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War, Fire, Plague and their Consequences in Renaissance Rijeka

Rijeka was not spared from the destruction in the time of the War of the League of Cambrai (1508–1516). After one of the sieges during that war, the town was scorched and plague appeared. Contemporary historiography gave some attention to the burning of the town but did not take into consideration all the relevant preserved sources. In the time of the conquest, Venetian forces committed great crimes and pillaged townsmen. Nevertheless, the town recovered from these events in a short period of time. At the same time, the town hinterland was under constant pressure from Ottoman incursions, which in some instances were conducted up to the town walls. All these events gave an incentive to townsmen to rebuild, strengthen their defence and resist unfavorable circumstances.

Keywords: war, fire, plague, 16th century, Renaissance, Rijeka

Introduction

At the outbreak of the War of the League of Cambrai (1508–1516), Rijeka was under Habsburg rule for almost half a century.¹ Narrative sources from the period preserve valuable information about the town and the circumstances regarding its destruction. These sources are Šimun Klimantović (1460–1540) *Chronicle*, Marino Sanudo Younger (1466–1536) *Diaries*, Girolamo Priulio (1486–1567) *Diaries*, Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) *History of Venice*, and Andrea Mocenigo (1471–

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¹ Town was part of the possessions of counts Walsee from the end of the 14th century until 1465. Then Wolfgang V Walsee gave his possessions to Emperor Frederick III Habsburg. See Ivan Jurković, "Walsee-Enns," in: *Istarska enciklopedija*, ed. Miroslav Bertoša and Robert Matijašić (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2005), 895-896; Marija Karbić, Zrinka Nikolić Jakus "Obitelj Walsee, gospodari Rijeke i posjednici u Istri i na Kvarneru", *Godišnjak Njemačke zajednice* 29 (2022): 14-18.

1542) *History of the War of the League of Cambrai*. Marino Sanudo wrote the most comprehensive description of all the sieges of the town. He had access to the Venetian administration archives of the time and used information from that documentation for his account. Other cited authors for their narratives probably relied on the same type of sources but nevertheless contained other valuable information. However, it should be noted that none of them were witnesses to the seizures of the town and its destruction. Furthermore, there is valuable information in the reports of the Venetian envoys at the Hungarian court regarding Rijeka.² Historiography of these events relied on the accounts of Šimun Klimantović and Marino Sanudo Younger.³ Existing scarce private documents (contracts, testaments etc.) also shed some light on certain aspects of the town history. Papers published on archaeological findings carried out during numerous reconstruction endeavours in the Old Town in the twentieth century do not provide enough evidence to expand knowledge based on written sources about the events indicated in the title.⁴

War, Fire and Plague

War, fire and plague which the town population experienced were directly connected with the War of the League of Cambrai. Emperor Maximilian Habsburg's declaration of war to the Venetian Republic in 1508 was a prelude to the forma-

² Šime Ljubić, ur., *Commissiones et relationes Venetae* (hereafter: *Commissiones*) Vol. I: *Anorum 1433 – 1527*, Monumenta spectantia historiam slavorum meridionalium Vol. VI (Zagreb: Jugoslaven-ska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1876), 108-143.

³ Bibliographic data further in the text.

⁴ For findings near church of Ascension of St Mary see studies in: Nikolina Radić Štivić and Josip Višnjić, eds., *Pul Vele crikve. Arheološka istraživanja riječkog kasnosrednjovjekovnog i ranonovovjekovnog groblja / Pul Vele Crikve. Archaeological investigation of Rijeka's Late Medieval and Early Post Medieval cemetery* (Rijeka: Grad Rijeka and Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, 2024). For findings from Middle Ages on excavation of Roman military headquarters in Tarsatica see: Josip Višnjić, "Ostaci srednjovjekovne i novovjekovne arhitekture na trgu Jurja Klovića / Resti architettonici del medioevo e dell'età postmedievale ritrovati in piazza Juraj Klović", in: *Tarsatički principij: kasnoantičko vojno zapovjedništvo / Principia at Tarsatica: late Roman military headquarters*, ed. Nikolina Radić Štivić and Luka Bekić (Rijeka: Grad Rijeka; Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, 2009), 301-307; Luka Bekić, "Numizmatički nalazi kasnog srednjeg vijeka, novog vijeka i modernog doba / Reperti numismatici del tardo medioevo, età postmedievale ed età contemporanea", in: *Tarsatički principij: kasnoantičko vojno zapovjedništvo / Principia at Tarsatica: late Roman military headquarters*, ed. Nikolina Radić Štivić and Luka Bekić (Rijeka: Grad Rijeka; Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, 2009), 311-331; Robert Čimin, "Kasnosrednjovjekovni, novovjekovni i moderni keramički nalazi/Reperti di ceramica tardo-medievale, postmedievale e contemporanea", in: *Tarsatički principij: kasnoantičko vojno zapovjedništvo / Principia at Tarsatica: late Roman military headquarters*, ed. Nikolina Radić Štivić and Luka Bekić (Rijeka: Grad Rijeka; Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, 2009), 335-376; Josip Višnjić, Siniša Pamić and Luka Bekić, "Rezultati arheoloških istraživanja provedenih na Trgu Ivana Koblera u Rijeci: tragovi antičke Tarsatike", *Histria archaeologica* 50 (2019): 91-93, 128, 135.

tion of the League. After the initial defeats of the emperor's forces and substantial territory losses war escalated. In a short period of time Maximilian allied himself with the Holy See, France, Spain, Mantua and Ferrara, and in December of 1508 formed a League in Cambrai. Although all of them were brought together with shared hostility towards Venice, each of them had their separate interests and maintained mutual distrust. The League was a loose and unstable alliance and war was fought with many twists and significant disregard to given oaths.⁵ The impact of this war on Rijeka was substantial.

In addition, the geographical position of Rijeka in relation to the system of Habsburg hereditary estates was also important. The town was located on the border with the Arch-Kingdom of Hungary, which made it an important real and symbolic stronghold. Moreover, its port was a key point in the flow of goods to and from the hinterland.

The town's position *in situ* was specific from a military defence point of view. It was surrounded by walls, a barbican and a moat filled with water. Its southern and eastern part was located almost entirely along the coast of the sea and the Rječina delta. Because of that it was theoretically easier to defend it from those sides as invading forces did not have room for maneuver. On the western side, there was a relatively suitable terrain for maneuvering the besieging military forces. Older town sketches from the end of the 16th century onwards show olive orchards and arable land stretching westward from the walls. On the northern side of the town, the defenders could face a problem, since the configuration of the terrain gradually rose upward the hill.⁶ That probably presented a problem for the attacking forces as well, namely their ability to counter defender's fire from the walls. It remains an open question to what extent, at the dawn of the efficient use of artillery in warfare during the 16th century, such configuration benefited the besieging forces or was an advantage for the defenders.

There is no comprehensive research on the organization of defense of the emperor's forces in the area of Kvarner and Rijeka in particular at that time. It probably

⁵ Historiography regarding this topic is substantial. See for example Piero Pieri, *Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1952), 453-525; in English see Frederic C. Lane, *Venice. A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 1973), 242-245; R. G. D. Laffan, "The Empire under Maximilian I", in: *The New Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. I: *The Renaissance 1493-1520*, ed. Denis Hay (Cambridge; London; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 214-217. For local impact of the war on Istria and its surroundings which is connected to the events at Rijeka see Miha Kosi, *Spopad za prehode proti Jadranu in nastanak "Dežele Kras"* (Ljubljana: Zgodovinski inštitut Milka Kosa ZRC SAZU, 2018), 143-170 and recent study in English language written by Robert Kurelić, *Daily Life on the Istrian Frontier. Living on a Borderland in the Sixteenth Century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 15-17, 86, 164.

⁶ See drawing from 17th century in Mithad Kozličić, *Kartografski spomenici hrvatskoga Jadrana* (Zagreb: AGM, 1995), 249.

did not deviate excessively from the framework of the military organization of the Habsburg possessions elsewhere.⁷

Šimun Klimantović wrote in *Cronicle* a short chronology of events regarding the war with Venice. The first event mentioned by name in that account was the incineration of the town in 1508. In that short entry, if one accepts that the fire truly happened in 1508, there is no further narrative regarding that particular event.⁸ In order to shed light on this allegation, the focus will also be placed on other sources.

Marino Sanudo wrote that on March 11, 1508, there were some activities near Rijeka, Pazin and other settlements.⁹ The very next day the Venetian commander requested from his superiors 300 cavalrymen and 1000 infantrymen and guaranteed victory in Pazin and Rijeka (territories of Emperor Maximilian).¹⁰ Preparations of forces for the siege of the town lasted until May.¹¹ At that time Venice gathered around 1500 soldiers on the Kvarner islands. On May 26 certain Ottoboni (mentioned only by family name) met for negotiations in Rijeka on behalf of Giovanni Navaiero with a proposal that the military garrison lay down their arms and surrender. Faced with such a proposal, the townsmen, Captain Johannes Rauber and the German military garrison (approximately 250 of them) gathered for an assembly to decide on their further action. Consequently, on the same day, they concluded that it was best for them to surrender, and the military garrison withdrew, while the population received the Venetian representatives with celebration. At the same time, Venice proposed unconditional surrender to other settlements in the town vicinity which they accepted (Trsat, Kastav etc.).¹²

⁷ In general see Charles Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen & co. Ltd., 1937): 74-88.

⁸ Branimir Brgles, Amir Kapetanović, "Sklapanje povijesne slike svijeta u Kronici Šimuna Klimantovića", *Povijesni prilozi* 33 (2014), no. 46: 123.

⁹ Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, Vol 7, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al. (Venice: Marco Visentini, 1882), 512.

¹⁰ Sanuto, *I diarii* 7, 513.

¹¹ Sanuto, *I diarii* 7, 519.

¹² Sanuto, *I diarii* 7, 522-523; That event is well documented in modern historiography, see Šime Ljubić, "Vladanje mletačko u Rēci", in: *Izvēstje o kraljevskom višem gimnaziju u Rēci koncem godine školske 1864/5* (Rijeka, 1865): 4-6; Giovanni Kobler, *Memorie per la storia della liburnica città di Fiume* 3 (Fiume: Stabilimento Tipo-litografico Fiumano di Emidio Mohovich, 1896), 68-69; Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata: od najstarijih vremena do svršetka XIX. stoljeća*, sv. 2, knj. 3: *Doba kralja Matijaša Korvina i Jagelovića (1458-1526)* (Zagreb: Knjižara L. Hartmana (Stjepan Kugli) 1904), 237; Silvino Gigante, "Fiume nel secolo XVI", *Bullettino della deputazione fiumana di storia patria* IV (1918): 11; Andrija Rački, *Povijest grada Sušaka* (Sušak: Primorski štamparski zavod, 1929), 29-30. For comparison it should be mentioned that Dubrovnik in the 16th century although larger by its territory, better fortified and by far more populated than Rijeka had a permanent garrison between 80 and 100 men and in times of war that number could rise up to 350 (according to Mađunić and in 17th century up to 200 men) or 400 men (according to Macan). See: Trpimir Macan, "Dubrovački brabanti u XVI

If fire did break out that year in Rijeka it was not because of military activities.¹³ In that respect, it is necessary to note that Marino Sanudo does not write that there was fire that year. The town was under Venetian rule until June 1509.¹⁴ The Venetian garrison at the beginning was comprised of one hundred men from the Kvarner islands. From February 1509 it was replaced by a permanent garrison of one hundred mercenaries.¹⁵

It seems that in June Croatian Ban Andrija Bot with 350 horsemen and 1500 infantry soldiers captured the town.¹⁶ Details regarding these events are not well known, but apparently, there was no major destruction. Perhaps capture was made in a similar peaceful fashion as it was the same year earlier.

Text of a letter from Venetian commander Angelo Trivisano addressed to his superiors was incorporated in the account of Marino Sanudo. He set out with fifteen galleys¹⁷ and about 2500 soldiers from Omišalj on the island of Krk towards Rijeka and besieged it at dawn on October 2nd, 1509. The town's garrison responded by firing cannons and arquebuses.¹⁸ Eight Venetian soldiers were killed, but this did not stop them from climbing the ladders and eventually gaining control of the town's walls. They entered the town on the same day as the siege began.

stoljeću", *Anali historijskog instituta Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku* 8-9 (1962): 305; Domagoj Madunić, "The Defensive System of the Ragusan Republic (c. 1580–1620)", in: *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević, Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013: 348–350.

¹³ For example, in that time Venetians besieged Trieste. Continuous artillery fire considerably damaged town and caused fire. (Sanuto, *I diarii* 7, 503).

¹⁴ Sanuto, *I diarii* 7, 559, 592, 600, 625, 687; Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, Vol. 8, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al. (Venice: Marco Visentini, 1882), 55, 220, 402, 467, 472.

¹⁵ Sanuto, *I diarii* 7, 763; Ljubić, "Vladanje mletačko", 7.

¹⁶ Sanuto, *I diarii* 8, 407; Ljubić, "Vladanje mletačko", 7; Kobler, *Memorie* 3, 70; Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, 238; Gigante, "Fiume nel secolo XVI", 14.

¹⁷ Andrea Mocenigo writes that there was sixteen triremis (footnote 21), Pietro Bembo that there was fifteen. Emperor Maximilian's commander in Istria reports different number of several types of ships – galleys, ships and small vessels. See Joseph Chmel, *Urkunden, Briefe und Actenstücke zur Geschichte Maximilians I. und seiner Zeit* (Stuttgart: gedruckt auf Kosten des literarischen Vereins, 1845), 323.

¹⁸ Quantities and types of arms of the town garrison are not known. Recently discovered inventory in Germany from 1507, contain valuable information. It was written by the chief imperial master armourer in Innsbruck, Bartholomäus Freisleben. Emperor Maximilian charged him to list all the arms in the settlements under his rule. Rijeka had seven howitzer, two quarter cannons, two terrabüchse, twenty five heavy hackbut, four arquebuses on fuse, eight crossbows, three halberds, three pavise, two spears, nine centenaio of gunpowder (around 450 kg), 1,5 barrels of sulphur, 100 gun bullets and 200 arrows. See Tomaž Lazar, "Oborožitev slovenskih dežel v začetku 16. stoletja: münchenski rokopis Cod.icon. 222", *Zgodovinski časopis* 71 (2017), no. 1/2: 119. Here I express my thanks to Željko Bistrović PhD from Konzervatorski odjel Rijeka who informed me about this title and for sharing his knowledge on archeological and other material findings in the town. For context regarding production and quantities of arms in Styria, Carinthia and Carniola see Vasko Simoniti, *Vojaška organizacija na Slovenskem v 16. stoletju* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1991), 180–199.

The garrison in the town fort initially resisted but negotiated surrender on the same day. Forty notable townsmen, who were known for their anti-Venetian sentiments, were detained. Furthermore, Trivisano in above mentioned letter wrote that after the conquest, his men from galleys set the town and fort on fire. Allegedly they were enraged when they became aware that the population of the town destroyed Venetian insignia, probably sometime in 1508. He excused himself from any responsibility for that action, stating that they did not follow his orders.¹⁹

More light is shed on this matter by Venetian doge Girolamo Priuli in his diary written long after these events (he became Doge in 1559). To emphasize the drama of the event he states that Rijeka was an unimportant town that chose not to surrender. In particular, he wrote that after the conquest victors *killed boys in their cradles, abused women, destroyed people, looted churches and in general destroyed everything that was sacred*. Furthermore, the magnitude of that event is evoked by a statement that *the infidels would not have done as much evil as was done that day*. In Venice, both senators and the population, writes Priuli, were appalled when they heard stories of crimes done that day and in fear of God's punishment.²⁰ It is unusual that Andrea Mocenigo, who wrote about that same event, only states that the Venetian commander razed the town to the ground and proceeded to Trieste, while completely omitting to describe the circumstances regarding the event.²¹

Inventory of items looted that day from the town's churches, valued around 7000 ducats makes it clear that the level of devastation was high.²² It seems that Venetian soldiers left town at the beginning of 1510.²³ Be that as it may, the town, along with the surrounding settlements, was exposed to Venetian attacks in the

¹⁹ Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, Vol. 9, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al. (Venice: Marco Visentini, 1883), 248-249; Pietro Bembo, *Historia Veneta libri XII* (Venezia, 1551), 145v; Ljubić, "Vladanje mletačko", 8; Kobler, *Memorie* 3, 71-72; Klaić, *Povjest Hrvata*, 239; Gigante, "Fiume nel secolo XVI", 15-19; Danilo Klen, "Stoljeće i pol prilika i neprilika u Rijeci i oko nje (1465-1627)", *Historijski zbornik* 41 (1988): 19 emphasizes Trevisan's malignant intent for destruction.

²⁰ Girolamo Priuli, *I diarii di Girolamo Priuli*, Vol 4, ed. Roberto Cessi, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Vol. 24, Part 3 (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1941), 393.

²¹ Andrea Mocenigo, *Belli memorabilis Cameracensis adversus Venetos historiae libri VI* (Venice, 1525), b i: "Angelus Triuisanus cum classe in Istriam venit, ciuitatem Fluminis ui coepit diripuit et solo aequauit"; g ii: "... quia Angelus Triuisanus cum sexdecim triremibus in Istriam uenit, et primo quoque tempore contra Ciuitatem Fluminis tormentis bellicis acriter agebatur, post ea atrox certamen fuit, denique urbe ui capta, omnia pradae militibus fuere, et solo aequata ciuitas est, atque amplius Veneti iterum terra marisque contra urbem Tergestum in expeditione ibant."

²² Sanuto, *I diarii* 9, 364-365, 431, 562-563.

²³ In earlier paper Ozren Kosanović, "Nekretnine u vlasništvu augustinskoga samostana sv. Jeronima u gradu i distriktu Rijeke i urbana topografija (15. i 16. stoljeće)", *Problemi sjevernog Jadrana* 20 (2022): 26 there was argument for year 1511. Here is that statement amended based on further reading of Marino Sanuto.

first half of 1510. Venetians themselves were surprised that in a very short period of time Rijeka's townsmen built a new port.²⁴ Their ships continued to attack Venetians in the Kvarner Bay and there are testimonies about some of them from the island of Cres from May 1510.²⁵ The situation did not calm down, as there is information that in September 1511 their ships caused damage to Venetian ships sailing in Ravenna and Recanati.²⁶ One of the leaders of these raids on Venetian possessions was Andrija Jakominić, from a prominent family in Rijeka. Persistent interference led Venice to subjugate the town in April 1512 to its rule. It was enough to anchor a Venetian warship in the bay in front of the town as a demonstration of power for the townsmen to surrender.²⁷ However, peace with Emperor Maximilian eventually led to the return of the town to his hands.

As if the war and destruction of the town were not enough to deal with, the plague also appeared. In one last will and testament written in July 1511, there is mention of plague, while Venetian reports from August 1512 confirm the presence of plague.²⁸ Still, it is difficult to determine the duration of the plague due to the lack of sufficient written data.

Be that as it may, the War of the League of Cambrai ultimately had certain consequences regarding the urbanism and population of the town. In the inventory of the monastery of St Jerome ten years after the town destruction there is an entry of one thousand bricks and nine thousand tiles in the yard.²⁹ From the extant

²⁴ Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, Vol. 10, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al. (Venice: Marco Visentini, 1883), 209, 361; Gigante, "Fiume nel secolo XVI", 22.

²⁵ Sanuto, *I diarii* 10, 241, 361.

²⁶ Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, Vol. 12, ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al. (Venice: Marco Visentini, 1886), 460.

²⁷ Pietro Pasqualigo wrote that Jakominić had four ships and twenty-five men for his pillage activities on Cres. Andrea Mocenigo described him as a pirate who had two ships with one row of oars. Ljubić, *Commissions*, 126, 133; A. Mocenigo, *Belli memorabilis*, one page before page noted as o. See Ljubić, "Vladanje mletačko", 9; Kobler, *Memorie* 3, 72-73; Gigante, "Fiume nel secolo XVI", 7-23; Attilio Depoli, "Fiume durante le guerre Venete di Massimiliano I", *Fiume. Rivista I/I* (1923): 84-85, 91-94, 98-102, 104-106, 108-109. Doubts on the great magnitude of town destruction in those years: Ferdo Hauptmann, *Rijeka od rimske Tarsatike do hrvatsko-ugarske nagodbe* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1951), 56; Danilo Klen, ed., *Povijest Rijeke* (Rijeka: Izdavački centar Rijeka, 1988), 108-109; Klen, "Stoljeće i pol", 19.

²⁸ Austria – Universitätsbibliothek Wien, Manuscripts, *Diplomatarium monasterii sancti Viti Fluminensis*, 49v; Ljubić, *Commissions*, 135. Rijeka was not exception regarding the plague in that year because there are testimonies on its outbreak elsewhere on the East Adriatic. For example in Roč, Koper and Trieste in Istria and on Hvar in Dalmatia, see: Jakov Stipišić, "Glavni izvori za poznavanje pučkog ustanka na Hvaru (prijevod)", *Radovi Instituta za hrvatsku povijest* 10 (1977): 568; Antonija Zaradija Kiš, Stella Fatović-Ferenčić, "Glagoljski zapis popa Šimuna Grebla iz 1512. godine", in: *Roč i Roščina*, ed. Božo Jakovljević and Mirjana Pavletić (Roč: Josip Turčinović, 2007), 65, 68.

²⁹ Ozren Kosanović, "Inventar pokretnih dobara augustinskog samostana sv. Jeronima u Rijeci iz 1523. godine", *Problemi sjevernog Jadrana* 17 (2018): 32.

sources, it is not clear whether these bricks and tiles were obtained for the renovation of the monastery or something else.

At that period Ottoman forces occasionally approached town by land. For example, the emperor's master armourer Bartholomäus Freisleben in 1507 had recorded that town spent 2 centenaio (95 kilos) of gunpowder fighting the Ottomans.³⁰ Their military detachments passed through the wider hinterland of the town along Grobničko polje.³¹ Continuous uncertainty in regard to the Ottoman incursions proved to be a problem in the following years and decades. Namely, in the repertorium of the Augustinian monastery of St Jerome, which is written in the 18th century, there is one entry, written on the basis of older sources, that the Ottomans ravaged the town's hinterland and wider surroundings in 1522, 1527, 1528 and 1536, taking people and cattle and causing great damage.³² Since 1522 there was a signal outpost in Rijeka and near the top of the Učka mountain with the purpose of alarming wider territory on Ottoman movement.³³ A small Ottoman detachment temporarily conquered Novi in August 1527, and sacked larger territory in Vinodol and the surroundings of Rijeka.³⁴ Such incursions continued for years. For example, the Ottoman detachment unsuccessfully besieged the fort in Klana in 1559.³⁵ All these were raids in the relative vicinity of the town (7 km to Grobničko polje, 15 km to Klana 35 km to Novi). These events are mentioned to sketch the general tendency of uncertainty in Rijeka before and after its incineration, sack and plague.

It is possible that the described circumstances regarding Ottomans in 1507 and 1522 were the probable impetus for the rapid reconstruction of the city in the years after its destruction during the War of the League of Cambrai. According to the above-mentioned narrative sources, the only decisive siege that the town suffered during the first half of the 16th century was that of the Venetian army led by Angelo Trivisano during the War of the League of Cambrai. Because of this, several questions arise: what kind of fortifications did the town have and what were the consequences of the incineration and destruction in the town?

³⁰ Lazar, "Oborožitev slovenskih dežel", 119; s. v. centenaio see Ronald Edward Zupko, *Italian Weights and Measures from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1981): 91.

³¹ Klen, *Povijest Rijeke*, 106.

³² Croatia – Državni arhiv u Rijeci – Samostan augustinaca, kut. 1, knj. 4, *Protocolum conventus fluminensis ordinem eremitarum sancti padri Augustini ad sanctum Hieronymum* 1704, 7.

³³ Simoniti, *Vojaška organizacija*, 171-173.

³⁴ Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, Vol. 45, ed. Federico Stefani, Nicolò Barozzi and Guglielmo Berchet (Venice: Marco Visentini, 1896), 687.

³⁵ Tatjana Paić-Vukuić, "Tko je bio Malkoč-beg, turski vojskovođa poražen pod Klanom 1559. godine?" *Zbornik Društva za povjesnicu Klana* 3 (1997): 115.

Defense of Town Walls, Fortifications and Urbanity

At the beginning of the 16th century if there was a siege the town had two lines of defence. First were the walls with towers. Outside of the walls, there were a barbican and a moat in which there was water. To the East, there was a marsh and the delta of the Rječina river. Inside the town, there was mostly empty corridor between the walls and the first houses. This was not the case entirely when it came to the walls towards the sea and partly towards the Rječina delta. Some houses were built near the walls. The second and last line of defence was the town fort. As the town was located on partly sloped ground, the builders wisely decided to place the fort at the highest point within the walls. It was positioned at the intersection of three quarters (*contrada*) – St Jerome, St Sebastian and St Vitus.³⁶ However, the walls of the fort to the north were at the same time part of the outer walls of the town.

Capabilities of town garrison to repel attempts of invading forces were closely related to the ratio of size of garrison and size of the walls. For sake of the argument, here shall be pointed some figures regarding town walls. The town walls are not preserved entirely since they were destroyed in time of expansion of houses in modern era.³⁷ In order to determine their approximate length I relied on the old town plans. The oldest plan of the walls, which contains a line with the measuring unit of length in klafters, was drawn by Giovanni Pieroni in 1639.³⁸ According to this plan length of the walls was approximately 302 m on the sea side (about 160 klafters), towards the Rječina about 210 m (about 110 klafters), towards the north about 385 m (about 204 klafters) and towards the west about 189 m (about 100 klafters). This plan was compared with the plan from the 19th century, which contains units of measurement in the metric system and according to this plan town walls approximately coincide regarding the eastern and

³⁶ Vanda Ekl, "O starim riječkim kulama", *Jadranski zbornik* 3 (1958): 385-397; Vanda Ekl, *Živa baština: studije i eseji* (Rijeka: Izdavački centar Rijeka, 1994): 149-172; Petra Predoević Zadković, Palma Karković Takalić, "The City Walls and Defence System Between Historical and Archaeological Sources. Some Aspects of the Urbanism of 15th-Century Rijeka", in: *Arheološki pogledi na srednjeveško urbanost / Archaeological Perspectives on Medieval Urbanity*, ed. Katarina Predovnik, Špela Karo and Maja Bricelj (Ljubljana: Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije, 2022), 355-365.

³⁷ As a result of construction interventions and construction in the Old Town core the preserved segments of the walls are the subject of local controversies regarding their preservation.

³⁸ Helena Seražin, ed., *Poročila in risbe utrdb arhitekta Giovannija Pieronija* (Ljubljana: Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 2008), 141. *Klafter* as measure unit was in use in Austria from the end of 16th century. One *klafter* was probably equivalent to 1,89 m (Christian Noback, Friedrich Eduard Noback, *Vollständiges Taschenbuch der Münz-, Maass- und Gewichtsverhältnisse, der Staatspapiere, des Wechsel- und Bankwesens und der Usancen aller Länder und Handelsplätze*, Vol. 2 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1851), 989, 1244, 1250, 1458; Zlatko Herkov, "Prinosi za upoznavanje naših starih mjera za dužinu i površinu," *Zbornik Histroijskog instituta Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 7 (1974): 74). *Klafter* maybe was same as so called French *toise*, also known as *fortifikations-mass* which was 1,94 m.

western walls, while they differ considerably regarding the northern and seaward walls.³⁹ A greater discrepancy can also be noticed when the length of the walls is calculated using satellite images, assuming that they followed the space of the buildings and houses that today form the “Old Town” (same assumption is made for the used plan from 19th century). Taking Giovanni Pieroni’s account into account here, the length of the walls without towers, other fortification elements and fort was somewhere around 1086 meters. I would like to point out here that this figure is not reliable in any case and that there is a future task for archeologists and other researchers to determine the exact extent of the perimeter of the walls and then their precise length.

If one takes garrison number of 250 men in 1508 and include the figure on dimension of walls then defenders could cover almost every four and a half meters of the wall’s length with one soldier. At that time, there were at least four town towers (St Jerome, Sokol, Lešnjak, Slogin), sea and land (northern) gates, additional fortifications and fort. Those also had to be defended with a larger number of men. If one considers the mentioned ratio regarding the number of soldiers per meter of the length of the walls, then it is clear that the defence of the city was not by any means a simple task. During the Trivisano’s siege in 1509, the defenders attacked Venetians with cannons and other firearms. For the sake of argument, the same number of defenders as in Navaiero’s siege will be assumed – 250 people. The number of firearms according to the mentioned inventory at the time before the outbreak of war was not negligible but whatever it was, one man was not enough to fire one cannon. If defenders had several firearms it required certain logistics. Such a situation significantly reduced the possibility of a concentration of 250 soldiers per meter of the defence perimeter along the walls themselves with all possible redistribution of defenders against the attackers during the defence process itself. We do not know the direction and course of the Venetian attack on the walls at the time of Trivisano’s siege. It is likely that a certain number of townsmen joined in the defence of the walls but the ratio in the number of people would still be on the side of the attackers. During the Navaiero’s siege, the Venetians gathered 1500 soldiers, which was an advantage in the ratio of 6:1 compared to the defender garrison. We do not know if the size of the besieging army was the only reason for immediate surrender or if there were other reasons as well – for example, the defenders’ assessment of whether they had enough food and military material to resist. One should not forget the fact that the crew had to stay somewhere inside the town which was already too small for all of its inhabitants.

A year later during Trivisano’s siege, if the garrison crew had approximately the same number the ratios were significantly less favourable for defenders. His army

³⁹ See Seražin, *Poročila in risbe*, 141; See Ekl, *Živa baština*, 176-177. (A. Pirisi, Pianta della Città di Fiume colle sue adiacenze).

consisted of 2500 soldiers and he could have at least an advantage in the ratio of 10:1 compared to the defenders. Perhaps townsmen joined the defence of the town, but the numerical advantage was still on the Venetian side.

The least urbanized part of the town was the quarter of St Jerome. The most urbanized quarter was St Barbara and part around the Great Square. It is not known in which directions Venetian forces operated. However, they had to encircle the fort, and therefore they had forces in the quarters of St Jerome, St Sebastian and St Vitus. Maybe houses near the fort in these quarters suffered certain damage during the attack.

Extant private documents (contracts and testaments) reveal a dynamic urban environment in which real estate was continuously built or adapted. Houses were built of stone, but also of wood. Some examples show how the ground floor was built in stone, and the first floor and roof were made of timber. From the available published research, it is possible for the middle of the 16th century to numerate about twenty houses in the quarter of St Barbara. This is far from the final number of properties there. All quarters had a social diversity of homeowners.⁴⁰ Still, individual mentions of house adaptations in the second decade of the 16th century are not sufficient in number to draw conclusions on the number of ruined houses after the siege.

Towards Conclusion

The intermediary role of the town in the trade between the countries in the hinterland and those on the Apennine peninsula was significant. In sources from the 15th century, one can notice the commercial export-import transit model of goods where iron and its products, oil and wine prevailed in terms of value. Venice failed in its efforts to stop that flow. It is not possible to conclusively determine the exact impact of the war of Cambrai League on the town's trade and economy. For the period from the 1520s to the middle of the 16th century, it is known that trade functioned in a similar way as earlier in the 15th century.⁴¹ However, there were also objective circumstances that significantly reduced economic activities – the danger of Ottoman incursions in the hinterland. However, if it is taken into account that the tenant of the right to harvest the fortieth tax in the first half of

⁴⁰ For general assessments regarding houses in town see Kosanović, "Nekretnine u vlasništvu augustinskoga samostana sv. Jeronima", 17-42. There is a PhD dissertation from 2023 which was unavailable for me at the time of writing this paper, see Petra Predoević Zadković, "Urbanizam srednjovjekovne Rijeke" (PhD diss., University of Zadar, 2023).

⁴¹ See Ana Kastelić, "Trgovina s platnom, raševinom in barvili (terraghetto, terrarosso) na Reki v letih 1527 do 1631", *Jadranski zbornik* VI (1966): 393-402; Ferdo Gestrin, *Mitninske knjige 16. in 17. stoletja na slovenskem* (Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1972): 25-74, 127-197.

the 16th century had a salary of 100 Rhine florins (about 68 ducats), then it can be argued that the trade was still not on its knees.⁴²

Thus, it seems that the town has recovered rather quickly after the fire. A decade later, a church school operated there, and people from the wider hinterland areas came to study. In that respect, it is interesting to note that around 1520–1521 Protestant reformer Primož Trubar (1508–1586) was educated there.⁴³ The town undoubtedly had already recovered by the 1520s. Ten years later, in 1530 it was a sufficiently safe and the most favorable place for Bishop Šimun Kožičić Benja (1460–1536) to start printing books in Croatian language on Glagolitic script.⁴⁴

It seems that the population of Rijeka managed to recuperate in several years after the end of the war and resumed developing their society.

⁴² For comparison the Venetian provveditore for Rijeka had monthly salary of 30 ducats.

⁴³ Martin Jevnikar, "Trubar, Primož", in: *Primorski slovenski biografski leksikon* 16 (Tič – Velikonja), ed. Martin Jevnikar (Gorica: Goriška mohorjeva družba, 1990), 72.

⁴⁴ Sanja Zubčić, "Glagoljska tiskara Šimuna Kožičića Benje: preduvjeti, dostignuća i odjeci", *Riječki teološki časopis* 26 (2018), no. 2: 248–249.

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Rat, požar, kuga i njihove posljedice u renesansnoj Rijeci

Sažetak

Rijeka nije bila pošteđena razaranja tijekom Rata Cambraiske lige (1508.–1516.). Nakon jedne od opsada za vrijeme rata, grad je zapaljen, a izbila je i kuga. Iako je suvremena historiografija posvetila određenu pozornost tim događajima, nije uzela u obzir sve relevantne sačuvane izvore. Tijekom osvajanja, mletačke su snage počinile ozbiljne zločine i opljačkale građane. Ipak, Rijeka se oporavila od tih događaja u relativno kratkom vremenu. U međuvremenu, gradsko je zaleđe bilo pod stalnom prijetnjom osmanskih upada, od kojih su neki doprli sve do gradskih zidina. Ta su iskustva potaknula stanovnike da obnove i ojačaju svoju obranu kako bi se mogli suprotstaviti nepovoljnim okolnostima s kojima su se suočavali.

Ključne riječi: rat, požar, kuga, 16. stoljeće, renesansa, Rijeka

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