

**THESES OF DISSERTATION (PHD)**

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**KISKOMÁROM  
AS A BORDER FORTRESS WITHIN  
THE SOUTHERN DANUBIAN DEFENCE SYSTEM**

**BUDAPEST, 2008**

## **The topic of the dissertation and history of research**

Our historians have been dealing with the Hungarian defence system against the Turks on numerous occasions. One part of these studies looked at the system of border fortresses as a whole, or at least in larger units and tried to come to conclusions on how they had worked. A major part of these essays deal with the development and consolidation of the defence system, that is, the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and primarily focus on the representation of the history of events. The monographic processing of individual fortresses constituting the border fortress system is yet to be written, apart from a few exceptions.

Up to the past decade there had not been any studies dealing with the fortifications of the Southern Transdanubian region (to which the fortress of Kiskomárom, the topic of the dissertation also belongs) except the ones on the two largest fortresses Szigetvár and Kanizsa. There are hardly any works on the less significant fortresses, or at least lack thorough research in archives. A great exception to this is a recently published monograph on Bajcsavár and Keszthely. The former also has the advantage of having existed only for a short period between 1578 and 1600, and the complete archaeological investigation of the site has also been carried out.

The former fortress lies underground, nearly 18 km northeast to Nagykanizsa on the administrative area of Zalakomár (Zala County), which was established upon the unification of Kiskomárom and Komárom in 1969. One of the reasons why the history of the fortress has not been studied so far is the size of the current village – in 2004 the population was 3152, which means that it was the 9<sup>th</sup> largest settlement in Zala County, where there are a large number of tiny villages; another reason might be that the walls of the former castle cannot be seen by laypeople. Except for an excavation in 1982, there have not been any archaeological investigations yet.

In order to be able to get a complete picture of the operation of the defence system against the Turks, it is inevitable to do research of the less significant fortifications which had not played a very important role in terms of defence, describing their role in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The present dissertation undertakes this task. Our aim is to highlight that each fortress in the chain of fortifications was an important eye of the chain, and it is especially true in the case of Kiskomárom, which played an important

role in the systems defending Kanizsa and against Kanizsa as well. The relatively large number of soldiers serving in the fortress can also prove this. The fortress under Christian rule in the front line of the Southern Transdanubian castles was able to obtain important and reliable information on the activities of the Turkish fortresses. The constitution of the properties used by commanders and officers provides valuable information on possessions at the fortifications under the Turkish Rule. Kiskomárom was also important from the point of ecclesiastical history, as it was a Calvinist deanery as well as the seat of two Calvinist Transdanubian bishops, which defines the religious identity of the soldiers and their families in the fortress. Although it was one of the most significant castles of the border defence line against Nagykanizsa in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and it had one of the largest number of soldiers, the border fortress of Kiskomárom did not raise the attention of researchers studying this period. Even fundamental research is missing, only one study was written on the fortress at the end of the 1980s and even that one remained unpublished. István Újvári's work was based on ample sources, mostly missilis found in the archives of the Batthyány family, and it is a description of everyday life in and around the border fortresses. The only published and printed work so far has been László Vándor's brief historical article in *Zalai Hírlap*, 1991 as part of a series depicting border fortresses in Zala County. Publications dealing with the Southern Transdanubian defence system make only references to Kiskomárom, all the information on it has been borrowed from them so far.

The largest amount of data on Komár can be obtained from the monograph of Kanizsa town published in 1994, as Kiskomárom used to be in close contact with Kanizsa, the centre of the defensive line which existed until 1600. Béla Iványi mostly used the documents from the archives of the Batthyány family in his unpublished manuscript on life at the Transdanubian border fortresses in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to describe the castle of Kiskomárom and its people. He also published an essay in 1960, in which he dealt with the role of the fortress in the defence of the Balatonhídvég passage, through which Komár was able to retain contacts with the Kingdom of Hungary after Kanizsa had fallen to the enemy, and in connection with this he also described the relationship of Kiskomár with Zalavár. In the early 1990s József Kelenik studied the population,

fluctuation and casualties of 14 border fortresses against Kanizsa, among them Kiskomárom as the centre of the Kiskomárom castle district, in the period of 1633-1640. In order to be able to judge the power of the fortress, we can consider the census of 1588, from which we can learn about the weapons and equipment of the castle, although the publisher of these data thought they were the inventory of Kanizsa. The correspondence between the commanders of the fortress, like that of László Kerecsényi at the end of the 1550s and the early 1560 with Tamás Nádasdy and Ákos Csányi, as well as Gábor Kisserényi with Boldizsár Batthyány in the 1570s, and also the orders of the Viennese Command towards László Majthényi in the late 1560s reveal some information on the fortress and its life.

The layout of the fortress was analysed by Vidor Pataki, although the notions used in his description do not completely match those used in modern castle architecture, and he did not give a detailed description of the layout of the Turco castle either. Cartographer László Irmédi-Molnár presented the plan of an unknown artist from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

There can be several data on the Kiskomár fortress in the history of Karos published in 2000 due to the strong ties with the settlement that belonged to the lordship of the castle of Komár, but this information with a few exceptions is not of economic nature. An example of the role that the soldiers at the border fortresses played in the taxation on the occupied areas can be seen from the relationship between Miklós Turos, voievod of Kiskomár and the village of Mányok in Tolna County, which was completed with recently discovered documents by Antal Molnár.

The importance of the border fortress in ecclesiastical history was realised by several researchers in as early as the 1890s. The reason is that the parish register of the Calvinist congregation in the Kiskomárom fortress from the period between 1624 and 1664 has been preserved. István Csire used it as a basis of his publication of the first data on the parsons, the building of the church and school of the castle as well as the parishes belonging to the Kiskomárom seniorate. Kálmán Révész published Bishop János Pálfi of Kanizsa's diary recorded in the parish register, as well as the bishop's regulations written for the congregation, in his study dealing with the first presbyterates of the Calvinist Church. Later it was Ferenc Ördög, who described and

analysed the surnames, nicknames and name substitutes recorded in registers. János Makar processed Bishop Pálfi's biography, the liturgy and agenda he had used, in his book published in 1961. Kiskomárom is also thoroughly dealt with in Etele Thury's publication on the history of the Transdanubian Calvinist diocese, since besides being a diocesan centre there were two bishops who had their seat here in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Gergely Beck studied the history of the Calvinist diocesan congregation in Inner Somogy in 1935, emphasising Kiskomárom as the centre of the Kiskomárom Diocese. These volumes largely rely on the minutes of the Transdanubian Calvinist Diocese recorded between 1612 and 1650, of which Etele Thury published those that were written before 1620 in the Hungarian Protestant Database. These include several references to the ecclesiastical life of Kiskomárom. Out of the correspondence of pastors while they were serving at the border fortresses there is only one that has been published: Sándor Laskai's correspondence consisting of 22 letters was published in 1958, but these letters do not primarily give us information on his pastoral tasks, rather on commercial activities, the preparation of the Turks as Laskai was also involved in spying. The author of the present dissertation has published the latest description of ecclesiastical life in the Kiskomár fortress.

### **The sources of the topic**

Regarding our topic there have been ample resources kept in different archives and museums. However, the available documents are ambiguous: on one hand they are diverse as they give an insight into the different segments of life at the border fortresses, on the other hand they are also one-sided as in many cases the information is very detailed but covers a very short period, which does not allow us to draw accurate conclusions on the whole period of the fortress' existence. Most of all we could rely on the data in the documents of the Hungarian National Archives. Almost all the fonds referring to the given period contain some information on the border fortress of Kiskomárom. The richest resource is the collection of missilis from the Batthyány and Nádasdy families. Some commanders and officers of the castle have left hundreds of letters behind them which can provide information not only on the role of the castle in the defence system but also on soldiers' incomes and the

relationship between soldiers and their commanders as well. The researchers of the period have used this group of resources the most often with reference to our topic of discussion: Ágoston Szalay in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, András Komáromy in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in 1958 László Balázs, in 1968 Erzsébet E. Abaffy, while in the 1990s László Szilasi and Sándor Óze.

In the Batthyány archives, apart from the missilis, there are two fonds that contain significant documents with reference to Kiskomárom. In the fond on the familiarises, servitors and soldiery from the Körmend Central Directorate we can gain information on the number of soldiers in Kiskomárom in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. From the documents of Ádám I. Batthyány, the chief commander of the border fortresses against Kanizsa a great deal of information can be retrieved on the supplies, the number of soldiers, soldiers' incomes, as well as a collection of missilis that survived in duplicates only, most of which cannot be found in the family collection of letters.

The warrants of the monarch and the body governing military affairs towards commander Gábor Kisserényi have been preserved in the archives of the Zichy family. From the material of the Registry of the Hungarian Chamber it is primarily the reports and petitions regarding taxes in Somogy County, written by the fortress officers towards the Hungarian Chamber, which were used as sources.

Among the directions collected in the Archives of the Hungarian Chamber we can also find those of commander Ferenc Kapra (1578-1591), based on which we can describe the tasks and responsibilities of the commander of the Kiskomár fortress.

It is also the Archives of the Hungarian Chamber which preserved the census that made it remarkably easier to map the network of settlements belonging to the castle lordship and also the services that were offered by the inhabitants to the commander and the fortress. Censuses that were carried out taking households into account, mostly naming the owners as well in order to help draw a map of the settlements in the castle domain in connection with the subsidies and the collection of the dica passed by the diets. Unfortunately the censuses in Nyitra County defined only the name of the settlement and the number of the house after the 1570, so they were unsuitable for reinforcing data from other sources.

In the Hungarian National Archives Collection of Maps there is a map drawn by an unknown master from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century in the fond of maps removed from the archives of the ducal branch of the Eszterházy family. In the centre of the map we can see the layout of the castle of Kiskomár, surrounded by the castles under Hungarian and Turkish rule in the area. The legend of the map also showed how far these castles were from Kiskomárom.

The fortress and the surrounding estates were in the possession of the Óbuda Provostry until 1565. Data referring to this period were taken from the documents of the Zalavár Convent' *Loca Credibilia* as well as from the protocollum volumes of the Royal War Council, since the documents of the ecclesiastical organisation have been unfortunately mislaid. In the Zala County Archives there are a few documents that can be dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that are out of scope in this research. The correspondence book of Christoph Haym, chief commander of the Kanizsa fortress (1594-1595) gives us a more detailed picture of the role of the fortress in 1594-1595, in the events in the Transdanubian region during the Fifteen-year War.

The photocopy of the articles of the Nagyvázsony Mixed Trade Guild that was overtaken from the mixed trade guild working in the castle of Kiskomárom was found in the Collection of Modern Documents in the Hungarian National Museum. It is a word-by-word adoption of the articles of the former trade guild in Kiskomárom, except the reinforcing notes of the Zichy family who owned the Nagyvázsony estate and if we rely on it the operations of the guild in the castle can be completely reconstructed. The protocollum of the Transdanubian Calvinist Diocese, which contains the minutes of the synods held between 1612 and 1658 and is now kept in Esztergom could be used as a primary source in reference to the religious life of the soldiery and their families in Kiskomár also containing information on the congregation of Kiskomárom as well as the Calvinist parish register kept in Pápa, in which we can find useful data on casualties in the border fortress, on judiciary practices, on offices and their bearers, and partly on their responsibilities.

Besides the documents in Hungarian archives, there were also numerous resources found in relation to our topic in the branch archives of the Viennese Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Hungarica and Turcica, Finanz- und

Hofkammerarchiv Hoffinanz Ungarn, and the Kriegsarchiv Bestellungen, Hofkriegsrat Protokolle, Hofkriegsrat Akten and Alte Feldakten. The sources discovered in these archives neatly complement the information in the material of the given period from Hungarian archives.

The Protocollum of the Royal War Council dated after 1557 can provide information on the everyday life in Kiskomárom, although they mention the contents of the document in regesta-like format. These regesta in the 16<sup>th</sup> century contain only a few lines, after that they became much more detailed. Kiskomárom was probably meant to possess a significant role in the development of the Kanizsa defence system, as the entries about the castle were always emphatic during the command of Gábor Kisserényi in the 1570. Besides the commanders of the fortress the commanders of Kanizsa, the officers in charge of the armoury, the chief commanders of the border area, the monarch, the archdukes, other officers of the fortress- mostly vice commanders-, the commanders of German soldiers and the artillerymen wrote to the War Council and received reports and orders from them. Most entries were concerning the appointments and remuneration of the officers of the fortress, food and war supplies, Turkish plundering, rents, the number of soldiers, the fortification and sieges of the castle. Most of the files of the Royal War Council consisted of the documents that were marked as existent in the volumes of Protocollum, however there are some that do not exist in them as regesta. As far as their topic is concerned, it does not differ from the contents defined in the volumes. In the Alte Feldakten fond we can find not only the number of the guards in Kiskomár but also that of the border fortresses against Kanizsa as well, what is more, there are documents related to the history of events in the castle. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century several documents of Hungarian relevance were removed – some of them related to Kiskomárom – and at present they are preserved in the Military History Archives Turkish Period Collection. The protocollum volumes of Bestellungen contain the exact date of the appointment of several chief commanders of Kiskomárom, and even two commnaders', namely Menyhért Rátki's and László Pethő's appointment documents were preserved.

From the material of the Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv the fond of Hoffinanz-Ungarn contained documents concerning commanders and officers requesting estate and

payment, and also the proceedings of these. The agreement of the first royal commander listing his responsibilities was also found in this fond.

### **The structure of the dissertation**

In accordance with the title of the dissertation the first and most extensive chapter describes the history of the fortress in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, taking a strict chronology as the structuring principle. We highlight events- mostly sieges- that were influencing the position and role of the fortress within the Southern Transdanubian defence system. The fortification was controlled by the commanders who served there, and who were very carefully selected by the military government in Vienna. At the same time they also clearly defined the responsibilities and powers that were laid out in the directions addressed to them. The circumstances of their appointment as well as their responsibilities are presented on the basis of these and a few scattered data.

Another chapter is dedicated to the discussion of how easy it was to defend a fortress, which largely depended on the number and constitution of the soldiers serving in the fortress. The living conditions of soldiers were influenced by their incomes and the condition of supplies in the fortress, the diversity of which is described in separate chapters. During the everyday life of such a huge community conflicts emerged inevitably, which were resolved or retaliated by the courts of different bodies. The operation of this mechanism is treated with special attention. The border fortress of Kiskomárom also served as an ecclesiastical centre, its effects on the life of soldiery are also highlighted, through the description of the Calvinist pastors' remarkable influence in the life of the castle. Finally the dissertation concludes with a special feature, the portraits of the last two chief commanders.

In order to make the dissertation more complete, some of the documents that are analysed in more detail are published in the collection of records. They are complemented by the appendices, which present the names of the royal (chief) commanders, the defence system of the border fortresses in and against Kanizsa, the domains of the Kiskomárom castle, the number of soldiers serving their time in the fortress and also the changes in it, as well as the portraits of the chief commanders of Kiskomárom.

### **The most important findings of the dissertation**

After the castle of Buda, the centre of the Kingdom of Hungary had been occupied by the Turks, in order to defend the territories that were kept under royal control as well Vienna and the Hereditary Lands, the military government of the Hapsburgs, also supported by the Hungarian nobility, was forced to construct a defence line of castles to stop Turkish advance. The implementation and coordination of this task was managed by the Royal Military Council.

The centre of defence in the Southern Transdanubian region was Szigetvár, which was also a crucial point of the defence line consisting of several fortresses, stretching as far as Lake Balaton. Behind Szigetvár there was another defence line, to which the fortress of Kiskomárom also belonged. The border fortress in Kiskomár was probably constructed in the 1540s upon the orders of the Provost of Óbuda. The monastery near the town of Komár served as the inner fortress. As the Provost's Office did not manage to maintain the fortress on its own, besides the troops of Tamás Nádasdy, there were also soldiers paid by the Styrian Estates stationing in Komár. Upon the Provost's request the fortress was also provided with war equipment by the Viennese military government. Affected by the impending Turkish threat the fortress of Komár, similarly to the castles nearby, was handed over to the Court's management in 1565, just a year before the fall of Szigetvár.

After the fall of Szigetvár the fortress of Komár became one of the most important points of the new defence line centred around Kanizsa. In accordance with the decision of the large-scale military council held in 1577 in Vienna the military government agreed on the defensive strategy based on border fortresses, exploiting the existing natural obstacles. Accordingly, several minor fortresses and sentry boxes were built around Kanizsa and Komár to strengthen and stabilise the defence line. At the same time the development of existing fortifications like the one in Komár was going on, although the extension of Kanizsa always had a priority.

Despite the peace since 1568, the everyday life of border defence was disturbed by a few hundred Turkish soldiers' raids meant to weaken the defence line, which in most cases did not remain unanswered. Some of these raids were remarkably successful, for instance in 1591, when the castle of Komár was occupied by a night shock-attack led

by the Pasha of Szigetvár. The Turks collected a great deal of booty and prisoners then set the castle on fire. The commander Ferenc Kapra directing the defensive action also lost his life during the raid. The crowd that gathered to take revenge eventually rebuilt the fortress.

The soldiery of Kiskomárom also took their share in the Southern Transdanubian movements during the Fifteen Years' War, then the German guard of the castle was commanded to the recaptured Babócsa. However, even the reconstructed defence works of Komár were unable to resist the attacks of a larger Turkish troop, which fact was also clear to the military government in Vienna. Thus, Commander Farkas Bakó, who was brought to law for handing over the fortress as well as the imprisoned soldiers were cleared of the charges at the end of the proceedings in 1600. What is more, when in 1601 the fortress was recaptured, it was Farkas Bakó again who was appointed as the commander of the fortress. Komár joined Bocskai's troops appearing in Transdanubia in 1605, yet it became a key fortification in the new defence line established against Kanizsa after the uprising and the Fifteen Years' War.

The castle of Komár, enclosed by Turkish-controlled territories gained up-to-date information on every movement of the enemy, which they passed on to the border fortresses at their back. The only way of maintaining connections between the Kingdom of Hungary and the surrounding castles (Zalavár, Szentgyörgyvár, Szentgrót and Keszthely) was by passing through the ferry at Hídvég, so the commanders of Komár did their best to ensure safe crossing. The Turks were also aware of the strategic importance of the ferry, so they destroyed it on several occasions during the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite the existence of the Peace of Zsitvatorok and its several reinforcements the Turks made several attempts to occupy the fortress. In the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century there were two occasions, in 1637 and 1651, when a larger Turkish troop was trying to occupy the fortress but they failed. In 1637 an army of approximately 1000 Turkish soldiers tried to capture the castle during a night raid. In 1651, after considerable preparations, a 7000-strong Turkish army equipped with cannons, recruited from the Southern Transdanubian fortresses, assaulted the fortress for a whole day, ending up with considerable casualties. The troops of Chief Commander Ádám Batthyány,

coming to assist the fortress took their revenge for breaking the peace treaty on the town of Segesd. The decline of the fortress was caused indirectly by the successful Winter Campaign of Miklós Zrínyi and the siege of Kanizsa beginning in the spring of the following year (1664). The Turkish army consisting of tens of thousands arriving to save the Kanizsa fortress occupied Kiskomár after their successful mission. The fortress had to be surrendered after three days of resistance to the decisively larger army; afterwards it was set on fire and destroyed by the Turks.

During the selection of the commanders of the fortress the military government in Vienna was extremely circumspect. They primarily selected people who were familiar with the geographical and property conditions of the Southern Transdanubian region, whose families were related to any noble families in Zala or Somogy County, and who had spent a few years in the fortresses of the area before their appointment. Besides, commanders to be appointed owned considerable properties in the Hungarian Kingdom, the defence of which could also be a motivation to do their best in carrying out their tasks.

The commanders acted according to the paragraphs in the instructions that they were given. The agreement of the first commander of the fortress of Komár after it was taken over by the royal court consisted of a few points only. The commanders of the fortifications in the developing defence line against the Turks and the military government in Vienna had to face a series of problems, so commanders' instructions became lengthier and lengthier and aimed to cover every possible segment of commanders' responsibilities, which is reflected well in the instructions of Ferenc Kapra issued in 1578. Certain paragraphs are included in every commanders' instruction all over the country, such as the collection of the fortress' incomes, keeping to their oaths and making the soldiery do the same, the maintenance of the defence works and buildings of the fortress, the protection and supplies of military equipment, to ensure a definite number of soldiers in battle order, the protection of the inhabitants in the surrounding villages, the prevention of Turkish expansion, or the conditions of dismissal. Besides these all instructions contained points which were relevant to the given fortress. The commanders of Kiskomárom were allowed to use the revenues from the castle domain without accountability under their own authority, in return they

paid 300 Hungarian Forints to the Hungarian Chamber. Ferenc Kapra's instructions prescribed a monthly 4 Rhine Florins paid to cavalymen, and 2 Hungarian Forints to infantrymen serving in the fortress. The German soldiers commanded into the fortress could also be commanded to defend the sentry-box in the nearby village of Szentiván. The commander was allowed to administer justice in his own court but in cases of theft, murder, adultery and similar offences he needed the approval of the chief commander of Kanizsa.

From the mid 1570s the number of soldiers serving in the fortress was around 350-400, and 25% of the defenders were German soldiers, the rest being Hungarians. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was only the defenders of the castle of Eger which outnumbered the soldiery in Kiskomár. In the 1620s there were 100 cavalymen and 240 infantrymen in the Hungarian soldiery, which changed to 150 cavalymen and 240 infantrymen from the following years. Apart from Hungarian soldiers there were German soldiers in the castle temporarily. Their numbers were 20 in the 1640s. The artillery was always made of Germans. After the end of the Thirty Years' War a large number of soldiers were released from the Western areas of war and were commanded to Komár.

Soldiers at the border fortresses took any opportunity to compensate their pay which was rather irregular. The soldiery of Kiskomárom received the licence of running taverns, which was the privilege of the landlord. Chief Commander István Bessenyei wanted to lay his hands on these incomes for himself but the soldiers led by Chief Commander Ádám Batthyány managed to save their privileges. Income from booties gained from frequent plundering, ransom from Turkish and Serbian captives were also important means to live on. During the division of income they often confronted the commanders who demanded one third of the booty instead of their originally defined share. Soldiers in border fortresses often worked as craftsmen, gaining extra income apart from their pay. They normally did jobs that were directly connected with soldiers' lives, so there were several shoe-and bootmakers, locksmiths, furriers and blacksmiths. Craftsmen formed trade guilds in order to promote their interests, and these guilds were regulated by trade privileges. According to the articles of the trade guild of Kiskomár we can get a very detailed picture of the constitution and the everyday life of the guild. The officers had further opportunities to increase their

income. One of them was the collection of tithe rented from the church and collecting the dica in Somogy County. Besides, they often laid their hands on villages in the occupied area, relying on the military force of their fortress, and they were also donated properties for their services by the monarch and the palatine. Their privileged position enabled them to deal with animal trade, especially cattle trade in the Southern Transdanubia in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which they often did with the support, or even upon the order of Chief Commander Ádám Batthyány.

The food supplies of the soldiery at the border fortresses were provided from many different sources and even then with difficulty. The main source would have been the castle domain but the annual income it yielded in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was not higher than 3000 Forints, which was barely enough to cover one or two months' supplies for the castle. The Turkish destruction badly damaged the villages of the domain, so this income decreased by the 17<sup>th</sup> century; attaching lands to Komár from Kanizsa was of no use. Thus, food for soldiers and their families had to be supplied from other sources. By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century there was a food supplies officer appointed to the fortress, but we know nothing of his activities. Somogy County had to make its contributions to the food supplies in several cases. Soldiers also got food for themselves and their families by buying food or ransoming villages. On the other hand soldiers also dealt with farming themselves on the farms outside the castle. However, due to the more and more frequent shock-attacks of the Turks, they were often forced to leave and go to safer places beyond Zala County and the Balaton to harvest crops for commission. It was also tolerated by commanders, although during harvesting time the number of soldiers fell dramatically.

The military supplies were provided by the Viennese armoury at first, then after a military supplies warehouse was set up in Kanizsa, Komár received their supplies from there. After the fall of Kanizsa supplies were even more difficult to deliver to the fortress, so they were provided by Vienna again and they were attached to the supplies of other fortresses in the defence line against Kanizsa. Their distribution to the individual castles was the responsibility of the chief commander of the border area.

The soldiery of commoners, whose officers were mostly noblemen, were fighting for their right to administer justice independently, so that any conflicts emerging could be

resolved at the court established by themselves. The trade guild of the fortress as well as the Calvinist Church also settled justice among their own members, while the commander's court served as the court of appeal for them. The commander's tribunal administered justice for the soldiery as well as the residents of the castle domain. Independent judgement of the church was successfully suppressed by Catholic commanders, and cases of moral vice were also delegated to their tribunal. Soldiers had the right to appeal from the commander's tribunal to the court martial led by the chief general or vice general of the border area.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century the castle of Kiskomár was one of the centres of the Calvinist Church in Transdanubia, so the life and identity of soldiers and their families were highly defined by their religion. Liberty of worship at the border fortresses was guaranteed by the diet of 1608, so the soldiers' community was free to choose their religion and their priests as well. Calvinist ministers were honoured members of the praesidium. The presbyterate consisting of officers controlling the life of the congregation of Kiskomárom established under their management was one of the first of its kind. The number of Catholics was insignificant, but as soon as Catholic commanders were appointed the Protestant denomination was getting driven back.

Summing up, we can state that although the castle of Kiskomár was able to resist a minor Turkish attack, still it had a remarkable role in the defence systems of Kanizsa and against Kanizsa alike. As the only castle that survived in Somogy County, it succeeded in halting Turkish advances in cooperation with the surrounding fortresses in the axis of defence. At the time of its destruction in 1664 the Turkish army was at such a military disadvantage against Christian armies reformed through a military revolution which forecast the opportunity of retaking the country. However, another twenty years were to come before that.

### **Publications concerning the topic**

- Az 1555-ös török hadjárat a Dél-Dunántúlon. In: PPKE Műhely-tanulmányok. Bp., 1999. 47–64.
- “Az szép szabadságra, magyarság javára” Emlékkiállítás a Bocskai-felkelés 400. évfordulója alkalmából. Bp., 2004. (kiállításvezető)
- Egyházi élet a kiskomári végvárban a 17. században. Történeti Muzeológiai Szemle 7. (2007) 33–47.