

MILITARY VIOLENCE IN TOWNS DURING THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR – THE CZECH AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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KILIÁN, Jan. Násilí páchané vojáky ve městech za třicetileté války – český a střeoevropský kontext. Na rozdíl od historiografie německé nepatří téma raně novověkého vojenského násilí na civilistech v českém prostředí právě k příliš reflektovaným – chybí dokonce i kategorizace násilných projevů a jejich celková analýza, a to navzdory tomu, že české země skýtají k problematice bohatou pramennou základnu. Autor studie nabízí kategorizaci následující: fyzická agrese (vraždění a zabíjení), újmy na zdraví a fyzické inzultace, znásilnění, psychický nátlak (zvláště hrozba násilím), dehonestace, násilné útoky proti civilnímu majetku (plenění, zhářství, loupeže) a devastace majetku. Vše uvedené se pochopitelně velmi často kombinovalo, a to jako velmi účinný prostředek k obohacení se a k ukojení vlastních fyzických potřeb. U všech kategorií je však nutno za války odlišovat násilí skupinové, tj. masové, a individuální. Konflikt mezi vojáky a městským obyvatelstvem byl ve válečných letech připraven vypuknout v podstatě kdykoli. Jedním z hlavních spouštěcích mechanismů byl nicméně alkohol, důležitou roli sehrávala davová anonymita, jazykové bariéry, stejně jako potřeba vybití agrese, frustrace a sexuálních tužeb. Otázkou k dalšímu výzkumu je přitom kupříkladu potenciální vzájemná nevraživost odlišných sociálních vrstev (vojáci se totiž rekrutovali ze všech společenských skupin).

Klíčová slova: dějiny vojenství; násilí; znásilnění; třicetiletá válka; střední Evropa; Čechy; urbánní historie;

Keywords: Army; Violence; Rape; Thirty Years' War; Central Europe; Bohemia; The History of Towns;

The history of violence in historiography is hardly a new topic, having already been considered by Friedrich Engels¹ in the 19th century, yet this theme has risen

¹ ENGELS, Bedřich. Úloha násilí v dějinách [ENGELS, Friedrich. The Role of Violence in History]. Praha: Svoboda, 1976.

to prominence again in recent years, especially in the context of modern historiographical methods, mainly the burgeoning study of historical anthropology. The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation. Also contemporary, particularly legal literature, offers definitions of violence, for example Kristián Koldín of Koldín considered it, together with injustice, as arch-enemies of justice, the law viewing all ruffians with equal displeasure.² This issue, which remains delicate even today, was mooted in the early-modern age particularly in Anglophone³ and Germanophone⁴ socio-historical literature, although it does so often in the context of individual violence, rather than within a broader history of crime.⁵ In the absence of many comprehensive and general studies of the subject, there remains insufficient consideration of the reflection of the dynamics of early modern relationships and the violent interactions between two major social divisions: soldiers and civilians, urban and rural.⁶ In Germany,

² MALÝ, Karel – SLAVÍČKOVÁ, Pavla – SOUKUP, Ladislav – SKŘEJPKOVÁ, Petra – ŠOUŠA, Jiří – ŠOUŠA, Jiří ml. – VOJTÍŠKOVÁ, Jana – WOITSCHOVÁ, Klára (eds.). *Práva městská Království českého. Edice s komentářem* [Rights of towns of the Czech Kingdom. Edition with commentary]. Praha: Karolinum, 2013, pp. 280–281.

³ Compare newest SHAGAN, Ethan, A. *The Rule of Moderation. Violence, Religion and Politics in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 or NORTH, Douglass Cecil – John Joseph WALLIS, John Joseph – WEINGAST, Barry R. *Violence and social orders. A conceptual framework for interpreting Recorded human history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁴ See MEUMANN, Markus – NIEFANGER, Dirk (eds.). *Ein Schauplatz herber Angst. Wahrnehmung und Darstellung von Gewalt im 17. Jahrhundert*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 1997; MEUMANN, Markus. *The experience of violence and the expectation of the end of the world in seventeenth century Europe*. In CANNING, Joseph – LEHMANN, Hartmut – WINTER, Jay (eds.). *Power, Violence and Mass-death in Pre-modern and Modern Times*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, pp. 141–159; or more recently: BURSHEL, Peter – MARX, Christoph (eds.). *Gewalterfahrung und Prophetie*. Cologne – Weimar – Wien: Böhlau, 2013.

⁵ Probably most helpful, in the historical-anthropological concept and further references to literature ČECHURA Jaroslav. *Kriminalita a každodennost v raném novověku* [Crime and Everyday Life in Early Modern Times]. Praha: Argo, 2013. Continuous research of Jindřich Francek should also be taken into account and also the edition of so called Pitch books (e.g. PÁNEK, Jaroslav (ed.). *Smolná kniha městečka Divišova* [Pitch book of town Divišov]. Praha: Historický ústav, 1977).

⁶ ĎURČANSKÝ, Marek. *Zkušenosti Nymburských s vojáky za třicetileté války. Sonda do problematiky obrazu vojáka v českém prostředí* [Experience of Nymburk with troops during the Thirty Years' War. A probe into the issue of the image of a soldier in Czech lands]. In Kuděj, 1999, no. 1, pp. 22–38; ŠULC, Jaroslav. *Třicetiletá válka a všední den venkovské společnosti (se zřetelem k situaci na komorních panstvích a ve středním Polabí)* [Thirty Years' War and everyday rural society (with respect to the situation in the chamber manors and along the middle of river Elbe)]. In *Časopis Národního muzea*, 2006, vol. 175, no. 1–2, pp. 41–78; KILIÁN, Jan. “Gott wird sie straffen...”. *Vojáci v pamětech Michela Stüelera z Krupky (1629–1649)* [“Gott wird sie straffen...”. Soldiers in the memories of Michel Stüeler from Krupka (1629–1649)]. In *Historie – Otázky – Problémy*, 2011, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 115–122 and KILIÁN, Jan. *Na kvartýře. K aspektům soužití mezi vojáky a měšťany za třicetileté války* [In Lodgings. The aspects of coexistence of troops and townspeople during the Thirty Years' War]. In *Historie a vojenství*, 2014, vol. LXIII, no. 1, pp. 20–34.

this subject was recently explored by Maren Lorenz, using the example of local northern regions in the second half of the seventeenth century. In the context of physical violence, she distinguished military violence against civilians, violence amongst soldiers and the violence of civilians towards soldiers. In discussing military violence, she focused on the differences between allied and hostile soldiers, violence during stays and campaigns, as well as military seizures, forced recruitment and sexual violence.⁷ This division can be partially accommodated in the present study, but it limits itself to outlining only military violence against civilians, in a clearly defined time period of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). It also tries to answer some key questions in this field of study such as: what were the actual triggers for soldier's aggression towards burghers? What concrete forms did it take? And what role did the rapes (of which sources are stubbornly silent) play?

General conditions – troops in Bohemia

If we accept the frequently made assertion that the Thirty Years' War began and ended in the Czech lands, it is not surprising that they (considering the strength of its population and economics) were confronted with frequent, military activities for the duration of the conflict, albeit of varying intensity.⁸ At the time of the Estates Uprising the battlefields were mainly in Southern Bohemia, but the West also experienced warfare, one episode was the penetration of auxiliary corps of Ernst of Mansfeld and his occupation of catholic Pilsen, which brought consequences for the entire region.⁹ Many Bohemian towns led by their representatives were also actively involved in anti-Habsburg activity and paid for this when financial penalties and loss of property were imposed after the Battle of White Mountain; some of the Royal towns (Tachov, Slaný, Vodňany) were demoted to the status of mere tributary town. This was in addition to the onerous duty to accommodate and nourish various large imperial units, or to at least contribute to their support. At this point in history the army also served as a powerful instrument of violent re-catholisation – so called Dragonnades becoming a notorious phenomenon which brought extraordinary fame to colonel Don Martin de Hoeff-Huerta.¹⁰

⁷ LORENZ, Maren. *Das Rad der Gewalt. Militär und Zivilbevölkerung in Norddeutschland nach dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg (1650–1700)*. Köln – Weimar – Wien: Böhlau, 2007.

⁸ Compare especially POLIŠENSKÝ, Josef. *Třicetiletá válka a český národ [Thirty Years' War and the Czech nation]*. Praha: Naše vojsko, 1970 and MATĚJEK, František. *Morava za třicetileté války [Moravia during the Thirty Years' War]*. Praha: Historický ústav, 1992.

⁹ Closer DOUŠA, Jaroslav. *Plzeň v letech 1618–1621. K postavení a vývoji města v době českého stavovského povstání [Pilsen in 1618–1621. The status and development of the city during the Czech Estate Uprising]*. In *Folia Historica Bohemica*, 1985, vol. 8, pp. 157–209. About Mansfeld monographically KRÜSSMANN, Walter. *Ernst von Mansfeld (1580–1626). Grafensohn, Söldnerführer, Kriegsunternehmer gegen Habsburg im Dreißigjährigen Krieg*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2010.

¹⁰ Compare for example HANZAL, Josef. *Rekatolizace v Čechách – její historický smysl a význam [Re-catholization in Czech – its historical significance and meaning]*. In *Sborník historický*, 1990, vol. 37, pp. 37–91, and about Huerta: ROEDL, Bohumír. *Huertova mise v Lounech [Huerta's mission in Louny]*. In FRANČEK, Jindřich (ed.). *Rekatolizace v českých zemích [Recatholization in the Czech lands]*. Pardubice: Historický klub, 1995, pp. 111–117.

The economic potential of Czech cities was already severely undermined during the second decade of the 17th century, and in the following two decades: a fatal blow was struck when Imperial army lodgings within the city walls were destroyed after repeated incursions of the enemy, all accompanied by the introduction of contagious diseases to the cities through by the military camps, where plague was the major threat, of course. On provincial roads, savvy groups of soldiers (so-called *Marauders*)¹¹ attacked groups of pilgrims. The Saxon invasion of 1631–1632 was still relatively merciful (with respect to the Emperor and the exiles within the army), moreover, it affected just the Northwest of the country, and Prague and its surroundings.¹² The joint Saxon-Swedish attack in 1634 had much more serious consequences and left a trail of murder and mayhem through many Czech cities. The situation in Nymburk was comparable with that in Magdeburg.¹³ Swedish armies subsequently became the terror of the Czech countryside, and their generals, Banér, Torstensson and Königsmarck, seemed unstoppable. Banér's strike in 1639 left physical scars on the face of many Czech towns that were visible even decades later. In the 1640s the Czech lands saw many great battles such as those of Jankov¹⁴ and Třebel,¹⁵ as well as becoming the refuge for failed imperial campaigners (i.e Breitenfeld in 1642 and Gallas's Danish campaign of 1644), and also the location of the last Swedish attempt at Congress to obtain the best outcome from the Peace of Westphalia. Not only Prague, where the battles of the Thirty Years' War had ended, but also other parts of the country were affected as Königsmarck's troops began plundering.¹⁶ It is worth noting that

¹¹ See especially BRÖCKLING, Ulrich – SIKORA, Michael (eds.). *Armeen und ihre Deserteure. Vernachlässigte Kapitel einer Militärgeschichte der Neuzeit*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998.

¹² REZEK, Antonín. *Dějiny saského vpádu do Čech (1631–2) a návrat emigrace* [History of the Saxon invasion in Bohemia (1631–2) and the return of emigration]. Praha: I. L. Kober, 1889 and more recently KORTUS, Oldřich. *Praha za saského vpádu v letech 1631 a 1632* [Prague in the Saxon invasion in 1631 and 1632]. In *Pražský sborník historický*, 2008, vol. 36, pp. 105–184. The situation of Pilsen DOUŠA, Jaroslav. *Plzeň za saského vpádu v letech 1631–1632* [Pilsen in the Saxon invasion in the years 1631–1632]. In *Minulostí Západočeského kraje*, 1995, vol. 30, pp. 22–71.

¹³ Magdeburg was destroyed in 1631 by Tilly's league force. The Nymburk events ODLOŽILÍK, Otakar. *Zkáza Nymburka za třicetileté války* [Destruction of Nymburk during the Thirty Years' War]. Nymburk: Musejní spolek, 1934.

¹⁴ BRANDL, Zdeněk – PETRÁŇ, Josef (eds.). *K 350. výročí bitvy u Jankova 1645–1995* [The 350th anniversary of the Battle of Jankov 1645–1995]. (= *Sborník vlastivědných prací z Podblanicka 35*). Benešov, 1995.

¹⁵ MATOUŠEK, Václav. *Třebel. Obraz krajiny s bitvou* [Landscape image with a battle]. Praha: Academia, 2006.

¹⁶ LÍVA, Václav. *Bouře nad Prahou aneb Švédové před Prahou a v Praze* [Storm over Prague or the Swedes in front of Prague and in Prague]. Praha: Vladimír Žikeš, 1948; HOJDA, Zdeněk. *Boj o Prahu a závěr třicetileté války v Čechách* [Fight for Prague and the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War in Bohemia]. In *Dějiny a současnost*, 1998, vol. 20, no. 5, pp. 11–18. See also BERÁNEK, Karel (ed.). *Zprávy o bojích se Švédy... 1648 v diáři koleje sv. Klimenta* [Reports of fighting with the Swedes ... 1648 in the diary of St. Clement College]. Praha: Koniasch Latin Press, 2002 and ŽUPANIČ, Jan – Michal FIALA, *Praha 1648. Nobilitační listiny pro obránce pražských měst roku 1648* [Prague 1648. Nobilitation instruments for the defense of Prague towns in 1648]. Praha: VR Atelier, 2001.

even by 1648 Czech towns still had military responsibilities; however, the level if not the intensity of the violence was reduced.

Physical aggression – 1. Murders and killings

The most drastic consequence of physical aggression is, of course, murder or manslaughter, whether it is committed by an enemy or an allied soldier. Both terms refer to the killing of a person by another person, the general difference lying in question of intention: a murder is a deliberate or even planned killing, while manslaughter is more likely caused by the interplay of circumstances and unfortunate coincidences. Here, manslaughter could also apply to a death in a battle, whether individual or collective (e.g. in an attack on a city), while the slaughter of defeated, fleeing, and often unarmed town civilians already amounted to murder. Even from this rather simplistic definition it is clear that the murder of civilians was much more pronounced when hostile troops were involved; feral from a long war conflict, driven by impunity and motivated by their own gain.¹⁷ Any city which had resisted an assault could expect virtually no mercy from the soldiers and mass-murder occurred as a characteristic accompanying phenomenon. Reflecting this reality, it is also easy to understand why smaller and weaker fortified cities in particular surrendered rather quickly and agreed with the attacker on some of the different forms of surrender, though even that might not always protect them from military aggression completely.

Prague and also Southern Bohemian towns faced an enemy attack during the invasion of Passau in 1611 after long years of peace,¹⁸ South Bohemia, was heavily attacked during the *Estates Uprising* when local towns represented enemy footholds for the imperials. Sadly, in this regard Prachatice and Písek were particularly notable, the latter being besieged by a Bavarian-imperial unit and conquered partly due to the neglect of its witless defenders while the surrender negotiations were already under way. The imperials *not to mention all soldiers, of which there were 500 infantry and 40 cavalry, were all slain, but also most front, middle and rearmost burghers, having begun by Royal reeve Jan Jandas, town-councilor Zikmund Švantle, Václav Vroutecký and other councilors, almost all of them beaten by sword without any pity, all sought after on roofs and in gutters like dogs or cats, so that the blood of the beaten flowed from the gutters like rain water. And then it was searched with care, that no more males were kept alive in the city, except for only 12 or 18 people.*¹⁹ Although the author of the quote, the evangelic Skála, clearly and tendentiously

¹⁷ Compare also MALÝ – SLAVÍČKOVÁ – SOUKUP – SKŘEJPKOVÁ – ŠOUŠA – ŠOUŠA – VOJTÍŠKOVÁ – WOITSCHOVÁ (eds.), ref. 2; particularly paragraphs on “hurry, fight and attac” on pp. 281–296.

¹⁸ Compare NOVÁK, Jan Bedřich. Rudolf II. a jeho pád [Rudolf II. and his fall]. Praha: Český zemský výbor, 1935, and more recently KOLDINSKÁ, Marie. Vpád Pasovských a soudobé české myšlení [Invasion of Passau troops and Czech contemporary thinking]. In Dějiny a současnost, 1991, 13, no. 6, pp. 15–20. Modern and detailed evaluation of the issues, with a focus on events in the affected areas is however sorely missing.

¹⁹ JANÁČEK, Josef (ed.). Pavel Skála ze Zhoře. Historie česká. Od defenestrace k Bílé hoře [Pavel Skála of Zhoř. Czech history. Defenestration to the White Mountain]. Praha: Svoboda, 1984, pp. 288–289.

exaggerated the numbers of men slaughtered in Písek, the deliberate killing of the male population of urban communities by an enemy became standard practice and intensified in the Czech Republic reaching its highest levels in the 30^s and 40^s of the 17th century. Additionally, a case from the time of the “rebellion” in the West Bohemian town of Horažďovice illustrates the reality of the most brutal military violence: *Those who could, fled, or hid, while some fell into the hands of the enemy, who didn't spare them, but beat and killed them, and tried to get out of them, where they have hidden money. Saying, Czech, give money!*²⁰

Plunder was the priority usually, but there were certainly individuals who killed civilians on a whim or for pleasure. One cannot forget the fact that the common soldiery came from many dubious backgrounds, frequently having changing military service for previous stay in jail, as well as so-called *lowered people*,²¹ and that scruples and principles were no brake on shameful deeds when dulled by alcohol or the anonymity of the crowd. In some cases, soldiers only followed their orders, especially when the destiny of the slaughtered cities was to serve as a warning to other potential defensive forts, or globally to all enemy camps.²² Many iconographic sources show the brutality of such actions and confirm that the soldiers used weapons designed for hand to hand combat.²³ It is indeed natural, considering the slow process of charging firearms in the time of the Thirty Years' War. It is also no coincidence that the most prominent section of the city's population, its economic and administrative elite, was killed during these offensive raids (see for example the Písek case outlined above). Immediately after breaching a city's walls the soldiery primarily focused on the most ostentatious city houses in the square and its vicinity where they could expect lucrative booty. Therefore, among the first murder victims were often (albeit officers often preferred to kidnap them for ransom) municipal officials, reeves, councilors and burgomasters, often also local clergy against whom the hatred of the aggressors could be multiplied for confessional reasons. This explains the murder of a Catholic chaplain in Rokycany, despite the fact that he was sick and helpless.²⁴

²⁰ Státní okresní archiv [State district archive of] Klatovy (hereinafter referred to as SOkA), Archiv města [Archiv of town of] Horažďovice (hereinafter referred to as AM), acts, inv. no. 333, carton N3 – description of the conquest of Horažďovice June 22, 1619 from the pen of a burgher Daniel Azaš (this is but a copy from the 19th century).

²¹ SOkA Klatovy, AM Horažďovice, acts, inv. No. 1339, carton N13 – reverse of certain Matěj (“magistrate messenger, reduced man”), who served in the regiment of Maximilian Pechler in Hungary years ago. He admits that he betrayed and deserted, according to a military order deserved execution. He fled to Horažďovice, where a captain from that regiment saw him at magistrate Jan Žižka, recognized him and immediately struck him, was going to put him to death. Reeve, councilor, mayor and other leading citizens, however, pleaded for him and the captain dropped from the penalty saying he will leave Matěj and his family, as lesser people as hereditary subjects.

²² Compare PUHLE, Matthias (ed.). „... gantz verheeret“. Magdeburg und der Dreissigjährige Krieg. Magdeburg: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1998.

²³ See e.g. LANGER, Herbert. Hortus Bellicus. Der Dreissigjährige Krieg. Eine Kulturgeschichte. Leipzig: Verlag Edition Leipzig, 1978 and on the armor KLUČINA, Petr. Tricetiletá válka. Obraz doby 1618–1648 [Thirty Years' War. Image of the period 1618–1648]. Praha – Litomyšl: Paseka, 2000.

²⁴ HRACHOVÁ, Hana et al. Rokycany. Praha: NLN, 2011, p. 84.

Still, one cannot imagine that the aim of enemy armies was to systematically slaughter the population of Czech towns. In fact, they could be a very useful resource for vital contributions for troops. There was a significant transformation of the Swedish diversionary actions taken initially by Banér and then Torstensson and Königsmarck. While Banér practiced a scorched earth policy, his followers were often content with threats and receiving favorable contracts. For example, both contemporary sources and modern historians agree that it was Banér, who caused the hardest blow of the whole war to Rokycany in the autumn of 1639. His men *hideously killed and slaughtered quite a few people... they beat people extinguishing fires, they ripped them naked and expelled them from the city, so there was no-one who would help, two females burned so cruelly and painfully and the city was burned and lay in dust, almost four houses weren't left compact, the people driven out of the city like wild animals, not knowing where to go, where to find a shelter there and everywhere on all sides was fear and terror, mother crying for her child, child looking for his mother, running in the woods...*²⁵ Less than a year and a half had passed and people in Klatovy mourned their dead after the Swedish attacks too. In contrast in Klatovy in February 1645, Torstensson kept his forces at bay and settled for protection money of 10,000 golden florins and rations. Although he originally demanded three times more, the locals managed to knock the price down, which also happened three years later, in Königsmarck's case.²⁶

Besides the mass killings, soldiers also committed individual murders of urban residents. Most often, it was a robbery with murder,²⁷ but there were also plenty resulting from conflicts or simple petty animosity. The largest category however was that of murders committed by the enemy. Enemy soldiers expected either impunity, or at least the indulgence of their superiors. By contrast, Imperial soldiers mostly had to expect to suffer the judicial consequences of their actions. When in 1622, one of them killed a young Krupka townsman under cover of night and tossed his body into a field of oats, he was subsequently apprehended, convicted and hanged on the gallows, set up only recently in the city's square.²⁸ Of course, the culprits were not always caught and punished, often it was impossible to even identify them, and their officers perhaps also lacked the will to do so. The murder of two subjects in Kašperské Hory committed by troops was met with only superficial regret by the appropriate supervisor.²⁹ The enemy could murder for no apparent cause and without any particular pretext in the country under occupation or assault and was viewed and recorded by their contemporaries. However, in most cases the motive was simple robbery (though gratuitous murder cannot be ruled out either), and the loot was often just a piece of clothing, shoes or objects of daily use. During 1646 the Swedes killed three men from Niklasberg/Mikulov

²⁵ IBID., p. 83.

²⁶ SÝKOROVÁ, Lenka et al. Klatovy. Praha: NLN, 2010, pp. 209–210.

²⁷ E.g. in 1642 a miller of the mill under Mělník was killed by one soldier of the Colloredo Regiment. LÍVA, Václav (ed.). Prameny k dějinám třicetileté války [Sources for the History of the Thirty Years' War] VI. Praha: Naše vojsko, 1955, pp. 261, 262 and 264.

²⁸ SOKA Teplice, AM Krupka, books, inv. no. 56 – Commemorative Book 1426–1853, fol. 20.

²⁹ SOKA Klatovy, AM Kašperské Hory, acts, inv. no. 3828, carton N39 – January 28, 1624 from Rejšejn Hans Stainechler to Kašperské Hory.

and its surroundings, one evidently for money, as they were trying to find where it was hidden.³⁰ Sometimes it is difficult to decide, on the basis of preserved testimony, whether it was a case of murder or manslaughter. Even at present, the act of examination often requires lengthy judicial proceedings. One example was an incident where a prominent Krupka townsman was thrown from a cliff above town houses by an Imperial soldier, the specific circumstances remain unknown but it is clear that it resulted in the townsman death.³¹

Many of the male population of Czech towns of the Thirty Years' War were killed in hand to hand fighting with the enemy, often alongside the regular garrison. These cases undeniably belong in the category of homicide. Czech citizens and members of the urban social classes were already dying in defense of their homes during the Estates Uprising. In the 1720s they enjoyed a short period of respite but in the next two decades they were forced to defend their loved ones and their possessions against the enemy on the city walls again. One famous episode from the beginning of the war was the conquest of the West Bohemian city of Pilsen by the mercenary commander Mansfeld.³² The catholic city of Pilsen, "semper fidelis", did not join the side of the rebellious estates and refused to surrender even to the powerful forces of Mansfeld. They could not however resist his concentrated attack and had to pay for it with the lives of more than six dozen of their inhabitants.³³

Obviously not every attack had to end in the domination of a city; many were able to defend themselves but often with the cost of loss of life. In 1619 the small Western Bohemian town of Kašperské Hory succeeded in defending themselves against an Imperial squad, however, the experience of death, wounding, capture as well as dramatic threats were very traumatic.³⁴ Swedish invasions claimed the most victims, for example the Banér's one (1639): *Martin Palma, otherwise known as Rozsypálek died in Mělník from a head cut-wound obtained from the Swedish captain Gartner, the citizen and councilor is to be buried the 16th June this year. Item Jiljí Sekler died from a wound to the right hand, injured in a fight when he opened a door to the enemies in his house, which was also joined by other pain died and was buried on Saturday 4th June. Item Kašpar Šolc, Daniel Louis killed by 24 lashes.*³⁵ Also George Senický, *being a human of insufficient health and his health very distressed, left this world wretched and lost everything when defending the city from the Swedish, anno 1639.*³⁶ This list from Mělník is merely selective. Only a bare few cities were able to find commitment to an armed defense with advancing years.

³⁰ Státní oblastní archiv [State regional archive of] Litoměřice (hereinafter referred to as SOA), ŘKFÚ [Roman-catholic parish office of] Moldava, register of births and deaths, sign. 117/1 (1608–1665), fol. 498.

³¹ SOkA Teplice, AM Krupka, books, inv. no. 56 – Commemorative Book 1426–1853, fol. 52.

³² See KRÜSSMANN, ref. 9.

³³ JANÁČEK (ed.), ref. 19, pp. 101–109. The events in detail DOUŠA, ref. 9.

³⁴ SOkA Klatovy, AM Kašperské Hory, acts, inv. no. 3562, carton N37 – Estates officers and troops in Sušice and Sušice councilor to Kašperské Hory July 23, 1619.

³⁵ SOkA Mělník, AM Mělník, books, inv. no. 49a, fol. 48.

³⁶ Národní archiv [National archive of] Praha (hereinafter referred to as NA), SM [Old manipulation], inv. no. 662, sign. C 215 M 5, carton 434, fol. D – Sheet of imperial magistrate David Prušek of Prušov in November 29, 1647 to the Czech Chamber.

The categories of unintentional or partially intentional homicide often discussed in legal circles today were the result of the aggressive behavior of soldiers against civilians. It is possible that there are cases of death by misadventure, but such cases can be at this point omitted. Rather than on the streets and public places these killings occurred in private homes or in common areas or places of entertainment, especially in pubs. Quarrels or rivalries between soldiers and civilians could quickly escalate into physical aggression ending in fatal injuries. Alcohol also played an essential role here. The stress caused by the long-term residence of undisciplined troops also almost inevitably ended in aggression. In Mělník the Taxis's Imperial unit was the cause of a lot of worries for the townspeople, when the commander refused to leave the city despite reminders from his superiors. Several clashes took place there when some of the locals were killed by soldiers, others were only slowly recovering from severe injuries and many other men and women were traumatized. On the other hand, one example of killing due to personal animosity may be a case from Mělník in which one prominent Mělník burgher, Melichar Šolc, a Catholic, became the target of indiscriminate attacks by exiles apparently returning to the city during the Saxon invasion. He eventually succumbed to severe injuries. Untold numbers of townsmen escaped murder by the soldiery by a whisker, some of them choosing to report it personally later. One report speaks of a resident stripped of his clothes by soldiers during the Swedish invasion, who was beaten, and if it hadn't been for his wife who knocked aside the épée of the attacker, he would have been killed on the spot.³⁷ Likewise, the writer of the remarkable Krupka history, Michel Stüeler, escaped with his life when a soldier fired his gun and he saved himself by quickly jumping aside.³⁸

Physical aggression – 2. personal injury and physical assaults

Although physical aggression by soldiers against civilians during the Thirty Years' War resulted in much killing and murder, it mostly took the form of injury to health, whether we understand it as permanent mutilation, torture, disfigurement or "just" beating or other milder forms of physical assault (we leave out damage or injury caused in combat, where violence was committed on both sides). We can even assume that such behavior was experienced by the vast majority of the Czech urban population during this long war, the more so because the monarch and the government accepted military violence as a disciplinary component of the process of re-catholisation, as part of the so-called *Dragonades*. This was accepted by both the monarch and the government.³⁹ Soldiers, not known for their high moral principles, became a constant presence in cities

³⁷ KILIÁN, Jan. *Město ve válce, válka ve městě. Mělník 1618–1648* [City at war, war in the city. Mělník 1618–1648]. České Budějovice: Veduta, 2013, pp. 171–172.

³⁸ KILIÁN, Jan (ed.). *Paměti krupského měšťana Michela Stüelera (1629–1649)* [Memories of Krupka townsman Michel Stüeler (1629–1649)]. Teplice – Dolní Břežany: Regionální muzeum v Teplicích – Scriptorium, 2013, p. 147.

³⁹ Compare ROEDL, ref. 10. Huerta then declared that if the townspeople don't concede, he will allow soldiers to beat them, unruly will put in prisoner and will let them suffer from plague, hunger and thirst (p. 116).

from the 1720's and did not meet civilians only in public spaces and public facilities, but directly in their most intimate sphere, in their homes.⁴⁰ They were accommodated there, often with their partners or their whole family, who had perhaps a completely different life and family values from the host, so that conflict was never far away.⁴¹ The more so because they shared domestic utensils and equipment, they met in the kitchen, at the table, there would have been a language barrier between them, which resulted in mutual misunderstandings, and the civilian might have felt that the soldier demands too much, while the soldier had a completely opposite opinion.⁴² All this in an atmosphere of permanent insecurity and danger and accompanied by increased alcohol consumption. In addition, a soldier was routinely stealing in the house of his host. Violence, including torture, committed by hostile soldiers completely without scruples was either caused by arbitrariness or more often to force the victim to state where their valuables are hidden. Physical assault also represented a form of personal disgrace and often the most important of townspeople and local government members representing the whole community in their office faced it repeatedly. One burgher of Pilsen witnessed in Strakonice how the Imperial soldiers (Hungarians) accommodated there beat the burgomaster and the Primate and threw them into a fountain.⁴³

Klement Král, burgher of Kašperské Hory portrayed vividly his experience with military violence, when he went on work trip to Horažďovice and intended to refresh himself at the local town hall: *As I came to the town hall for lunch and was getting ready, the soldiers from young master of Wallenstein, namely the regional soldiers, attacked me powerfully with ugly words and they forced me to take a wide thaler, which I didn't want to accept from them. They let me know that if I didn't take it, I would have to go with them. The thaler they pressed to me with great power, although I did not want to have it, as I'm a neighbor from Pergkrejchenštejn, so I asked them to leave me alone and stop arguing about it and I prayed to God many times. These were people defeated by drink, who reached at me powerfully, always shoving the thaler into my pocket, but I didn't want to have it at all. Furthermore, they said haughtily that I defamed the H.I.M.⁴⁴ coin. They accused me, beat me for no reason and wrestled with me until I bled. Afterwards they falsely reported to Mr. Lieutenant then had me in handcuffs immediately and with a chain I was made to walk, in which a chain I remain until now.*⁴⁵ Král's story did not end⁴⁶ with the forced payment of fifteen thalers for his release from prison,

⁴⁰ Particularly PRÖVE, Ralf. Der Soldat in der „guten Bürgerstube“. Das frühneuzeitliche Einquartierungssystem und die sozioökonomischen Folgen. In KROENER, Bernhard – PRÖVE, Ralf (eds.). Krieg und Frieden. Militär und Gesellschaft der frühen Neuzeit. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996, pp. 191–219.

⁴¹ Compare LORENZ, ref. 7, p. 176.

⁴² Detailed KILIÁN, Na kvartýře, ref. 6.

⁴³ Archiv města Plzně [Archive of the city of Pilsen], RMR I 1, inv. no. IX f 11/29 – August 11, 1635 Jiří Vojtěch Velenovský wrote to his father.

⁴⁴ =His Imperial Majesty.

⁴⁵ SOkA Klatovy, AM Kašperské Hory, acts, inv. no. 6143, carton N56 – December 21, 1643 Klement Král to Kašperské Hory councilors.

⁴⁶ A later document tells us that Král lost everything during the war and he could not do his profession, so he earned living as a carrier. Over time, his arm, legs and back got lame, and had to be live on alms and for dwelling he had a dark and stinking sty at a certain municipal school in

shows several typical aspects of contemporary military practices. If the burgher from Kašperské Hory had accepted the thalers from the soldiers, it would be tantamount to acceptance of military practices in their eyes. Král understood this very well, but rejection of the coins didn't protect him from dangerous situations either. He was accused of contempt for the Imperial currency and beaten bloody by the attackers, who formed a large drunken group. The helplessness of civilians against military elements is illustrated and highlighted by the false account of events from the aggressors to their supervisor and the resulting punishment for someone who was in fact a mere victim.

Civilians soon realized that the soldiers could not be trifled with, and that in case of any conflict they would bear the consequences. A certain burgher from Mělník realized this when visiting a pub where provoked into an épée duel with a soldier which he won, he then had to pay the officer for the harm he had caused. Similarly, a townsman of the same city, who defended his wife against a drunken young soldier was forced to pay compensation for knife wounds the would-be assailant inflicted upon himself when he stumbled while fleeing⁴⁷ Behind both these cases and many others besides, we see the influence of alcohol again, the most common engine of conflict at that time even despite its shortage among the troops – which they naturally wanted to rectify immediately. Klatovy's citizens complained that the soldiers *climb to their homes on ladders, conquer their cellars, rob shops, draw blood fighting with people, beat, chop, and come at night with others...*⁴⁸ A wide variety of injuries due to these conflicts is reported by contemporary sources – wounds from cutting and stabbing, broken heads, fractures, punched eyes (and teeth to an even greater extent) and severed limbs. Limbs could be also damaged so seriously that they had to be amputated immediately, which was often fatal for the patient.⁴⁹ Beating and slapping, from which even the landlord's family and his staff weren't spared,⁵⁰ were under these circumstances one of the mildest forms of physical violence from soldiers even though they were humiliating for the members of the emancipated members of the burgher class.

However, it did not stop there and these soldiers weren't averse to torturing their victims, as they believed that would force them to confess where they had hidden their valuables. Particularly "resourceful" in this regard were the Swedish mercenaries who were tightening ropes around their prisoner's heads so hard that blood flowed from the nose and ears. Václav Zálužský was *clubbed over his shoulders and had a rope around his head tightened for money*,⁵¹ during the infamous plunder of Nymburk by Saxon-Swedish forces in 1634.⁵² This is the origin

Kašperské Hory. (SOkA Klatovy, AM Kašperské Hory, inv. no. 1990, carton N20 – Marie Langoová, Král's daughter, to Kašperské Hory councilor, probably in January 1673). Král's case becomes a picture of an individual human tragedy of a man affected by the Thirty Years' War.

⁴⁷ KILIÁN, ref. 37, pp. 185–186.

⁴⁸ SÝKOROVÁ et al., ref. 26, p. 207.

⁴⁹ KILIÁN (ed.), ref. 38, p. 155.

⁵⁰ At a certain Mělník citizen there were soldiers fighting with his staff. SOkA Mělník, AM Mělník, files-militare, fol. 1820 (undated, after 1632) – Jan Janáček to the councilors.

⁵¹ SOkA Mělník, AM Mělník, files-militare, fol. 4003 (October 19, 1634).

⁵² This ODLOŽILÍK, ref. 13; see also ĎURČANSKÝ, ref. 6.

of the term *Swedish drink*, which was mostly slurry, possibly combined with other waste which soldiers poured by force into the mouths of tied-up victims. Such actions were also fatal for some victims. Brutal military practices included dragging people behind horses, which was painful as well as demeaning.⁵³ The sources also indicate that the soldiers in the 17th century also used standard instruments of torture (such as thumbscrews and boots), whether they brought their own, or borrowed them temporarily in the towns. However, torture is most often mentioned in contemporary documents without further elaboration – as in the case of Andreas Büttner, a wheel maker from Mikulov who was dragged into woods in late 1646 during a hostile plundering of the Ore mountains (Krušné hory) town and subjected to violent practices, after which he eventually died.⁵⁴ It is well-known that the councilors of Rokycany were also tortured after they refused to pay the Swedes a huge ransom.⁵⁵

Physical aggression – 3. Rape

The most difficult form of military violence during the Thirty Years' War to document was rape, for obvious reasons.⁵⁶ In theory it was a capital offense,⁵⁷ but there was a stark contrast between times of war and peace and soldiers' violent behavior towards women became a welcome erotic adventure for the troops, during a protracted and ongoing armed conflict. Maren Lorenz, also finds it surprising that such a small number of rapes were recorded (registered) and even fewer sentences given, due to the resolute silence of participants. This highlights the problem with the very definition of rape in the 17th century which is very different from the current definition, when it is assumed that, for the fulfillment of the elementary act all that is required is vaginal penetration with subsequent ejaculation.⁵⁸ Cases where women became prey of the aggressors are also clearly problematic, some soldiers eventually taking their victims as wives or partners while others simply dismissed them after using them for sex. Peter Hagendorf, the author of a unique mercenary diary, didn't behave any differently, when he captured successively two young girls in conquered German cities in a short time.⁵⁹ As Lorenz observes again, the chance of a free sex slave has been an attractive bonus for victorious armies since ancient times and the motif of raping

⁵³ SOKA Klatovy, AM Horažďovice, acts, inv. no. 333, carton N3 – description of the conquest of Horažďovice June 22, 1619 from a pen of a burgher Daniel Azaš.

⁵⁴ SOA Litoměřice, ŘKFÚ Moldava, register of births and deaths, sign. 117/1 (1608–1665), fol. 498.

⁵⁵ HRACHOVÁ et al., ref. 24, p. 84.

⁵⁶ Compare JANSSON, Karin. Soldaten und Vergewaltigung im Schweden des 17. Jahrhunderts. In MEDICK, Hans - von KRUSENSTJERN, Benigna (eds.). *Zwischen Alltag und Katastrophe*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999, pp. 195–225.

⁵⁷ MALÝ – SLAVÍČKOVÁ – SOUKUP – SKŘEJPKOVÁ – ŠOUŠA – ŠOUŠA jr. – VOJTÍŠKOVÁ – WOITSCHOVÁ (eds.), ref. 2, p. 275: "Therefore whoever reached a maid or an honest widow with power, touched her or took her captive, and then forced her, each such rapist should be punished by sword, and if there were any light persons, then have to be woven into the wheel."

⁵⁸ LORENZ, ref. 7, pp. 207–209.

⁵⁹ PETERS, Jan (ed.). *Peter Hagendorf – Tagebuch eines Söldners aus dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012, pp. 109 and 110.

a young girl even makes it into folk songs which have been sung in Germany for centuries.⁶⁰

In principle, it is necessary to distinguish between individual and mass rape. The latter belonged to the interbellum period (and not only in the early modern period) with typical accompanying phenomena, it was almost a commonplace that no one questioned, but also didn't discuss. Czech towns were subjected to group rape again especially during the *Estates Uprising* 1618–1620 and invasions of the 30s and 40s of the 17th century. However, Contemporary informants speak only in general (such as that the Swedes committed shameful deeds on the females of cities after the conquest)⁶¹ or indications, as with Hrušková, a burgheress of Mělník, who testified that soldiers grabbed her and dragged her, together with other women, to some location,⁶² the purpose being fairly clearly implied. The same fate was probably suffered by women in Klatovy, Horažďovice, Rokycany and other towns in Western Bohemia after their homes were raided by the enemy. One pertinent question concerns whether the male relatives of the rape victims (husbands, fathers, brothers...) were sometimes forced to witness it. Besides satisfying their own sexual needs the soldiers were intent on causing humiliation and shame. It seems clear that this did indeed occur and according to Lorenz there was no offense which symbolized the aggressors' power more than rape in the enemy land, even though at that time it certainly was not a targeted political weapon of war. Anyway, it can be understood as *a transhistorical and transcultural element of the implementation of patriarchal power relations and as an endemic event during wars.*⁶³

In contrast, individual rapes occurred in the cities in times of at least relative peace and the guilty individuals were exposed to common judicial practice. The punishment for rape was the death penalty, but as these deeds occurred usually in private, proving them in the 17th century was extremely difficult, and usually a case of one person's word against another's. Even when there were witnesses available, the culprit often was not punished. In the German town of Rügen, a mercenary soldier raped a seventeen years old girl in front of her parents so brutally that she died of her injuries, but his superior dismissed him unpunished, with regret, that the girl had died but that little more could be done.⁶⁴ Many attempted rapes remained so only because of the timely intervention of other parties. In Krupka, a young bourgeois daughter was saved at the last moment by a local parish priest from violence assault by an Imperial standard bearer that was staying there on *Salva Guardia*.⁶⁵ Mariana Zahrádková from Pilsen escaped rape,

⁶⁰ LORENZ, ref. 7, pp. 208 and 211.

⁶¹ "... grabbing females, treated them improperly so poor mothers fled, with fear threw children from away from their breasts...", wrote, for example, Jiří Kryštof Aulický of Plešnice and Aulice and Jan Kryštof Wolfingar of Wolfspach on Prostiboř about the Swedish invasion in Rokycany in October 1639. SOkA Rokycany, AM Rokycany, acts, inv. no. B III / 4 carton 336.

⁶² Barbora Hrušková testimony from November 13, 1640 – SOkA Mělník, Mělník AM, files-Militaire, fol. 4290.

⁶³ LORENZ, ref. 7, pp. 207 and 211.

⁶⁴ MEDICK, Hans – MARSCHKE, Benjamin (eds.). *Experiencing the Thirty Years' War. A Brief History with Documents.* Boston – New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013, pp. 80–81.

⁶⁵ KILIÁN (ed.), ref. 38, p. 503.

when the stable master Colonel John de la Cron set his sights on her – but when he could not manage the deed, he still dismissed her with the title of *whore*.⁶⁶ Such conduct was common and women had to endure much from soldiers, including obscene gossiping and innuendo.⁶⁷

Psychological pressure

Of course, military violence included a psychological element during the Thirty Years' War, beginning with threats of violence, and ending with humiliation. The purpose of this was usually quite clear – to achieve the satisfaction of one's own (financial, logistical, political, confessionary, etc.) needs and goals. These threats of violence appeared very useful to soldiers, in particular their officers. Threats towards the civilian urban population were also made in an attempt to force the surrender of fortified urban settlements and to get them to open their gates. Soldiers were increasingly more valuable as the war dragged on, so officers didn't want to risk the losses which could be expected during the conquest of a city. On the other hand, citizens had plenty of negative experiences with the military and knew that such threats were not idle. Therefore, they began the practice of signing written, codified agreements designed to secure protection against violence on condition of payment of protection money (i.e. *Ranzion*). This could be further enhanced by providing a *Salva Guardia* (also drawn from native troops), whether physical or in writing, for which the city also naturally had to pay. Deputy Commander of one of this imperial regiment left his cavalry officer in Kašperské Hory, and the city had to pay the steep protection levy of one hundred imperial thalers for an unknown time period.⁶⁸ The soldier was subsequently captured by the Swedes, but he managed to escape, although without a horse, and get back. His officer immediately turned to the city with demand for delivery of the agreed money and with orders to provide the horseless rider a good horse with equipment, saddle and pistols at their expense. If Kašperské Hory failed to do so, he further threatened to come and get the desired items himself and added that he wouldn't hesitate to apply a military execution to meet the default.⁶⁹

The threat of military executions meant a forcible requisition of property with military assistance from the Czech cities practiced both by the enemy (emphasizing the potential of violence using “fire” and “sword”)⁷⁰ and the Imperials. Here

⁶⁶ Archiv města Plzně, RMR I 1, inv. no. IX f 15/71 – June 1, 1648, in Pilsen. Burgheress Markéta Altkrotová gives the city council her opposition to the action of Mariana Zahradková to her accusation.

⁶⁷ SOkA Mělník, AM Mělník, files-militare, fol. 3990 – February 19, 1634 Metuzalém Polák to councilors of Mělník. Author of obscenities against Polák's wife was supposedly some military servant.

⁶⁸ E.g. town of Kašperské Hory got *salva guardia* among others from Karel Bonaventura Buquoy (September 1619), Maximilian of Bavaria (October 1620), Ferdinand II. (December 1624), Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (November 1642 and later), Ferdinand III. (September 1641, December 1642) and Matthias Gallas (April 1643 and later). SOkA Klatovy, AM Kašperské Hory, acts, inv. no. 88–125, cartons N2 and N3.

⁶⁹ IBID., inv. no. 4180, carton N41 – June 11, 1648 the lieutenant von Prettach to Kašperské Hory.

⁷⁰ E.g. 4 October 1648 a Swedish captain Martin Hüttmacher threatened Horažďovice citizens with fire and sword, if they don't bring the Swedes required contributions and other things in Horažďovský Týn immediately. SOkA Klatovy, AM Horažďovice, acts, inv. no. 1369, carton N14.

is the source of the claim that because of the effects on them, civilians quickly saw little difference between “home” and enemy forces. However this is not quite a completely true assertion, especially as the Swedes provoked more fear as the example of Mělník, already mentioned, indicated—there the locals tried to meet the requirements of the enemy straight away, while in the case of the Imperials they were significantly slower.⁷¹ In addition, soldiers often used other reliable ways to obtain the desired money or rations – they kidnapped inhabitants or took hostages often prominent city representatives and favored clerics. In Duchcov and Krupka, during their incursion into Bohemia, the Saxons got hold of the local parish priest, the dean and two other priests who they deported and imprisoned, and then demanded three hundred ducats from the respective cities for their release. However, at least in the case of Krupka, they miscalculated as the citizens of Krupka refused to pay for the release of their churchmen.⁷² The Swedish general Königsmarck took several burghers in Klatovy to guarantee that his money would eventually be paid after he failed to receive his ransom in the required amount.⁷³

However, there were also numerous cases of threats, when troops that were supposed to protect the local population behaved completely arbitrarily. This was the experience of Kašperské Hory during the *Estates Uprising* with the Hungarian captain of the dragoons who ordered the populace to *send people straight away and also, if we don't want the wives and children to be slaughtered with us and also for the town to be burnt down completely...*⁷⁴ Councilors therefore sent several people from their midst, *desiring to learn what new they wanted*, to which the soldiers replied that they wanted three thousand golden florins. The representatives were horrified and apologized that such a large amount cannot be found in the city, asked for mercy and pointed at some regulation, but the soldiers did not take anything into account. They seized the representatives, tied them up and wanted them to deport them somewhere. If the councilors wanted to liberate them, they had to deliver eight hundred golden florins to the captain and his men immediately. They did so, and the soldiers had to promise them that they would not do any harm to them or their subjects. However, the next day they took their subjects' cattle, and carried away a number of other things with them and also took the miller, who had to redeem his freedom for another eighty golden florins.⁷⁵

Threats of violence weren't limited to officers in charge of divisions; individual soldiers were just as capable in this field. Threats to landlords in cities where they

⁷¹ KILIÁN, ref. 37, especially pp. 183–186.

⁷² KILIÁN (ed.), ref. 38, p. 159.

⁷³ ASCHENBRENNER, Vít. Pokus o vydání některých pramenů k třicetileté válce na Klatovsku [Attempt to publish some sources on the Thirty Years' War in the Klatovy region]. Unpublished work, Klatovy, 1994 (stored in SOkA Klatovy), p. 29.

⁷⁴ SOkA Klatovy, AM Kašperské Hory, acts, inv. no. 5858, carton N55 – July 17, 1619 Kašperské Hory citizens to Jáchym Novohradský of Kolovrat.

⁷⁵ SOkA Mělník, AM Mělník, files-militare, fol. 1663: At a Mělník burgheress Nedvěďová a handful of soldiers managed to drink a whole barrel of white wine in the value of seventy gold in a short time. In her words, the soldiers asked for wine day and night, and if they were not served immediately, they threatened her by destroying her stove, breaking windows and smashing tables.

found accommodation were an almost daily occurrence. The aim was to achieve better provisions, selected delicacies and of course, large quantities of alcohol.⁷⁶

In the Thirty Years' War, especially in the first phase of re-catholisation after the battle of White Mountain, soldiers served as a powerful executive persuasive instrument. Pressure on non-Catholic subjects who suddenly had to provide for a larger number of troops was considerable, many suffered from undermined both their psyche (which led to withdrawals as well as suicides) and religious commitment. Indeed, they could get rid of unwanted guests in case of their conversion. The Imperial colonel Huerta later even boasted that he turned more souls to the Catholic faith than Christ himself with all his apostles.⁷⁷ Colonel Breuner gained a similar reputation in the dowry cities of the Czech queens. His men were also accommodated by non-Catholic townspeople about the same time as Huerta's, and in double or even triple the numbers, particularly in locales with *obstinate heretics*.⁷⁸

Defamation and humiliation had a similar role in achieving military objectives and satisfying their needs in various cities. Although, some of them aroused simple distaste, shook the psyche of civilians and were met with resentment of superiors. This was perhaps the case with the violence against the relics of the deceased Klatovy Primate Daniel Beads from Cieszyn, whose coffin was pried open by Imperial soldiers and the corpse robbed of a massive gold chain and other objects. Following the intervention of a senior they lost their plunder and were threatened with severe punishment,⁷⁹ but Klatovy in 1624 saw clearly that such soldiers won't be stopped by anything and practically nothing is sacred to them, not even a temple of God with its graveyard. Representatives of local elites, especially municipal dignitaries and clerics were prime targets of humiliation. Soldiers were intentionally venting their, often socially conditioned, desires on them. Sons of peasants and former members of the lower urban classes gained a power advantage over people from higher social strata covered by military service during the war. They exposed them not only to steal clothes, they even dragged them behind their horses and had them running like dogs behind, invented various humiliating spectacles to involve them in. An aged dean of Rokycany was put on an old horse by Swedish soldiers, who put a miter on his head and paraded him around the city to much laughter.⁸⁰ Honor and reputation were important capital in early modern times and soldiers targeted their attacks at these, knowing that they caused similar distress to physical aggression.

⁷⁶ ROEDL, ref. 10, p. 116.

⁷⁷ KILIÁN, ref. 37, pp. 150–151.

⁷⁸ SÝKOROVÁ et al., ref. 26, p. 205.

⁷⁹ HRACHOVÁ et al., ref. 24, p. 83.

⁸⁰ Compare e.g. SCHWALLEROVÁ, Jana. "Život a dobrá čest jedním krokem kráčeji". Čest a každodennost ve Veselí nad Lužnicí v 17. a 18. století ["Life and honor walk together." Honor and everyday life in Veselí nad Lužnicí in the 17th and 18th century]. In Kuděj, 2006, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 26–45.

Looting, arson, robbery and damage to property

Looting, arson, robbery and damage to property were criminalized offenses in peacetime but belonged to perhaps the most common and most documented incidents of military violence against civilians. Theft was equally common; violence was not used, but often the result of lack of attention, carelessness or simple opportunism, e.g. accommodation of soldiers in a townhouse.⁸¹ The view of one citizen on a soldier during the Thirty Years' War is aptly characterized in the words of Jiří Senický from Mělník: *Although soldiers are dull headed beasts, yet they took what they could get their hands on;*⁸² Albrecht Chválenský from Volyně expressed his view on one section of Imperial dragoons: *I hear about them, that they are proper thieves.*⁸³

The symbols of the Thirty Years' War were its looted and vandalized cities; the prospect of seizing the booty in them was a motivation of many men who had enlisted in the army. Under the applicable laws of war, a simple soldier was entitled to a completely legitimate share of the loot (the more so because their pay was often not forthcoming for months on end), mostly in the form of various estates.⁸⁴ Commanders profited from the loot the most, reserving major treasures of the occupied city,⁸⁵ which in practice meant that they placed a reliable guard on the property they were after. That could also apply to some other buildings that were to be saved for various reasons (important persons, collaborators etc.).⁸⁶ Commanders also ruled on individual shares. Even in contemporary legislation, especially with regard to "looting" (Plünderung), there was a distinction between criminal violence (Violentia) and violence tolerated, and sometimes directly ordered (potestas) from on high.⁸⁷

Every city, which decided to resist an attacker, had to reckon with the possibility that in case of failure they would then be left at their mercy. Looting was then permitted over various time periods, determined by the commanders of

⁸¹ Soldiers stole virtually anything, from unripe fruit on the trees, over oversize things to live cattle. E.g. one soldier stole a glove from a table in house of Michel Stüeler (KILIÁN (ed.), ref. 38, p. 471); in the house in Police nad Metují, belonging to Lukáš Šadimský, removed military servants three locks in order to sell them (SOkA Náchod, AM Náchod, acts, inv. no. 1568, without a sign., carton 35 – Lukáš Šadimský of Šadim, private files) and in Pilsen, in a house of Jan Karel Višňovský, two imperial soldiers stole about 40 pounds of wool in "thieving manner" (Archiv města Plzně, RMR I 1, inv. no. IX f 14/83 – June 22, 1646 Jan Karel Višňovský to the city council).

⁸² SOkA Mělník, AM Mělník, files-militare, fol. 4545 – Jiří Senický to Jakub Žamborský (date not obvious).

⁸³ SOkA Klatovy, AM Kašperské Hory, acts, inv. no. 6083, carton N56 – April 25, 1639 Albrecht Chválenský to Kašperské Hory.

⁸⁴ Compare PETERS (ed.), ref. 59.

⁸⁵ Gallas and Aldringen's plunder in Mantua was renowned – among others REBITSCH, Robert. Matthias Gallas (1588–1647). Generalleutnant des Kaisers zur Zeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges. Eine Militärische Biographie. Münster: Aschendorff, 2006, pp. 46–59.

⁸⁶ Compare KILIÁN, Jan. Kauza mělnických zrádců v době švédského vpádu v roce 1639 [The case traitors of Mělník during the Swedish invasion in 1639]. In Confluens, 2007, pp. 123–134. Sparing the house of Mělník citizen Purkyně by the Swedes was seen as the main evidence of his alleged collaboration with the enemy.

⁸⁷ This by PRÖVE, Ralf. Violentia und Potestas. Perzeptionsprobleme von Gewalt in Söldnertagebücher des 17. Jahrhunderts. In MEUMANN – NIEFANGER (eds.), ref. 4, pp. 4–42.

besieging divisions, sometimes being limited to just a few hours,⁸⁸ sometimes days. Part of looting was murder and rape addressed above, the main goal being booty. Therefore, the biggest temptations were elegant homes, town halls, and of course churches, as the townsfolk often hid their valuables there in the false belief that they would be safe there. In Horažďovice, the marauding soldiers allegedly stole several hundred golden florins secreted in the church, including hidden bourgeois property. They took eight vestments, two large gilt silver chalices, a silver-gilt monstrance and silver-gilt box for sacramental bread.⁸⁹

The same happened in Rokycany, where through the torture of locals the Swedes managed to establish where their valuables were hidden under the floor of the church.⁹⁰ Looting of the conquered area also involved members of the military camp -soldiers' partners and military maids, searching for items usable in the camp home or marketable at another location. Some goods were much sought after: large brewing pans or tanning vats. There are also documented cases when a city was not looted by the enemy but their own or allied troops. In early 1641, Rokycany, which was still traumatized by the appalling behavior of the Swedes eighteen months previously, refused to open their gates for two regiments of the imperial cuirassiers fleeing the enemy. Irritated soldiers then forcibly "cut out" one of the gates broke into the city and proceeded to go on the rampage.⁹¹

After being plundered, or even during the plundering, many cities were intentionally set ablaze by the soldiers, and there were dozens of such cases among Czech cities. In the early modern urban community, fire represented a fatal catastrophe, a disaster which was difficult to cope with successfully even in times of peace, let alone during war, when soldiers often deliberately obstructed the efforts of people to put fires out.⁹² The suffering in Rokycany after the Swedes set the city on fire has already been referred to but the same happened in 1619 after an attack of the Imperial army in Horažďovice, where fire was started in the suburbs and in Zářečí. The fire intensified so much that it easily spread to the city because it was already tinder dry after a long drought – apparently rain did not fall for several weeks and the sun was hot. In an hour, all was on fire – towers, the tower clock, the bells of the church, two gateways, a gate, the bridge, municipal mill, brewery, malt house, two hospitals, the town hall with its entire hidden trove, such as books and records, weapons and firefighting utensils. The Fire eventually reached such proportions that it drove the invaders themselves

⁸⁸ In Klatovy 1641 the Swedes were looting the city for four hours. SÝKOROVÁ, Lenka. *Tricetiletá válka v Horažďovicích – Od požáru k plenění* [Thirty Years' War in Horažďovice – From fire to looting]. In WASKOVÁ, Marie (ed.). *Sborník k počtě Evy a Karla Waskových, západočeských archivářů* [Compilation in honor of Eva and Karel Waska, West Bohemian archivists]. Plzeň: M. Wasková, 2011, p. 120.

⁸⁹ SOkA Klatovy, AM Horažďovice, acts, inv. no. 333, carton N3 – description of the conquest of Horažďovice (June 22, 1619) from the pen of a burgher Daniel Azaš.

⁹⁰ HRACHOVÁ et al., ref. 24, p. 83.

⁹¹ LÍVA (ed.), ref. 27, p. 148 – February 1, 1641 Jan Kolnec of Kolno, governor of Zbiroh, to the Czech chamber.

⁹² See e.g. the case of fire in Mělník 1621. KILIÁN, ref. 37, p. 146. The reason, why the Imperials did not want to allow the Mělník people to put the fire out, is not clear.

out of the city.⁹³ Setting a city on fire, especially its suburbs, was also practiced as a defensive measure by its garrison of defensive officers, as the buildings in the suburbs could be a hiding place for the enemy. The eviction of the relevant population from affected properties often had to be violent here too. In addition, such a task could become completely counterproductive, as the commanding imperial officer in Bautzen discovered, after the fire spread from the suburbs over the walls, destroyed many of the defenders there as well as residents and resulted in the city's surrender to the enemy.⁹⁴

Robbery, the seizure of the property of another by force or under threat of violence, covers both an offense against property and against human rights and dignity. Soldiers robbed to such a degree that the scope of it in this period is not even quantifiable. Additionally, you cannot forget the so-called marauders, robbing deserters (especially on main roads, sometimes individually, but mostly in groups), who sometimes formed complete troops of robbers, including the famous group *Petrovsti*, who, by the end of the Thirty Years' War threatened even regular military actions of the imperial army.⁹⁵ Roads were so dangerous due to these soldiers that middle-class merchants often resigned from business and relied on the safety of their inner city walls.⁹⁶ Michel Stüeler from Krupka met with two such groups on just one return trip from Prague. But he and his escort were lucky, unlike four Prague Jews, who he said were robbed of about fifty golden florins.⁹⁷ "Military rabble", as he put it, robbed also a local burgher Jan Stayndl on his return from Pilsen to Všeruby in the spring of 1635.⁹⁸

Basically, all soldiers whom traveling civilians met were frightening. In 1628 Jan Hlavsa from the West Bohemian town of Mutěňín reported to the Pilsen people, about the de-mobbed troops who were causing great harm to trespassers at various locations in the county.⁹⁹ An expedition from Mělník led by the primate and the royal magistrate had to barricade themselves in one of the municipal courts against an imperial corporal and his soldiers, who then proceeded to take bottles from their abandoned cart and later robbed another officer from a neighboring estate of a hat and a gun.¹⁰⁰

The goods most frequently stolen by soldiers were undoubtedly horses. Lamentations and requests for the return of stolen animals and entire recorded lawsuits are found across a range of sources of urban origin. Soldiers stole horses

⁹³ SOKA Klatovy, AM Horažďovice, acts, inv. no. 333, carton N3 – description of the conquest of Horažďovice (June 22, 1619) from the pen of a burgher Daniel Azaš.

⁹⁴ ZEIDLER, Johann. *Tabeera Budissinae. Budissinische Brandstelle. Das ist: Was vor, in und nach der erbärmlichen ruin und einäscherung der Alten Volckreichen und Nahrhaftigen Hauptstadt Budissin vorgangen.* Dresden 1647.

⁹⁵ SOA Praha, RA Valdštejnů [Archive of the family of Waldstein], inv. no. 1654, sign. A/II-141 – November 10, 1648 Martin Maximilian of Goltz to an unknown earl addressee.

⁹⁶ Due to the fear of dangers on the roads they did not go from Pilsen to Louny in October 1631. Archiv města Plzně, RMR I 1, inv. no. IX f 10/5.

⁹⁷ KILIÁN (ed.), ref. 38, p. 139.

⁹⁸ Archiv města Plzně, RMR I 1, inv. no. IX f 10/93 – April 24, 1635 Jan Stayndl to Pilsen.

⁹⁹ Archiv města Plzně, RMR I 1, inv. no. IX f 8/82 – October 5, 1628 Jan Hlavsa to Pilsen.

¹⁰⁰ SOKA Mělník, AM Mělník, books, no. 138, fol. 201–202 – April 21, 1622 Mělník councilors to Colonel Jan Slach of Hřivice.

from stables or stole them from their owners on the road and then sold them at markets in near and more distant towns.¹⁰¹ It is actually remarkable how often the original owners were able to find their lost property and this was similar in the case of oxen and cows. Soldiers looted almost anything they could lay their hands on as can be seen from the foregoing. The traffickers of these stolen goods were often Jews, but it was also done by otherwise honest and upright citizens. While the soldiers had virtual immunity, civilians could end up being lawfully and severely punished. Voršila Bajerová a burgheress from Náchod was punished for such trafficking not only by imprisonment but also was given a suspended death sentence if she knowingly committed a similar offence in the future;¹⁰² Adam Švehla, a tailor from Kašperské Hory, likewise.¹⁰³ But authorities were far more benevolent elsewhere, and there were cases when the townsman made a considerable profit from trafficking.¹⁰⁴

What could not be stolen or plundered could certainly be at least broken up or otherwise destroyed. Intentional damage to property by soldiers in thirty years of armed conflict was also commonplace. Again, enemy soldiers played the main role: while the Swedes took all the valuables during their attack on Kašperské Hory, they destroyed everything they couldn't transport. Witnesses *saw and watched how all their wardrobes, trunks, doors, nice and decent works and masterpieces were chopped and smashed, all the things scattered about the room. Similarly, in the cellar opposite the same councilor's dormitory many trunks, large and small, also kegs and skewers were broken and smashed.*¹⁰⁵ In this case of violence against property it could just as much have been the consequence of alcohol consumption, as it was frustration caused by unsatisfactory amounts of loot and a certain malicious joy experienced by soldiers on leaving the affected population in despair. Besides furniture and stoves, they also enjoyed smashing windows and doors,¹⁰⁶ dishes they couldn't use, beer and wine barrels in town cellars after emptying them, and despoiling city books and documents at the town halls. After military visits, the once prosperous burgher homes became in many places just pathetic ghettos.

¹⁰¹ Compare Archiv města Plzně, RMR I 1, inv. no. IX f 13/23 (a matter of returning a mare which was stolen by soldiers to one neighbor, and which was then sold to another merchant, year 1640); inv. no. IX f 6/11 (Zelená Hora estate officer asked the Pilsen city council in August 1619 for an intercession at Mansfeld that a widow could have her two "jades" returned); inv. no. IX f 7/31 (July 27, 1624 asked the Chotěšov provost the Pilsen councilors for the return of a mare that had been stolen by soldiers and identified by a Pilsner citizen to a Chotěšov subject) or inv. no. IX f 2/13 (December 20, 1629 Governor Zieglmeyer to Pilsner council that his horse was taken near Pilsen).

¹⁰² ČESÁKOVÁ, Markéta. Rychtářské manuály města Náchoda. Prameny k dějinám náchodské městské správy 1. poloviny 17. století [Reeves manuals of the town Náchod. Sources for the History Náchod's town administration of first half of the 17th century]. Praha: Karolinum, 2013, p. 56.

¹⁰³ SOkA Klatovy, AM Kašperské Hory, acts, inv. no. 5917, carton N55.

¹⁰⁴ Michel Stüeler from Krupka pointed to the origin of the wealth of his relative, a copper smiths Gorge Janich. KILIÁN (ed.), ref. 38, p. 433.

¹⁰⁵ SOkA Klatovy, AM Kašperské Hory, acts, inv. no. A5, carton N1 – May 9, 1641 Heřman Cíl of Svojšice and Beneš Fremut of Stropčice witnessed the city's status.

¹⁰⁶ See for example, *ibid.*, inv. No. 5883, carton N55 – August 15, 1620 councilors of Kašperské Hory to captain Ferdinand Lažanský of Buková: "... what kind of disorder commences here from some soldiers, expelling neighbors from their houses, beat them, break rooms, chests and wardrobes..."

To summarize all the foregoing, we can militarily categorize aggression directed against civilians to slaughter and killing, bodily harm and physical assault, rape, psychological coercion in the form of threats of violence, intimidation and violent attacks against civilian property in the form of looting, arson, robbery and devastation of estate property or movable assets. All these violent events, in which it is necessary to distinguish between the “home” aggressors and the enemy, could be of course combined, which very often happened. The aim, for which military violence including even brutal torture became an effective means, was primarily to gain property and profit. Likewise, it could also serve to promote political and confessional intentions to accelerate fiscal requirements, as well as disgracing opponents. Virtually all listed categories can be divided into group (mass) and individual violence. Conflict leading to violence between the military and the urban population was basically permanently hidden in the explosive environment of the Thirty Years’ War and its social uncertainties. In particular, the soldier was propelled into the intimate realms of middle-class households which had different values from his own. The triggering mechanisms were primarily alcohol, whether excess or lack, and similarly the lack of other provisions, that the soldiers should be entitled to. The anonymity of the crowd played an important role together with the relative impunity of soldiers, but also the language barrier between soldiers and civilians, leading to numerous misunderstandings. However, the need to discharge aggression was also noticeable, alongside frustration and erotic desire.

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