The Napoleon Series

The Germans under the French Eagles: Volume VI Our Allies the Bavarians Chapter IV Part I

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CHAPTER IV

CAMPAIGN OF 1809

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1. -- The political and military situation at the beginning of 1809. Mobilization and organization of the Bavarian troops.

Austria wished to wash away her defeats of 1805; she posed as champion of an oppressed Europe and decided to fight again against France. Her grievances were numerous: did the French Empire not annex, in Germany, Wesel, Kehl, Cassel, Bliessingen -- and, in Italy, Tuscany, with the duchies of Parma and Piacenza? The feudatories of Napoleon now reigned over half of Europe: Murat was King of Naples, -- Jerome, King of Westphalia, -- Louis, King of Holland, -- Joseph, King of Spain ... The Papal States were occupied and would, no doubt, soon be gathered into French territory. The Confederation of the Rhine extended over all Germany and its contingents could reinforce with more than 100,000 bayonets the armies of Napoleon ... Finally, the organization of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was an unbearable menace for the safety of the Austrian states .

Who will be the partners of the Viennese court, in the big part that it prepares to play? Russia? It had at present a sincere friend in France, against whom it would not work at any price; besides, she was fighting against the Swedes and was going to take Finland away from them. Prussia? Her disasters of 1806 and 1807 forbade her all imprudence that her moral support was assured to Austria, but the commitment to support it by arms remained conditional and would be filled only after the first important successes won by the Imperialists on the French. England, therefore, remained alone with Austria; she promised her strong diversions in Holland, on the coasts of Italy, facilitated the levy of 400,000 soldiers, and advised her to take advantage of the remoteness of Napoleon, who had returned to Spain.

Austria regulated the composition of her forces: the Archduke Charles would command in Germany six army corps and two reserve corps;[1] the Archduke John would be at the head of the Army of Italy, and send strong detachments

[1] 1st Corps, Bellegarde; 2nd Corps, Kollowrat; 3rd Corps, Hohenzollern; 4th Corps, Rosenberg; 5th Corps, Archduke Louis; 6th Corps, Hiller; 1st Reserve Corps, Lichtenstein; 2nd Reserve Corps, Kienmayer. A total of 185 battalions and 164 squadrons.

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into the Tyrol, whose insurrection was prepared; two corps, with Archduke Ferdinand, would invade the Duchy of Warsaw. With the masses it would throw on the other side of the Inn and those that would come out of Bohemia, the Archduke Charles expected to have a cheap scattering of the French...

Davout, who commanded our troops in Germany, had only 70,000 men in Westphalia, Hanover, Thuringia and Franconia; Oudinot was at Hanau with a corps of 12,000 soldiers; Massena was still a long way off: he had left Spain with 25,000 men and was marching towards the Rhine; 60,000 French made up the army of Italy; finally, the 12,000 men of Marmont occupied Dalmatia and the Illyrian provinces.

But, in the depths of Spain, Napoleon had been notified of the inconceivable arming of Austrians, and took provisional measures without delay; from 15 January 1809, from Valladolid, he required the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine to prepare their contingents; the Saxons would concentrate on Pirna and Stolpen, the Württembergers in Swabia. The Bavarian army, placed on a war footing, amounted to 40,000 men and 5,800 horses; it was divided into four great territorial commands: that of Bavaria (Munich) entrusted to the brave General Deroy; that of Swabia (Augsburg) to Wrede; that of the Tyrol to General Kinkel; finally, that of Franconia (Bamberg) to the Count of Isenbourg. General Triva, Minister of War, in execution of Berthier's indications, immediately concentrated the troops of Franconia at Nuremberg, those of Swabia at Augsburg, and those of Bavaria at Plattling.

The Emperor returned to Paris on the 23rd of January, after having beaten the English at Corunna; he pushed Oudinot on Augsburg; Davout closed at Wurzburg; Boudet, Carra Saint-Cyr, Molitor and Legrand would arrive at Ulm; Dupas came down from Hamburg to Cassel; the Württembergers, with Vandamme, occupied Heidenheim; the Saxons massed 15,000 men at Dresden; Baden and Hessians were concentrated in Pforzheim and Mergentheim.

In the middle of February Maximilian Joseph called up 12,000 conscripts to complete the Bavarian army. The Oberhaus Fortress at Passau and the Kufstein Fortress at the gates of the Tyrol were put into a state of defense (26 February) and their garrisons increased. Two light battalions reinforced the troops of General Kinkel in the too barren places of the Tyrol; finally, four squadrons taken from the 1st Dragoons and 2nd Light Horse were placed under observation along the Inn.

Major General to the Emperor.

Paris, 5 March 1809.

"I wrote to the King of Bavaria to inform the composition of the Bavarian army, in accordance with the military regulations you have adopted for the army of the Confederation of the Rhine. I have asked for the status of the situation; I have said that Your Majesty desired that, on the 20th of March, a division should be gathered in Munich, one in Straubing, and one in Landshut. "

In anticipation of the next invasion of Bavaria, Napoleon wanted this power to employ its second-line troops without delay to strengthen the regular army in secondary theaters of operations, such as the Tyrol, --in the strongholds and large arsenals, like Passau, Kufstein, Amberg; in this way the army in the field would not be diminished by considerable detachments. Also, Berthier wrote on 21 March to King Max:

"The Emperor desired, Sire, that your Majesty should order that there be raised on the camps in his state 12 battalions of militia forming 48 companies, of which 8 battalions would be directed on Innsbruck for the defense of the Tyrol, a battalion on Forchheim, one for Amberg and one for Kufstein... The Emperor has just ordered that several battalions of militia in Italy will be provided for the defense of the Tyrol."

The Tyrol was already a source of anxiety for Napoleon, who knew that Bavarian conscription was causing the greatest difficulty; the deep loyalty of the mountaineers of that country to the House of Austria made him fear, quite rightly, that the insurrection of that rugged province would be like another Vendee cutting or rendering perilous the communications of the army of Germany with that of Italy.

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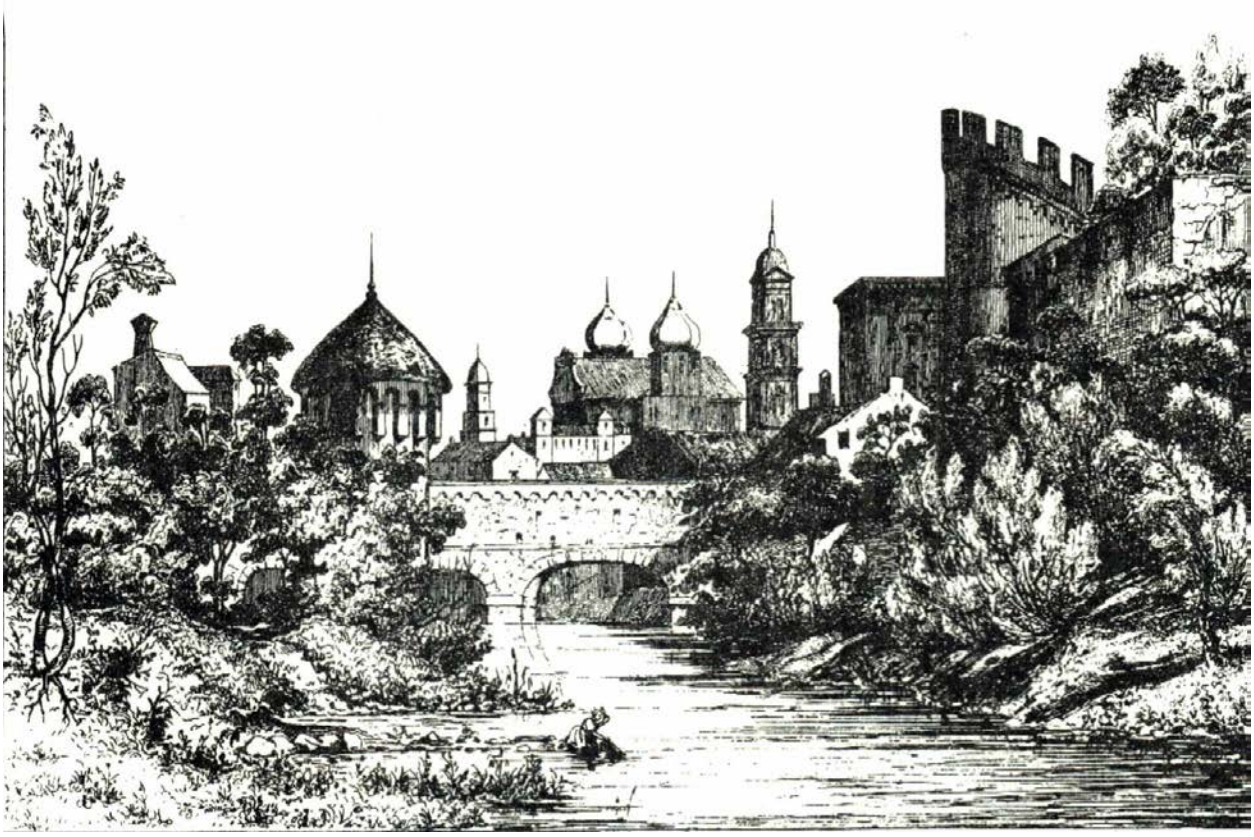
Our allies also had to think of the food stores to be built; we would fight in Bavaria: Bavaria would provide a supply of fifty days for the 40,000 men she had under arms.

The Emperor to the Major General.

Paris, 30 March 1809.

"...The Bavarian army has a division at Straubing, one at Landshut and one at Munich... The Bavarians must have 2,000,000 rations in Augsburg... The Augsburg stores will be provided by Bavaria... "



Augsburg.

These were the three beautiful divisions that King Maximilian put at the disposal of France:

1st Division, commanded by the CROWN PRINCE.

RECHBERG Brigade.....	{ 1st and 2nd Infantry Regiments. 1st Light Battalion.
RAGLOWICH Brigade.....	{ 4th and 8th Infantry Regiments. 3rd Light Battalion (detached in Tyrol).
ZANDY Cavalry Brigade.....	{ 1st Dragoons. 1st Light Horse.

2nd Division, GENERAL VON WREDE.

UNMIK Brigade.....	{ 3rd and 13th Infantry Regiments 6th Light Battalion.
BECKERS Brigade.....	{ 6th and 7th Infantry Regiments. 4th Light Battalion (detached in Tyrol).

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VON PREYSING Cavalry Brigade..... { 2nd Light Horse. / 3rd Light Horse.

3rd Division, GENERAL DEROY.

VINCENTI Brigade..... { 9th and 10th Infantry Regiments. / 5th Light Battalion.

SCHLOSSBERG Brigade..... { 5th and 14th Infantry Regiments. / 7th Light Battalion (detached in the towns).

VON SEYEDWITZ Cavalry Brigade.... { 2nd Dragoons. / 4th Light Horse.

Each division has 10 battalions, 8 squadrons, 18 pieces of cannon. These troops, which together amounted to 30,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry and 66 guns -- including 12 reserve, were placed under the command of Marshal Lefebvre and formed the 7th Corps of the Grand Army. The French General of Division Drouet d'Erlon fulfilled the functions of chief of staff; General von Colonge commanded the artillery, and the Bavarian Captain Becker the engineers.[2]

The day after Napoleon prescribed these organization arrangements, Marshal Lefebvre wrote to Berthier:

Munich, 9 April, 8 o'clock in the morning.

"An aide-de-camp of the Archduke Charles has just handed me a declaration that he has orders to advance with the troops under his command and to treat as enemies all those who would oppose him..."

On the 10th of April the Archduke was crossing the Inn at Braunau, Mühlheim, and Schärding. The Bavarian garrison of Passau, breaking the bridge of the Danube, withdrew into the fortress of Oberhaus whose artillery was reinforced with 12 pieces of heavy caliber from Ingolstadt; the enemy occupied Passau, and General Baron de Montigny, governor of the Oberhaus, responded with cannon at the summons of Rosenberg, commanding the Austrian 4th Corps.

While Jellachich marched directly on Munich by Wasserburg with 8 battalions and 8 squadrons, Chasteler went up the Pusterthal and gave the awaited signal which made the general insurrection of the Tyrol burst forth.

2. -- Insurrection of Tyrol.

The Tyrol had at first loyally submitted to its new masters, since the treaty of Pressburg had annexed it into the young Kingdom of Bavaria; but the policy of the Bavarian government towards the Tyrolese, the clumsiness and the brutality of its agents quickly brought to the simple populations, the proud and believers of this province a discontent which was transformed little by little into a ferment of rebellion and revolt.

It was "with his old rights" that the Tyrol had become Bavarian; the act of Pressburg had explicitly stipulated it, and King Maximilian had formally undertaken not to change "an iota" to the Tyrolean constitution. However, the Bavarian officials, scarcely settled in the country, treated it as conquered territory and began against the clergy a real persecution; the three bishops of the Tyrol, in Chur, Trent and Brixen, were forbidden to confer ordination on any cleric whom the University of Innsbruck had not previously examined and approved in the name of the King of Bavaria; these prelates were invited to demand from their clergy the greatest submission to any royal ordinance relating to the policy of the Church; lastly, it was their duty to abandon to the King of Bavaria the collection of all the cures of their diocese.

In the face of this brutal demand, the bishops far from lessening protest and resistance; on the orders of Montgelas, prime minister of Bavaria, to the great scandal and in spite of the irritation of the populations, Monseigneur von Buoi, Bishop of Chur and Monseigneur von Thunn, Bishop of Trent were expelled from their seats.

[2] Letter from the Emperor to Berthier, 8 April 1809.

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After these first demonstrations of its strength, the Bavarian Government, represented by the Commissioner of the Inn Count of Arco, by M. von Mieg Chancellor of the Tyrol and by the "Kreishauptmann" Hofstetten, Special Commissioner for Ecclesiastical Affairs, vainly sought to obtain from the three prelates the renunciation of their rights: these remained inflexible, and the Tyrolean priests -- like the populations of the parishes -- approved of them and openly support them. The Bavarian agents then turned against the clergy of the second order, imprisoned parish priests, and removed others, employing armed force for these painful executions; "vagabonds monks, bad preachers discarded dioceses were appointed to occupy the cures which became empty, and during this time the banished priests traveled the valleys under the most diverse disguises, welcomed and hidden by the mountain dwellers who deserted churches contaminated by intruder."[3] Persecutions still brought pastors closer to their flock: the Tyrolese could not understand that they are forbidden thereafter "to celebrate other religious holidays than those indicated by the Bavarian ministers' calendar, to carry out traditional processions, to carillon at certain celebrations, to celebrate the service of Christmas night before 5 o'clock in the morning..."[4] The infractions of these rules were punished by the fine, the prison, the forced enlistment.

The tyranny of the Bavarian bureaucrats soon passed all bounds. After the plundering of the convents and churches, there were, contrary to the formal texts of the treaties, a whole series of measures tending to the progressive confiscation of the most precious rights of the Tyrolese: reorganization of the communes, which injured a crowd of local interests; introduction, then reduction of the value of paper money; recovery of a considerable sum; a contribution of nine millions, required as a war indemnity; establishment of conscription, of which the Tyrolese had hitherto been exempt; suppression of the Constitution of Tyrol dating back to 1323, and replaced by the Bavarian Code; ban on rifle shooting, the national sport that fascinated all peasants in the Austrian Alps; auction sale and demolition of the old castle of "Tirol" which gave its name to the country; and finally, even the name of Tyrol, to which the Bavarians wished to substitute the mere geographical expression of "South-Bavaria". All these vexatious measures deeply hurt the Tyrolese, threatened their economic interests and ruffled their noblest national traditions. So they grouped themselves naturally around those among them who spoke to them about their persecuted faith, their confiscated rights and their unrecognized freedom...

André Hofer was the principal and became the most legendary of these defenders of the Tyrol.

A simple innkeeper in the Passeyrthal, a short distance from Meran, under the sign "Sable" -- "Wirthaus am Sand" -- Hofer, the "Sandwirth" as he was known throughout the Tyrol, was a simple man , religious, deeply devoted to the House of Austria. He was deputy of his valley and accompanied in 1805 the former governor of the Tyrol, Archduke John, during the evacuation of the country by the Austrians; the latter kept him as confidant, as his correspondent, and summoned him to Vienna in 1808 to issue with him the measures to be taken in the eventuality, which became probable, of a coming war between Austria and Napoleon.

Returned to his dear mountains, Hofer had gathered around him ardent patriots of all devotions; it was Joseph Speckbacher, of Guadenwal, --Straub, of Hall, - the energetic Capuchin Haspinger, known under the name of "the Red Beard", --Peter Mayer, nephew of Kolb, Pierre Kamenater, the former Austrian Major Teimer; each of them organized the taking up of arms in his valley; there was no lack of powder or bullets; all the men of the country were hunters, intrepid trekkers, in love with their mountains, of which they knew the slightest paths... It was agreed that the insurrection will break out all over the Tyrol on the same day when Austria declared war on the France, and that the general uprising of the country would come by the Pusterthal.

Meanwhile, the Bavarian authorities believed themselves in the greatest security. Montgelas prescribed the most active surveillance, forbade all transport of arms, and recommended that travelers and strangers be watched; the disorders that began to occur in many parts of the country, where the Tyrolean refractories had disarmed and chased away several Bavarian posts, were blamed on the horror inspired by conscription... Yet it was the prelude to the explosion.

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[3] Clair, *André Hofer and the Tyrol Insurrection*, page 56.

[4] *Id*., Page 58.

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The Bavarian troops of the Tyrol Government, commanded by General Kinkel, with four battalions and a battery, occupied the garrisons of Innsbruck, Brixen, Trent, and Kufstein. They included the 11th Infantry Regiment, the 2nd Light Battalion, and the Bavarian Tyrolean Jäger Battalion; the arming of Austria had brought their reinforcement by two squadrons of the 1st Dragoons and the 3rd and 4th Light Battalions. Scattered over an immense expanse, separated by high mountains and isolated from each other by the very nature of the country, the Bavarian garrisons were further weakened by the detachments that had to be sent to the numerous villages where recruitment was too difficult.[5]

On the 9th of April, the storm broke; Austria declared war and Archduke John called to arms "his faithful Tyrolese". Hofer addressed them with the following simple proclamation:

"Tomorrow, for God, the Emperor and the Fatherland, we will march forward and everyone is invited to fight bravely!"

The Austrian 8th Corps commanded by Albert Gyulay, assembled at Villach in Carinthia, detached the Marquis de Chasteler with 12,000 men on Lienz and Toblach: Chasteler crossed the border with 7,000 soldiers, 3 squadrons and 17 guns, and came to support the insurgents of the Tyrol. The Austrian 9th Corps, under Ignatius Gyulay, also set out from Laybach in Carniola.

Hofer took 4,500 peasants from the Passeier and Meran valleys with him: he led them to Sterzing, and on 11 April he attacked Major Speicher, who commanded a Bavarian post composed of two companies of the 4th Light Battalion. The Bavarian cannon first held the Tyrolese at a distance, but the mountaineers drew near, covered by thick hay wagons which they rolled in front of them. Their fire soon put the 12 Bavarian gunners out of action; Major Speicher fell wounded; his decimated soldiers laid down their weapons after desperate resistance and went to the insurgents: this fight cost the Tyrolese 76 men, but 40 Bavarians remain killed or wounded on the ground.

At Hall, the same day, the intrepid Straub and Speckbacher fell on the troops of Lieutenant Colonel Bernclau and also compelled them to surrender. All the Bavarian posts, all the small detachments were assaulted, massacred, or taken prisoner.

Bucher, Hofer's friend, arrived in sight of Innsbruck with the people of the parish of Axams: 70 to 80 mountaineers; as soon as his arrival was announced, the whole population ran to arms, escaped from the city, joining him and crowned the mountains that dominate the Tyrolean capital. In vain General Kinkel sortie from the town Colonel Dietfurth's infantry battalions, the dragoons, the artillery: the Iselsberg, key to the independence of the Tyrol, was unnecessarily attacked by the Bavarians who could not dislodge the insurgents and suffered bloody losses in their repeated and unsuccessful assaults (11 April).

On 12 April, at dawn, the peasants surrounded the city and approached the bridge defended by Bavarian fire. Kinkel judged the desperate position and wanted to parley with the attackers; but it was too late, the Bavarian gunners had fallen under the bullets of Tyrolean rifles, the insurgents had seized the cannon and invaded Innsbruck already... The brave Colonel Dietfurth, already twice wounded, tried a last effort to repress the enemy who has just entered the hospital; he rushed almost alone in front of the Tyroleans and soon went to the ground, mortally shot in the head... This was the end of the resistance: all that were not killed put down their arms. Innsbruck was in the power of the Tyrolese. Major Erbach, however, at the head of a few dragoons and about 400 Bavarian infantrymen, rushed, his sword in fist, through the victorious peasants managing to make a gap and escape with his little troop; he arrived at Hall, but he was to fall there with everyone into the hands of Straub who has been master of this point since the day before and made all the Bavarian prisoners condemned to Salzburg without delay.

The next day, the peasants were celebrating their triumph, spilling into Innsbruck, when an alarm shout suddenly rang out in the city: "To the arms! It's the enemy!" Indeed, a strong column was approaching, coming by the

[5] At the beginning of April, General Kinkel was at Innsbruck with the 11th Regiment, a squadron of the 1st Dragoons, a half-battery; Lieutenant Colonel Wreden had the 2nd and 4th Light Battalions, a squadron and a half-battery at Brixen; Lieutenant-Colonel Bernclau was at Hall, Schwaz and Rattenberg with the 3rd Light Battalion.

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Brenner road: it was the French General Bisson who, leaving Italy with 2,000 conscripts for the German army and surprised during this march by the insurrection, was on his way to Innsbruck where he planned to join the Bavarian troops; clawed by Hofer and Chasteler, he arrived with his extended soldiers to whom the garrisons of Lieutenant-Colonel Wreden's Bavarian posts he had collected in the passage had gathered, and thus saved from massacre or captivity. Received in front of Innsbruck by rifle fire, Bisson could not believe the surrender of General Kinkel, that was made known to him; a parliamentarian sent to the city returned to confirm this disaster: he had in front of him 13,000 well-armed peasants, drunk on their success, masters of the cannons captured by the Bavarians; behind him, the approaching gangs of André Hofer having already cut off and taken his rearguard, and Chasteler's regular Austrian troops descending from the Brenner; his own soldiers were tired of the forced march they have done, without food, almost without ammunition... Nevertheless, Bison refused to go to "peasants" and asked to withdraw freely to Augsburg: Major Teimer, in Austrian uniform, however, effected the surrender, when a cannon shot gave the Tyroleans the signal of a general attack that was to end in a massacre... The unfortunate Bisson laid down his arms; the 1,300 Bavarians who accompanied him shared his fate: Lieutenant-Colonel Wreden had already lost 250 men and 9 officers killed or wounded since the insurgency began.

In four days of fighting and without waiting for the help of the Austrians, the inhabitants of Tyrol had taken 2 generals, 17 senior officers, 115 officers, 5,910 men, 3 flags, 5 guns and 800 horses.

Chasteler entered the following day in to Innsbruck, officially restored Austria's authority there, and then marched with Hofer on Trento: the French General Baraguey d'Hilliers was soon to retreat from Trento to Roveredo, then to Rivoli.

The whole of Tyrol was freed from foreign occupation. The Bavarians, expelled from the country, occupied only the Kufstein fortress blockaded by the insurgents and defended by Major Aichner, with a garrison of 576 men and 64 guns.

3. --Abensberg, Landshut, Eckmühl.

At the same time that the bulk of the Austrian army crossed the Inn and invaded Bavaria (3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 2nd Reserve Corps) the 1st and 2nd Corps, with Bellegarde, left the mountains of Bohemia and advanced along the left bank of the Danube.

The movement of the enemy was taking shape; Berthier began to concentrate the army in his own way:

The Major General to Marshal Masséna.

Strasbourg, 11 April 1809, 6 o'clock in the morning.

"The enemy is on Bavarian territory and makes his movement on Munich: you will take command of all the troops on the right bank of the Danube, that is to say the Bavarians (7th Corps), the corps of General Oudinot , and your army corps (4th Corps)."

"The Bavarian division which is in Straubing will make its movement on Ingolstadt, the other two divisions will continue their movement on the Lech."

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1809. -- Tyrolean insurgent.

Davout gathered near Regensburg, and Masséna at Augsburg. In execution of the orders of the Chief of Staff, the Bavarian division of Wrede retreated from Straubing after breaking the bridges of the Isar: he went to Abensberg, south of Regensburg; his cavalry brigade connecting him with the troops of Saint-Hilaire who occupy this city. But new orders make Wrede take his position from Straubing, while the other two Bavarian divisions were sent, Deroy's to Landshut and the Crown Prince's to Freising. The Bavarian cavalry still occupied Munich, but the Austrians were getting closer to the Isar, all the Bavarian baggage was directed to Vohburg on the night of April 14 to 15, and the new bridge of Freising was burned.

The Chief of Staff to Marshal Masséna.

Donauwörth, 5 April 1809.

"Marshal Lefebvre has misunderstood my orders, he is evacuating Munich on Landshut: go quickly to Landshut and Freising, so he can fall back on Augsburg."

On 15 April, Deroy was still in Landshut; Wrede, in Biburg, ready to support him in case of attack, -- his cavalry brigade (Preysing) had a regiment (2nd Light Horse) at Pfaffenhofen and another (3rd Light Horse) at Rottenburg. The Crown Prince was in Au. Munich was evacuated by the Bavarian cavalry.

The next day (April 16th), the Austrian 5th and 6th Corps entered Landshut and reestablished the bridge over the Isar, under the fire of Deroy who retreated to Pfaffenhofen in combat formation, fighting the enemy at Weichmühl and arriving at night in Siegenburg. Lieutenant-Colonel Buttler of the 5th Light Battalion distinguished himself in the battle of Landshut, as well as the Seydewitz Brigade (2nd Dragoons and 4th Light Horse). Jellachich occupied without resistance the Bavarian capital.

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The three Bavarian divisions were therefore, on the 17th, on the Abens.

The Emperor left Paris on the 12th of April, at the news that the Austrians having crossed the frontiers of Bavaria: he arrived on the 16th at three o'clock in the morning at Ludwigsburg, whence he immediately changed the corrupted dispositions of Berthier, which extended army on a long line from Regensburg to Augsburg; he wrote to him; he wrote to him rather harshly:

The Emperor to the Major General.

Ludwigsburg, 16 April 1809.

"As for the order to occupy Straubing by General Wrede, I do not understand it because I do not know why he evacuated it. On the order to occupy Landshut, I can find no reason. Marshal Lefebvre had done well to concentrate his forces in Munich: two divisions are stronger than one."

"... I would have preferred to have my army concentrated between Ingolstadt and Augsburg, the Bavarians in the front line, as the Duke of Danzig had been, until we know what the enemy is doing."

"I must abide by my instruction to *rally* my army and have it in my hand."

Napoleon pursued his journey towards his army rapidly; he arrived on the evening of the 16th at Dillingen, the 17th at Donauwörth; he reached Ingolstadt on the 18th.

The Bavarians have already received orders from him to proceed to Neustadt, with the exception of Wrede, who was maintained at Siegenburg, to prevent the enemy from establishing a bridge there; their positions on the Abens would favor the meeting of Davout, who came from Regensburg, with the bulk of the army towards Ingolstadt and Augsburg. Lefebvre immediately wrote to Marshal Davout:

"I am sent to support you, I have sent a division to Siegenburg and Biburg, two others are all ready to follow and march on the left flank of the enemy if you are attacked."

This letter was intercepted by enemy scouts on the night of the 18th to the 19th of April, between Neustadt and Regensburg; it was recorded in the work of the Austrian General Stutterheim.

Wrede, covered by his cavalry in front of Siegenburg, was attacked on the 17th on the Abens; the 2nd and 3rd Light Horse (Preysing Brigade) were very seriously engaged and charged successively while the division withdrew on Vohburg after destroying the Siegenburg bridge.

On the 18th, Wrede with his cavalry, the skirmishers of the 13th Regiment, and the light battery Caspers, drove back the enemy who had crossed the Abens, and, after having taken the bridge of Siegenburg, went to settle at Biburg with all his division. Deroy and the Crown Prince were in front of Abensberg. Leaving a single regiment to guard the bridge over the Danube, Davout left Ratisbon and his three columns were on the march to reach the Abens. The Württembergers would arrive at Neustadt; the Boudet and Molitor divisions of Masséna's corps, the Baden and the Hessians reached Augsburg; finally, Oudinot was on his way from Friedberg to Pfaffenhofen: by these movements the Emperor was going to concentrate 60,000 men on the Abens, bordered now by the 27,000 Bavarians of Lefebvre.

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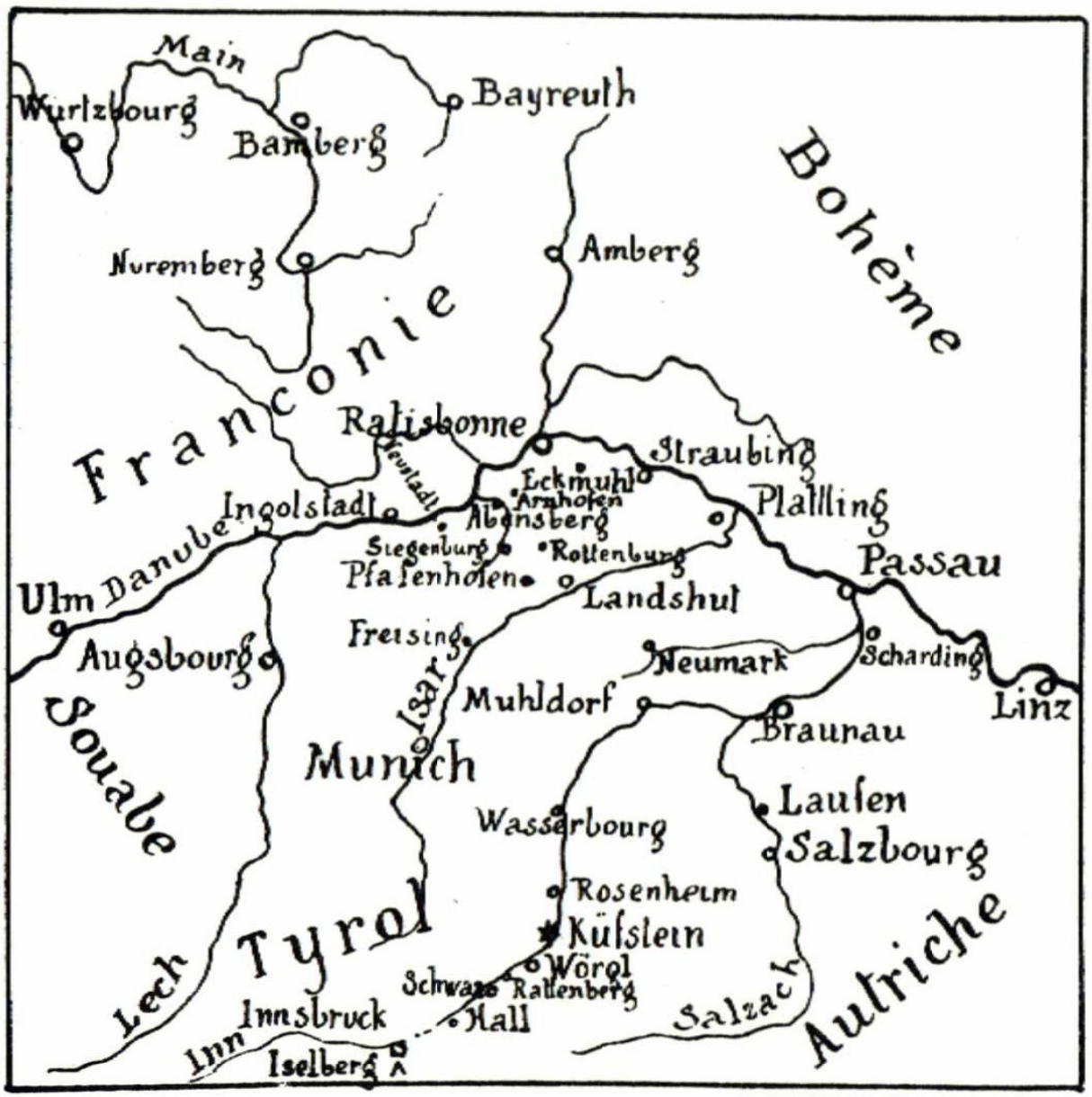

Sketch for the operations of the Bavarians at the beginning of the campaign of 1809.

19 APRIL. -- COMBAT OF ARNHOFEN.

While Marshal Davout clashed with the Archduke on his way from Rohr to Regensburg and defeating him at Abach and Thann, Wrede remained under observation at Siegenburg, defeating the corps of Archduke Louis, who had stopped on the Abens; Deroy was in reserve behind Abensberg while the Crown Prince left with his division, heading towards Ratisbon to support Davout; wanting to prevent this movement of the Crown Prince, the Austrian General Thierry, with 2 battalions, 2 squadrons, 1 light half-battery, attacked at Arnhofen the Bavarian 1st Regiment of Light Horse soon supported by the battery of Captain Regnier; the Austrian dragoons strongly mistreated the Bavarian squadrons and the Regnier battery was in a very compromised moment... The arrival of the Crown Prince with 2 squadrons of the 1st Dragoons restored the fight; Colonel von Vieregg charged the Austrian cavalry at the head of his dragoons, the Bavarian infantry arrived, and Thierry retired with his detachment, noting that he had a whole division on his arms. The Crown Prince then returned to Abensberg after having liaised with the right wing

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of Marshal Davout; this engagement cost 40 men to his infantry and 56 to his cavalry; the latter almost all belonging to the 1st Light Horse.

20 APRIL. -- ABENSBERG.

The Emperor joined the army. In this war which he supported for the interests of the Confederation of the Rhine, he wished to give to his German allies the greatest proof of his confidence, and to fight in their ranks, in their midst; he arrived the morning of the 20th of April at Abensberg; stopping at the head of the Bavarian divisions, he summoned all the officers around him, and addressed to them this harangue, translated immediately by the Crown Prince of Bavaria, and afterwards repeated in all the companies:

"Bavarian soldiers! I do not come to you as Emperor of the French, but as protector of your country and of the German Confederation."

"Bavarians! You are fighting alone against the Austrians today, not a Frenchman is in the front ranks, they are in the reserve corps whose presence the enemy does not know."

"I place all our confidence in your bravery. I have already pushed back the limits of your country; I now see that I have not done as much as I can. In the future I will make you so great that when you make war on the Austrians you will no longer need my help. For two hundred years the Bavarian flags, protected by France, have resisted Austria. Now we will punish her for the harm she has always caused to your country i Vienna, where we will be soon."

"Austria wanted to partition your country into baronies, to divide you and distribute you into its regiments. Bavarians! This war is the last you will fight against your enemies, attack them with the bayonet and annihilate them!"

These fiery words electrified the Bavarians; they asked to march and promised victory to the Emperor. He ordered a general attack at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. While Davout fought at Hausen against Vukassovich, and Lannes at Rohr against Hohenzollern, Vandamme went on Bruchhof, the Crown Prince attacked Offenstetten, and Wrede, on the far right, went over the Abens to Siegenburg and marched on Pfaffenhofen. The Deroy Division remained in reserve.

The success of the day was complete: supported by the cuirassiers of Saint-Sulpice, the Crown Prince hustled the Austrian Thierry who lost 3,000 men and retired on Rottenburg; von Wrede, with the support of the Württembergers, first took Biburg from the Archduke Louis, then captured Pfaffenhofen at the bayonet in a brilliant battle in which the 6th Light Battalion and the 7th Line Regiment stood out.

Napoleon, after the battle, to testify to his satisfaction with the Bavarian troops, congratulated and embraced the Crown Prince before the front of his division, amid the enthusiastic acclamation of the soldiers.

In the evening, Lefebvre and Vandamme, with the Bavarians and the Württembergers, were between the Abens and the Laber, near Rottenburg; Rohr, Bachel and Pfaffenhofen; Oudinot and Massena arriving on the front, towards this last point, and already their detachments at Moosburg and at Freising: Jellachich, in Munich, was thus cut off from the army of the Archduke who had in front of him Marshal Davout, at Hausen and Abach; the two corps of the Austrian right, commanded by Bellegarde, had the relegated the responsibility for guarding the bridge surrendered at Regensburg; but this local success did not prevent the center of the Archduke from being separated from his left by Hiller and Archduke Louis. The Emperor, by a rapid maneuver, would crush this Austrian left with the soldiers of Lannes, Vandamme, and Wrede, while the corps of Davout and the two Bavarian divisions of Lefebvre would pin down the Archduke Charles; he would then turn against the latter, with all his might, and deliver battle to him.

21 APRIL. -- LANDSHUT.

Landshut was occupied by the Austrian 5th and 6th Corps (Archduke Louis and General Hiller) and by the 2nd Reserve Corps (Kienmayer). Congestion was extreme in the small town and would hurt its defenders.

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The Emperor harangues the Bavarians at Abensberg (20 April 1809).
(According to the *Feats of the French Nation*.)

Napoleon marched on Landshut in two columns: the first was directed by Ergoltingen, it was formed by the corps of Lannes; the second filed by Altdorf and consisted of the Württembergers and the division of Wrede.

Bessières led the vanguard, all of cavalry, composed of the Bavarian brigade of Zandt (1st Dragoons and 1st Light Horse) and some French squadrons of the corps of Lannes.

Bessières arrived in front of Landshut and immediately attacked the suburb of Seelingenthal with a regiment of French mounted chasseurs and Bavarian squadrons; the Austrian cavalry accept the fight, but it was soon repressed after an engagement where the General von Zandt found a glorious death. Without the energetic resistance of two Austrian battalions, the enemy artillery fell into the hands of our horsemen; it was with great difficulty that they managed to retired by the Isar bridge.

At 9 o'clock in the morning, Wrede arrived with his infantry, followed closely by the Württembergers; he immediately engaged and charged in person with a detachment of light horses: the Bavarians, full of enthusiasm, captured 11 guns from the Austrians; several of these pieces were immediately turned against the retreating enemy and, in the animation of the fight, Wrede himself took a moment to serve as a gunner... The rapidity of the attack allowed saving the bridge of the Isar that Archduke Louis had no time to set fire to it. Finally, at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, Landshut was occupied by the attackers; the confusion was inextricable: the Austrians left there 6,000 prisoners, cannons, a large quantity of ammunition carts, treasure vans, a pontoon bridge... Major Hartscher, with some light horse of the 3rd Regiment, at Eggenfelden, also took a herd of 700 oxen and an enemy food store. Hiller retired by Geisenhausen on Braunau, pursued by Bessières with 4 regiments of French chasseurs à cheval, by Wrede and by all the Molitor Division.

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General von Preysing was sent to Munich with 4 squadrons of light horse: but he could not go beyond Freising, where he learned that the Bavarian capital was still occupied by Jellachich. As for Wrede, he arrived at Neumark on the 22nd of April, at 9 o'clock in the morning, and pushed what remains of his cavalry to the Inn.

COMBAT OF THE LABER.

While the Emperor was victorious at Landshut, Davout and Lefebvre charged with containing the Archduke Charles attacked him on the Laber; the Austrian 4th Corps (Rosenberg) was assaulted by the French at Denzlingen; to the left of our line of battle, Lefebvre keeping in reserve at Rottenburg the division of the Crown Prince engaged with the division of Deroy at Langquaid: "The squadron of the Minucci Dragoons, assigned to the Marshal, charged with vigor to the right of the village on a battalion of infantry who put down their arms, but who perceived that the cavalry coming to them had to pass a marshy and difficult place, took up their arms and made a discharge which killed an officer and a few dragoons, and wounded several of them, this charge, continued with vivacity, disconcerted the enemy: the position and the village were carried off by the infantry."[6] The Austrians retired on Schierling, but the Bavarian pieces of 12 placed their batteries in gear, dismounted three cannons and blew up several caissons; the Bavarians were soon approaching Schierling; the 7th Light Battalion took and then loses the village which Lieutenant-Colonel Buttler attacked again with the 5th Light Battalion and ended up occupying it; but he could not come out of it. The division of cuirassiers of Saint Sulpice, the Bavarian brigade of Seydewitz (2nd Dragoons, 4th Light Horse) also took part in the affair between the village of Schierling and the wood of the same name and held in check the Austrian 3rd Corps (Hohenzollern). This fight prevented the two enemy corps from rescuing Landshut from Hiller and Archduke Louis, and costing them 3,000 killed or wounded.

22 APRIL. -- ECKMÜHL.

After his victory at Landshut on the left wing of the Austrian army, Napoleon immediately went to the Laber with the cuirassiers of Nansouty, the Württembergers, the corps of Lannes and Massena, to meet with Davout, the two Bavarian divisions of Lefebvre and give battle to the Archduke Charles. The Bavarian 1st Regiment of Light Horse "Kronprinz" alone made up the imperial vanguard, leaving from Landshut. The Württemberg infantry takes the village of Eckmühl, and the Emperor launched, to support it, all his cavalry: the Bavarian squadrons were on the

[6] Report of General Drouet, Chief of Staff of the 7th Corps.

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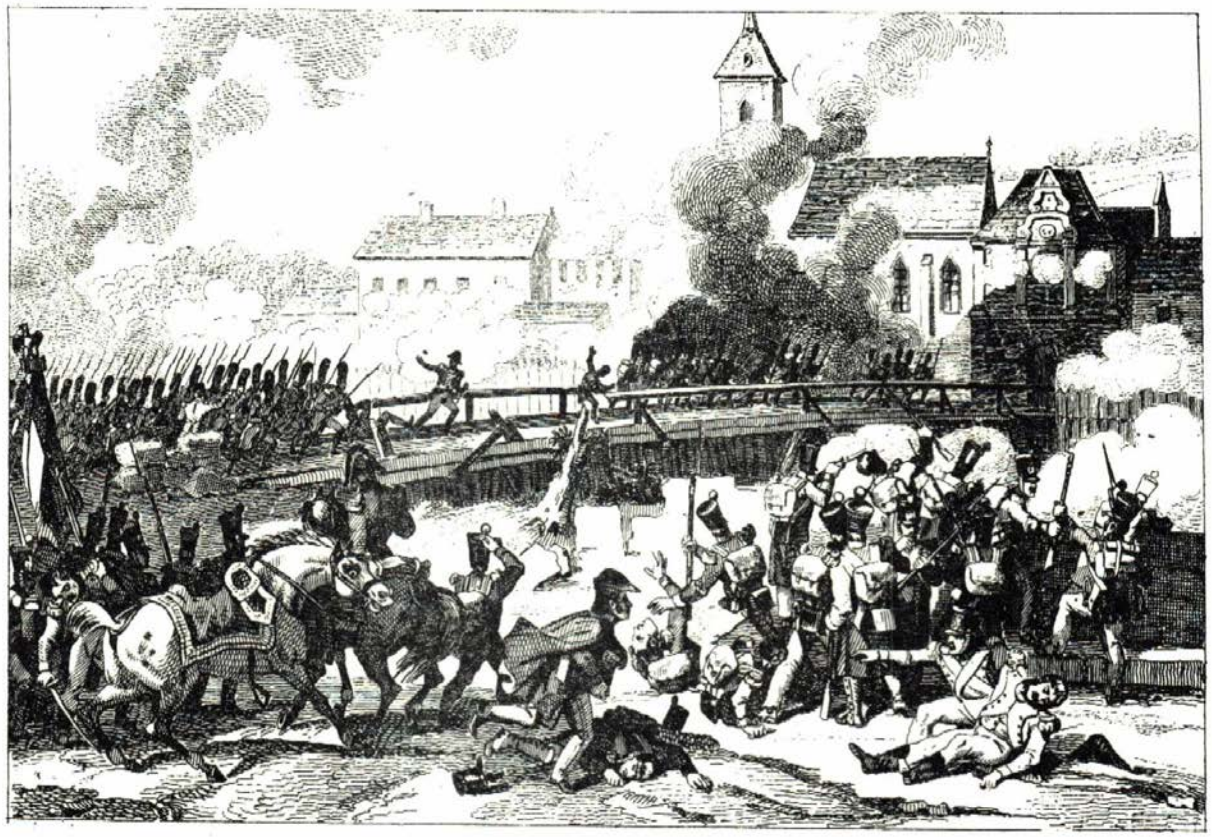

Passage of the Landshut Bridge.
(According to *Military France*.)

left, the Württembergers in the center, the French on the right; the Bavarian cavalry charged with remarkable vigor: the junction was now assured with Davout and Lefebvre. These, massing their artillery between Schierling and Unterleuchling, captured this last village and compelled the retreat of the Austrian 4th Corps (Rosenberg); Deroy's division took a glorious part in this episode of the battle. After the French and Bavarian cavalry, an Austrian battery whose fire was murderous was attacked, by the order of the Emperor, by General Seydewitz with the Bavarian 2nd and 4th Light Horse; Seydewitz despite heavy losses, charged on this battery, taking 5 cannons, but was counter-attacked by 8 squadrons of Austrian light-horse which brought him back on the squares of the Bavarian infantry; cleared by the Württemberg cavalry and a regiment of French cuirassiers, it was reformed, renewed its attack and, happier this time, takes again and brings back the 5 Austrian cannons.

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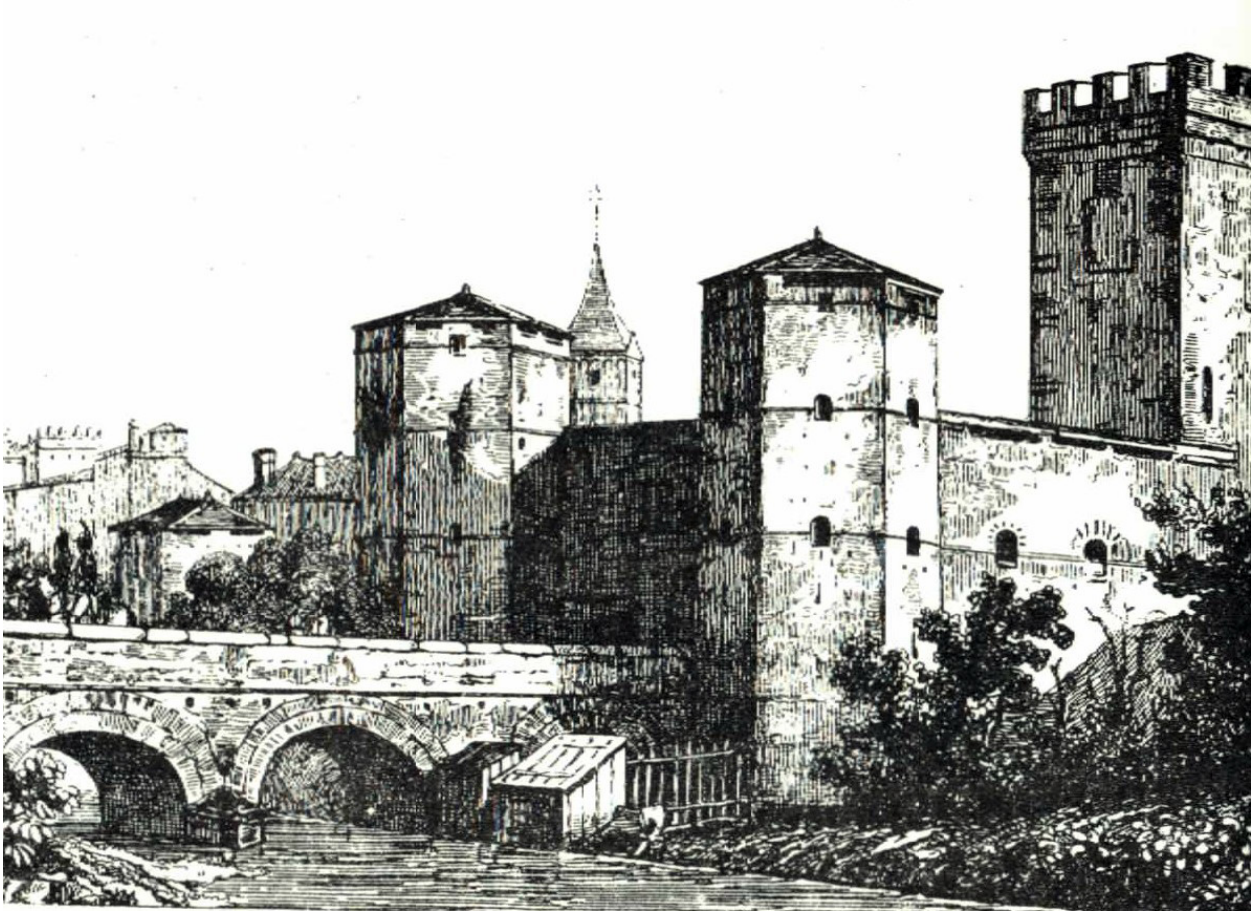

Munich. --Gate of Sendlinger.

Archduke Charles wanted to reassemble his 2nd and 3rd Corps his 1st Reserve Corps; he asked his cavalry for time to do it; 2,000 Austrian cavalry came to form before Egloffsheim: Cuirassiers of the Emperor, Hussars of Stipsciz, Light Cavalry of Vincent, supported by the batteries. But they could not resist the furious attack of the French, Bavarian and Württemberg squadrons, that closely followed the columns of infantry: the whole army was carried forward, Davout and Lefebvre formed the left, the French and allied cavalry the center, Lannes the right of their line; Masséna and Oudinot were in reserve. The Austrians, broken, retreated to Ratisbon leaving 5,000 killed, 15,000 prisoners, 12 flags and 16 pieces of cannon on the battlefield gloriously sprinkled with Bavarian blood. The Bavarian cavalry suffered heavy losses, especially in its attacks against the Austrian artillery: the 2nd Dragoons had 2 officers and 13 men killed, 3 officers and 43 wounded men, 28 missing; the 4th Light Horse had 3 officers and 102 men hors-de-combat; the infantry suffered less; it lost only eight officers and a hundred soldiers in the Deroy Division; that of the Crown Prince had only a small number of wounded.[7]

During the night, after the battle, the Crown Prince nearly perished in the fire which followed the plundering of the village of Egloffsheim, where his division was cantoned; Deroy bivouacked at Thalmassing and the cavalry on the road to Straubing.

In his report on the battle of Eckmühl, the Duke of Danzig praised generals Deroy, Seydewitz, Sibein:

"On this day," he wrote to the Emperor on 25 April, "the Bavarian troops gave evidence of sustained value, and I can not praise them too much, as well as the generals and officers."

[7] According to the report of General Drouet, the battle of Eckmühl and the preceding affairs cost the Bavarian corps only 11 officers and 108 non-commissioned officers and soldiers killed, 25 officers and 480 wounded soldiers.

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"I beg your Majesty to be kind enough to grant me some decorations for the Bavarian regiments, and particularly for the cavalry regiments of General Seydewitz; this brave general deserves also to be recommended, as well as the artillery which has conducted itself perfectly. If your majesty deigns to grant me this favor, he may judge the effect it will have on the Bavarian army."

The Emperor captured Ratisbon the next day, and the Bavarian battery of 12 contributed to the capture of this city defended by Kollowrat with the Austrian 2nd Corps. Leaving Davout under observation at Regensburg with the Friant and Saint-Hilaire Divisions, Napoleon marched on Vienna by the right bank of the Danube; Oudinot, Vandamme and Lefebvre were directed on Landshut; the Crown Prince of Bavaria then descended upon Munich with the artillery taken from the Austrians, and Deroy followed him. Two Bavarian battalions were ordered to escort to Augsburg a few thousand prisoners; in this town, General Beaumont organized a reserve corps consisting of three provisional regiments of French dragoons and three infantry regiments, one of which was Württembergers, the second composed of troops of the Grand Duchy of Berg and the third Bavarian.

As for Marshal Massena, he was sent to Straubing; one of his detachments, pushed to Passau, broke up the blockade of the fortress of Oberhaus, where General de Montigny had vigorously maintained himself from the 10th to the 26th of April.

23-24 APRIL. -- BATTLES OF NEUMARK.

Bessières, with his cavalry followed by the divisions of Wrede and Molitor, pursuing Hiller on the Inn, arrived at the dangerous defile of Neumark; without waiting for his infantry which was still far behind, he attacked the Austrians with his squadrons supported only by the Bavarian 6th Light Battalion "Laroche"; but our horsemen were repulsed and the support battalion, obliged to engage fully, lost 2 officers and 40 soldiers (23 April); Wrede was supported by General Minucci in the night in Neumark with the Bavarian 13th Regiment and the French 2nd Chasseurs à Cheval. Hiller attacked Neumark the next day with 12 battalions; Wrede only had to oppose him 9 Bavarian battalions, a picket of 36 light horse and 4 squadrons of French chasseurs; soon, the Bavarian 13th Regiment, the 6th Light Battalion, the battery, were obliged to fall back on the 3rd Line which came to reinforce; the Beckers Brigade, the two batteries Dorn and Caspers -- the last reserves of Wrede -- were engaged in their turn. But the overwhelming superiority of the Austrians who presented with more than 30,000 men made Wrede fear for his line of retreat, and, not to be cut off from Neumark, he retired through the long suburb of that city under the protection of the Berchem battery; the crossing of the Rott bridge was carried out with confusion, under the fire of the Austrians... When the battery retreated, all the horses of one of its pieces having been killed, the gunners took up the traces so as not to abandon their cannon... Berchem himself saved a caisson whose last driver had just been killed... Wrede defended the bridge with a handful of men, while his division painfully gathered on the other side. Finally, the arrival of Molitor prevented a disaster and the two divisions together were massed on the Aich. In this fight, the Bavarians had 37 officers and 648 men hors-de-combat, 110 missing; in the 13th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel von Tanzel was killed; in the 7th, Colonel Taxis and Major Gédony were seriously injured.

Jellachich left Munich, where the King of Bavaria returned on the 25th of April, followed the next day by the Crown Prince Division, which brought with it the cannons taken from the Austrians at Eckmühl. Deroy was in Erding. Hiller, who retired on the 25th from Altheim went on the 26th to Wels, and Wrede, following his pursuit between the same days at Mühldorf, repaired the bridge under the fire of the enemy.

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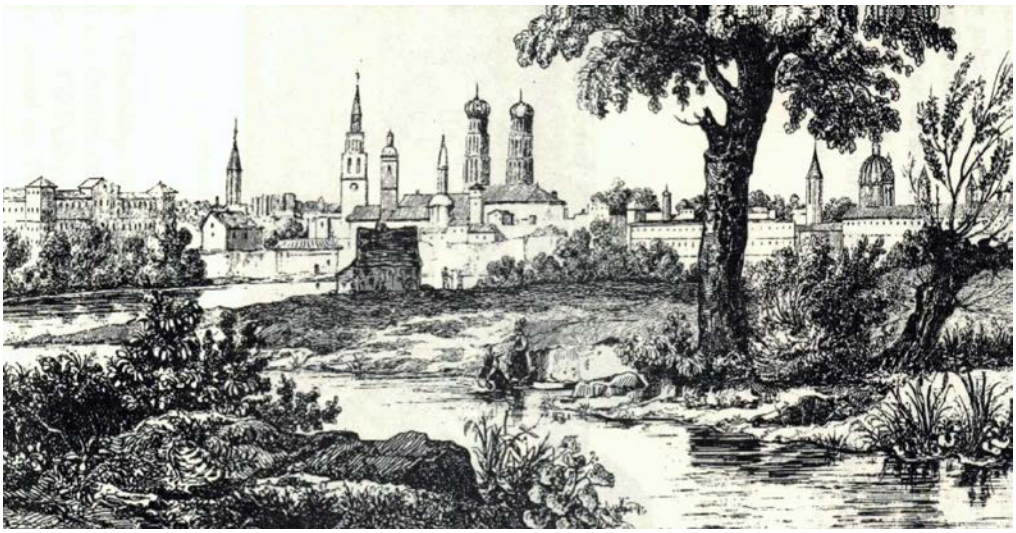
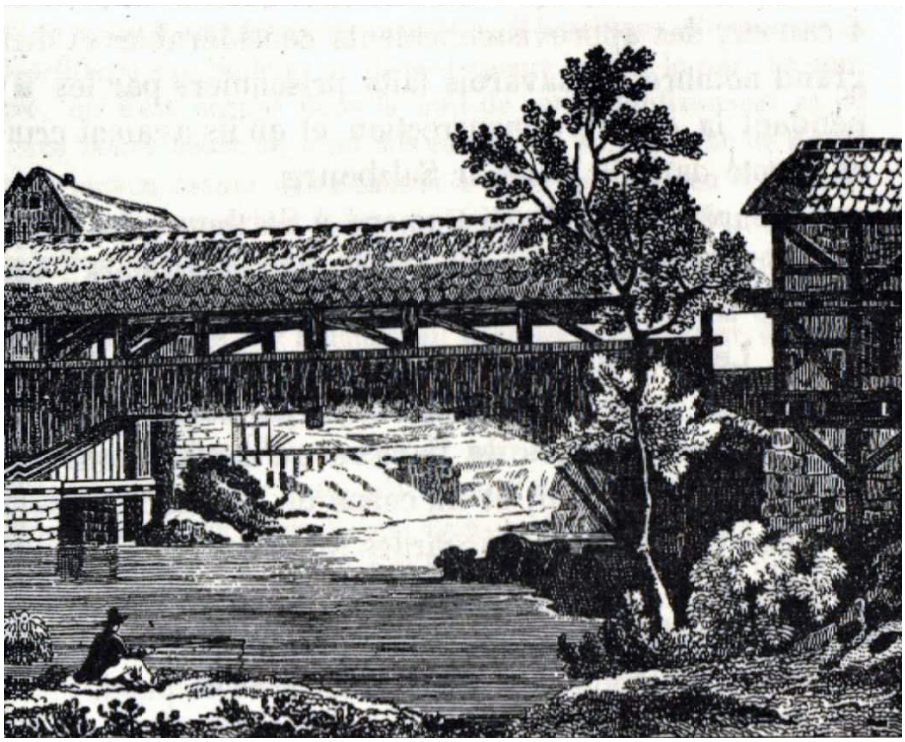


Munich.

The Emperor arrived in person at Mühldorf on 27 April and ordered Wrede to go to Laufen to follow Jellachich. The Bavarian general, on the 28th, went to Trotzburg, chasing off the enemy posts, repairing the Alz bridge and pushing to Tittmoning. A squadron of the 3rd Light Horse which he sent on Laufen caught the Austrian light horse of O'Reilly at Friedelfing, forcing them back and taking prisoners; General von Preysing bringing in 4 new Bavarian squadrons, arrived in front of Laufen at 9 o'clock in the evening, attacking the city whose bridge had been destroyed; he immediately repaired it and made it passable for the next day at noon.



Laufen Bridge.

Anticipating his nearest infantry, Wrede crossed Laufen with his two cavalry regiments (2nd and 3rd Light Horse), the 6th Light Battalion, a light battery, and marched rapidly on Salzburg; he had indeed learned, by an intercepted

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letter, that Jellachich was between that city and Waching. Two leagues beyond Laufen the Bavarian vanguard upset the enemy rearguard, which it pursues up to the glacis of Salzburg, where Austrians and Bavarians entered pell-mell. After a brilliant fight, the city was in the hands of Wrede who took from the enemy 13 officers, 600 men, 4 cannons, considerable supplies and rescued a large number of Bavarians taken prisoner by the Tyroleans during the last insurrection and they had thought to put safely in the town of Salzburg.

Marshal Lefebvre brought to Salzburg the other two Bavarian divisions, by Wasserburg and Altmark; all his troops were united, and he would employ them to reconquer the Tyrol. King Maximilian has just organized six reserve battalions, a corps of mountain jäger from the Bavarian forest service, placing them under the command of Colonel Max Arco, and a body of volunteer foot and horse jäger drawn from the royal forester guards commanded by Colonel Oberndorf. These reinforcements were intended to hold the northern outlets of the Tyrol and to assist the troops in operations in that country.

4. -- Operations in the Tyrol.

Lefebvre's Bavarian divisions, meeting on 30 April in Salzburg, had the task of flanking the right wing of the French Grand Army on its march on Vienna.

Major General to Marshal Lefebvre.

Burkhausen, 29 April 1809.

"His Majesty thinks, M. Marshal, that you will be at Salzburg today, and that you will at once have sent to remove the blockade of the fort of Kufstein. Direct General von Wrede on Strasswalachen, and from there he should push reconnaissances on Lambach."

In execution of these orders, the Duke of Danzig made the arrangements which he reports in the following letter:

Marshal Lefebvre to the Emperor.

Salzburg, May 1st, 1809, 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

"In spite of all possible diligence, I was able to reach Salzburg only yesterday at 2 o'clock, since the Saal bridge was difficult to restore. I immediately commanded 2 cavalry squadrons, 3 infantry battalions, and 3 artillery pieces on Hallein, where they only arrived in the evening. The bridge being cut, we took care in the night of its restoration and early this morning we started on the road to Radstadt. Everyone assures us that the enemy has established a fort behind Golling at the junction of the roads of Hallstadt and Radstadt which will prevent entering the two valleys. It is also said to have been fortified in the Sankt Gilgen Valley."

"I directed a brigade on Reichenhall destined to unblock Kufstein and observe the valley of Sankt Johann and Innsbruck."

"The parties I sent by Rosenheim told me that there were only a few Austrian companies with 5,000 or 6,000 peasants to blockade this town; and not being strong enough to lift the blockade, I ordered this brigade to march towards Traunstein and Grassau, the defiles of Lofer and Sankt Johann being too difficult."

"General Drouet made this morning a reconnaissance of the castle (Salzburg) with Colonel Lejeune and the commander of the place; he thought that this superb position could very easily make them masters of the part of the city on the left bank of the Salza, and that if one wished to make Salzburg one of the first towns of Europe, it would be very easy at little expense, but a garrison of 9,000 to 10,000 men would be necessary, while 3,000 would suffice to defend the part of the town on the left bank. Colonel Lejeune , who had returned to His Majesty, could give him all the information which he desired on this position. They began to put the castle in condition."

"I received the dispatch of the Prince of Neuchatel of 30 April, at noon, by which he told me to send 10,000 men in pursuit of the enemy; I have the honor to observe to your Majesty that it is far from me that I have this number at my

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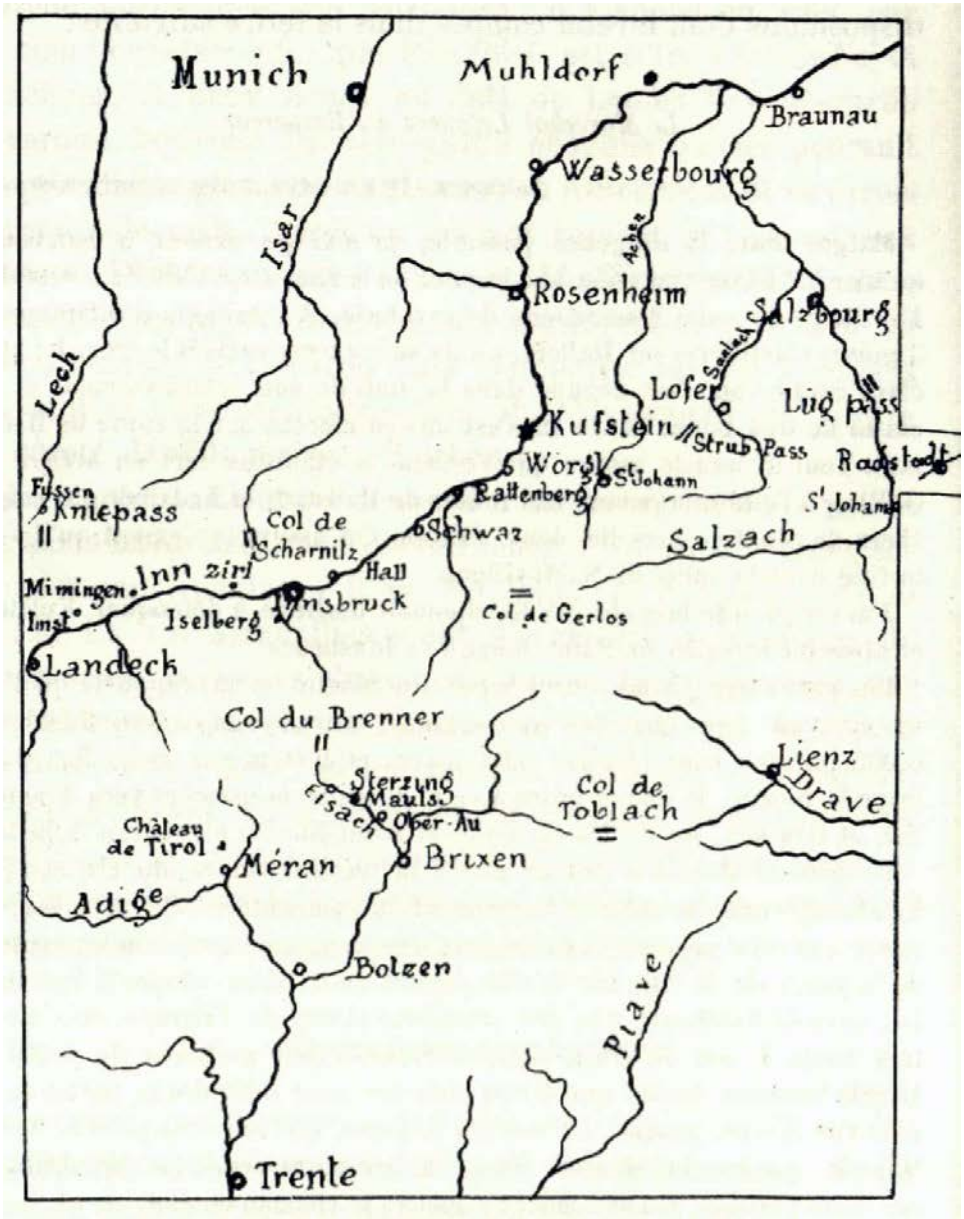
disposal. First of all, the 2nd Division no longer takes my orders and has not given me any account for a long time, despite all the orders I can give to General von Wrede. The 1st and 3rd Divisions have 5 battalions of detachments, both for the conducting of prisoners and for Kufstein; a brigade of the 3rd Division left yesterday to unblockade this city, and a brigade of the 1st Division has gone to Hallein and is now marching on Radstadt, so that I have only remaining in Salzburg, after deduction of about 2,500 stragglers, on my two divisions, only 4,572 bayonets intended to support the division of Wrede and the troops who march towards Carinthia."

The insurrection of the Tyrol caused the orders previously given to Marshal Lefebvre to be modified: it was no longer a question of following the general movement of the army, but of suppressing the peasants' uprising as soon as possible and of solidly occupying the country after having chased off the Austrians.



Sketch of Tyrol.

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In fact, after the failure of Prince Eugene at Sacile, in Italy, and the retreat of the Archduke John, who was recalled to the defense of the hereditary states following the defeats of the Austrian army of the Danube, Chasteler had recovered with ten battalions from Roveredo and Trento on Innsbruck, rallying the 3 battalions left on the Inn to Count von Buol to supervise and organize the Tyrolean militia.

The peasants, to whom the patriot Straub had just brought back from Austria 200,000 florins, 70 barrels of powder and 12 of lead, thought themselves invincible, and all the able-bodied men were under arms, ready to assist the little Austrian army of the Marquis de Chasteler.

To fulfill the task assigned to him, Lefebvre sent General Stengel[8] to Radstadt with the 8th Regiment, 1 battalion of the 4th and 3 pieces of the Wagner Battery; Stengel must follow Jellachich, whose rearguard stopped at the Lueg Pass; the reconnaissance that had been made of this defile suggested great difficulties:

Marshal Lefebvre to the Emperor.

Salzburg, 2 May, 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

"I have the honor to report to Your Majesty that my aide-de-camp Maigarnaud, who is with the column which I directed on Radstadt, gives me some details of the situation of Fort Lueg which I have the honor to transmit to him: the *Pas de Lueg* is unapproachable our side, it has 3 drawbridges, and the troops who defend the approaches are so well covered that we see nobody. From the bridge of the Lamer to the Pas de Lueg, the side of the mountain is filled with skirmishers who make a continual fire on the road from which they are only separated by the Salza which is very narrow in this place; armed with iron crampons, they climb the steepest rocks."

"Seeing the difficulty of forcing this post, I ordered it to be turned by Abtenau, although the road was impracticable for the cavalry because of the snow; already a battalion is on the march to take post at Huttau; although it takes nine hours to march, I hope that this movement will compel the enemy to abandon the defile of Lueg. I have the brigade in charge of this operation supported by the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division. I hope that these forces will be sufficient to make us masters of the Pas de Lueg and open our communications on Radstadt."

"It has not yet been possible to obtain news of Chasteler's corps except from the peasants who assure us that he is on the side of Innsbruck, and that the Tyroleans must have made him remain among them to direct them."

"I sent off 1 battalion, 1 squadron and 2 artillery pieces from Reichenhall today to Lofer to threaten the rear of Kufstein."

"By the departure of the 2nd brigade of the 1st Division, I remain here with about 2,000 bayonets. I no longer hear of the troops I provided to escort prisoners of war, although I ordered them to return."

Placed on the Napoleon Series: November 2019

[8] General Stengel had replaced General Raglovich at the head of his brigade

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