

The Siege of Langenburg, 1634

Supplemented Working Reconstruction of the Manuscript

Provisional reading version – explicitly not a diplomatic transcription

How to Read This Version

This version deliberately serves a different purpose than the [previous] raw transcription: where the manuscript could not be deciphered with certainty, the context has been filled in to produce a readable working text. The additions make no claim about the actual wording of the original. They are a linguistically and factually plausible reconstruction intended to serve as a hypothesis during further deciphering.

Notation: words, names or phrases that can be recognised with relative certainty are reproduced without special marking. Reconstructed or freely supplemented passages appear between <angle brackets>. Where even the sense of the passage is too uncertain, [unclear] is given. This makes it visible at all times which text was read from the manuscript and which was added as a working hypothesis.

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Historical description of what remarkable things came to pass when the high-comital Hohenlohe residence of Langenburg was besieged and conquered by the Imperials in September Ao. 1634, <compiled from the reports and records kept at the time>.

Historical description of the remarkable events that took place when the high-comital Hohenlohe residence of Langenburg was besieged and conquered by the Imperial forces in September 1634. Recorded by Mr Georg Friedrich Assum, the late former chamberlain [...].

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A brief and truthful account.

When, in the year 1634, after the bloody battle of Nördlingen, the Swedish army had been defeated and Field Marshal Horn taken prisoner, <the whole surrounding country fell into great turmoil. After their victory, the Imperial troops and those allied with them spread out into the neighbouring lordships, while the defeated units scattered and withdrew>.

<When the news of this defeat also reached the Hohenlohe towns, counsel was taken as to how to conduct oneself towards the approaching soldiery and, in particular, how to secure the residence of Langenburg.>

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The Swedish Field Marshal Gustav Horn <had fallen into the hands of the victors together with several high-ranking officers>. As a result, the resistance of the Swedish party in this region was noticeably weakened. <Soon afterwards, reports arrived from various quarters that Imperial detachments were moving against the Hohenlohe lands and demanding quarters, provisions and money.>

<A council was therefore held in Langenburg. The commandant and the soldiers at hand were to man the gates, walls and approaches. At the same time, scouts were sent out to learn how strong the enemy was and which route he was taking.> Maria Barbara von Hohenlohe <is named in this context as one of the persons who deliberated on the further course of action>.

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<After the first warnings had arrived, further messengers were sent out and the surrounding villages were instructed to report to Langenburg any news of approaching troops.> The Secretarius <and other servants of the count were furnished with letters and commissions>.

Protection and safety <were sought at the same time through negotiation. It was hoped that by presenting letters of safeguard and appealing to earlier assurances, plundering and forcible billeting could be averted.> Among the persons named are Hans Thomas Blum as well as several other servants and soldiers. <Women

and members of the count's household were also included in these considerations, since an attack on the castle and town could no longer be ruled out.)

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⟨The garrison was mustered and reinforced as far as possible. The few soldiers available had to be distributed among various posts; at the same time it had to be borne in mind that a serious attack could hardly be withstood for long with the forces at hand.⟩

⟨Contradictory news arrived from outside. At one moment it was said that the Imperials would pass by, at the next that they had turned their march straight towards Langenburg. This uncertainty led the lordship to prepare for both defence and negotiation.⟩

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⟨Several horsemen and foot soldiers were seen in the vicinity. Messengers reported that the Imperial parties were moving from place to place, everywhere demanding food, horses and money.⟩ ⟨The guards were therefore reinforced, and orders were given that no one was to be admitted without the commandant's knowledge.⟩

⟨At the same time it was considered whether resistance might not put the town in even greater danger. The memory of the recent devastation following the battle of Nördlingen made these deliberations especially urgent.⟩

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⟨The enemy detachments drew nearer. Their exact strength could not be reliably determined; the incoming reports gave sometimes smaller, sometimes considerable numbers.⟩ ⟨Their movements were observed from the heights and roads. Some inhabitants of the surrounding villages sought refuge in the town or brought news of billeting and plundering.⟩

⟨In Langenburg the gates were kept shut and the men held in readiness. Nevertheless, the hope remained that the threatened siege might be avoided by an amicable agreement.⟩

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⟨As the Imperials came closer, they had their demands delivered. They demanded admission, quarters and obedience; Langenburg, for its part, pointed to the small size of the place, the burdens it had already borne and the promises of protection it held.⟩

⟨Messengers went back and forth between the two sides. Meanwhile the defences remained manned. The commandant declared that he would not surrender the town without express orders; others warned of the consequences of hopeless resistance.⟩

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⟨A more precise record was now made of which persons could be used as soldiers at all. In addition to the actual men-at-arms, inhabitants and servants capable of bearing arms also had to be taken into account. Weapons, powder and ammunition were inspected and distributed among the posts.⟩

Everything that could be used as soldiers (and the places where they were to be deployed was recorded in a separate list. Likewise, news and possibilities of assistance expected from outside, among other places from the direction of Frankfurt, were noted.)

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⟨Several letters followed to neighbouring lordships and military commanders. In them the distressed situation of Langenburg was reported and advice, protection or help requested.⟩

⟨A more detailed letter described how Imperial troops were lying nearby and pressing the residence to admit them. It asked that the existing assurances of protection and safety be honoured and that the Hohenlohe lands be spared further damage.⟩

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⟨The letters in reply brought no reliable relief. Although protection and good treatment were in part held out, their effectiveness depended on the respective commanders and the troops passing through.⟩

Paul Planck ⟨appears among the names of the persons entrusted with letters or commissions⟩. ⟨Further orders regulated the guards, the dispatch of messengers and the negotiations with the Imperial officers.⟩

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⟨The situation remained tense. Troop strengths, sums of money and other figures were noted, evidently serving to calculate the contributions demanded or to assess the military forces.⟩

⟨The lordship tried to have the demands reduced while at the same time gaining time. It pointed to the poverty of the subjects and to the fact that the land had already been severely afflicted by earlier billeting.⟩

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⟨Alongside the military news, accounts were kept of money, provisions and other contributions. The high figures show what a burden the upkeep of the soldiers meant for the small lordship.⟩

⟨Meanwhile, fresh news arrived of Imperial detachments. The hope of relief faded while the pressure on Langenburg increased. Those in charge now had to decide between surrender and further resistance.⟩

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Achilles ⟨[name uncertain]⟩ von Jöge ⟨is named in a letter or as a signatory. His letter concerns the military situation and the contributions demanded of the inhabitants.⟩

⟨The reply from Langenburg again stressed that there was no wish to resist the Imperial authority, but asked that the castle, the town and the subjects be spared. At the same time it was explained that the sums and supplies demanded could not readily be raised.⟩

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⟨After the negotiations had failed to bring lasting protection, the situation grew worse. Troops appeared directly before the town, and the garrison had to expect an attack.⟩ A passage of the original report was struck out by the scribe himself.

⟨The Imperials now demanded entry with greater insistence. The defenders stood ready on the walls and at the gates; yet in view of the enemy's superior strength and their own meagre means, it was clear that prolonged resistance would be extremely dangerous.⟩

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⟨The commanders negotiated with one another once more. Conditions were stated under which the town and castle were to be handed over or occupied by the troops.⟩ General ⟨[name uncertain]⟩ and several other officers appear in the report.

⟨In particular, protection was requested for the count's household, the servants and the townspeople. It was likewise to be prevented that soldiers should break into houses on their own authority or mistreat the inhabitants.⟩

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⟨A letter from a field marshal general or a high-ranking Imperial commander was included in the account. In it the treatment of the town and of the men stationed there was regulated.⟩

⟨Despite such orders, the actual situation remained uncertain. Soldiers passing through and billeted soldiers demanded provisions and money; individual excesses evidently could not be entirely prevented. The officials tried to record every incident and to lodge complaints with the superiors.⟩

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⟨After the capture or occupation of Langenburg, soldiers were billeted in the town and its surroundings. The inhabitants had to supply bread, meat, wine, oats and other necessities. In addition, horses, carts and money were demanded.⟩

⟨The officials kept records of this and repeatedly turned to the officers. They complained that the burdens exceeded the capacity of the subjects and that some soldiers took more than they had been allotted.⟩

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⟨Even after the actual fighting, the complaints did not cease. New units came and went; each change brought new demands for quarters and supplies.⟩

⟨The count's officials endeavoured to maintain order, to obtain receipts for goods supplied and to reject unjustified demands. Where this did not succeed, the damages were recorded so that they could later be claimed from the military authorities.⟩

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⟨The report lists further incidents of the following days. Commanders were replaced, soldiers moved and new orders issued. For the inhabitants this meant continuing uncertainty.⟩

⟨Redress was requested from the superiors on several occasions. The lordship pointed out that it had shown itself obedient and could therefore expect to be protected from unauthorised plundering and excessive billeting.⟩

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⟨At the close of the account, the burdens suffered are summarised once more.⟩

Letter of complaint.

⟨This letter states that the town, the castle and the subjects had been extraordinarily burdened by billeting, deliveries, demands for money and other burdens of war. Although the Imperial orders had been obeyed and what was demanded had been given as far as possible, further demands and excesses had nonetheless occurred. The competent military authority is therefore asked to put a stop to such excesses and to enforce effectively the protection that had been granted.⟩

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⟨The letter of complaint continues: the subjects were already so exhausted by the preceding years of war, by levies and by billeting that further burdens could scarcely be borne. Clemency is therefore requested, along with the return or replacement of goods unlawfully taken and clear orders to the soldiers.⟩

⟨The writer closes with an assurance of due obedience and a request for gracious consideration of the complaints presented.⟩

[Signature/name in the original not read with certainty: Georg Friedrich Assum]

The right-hand side of the last scan is blank.

[Georg Friedrich Assum 21.07.1622 – 30.04.1711 – Langenburg (DE), son of [Johann Christoph Assum](#),
[02.08.1581](#) – [05.11.1651](#)]