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Stendardo di Lepanto (1570), Lati A e B, Museo Diocesano di Gaeta. Wikimedia Commons. Lo stendardi fu dipinto a tempera su seta da Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta (1521-1575), su incarico del Cardinale Onorato Caetani. L'11 giugno 1570 fu benedetto da Papa Pio V nella Basilica di San Pietro e consegnato a Marcantonio II Colonna ponendolo al comando della flotta pontificia. Partito da Civitavecchia e giunto a Gaeta il 22 giugno 1571, Marcantonio Colonna, fece voto di consegnare lo stendardo al patrono della città qualora fosse tornato vincitore. Il 13 agosto Pio V fece consegnare un secondo stendardo della Lega a Don Giovanni d'Austria, comandante generale della flotta cristiana che, riunitasi a Messina, salpò il 24 agosto verso Lepanto. Durante la battaglia del 7 ottobre i due vessilli sventolarono rispettivamente sull'Ammiraglia e sulla Capitana pontificia e non furono mai centrati dal tiro nemico. Nelle stesse ore il papa ebbe la visione della vittoria e in ricordo rifinì l'Ave Maria nella forma attuale, aggiunse le Litanie lauretane alla recita del Rosario e l'appellativo mariano di Auxilium Christianorum e consacrò il 7 ottobre a Santa Maria delle Vittorie sull'Islam, celebrato con lo scampanio al mattino, a mezzogiorno e alla sera in ricordo della vittoria. Papa Gregorio XIII trasferì poi la festa alla prima domenica del mese di ottobre intitolandola alla Madonna del Rosario. Al ritorno da Lepanto, Marcantonio Colonna sciolse il voto consegnando lo stendardo al vescovo Pietro Lunello. Il vessillo fu poi conservato presso la cattedrale dei Santi Erasmo e Marciano.

The Size and Composition of the Venetian Professional Army in the East Adriatic War Theatre (1645-1718)*

by Nikola Markulin¹

ABSTRACT: This article analyses the size and composition of the Venetian professional army deployed in the East Adriatic war theatre during the Republic's last three wars against the Ottoman Empire from 1645 to 1718. A distinctive feature of this war theatre was that the Venetians, at the end of all three wars, remained victorious and succeeded in enlarging their East Adriatic possessions. Contrary to the assertions of local historians, who studied these wars and almost unanimously ascribed all of the Venetian victories to local irregulars, this enquiry shows that professional army units bore the main burden of fighting. Moreover, the entire Venetian strategy in this theatre was determined by the availability of these troops. This analysis is based on archival records produced by the contemporary Venetian military administration.

Keywords: Ottoman – Venetian Wars, East Adriatic war theatre, Venetian Dalmatia, Early modern history, Professional army

Introduction

uring the 17th and 18th centuries, the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire engaged in three wars: the Cretan War (1645-1669), the Morean War (1684-1699), and the Second Morean War (1714-

1718). These conflicts unfolded in two distinct theatres of war: the Aegean and the East Adriatic. Compared to other early modern interstate military conflicts,

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the Ottoman-Venetian wars are among the less researched and, therefore, less known to a wider audience. While this topic has recently gained some interest from established military historians, the East Adriatic war theatre remains almost a blind spot.² This is also the case within studies focused on early modern Venice or its relations with the Ottomans, but not strictly from the perspective of military history.³ This phenomenon can be attributed primarily to the language barrier.

The most distinctive feature of the East Adriatic war theatre was that, unlike in the Aegean theatre, the Venetians remained victorious at the end of all three wars and succeeded in enlarging their possessions. This paper will analyse the size and composition of the Venetian professional army deployed in the East Adriatic theatre during the last three Ottoman-Venetian wars, aiming to provide a solid starting point for a systematic explanation of the series of Venetian victories. In that sense, it is almost perfectly compatible with a recently published paper more focused on the size and composition of contemporary Ottoman armies engaged in fighting the Venetians in this theatre.⁴ The underlying purpose of this work is to introduce a wider audience to this neglected early modern war theatre through this specific topic.

Although documents produced by the Venetian military administration have been analysed by local (ex-Yugoslavian and Croatian) historians for decades, a systematic and thorough analysis of the Republic's professional armed forces has been neglected. In short, the main reason for this lies within the intertwined

² Gregory HANLON, European Military Rivalry, 1500-1750. Fierce Pageant, Routledge, New York, 2020, pp. 148-155; Gábor ÁGOSTON, The Last Muslim Conquest: The Ottoman Empire and its Wars in Europe, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2023, pp. 460-466. On the other hand, James D. Tracy's book covers this area but concludes with the year 1618, thus omitting nearly the entire 17th and 18th centuries, including the last three Venetian-Ottoman wars. James D. TRACY, Balkan Wars. Habsburg Croatia, Ottoman Bosnia, and Venetian Dalmatia, 1499-1617, Rowman & Littfield, Lanham, 2016.

³ Frederic C. LANE, Venice. A Maritime Republic, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1973, pp. 409-411; Kenneth M. SETTON, Venice, Austria, and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century, The American Philospohical Society, Philadelphia, 1991, pp. 142-148, 320, 432; Gaetano Cozzi, Michael KNAPTON and Giovanni SCARABELLO, La Repubblica di Venezia nell' età moderna. Dal 1517 alla fine della Repubblica, Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, Torino, 1992, pp. 117-145, 556-560.

⁴ Nikola Markulin, «Venetian – Ottoman Wars in the East Adriatic Theatre of Operations (1645–1718): Determining the Ratio of Forces», *International Journal of Military History and Historiography* (published online ahead of print 2023), https://doi. org/10.1163/24683302-bja10055.

relationship between local historiographies and dominant ideologies. Whether they have seen these forces as predecessors of communist guerrillas that fought Axis forces or as national heroes leading their compatriots in a "centuries-long struggle against foreign rule" (the similarities between these two agendas are obvious), local historians have focused solely on various local irregular and militia units within the Venetian army.⁵ Needless to say, these are false analogies. Almost without exception, local historians have attributed all of the Venetian victories to the irregulars.

Hopefully, a careful analysis of contemporary Venetian military administration reports will show that the professional army units formed the backbone of the Venetian armies and were the primary contributors to almost all Venetian victories. Furthermore, this analysis will demonstrate that the availability of these units in the East Adriatic theatre determined the entire Venetian strategy. The focus will be on the strategic and operational levels and will include solely the most numerous types of professional units, i.e., infantry and cavalry. Various other military professionals, such as engineers, gunners, sappers, and miners, who were usually deployed individually or in small numbers for specific operations, will be omitted from this research.

Geographical and administrative layout

This war theatre was primarily shaped by two key geographic factors: the Adriatic Sea, whose eastern coast offered favourable conditions for seafaring, and a rugged, mountainous hinterland. Acknowledging the vital importance of the East Adriatic coast to its commercial empire, Venice maintained near-total naval dominance within the Adriatic. By the mid-17th century, it exercised control over all the islands and nearly the entire coastline, with the exceptions being the southern coast of Dalmatia around the Neretva River delta, the city-state of Du-

⁵ The most notable examples of this approach are following works: Gligor STANOJEVIĆ, Jugoslovenske zemlje u mletačko-turskim ratovima XVI-XVIII vijeka, Istorijski institut u Beogradu, Belgrade, 1970; Marko JAČOV, Le guerre Veneto-Turche del XVII secolo in Dalmazia, Atti e memorie della Società Dalmata di storia patria, vol. XX, Venice, 1991; Ivan PEDERIN, «La guerra fra Venezia e l'Impero Ottomano (1715-1718) e l'albeggiare delle coscienze nazionali Croata, Serba e Montenegrina», Ateneo Veneto, 181, Venice, 1994, pp. 201-228; Marija Kocić, Venecija i hajduci u doba Morejskog rata, HESPERIAedu, Belgrade, 2013.

brovnik, and a few ports along the present-day Montenegrin coast. These Venetian possessions were organized into the dual province of Dalmatia and Albania, with a governor-general, elected from Venice's aristocratic elites, serving as the chief commander of the army as well as the head of military and civil administration. At the time, the Ottomans held sway over the entire hinterland of the East Adriatic coast, establishing strongholds just a few miles from Venetian ports. However, the Dinaric Mountain range, which lay almost perfectly parallel to the coastline nearby (at most 40 miles away), formed a natural barrier separating the Ottoman-controlled territories in Bosnia from their bordering (sub)provinces in Dalmatia. Historians estimate the population of this war theatre to have been between 80,000 and 130,000 people during the period under consideration.

Prior to the Cretan War, Venetian territories were confined to a narrow coastal strip extending approximately 200 miles, with limited hinterland depth. Given this geographic layout, the loss of any port town would have jeopardized Venetian naval supremacy in the Adriatic and shifted the strategic balance in favour of the Ottomans.⁶ Therefore, these strategically important port towns were strongly fortified and garrisoned. During the three wars considered here, the Venetians repulsed the Ottomans across the Dinaric Mountain range. Given the constraints of pre-industrial military logistics, it is relatively straightforward to understand why Venetian conquests ceased there, establishing the 1718 border as the final demarcation between the two states.

The criterion used in this research to differentiate between various types of units is the same as that employed by the contemporary Venetian military administration, which was based on the different salaries given to the personnel of different units, rather than on their military function. Therefore, although their equipment and tactics were the same, there were two "types" of line infantry or light cavalry since they were granted different salaries. Due to space limitations, the administrative aspect of army organization will be omitted. In short, it resembled other European armies of the time; soldiers were organized into companies and regiments with common military ranks, from corporal up to general. Reports regarding troop numbers varied considerably, which is understandable given the lack of contemporary standardized forms. Sometimes, for example, reports included numbers for each branch of infantry or cavalry, while at other times, gov-

⁶ Cozzi cit., pp. 119.



Fig. 1 Map of Venetian conquests in the East Adriatic war theatre (1645–1718).

ernors reported only the general number of all professional troops deployed at the time. Efforts will be made to present these numbers as uniformly as possible in this research.

Prioritizing the Aegean theatre

In terms of manpower, money, and other resources needed for war, the Venetians always prioritized the Aegean war theatre. At the outbreak of the Cretan War, the Republic had 4,114 men stationed in Dalmatia and Boka, while there were 13,843 men deployed on Crete alone.⁷ The garrison of Candia (modern-day

⁷ Feruccio SASSI, «Le Campagne di Dalmazia durante la Guerra di Candia (1645-1648)», Archivio Veneto, 20, 1937, pp. 222; Norman David MASON, *The War of Candia, 1645-*

Heraklion), the only fortress on the island to remain in Venetian hands after initial operations, comprised about 4,000 to 6,000 soldiers, a force nearly equal in size to the army maintained throughout the entire East Adriatic theatre. Additionally, there was an amphibious army of 10,000 to 15,000 infantrymen aboard the Aegean fleet, which boasted a fleet of large ships approximately ten times larger than the Adriatic squadron.⁸

Prioritization of the Aegean theatre continued through two successive wars (see Table 1). During the campaign of 1684, the central government dispatched 9,300 soldiers from Venice to its overseas possessions. Out of this number, 8,570 were sent to the Aegean theatre, while only 730 were deployed in Dalmatia and Albania.⁹ During the campaign of 1687, the East Adriatic theatre received a significantly favorable proportion of reinforcements - 2,768 infantrymen - compared to the 5,865 deployed to the Aegean theatre during the same period.¹⁰ However, this unusual redistribution of forces was more a consequence of the outbreak of plague in the Aegean theatre than an eventual shift in Venetian strategy.¹¹ Before the start of the campaign in 1688, the Senate sent 2,508 infantry to the Aegean theatre and 1,792 to Dalmatia, but the latter number included 936 low-quality Italian militiamen. Moreover, at that time, the official reported that a new contingent of 10,000 line infantry was about to embark for the Aegean theatre.¹² The unfavorable ratio of reinforcements for the East Adriatic theatre continued during the Second Morean War. From June until mid-August 1715, the central government sent only 604 men there, while at the same time 5,263 men were sent to the Aegean theatre.¹³

^{1669,} Ph.D.diss., Louisiana State University, 1972, pp. 17.

⁸ MASON cit., pp. 96 – 98.

 ⁹ Archivio di Stato di Venezia (henceforth: ASVe), Senato, Deliberazioni, busta (henceforth:
 b.) 107, 9 September 1685.

¹⁰ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 111, 27 September 1687.

¹¹ Michele FOSCARINI, *Historia della Republica Veneta di Michele Foscarini Senatore*, Combi&La Noù, Venice, 1696, pp. 337; Pietro GARZONI, *Istoria della Repubblica di Venezia in Tempo della Sacra Lega*, Appresso Giovanni Manfrè, Venice, 1720, pp. 222-223.

¹² ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 112, 27 March 1688.

¹³ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 172, 27 August 1715.

E	ast Adriatic T	Aegean Theatre				
Source ¹⁴ /Date	Infantry	Cavalry	Total	Infantry	Cavalry	Total
b. 107, 9 Sep- tember 1685	5,547	843	6,390	16,618	95	16,713
b. 111, 27 Sep- tember 1687	10,000	879	10,879	18,848	1,310	20,158
b. 125, 26 Sep- tember 1694	6,026 (plus 600 Italian militiamen)	1,144	7,170 (7,770)	15,107	2,025	17,132
b. 172, 23 Au- gust 1715	/	/	7,69015	/	/	17,706
8 April 1718 ¹⁶	/	/	11,000	/	/	18,000

Table 1. Comparison of Venetian professional army deployed in two war theatres

Not only were far greater numbers of troops dispatched from Italy to the Aegean, year after year, but the Senate also regularly issued orders to the governors in Dalmatia to detach and send part of their troops there. Therefore, reinforcements always came from Dalmatia and Albania to the Aegean region; they never moved in the opposite direction. Orders to send a few companies were issued on a yearly basis, but sometimes the governors had to send a few thousand men, nearly half of the troops under their command.¹⁷ The best the governors in Dalmatia could hope for in terms of priority of reinforcements was that the Senate redirected troops embarked for the Aegean theatre to the East Adriatic. Even in those cases, it was only for one campaign as was the case in 1687 and 1688, when the Venetians undertook their most ambitious (and successful) offensives against the Ottoman strongholds of Herceg Novi and Knin.¹⁸ Even after loss of most of

¹⁴ All data within this table, except for the last row, are from ASVe, Deliberazioni.

¹⁵ The army in Dalmatia and Boka comprised 1,324 low-quality troops known as *pandurs*. The size of the army in the Aegean referred exclusively to "pure" professional soldiers.

¹⁶ ASVe, Senato, Dispacci: Capi da Guerra, Dispacci dello Schulemburg (henceforth: CG Schulemburg).

¹⁷ Domagoj MADUNIĆ, Defensiones Dalmatiae: Governance and Logistics of the Venetian Defensive System in Dalmatia During the War Of Crete (1645 - 1669), Ph.D. diss., Central European University, 2012, pp. 423 – 435; ASVe, Senato, Dispacci: Provveditori generali da Terra e da Mar (henceforth: PTM); b. 350, report number (henceforth: no.) 24; b. 356, no. 131, 169, 178; b. 362, no. 48, 51.

¹⁸ ASVe, PTM, b. 354, no. 85; b. 355, no. 90 - 100; b. 356, no. 146, 147; Deliberazioni, b.

possessions in the Aegean theatre to the Ottomans after 1718, the Venetian chief general proposed deploying 8,000 men in Dalmatia and Boka in the event of a new war, compared to 22,000 in the Aegean theatre.¹⁹ However, despite having a smaller army and receiving fewer reinforcements, Venetian commanders in the East Adriatic theatre proved superior in terms of victories against the Ottomans.

The size of the Venetian professional army in the East Adriatic theatre

Although the size and composition of the Venetian professional army in this theatre varied due to factors such as available reinforcements and resources, operations planned by governors, and priorities given to other theatres, the most significant difference was between the peacetime and wartime armies. Since they were very expensive and their deployment would significantly increase state expenditures, the Senate would promptly reduce the number of professional units once an armistice was agreed upon. Therefore, the army the Republic kept in the province during peacetime was about two to three times smaller than during wars. It consisted of about 2,500 infantrymen, of which about 1,000 were deployed on armed boats to patrol sea lines, along with a few hundred cavalry (see Table 2). Since the Venetians had enlarged their East Adriatic possessions after 1699, the need to garrison several newly conquered fortresses arose, leading to an increase in the peacetime army. About 3,500 professional infantry and 500 cavalry were now regarded as the optimal peacetime force.²⁰

Date	Infantry	Cavalry	Total	Source
1642	2,285	367	2,652	CRV VII, pp. 188-238 ²¹
1675	2,800	250	3,050	Alberti ²²
1680	2,500	300	2,800	CRV VIII, pp. 57-71 ²³

Table 2. Venetian peacetime army in the province of Dalmatia and Albania

23 Grga NOVAK (Ed.), Commissiones et relationes Venetae, vol. VIII (henceforth CRV VIII),

^{110, 29} July 1687; b. 111, 20 September 1687; b. 112, 17 July, 5 August, 21 August 1688. 19 ASVe, CG Schulemburg, 8 June 1722.

²⁰ ASVe, CG Schulemburg, 8 June 1722.

²¹ Grga NOVAK (Ed.), *Commissiones et relation*es Venetae, vol. VII (henceforth CRV VII), JAZU, Zagreb, 1972.

²² The State Archives in Zadar (henceforth: DAZd), Obitelj Alberti, b. 5, foglio 116-117.

At the outbreak of wars, the Venetian professional army in the province grew exponentially (see Table 3). On average, about 7,500 professional soldiers were deployed during the three wars considered here. However, as mentioned earlier, the size and composition of the armies varied significantly depending on various circumstances. At the beginning of the conflicts, the armies started to build up for the upcoming campaign, and therefore, there were fewer troops deployed. This was the case in August 1645, about a month after the Ottoman attack on Crete. It was also evident in May 1684, just a few weeks after the Republic had entered the war. Fewer troops were also deployed at the end of the conflicts, as exemplified by the situation in February 1668 when Venice was exhausted by a prolonged war.

Date	Infantry	Cavalry	Total	Source	
		Creta	an War		
August 1645	3,688	426	4,114	Sassi cit., pp. 222	
June 1647	7,740	1,160	8,900	PTM, b. 306, no. 297	
December 1653	5,624	376	6,000	PTM, b. 315, no. 97	
February 1655	4,548	444	4,992	CRV, VII, pp. 99-122	
November 1658	9,448	91	9,539	Marra site are 250	
February 1668	3,510	52	3,562	MADUNIĆ cit., pp. 250	
		More	an War		
May 1684	4,700	350	5,050	PTM, b. 350, no. 7	
March 1685	5,583	951	6,634	b. 1, no. 49 ²⁴	
September 1685	5,547	843	6,390	Deliberazioni , b. 107, 9 Sep- tember	
January 1686	4,478	854	5,332	Deliberazioni , b. 107, 16 Jan- uary	
May 1686	6,381	823	7,204	PTM, b. 353, no. 5, 11, 19.	
February 1687	6,923	848	7,771	PTM, b. 354, no. 52	
September 1687	10,000	879	10,879	Deliberazioni , b. 111, 27 Sep- tember	

Table 3.	Venetian	wartime	professional	army
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JAZU, Zagreb, 1977.

²⁴ DAZd, *Generalni providuri za D*almaciju i Albaniju (henceforth: GPDA), Dispacci, Pietro Valier.

6,635	772	7,407	PTM, b. 356, no. 142						
6,424	848	7,272	PTM, b. 361, no. 38; b. 496, 1 November						
6,626	1,144	7,770	Deliberazioni , b. 125, 26 Sep- tember						
	Second N	Iorean W	ar						
/	/	7,690	Deliberazioni, b. 172, 23 August						
/	/	15,340	ASVe, PTM, b. 383, no. 91						
9,458	1,654	11,112	b. 1, 15 May ²⁵						
4,686	766	5,452	CG Schulemburg, 29. june 1718						
	6,424 6,626 / / 9,458	6,424 848 6,626 1,144 Second N / / 9,458 1,654	6,424 848 7,272 6,626 1,144 7,770 Second Morean W / / 7,690 / / 15,340 9,458 1,654 11,112						

The main argument for the claim that professional units served as the backbone of the Venetian army can be straightforwardly derived from the fact that periods of the greatest Venetian offensives and successes coincided with the periods when the governors had the highest number of professional troops at their disposal. That was the case with the offensive of 1647 and 1648, the three-year span of constant conquests from 1686 to 1688, the period of offensives in southern Herzegovina and the Neretva River valley in 1694, and the successful attack on the Ottoman fortress of Imotski in 1717. However, despite having a relatively large professional army, the Venetians remained passive in 1658 and 1715. In the first instance, the governor failed to counter Ottoman aggressive moves, and in 1715, the Ottomans launched one of their most ambitious attacks in this theatre, while a series of disasters in the Aegean theatre additionally paralyzed the Venetian command. Data for June 1718 shows the number of troops left to garrison the province after the 6,000-men strong detachment had embarked for the attack on Ulcinj. The composition of the professional army deployed in the province played an equally important role as its sheer size in determining the overall Venetian strategy.

Line infantry

If the professional units formed the backbone of the Venetian army, the line infantry, like in other contemporary European armies, formed the backbone of the professional army. The Venetian military administration differentiated its line

²⁵ DAZd, Dispacci, Alvise Mocenigo.



Fig. 2 A. von Escher depiction of Venetian grenadiers deployed in Dalmatia, likely during the attack on Imotski in 1717. Vinkhuijzen Collection, NYPL Wikimedia Commons.

infantry units based on the regions from which their personnel originated. Thus, there were mainly two administrative designations for these units: Italian and *Oltramontani* (literally, "men from across the Alps") infantry. However, sometimes more precise designations were used for administrative purposes, such as Corsicans (*Corsi*), Abruzzesi, Germans (*Allemani*), and Swiss (sometimes *Grigioni* or *Grisoni* for soldiers from Graubünden). Italian infantry was consistently slightly more numerous than the *Oltramontani* units, which were deployed only during wartime. During the Morean War, the proportion of Italian to Oltramontani line infantry slightly varied, but on average was 2:1 in favour of the former.²⁶ In 1717,

²⁶ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 107, 9 September 1685; PTM, b. 353, no. 19; b. 354, no. 52.

there were 1,861 Swiss, 2,186 German, and 2,487 Italian and Corsican line infantrymen deployed in this theatre.²⁷

There were slight differences in salaries among these units, with *Oltramontani* typically receiving the highest and Italian infantry usually receiving the lowest salaries. However, their armament, training, and tactics were similar. During the Cretan War, units of line infantry were equipped with a combination of firearms and pikes. From the outset of the Morean War, the Venetian line infantry began to use snaphance muskets in ever-growing numbers, and pikes were replaced with bayonets.²⁸ They were trained in volley fire tactics. All of these administratively distinguished types of line infantry served together equally in garrisons and in field armies. During campaign seasons, *ad hoc* companies of grenadiers would be formed from the best soldiers of regular line infantry units, and their personnel would receive higher salaries.²⁹

The number of line infantry deployed in the Province during wartimes varied significantly, from about 2,800 to 7,000 (see Table 4). It depended on the phases of wars and available resources. For periods with the lowest numbers of line infantry, it should be noted that in 1655 and in January 1686, the Republic was just recovering from catastrophic defeats with high casualties among professional troops, while in 1667, it was exhausted by a long war, and in 1688, the governor had been waiting for reinforcements after having sent his best troops to the Aege-an theatre. Conversely, the periods with the highest numbers matched campaign seasons with the greatest Venetian successes.

²⁷ DAZd, Dispacci, Mocenigo, b. 1, 15 May 1717.

²⁸ In May 1686, the governor asked the Senate to authorize the shipment of 1,000 bayonets in Dalmatia, 500 snaphance carabines, and 1.000 snaphance muskets in addition to older types of firearms. ASVe, PTM, b. 353, no. 15.

²⁹ Nikola MARKULIN, *Mletačka vojna organizacija u Dalmaciji i Boki od Morejskog rata* (1684-1699) do Požarevačkog mira 1718, Ph.D.diss., University of Zadar, 2015, pp. 79-80.

Date	Line Infantry	Total Infantry	Source
August 1646	7,70030	8,936	Sassi cit., pp. 239-244
May 1651	3,235	4,853	Madunić cit., pp. 246
1655	2,869	4,548	CRV VII, pp. 114
February 1664	4,178	4,928	CRV VII, pp. 152-153
1667	2,750	3,570	CRV VII, pp. 276
May 1684	3,800	4,700	ASVe, PTM, b. 350, no. 7
March 1685	4,147	5,583	DAZd, Dispacci, Valier, b. 1, no. 49
September 1685	4,038	5,547	ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 107, 9 September
January 1686	2,915	4,478	ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 107, 16 January
May 1686	4,069	6,381	ASVe, PTM, b. 353, no. 19
February 1687	4,279	6,923	ASVe, PTM, b. 354, no. 52
October 1687	7,050	9,00031	ASVe, PTM, b. 355, no. 105
July 1688	2,955	6,635	ASVe, PTM, b. 356, no. 142
January 1689	4,738	6,711 ³²	ASVe, PTM, b. 356, no. 166
November 1694	3,277	5,489	ASVe, PTM, b. 363, no. 115
May 1717	6,534	9,458	DAZd, Dispacci, Mocenigo, b. 1, 15 May

Table 4. Proportion of line infantry within Venetian professional army

The primary responsibility of the professional line infantry in the Province was to maintain garrisons in strategically important port towns (see Table 5). Although Venetians during the first years of the Cretan War had conquered major part of the Dalmatian hinterland, they opted to destroy Ottoman strongholds, not

³⁰ The number of line infantry is estimated to about 7,000 considering that there were 30 armed boats with crew of about 1,200 men in June 1646.

³¹ There were 7,327 professional infantrymen distributed across the province. The governor noted that he had garrisoned a few additional marine infantry companies in two exposed forts. There were 37 small galleys under the command of the governor, with a crew of about 1,500 marines.

³² Without drummers, trumpeters and sick soldiers.

to garrison them. This strategy turned out to be ill-conceived because during the peace negotiations of 1670, the Ottomans recognized only forts with a professional garrison as new Venetian acquisitions.³³ The memory of that event persisted for decades, and even in 1689, the governor used it as an argument against reducing the number of professional troops in Dalmatia.³⁴

During their major offensives of the Morean War from 1686 to 1688, the Venetians took a different approach. They garrisoned all major captured Ottoman strongholds with their professional infantry. The most important of these, such as Sinj, Herceg Novi, and Knin, immediately received several line infantry companies augmented by a company or two of marines. It should be noted that with the conquest of the hinterland and the pushing back of the Ottomans inland, the imminent threat to Dalmatian port towns ceased. Consequently, their garrisons became smaller in favour of newly conquered fortresses such as Sinj and Knin. Smaller and less important forts were garrisoned by local units of *paesani* or *pandurs*.

³³ Tea MAYHEW, *Dalmatia between Ottoman and Venetian Rule. Contado di Zara 1645-1718*, Viella, Roma, 2008, pp. 48-62.

³⁴ ASVe, PTM, b. 356, no. 169.

Town or Fort	March 1655 ³⁵	May 1684 ³⁶	January 1686 ³⁷	March 1687 ³⁸	February 1688 ³⁹	June 1718 ⁴⁰
Zadar	553	900	903	501	340	304
Šibenik	650	700	318	533	216	125
Knin	/	/	/	/	600	627
Sinj	/	/	/	251	410	343
Trogir	149	200	181	248	112	30
Klis	380	300	284	261	112	68
Split	589	700	782	956	196	370
Omiš	128	/	40	120	80	59
Zadvarje	/	/	201	146	176	108
Opuzen (with Čitluk)	/	/	206	299	600	123
Kotor (with Ri- san and Budva)	?	1,000	1,10941	949	402	259
Herceg Novi	/	/	/	/	600	150
Total	2,321 (without Kotor)	3,800	4,024	4,264	3,764 (4,478)	2,507

 Table 5. Line infantry in garrisons

Being the main garrison force in the province, the line infantry withstood the burden of the fiercest Ottoman offensives. The main part of the 3,500-men-strong

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³⁵ MADUNIĆ cit., pp. 248.

³⁶ At the time, the garrison of Split had the duty to send detachments to garrison Omiš and Zadvarje. ASVe, PTM, b. 350, no. 7.

³⁷ There were also 253 marines deployed in the garrisons in addition to the 350 marine recruits at the time stationed in forts. ASVe, *Del*iberazioni, b.107, 16 January 1686.

³⁸ There were 492 marines deployed in the garrisons. ASVe, PTM, b. 354, no. 52.

³⁹ The actual number of line infantry at the time was 4,478 men. For one German regiment comprising 472 men, it is not specified where it was deployed. There were also 256 marine infantrymen and 937 Italian militiamen in garrisons. The list also included numerous smaller forts, but without specification about the type of their garrisons: Vrlika (60), Obrovac (one company), Drniš (20), Zubci (120), Carine (100), Grahovo (120), Cetinje (80), Makarska (20), Ostrovica (20), and Skradin (12). ASVe, PTM, b. 356, no. 169.

⁴⁰ The list also included smaller forts and their garrisons: Imotski (121), Vrgorac (95), Otton (42), Plavno (28), Strmica (30), Hvar (50), Korčula (56), Utton (45), and Carine (118). ASVe, CG Schulemberg, 29 June 1718.

⁴¹ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 107, 29 September 1685.

garrison of Šibenik during the Ottoman siege in 1647 was formed of line infantry, as were three contingents of reinforcements that poured into the city by sea.⁴² The garrison of Sinj, besieged in 1687, was composed of about 400 line infantrymen, including one grenadier company, plus two companies of marines.⁴³ The majority of the 1,600 men strong garrison that successfully defended the fortress of Čitluk against the Ottoman counterattack in 1694 was also composed of Italian line infantrymen.⁴⁴ The second Ottoman siege of Sinj in 1715 was sustained by 650 line infantrymen and grenadiers.⁴⁵

The Senate's decisions to authorize the deployment of one or two regiments of professional line infantry, particularly for specific campaigns, were crucial for most Venetian victories. This was especially the case during the Morean War. In the summer of 1686, just before launching what would become the first successful Venetian offensive in nearly forty years, directed against Sinj, an important Ottoman fortress in the hinterland of Split, the governor had received reinforcements of 955 professional line infantry.⁴⁶ The following year, the same governor was waiting for reinforcements from Venice during the Ottoman counterattack directed against Sinj. His patience was rewarded when he received 904 men, of whom 404 were line infantrymen, and the relief army could finally begin its march.⁴⁷ Immediately after breaking the Ottoman siege, the governor had to send the received line infantry to the Aegean theatre.⁴⁸

A more ambitious offensive directed against the Ottoman port town of Herceg Novi was conceived from the beginning to be executed with considerable help from Venice. Besides the troops they could gather across the province, the governor and his generals counted on reinforcements of 2,500 to 3,000 line infantry. The Senate authorized this and even added 16 auxiliary galleys. The promised reinforcements were sent in a few batches, so that the last contingent, comprising a regiment of about 1,000 German line infantry, arrived just five days before the

⁴² ASVe, PTM, b. 307, no. 297, 301, 308, 312.

⁴³ ASVe, PTM, b. 354, no. 63.

⁴⁴ ASVe, PTM, b. 362, no. 101; b. 363, no. 110, 111. Čitluk was an Ottoman fortress that defended the nearby river port of Gabela.

⁴⁵ ASVe, PTM, b. 381, no. 72.

⁴⁶ ASVe, PTM, b. 353, no. 20, 27.

⁴⁷ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 110, 26 and 29 April 1687; PTM, b. 354, no. 65, 67.

⁴⁸ ASVe, PTM, b. 354, no. 72.

fall of the town.⁴⁹ However, before the start of the new campaign season, the majority of the received reinforcements was sent to the Aegean theatre.⁵⁰

Since the 1688 campaign had already been planned and directed against Knin, the last Ottoman fortress west of the Dinaric mountain ridge, the Senate approved new reinforcements. By mid-July, the governor received a new German regiment of line infantry and successfully executed the planned offensive. By January 1689, the regiment was already on its way to the Aegean theatre.⁵¹ The Venetian command followed the same pattern during their last major successful offensive of the Morean War. The governor conceived an attack against Čitluk at the mouth of the Neretva River, requested additional reinforcements of 800 line infantry from Venice, received 600 of them, and, together with forces gathered across the province, took the fortress in 1694.⁵²

Marine infantry – Oltramarini

In addition to line infantry, Venetian governors and commanders also employed another type of professional infantry in this theatre: marine infantry. Commonly referred to as *Oltramarini* (literally, "men across the sea") by military administration, they were esteemed for their cost-effectiveness, versatility, loyalty, and high mobility.⁵³ These units were recruited from the native populations of the Eastern Adriatic coast and its hinterland. From the early decades of the 17th century, they constituted about a quarter of the Republic's army in this theatre (see Table 6).

Units of marine infantry were organized to serve aboard smaller vessels within the Venetian navy, which remained their principal task. During the Cretan War, there was a diversity of types of these vessels, but by the 1680s, a standardized type emerged: the small galley (*galeotta*), with which the units of *Oltramari*-

⁴⁹ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 110, 29 July, 6, 16, and 19 August 1687; b. 111, 6 and 20 September 1687; PTM, b. 354, no. 80, 85; b. 355, no. 90, 94, 96.

⁵⁰ ASVe, PTM, b. 355, no. 100.

⁵¹ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 112, 17 and 31 July, 5 and 21 August 1688; PTM, b. 356, no. 134, 147, 166.

⁵² ASVe, PTM, b. 362, no. 47; b. 363, no. 103.

⁵³ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 125, 26 September 1694; ASVe, Capi da Guerra, b. 9, 1 August 1694; DAZd, Dispacci, Mocenigo, b. 1, pp. 89; b. 3, pp. 107.

ni were unmistakably associated. Usually, one company of marines, nominally comprising 50 men, served both as rowers and soldiers aboard one such vessel, though there were also larger types requiring 100 or more marines. The state provided them with an arquebus, and from the 1680s, a snaphance musket, along with a sword. While marine infantry units were not furnished with pikes or, later, bayonets, they were expected to excel in volley fire tactics.⁵⁴ Besides in the East Adriatic, they also served in the Aegean theatre where about 2,000 of them were constantly deployed.⁵⁵

Small galleys, manned by marine infantry crews, were typically organized into squadrons consisting of three to eight ships tasked with patrolling or guarding specific sectors, such as the Bay of Kotor or the Mouth of the Neretva River. At times, a single regular galley was assigned to squadrons tasked with guarding more crucial sectors. The primary responsibility of these squadrons was to protect against Ottoman corsairs originating from Ulcinj or from the Barbary Coast. However, they were also tasked with a variety of other duties, including escorting the governor's galley or transport ships, transporting money from Venice to Dalmatia (usually several months' worth of salaries for an entire province, including the army), intercepting contraband shipments, and providing cannon support for amphibious operations.

Due to Venetian near-total naval dominance in the Adriatic, marine infantry units frequently participated in land operations. Often, up to a thousand of these soldiers were disembarked and attached to field armies, even when their objectives involved deep inland offensives, as seen in campaigns against Sinj in 1685 and 1686, and Knin in 1654 and 1688. During Venetian amphibious operations, such as those against Herceg Novi in 1687, Ulcinj in 1696 and 1718, and the 1694 campaign in the Delta of the Neretva River, marine infantry units were utilized even more extensively. Their value became even more apparent when there was a need to rapidly assemble relief forces for besieged Venetian forts. Already stationed aboard their ships, they could sail to the endangered sector within a few days. They were among the first reinforcements shipped by the Venetians to the besieged Šibenik in 1647. Additionally, they were the first to arrive when the governors started assembling relief armies for the besieged Sinj in both 1687

⁵⁴ MARKULIN, *Mletačka*, cit., pp. 216-243.

⁵⁵ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 107, 29 September 1685; b. 125, 26 September 1694.



Fig. 3 Contemporary depiction of marine infantry soldiers (Oltramarini) by Giacomo Ceruti (1698-1767). Photo from Dorotheum Auction, Public Domain, Commons Wikimedia.jpg

and 1715, as well as for Čitluk in 1694.⁵⁶ During land operations, they served as light infantry, carrying out various duties such as scouting (leveraging their local knowledge as natives), skirmishing, guarding siege works and batteries, garrisoning occupied strongpoints, and even forming assault detachments during sieges.

Following the initial campaign of the Morean War, it became customary to station several hundred of these troops across various garrisons. Additionally, as Dalmatian port towns served as recruitment hubs for these soldiers, captains and colonels were required to muster their newly recruited units for inspection before dispatching them to Venice. Consequently, there were occasionally several hundred more marine infantrymen stationed within city walls.⁵⁷ However, since they were untrained and usually under-equipped, the governors would only deploy them in response to imminent threats. For instance, during the opening of the campaign season in 1687, a governor decided to reinforce the endangered fortress Zadvarje with twelve freshly recruited and uninspected marine companies totaling 509 men.⁵⁸ In contrast, despite facing a large Ottoman invasion in 1715, the governor decided against deploying newly recruited marines assembled in Zadar.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ ASVe, PTM, b. 306, no. 301; b. 354, no. 63, 66; b. 362, no. 97, 99; b. 380, no. 62.

⁵⁷ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 107, 16 January 1685; PTM, b. 353, no. 6, 11; b. 362, no. 48.

⁵⁸ ASVe, PTM, b. 354, no. 52.

⁵⁹ ASVe, PTM, b. 381, no. 69.

Date	On vessels	vessels	In garri- sons	Total	Source
1632	1,160	21	/	1,160	CRV VII, pp. 52
1655	1,679	45	/	1,679	CRV VII, pp. 114
1667	820				CRV VII, pp. 276
1680	900	18	/	900	CRV VIII, pp. 71
May 1684	900	20	/	900	ASVe, PTM, b. 350, no. 7
March 1685	1,199	/	337	1,536	DAZd, Dispacci, Valier, b. 1, no. 49
October 1685	/	24	/	1,509	ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 107, 29 September, 20 October
March 1687	1,573	32	492	2,065	ASVe, PTM, b. 354, no. 52
July 1688	1,363	/	528	1,891	ASVe, PTM, b. 356, no. 142
January 1689	1,903	31	256	2,159	ASVe, PTM, b. 356, no. 166, 169
November 1694	1,441	24	/	/	ASVe, PTM, b. 363, no. 115
May 1717	/	/	/	1,402	DAZd, Dispacci, Mo- cenigo, b. 1, 15 May 1717
June 1718	/	/	/	1,322	ASVe, CG Schulem- burg, 29 June 1718

Table 6. Marine infantry

Units of *Oltramarini* were not the only professional infantry units recruited from local inhabitants. There were also companies called *paesani* or *panduri*. These units were typically assigned to fixed positions, such as sentry towers in the hinterland, important mountain passes, bridges, and roads. Often, local communities were granted contracts to form these companies with their own personnel. Their weapons, equipment, and tactics were not standardized, and they were considered professional soldiers only because they received a regular monthly salary, which was the lowest within the army.⁶⁰ They were never called upon to form a field army. However, as the Venetians advanced and the number of posts

⁶⁰ MARKULIN, *Mletačka*, cit., pp. 84 – 89.

needing guards increased, the numbers of these inexpensive soldiers grew. In 1695, there were 838 of them.⁶¹ By 1715, their numbers had risen to 1,324, and by 1717, to 1,533.⁶²

Cavalry

The size and composition of the Venetian professional cavalry underwent significant changes throughout the last three wars against the Ottomans. Cavalry units deployed in the East Adriatic theatre exhibited variations in both the type and the ethnicity of their personnel. While the diversity in cavalry types decreased over time, differences between units regarding the personnel's ethnicity persisted, primarily due to language requirements.

Venice deployed cuirassiers (*corazze*), the heavy and most expensive type of cavalry, during the Cretan War and the first two campaigns of the Morean War. They were recruited mainly from German-speaking regions and thus commonly referred as *Corazze Oltramontane*. They were the most numerous during the first years of the Cretan War when there were up to 10 companies (400 to 600 men).⁶³ Venetian commanders utilized them fully during their successful offensive of 1647 when they conquered all of Zadar's hinterland, and their "finest hour" was the battle with Ottoman relief forces during the siege of Klis in 1648.⁶⁴ In 1655, the governor reported to the Senate that there were 164 cuirassiers in Dalmatia and expressed his opinion that this number was too low to fully utilize the potential of these units in offensive operations but too excessive regarding their expensiveness for waging defensive war. Governor proposed to the Senate to disband them and keep only four companies of light cavalry to guard exposed posts and patrol the hinterland. The Senate accepted his proposal, and until the end of the war, only a few companies of light cavalry were deployed in Dalmatia.⁶⁵

At the start of the Morean War the cuirassiers were again deployed in the East Adriatic theatre. In March 1685 there were 352 of them, and until the end of the

⁶¹ ASVe, PTM, b. 363, no. 115.

⁶² ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 172, 23 August 1715; DAZd, Dispacci, Mocenigo, b. 1, 15 May 1717.

⁶³ MADUNIĆ cit., pp. 255-256.

⁶⁴ Research Library of Zadar (ZKZd), Manoscritti - MS 394; Historia della Guerra di Dalmatia fra Venetiani e Turchi del dottor Francesco Difnico, 60-65; 102-130.

⁶⁵ CRV VII, pp. 114.

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year their number rose to 424. By the beginning of the next season their number fell to 243. However, due to the constant problem with lack of available forage in this theatre and unavailability of the large horses required for this type of cavalry, effective number of cuirassiers was always significantly lower (50 to 60 percent) than their nominal strength.⁶⁶ Therefore, considering their low cost-effectiveness, the authorities decided to abandon them. Prior to the 1686 campaign, the four existing companies were merged into three. Their officers and soldiers began receiving a lower salary, equivalent to that of dragoons, and from then on, they were designated as *Carabinieri Allemani* or *Dragoni Oltramontani*.⁶⁷ However, they were instructed to retain their breastplate armor and utilize it when necessary.⁶⁸

During the Cretan War, the Venetians drastically reduced the number of cuirassiers after a few very successful campaigns at the beginning of the war, as they knowingly opted for a defensive strategy. Conversely, after the spring of 1686, when they completely phased out this type of cavalry, their greatest offensives were yet to come. In addition to logistical issues, this phenomenon could be explained by the Venetians' confidence, considering the Ottoman central government's minimal attention to this theatre during the Morean War. Therefore, prospects for pitched battles, in which this type of cavalry excelled, such as the clashes with Ottoman relief forces in 1647 and 1648 – the closest this theatre would ever come to such battles – were very slim.

All other units of professional cavalry deployed in this theatre belonged to the type commonly referred to as light cavalry. Their horses, which contrary to those of cuirassiers were available in the region, were largely similar as well as their arms and equipment, particularly following the introduction of snaphance carbines and pistols into the Venetian army in the early 1680s.⁶⁹ Additionally, they employed similar tactics, often functioning as dragoons within other European armies, and their units frequently served in mixed formations. However, the Venetian military administration distinguished between them based on their slightly

⁶⁶ DAZd, Dispacci, Valier, b. 1, no. 49; ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 107, 29 September 1685; PTM, b. 353, no. 5.

⁶⁷ ASVe, PTM, b. 353, no. 20; b. 361, no. 5; b. 496, 1 April 1691, 29 June 1692, 20 February 1695.

⁶⁸ DAZd, Dispacci, Valier, b. 3, no. 148; ASVe, PTM, b. 353, no. 5; b. 495, no. 2, 8.

⁶⁹ See footnote 27. See also: MARKULIN, Mletačka, cit., pp. 216-227.

different salaries.⁷⁰ The first type of units was known as dragoons and originated from Italy, hence occasionally referred to as *Dragoni Italiani* by the military administration. The other units, though equipped, trained, and used similarly, were designated as *Croati a cavallo* and hailed from the East Adriatic hinterland.

In this theatre, the light cavalry units consistently outnumbered the cuirassiers. In the initial years of the Cretan War, the proportion of Venetian professional cavalry stood at about 2 to 1 in favour of light cavalry. Subsequently, after 1655, only light cavalry units were deployed.⁷¹ This similar proportion persisted during the early campaigns of the Morean War.⁷² After the discontinuation of heavy cavalry in 1686, the proportion of dragoons within the Venetian professional cavalry was as follows: in November 1690, there were 203 dragoons among the 933 cavalrymen, and two years later, there were four dragoon companies alongside 15 companies of Croatian cavalry.⁷³ During the Second Morean War, the Venetians deployed three regiments consisting of 1,031 Croatian cavalrymen and two regiments comprising 623 dragoons.⁷⁴

In addition to the military duties typically assigned to light cavalry, such as securing flanks, leading vanguards, forming mobile forces for rapid response, patrolling the countryside, and protecting land communications, the Venetian light cavalry in this theatre had another crucial role: overseeing the highly successful raids conducted by Venetian irregulars. As these irregulars switched sides during the course of the wars, Venetian commanders harbored suspicions toward them. Nonetheless, they endeavored to find ways to manage and coordinate their otherwise independent raids with the movements of the Venetian army. This was achieved by augmenting the raiding parties with a few hundred professional light cavalrymen.⁷⁵ A similar procedure was followed during the assembly of field armies, whether for offensive or defensive operations, wherein all of effective professional cavalry typically accompanied irregular forces to the agreed-upon assembly point.

⁷⁰ MARKULIN, *Mletačka*, cit., pp. 71 – 80.

⁷¹ MADUNIĆ cit., pp. 255 – 256.

⁷² ASVe, PTM, b. 354, no. 49; b. 495, no. 2; Deliberazioni, b. 107, 16 January 1686.

⁷³ ASVe, PTM, b. 495, 9 November 1690, 1 November 1692.

⁷⁴ DAZd, Dispacci, Mocenigo, b. 1, 15 may 1717.

⁷⁵ ASVe, PTM, b. 361, no. 64; b. 495, no. 14; b. 496, 5 August 1693; DAZd, Dispacci, Mocenigo, b. 1, 17 April 1717.

Field armies

Whether the Venetian commanders opted for it or were compelled to do so, they pursued a strategy of passive defense during the last 15 years of the Cretan War and the first two campaign seasons of the Second Morean War. During those periods, with the exception of the six-year span from 1657 to 1663, when the Ottomans focused their efforts in the Transylvanian and Pannonian war theatres, the Venetians fought the Ottomans alone. For the rest of the time, the Venetians pursued either active defense or offensive strategies. Only the first decade of the Cretan War, particularly the campaigns of 1647 and 1648, was exceptional in the sense that during this period the Venetians achieved considerable success while fighting alone.

While the strategy of passive defense required effective garrisoning of port towns and fortresses, as well as ensuring the safety of sea lines, the other two strategies required Venetian commanders to establish a mobile field army to either respond to Ottoman offensives or launch offensives of their own. However, given the specific strategic layout of Venetian possessions in the East Adriatic, the assembly of a field army could only commence once garrisons and sea lines were secured. Consequently, one method for the Venetians to gather a field army was by utilizing a potential surplus of professional, mainly line, infantry within garrisons.

The reports of the governors regarding garrison requirements varied significantly. During the Cretan War, the number varied from 2,702 in 1667, to 3,950 in 1655, and 4,250 in 1660.⁷⁶ At the outset of the Morean War, the governor reported a need for 2,700 men. By 1694, the required garrisons for the newly conquered forts had increased to 4,880 men.⁷⁷ Since no new forts had been conquered in the meantime, the requirements reported in 1715 were similar – 5,000 troops.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is possible to roughly estimate that after the conquest of Klis in 1648 until the new conquests in 1686, about 3,000 professional infantrymen were needed for wartime garrisons. New conquests raised requirements to around 5,000 men, remaining at this level until 1718, with the caveat that the conquests of Sinj and Knin had reduced the garrison requirements of Dalmatian

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⁷⁶ CRV VII, pp. 142 – 146; 253 – 276; MADUNIĆ, cit., pp. 249.

⁷⁷ ASVe, PTM, b. 350, no. 34; b. 363, no. 115.

⁷⁸ ASVe, PTM, b. 380, no. 39.



Fig. 4 Depiction of the Venetian siege of Herceg Novi (Castel Nuovo) in 1687, the most ambitious Venetian offensive in this war theatre. Source: https://commons.wikimedia. org/wiki/File:Castelnuovo_-_Coronelli_Vincenzo_-_1688.jpg

port towns by moving the frontline up to the Dinaric mountain ridge.

To maintain the possibility of active defense or offense, the Senate had to enlarge the professional army in the Province or embrace a few alternative methods.



The first alternative, destroying conquered fortresses instead of garrisoning them, proved ill-conceived at the end of the Cretan War. Another alternative was to entrust less important posts to *ad hoc* recruited local units. The constant rise in the number of *pandurs* testified that this method was embraced. The most effective method, as discussed above, was sending large contingents of professional infantry reinforcements for particular campaigns directly from Italy, as was the case during the three campaigns from 1686 – 1688, and in 1694 when the Venetians achieved their greatest victories.

From time to time, the Senate would deploy units of Italian or Istrian militia (cernide) to this theatre. Apart from professional infantry, they were the only troops trusted enough to be incorporated into the garrisons of port towns. Consequently, the line infantry could be relieved of garrisoning duties and used to form field armies, as pointed out by the governors in 1687 and 1693.79 During the Cretan War, there were several hundred of these men periodically deployed in Dalmatia, with a peak in 1658 when 1,575 Italian and Istrian militia troops were stationed in the garrisons of port towns.⁸⁰ However, at that time, the governor remained passive and they were not utilized in a way that relieved line infantry of garrisoning duties. During the Morean War, increased deployment of these units correlated with the greatest Venetian successes. Therefore, it is evident that Venetian commanders utilized them as described. In the spring of 1687, the Senate sent 500 militiamen to Dalmatia, and by July 1688, their number had risen to 1,789. Their deployment continued in 1689 with 977 soldiers, through 1693 with the government deploying

817 militiamen, and in 1694, the Senate authorized sending an additional 600 to this war theatre.⁸¹

⁷⁹ ASVe, PTM, b. 354, no. 65; b. 362, no. 47.

⁸⁰ MADUNIĆ cit., pp. 156-158.

⁸¹ ASVe, Deliberazioni, b. 110, 19 and 29 April 1687; b. 125, 26 September 1694; PTM, b. 354, no. 67; b. 356, no. 142, 169; b. 362, no. 47, 48, 72;

Cam- paign	Objective	Line infan- try	Ma- rines	Profes- sional cavalry	Irreg- ulars	Mili- tia	Total	Source
1647	Conquest of Zadar's hinter- land		5,000		0	0	5,000	CRV VII, pp. 68
1648	Conquest of Klis		/		/	/	10,000	CRV VII, pp. 71
1654	Conquest of Knin	2.2	00	250	1,900	1,140	5,490	CRV VII, pp. 80
1686	Conquest of Sinj	2,000	1,000	700	3,5	00	7,200	b. 353, no. 37
1687a	Relief army (Sinj)	1,300	1,000	700	2,0	00	5,000	b. 354, no. 63-67
1687b	Conquest of Herceg Novi	5,70082	1,000	250	1,5	00	8,450	b. 355, no. 87-100
1694a	Conquest of Čitluk	1,500	1,200	700	6,2	74	9,700	b. 362, no. 93
1694b	Relief army (Čitluk)		1,100		4,4	74	5,600	b. 362, no. 101
1694c	Relief army (Čitluk)		2,000		4,4	38	6,438	b. 363, no. 112
1696	Conquest of Ulcinj	1,500	850	150	4,2	71	6,771	b. 364, no. 167
1715	Relief army (Sinj)	40	0	100	0	3,000	3,500	b. 383, no. 90
1717	Conquest of Imotski	2,489 0 697		3,8	20	7,006	b. 384, 2 Au- gust 1717	
1718	Conquest of Ulcinj	8,017	400	500	3,0	00	12,000	CG Schulem- burg, 29 June, 22 July 1718

Table 7. The size and composition of Venetian field armies

Whether they could extract them from garrison surpluses or received a large contingent of reinforcements from Venice, line infantry was an essential component of Venetian field armies in this theatre. The desired number varied depending on the strategic circumstances, operational objectives, and from governor to governor. Most governors during the Morean War agreed that 2,000 line infan-

⁸² With 1,500 line infantrmen from Venice's allies Malta and Papal States.

trymen should be enough for the core force of a field army.⁸³ While preparing to defend against an imminent Ottoman offensive in 1715, a senior army general advised the governor that 3,000 line infantrymen should form the backbone of the field army to counter the enemy's moves.⁸⁴ Conversely, a lack of line troops for field armies could compel the Venetians to delay offensives, or at least serve as an excuse to the governors, as was the case in 1647, 1684, 1693, and 1715.⁸⁵

Obviously, some governors had to make do with what was available at the time, while others had an even larger force at their disposal (see Table 7). The two most notable exceptions to these optimal numbers were the field armies of the Second Morean War. The army assembled in 1715 to break up the Ottoman siege of Sinj lacked almost any line infantry. Although there were troops scattered in garrisons, not knowing the objective of the Ottoman offensive and probably paralyzed by the disastrous news of Venetian losses in the Aegean theatre, the governor hesitated to strip any fortress of its line infantry. Instead, he opted to wait until the Ottoman siege forces exhausted themselves against the 650 line infantry in besieged Sinj, and then ordered a relief force composed mainly of militia to march. Conversely, the army assembled for the attack on Ulcinj in 1718 had an abundance of line infantry because, by that time, the Venetians had lost almost all of their forts in the Aegean theatre, and Dalmatia was the only region where they could deploy their contracted regiments.

Units of line infantry were given the most dangerous tasks. During siege operations, they were commonly deployed in the first lines of trenches and approaches, required to storm enemy defenses, especially undertaking highly risky assaults on breaches in the enemy's fortifications. This was the case during every Venetian siege that progressed to the final charge, including the sieges of Klis in 1648, Sinj in 1686, Herceg Novi in 1687, Knin in 1688, Čitluk in 1694, Ulcinj in 1696, and Imotski in 1717. Assault parties, commonly led by grenadier detachments, suffered the heaviest losses, as expected.⁸⁶ Line infantry also suffered the heaviest losses during the failed Venetian sieges of 1654 and 1685, as they

⁸³ ASVe, PTM, b. 350, no. 34, 36; b. 353, no. 37; b. 354, no. 45; b. 363, no. 115.

⁸⁴ ASVe, PTM, b. 380, no. 34.

⁸⁵ MADUNIĆ cit., pp. 146 - 147; ASVe, PTM, b. 350, no. 21; b. 362, no. 51, 60; b. 380, no. 34.

⁸⁶ In the order listed: Girolamo BRUSONI, *Historia dell'ultima guerra tra Veneziani e Turchi*, Presso Stefano Curti, Venice, 1673, pp. 163 – 175; ASVe, PTM, b. 353, no. 37; b. 355, no. 97; b. 356, no. 149; b. 362, no. 93, 94, 97; b. 364, no. 172; b. 384, 2 August 1717.

formed the defensive line for retreating forces.⁸⁷ When news of the signed armistice reached the vast Venetian army engaged in the siege of Ulcinj in 1718, the line infantry were tasked with forming the rear guard during the army's retreat.⁸⁸

The second component of Venetian field armies comprised units of marine infantry. Praised for their versatility, these troops sailed to assembly points in their own vessels, disembarking to fight on foot as light infantry. Their importance was magnified during amphibious operations in 1687, 1694, 1696, and 1718, where they safeguarded transport vessels, provided fire support with their vessels' cannons, and led the initial wave of amphibious landings. Typically, two squadrons with three to four small galleys each would remain to patrol vital sea lines, while all other vessels joined the forming field army. Thus, approximately 1,000 marine infantry served as another type of professional infantry within Venetian field armies in this theatre.

Aside from line and marine infantry, professional cavalry formed the third component of field armies. Since cavalry units were ineffective in garrison duties, commanders gathered all professional cavalry under the supervision of the governor of cavalry to join the field armies. Obviously, the number of cavalry deployed for the mentioned amphibious operations – except for the attack on Čitluk in 1694, when the cavalry could travel overland to join the disembarked army – was much smaller due to naval transport limitations. During these operations, the remaining professional cavalry would be tasked with raiding the enemy's rear alongside irregulars, aiming to tie down as many enemy forces as possible.⁸⁹ Therefore, depending on whether the assembled field army had to march inland or sail along the coast, the number of professional cavalry attached varied from 700-800 in the former scenario to around 100 in the latter.

The remainder of the Venetian field armies assembled in this theatre consisted of various attached militia or irregular units. These units comprised more than half of the army's strength but were typically assigned less demanding tasks such as digging trenches, preparing batteries, towing artillery and munitions, and guarding siege works. They were valued for their exceptional local knowledge and were also deployed as guides, scouts, and spies. For each day spent in the

⁸⁷ ASVe, PTM, b. 315, no. 113; DAZd, Dispacci, Valier, b. 1, no. 58, 60.

⁸⁸ ASVe, CG Schulemburg, 16 August 1718.

⁸⁹ ASVe, PTM, b. 495, no. 14; b. 394, no. 166.

Adi 13 Seatores ibgb Dispositiones per l'assalts di Diligno Corps di 40 monationi, comundato dal rej. mansi e ap legrosso equiri un corps li so Songorio es Altrages an messina Concisarno conto Cloumarinis comandado Jara le Gragonia el Arrizesi comundati 20480 Ten. Ofto filmin I distacamères di certes, « cinquartes comandos aober e Ten 6. Il Corps di Boo Janoi comandati das 0. lava monkogieri al lavance futero alles prura

Fig. 5 Composition of the detachment formed for the assault on Ulcinj in 1694. (ASVe, PTM, b. 364, no. 172)

campaign, they received salaries, usually consisting of a portion of biscuit and a sum of money equivalent to that given to marine infantrymen.⁹⁰ Equally crucial for the success of Venetian armies were various specialists attached to them, including artillerymen, miners, engineers, masons, draft cattle drivers, and others. However, their roles, as well as those of the militia and irregular units, fall outside the scope of this study.

⁹⁰ ASVe, PTM, b. 362, no. 93, 97; b. 364, no. 172.

Conclusion

As shown, the Venetian professional army deployed in the East Adriatic theatre during the Republic's last three wars against the Ottomans varied significantly in both size and composition. The peacetime army of about 3,000 professional soldiers quickly grew within the first months of the conflicts. However, since the Venetian army, like most of its European counterparts, was composed of mercenaries, time was needed to recruit and dispatch the first regiments from Italy. Therefore, at the beginning of hostilities, the armies were smaller, usually about 5,000 men, compared to the later stages of the wars. Their size varied due to various factors, with the most important being the available resources and the priority given to reinforcements by the Senate for specific campaigns. On average, the professional army in this theatre comprised about 7,500 men.

The most valuable units among the professional army were the line infantry. The greatest Venetian successes in this theatre were achieved when line infantry units were deployed in large numbers. Cavalry units, essential for forming the vanguard and protecting the flanks of field armies, were nearly as important for conducting inland offensives. Their absence confined commanders to a defensive strategy, as was the case during the later stages of the Cretan War. Marine infantry units excelled in the amphibious operations often pursued by Venetian commanders and were praised for their versatility and cost-effectiveness.

Contrary to the claims of the majority of local historians, who attributed Venetian successes in this theatre to the irregulars and thus greatly overestimated their role, this analysis has shown that the professional army units served as the backbone of the Venetian armies. They garrisoned all strategically important ports in the region, defended vulnerable fortresses, and constituted the core of both field offensive armies and relief forces for besieged fortresses. The choice of whether Venetian governors and commanders pursued an offensive or defensive strategy in this theatre depended on the number and quality of these troops under their command. However, the primary drawback of the professional army units was their expense, requiring governors to always consider military operations in terms of cost-effectiveness. This was also the main reason why the size of the peacetime army was significantly smaller than that during the wars.

Another argument in favour of the claim that the role of the professional army was decisive should be considered here, albeit briefly. Venetian irregular units

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comprised ex-Ottoman Christian subjects who had held prominent roles within the Ottoman armies. During the 17th century, they began to accept Venetian sovereignty in increasing numbers. This process, however, began on a large scale after the initial Venetian victories at the outset of the Cretan War. Often, the precondition for switching sides was the deployment of Venetian professional troops in the home regions of various communities of Ottoman Christian subjects, or even more decisively, the conquest of some important nearby fortresses by the professional army.⁹¹

In conclusion, this analysis of the Venetian professional army, along with a recent study on the Ottoman armies in this theatre, provides a solid foundation for further research on the Ottoman-Venetian wars. To fully understand the consistent Venetian victories, future studies should delve deeper into the roles of Venetian irregulars and militia. Additionally, examining logistical constraints, the infrastructural capabilities of the belligerents, and the impact of Habsburg pressure on Ottoman Bosnia are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of Venetian successes in this theatre. This research not only fills a significant gap in the historiography of the Ottoman-Venetian wars but also sets the stage for more nuanced and detailed future studies.

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⁹¹ ASVe, PTM, b. 350, 28 May 1684, no. 17, 32; b. 353, no. 7; b. 355, no. 106.

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