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***Le genti della citta, delle isole e del contado, le quale al tutto volevano partirsi*”. Migrations from the Venetian to the Ottoman Territory and Conversions of Venetian Subjects to Islam in the Eastern Adriatic in the Sixteenth Century<sup>1</sup>**

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Migrations from the Venetian to the Ottoman territory and conversions of Venetian subjects to Islam were commonplace in the eastern Adriatic in the sixteenth century and were thus one of the most important factors within the frame of Ottoman-Venetian relations. Main internal reasons for migrations and religious conversions were of economic, social, existential, material and personal nature, while external reasons were above all influenced by Ottoman-Venetian wars and Ottoman raids to the Venetian territory.

*Key words:* migrations, Venetian territory, Ottoman territory, conversions, Islam, eastern Adriatic, 16<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a revised and enlarged version of the paper “‘Mi faccio Turco’. Migrations from the Venetian to the Ottoman Territory and Conversions of Venetian Subjects to Islam in the Eastern Adriatic in 16<sup>th</sup> Century”, presented at the Eleventh Mediterranean Research Meeting, Florence and Montecatini Terme 24-27 March 2010, organised by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute.

## Introduction: Historical Background

This article deals with migrations to the Ottoman territory and conversions to Islam, which significantly influenced the ways of living and coexistence along the Ottoman-Venetian border in the eastern Adriatic in the sixteenth century. Both phenomena fall into a broader frame of relations between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern Age when the local population strived to set and preserve their changing identities and ensure their survival in this dynamic and difficult period of Adriatic history. However, the big clash of two world religions did not determine each and every action of every actor on this scene. Equally, Muslims and Christians were not constantly engaged, in their actions and thoughts, in a struggle against each other. As stated by Cemal Kafadar, coexistence and symbiosis were just as possible and probably more common.<sup>2</sup> The Ottoman<sup>3</sup> conquest in the Balkans from the middle of the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth centuries neither began nor end the same everywhere. Compared to medieval Croatian Kingdom, the territories of the eastern Adriatic remained to the side of the main Ottoman incursion routes, but nevertheless this territory also fell under the impact of the Ottoman army fairly early. Namely, in that period the Habsburg lands and Kingdom of Hungary (up to the battle of Mohács in 1526) were engaged in continuous conflicts with the Ottoman Empire, while Venetian Republic, at least officially, maintained good and peaceful relations with the Ottomans. However, the almost unstoppable Ottoman penetration in the eastern Adriatic region was particularly hard felt by the Venetian Republic, which had managed to obtain the majority of its possessions there only a short time before.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, 19.

<sup>3</sup> In this article the members of the Ottoman Empire are referred to as the 'Ottomans', which not only marks the Ottoman Turkish population as an ethnic category, but rather expresses the political meaning of the members of the Ottoman Empire. Namely, the expression 'Turk' is in most sources, as well as in contemporary popular and even scientific literature, used rather uncritically and reveals etymological confusion and deliberate or nondeliberate poor knowledge of actual reality. This is true above all for two reasons. Firstly, the expression 'Turk' in the Early Modern Age marked all those ethnicities and their members, who under the supreme command of the Ottoman state came in contact with the Christian population. The other important reason is, that both educated writers and the uneducated majority used the term 'Turk' to name the Turkish, Turkmen and even Tatar and, thus, were not able to identify the differences between the Ottomans and other Turkish ethnicities, such as the Seljuqs. Namely, in the Ottoman Empire the inhabitants of ethnically Turkish origin were in minority, while at the same time one of its main characteristics was, that it excepted all those ethnic and religious elements, that were of use in increasing its power and wealth, as this was above all a 'federation' of different groups of people, that was based primarily on economic foundations, which is clearly visible in its typical gathering of large quantities of booty. Cf. Heath W. Lovry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003, 135.

<sup>4</sup> The Venetians managed to subdue most of Dalmatia in 1409, while their authority there was only consolidated in 1420. Cf. Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata od najstarijih vremena do početka XIX stoljeća*. Sv. 2, Treće doba: vladanje kraljeva iz različitih porodica (1301-1526). Dio 2, knj. 2: Od gubitka Dalmaci-

After the Ottomans finally conquered Bosnia in 1463, they turned their main attention towards the medieval Croatian Kingdom with the center in Knin (*Tenina*), against which the Ottoman military expeditions in the first part of the sixteenth century were primarily directed. The Ottomans wanted to desolate and weaken economic and demographic structure of Croatian lands, bordering with the Venetian dominion along the eastern Adriatic, and situated between the Ottoman and Venetian territories, so that they could eventually take possession of them. Thus, Pope Leo X. named Croatia the “forefront of Christianity” (*Antemurale Christianitatis*), given that Croatian soldiers made significant contributions to the struggle against the Ottomans.

In 1493 the Ottomans utterly defeated the Croatian feudal army at Krbava field (*Krbavsko polje*) in Lika, wiping out most of the Croatian nobility. As a result, many members of the diminished and impoverished nobility sought refuge by migrating to safer areas, thus opening the way to mass migration of Croatian population in the area to the south of Gvozd. Consequently, in the beginning of the sixteenth century the Ottoman incursions were mainly directed towards the Croatian territory in the southern hinterland of Dalmatian coast, stretching from Zrmanja to Cetina, including the most important forts, such as Blagaj, Unac, Knin, Skradin (*Scardona*), Klis (*Clissa*) and Obrovac (*Obrovazzo*).

By January of 1513 the Ottomans pushed further along the Croatian territory and laid siege on the town of Sinj (*Signa*), another important strategic and commercial center of former Croatian Kingdom, situated in the hinterland of Split (*Spalato*). The town fell, thus putting even more strain on the Venetian zone in Dalmatia, particularly Zadar (*Zara*). With this being the case, the Ottoman 1492 occupation of Makarska (*Macarsca*), littoral territory in the south of Dalmatia, proved to be of even greater importance. In addition to that, in the first part of the sixteenth century the Ottomans took possession of some of the crucial Croatian strongholds, among them Knin in 1521, Ostrovica (*Ostrovizza*) in 1523, and Obrovac in 1527. The most important and last remaining Croatian fort Klis fell in Ottoman hands in 1537. By achieving all this, the Ottomans imposed their own supremacy over greater part of the former Croatian Kingdom.

Croatian noblemen have for decades blocked the Ottoman attempts to penetrate towards the Venetian possessions on the eastern Adriatic coast. Thus, they have maintained, to a large extent, the security of the Venetians coastal towns and islands. The Venetian authorities have acknowledged their pivotal role quite early and chose to help them, both materially and morally, in their struggle against the advancing Ottomans. However, with the fall of the Croatian forts and towns on the territory stretching from Lika and Krbava to Cetina in Ottoman hands the

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je do Matije Korvina (1409-1457). Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1975; Gaetano Cozzi, Michael Knapton, *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna*. Tomo primo: dalla guerra di Chioggia al 1517. Torino: UTET, 1997.

Venetian eastern Adriatic lands lost their protective buffer zone, which in turn redefined the status and relations between different authorities in the area.

The Ottomans began to threaten Venetian sovereignty throughout the eastern Adriatic already in the second half of the fifteenth century, and by doing so moved their state border from the interior of the Balkan Peninsula towards the narrow and thin belt of the Venetian territory alongside the eastern part of the Adriatic. In the sixteenth century the Ottomans pressed further, resulting in the shrinkage of the Venetian territory in Dalmatia and Albania, leaving only a few of their most important towns and their immediate hinterland, and thus forcing the local Christian population to retreat there in front of the inexorable Ottoman onslaught, and to permanently settle there or move further to other countries, above all to the Apennine peninsula and the Habsburg lands.

The Ottoman threat in the eastern Adriatic became real with the taking of Valona (*Vlorë*) in 1417. Especially important was the Ottoman capture of Skadar (*Shkodër*) in 1479, that enabled the Ottomans to take possession of almost the entire Albanian coastal territory, thus putting direct pressure on Bar (*Antivari*) and Ulcinj (*Dulzigno*), situated on the Venetian territory of *Albania Veneta* or Venetian Albania, in today's Montenegro. However, both of these two strategically important Venetian port towns were only taken by the Ottomans a hundred years later, during the Cyprus war (1570-1573).

The initial stage of the Ottoman raids on the Venetian eastern Adriatic possessions lasted for almost eight decades, but the first direct threat to that area came only with the Ottoman-Venetian war in the years 1499-1502. This war was a turning point in political and economic development and marked the beginning of a long period of numerous Ottoman incursions into the direct hinterlands of Venetian eastern Adriatic towns<sup>5</sup>. Two other Ottoman-Venetian wars that also largely contributed to the destruction were the War of the Holy League (1537-1540) and, above all, the Cyprus war, during which the heaviest fighting took place, causing the greatest material damage, and henceforth brought about the largest migrations of the Venetian population.

Thus, in the years between 1468 and 1500 the Ottomans invaded the territory of Dalmatia eleven times. In the year 1499 alone they have taken with them over 7.000 people and as much as 500.000 cattle. Venetian strongholds in Dalmatia were not sufficiently fortified and did not present a serious threat to the Ottoman armies, therefore the inhabitants had to take up arms themselves and fight off an utterly determined enemy. The surroundings of most of the Dalmatian towns and forts was turned into a wasteland, with the local population being either killed or captured, apart from some of the lucky souls that managed to escape behind

<sup>5</sup> Tomislav Raukar, "Venecija i ekonomski razvoj Dalmacije u XV i XVI stoljeću", *Radovi Instituta za hrvatsku povijest Sveučilišta u Zagrebu* 10 (1977): 218.

town walls<sup>6</sup>. From then on the Ottoman raids grew bigger and more destructive by the year. Panic and insecurity reigned in all of Dalmatia, as the consequences of the Ottoman terror really were appalling. For example, between 1462 and 1520 over 70.000 people was supposed to be taken into slavery from the territory of Šibenik (*Sebenico*),<sup>7</sup> one of the biggest and most important towns in Dalmatia, and out of the 120 villages that existed around Šibenik, only 14 remained by the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

On the conquered territory the Ottomans have, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, organized a territorial military border system, the so called *Krajina*, which lasted until the Candian war (1645-1669). This was a kind of a defence structure against the Venetians, who in the middle of the sixteenth century also started protecting their possessions with a similar version of *Krajina*. In general, one could argue that from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries the entire territory of Dalmatia formed a kind of *Krajina*. However, the Venetians were dependent on scarce and insufficient mercenary troops, which gave birth to the idea of regular enlistment of all those capable for military service, a kind of a “national” army, the so called *cernide* (*fanti cernidi*). This was already practised by the Venetians in the *Terraferma* region since the first part of the sixteenth century, where such units made part of the auxiliary forces.<sup>9</sup>

The Ottoman Turks were conducting raids in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula and towards the east coast of the Adriatic long before they incorporated certain territories. Such a way of conquest represented the basis of their strategic military plan, as they made an effort to economically weaken the areas they wanted to conquer and to force its inhabitants into emigration.<sup>10</sup> Although their raids were of a predominantly looting nature, Ottomans carried them out systematically, so that they organized parallel incursions alongside the main ones. In this way the Ottoman units could loot mercilessly even in the time of peace. The influences of these incursions had a profoundly negative effect on the entire future demographic and economic development of the Venetian eastern Adriatic lands. Beside the scarce incursions of the regular Ottoman cavalry were also the raids

<sup>6</sup> Marin Sanudo, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto* (MCCCCXCVI – MDXXXIII), vol. 1–58 (Ed. Rinaldo Fulin, Federico Stefani, Niccolo Barozzi, Guglielmo Berchet, Marco Allegri). Venezia: La Regia Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria, 1879-1902, vol. 7, 132.

<sup>7</sup> Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, “Marina Sanuda odnošaji skupnovlade mletačke prema južnim Slavenom”, *Arkiv za povjestnicu jugoslavensku* 8 (1865): 102.

<sup>8</sup> Šime Ljubić, *Commissiones et Relationes Venetae*. Tomus III: Annorum 1553-1571. Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, vol. 11. Zagrabiae: Sumptibus Academiae Scientiarum et Artium, 1880, 245-246.

<sup>9</sup> Šime Peričić, “Vojna krajina u Dalmaciji”, in *Vojna krajina. Povijesni pregled-Historiografija-Rasprave*. Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, Centar za povijesne znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1984, 199-204.

<sup>10</sup> Bogumil Hrabak, “Turske provale i osvajanja na području današnje severne Dalmacije do sredine XVI stolecja”, *Radovi Instituta za hrvatsku povijest* 19 (1986): 71.

of the local Ottoman horsemen and *Morlachi* or Slavic Vlachs, which took place at the orders of lower Ottoman officials and had a convincingly looting purpose. The incursions of the Ottoman looting groups in the time of peace, especially in the first quarter of the sixteenth century when they were most intensive, can be understood as a part of the continuous Ottoman warfare against the Venetian Republic, similar to the Ottoman incursions in Friuli in the fifteenth century, and despite several ceasefires and peace treaties between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire.

The extremely grim situation as a consequence of the Ottoman-Venetian fighting was lamented by the *Provveditore generale della cavalleria in Dalmazia*, i. e. Venetian Supreme Commander of Cavalry and one of the highest ranking Venetian military and administrative officials in the eastern Adriatic Zuanne Mocenigo. In his *relatione* from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1567 he states that the Ottomans constantly pillaged and looted Venetian possessions in the hinterland of Zadar, captured the local Venetian subjects and stole their cattle, which made the affected population completely desperate. As they couldn't retrieve their stolen goods, nor take revenge, due to the ban by the Venetian *provveditori* from Zadar, they for the most part decided to migrate to other territories, even to foreign lands. Many of them thus returned to the Ottoman territory, from where they had previously immigrated, as this seemed to them the only way to save themselves from the Ottoman pillaging and enslavement. The Zadar *provveditori* tried to appease them by writing to local *sanjak beys* requesting they control their subordinates, "but they never did anything against their evil practices".<sup>11</sup>

Confronted with a severe depopulation of their new possessions in the eastern Adriatic, the Ottoman authorities started implementing two measures: firstly, they started to settle Orthodox Vlachs to the exposed and strategically important outskirts along the Venetian border;<sup>12</sup> besides that they made a great effort to speed up the process of colonisation of vacant land, mostly with immigrants from

<sup>11</sup> Ljubić, *Commissiones et Relationes Venetae*. Tomus III., 191.

<sup>12</sup> Josip Vrandečić, "Had an Ottoman Combatant any Chance to Win the Love of the Daughter of the Rector of the Dalmatian Town Zadar (Islam in Ottoman Dalmatia in the 16th and 17th century and its coexistence with the Christian world of neighboring Venetian Dalmatia)", *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru* 34 (1994-1995): 167. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1560 the Spanish ambassador in Venice informed his king, "that over 15 000 Turkish families" settled in Lika and Krabava, while another report, based on intelligence data, retrieved from Zadar, stated that "8 000 Turkish families settled on the borders of Zadar territory, while another 4 000 are expected". Mirjana Polić Bobić, "Dva izvještaja o naseljavanju muslimana u Liku i Krbavu", *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu* 24 (1991): 207-210. Nevertheless, the settlement of Vlachs is a process that began long before the Ottoman arrival at the Balkan peninsula, as the Vlach migration flow intensified from the end of the fourteenth century and is clearly evident throughout the whole of the fifteenth century. Bogumil Hrabak, "Naseljavanje hercegovačkih i bosanskih vlaha u Dalmatinsku zagoru u XIV, XV i XVI veku", in *Migracije i Bosna i Hercegovina* (materijali s naučnog skupa Migracioni procesi i Bosna i Hercegovina od ranog srednjeg vijeka do najnovijih dana - njihov uticaj i posljedice na demografska kretanja i promjene u našoj zemlji, održanog u Sarajevu 26. i 27. oktobra 1989. godine). Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, Institut za proučavanje nacionalnih odnosa, 1990, 67-87.



the Venetian territory, as well as with those who came from the inner parts of the Ottoman Empire. The process of colonisation or settlement of different population groups greatly altered the settlement and cultural outlook of the landscape. The cultivation and agrarian activities of those eastern Adriatic territories that the Ottomans had gained from the Venetians contributed substantially to the temporary consolidation of the Ottoman position in the Balkans.

Consequently, among the most significant events in the eastern Adriatic in the Early Modern Age were the migrations from the Venetian territory to the Ottoman Empire. There were several forms of migrations which caused substantial increase in the number of inhabitants on the Ottoman territory. For the most part these were non-planned individual migrations, and were direct or indirect economic, social, material and existential consequences of military conflicts between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire. In addition, traditional forms of migrations also existed, which had been taking place long before the Ottoman presence in the Balkans, for example seasonal migrations of cattle and small cattle from Dalmatia to the Dinarid pastures. Nevertheless, these forms of migrations were also, at least indirectly, influenced by the Ottoman-Venetian military conflicts.

The territory of Venetian Dalmatia consisted of a long and narrow land belt, stretching alongside the eastern coast of the Adriatic. The terrain there is rocky, with many scattered island and small ports. In the continent the Venetian territory spread only to the nearest plateaus and hills, which forced the local shepherds to lead their cattle to the Venetian territory at the sea in winter, and then move to the Ottoman countryside in the interior of the continent, thus breaking the otherwise rigid Ottoman-Venetian border and spreading the area of coexistence between both sides.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the widespread migrations of cattle and nomadic shepherds on the Dinarid mountains had both a narrow and broader influence. Some migrations took place inside the geographical borders of Dinarid mountains, while others extended outside the Dinarid borders. In the Littoral such migrations took place from the coastal region towards the mountain pastures, that spread across the highest parts of the Dinarid mountains. The movement of cattle and shepherds inside the central part of the highlands covered the extended belt of the highest mountain ranges. The distance between permanent settlements and mountain pastures in this area was not great, as this land belt was very narrow. The third area of cattle migrations was in the northern part of the Dinarid foothills with its permanent settlements. From this livestock area, cattle moved to the high pastures in the

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<sup>13</sup> Maria Pia Pedani, "Beyond the Frontier: the Ottoman-Venetian border in the Adriatic context from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries", in *Zones of Fracture in Modern Europe: the Baltic Countries, the Balkans, and Northern Italy*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005, 45.

summer and descended back to the plains in the winter, to avoid starvation.<sup>14</sup>

Directly connected with the migrations to the Ottoman eastern Adriatic territory were the conversions to Islam, which had a fundamental influence on the religious situation across the entire region. Namely, many migrants to the Ottoman Empire, alongside a part of the indigenous population that had not fled in front of the invading Ottomans, underwent a religious conversion, in order to acquire a higher social status or to obtain better living conditions, as the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire had every chance of a rapid social climb and a greater possibility of acquiring material wealth. Both the Catholic Church and the Venetian Republic condemned and persecuted such religious conversions, while Islam and the Ottoman authorities favoured them.

### Life and coexistence on the border

Ottoman-Venetian contacts in the eastern Adriatic were dependent upon the global relations between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire. The uneasy neighbourhood namely forced both the Ottomans and the Venetians to establish and adapt their mutual relations. The analysis of the widely spread coexistence of the local population can be included in the broader mosaic of coexistence between Islam and Christianity in the Mediterranean basin from Spain to Egypt in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The spectre of their relations included wars, raids and conflicts, but also everyday communication, through trade, visits, personal friendship and love.<sup>15</sup> As they were economically and generally dependent upon trade with the Ottoman part of the eastern Adriatic territory, the Venetians did their utmost to keep peaceful and friendly relations with the Ottomans.<sup>16</sup> Thus, their attitude towards the Ottomans in the Early Modern Age changed from completely negative to specific forms of ethnographically connotated interest.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Mirko Marković, *Stočarska kretanja na Dinarskim planinama*. Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk, 2003, 27.

<sup>15</sup> Vrandečić, "Had an Ottoman Combatant any Chance", 182.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 138-139, 141.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French history, thought and literature (1520 – 1660)*. Paris: Boivin, 1941; Edelgard Albrecht, *Das Türkenbild in der ragusanisch-dalmatinischen Literatur des XVI. Jahrhunderts*. München: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1965; Marcel Bataillon, "Mythe et connaissance de la Turquie en Occident au milieu du XVIe siècle", in *Venezia e l'Oriente fra tardo medioevo e rinascimento*. Firenze: Sansoni, 1966, 451-470; Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453 – 1517)*. Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1967; Carl Göllner, *Die europäischen Türkendrucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, Bd. II. București, Baden-Baden: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania, Librairie Heitz GmbH, 1968 idem, *Turcica*. Bd. 3, *Die Türkenfrage in der öffentlichen Meinung Europas im 16. Jahrhunderts*. Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1978; Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*. Firenze: G. C. Sansoni editore, 1975; Vedran Gligo, "Govori protiv Turaka", in *Govori protiv Turaka*. Split: Logos, 1983, 7-65; Vasko Simoniti, *Vojaška organizacija na Slovenskem v 16. stoletju*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1991; idem, "La 'paura dei turchi' nel'400 e nel'500 presso gli sloveni: un fattore di aggregazi-



Against a prevalent Orientalizing disposition, which considers 'East' and 'West' as trans-historical, immutable, and self-contained binaries, historians of the early modern Mediterranean have for a long time emphasized the convergence and interdependence of sociocultural processes across the region. If earlier generations privileged the military, diplomatic, and economic aspects of cross-Mediterranean exchange, scholars now seek to understand how mundane and ongoing contacts between members of different societies (and of differentially situated members within each society) shaped emerging cultural categories of difference and sameness.<sup>18</sup>

However, the actual contact between the Muslims and the Christians on the Venetian territory was rather limited. In the eastern Adriatic contact between the Venetians and the Ottomans occurred during the Ottoman incursions in the hinterlands of Venetian towns, in the periods of political relations in the times of peace or through commercial cooperation, as the Ottomans sold their merchandise from the hinterland of their eastern Adriatic possessions in the squares and markets of Venetian towns. Occasionally, official contacts also occurred during the Ottoman-Venetian diplomatic negotiations.

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one", *Annali del Dipartimento di studi dell'Europa orientale, Sezione storico-politico-sociale* 13/14 (1997): 67-93; Lucette Valensi, *The Birth of the Despot. Venice and the Sublime Porte*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1993; Jean-Claude Berchet, *Le voyage en Orient. Anthologie des voyageurs français dans le Levant au XIXe siècle*. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1994; Kate Fleet, "Italian Perceptions of the Turks in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 5 (1995): 159-172; Ignacij Voje, *Slovinci pod pritiskom turškega nasilja*. Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut filozofske fakultete, 1996; idem, *Slovenica-balkanica. Zgodovinske študije*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2005; Boris Nikšić, *Osmansko carstvo očima bivšeg zarobljenika. Opis osmanskog dvora i države Nikole Matije Iljanovića*. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2001; Mustafa Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy. A History of the "Other" in Early Modern Europe: 1453 - 1683*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2001; idem, *Historical Image of the Turk in Europe: Political and Civilisational Aspects*. Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2003; Maximilian Grothaus, "Vom Erbfeind zum Exoten. Kollektive Mentalitäten über die Türken in der Habsburger Monarchie der frühen Neuzeit", in *Auf den Spuren der Osmanen in der österreichischen Geschichte*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002, 99-113; Giovanni Ricci, *Ossessione turca. In una retrovia cristiana dell'Europa moderna*. Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2002; Almut Höfert, *Den Feind beschreiben. "Türkengefahr" und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450 - 1600*. Frankfurt, New York: Camp Verlag, 2003; Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West. Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; Davor Dukić, *Sultanova djeca: predodžbe Turaka u hrvatskoj književnosti ranog novovjekovlja*. Zadar, Zagreb: Thema i. d., Ibis grafika, 2004; Asli Çirakman, *From the "Terror of the World" to the "Sick Man of Europe". European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth*. New York: Peter Lang, 2005; Günsel Renda, "Osmansko cesarstvo in Evropa v 17. stoletju: Spreminjajoče se podobe", in *Podoba Turkov v Evropi 17. stoletja*. Istanbul: Univerza Sabanci, Muzeja Sakipa Sabancija, 2005, 44-55; Zrinka Blažević, "Osmanistički diskurs kao polje de/stabilizacije kulturnih inskripcija 'Drugoga'", *Kolo* 16 (2006): 211-232; Klemen Pust, "Podoba 'Turka' v kršćanskih deželah vzhodnega Jadrana v zgodnjem novem veku", *Acta Histriae* 15 (2007): 209-234; idem, "Luigi Bassano da Zara: 'I costumi et i modi particolari della vita de' Turchi': primer kršćanskega opisovanja Osmanov iz 16. stoletja", *Acta Histriae* 17 (2009): 59-82; idem, "Vprašanje identitete in iskanje strategij preživetja: migracije z beneškega na osmansko ozemlje in spreobrnitve v islam na območju vzhodnega Jadrana v 16. stoletju", *Acta Histriae* 18 (2010): 907-936.

<sup>18</sup> E. Natalie Rothman, "Becoming Venetian: Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 21 (2006): 39.

The open border that the Ottomans maintained in the early period of their conflicts with Byzantium had thus irrevocably passed, and a new, diplomatically set form of demarcation developed, which divided two great bureaucratic empires and their military forces.<sup>19</sup> The Ottoman borderline, which was drawn after the Cyprus war, was declarative and political, while the Venetian borderline was mainly a cultural and religious one and thus less conspicuous. The Ottomans were not allowed to cross the latter border, unless they fled to the Venetian territory.<sup>20</sup>

The impact of the Ottoman border was directly felt, especially in an economic sense, by many of the inhabitants in the Venetian communes of the eastern Adriatic, including the most important town, Zadar. This was especially true for those whose possessions were occupied by the Ottomans or were left uncultivated, as the Ottomans captured most of their serfs, while the others escaped out of fear. Above all, it was the secular feudal lords, and also certain churches and convents, which suffered the greatest damage. These kind of troubles existed until the border remained only a stone's throw from the town walls, which took more than a century. Only in the time of the Morean war (1683-1699), were their successors able to reclaim their possessions and start exploiting them again.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, Poumarede established that the border between the Ottoman and the Venetian state was by no means impenetrable; also the constant Ottoman-Venetian conflicts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries didn't prevent the passing and circulation of people and goods. Therefore, regardless of tolerance or intolerance of authorities on both sides a certain "porosity of the border" existed, which was based on the mobility of population, continuity of rural and mountainous areas, complementary needs of territories on both sides of the border, local practices and forms of production and exchange, as well as the inclusion of the Venetian Albania and particularly Venetian Dalmatia into international commercial connections. Despite numerous incidents and the consequent lack of security caused by the transborder contacts, the latter was indispensable in keeping the internal balance of the Venetian territory. Thus, a paradox occurred: the inhabitants of the Venetian possessions, in order to survive, had to rely, to some extent, on their biggest enemies, the Ottomans, who they were in constant conflict with.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Mark L. Stein, *Guarding the Frontier. Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe*. London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007, 20.

<sup>20</sup> Vrandečić, "Had an Ottoman Combatant any Chance", 176, 182.

<sup>21</sup> Seid M. Traljić, "Zadar i turska pozadina od XV do potkraj XIX stoljeća", *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 11-12 (1965): 214.

<sup>22</sup> Geraud Poumarede, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade. Mythes et realites de la lutte contre les Turcs aux XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002, 129-130.

## Migrations

In view of the current state of research, it is for now impossible to give an accurate assessment of the range, directions and forms of migrations from Christian Europe to the Ottoman Empire between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, as we don't have such a large synthesis of knowledge on European and Ottoman history.<sup>23</sup> Equally complex and unsatisfactory is the research on the question about the relation between those Christians who only fled to the Ottoman Empire and those who additionally converted to Islam.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, we can claim, on the basis of information from the archive sources, that the early modern migrations from the Venetian to the Ottoman territory were, in fact, very common and widespread. For the most part, the migrations to the Ottoman territory occurred during the Ottoman-Venetian wars, as the Ottomans prevailed in all three official conflicts with the Venetian *Signoria* or *Seigneurie* in the sixteenth century (war 1499-1502, War of the Holy League and Cyprus war), which in turn added to the appeal of their rule. In the time of peace, however, the main reason of such migrations were the Ottoman incursions to the Venetian territory.

There were two main forms of migrations: voluntary and involuntary. The latter were by far the most numerous and included a variety of people from the Venetian Republic, Lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen and Holy Roman Empire, who were captured by the Ottomans during their military expeditions. Such migrants were either taken to the Ottoman slave markets and sold or used as settlers in devastated and deserted regions of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>25</sup>

The Venetian and other emigrants in the Ottoman territory represented a temporary suspension of the otherwise almost impenetrable divide between the two opposite religious worlds, Christianity and Islam, with their adoption of a new identity on the edges between the known and the unknown<sup>26</sup>. Ottoman conquest contributed greatly to the different, and sometimes multiple, identity labels of the Balkan population. In most areas three to four different identities were to be found. Moreover, while some of the identities might appear to be of an ethnic nature, others continued to be linked to geography and the political situation. But it should be noted that whatever the core of one's identity, we/they feelings, often with no ethnic-type label, were expressed. Mostly it was Christians versus

<sup>23</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Civiltà e imperi del Mediterraneo nell'età di Filippo II*. Torino: Einaudi, 1976, 845-850.

<sup>24</sup> Lucia Rostagno, *Mi faccio Turco. Esperienze ed immagini dell'islam nell'Italia moderna*. Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino, 1983, 27; Cf. Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*.

<sup>25</sup> Klemen Pust, "Za odkup ubogih sužnjeve, naših podanikov". Reševanje Benečanov iz osmanskega in Osmanov iz beneškega suženjstva na območju vzhodnega Jadrana v 16. stoletju", *Zgodovinski časopis* 64 (2010): 327-331.

<sup>26</sup> Lucetta Scaraffia, *Rinnegati. Per una storia dell'identità occidentale*. Roma, Bari: Laterza, 1993, 46-47.

Muslims, or "we against the Turks", but it also could be political within an entity.<sup>27</sup> Thus, it is necessary to revise the way in which we understand identity in the early modern Mediterranean world. Identity in this era, both individual and group, was much more complicated than simple adherence to modern notions of religious or political belonging. Though this boundary was often breached, changing one's religion did not mean replacing or abandoning some former, essentialized self. Conversion signified simply a complication of identity, an addition to the important regional, ethnic, religious, and familial elements that were at the core of self and community in this period.<sup>28</sup>

Istanbul was the main objective of most of the renegades from the Venetian territory. Among the numerous Venetian inhabitants of Istanbul, only the ambassador or the *bailo*, his officials and his family, as well as those merchants who had the status of full Venetian citizen were officially recognised. Beside this smaller core of official Venetian representatives there existed a much larger community of formal Venetian Christians, who had in the mean time become Ottomans. The official Venetian inhabitants of Istanbul never numbered more than a hundred persons, whilst the fugitives from the Venetian territory could be counted in their thousands. Some of them fled from Venice or the *Terraferma*, but most were Slavic and Greek citizens of the Venetian Republic. The reasons for their arrival were varied; above all there were many banished persons (*banditi*), runaway slaves, soldiers, small merchants, craftsmen, peasants and adventurers.<sup>29</sup>

In the Ottoman Empire, from as early as the fifteenth century, there were several Christian renegades from the Venetian territory who had achieved extraordinary trust and prominent positions in the Ottoman military and administration in Bosnia. These people later played an increasingly important role on the Ottoman eastern Adriatic border by helping the Ottomans conquer the Venetian territory and towns and to consolidate their power in the region. This was common Ottoman practice, with which they sought to weaken their enemy's defence and to gain for their cause as many local inhabitants as possible, so that in this way they could then create a basis for the preservation of the conquered possessions.<sup>30</sup>

For the most part, the emigrants to the Ottoman territory were members of the lower social strata, who mostly wanted to avoid continuous Ottoman raids, but they also arrived due to hunger, as they aspired for a better life under the Ottoman masters. Equally, there were many cases when the renegades were persecuted and

<sup>27</sup> John V. A. Fine, *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter in the Balkans. A Study of Identity in Pre-Nationalist Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006, 183.

<sup>28</sup> Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople. Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006, 129.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62.

<sup>30</sup> Seid M. Traljić, "Vrana i njezini gospodari u doba turske vladavine", *Radovi Instituta JAZU u Zadru* 18 (1971): 349.

had thus sought shelter in the Ottoman Empire. It is therefore not surprising that the Ottomans sent their emissaries or envoys to regions they wanted to conquer in order to spread affinity towards themselves among the local population.

Throughout the Balkan Peninsula, as well as on the Venetian possessions in the eastern Adriatic, many Slavic peasants consequently sympathised with the Ottomans, who were known as the “enemies of the old lawful nobility” (*inimicus nobilitati*), and didn’t, as a society, acknowledge the idea of a noble status according to birth. The same happened in Cyprus and Crete, where a revolt against the Venetian feudal oppression even started to spread<sup>31</sup>. The Ottomans wanted to physically eliminate the main representatives of aristocratic families and above all wanted to prevent any striving for revenge. Henceforth, it is understandable that the subordinate population oscillated towards their new Ottoman masters, who had liberated them from the heavy and unbearable burden.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, among the most important reasons for the migrations of the population of Venetian eastern Adriatic possessions we could, beside the military and political, also include the economical ones, i. e. better chances of survival that the Ottomans had in comparison to the Venetians. Namely, the Ottoman serfs in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had far fewer obligations towards their feudal lords and state than their Venetian counterparts did, so many of the latter fled to the territory under the Ottoman rule.<sup>33</sup>

In the seventeenth century this was not true anymore which caused social disturbances and even uprisings. Social unrest coincided with a considerable raise in prices, connected with daunting inflation, which occurred in the first half of the seventeenth century and further worsened the general economic situation<sup>34</sup>. Thus, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1622 the soldiers of the Ottoman central military units, stationed in Istanbul, rebelled against Sultan Osman II. and put forward a number of demands. Because they were dissatisfied with the sultan’s answer, they stormed his palace and killed him, which was the first regicide in Ottoman history. In his stead they enthroned his uncle, Prince Mustafa.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *I termini di una discussione. Atti del Convegno su le Marche e l’Adriatico orientale dal XIII secolo al primo Ottocento* (Senigallia 1976). Ancona, 1978, 440. In the decrees of the Venetian Senate we can find evidence of a pro-Ottoman atmosphere among the Greeks on the Aegean islands and the Peloponnese, where the local population often sought refuge on the Ottoman territory. In 1428 the Senate debated on the disturbingly good relations of the Greek population with the Ottomans, and there was great concern that it could facilitate the Ottoman invasion of Peloponnese. Orhan Kologlu, “Renegades and the case Uluç/Kiliç Ali”, in *Mediterraneo in armi (secc. XV-XVIII). Quaderni-Mediterranea. Ricerche storiche*. Palermo: Associazione Mediterranea, 2007, 520-521.

<sup>32</sup> Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 163.

<sup>33</sup> Hrabak, “Turske provale i osvajanja”, 72.

<sup>34</sup> Nenad Moačanin, “Demographical Trends in the Ottoman Empire in Europe and their Impact on Economy: neither the West, nor the East”, in *Relazioni economiche tra Europa e mondo islamico, secc. XIII-XVIII*. Atti della “Trentottesima Settimana di Studi”, 1-5 maggio 2006. Prato: Le Monnier, 2007, 67.

<sup>35</sup> Baki Tezcan, “The 1622 Military Rebellion in Istanbul: A Historiographical Journey”, in *Mutiny and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002, 25.



As mentioned, the Ottomans had also spread their social propaganda against the feudal lords among the peasants in the Venetian area of the eastern Adriatic. This was done predominantly in the Dalmatian parts of the eastern Adriatic, for example in Poljica (*Poglizza*) in the vicinity of Split.<sup>36</sup>

These phenomena were not limited solely to the area of the Venetian Dalmatia. As early as in the first quarter of the sixteenth century the migrations to the Ottoman territory were just as numerous in the Venetian Albania, where the inhabitants of Kotor (*Cattaro*) on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1525 complained to the *Signoria*, that the town's Venetian rector and *provveditore* had caused the local population numerous injustices and inflicted them with grave damage, which caused many of them to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>37</sup>

In contrast, in the northern part of the Venetian eastern Adriatic possessions, especially in Venetian Istria where everyday contact between the Ottomans and Venetians was relatively scarce, such Ottoman activities were not so common.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, even noblemen of the neighbouring Habsburg Carniola frequently complained because their serfs stated that it would be better to live under the Ottomans, where there was peace and the peasants didn't have to pay so many taxes.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, also for the area of Venetian Istria we can find very interesting information in the archives about actual or only planned migrations of lower classes from Venetian to the Ottoman territory. The supreme Venetian political, administrative, and military official in Dalmatia, *Provveditore generale in Dalmazia* Andrea Civran, as well as *potestato* and *capitano* of Koper (*Capodistria*) Zuanne Minoto have, for example, on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 1524 informed the *Signoria*, that a *Morlacho* named Toma Rozić, the inhabitant of Vodice (*Uodize*) in the vicinity of Rašpor (*Raspo*), promised the Bosnian *sanjak bey*, that he would bring him a hundred *Morlachi* families from the Venetian territory, while at the same time he declared himself ready to serve *sanjak bey* as a guide for the Ottoman incursions in Istria. The Bosnian *pasha* exactly at that time gathered cavalry for a raid "against Ljubljana", which probably meant Carniola. Civran and Minoto have thus ordered the *capitano* of Rašpor Aloysio Barbaro he is to seize Rozić urgently and as soon as possible. Namely, if he wasn't neutralized, the Ottomans would continue to plunder the Venetian territories in Dalmatia and Istria, which would, according to the opinion of Civran and Minoto, bring about "the destruction of

<sup>36</sup> Marko Šunjić, *Dalmacija u XV stoljeću*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1967, 87-88.

<sup>37</sup> Šime Ljubić, *Commissiones et Relationes Venetae*. Tomus I. Annorum 1433-1527. Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, vol. 6. Zagrabiae: Sumptibus Academiae Scientiarum et Artium, 1876, 176.

<sup>38</sup> Hrabak, "Turske provale i osvajanja", 73; Klemen Pust, "Vpliv osmanskih vpadov na migracije v Istri (15.-16. stoletje)", in *Migracije in slovenski prostor od antike do danes*. Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 2010, 157-174.

<sup>39</sup> Stanko Jug, "Turški napadi na Kranjsko in Primorsko do prve tretjine 16. stoletja. Kronologija, obseg in vpadna pota", *Glasnik Muzejskega društva za Slovenijo* 24 (1943): 9.



Venetian rule in that area". Minoto therefore imprisoned Rozić and exposed him to torture. Because of his general popularity among the local population, Minoto didn't want to release him, as his was afraid of a rebellion against the Venetian authorities. This in itself testifies about the malcontentment of the local population, living in direct vicinity of one of the main Ottoman incursion routes to Istria, that lead further on towards Friuli and the Habsburg Karst.<sup>40</sup>

Migrations from Istria to the Ottoman territory continued in the middle of the sixteenth century, as is evident from the testimony of Nikola Milokanić, a 70 year old former Ottoman subject from Banpolje (*Banadego*) in the *sanjak* of Lika. Namely, the *Provveditore generale in Dalmazia* Ferigo Nani has, on 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1591, reported that during his hearing Milokanić testified he was born in Istria, from where he emigrated 40 years ago, i. e. around 1550, to the Ottoman Empire, where he married. Eventually, he decided to return to Istria, together with 184 *Morlachi*, mostly his relatives and followers.<sup>41</sup> Thus, a former renegade, who emigrated from the Venetian territory to live under the Ottoman rule, in his old age returned to his original fatherland.

The voluntary migrations of the Venetians to the Ottoman Empire were already quite common in the fifteenth century. For the most part these were temporary forms of migration, especially merchants, who lived in the Ottoman territory during the time of their trading activities. Thus, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 1480, soon after the end of the Ottoman-Venetian war 1463-1479, the *doge's* secretary, Giovanni Dario,<sup>42</sup> brought the sultan's letter to *Signoria*, with which the sultan allowed permanent residence in the Ottoman Empire to all foreigners, apart from the Ottoman enemies.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> "...morlacho da questa parte, qual se chiama thomaso rosich, qual [...] habita ale Vodize apresso raspur persona assai richa [...] El detto Sanzacho fa adunatio de Cauallj, Et ha uoce da uoler Correr Verso Lubiana [...] Proueditor Zeneral In Dalmatia, per la quale Visto, Et Inteso El Desiderio qual ha sua magnificientia che huomo morlacho nominato Tomaso Rosich habitante ale Uodize fusse retenuto [...] che per bona uia era certificato questo morlacho hauea promesso per Dare al Signor bassa de bossena Cento famelgie de morlachj Et guida de potere Correr In questo bando de Istria, Solicitando [...] signore bassa a tal effetto". Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV), Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci (CCD), Lettere dei Rettori (LR), busta 270: Raspo, 1524. 20. 7.; 1524. 23. 7.; Cf. Pust, "Vpliv osmanskih vpadov", 169.

<sup>41</sup> "Hoggi doppo hauer scritto alla Serenita Vostra e uenuto in questa Citta Nicolo Milocanich suddito Turchesco habitante in Badanego luoco sottoposto alla giurisdittione del Sanzacco di Lica, il quale, per quanto dice, desidera uenir sotto l'ombra de quel Serenissimo Dominio, etandar ad habitar cum molte anime nell'Istria per liberarsi dalla tiranide turchesca [...] Nicolo Milocanich q. Vido huomo deta de anni 70., come affirmo alpresente habita in Banadego suddito Turchesco, uenuto hoggi in questa citta come disse per andar in Istria a trouarsi habitazione, et condurui la sua famiglia, et altri di quel paese al numero di cento e ottanta quattro anime, con li quali ha posto ordine di partirsi di quel Paese per non star piu sogetto al Turco". ASV, Senato, Dispacci, Provveditori da Terra e da Mar (PTM), busta 415: Provveditore Generale in Dalmazia (1591), 1591. 16. 4.; Cf. Pust, "Vpliv osmanskih vpadov", 169.

<sup>42</sup> About the great role of Giovanni Dario, whose family originated from Crete, in the Ottoman-Venetian diplomatic relations in the second part of the fifteenth century, see his *dispacci*, that he sent to the Doge Giovanni Mocenigo from Istanbul. Cf. Giovanni Dario, *22 dispacci da Costantinopoli al doge Giovanni Mocenigo*. Venezia: Corbo e Fiore Editori, 1992.

<sup>43</sup> Državni arhiv u Zadru (DAZd), Ducali e terminazioni (DT), liber II (1458-1487), 1480. 24. 11.;

Italian merchants even sold weapons on the Ottoman territory, including the area of eastern Adriatic, as is disclosed by an incident from 1552, when three merchants sold weapons in the Ottoman Vrana (*Laurana*) and Ključ. One of them had arrived as far as Sarajevo, while the other moved towards Alessio (*Lezhë*) in Albania. All three merchants were put in jail by the *Signoria* and a legal procedure was started against them. In defence of his actions one of the merchants stated: "Sometimes even respectable ladies become whores"<sup>44</sup>

The first mention of a permanent settlement of renegades from the Venetian eastern Adriatic possessions on the Ottoman territory dates back to the beginning of the second part of the fifteenth century. The decision of the *Consiglio dei Dieci* from the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1463 states that an experienced sailor, Grgur from Trogir (*Trau*), escaped from a Venetian jail, where he was imprisoned due to his various crimes, and after many adventures he arrived in Istanbul, where he joined the Ottoman navy. Nevertheless, *Signoria* granted him a free pass to Venice for a period of ten years, while at same time authorised the *Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci* to conduct negotiations with him and other Venetian renegades in Istanbul, with the intention of organizing the assassination of the Sultan Mehmed II.<sup>45</sup>

The material and existential reasons for migrations of lower classes to the Ottoman territory were different. Amongst others, many soldiers who were discharged from the Venetian military service resorted to Ottoman help. After the end of the Holy League war, for example, *Signoria* didn't need such a large number of military mercenaries, so the redundant soldiers had to seek jobs elsewhere, and many of them pledged themselves to serve the Ottomans. This is also visible from the demands of the commune of Zadar on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1541 submitted to *Signoria*.

The people of Zadar complained about the dismissal from the Venetian army of Croatian horsemen (*Croati a cavallo*),<sup>46</sup> who served under the command of Vid Posedarski and the Detrico family. The dismissed horsemen had no other alter-

Ivan Pederin, "Zadarske dukale o ratu i miru s Turcima od XV do XVII stoljeća", *Hercegovina* 4 (1985): 136-137.

<sup>44</sup> Sabine Florence Fabijanec, "Le sens de l'honneur chez quelques hommes d'affaires a Zadar au XIV<sup>e</sup> et au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Acta Histriae* 8 (2000): 104.

<sup>45</sup> Vladimir Lamansky, *Secrets d'état de Venise. Documents extraits, notices et études servant a éclaircir les rapports de la Seigneurie avec les Grecs, les Slaves et la Porte Ottomane a la fin du XVe et au XVIe siècle*. Tomo I, II. New York: Burt Franklin, 1968, 17. However, at the very end of the fifteenth century, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1495, the *Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci*, as proposed by Jacob from Venice, approved the poisoning of an experienced Venetian sailor Benedetto Barbetta, who fled to the Ottoman Empire, where he joined and eventually became an Ottoman. As compensation for his services Jacob was awarded a monthly annuity of five ducats. *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Lovorka Čoralić, Nedjeljka Balić Nižić, "Iz hrvatske vojne povijesti - *Croati a cavallo* i *Soldati Albanesi*, njihova bratovština i gradivo o njezinu djelovanju od 1675. godine do sredine XVIII. stoljeća", *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za društvene i povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zagrebu* 24 (2006): 71-130.

native, but to go serve the Ottomans, as all of them originated from the area of Nadin and Vrana fortresses in the hinterland of Zadar, that were conquered by the Ottomans in the war. The Ottoman authorities had already summoned these horsemen to their homes and properties, and granted them total tax exemption for the period of ten years. If this really happened it would, in the opinion of the Zadar representatives, cause “the total destruction of our desolated homeland”. That is the main reason that the commune of Zadar made a plea to the *Signoria* to rehire the Croats, or at least the most competent half of them, who could ensure “the preservation of the Zadar territory”. The Venetian authorities answered, that the Senate had taken care of this by means of a special decree, as the *Signoria* was very interested to appease the local population and prevent the transition of the soldiers to Ottoman service.<sup>47</sup>

Deserters from the Venetian town garrisons in the eastern Adriatic often fled to the Ottoman territory, as the *comes* and *capitano* of Šibenik, Raimondo Gritti, informed the *Signoria* on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1582. At that time a soldier under the command of captain Marco Brazzano, named Antonio from Portobuffole, fled from the town citadel and joined the Ottomans. Antonio at night climbed the town walls using a rope and took with him the *castellano*'s slave, who was cuffed in the warehouse in the lower part of the citadel. Gritti was, thus, convinced that “the slave was a sneaky and evil person also”, and called upon the *Signoria* to severely punish both fugitives, as a warning to all the others who were attempting similar actions. At the same time, Gritti blamed captain Brazzano for the appalling situation in the citadel, as the latter in his opinion wasn't up to the difficult task and was always arguing with the soldiers. The unit, which was supposed to consist of fifteen soldiers, was thus not in full number, furthermore, the soldiers were permanently defecting from the citadel, but the same was true for their replacements also.<sup>48</sup>

Of great significance is the fact that even before Antonio's escape another soldier had defected to the Ottoman side. Together with the *castellano* and *governatore*, Gritti had to constantly solve problems caused by poor management of the citadel military unit, due to the fact that captain Brazzano was not a soldier by profession and didn't even know whose turn it was to keep the night watch.<sup>49</sup>

About these kinds of escapes to the Ottoman territory we get further information from the report of the *comes* of Zadar Zuanne Battista Michiel from the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 1585, according to which, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October at 1800 hours a soldier named Vincenzo from Tolentino, with the nickname *Spadarin*, from the infantry unit of captain Cesare Podocataro, climbed over the Zadar town walls and fled

<sup>47</sup> ASV, Senato Mare (SM), Rubriche e registri (RR), registro 25 (1539-1540), 1541. 12. 2.

<sup>48</sup> ASV, CCD, LR, busta 280: Sebenico, 1582. 10. 1.

<sup>49</sup> “...prima di questo successo un'altro pursuedo soldato fattosi cassare ando a farsi turcho”. ASV, CCD, LR, busta 280: Sebenico, 1582. 10. 1.

to the Ottoman territory. Because of the gravity of the offence Michiel didn't even wait for the appropriate decree from the *Signoria*, but banned Tolentino from the entire Venetian territory and from all Venetian vessels, under the penalty of hanging and a fine of 500 liras. At the same time Michiel asked the *Signoria* for the confirmation of his verdict, so he could then declare it to the entire population of Zadar, not only as a means of punishing the culprit, but even more so as an example and to intimidate other potential fugitives, as this was a matter of great importance for the security of this prominent fort.<sup>50</sup> The fact that Michiel acted so swiftly and very rigorously clearly shows that the phenomenon of defection to the Ottoman territory was obviously widespread.

Many delinquents and criminals from the Venetian military service at the time also fled to the Ottomans. There is a mention in the archival sources, dated the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1517, about a nobleman from Zadar, named Lombardin Benja, who was supposed to become a *stratioti* with two horses, but had fled from the Zadar area before that, due to a murder charge, and found refuge on Ottoman territory. Shortly after his escape the fourth Ottoman-Venetian War, that of the Holy League, occurred, so his brother Saladin also became a *stratioti* and fought the Ottomans, but he was killed in the clash with the commander in the Ottoman military service, Constantine the Greek (*Constantino grecho*). In the meantime, Lombardin returned to Zadar, as there was no one else to support his sisters and elderly mother, and rejoined the Venetian army. Due to grave poverty he turned to *Signoria* for help and on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August got a raise in his salary of two ducats a month, so his salary amounted to eight ducats a month, which was a considerable amount.<sup>51</sup>

Especially surprising is the fact that *Signoria* not only accepted Lombardin back in active military service, but had also given him a raise in his salary. On one hand this could be explained by the Venetian military needs, as they found themselves in a war with a stronger adversary, and therefore needed every soldier that they could get. On the other hand, however, it is possible to establish that similar transitions between the Venetian and the Ottoman territory were obviously so common that such phenomena, at least in the time of war, were not criminalised. This is confirmed by the notice of the supreme Venetian official in Dalmatia, the *Provveditore generale in Dalmazia* Hieronimo de Cavalli from the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1523, announcing that the noblemen, citizens and commoners of the eastern Adriatic Venetian towns, as well as the local land workers, complained that it would be better to live under the Ottomans than the Venetians. Preceding this,

<sup>50</sup> ASV, CCD, LR, busta 284: Zara (1575-1793), 1585. 14. 11.

<sup>51</sup> ASV, SM, RR, registro 19 (1517-1521), 1517. 30. 7.

many of them had already fled to the Ottoman territory.<sup>52</sup>

An important reason for escaping to the Ottomans was also due to love connections, combined with the difficult social and existential situation of individuals. As we find out from an anonymous diary on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 1571 one such incident deeply disturbed the public opinion in Venetian Dalmatia. As is visible from the description, made by an unknown chronicler, this was not an unusual event and it ended well for the renegade, who even actively collaborated in the Ottoman raids on the Venetian territory.

Petar Bačić, a young man from Split, aged 26, who lost his inheritance to the Alberti family and thus remained without means to support his elderly mother, swore that he would kill every member of that family, except for Giovanna Alberti, his former mistress. An important reason for this decision was that when Bačić asked to marry Giovanna, he was ridiculed as a beggar and thrown from the Alberti's palace. Both Bačić and his mother then fled to the Ottoman fort Solin and further to Klis, the centre of the Ottoman power in that area. Once there, Bačić called upon the Ottomans, to grant him command of a cavalry unit in order to raid the Venetian territory. The Ottomans rendered him the command over 42 horsemen. However, during the pillaging of the Split hinterland Bačić changed his mind and decided to return to the Venetian side of the border. There he was warmly accepted, as the Venetians were short of soldiers. A certain hermit, whom the ordinary people worshiped as a prophet, labelled the return of Bačić as a sign of divine mercy towards the Venetians, thus, the actions of Bačić gained metaphysical dimensions in folk tradition.<sup>53</sup>

Migrations into Ottoman territory by individuals from higher social classes and with elevated social position also took place in the area of Venetian eastern Adriatic possessions. For Kvarner (*Quarnero*) there is certain information about such types of migrations in the second half of the fifteenth century, which can also be found in the report of the official secretary of the Venetian Republic, Antonio Vinciguerra, from 1481.

According to Vinciguerra, Pavle, the relative of Prince Radić (*Radichio*), the brother of the Bosnian king who was executed by the Ottomans, voluntarily joined the Ottomans, as result of the shameful actions committed by the Count Ivan Frankopan or Frankapan (*Frangipani*). Namely, Radić, together with his family, fled to the Venetian island of Rab (*Arbe*), to escape the Ottoman persecution. Later he accepted the invitation by the Count Ivan Frankopan to come to the island of Krk (*Veglia*). Count Ivan persuaded him to become a warlord in the service of the Hungarian king, but Radić died on the way to Hungary. Vinciguerra blamed

<sup>52</sup> "...staria meglio da le bande de lj, che de qui". ASV, CCD, LR, busta 302, 1523. 1. 8.

<sup>53</sup> Vicko Solitro, *Povijesni dokumenti o Istri i Dalmaciji*. Split: Književni krug, 1989, 164-168; Cf. Vrandečić, "Had an Ottoman Combatant any Chance", 164.

Count Ivan for Radić's death, as he also imprisoned his family and seized all his belongings. Pavel escaped from Krk by boat, but was attacked at sea by Ivan's pirates, who took all of his money, silver and jewellery. The pirates also behaved indecently towards the women in Pavel's escort, and the latter barely escaped death. Because of the humiliation, Pavel escaped to the Ottoman territory, where he planned his revenge. Vinciguerra quite suggestively claims that Count Ivan "lived in fear from that moment on, and every time he heard the Ottomans were preparing to sack Krk, he hastily equipped his galley".<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting example of a collective escape of members of higher social strata to the Ottoman territory is reported by *comes* and *capitano* of Šibenik Leonardo Lauredan on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April and 17<sup>th</sup> of May 1514. Namely, one month before that, in the night of 25<sup>th</sup> of March, the sons of some of the most eminent Šibenik families fled to the Ottoman Empire, under the pretence of going to the Kingdom of Hungary. Mostly they were young people, eager to establish themselves and take part in adventures. The leader of the escape was Ivan Franjo, son of Petar Tobolović, other fugitives were as following: Bernardin, son of Jakov Dobrojević, Grgur, son of Ivan Dragojević, Ivan, son of Petar Mišić, Baldissero, son of Michele de Gersanis, and Franjo, son of Petar Vojnović. Except for Franjo Vojnović, aged 24, who returned to Šibenik, all the others arrived to Sinj and from there set out on foot towards the *sanjak* of Bosnia.<sup>55</sup>

For such an oligarchic society as the Venetian, this escape became a major incident. The real problem was that it was perpetrated by young members of the upper classes, which were, according to Venetian understanding, the main basis and supporters of central rule. That is also why this act, in the eyes of the Venetian authorities, represented a much larger transgression than escapes committed by persons of lower social origin. Consequently, Lauredan's verdict of their actions was swift and merciless. He condemned them to exile, which in those times was one of the most severe punishments. Not even the pleading for clemency by their parents could alter his decision. According to Lauredan the fugitives had no justifiable reasons for their escape, which in his mind clearly showed their ingratitude and cunning.<sup>56</sup>

Lauredan was particularly worried about the social repercussion. Other inhabitants of Šibenik could understand the actions of the fugitives as a form of social rebellion, such an example could therefore instigate the others and especially the lower social classes to rebel. The Venetians always had great problems with control over local elites and other inhabitants in Dalmatian communes under their

<sup>54</sup> Solitro, *Povijesni dokumenti*, 43, 54, 57, 62, 77-80; Ljubić, *Commissiones et Relationes Venetae*. Tomus I., 89.

<sup>55</sup> ASV, CCD, LR, busta 280: Sebenico, 1514. 21. 4.; 1514. 17. 5.

<sup>56</sup> "La partida di quali Improuisa non Impulsi da alchuna legittima Causa". ASV, CCD, LR, busta 280: Sebenico, 1514. 21. 4.



rule. In the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age there were several uprisings against Venetian rule in Dalmatia, the most famous and destructive being the one of Matija Ivanić on Hvar (*Lesina*), between 1510 and 1514.<sup>57</sup>

Owing to this escape, the rectors of Šibenik ordered the main town entrance to be locked and night watches to be placed on town walls and in the suburbs. At the same time they asked the Venetian authorities to temporarily remove from the town the parents and relatives of the escaped noblemen, which would supposedly prevent the danger of future escapes.<sup>58</sup> This testifies to the fact that other noblemen and citizens of Šibenik also considered the possibility of escaping to the Ottomans.

Consequently, by the middle of the sixteenth century the dimensions of migrations from the Venetian Dalmatia and Venetian Albania to the Ottoman territory became almost uncontrollable, as the living conditions were unbearable even in the official time of peace. The supreme Venetian commander in the Adriatic, *Capitano in Golfo* Pandolfo Guoro, in his *relazione* from 1556 warned *Signoria*, that the land on Venetian eastern Adriatic possessions was infertile and offered the people a mere existence and nothing else. Because of the Ottoman desolation and high taxes, which they could not pay, the Venetian population in the eastern Adriatic were left with no alternative but to migrate to foreign lands, especially to the Ottoman Empire, thus making the Venetian possessions more and more depopulated, which decreased the number of oarsmen or *galeotti* for the Venetian galleys. Guoro also informed the *Signoria* about Pavle Čeletić, inhabitant of Novi-grad (*Nouegradi*) in the vicinity of Zadar, who at that time voluntarily emigrated to Ottoman Bosnia, together with his entire family.<sup>59</sup>

One of the supreme commanders of the Venetian navy, *Provveditor dell'armata* Cristoforo da Canal, also complained in 1558 over the lack of population and especially oarsmen in Venetian Dalmatia. According to Canal, the structure of the Venetian navy consisted of three parts: the first part were the oarsmen from the Venetian Dalmatia, the second part was constituted by the Greeks, and the third part consisted of both the Venetians from the capital and its *Terraferma*, as well as oarsmen from Venetian Istria. The problem was that every year, with the disarmament of the galleys during the winter and their rearmament in the spring, as much as one third of the oarsmen deserted the Venetian navy and fled, mostly to the Ottoman territory. Besides that, the Venetian Dalmatia was lacking men

<sup>57</sup> Grga Novak, *Hvar kroz stoljeća*. Zagreb: Izdavački zavod JAZU, 1972, 82-102. On social differentiation and movements from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries: Miroslav Kurelac, "Društvene diferencijacije i pokreti pučana srednje Dalmacije od XIV. do XVI. stoljeća", *Zbornik Zavoda za povijesne znanosti Istraživačkog centra JAZU* 10 (1980): 237-245.

<sup>58</sup> ASV, CCD, LR, busta 280: Sebenico, 1514. 17. 5.

<sup>59</sup> "...*Polo Celetich fo subdito di Novegradi che sponte ando con la fameia ad habitar in Bossina*". Ljubić, *Commissiones et Relationes Venetae*. Tomus III., 90.

who could be recruited as oarsmen. The reasons for impoverishment and depopulation were, in Canal's mind, numerous, but the main one was "the last war that your Serenity waged against the Turks, during which, as I was assured, most of the population, that lived in the areas close to the border with the Turks, fled out of fear of being captured or massacred".<sup>60</sup>

The problem of deserters from Venetian galleys who sought refuge on the Ottoman territory was already very worrying for the Venetian authorities in the first half of the sixteenth century. Namely, as we find out from the report of the *comes* and *capitano* of Šibenik Giovanni Aloisio Venier from the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1533, those who declined to serve on the galleys as oarsmen, where they lived a harsh and dangerous life, were banned from the Venetian territory and had all their belongings confiscated, so they started fleeing to the Ottoman side of the border.<sup>61</sup>

About the critical situation in the area of Zadar and the consequent migration of the local population to the Ottoman Empire, we learn more from the *relatione* of the *capitano* of Zadar, Vicenzo Querini, from 1561, which states that in 1559 there was a great famine and impoverishment in the town, but also in the hinterland and on the islands. Therefore, the inhabitants wanted to migrate to the Ottoman territory, so Querini was forced to ride throughout the town's territory and promise the inhabitants that the Venetian authorities were definitely going to help them. Without his personal engagement, the Zadar's hinterland would have become completely deserted, which in Querini's mind would lead to "the total destruction of the town and consequently great loss for the *Signoria*". Thus, Querini made a desperate appeal to the Venetian authorities: "On my knees I beg your Serenity to provide righteous help to your subjects".<sup>62</sup>

The migration flow to the Ottoman territory did not stop towards the end of the sixteenth century; conversely, it even strengthened. This is why the *comes* of Zadar, Zuan Battista Michiel, in his *relatione* from the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1586 called upon the *Signoria* to pardon all the deserters from Venetian galleys, that had fled to Habsburg Senj (*Segna*), but mostly to the Ottoman Empire, as well as the *banditi* from the Zadar territory and other regions of Venetian Dalmatia, and to enable them to return to the Venetian territory, under the condition that they settle in the area around Radovin (*Radouino*) and other settlements on the Ottoman-Venetian border. This simple method could, according to Michiel, significantly increase the number of colonists in that region, which would in turn raise the income from revenues, improve the supply of Zadar, and the security in the whole borderland with the Ottomans. Many of the *banditi* namely escaped to the Otto-

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 109-110.

<sup>61</sup> ASV, CCD, LR, busta 280: Sebenico, 1533. 15. 9.

<sup>62</sup> "...le genti della citta, delle isole e del contado, le quale al tutto volevano partirsi". Ljubić, *Commissiones et Relationes Venetae*. Tomus III., 152.

man territory, shortly after they were expelled from Venetian ground, where they were awarded with large estates, as Ottomans were lacking land workers. These renegades also started to collaborate with the Ottomans in their incursions to the Venetian territory.<sup>63</sup>

The intensity of migrations to the Ottoman possessions was still high in the seventeenth century, indicated by the edict of Sultan Ahmed I. in September of 1614, stating that all the fugitives from the Venetian territory to the Ottoman Empire have to be surrendered to the Venetian *bailo*, if he so demanded, in order they be taken to Venice to face the *Signoria*.<sup>64</sup> Because of that the *comes* of Zadar, Antonio Civran, on 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1631 ordered that the Ottomans at Novigrad in the vicinity of Zadar were not allowed to enter the fort, while the Venetians were forbidden to cross the border to the Ottoman territory.<sup>65</sup> This kind of categorical order is an evocative proof that such transitions of the border were quite common.

### Conversions to Islam

In contrast to Islam, which had a fairly open attitude towards conversions from Christianity to Islam, both the Catholic Church and *Signoria* officially strongly condemned and persecuted all such actions. In addition, the Catholic Church was also rather sceptical towards conversions in the other direction, from Islam to Christianity.<sup>66</sup> However, a recent study of renegades in sixteenth century Venice shows a surprising degree of practicality in the Church's and the Republic's treatment of the problem. The renegade was by then, and perhaps even much earlier, no longer a total outcast. This was partly because the renegades also ran to whole classes or specialisations, the cannon-founders, sword-smiths, arms de-

<sup>63</sup> Grga Novak, *Mletačka uputstva i izvještaji*. Svezak IV. Od 1572 do 1590 godine. Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, vol. 47, Zagreb: JAZU, 1964, 375.

<sup>64</sup> ASV, Lettere e scritture turchesche (LST), busta 10, 1614; Maria Pia Pedani, *I "Documenti turchi" dell'Archivio di Stato di Venezia*. Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1994, 309-310.

<sup>65</sup> DAZd, Atti del provveditore generale della Dalmazia ed'Albania (APG), Antonio Civran (1630-1632), vol. I., 1631. 12. 6.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Hans Joachim Kissling, "Das Renegatentum in der Glanzzeit des Osmanischen Reiches", *Scientia* 55 (1961): 18-26; Rostagno, *Mi faccio Turco*; Gino Benzoni, "Il 'farsi turco' ossia l'ombra del rinnegato", in *Venezia e i Turchi. Scontri e confronti di due civiltà*. Milan: Electa, 1985, 91-133; Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*; Olympia Gobbi, "Quando il Turco si fece cristiano: conversioni di schiavi e relativo cerimoniale", in *Pirati e corsari in Adriatico*. Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 1998; Bartolomé Bennisar, Lucile Bennisar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah. L'histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVIe-XVIIe siècles*. Paris: Perrin, 2001; Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650. The Structure of Power*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002; Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters. White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004; Poumarede, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade*; Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels. A History of the Conflict between Christendom and Islam*. London: Penguin Books, 2004; Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*; Giovanna Fiume, *Schiavitù mediterranea. Corsari, rinnegati e santi di età moderna*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2009.

alers and gun-runners, whose activity was considerable in the Balcans in the decades following the Ottoman conquest and who were indispensable in the Mediterranean from the city-states of the Barbary corsairs to Constantinople, trading as much in expertise as in manufactured goods.<sup>67</sup>

On the other hand, Islam commands severe punishment, usually death, for any kind of religious apostasies and conversion to another religion. However, the circumstances in practical everyday life were often different from the formal set of rules. This can also be traced in the testimonies of religious converts, who were not persecuted by the Ottoman authorities, despite the fact that they had converted from Islam to Christianity.<sup>68</sup> Thus, it is possible to claim that the Ottomans also showed a degree of practicality to the renegades of their own.

In Christian Europe deviations from Christianity and conversions to Islam were quite common in the Early Modern Age, which means that the negative attitude of the Catholic Church was, apart from doctrinal and ideological differences, also the result of fear from losing a great number of believers. Religious conversions were most numerous in the time of great economic, religious and political crises in Christian Europe.<sup>69</sup>

The period from 1500 to 1650 represents the golden age of the renegade. Their numbers were so great that the flow from Christianity to Islam has been characterized as a "religious nomadism".<sup>70</sup> On the basis of information from the sources for the period 1550-1700, some 1 500 converts from Christianity to Islam were identified in the entire European territory. However, these cases represent only 0.5% of all religious converts, as those whom we have information about, during their testimonies in front of the Inquisition, mentioned names of thousands of other religious converts, about who there is no written record in the archival sources that have been preserved up to now.<sup>71</sup> Archival documents from Christian Europe even mention no less than 300 000 religious converts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>72</sup> Whatever their numbers in certain areas, scholars generally agree that in the Mediterranean of the sixteenth century, renegades

<sup>67</sup> J. Michael Rogers, "To and Fro. Aspects of Mediterranean Trade and consumption in the 15th and 16th Centuries", *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 55 (1990): 58; Cf. Benzoni, "Il 'farsi turco' ossia l'ombra del rinnegato".

<sup>68</sup> Lovorka Čoralić, *Hrvati u procesima mletačke inkvizicije*. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, Dom i svijet, 2001, 31.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*.

<sup>70</sup> Salvatore Bono, "Pascià e Rais algerini di origine italiana", in *Algeria e Italia*. Milano, 1982, 221; Rostagno, *Mi faccio Turco*, 27; Bartolomé Bennassar, "Frontières religieuses entre islam et chrétienté. L'expérience vécue par les 'Renegats'", in *Les frontières religieuses en Europe du Xve au XVIIe siècle*. Actes du XXXIe Colloque international d'études humanistes. Paris: Éditions Vrin, 1992, 71-72; Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*, 8.

<sup>71</sup> Bennassar, Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah*, 147-148.

<sup>72</sup> Scaraffia, *Rinnegati*, 4; Kologlu, "Renegades and the case Uluç/Kiliç Ali", 523.

numbered into the hundreds of thousands.<sup>73</sup>

The ritual of conversion was simple, the candidates only spoke a few words in a language, that they usually didn't even understand, and with the formula of renouncing Christianity ("*La ilaha illa Allah Mohammed rezul Allah*" or "*Kelime-I Shehadet*", meaning: "There is only one God and Mohamed is his prophet") accepted the new religion. Although it is not always stated in the archives, the men also underwent circumcision. Then followed the renouncing of the old and accepting of the new, Muslim name (for example Ahmed, Ali, Fata, Husein, Mehmed, Mer, Osman, Rahlima). A typical form of a request for conversion to Islam, as can be seen from the one that a married couple presented to sultan in 1681, is as follows: "Your majesty, my honourable and merciful Sultan! Be well! We came in front of Your solemn person, me and my wife, to beg You, to become Muslims. We beg You to grant us Your solemn blessing and grace. Give us Your orders, my Sultan. Two new Muslims".<sup>74</sup>

Most other forms of request usually contain a formulation ("...your humble servant..."), that comes immediately after addressing the sultan, as seen here in a request by a freed slave, who in 1686 wanted to convert to Islam: "Your majesty, my honourable and merciful Sultan! Be well! I, your humble servant, am a freed slave, who accepted Islam. I came in front of Your solemn person, to receive Your mercy. I beg You, to bless me with your blessing. Give me Your orders, my Sultan. Your servant".<sup>75</sup>

Even children could convert to Islam. In 1679 the sultan was presented with a request of a twelve year old boy, who wanted to convert and had already undergone circumcision<sup>76</sup>. In the later periods of Early Modern Age conversions to Islam usually took place in front of the sultan, while new Muslims were awarded with a certain amount of money (*kisve bahas*).<sup>77</sup>

Individuals who converted to Islam were, upon their return to Venetian lands, usually compelled to renounce their new faith and embrace Catholicism again. In the records of the Venetian Holy Office (*Santo Uffizio*), i. e. the Inquisition, there are several minutes of proceedings against Venetian subjects from the eastern Adriatic area, who have converted from Catholicism to Islam, only to return, later on and due to different reasons, to Catholic faith<sup>78</sup>. The oldest remaining procee-

<sup>73</sup> Bartolomé Bennassar, "Conversion ou reniement? Modalités d'une adhésion ambiguë des chrétiens à l'Islam (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)", *Annales ESC* 6 (1988): 1349-1350.

<sup>74</sup> *Osmanski izvori za islamizacionnite procesi na Balkanite XVI-XIX*. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Bulgarskata akademija na naukite, 1990, 115.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans. Kisve Bahasi Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

<sup>78</sup> As is stated by Dursteler, some renegades eventually returned to Christianity, while the vast majority

ding minute dates back to 1591, the last occurred in 1647, while all the rest took place in the first half of the seventeenth century. During this short period there were as many as six proceedings in 1642, while in 1628 and 1647 there were three of them. In these years proceedings lasted for only a few days each. The entire number of proceedings was 21, in 15 cases men were interrogated, while women stepped in front of the Venetian Inquisition in six cases.<sup>79</sup>

In their testimonies the repented converts claim that the Ottomans forced them to convert to Islam, however we need to consider their claims with precaution, as they were made with the intent to obtain pardon and absolution from heresy. The repentant converts, as was common in such proceedings and in concordance with the biased and exclusive official position of the Catholic Church, have systematically and routinely presented the Ottomans in an overwhelmingly negative way. This happened at the advice of their Franciscan and Dominican interpreters and companions in inquisitorial procedures. Despite formal and official condemnation of Islam and the suffering that the Ottomans caused them in more intimate circle they expressed a far more enthusiastic and favourable opinion about Islam and the Ottoman civilization, in accordance to which they lived for many years and also accepted its values and privileges.<sup>80</sup> Converts in Sicily in their official statements often contested the primacy of the Catholic Church in the interpretation of complex theological issues, even during inquisitorial procedures, and have overtly sympathised with the learnings of Islam.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, autobiographical texts or self-narratives of conversion to Islam, such as diaries, captivity narratives, travelogues, dream books and records of mystical visions, written by authors originating from a variety of social milieus, which flourished in the second half of the sixteenth century and above all in the seventeenth century, promoted Islam as a veritable spiritual option and the *Qu'ran* as the true word of God by bringing together the tradition of medieval Islamic anti-Christian polemic with Christian humanist sensibilities for textual criticism. Namely, this process was a manifestation of the Ottoman participation in the age of "confessionalization".<sup>82</sup>

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probably did not. The growing historiography of the renegades has almost entirely ignored this group, in part because these individuals do not often appear in the Inquisition records that have been the base of all studies of renegades. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 119.

<sup>79</sup> ASV, Santo Uffizio (SU), Processi, busta 86., 1628. 8. 8.; "Senato Rettori (1630-1797)", *Atti e Memorie della Societa Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria* 18 (1902): 222; Čoralić, *Hrvati u procesima*.

<sup>80</sup> Marco Lenci, *Corsari. Guerra, schiavi, rinnegati nel Mediterraneo*. Roma: Carocci, 2006, 154.

<sup>81</sup> Maria Sofia Messana, "La 'resistenza' musulmana e i 'martiri' dell'islam: moriscos, schiavi e cristiani rinnegati di fronte all'Inquisizione spagnola di Sicilia", in *Schiavitù e conversioni nel Mediterraneo. Quaderni storici* 42 (2007): 758.

<sup>82</sup> Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature", *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989): 125-138; Tijana Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009): 35-37.



Also, the interrogated converts emphasized in front of the Inquisition, that despite the acceptance of Islam they were nevertheless strictly supervised, which substantially diminished their chances of escape. However, considering the informations from the hearings, pertaining to their rescue from the Ottoman captivity, one gets the impression this was not entirely accurate. Escapes were namely, after several decades as well as after only a few years of living among the Ottomans, carried out without significant trouble or danger.

Conversions to Islam of the migrants from the Venetian to the Ottoman territories were dependent on the process of Islamization.<sup>83</sup> The Ottomans conducted Islamization in the area of the eastern Adriatic as a sort of a guarantee for the stability of the region. Even though Islam was not introduced by force, the economic and political advantages of converting to the state religion were stimulating enough by themselves. Namely, converting to Islam allowed the landlords to enter the new elite, while at the same time their personal property was not included in the pool tax, called *cizye*. The lower social classes also benefited, as they paid lower taxes after their religious conversion. In this way, slowly but surely the ma-

<sup>83</sup> Religious, cultural and historiographical phenomenon of Islamization, which incorporated conversions of local population to Islam, as well as immigration of Muslim or subsequently Islamised population, was, at least for the area of the eastern Adriatic, less researched as the scientific research was mainly focused on Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to Josip Vrandečić, there are two main reasons for this. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a deeply Islamized country was a starting point for the Islamization of the Venetian eastern Adriatic lands, which is above all true for the territory of Venetian Dalmatia. In contrast to the powerful Muslim majority in Bosnia after the Venetian victory and implementation of Venetian rule over former Ottoman lands in Dalmatia and the entire territory of the Venetian Albania in the late seventeenth century, the entire local Muslim population fled to neighbouring Bosnia. Vrandečić, "Had an Ottoman Combatant any Chance", 165. However, certain authors have also dealt, directly or indirectly, with the area of the eastern Adriatic: Ivan Grgić, "Opis kliškog sandžaka s ove strane Velebita i Dinare iz godine 1572", *Zadarska revija* 5 (1956): 253-261; Fehim Spaho, "Jedan turski popis Sinja i Vrlike iz 1604 godine", *Acta historico-oeconomica Iugoslaviae* 12 (1985): 1-120; idem, "Splitsko zaleđe u prvim turskim popisima", *Acta historico-oeconomica Iugoslaviae* 13 (1986): 47-86; idem, "Neke karakteristike razvitka varoških naselja u Kliškom sandžaku u XVI i XVII stoljeću", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 38 (1988): 99-133; idem, "Grad Sinj u turskoj vlasti", in *Sinj i Cetinska krajina za vrijeme osmanlijske vlasti. Zbornik Cetinske krajine* 4 (1989): 55-63; idem, "Skradinska nahija 1574. godine", *Acta historico-oeconomica Iugoslaviae* 16 (1989): 79-107; Josip Soldo, "Etničke promjene i migracije stanovništva u Sinjskoj krajini krajem 17. i početkom 18. stoljeća", in *Sinj i Cetinska krajina za vrijeme osmanlijske vlasti. Zbornik Cetinske krajine* 4 (1989): 81-144; Ivan Erceg, "Turska osvajanja i organizacija proizvodnje u Dalmaciji i njihov odraz na privredni život Hrvatske", in *Sinj i Cetinska krajina za vrijeme osmanlijske vlasti. Zbornik Cetinske krajine* 4 (1989): 9-54; Hrabak, "Naseljavanje hercegovačkih i bosanskih vlaha"; Polić Bobić, "Dva izvještaja o naseljavanju muslimana"; Vrandečić, "Had an Ottoman Combatant any Chance"; Čoralić, *Hrvati u procesima mletačke inkvizicije; The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*. Leiden: Brill, 2002; Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans*; Kornelija Jurin Starčević, "Demografska kretanja u selima srednjodalmatinskog zaleđa u 16. i početkom 17. stoljeća", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 54 (2005): 139-167; idem, "Islamsko-osmanski gradovi dalmatinskog zaleđa: prilog istraživanju urbanog razvoja u 16. i 17. stoljeću", *Radovi Instituta za hrvatsku povijest* 38 (2006): 113-154; Fine, *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter*; Aladin Husić, "Demografske prilike u srednjodalmatinskom zaleđu početkom 16. stoljeća", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 55 (2006): 227-242; Suphan Kirmizialtin, "Conversion in Ottoman Balkans: A Historiographical Survey", *History Compass* 5/2 (2007): 646-657.

major part of the Bosnian population, above all those situated on fertile grounds along the rivers, converted to Islam. This part of the population remained static and continued to pursue agriculture. The Ottomans were particularly interested in regaining order in the strategic areas along the borders with the Habsburgs and the Venetians.<sup>84</sup>

Beside social objectives, religious-cultural factors, such as religious syncretism, also contributed significantly to the Islamization of the region. Balkan peasants preserved many elements of pagan traditions in their daily practice even after embracing Christianity. When *Sufi* orders from Anatolia introduced popular Islam to Ottoman Europe in the early fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they found a very welcoming milieu. Especially the charismatic teachers of the *Bektaşi* and *Mevlevi* orders, who had never been strict about following the rules of Islamic law (*Shari'a*), gained substantial following among the urban and rural populations. Shared elements of popular religion, such as veneration of saints, certain holidays, and cult sites holy for both Muslims and Christians, made the transition from one religion to other easier for lay people who had never been very well-informed about the orthodox forms of their religion. Having embraced Islam, the new converts would continue to honor the same saints or celebrate the same holidays under different names. This religious syncretism also facilitated the existence of crypto-Christians, people who professed Islam in public but practiced Christianity in private. Some of these people had maintained their Christian identities for centuries and declared their real religious affiliations only in the nineteenth century during the age of Tanzimat reforms.<sup>85</sup>

The whole of the sixteenth century consisted of unsuccessful Ottoman attempts to Islamize the eastern Adriatic. Failure of Islamization has even threatened the

<sup>84</sup> Vrandečić, "Had an Ottoman Combatant any Chance", 167. As stated by Vrandečić, Islamization was mostly spread by Ottoman soldiers kept in forts, fugitives from neighbouring Venetian Dalmatia (we can now also trace immigrants from both Venetian Albania and Venetian Istria in the archive sources), who converted to Islam, as well as by means of conversion of the local and immigrant population, and the freeing of the Christian slaves after their religious conversion, while at the same time probably also with the assistance of a part of the pre-Ottoman population. Despite the fact that the Ottomans distributed land in the eastern Adriatic to their soldiers, that the enslavement of Christians, who then converted to Islam, contributed to the growth of the Muslim population in Bosnia and the Ottoman part of Dalmatia, and that there were many examples of voluntary and deliberate migrations of population from the Venetian to the Ottoman territory, where they converted to Islam, Islamization in the eastern Adriatic was very slow. The Catholic population fled from the Ottoman territory to Venetian Dalmatia, while the Orthodox Vlachs, who were granted extensive autonomy in the Ottoman Empire, were not eager to convert to Islam. As a rule, Christians only settled in villages (*karye*), however there were villages that were completely inhabited by Muslims, such as Hrvace, Obrovac and Civljani. Unfortunately, there is no evidence about whether the inhabitants of these villages were former Catholics that converted to Islam, or Muslim population, that had settled just before the census. Towns in the Ottoman part of Dalmatia, on the other hand, had an exclusively Muslim population. Ibid. 172-173, 182.

<sup>85</sup> Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the Balkans as a Historiographical Problem. The Southeast-European Perspective", in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*. Leiden: Brill, 2002, 257; Kirmizialtin, "Conversion in Ottoman Balkans", 648-649.

position of Ottoman eastern Adriatic possession in the seventeenth century, during the Crete and Vienna war (1683-1699). Namely, the Christian population collaborated in the liberation of the entire eastern Adriatic region from the Ottoman rule. Besides the unfavourable geographical structure of the Ottoman eastern Adriatic territories that were divided from Bosnia by a high mountain range called Dinarids, the Ottoman position was further threatened by the fact that the Orthodox Vlachs, who were mostly serving as semi-professional soldiers on the border, pragmatically chose to defect in great numbers to the Christian side in the seventeenth and beginning of eighteenth centuries, in the time when the Ottomans began to lose their possessions on Croatian territory.<sup>86</sup>

Conversions to Islam could also be forced, as was the case with the practice of *devşirme* with which the Ottomans recruited Christian boys for administrative and military jobs. These boys were then accepted into ethnic Ottoman-Turkish families, mostly in Anatolia, who assisted them in learning the Ottoman Turkish and Islam. Later on they were sent to schools, the brighter ones became civil servants, while the rest were trained to become janissaries and sultan's horsemen.<sup>87</sup>

However, different forms of forced religious conversions were more or less only exceptions that happened in special and isolated historical moments. In most cases the religious conversions were, at least officially, voluntary, as the *Qu'ran* commands "*la ikraha fin-din*" or "religious conversions without resolving to force". On the occupied territories the subdued population converted to Islam gradually, first came the social, exterior conversion, only thereafter did they convert internally, without a dramatic break with their previous condition.<sup>88</sup>

Namely, in the Ottoman Empire the "followers of the Book", meaning the members of Christian and Jewish faith, were officially granted the freedom of belief, so according to Lucia Rostagno Christian "infidels" (*dhimmi*) were turned to con-

<sup>86</sup> Vrandečić, "Had an Ottoman Combatant any Chance", 175. The Croatian part of the Bosnia *eyalet* or the Ottoman part of Croatia, has thus remained populated by a Christian majority, as is evident from the report of the *Provveditore generale in Dalmazia* Jacopo Foscarini from 1572, according to which there was only 560 Muslim out of the total of 6 860 households, or nine percent. Even in 1604 in *nahiya* Vrlika there were 115 Muslim and 191 Christian households. According to another land register (*defter*) from 1604 in the neighbouring *nahiya* Sinj-Cetina the ratio of households was 330 to 699 in favour of the Christians. Spaho, "Jedan turski popis", 1-120; idem, "Grad Sinj u turskoj vlasti", 79-107; Cf. Vrandečić, "Had an Ottoman Combatant any Chance", 175-176.

<sup>87</sup> On this subject we have an interesting description by Francois Savary de Breves, who had been, for as much as 22 years, a secretary and later also French ambassador in Istanbul: "Christian children, raised in Islamic religion and tradition, hate their parents and never speak about them. They consider the Sultan their protector and father, and are only loyal to him. They name themselves servants of Allah, they are faithful to Islam and hateful towards Christianity". François Savary de Breves, *Discours abrégé des aseuvrez moyens danéantir et ruiner la monarchie des princes ottoman*. Paris, 1615, 28.

<sup>88</sup> Mercedes Garcia-Arenal, "Les conversions d'Europeens a l'islam dans l'histoire: esquisse generale", *Social Compass* 46 (1999): 274-275.

vert to Islam by economic and social reflection, rather than political and social coercion.<sup>89</sup>

On the basis of information retrieved from sources, it is possible to conclude that most conversions of Christians to Islam were a direct consequence of their social, material and existential condition.<sup>90</sup> The Habsburg ambassador to Istanbul, Giovanni Maria Malvezzi, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1550 informed King Ferdinand I. about an example of conversion to Islam that acted as a kind of survival strategy of captured Christians. Malvezzi stated that two escaped Christians had come to him and sought refuge from the Ottomans. The first, János from Kaposvár, who converted to Islam whilst in the Ottoman prison, and by doing so saved himself from being sent to the galley, and his Venetian colleague who was sent to the galley as a rower by the Grand Visier Rüstem *pasha* before he could convert to Islam.<sup>91</sup> The Ottoman corsairs in the sixteenth century namely captured many Christians, also in the Adriatic.<sup>92</sup>

The religious conversion of János was obviously a mere attempt to save himself from the Ottoman prison and to get some sort of guarantee for at least a basic existence. Such religious conversions constituted an important part, as many of the Christian prisoners converted to Islam while being slaves to the Ottomans, in order to improve their chances of survival and even climb up the social ladder. Namely, those captives, who were regarded by the Ottomans to be "prisoners of war", could hope to buy themselves from captivity, which was mostly true for the members of nobility, or save themselves from falling into slavery by means of restitution or mutual exchange of prisoners. If such a transaction did not succeed, captives were sold at slave markets and thus officially became slaves, many of whom were forced to serve as oarsmen on galleys.<sup>93</sup>

Islam offered to religious converts the freedom of action and a chance of getting rich, which especially appealed to members of lower social classes of European Christian countries. The majority of new converts to Islam that accepted the new religion in slavery, originated from that social strata, as the rich were able to

<sup>89</sup> Rostagno, *Mi faccio Turco*, 5.

<sup>90</sup> Conversions to Islam could also be the result of complex political circumstances, as an attempt to save oneself from the pressure exerted by Christian states. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1551 Giovanni Maria Malvezzi reported to Ferdinand I. from Adrianopel, that a Catalanian Miguel de Herrera, who found himself in Ottoman prison, as advised by Antonio Priuli, the confidant of the Venetian *bailo* Navigier, converted to Islam and was given the name Mustafa, however, that did not save him from jail. Namely, the Venetians wanted to obtain from Herrera important intelligence on Habsburg intentions, but Malvezzi managed to prevent that. *Austro-Turcica 1541-1552. Diplomatiscche Akten des habsburgischen Gesandtschaftsverkehrs mit der Hohen Pforte in Zeitalter Süleymans des Prächtigen*. München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1995, 574-577.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 429-431.

<sup>92</sup> Klemen Pust, "Beneško-osmanski pomorski spopadi na Jadranu v XVI. stoletju", *Povijesni prilozi* 38 (2010): 97-133.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, "Za odkup ubogih sužnjeve, naših podanikov", 326-358.

buy themselves from captivity, without being forced to renounce their original religion.<sup>94</sup>

We know of many examples of religious converts who significantly improved their material situation after their arrival to the Ottoman cities, while some of them even got rich, which is testament to their success. Thus, 200 or as much as one third of the 616 highest Ottoman officials that were operating in period up to the twentieth century, had non-Turkish roots, while one-seventh of all officials were supposed to have been of Christian origin.<sup>95</sup> Among the admirals of the Ottoman navy up until 1867, the majority were converts to Islam.<sup>96</sup>

The most notorious example was the career of Alvise Gritti, the natural son of the Doge Andrea Gritti and, for a time, the friend and counsellor of Süleyman the Magnificent.<sup>97</sup> Also in Venetian Dalmatia there were several examples of slaves that had converted to Islam only to find themselves in top positions in the Ottoman state administration and the army. The conversions to Islam were more common there than in Venetian Istria, as was the contact between the Venetian and Ottoman population. Because of the increasing Ottoman pressure even certain Croatian magnates from the territory of medieval Croatian Kingdom in the Dalmatian hinterland converted to Islam, while other sought help from the Habsburgs and, above all, the Venetians. In turn they sent them much important information on the Ottomans.<sup>98</sup>

Religious conversions, conducted for the main purpose of improving a convert's material and existential situation, were especially common during wars, as well as in individual military clashes in the time of peace. The same was true also for the region further to the north from Dalmatia, such as the area of the river Una. Namely, in the middle of the sixteenth century, on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1556 the *sanjak bey* of Bosnia, Mehmed *pasha*, informed the Sublime Porte that Ottoman soldiers had managed to conquer the Croatian fort Kostajnica, while military garrison Novi was burned to the ground. After the battle a renegade *nefer*, i. e. an ordinary infantry soldier, defected from the Venetian army to the Ottoman territory and conveyed to the local Ottoman authorities important information about the enemy. The renegade was taken to Istanbul, where he converted to Islam. Be-

<sup>94</sup> Bennassar, Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah*, 372-373. On the other hand, Christian women did not, for the most part, convert to Islam in search of titles and honours; rather, for some of them, to embrace the Muslim religion meant to try to escape from a grey life and to redeem themselves by settling down in the Ottoman domains. Anna Vanzan, "In search of another identity: Female Muslim—Christian conversions in the mediterranean world", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 7 (1996): 327-333.

<sup>95</sup> Kologlu, "Renegades and the case Uluç/Kiliç Ali", 518.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 525.

<sup>97</sup> Heinrich Kretschmayr, "Ludovico Gritti, eine Monographie", *Archiv für Oesterreichische Geschichte* 33 (1897): 1-106.

<sup>98</sup> Klemen Pust, Darko Darovec, "'..Tamen a una spia fuori...?' Beneška obveščevalna dejavnost na območju vzhodnega Jadrana v letu 1499", *Acta Histriae* 16 (2008): 173-192.



cause of his great merits, Mehmed *pasha* rewarded him by granting him a *timar* or land fief with revenues totalling up to 4 000 *akçes*, which was also approved by the sultan.<sup>99</sup> *Timar* of such dimensions falls into the category of small fiefs, but nevertheless this represented a substantial social rise for a mere professional soldier, who, thus, became a landowner. In this manner, by granting material benefits, the Ottomans always attracted new religious converts who were dissatisfied with the positions they were holding in their Christian homelands.

Only a few years prior to that there was a similar case of a convert to Islam from the Venetian territory of the eastern Adriatic. The *sanjak bey* of Bosnia sent a letter to the Sublime Porte on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1560, to inform the Ottoman authorities that one of the "famous *Uskoks* from the fort of Šibenik, named Ivan, son of Peter, known for his courage and fearlessness", who came to the Ottoman territory as a soldier, voluntary accepted Islam and received a new name Ramadan. Sublime Porte ordered he be awarded a *timar* with revenue income of up to 8 000 *akçes*. However, the actual investiture of the possessions was dependent on the number and size of available lands, especially in the time of peace, when the Ottomans had much lesser chance of obtaining new lands. Thus, the Sublime Porte decided Ramadan be given the free *timar* worth 7 000 *akçes* on the territory of *sanjak* Klis, which belonged to Bali *bey*, who had died a short time before.<sup>100</sup>

Conversions to Islam on the territory of the Venetian Republic were, apart from military, economic, political and broader social circumstances, frequently caused by ideological and doctrinal reasons. Perhaps the most resounding process conducted against a cleric who converted to Islam took place in Venice in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, against a Franciscan monk Giacinto from Foligno in Perugia. The first information on Friar Giacinto dates back to the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1622, when the rector of Pesaro informed *Signoria*, that the previous day Giacinto had embarked on a ship heading for Venice, so he called upon the *Signoria* to have him arrested upon his arrival, because he had converted to Islam. As it seems, Giacinto arrived to Venice already the same day, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, as the supervisor Marco Antonio Seraffini on that day reported to *Signoria*, that in the part of the city that was under his jurisdiction, a convert to Islam appeared, which was a case for the Inquisition, so he urged the Venetian authorities to arrest him. Seraffini namely didn't have an appropriate prison, so the suspect could break loose from it and escape.<sup>101</sup>

Nevertheless, Giacinto managed to escape Venetian justice, as a month later, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, *Signoria* finally received notice about his arrest in Venice. The

<sup>99</sup> Ešref Kovačević, *Muhimme defteri. Dokumenti o našim krajevima*. Monumenta turcica historiam slavorum meridionalium illustrantia, tomus IV. Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 1985, 20.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 59, 60. In the Ottoman Empire, unlike Christian Europe, *timars* and other feudal possessions were not owned by the feudal lords (*sipahis*) and could not be inherited.

<sup>101</sup> ASV, SU, Processi, busta 77, 1622. 28. 4.



process that began in his absence, in the time of his stay in Istanbul, and during which, according to Venetian authorities, the character, value and affinities of the convert would be revealed, as he “deserves to be punished, because he is a villain, as his appearance alone attests”, continued.<sup>102</sup>

The processes against real or imaginary religious converts of this sort were numerous on Venetian territory, especially in 1500, the year after the last Ottoman incursion in Friuli. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of May the notorious Ermacora Ungaro di Viles (from the Villa Vicentina), Ottoman informer and guide during their last incursion in Friuli in 1499, who had converted to Islam due to his opposition against the Venetian authorities, was convicted, beheaded and finally quartered, while his wife and Giovanni Ritio di Latisana were set free, as were the noblemen from Trieste Pietro and Antonio Burlo. The legal processes had been interfered with by politicians, after it turned out that the Ottoman raid in Friuli was a direct consequence of an international plot in which Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. was also included.<sup>103</sup>

Already under the rule of Mehmed II. the net of Ottoman collaborators in Christian Europe was very widespread and influential, and most of them converted to Islam. Thus, the Ottoman informants prevented many Venetian attempted assassinations of the sultan. They also managed to infiltrate the territory of Friuli, Austria and the German lands, while in Italy there was a whole array of Ottoman informants, above all merchants and humanists, many of who converted to Islam.<sup>104</sup>

In the eastern Adriatic there were also many converts to Islam, who were spying and performing other services for the Ottomans. During the Cyprus war their anti-Venetian activities strengthened and became clearly evident, therefore the Venetian authorities fought against them mercilessly.<sup>105</sup>

As is stated in the *relazione* by the *provveditore* of Krk Andrea Bondumier from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1571, he ordered the guard to be carried out in pairs, with the order that the soldiers should alarm the population about the arrival of the enemy with a single shot. In the case of this happening, the *cernide* or the auxiliary local units, together with their commanders were obliged to meet the guards, while the inhabitants had to sink their vessels, so the attackers couldn't escape. These measures prevented greater damage that had happened in the past, and also ensured the capture of some notorious renegades, such as the former priest Andreja Krizmanić, who converted to Islam. Bondumier was overwhelmed with joy: “Finally,

<sup>102</sup> ASV, SU, Processi, busta 77, 1622. 22. 5.

<sup>103</sup> Sanudo, *I Diarii*, vol. 3, 246; Vincenzo Joppi, “Antonio Burlo ed i Turchi in Friuli (1500)”, *Archeografo Triestino* 9 (1882): 300-308; Jug, “Turški napadi na Kranjsko in Primorsko”, 37; Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 97; Arduino Cremonesi, “Zadnji turški vpad v Furlanijo (1499)”, *Goriški letnik* 3 (1976): 125-126.

<sup>104</sup> Franz Babinger, “Maometto il Conquistatore e l'Italia”, *Rivista storica italiana* 63 (1951): 491.

<sup>105</sup> Klemen Pust, “Beneška protiobveščevalna dejavnost in signalna organizacija na območju vzhodnega Jadrana v letu 1499”, *Zgodovinski časopis* 63 (2009): 318-348.

and without searching for him, I captured this renegade, who intended to lead ten Ottoman boats from Obrovac to Baška (*Bescanuova*) on the island of Krk. By the mercy of God the Ottoman ships were intercepted in the Velebit straits, while the renegade, by my merit, got his deserved punishment"<sup>106</sup>

However, the Venetians did not dare to directly attack the more influential religious converts in the service of the Ottoman authorities, as they feared possible Ottoman retaliation. Such was the case of Cypriot Yonus *bey*, with the Christian name Lucio Doria, who at the end of the sixteenth century found himself in Pula (*Pola*). He was the confidant of the sultan's deputy (*çavuş*), who at that time held an important position of Grand Vizier in Istanbul.

The Venetian authorities on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1592 instructed the *comes* of Pula to secretly summon Yonus *bey* and order him to leave the Venetian territory in eight days, never to return again, or he would fall into disgrace with the *Signoria*. The *comes* of Pula also had to keep *Signoria* thoroughly informed. Yonus *bey* obviously really left Pula, as we find out from the letter that *Signoria* sent the *capitano* of Rašpor from the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1592, with which *Signoria* ordered him to secretly investigate if the convert Yonus *bey*, after he left Pula, still finds himself in Istria. *Capitano* of Rašpor also had to inform *Signoria*, where Yonus *bey* went and which lands and possessions he inherited on Venetian territory. On the basis of information from the sources, we can assume that Yonus *bey* left the entire Venetian territory, as approximately two years later, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1594, *Signoria* ordered the *capitano* of Rašpor, to gather assets of Yonus *bey*, so his wife could be paid the sum of 3 000 ducats<sup>107</sup>. Namely, because Yonus *bey* was stripped of his possessions, his wife became the sole heir. There is also a chance that *Signoria* had Yonus *bey* liquidated, but this is less probable, because of his high position in the Ottoman central hierarchy of power.

Regarding chronology, conversions to Islam in the eastern Adriatic began quite early in the sixteenth century. For the area of Zadar the first mention of converts to Islam already exists at the beginning of the century. *Comes* of Zadar Pietro Delfino and *capitano* of Zadar Marin stated, in the letter to the *Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci* on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 1507, they were informed that Gioanis, whose brother was the Ottoman military commander in Mostar, had crossed the border, entered the Venetian territory and then visited Mantova and Bologna. Gioanis was persecuted by the Venetians both for trespassing and for apostasy.<sup>108</sup> Obviously, this was the case of a convert to Islam who was banned from the Venetian territory.

During the Ottoman-Venetian fighting in the beginning of the sixteenth century

<sup>106</sup> Ljubić, *Commissiones et Relationes Venetae*, Tomus III., 271-272.

<sup>107</sup> "Lettere segrete di Collegio (1308-1627)", *Atti e Memorie della Societa Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria* 46 (1934): 85.

<sup>108</sup> Lamansky, *Secrets d'état de Venise*, 433.

Murad *bey* Tardić, then the most famous and influential religious convert in the eastern Adriatic, who originated from Šibenik, was seized by the Ottomans and taken to Sarajevo. He became the slave of the Bosnian *sanjak bey* Gazi Husrev *bey* who set him free after his conversion to Islam, and installed him as his deputy. Later, in 1537, he became *sanjak bey* of the Klis *sanjak*, that also incorporated the conquered part of the Zadar hinterland.<sup>109</sup>

One of religious converts with great influence and reputation was also the *Dragoman*, or the official interpreter, translator and official guide for Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and certain European languages, and an envoy of the Sublime Porte Yunus *bey*. During the War of the Holy League on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 1539, before the signing of the official Ottoman-Venetian peace agreement, he warned the Venetian *Doge* Pietro Lando and the *Signoria* against reckless actions against the Ottomans. To gain the trust of the Venetians he mentioned that he “grew up in a Venetian land in the Adriatic”, which means he was one of the enslaved inhabitants from the Venetian eastern Adriatic possessions, who used the opportunity to climb to a high position in the Ottoman administration.<sup>110</sup>

Conversions to Islam and other forms of heresies, above all Protestantism, became widespread in the Venetian eastern Adriatic lands, especially after the Cyprus war. Regarding this is a copy of a letter from the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1578, not long after the war ended, which is incorporated in the *Libro d'oro* of the Dalmatian town of Split. With the decree, contained in the letter, the *Consiglio dei Dieci* allowed the departure of an inquisitor to Zadar, with the command to suppress all heresies in Venetian Dalmatia.<sup>111</sup>

Conversions to Islam were quite common even in the seventeenth century, when perhaps the most notorious example of religious conversion in the eastern Adriatic took place, as it is visible from the petition in Ottoman Turkish, that was addressed to sultan in 1631 by a convert to Islam, named Reçeb, whose Christian name was Girolamo Fasaneo da Lesina. He was a member of the well-known noble family Fazanić<sup>112</sup> from the island of Hvar, who obtained a doctorate in law at

<sup>109</sup> Traljić, “Zadar i turska pozadina”, 206, 214. Murad *bey* originated from influential Šibenik family, his brother Zorzi Baio held an important position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Šibenik, and was in February of 1532 granted land by the Pope, that was renounced by Antonio Thibaldeo from the convent of San Nicolo di Porto in Šibenik. Sanudo, *I Diarii*, vol. 55, 483-484.

<sup>110</sup> ASV, LST, busta 3, 1539. 4. 12.; Pedani, I “Documenti turchi”, 109.

<sup>111</sup> “The honorable *nuncio* has mentioned in the Collegio, that it is necessary to send one or more inquisitors to our towns and possessions in Dalmatia [...] against those who were denounced in the matter of heresy [...] against anyone who was denounced for heresy in the province of Dalmatia”. *Zlatna knjiga grada Splita*. Svezak I. Split: Književni krug, 1996, 554-557.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Nikša Lučić, Lovorka Čoralić, Joško Kovačić, “Fazanić (Fasaneo), hvarska plemićka obitelj”, *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. 4, Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod “Miroslav Krleža”, 1998. Piero di Lesina or Petar Fazanić, one of the most successful family members, who was a shipowner and a merchant, gave name to a street in the eastern part of Venice, the Castello, where in the middle and second half of the sixteenth century he possessed several houses. Lovorka Čoralić, “Hrvati u mletačkim katastrima (XVII.-

the university of Padua. Fasaneo claims he accepted Islam because of ill treatment he was supposedly subjected to by *comes* of Trogir, Filippo Molin, who, according to Fasaneo, kidnapped his two daughters, while the Venetian *bailo* in Istanbul persistently sent assassins in order to liquidate him. *Signoria* also impounded all of his property that he possessed on Venetian territory, so he conducted intense lobbying at the Sublime Porte in order to get all of his possessions returned. In his mind there was no doubt that among the "infidels", meaning the Venetians, there were many noblemen, who observed his faith with great interest, "as there were already many examples in the past, when the oppressed sought refuge under the protection of the sultan, which sometimes even served as an excuse for conquests of forts and even whole countries". Nevertheless, despite his connections with the Porte and promises of great profits for the Ottoman magnates, his life story ended abruptly when the *Signoria* finally succeeded to eliminate him.<sup>113</sup>

The situation for the Venetians was extremely unpleasant indeed, as the Sublime Porte found in the person of Fasaneo a very efficient means with which they exercised pressure on the *Signoria*. Did the Ottoman authorities really intended to help Fasaneo, as a Muslim, to reclaim his possessions or was this but a merely diplomatic manoeuvre, aimed at preventing, or at least softening, the Venetian demands in other matters?

## Conclusion

The forms of contacts and permanent coexistence along the Ottoman-Venetian border in the eastern Adriatic in the sixteenth century were very diverse, which contributed to the identity formation of the local population and social groups. Apart from wars and Ottoman incursions, there was also cooperation between the inhabitants from both sides of the border, which was reflected most in their economic, cultural, social and personal links.

The most important influence on the religious and social image of the eastern Adriatic in the sixteenth century was cast by migrations from the Venetian to the Ottoman territory and conversions of Venetian subjects to Islam, which happened in the broader frame of Islamization. Specifically pertaining to the migrations and religious conversions, the percentage of the Muslim population increased substantially, which consequently caused the temporary strengthening and consolidation of the Ottoman position.

Migrations to the Ottoman territory were mostly induced by the Ottoman-Venetian wars and Ottoman raids on the Venetian eastern Adriatic possessions. Hence

XVIII. st.)", *Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru* 44 (2002): 113.

<sup>113</sup> ASV, LST, busta 13, 1631; Pedani, I "Documenti turchi", 376-378, 381-382; Lamansky, *Secrets d'état de Venise*, 118-124; Antonio Fabris, "Il Dottor Girolamo Fasaneo, alias Receb", *Archivio veneto* 5/83 (1989): 105-118; Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, 207.

an important role was also exercised by the negative economic consequences of continuous fighting, as well as poverty and the unfavourable social, material and existential situation of the local population. Therefore, above all, the members of lower social classes migrated to the Ottoman Empire, although there were also examples of persons with higher social status migrating to the Ottoman side of the border. Among the fugitives that fled to the Ottoman territory, the written sources mostly mention the *banditi*, runaway slaves, soldiers, peasants, small merchants, craftsmen and adventurers.

Conversions to Islam were also mostly the consequence of the negative social and economic situation of the migrants, as well as of the native Christian population on the Ottoman territory. Namely, religious conversions of individuals and entire groups of citizens represent above all a specific strategy of survival, used by the converts to ensure themselves better living conditions, and by doing so, to gain chances for a swift climb up the social ladder, as Islam enabled its members to gain every public service and highest honours, apart from the position of sultan, which was reserved for the imperial family of the Ottomans. One of the main characteristics in the entire history of the Ottoman Empire was that religious converts occupied many, including the highest positions in society, predominantly in administration and the military.

Venetian authorities had officially persecuted fugitives from their lands to the Ottoman territory, above all those renegades that have also converted to Islam. Nevertheless, the Venetians in certain cases, due to other reasons- mostly because of wars with the Ottoman Empire, while in the time of peace the main reason was that they wanted to keep peaceful relations with the Ottomans- turned a blind eye and enabled the renegades to return to the Venetian territory, and even provided for their reintegration in the Venetian society. Such double standards and differentiation between theory and practice, which is typical for the entire Early Modern Age, clearly testify to the ambiguity of the Ottoman-Venetian relations in the eastern Adriatic borderland between the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic, where the hostility between the two religious and state systems intertwined with the different forms of coexistence adopted by the local population.

***Le genti della citta, delle isole e del contado, le quale al tutto volevano partirsi.***

**Migracije iz Venecije u osmanske krajeve i prelasci mletačkih podanika na islam na istočnom Jadranu tijekom šesnaestog stoljeća**

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**Sažetak**

Susreti između Venecije i Osmanskog carstva u istočnom Jadranu ovisili su o globalnim odnosima između tih dviju država. Susjedstvo, pa i ako nelagodno, prisililo je Mlečane i Osmanlije da uspostave i prihvate obostrane odnose. Analiza suživota lokalnog stanovništva dio je šireg mozaika suživota između islama i kršćanstva na Mediteranu od Španjolske do Egipta tijekom šesnaestog i sedamnaestog stoljeća. Spektar njihovih odnosa obuhvaćao je ratove, upade i konflikte, no također i svakodnevnu komunikaciju kroz trgovinu, posjete, prijateljstva i ljubav. Kako je Venecija ekonomski ovisila o trgovini s osmanskim dijelom istočnog Jadrana, Mlečani su nastojali koliko su god mogli održati prijateljske odnose s Osmanlijama. Stoga se njihov stav spram Osmanskog carstva u ranom novom vijeku promijenio od posve negativnog do specifičnih oblika etnografski označenog zanimanja.

Dobrovoljni emigranti iz Venecije u Otomansko carstvo najvećim su dijelom bili pripadnici nižih društvenih slojeva koji su željeli izbjeći stalne osmanske upade, no također su iseljavali i zbog gladi jer su se nadali boljem životu pod osmanskim gospodarima. Također, u brojnim slučajevima odmetnici su od progona potražili zaklon u Osmanskom carstvu. Osmanlije su slali svoje poslanike u krajeve koje su namjeravali pokoriti kako bi među lokalnim stanovništvom poticali sklonost prema Osmanskom carstvu. Stoga, sredinom šesnaestog stoljeća dimenzije migracija iz Mletačke Dalmacije i Albanije u Osmansko carstvo bilo je gotovo nemoguće kontrolirati, jer su životni uvjeti bili nepodnošljivi čak i u službeno vrijeme mira.



Nasuprot islamu koji je imao prilično otvoren stav spram prelazaka s kršćanstva na islam, i Rimokatolička crkva i *Signoria* su bile poprilično sumnjičave spram konverzija u drugom smjeru, s islama na kršćanstvo. U kršćanskoj Evropi, devijacije kršćanstva i prelasci na islam bili su česti u ranom novom vijeku, što znači da je negativni stav Rimokatoličke crkve proizilazio ne samo iz doktrinalnih i ideoloških razlika već i iz straha od gubitka velikog broja vjernika. Promjene religije bile su najbrojnije u vrijeme ekonomskih, religijskih i političkih kriza u kršćanskoj Evropi. S druge strane, islam je zapovijedao teške kazne, obično smrt, za slučajeve odbacivanja vjere i prelaska na drugu religiju. No, okolnosti svakodnevnog života su se često razlikovale od formalnih pravila.

Prelasci na islam su se zbivali i pod prisilom, poput prakse *devşirme* kojom su Osmanlije novačile kršćanske dječake u vojne i administrativne poslove. No, različiti oblici promjene religije pod prisilom uglavnom su bili izuzeci koji su se događali u posebnim, izoliranim povijesnim trenucima. Na osnovu informacija prikupljenih iz izvora može se zaključiti da se većina prelazaka s kršćanstva na islam bile izravne posljedice društvenih, materijalnih i egzistencijalnih uvjeta.

*Ključne riječi:* migracije, teritorij Venecije, teritorij Osmanskog carstva, religijske konverzije, islam, istočni Jadran, šesnaesto stoljeće.