

Enemy behind the Gates: The Occupation of Central European Cities during the Thirty Years' War

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The present study aims to briefly discuss the basic aspects of the occupation of Central European cities by enemy troops, based on a comparison of the course of military stays. The findings will be based on the author's research of both recent literature and archival sources in the Czech lands, including Silesia, Germany (especially Upper Palatinate, Bavaria, and the north of the country) and Austria.

[Thirty Years' War; City History; Occupation; Military; Townspeople]

On the Issue. Europe and Bohemia

From ancient history all the way to the present day, cities have always quartered soldiers. Likewise, they were and still are regularly occupied by enemy forces, either because of the aggressor's claims to them and their adjacent territories, or for their strategic importance. Even Czech scientific and popularizing literature has always pushed the picture of cities being ransacked by enemy armies during the Thirty Years' War,¹ especially because they often settled here for months or even years. If a location that stood along the path of the invader's conquest did not fit

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¹ A general look at the Thirty Years' War in Czech historiography J. POLIŠENSKÝ, *Tricetiletá válka a český národ*, Praha 1960 or, more recently, R. FUKALA, *Tricetiletá válka 1618–1648 I–II*, České Budějovice 2018. Abroad, and especially in Germany, works about this war are innumerable, so I highlight here only the latest ones: G. SCHMIDT, *Die Reiter der Apokalypse. Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, München 2018; J. BURKHARDT, *Der Krieg der Kriege. Eine neue Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, Stuttgart 2018 or H. MEDICK, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg. Zeugnisse vom Leben mit Gewalt*, Göttingen 2018. See also Peter H. WILSON, *Europe's Tragedy. The History of the Thirty Years War*, London 2010.

into their long-term plans, they moved on relatively quickly. This was usually preceded by some amount of resistance and subsequent plundering, or “only” paying a protection fee. Sometimes the invaders also agreed to leave on the condition that they would collect a regular tax to feed their army. Additionally, cities also housed domestic and allied soldiers, usually for their defence. It is well documented that even friendly soldiers caused considerable havoc in cities where they were stationed and did not shy away from robbery, theft, murder, and rape. While I myself do not agree with claims that civilians sometimes saw little difference between enemy and friendly troops (though I also do not deny the possibility that that was sometimes the case), it would not be unreasonable to question if there was really a difference between when a city housed an occupying force and when it housed those who were supposed to protect it. It is difficult to imagine that an enemy army would systematically pillage a city that they plan to inhabit for an extended time. After all, the damage done to its economy and populace would hardly be worth it in the long term. In the following text, I will focus on the issues of the wider Central European area using select cities as examples to formulate more general theses that could be further discussed in historiographical discourse.

It should be noted at the outset that the Thirty Years’ War was by no means thirty straight years of constant fighting. It consisted of several phases of varying intensity and scale, with some areas being hit very hard demographically and economically, while others were less or not at all. For example, the authors of a book on the city of Hamburg aptly called “War Just Beyond the Gates” because the vital northern German port city remained just out of reach of the fighting and actually prospered during the war years.² Other cities, due either to their strong fortifications and garrisons (f.e. the Bavarian city of Ingolstadt³) or the determined resistance of its defenders (the famous defence of Brno⁴), never suffered occupation. In contrast, Magdeburg serves as an example of a city that was conquered and pillaged by enemy armies more than once and suffered

² M. KNAUER, S. TODE (eds.), *Der Krieg vor den Toren. Hamburg im Dreißigjährigen Krieg 1618–1648*, Hamburg 2000.

³ T. SCHÖNAUER, *Ingolstadt in der Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges. Soziale und wirtschaftliche Aspekte der Stadtgeschichte*, Ingolstadt 2007.

⁴ Specifically about the defence of Brno: B. BRETHOLZ, *Der Vertheidigungskampf der Stadt Brünn gegen die Schweden*, Brünn 1895; F. ŠUJAN, *Švédové u Brna roku 1645*, Brno 1898 or more recently P. BALCÁREK, *Brno versus Olomouc. Pod Špilberkem proti Švédům*, Brno 1993.

greatly during the war. Particularly the Sack of Magdeburg in 1631 by the Catholic League is indelibly written into history. Thousands of dead and a pile of ash and rubble where once stood a thriving city were all that remained to serve as a symbol of the senseless violence of the Thirty Years' War.⁵ This event also gave us a new word to describe the total devastation of a city: *magdeburgisation*.

Czech cities were far from exempt, after all, it was in Bohemia that the war began, and along its southern borders were where the first occupations of fortified cities occurred. Bohemian revolutionary assaults on Austrian border cities were later followed by conquests of towns on the Czech side by the imperial forces led by the Count of Buquoy and his famous Spanish officers (Marradas, Huerta). The West Bohemian Catholic bastion of Pilsen was also defeated after its inhabitants refused to join the uprising and were conquered by mercenaries led by Peter Ernst of Mansfeld, with the help of other territorial armies.⁶ The Mansfeld garrisons remained in several places even after the Battle of White Mountain, but I would be reluctant to call their pacification by imperial troops an occupation. This stands in contrast to towns in Upper and Rhine Palatinate, where the fighting moved from Bohemia and where Heidelberg, the seat of Friedrich of Palatinate, was also conquered and occupied. The cities of Friedrich's allies turned out no different. Another period of fighting started with the intervention of Christian IV of Denmark, who managed to penetrate not only deep into northern Germany, but also Silesia, where his and his allies' armies occupied a number of cities.⁷ The Danish never managed to hold Silesian and imperial cities for long however, as they were interrupted by the intervention of a bolstered imperial army under the command of Albrecht of Wallenstein. The Habsburgs' other Nordic rival, Sweden, presented a much bigger threat though – from 1630 onwards, Swedish armies gradually flooded Germany and made their way into Bohemia and Austria, where they occupied important cities and fortresses for many years. Olomouc, in Moravia, was held by the Swedes for eight years

⁵ M. PUHLE (Hg.), „...gantz verheeret!“ *Magdeburg und der Dreissigjährige Krieg*, Magdeburg 1998.

⁶ Most recently: J. KILIÁN, *Dobytí Plzně 1618*, České Budějovice 2018.

⁷ On the Danish invasion V. MIŠAGA, *Dánský vpád do Slezska a na Moravu. Souvislosti a průběh roku 1626*, in: *Časopis Národního muzea – řada historická*, 177, 1–2, 2008, pp. 55–103 and R. FUKALA, *Dánský vpád do Slezska a rozklad opavské stavovské společnosti. Památce univerzitního profesora PhDr. Josefa Polišínského, DrSc.*, in: *Slezský sborník*, 99, 2, 2001, pp. 81–94.

(1642–1650), even after the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia. Some Pomeranian towns were much worse off, as their occupying garrisons only left almost a century after annexation, with Szczecin being held from 1630 to 1720 (since 1648 as a part of Sweden).

After Sweden's failures at the Battle of Nördlingen in 1634 and the Peace of Prague in 1635, France joined them as an ally, but paid for its initial unpreparedness by being forced to repel the enemy invaders from its own territory and having to recapture cities conquered by the Habsburgs and their allies.⁸ The same fate awaited many cities in southern Germany after the consolidation of their armed forces and the transition to a counterattack in conjunction with the famous warlord, the Duke Bernard of Saxony-Weimar.⁹ Czech lands were invaded by even before the Swedes by the Saxons, who were until then allies of the Habsburgs. From 1631 to 1632 they occupied the entire northwest of the kingdom and the capital city of Prague without much opposition.¹⁰ Before the war ended, the Swedes, whose stay in Bohemian and Moravian cities was mostly short-term (with the exception of fortresses in northern Moravia, Olomouc and Uničov, among others) and in the Czech-Saxon-Lusatian borderland (Cheb and Frýdlant¹¹), managed to reach the left-bank part of Prague. Swedish garrisons remained here until the conclusion of the Nuremberg Assembly in 1650, where a satisfactory agreement was finally reached.¹²

⁸ See R. REBITSCH, *Matyáš Gallas (1588–1647). Císařský generál a Valdštejnův „dědic“*, Praha 2014, especially pages 42–51. Gallas was the commander in chief of the imperial campaign in France. The French were most terrified by General John of Werth with his bold ventures, during which he even appeared close to Paris. His biography: H. LAHRKAMP, *Jan von Werth. Sein Leben nach archivalischen Quellenzeugnissen*, Köln am Rhein 1962.

⁹ Compare T. WOLF, *Reichsstädte in Kriegszeiten. Untersuchungen zur Verfassungs-, Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte von Isny, Lindau, Memmingen und Ravensburg im 17. Jahrhundert*, Memmingen 1991.

¹⁰ Monography on the Saxon invasion: A. REZEK, *Dějiny saského vpádu do Čech 1631–1632 a návrat emigrace*, Praha 1888. More recently M. TOEGEL, Příčiny saského vpádu vpádu do Čech v roce 1631, in: *Československý časopis historický*, 21 (71), 4, 1973, pp. 553–581 and O. KORTUS, Praha za saského vpádu v letech 1631 a 1632, in: *Pražský sborník historický*, 36, 2008, pp. 105–183.

¹¹ On the occupation of Frýdlant: M. SVOBODA, Švédská okupace Frýdlantu roku 1639, in: M. ELBEL – M. TOGNER (uspoř.), *Historická Olomouc*, sv. 13 (=Konec švédské okupace a poválečná obnova ve 2. polovině 17. století), 2002, pp. 53–67.

¹² See A. OSCHMANN, *Der Nürnberger Exekutionstag 1649–1650. Das Ende des Dreißigjährigen Krieges in Deutschland*, Münster 1991.

A Comparison and Starting Point

A unique monography by Anja Rieck provides an invaluable description of urban life in Frankfurt am Main during occupation in the Thirty Years' War, and its findings can be further developed and compared. The occupation of this important imperial coronation city by the Swedish army lasted for four years, from 1631 to 1635. The majority of Frankfurters were Lutherans and actually welcomed the Swedes, so to what extent it can be called an occupation is a point of contention, especially after Frankfurt voluntarily accepted the Swedes following negotiations. Later, the city even joined their side, despite initially wanting to remain neutral. Fearing a change of mind, Gustav II Adolf assured the emperor that Frankfurt's decision was not a result of Swedish threats. To protect his reputation as an ally to German Protestants, he went as far as to tolerate some violent resistance from locals. This also served the purpose helping to make the city a power base for his ambitions for the imperial throne. Because of this, he was very accommodating of the city and its rights and freedoms. In the end however, Frankfurters were disappointed by the Sweden's high financial demands, attempts to confiscate the property of the Catholics and the indiscipline of the soldiers from the garrison. In January 1632, the Swedish Chancellor Oxenstierna came here and remained until 1635. He initiated the founding of the anti-Habsburg Heilbronn Association (1633), which chose Frankfurt as its residence. However, after the Battle of Nördlingen a year later, the city's residents became disillusioned, and Frankfurt switched back to the imperial side after the Peace of Prague (1635). They only managed this after the strong Swedish garrison voluntarily left, following a confrontation. In her study, Anja Rieck describes the difficult coexistence of Frankfurt citizens with Swedish soldiers who demanded not only plenty of food, but also alcohol and tobacco, putting a great strain on the already somewhat destitute populace. In addition, soldiers often behaved brutally. There were instances of landlords being kicked out of their own beds and houses, as well as numerous counts of sexual violence and religious clashes. While the city did have its own soldiers, they were subordinate to the Swedes. When it came to repairing the fortifications, everyone was obligated to help, and while the villagers from the area could not avoid this, the rich could just send labourers in their stead. The richest patricians did not lose weight even then, the lower classes did. Some local merchants were in very close contact with the Swedes: they became their court suppliers. And there were those who tried to make money on the soldiers and sold them the required goods very expensive.¹³

In the following text, we will focus on three basic areas. First, for what reasons and under what circumstances the soldiers entered the cities. Secondly, what denominational changes and clashes in the cities took place in the event of the enemy occupation. Thirdly, how the stay of military units changed the everyday life of cities and their inhabitants.

Soldiers in the Cities

Enemy forces entered cities in two major ways – following a battle, or in accordance with some prior agreement and under pre-arranged conditions. The second option became more common and far more welcome on both sides during the Thirty Years' War as time went on and exhaustion among armies grew. Potential loot in repeatedly looted cities could hardly make up for further losses in manpower, and that is without even taking into account the physical, logistical and time demands of such an endeavour. To prevent unnecessary bloodshed, cities let enemy soldiers in, paid the high protection charges (which went down significantly as the war went on), paid taxes and tried to find some *modus vivendi* and *cooperandi* with residing foreign soldiers and officers.¹⁴ Cities that refused to cooperate paid dearly for their resistance, and served as an effective measure to subdue others. The fact of the matter is, however, that it was not always up to the actual council of the city or municipality in question, but rather the leadership of the manorial garrison, or even the local sovereign himself.

If a city did have to take up arms in defence, its people could expect violent retribution from the invaders. Especially in the case of an unconditional surrender following a military defeat, a certain degree of violence was to be tolerated, even expected as par for the course in such a war. German historian Ralf Pröve describes in his works the terms “violentia” (intolerable violence) and “potestas”, the latter of which represents what is described above.¹⁵ The conquered city could be handed over to the soldiers to sack as they pleased, and what the rest of its fate would be depended on what the enemy commanding officer's plans were. If he did

¹³ A. RIECK, *Frankfurt am Main unter schwedischer Besatzung 1631–1635. Reichsstadt – Repräsentationsort – Bündnisfestung*, Bern, Frankfurt am Main 2005.

¹⁴ M. ĎURČANSKÝ, *Česká města a jejich správa za třicetileté války. Zemský a lokální kontext*, Praha 2013, p. 180.

¹⁵ R. PRÖVE, *Violentia und Potestas. Perzeptionsprobleme von Gewalt in Söldnertagebücher des 17. Jahrhunderts*, in: M. MEUMANN – D. NIEFANGER (eds.), *Ein Schauplatz herber Angst. Wahrnehmung und Darstellung von Gewalt im 17. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 1997, pp. 4–42.

not expect its longer occupation and use, he had no real reason to keep his soldiers in check, quite the contrary – it would help with ongoing problems there were with paying the soldiers their regular wages. Enraged by the fighting, injuries, and casualties among their own comrades, longing for loot, they unleashed hell upon the conquered city in the following hours or days. They did not shy away from murder, rape, torture, mutilation, burning, looting houses, destruction of property (furniture, windows, doors) and robbing civilians, taking their clothes (sometimes right on the street), stealing cattle and anything that was valuable and wasn't bolted down. Church tabernacles and town halls or other public buildings were in no way exempt, paper from city books and deeds could serve various other purposes. The more opulent city buildings were often reserved for the commanders of the siege divisions. The Palace of the Dukes of Gonzaga in Mantua for example is famous the loot acquired during its sacking by generals Johann Aldringen and Matthias Gallas.¹⁶ In any case, while material losses could be healed or mourned, the really worst losses to cities were demographic in nature, be it inhabitants dying during the siege, or fleeing and never returning. In the aforementioned Sack of Magdeburg, up to twenty thousand people supposedly died at the hands of the invaders or perished in the subsequent fires (1631).¹⁷ In the Czech lands, Nymburk only fully recovered from the being laid waste to in 1634 long after the war,¹⁸ Písek suffered through mass murder as early as during the uprising in 1620, starving Augsburg supposedly experienced instances of anthropophagy,¹⁹ and a high percentage of the residents of Bautzen burned and suffocated to death after the town was deliberately engulfed in flames.²⁰

¹⁶ Testimonies from biographers: H. HALLWICH, *Johann Aldringen. Ein Bruchstück aus seinem Leben als Beitrag zur Geschichte Wallenstein's*, Leipzig 1885 and R. REBITSCH, *Matyáš Gallas (1588–1647). Císařský generál a Valdštejnův „dědic“*, Praha 2014.

¹⁷ See note 5 and onwards: M. KAISER, „Excidium Magdeburgense“. Beobachtungen zur Wahrnehmung und Darstellung von Gewalt im Dreißigjährigen Krieg, in: M. MEUMANN – D. NIEFANGER (eds.), *Ein Schauplatz herber Angst. Wahrnehmung und Darstellung von Gewalt im 17. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 1997, pp. 43–64.

¹⁸ O. ODLOŽILÍK, *Zkáza Nymburka za třicetileté války*, Nymburk 1934.

¹⁹ B. ROECK, „Als wollt die Welt schier brechen“. Eine Stadt im Zeitalter des Dreißigjährigen Krieges, München 1991, pp. 271–279. Here, Roeck very graphically depicts the famine in the besieged city and resulting deaths.

²⁰ J. ZEIDLER, *Tabera Budissinae. Budissinische Brandstelle. Das ist: Was vor, in und nach der erbärmlichen ruin und einäscherung der Alten Volckreichen und Nahrhafftigen Hauptstadt Budissin vorgangen*, Dresden 1634.

The list of such events goes on and on, but what we are primarily interested in are situations where the city was spared from the worst extempore acts and conquered with occupation in mind. West Bohemian Pilsen at the end of 1618 serves as a particularly illustrative example. It was a catholic city that, while under siege by forces led by Peter Ernst, count of Mansfeld, openly taunted its enemies and inflicted significant casualties upon its attackers. It could afford to keep this up both because of its supposedly impenetrable walls and because there was still hope of Habsburg forces coming to its aid. It would come as no surprise if the general, after breaking through the walls, let his soldiers loose on Pilsen to do as they pleased. Mansfeld however had other plans for the West Bohemian metropolis, namely, to support power and serve as a strategic base on the route between Prague and German lands, and thus strictly forbade his men from violence in Pilsen. He quickly had collateral damage repaired and even improved the city's fortifications, so much so that two years later, during its march on Prague, even the Imperial-League army was reluctant to attack Pilsen, and rather to negotiated with Mansfeld. His garrison then remained here for several months after the Battle of White Mountain.²¹ The way his forces further fortified the occupied city was a logical move – they did so for their own protection. For the locals, however, this often meant an obligation to participate in the fortification work as a part-time cheap labour force. When the people of Sulzbach were called on to take part in the construction of palisades in front of the gates sometime around 1636, they proudly replied that they had their privileges and would not be forced to do such work.²² On the other hand, the same demands could, of course, be made (and regularly were) by their government and its military commanders.

To have a city spared, the occupying forces had to be paid large sums of money. The northern German city of Hildesheim had to bankroll various officers during the war but paid the most to Gottfried Heinrich of Pappenheim after his occupation of the city in 1632. The Imperial Marshal originally demanded 200,000 gold coins but was in the end satisfied with only a quarter of that sum, which was a common occurrence.²³

²¹ KILIÁN, pp. 53–60.

²² A. RANK, *Sulzbach im Zeichen der Gegenreformation (1627–1649). Verlauf und Fazit, einer beschwerlichen Jesuitenmission*, Sulzbach, Rosenberg 2003, p. 90.

²³ CH. PLATH, *Konfessionskampf und fremde Besatzung. Stadt und Hochstift Hildesheim im Zeitalter der Gegenreformation und des Dreißigjährigen Krieges (ca. 1580–1660)*, Münster 2005, p. 494.

Another way to get money from an occupied city was the capture and kidnapping of citizens and demanding a ransom for their release.²⁴ Councillors and clergy made for great targets, exemplified by the case of the catholic dean of Cham, who fell into Swedish captivity repeatedly, allegedly had to pay himself out of his predicament with an unbelievable sum of 30,000 gold coins.²⁵ The clergy from Altdorf were also abducted, as well as Mittner, the dean of Neumarkt, who nevertheless did manage to escape from captivity. At the very end of the war, four townspeople were abducted from Nabburg to Weiden by the Swedes as a way to enforce a protection tax.²⁶ The wife of an Altdorf schoolmaster was abducted by Croatian soldiers from Altdorf to Neumarkt and released after paying ten toalars in ransom.²⁷ In January 1633, General Gronsfeld imprisoned several Hildesheim councillors to demand 25,000 gold coins from the city, but the councillors were released a few days later when an agreement was reached for a smaller sum. This situation repeated itself a year later, when the imperial commissioner abducted eighteen Hildesheim burghers and imprisoned them in the city of Hameln, as well as forcing them to renounce their allegiance to the Swedes. They were abducted in a wagon that was used to transport manure, among other humiliating acts and only returned home after more than half a year.²⁸ Three burghers were taken by the Swedes from the Silesian city of Głubczyce in 1642, including Mayor Konrad Erb of Ehrenberg, after the city could only pay 6,000 toalars of the required 9,000. Although the mayor managed to beg his way to freedom, the other two men remained captive and were taken to Frankfurt an der Oder, where they were to wait for the remaining money to be paid to the Swedes. One of them died during the captivity and the other finally managed to escape after thirty-nine weeks of captivity.²⁹ In 1633, the Oleśnica-Bierutów prince turned to the Saxon commander Franz Albrecht of Saxony-Lauenburg with a request for the release of the captured mayor and councillors from Kluczbork. In his second request,

²⁴ ĎURČANSKÝ, pp. 125–126. Additionally, this slightly outdated article: J. ŠTĚPÁNEK, *Měšťané litomyšlské v zajetí švédském*, in: *Časopis Českého musea*, 68, 1894, pp. 118–135.

²⁵ J. BRUNNER, *Geschichte der Stadt Cham*, Cham 1919, p. 91.

²⁶ E. DAUSCH, *Nabburg, Geschichte, Geschichten und Sehenswürdigkeiten einer über 1000 Jahre alten Stadt*, Regensburg 1998, pp. 224–225.

²⁷ K. RIED, *Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz. Eine quellenmäßige Geschichte der Stadt Neumarkt*, Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz 1960, pp. 78, 83, 84.

²⁸ PLATH, pp. 464–465.

²⁹ K. MALER, *Dzieje Głubczyc do 1742*, Opole 2003, pp. 157–158.

he stated that not only was he not satisfied, but on the contrary, their prison conditions were worsened to force them to pay a protection tax.³⁰

Another thing to consider is the torture of residents who did not want to reveal the hiding places of their valuables, but again this was more in cases where the enemy only plundered the city without occupying them more permanently. Swedish soldiers were infamously inventive in this endeavour, pioneering practices such as tightening ropes around people's heads and forcibly pouring "Swedish Drink" (sewage combined with other waste) into their throats. In the autumn of 1645, in an effort to enforce a large payment from the town of Głubczyce, Swedish General Königsmarck had the merchant Adam Pusch seated in front of the local town hall on a wooden horse with a very sharp back for seven hours.³¹ In Kötzting, the Swedes supposedly tied one burgher between two planks and cut him in half with a saw like a tree.³²

The military garrisons of many occupied cities subsequently became a menace to the entire wider area in which they demanded payment for their provision under the threat of execution by fire and sword. Few took such threats lightly, although contributions could not always meet the demands. In the 1640s, garrisons were a plague to Moravian (Olomouc, Uničov, etc.) and West Bohemian cities (Cheb, Horšovský Týn, etc.), but also Annaberg, Saxony, whose area of interest also included the Bohemian Ore Mountains. Those areas were later also harassed by the strong Swedish garrison in castle of Hněvín in Most, which was responsible for many violent actions in pursuit of tax enforcement and intimidation, including burning villages, towns, and castles. It was no wonder that the castle in Most was on top of the list of fortresses to be demolished for safety reasons after the war.³³

Soldiers, Burghers, and Faith

A very significant change in the occupied city concerned religious conditions. In the later stages of the war, although sometimes Catholic

³⁰ Archiwum państwowe Opole, Akta miasta Kluczborka, no. 1598 – Letter from Prince Henry Wenceslas of Minsterberg to Duke Franz Albrecht of Saxony-Lauenburg concerning the captured mayor and councilors from Klučbork, September 5, 1633 (draft).

³¹ MALER, pp. 157–158.

³² BRUNNER, pp. 91–92.

³³ J. KILIÁN, Die nordböhmischen Festungen zur Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges in narrativen Quellen, in: *Die Festung der Neuzeit in historischen Quellen* (= Festungsforschung, Bd. 9), Regensburg 2018, pp. 117–131.

armies occupied Catholic cities (including French ones by the combined Imperial-League-Spanish armies and Bavarian cities by French armies), more often the occupiers were of different faiths than the locals. For this reason, they expelled their ideological rivals (pastors, priests, teachers), unless they managed to flee to safety on their own. Both the Saxons and the Swedes purposefully persecuted Catholic clergy and abducted them for ransom. The parish priest Schemelius from the town of Chabařovice in the foothills of the Ore Mountains managed to escape with his valuables but was murdered by the inhabitants of a nearby village out of robbery motives.³⁴ In addition, captured clergy were usually the target of public ridicule and humiliation. The old Dean of Rokycany had a mitre put on his head by Swedish soldiers, was mounted on a horse and paraded around the city. There was also the local chaplain, who was murdered by Swedish soldiers despite being helpless and ill.³⁵ When a priest did decide to escape, it was often adventurous and dangerous. In Sulzbach, Upper Palatinate, after the surrender of the city, the Bavarian occupiers tried to arrest Pastor Braun, who left us his written testimony. According to Braun, the soldiers arrived in Sulzbach from Amberg, encircled his house, armed with rifles and prepared to fire. His wife and two daughters were very frightened, the house was searched, but when Braun, who had fled to safety in time, was not found by the soldiers, they just left.³⁶ Worse off were the Jesuits, who could not expect much mercy from the Lutheran and Calvinist hordes. In Hildesheim, northern Germany, where they had been since the end of the 16th century, they had for long been a thorn in the side of local Lutheran townspeople, so when the Hildesheim imperial garrison capitulated in 1634, the Jesuits were exiled.³⁷

Abandoned churches and sacred buildings of non-believers were desecrated by soldiers, or at least used for different purposes. In the autumn of 1618, the revolutionaries, under the command of Count Heinrich Schlick, settled in Zwettl in Lower Austria after a short battle with their garrison and armed townspeople. Since there was no fortress in the city, they created their own by fortifying the building of the rectory. Even better fortified was the local monastery, several kilometres outside of the

³⁴ J. KILIÁN, Vražda chabařovického faráře Schemelia, in: *Ústecký sborník historický*, 1–2, 2012, pp. 7–21.

³⁵ H. HRACHOVÁ (ed.), *Rokycany*, Praha 2011, pp. 83–84.

³⁶ A. ECKERT (ed.), *Nordgauchronik von Johannes Braun, Pastor und Superintendent zu Bayreuth. Anno 1648. Pfalzgraf Christian August gewidmet*, Amberg 1993, pp. 343–345.

³⁷ PLATH, p. 146.

city, even more abundantly. They equipped it with cannons and a whole infantry battalion. In contrast, the parish Catholic church in the city was converted into a slaughterhouse and stables for cattle. This was to last for a full seven months, until the imperial commander Henry Duval de Dampierre appeared in Zwettl and forced them to surrender.³⁸ The way invaders turned church buildings into stables and barns is referenced in many contemporary texts.

Clergy then came to or returned to cities that were occupied by armies that shared their faith. Under their protection, they could work here freely – they baptized, married, anointed, and buried. Their services were also sought after by until recently religiously oppressed locals. A particularly large number of expelled non-Catholic priests came to Prague and the cities of the Bohemian Northwest during the Saxon invasion in 1631–1632, but they came episodically, in waves.³⁹ In Prague, returning exiles, in cooperation with non-Catholic priests, buried the heads of the executed revolutionary leaders, so thoroughly in fact that they have not been unearthed to this day. Michel Stüeler, an author of memoirs from Krupka in North Bohemia, describes the case of Christian Troschel, a Lutheran priest who was the deputy pastor of Krupka in the pre-White Mountain period, who had to go into exile beyond the nearby border in 1624 and returned a few years later thanks to the Saxons. The locals, still resistant to re-Catholicization, gave him a warm welcome.⁴⁰ Banning the preaching of non-Catholic clergy in the Bohemian part of the Ore Mountains and Lutherans in general was an impossible task. A similar situation happened when non-Catholic priests arrived in Silesia and northern Moravia during the Danish invasion, or in Palatinate towns after Swedish incursions. Non-Catholic services also became an integral part of everyday life in Moravian towns that found themselves more permanently under the rule of their Swedish garrisons in the 1640s, such as Olomouc.⁴¹

³⁸ D. GRETZEL, *Die landesfürstliche Stadt Zwettl im Dreißeigjährigen Krieg*, Zwettl 2004, pp. 21–24.

³⁹ O. KORTUS, Praha za saského vpádu v letech 1631 a 1632, in: *Pražský sborník historický*, 36, 2008, pp. 105–183.

⁴⁰ J. KILIÁN (ed.), *Paměti krupského měšťana, Michela Stüelera (1629–1649)*, Teplice, Dolní Břežany 2013, p. 185.

⁴¹ On the occupation of Olomouc, most recently J. HOFMAN, Mezi mlýnskými kameny – městská rada jako prostředník mezi olomouckou obcí a švédskou armádou (1642–1650), in: *Historica Olomucensia*, 45, 2013, pp. 63–83.

In connection with the occupation, the composition of city councils also changed routinely, if the city was occupied by non-Catholics, catholic councillors often had to leave, and vice versa. While this was the norm, there were also notable exceptions. When the Duke of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, along with the Swedes, occupied Hildesheim in 1634 and immediately ordered the expulsion of Catholics from the town council, a wave of protest arose from among the councillors, even though they were mostly Lutherans. They resented the duke's interference in town affairs and disobeyed his orders.⁴² In the Bohemian royal town of Slaný, returning emigrants, led by the city's former councillor, Václav Pelargus, who had worked his way up to high positions within the Saxon occupation administration, played an important role during the Saxon invasion. At the same time, many of his former neighbours tried to benefit from his position.⁴³

One more brief observation – Jewish diasporas were waged in various ways in the occupied cities, and they served as a significant source of funds for both sides, while at the same time, soldiers liked to sell stolen goods to Jews. This led to some interesting contrasts. For example, the Jews of Hildesheim complained about the immense burden on them, one that led to the impoverishment and shrinking of the local Jewish community,⁴⁴ while their colleagues in Frankfurt, a local rabbi wrote, openly admitted that they had actually fared much better than Christians.⁴⁵

Social Life and Business

It is inconceivable that social life and business in the occupied city could completely subside, that locals would practically stop leaving their homes, or that if they did, they would completely avoid the occupiers. The reality was quite different. Residents came into contact with the soldiers on a daily basis, not only as part of their duty to accommodate them, but sometimes even amicably. They traded with each other, and townspeople were able to obtain valuable goods of questionable origin, but at attractive prices.⁴⁶ Some craftsmen even prospered, as can be seen

⁴² PLATH, p. 297.

⁴³ J. KADEŘÁBEK, *Nerovný boj o víru. Páni z Martinic a rekatolizace města Slaný (1600–1665)*, Praha 2018, pp. 121–122.

⁴⁴ PLATH, pp. 541–545.

⁴⁵ RIECK, pp. 215–217.

⁴⁶ Stüeler, a burgher from Krupka, noticed that his neighbor Gorge Janich had bought a large amount of stolen goods and made a considerable fortune of them. KILIÁN (ed.), *Paměti*, p. 433.

in the example of Frankfurt. In the Hanseatic port of Wismar, bakeries supplying the garrison profited greatly from the beginning of the Swedish occupation in January 1632,⁴⁷ when the city's commander Caspar of Gramb handed over the city without a fight due to lack of food.⁴⁸ The soldiers became comrades to the townspeople at their evening entertainment, though joint games and drinking often resulted in conflict. Many occupying soldiers also took a liking to the burghers' daughters and either left the city with them or negotiated their release from the army, settled in the town and made a living there (some of them were skilled craftsmen). These mutual relations are best evidenced by registry records, which prove the presence of soldiers, often junior officers, at the baptisms of middle-class children.

Too close relations with the occupiers could however also be seen as collaboration with the enemy. This notion has existed since time immemorial, especially so if the enemy in question was of the same religion, language, mindset, or social origin as the collaborators. After all, for example, a large number of Czech exiles or Germans were part of the Saxon and Swedish armies, and it was possible to converse with them without much difficulty. In contrast some imperial units were composed exclusively of Hungarians or Croats, with whom the communication was much more complicated for Czech and German residents. The resulting language barrier, together with the poor reputation of these units, led to an understandable fear of their occupation of city. The inhabitants of Bohemian cities collaborated primarily with Saxons during their invasion of the country in the early 1630s, for which they were subsequently punished by the Frýdlant Confiscation Commission. Swedish troops were far less welcome in the country, but nevertheless there were many people who were willing to cooperate with them. In Mělník, the town at the confluence of the Elbe and Vltava rivers, after the departure of Field Marshal Johan Banér's troops, who occupied it in 1639, an extensive investigation began into an alleged betrayal that Adam Purkyně was supposedly to committed there by collaborating with the Swedes. The imperial mayor of Mělník accused him of coming out of the city to meet the enemy and revealing to the commanding general the strength of the city garrison and weak points of the walls. During the subsequent attack,

⁴⁷ P. TOBER, *Wismar im Dreißigjährigen Krieg 1627–1648. Untersuchungen zur Wirtschafts-, Bau- und Sozialgeschichte*, Berlin 2007, p. 87.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

many citizens of Mělník were killed and their houses were looted, but not so the Purkyně house, which was supposedly guarded by a group of enemy soldiers. Although the imperial mayor failed to prove the burgher's guilt, Purkyně was never completely acquitted of the accusation and spent some time in prison.⁴⁹ His actions may have been more a result of fear for his family and property than sympathy for the Swedes, but even that was one of the aspects of the time and events.

Unfortunately, soldiers, be they from the invading or friendly armies, also brought various diseases with them, of which the plague often caused the worst damage, possibly even more than military action. In Central Europe, plague epidemics repeated in every decade of war, and one of these bouts took place right in the middle of the militarily hectic years of 1633–1634. This was at the same time as the Kingdom of Bohemia was attacked by Swedish-Saxon armies and, among other things, annihilated the town of Nymburk. In the same year, the plague also engulfed the Upper Palatinate cities. Weiden chronicler Jakob Schabner states that between mid-August and the beginning of November, 1,800 people died in Weiden, including his own wife and many soldiers and officers from the city garrison.⁵⁰ The situation was similar in other cities he writes about, more than a thousand people supposedly died in Sulzbach in the span of five months,⁵¹ in Neumarkt five hundred died from February to November,⁵² and in neighbouring Bavaria it was no different. In August 1633, following the large accumulation of troops, what they called the “Hungarian disease” reared its head in Wasserburg, Bavaria.⁵³ For Silesia, one of the worst plague epidemics during the Thirty Years' War was the one in 1633–1634. It killed several thousand inhabitants in Nysa⁵⁴ and high numbers were also seen in Namysłów⁵⁵ and in Kluczbork.⁵⁶ Even then, banal intestinal diseases, viruses, and influenza, which soldiers

⁴⁹ J. KILIÁN, *Kauza mělnických zrádců v době švédského vpádu roku 1639*, *Confluens*, in: *Sborník historických a vlastivědných prací z Mělnicka*, 6, 2007, pp. 123–134.

⁵⁰ WAGNER (ed.), pp. 5, 60, 65.

⁵¹ RANK, p. 85.

⁵² RIED, p. 90.

⁵³ M. WILDGRUBER, *Die feste Stadt Wasserburg im dreißigjährigen Krieg 1632–1634*, Wasserburg am Inn 1986, p. 96.

⁵⁴ M. SIKORSKI, *Nysa w kręgu zabytków i historii*, Krapkowice 2010, p. 15. According to the author, it was one of the most tragic events in the history of the city.

⁵⁵ M. GOLIŃSKI – E. KOŚCIK – J. KĘSIK, *Namysłów. Z dziejów miasta i okolic*, Namysłów 2006, p. 147.

⁵⁶ B. CIMAŁA, *Kluczbork: dzieja miasta*, Opole 1992, p. 53.

previously exposed to bad weather brought to the houses of their hosts, killed many. Additionally, soldiers and even the commanders themselves sometimes intentionally spread diseases. In the conquered Landshut, corpses and carcasses were allegedly thrown into the wells to poison them, pharmacies were destroyed and healers were killed so that they could not help the sick and wounded.⁵⁷

It should also be mentioned that cities and their hospitals and infirmaries also served soldiers as places to heal and regenerate. Especially after battles and difficult campaigns, there were always dozens or even hundreds of people who needed medical assistance. In Nabburg, in 1634, the hospital primarily housed sick Bavarian soldiers, with whom the townspeople had conflicts relating to medical supplies, and after the city was conquered by the Swedes, they were replaced by sick and wounded Swedish cavalymen, who cost Nabburg the 812 gold.⁵⁸ The city of Cham received and took care of sick soldiers in 1648.⁵⁹ In Neumarkt, in connection with the siege of Weißenburg, a field infirmary was set up in 1647. The wounded, mostly with injured limbs, were placed in four dedicated buildings, including the local Latin school, while others ended up in local residences.⁶⁰

Conclusion

This study deals with the differences between the arrival of an allied/friendly army and an enemy force using the example of select Central European cities. Cities that refused to surrender to the enemy and were conquered in battle were exposed to greater violence upon their civilian populations, the degree of which depended on the intentions and plans of the enemy's commanding officer, as well as, of course, his ability to maintain discipline among his own men. Victory could be followed by pillaging, murder, rape, arson, as well as torture - most often with the intent of forcing civilians to expose where they hid their valuables. However, this was more the case when the enemy soldiers had to move on soon after the conquest. On the other hand, if a city came to serve the occupying force as a long-term fortified base of operations, it would, on principle, be spared. It would also pay largely have largely the same

⁵⁷ W. EBERMEIER, *Landshut im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Das Schicksal der Stadt und ihrer Bewohner im historischen Zusammenhang*, Landshut 2001, p. 106.

⁵⁸ Stadtarchiv Nabburg, Ratsprotokolle, Vol. 46a, fol. 20 and Vol. 48, fol. 2–3.

⁵⁹ Stadtarchiv Cham, Akten, sign. X 22 (1648).

⁶⁰ RIED, pp. 105–106.

responsibilities as before (quartering and supplying soldiers, payment of contributions, participation in fortification work, care for the sick and wounded), just under different masters. However, new occupiers often collected very high protection taxes from the spared cities, and they would only go down to a more tolerable level after a while. In order to enforce the fees, Abductions and imprisonment of leading townspeople in order to enforce the fees, especially councillors, were a regular occurrence. Even worse off were the clergy, who were heavily taxed and had to endure great suffering, including unpleasant ridicule and humiliation. Stronger garrisons of occupied cities could harass the local populace for years on end –attacking the property of disobedient citizens and demanding taxes for themselves under the threat of execution. Religion also saw significant changes under new administrations. Priests returning to occupied cities found that the faith they preached was now illegal, and councillors with the wrong faith often had to relinquish their positions to those of the same faith as the invaders. The defeated town also often saw its tabernacles desecrated and used for storage or even as stables or cattle sheds. Daily life in the occupied cities did change drastically though, interaction between soldiers and residents soon became the norm, from business all the way to marriage. This was especially true in cases of long-term occupation. While it was not always proven, it was inevitable that there would also be instances of townspeople being accused of collaboration after occupying army left. Another result of the long-term quartering of soldiers in the city is that it sometimes contributed to the transmission of infectious diseases (plague and common seasonal diseases) to the civilian population, although whether it was really the fault of the invaders is hard to ascertain.

