the first time. It is reasonable to think, that the Zrínyis entered the lagoon city as early as their study trip (1636–1637) in Italy which marked the end of their youth.¹¹¹

Ban of Croatia and Slavonia

This short overview of Péter Zrínyi's career path at the Croatian-Maritime confines reveals it to be unbroken moreover ascending. There is no indication of having been sidelined or mistrusted by the Austrian authorities. This was suggested by the nationalist historiography tendentially overestimating the day-to-day conflicts that Zrínyi was involved in.¹¹² It is worth mentioning that Farkas Kristóf Frangepán (†1652), who had chosen his wife from among the Austrian estates in the person of Ursula Inkofer, had been able to promote his son-in-law's advancement for just a couple of years. Surprisingly, not even the deaths of Gáspár (†1653) and György Frankopán (†1661) pushed back his career. On the contrary, these gave way to Zrínyi to get his brothers-in-law' positions, as noted above. He tried to take advantage of the death of Herbart von Auersberg, the captain-general of the Croatian-Maritime confines in 1669 as well, seeking to become head of the frontier, following his father-in-law's example.¹¹³ At first glance, the long desired position seemed to be at arm's length. Realistically thinking, however, his efforts could not be awarded with success, paradoxically exactly due to his relatives. At the beginning of the 1650s, the Frangepán family, including Péter Zrínyi, headed not only the confines itself but they also commanded nearly half of the border districts.¹¹⁴ From the point of view of the Austrian estates, which subsidized the frontier, this provided the kindred with extraordinary influence. As a matter of course, the estates of Carniola and Carinthia were interested in appointing someone from among themselves captain-general, thus Farkas Kristóf Frangepán's appointment was an

¹⁰⁷ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 9771. Szlakóc, 11 September 1644. Gergely Darabos to Ádám Batthyány

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ ZMÖM 2003. p. 500–501.

¹¹⁰ MNL–OL P 1314 A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. [The Archives of the Ducal Branch of the Batthyány Family] Missiles. No. 50705. Csáktornya, 3 June 1645. János Újhelyi to Ádám Batthyány.

¹¹¹ BITSKEY 1998. p. 326; SZÉCHY 1896. p. 64–68.

¹¹² KUKULJEVIĆ 1868. p. 211–224; PAULER 1867. p. 89–118.

¹¹³ PAULER 1876. p. 254–255

¹¹⁴ LOPAŠIĆ 1889. p. 466–470.

exception to a rule. Péter Zrínyi, as we have seen, made a bid for this position as early as 1664, but he did not succeed. The rejection, among other things, might have been connected to the fact that Miklós Zrínyi occupied the dignity of the ban of Croatia and Slavonia from early 1648.¹¹⁵ Péter's appointment as commander-in-chief was obviously anything but desirable from the perspective of the Austrian estates, because it would have increased the Zrinyis' weight south of the Száva.

Péter Zrínyi's chance of promotion dropped to a minimum after he had been appointed the ban of Croatia and Slavonia in January 1665, following his brother's death the previous year.¹¹⁶ The bans, as is well known, commanded the border zone along the Kulpa River owing to the fact that his contingent of half a thousand men was dislocated among the strongholds Breszt (Brest), Pokupszko (Pokupsko), Berkisevina (Brkiševina) and Szredichkó (Sredičko).¹¹⁷ The garrisons of this border district were sustained from the incomes of the Hungarian Chamber just like those of the confines opposite Kanizsa, even their payment was settled at the same time. No wonder that is why the pay-sheets of the latter usually contain the items of the border zone directed by the ban, as well.¹¹⁸ Not being aided by the Hereditary Lands, their competent military authority was the War Council of Vienna unlike the Slavonian and Croatian confines, which were directed by the Inner Austrian one of Graz. Hence, the dignity of the ban of Croatia and Slavonia was so to speak inconsistent with managing the confines, so Péter Zrínyi had no option but to quit his border offices. He achieved, however, to be succeeded by his underage son, János Antal (Ivan Antun, 1654–1703) as captain-in-chief of Ogulin.¹¹⁹ The precedent for this was set by Farkas Kristóf Frangepán who passed the high captaincy in question into his elder son's hands taking advantage of being captain-general of the confines.¹²⁰

Péter Zrínyi might have felt himself somewhat compensated by being appointed captain of Légrád and Muraköz in August 1665, which position also became vacant by Miklós' death. Thereby he headed not only the aforementioned garrisons of the border zone on the Kulpa but also 650 royal soldiers of the confines opposite Kanizsa.¹²¹ Possibly his superiority encouraged Péter to compell Miklós Zrínyi's widow, Sophia Maria Löbl to divide the family holdings again. According to the contract concluded in December 1665, the Muraköz domain was halved just like the estates lying on the Kulpa River, namely those of Ozaly, Ribnik and Brod, whereas Péter held Bosjakó alone.¹²² Besides, the arrangement entitled Péter to take half of

¹¹⁵ ÖStA KA ZSt. Sr. Bestellungen. Karton 9. No. 1468. (16 March 1648). Released by KINCSES 2017. p. 213–214.

¹¹⁶ ÖStA KA ZSt. Sr. Bestellungen. Karton 11. No. 1746. (18 February 1665).

¹¹⁷ TAKÁTS 1908. p. 291–292, 298.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ LOPAŠIĆ 1885. p. 403–406.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ ÖStA KA ZSt. Sr. Bestellungen. Karton 11. No. 1752. (22 August 1665).

¹²² MNL–OL MKA E 148 NRA Fasc. 319. No. 23. An abstract of it: Fasc. 1092. No. 7, Fasc. 1091. No. 61.

Medvevár (Medvedgrad) manor out of pawn, yielding his shares at the Rakovec and Verbovec estates to his sister-in-law in exchange for the other half. Zrínyi Péter was also allowed to lease half the Ozaly estate and that of the littoral holdings for 5000 Forints which were to have ceded to Miklós' children.¹²³ To sum up, Péter kept his hands on the Croatian and Adriatic estates just as he did before, only the legal title of their possession changed. In addition, he obtained half of the Muraköz estate which was the most valuable of all the family holdings. Péter Zrínyi apparently knew that he could fulfil his duty as joint captain of Muraköz and Légrád only by commanding the private armed forces of the large estate, at least partially.

Conclusion

The intervals spent in Muraköz (1637–1647, 1665–1670), as we have seen, framed the two decades' career of Péter Zrínyi as officer at the Croatian-Maritime confines. This started with his appointment as captain-in-chief of Sichelberg and Szluin (1647–1657?) followed by getting the high captaincy of Zengg (1658–1661?), the office of the captain-in-chief of Ogulin and that of Sichelberg-Szluin for the second time (1662?–1664). By occupying the position of the deputy captain-general he became the second-in-command of the confines, which proved to be the highest and last stage of his advancement. Taking over the dignity of the ban following his brother's death in early 1665, he drifted away from the possibility of becoming captain-general of the confines which he desired for. His proficiency, as opposed to the statement of the research, was broken as late as its final but most important phase.¹²⁴ This must have played a crucial role that the unruly aristocrat got involved in the conspiracy against the House of Habsburg named after him and his brother-in-law, Ferenc Kristóf Frangepán. This, besides costing them their lives, sealed off the faith of their families, as well.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Péter Zrínyi dealt with obtaining the generalcy of Upper Hungary towards the end of his life. Besides purchasing some estates in the region, the marriage of his first-born daughter Ilona (Helena) (†1703) to Ferenc I. Rákóczi in 1666 might also have served this purpose. PAULER 1876. p. 167–168. Despite not being the subject of the present paper, it is worth mentioning that Ilona Zrínyi was not 23 but only 17 years old at the time of the marriage service. The scholars had a good reason to believe that her birth date of 1643, which could be read on her sepulchre in Nikomédia (Izmit), simply can not be true. TEMESVÁRI 1996. p. 51–56. The diary of Farkas Kristóf Frangepán, her grandfather proves without any doubt that Ilona Zrínyi was born on 20 March 1649, between 11 o' clock and noon in the morning in Muraköz, probably in Breszt (Podbrest). LASZOWSKI 1939. p. 85–86. The Croatian language entry seems to have escaped the researchers' attention so far.

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AHK	Alte Hofkammer
Bd.	Band
Bp.	Budapest
HDA	Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb
Exp.	Expeditur
Fasc.	Fasciculus
FHKA	Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv
IÖHKR	Innerösterreichischer Hofkriegsrat
KA	Kriegsarchiv
KIA	Kanzleiarchiv
Konv.	Konvolut
MKA	Magyar Kamara Archivuma [Archives of the Hungarian Chamber]
MKL	Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár [Archives of the Hungarian Chancellery]
MNL-OL	Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára [Central Archives of the National Archives of Hungary], Budapest
MNL-ZML	Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Zala megyei Levéltára [Zala County Archives of the National Archives of Hungary], Zalaegerszeg
MSHSM	Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium
NRA	Neoregestrata acta
NSK	Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica [National and University Library], Zagreb
ÖStA	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Wien
Prot.	Protokolle
R. Nr.	Rote Nr.
Reg.	Registratur
S.d.	Sine dato
Sr.	Sonderreihe
SUS	Sammlungen und Selekte
ZSt	Zentralstelle

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