

The Battle of Wittstock 1636: Conflicting Reports on a Swedish Victory in Germany

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“The earth, whose custom it is to cover the dead, was there itself covered with them, and those variously distinguished: for here lay heads that had lost their natural owners, and there bodies that lacked their heads: some had their bowels hanging out in most ghastly and pitiful fashion, and others had their heads cleft and their brains scattered: there one could see how lifeless bodies were deprived of their blood while the living were covered with the blood of others; here lay arms shot off, on which the fingers still moved, as if they would yet be fighting; and elsewhere rascals were in full flight that had shed no drop of blood: there could one see crippled soldiers begging for death, and on the contrary others beseeching quarter and the sparing of their lives.”

On the Battle of Wittstock, 1636
H.J.C von Grimmelshausen, *Simplicissimus* (1669).

WITTSTOCK, in the north-east of the German state of Brandenburg, was the scene of a battle which took place on 4 October 1636. The outcome of the fight was a stunning victory by a Swedish army against a coalition consisting of the forces of John George of Saxony and the Imperial army of Count Melchior von Hatzfeld. Opinions on the clash itself are somewhat divided; several scholars over the years have compared it to Hannibal’s victory over the Romans at

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Cannae in 216BC¹, whilst others view it as of considerably less significance.² The battle occurred during the struggle for control of Germany by the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand II, in the aftermath of the Battle of Nördlingen (1634) and the Treaty of Prague (1635). These two episodes appeared to have delivered a decisive blow against the Swedes and their allies. It seemed to Ferdinand that he had finally gained the upper-hand against the various powers opposed to Habsburg hegemony in Europe (led by Sweden and France). In a bid to finish off the Swedes, the main Imperial army shadowed their opponents along the Elbe while a smaller army under General Klitzing moved into Brandenburg hoping to find a moment to deliver the fatal blow. The Imperial-Saxon coalition thought they had their chance when the opposing forces came together around the Schaffenburg hills just outside the small town of Wittstock.

The Imperial allies faced the Swedish *huvudarmé* (main army) commanded by Field Marshal Johan Banér. These were joined by a second allied army, mostly consisting of German and Scottish regiments, which made up the 'Army of the Weser' under the command of Field Marshal Alexander Leslie.³ Though notionally a Swedish army, a report from March 1636 had noted that should Sweden ever make peace against the wishes of Charles I, Leslie would be able to keep his army in the field independently to assist the Elector Palatine as his officers were subjects of Charles I.⁴ This mention of the army's ethnic composition is striking. Indeed, only about a third of the newly combined Swedish army actually comprised Swedes and Finns, the rest being Scots and

- 1 Birger Steckzén, 'Wittstock 1636' in Nils F. Holm (ed.), *Det svenska svärdet: Tolv avgörande händelser i Sveriges historia* (Helsingfors, 1948), p.126; T.M. Barker, *The Military Intellectual and Battle: Raimondo Montecucoli and the Thirty Years' War* (Albany, 1975), pp.209 and 244 n.68. Both Steckzén and Barker quote Hans Delbrück, though Delbrück himself gives the important qualification that this depends on whether the Swedish side really did attack in the knowledge that theirs was the inferior force. See H. Delbrück, *History of the Art of War, within the framework of political history, vol. 4: The Modern Era* (Westport, 1985), IV, p.212. See also Peter Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy: A New History of the Thirty Years' War* (Basingstoke, 2009), p.583, where the battle is called 'one of the most important battles of the war'.
- 2 C. V. Wedgwood, *The Thirty Years' War* (London, 1999 folio edition), p.366; Gunnar Wetterberg, *Kanslern Axel Oxenstierna i sin tid* (2 vol., Stockholm, 2002), II, p.743.
- 3 That there were two armies is attested to by most contemporaries. One anonymous Imperial report of the battle (Appendix 4) mentions the two coming together, but puts Leslie's rank incorrectly as Major General. See Universitaets-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, *Eigentlicher Verlauf des Treffens bey Wittstock, VD17 23:31324OS*. The strength of Leslie's army was given at around 5,000 men in March 1636. Hartlib Papers, HP11/1/107A-B. 'News from the continent', 10 March 1636.
- 4 [T]he [N]ational [A]rchives of Great Britain, SP75/13, f.303. Joseph Averie to Secretary Coke, 12/22 March 1636; Alexia Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance: Scotland and Sweden 1569-1654* (Leiden, 2003), p.101.

Germans, with some English troops also intermingled.⁵ Issues of ethnicity aside, scholars cannot agree on the size of the two contesting armies at Wittstock, with some reports allowing the Imperialists only 12,000 men while allocating the Swedish force 22,000. More usually the Swedes are estimated at just over 15,000 and the Imperialists at 22,000 (supported by the reports published here) although various other statistics are also postulated between these ranges.⁶ Peter Wilson, following the lead of Hans Delbrück, has opted simply to conclude that the two sides were 'fairly even in numbers'.⁷ Whichever view one takes on the numbers involved, Wittstock was a Swedish victory, a bloody affair and a human tragedy. Again statistics vary, but it is generally agreed that somewhere between 7,000 and 10,000 men died that day with many more injured and invalided. In this brief analysis two neglected Scottish accounts of the episode are reviewed and contrasted with better known ones. In so doing we bring new perspectives to what happened that day, but not before setting the historical context that brought the Scots to the field in the first place.

The Scots at Wittstock: An Historical Background

Throughout the early modern period, Scottish soldiers could be found fighting in the armies of numerous European powers either as individuals, in small groups or in larger formations including entire armies. Too often Scotland and England are seen as being remote from or unconcerned with the Thirty Years' War, or – if troops from these nations are noted as present – British participation is written off as that of mere mercenaries.⁸ For example, Peter Wilson has commented:

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- 5 Lars Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Baner och Lennart Torstensson såsom härförare* (Stockholm, 1932), p.67. That a proportion of the army was English has certainly been understood by Swedish historians of the battle. See Steckzén 'Wittstock 1636', p.112; Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance*, p.101.
- 6 See for example Delbrück, *History of the Art of War*, pp.212-213; Barker, *The Military Intellectual*, pp.206-207; Wetterberg, *Kanslern Axel Oxenstierna*, II, p.741; Lars Ericsson Wolke, Göran Larsson and Nils Erik Vilstrand, eds., *Trettioåriga kriget: Europa i brand 1618-1648* (Värmano, 2006), p.151. For some very precise statistics for the Swedish side of 15,298 men see Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Baner och Lennart Torstensson*, p.67.
- 7 Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, p.581; Delbrück, *History of the Art of War*, p.213. Delbrück notes 'the battle cannot be understood until we assume that the Swedes were at least equal to the allies in strength or perhaps even somewhat stronger'.
- 8 See for example Ian Grimble, *Chief of Mackay* (London, 1965), p.83; R. Bonney, *The Thirty Years' War 1618-1648* (Oxford, 2002), p.57. Some scholars have argued that mercenary service in general was a defining feature of the war with Scots and Germans being singled out. See, for example, Boris Fedorovich Porshnev, *Muscovy and Sweden in the Thirty Years' War, 1630-1635*, edited by Paul Dukes and translated by Brian Pearce (Cambridge, 1995), p.37.

Mercenaries from Britain have attracted considerable recent attention. The discussion is often illuminating, but at times rather magnifies their actual importance.⁹

Given that until recently there has been no substantial work undertaken on England and the Thirty Years' War and the extent of the full British contribution awaits substantiation, this dismissive judgement seems short-sighted.¹⁰ Furthermore, recent historians of Scotland's involvement during the conflict have actually reduced the previously accepted scale of Scottish contribution to Sweden and addressed calamitous failures as well as successes – something which hardly magnifies these soldiers' importance.¹¹ Indeed, the aim of recent scholarship on the subject has been to consider both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of Scotland's contribution, and to place these within a proper context.¹² These studies include examples of small-scale participation and in places such as Spain or Venice in addition to the better-known involvement with Scandinavian or Dutch armies.¹³ Moreover, the discussion of mercenary motivation is not based on any meaningful reading of readily available primary or secondary sources.¹⁴ Some individuals were

9 P.H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War: A Sourcebook* (Basingstoke, 2010), p.337.

10 The doctoral research of Adam Marks seeks to address this gap: 'England, the English and the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648)'. Beyond this there has been some limited work done by D.J.B. Trim such as: D.J.B. Trim, 'Calvinist Internationalism and the English Officer Corps, 1562-1642,' *History Compass*, vol.4, no.6 (2006) pp.1024-1048 and D.J.B. Trim 'English Military Émigrés and the Protestant Cause in Europe, 1603-c.1640,' in David Worthington, ed., *British and Irish emigrant and exiles in Europe 1603-1688* (Leiden, 2010), pp.237-260.

11 Alexia Grosjean, for example, systematically checked Swedish sources concluding that *Krigsarkivarie* Alf Åberg's estimate of 35,000 Scots may have been an over-estimate (by c.5000) as he had not allowed for re-enlistments. See Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance*, p.106. Her section on pp.96-97, entitled 'Scottish defeats' includes discussion of some careless and disastrous actions by Scottish commanders while other militarily inept decisions by Britons pepper the book.

12 Steve Murdoch, *Britain, Denmark-Norway and the House of Stuart, 1603-1660: A Diplomatic and Military Analysis* (East Linton, 2003), pp.202-225; Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance*, pp.74-111.

13 D. Worthington, 'Alternative Diplomacy? Scottish Exiles at the Courts of the Habsburgs and their Allies, 1618-1648,' in S. Murdoch, ed., *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648* (Leiden, 2001), pp.50-54; R.A. Marks, 'The Scots in the Italian Peninsular during the Thirty Years' War,' in ed. T. O'Connor and M.A. Lyons, *The Ulster earls and Baroque Europe* (Dublin, 2009), p.348.

14 For discussion of what is meant by mercenary service see D.J.B. Trim, "'Jacob's Wars.'" The Employment of English and Welsh Mercenaries in the European Wars of Religion: France and the Netherlands, 1562-1610' (PhD. Thesis, King's College, 2002) pp.60-94; Sarah Virginia Percy, *Mercenaries: The History of a Norm in International Relations*, (Oxford, 2007), p.56. Percy describes a mercenary as a fighter who 'does not possess...ideological impulses...his financial motives are unmitigated by any sense of higher cause.' For a more nuanced discussion of Scottish military service during the war see Murdoch, *Britain, Denmark-Norway and the House of Stuart*, pp.208-215.

certainly driven by money and sought mercenary service, such as, perhaps most famously among the Scots, Sir James Turner and Count Walter Leslie.¹⁵ Money, though a necessary fact of life for any soldier (or civilian for that matter), need not be the primary motivation for service. In the opinion of Colonel Robert Monro 'such Souldiers to command were my choice, that cared not for gold nor money, but for credit'.¹⁶ James Spens, a common soldier writing home to his parents after leaving the Swedish army for Dutch East India service wrote of his motivations 'I would not wish for gold', but rather talked of 'the goodness that I find by travelling and visiting foreign countries'.¹⁷ Regardless of the quest for money, virtue or adventure by individuals, the larger Scottish military migrations usually occurred in support of a political or religious cause and were, during his reign, usually sponsored by Charles I himself. Focussing on Swedish service alone, a perusal of the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* reveals warrant after warrant being issued to commanders to raise levies in the name of Charles I and on the orders of the Scottish government. Typically these begin:

The Lords of the Seceit Counsell, according to ane warrant and direction in writ signed be the King's Majestie and this day presentit to thame gives and grants licence and warrant to Colonell Robert Stuart and such captains, lieutenants and others officers as hes charge under him to levey and take up within this kingdom and supple of foure hundredth men for the use and service of the crowne of Sweden.¹⁸

In Charles I's view, these troops' purpose was to support his sister, Elizabeth of Bohemia, in her attempts to regain her husband's possessions in the Upper

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- 15 Sir James Turner, *Memoirs of his own Life and Times* (Edinburgh, 1829), p.16. Turner famously wrote 'I had swallowed without chewing, in Germanie, a very dangerous maxime, which militarie men there too much follow; which was, that so we serve our master honestlie, it is no matter what master we serve'. Walter Leslie famously orchestrated the assassination of General Wallenstein. For an account of his activities see David Worthington, *Scots in Habsburg Service, 1618-1648* (Leiden, 2004), *passim*.
- 16 Robert Monro, *His Expedition with the worthy Scots Regiment called Mac-keyes ...* (2 vols., London, 1637), I, p.73. Monro returns to this point several times noting that the best pikemen 'remaine standing firme with their Officers, guarding them and their Colours, as being worthy the glorious name of brave Souldiers, preferring vertue before the love of gold, that vanisheth while vertue remaineth'. Monro, *Expedition*, II, p.37.
- 17 [N]ational [A]rchives of [S]cotland, RH9/2/242, 1632, Drummer James Spens to his parents, 23 February 1632.
- 18 For reinforcements sent out after Wittstock see *RPCS*, second series, p.485. Privy Council of Scotland warrant to Colonel Stuart, 13 May 1637. The warrant comes accompanied with a copy of the letter by Charles I.

and Lower Palatinate, even if that was through service in the Swedish army. This was not just a Stuart ambition, but also the declared motive of the majority of commanders who have left us their personal testimony.¹⁹ Some appeared equally keen to defend international Protestantism (particularly those represented by the volunteers to the Scots Brigade in the Dutch Republic) while still more were brought into the conflict in the retinue of their social superiors (willingly or otherwise).²⁰ The overall result was that some 50,000 Scots participated in the conflict in the anti-Habsburg forces, with several thousand more on the Imperial side – a number easily matched by English participation in the various phases of the war.²¹

The Scots tended to seek service whenever a given country took the lead against the Habsburgs in a given phase of the conflict. Anticipating Gustav II Adolf's entry into the war, some 12,000 Scots were already in Swedish service by 1630, including remnants from the Danish campaign. By the war's end in 1648, some 30,000 had fought in Germany on behalf of Sweden. Here leadership qualities were fully developed with no fewer than 12 field marshals and generals, over 70 colonels, 50 lieutenant colonels and 8 admirals seeing service. Importantly entire armies were given over to Scottish command, most notably the notionally Swedish 'Army of the Weser' led by Field Marshal Alexander Leslie. Scots in Swedish service participated with distinction at the battles of Stralsund (1628), Breitenfeld (1631) and Lützen (1632). They also participated in significant numbers at the defeat of Nördlingen (1634). But, as discussed below, possibly their greatest impact came under Leslie at Wittstock.

19 See for example Robert Monro's declaration that; 'I did come at it [the war]; for many reasons, but especially for the libertie of the daughter of our dread Sovereigne, the distressed Queen of Bohemia, and her Princie Issue; next for the libertie of our distressed brethren in Christ'. Monro, *Expedition*, II, pp.61-62. See also Sir Thomas Kellie, *Pallas Armata or Military Instructions for the Learned, The First Part* (Edinburgh, 1627), p.3.

20 For the Scots-Dutch Brigade see J. Ferguson, ed., *Papers Illustrating the History of the Scots Brigade in the Service of the United Netherlands, 1572-1782* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1899). As a counter point to committed Protestants in the Dutch Brigade like Colonel William Brogg, we can look to Catholic soldiers in Spain such as Colonel William Semple, whose devotion to his confession was no less sincere than his Presbyterian countrymen. For his founding of the Scots College in Madrid and service to Spain and the Catholic cause see Worthington, *Scots in Habsburg Service*, chapter 3 and *passim*.

21 For a numerical breakdown of British involvement see Murdoch, *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War*, intro, pp.19-20; Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, p.322. Wilson introduces a small error here, believing all the Britons in Danish service served under General Morgan, when he only commanded the English, Irish and Welsh. The Scots, under agreement of Charles I and Christian IV, served within the Danish army proper though under the Scottish flag. The Saltire was altered to have a *Dannebrog* in the top left corner.

Recruiting for Sweden continued throughout the 1630s. This period also witnessed the arrival in France of several thousand troops, both Catholic and Protestant to bolster the French campaign. However, from 1638 the Scottish military migration in Europe was generally reversed with thousands of Scots streaming home to participate in the British Civil Wars. Smaller contingents did set sail for the Continent thereafter, but the heyday of mass Scottish recruitment for the European armies was over. After the Treaty of Westphalia, most remaining Scottish units were merged or disbanded, though the vast majority who served had already died long before 1648. They lie in graves across the various theatres of the Thirty Years' War as several of the occupants of the recently discovered Wittstock mass grave amply testify.²²

The Historiographical Context

Despite many scholars' recognition that the battle was a significant human event, if not a second Cannae, there has been very little critical analysis of it undertaken in English. This is a fact all the more remarkable considering the role of the Scottish contribution to this notable Swedish victory, particularly among the officers.²³ Part of the problem lies in a failure to understand either that there was a Scottish dimension to the conflict at all or, if recognised, that this presence played any part in the outcome on the day.²⁴ Problematically this is due to an over-reliance on a rather limited selection of the available battlefield reports wherein the voices of two of the three most senior commanders on the Swedish side that day – Field Marshal Alexander Leslie

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- 22 A. Grothe and B. Jungklaus, 'Archaeological and anthropological examinations of a mass grave from the 1636 battle at Wittstock: a preliminary report,' in G. Grupe, G. McGlynn, and J. Peters, ed., *Limping together through the Ages. Joint Afflictions and Bone Infections. Documenta Archaeobiologiae* 6, (Rahden/Westf., 2008), pp.127-135; A. Grothe, B. Jungklaus, and S. Eickhoff, 'Memento Mori – Söldnerbestattungen der Schlacht bei Wittstock 1636,' *Archäologie in Deutschland*, no.1 (2009).
- 23 The Scottish contribution to the war has been researched in some detail, though allusions to this battle in particular are limited to the briefest of examinations. See for example Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance*, pp.101-102.
- 24 A noticeable German exception here is contained in a recent monograph of another key battle of the war where the authors go to great lengths to point out the scale and importance of the Scottish presence on the field. See Peter Engerisser and Pavel Hrnčířik, *Nördlingen 1634: Die Schlacht bei Nördlingen – Wendepunkt des Dreißigjährigen Krieges* (Weißensstadt, 2009), pp.240-250.

and Lieutenant General James King – are ignored.²⁵ Rather, there has been a preference to seek authority in the scholarship of Hans Delbrück, who missed these reports and instead repeated the assessment of pro-Imperialist contemporaries as interpreted by another scholar, Rudolph Schmidt.²⁶ Delbrück's influence on Wittstock scholarship persists to this day.²⁷ The cumulative result of continued repetition without additional supporting research into the leading protagonists has been to produce only a partial and confused appraisal which misses some crucial detail of the battle. Secondary literature concerning Wittstock frequently fails to consider the role of anyone on the Swedish side other than Lieutenant General Lennart Torstensson and Field Marshal Johan Banér, who actually served together in the same wing of the army. For example, Delbrück mistakenly placed Leslie in charge of only the 'reinforcements' of 4000 men rather than in command of the centre of the army, and even this merely appears in a note, not the main text.²⁸ Classic accounts of the war such as that of C.V. Wedgewood mention Leslie in a more meaningful way, but often out of position: she locates him on the flank, as if Banér's troops formed the centre.²⁹ Other errors have crept in: Barker conflates Major General John Ruthven (second in command of the reserve) with his uncle, Lieutenant General Patrick Ruthven, who was also in Swedish service

25 For James King's report see ff.275-276. General King's Report of Wittstock, 1636. King directed copies of this letter to both Elizabeth of Bohemia at The Hague and Joseph Averie in Hamburg. From Elizabeth's correspondence we learn that Averie sent King's report to Charles I; this may be the copy in TNA. See Nadine Akkerman, ed., *The Correspondence of Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia. Volume II, 1632-1634* (Oxford, 2011), p.554. Elizabeth of Bohemia to Sir Thomas Roe, The Hague, 28 November 1636. For Alexander Leslie's Report see SRA, Brefexling til Rikskanslern Axel Oxenstierna. Alexander Leslie's report on the battle of Wittstock (1636). This report is published in *Rikskanslerns Axel Oxenstiernas Skrifter och Brefvexling* (Second Series, 13 vols., Stockholm, 1888-), IX, pp.465-468. See also SRA, Skrivelser till Kristina. Alexander Leslie's report on the battle of Wittstock to Queen Christina (1636), which is a slightly shortened account. These two reports are reproduced here as Appendices 1 and 3.

26 Rudolf Schmidt delivers a narrative interpretation of Swedish, French and Imperial-Saxonian reports. His summary of Swedish sources focuses on Banér's report and several pamphlets influenced by the Swedish field marshal, omitting King's and Leslie's reports. Accordingly Schmidt's synopsis and interpretation is incomplete. Rudolf Schmidt, *Die Schlacht bei Wittstock* (Halle, 1876). Thomas Barker's work on Montecuccoli provides an account of the battle from an Imperial perspective. See Barker, *The Military Intellectual*, pp.31, 34 and 205-212.

27 See for example Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Baner och Lennart Torstensson*, p.161; Steckzén, 'Wittstock 1636', p.126; Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy*, pp.581-583.

28 Delbrück, *History of the Art of War*, IV, p.214.

29 Wedgewood, *The Thirty Years' War*, pp.365-366.

but who did not participate at Wittstock as he was in Scotland on a recruiting mission.³⁰ Scandinavian scholars have traditionally paid more attention to the role of the Scottish commanders at Wittstock, albeit the lack of attention paid to the Scottish accounts, or even close scrutiny of Banér's, has led to errors.³¹ In one account of the battle the left flank was placed 'under finnen Torsten Stålhandske och skotten James King' but missing the important caveat that King was the senior officer.³² Furthermore, Leslie's role – or indeed that of the entire centre of the Swedish army – is usually altogether absent.³³

As the additional reports by the Scottish commanders reveal, even before the musket smoke had dissipated, disagreement was rife over what had actually happened during the battle and the role played by particular individuals over the course of the two-day conflict. These simmering grievances were provoked by a mutual distrust between James King and Johan Banér, Banér's alleged jealousy of Alexander Leslie and a general suspicion by Leslie and Banér towards Johan Vitzthum von Eckstädt – the nominated commander of the reserve.

Conflicting Reports

When the combined Banér-Leslie army formed up on the morning of Saturday 4 October 1636, it was divided into four distinct sections, each one with a clearly assigned role.³⁴ Banér (seconded by General Torstensson) and 3,500 men took up position on the right wing of the army directly facing John George of Saxony. His wing (the smallest of the four sections) comprised 17 squadrons

30 Barker, *The Military Intellectual*, p.210.

31 For example Tingsten makes John Ruthven a colonel rather than a major-general. See Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Baner och Lennart Torstensson*, pp.63-75. Steckzén, 'Wittstock 1636', pp.106-127. For a brief but largely accurate description of Leslie at Wittstock see Lars Rossander, *Sveriges fältmarskalkar* (Stockholm, 2003).

32 Appendix 4: Anonymous Imperial Report of Wittstock

33 Wolke, Larsson and Vilstrand, *Trettioåriga kriget*, pp.150-151; Gunnar Wetterberg, following Gustaf Björnin's 1910 account, makes the same error in believing there were only two sections to the army without a centre. See Wetterberg, *Kanslern Axel Oxenstierna*, II, p.741. Alf Åberg certainly correctly placed James King in charge of the left wing, and knew there was a centre phalanx, but omitted mention of Alexander Leslie preferring to emphasise a two-part army. See Alf Åberg, 'The Swedish Army, from Lützen to Narva' in Michael Roberts, ed., *Sweden's Age of Greatness, 1632-1718* (London, 1973), pp.279-280. When Åberg did write on Leslie it was a paragraph, and skipped from 1630 to 1638 and missing Wittstock. Alf Åberg, 'Scottish Soldiers in the Swedish Armies in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries' in G.G. Simpson, ed., *Scotland and Scandinavia, 800-1800* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.94-95.

34 The statistics given and the intended tactics here for the Swedish army are drawn from Tingsten's generally competent report and will only be commented upon further where the contemporary reports provided disagree. See Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Baner och Lennart Torstensson*, pp.66-67.

of cavalry backed by 700 musketeers led by the Scottish Catholic, Colonel William Gunn.³⁵ Field Marshal Alexander Leslie took command of the centre (seconded by Major General Thomas Kerr), directly in front of Hatzfeld's Imperial army.³⁶ He had five brigades of infantry and five cavalry squadrons amounting to 4,342 men. Lieutenant General James King's cavalry (seconded by Major General Torsten Stålhandske) formed the left wing with some 18 cavalry squadrons.³⁷ Command of the reserve fell to Lieutenant General Johan Vitzthum (seconded by Major General John Ruthven), with the largest single contingent comprising 4,656 men divided into four brigades and 12 cavalry squadrons. The plan was audacious: King's cavalry were sent on a sweeping flanking manoeuvre to the west with the purpose of circumnavigating enemy positions and surprising them in the rear. To distract them Banér hoped to keep the enemy busy with a head-on assault on the Saxon positions, supported by fire from Torstensson's artillery and Gunn's musketeers. Leslie, with the infantry brigades, was to feign an attack on the main Imperial centre and thus prevent them from supporting John George's forces. Cumulatively it was hoped that Banér's men would break the Saxons, who would then be forced straight into the path of King's cavalry, which would, all being well, be approaching the Imperial rear from the west.³⁸ However, all did not go to plan and it is here that the reports start to conflict.

Banér's phalanx found the Saxon troops to be steadfast and he reported there was not one of his squadrons that did not have to engage them at least six times, or as many as ten. The attacks were so ferocious that Banér's forces began to waver. The Swede blamed this on the slow movement of King's cavalry in traversing the difficult swamps and woodlands to the west of the battlefield, while the reserve was similarly slow to enter the fray. What happened next is crucial: not only was Leslie contending with Hatzfeld directly in front of him, but he was now additionally forced to intervene in

35 Tingsten puts the number of musketeers at 500 and all under the command of General Torstensson. James King's Report states there were 700 musketeers, but under the leadership of Colonel William Gunn. If these were to work in combination with the artillery, then Torstensson, as General of Artillery, would have had command, but the implications of this suggest a static rather than mobile operation. See Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Baner och Lennart Torstensson*, pp.66-67.

36 One scholar gives an interesting description that Leslie's centre was composed of 'svenska bondpojkar, skotska veteraner, och tyska landsknektar'. See Steckzén, 'Wittstock 1636', p.120; Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance*, p.102.

37 Stålhandske certainly had an affinity with the Scottish commanders at Wittstock, himself being the step-son from an early age of the Scottish cavalry officer Robert Guthrie.

38 Colonel Robert Douglas, a future field marshal in Swedish service, participated in King's flanking manoeuvre. See Archibald Douglas, *Robert Douglas en krigaregestalt från vår storhetstid* (Stockholm, 1957), p.58; Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance*, p.102.

support of the wavering right flank, requiring him to traverse the battlefield. As Banér informed Queen Christina, his troops were in trouble:

...auch weren wegen der grosen force des feindes in eine gantzliche disorder gekommen, wan nicht der Feltmarschalch Lessle mit 5 brigaden zu fuss, die er in der battaglia bey sich gehabt, unss eben zu rechter zeit secundiret undt 4 brigaden von des feindes infanteria, die sich allbereit auch auf unss gewendet, undt unss in die flancke gehen wollen mit menlichen angriff poussiret undt von unss abgekeret, das wir etzlichermassen zu respiration kommen können.³⁹

due to the strength of the enemy they would have fallen into total disorder, if Field-Marshal Leslie with the five brigades of foot which he had with him during the battle had not assisted us just in time and had not manfully attacked and turned away from us 4 brigades of the enemy's infantry (...) so that we could finally gain our breath.

That Leslie's battalions served as the salvation of Banér's wing has been picked up in some histories, even if it is not more generally understood.⁴⁰ For those who have only used Imperial accounts this is perhaps not unexpected, but given the availability of Banér's account it is surprising. Nonetheless, Leslie's actions were widely reported at the time. As William Boswell, an English diplomat in The Hague put it:

These p[ar]ticulars are grownded upon l[ett]res from Banier's Army unto ye French Resid[en]t who sent this Expresse; and the Report of the Expresse himsef who was in the Fight & an Eye-witnesse of what passed: One circumstance is added w[hi]ch I can not omitte, That a part of Banier's owne forces, being overlay's so farre, as they began to thinke how to save themselves, by a retreat; (and had given back; but that) Lesley coming in to their succour, put the Ennemy first to flight, w[hi]ch they could never recover.⁴¹

The Scottish cleric John Durie, writing from Stockholm within days of the battle, commented that:

39 Appendix 2: Johan Banér's Report.

40 Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Banér och Lennart Torstensson*, p.69; Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance*, p.102.

41 TNA, SP 84/151, ff.341-342. Mr Boswell to Secretary Coke, The Hague, 7/17 October 1636.

As for the publicke newes, It is certaine y:t the Saxon & Imperiall forces are quite defeated in Pomenn by Bannier & Leslie, this victory is counted as considerable as any w:ch hitherto they have gotten. For it was a general battaile of all forces on all sides & ye defeate of ye enemy is total of all ye Infantry, and of soe many of ye horse as did not escape by flight. On Sunday next they will shoote all ye ordnance here about ye towne in signe of ioy.⁴²

However, not all accounts of the battle mentioned Leslie's role in it, not even all the Scottish ones. In January 1637 Robert Baillie, principal of Glasgow University, wrote to his cousin, William Spang, a Calvinist minister in The Dutch Republic stating simply: 'glaid I am to see the wickedness of that foolish prince of Saxone punished' – a reference to John George's acceptance of the Peace of Prague.⁴³ Possibly the most understated account of the Swedish victory at Wittstock by one Mr Primrose to Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy omits mention of Leslie at all. This is despite the fact that the recipient of his letter was Alexander Leslie's own foster-brother.⁴⁴ That an account of a formidable military victory gained by Glenorchy's close kinsman could be so dry is illuminating.

Where the Scots were mentioned some serious discrepancies sometimes occurred in contemporary accounts, particularly as to the role of King's cavalry. Banér not only explicitly stated that the late arrival of King's horse caused him distress, but further claimed that they actually had little to do on the first day of the battle at all, casting doubt on their contribution to the outcome. However, in his own report King unambiguously claimed that it was the appearance of his cavalry, in combination with Leslie's infantry support for Banér, which provoked the initial retreat of the enemy and thus led to the eventual Swedish breakthrough.⁴⁵ Rather than having 'little to do' on the first day of battle, King's report suggests that despite orders from Banér to cease action as night drew in, two of King's regiments (under Major General Torsten Stålhandske) advanced and destroyed three of the enemy's regiments. He also said at the time that Banér's reluctance to allow King to pursue the

42 G. Westin, ed., *John Durie in Sweden 1636-1638: Documents & Letters* (Uppsala, 1934-1936), p.24. John Durie to Samuel Hartlib, 12/22 October 1636.

43 D. Laing, ed., *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, Principle of The University of Glasgow 1637-1662* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1841), I, p.3.

44 NAS, GD112/39/61/9. J. Prymrois to Colin Campbell, Laird of Glenorchy, 3 November 1636.

45 This is certainly the understanding of most Swedish military historians. See Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Banér och Lennart Torstensson*, p.70; Steckzén, 'Wittstock 1636', p.125; Wolke, Larsson and Vilstrand, *Trettioåriga kriget*, pp.150-151.

enemy permitted their escape.⁴⁶ Banér's decision to prevent the pursuit was still being reported in December with allegations that he preferred carousing to conflict. According to the Englishman Joseph Averie:

FeldMarshal Leslie was very urgent wth Bannier hereupon to raise their leager presently and march towards the Enemy alledging the inconvenience of any longer stay, by reason of the winter approaching, the difficultie of the waies growing dailie worse and worse, and the advantages wch the enemie gained thorough their losse of time. The like Counsell had Leslie given before, when Bannier held the Armies idle so longe time after the battaile; employed only about the Siege of Werben skonce and laying a bridge over the Elve for transport of his great ordnance; wheras if they had left Werben well besieged and pursued the D. of Saxon & Hattsfeild with their horse and foote, and some small pieces only (wch they had meanes enough to transport) as Leslie and Kinge advised; the enemie had beene more scattered and his coniuncture allso wth Gött's *empesched*. But as this counsaile prevailed not then no more did it now: for Bannier spent the best part of the weeke in drinking and merriment and though he was daily pressed by Leslie could not bee persuaded to raise his armie untill Saturday the 19 November.⁴⁷

Averie spent several days in direct conversation with Banér, King and Leslie in the weeks following the battle and his report provides a very different insight into which of the commanders in the Swedish camp had been pro-active in their duties. It remains unclear whether Banér's recollection of the role of the left wing was a deliberate attempt to downplay King's participation in order to inflate his own reputation or whether his lack of detail was simply a genuine oversight.⁴⁸ But King's is not the only report to conflict with Banér's and, as Averie highlighted, Leslie also had a number of things to say about Banér and the events at Wittstock.

Leslie has left not one but two accounts of the battle. They were both written three days after the event and include an official report for the Swedish

46 Appendix 1: James King's Report. See also Appendix 4: Anon. Imperialist Report of Wittstock. This report also notes Stålhandske's engagement on the first day, though confuses his subsequent actions.

47 TNA, SP 75/13, ff.337-340, Joseph Averie to Secretary Coke, 13/23 December 1636. 'empesched' (italics ours) appears to be a corruption of the French *empescher* 'to impede'.

48 Certainly, within a couple of years, King and Banér were at each other's throats over a number of issues including Banér's prevention of King's promotion to field marshal and Banér's claims that King's incompetence cost the Swedes the battle of Vlotho. See Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance*, p.103.

government, and a second relation to his long-time friend Chancellor and Regent Axel Oxenstierna.⁴⁹ Although both accounts were written in German (and one of them has been available in print since 1898), neither appear to have been considered by scholars of the battle. The second (and published) description addressed to Oxenstierna contains a striking additional clause attacking Leslie's 'enemies' within the Swedish hierarchy. As Leslie put it:

Wiewohl ich nicht daran zweiffle, von meinen übell affectionirten Ew. Excell. anderst hinderbracht sein möchtten, so ist doch Gott bekant, dass (ich) dahin allewege meinen scopum dirigirt, damit Ew. Excell. in meinen sachen ein satsames und wohlgefelliges genugen thun möchte. Versehe mich auch disfals meine actiones remonstriren und meine missgönnern widersprechen werden, und wünsche, dass mit Ew. Excell. in disser sachen mundliche underredung pflügen könnte, wie den verhoffendlich die zeit geben wird.⁵⁰

Although I do not doubt that those who are viciously affected towards me will have told Your Excellency differently, God knows, that I have always directed my actions in order that Your Excellency may have had an ample and complete satisfaction regarding those things which concern me. I hope, that if this is the case, my actions will remonstrate and contradict those who resent me, and I wish that I could talk with Your Excellency about this matter. Time will hopefully grant this.

It is uncertain precisely who Leslie considered to be his 'enemies' or 'those viciously inclined' towards him within the Swedish forces, but contemporary correspondence suggests it was Johan Banér. As Joseph Averie observed in April 1636:

Bannier discovereth also too much the ancient envie & ill will wch he beareth unto Feld Marshal Leslie whose raising he would faire hinder & ruinate his army if he could. for he sent downe latly into the land of Luneborg to challenge for his the Quarters where Leslie lay wth a kind of threatening if he left them not; and yet had he no other way to passe of lodge his Troupes. but Feld Marshal Leslie little respected such a Message and I beleieve the Chancelor wilbe the more forward to advance the progresse of this army, because Bannier would hinder it.⁵¹

49 Appendix 3: Alexander Leslie's Report. We thank Dr Helmut Backhaus for identifying the report to Queen Christina and allowing us unlimited access to the other Wittstock documents held in the National Archives of Sweden (Riksarkiv).

50 Appendix 3: Alexander Leslie's Report.

51 TNA, SP 75/13, ff.315-316. Joseph Averie to Secretary Coke, 8/18 April 1636.

Averie's reports makes it apparent that not only did the two men have very different opinions on how to conduct a campaign but also that Banér's envy of Leslie was already well-known long before Wittstock. Moreover, Leslie consistently proved himself as a supporter and friend of James King, whom he trusted implicitly, even when they later found themselves on opposite sides in the British Civil Wars.⁵² Wittstock was a battle that depended on trust between commanders on different parts of the field and the Scottish commanders can be shown to have had trust in abundance. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that Leslie's and King's accounts both compliment each other and differ to the account by Banér (albeit Leslie was too quick in assuming Banér would understate his contribution).

These and other documents reinforce our understanding of the extent of Scottish military command on the battlefield and perhaps bring the 'trust element' more fully into view. The Scottish commanders amounted to a field marshal (Leslie), a lieutenant general (King) and two major generals (Thomas Kerr and John Ruthven). We now also know of no less than 14 brigades or squadrons under Scottish command at the battle and can identify over 45 officers spread throughout the army.⁵³ Strangely, or perhaps deliberately, elements of the Army of the Weser were found in each of the four sections of the combined Swedish army rather than serving together in a single unit. This is suggestive that Leslie wanted to ensure he had people he could trust in each quarter. Thus, while Banér's vainglorious first-person relation highlights how much of the audacious plan was *his*, and how much *he* suffered in gaining the victory, one senses that Leslie and King had far more to do with the conception and execution of tactics than Banér allows.

A really striking piece of information found in the King and Leslie reports, but missing from Banér's, is mention of Major General John Ruthven.

52 Leslie opened and closed his letters to King with 'Dear Brother', even in the 1640s. For more on the close relationship between Leslie and King see Steve Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial and Covert Associations in Northern Europe, 1603-1746* (Leiden, 2006), pp.39-47.

53 The main commanders among these were: Colonel Robert Cunningham (killed at Wittstock), Colonel James Forbes, Colonel John Forbes, Colonel Robert Douglas, Colonel William Gunn (wounded at Wittstock), Colonel David Leslie, Colonel Harry Lindsay, Colonel Maurice Duwall (MacDougall), Colonel William Stuart, Colonel Thomas Thompson; Lieutenant Colonel Francis Sinclair, Lieutenant Colonel William Stewart, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Leslie (Lord Balgonie) and Lieutenant Colonel John Lichton (killed at Wittstock). NB. Although born in Germany, Colonel Duwall remained a Stuart subject until he was naturalised a Swede in 1638. He recruited troops in Scotland and was considered a subject by Charles I.

Both King and Leslie place Ruthven as co-commander of the main reserve under Lieutenant General Johan Vitzthum. His deployment in this position is interesting, not least as his very presence on the battlefield usually goes unnoticed.⁵⁴ Ruthven had served with Leslie since 1630 and in the Army of the Weser for most of 1636. Furthermore, having married Leslie's daughter Barbara, Ruthven was thus both a trusted colleague and close kinsman of the field marshal. Leslie had several kinsmen on the field including his son, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Leslie 'the younger', who served as second in command in Colonel Thomas Thomson's regiment. Leslie's deployment of his kith and kin at Wittstock clearly reflected his implicit trust in them. Vitzthum, in contrast, had acquired something of a reputation for being 'slow' to commit to actions and for being of dubious trustworthiness. When Banér found himself struggling on the right flank at Wittstock, he sent orders to Vitzthum to commit the reserve to battle. Vitzthum refused these and similar instructions sent to him from Leslie, allegedly fearing the day would turn into another defeat like Nördlingen. In the Swedish *Riksråd* (State Council) it was later reported that Vitzthum's men had eventually advanced against his orders and we can reasonably assume that they were ordered forward by his second in command, John Ruthven. Vitzthum later faced allegations of treason for this, his quip about Nördlingen (a comment unbecoming of a general) and a series of other dubious actions, though he absconded before he could be prosecuted.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the surviving *ordre de bataille* highlight that Leslie not only had a major general from his Army of the Weser in the reserve, but his son-in-law Ruthven was in position with two chosen units placed, rather skilfully, on either side of Vitzthum himself, and in one diagram with another, Thomas Thomson's (thus also Leslie 'the younger') directly

54 Tingsten, although mistaking Ruthven for a colonel, is one of the few to place the Scot in this position of command. See Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Banér och Lennart Torstensson*, p.66.

55 N. A. Kullberg et. al., eds., *[S]venska [R]iksrådets [P]rotokoll, 1621-1658* (vols. 1-18, Stockholm, 1878-1959), VII, 1637-1639, pp.279, 285. Riksråd minutes, 11 & 21 August 1637. We thank Dr Alexia Grosjean for providing this reference. According to Gunnar Wetterberg, the historian Gustaf Björlin attributed Vitzthum's actions to his interpretations of Gustaf Wrangel's orders not to waste his troops on Banér's 'daredevil' schemes. See Wetterberg, *Kanslern Axel Oxenstierna*, II, p.742. However, the fact that Vitzthum had left the country and joined the Imperialists gave credence to the treason allegations, see *SRP*, VII, pp.524 and 532. Riksråd minutes, 31 May and 26 July 1639. Barker, unaware of the accusations of treason, is content to allow for Vitzthum's slow arrival simply being due to his distance from the main battle. Barker, *The Military Intellectual*, p.244 n.69.

behind the German commander – as if for that eventuality.⁵⁶ Whether this was by accident or design, Banér's report merely states that Vitzthum's men reinforced 'the anguish of the right' by arriving too late to fight. Given the reports that his subordinates acted in spite of Vitzthum, the implications for Ruthven's role as surrogate commander of the reserve are obvious.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Vitzthum's dereliction of duty mean that during the battle itself three of the four sections of the Swedish army (centre, left wing and by default, the reserve) were under Scottish command, and Banér himself ascribed the final victory to their actions, particularly Leslie, and even (if grudgingly) to the left wing and the reserve.

A final discrepancy found in the reports lies in the claims of what the commanders wished to do after their victory. Banér claimed in his report that Leslie had asked if he might remain with him and continue the campaign. Leslie's report reminded Oxenstierna that he had already asked to leave Swedish service long before the battle and indicated that he still wished to do so, though without prejudice to the Swedish Crown. He had previously signalled that this was partly because Swedish ambitions in the war did not match those of the Scottish officers in the Army of the Weser, namely the restoration of the Palatinate (on behalf of Elizabeth Stuart and her 'Princlie Issue'), which had obviously not been a key Swedish goal since 1632.⁵⁸ In November 1636 Leslie reiterated his support for Elizabeth of Bohemia and indicated that he and King continued to disagree with Banér's overall handling of the campaign.⁵⁹ From this moment on Leslie's priorities lay elsewhere. Wittstock may have been one of his greatest victories, but it and his continued association with Banér had clearly left a bitter taste in his mouth.

56 Two units under the command of Major General John Ruthven are indicated on one of the orders of battle. See Krigsarkiv, Sveriges Krig 3:210. Wittstock, 24 September 1636. NB on this version he is erroneously listed as General Lieutenant, while on another version (same archive 3:208), he is correctly given as Major General. These orders are indicative that the officers discussed deployment at length before the final deployment as regiments are considered in some cases in several different parts of the field.

57 SRP, VII, 1637-1639. p.279. Riksråd minute, 11 August 1637.

58 Charles looked to France rather than Sweden to secure the Palatinate for his sister, although low-level diplomacy trying to realign Swedish and British policies on a number of levels, including the Palatinate and the alignment of the Protestant churches of Europe, was being pursued. See Murdoch, *Network North*, pp.296-297. As noted above, 'Elizabeth and her Princlie Issue' remained a main motive for Scots and was still being expressed as late as 1637 by many officers. See Monro, *Expedition*, II, pp.61-62.

59 TNA, SP 75/13, ff.337-340. Joseph Averie to Secretary, 13/23 December 1636.

Conclusion

The reports from the Scottish commanders agree with the existing orthodoxy concerning the battle in two regards. Firstly they support the notion that the Swedes were outnumbered, explicitly stated by Leslie and Banér, and secondly they reiterate the human dimension of the victory.⁶⁰ Wittstock had cost thousands of lives on all sides and many of the dead and wounded were Scots. The most senior Swedish commander killed, and mentioned in all the main reports, was Colonel Robert Cunningham, while one of the two brigades reported as 'virtually destroyed' included the men under Major General Thomas Kerr's command – the *Karrische* brigade.⁶¹ Lieutenant Colonel John Lichten was also among the slain while Colonel William Gunn was noted as among the seriously wounded. After Wittstock many of the surviving Scottish officers returned to Scotland. Some went home to recruit new levies for their regiments, others to recover from injury and some to retire or contemplate their future and their friendships. One testament in particular reinforced the inter-relationship of the Scots officers who served together when Wittstock survivor Colonel Harry Lindsay mentioned several fellow survivors including Colonel Alexander Leslie 'the younger' and left 10,000 merks 'to my comrade Colonel Robert Douglas for the kindness between us'.⁶² As Lindsay put it 'there is nothing more certain than death - which is the dissolution of this frail and mortal body - and that there is nothing more uncertain than the hour and time thereof'. According to most of the surviving *ordre de bataille* Lindsay's regiment stood as part of the *Karrische* brigade. The fragility of life and possibility of death in service in this terrible war was well understood after such traumatic events as Wittstock.

60 Appendix 3: Alexander Leslie's Report 'We attacked him in God's name, notwithstanding that he was far superior to us not only in his abovementioned position but also in the amount of his troops. According to the prisoners he had 13 brigades of foot and 12 or 14,000 horse, which number we did not match by far'. Banér makes a similar statement in his report.

61 Steckzén gives precise information on two of the regiments declared as 'destroyed' during the battle. Of the 892 men in the Magdeburg brigade only 308 survived, while of the 800 in one Scottish brigade, 350 died. These were probably the *Karrische*. See Steckzén, 'Wittstock 1636', p.119.

62 Appendix 5. NLS Saltoun Papers, MSS 17606: Papers relating to Colonel Harry Lindsay. This bond of friendship developed in war found expression in several sources of this period, perhaps most famously in the memoir of Colonel Robert Monro. See Murdoch, *Network North*, pp.73-77.

Field Marshal Alexander Leslie also briefly visited Scotland in the aftermath, but returned to Sweden in 1638 seeking his final decommissioning. He thereafter arrived in Scotland to raise and lead the Army of the Covenant against Charles I, not without the help of his great friend and ally, Axel Oxenstierna.⁶³ His reputation as a courageous and considered commander was proven during the campaigns of the Bishops' Wars (1639-1640).⁶⁴ Leslie's leadership in this campaign even earned him the respect of the king whose army he had defeated and saw him elevated to the peerage as Earl of Leven.⁶⁵ However, as the Swedish *Riksråd* records show, during his absence from Swedish service Leslie's role at Wittstock was already being diminished while that of Banér became 'magnified'.

Two versions of the *Riksråd* records from January 1639 exist.⁶⁶ In one of these Leslie's contribution to Wittstock is omitted completely despite the fact that both Banér's initial report (1636) and his newly commissioned drawing

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- 63 For more on Leslie and Oxenstierna and the resulting Swedish support for the Scottish 'Covenanting Revolution' see A. Grosjean, 'General Alexander Leslie, the Scottish Covenanters and the Riksråd debates, 1638-1640' in A.I. MacInnes, T. Riis and F.G. Pedersen, eds., *Ships, Guns and Bibles in the North Sea and Baltic States, c.1350-c.1700* (East Linton, 2000), pp.115-138; Grosjean, *An Unofficial Alliance*, pp.175-182. For the actual text of the debates that took place in the Riksråd see A. Grosjean and S. Murdoch, eds., 'The Riksråd Debates, 1638-1640'. Documents 117 & 118 in C. Erskine, A.R. MacDonald and M. Penman, eds., *Scotland: The Making and Unmaking of the Nation, c.1100-1707. Volume 5: Major Documents* (Dundee, 2007), pp.214-223.
- 64 As the Royalist officer John Aston said 'The generall was much good admired by his soldiers for his judgement in encamping and the good discipline of his men'. See John Aston, *The Journal of John Aston, 1639* (Pallas Armata Reprint, 1999), p.28. For Leslie's campaign at Newburn which won the Bishops' War see Edward Furgol, 'Beating the Odds: Alexander Leslie's 1640 campaign in England' in Steve Murdoch and A. Mackillop, eds., *Fighting for Identity: Scottish Military Experience, c.1550-1900* (Leiden, 2002), pp.33-59.
- 65 '[The] King receiued such contentment that whereas his dinner was appointed and prouided at then Maiors of New castle, hee yet went and honoured Generall Lasley with his presence at dinner, who hath not only gained a good report with his Majestie to be a brave Souldier but also a singular esteem to be a most expert and able commander and generall by such of our English Officers as were then with his Majestie.' See Anon., *His Maiestie's passing through the Scots Armie: Together with the manner of the Scots Marching our of New-Castle; Related by the beft Intelligence* (Printed in the yeare, 1641), pp.1-2. Two years later Sir Cheney Culpepper observed that if the English Parliament's army 'were leade on by a Generall, like Lesley in the Scots first expedition, not too wise (or greate) to be cowncelled, our affaires would goe better on then they have lately done'. See Hartlib Papers, HP 13/22B-23B. Sir Cheney Culpepper to Samuel Hartlib, 20 December 1643.
- 66 SRP, VII, 1637-1639, pp.400-401. Riksråd minute, 19 January 1639. Two versions of the same meeting produced in parallel columns. It is worthy of note that one of the *Riksråd* councillors present was Axel Banér though there is no evidence he sought to omit Leslie from the record to aggrandise a kinsman.

(1638) of the battle described the disposition of the contesting armies.⁶⁷ One of the government accounts erroneously stated that the entire successful Banér-Leslie 1636 campaign was led by Banér and Torstensson – it had become, to some, a solely Swedish affair. It has remained such in the minds of most historians ever since. An alternative understanding, however, is buried in archives across Europe and in the Wittstock mass grave from which the extent of the Scottish contribution to this dramatic Swedish victory is finally being unearthed.

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The National Archives of Great Britain, SP75/13; SP 80/9; SP 84/151

67 *SRP*, VII, 1637-1639, p.310. 15 September 1638. This Riksråd minute, pointed out to us by Dr Alexia Grosjean, records that a 'more complete drawing' of the Wittstock battle had arrived and Quartermaster-General Oluf Hansson was ordered to have it made in copper. It shows King and Leslie in the correct position and is now housed in Krigsarkiv in Stockholm. We thank Ingrid Karlsson for bringing this and various other maps of Wittstock to our attention during our research in Krigsarkiv (including *Sveriges krig*, 3:199 & 200). Anja Grothe from the Brandenburg-based Wittstock Mass Grave Project is an expert on the topography of the battlefield. She identified the previously described 'anonymous' map as one that had to be done by an eye-witness and leading commander and with this confirmation we tentatively here link the one mentioned in *SRP* and the main map in *Sveriges krig* together.

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APPENDICES

1. Lieutenant General James King's Undated Report.⁶⁸

After the Conjunction of both our armies under the Comand of Feldmarschall Banér⁶⁹ and Feldmarschall Leslie and the taking in of the towne of Lüneburg we marched towards Dömitz where we arrived the 24th of August. Here we have notice that 6 or 7 regiments of the Enemys horse were lodged in villages betwixt Werben and Perleberg. Feldmarschall Banér and myself advanced with the greatest part of our Cavalery to have fallen upon these men. but our Exploit being discovered by certaine prisoners they gott of ours; they had time, (excepting some few of them), to retreat unto their army. Feldmarschall Leslie arrived to us with the whole bodie of the army the 4th of September at Grabow from whence we marched to Neustadt and Parchim and there lay still untill the 14th September as well to attend upon the Enemys proceedings or to wayte for certaine troupes who were coming towards from Feld Marshal Wrangel. As soon as these were arrived we tooke a firme resolution to provoke the Enemy to battaile: Whereunto indeed our Necessitys constreyned us, for want of meanes to support our army and though they were farre stronger, then we as consisting of the 3rd Armys under the command of the Duke of Saxony, Hatzfeld and Marazini, and no lesse in number than 30 thousand men both, horse and foote, as our best Intelligence gave us to understand; yet we had good Incouragement, besids necessity to hazard the day with them. for in all rencounters betweene our Palties (sic)⁷⁰ and their course everyone had the better of them wch much animated the common man on our side. But

68 TNA, SP 80/9, ff.275-276. General King's Report of the Battle of Wittstock. Catalogued as 24 September 1636. This transcription contains anachronistic spellings which we have left in the original as the sense is obvious. It is a copy of King's report and is in English rather than Scots suggesting it is not the author's own handwriting. As noted above, Joseph Averie sent a copy to Charles I and this may be Averie's copy.

69 To avoid confusion, personal and place-names have been standardised in this and the subsequent reports. For this purpose we have used a combination of sources including biographical dictionaries and the useful officer list produced by Krigsarkiv. See Björn Gäfvert, ed., *Krigsarkivet Beständsöversikt, del 2* (Stockholm, 1987).

70 'Palties' appears to be a mis-transcription of 'Parties'.

for all our resolution to fight our doubt was that Enemy would decline the battell and therefore to give him an umbrage that we were affrayed of him we used this policy namely of demolishing the bridges and passes where we marched least he should sodainly come upon it. This project succeeded to our expectation and the Enemy verily persuading himself we would neither provoke nor abide him but that our purpose was to make our retreat into Pomerania (out of confidence in his own strength I beleeve) sent away Gen. Major Klitzing from the army with about 5 thousand comanded men unto Rathenow and Brandenburg. Hereupon we advanced the 15 Septemb. with our whole army before Perleberg where the Enemy lay strongly entrenched and notwithstanding that we twice presented ourselves before their trenches within lesse then canon shot as we beate also their horseguards into their works yet they would not come out of their trenches and to assault them where they were so strongly lodged, was too dangerous and indeed desperate. Therefore we thought good to provoke them another way: and so the 16 th September marched to Werben where we lay down with our whole army and assaulted both it and Havelberg; hoping that the Enemy would attempt the relief of these places. Havelberg we took in with little adoe but understanding that the Enemy had raysed his Leager at Perleberg and was marching towards Wittstock we left Werben and the 21th Septemb. Marched with our whole army towards Wusterhausen to hinder the Enemys conjunction againe with Klitzing, who having taken in Rathenow and Brandenburg had caused our Dragoneres (who lay there) to be convoyed unto Ruppin. These Dragoners had present orders to besett Zehdenick and others passes thereabouts, the better to hinder or protract Klitzings returne unto the army. In the meantime our army marched with all the Expedition we could after the Enemy towards Wittstock; and the 23. September tooke by assault a strong passe held by the Enemy thorough which we must march. And the next day here passing over with our whole army, we marched untill one o'clock, and then advanced before Wittstock where the Enemy had made sundry Revelins for the safety of his Ordnance et certaine Musquetieres that guarded them on that side where he expected we could charge. This we perceiving sought out another way but not such as whereby we could march in full battell. Our army was ranged and ordered in manner following: The right wing was comanded by Feld Marshal Banér; & Leonard Torstensson, Generall of the Artillery, the battell of foote by FeldMarshal Leslie and General Major Kerr, the left wing by me and General Major Stålhanske; and the reserve by Lieutenant General Vitzthum and Gen. Major Sir John Ruthven.

The right wing consisted of 17 squadrons horse and 700 Musquetiers comanded by Collonell Gunn; the battell of foote of 5 brigades; the left wing

of 18 squadrons horse and 600 Musquetiers comanded by Col. Erik Hanson; and the reserve consisted of 17 squadrons of horse and 4 brigades of foote. Now seeing we could not come all alike to the spot, the right wing (who first gave the Onsett), had their hands full, and gott a repulse: but FeldMarshal Leslie with the foote and I with the left wing came in reasonable time to their succour. And it pleased God to bring me an unexpected way between two great bushes; where in a wood before me lay the most part of the Enemys foote guarded with sundry Regiments of horse. There we attacked with Courage and Resolution, beating before us all both foote and horse; we incountered with small loss on our side. Only because both the Enemys troupes and ours were pell mell mingled one amongst another before the front of our foot men who beganne to charge with me, my troupes suffered some harme upon this occasion. Yet after we had finished our busines in the wood I marched thorough, and so joyned again with the rest of our troupes of the left wing, to witt Ståhlhanske, Goldstein and Colonell Dewitz, who took their Coarse another way about the wood. Thence we all advanced towards a place where the Enemy stood with two brigades of foote, and the residew of his Cavalry of intention of have given the last charge, and if we had proceeded our victory had bene the greater and few of the enemy hade escaped. But upon some considerations we were inhibited by Feld Marschall Banér least the darkness of the enemy might bread some confusion. Yet, being so neere one another, before the Officers could be recalled, being so hotte and eager in their pursuite two of our regiments to witt Ståhlhanske and Goldstein came to charge; who beate 3 Regiments of the Enemy, gott divers Cornetts of horse from them, and breaking thorough them, chanced to light upon divers of their canon. Intelligence herof being sent onto Feldmarschall Banér, he advanced forwards with his right wing. But, it being dark, the Enemy tooke advantage of the night et escaped us. We understood first at Midnight that they made away but by reason of the weariness of our troupes and the darkness of the night we could not then effectuate any thing of importance. The day following I was sent by our Feldmarschall after the enemy with the cavalry of the left wing, and the Reserve, but could not overtake them, excepting only some of their foote: wherof I beleeve they have saved very few, I dare say not 1500 at most, the rest escaped over the Havel. Yet their retreat was so confused and out of Order that they lost many of their horsemen in the Havel which was then very deep. My fortroupes ever being in their rereguard and if our horsemen had not bene so intent upon their booty very few of them had escaped. They have lost besids all their artillery; and ammunition wherof we found 39 piece of Ordnance, two fire mozers, a great deale of powder and shotte, and I think all their baggage; for we have taken above 4 thousand wagons, and above

two hundred colours of horse and foote. God Almighty make us thankfull for this great victory: whereof you have herwith the true relation. On our side are slayne in the battle Col. Robert Cunningham, et Colonell Berghofer and 3 Lieut.-Collonells. Col. Gunn and Col. Luske and other officers are wounded but with out danger of life or limme. On the Enemys side our prisoners say that Marazini is deadly wounded and Hatzfeld hurt. The Counts of Witberg/Wildberg? and Falkenstein, Yong Hatzfeld,⁷¹ Gen. Major Wend, Col. Sedlitz/Seidlitz?, Col. Schartow, Col. Belter slaine; besids divers other Collonells et Lieuten. Collonells surely wounded. Since the battle we have taken in Werben shantz, and are now advanced over the Elbe as farre as Gorleben to pursue our Victory. We understand the Duke of Saxony came into Leipzig with 60 horse where he yet is; and the troupes he hath left lodged thereabouts: Hatzfeld with his lying about Halberstadt.

2. Field Marshal Johan Banér's Report, 25 September 1636.⁷²

Most Serene and mighty Queen, most gracious Lady. Your Royal Majesty, from my latest letter dated Parchim, the 12th of this month, will have perceived and had presented to her what kind of design I then put forward against the enemy; namely that I wanted to try to confuse the same and bring them to battle early, and before he became more powerful.

Therefore I set off on Tuesday, the 13th and the same day I made it as far as Putlitz. On the 14th I marched to Wolfshagen, where 5 regiments of cuirassiers and Unger with his regiment of dragoons made their presence known. I expected that they would deny me the use of the pass. However, they did not hold their ground long, and since a number of different passes exist between Wolfshagen and Perleberg, the cuirassiers gave way from one to the other before me. At each pass they presented themselves several times in order to delay my advance, but this never continued for long. And Unger, as well as the cuirassiers, sped to the enemy's camp in front of me – [but] not without noticeable losses. Prisoners of the enemy who were transferred here report that during this retreat 400 men of the cuirassiers were left behind and that Unger has not brought more than 60 of his dragoons back into the

71 The meaning here is 'the younger Hatzfeld'.

72 SRA, *Skrivelser till Kristina. Johan Baner's report on the battle of Wittstock (1636); Rikskansleren Axel Oxenstiernas Skrifter och Brefvexling* (Second Series, 13 vols., Stockholm, 1888-), VI, pp.856-866. The battlefield reports of Banér, Leslie and the anonymous Imperial report have all been translated into modern English from their original German. It necessarily follows that punctuation and grammar have been altered, but we hope without prejudice to the meaning originally conveyed.

enemy's camp. Your Royal Majesty will have heard this most graciously also from resident Marwitzen's letter to the Elector of Brandenburg.

The same day I advanced fairly close to the enemy's camp with the army. At a convenient place I presented myself to the enemy for a battle, but he did not want to leave his camp, which was situated within a barrier behind two high ditches, so that it was almost impossible to see a man within it. In addition it was furnished from the outside with a bog as well as with thorny hedges and shrubs. Rather, the enemy placed himself into a battle formation within the camp. I had to carefully consider an attack against an enemy with such a big [defensive] advantage. Since the evening had fallen in the meantime, and because I did not want to undertake anything without further deliberation, I retired a quarter mile backwards from there. I consulted with the main officers due to the importance of this matter.⁷³ They all agreed with me that it was of no benefit to attack an enemy who held such a great advantage.

Nevertheless we positioned ourselves again for a battle in front of his camp the following day, the 15th of this month, in order to try to tempt him outside of his camp. However this was not the enemy's pleasure, who, in his secluded position, reserved his options for alternative ways out⁷⁴, without sending more than approximately 500 horse outside the camp and who engaged themselves in skirmishes with our own [horse] for a short time. Since the enemy refused to engage himself in a battle as described above, I had to oblige the enemy [to a battle] in a different manner.⁷⁵ I decided to drive him from the Elbe and Havel in order to draw him into opposition against me so that thereby he could not avoid battle.

The same day I marched to Wilsnack, and on the 16th I rested there. Early on the 17th [I] sent Lieutenant-General Vitzthum ahead with troops to besiege Havelberg and followed [him] with the army. Havelberg, which was defended by 100 men, surrendered the following day to our mercy. In the meantime I had taken and destroyed the enemy's ships, so that he could not use them as a bridge. In addition the provisions found on the ships proved useful for the army.

I would have recovered the fortification at Werben, with God's help, if I could have besieged it for another night and if I had not received a certain report, that the enemy had set off on the 19th of this month, and had planned to

73 According to the notes contained in *Rikskansleren Axel Oxenstiernas Skrifter och Brefuexling* relating to this report, this was explicitly Field Marshal Alexander Leslie.

74 The original text reads '...aber es hat dem feinde solches nicht beliebt, (sondern) sich einen weg wie den andern eingezogen vorhalten...'

75 The original text reads '...so habe ich auf andere consilia den feindt dazu zu obligiren bedacht sein müssen...'

join and to reinforce himself with the 3500 men who had been separated from the army under Major General Klitzing to besiege the city of Brandenburg (as became obvious from an intercepted letter from Klitzing). Thus Commandant Mortaigne wrote to me on the 20th – shortly thereafter and during my departure – that he had given the city of Brandenburg to the enemy due to a lack of powder and that he lodged himself with his dragoons in Ruppin. Thus I had to hurry even more quickly in order to prevent the enemy's escape and to hinder his meeting with Klitzing. My movement made the enemy hesitate and made him settle again here at Wittstock.

From the enemy's action I could only conclude then that he intended to stay as long as possible in his advantageous camp, and that he wanted to consume and ruin myself through [my] continuous travels and lack of victuals. Thus I made a final decision rather to risk something with the troops that I had with me than to give the soldiers cause to [have to] repeat a difficulty.⁷⁶ Thus, early on in the day before yesterday I dared, in the name of God, to march towards the pass at Fretzdorf, one mile from the enemy's camp, which I could pass easily, but which was difficult enough. I repaired the bridge which had been ruined by the enemy and hastened 1000 musketeers over to Wormstedthaus. [This location] features convenient water ditches and a narrow and easily defendable field. In addition I brought over my own as well as General Leonard Torstensson's two regiments of horse and yesterday in the early morning I began to cross with the army [a process] which took until midday.

When I came over the pass with the whole army, I drew the troops together in the field which was situated there. Again I had to advance through a forest for half a mile, until I found a spacious field where I could form up in battle order. This was when I saw the enemy's battle order for the first time; he had settled behind a forest on a high hill, which commanded the forest. The enemy had placed himself behind redoubts and revelins; he had positioned his wagons between these and had also placed his cannons there.

I had reasonable concerns about attacking the enemy in his great advantageous position and even saw it as an impossibility, especially as the enemy – according to the repeated statements of prisoners – was not weak, but superior to me in cavaliers and soldiers. Thus I moved towards the right hand side of the forest with the army, towards the city [Wittstock] to the end of a hill touching the enemy's battle formation and turned thence with the right wing, commanded by myself and General Torstensson, with the full intention of drawing the enemy from his advantageous position.

76 The original text reads '*...alss der soldatesca zu repetirung einer schwüirigkeit ursache zu geben.*'

This indeed happened, so that the enemy had to change his first position which has been previously mentioned. First he threw his whole cavalry towards me through the forest, which was slightly permeable, with high oak trees and was easy to cross. He was soon disposed to a fight which was so hard fought that I had not previously witnessed such in my life.

And since the left wing under the command of Lieutenant-General King and Major-General Stålhandske were slightly delayed due to a long circuit and did not reach the enemy at the same time as I, the whole force of the enemy, horse and foot, fell onto the right wing and troubled us so much that there was no squadron among us which did not have to engage 6-8 or even 10 times. [They were] placed into such anguish due to the repeated reduction [in their numbers] and due to their weariness that they began to falter, despite their heroic bravery and the maintenance of their posts. They would have fallen into total disorder if Field-Marshal Leslie with the five brigades of foot which he had with him during the battle had not assisted us just in time and manfully attacked and turned 4 brigades of the enemy's infantry - which had turned against us and had wanted to break into our wing - away from us so that we could finally gain our breath.

Nevertheless the enemy's infantry broke away from his cuirassiers again and almost completely ruined two of our brigades, which were the Swedish, which had come from Magdeburg, and the *Karrische*. The Swedish however lost most and several flags fell into the enemy's hands, which were thereafter taken back by [those of] our cavalry who participated in the battle.

The right wing and our infantry which was standing in their first engagements would not have got into such peril if the left wing had not taken such a long circuitous route; They could not have refrained from this circuit due to the forest which was in front of them and due to the high hill. [The anguish of the right would have been less] if the left had started to fight the enemy a little bit earlier and if the reserve, led by Lieutenant-General Vitzthumb, had not followed quite as slowly as they did, but had advanced quicker when they realised that we were engaging with the enemy.

However, since the left wing had moved onto the first advantageous position - which was left by the enemy - when night fell and began to charge, the enemy saw our rearguard, which had arrived too late to fight and could not have been employed due to the fall of night. Thus the enemy became panicky, lost his courage and got into such confusion - through God's mercy and God's helpful act of providence - [that] he was completely beaten, leaving several flags and standards. Most of the infantry, of which a proportion have been slain, fled and rushed from the field, leaving all cannons and taking away

with them no more than three brigades of foot. For this victory gained we have to thank and praise God's might.

In this major battle of colonels, Colonel Berghofer of horse and Colonel Cunningham are missing on our side, and a Lieutenant-Colonel of my regiment (of foot), called Saborsky. Colonel Thure Bielke, who held his ground exceedingly well, is lost, and since his corpse was not found on the battlefield, he is undoubtedly alive and a captive of the enemy. In addition diverse colonels, lieutenant-colonels and other officers are wounded.

On the enemies side, as far as we have learned in haste, Marazini, Major-General Götz, Colonel Wildberg and Colonel Wendt have died and Colonel Hanau is mortally wounded. And Her Royal Majesty shall be [further] informed of what has been lost on both sides and shall be sent a specification of artillery pieces, of which more and more are found, as well as of the number of standards and ensigns which are still brought in. In this battle Field Marshal Leslie and General Torstensson have assisted me so loyally, that I cannot thank them enough for their effort and care (for) Her Royal Majesty and the Swedish Crown (and) their growing service thereof.

I have to testify for them that they – next to me – have kept up the army without complaint.⁷⁷ And through their courage and bravery and with prevailing direction they assisted in wresting the victory from the enemy, who would otherwise have readily proclaimed and called out the victory, after part of the main officers in the enemy's army had spread the rumour that I had died while another part had spread the rumour that I was captured. I therefore subserviently trust in Her Royal Majesty's inherent and benevolent mercy, that she will be inclined without my reminder to devote herself to reward their loyal and arduous service.

As the left wing did not have a lot to do yesterday, I have sent it today in the early morning under the command of Lieutenant-General King and Major-General Stålhandska to pursue the enemy to Pritzwalk and Werberschantze, where he [the enemy] will in all likelihood retreat. The enemy sought to save himself in different ways in great disorder leaving all his troops on foot behind. In addition he was forced to leave his ammunition and baggage as well as the baggage of the Electoral household, and especially his silver wagon and chancery; this capture will be recounted many times.

And I have already learned so much of their actions [King's cavalry], that they have captured over 2000 men of the enemy and that a great number of the enemy have been slain on the way between here and Pritzwalk and that the route is meant to be full of corpses. As soon as the troops have been

77 The original text reads '*...ohne rumb zu melden.*' It is not entirely clear what is meant by this.

regrouped and the wounded have been accommodated, which will hopefully be effected within two days, I am resolved to completely possess myself of the Werberschantz, and then to cross the Elbe in Meissen and Thüringen and to move into the enemy's territory. I am resolved to break his force, which consists of two battalions, comprising 13 strong brigades of foot and 15,000 horsemen; [and this] to the best of my ability and as far as possible, as much as my frail body will be able to suffer.

Without doubt he will save a great number of his horsemen from this great body and will attempt to meet with duke Georg and others as soon as he can. Thus Field-Marshal Leslie, who is slightly handicapped as to the continuation of his service, has persuasively asked to stay with me until the persecution of the enemy is concluded. I am also resolved to keep Field-Marshal Wrangel's troops with me for the duration of this process. Thereafter 'Herr' Leslie thought that he might reassume his position at the Weser and that he would have the opportunity to consolidate his army. This will be all the easier for him, as news continues that Gallas has been completely defeated and that he has died. Thus the troops which are astray in Westphalia have been ordered to the Cölln territories (*Cöllnschen landen*) and nobody should be found there (Westphalia) apart from the occupying forces of the enemy.

Dated Wittstock, the 25 September Anno 1636 Johan Banér.

3. Field Marshal Alexander Leslie's Report. 27 September 1636.⁷⁸

Noble Chancellor, Gracious Lord and highly honoured Patron.

Your Excellency will have rightly received my various letters to himself since my meeting with Herr Banér at Lüneburg and will each time have read about our demeanour / countenance. I have likewise last advertised your Excellency about this at Dömitz, from where we crossed the Elbe drawing closer and closer to the enemy – Saxony and Hatzfeld – who were lying beside the Elbe. We turned our march towards Parchim, where several troops belonging to Field Marshal [Gustav] Wrangel joined us as reinforcements. This was as Marazini had withdrawn from Pomerania and had met with the enemy.

78 SRA, Brevvexling til Rikskanslern Axel Oxenstierna. Alexander Leslie, Earl of Leven Report on the battle of Wittstock (1636). This report is published in *Rikskanslern Axel Oxenstiernas Skrifter och Brevvexling* (Second Series, 13 vols., Stockholm, 1888-), IX, pp.465-468. See also SRA, Skrivelser till Kristina. Alexander Leslie's report on the battle of Wittstock (1636). These two reports are nearly identical except for the additional final paragraph in the report to Oxenstierna which discusses Leslie's 'enemies'.

We departed from there on the 13th of this month, directing our march back to the enemy who are Saxony, Hatzfeld and Marazini, who stayed together at Perleberg in Brandenburg. We arrived on the 14th of this month close to Perleberg, not far from the enemy's field camp, determined to enter into a main battle with them, making all preparations to this effect on our side and placing the troops in battalions. However, as the enemy neither gave up his advantage nor presented himself in the field, we went to Wilsnack the following day, the 15th of this month, and thereafter, on the 17th to Werben, where Lieutenant General Vitzthum took the city of Havelberg, which had been occupied by the enemy.

In the meantime we attacked the scone of Werben in such a way that she would have surrendered quickly, if we could have stayed a bit longer at this place. But after the enemy had stirred at Perleberg and had marched towards Wittstock, we likewise moved from Werben and turned thither on the 20th of this month. On the same evening we lodged in the field at Kyritz. On the 21st we arrived at Wusterhausen and on the 23rd (we arrived) at Fretzdorf, one mile from Wittstock. And since we gathered information there, that the enemy had managed to take an advantageous stand on a hill towards Wittstock as well as in the surrounding forest, and since we heard that evening through his signals that he had resolved to engage [us] in an encounter, we took a strong pass – which had been occupied by the enemy – on the same day shortly after our arrival. We worked diligently day and night in order to enable our troops and artillery to cross [this pass].

The following day, which was the 24th of this month, in the afternoon at about 2 o'clock we moved so that the enemy could see us, after we had recognised how we could best damage him in his advantageous position. Field Marshal Banér and General Leonard Torstensson commanded the cavalry's right wing, I commanded the infantry of the battalions, Lieutenant General King and Major General Stålhandske commanded the left wing, Lieutenant General Vitzthum and Major General [John] Ruthven, however, commanded the reserve.

After it had been adjudicated that the enemy had positioned himself at the left side of the hill where he thought that we would arrive, we turned to the right hand side (and moved) around the mountain, (thus) meeting him differently than he expected. Thus he likewise had to turn to the other side [of the hill] towards us. We attacked him, in God's name, notwithstanding that he was far superior to us not only in his abovementioned advantageous position but also in the amount of his troops. According to the prisoners he had 13 brigades of foot and 12 or 14,000 horse, which number we did not match by far.

A very severe battle ensued. The enemy attacked our right wing with such fury and such severity, which I have almost never seen before. But after long, brave and manly fighting the enemy left the forest and retired to the crest of the hill. Night had fallen in the meantime, overtaking us, so that we were prevented from further pursuing and completely ruining the enemy. This was so much for the best for him, that he could escape during the night and could take those troops which were still together with him, although the most part of the infantry had been separated from him and beaten.

When we realised he had escaped, at the earliest [opportunity] the following day, the 25th, we let the major part of our cavalry commanded by General Lieutenant King and Major General Stålhandske, pursue the enemy in order to destroy (those) they could catch and to seize his remaining cannon and baggage if possible.

Apart from that, many brave cavaliers and soldiers, senior and junior officers, died on the battlefield; however who or how many in particular, is as yet unknown. People say that Marazini is dead or mortally wounded. If that is true, it will be known shortly. The main officers on our side have – thank God – not been injured, although some stood at places on the field which were hotly contested. We have received a great number of the enemy's flags and ensigns which we are still collecting. They are to be sent over with the next post, as well as with 30 seized cannon. We have heard that our cavalry, who pursued the enemy, have captured another 9 cannon which the enemy had to leave behind. They will bring these along in due course. In addition more than 1000 baggage carts have been gathered by our troops, which had been left one mile from here.

As the battle had begun early it seems that we gained the desired result; the complete ruin of the enemy, through divine assistance. Fortune has granted us such a victory as we have not had for a long time. We have to thank God, who may bless and aid us in the future against our enemies and against the enemies of our just cause. We have moved here to Wittstock, in order to recoup again, since we have decided to pursue the enemy further (after we have done this).

Lastly Your Excellency will have received this report several times from my letters, therein I have signified my condition and ailment as well as my increasing age, with the attached reasonable request, to take this graciously into account, as my condition is such and as it will thus be very difficult to carry this heavy charge and since I have hopefully hitherto given Her Royal Majesty and her heirs satisfaction with my loyal service, which I have always been prepared to do. Also, during the time, when I have carried this charge, I have directed my actions in such a manner that Your Excellency will have

hopefully taken some contentment from them. Although I do not doubt that those who are viciously affected towards me will have told Your Excellency differently, God knows, that I have always directed my actions in order that Your Excellency may have had an ample and complete satisfaction regarding those things which concern me. I hope, that if this is the case, my actions will remonstrate and contradict those who resent me, and I wish that I could talk with Your Excellency about this matter. Time will hopefully grant this. I comfort myself that Your Excellency will consider the abovementioned motives and will discharge me from the burden which I have taken upon myself and to appoint another subject instead.

Field Marshal Alexander Leslie

Dated Wittstock, the 27 September (7 October) 1636.

4. Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt (Sammlung Ponickau, VD17 3:626752P, available online).

[A] Thorough and true report of the bloody battle which happened on 24 September 4 October in the country of Mecklenburg at Wittstock between the Elector of Saxony and the Imperial General Fieldmarshal Graf von Hatzfeld and the Swedish crown General Johann Banér.⁷⁹

Anno 1636

After the Swedish General Banér united with Major General Leslie at Lüneburg and with Wrangel's troops on this side of the Elbe, he attacked the Saxons and Imperialists on 14th September at Perleberg in great haste and with great fury. There he managed to take away many of the Saxon and Imperial victuals which ran out immediately.⁸⁰ However, as he found them there in an advantageous place with the army in a good position, he positioned himself in battle formation against the Saxons and Imperialists [within] only half a mile. As General Klitzing with 5000 or more men had been commanded away from the Saxon and Imperial armies to go to Rathenow and Brandenburg, the

79 Universitaets-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, Eigentlicher Verlauf des Treffens bey Wittstock, VD17 23:31324OS. We would like to thank Professor Andrew Pettegree, University of St Andrews, for helping us to identify this document.

80 The original reads '*...den Chur Sächsischen und Keyserlichen bey Perleberg auff den Halß gegangen und daselbsten viel von Chur Sächs. und Keyserl. Furagiern/so gleich außgewesen/ hinweg bekommen.*'

Saxons and Imperialists were hesitant to risk or to engage in a battle with the Swedes. When the Swedes saw that they could not do anything they moved off the next day and marched with the whole army towards Havelberg and the sconce at Werben. He (the Swede) furiously attacked Havelberg and the sconce at Werben. And since Havelberg was only garrisoned with 100 men it was occupied [but only] after considerable resistance. However, at the sconce at Werben they could not achieve anything, although they used a lot of force with canons, mortars and assaults. In the meantime the Saxons and Imperialists (with their armies) turned towards Wittstock on 19/29 September after they had tarried in the field at Perleberg for several days. They thought that they could march towards Zehdenick and that they could unite themselves on the other side of the river Havel with General Klitzing and other regiments which still remained in the region around Schwedt. As soon as the Swedes learned about their march, they left the sconce at Werben and hastened towards Kyritz und Wusterhausen. Thus they arrived before the Imperialists and Saxons positioning themselves in the middle at Wusterhausen and Ruppin hindering the intended unification [of Imperial forces].

The Swedes had a considerable army consisting of 12000 cavalry and 10000 infantry as well as a strong artillery whereas the Imperialists and Saxons were not stronger than a maximum of over 13 or 14 and a half thousand. After the Swedes debriefed the prisoners who - due to a shortage in victuals and due to a famine - had to leave [their camp] daily, they marched towards the Imperialists and Saxons on 23 September / 3 October and positioned themselves in battle formation half a mile away from them at the river Dosse. During the night they let most of their troops cross the Dosse. As soon as his excellency of Saxony realised this, they ordered their army to position itself at quite an advantageous place in battle formation early the next day being the 24 September / 4 October. They ordered their cannon dug in and redoubts to be thrown up. When the Swedes realised this they likewise positioned themselves in battle formation on this side of the river Dosse. They could not go backwards towards the Saxons and the Imperials as they held the advantage. Instead they moved alongside the river Dosse on its right banks, with the intention of setting up their battle formation at Wittstock on the same heights in order to force the Imperialists and Saxons to change their battle formation. This happened. As soon as the Saxons saw the Swedish intention they changed their battle formation and turned towards the hill, which the Swedes wanted to occupy. And as both parties were eager to have the hill a bloody battle quickly ensued, almost before either side could take up a position (as there was not enough time on either side). The battle continued from 3pm until after night had fallen so that for three hours it was impossible

to know to which side God would grant victory. The Imperialists and Saxons eventually completely divided the Swedish right wing consisting of cavalry and infantry and put them to flight. Thereafter they fought until nightfall with Major General Stålhandske who commanded the Swedish left wing and who came around the forest. Thus he (Stålhandske) had to turn towards the forest. Therefore, and due to the dark night, the Saxons and Imperialists with several regiments became quite confused, especially as it was impossible to see who was a friend and who was an enemy.

The Swedes ordered two signal shots from canons one hour later. According to several captured officers - who were able to escape - with these shots the Swedes intended to order Stålhandske and whatever troops he still had in the forest to withdraw with the message that he – Stålhandske – was to quickly return to the pass in order to save the infantry. This was as their right wing was completely beaten and as the infantry had become scattered. The latter had thrown down their guns and had escaped into the bog. (The infantry's safety) was not certain until the next morning. The Saxons and the Imperialists remained for 3 hours on the battlefield after the battle just described. As they had learned from various imprisoned colonels and from senior and junior ranking officers that the Swedish reserve had not yet arrived at the battle and the power of the same was such that the Saxons and Imperialists with their tired regiments could almost no longer consider themselves strong enough, the General Graf von Hatzfeld hastily ordered several generals and officers to convene. He discoursed with them whether it would be advisable to wait until the morning or to march away [at that point]. He also asked about the condition of their artillery and infantry regiments. The generals reported with regard to the artillery that the cannon and ammunition horses had almost all bolted, and that thus most of the cannon could not be used to their advantage and to resist the Swedes. Furthermore, (they reported) that several infantry brigades had suffered considerable casualties. Thus, it was decided to march away from the battlefield and to turn towards Werben. They marched away during the same night but in good order and they turned their march towards the scone at Werben.

The next day around midday the Swedes sent 8 strong troops [of cavalry] after them, who caught and imprisoned [only a] very few soldiers on foot who had become lost in the darkness of the night and on the bad muddy road. The Imperialists and Saxons brought one cannon (or 10) as well as several ammunition wagons to Werben. There they guided the infantry across the Elbe with *Bramen*.⁸¹ The cavalry however crossed through the Havel and

81 The exact meaning of the word '*Bramen*' is unclear although it must have been a type of boat.

has marched on this side of the Elbe to Magdeburg. The Imperial and Saxon baggage was partially looted by the Swedes, but mostly by their own troops.

It was a bloody battle on both sides. It is estimated that over 7000 men died on both sides. There is news that on the Swedish side Colonel [Robert] Cunningham, Colonel Berghofer, the Lieutenant-Colonel of the blue regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Marschofsky of duke Hans Heinrich's cavalry regiment, Colonel Kehrberg, Lieutenant-Colonel Saborsky, Lieutenant-Colonel Bretzkowsky with 3 cavalry captains and others have died. Colonel Luche, Lieutenant-Colonel Schöneck, Prince Gustavus Gustav's son, Colonel Krackaw, the Major of the old blue regiment and Captain Jericho and many more have been injured.

On the Saxon side many high and low ranking officers have been injured and have died. As far as it is known at this stage on Imperial side General Quartermaster Morzin's head has been streaked by a (musket or canon) ball. Colonel Graf von Wildberg and Falckenstein are dead, Colonel Delmaistro is deadly wounded. Colonel Seitlitz, Colonel Schartau, Colonel Beiter, Sergeant Colonel Wendt are dead on the Saxon side. Colonel Milbe, Colonel Milditz, Sergeant Colonel Rippe are deadly injured.

It is not known yet how many of the infantry have died or have been injured. It is certain and true that there was not a shortage of Imperialists and Saxons and that their cavalry has fought so manly and steadfastly. Suchlike behaviour by any cavalry has not happened or been heard of in previous years or during the whole war. Their opponents will have to confirm this.

The end.

5. The Testament of Colonel Harry Lindsay⁸²

HARRY LINDSAY

Be it known to all men by these present letters [that] me Colonel Harry Lindsay, for in so much that I am, shortly God willing, to depart beyond this realm of Scotland to Germany or elsewhere abroad, [and] there to attend my charge upon the wars and other business that concern me. And in the meantime, considering that there is nothing more certain than death - which is the dissolution of this frail and mortal body - and that there is nothing more uncertain than the hour and time thereof. I have thought it expedient for the discharging of my duty in the disposing of my goods for [ensuring] peace and

82 NLS Saltoun Papers, MSS 17606: Papers relating to Colonel Harry Lindsay. This version is a translation of the original Scots. We have added paragraphs and punctuation for the aid of clarity.

tranquillity amongst my friends. And [further] to take away all occasion of discord that may arise or ensue amongst them after my decease when it shall please God to call me out of this world to his everlasting glory, to make my testament and better will by that which follows after;

In the first I commend my soul into the hands of my redeemer and my body to the dust wherefrom it came, trusting in the merits of Jesus Christ the redeemer of the World and by no other means to be participant of that eternal Kingdome that Christ has purchased for all the elect by his precious blood.

And next I constitute my uncle, the Lord Balcares and the Laird of Dun and Doctor David Munro [to be] my executors and universal agents with my goods and possessions. I refer the giving up of the inventory of my goods, possessions and debts, both by me and to me, to my said executors with power to them to balance the said and to pay what therefore I leave in legacy to the persons afterwards mentioned the sums of money and other valuables written below - each one of them for their own part as afterwards desired. Viz:

I leave to my two brothers John and Robert Broun, to be divided between them the sum of five thousand marks which my brother John Broun of Fordell ... upon the Laird of Craiquathrow and ... them both and [their] heirs lawfully begotten of their body I leave to my Lord Spynie and his heirs:

Item. I leave to my sister Ratharie Broun the sum of three hundred dollars which Colonel Leslie is owing me.

Item. of that ten thousand marks which the Laird of Dun is owing me, I leave to my uncle my Lord Balcarres five thousand marks; The other five thousand marks I leave to the Laird of Dun to be given at his pleasure to any of his children begotten with my aunt, my Lord Spynie's sister;

Item. I leave to my Lord Spynie of that ilk one thousand marks which Robert Fletcher is owing and eight thousand marks; To my uncle Mr Robert Lindsay [I leave] one thousand marks; To my comrade Colonel Robert Douglas, for the kindness between us, ten thousand marks:

Item. Of that ten thousand marks which Patrick Wood is owing me I leave to the Old College of St Andrews for the entertainment of poor students of the name of Lindsay five thousand marks ; Additional Item. One thousand marks of which the annual rent shall thereby be distributed there to poor honest and distressed men;

Item. To my cousin Ludovik Lindsay, [I leave] two thousand marks;

Item. To Jhung Thorntoun [I leave] one thousand marks.

Item. To the Laird of Auchmout ... one thousand marks

Item. To Doctor Monro [I leave] the silverwork which is in my charter chest

Item. Colonel Lumsdain [I leave] the silverwork [which] he has of mine in his keeping.

In witness of which I have undersigned this present testament, written [for me] by James [Tins?], in the service of Thomas Darling ... to His Majestie's Signet with my hand at Edinburgh the twentieth day of July, the year of God 1637

Before these witnesses the said Thomas Darling and James [Tins?]

H.Lindsay

Tho: darling witness

Ja: [Tins?] witness