



# The revival of the anti-Ottoman projects in the Balkans after Lepanto and Venice's struggle to maintain long lasting peace with the Ottomans (1573-1645)

## İnebahtı Sonrası Balkanlarda Osmanlı Karşıtı Projelerin Canlanması ve Venedik'in Osmanlılarla En Uzun Süreli Barışı Sağlama Mücadelesi (1573-1645)

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### ABSTRACT

The sixteenth century was a time when projects against Ottoman power were diminishing. This sixteenth century trend changed dramatically after the battle of Lepanto on 7 October 1571, when the Holy League coalition forces inflicted a significant defeat on the Ottoman fleet. This study investigates how Venice responded to the growing anti-Ottoman projects and movements in the Balkans in order to keep a long lasting peace with the Ottomans that characterized the period from the peace treaty between Venice and the Ottoman Empire in 1573 until the war of Crete in 1644. Venice's struggle for peace in this period, was of crucial importance in the relatively quiet situation in Rumelia during this period compared to the disquiet and social unrest that characterized Anatolia, especially during the *Celali revolts*.

**Keywords:** Battle of Lepanto, Anti-Ottoman projects, Veneto-Ottoman relations, Struggle for peace

### ÖZ

16. yüzyıl, Osmanlı gücüne karşı projelerin giderek daha az dolaşıma girdiği bir dönemdi. Bu 16. yüzyıl eğilimi, Kutsal İttifak güçlerinin Osmanlı donanmasını önemli bir yenilgi uğrattığı 7 Ekim 1571'deki İnebahtı Savaşı'ndan sonra dramatik bir şekilde değişti. Bu çalışma, Venedik ile Osmanlı İmparatorluğu arasında imzalanan 1573 tarihli barış antlaşmasından 1644 yılındaki Girit Savaşı'na kadar olan dönemi karakterize eden en uzun süreli barışı sürdürmek için Venedik'in Balkanlarda büyüyen Osmanlı karşıtı proje ve hareketlere yaklaşımını araştırmaktadır. Bu dönemde Venedik'in barış mücadelesi, özellikle Celali isyanları sırasında Anadolu'ya damgasını vuran huzursuzluk ve toplumsal çalkantılarla karşılaştırıldığında, görece sakin Rumeli'deki vaziyet dolayısıyla çok önemliydi.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** İnebahtı Muharebesi, Osmanlı karşıtı projeler, Venedik-Osmanlı ilişkileri, Barış mücadelesi



Contrary to the general view of the Battle of Lepanto being a turning point in Ottoman military history, the battle simply closed a period of great territorial gains for the Ottomans. These were added to the previous year's Ottoman successes that culminated in the relatively easy conquest of Cyprus, a conquest which, following the completion of the conquest of the entire island, was organized with the status of a provincial governorship (1570-1571)<sup>1</sup>. This can help us understand why the odds at Lepanto favored the Holy League, as the Ottoman fleet was looking at closing the season and the soldiers were clearly exhausted, after a sea-campaign of more than five months<sup>2</sup>. This late season battle also explains why the victory of the Holy League did not, and could not have continued. The winter season was coming and fleets were harbored during the winter months while soldiers were generally being dismissed. The Ottoman navy was quickly rebuilt thereafter. Thus, for the Ottomans, it was just another episode in the intense war for supremacy in the Mediterranean<sup>3</sup>.

The less visible side of the symbolic victory is the different impact it had on the Holy League states, formed three months earlier on 20 May 1571<sup>4</sup>. For Europeans in general, it was a long-awaited victory over the Ottomans that contributed to the return of optimism vis-a-vis the Ottoman power, but not enough to have real consequences in the geopolitical balance of the forces of the time<sup>5</sup>.

Beyond the general European mood of optimism, for Venice, Lepanto did not help at all to reverse the huge losses it had to accept during the war. In Venice, the general optimism was clearly converted into caution towards any further involvement in anti-Ottoman alliances or projects which might lead to similar dramatic territorial losses. Clearly, a breach of the general status quo in the Mediterranean had affected the Balkan region or Rumelia and the inability to defend the territories was a geostrategic avalanche that risked lowering the morale of the troops and citizens and the value of the state in the eyes of the rivals.

1 Feridun Emecen, "From the founding to Küçük Kaynarca", *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilisation*, ed. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, vol. I, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul 2001, p. 39.

2 The account of the Lepanto campaign, by Alessandro Barbero notes that the Ottoman fleet was depleted by deaths and desertions. In July a Venetian slave reported that although it was generally free of infectious disease, people were dying from many other causes. Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits, and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World*, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 159, 164-165.

3 For a general view see Andrew C. Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto and its Place in Mediterranean History", *Past and Present*, 57 (1972), 53-73. For the Ottoman view see: Halil Inalcik, "Lepanto in the Ottoman Documents", *Il Mediterraneo nella seconda met del '500 alla luce di Lepanto*, ed. G. Benzoni, Florence 1974, pp. 185-192; Onur Yıldırım, "The Battle of Lepanto and its Impact on Ottoman History and Historiography", *Mediterraneo in armi/secc XV-XVIII*, ed. C. Rossella, v. 2, Palermo 2007, pp. 533-556.

4 Article 21 of the Treaty signed in Rome stated that none of the parties could act independently to negotiate peace with the Sublime Porte. Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, p. 154.

5 See for example: M. Lesure, *Lepante; la crise de l'empire ottoman*, Paris 1972, pp. 149-164.

The tense situation in the Mediterranean that preceded the battle of Lepanto has its documented reflection in the confrontation of the populations with the imperial center. Especially in the coastal areas in the Peloponnese and along the Albanian and Dalmatian coasts where the main uprisings took place immediately before and after the battle of Lepanto<sup>6</sup>. The agitation also characterized the province of Himara, where the dominant mountain relief and the proximity to Venetian Corfu and Spanish Calabria and the distance from Ottoman Vlorë were essential factors<sup>7</sup>.

On the other hand, because of the fact that for Venice, Lepanto was not a victory, rather the battle simply ended the chain of Venetian losses in the Adriatic, in the Mediterranean, a different mood could be detected which was instead defensive towards the Ottomans. In this sense, Venice was the state that lost more than any other state in the war.

Of course, for Venice, the victory in Lepanto was celebrated with festivities, just as in many parts of Western Europe where a battle would be commemorated in art and literature for years and decades to come<sup>8</sup>. And this, is probably the most enduring legacy of the victory. N. Malcolm observes the idea that the victory was very important psychologically, as it showed Western Christendom that the Ottomans were not invincible. Yet, this is not a strong argument because there had been other famous Ottoman defeats, such as the recent defeat in Malta in 1565, which had been a colossal humiliation for the Ottomans<sup>9</sup>.

By the beginning of 1573, Venice had been at war for three years and as well as suffering territorial losses, it was estimated to have spent 10 million ducats in total while the commerce of their rivals, the Ragusans boomed during these war years. According to the final agreement, which was concluded on 7 March 1573, Venice was obliged to pay a lump sum of 300,000 ducats, the same as in 1540 at the end of the previous conflict. The peace treaty stated, among other things, that Sopot was to remain under the administration of the Sultan as well as Bar and Ulcinj<sup>10</sup>. Venice was also obliged to hand back Margariti and the fortress in the

6 Lesure argues that Ottoman interest in the Balkan uprisings was directed at three regions: a) areas in northern Albania and Montenegro; b) the western area of Epirus; and c) the Ohrid region. Lesure, *Lepante: crise de l'empire ottoman*, p. 69.

7 Kenneth M. Setton, "The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571), Volume IV, the Sixteenth Century", *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society*, Volume 162, Philadelphia 1984, p. 395; J. K. Hassiotis, "Ἡ ἐπανάστασις τῶν Χιμαριωτῶν στα 1570 καί ἡ ἀλωση τοῦ Σοποτοῦ, Ἡπειρωτικὴ Ἑστία, 13, 1968, pp. 256-276; Ricardo Cereza Martinez, *Las Armadas de Felipe II*, Editorial San Martin, Madrid 1988, p. 214; J. M. Floristan, "Contactos de la Chimarra con el reino de Napoles (s. XIV-com. XVII)", *Epirotika hronika*, t. 30 (1992), Ioannina, p. 102.

8 Hess, "The Battle of Lepanto and its Place in Mediterranean History", p. 53.

9 Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, p. 172.

10 ASV, Commemorativi, XXIV, n. 6; Maria Pia Pedani, I "Documenti Turchi" dell'Archivio di Stato di Venezia. *Inventario della miscellanea*, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, 1994, doc. 818. 7 marzo 1573. "Il bailo Mercantonio Barbaro esprime il desiderio della Repubblica di concludere la pace... Il sultano accetta alle seguenti condizioni, contenute nell'esposto del bailo: la Repubblica pagherà 300.000 ducati come stabilito nelle capitolazioni del 1540 e consegnerà il castello di Sopot con le artiglierie... i confini in Albania e in Bosnia saranno quelli di prima della guerra... Il sultano si impegna a mantenere la pace a patto che Venezia la osservi e non porti aiuto ai suoi nemici."

Mani. On their side, the Ottomans confirmed to the Venetians the commercial privileges previously held in the Ottoman markets, the restitution of the ships captured during the war and most importantly and interestingly the protection of Venice from any eventual attack by the Spanish fleet<sup>11</sup>.

With the collapse of the League, the Ottoman navy was now the dominant force in the eastern half of the Mediterranean. Once peace with Venice was reached, the Ottoman navy could engage in the distant waters of the Western Mediterranean. The rebuilt Ottoman fleet which appeared off La Goletta in the second week of July 1574, and which reconquered Tunis under the Spaniards, consisted of between 250 and 300 ships, carrying more than 40,000 soldiers<sup>12</sup>.

Due to this, from 1573, the Republic of Venice abandoned the European coalition, returning to a policy of good neighborliness with the Ottomans, a policy that lasted until the Venetian-Ottoman war for Crete (1644-1669). The naval policy of Venice was primarily concerned with the protection of trade routes and the usual policy involved cooperation, not conflict.

One of the most important impacts that the Battle of Lepanto had in Europe was the return of the zeal for the planning of anti-Ottoman operations. One of the first projects planned after Lepanto was the anonymous Italian project of 1572. The over-optimistic mood of the time is clearly seen in the campaign being presented as completely safe. ("Lo confermo esser la ditta Impresa molto necessaria, facile, et senza ueruno periculo".) Interestingly enough even the spatial coordinates of this operation are linked to the same geography where the Holy League victory happened. Thus, the attack would start from Epirus<sup>13</sup>.

In this optimistic climate that accompanied and followed the Battle of Lepanto in March 1572, a Spaniard, Esteban Lopez d' Avila, who had fled Istanbul, announced with great certainty that all of Rumelia and "the Greek and Albanian provinces were waiting for sir Don Juan with a great desire to go against the Turks, and they express it openly"<sup>14</sup>. The combination of a local uprising and an invasion by the forces of the League was what the Ottoman authorities were most afraid of. Soon after the Battle of Lepanto the Himariots were actively collaborating with Venice, and rebels in the Dukagjin area were coordinating their

11 Marie Viallon, "Réception et conséquences politiques de Lépante à Venise", 2001, halshs-005654638, p. 8. "La conséquence la plus forte et la plus paradoxale de la Sainte Ligue de 1571 est de renforcer les options anti-espagnole et anti-pontificale de la République de Venise", *ibid.*, p. 11.

12 Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 190-191.

13 *Discorso dedicato al Beatissimo et santissimo Papa Pio Quinto circa il modo riuscibile et sicv per far rimpresa et cruciata contra il gran Turco...* T. G. Djuvara, *Cent projets de partage de la Turquie (1281-1913)*, Librairie Félix Alcan, Paris 1914, pp. 106-113.

14 "toda la Romelia y provincias de Griegos y Arnautes esperan al señor Don Juan con grandissimo deseo para levantarse contra el Turco, y lo dizen publicamente, solamente demandan armas y hombres de gobierno". A. Ciorănescu, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor cu lese din arhivele de la Simancas*, Bukuresht 1940, p. 56.

actions with the Venetians in Kotor. The Dukagjini highlanders attacked Lezha and took it, albeit temporarily. Then, in coordination with a section of the Venetian forces located in Ulcinj, they attacked Shkodra<sup>15</sup>. Another revolt had broken out just before the battle, in the east-central Albanian region between Elbasan and Ohrid. In Greece, several new uprisings took place both on the mainland and in the archipelago. An important figure in these efforts was the Archbishop of Ohrid, Joakim, who in the years 1573-1574 was involved in talks and projects with the aim of conducting an uprising against the Ottomans in favor of Spain<sup>16</sup>.

Even during those periods when Venice was in temporary conflict with the Ottomans, Venice's support for local movements and their promotion was fragile, sporadic, and temporary, thus failing to keep a genuine tradition alive. Being the only state that lost during the Holy League war of 1570-1573 and sharing maritime and land borders with the Ottoman Empire, Venice adamantly pursued its policy against any kind of movement of the peoples of the Balkans for an armed uprising. This Venetian realpolitik attitude that lasted for more than seven decades, was decisive in that important actions against the Ottomans were not carried out by the local populations of the Balkans. Interestingly, the Battle of Lepanto was followed not only by the longest lasting peace that had ever existed between Venice and the Ottomans, and the revival of anti-Ottoman projects, but also from the last quarter of the sixteenth century by the fact that the bearing of firearms by the *reyas* became a widespread phenomenon<sup>17</sup>.

One of the most overlooked aspects in the study of Venetian-Ottoman relations is that when it is emphasized that the Signoria was opposed and discouraged to any project coming out of the Balkan populations, and to any initiative by another state, the reason given is usually that this was influenced only by the need for the Republic of Venice to maintain its trade network in the East and the treaties with the Ottoman Empire where it also enjoyed great trade privileges. Undoubtedly trade played its role in the state policy of Venice and the Ottoman market was an immeasurable economic opportunity<sup>18</sup>.

We must add to this the impossibility of finding this security in any Christian state, precisely because of their instability towards the Ottomans. The Ottomans were also very aware of this. In the words of the Ottoman Grand Vizier, Sokollu "his lord had strength enough to resist all of them, and to make war in many places at the same time; and besides, he knew perfectly well how little trust Venice could put in Christian princes."<sup>19</sup>

15 *Qëndresa e popullit shqiptar kundër sundimit osman nga shek. XVI deri në fillim të shek... XVIII (dokumente Osmane)*, Përgatitur nga Selami Pulaha, Tiranë 1978, dok. (51), 15 December 1570.

16 Ioannis Hassiotis, "Ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Αχρίδος Γεωργίου και οι συνωμοτικές κινήσεις στη βορειο Ήπειρο (1572-1576)", *Μακεδονικά*, nr. 6 (1964), p. 244; Andrei Pippidi, *Hommes et idées du Sud-est européen à l'aube de l'âge moderne*, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, București 1980, p. 36; Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 178-179.

17 H. İnalcık, "The Socio-Political Effects of the Diffusion of Fire-arms in the Middle East", *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, ed. V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp, London 1975, pp. 195 and 197.

18 Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, JHU Press, 1973, p. 304.

19 Malcolm, *Agents of Empire*, p. 153.

For Venice the only way to secure her dominions was the establishment of a bilateral relationship with Istanbul, which, despite the occasional ups and downs, constitutes one of the most stable relations in their entire history. Even though during the history of Venice there were 11 wars with the Ottomans, nine of them fell within the period of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>20</sup>. In a way the Venetians held the *de facto* privilege of the “preferred state” in relations with the Ottomans<sup>21</sup>.

The Venetians had a much closer understanding of the Ottoman power and therefore could follow a much self-confident policy towards the Ottomans. For the Europeans in general, the idea of an Ottoman goal for a universal empire was a widespread belief. In 1531 Archduke Ferdinand I wrote to his brother Charles V, stating that the sultan was aiming to “extend his dominion and place the whole world under him.” However, forty years later, the Venetian bailiff Marcantonio Barbaro would consider it inconceivable that the Ottoman Empire could become “a universal monarchy.”<sup>22</sup>

In the climate of the revival of the anti-Ottoman projects, most of the projects originated from, or had as a focus, the areas bordering the fluid contact zone between the Ottomans and the Spaniards in the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea, thus, generally involving populations that presented some “frontiered” features, such as the Mani peninsula and the Epirotic coast. Although these regions were not classified as the frontier areas of the Ottoman Empire, they had common borders with other enemy states’ territory, and they developed a rebellious mentality and particularly close connections with the enemy<sup>23</sup>.

### Venetians and Ottomans. From rivals to political and trading partners

Throughout the period under consideration, Venice maintained a pragmatic position combining ambitious political and trade positions that led it to sign trade treaties with the Ottoman Empire. This allowed Venice free, almost exclusive access to the Mediterranean area ruled by the Ottomans. After the end of the first frontal war between the Venetians and the Ottomans in 1479, Venice, already liberated from the rivalry of Genoa, managed to maintain Adriatic rule and be one of the strongest trading and military powers in the Mediterranean<sup>24</sup>.

20 1463-1479; 1499-1502; 1537-1540; 1570-1573; 1645-1669; 1684-1699 dhe 1714-1718. Egidio Ivetic, *Adriatico orientale. Atlante storico di un litorale mediterraneo*, Centro di Ricerche Storiche, Rovinj 2014, p. 88.

21 Kristof Glamann, “The Changing Patterns of Trade”, in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, Volume V, ed. E. E. Rich and C. H. Wilson, Cambridge University Press, 1977, f. 221; Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, p. 305.

22 Eugenio Albèri ed., *Relazioni degli ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, ser. 3, vol. I, p. 301; Noel Malcolm, *Useful enemies. Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2019, p. 68.

23 Gábor Ágoston, “A Flexible Empire: Authority and its Limits on the Ottoman Frontiers”, *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 9 (2003), 15-31.

24 Gino Luzzatto, *Storia economica. L'età moderna*, Padova 1938, f. 70.

Restoring peace between the Venetians and the Ottomans would inevitably bring about a slowdown in the pace and energy of local anti-Ottoman efforts. This means that in such foreign states these efforts found a vital support. In this respect the Venetians were the most important actors who could promote or extinguish local efforts. The appearance of peace on the horizon was accompanied by increased vigilance of the Venetian authorities so that the populations under their influence were restrained in time, so as not to disturb the peace.

Discouragement of the Republic to local movements that were considered to disrupt interstate relations took on visible and energetic proportions when needed. These measures included the sabotage of such movements, demands not to rebel, and even the persecution, imprisonment, murder, poisoning or disappearance of key leaders, or even the military suppression of these movements. The costs of such confrontations were colossal and the political benefits controversial. Moreover, and above all, these confrontations damaged the essence and the strongest point of the Venetian power: trade<sup>25</sup>.

But the sixteenth century Adriatic was no longer a Venetian “gulf”. The Ottomans and Spaniards were not the only actors that were added to the Adriatic navigation scene in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Dubrovnik made efforts to expand trade in the Black Sea through the grain market in Istanbul, and occasionally in Albania<sup>26</sup>. Another challenge to Venetian supremacy in the Adriatic in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was posed by Ancona<sup>27</sup>. To these state fleets were added the increasing presence of the corsairs especially along the Albanian and Dalmatian coasts, where the Uskoks of Senj were active in the last decades of the sixteenth century and first two decades of the seventeenth century<sup>28</sup>.

However, from Istanbul’s perspective, the alliance of the Venetians with the Spaniards was clearly seen as a move against the Ottomans. This is emphasized by the grand Vizier Lutfi Pasha in a letter of December 1539 when he called the Venetians responsible for the damages caused to their own citizens by allying with the Spaniards<sup>29</sup>.

25 Eric Dursteler, “Commerce and coexistence: Veneto-Ottoman trade in the Early Modern Era”, *Turcica*, 34 (2002), pp. 105-133.

26 Bogumil Hrabak, “Izvozi žitarica iz osmanlijskog carstva u XIV, XV i XVI stoleću”, *Zajednica naučnih ustanova Kosova studije*, Knjiga 20, Prishtina 1971, p. 635.

27 Philippe Braunstein, “À propos de l’Adriatique, entre le XVIe et le XVIIIe siècle”, *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*. 26e année, N. 6, 1971, pp. 1270-1278.

28 On the Uskok issue and importance for the Veneto-Ottoman relations see: Idris Bostan, *Adriyatik’te Korsanlık: Osmanlılar, Uskoklar, Venedikliler, 1575-1620*, Timas Yayınları, Istanbul 2009.

29 “[Il gran visir] Lütüfi e [il visir] Mehmed al doge [Pietro Lando]. *Venne comunicato al sultano che Tommaso Contarini ha dichiarato che Venezia intende stipulare la pace. I veneziani, preferendo la guerra, si sono resi responsabili dei danni causati ai musulmani. Il doge volle egli stesso la rovina del suo paese alleandosi con la Spagna. Moltissimi sovrani ambiscono invano l’amicizia del potente sultano, che ha sempre bene accolto gli amici sinceri come per esempio il re di Francia... Dipende dal doge avere o no la pace.*”, *I documenti turchi*, nr. 410, 4 Dicembre 1539.

Even the policy pursued by Venice, which in the Italian courts was portrayed as not religiously motivated (*siamo veneziani, poi cristiani*) had its own political justification<sup>30</sup>. Venice had managed to find a *modus vivendi* with its Ottoman neighbors, which in fact, constituted one of the most interesting aspects of international politics of the time. It was undoubtedly to their merit that for a long time they secured their possessions in the Balkans from political and military superpowers like the Ottoman Empire. Given this situation, the level of care and/or fear of the Venetians of the new European rivals who from time to time intervened in this area, endangering the *status quo* achieved between the Venetians and the Ottomans, is understandable.

### The Rivalry between Spaniards and Venetians in the Adriatic

While in the Mediterranean and in Europe the Franco-Spanish rivalry was seen as a major and main obstacle in uniting and creating an anti-Ottoman front in the Adriatic, it became an enduring feature of Venetian-Spanish rivalry.

For the Spaniards the main concern was not the expansion into the east Adriatic coast, but the protection from any repetition of the Otranto episode. The only action of the Spaniards on the Albanian coast was the attack on Durrës at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This attack was carried out by a Spanish squadron led by the Marquis of Santa Cruz, D. Alvaro de Bazán<sup>31</sup>. After taking with them 150 slaves as well as a whole arsenal of cannons from the city castle, they turned back towards the Italian coast<sup>32</sup>. In that case, it was clear that they had no long-term action strategy on the Albanian coast. The Ottoman-Spanish confrontation in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic had always had the character of a naval conflict, and very rarely was any internal invasion attempted by either side.

Part of this Venetian-Spanish rivalry was receiving and transmitting information about the other side's movements. Venetian ambassadors and consuls, in general, were very careful in collecting such data. Throughout the 16th century the Spaniards continued to be aware of and in contact with certain collaborators and agents on the Balkan coasts, but at the beginning of the 17th century they managed to undertake concrete actions. This had to do with the situation of the conflict between the Austrian crown of the Habsburgs and the Ottomans during the Thirteen Years' War or the Long Habsburg-Ottoman War between 1593 and 1606.

30 Philip Longworth, *The Rise and Fall of Venice*, Constable, London 1974, p. 153.

31 He took part in most of the naval battles of the reigns of Philip III and Philip IV, as commander-in-chief of the Portuguese navy (1579), those of Naples (1603), Spain (1616), etc.

32 ASV, Dispacci Corfù, b. 5 (1604-1606): report from the Bailio Aluise Basadonna, Corfu, 11 August 1606; Injac Zamputi, Zamputi, *Dokumente të shekujve XVI-XVII për Historinë e Shqipërisë, Vëllimi I (1507-1592)*, Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë, 1989, vol. III, f. 63, 64; Ardian Muhaj, *Nga Ballkani në Mesdhe. Shqiptarët nga mesjeta në agimin e kohës së re*, Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Tirana 2019, pp. 103-104.



In 1606, when it seemed that the Spanish intervention in the Ottoman territories in the Adriatic and Ionian was reaching serious proportions, the efforts of the Venetians to follow the situation increased. The Spanish threat to the Adriatic took on much more serious proportions than if they had been directed against Ottoman targets in the Eastern Mediterranean. In August of that year, the ambassador of Venice addressed to Spain a letter to the Council of Ten announcing the letters of some prelates from Albania who were directed to incite the Spaniards in an undertaking to support anti-Ottoman movements in Albania and the Balkans<sup>33</sup>.

It is difficult to say, however, who instigated whom. The Venetians tended to blame the locals for their rapprochement with the Spaniards, but in fact, the Venetian documentation itself proves that the initiatives came from the Spaniards themselves in most cases. The Habsburgs did not stop looking for allies in the Ottoman territories in their war with the Ottomans which had already been going on for over a decade at different rates<sup>34</sup>.

For their part, the Spanish collaborators themselves did not make much difference in terms of loyalty to the Spaniards or the Venetians. It happened that the Venetians themselves noticed that these agents or collaborators had previously been in the service of the Venetians themselves and had now passed into the service of the Spaniards<sup>35</sup>. The movements of the representatives arriving from the Ottoman territories did not go unnoticed and were reported in detail<sup>36</sup>.

Naturally the care and concern of the Venetians for the actions and intentions of the Spaniards had a clear aim, which was to protect their territory from Spanish interference and to protect at all costs their interests in the Adriatic threatened by the Spaniards. Even if the Spaniards did not directly attack the Venetian territories or economic interests in the Adriatic, Spanish interventions in those territories would bring a concentration of Ottoman military

33 ASV, Communicate del Consiglio dei X, filza 3; Jovan. N. Tomić, *Gradja za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu protiv Turaka krajem XVI i početkom XVII veka; po italijanskim Arhivama skupio*, Knj. I (god. 1595-1606 – Mletački Drzhavni Arkiv). Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, Beograd 1933, 1, dok. nr. CCXV (p. 251), f. 349-350. 16 August 1606.

34 The Venetian ambassador to Naples informed the Senate in a detailed report about the efforts of the vice-chancellor of Naples to activate people to make agreements with the bishop of Stefania, Nikolle Mekajshi, and other Albanian leaders, to start the uprising, which was expected to be supported by the Spanish fleet. ASV, Senato secreta, Dispacci Napoli, filza anno 1606; Tomić, *Grada za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu*, 1, Dok. nr. 218 (254), f. 353-357. 21 November 1606.

35 The Venetian representative in Naples informed the Senate that the one who had uncovered the Budva conspiracy was Nikola Stanisha of Bar, a former flag bearer in the service of the Republic, “and today is in the service of Naples.” The latter promised that if he was pardoned, he would serve the interests of the Republic. ASV, Senato secreta, Dispacci Napoli, filza anno 1606; Tomić, *Grada za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu*, 1, Dok. nr. CCXXI (257), f. 362-366. 5 December 1606.

36 A Venetian report from Naples specified that one of the elders of the region of Vlora had arrived in Naples and offered to show the way how to conquer the castle of Vlora. ASV, Senato secreta, Deliberazioni Napoli, filza anno 1606; Tomić, *Grada za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu*, 1, Dok. nr. CCXXIII (260), f. 373-374. 12 December 1606.

forces and thus a complication of the situation. Therefore, the former bishop of Curzola, persuaded the Viceroy to leave the Klish enterprise, for this “would cause the Turks to be more zealously placed in the guard of their forts.”<sup>37</sup>

One of the strategies successfully pursued by the Venetians was to prevent Spanish interference in the territories of Venetian political rule or in their economic zone. The Spaniards had no problem even aiming to conquer the Venetian castles. On December 5, 1606, Anton Kaboga from Ragusa presented the project where initially 15 thousand men were to be secured, entering talks with Gardan Vojvoda from Niksic, as well as with Albanian and Bosnian leaders<sup>38</sup>.

On December 16, 1606, the Venetian senate informed the general inspector of Dalmatia and Albania of the preparation of the enterprise on Klish and Albania by the Viceroy of Naples and the Spaniards<sup>39</sup>. For this reason, the Senate of Venice wrote to the Dalmatian *provveditore* that he had received information from Kotor “concerning the affairs of Albania and the machinations of the Spaniards for that castle (of Kotor)” and ordered him to take measures to protect the city changing and enlarging the garrison of that castle<sup>40</sup>.

In the rivalry with the Spaniards, the Venetians generally had to consider the fact that the Papacy as well as the Habsburgs maintained a constant hostility towards the Ottomans, and this caused Rome to lean towards the Spaniards in their intervention in the Venetian sphere of influence. The role of the Pope in this multiple relationship was to enable the contacts of the Spaniards with Albanian and Balkan actors from the interior, which was inaccessible to the Spaniards<sup>41</sup>.

The Pope's inclination towards the Spaniards was also reported by the Venetians themselves. Thus, the Venetian ambassador in Naples wrote to the senate on the departure of Mark Gjini for Spain to conclude an agreement on an expedition to the Balkans, which would ensure the Spaniards the conquest of Budva, Kotor and all of Albania<sup>42</sup>.

37 ASV, Senato secreta, Dispacci Napoli, filza anno 1606; Tomić, *ibid.*, Dok. nr. CCXXX (268), f. 383-386. 27 December 1606, nr. 37.

38 Zamputi, *Dokumente të shekujve XVI-XVII për Historinë e Shqipërisë*, Vëll. III (1603-1621), doc. 30, 1606, before 5 December. A project to avert Turkish forces from the Hungarian war by taking action across the Balkans by launching an uprising in various countries. p. 89.

39 Tomić, *ibid.*, vol. I. (1595-1606), dok. CCXXVI (263).

40 ASV, Senato secreta, Deliberazioni, Reg. XI, fl. 112; Tomić, *ibid.*, vol. I, dok. nr. CCXXXIV (272). 6 February 1607.

41 Zamputi, *Dokumente të shekujve XVI-XVII për Historinë e Shqipërisë*, Vëll. III (1603-1621), dok. (14): 13 May 1606, p. 55: “Pope Paul V, in a letter, conveys and presents to the King of Spain the Albanian Captain Mark Gjini and the Count of Podgorica Anton Nikolla, who are the representatives of the insurgent populations of the Balkans”.

42 ASV, Senato secreta, Dispacci Napoli, filza anno 1606; Tomić, *Gradja za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu*, I, dok. nr. CCXII (248), 6 June 1606.

Here, we undoubtedly have a case where those recommended by the Pope were willing to cooperate with the Spaniards not only in an uprising against the Ottomans, but also in the conquest of Venetian territories by the Spaniards. This impression and threat of the Spaniards targeting Venetian possessions in the Adriatic is conveyed by the general director of Dalmatia and Albania, who informed the Senate about the efforts of the Spaniards for the enterprise in Albania and about the measures taken by him and other Venetian governors<sup>43</sup>.

What should be noted is that the Venetians were very difficult to defeat in the sphere of information gathering as it always turns out that they were many steps ahead of the Spaniards, at least in the Balkans. They even made lists of Albanian and other allies who had agreements with the Spaniards<sup>44</sup>.

Spanish projects were by no means modest though, they were inflated and mostly adventurous. An example of this is the announcement that the general director made to the senate at the end of March 1607 about a conspiratorial plan for Shkodra to be handed over to the Spaniards, etc.<sup>45</sup>

All these complicated relations between the Spaniards and the Venetians were summarized by an outside observer - the Polish ambassador to Naples - who, announcing the representative of Venice, Agostino Dolce, had confirmed to him "the intention of the Spaniards to enter the Gulf of Venice to go over to Albania" and had made many remarks on the danger to the Republic if that happened. According to him, the Spaniards had spent "with spies, gifts and weapons that they have recently sent to that province, more than two hundred thousand ducats, in addition to the many people of that nation who are kept here with good salaries, and these to believe that the Spaniards will not want to waste all that money in vain"<sup>46</sup>.

What stands out in Venice's attitude towards the Ottoman-Spanish confrontation is the great care to avoid armed conflict with the Spaniards, but at the same time the high readiness for any Spanish movement. The situation resembles a cold war between two Christian rivals. In 1607 the captain-in-chief was instructed that if the Spaniards were to ask him for the cause of this naval demonstration, he should tell them that it was "for the safety of navigation and

43 To escape the Spanish danger, he required the authorization and appropriate means to capture the ship of a certain captain named Dolist, who had arrived in Albania and was believed to be working for the Spanish. Tomić, *ibid.*, dok. CCXXXIX (278), 11 March 1607.

44 ASV, Senato secreta, Dispacci del provved. gener. in Dalmazia ed Albania, filza anno 1607; Tomić, *ibid.*, I, dok. nr. CCXLV (292), f. 423-424. Marc 1607. For preventive care of the Venetian governors, the Senate congratulates the Kotor *provveditore* who had arrested suspicious people. ASV, Senato secreta, Deliberazioni, Reg. 98, fl. 13; Tomić, *ibid.*, dok. nr. CCXL (285), f. 412-413. 20 March 1607.

45 ASV, Senato secreta, Dispacci del provved. gener. in Dalmazia ed Albania, filza anno 1607; Tomić, *ibid.*, nr. CCXLV (292), f. 421. 29 March 1607. List of names of Albanian and other allies who have made agreements with the Spaniards.

46 ASV, Senato secreta, Dispacci Napoli filza anno 1607; Tomić, *ibid.*, I, nr. CCLIV (311), 22 May 1607.

for other services”<sup>47</sup>. The Senate, seeing the preparations of the Spaniards “who have a special purpose to attempt an enterprise in Albania, in Kastelnovo, Vlora or other nearby places”, and thinking that even the Turks should take the necessary measures for their protection, gave a more precise order to the *provveditore* of Kotor to “take the greatest care for the security and good guard of that fortress” in the face of the Spanish danger and the danger that could come from the Turks<sup>48</sup>.

## Peace disturbers and their punishers

For states in general and for those who lived mainly on trade, peace was a great boon which they regarded as essential to their political survival and social tranquility. For peace and in its name, such states, especially Venice, Genoa or Ragusa were willing to make difficult compromises. For the sake of peace, the Venetians guarded those who intended to undermine Ottoman power, collaborating with the Ottomans in punishing them<sup>49</sup>.

The most interesting aspect of the situation was that the years that characterize the period of peace between the Ottoman Empire and Venice from the last quarter of the sixteenth century to the war of Crete are characterized by an increased social unrest in Anatolia, while the European part of the Empire was much calmer. Even in areas that were prone to uprisings such as the region of Himara in Southern Albania, there is visible a dynamic of decreased intensity of social unrest<sup>50</sup>. The *Celali* movement and the years 1595-1610 are especially described as a period of great domestic disturbance<sup>51</sup>.

Even before Lepanto, Venice was careful about the consequences of the local uprisings that could impact their relationships with the Ottomans. In 1550, the Himariots who had planned to attack the Ottoman garrisons, overseeing the construction of two fortresses near them, asked the Venetians for permission to send their families to Corfu, but the Venetians refused<sup>52</sup>. After Lepanto, this policy became a norm for Venice, and was kept unaltered until the war of Candia.

47 ASV, Senato secreta, Deliberazioni R. 98, fl. 52; 9 June 1607.

48 ASV, Senato secreta, Deliberazioni R. 99, fl. 24-25; 6 June 1608.

49 Excerpts from an anonymous report: Albanians' natural willingness to revolt against the sultan is thwarted by the Venetians who reveal to the Turks talks of an agreement on their expulsion from the country. AV, Borghese 126, H. 1, f. 269-270; Zamputi, *Dokumente të shekujve XVI- XVII për historinë e Shqipërisë*. Vëllimi II, (1593-1602), nr.174.

50 This dynamic is summarized by Floristan, “Contactos de la Chimarra con el reino de Napoles”, pp. 117-118, concluding that the activity of the Himariots “*fue decreciendo poco a poco. Si exceptuamos el breve contacto indirecto de 1596, las relaciones con España no se reanudaron hasta 1603, aunque con mucho menor intensidad*”.

51 Emecen, “From the founding to Küçük Kaynarca”, p. 44, describes this as a situation where “Anatolia was virtually in flames”, with revolts that under the leadership of powerful rebel beys and pashas, such as the Karayazıcı and Kalenderoğlu actually taking the form of major oppositions to state authority. Furthermore Canbolatoğlu and Maanoğlu revolts which took place in the Syrian and Lebanon regions took the form of “wars of independence”.

52 “[...]. Che li populi della Cimeria in Albania intendendo che i Turchi disegnavano far' due fortezze a confini loro per tenerli in freno, cercavano di mandare le donne loro a Corfù quando li Signori di Venetia se ne contentassino i quali han resoluti di non le volere, per conservar la capitulatione col Turco.” ASF, Fondi Mediceo del Principato, Vol. 397a, fl. 706, 28 June 1550.

Just as conflicts had their victims and their consequences, so keeping peace often had its costs and victims. One of these victims of the Venetian-Ottoman peace was an Albanian captain who was executed by Venice in 1595<sup>53</sup>. The number of those being tracked down, persecuted, arrested, imprisoned, poisoned, or executed by the Venetians was so great that a false impression was created as if the insurgents were being punished more by the Venetians than by the Ottomans themselves. This is, in fact, inaccurate but is known because of the more abundant Venetian documentation.

To keep the situation under control the Venetians invested heavily in information networks. This was true, especially during conflicts on the border of the Venetian domain. In October 1595, the *provveditore* sent to Venice the minutes regarding the questions and answers of an informant who had revealed the efforts being made to organize an uprising in Albania<sup>54</sup>. This set in motion the Venetian administration, and in harsher and more concrete words a few days later, the Senate sent a letter ordering the arrest and deportation to Venice of the leaders who made agreements for the organization of the armed movement in Albania<sup>55</sup>. Simultaneously with this letter, the Senate instructed the *provveditore* of Kotor to give the necessary assistance to the fleet so that he could arrest the leaders, etc., who made agreements for the armed uprising<sup>56</sup>. The message was repeated to the rector of Kotor on the issue of arresting the leaders and to persuade the informant to continue to persuade the Albanian leaders to postpone another armed uprising for a while<sup>57</sup>.

This last request to postpone the uprising for another time is a proof of how safe the Venetians felt in the face of these movements and how they demanded everything in accordance with the dynamics of their intentions.

Thus, after following the movements of Tome Plezha, Mark Gjini and the bishop of Curzola two months after the discovery of the intended uprising, the governor of Kotor was instructed on how to act for their arrest<sup>58</sup>. However, it seems that they had realized that they were being tracked down by the Venetians and avoided entering the territories of Venice. For this reason, the Council of Ten instructed the representative of the Republic in Naples to find a way to

53 The Council of Ten decides to execute the Albanian captain Cezar Kapucimadi. Vladimir Lamansky, *Secrets de l'etat de Venise, Secrets d'Etat de Venise. Documents, extraits, notices et etudes servant à éclaircir les rapports de la Seigneurie avec les grecs, les slaves et la Porte Ottomane à la fin du XVe et au XVIe siècles*, Saint-Petersbourg 1884, dok. 71, pp. 112-114; *Dokumente të shekujve XVI- XVII*, Vëllimi II, (1593-1602), nr. 12, 19 February 1595.

54 ASV, Senato Secreta. Disp. rett. e provv. Dalm, e Alb, filza a 1595; Lamansky, *Secrets de l'etat de Venise*, p. 498. 10 October 1595.

55 ASV, *Senato Secreta, Delib. Roma. Reg. 10, f. 146v*; Tomić, *Gradja za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu protiv Turaka*, vol. 1, Dok. V(7), f. 9-10. 14 October 1495.

56 ASV, *Senato Secreta, Delib, Roma, Reg. 10, f. 150v-151*; Tomić, *ibid.*, Dok. VI (8), f. 10-11. 14 October 1595.

57 ASV, *Senato Secreta, Delib, Roma, Reg. 10, f. 150*; Tomić, *ibid.*, Dok. VII(9), f. 11-12. 18 October 1595.

58 ASV, *Senato Secreta, Delib, Roma, Reg. 10, f. 170*; Tomić, *ibid.*, Dok. IX(11), f. 13-14. 2 December 1595.

persuade Mark and John Gjini to return to the places of Venetian domination. If he failed, he was instructed to find the best way to physically eliminate them<sup>59</sup>. Despite this effort and despite this permission and instruction for their assassination, in February 1596 they continued to evade the decision assigned to them by the Senate. In February, the Council of Ten instructed the Venetian secretary in Naples to put a man to spy on the Gjini brothers and make every effort to persuade them to return to Venetian rule<sup>60</sup>. Seeing that the conspirators continued to move freely and refused to return to the possessions of Venice, the Senate wrote to its representative in Rome about the excuses he had made to Cardinal S. Giorgio in relation to the bishop of Curzola, the knight Plezha and Mark Gjini, stating that the efforts of the leaders of the movement against the Ottomans constituted “a great danger and turmoil” for Venice<sup>61</sup>.

The suspicions that in the meantime Plezha had been quietly executed in prison turned out to be untrue, although this had to do with someone else, about whom no more is known<sup>62</sup>. In fact, the number of those whom Venice persecuted as troublemakers became quite large and the insistence of the Signoria on their punishment became more and more concrete. In January 1597 we learn that the Venetian secretary in Naples had received a firm order to kill or poison the two brothers Mark and John Gjini. However, he announced that it was impossible for him to approach them to carry out their execution or poisoning<sup>63</sup>.

The issue of punishing troublemakers had gone to the highest religious instances of the Catholic religion. As early as September 1596 we learn that the pope himself had intervened with the Venetian ambassador in Rome to pardon Tome Plezha and Mark Gjini<sup>64</sup>. However, Venice insisted on punishing them, and in a document a month later instructions were given to the Venetian ambassador in Rome on how to respond to the pope and cardinals regarding the impossibility of pardoning them<sup>65</sup>.

Another case a few months later concerns another Albanian being arrested and interrogated<sup>66</sup>. In May 1596 this person named Pal Kryqi was interrogated twice in the

59 Lamansky, *Secrets de l'etat de Venise*, pp. 109-110, dok. LXIX (1). 8 January 1596.

60 Lamansky, *ibid.*, p. 110, Dok. LXIX(-3). 9 February 1596.

61 ASV, Senato Secreta, Deliberazioni Roma, Reg. 10, f. 197v; Tomić, *Gradja za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu*, vol. I, Dok. XVIII(21), f. 25. 17 February 1596.

62 “It was said that during these days a man was secretly killed, but it is not believed to be him [Plezha]”. *Dokumente të shekujve XVI- XVII*, vëll. II, (1593-1602), nr.108, 24 August 1596.

63 ASV, Capi Cons., dei X, Lettere di ambas. ecc. (Napoli) busta 19; *Dokumente të shekujve XVI- XVII*, vëll. II, (1593-1602), nr.130. 24 January 1597.

64 From a report by the Venetian ambassador on the pope's intervention to apologize to Tome Plezha, Mark Gjini and other leaders who wanted to organize the uprising in Albania. ASV, Senato Secreta, Dispacci Roma, filza 38; *Dokumente të shekujve XVI- XVII*, vëll. II, (1593-1602), nr. 117. 28 September 1596.

65 ASV, Senato Secreta, Deliberazioni Roma, Reg. 11, f. 96; *Dokumente të shekujve XVI- XVII*, vëll. II, (1593-1602), nr. 119. 5 October 1596.

66 The procurator informs Venice about the affairs of Klish and shows that the Albanian Pal Kryqi arrived there by a Neapolitan ship and that he set people to investigate his actions. *Dokumente të shekujve XVI- XVII*, vëll. II, (1593-1602), nr. 76. 21 May 1596.

presence of the Venetian general inspector. He had been sent by the Viceroy of Naples for the case of Klish. He was finally arrested and while he was being tied up, he said: “Glory to God I have a good master who [will protect] me if something bad happens to me. When asked who this master was, he replied: The King of Spain”<sup>67</sup>. This assurance that he whom he served was a strong ruler (master) is of interest to understand the point of view of the protagonists of these movements. He was right and seemed to understand the situation well. A few weeks later, the Venetian secretary in Naples was informed about the mission of this Paul and that he was rightly arrested. But since he was a hireling of the Kingdom of Naples, in honor of the King of Spain, an order was given to release him and to return the letters that had been seized from him, but “reprimanding him let him do his work out of our sight and hide himself in such a way that our peace with our neighbors is not disturbed”<sup>68</sup>.

The influence of Venice in thwarting the uprising-instigated attempts of the Habsburgs and the papacy extended throughout the period of the Ottoman-Austrian war of 1593-1606 and is one of the most untapped aspects in studies on this subject. In April 1601, among the targets of Venice was another protagonist of these efforts, the knight Bertucci. The Council of Ten instructed the General *Provveditore* of Dalmatia to remain vigilant and follow the movements of the knight Bertucci, and most importantly, he was instructed that “if he comes to any part of our state to be caught alive or dead”<sup>69</sup>.

The attitude of Venice had already become known to all and all those involved in the struggle against the Ottomans knew that they had to be guarded by both the Ottomans and the Venetians. Thus, in July 1601, the bishop of Stephanie in Albania, sent to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini a messenger, but secretly, because otherwise the Venetians would intervene and reveal it to all the Turks<sup>70</sup>.

The Venetian information network functioned in defence of peace and in the punishment of rioters not only in the Balkans, but also followed their movements in Italy. The Venetian ambassador to Rome informed the council of the Ten about what Mark Kaloyan (Samuel) was plotting<sup>71</sup>.

67 ASV, Senato Secreta, Dispacci Proved. Gener. in Dalm. ed Alb, filza anno 1596; *Dokumente, ibid.*, nr. 77. 21 May 1596.

68 ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Reg. 91, f. 36,37; *Dokumente të shekujve XVI- XVII*, Vëllimi II, (1593-1602), nr. 85. 8 June 1596.

69 Lamansky, *Secrets de l'etat de Venise*, p. 112. 14 April 1601. Bertucci actually died 26 years later in July 1627. We learn this from his nephew Christoffero Tarnoschi who wrote to Caterina di Ferdinando I de 'Medici-Gonzaga that he had heard about a project against the Ottomans in Albania. “*Dal S.r Gasparo Scioppio mio antico amico vengo avisato come in Mantova ha trattato con V. A. a dell' imprese dell' Albania a favore del Seren.mo Gran Duca nipote di V.A. a in conformità della commissione... et della bona mem.a del Cavag.r Bertucci mio zio, che pochi giorni sono è passato da questa a miglior vita.*” Archivio di Stato di Firenze, (ASF) vol. 6113, fl. 706, 12 July 1627.

70 AV, Borghese III, 60 h, f. 75 Horvat-Glasnik XXI, dok. 70, f. 79-80, 25 July 1601.

71 ASV, Capi Cons. dei X, Lettere degli ambasciatori Roma, b. 27; Tomić, *Gradja za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu protiv Turaka 1*, dok. nr. CCIII (237), f. 326-327. 22 June 1602.

As mentioned above, the case of the bishop of Curzola on whom Venice had issued an arrest warrant, this included high religious figures such as the archbishop of Bar. In April 1601 the rector of Kotor was instructed to keep an eye on the movements of the archbishop of Bar who had gone to Budva, ostensibly to preach, but the Senate suspicions were that he had gone to prepare an uprising<sup>72</sup>.

This policy already made public, also recruited assassins who offered themselves to the Venetians to carry out executions or poisonings of troublemakers, as if they were political opponents or enemies. In September 1606, the Venetian representative in Naples notified the Council of Ten of the offer he had made to a man to cause the death of Peter Lanza in return for a ransom<sup>73</sup>.

Of course, a need also creates the offer for its fulfilment and the activation of a considerable number of agents and informants required considerable human and financial resources. In October 1606, the rector of Kotor informed Venice about the actions of Anton Petković, who, coming with money and cloth from Spain, was brought to Albania and other countries, raising suspicions that a secret agreement was being made. The rector therefore alleges that he was making efforts to arrest him<sup>74</sup>. One month after the first letter the Kotor *provveditore* informed the senate that he had tried to arrest Anton Petković, who had arrived in the port of Budva and brought money and coins for gifts, but when the Venetian ships arrived to capture him, he fled on his own ship<sup>75</sup>.

Others also fell into Venice's net even after the end of the Ottoman-Austrian war and the establishment of peace between them<sup>76</sup>. In 1609, the French ambassador wrote to his king that the Bailo of Venice in Istanbul had paid someone to kill a scapegoat who had tried to organize the uprising and then, disappointed, went to Turkey to become a Turk<sup>77</sup>.

To this added caution, the Venetians were determined in the demilitarization of that intermediate space between them and the Ottomans, especially when it came to the Albanian

72 ASV, *Senato Secreta, Deliberazioni Roma*, R. 13, fl. 77; Tomić, *ibid.*, dok. nr. CXCVII (231), f. 321. 14 April 1601.

73 Venice decides that the three prisoners: Luka Čigo from Perast, Baptist Markovic and Stefan Levarda, arrested and handed over by the Kotor's inspector, "who are involved in the affairs of Albania, be processed in Zara by the new general inspector." ASV, Inquisitori di Stato, busta 460, Dispacci Napoli, a, 1600-17. Tomić, *Gradnja za istoriju pokreta na Balkanu*, 1, dok. nr. CCXVI (252), pp. 350-352. 26 September 1606.

74 ASV, Senato secreta, Dispacci dei rett. e prov. in Dalm. e Albania filza anno 1606; Tomić, *ibid.*, dok. nr. CCXVII (253), pp. 352-353. 22 October 1606.

75 ASV, Senato secreta, Dispacci dei rett. e prov. in Dalm. etj. Albania, anno 1606; Tomić, *ibid.*, dok. nr. CCXXXII (270), pp. 387-390. 18 January 1607.

76 ASV, Senato secreta, Deliberazioni, Reg. 98 fl. 83; 28 July 1607.

77 Jean de Gontaut Biron, *Ambassade en Turquie de Jean de Gontaut-Biron, Baron de Salignac: 1605 à 1610: correspondance diplomatique et documents inédits*, publiés et annotés par le Comte Théodore de Gontaut Biron, Paris 1889, pp. 302-303. 5 September 1609.



coast where the presence and influence of the Spaniards was put into action from time to time. In support of this position, in December 1634, Venice issued orders to prevent the Himariot military from going into the service of the Spaniards, as had recently happened with about 400 men who had left<sup>78</sup>. Venice took similar steps not only in the case of the Himara area but in the whole extension of the Albanian coast<sup>79</sup>.

### The war for Crete and the return of Venetian-Ottoman hostility

The second half of the 17th century would be characterized not only by the two decades of the Candia war (1644-1669), but by the resumption of Venice's hostility with the Ottomans in the last decades of the century. After a 72-year period the international situation was a very active period of conflict in Europe, where the main conflict was the Thirty Years' War. Although trade relations continued to be normal, political relations were strained for several years before the war for Crete began<sup>80</sup>. The Venetians had feared an Ottoman invasion of Crete for almost a century<sup>81</sup>.

In contrast to the period of peace with the Ottomans, during the Venetian-Ottoman war of these years, often the provinces located near the coast and with communication links with the sea, especially the coastal mountainous areas were quite active in movements and uprisings<sup>82</sup>. This proves once again that the relatively calm situation in Rumelia during the longest Veneto-Ottoman peace owes much to Venice's struggle and commitment to keep the peace and not to foster local uprisings or foreign interventions in any way in the area. The lack of Venetian support for rebellions in Rumelia was one of the most important factors that contributed to Rumelia being spared from widespread social unrest like the *Celali* phenomenon in Anatolia.

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78 Zamputi, *Dokumente për Historinë e Shqipërisë (1623-1653)*, dok. nr. 23. 12 December 1634.

79 In 1643, Venice sought to prevent the recruiting of soldiers from Albania for the forces of Naples. Zamputi, *Dokumente për Historinë e Shqipërisë (1623-1653)*, dok. nr. 100. 1643.

80 Emecen, "From the founding to Küçük Kaynarca", p. 49.

81 Kenneth M. Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century*, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia 1991, p. 108.

82 On the anti-Ottoman projects in the Balkans during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries see: Ardian Muhaj, *Projekte kunderosmane ne shekujt XVI-XVII. Mes fantazise, interest dhe realitetit*, [Anti-Ottoman projects in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Between phantasy, interest and reality], Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Insituti i Historise, Tirana 2021.

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