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Taming Mars: Customs, Rituals and Ceremonies in the Siege Operations in Dalmatia during the War for Crete (1645–69)

The main question of this study is how seventeenth-century European societies attempted to regulate the conduct of warfare. It deals with a peculiar aspect of seventeenth-century siege warfare, namely the customs, ceremonies and rituals that regulated various aspects of a siege, such as the observation of truces and immunities, the negotiation of surrenders, the treatment of prisoners etc. So far, most historians dealing with Early Modern siege warfare have been more concerned with its technical and operational aspects: the digging of trenches, the development of various elements of fortifications, wastage rates of combatants, hardships brought about by lack of food and epidemics, and so on, than they have been with these “decorative elements” of engagement. Nevertheless, these activities, although usually without any obvious operational military value, provided a medium for a discourse between the besieger and besieged and thus, as I argue, played an important role in the final outcome of a siege. Through descriptive analyses of three cases, each dealing with one siege operation in the Dalmatian theater of operations during the War for Crete (1645–69), this inquiry provides an account of customs, rituals, ceremonies and rules of “proper” conduct of a siege, with particular emphasis on the most critical part of a siege: the surrender of a fortified site.

Keywords: Republic of Venice, Dalmatia, Ottoman Empire, military history, War for Crete, siege warfare.

Introduction

The main general question of this study is how seventeenth-century European societies attempted to restrain and regulate the conduct of warfare. As the title says, this study deals with a peculiar aspect of the seventeenth-century siege warfare, namely the customs, ceremonies and rituals that regulated various aspects of the siege, such as observing truces and immunities, negotiation of surrenders, treatment of prisoners etc. In its scope, my inquiry is limited to the siege operations conducted in Dalmatia during the longest war ever fought by the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire, the war known as the War for Crete (1645–69).

In an attempt to somehow regulate the chaos and destruction or to at least create some appearance of control over the violent forces of war, societies have always striven to define rules for proper conduct and behavior during war and develop a set of mechanisms in order to ensure that these rules are actually obeyed. Over the centuries, these mechanisms have evolved, and a few have become widely accepted customs. Some of them survived throughout the centuries and are even today widely recognized and used, of which, probably the most well-known is the practice of waving the white flag as a sign that one is ready to lay down one's weapons and began parleys. By the middle of the seventeenth century, "siege warfare in Europe was waged within the framework of a number of restraints and rules which were derived from civil and canon law and the code of medieval chivalry."¹ The restraints and rules manifested themselves during the siege operations as the collection of customs, ceremonies and rituals which were more or less respected across European battlefields.

So far, most historians dealing with Early Modern siege warfare have been more concerned with its technical and operational aspects: the digging of trenches, the development of various elements of fortifications, wastage rates of combatants, hardships brought about by lack of food and epidemics, and so on, than with these "decorative elements" of engagement.² Rituals and ceremonies involved in siege warfare have mainly received significant coverage in works dealing with the development and codification of European laws of war in general, as is the case with Geoffrey Parker's "European Laws of War" or Randall Lesaffer's "Siege warfare in the Early Modern Age," or in studies focusing on a single conflict, for example works by Barbara Donagan on the English Civil War.³ Nevertheless, these activities, although usually without any obvious operational military value, by providing a medium for a discourse between the besieger and besieged, as this paper argues, played important role

1 Christopher Duffy, *Siege Warfare: The Fortress in the Early Modern World 1494–1660* (London: Routledge, 1979), 249.

2 Such is for example the case with the previously quoted study "*Siege Warfare: The Fortress in the Early Modern World*" by Christopher Duffy.

3 See: Barbara Donagan, "Codes and Conduct in the English Civil War," *Past and Present* 118 (1988): 65–95; Barbara Donagan, *War in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 125–213; Geoffrey Parker, "Early Modern Europe," in *Laws of War*, ed. Michael Howard, Georg J. Andreopoulos, and Mark R. Shulman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994): 40–58; Randall Lesaffer, "Siege Warfare in the Early Modern Age: A Study on the Customary Laws of War," in *The Nature of Customary Law Legal, Historical and Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Amanda Perreau-Saussine and James B. Murphy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 176–202.

in the final outcome of a siege. Through descriptive analyses of three cases, each dealing with one siege operation in the Dalmatian theater of operations, this inquiry provides an account of customs, rituals, ceremonies and rules of “proper” conduct of the siege, with special emphasis on the most critical part of the siege: the surrender of a fortified site.

Legal Context: Seventeenth-Century Laws of War

As Barbara Donagan pointed out, by the middle of the seventeenth century (1) natural law or the law of nations, (2) international laws of war, and (3) military law provided a sort of framework for codes of conduct and behavior, which were intended to institutionalize and put some constraints on the conduct of warfare between states. Of these three, the first two were international and rather general in nature, with slight local variations concerning the laws of war, while military law regulated the conduct of one particular army for which its articles were written and publicly announced.⁴ However, this vague constellation left the borderline between legitimate and illegitimate conduct in armed conflict very unclear. It was not considered legitimate to sack a town that had formally surrendered, but it was not illegitimate to sack it if it refused the call to surrender. Killing noncombatants, especially the weak and harmless, those who could do no harm, was nominally prohibited, since it was considered to be against Christian morality. Similarly, widely recognized conventions of the laws of war also implied protection and mercy for prisoners of war. However, Early Modern European conflicts abounded with examples of atrocities, when civilians and prisoners were declared (by authorities) a potential risk or liability and consequently eliminated under the pretext of military necessity. For the soldiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century the doctrine of the obedience to the authorities in command trumped any moral or ethic reservations they could have. The prominent sixteenth-century Spanish soldier Francisco Valdés accurately summarized departure from Christian ethics by the practitioners of the art of war, who were subject to the imperative of obedience to their superiors, when he wrote: “The day man picks up his pike to become a soldier is the day he ceases to be Christian.”⁵

4 Donagan, “Codes and Conduct,” 74.

5 Quoted in Parker, “Early Modern Europe,” 44.

Furthermore, at the time, no international organization or agency existed that could enforce the application of the laws of war or punish offenders. Responsibility for their enforcement was solely in the domain of the army commander and his superiors. Apart from acquiring a bad reputation and losing honor, all of which in the end could lead to disgrace and destroy a commander's professional career,⁶ the only immediate effective mechanism that could be used against an offender was a threat of retaliation by the other side.⁷ Only military law was backed by coercive mechanisms that could be used to enforce it. However, the problem with military law was that it was totally dependent on the willingness of one side to apply it, and in particular to apply it to its own members. The role of military law was not to protect and enforce some "high moral ground" or ethical principles (such as the protection of civilians, the weak and the harmless), but rather to maintain discipline within the army and prevent the disruption of social order by unruly soldiers.⁸

The majority of the researchers in the field agree that of all the social, legal, political and cultural factors involved, what most effectively promoted restraint in the conduct of warfare in Early Modern Europe was the self-interest of professional soldiers and their instinct for self-preservation. In protracted warfare fought by two equally strong sides, both parties very quickly discovered the advantages of maintaining "honorable" standards and practices. Honoring surrenders, sparing the wounded, and respecting the flags of truce and envoys all reduced the chaos of conflict and significantly increased personal chances of survival.⁹ In that regard, it is not surprising that one of the main characteristics of seventeenth-century laws of war was their professional character. They were intended to be shared primarily by the combatants and granted "as soldiers to one another."¹⁰ As Barbara Donagan concludes, "The primary function of the laws of war by the seventeenth century was as a kind of contractual etiquette

6 Probably the most famous contemporary seventeenth-century example is that of Johan Tserclaes, count of Tilly (1559–1632), commander of the Imperial forces which in May 1631 captured and devastated the Protestant town of Magdeburg. In the carnage that followed capture of the town almost two-thirds of its population perished. This infamous event became known as the "sack of Magdeburg," and was extensively used for propaganda purposes by the emperor's enemies, blackening the otherwise impeccable reputation of count Tilly as a military commander. Geoffrey Parker, ed., *The Thirty Years' War* (London–New York: Routledge, 2006), 88–89; Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 471.

7 Parker, "Early Modern Europe," 55.

8 Donagan, "Codes and Conduct," 76.

9 Parker, "Early Modern Europe," 41–42, 51–53.

10 *Ibid.*, 42.

of belligerence. They provided each party with a framework of expectations as to the conduct of others, and as a kind of contract, written and unwritten, into which they would enter.”¹¹

Since the days of the destruction of Jericho by the Israelites, siege operations have counted as one of the most ferocious and bloodiest aspects of armed conflict. Siege can be successfully brought to an end by an attacking force either by storming the fortress or by compelling the defenders to surrender. Seen from the perspective of the defenders, the difference between the two was that of life and death. Defenders willing to fight till the end, waiting until the last moment, when fortifications had been breached, were usually denied any quarters and were put to the sword without mercy, or if they were lucky they were taken as prisoners in order to be ransomed later or sold as slaves. On the other hand, a commander who would surrender the entrusted fortification at the first sight of an enemy risked the wrath of his prince. Since not all of the princes were as courteous as the French kings and provided their commanders with more or less clear instructions regulating their behavior in this matter, the surrender of an entrusted fortress or town turned out to be very dangerous and slippery ground for fortress commanders.¹² In this regard, both the *Most Serene Republic* and the *Grand Signor* of the *Turks* were almost equally unforgiving to commanders whom they judged incompetent and cowardly. In short, when there was a clear sign that no relief force would arrive in the near future, the key to survival for the defending commander lay in timely surrender, neither too soon, because of reasons previously mentioned, nor too late, lest the commander and those with whom he fought faced the even deadlier and more imminent danger of enraged attackers.

Seventeenth-century laws of war recognized two types of surrender: yielding to mercy and honorable surrender. In the case of yielding to mercy, no guarantees were given, and the decision to slay all, none or some of prisoners lay solely in the hands of a victorious commander. In the case of honorable surrender, depending on the outcome of negotiations defenders were granted life, freedom and the right of passage, protection from plunder, beating and

11 Donagan, “Codes and Conduct,” 78.

12 During the rule of Luis XIII, fortress commanders were forbidden to surrender the fortress until the breach was made and several assaults had been repulsed, while in the days of Louis XIV, the number of repelled assaults was set at one. See John A. Lynn II. “The Other Side of Victory: Honorable surrender during the Wars of Louis XIV” in *The Projection and Limitations of Imperial Powers, 1618–1850*, ed. Frederick C. Schneid (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2012), 60–61.

wounding, the right to carry limited amounts of personal properties, and similar favorable terms. According to the widely accepted laws of war, if the town had rejected the call to surrender, it was permissible for the attacker to punish it. The longer the town offered resistance, the more severe the punishment would be, until the point in the siege was reached which allowed attackers to slay all prisoners (combatants and non-combatants alike). According to customary practices of early modern warfare, attackers should offer defenders two chances for surrender; the first one upon the encirclement of a town when the artillery pieces were brought up and the second when the breach was made in the walls. In the case of the first, defenders had rather good chances of negotiating favorable terms of honorable surrender. However, once the walls had been breached, everything depended on the negotiating skill of the defending commander and operative restraints of the attacking force, but in general the more siege was prolonged the harsher were the terms of surrender.¹³

Seen from the perspective of a besieging force commander, capture of the fortress by its surrender was a highly favorable outcome. Not only did it represent the safest and least costly way of successfully concluding the engagement, there were also long term benefits. A commander with a good reputation, one who was known to keep his word and who had proven himself capable of controlling his troops and preventing them from committing atrocities once the defenders had laid down their weapons, could expect others, when faced with overwhelming superior force, to follow this path and offer their surrender more easily and with less hesitation. In a prolonged campaign mainly composed of series of sieges, as was the case with the majority of seventeenth-century campaigns, the question of balance between clemency on the one hand and strict enforcement of the rules of war on the other (which allowed attackers to slay all the defenders after certain point in a siege) was of crucial importance. Obviously, exercise of this right was a two edged sword. Certainly, it could provide short-term benefits. By making an example of a single enemy stronghold, an army commander could have reasonable hopes that others would be intimidated and would lose courage and the will to fight when faced with the threat of such brutality. On the other hand, it could also easily backfire and produce the reverse effect. If convinced that surrender was not an option, defenders would be left with no other choice but to fight to the last man.¹⁴

13 Parker, "Early Modern Europe," 48; Lesaffer, "Siege Warfare in the Early Modern Age," 177–80.

14 The Duke of Alba's treatment of rebel towns in the Netherlands in 1572, a so-called "strategy of selective brutality," represents one such example of a campaign of terror that backfired. Instead of

The question of how this legal/customary framework actually work in practice brings us to the topic of the siege operations in Dalmatia during the War for Crete.

Historical Setting: Venetian Dalmatia and the Eyalet of Bosnia

When the war broke out in 1645, the Ottoman–Venetian frontier in Dalmatia had been unchanged for more than 70 years. Although the period from the end of the Cyprus War up to 1645 could not be called peace in the strict sense of word (due primarily to the relentless pirate activity of Uskoks of Senj, subjects of the Austrian Habsburgs, which was the main cause of strains in relations between Venice and the Ottomans), nevertheless the two empires were at least ready to cohabit and restrain from any major military incidents.¹⁵ Seen from the military point of view, in case of a renewal of hostilities all the numbers favored the Ottoman side. After more than a century of a conflict, due to wars, hunger, plague and loss of the larger part of its territory, by the middle of the seventeenth century Dalmatia had been reduced to a thin strip of land with no more than 75,000 inhabitants.¹⁶ Equally small were the Venetian forces charged with the defense of this strategically important province. In the pre-war years they counted no more than 2,250 infantry and 370 cavalry.¹⁷ On the opposite side stood the forces of the Bosnian *eyalet*, one of the largest Ottoman provinces in the European part of the empire. The number of *sipahis* who could be mobilized

furthering the suppression of a rebellion, it stiffened rebels' resolve to resist and resulted in its spread. Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 1998), 127–28.

15 For a sound overview of the problems created by *uskoks* for the Venetian Republic see: Wendy C. Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj: Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-century Adriatic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); For the Ottoman point of view compare: Suraiya N. Faroqi, “The Venetian presence in the Ottoman Empire, 1600–30,” in *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, ed. Huri İslamoğlu-İnan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 314–17. See also: Tea Mayhew, *Dalmatia between Ottoman and Venetian Rule. Contado di Zara 1645–1718* (Rome: Viella, 2008), 25–29; Gligor Stanojević, *Jugoslavenske zemlje u mletačko turskim ratovima XVI–XVIII vijeka* (Belgrade: Izdanje istorijskog instituta, 1970), 77–116, 168–85.

16 In August 1644, Giouanni Battista Grimani, governor-general in Dalmatia and Albania, at the end of his service (1641–1644) reported to the *Collegio* that Dalmatia counted no more than 75,000 souls, of which only 21,000 were able bodied men. *Relazione di Giouanni Battista Grimani Ritornato Proveditor General di Dalmatia et Albania di 10 Agosto 1644*. Published in Grga Novak, *Mletačka uputstva i izvyještaji: od 1621–1671 godine*, vol. 7 (Zagreb: n.p., 1972), 181 (Henceforth: *Mletačka uputstva i izvyještaji* 7).

17 *Ibid.*, 188–238.

from this province amounts to ca. 8,000.¹⁸ Furthermore, from the 1580's on, the Ottomans began to organize their border territories facing the Republic of Venice and the Habsburg Empire as a sort of military frontier area.¹⁹ *Defsters* for this border zone from the year 1643 recorded ca. 15,000 salaried troops stationed as garrisons in border fortresses, and of those 2,950 were deployed in the sandjaks of Klis and Lika, which directly faced Venetian Dalmatia.²⁰

When the war started in 1645, the Dalmatian theater of operations was peaceful throughout the entire first year. No major incursions were undertaken by either side in the conflict, and trade between Sarajevo and the Venetian port of Split remained uninterrupted. Venetian extraordinary governor in Dalmatia Nicolò Dolfin called the situation “war without war.”²¹ Both the Bosnian landholding elite and the merchant community were convinced that conflict would be resolved quickly and without major confrontation in their part of the world. Unfortunately this was not to be the case. When in summer of 1646, after long preparations, the forces of the Bosnian pasha crossed the Dinaric mountains that divide Dalmatia from its hinterland, hostilities started for real, and they would continue for the next 24 years.²²

18 According to the summary *timar* inspection undertaken in 1631, the *eyalet* of Bosnia counted 150 *kiliç ziamet* and 1793 *kiliç timar*. Based on the calculation which assumes an average of 2.5 armed retainers (*jebelni*) accompanying each *timar sipahi*, and 10 for every *zaim*, this would put the potential military strength of timariot forces in Bosnia at approximately 7,925 men. Figures taken from: Murphey Rhoads, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 40–41.

19 Adem Handžić, “O organizaciji krajine bosanskog ejaleta u XVII stoljeću,” in Vasa Čubrilović, ed. *Vojne krajine u Jugoslavenskim zemljama u novom veku do karlovačkog mira 1699* (Belgrade: SANU, 1989), 77–91. The most comprehensive study of this institution remains the pioneering work of: Hamdija Kreševljaković, *Kapetanije u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1980); See also: Nenad Moačanin, *Turska Hrvatska: Hrvati pod vlašću Osmanskog Carstva do 1791* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1999), 30–34.

20 According to a summary report of this zone from 1616, the total number of men in garrisons was 10,107. The estimate of ca. 15,000 given above is based on available data from 1643 for four central sandjaks: Krka, Lika, Bihac and Bosnia, which shows an increase in garrison sizes of 50 percent in comparison with the size of garrisons in 1616. See: Adem Handžić, *O organizaciji krajine bosanskog ejaleta u XVII stoljeću*, 89; and Fehim Spaho Đ., “Organizacija vojne krajine u sandacima Klis i Krka u XVII stoljeću,” in *Vojne krajine u Jugoslavenskim zemljama u novom veku do karlovačkog mira 1699*, ed. Vasa Čubrilović (Belgrade: SANU, 1989), 108; Compare also: Kornelija Jurin-Starčević, “Vojne snage Kliškog i Krčko-Ličkog sandžaka pred Kandijski rat – osmanska vojska plaćenika,” in *Zbornik Mire Kolar-Dmimitrijević*, ed. Damir Agičić (Zagreb: FF Press, 2003), 79–93.

21 Feruccio Sassi, “Le Campagne di Dalmazia durante la Guerra di Candia (1645–1648),” *Archivio Veneto* 20 (1937): 229.

22 For an overview of the military operations in the Adriatic theater of operations during the War for Crete see: Sassi, “Le Campagne di Dalmazia” (henceforth: *Sassi I*); Idem, “Le Campagne di Dalmazia durante la Guerra di Candia (1645–1648),” *Archivio Veneto* 21 (1937): 60–100 (henceforth: *Sassi II*); Josip Vrandečić, *Borba za Jadran u ranom novom vijeku: Mletačko-osmanski ratovi u vенецијanskoј nunciјaturi 1524–1797*

Two types of warfare were dominant in the Dalmatian theater of operations during this war: 1) siege operations by regular forces and 2) raiding activities, performed by Venetian irregulars (*Morlacchi*) or in the case of the Ottomans, by cavalry raiding parties. In the course of an entire war only two major engagements were fought in the open field. The first one took place in 1648, when the Venetian forces besieging the fortress of Klis defeated the forces of the Bosnian pasha coming to relieve the siege. The second took place in 1654, when the Ottoman forces relieved the besieged fortress of Knin and in the open field routed the Venetian army, inflicting heavy casualties. Seen from the operational point of view, this was a rather repetitive war. Military operations closely followed the change of seasons. The script for an entire war could be summed up as follows: in early spring, when the Dinaric mountain passes were still closed by snow and two Dalmatian *sandjaks* were practically cut-off from the rest of the Empire, the Venetian army would enter the field, destroying and conquering as many Ottoman strongholds as possible. With the coming of summer, the army of the Bosnian pasha would descend from the north and Venetian forces would fall back behind the walls of Dalmatian coastal towns. After 1654, when the Ottomans fully regained the initiative in this battlefield, the Venetian regular forces ceased their incursions into the Ottoman lands completely and left the task of harassing of the enemy entirely to their irregular forces, units of the so called *Morlacchi*, former Ottoman Christian subjects who had defected to the Venetian side in the first years of the war.²³

During the spring offensives of 1647 and 1648, the Venetian forces achieved their greatest successes, capturing all major Ottoman strongholds south of the Dinaric mountains. Three siege operations from these campaigns, each of which ended with the surrender of the Ottoman garrison, serve as the focal case studies for this paper.

(Split: Filozofski fakultet u Splitu, 2013) (henceforth: *Borba za Jadran*); Gligor Stanojević, "Dalmacija u doba kandijskog rata," *Vesnik vojnog muzeja* 5, no. 2 (1958): 93–182; Idem, *Jugoslavenske zemlje u mletačko turskim ratovima*, 186–300; Tea Mayhew, *Dalmatia between Ottoman and Venetian Rule*, 29–48; Radovan Samardić, *Kandijski rat (1645–1669)*, vol. 3 no. 1, ed. Radovan Samardić (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1993), 336–424; Marko Jačov, *Le guerre Veneto-Turche del XVII secolo in Dalmatia* (Venice: Società dalmata di storia patria, 1991), 9–145; Giuseppe Praga, *History of Dalmatia* (Pisa: Giardini, 1993), 188–92; Karlo Kosor, "Drniška Krajina za turskog vladanja," in *Povijest Drniške Krajine*, ed. Ante Čavka (Split: n.p., 1995), 103–79.

23 For more on the Morlacchi, and their role in the Venetian defensive strategy see: Domagoj Madunić, "Capi di Morlacchi: Venetian Military Policies During the War for Crete (1645–1669) and the Formation of the Morlacchi Elite," in *Türkenkriege und Adelskultur in Ostmitteleuropa vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Robert Born and Sabine Jagodzinski (Leipzig: GWZO, 2013), 29, 20.

The Capture of Zemunik and Novigrad (March, 1647)

Il s(igno).re Dio miracolosamente operando, ha fatto posso dir un pigmeo gigante, ...

(Governor-general Lunardo Foscolo, April 1647, after the capture of the strongholds of Zemunik, Islam and Novigrad)²⁴

The first case of this paper deals with the capture by the Venetian forces of the town of Zemunik (*Zemonico*) in March 1647. Zemunik was the seat of the sanjak-bey, and it functioned as an Ottoman forward base threatening the Venetian provincial capital of Zadar (*Zara*). The town's fortifications, though strong, had not been improved with modern bastions and were outdated by the time of the war for Crete, unable to resist concentrated artillery fire. However, the town was well provisioned with stocks of food, arms and ammunition and defended by a strong garrison commanded personally by *sanjak* Halil-bey. Halil-bey was one of the most powerful Ottoman notables on this frontier. He was the lord of Vrana (a prosperous Ottoman stronghold in the vicinity of Zadar) who in the decades before the war had been the most prominent member of the party of Ottoman frontier lords hostile to the Venetian Republic and advocating its expulsion from Dalmatia.²⁵ Conquest of this Ottoman stronghold in March 1647 was the first major Venetian success in Dalmatia in the war and represented a sort of the turning point, since from that moment on it was Venetian forces that were mainly on the offensive for the next seven years.

The Venetian campaign started on March 14, 1647, when the force of 4,000 foot and 600 horse left Zadar carrying a battery of three siege guns. According to Venetian estimates, in addition to the town garrison of 1,700 men, Halil-bey could also count on some 6,000 local *sipahis*. However, the Venetian commander's bold move paid off. Upon seeing the Venetian force approaching, Halil-bey dispatched his son Durak-bey with instructions to assemble as large a force of regional *sipahis* as possible and bring them to his aid. But fortune favored the Republic, and Durak-bey and his entourage ran into a unit of Venetian light cavalry scouting the countryside and were killed in a short encounter. With Durak-bey's death, any chance of quick relief perished. So far, the plan had worked perfectly, and the Ottomans were completely caught off guard. Venetian forces quickly captured a town suburb (*borgbo*) most of the inhabitants of which

24 Archivio Stato di Venetia (ASVe), *Senato, Dispacci*, Provveditori da terra e da mar (PTM). b.(usta) 464. n(umer)o. 231. (Zara, 13. Aprile 1647).

25 For more on Halil-bey and this well-known and influential family see: Seid M. Traljić, "Vrana i njezini gospodari u doba turske vladavine," *Radovi JAZU Zadar* 18 (1971): 343–75.

had scattered to the surrounding countryside. The town was swiftly encircled and Venetian guns began to bombard its walls. After two days of bitter fighting and several repulsed assaults, the town walls were finally breached by artillery fire and the defenders were forced to retreat to the inner line of the town defenses. At this point, the commander in charge of the Venetian forces, Marc' Antonio Pisani, the governor-general of the cavalry (*Provveditore Generale della Cavalleria*), sent his envoys to the defenders with the call to surrender and a stern warning that if they failed to yield, no mercy would be shown. The Venetian envoys were also instructed to inform the defenders of the death of Durak-bey.²⁶

With the prospect of the timely arrival of a relief force gone, panic struck the remaining defenders, and not even the sternest measures taken by the Halil-bey, who slayed a few of the loudest, could maintain discipline. Facing open rebellion in his ranks, Halil-bey agreed to let all who wished to do so leave. Soon, the majority of the defenders and civilians, some 500 souls, 200 of which were able-bodied men, came to terms with the Venetian commander. General Pisani allowed them to leave the town, but only with their lives, refusing to allow them to take any personal possessions or arms. Additionally, the defenders were forced to hand over six hostages, who were to be taken to Zadar for a period of one month. On the other hand, Halil-bey remained resolute not to yield to the Venetians, and he retreated to the town castle (*castelo*) with 200 of his most faithful guards.²⁷ Though Ottoman refugees did leave the town unhindered and headed toward Ottoman-held territory, they were ambushed by a group of Venetian soldiers who were convinced that they were carrying valuables. Upon hearing of this, the Venetian general personally intervened in order to protect the Ottoman refugees and reestablish discipline among the troops by putting some of the offenders to death. Furthermore, in order to prevent any further similar incident, general Pisani dispatched a unit of reliable cavalry to escort the refugees to the safety.²⁸

26 Contemporary Dalmatian historian, Franjo Difnik/Divnić (Francesco Difnico), provides a very detailed and reliable description of the events of this operation. See: Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandrijskog rata u Dalmaciji* (Split: Splitski književni krug, 1986), 114–20. A rather reliable and accurate contemporary description also can be found in: Vicko Solitro, *Documenti Storici sull' Istria e la Dalmazia*, vol. 1 (Venice: n.p., 1844), 313–31. Compare also: Josip Vrandečić, *Borbu za Jadran*, 64–67. Governor-general Lunardo Foscolo provides an account of these events in his letters to the Senate: ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 464. num. 219 (Zara, 18. Marzo 1647); num. 220 (Zara, 20 Marzo 1647); num. 222 (Zara, 22. Marzo 1647).

27 ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 464. num. 220 (Zara, 20. Marzo 1647).

28 Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandrijskog rata u Dalmaciji*, 120; Vicko Solitro, *Documenti Storici*, 325–26.

After resisting for two more days without any hope of relief, Halil-bey finally decided to give up, and by waving the white flag he signaled to the besiegers that he was ready to begin parleys. Halil-bey offered to surrender the fortress of Zemunik under the following terms: (1) safe passage for himself and his companions and (2) the right to leave the fortress with personal possessions and armaments. These conditions were rejected by the Venetian commander, who was not willing to grant the defenders the honor of leaving the fortress with their arms and personal property, but was only ready to spare them their lives and freedom. General Pisani also demanded that the fortress be given up intact, and in good order and in order to ensure that these conditions would be met, Halil-bey and twelve aghas were to accompany him to Zara as hostages for a period of one month. In the end, Halil-bey agreed to the Venetian terms and requested that the general send him his personal ring as a guarantee of his word. Upon receiving it, the *sanjak-bey* surrendered to the Venetians and ceremonially handed over the keys of the city. Halil-bey, although regarded as one of the most ferocious enemies of the Republic, was treated well and escorted to Zadar in the company of the nephew of the Venetian general Pisani.²⁹

Yet misfortune continued to befall the old *sanjak-bey*, and one more unexpected event sealed his fate. After the defenders laid down their arms, permission was given to the troops to plunder the town. However, not all of the Ottoman defenders surrendered with their commander. A few dozen hid in the caverns below the fortress in order to avoid being captured. Eventually, when the Venetian troops began looting the town they were discovered and in the ensuing combat some were killed, but most of them were taken as prisoners, with the exception of captured Christian renegades, who were promptly executed. Unfortunately for Halil-bey and his companions, the Republic used this incident as an excuse in order to avoid releasing him. Halil-bey was accused of “breach of contract,” and the terms of his surrender were declared void and not binding for the Republic. Accordingly, all 108 captured defenders were sentenced to gloomy and deadly service aboard the Venetian galleys, while the fate of *sanjak* Halil-bey and the twelve hostages remained undecided for some time.³⁰

At the beginning of the April, governor-general Lunardo Foscolo, governor of the province and commander in chief of all of the Venetian forces in Dalmatia,

29 Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandijskog rata u Dalmaciji*, 120–21; Vicko Solitro, *Documenti Storici*, 326–27.

30 Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandijskog rata u Dalmaciji*, 121; Vicko Solitro, *Documenti Storici*, 327–28. ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 464. num. 220 (Zara, 20. Marzo 1647) attachments to the letter of two reports by Marc' Antonio Pisani, both dated 20. Marzo 1647: *Lettere scritte dall Ill.mo s.r Prov.re Gnal della Cav.rria Pisani*.

urged the Senate to come to a decision concerning the fate of this enemy of the Republic, warning that he could not stay in Zadar, where he: “*sempre sarà pietra di scandalo, cagione de mali.*”³¹ The Senate was divided on the question of which course of action to take with regard to Halil-bey. A few days later, governor-general Foscolo, who was rather alarmed, wrote to his superiors that rumors had reached the province according to which the question of Halil-bey’s execution was being discussed in the Senate, including the exact names of the senators in favor and against this decision, warning that the circulation of such rumors was highly perilous.³² But reason prevailed, and on March 30, 1647, the Senate ordered governor-general Foscolo to release the Ottoman hostages after the expiration of the agreed period, though Halil-bey was to be sent to Venice with the first available galley.³³ In spite of Halil-bey’s reputation as a vicious enemy of the Republic, he was not maltreated. On April 21, 1647 the Senate ordered this “*Turco di gran auttorità, e stima à Confini di Zara*” to be transferred to the *castello* in Brescia, where he was to be guarded “*con le sicurrezza dovuta*”. The Senate also ordered that he be given a moderate monthly stipend, “*onde riceva ogni honesto trattamento*”.³⁴ Thus it came to pass that the old *sanjak-bey* spent the last years of his life imprisoned in Brescia, until he died in 1656.

A similar course of events transpired two weeks later with the recapture of Novigrad. The fortress port of Novigrad (*Novegradi*), which had been captured the previous year (1646) by the army of the Bosnian pasha, was the northernmost fortified port in the Adriatic in Ottoman hands. Governor-general Foscolo, encouraged by the successful progress of the campaign (with the *sanjak-bey* and several prominent Ottoman leaders in his hands and the local Ottoman forces in disarray), decided to press forward and attempt to recover this strategically important stronghold. After a short respite and a chance to resupply his troops, Foscolo dispatched a force of 3,000 foot and 700 horse overland north to Novigrad, while he personally proceeded at the head of the naval squadron, which consisted of four galleys and a dozen smaller warships. Though the initial Venetian attempts to storm the fortress were repelled with heavy casualties, on the third day of the siege (March 31 1647), combined bombardment from land and sea opened a breach in the walls. At that point, the defenders, aware that no

31 ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 464. num. 228 (Zara, 7. Aprile 1647).

32 Ibid. num. 231 (Zara, 13. Aprile 1647); Josip Vrandečić, *Borba za Jadran*, 68.

33 ASVe, *Senato Rettori*, R(egistro)-18, f. 63r-64v; ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 464. num. 232 (Zara, 14. Aprile 1647).

34 Ibid. 82r.

relief force was coming to their aid, decided to start negotiations with the aim of surrendering the fortress.³⁵

The Ottomans requested to be granted a so-called “honorable surrender” meaning to be allowed to leave with their arms and possessions, yet this time, due to the heavier casualties, the Venetian commander turned out to be less forthcoming. The governor-general demanded an unconditional surrender and was willing to grant the defenders only their lives. In expectation of the imminent Venetian assault, the remaining defenders, 90 in number, conceded and surrendered the fortress to the Venetian forces.³⁶ Governor-general Lunardo Foscolo proved to be a man of his word, and in spite of the complaints of the angry Venetian troops, who demanded that the Ottomans be cut to the pieces, he personally intervened and ensured secure transfer of prisoners to the galleys. Moreover, Foscolo also continued to demonstrate consistency in his treatment of captured Ottoman notables. Though all male able-bodied Ottoman prisoners were chained to the galley benches according to the standard Venetian practice to serve as oarsmen, an exception was made for the eight captured *aghas*, who were exempt from this.³⁷

The Siege of Klis (March, 1648)

The last case this paper concerns with is the most famous of Lunardo Foscolo victories: the capture of the fortress of Klis (*Clissa*) in March, 1648. Klis was a strong and famous fortress overlooking the Venetian port-town of Split and the seat of the *sandjak-bey*. Because of its excellent position atop the ridge, it enjoyed the reputation of being impregnable. Due to its fame, the siege and subsequent capture of the fortress by Venetian forces were described in detail in several contemporary chronicles and reports from various Venetian officials in Dalmatia.³⁸ In short, after a two-week siege, five repelled Venetian assaults, and the defeat of the force of Bosnian Pasha (who came to provide relief for the Ottomans), on March 30, 1648, the defenders raised the white flag to signal that

35 For an overview of this Venetian operation see: Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandijškog rata u Dalmaciji*, 122–23, 126–27; Josip Vrandečić, *Borba za Jadran*, 66–67. For Foscolo’s reports on the capture of Novigrad see: ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 464. num. 226 (Novegradi, 31. Marzo 1647).

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid. num. 228 (Zara, 7. Aprile 1647).

38 See: Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandijškog rata*, 175–97; Girolamo Brusoni, *Historia dell’ ultima guerra tra Veneziani e Turchi* (Venice: n.p., 1673), 163–78; Vicko Solitro, *Documenti storici*, 273–90; For an overview of entire campaign to capture Klis see: Josip Vrandečić, *Borba za Jadran*, 81–85; *Sassi II.*, 84–86.

they were ready to open negotiations. Accordingly, an Ottoman delegation of five men came out of the fortress and was received by the Venetian commander, governor-general Foscolo. According to Venetian chronicles, the Ottomans first demanded that in exchange for surrendering the fortress in undamaged condition with all the artillery and ammunition they were to be given the same terms “that Christians have previously given to the Turks, in accordance with the customs of warfare at this frontier,”³⁹ meaning that combatants and civilians alike be allowed to leave the fortress carrying arms and their personal possessions. In spite of the good rhetorical figures used by the Ottoman envoys and allusions to Christian morality and mercy, these terms were rejected by governor-general Foscolo, who replied that if such a proposal had been made on time, when the Ottomans had been in a more advantageous position, they would have found him more forthcoming than now, when the fortress had been destroyed, the relief force of Bosnian pasha routed, and the Ottomans left with little or no remedy for their situation. With this answer governor-general dismissed the Ottoman envoys and broke the negotiations for the day.⁴⁰

The negotiations continued the next day, and the Venetians remained persistent in their willingness to accept only an unconditional surrender, assuring the Ottoman leaders that they should have no fear, that everyone would be treated well and according to his position and rank. In turn, the Ottomans replied that they did not see why the same favorable and honorable conditions of *buona guerra* that had been given to the Venetians during the siege of the fortress of Canea at Crete should not be granted to them, since the status of Klis was in no way lower than that of Canea.⁴¹ After an entire day of dramatic negotiations which almost ended in failure, since the *sandjak-bey* was unwilling to give up his request to be allowed to leave the fortress bearing arms, the Ottoman negotiators finally yielded and agreed to surrender the fortress under the following terms:⁴²

39 Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandijskog rata*, 185; Girolamo Brusoni, *Historia dell' ultima guerra*, 185; For Foscolo's report on the capture of Klis see: ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 466. num. 386. (Di Galea Salona, 1. Aprile 1648).

40 A rephrased version of: *Li fu da me risposto, che si à qualche chiamata fattali in tempo, havessero voluto parlare, anco in stato di qualche vantaggio, si sarebbero ritrovati, ma hora che la Piazza era distrutta, rotto il Bassa col soccorso, et che non haveva rimedio il loro male, non potendo resistere, non eran più in tempo di ottenir quanto chiedevano, ...* ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 466. num. 386. (Di Galea Salona, 1. Aprile 1648).

41 Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandijskog rata*, 186–87; Vicko Solitro, *Documenti Storici*, 283–85.

42 In his letter to the Senate governor-general Foscolo summed up the conditions of the surrender as follows: *Le condizioni furono che tutti uscissero libere le vite, senz' Armi, et senza Bagaglio, et che sei di loro principali restassero d'ostaggio, fin tanto, che seguisse la liberatione del Conte Capra, Capitan Gandussi, et altri fatti prigionieri sotto Clissa in tempo dell' assedio di Sebenico, et il Capitan Bartolazzi, arrestato nella ricupera di Duari, con altri al numero di*

1. all the defenders together with their families would be allowed to leave the fortress freely but without any arms, horses or baggage;
2. the defenders would be escorted to safety by the Venetian forces;
3. all Christians or any other Ottoman subjects who were willing to stay and accept the Serene Republic as their new lord would be able to do so without any hindrance from anyone;
4. all Christian slaves imprisoned at the time in the fortress would without any exception be handed over;
5. the Ottoman side would return 12 distinguished Venetians who were being held as prisoners;
6. the Ottomans would provide six hostages (including the brother of the *sanjak-bey*) to ensure safe handover of the fortress and return of the requested Christian prisoners, after which they were to be set free.

When all the terms had been agreed upon, general Foscolo sent his personal envoys to the *sandjak-bey* bearing his own ring, to be given to the *sanjak-bey* as a symbolic guarantee that he would uphold his part of the bargain. Upon receiving the envoys and the ring, the *sandjak-bey* in turn confirmed his agreement with the terms of surrender and gave the envoys two silver decorated *bandjars*. With this ceremony, negotiations were formally finished and the surrender was scheduled for the morning of March 31, 1648. At the appointed time everything was ready for the investment ceremony, general Foscolo arranged his troops in two columns along the road leading from the fortress as a sort of an honor guard, and the defenders began leaving the fortress in the procession.⁴³ But again, one unpredictable incident almost turned the entire event into a wholesale bloodbath.

Among the first to leave the fortress was Ahmet-aga Barjaković, a well-known Ottoman *sipahi* who allegedly, upon seeing some of the Venetian irregulars from Poljica (*Pogljizža*), a region that had recently changed sides and gone over to the Venetians, called them traitors to the Sultan and threatened that due punishment would catch up with them. Enraged both by his behavior and what they thought were too generous terms of surrender, Venetian irregulars

dodici, compresi alcuni, che si ritrovano in Constantinopoli per più allungare la rilassatione di questi, et non provarli contrarij, la prossima Campagna. Condizioni, per mio riverentissimo senso le più decorose, e le più avvantaggiose per l'Ecc.me Vostre che bramar si potessero, in un impresa ardua et difficile com' è questa; ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 466. num. 386. (Di Galea Salona, 1. Aprile 1648); The more detailed and elaborated articles presented above are taken for Franjo Difnik, a very well-informed contemporary Dalmatian chronicler. See Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandrijskog rata*, 187–88.

43 Ibid., 188.

attacked and killed Barjaković and his family. After this first shedding of blood a wholesale attack on the Ottomans began. What followed were scenes of atrocities that could match the most brutal moments of the Thirty Years War. A contemporary, Dalmatian historian Franjo Difnik (*Francesco Difnico*), recorded the behavior of the Venetian troops with open disgust, stating that they took children away from their mothers' breasts and from the hands of their unfortunate fathers and noting how the corpses of murdered Turks were opened with inhuman brutality and greed and searched for hidden money and jewels. Difnik concludes his description of the incident with the following gruesome description: "Some enjoyed skinning the bodies of dead Turks and using their skin as tracks or belts. Rape was also committed, without any concern for age or gender, and all in all, no act of mindlessness was missing."⁴⁴

By the time order and discipline had been restored, some 200 defenders had perished. The *sanjak-bey* and his entourage were saved only by the personal intervention of the Governor-general, who approached him with great embarrassment and in distress. In the presence of the *sanjak-bey* and other Ottoman dignitaries, Foscolo publicly proclaimed that all Ottomans taken as slaves by private persons must be set free and prohibited any further attacks under the threat of capital punishment. All in all, Foscolo reported to his superiors that he had "accarezzando in tanto il Sangiaccio, et ben trattengolo, quanto so è posso, per farli conoscer il dispiacere grande che si ha dell' accidente."⁴⁵ Furthermore, in order to compensate at least partially for the damages this incident had had on his personal reputation and that of the Republic as well and ensure that no further harm would come to the Ottomans, the Venetian general ordered the surviving Ottomans to be transferred to the galleys and transported by sea to the Ottoman-held territories, providing them with enough food for the duration of voyage, for all of which he obtained written expression of gratitude from the *sanjak-bey*.⁴⁶

However, this was not the last breach of the terms of surrender. On the night after the surrender, Jusuf-bey Filipović, one of the Ottoman hostages, fled the Venetian camp. When this was discovered in the morning, the *sandjak-bey* of Klis rather chivalrously offered himself as a substitute for the missing hostage. Governor-general Foscolo gracefully accepted this proposal and left for Zadar

44 Ibid., 189., 1.

45 ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 466. num. 386. (Di Galea Salona, 1. Aprile 1648).

46 Ibid. num. 389. (Di Galea Salona, 7. Aprile 1648) and also the attachment to the letter: *Scrittura con Turchi di Clissa*.

aboard the galley in the company of six Ottoman notables, who were to be detained there until all Christian prisoners specified in the articles of surrender had been handed over.⁴⁷ As it turned out, this took quite a long time. Due to the experiences of previous campaigns, governor-general Foscolo was well aware of the negative effects on the Ottoman military capabilities of having in Venetian captivity prominent Ottoman frontier lords, and he chose the Christian prisoners who were to be returned with great care. In order to keep Ottoman hostages in Venetian hands for as long as possible without however giving rise to any possibility of an accusation of breach of faith, Foscolo named several Christian prisoners whom he knew had been imprisoned in Constantinople and who would therefore require considerable time to be found and brought to Dalmatia.⁴⁸

Closing Remarks: How to Surrender a Fortress Successfully

The series of vignettes presented so far allow us to reconstruct how in the Ottoman–Venetian context an ideal case of the surrender of a fortified place in the mid seventeenth century would look. First, by waving the white flag defenders would signal that they were ready to begin parleys (as took place at Klis, Zemunik, and Novigrad). Then delegations from both sides would meet and work out the terms of the surrender. When both commanders had agreed upon these terms, the general of a besieging force would send envoys bearing his ring or some other similar personal item. The item served as a symbol confirming that the envoys were speaking in the general's name and also as a guarantee that the general would keep his word. Then, hostages would be exchanged by both sides, and in cases of major military engagement in which persons of the higher ranks were present the envoys would receive gifts. In the end, the attacker would be invested as the new lord of the fortress by ceremonial handover of its keys. Finally, in a case in which the defenders were granted safe conduct, they would be escorted to the border and when all the terms of surrender had been fulfilled the hostages would be released.

As can be deduced from the cases discussed above, even if the right moment to surrender the fortress was chosen, the process itself was neither simple nor straightforward. On the contrary, the act of opening the gates, leaving

47 Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandijškog rata*, 190–91.

48 ASVe, Senato, PTM, b. 466. num. 389. (Di Galea Salona, 7. Aprile 1648.)

the protection of the fortress and surrendering oneself to the mercy of one's enemy represented the most critical moment of the siege for the defenders.⁴⁹ Of the three cases presented in this study, only one (Novigrad) ended without any major incidents, while both the surrender of Klis and the surrender of Zemunik involved attacks on the surrendering Ottomans. It would be wrong to attribute these outcomes to the personal incompetence of the Venetian commanders, or to their negligence. They were the product of the heterogeneous character of Early Modern European armies, which consisted of multinational mercenary units, as well as their loose command structure, which limited the command and control that European seventeenth-century commanders could exercise over them. These factors produced an environment in which the interests of the commander-in-chief of the besieging force (a member of the Venetian administration in Dalmatia and as such a representative of the interests of the state) were not always same as those of his subordinates: mercenary colonels, captains, or at the lowest level the ordinary soldiers, for whom war was in the first place a business enterprise and who almost always put their financial interests above anything else.⁵⁰ This was essentially what occurred at the siege of Zemunik, where in direct breach of the warranted safe conduct, the defenders were still attacked and robbed by a faction of the Venetian army eager to put its hands on additional plunder. A similar incident took place in the wake of the exit of the Ottoman defenders from the fortress of Klis. Though this time the attack was started by Venetian irregulars, it still had damaging consequences for the Venetian war effort. For the commanding Venetian general, Lunardo Foscolo, in addition to the stain it put on his personal reputation and possible accusations of incompetence by his superiors, the most frustrating consequence of this incident was the plunder of the fortress granaries by Venetian soldiers, who exploited the breakdown of order and discipline, leaving him without these much needed provisions.⁵¹

49 Vivid first hand account providing excellent insight into perspectives, fears and dilemmas of the Ottoman defenders facing this situation, can be found in the famous autobiographical work by Osman Agha of Temesvár (Timișoara), in his description of surrender of fortress of Lipova to the Habsburg forces in 1687, when he fell into his long lasting captivity. Ekrem Čaušević, ed., *Autobiografija Osman-age Temišvarskog* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2004), 8–11.

50 For more on the character of the Early Modern European armies and a rather elaborate discussion concerning the relationship between the Early Modern states and their armed forces see: David Parrot, *Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

51 ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 466. num. 389. (Di Galea Salona, 7. Aprile 1648.)

Functioning within these operational limitations, Venetian field commanders followed all customary practices of siege conduct employed on European battlefields at the time. At the start of the siege, defenders were called on to surrender. Then, even at a later stage of an engagement, if requested quarters were granted, and if no “obstinate resistance” was met, defenders were usually given an opportunity to surrender under favorable conditions, as was the case, for example, with the sieges of Zemunik (1647), Klis (1648) and Risan (1649). In most cases (but still with a few exceptions, for example the case of the aforementioned “perfidious” Halil-bey), the terms of surrender on which the two parties had agreed were upheld by both sides, within the limits of their abilities. In their reports to the Senate, the governor-generals in Dalmatia often stressed the need to keep their word and honor the terms upon which they had agreed. In this, governor-general Foscolo was not exceptional. Other Venetian governor-generals also stuck to this policy. For example, after the surrender of the small Ottoman fortress of Zadvarje/Duare (1652), governor-general Girolamo Foscarini personally attended to the protection of the 200 defenders, to whom safe conduct was granted, from the Venetian irregulars (*Morlacchi*), who aimed to kill and rob them. In his letter to the Senate governor-general Foscarini felt the need to assure his superiors that “I know very well that good faith should be practiced at all times and with everyone, even if they are barbarians and infidels.”⁵²

Like the Early Modern diplomatic practices, in accordance with which the utmost attention was devoted to the question of etiquette and upholding the honor and status of a particular prince, military affairs also demanded similar attention for ceremonial matters. In a diplomatic ceremony a diplomat, an envoy, represented a prince who was not present. On the battlefield this was the role of an army commander. The conduct of an army under his command directly reflected on the reputation and status of the sovereign under whose banner it fought. Every Early Modern army commander was well aware of this fact, and special attention was paid to questions of etiquette, status and honor. As illustrated by the cases above, Venetian commanders did not hesitate to impose capital punishment on soldiers who attacked the Ottomans once they had surrendered. The prisoners were considered to be under the protection of a commanding general, and any harm done to them not only represented a breach of articles of war, but also reflected on both the commander’s personal honor

52 ASV, Senato, PTM. b. 472. num. 91. (Almissa, 24. Febbraio 1651. m.v.).

and that of the prince he served. Moreover, the conduct of Mehmet *sanjak-bey* of Klis, who offered himself as a substitute for Filipović-bey (one of the designated hostages who had fled the Venetian camp) aptly demonstrates that the principle of upholding a pledge, which had consequences for one's personal honor in case of a breach, was one shared by both sides in this conflict.

In terms of etiquette, ceremony and status, probably the most remarkable thing is the role played during the negotiations by the granting of permission to leave the fortress bearing arms. In almost all of the cases the first set of terms put forward by the defenders included the request that they be allowed to leave the fortress armed. The value of this request was purely symbolic and psychological, since, armed or not, once out of the protection of their fortifications the defenders had virtually no chance to put up any struggle against the numerically superior attackers. To be allowed to leave the fortress armed was considered an act of honor and respect, and one not granted easily, since the concession of this kind made to the enemy was perceived as a decrease in the value of the victory that had been won. The case of the siege of Klis serves as a very good illustration of the importance of this term for both sides. The Ottoman commander, *sanjak-bey* Mehmet, refused to give up on this demand until the very last moment, risking the breakdown of negotiations and Venetian general assault, which would almost certainly have resulted in a wholesale bloodbath once the attackers breached the walls. However, while governor-general Foscolo appeared to be in a more favorable position, his troops had endured almost a month of the hardships of the siege and bad weather, with casualties numbering hundreds of dead and wounded, were already reaching the limits of their obedience. Thus, the outcome of an assault with an anticipated high rate of casualties and fought by such troops against resolved defenders without any choice but to fight to the last man was far from being a sure thing. Yet, both sides were willing to put everything at stake merely to achieve this purely symbolic victory. In the end, Foscolo got the upper hand and the defenders submitted to all of his demands, but the story has an interesting epilogue that deserves to be mentioned.

A few weeks after the capture of Klis, in April 1648, a pamphlet entitled "*Vittoria ottenuta dalle Armi Feliciss.(i)me della Ser.(enissi)ma Repubblica. Nell' impresa dell' inespugabile fortezza di Clisa,*" began to circulate in Venice. When some of the copies reached governor-general Foscolo in Dalmatia, he promptly, with great displeasure, wrote to the Senate, stating "*Si è veduto alla stampa qui una narrativa dell' accaduto, et stabilito nell' acquisto di Clissa, che essendo quasi tutto lontana dal vero il racconto pregiudicando all' essenza delle conclusioni, et che avvantaggiano indebitamente, et contro il vero,*

il partito di turchi.” Foscolo asked the Senate to ban the pamphlet immediately, since it falsely claimed that the Ottoman defenders had been allowed to leave the fortress bearing their arms, while in reality, Foscolo reminded his superiors, they had left with only their lives and freedom.⁵³

One more question peculiar to the cases examined in this paper needs to be addressed: did the fact that the participants in the conflict (the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire) came from different sides of the religious divide (Islam and Christianity) in any way influence the rules of engagement?⁵⁴ While at the middle of the seventeenth century the Ottomans were still considered by the majority of Europeans as the “other,” i.e. an enemy, they had nevertheless become an integral part of the European state system.⁵⁵ The arguments presented so far show or at least support the proposition that the acceptance and integration of the Ottomans went further than the acknowledgment of their membership in the European state system of power. As we have seen, codes of conduct of warfare respected by European Christian states were both applied to and accepted by the Ottoman forces. Captured Ottoman commanders were treated with the dignity and respect befitting any Christian commander, while the social status and ranks of the Ottoman prisoners were equally respected, with persons of higher social status protected and given better treatment than others. For example, when in March 1647 the defenders of the fortress of Novigrad were forced to an unconditional surrender, the entire garrison, 137 men in total, was sent to Venetian galleys with the exception of the eight *aghas*, who were spared this fate and were instead taken to Zara as prisoners. There was a similar case in 1649, when the Ottoman fortress of *Risan* in the bay of Kotor surrendered after a twenty-day siege. While the *aghas* were allowed to leave with both their arms and baggage, all the others were granted only their lives and personal freedom.⁵⁶ Additionally, acts of civility and courtesies, such as offers of personal protection, the issue of letters of gratitude for good treatment and the exchange of gifts (in

53 ASVe, Senato, PTM. b. 466. num. 394 (Zara, 28. Aprile 1648) and attachment: *Relazione di Clisa gia Stampa*.

54 For an overview of the role religion played in conduct of wars in the European context see: David J. Brim, “Conflict, Religion, and Ideology,” in *European Warfare, 1350–1750*, ed. Frank Tallet and D. J. Brim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 278–99.

55 For an overview of this historical process see: Thomas Naff, “The Ottoman Empire and the European States System,” in *The Expansion of International Society*, ed. Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 143–69.

56 Franjo Difnik, *Povijest Kandrijskog rata*, 212. Gligor Stanojević, *Jugoslovenske zemlje*, 212.

this case rings, *handjars* or *kaftans*) common among the European commanders were also part of the interactions between Ottoman and Venetian commanders.

However, this study is in no way intended to imply that this was a benign war, far from it. The Dalmatian theater of operations was not lacking in brutality and atrocities. As was mentioned, two dominant modes of warfare in this war were siege operations and guerrilla raids, both of which fall into the category of military activities that are by definition hard to control and restrain. Guerrilla warfare by its very nature is a dirty business. The targets are not combatants, but rather resources that support an opponent's military infrastructure, in this case civilians on both sides of the frontier. On the other hand, Early Modern siege operations were notorious because of the hardships suffered both by besieger and besieged, and consequently their high cost in human lives. After enduring weeks or months of trench warfare, bad weather, diseases and high casualty rates, Early Modern commanders had great difficulty imposing strict discipline and control over badly paid troops once they were inside the fortified place. What I do intend to suggest is that the cases discussed above do not offer evidence of excessive acts of violence or atrocities the motives of which could be ascribed solely to religious enmity. Rather, the incidents did not fall far from contemporary European practices and were products of the nature of Early Modern warfare and the limits of the control seventeenth-century military commanders could exercise over their forces.

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