

NUOVA **ANTOLOGIA** 
MILITARE
RIVISTA INTERDISCIPLINARE DELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI STORIA MILITARE

N. 3
2022

Fascicolo Speciale 1. Luglio 2022
Venetian-Ottoman Wars

EDITED BY STATHIS BIRTACHAS



Società Italiana di Storia Militare

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Nuova Antologia Militare

Rivista interdisciplinare della Società Italiana di Storia Militare
Periodico telematico open-access annuale (www.nam-sism.org)
Registrazione del Tribunale Ordinario di Roma n. 06 del 30 Gennaio 2020



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For the Journal: © Società Italiana di Storia Militare
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Grafica: Nadir Media Srl - Via Giuseppe Veronese, 22 - 00146 Roma
info@nadirmedia.it

Gruppo Editoriale Tab Srl -Viale Manzoni 24/c - 00185 Roma
www.tabedizioni.it

ISSN: 2704-9795

ISBN Fascicolo 978-88-9295-532-5

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On the cover: lantern of an Ottoman galley captured at Lepanto.
Venice, Armory rooms of the Council of Ten at the Doge's Palace.
Topwar.ru website of Vjačeslav Špakovsky.



Venice and the Ottoman Empire as warriors. Source: [Roger PALMER, Earl of Castlemaine], *Das von den Türcken außs äusserst bedrangte, aber: Durch die christliche Waffen der heroischen Republic Venedig außs tapfferst beschützte Candia* [...], Frankfurt, Wilhelm Serlin, 1669.

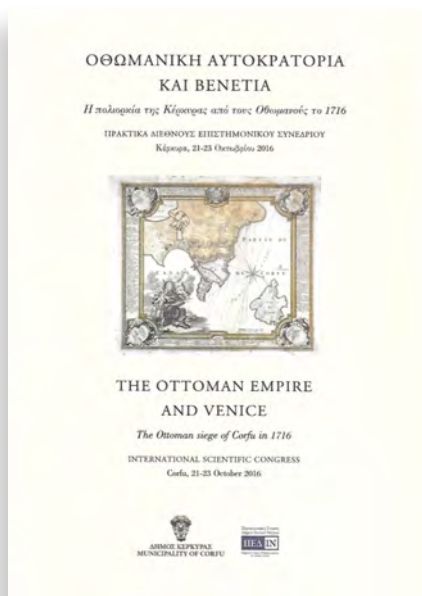


“Oltremarini” (Overseas) Regiments in Venetian service, nicknamed ‘Schiavoni’
(Vinkhuzen Collection, NYPL)

NIKOS E. KARAPIDAKIS AND ALIKI D. NIKIFOROU (EDS.),

***Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία και Βενετία:
Η πολιορκία της Κέρκυρας από τους Οθωμανούς το 1716.
Πρακτικά επιστημονικού συνεδρίου,
Κέρκυρα, 21–23 Οκτωβρίου 2016
[= The Ottoman Empire and Venice:
The Ottoman siege of Corfu in 1716. Proceedings
of the international scientific congress,
Corfu, 21–23 October 2016]***

Corfu, Municipality of Corfu – Regional Union of Municipalities of Ionian Islands, 2019, pp. 525.



This volume includes the proceedings of an international scientific congress dedicated to the Ottoman Siege of Corfu in 1716. It is the common effort of researchers from Greece, Italy and Germany, with Nikos Kara-

pidakis, Professor of Western Medieval History at the Ionian University, History Department, and Alikí Nikiforou, former Associate Professor of Cultural Heritage Management at the Ionian University, Department of Archives, Library Science and Museology, as editors. Both are significant scholars of the history of Corfu under Venetian rule.

The volume includes the following essays.

Daphne Lappa («Seamen and Mercenaries on Corfu at the turn of the 18th century», pp. 33-42) explores the population structure in the city of Corfu and traces the foreigners who arrived because of war during the two decades between the Morean War and the seventh Venetian–Ottoman War (1693–1714). The essay focuses on a group of ‘foreigners’ who reached the city of Corfu as men of war, mariners, soldiers and craftsmen who worked for the military machine in general (served in the Venetian guard and the forces of mercenaries’ companies or in the navy, mainly in the *armata sottile*, i.e. in galleys and galleasses). The author emphasizes that in the documents of the time there is a clear distinction between the native and the ‘foreigner’ under examination. Nevertheless, the non-Corfiot men of war were integrated into local society through marriage with Corfiot women.

Sophia Laiou («Η περιγραφή μιας αποτυχημένης στρατιωτικής επιχείρησης. Ο Οθωμανός χρονικογράφος Raşid Efendi και η πολιορκία της Κέρκυρας το 1716»¹, pp. 43-51) refers to the only Ottoman source that described the Siege of the fortress of Corfu by the Ottoman forces in July–August of 1716, i.e. that of the official Ottoman chronicler Raşid Efendi. Efendi presented the efforts of the Ottoman forces to conquer the island and analyzed their weaknesses. Laiou suggests that Efendi’s narration can be considered as a realistic registration of the Siege from the Ottoman’s point of view, and attempts to compare it with the contemporary Western sources.

Roberto Vaccher’s essay [«La difesa veneziana di Corfù (1716): Aspetti logistici»², pp. 53-80] deals with the problem of distance and the ways in which it affected communications and supplies. How many provisions reached Corfu in time? Were they enough? The author focuses on analyzing the mechanisms and the operating of the Venetian logistic machine, which can be done thanks to the

1 English title: «The description of a failed military operation. The Ottoman chronicler Raşid Efendi and the siege of Corfu in 1716».

2 English title: «The Venetian defense of Corfu (1716): Logistic aspects».

study of Venetian archival sources.

Gabriele Medolago's essay («Dalla terraferma Veneta alle Guerre del Mediterraneo: Bergamo ed i Bergamaschi nei conflitti fra Veneziani e Turchi»³, pp. 81-123) deals with all that the Ottoman–Venetian wars, and the Siege of Corfu in particular, have entailed for Venetian Bergamo, and with the way in which its inhabitants have joined these conflicts. Medolago's research is based on a series of unpublished documents from Bergamasque or Venetian public and private archives, as well as on published narrative texts and visual sources. Specific issues under consideration are the following: the contribution of the inhabitants of Bergamo to the conflicts through money and assistance; financial issues; the social, economic and religious consequences of these events; the opinion on the Ottoman problem; the prayers and ceremonies linked to war; the establishment of artillery factories which were necessary to Venetians.

Romina Tsakiri («Αναμένοντας την πολιορκία: Οι εκκλήσεις των βενετών αξιωματούχων για την προετοιμασία της πόλης της Κέρκυρας (1714–1716)»⁴, pp. 125-165) deals with the war preparations: examines the reports and appeals of the Venetian military officials to the *Serenissima's* Senate on the eve of the war, from March 1714 onwards, which provide important evidence of the horrible state of the defensive works, but also the shortages and poor or incomplete disuse craftsmanship in the two fortresses (the Old and the New one) and the fortified town of Corfu. The author points out that, despite the approval of the measures deemed necessary by the officials, a series of reasons led to the delay of the works and the delivery of the necessary supplies. Only after the arrival (in February 1716) of Venice's Field Marshal Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg on the island, the defense of Corfu was organized in a systematic way.

Evi Karamoutsou («Ο ρόλος της εβραϊκής κοινότητας της Κέρκυρας στην πολιορκία του 1716»⁵, pp. 167-176) presents a series of testimonies favorable to the role of Jews during the Siege of Corfu: of the Venetian Overseers, of the Field Marshal Schulenburg, of the Captain and Superintendent of the Artillery Antonio

3 From the Venetian *terraferma* to the Mediterranean Wars: Bergamo and the Bergamasques in the conflicts between the Venetians and the Turks».

4 English title: «Anticipating the siege: The appeals of the Venetian officials for the preparation of the city of Corfu (1714-1716)».

5 English title: «The role of the Jewish community of Corfu in the siege of 1716».

Sora, of the Procurator Antonio Loredan, of the Archbishop of Corfu Augusto Zacco etc. Indeed, according to them, the Jewish people demonstrated loyalty to the Venetian authorities' orders, fought bravely sharing the suffering and the sacrifices of the city's Christians and offering the greatest of service. Karamoutsou claims that these attestations, received by those who played a leading role in the siege, used in the following years by the Corfiot Jews whenever need called for it.

Nikos Skoutelis («Από την μελέτη στην εφαρμογή. Η επιστασία των έργων στις εξωτερικές οχυρώσεις της Κέρκυρας 1719–1727»⁶, pp. 179-192) refers to the supervision by different engineers of all construction works in order to integrate the hills of Avramis and Sotiras in the defense system of the city of Corfu in a period after its Siege (1719–1727), in relation to the relevant Schulenburg's ideas.

Elisabetta Molteni's essay («La città-fortezza sotto assedio. Schulenburg e la fortificazione di Corfù nella prima metà del Settecento»⁷, pp. 193-220) describes the state of the fortifications during the Siege of 1716, the strategies of defense planned and executed by Schulenburg, and the works predisposed in preparation for the attack from both land and sea in the few months preceding the Siege. Furthermore, it examines the phases of the siege and the positions deemed favorable for the attack on the fortress and used with this aim by the Ottoman forces. Finally, it presents the plans for strengthening and updating of the defenses of Corfu, based on the experience of the war, that implemented in the 1720's and later in the 1750's.

Guido Zucconi's essay («Dopo Schulenburg: Aspetti dell'edilizia civile e problemi di riassetto urbano»⁸, pp. 221-227) does not deal with the Siege of Corfu and the last Venetian–Ottoman War. It concerns the design and implementation of a series of civil constructions during the last eighty years of the Venetian rule, but also after that.

Some decades before the German Unification and specifically in 1825,

6 English title: «From the project to the implementation. The supervision of the works in the external fortifications of Corfu 1719-1727».

7 English title: «The city-fortress under siege. Schulenburg and the fortification of Corfu in the first half of the eighteenth century».

8 English title: «After Schulenburg: Aspects of civil construction and urban reorganization problems».

Karl August Varnhaggen von Ense published a volume entitled *Biographische Denkmaler* [= *Biographical Monuments*]. Among the three biographies included in this volume, the author gives a literary biography of Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg. Hans-Bernhard Schlumm («Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg – Η λογοτεχνική περιγραφή ενός ήρωα»⁹, pp. 231-238) comments on it and points out that through it Varnhaggen indented to show that heroes like Schulenburg would have achieved higher goals within a German national state.

Heiner Krellig's essay («After 1716: Strategies of fame and signs of gratitude in the republic of Venice», pp. 239-280) explores the personal and state strategies of commemoration of the Siege of Corfu, based on published and unpublished sources, on the monument dedicated to Schulenburg, placed near the entrance of the Old Fortress of Corfu, the lamp donated by the Venetian Senate for the Church of Saint Spiridon of Corfu, and the Santuario della Madonna dell'Apparizione of Pellestrina.

Claudia Salmini («Le aventure dell'archivio Schulenburg»¹⁰, pp. 283-299) presents the adventurous history of Schulenburg's papers, now preserved in the State Archives of Venice. This collection does not consist of personal documents. On the contrary, its material (maps, drawings, descriptions of cities, harbors, fortifications, memories and manuscripts of a military and political character etc.) testifies to the Venetian war campaigns under Schulenburg's command, and provides accurate and confidential information relating to the territories involved in the those campaigns.

Nikos Kokkomelis («Ηρώας ή μεγάλος άνδρας; Ο κατά Βολταίρο Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg»¹¹, pp. 301-313) comments on a letter from Voltaire to Schulenburg (15 September 1740). Through that the French philosopher asked the latter to send him a summary of the conflicts, in which he had participated against King Charles I of Sweden, and in the same time he expressed his admiration for the German military officer's achievements. Moreover, through this epistle Voltaire set out his views on the virtues that a great man should have.

Francesco Vecchiato («Werner von der Schulenburg, autore del romanzo stori-

9 English title: «Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg – The literary description of a hero».

10 English title: «The adventures of the Schulenburg's archive».

11 English title: «A hero or a great man? Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg from Voltaire's point of view».

co *Der König von Korfu*»¹², pp. 315-328) analyzes a historical novel by Werner von der Schulenburg, a nineteenth century scholar, dedicated to his ancestor and Venice's Field Marshal Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg.

Katerina B. Korre («Η ιστορική μνήμη μεταξύ αφήγησης και αφηγήματος: Τα βενετικά στρατιωτικά ημερολόγια της πολιορκίας της Κέρκυρας»¹³, pp. 331-358) investigates a variety of Venetian publications regarding the Siege of Corfu that aimed at a wide readership and became very popular: “flying sheets” (“*fogli volanti*”), military chronicles and diaries, as well as “*actuelles militaires*”, i.e. accounts coming from the battlefield accompanied by plans depicting the Siege, fortifications, defensive plans etc.

By revising the relationship between the painter Antonio Guardi, born in Vienna but established in Venice from 1730s onwards, and the *Serenissima*'s Field Marshal Schulenburg, one of the most important Guardi's clients, Milos Karkazis («Ο στρατάρχης Schulenburg και ο ζωγράφος Antonio Guardi»¹⁴, pp. 361-369) attempts to clarify aspects of Guardi's art of portraiture, as well as other types of paintings from 1729 up to 1747.

Camillo Tonini («Un inedito dipinto della collezione di Teodoro Correr con la battaglia navale dell'Otto Luglio 1716 nelle acque di Corfù e altre memorie dell'assedio»¹⁵, pp. 371-379) presents a number of visual and other type of sources from Venice relating to the Siege of Corfu (paintings, engravings, medals, historical maps, technical reports and journal handwritten during the Siege), emphasizing at an unpublished painting of the naval battle of July 8, 1716, belonged to the collection of Teodoro Correr (Venice, Museo Civico Correr).

Maria Rosa de Luca's essay («1716 in tempore belli. Il confronto fra oriente e occidente attraverso i “Trionfi” di Guiditta»¹⁶, pp. 381-390) aims to analyze in a systematic way the famous oratorio by Antonio Vivaldi *Juditha triumphans*

12 English title: «Werner von der Schulenburg, author of the historical novel *Der König von Korfu* [= The King of Corfu]».

13 English title: «The historical memory between narration and narrative: The Venetian military calendars of the siege of Corfu».

14 English title: «The *Field Marshal* Schulenburg and the painter Antonio Guardi».

15 English title: «An unpublished painting from the collection of Teodoro Correr with the naval battle of July 8, 1716 in the waters of Corfu and other memories of the siege».

16 English title: «1716 in tempore belli. The confrontation between East and West through *Juditha*'s “Triumphs”».

devicta Holofernis barbarie, an allegorical description of the Venetian defense of Corfu and the Christians' victory over the Ottomans in the same year of the oratorio's premiere (1716).

Aliki Nikiforou («Η πολιτική θεολογία της οθωμανικής πολιορκίας του 1716»¹⁷, pp. 391-432) focuses on the political theology in the Siege of Corfu, given that both mortal and divine forces –Schulenburg and Eugene of Savoy on the one hand, miraculous interventions of Saint Spyridon, patron saint of Corfu, and Virgin Mary on the other– involved in the defense and salvation of the island from the attack of the Ottoman forces. In this case, the Republic of Venice incorporated into its political theology the aforementioned traditions, both Orthodox and Catholic, but also the Olympian Gods in the context of the 18th century re-viving of the ancient Greek and Roman traditions.

Nikos E. Karapidakis («Η πολιορκία της Κέρκυρας από τους Οθωμανούς το 1716. Ιστοριογραφικά προβλήματα και ιστοριογραφικές προοπτικές»¹⁸, pp. 433-438) draws some significant conclusions of the conference dedicated to the Ottoman Siege of Corfu in 1716 and points out the contribution of the conference to the relevant historiography.

Ultimately, the volume includes a series of visual sources (see “Illustrations” on pp. 439-519) and abstracts of all the essays in English.

In conclusion, the essays of this collective volume give new evidence and enrich our knowledge about the two opposing parties, Venice and the Ottoman Empire, on the eve and during the Siege of Corfu (1716–1718): the war preparations; the various military officers, their personalities and projects; the shortcomings and the disadvantages of the two armies and fleets; the reports of the protagonists and the participants about the war events; the involvement and contribution of various social groups of the island in military operations; the assessments for the causes of the victory of the one side and the defeat of the other; the consequences of the war and its impact on Venice and Europe. Some of the essays, drawing on data from military engineers' and other experts' reports, point out that Venice implemented its vast experience on the art of warfare, and in particular on

¹⁷ English title: «The political theology of the Ottoman siege of 1716».

¹⁸ English title: «The siege of Corfu by the Ottomans in 1716. Historiographical problems and historiographical perspectives».

the technique of fortification from the War of Candia onwards, as well as the new theory on this field, main characteristics of which were the outer fortifications and the underground tunnels, i.e. the transfer of war outside the city walls. The new military works of the period decisively influenced the urban landscape of the city of Corfu. In addition, the volume provides important information about the central figure of the Siege, the *Serenissima's* Field Marshal Johann Matthias von der Schulenburg, and, especially, about the history of his archive, the memory strategies he adopted, and the representations of his history through art, literature and philosophy. Finally, expressions of the events of the Siege of Corfu through art, along with their reception by historiography, religion and politics are studied by the contributors in a systematic way. This is, therefore, the most complete collection of studies to date regarding the Siege of Corfu that offers new historiographical approaches, based in great part on primary sources.

STATHIS BIRTACHAS



Icon of the naval Battle of Curzolari (Echinades in Greek) islands, by the Cretan painter Georgios Klontzas, last decades of the 16th century; one of the most famous depictions of the naval Battle of Lepanto in post-Byzantine art. Courtesy of the National Historical Museum, Athens (cat. n. 3578).

Venetian-Ottoman Wars

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