

PAPERS AND MONOGRAPHS OF THE FINNISH INSTITUTE AT ATHENS VOL. XV

THESPROTIA EXPEDITION I
TOWARDS A REGIONAL HISTORY

edited
by Björn Forsén

HELSINKI 2009

© Suomen Ateenan-Instituutin säätiö (Foundation of the Finnish Institute at Athens),
Helsinki 2009

ISSN 1237-2684

ISBN 978-952-67211-0-1

Printed in Finland by Ekenäs Tryckeri.

Cover: The Early Hellenistic fortress Agios Donatos of Zervochori seen from the south.
Photo: Esko Tikkala.

Layout: Vesa Vahtikari

Contents

Preface		i
Björn Forsén	<i>An Interdisciplinary Odyssey into the Past</i>	1
Evangelos Tourloukis Ourania Palli	<i>The First Mesolithic Site of Thesprotia</i>	25
Antonia Tzortzatou Lila Fatsiou	<i>New Early Iron Age and Archaic Sites in Thesprotia</i>	39
Jeannette Forsén	<i>The ‘Dark Age’ in the Kokytos Valley – Not So Dark After All</i>	55
Mika Lavento Maria Lahtinen	<i>Geo-archaeological Investigations at Mavromandilia of Prodromi</i>	73
Irini Svana	<i>The Rural Sanctuary at Kyra Panagia</i>	89
Peter Funke	<i>Concilio Epirotarum habitato – Überlegungen zum Problem von Polyzentrisismus und Zentralorten im antiken Epirus</i>	97
Γιάννης Πίκουλας	<i>Αναζητώντας αμαξιτούς οδούς στη Θεσπρωτία</i>	113
Mikko Suha	<i>The Fortification Walls of Agios Donatos</i>	119
Esko Tikkala	<i>The Frieze-Epistyle Blocks of Agios Donatos</i>	133
Markku Niskanen	<i>A Shift in Animal Species Used for Food from the Early Iron Age to the Roman Period</i>	145
Janne P. Ikäheimo	<i>Stamped Terra Sigillata from Agios Donatos</i>	155
William Bowden	<i>Thesprotia in the Context of Roman and Late Antique Epirus</i>	167
Erkki Sironen	<i>Some Notes on Inscriptions of Roman Date from Thesprotia</i>	185
Νίκη Βασιλικού	<i>Παλαιοχριστιανική βασιλική στην Κρυσταλλοπηγή Παραμυθιάς</i>	197
Asterios Aidonis Anestis Emmanouil	<i>The People of Doliani: An Approach to the Paleodemography of the Late Byzantine Cemetery</i>	207
Mika Hakkarainen	<i>Venetian Presence in Thesprotia</i>	223
Timo Sironen	<i>An Ottoman Sepulchral Stele from Paramythia</i>	239
Evangelia Balta Fehmi Yilmaz Filiz Yaşar	<i>Tsamouria – Nineteenth Century Ottoman Thesprotia</i>	245
List of Contributors		275

Venetian Presence in Thesprotia

Mika Hakkarainen

Venise faible dans ses moyens militaires, régnait sur le continent par les divisions et la corruption. Dans sa sage politique, elle eût soin de conserver les principales échelles de la terre ferme, afin de ne pas être à la merci des volontés d'un Pacha puissant. ... Entretenir l'indépendance du Chamouri et de la Ciéra, était encore l'objet constant de la République Vénétienne, et empêcher le voisinage d'un homme puissant fut constamment la mesure de sa politique dans le Divan de Constantinople.

With these words the French consul in Ioannina, F.C.H.L. Pouqueville, in a report of 1807¹ explained the past Venetian policy vis-à-vis the Ottomans, who had been controlling most of Epirus and Thesprotia for nearly as long as Venice had been in charge of Corfu and the other Ionian islands. Pouqueville's report illustrates very well the general character of the Venetian presence in Thesprotia. Although limited in form to some scattered outposts on the Epirotic coast, the Republic's presence, especially because of Corfu, was strong enough to affect the political and commercial life of the whole region (Fig. 1) in various ways from the late Middle Ages till the end of the Republic in 1797.

In broad outlines Thesprotia can be divided into three different zones as regards the Venetian presence. First there were the Venetian outposts along the coast. Between them and the Ottoman dominion lay the unmarked border-zone that constantly was fought for. But Venetian influence stretched even further inland, into those parts of Thesprotia that belonged to the Ottoman Empire. I will here give some examples of how the Venetian presence was felt in these three zones through the centuries until the French advent on the scene put an end to this longstanding socio-political equilibrium. The purpose is thereby to give a general overview of the Venetian presence in Thesprotia during those centuries, which will serve as a framework for more detailed studies connected with the Thesprotia Expedition.

The bridgeheads on the coast

In order to secure the trade route to the Levant, vital for Venice's economy, and to control the access to the Adriatic Sea and furthermore to the Gulf of Venice, the Republic strove for acquisition of strategic posts along the route.² The most important of them was the Isle of Corfu – "porta del Golfo" – which was taken over in 1386.³ Soon it was found necessary to take over some outposts on the littoral facing Corfu in advance of the Ottoman expansion towards Epirus, in order to secure the maintenance of Corfu and the other Ionian Islands as well as the control of the shipping in the Channel of Corfu.⁴

¹ Apogiatis-Pelé 1993, 64.

² Thiriet 1959, 355-363.

³ Thiriet 1959, 395.

⁴ Thiriet 1959, 353-439.



Fig. 1. Corfu and the coast of Thesprotia (after Camotio 1571).

After years of contest, Butrint was finally taken in 1386⁵, Strovili⁶ and Sagiada (Bastia) in 1413⁷, Parga in 1401⁸ and the Phanari district (the Acheron river delta) in 1410⁹. In the

⁵ *AAV* 1, 30.

⁶ Sathas V 245.

⁷ Thiriet *Sénat* 850, 975, 1029, 1505, 1737. The Venetian authority in Sagiada remains to be clarified; it seems that the bay and fishery belonged to the Republic, but the village to the Porte: see Ploumidis 2002, 9-15.

⁸ Sathas II 29, 46 (no. 240 and 258).

⁹ First reference in 1410 (*AAV* 6, 60).

Venetian administrative organization all these outposts were part of the *Regimen Corfu*, “sub jurisdictione civitatis Corphou”. According to the treaty between the Republic and the Corfiotes, which was made already in 1386, all the offices of the outposts were secured by the Corfiote nobility.¹⁰

The Ottoman forces took Ioannina in 1430, then Arta in 1449, and finally pushed into Thesprotia in 1452 seizing the Venetian outposts on the coast, which however were soon reconquered by the Venetians.¹¹ The Ottomans managed several times during the frequent Veneto-Ottoman wars in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to evict the Venetians from their bridgeheads. Thus Butrint, Strovili and Parga were taken several times¹², for example Strovili in 1463, 1473 and 1506. Parga was also occupied and burned down several times and even Corfu was besieged three times, in 1537, 1571 and 1716. Nonetheless, in the peace treaties the status quo was always restored¹³ and the Venetians succeeded in keeping Butrint, Sagiada, Parga and Phanari.

A short glance at the geomorphology of Epirus reveals the importance of these positions and their meaning for the Epirotic economy. A series of mountain ridges stretching north to south extends the region parallel to the littoral. The ancient road network followed the north to south corridors, but access to the coast from the mainland was difficult. Small bays like that of Parga often break the steep coastline, but only a few of them were convenient for ports. The routes from the inland of Thesprotia to the coast and the best ports on the littoral were thus in Venetian hands.

Butrint was important not only for its strategic position at the northern entrance to the Channel of Corfu; its financial value due to the fisheries on the lake of Butrint was also considerable. Sagiada was the main port for the trade between Corfu and the Epirotic mainland. The Venetians constructed there a *lazaretto*, a control-post for the shipping to Corfu.¹⁴ But Sagiada's fishery, acquired in 1570, remained a longstanding bone of contention between the Porte and the Republic.¹⁵ Parga, “gli orecchi ed il cuore della vicina isola di Corfu”, as Francesco Grimani put it in his *relazione*, a small community of about 5,000 inhabitants, was the Republic's military outpost. Phanari's importance for Corfu lay in its woods, where the Venetians got timber for shipbuilding,¹⁶ and the port was also important for the grain supply of Corfu.¹⁷

The Venetian position in Epirus was further strengthened as late as 1718 through the peace treaty of Passarowitz, which ended a war otherwise disastrous for the Republic. Von Schulenburg's military activity after the siege of Corfu in 1716 brought Preveza and Vomitza to Venice, which meant control of the Ambracian gulf and its trade – or as the French consul in Zante, André Grasset de Saint-Sauveur, put it, “the control of the whole Epirotic commerce”.¹⁸

¹⁰ “sub jurisdictione civitatis Corphou castellaniam et commestabileriam Buthrentou, capitaneria Saiate, castellaniam et capitaneria Barge, castellaniam Fanari”. See Sathas III, 31-33 (no. 571) or Thiriet *Sénat* 730, 1505. On the Venetian administrative system see Thiriet 1959, 182-197.

¹¹ Marmora 1672, 323-328.

¹² Grasset de Saint-Sauveur 1800, 286-285.

¹³ *ASV Libri commemoriali della Repubblica di Venezia. Regesti VIII.*

¹⁴ Ploumidis 1993, 491-493.

¹⁵ Ploumidis 2002, 9-13.

¹⁶ The fort of Vilichi, through which the area was controlled, seems to have lost its significance in the late fifteenth century or was destroyed in the Veneto-Ottoman wars.

¹⁷ Thiriet *Sénat*, 505, 2523.

The Venetian outposts on the Epirotic coast were significant transit posts for the trade between the Ionian islands held by the Republic and the Ottoman mainland of Epirus. The relation between them was in a way almost symbiotic. Corfu and the other islands were dependent on grain supply from the mainland, because their own grain harvest did not suffice for more than six months per year.¹⁹ On the other hand, the mainland needed for instance Corfiot salt and tried to get rid of this dependence by constructing salt lakes at Sagiada. However, the Venetians, well aware of the risk of this competition, destroyed the salina at least once.²⁰

One of the peculiarities of the Venetian trading hegemony was that the Republic throughout the centuries succeeded in keeping Ottoman shipping out of the Channel of Corfu. Even the peace treaty between Venice and the Sublime Porte in Passarowitz restated the prohibition of entrance to the Channel for ships under Ottoman flag. Shipping in the Channel was in the hands of the Venetian subjects in Corfu and Parga, a fact which caused irritation among and frequent conflicts with Ottoman local authorities and inhabitants. The Serenissima's finger rested indeed heavily on the pulse of Ottoman Epirus.

Modus vivendi in the border zone

The first and apparently the last attempt to demarcate the Venetian possessions on the coast was done in connection with the peace treaty of 1480. Unfortunately, there is only one short reference without any details concerning the demarcation in Butrint and Parga, when Zuam Dario and Sinan Pasha settled the boundaries in Morea, Epirus and Albania.²¹ The frequent border skirmishes, recorded by the Venetian authorities, reveal one of the peculiarities of Veneto-Ottoman relations in Epirus, that is, the absence of an accepted demarcation between the area of Parga and the confining kaza of Margariti, or between Venetian and Ottoman territories. This strange situation would continue from 1480 until the end of the Venetian dominion.

The Venetian presence on the coast had actually been recognized by the Ottomans already in the first peace treaty between Venice and the Sublime Porte, signed in 1419²² and later reconfirmed in all peace treaties and capitulations. However, on the local level the Republic's relations with the Ottoman administration and population in Epirus remained often charged, and led to frequent challenges to Venetian authority. The reasons were clear; Venice had the commercial monopoly in her hands and the question of the demarcation between Venetian and Ottoman territory had been left unclear.

The main centre of the conflicts was Parga. It was a military outpost, the strongest and most visual bridgehead, the Republic's eye and ear in Thesprotia.²³ The Ottoman part of Thesprotia which surrounded Parga belonged administratively to the Sancak of

¹⁸ Grasset de Saint-Sauveur 1800, 269.

¹⁹ Sathas III 32; V 224-225; VI 218. Even a short cut-off of the grain supply caused famine in the islands, as happened in 1558, which explains the reluctance of the Venetian authorities to engage in any kind of conflicts.

²⁰ Marmora 1672, 323.

²¹ Stefano Magno, in Sathas V, 219-220. On the border commission, see Gilliland Wright 2006.

²² Thomas II, 318-319.

²³ Parga: "elle servait...les intérêts de sa politique, que fut au moyen des ses postes en terre-ferme, des formes le noyau d'une confédération d'anarchies particulières, aussi convenables à ses vues qu'à sa faiblesse" (Pouqueville 1820, 455).

Delvino, which was divided into several districts or *kazas*. Two of them, Paramythia and Mazaraki, are significant in relation to Parga. Especially the second one figures often in the Venetian sources. The fort of Margariti in the plain of Phanari (sic!) was built in 1549 by Bayazid Azgu oglou (Scuroglii), sancak bey of Delvino²⁴, and developed soon into an Ottoman stronghold against the Venetian possession on the coast. In spite of successful efforts to destroy it during the fourth Veneto-Ottoman war in 1571, the Venetians finally did not succeed in preventing Margariti from developing into the counterpart of Parga. The different and constant confrontations and border conflicts between these two strongholds and their inhabitants are a continuous agenda in Venetian weekly reports, *dispacci*, of the bailo of Corfu and later Provveditore da Terra e da Mar to the Senate, in which all the events in their jurisdiction are recorded.

The Venetian government in Corfu interfered almost constantly by taking contact with the sancak bey of Delvino, but never by military means, because avoidance of armed conflict with the Turks was a strict rule of the Serenissima, though a show of force was often resorted to. Armed counter-incursions were left to the Pargiotes, who were almost too eager to take revenge. Besides the economic reasons for these conflicts, the ideological ones were developing considerably, together with the gradual Islamization. The inhabitants of the Ottoman border areas regarded themselves as *gazi*, frontier warriors. The term *gaza* hints to raids over frontiers.²⁵ The earliest record of Islamization in Thesprotia mentioned in Venetian sources can be found in the year 1558: in the report of the Bailo of Corfu, a fief holder called Ahmed in the village of Agia, close to Parga, had organized the whole village of Agia, most of them Christians, to conduct raids against Parga. This Ahmed had formerly been a Christian. The governor of Parga had turned to the 'voivode' of the kaza of Mazaraki and asked that Ahmed be punished for his activities.²⁶

As for Islamization in Thesprotia, the process remains to be studied. Anton Minkov has recently shown that the poll tax, the *cizye*, which has been seen as one of the main reasons for Islamization, cannot be considered its real incentive, at least not in the first century of Ottoman rule. Economic considerations often motivated the conversion, but, as Minkov further points out, it poses problems – and other factors, such as social and psychological ones, must also be considered.²⁷ The organization of Ottoman rule did bring with it only minimal conversion during the fifteenth century, affecting mainly the military elite. In Epirus the conversion seems to have affected mainly the population of Albanian origin.

In the 1640s the Venetian bailo in Constantinople managed to obtain from the Porte a firman which ordered the local governors to make a pause in the constant raids from the Ottoman side against Parga, of course without any results.²⁸ A written memorial of these constant border skirmishes can be found in the archive of Parga, now part of the Corfu archive.²⁹ It is a long register of all the conflicts, cattle stealing, quarrels concerning fishing and tree-felling for shipbuilding, kidnappings of Pargiotes etc., caused by the Ottoman

²⁴ Sathas VIII, 313; Chasiotis 1970, 91, f. 1; 152, f. 2.

²⁵ Pedani 2002, 13-15.

²⁶ *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, *dispacci* b. 1 (3.7. 1558). The same report reveals that the kaza of Mazaraki was under the sancak of Avlona. The sancak of Delvino seems to have been organized at some point between 1558 and 1663.

²⁷ Minkov 2004, 92-101.

²⁸ Aravantinos 1856 II, 198.

²⁹ Papageorgiou 1982, 93-132.

subjects from Mazaraki, Margariti and Paramythia. The tension often developed into full-scale raids, as in 1745 and 1784. The first registration dates from the year 1699 and the last one was written in 1795; all the losses are recorded and the value of them in money mentioned. Noteworthy in these border conflicts is that they were not always between the Muslim Ottoman subjects and Christian Pargiotes, but very often also between Christian populations from the neighbouring Ottoman villages such as Agia Kiriaki (“*τούρκους και ρομέους*”) and the Pargiotes.

The main aim of these raids was to damage the sources of income, olive trees, tobacco cultivation and wine cultivation, not to mention to cause human losses in the form of dead people and slaves.³⁰ A common habit among the Turkish border inhabitants was to take slaves who were supposed to be ransomed (*ἐπίασαν τοὺς κάτωδι σκλάβους καὶ ἐξαγοράστηκαν μὲ περισὸ σολδί*). The year 1745 was especially severe for the Pargiotes. On April 15 during a service in the church of Panagia in Paleo Parga, the Turks made a raid, killed three persons and enslaved 36 persons and robbed them. All the persons had to be ransomed as well as their property. The Pargas governatore Antonio Gonemi registered all the persons by their name and all the lost property.³¹

The last major conflict between Parga and Margariti, overshadowing the last decade of the Venetian rule, started in 1784. Hassan Tsapari, bey of Margariti, took advantage of the Holy Week, and began to erect towers close to the village of Agia Kiriaki on the side of the border which was seen to belong to Parga. The Pargiote attempt to destroy the towers failed and they began to build their own in front of the ones of Hasan Tsapari and to make incursions on the Turkish side. According to the Venetian reports Tsapari tried to prevent any commercial activity between Parga and Margariti as well, so as to get possession of the Phanari district. This caused a long and violent skirmish, which demanded the intervention of the Venetian authorities.³² The situation calmed down when the Provveditore Francisco Falier showed force by sending a galley to support the Pargiotes³³ and finally a peace treaty was signed in June 1791 between the Pargiotes and the Tsaparis family.³⁴

The long-disputed fishery in Phanari was ceded to the Tsaparis of Margariti in this connection, probably as a strategic move by the Venetians in order to keep the agas of Margariti on their side against the rising influence of Ali Pasha.³⁵ The Tsapari family, which controlled the region of Margariti from the eighteenth century onwards, was in a central position regarding Venetian policy towards Ali Pasha. Hasan Tsapari had allied with Ali Pasha in his campaign against the Souli. In order to break the alliance, the Venetians resorted to their traditional ways – supporting the archenemy of Parga. One of these ways was the ceding of the fishery in Phanari to the Tsaparis. They also supplied the Tsaparis with munitions and ships, which caused concern in Constantinople.³⁶

³⁰ During the period which the register covers, Parga's losses were more than 80 persons (Papageorgiou 1982, 95).

³¹ Papageorgiou 1982, 96.

³² *ASV* Provveditore da Terra e da Mar, b. 878-879 (1784).

³³ Benetos Kalogera's, *gouvernatore e capitano* of Parga, report *ASV* Provveditore da Terra e da Mar 1048. Report from the councillors of Parga to the Provveditore, *NLG* ms. 1645. ff. 31-32. Memmo 1794, 21-22.

³⁴ *NLG* ms. 1646, ff. 34v-35r.

³⁵ J. Dupré mentions in his report that Phanari was ceded by the Venetians to Hassan Tsaparis, in Apogiatis-Pelé 1993.

³⁶ See Balta, this volume.

Phanari, a large alluvial plain formed by the river Acheron, which was earlier controlled by a fortress in Vilichi, the port in the Middle Ages, seems to have lost its importance by the end of the eighteenth century.³⁷ The Phanari district and its natural resources, woods, fishery, and the port had long been a thorn in the flesh of beys of Margariti and Paramythia. In 1612 Husein Tzelepi of Paramythia constructed a fortified post in Korone from where it was easy to control the forests, from which the Venetians got timber for their vessels, violating the Venetian jurisdiction.³⁸ In 1643 he imposed a duty on all ships docking at the port.³⁹ Vincenzo Grimani, bailo of Corfu, in his final report to the Senate of Venice tells how the bey of Paramythia had invaded the Phanari fishery on the eve of the fourth Veneto-Ottoman war in 1644 and confiscated all the ships in the port.⁴⁰

The main reasons for these raids, however, were economic. In the peace treaties and capitulations the Venetian position, having factual dominance and control of the Epirotic trade, was always recognized by the Porte. On the local level, the compliance of capitulations was another matter. The border conflicts arose mainly out of the disputes over the rights of using the fisheries and the woods as well as over the control of trade. The local population did not respect the Venetian authority in spite of repeated negotiations to solve the problems, and the non-existence of marked borders also caused constant skirmishes. From time to time conflicts were settled in Constantinople, as in 1728 concerning the fisheries in Butrint and Riniasa.⁴¹ The peace of Passarowitz in 1718 brought with it a constant series of new conflicts in the area of Preveza and Vonitza.⁴²

Divide et corrumpere: the way of monitoring the inland

The Tsaparis case reveals much of Venice's policy in Epirus. The interaction with Ottoman authorities was crucial for her policy. To avoid open conflicts and confrontations which would endanger supply of the Ionian islands became the main guideline of her policy. At the same time, all efforts except military ones were made to hinder any activity in the region which could endanger her commercial interest. The fact that Corfu was dependent on the mainland for its grain supply was crucial for the policy. Any turmoil in the relation of Venice and the Porte as well as in the region had direct effects on the supply, causing famine.⁴³ Its constant 'behind the scenes' policy comes out in the reports to the Senate and the Inquisitori dello Stato, as well as in their orders and advice to authorities in Corfu, and can be illustrated by several examples of different nature.

From the seventeenth century onwards, centrifugal forces in the Ottoman political organization⁴⁴ were apparent also in Epirus. The gradual weakening of the Sublime Porte's grip on the provinces from the seventeenth century onwards was not left unnoticed by the

³⁷ On Vilichi see Soustal 1981, 275-276.

³⁸ *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, b.1 (16.4. 1612).

³⁹ *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, b.1 (25.4. 1643).

⁴⁰ *ASV* Collegio, Relazione di Pietro Navagiero 1644.

⁴¹ *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, b. 256 (13.3-11.4. 1728).

⁴² *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, b. 254.

⁴³ Sathas V 224 (July 1489).

⁴⁴ Lewis 1958, 111-127.

Venetians. The reports of the Corfiote authorities give a clear picture of the process and constitute important sources for the history of Thesprotia. The administrative distribution in different provinces, sancak, Delvino and Ioannina, as well as the local subdivisions in kazas, enabled the Republic to wage the distinctive policy to secure its position in the region without military means, as Pouqueville later stated: “Toute l’attention du gouvernant se bornoit à entretenir une paix continuelle avec les divers pachas dont il pouvoit craindre l’ambition pour ses faibles possessions sur le continent, et l’interception pour les îles, des vivres que l’en tiroit de l’Albanie”.⁴⁵

The internal development of the whole of Epirus towards decentralization and finally anarchy was exploited and enhanced if possible by the Venetian authorities in the Ionian islands. Local chiefs had begun to make their own policy without the authorization of the Sublime Porte. The main aim of the Venetian policy was to advance the political disorder in Epirus by stirring the ambitions of the local Ottoman hierarchy and so to further weaken the position of the pasha in Ioannina, the formal head of the Ottoman administration in Epirus.

Venetian reports, based on information gathered by their agents and sympathizers, speak of increasing unrest and anarchy in the Ottoman *terra ferma*. The authorities in Corfu report to the Senate in Venice on violent actions against the *mussacalis* sent by the Porte in Constantinople. These inspectors, *mussacali* in Venetian documents, often caused unrest among the local Ottoman chiefs and population. In 1625 a *mussacali* arrived in Paramythia, causing the inhabitants to escape to the mountains and finally forcing the bey of Paramythia, Peri Mehmet Passopulo, to expel him violently.⁴⁶ In 1631 the Porte gave orders that Margariti should be destroyed and all the inhabitants over seven years old killed. The mission was given to the *kapudan pasha*, whose appearance with an Ottoman fleet on the Epirote coast made the Pargiotes warn Margariti and the population could escape.⁴⁷ During the long Veneto-Ottoman Cretan war, Ottoman forces unsuccessfully besieged Parga from September till Christmas 1657. Later the commander of the Ottoman forces in Constantinople accused the local pashas of Ioannina and Delvino of unwillingness to support his troops. The reluctance of the locals went so far that Osman Karapiperi, pasha of Delvino, suggested peace negotiation in February 1658, which took place on July 23. War-weariness and heavy taxation were mentioned as reasons.⁴⁸

One of the significant ways the Venetians intervened in everyday life in Thesprotia was through funding and arming local *klephtes* and *armatoli*, especially Christians, in order to raise confusion. They often found refuge in Parga.⁴⁹ The Souliotes, a Christian Albanian tribe living in the mountains southeast of Paramythia, not far away from the Venetian Phanari district, were often included in these conflicts.⁵⁰

The first Souliote war against the Ottoman authorities in Ioannina broke out in 1732. It was actually instigated by the Venetians, who even managed to persuade the beys of Margariti to join the revolt, which lasted four years and finally caused the destruction

⁴⁵ Pouqueville in Apogiatis-Pelé 1993, 93.

⁴⁶ *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, b. 29.

⁴⁷ *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, b. 29.

⁴⁸ *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, b. 29.

⁴⁹ In 1749 Ottoman authorities required the extradition of Greek *klephtes* who had fled to Parga: Siorokas 1981, 158-159.

⁵⁰ In general about the Souliotes see Psimouli 2006.

of Margariti by the troops from Ioannina. The Souliotes were besieged without results.⁵¹

In March 1772 the Venetian agents in *Terra Ferma* informed the authorities in the islands that Suleiman aga of Margariti had summoned the local Albanian agas in order to attack Souli. Only Pronios aga of Paramythia had refused the invitation, because he had promised the Souliotes and Christians in Paramythia that he would not wage war against Souli. The further plan was to attack Preveza with the excuse of calling for the extradition of Ottoman subjects who had escaped in Preveza, and especially of those who had participated in the war on the Russian side against the Porte. The report did not come as a surprise. The Venetian authorities in Corfu as well as in Venice were aware of the plans already a year in advance, and were also immediately informed when the Souliotes managed to beat the Ottomans and capture the leaders, among others Suleiman aga of Margariti, who were released against heavy ransom.⁵²

For the Venetians the second Souliote war was alarming, because the Margariotes were no longer on the side of Souli. This was repeated fifteen years later in 1789 when the Tsaparis family allied with Ali Pasha against the Souliotes, allies of the Republic.⁵³ In the fourth Souliote war, Venice no longer existed to supply the Souliotes with ammunition etc. from Preveza and St. Maura, with disastrous effects for the Souliotes.

Besides supporting their allies and corrupting the Ottoman officials in Epirus, the Venetians strove to hinder all the political activity which could endanger its own interests. In December 1604 a Spanish frigate brought Dionysios, the Metropolitan of Larissa, himself a native of Paramythia, to Zakynthos, from where he continued to Phanari on the coast and to the village of Choika, at that time under Venetian jurisdiction.⁵⁴ There he gathered locals in order to incite them to uprising and an attack against Preveza by promising Spanish support. However, the Venetian authorities succeeded in preventing the uprising and the Spanish frigate was banished from the Ionian Sea.⁵⁵ Dionysios showed up in Venetian records again in the fall of 1611. But this time the Venetians failed to prevent his plans in Epirus and were forced just to follow the course of events.

In September 1611 an uprising against Ottoman rule in Paramythia instigated and led by Dionysios broke out. He and his followers even attacked Ottoman authorities in Ioannina, but the uprising ended soon in failure; his supporters were slain and Dionysios skinned alive. A detailed report of the events was provided by Ioannis Petritzis in Sagiada; letters from the King of Spain had been found among Dionysios' belongings, the head and skin were sent to Constantinople, and the pasha of Ioannina had entered Paramythia in order to punish the participants.⁵⁶ In October the provveditore sent the dragoman Ioannis Simos to Paramythia and Delvino to get more information. The Spanish machinations became clear, and it emerged that the pasha had decapitated 300 persons and sent the heads to Constantinople.⁵⁷ The bailo Simon Contarini reported from Constantinople that

⁵¹ Aravantinos 1856 I, 244-245.

⁵² *ASV* Provveditore da Terra e da Mar, f. 118.

⁵³ Eton 1798, 399. Eton reveals that it was La Salle who instigated the war of 1789.

⁵⁴ Choika is located at the very gate to Souli, and thus the Venetian territory at least at this date extended fairly far inland from Phanari.

⁵⁵ *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, b. 7 (30.12. 1604).

⁵⁶ It seems that the reprisals taken by the Ottoman authorities in Thesprotia after the uprising caused emigration to the Venetian territories; on the island of Paxos place-names and folk tradition have it that f.e. inhabitants of the village of Veliani moved on the island after the revolt. See also Aravantinos 1856 II, 124.

⁵⁷ *ASV* Bailo di Corfu, b. 7 (1611).

87 heads were exhibited as well as the skin of Dionysios. However, the show did not convince the Grand Vizir who wondered why they were not sent alive. The result was that Osman Pasha, the sancak bey of Ioannina, fell into disgrace and was ordered to be arrested. But he had foreseen this and escaped via Parga, first to Paxos and from there to Leukada, “with a great amount of money”. The money, though, was confiscated by the Pargiotes.⁵⁸

The appearance of Cosmas of Aitolia in Epirus in the late eighteenth century raised as much irritation and concern in Corfu. On 27 May 1777, much to the surprise of Benedetto Pieri, *capitano e governatore* di Parga, a Greek monk with a large armed entourage showed up in Parga, stirring up religious enthusiasm among the inhabitants of the town, who were Venetian subjects. After considerable efforts, Pieri managed to make Cosmas leave the town. Pieri’s report is the first Venetian document on Cosmas of Aitolia’s activity in Epirus.⁵⁹ Cosmas’ rapid movement and increasing popularity among the Greek Orthodox population on the coast and on the islands held by the Republic caused confusion and alarm among the authorities. The Provveditor General da Mar Giacomo Nani’s report to *Inquisitori di stato* radiates embarrassment due to the fact that he had not managed to prevent Cosmas’ arrival in Corfu. Cosmas’ antisemitic sermons before a large public raised fear of pogroms against Corfu’s Jewish population. Nani decided to act promptly: Cosmas was removed from Corfu in the still of the night to Agia Saranda on the coast. Cosmas’ popularity even among the Muslims and local Ottoman authorities raised suspicion; thus, for instance, he was invited to Margariti by Suleiman aga Tsappari.

Cosmas’ movements in Thesprotia during the following two years were monitored closely by the Venetians through Demetrio Mamouda as their agent in the entourage of Cosmas. In spite of the fact that no evidence whatever was revealed against the *calogero*, which would have shown that he was planning something against the Venetian interests, the Provveditor Nani recommended to the *Inquisitori* that Cosmas should be ‘*levar dal mondo*’. It happened soon. Cosmas was murdered in late August 1779 outside the village of Kolikontsi. According to his pupil and memorialist Sapheiros Christodoulides, the assassins were in the service of Kurt Pasha but behind the murder lay Jewish instigation. Whether the Venetians were simply late or could camouflage their involvement remains to be elucidated.

The reason for the Venetians to be worried about Cosmas and his activity can be assumed to be clear: his popularity among the Christian population, in the Venetian territory as well as in the Ottoman, and even among the Muslims. He was under the protection of local beys and agas, which certainly did not reduce the suspicion.⁶⁰ The

⁵⁸ *ASV Collegio, Relazioni*, b. 85. *ASV Bailo of Constantinople*, dispacci 29.11. 1611, b. 72. (1612).

⁵⁹ “Un grosso numero di persone armate provenienti dallo Stato Ottomano Greci con un calogero in centro posto sopra un mulo, che orava, e benediva, comparve il di oggi in questa parte. I fanatici si trasportarono, reputandolo come un nume tutelare della religione, mentre spiacevansi i di lui prodigi e miracoli” report by the capitano di Parga to Provveditor General da Mar on Corfu 27.5. 1777 (*ASV Inquisitori di Stato*, b. 405). There are a lot of reports by Venetian officials to each other and *Inquisitori di Stato* in Venice (*ASV Inquisitori di Stato*. Dispacci dal Provveditor General da Mar, 1776–1780, b. 405).

⁶⁰ Cosmas collected huge sums of money from Christians and Muslims in order to build churches and schools, which was clear evidence of his veiled plans. There is Venetian evidence of Cosmas’ connections with the Austrians; he was distributing a leaflet in Greek which promised privileges for immigrating into the Austrian territories. See *ASV Inquisitori di Stato*, b. 405 (10.03, 16.03 and 21.03. 1779).

last Russo-Turkish war and the presence of the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean in the 1770s was in fresh memory. The emissaries of Catherine II in Greece had been active already before the arrival of the fleet of Orlov inciting rebellion in the midst of the Christian population with good results. The Republic and its neutrality in the war were viewed suspiciously by the Porte, especially because of Venice's inability to hinder its Greek subjects from joining the Russian campaign. Russian presence in Greece and its waters caused enthusiasm among the Greeks, and Venetian authorities had trouble in trying to maintain order in the Ionian islands.⁶¹ From then until the end of Venetian rule, the presence of Russian emissaries in Epirus was a constant concern.⁶²

The French threat

A further concern for the Venetian authorities in Corfu was the threat to its trading monopoly in Epirus caused by the French from the end of the seventeenth century onwards. In 1673 the embassy of the Marquis Charles de Nointel (in Constantinople, 1671-1679) restored the friendship between the Sublime Porte and France and renewed the commercial capitulations, which led to a clear increase of French commerce in the Levant. The French showed up soon in the Ionian Sea, and already in 1678 the provveditore of Zante found himself compelled to confiscate French vessels carrying corn. According to the Venetian point of view, the corn from the mainland was excluded from merchants because it was needed for the supply of the Ionian islands. The Republic tried to enforce a 6% custom on all merchants on the Epirotic coast, which was not accepted by France.⁶³

The French trade in Epirus was for some time organized through the consulate in Sagiada, founded in 1695, and its consul P. Garnier, who gathered information on the Epirote resources, especially corn and timber, for the French government.⁶⁴ In order to avoid the Venetians' jurisdiction and their control and customs, the consulate was transferred to Arta in 1702. The French were interested especially in the exploitation of forestry resources, and when the consulate had been moved the timber trade was organized in an even more systematic way: "Toutes les relations de commerce de la France avec l'Albanie se bornirent à une coupe de bois de construction pour l'arsenal de Toulon."⁶⁵ However, the peace of Passarowitz in 1718, in which the Ottoman Empire conceded Preveza and Vonitza to the Republic, further strengthened the Venetian monopoly of the Epirote trade; the access to the Ambracian Gulf was now also controlled by the Venetians.⁶⁶

⁶¹ For the Venetian archival material on the Russian campaign in the Mediterranean, see Manfroni 1912-1913. Orlov's emissary in Epirus Luitzis Sotiris arrived in Epirus to raise the population in 1770. Some 800 Epirotes followed Sotiris and joined the Russian fleet: Protopsaltis 1959, 117.

⁶² *ASV Inquisitori di Stato*, b. 397 (21.4. 1773); b. 409 (24.12. 1796).

⁶³ Mason 1897.

⁶⁴ Mason 1897, 441.

⁶⁵ Grasset de Saint-Sauveur 1800, 278.

⁶⁶ "Préveza et Vonitza dans le Golfe d'Arta rendait cette République maitresse du commerce de l'Albanie inférieure. C'était de là qu'elle tirait le plus productifs que ces îles mêmes, à cause des importations, et des exportations... Préveza et Vonitza, possessions si essentielles pour les approvisionnements de Corfu, continuaient de fournir de vivres à Ste Maure, Ithaque et Cephalonie, depuis que les Vénétiens avaient été dépossédés du Duché de Chiarenza dans la Morée." Pouqueville in Apogiatis-Pelé 1993, 64-69. Paladini 1993-1994, 190.

The French endeavoured to bypass the custom of Corfu, which irritated the Venetians who thereby lost as much as 10,000 piastres per year. Their aim was to prevent the French from using their emporia without paying customs. The Republic countered the French trading expansion with piracy against French vessels, and the French consul André Grasset de Saint-Sauveur openly reproached Venetian officials for supporting the piracy of their subjects.⁶⁷ The French were regarded with suspicion by the Venetians not only because of their commercial motives.⁶⁸ The ‘tumult’ in Paris, which later came to be known as the French Revolution, also caused alarm. Provveditore Angelo Memmo, at the beginning of the year 1792, received strict orders from the Inquisitori di Stato to take measures against “figure francesi o di altra nazione che con artificiosi mezzi o per la via di occulti emissary e delle stampe tetasseo di diffondere quelle velenose massime da cui traggono origine i sovvertimenti della Franca.”⁶⁹ Their worry was not groundless; the strategic position of Corfu as naval base and the timber supply of Epirus were part of Napoleon’s plans.

The activity of the French merchant and emissary Jean Baptiste La Salle, who openly co-operated with Ali Pasha, raised special concern. In their rivalry with Venice, French emissaries soon found Ali Pasha to be their natural ally in Epirus.⁷⁰ La Salle and his partner Pierre Jérôme Dupré had started their activity in the surroundings of the Ambracian Gulf in order to find timber for shipbuilding in Toulon already in 1786.⁷¹ In the 1790s he organized shipbuilding in cooperation with Ali Pasha in Vathi. Finally his journey to Constantinople, to get the French Ambassador to turn Ali Pasha against the Republic, was too much for the Venetians and they decided to have him “levar dal mondo”, as the Venetian slogan put it, because La Salle was “fastidio al pubblica riguardo”. Thus he was assassinated in Preveza in August 1792.⁷²

The end of the Venetian dominion

The main concern of the Venetian authorities in Corfu at the end of the eighteenth century was the rise of the especially ambitious Ali Pasha of Tepelen, on whose plans the Venetians seemed to have been very well informed, the process being closely followed.⁷³

⁶⁷ Giannakopoulos 2003, 27.

⁶⁸ Venetian policy against the French trade was a constant grievance of the French consuls in the region: Grasset de Saint-Sauveur 1800, 302-303; Siorokas 1981, 177-193.

⁶⁹ Barra 2002, 35.

⁷⁰ “Ce avec ce Pacha que nous devons établir notre principales relations; sa puissance, qui est fort étendue, et sa reputation, peuvent nous être fort utiles” *Memoire sur les îles françaises de la Mer Adriatique, présenté au Directoire Exécutif par le Citoyen Corpigny, sidevant Commissaire dans le Département de Corcyre*. In ANP, Série F.1e, Pays annexes ou dépendants 1792-1814, Iles Ioniennes, b. 205, published by Barra 2002, 55-68.

⁷¹ P. J. Dupré 68ff. in Giannakopoulos 1986/87.

⁷² On La Salle, see Grasset de Saint-Sauveur 1800, 280-286 and Barra 2002, 28-31. According to W. Eton (1798, 382), La Salle was also a French agent and “not only to provide timber in Epirus for the French navy, but also for revolutionizing that country”. La Serenissima had resorted to similar drastic measures even earlier. In 1733 capitán Lamarinis Triboukis, attached to the French, was assassinated because of his activity for the French commerce in the region: Aravantinos 1856 I, 244.

⁷³ On the rise of Ali Pasha see Skiotis 1971, 219-244. The Venetian intelligence was still active as late as 1795 and 1796, gathering information on Ali Pasha and his French contacts. See *ASV* Inquisitori di Stato, b. 408, b. 409; Preto 1999, 501; *ASV* Provveditore da Terra e da Mar, b. 56 (30.06. 1795).

Ali personified old Venetian fears of a powerful Ottoman authority in the region. Against this threat they had been acting for hundreds of years. Paradoxically, however, according to their traditional policy, in the beginning the Venetians supported Ali in order to get reciprocal support from him.⁷⁴ Thus the Serenissima was supported by Ali in the four-year-long ‘Butrint affair’, which began when Sancak bey of Delvino, Mustafa Pasha Kokka, seized some Venetian possessions close to Butrint. The affair was even taken up by the Venetian bailo in Constantinople directly with the Sublime Porte.⁷⁵

However, the resources needed for the traditional Venetian measures, “les divisions et la corruption”, gradually became insufficient. The last provveditore in Corfu, Carlo Aurelio Widmann, was even forced to spend his own funds to bribe Ottoman local authorities and to arm the *armatoli*.⁷⁶ Widmann’s mission, to defend the Venetian possessions against the pressure of Ali Pasha, was never fulfilled. In May 1797 French troops entered Venice. Soon after that, on 27 June, they occupied Corfu, putting an end to four hundred years of Venetian dominion of the island and the Epirote coast. This also meant the end of the socio-political balance in Epirus maintained by the Republic, because the French authority in Corfu – and later the British as well – allied with Ali Pasha, thereby contributing to his political ambitions and revolutionizing the political situation.⁷⁷ Thus Ali Pasha took over Preveza in 1798 and defeated the Souliots in 1801. Finally Butrint fell to him soon after the collapse of the Venetian *Regimen Corphu* and Parga in 1819. All of Thesprotia and Epirus was thenceforth in Ottoman hands.

⁷⁴ *ASV* Provveditore da Terra e da Mar, b. 1042 (24.3. 1783). In return for his measures against Mustafa Pasha Kokka of Delvino, the Venetian bailo in Constantinople spoke for Ali’s commission to pasha of Two Tails, i.e. governor of the province. *ASV* Provveditore da Terra e da, Mar b. 1042 (3.5. 1783).

⁷⁵ *ASV* Collegio, Relazioni, b. 7 dispacco di Andrea Memmo 26.2.1782.

⁷⁶ *ASV* Inquisitori di Stato, b. 409 (13.8 1796). Paladini 1993-1994, 186ff.; 191ff. Still in 1789 the Corfiote Alvise Mammurà got three zecchini per month in order to create useful relationships in the Terra Ferma Turca: Preto 1999, 500.

⁷⁷ The far-sighted and experienced French consul André Grasset de Saint-Sauveur (1800, 276-277) stated already beforehand: “si Ali réussissoit dans ses tentatives, il en résulteroit une révolution bien interessante dans cette province”. On the French dominance see Barra 2002, 34-82.

Bibliography

Primary archival and published sources

AAV = J. Valentini, *Acta Albaniae Veneta saeculorum XIV et XV* 1-23. Palermo, Rome and Munich 1967-1976.

ASV = Archivio di Stato di Venezia:

-Bailo di Corfu

-Collegio, Relazioni

-Libri commemoriali della Repubblica di Venezia. Regesti.

-Provveditore da Terra e da Mar

-Inquisitori di Stato

NLG = National Library of Greece.

Memmo 1794 = A. Memmo, *Relazione del no. Angelo Memmo, ritornato Provveditor Generale da Mar 1794*, Venice 1867.

Sathas = C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge* I-IX, Paris 1880-1896.

Thiriet Sénat = F. Thiriet, *Regestes des Délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Roumanie* I-III, Paris and den Haag 1958-1961.

Thomas = J. Thomas, *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum* I-II, Venice 1876.

Reference works

Apogiatis-Pelé 1993 = D. Apogiatis-Pelé, Έξι γαλλικά υπομνήματα για τα Επτάνησα και τον απέναντι ηπειρωτικό χώρο (1798-1809), Kerkyra 1993.

Aravantinos 1856 = P. Aravantinos, Χρονογραφία της Ήπειρου των τε ομόρων ελληνικών και ύλουργικών χωρών I-II, Athens 1856.

Barra 2002 = F. Barra, 'Le isole Ionie da Venezia a Bonaparte', *Atti memorie della società dalmata di storia patria* XXXI (2002), 17-82.

Camotio 1571 = G.F. Camotio, *Isole famose porti, fortezze et terre maritime sottoposte alla Serma Sigria di Venetia*, Venice 1571.

Chasiotis 1970 = I.K. Chasiotis, Οι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου, Thessaloniki 1970.

Eton 1798 = W. Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire*, London 1798.

Giannakopoulos 1986/97 = E. Giannakopoulos, Όψεις της οικονομικής και κοινωνικής ζωής στην Ήπειρο στα τέλη του 18^{ου} αιώνα: ένα γαλλικό υπόμνημα, *EpChron* 28 (1986/1987), 43-70.

Giannakopoulos 2003 = E. Giannakopoulos, Η ληστοπρατεία στις κλειστές θάλασσες. Η περίπτωση του Αμβρακικού και Πατραϊκού Κόλπου (τέλη 17^{ου} αρχές - 19^{ου} αι.), in C. Kalliga and A. Malliaris (eds.), *Πειρατές και κουρσάροι. Μονεμβασιώτικος Όμιλος Ι' Συμπόσιο Ιστορίας & Τέχνης* (20 - 22 Ιούλιου 1997), Athens 2003, 124-162.

Gilliland Wright 2006 = D. Gilliland Wright, *After the Serenissima and the Grand Turk Made Love: the Boundary Commissions of 1480 and 1482. 550th Anniversary of the Istanbul University International Byzantine and Ottoman Symposium.* nauplion.net/stato-mar.html

- Grasset de Saint-Sauveur 1800 = A. Grasset de Saint-Sauveur jeune, *Voyage historique, littéraire et pittoresque dans les isles et possessions ci-devant vénitiennes du Levant*, Paris 1800.
- Lewis 1958 = B. Lewis, 'Some Reflections on the Decline of the Ottoman Empire', *Studia islamica* 9 (1958), 111-127.
- Manfroni 1912-1913 = C. Manfroni, 'Documenti veneziani sulla campagna dei Russi nel Mediterraneo 1770-1771', *Atti del reale istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti* LXXII:2 (1912-1913), 1143-1176.
- Marmora 1672 = A. Marmora, *Della historia de Corfu Libri VIII*, Venice 1672.
- Mason 1897 = P. Mason, *Histoire du commerce françois dans le Levant au 17^e siècle*, Paris 1896.
- Minkov 2004 = A. Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans. Kisve Bahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730*, Leiden 2004.
- Paladini 1993-1994 = F.M. Paladini, 'Né uomini né strutture. Ultimi anni del dominio veneto nelle isole Jonie attraverso i dispacci dell'ultimo provveditore generale da mar Carlo Aurelio Widmann', *Atti dell'istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti*, Classe di scienze morali, lettere ed arti CLII (1993-1994), 183-222.
- Papageorgiou 1982 = G. Papageorgiou, Συμβολή στην Ιστορία της Πάργας, *EpChron* 22 (1982) 93-132.
- Pedani 2002 = M.P. Pedani, *Dalla frontiera al confine* (Quaderni di Studi Arabi. Studi e testi 5), Rome 2002.
- Pitcher 1972 = D.E. Pitcher, *An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire*, Leiden 1972.
- Ploumides 1993 = G.S. Ploumides, Η επικοινωνία Ιονίου και Ήπειρου με τη Δύση (1602-18^{ος} αί.), in *Η επικοινωνία στη Βυζάντιο*, Athens 1993, 491-493.
- Ploumides 2002 = G.S. Ploumides, Το ιχθυοτροφείο της Σαγιάδας (1585), *EpChron* 36 (2002), 9-15.
- Pouqueville 1820 = F.C.H.L. Pouqueville, *Voyage dans la Grèce comprenant description ancienne et moderne de L'Épire....* Paris 1820.
- Preto 1999 = P. Preto, *I servizi segreti di Venezia*, Milan 1999.
- Protopsaltis 1959 = E.G. Protopsaltis, *Η επαναστική κίνηση των Ελλήνων κατά τον δεύτερον επί Αικατερίνης Β' ρωσοτουρκικόν πόλεμον 1787-1792*, Athens 1959.
- Psimouli 2006 = V. Psimouli, *Σούλι και Σουλιώτες*, 4th ed., Athens 2006.
- Siorokas 1981 = A. Siorokas, *Το γαλλικό προξενείο της Άρτας (1702-1789)*, Ioannina 1981.
- Skiotis 1972 = D.N. Skiotis, 'From Bandit to Pasha; First Steps in the Rise to Power of Ali of Tepelen, 1750-1784', *IJMES* 2 (1972), 219-244.
- Soustal 1981 = P. Soustal, *Nikopolis und Kephallenia* (Tabula Imperii Byzantini 3), Vienna 1981.
- Stojkov 1970 = R. Stojkov, 'La division administrative de l'eyalet de Roumélie pendant les années soixante du XVIII^e siècle. Selon un registre turc-ottoman de 1668-1669', *Studia Balcanica* 1 (1970), 205-223.
- Thiriet 1959 = F. Thiriet, *La Romanie vénétienne au moyen âge. Le développement et l'exploitation du domaine colonial vénétien (XIIe-XVe siècles)*, Paris 1959.