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Angela De Maria

Making borders

The Dalmatian «linea Nani» and the defence of Salona fort

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At the end of the War of Candia (1645-1669), the work of the dragomans and the diplomatic agents in the service of the Most Serene Republic proved to be fundamental in defending the conquest of the small fort of Salona, strategically positioned between the Venetian scala of Split and the fortress of Klis.

Keywords: Salona fort, Klis, Ottoman-Venetian frontier, «linea Nani», capitulations, diplomacy, translation, trickery, land traffic, maritime traffic

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1. Introduction: the Salona fort and the Dalmatian frontier

If at the end of the War of Candia the main diplomatic forces on both the Ottoman and the Venetian sides were concentrated on the strategically central Aegean islands, Dalmatia was also an important focus of attention and considerable concern for both opponents. During the conflict, the region was a theatre of war in which the Venetians sought to compensate for the great loss in the Mediterranean by absorbing ever larger portions of territory within the border line, which until then had divided the areas under its rule from those under Ottoman domination.¹

While the conquest of Klis represented the most successful Venetian military operation, from a diplomatic point of view the ministers and their collaborators were

more occupied in the defence of the fort of Salona, which was strenuously contended by the Ottoman enemy. Indeed, the efforts to defend the possession of Salona reflected the strategy of the Venetian Republic to control and affirm its own presence in the Dalmatian frontier. As a strategic point in a *no man's land*, the small fort attracted the diplomatic, military and commercial interests of both Venetian and Ottoman parties. Furthermore, the negotiations around these matters represented a meeting point between different cultural, religious and juridical views on border conception and definition.

The control of Dalmatia, after all, maintained secure «possession» of the Adriatic and, consequently, allowed the Republic's ships free access and circulation in a safe, «Venetian», sea, which was traditionally considered by the *Serenissima* its legitimate and exclusive possession.²

1 This was the so-called *acquisto vecchio*, a previous acquisition which remained almost unchanged from the fifteenth century until the treaties of Karlowitz and Passarowitz, when it was considerably enlarged in the *acquisto nuovo* and *nuovissimo*. Cf. E. Ivetic 2007, pp. 265-266.

2 On the Venetian claim to sovereignty in the Adriatic «gulf» and the role of the sea for the Republic, in addition to the excellent essays by A. Tenenti – U. Tucci 1991, pp. 7-76. See also A. Tenenti 1999; R. Cessi 1953; É. Crouzet-Pavan 2004; J.-C. Hocquet 2006; F. C. Lane 1991.

Ultimately, for Venice the absolute priority was the sea, and the removal of external threats was its primary objective.³ Control over the Adriatic «gulf» and the safety of maritime traffic were essential factors for the safeguarding of communications with the western shore of the Balkans and, from there, the eastern Mediterranean. In other words, the narrow coastal strip along which Venice had managed to maintain its presence constituted a series of colonial settlements that connected the *Dominante*, with its adjoining maritime «territory», to the domains of its own *Stato da Mar* in an unbroken chain of maritime traffic and communications that linked the many coastal and island landmarks which the Republic controlled in the Adriatic, the Ionian and the Aegean.

For this reason, Dalmatia was the nearest frontier territory, where the Venetians across the Adriatic (which, itself, constituted the maritime frontline of contact with the Ottomans)⁴ confronted and interacted directly with their «Turkish» neighbour. The region was therefore highly symbolic on a conceptual as well as geo-political levels, representing in the eyes of the Westerners (as with all areas in contact with the Muslim world) the frontier of Christianity or, in other words, the «military frontier *par excellence*», the «absolute frontier».⁵ It was a region of containment of the adversary and closest to the territory of the *Dominante* and its «gulf».⁶ Yet despite being an area of oppositional contact between the Christian West and the Islamic East, at least on a theoretical level, the perception of a possible dialectical encounter with neighbouring territories became a reality of everyday life.⁷ In fact, while the proximity to the «enemy» often reflected the clash of two different models of «civilization», the geo-political conformation of the Western Balkans had nevertheless inevitably translated these into a significant interpenetration of Venetian and

Ottoman presences. The ports and fortresses that Venice controlled along the coastal strip were «islands» located within the much more compact and homogeneous territory that the Ottomans controlled extending from the coast towards the hinterland. The Venetian settlements, lacking sufficiently large areas of land, were effectively enclosed by the surrounding Ottomans and therefore in considerably close contact with the archetypal «enemy».⁸

The predominantly Venetian presence along the coast and islands, on the one hand, and the progressive Ottoman expansion inland, on the other, therefore gave rise to two different contrasting spatial models: the Venetian one, devoid of homogeneity and geographical continuity, mainly towards the Adriatic «gulf»; the Ottoman one, geographically compact and extending towards the largest territories of the Balkan hinterland.⁹ Both constituted the frontier area within which the expansionist aims of the respective enemy could be held at bay. The coastal strip was the Adriatic outpost of the *Signoria*: it was a defensive barrier and an indispensable bulwark against Ottoman appetites for the «Gulf of Venice», while the part inland was decisively in Ottoman hands, constituting the Balkan *limes* of the Islamic Empire, which likewise contained the Venetian pressure towards the continental East.

However, if the Dalmatian frontier favoured vibrant interaction and dialectical contact between the two neighbours – above all in the matters of trade and commercial traffic – it also constituted an area of fixed borders and territorial delimitations that recognized and legitimized the presence of the adversary and limited the margin of influence within a given area: and in speaking of the determination of boundaries, one does not necessarily speak of walls, separations and sharp divisions, but rather

3 In fact, already in the fifteenth century, only a few years after the conquest of Constantinople, the Ottomans posed a considerable threat to the Venetian control of the Adriatic: first when they had managed to reach the Balkan coast with the conquest of Serbia, and then shortly after with the occupation of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro; cf. M. P. Pedani 2004; J. Vrandečić 2009. Added to this was the danger of piracy and privateering. The raids at sea were not only carried out by the Ottoman subjects from Barbary and the Balkans, but also by the Christian and imperial pirates of Senj, the so-called Uskoks, who impeded the safe crossing of the Republic's ships and their crews and goods; cf. S. Bono 1964, pp. 136-192; Id. 2006; M. P. Pedani 2017, pp. 41-47. For a general overview of the phenomenon of piracy and privateering in the Adriatic see S. Anselmi 1998.

4 G. Gullino 1996; M. P. Pedani 2017, pp. 35-47.

5 D. Nordman 2007, p. 109 and G. Veinstein 2013, in particular pp. 33-35. Cf. also B. Heyberger 2013 and E. Ivetic 2014, pp. 123-132.

6 See G. Gullino 1996, p. 105; E. Ivetic 2014, pp. 123-132; A. Tenenti – U. Tucci 1991, p. 51; F. Thiriet 1959, p. 354.

7 For reflections on the perception of the «Turk» on the Dalmatian frontier see E. Ivetic 2007; Id. 2009; Id. 2013 and the recent study by K. Barzman 2017. The Ottoman perspective on ethnic and religious alterity in the Balkans of the early modern period may be found in R. Gradeva 2005. On the role assumed by the St Mark's Republic as a crossroads between Christian Europe and the Ottoman East, see, in particular, H.-J. Beck 1977; M. P. Pedani 2010; P. Preto 2013.

8 G. Praga 1954, p. 174, refers to a popular saying, «you can hear the Turkish cockerel crowing in the cities of the sea».

9 On the singular geo-political configuration of the Ottoman-Venetian frontier, see G. Ivetic 2014; G. Minchella 2011, pp. 1-2; Ead. 2014, pp. 115-116; G. Ortalli 2009; W. Panciera 2006, p. 784; M. P. Pedani 2000; Ead. 2004; Ead. 2005; Ead. 2007; Ead. 2017.

of diplomacy, of agreements, of compromises; in short, a relationship of truce and peace.¹⁰

The particularity of the area of the Western Balkans, with regard to Venetian-Ottoman contact, is precisely in its inherent dual geographical and political nature in being both frontier and border at the same time: if, however, by mutual consent the two neighbours established clear and fixed lines of delimitation and division of the territory, it should never be omitted that on the other hand the «granular» and porous nature of such a frontier area was also able to promote the reciprocal search for fluid and lively opportunities of exchange and mobility.¹¹

Indeed, already by the fifteenth century, the need not only to officially establish its domination over the portions of conquered territory, but also to establish peaceful relations of coexistence with the neighbour, meant that the two adversaries were confronted with the complex issue of the border, and consequently the beginning of a long and crucial chapter in the history of the Western Balkans.¹²

The negotiations that put an end to the War of Candia and, in particular, the efforts to defend the possession of Salona demonstrate how the matter of defining the borders in the Western Balkans was a fundamental chapter in the *'ahdnames* which agreed truce between the two powers.¹³ This issue was not given a secondary or marginal significance with respect to the general objective of overcoming the crisis and re-establishing the conditions for a fruitful interaction and, if anything, it was an intrinsic

part of it; it was a factor of unquestionable importance for the determination of diplomatic agreements and compromises, and the concrete implementation of relations of peaceful coexistence with the neighbouring power depended decisively upon it.

The delimitation between the areas of Venetian and Ottoman influence is not, therefore, the confirmation of the widespread historiographical opinions on the irreducible antagonism between the Western Republic and the Eastern Empire. On the contrary, they are the tangible proof that there was a need to maintain order and create the conditions for peaceful coexistence between the two countries. In other words, when good sense and acute pragmatism demolished ideological and religious barriers, porous and fluid frontiers opened them up on political, social and above all economic levels; that is, the foundations were laid for a fruitful and dialectical contact with the neighbour.

The reciprocal consent and respect of the agreements, while not always achieved without diplomatic difficulty, constituted the pivot around which to build an attitude of openness towards the «other». The definition of the borders, therefore, did not correspond to a mutual closure, but left points of opening, channels of exchange, passageways and chances of mobility between one and the other's worlds. Ultimately, it was clear to both Venetian and Ottoman parties that the fort of Salona constituted a strategic point in such a strategic porous area.

10 M. P. Pedani 2017, pp. 49-52. For a wider view of the tight interconnections between the determination of borders and peace agreements see again M. P. Pedani 1996a. It should also be noted that in the Ottoman political and religious culture, the idea of «border» was linked to that of *jihad*: the ideology of «holy war» against the *infidels* determined a sharp distinction between the *dār al-Islām* (the «Land of Islam», also called by Muslim authors *dārunā*, «our Country», in which the law of Islam prevailed) and the *dār al-ḥarb* (the «Land of War» against which there was a state of war). This was modified when a truce agreement was reached (generally established by the *'ahdname*), the status of *dār al-ahd* (the «Land of Covenant») or *dār al-ṣulḥ* (the «Land of Truce») was temporarily attributed to a non-Muslim country. For a definition of the cited notions and terms, in addition to the recent and exhaustive G. Calasso – G. Lancioni 2017, see A. Abel 1991a; Id. 1991b; H. Inalcik 1991; D. B. MacDonald 1991. On the Ottoman idea of borders and division of the world see P. Brummett 2015, pp. 77-81; C. Heywood 1999; H. S. Khalilieh 2019; M. P. Pedani 2007.

11 D. Nordman 2007, p. 109. For the different meanings and the geo-socio-political value contained within the notions of «frontier» and «border», terms sometimes improperly used as synonyms, it is possible to refer to a wide literature: C. Alexandre-Garner 2008; A. Bues 2005; L. Febvre 1962; A. Giordano 2018; J. Nouzille 1991, pp. 11-56; D. Power – N. Standen 1999, in particular pp. 13-31; P. Zanini 1997. For a more specific view of the frontiers and borders between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, see P. Brummett pp. 75-127; A. Fuess – B. Heyberger 2013; D. Nordman 2007.

12 On the first border agreements in the Balkan region (1479) see the exhaustive and detailed essay of E. Orlando 2009. What is also important to briefly underline is that the interest in defining one's own areas of influence was reciprocal, which leads one to revise, at least partially, the historiographical view that the Ottoman Empire would only accept the idea of the political boundary and the inviolability of state sovereignty over a territory only on the occasion of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 (cf. R. A. Abou-el-Haj 1969 and A. Fuess – B. Heyberger 2013, p. 17; dealing with the issue in depth, see M. P. Pedani 2017). In reality, it cannot be denied that the demarcation of the territories constituted an issue for the Ottomans already by the fifteenth century and whenever they had come into direct contact with other enemy powers, in which it was essential to mark a dividing line that could remove the impending danger of political instability and social unrest.

13 The *'ahdnames* correspond in Ottoman diplomatic terminology to the peace agreements ratified between the sultan and European sovereigns, commonly referred to in Occidental contexts as «Capitulations» consisting in *capitula*, i.e. articles containing the clauses of the agreement. Albeit the result of long and often tortuous negotiations between the diplomatic representatives of the sovereigns, these agreements were not real bilateral treaties, but rather «concessions» of privileges that the sultan granted to European sovereigns from a position of superiority. Cf. M. H. van den Boogert 2005; E. Eldem 2006; A. H. de Groot 2009; H. Inalcik 1986. For a more specific view of the Ottoman-Venetian Capitulations see H. P. A. Theunissen 1998; A. H. de Groot 2009, pp. 109-117; M. P. Pedani 1996a.

2. Defending Salona from mistranslation, self-interest and «trickery»

The «Scrittura contratta sopra la positione di confini di Dalmatia» of October 30, 1671 described the new line of territorial delimitation which the appointed representatives established «after mature discussion» and in common «agreement». ¹⁴ In the use of specific representatives and in the consensual nature of the pact, we can see the implementation of the practice that was being defined in border matters between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. ¹⁵ Indeed, in the event of the negotiations at the end of the War of Candia, the peace agreement was crowned with the demarcation of the new border line established by the representative Gian Battista Nani, procurator of the Saint Mark's Republic (after whom the new border was named the «linea Nani»), and by the representative appointed by the sultan, Hüseyinpascià, *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia.

But even if the agreement was signed by the delegated agents, in reality the long and often controversial negotiations involved many figures who took on – and not only in the chosen location for the work – a relevant or even primary role in defending of the possession of Salona. From the examination of the documentation relating to the «casa bailaggia» (the bailo's house, i.e. the Venetian embassy at the Porte) the figure of the dragoman, otherwise elusive in the official documents that sanctioned the agreements on border matters (*sinirname* or *hudud-name*), emerges clearly and prominently. Therefore, the documentation collected by the diplomatic representative at the Porte and the dispatches sent by the same

to the Senate are an extremely interesting source for understanding what and who moved «behind the scenes» of the negotiating process in the shadow of those who officially represented the sovereigns and who sanctioned the final agreements with their name. ¹⁶

This is the case of the dragomans of Venice, Ambrogio Grillo, Tommaso Tarsia, Giovanni Pirone and Michele Parada, who recur as main intermediaries with the Ottomans or, better, with the Divan's spokesman, the grand dragoman Panaiotis Nikousios. The almost exclusive ability to speak and understand oriental languages allowed these dragomans to insert themselves, *in partibus infidelium*, into valuable «confidential» networks, in which they occupied the privileged position of intermediaries. ¹⁷

Tommaso Tarsia and Ambrogio Grillo, in particular, were at the forefront of this effort, actively participating and collaborating to include the fort of Salona within the Venetian area. The former, as the main interlocutor of Panaiotis, was an important conductor of the negotiations that took place at the Porte regarding the diplomatic agreements, ¹⁸ and the latter was considered the highest exponent of the Tarsia family and dragoman expert in border matters («pratico dei confine»), thanks to the mission carried out in Dalmatia in the service of Gian Battista Nani for the definition of the new *limes*. ¹⁹

Precisely in virtue of their mastery of oriental languages, which placed them in direct contact with the representatives and subjects of the sultan, they were able not only to take part in diplomatic negotiations, but also to manage them and sometimes divert their course.

¹⁴ I libri commemoriali 1914, no. 66.

¹⁵ Cf. M. P. Pedani 2017, pp. 52-54. Actually, the logic that had also overseen the previous agreements remained almost unchanged: political and economic requirements called for agreement with the enemy and the establishment of dialogue. As it has been mentioned, from the first contacts in the Western Balkans, the reciprocal search for relationships of coexistence had overseen the territorial organization of the occupied areas. However, the practice that animated these agreements was different. In the *'ahdname* granted by the sultan on 25 January 1479 it was clear that the issue of borders would be dealt with unilaterally and on the basis of the right of conquest firmly claimed by the Ottoman power: while this demanded the legitimacy of its dominion over the areas conquered with arms, the Republic of Venice was enjoined to abandon all the occupied areas during the conflict, but allowed to keep those possessed before the outbreak of hostilities. Moreover, on that occasion it was not even allowed to appoint a representative at the *Serenissima* to deal with the border matter with the *emin* Halil bey, who had meanwhile been sent by the sultan with this specific assignment. On the negotiations that led to the agreement of 1479, in addition to the most comprehensive E. Orlando 2009; see also A. Bombaci 1954, pp. 300-305; A. Gallotta 1985 and M. P. Pedani 2017, pp. 50-51. In D. Gilliland Wright – P. A. MacKay 2007 it is also possible to read the treaty of 25 January 1479 in the original Greek text with an accompanying English translation.

¹⁶ This refers to the documents of the great archive *Bailo a Costantinopoli* (in particular the series of *Lettere*) and to the collection of *Dispacci* sent by the bailo to the Senate (Venetian State Archive).

¹⁷ On the «confidants» who gravitated around the Venetian bailo during the years of the War of Candia see C. Luca 2003. On the role of information (and espionage) and its tight links with the European diplomatic operations see L. Bely 1990; J. Petitjean 2013; P. Preto 1994 (none of these studies, however, provide a dedicated space to the informative role of dragomans). For a general view on the roles, functions and characteristics of the European dragomans at the Porte see M. Grenet 2016; F. Hitzel 1997; N. E. Rothman 2009; Ead. 2001, pp. 165-86; M. de Testa – A. Gautier 2003; G. Veinstein 2015. On the role of different figures of intermediaries in the Mediterranean diplomacy see in particular M. van Gelder – T. Krstić 2015 and N. Malcolm 2015.

¹⁸ See the correspondence in BaC, *Lettere*, b. 113 I, fasc. *Adrianopoli*. See also SDA, Cost., ff. 153, 154, 155, 155 bis, 156, *passim*. On the Grillo dragoman dynasty and the figure of Ambrogio in particular, see C. Luca 2003, pp. 304-306; Id. 2008, pp. 119-127.

¹⁹ SDA, Cost., f. 157, l. 103, c. 250r (Giacomo Querini; Ortaköy in Bosphorus, Nov. 1, 1673). See also BaC, *Lettere*, f. 113 I, fasc. *Spalato*, cc. unnumbered (Gian Battista Nani to Giacomo Querini, Nov. 1, 1671). On the figure of Tommaso Tarsia see C. Luca 2013 and G. Paladino 1917, pp. 185-193. On the Tarsia family and the personal and professional profile of the dragomans it provided, see E. Gardina 2005; C. Luca 2013; A. Pippidi 2006, pp. 68-74; S. Yérasimos 2005.

Consequently, the (more or less voluntary) manipulation of the oral and written translation could turn into a source of diplomatic incident such as to affect drastically the outcome of the negotiations.

The diplomatic procedures related to the drafting of the *ahdnames* of 1671 risked being stranded between the interpretative ambiguities of two *capitula* of the agreement. One of the two, in particular, concerned the delicate matter of territorial organization in Dalmatia, in which the *Serenissima* was implementing a decisive compensatory policy aimed at offsetting the serious loss of Crete. Different shades of meaning in the translation of the article would, in fact, have dictated the design of the new dividing line. It was therefore not a question of oversight or error that remained harmlessly on the linguistic layer of the text, but also of nuances full of consequences on the diplomatic level. The results of a correct translation did not depend, therefore, mechanically on the linguistic abilities of the person who performed it, but also to a decisive extent on his good faith and honesty.²⁰

Not surprisingly, the different translation of the two articles was claimed by Venetian ambassador Alvise Molin to be a «trick» plotted by the Ottoman dragoman Panaiotis and by the first vizier in favour of the interests of the Divan.²¹ More precisely, the matter concerned acquisitions made in Dalmatia by the Venetian army, with particular reference to the fortress of Klis and its countryside, including Salona, which constituted the greatest success of military operations in the Western Balkans.

In fact, a substantial difference emerged from the comparison of the translations made by Panaiotis and the

Venetian dragomans. According to a first version, the fortress of Klis (with its countryside) was conceded to the St Mark's Republic along with all the places occupied in Dalmatia during the conflict.²² A subsequent amendment, however, veiled the modifications to the conditions of the agreement: Klis, the only one explicitly mentioned in the article, was without the mention of its territory, while it was specified that «all the occupied in Dalmatia» («tutto l'occupato in Dalmatia») would be conceded «in the way they had possessed it in the time of the war» («nel modo che hanno posseduto nel tempo della Guerra»)²³

In fact, the correction aroused the suspicions of the ambassador and his dragomans, since it seemed that all purchases had been reduced to the fortress of Klis only, removed of its surrounding territory, and that «the rest are places of little interest» («il resto sia paese indifferente»)²⁴ Furthermore, behind the specification relating to the occupied territories, there was a hidden expedient in which the vizier was effectively resorting to undermine the Republic's conquests: to cede only the fortresses that, once conquered by the enemy, were occupied and manned throughout the course of the war.

After controversial negotiations, the chapter was established in the following way: «That the Confines of Bosnia, Klis and all that is occupied therein, be held in the possession of the lords of Venice, during the course of this war, be in their possession without any of my empire harassing them, nor under anything more serious than other things do you suffer.»²⁵ That is, if on the one hand the Vizier did not yield to the request explicitly to mention the

20 In fact, if for a European representative the presence of an intermediary to support him (and sometimes more properly, replace) in the negotiations with the Ottomans was essential, given his objective communicative difficulties, on the other hand it was precisely these intermediaries that could be transformed into the cause of all evils: «Among the woes in which the ministers of princes work in this country, not least is that of speaking not only by means of interpreters, that is, through the voices of others, but to be constrained to have the documents, agreements, and Capitulations translated, upon which so many notable consequences depend. It is certain that, in the diversity of languages, the words from one are not found in the other, in such corresponding forms as to be able to translate them word for word, which render them rude and unintelligible. I have had many experiences of this, and from all those I have translated, the same meaning has been expressed with different words, however, even when there is no diversity of substance, they can never be of equal force. In the similar way to the Latin language and Italian, despite having such a great affinity between them, where the Italian is so far from the Turkish, which is rather from Arabic, and from the Hebrew from which it has some small conformity.» («Fra l'infelicità, nelle quali travagliano li Ministri de Principi in questo Paese, non è già l'inferiore quella di parlare non solo per via d'Interpreti, che è a dire con voce altrui, ma di convenir far tradurre le scritture, accordati, e Capitulationi, da quali dipendono conseguenze di tanto rimarco. Certo è, che nella diversità de gl'idioma non ponno praticarsi così uniformi le parole, che dell'uno non si trovan nell'altro, onde *ad verbum* possino cavarsi le traduzioni, le quali anco a parola per parola riuscirebbero rudi, e non intelligibili. Io ne ho fatte molt' esperienze, e da quanti ho fatto tradurre da tutti con diversità di parole è stato espresso li medemi sensi, né quali però se ben non vi è diversità di sostanza, non vi può esser mai equalità di forza. Così pure si pratica nella lingua latina, e italiana, benché habbiano tra esse affinità sì grande, dove è tanto lontana l'italiana dalla turca, che più tosto dall'arabo, e dall'ebreo tragga qualche picciola conformità.»), SDA, Cost., f. 154, l. 79, c. 104r (Alvise Molin; Candia, Apr. 10, 1670).

21 Ibid., f. 154, l. 84, c. 144r (Candia, May 12, 1671). See also *ibid.*, l. 79, c. 104r-113v (Candia, Apr. 10, 1670).

22 Ibid., f. 154, l. 79, c. 105r-v (Candia, Apr. 10, 1670). See also *ibid.*, f. 153, l. 49, c. 401r-v (Canea, Sept. 28, 1669).

23 Ibid., f. 154, l. 84, c. 145v (Candia, May 12, 1671).

24 Ibid., f. 153, l. 49, c. 401v (Canea, Sept. 28, 1669).

25 «Che alli confini di Bossina, Chlissa, et tutto quello ch'è occupato cioè è intrato in possesso delli signori di Venetia, nel corso di questa guerra, sii in possesso loro senza ch'alcuno del mio Imperio li recca molestia, ne meno sotto pretesto di gravezza o altro li travagli.» (Translation of the Capitulations attached to the letter of Alvise Molin on 24 May 1670), *ibid.*, f. 154, l. 87, c. 178r-v.

territory of Klis, claiming to imply this with the expression «all that is occupied in Dalmatia» also the land of the fortress, on the other hand it stated the conceding (at least apparently) of all the territories taken with weapons without any specification on the manner and timing of their occupation.²⁶

It seemed, therefore, that a common agreement had been reached by both countries. However, the suspicion that the translation of the article had been deliberately manipulated by the Ottoman dragoman turned out to be well founded once peace had been concluded, upon which the commissioners Nani and Mahmud Pasha (replaced after his death by Hüseyin Pasha) began negotiations in the definition of the new borderline. Once again it was the work of the dragomans to reveal the Ottoman plots: in a first draft of the document on the new territorial division, the dragoman Grillo noted that the Vizier conceded not so much «the locations that had fallen into the hands of Venetians» («i luochi entratnel le mani de Venetiani»), but rather «the possessed locations» («i luochi possessi»)²⁷ The intervention on the translation and the careful choice of words revealed the renewed attempt to intervene in the design of the borderline. The first expression, that was considered more advantageous by the Venetian ambassador because it included all the locations and the forts that had fallen under the arms of the *Serenissima*, was eradicated by the vizier «because it stings them too much, and fears its prejudice» («perché li punge troppo, e ne teme il suo pregiudizio»)²⁸

In fact, by conceding the territorial «possessions», the Ottoman first minister excluded from the Venetian control the forts that the enemy, once conquered, had left uninhabited, along with all those others that had been deliberately capitulated to the *Serenissima*. It was a «gross» expedient to reduce and frustrate the scope of the Venetian conquests.²⁹ Indeed, if the occupation of the fortress of Klis had represented the most brilliant endeavours of the

Venetians, also the taking of other small forts such as Salona contributed to making the territories more compact and solid in the face of Ottoman pressure.

The Dalmatian possessions of the *Serenissima*, «piccole Venezie d'oltremare»,³⁰ isolated and enclosed within areas surrounded by the «Turkish» presence, far from each other and positioned along a discontinuous strip of land, could be put in communication and linked territorially by the presence of these small forts which, together with their countryside, extended the control over a larger and more compact area. It was therefore the goal of the Ottomans to fragment and splinter the Venetian presence in order to ensure a road from the hinterland to the West that would lead them directly to the Adriatic, threatening the exclusive Venetian control of the «gulf».

In any case, the difficulty of dealing with the Ottomans – who never kept to the same proposition («che mai ferman sopra un proposito stesso»), but changed their minds continually, turning the negotiations always in the direction of their own profit – was clear to Alvise Molin.³¹ For the ambassador, who was negotiating with them at a crucial moment in the history of the Republic, the tendency towards cheating, manipulation of business, search for profit, corruption, avarice, inconsistency and whim, constituted the defining trait of the «enemy», and was almost a formula labelling the «diplomatic» style in use at the Divan.

One exemplar of this tendency was the first grand dragoman (*baştercüman*) Panaiotis, who was also well known to the «ministers» of the Republic.³² A few years after the conclusion of the peace negotiations, the bailo Giacomo Querini provided a brief and thorough portrait, recognizing in his dexterity, cunning, prudence, shrewdness and capacity, all of which were reasons to be wary of his operations³³.

However, the office Panaiotis held exercised a great influence in the Court of the sultan. Being the first interpreter

26 Ibid., f. 154, l. 84, cc. 138r-151r (Candia, May 12, 1671).

27 Ibid., f. 155, l. 145, c. 153r (Adrianople, May 19, 1671).

28 Ibid.

29 G. Praga 1954, p. 188.

30 E. Ivetić 2014, p. 138.

31 SDA, Cost., f. 154, l. 84, c. 138r (Candia, May 12, 1671).

32 We name him here in accordance with that found in Venetian sources, where the name (whose most frequent variant is the Italianized form Panagiotti) is only very rarely accompanied by the surname Nikousios (on the figure of Panaiotis see in particular D. Janos 2005/2006).

33 «The truth is that this man has dexterity, intelligence, and can serve so well, as evil may be credited to the Vizier, and in all the negotiations of Christian princes who have his hand and advice. In short, the subject, out of prudence and foresight, is able to fend off manipulations of all kinds, but best of all, pray God not to fall into his arms.» («Il vero è che ques'huomo ha desterità, ingegno, e può servire così bene, come male tiene credito appresso il Visir, e in tutti linegotij de prencipi Christiani vi ha la mano e il consiglio. Insomma il soggetto per prudenza, accortezza è atto ad'intavolare qual si sia maneggio, ma il meglio di tutto è, prega Dio di non ridursi a cadere nelle braccia sue.»), Ibid., f. 156, l. 26, c. 164v (Adrianople, March 18, 1672).

of the grand vizier, that is his spokesman and his closest «confidant», he occupied a position of great power at the Divan³⁴. To gain the trust of the dragoman and gain his benevolence therefore meant to be in the favour of the first minister, whose pride notoriously surpassed «that of all men combined» («quella di tutti gl' huomini uniti»)³⁵.

It was therefore inevitable to resort to Panaiotis and his «assistance» to obtain «confidences» on the manoeuvres of the Porte.³⁶ It was a role which the dragoman used to extract huge sums of money from the representatives of the Republic, who, incited moreover by the same central organs of the *Dominante*,³⁷ were not slow in offering him conspicuous donations in order to oil the wheels of the negotiations, because «in the pain in which the affair is urgent, you can quench the thirst he has for his own gain» («nel dolore in cui urge l'affare possistorare la sete, cheegli ha del proprio profitto»)³⁸. Ultimately, the successful conduct of negotiations depended largely on the satisfaction of the dragoman's appetites, in a continual game of tug-of-war in which it was worthwhile «to replenish new food for its ever-ravenous greed» («rinovar nuovo cibo alla sua sempre fame lica avidità») without, however, fully satisfying it so that he would not relax his commitment to the rapid conclusion of the agreements.³⁹ Or in the opinion of Alvisè Molin, «it will always be wiser to keep friendships alive by nourishing them moderately, and not to suffocate them with excessive expenditure.»⁴⁰

Several years later, again the bailo Giacomo Querini deprecated this «form of proceeding» by not hesitating to denounce the «incivility and greed» of the Ottomans hidden in their expressions of «confidence, esteem, and love.»⁴¹

Maintaining the good relations with the dragoman seemed, ultimately, «the only way to conduct business in this country» («l'unica via per condurre gli affari in questo

paese»)⁴². Therefore, his favour was absolutely necessary since, through being «loved, and favoured by the Vizier», he kept the management of all the negotiations in his hands, «so that he can do much, both good, and harm» («onde può far molto, e di bene, e di male»)⁴³.

3. Claiming Salona to nullify the Venetian acquisition of Klis

The only fortress for which possession was not disputed was Klis, «renowned throughout the world,»⁴⁴ the only one to be explicitly mentioned in the *ahdnames* of 1671. It was, what is more, an exceptionally valuable conquest, being the most important Ottoman base in the Dalmatian area. The fortress was «built on an inaccessible cliff, surrounded by ravines, and gorges, dominated by the summit of the mountain», keeping watch over the coastal areas, blocking invasions.⁴⁵

The acquisition of its control was full of possibilities and advantages for the Venetian Republic. Klis, the «rock», according to some, took its name from the Greek *kleisa*, the «key», constituting the gateway to the inner-most territories of the Bosnian region.⁴⁶ In overthrowing the sanjak of Klis, the *Serenissima* was therefore opening the possibility of reconciling its traditional maritime vocation with a different economic perspective, that of trade by land. The penetration towards the inland regions, among other things, not only allowed the Adriatic Republic to make its presence stronger in the area with respect to the Ottoman pressure on the «gulf», but also to move eastwards with the twin objectives of reducing the sultanate control of areas of that were fertile and rich in raw materials, scarce within the *Stato da Tera*, and intercepting the itinerary of the land traffic that reached Constantinople by way of Belgrade.

34 Born within the Greek community of the district of Phanar in Constantinople, in 1669 Panaiotis started the long period of monopoly over dragoman offices within the Orthodox elite. The dragomans of the Divan could not in fact be Muslim, given the prohibition of learning languages other than those sacred to Islam. Cf. D. Janos 2005/2006, pp. 177-179; G. Veinstein 2000, p. 610. For a more general view of the relationship between Islam and European languages see B. Lewis 1982, pp. 71-88. A quick excursus on the dragomans of the Phanariot community in B. Papastavrou 2008. For the most recent studies on the role of Ottoman dragomans, see also G. Veinstein 2000.

35 SDA, Cost., f. 153, l. 49, c. 401v (Alvisè Molin; Canea, Sept. 28, 1669).

36 Ibid., f. 153, l. 60, c. 495r (Alvisè Molin; Canea, Dec. 20, 1669).

37 SD, Cost., r. 37, *passim*.

38 SDA, Cost., f. 153, l. 31, c. 314v (near Candia, March 26, 1669).

39 Ibid., f. 153, l. 60, cc. 494r-v (Canea, Dec. 20, 1669).

40 «[...] più conferente sarà sempre con moderato alimento tenerve le amicizie, e nutrirlle, e non soffocarle con eccessivi dispendi», Ibid.

41 «[...] io resto attonito di quella forma di procedere, dandosi nome all'inciviltà, et avaritia, di confidenza, stima, et amore», Ibid., f. 156, l. 26, c. 164v (Adrianople, March 18, 1672).

42 Ibid., f. 154, l. 116, c. 521r (Alvisè Molin; Arnautköy in Bosphorus, Dec. 10, 1670).

43 Ibid., f. 153, l. 49, c. 403r-v (Canea, Sept. 28, 1669).

44 G. Praga 1954, p. 186.

45 J. F. de La Harpe 1786, p. 129.

46 On the fortress of Klis see A. de Benvenuti 1935-1936; Id. 2006, pp. 219-254; R. Tolomeo 2012.

If, therefore, the Ottomans could not object to the Venetian domination of Klis, they nevertheless tried to nullify the acquisition by isolating it within a limited territory and interrupting contact and communication with the other Venetian possessions.⁴⁷ The main Ottoman objective was, consequently, the castle of Salona, an ancient Roman city, which the Venetians had managed to besiege and destroy in 1647 together with the small fortress of Sasso (Kamen).⁴⁸ On closer inspection, however, the fort of Salona was not in itself a possession comparable to that of the impregnable Klis.

Salona, «which in other times was a beautiful city and famous and is a very miserable site, with all the comforts from sea as well as from land», had in fact, as early as the beginning of the 16th century (more so after the Ottoman advance), been severely affected by the state of abandonment of the nearby fortress of Klis and the surrounding area.⁴⁹ The contemporary traveller George Wheler noticed its artistic and architectural poverty, affirming that it was almost devoid of anything noteworthy.⁵⁰ Again about a century later, the Paduan abbot, Alberto Fortis, noted for his account of his *Viaggio di Dalmazia*, found himself in front of «a wretched little village, where little recognizable leftovers of ancient splendour had been preserved».⁵¹

However, for both adversaries the fort stood in such an indisputably strategic position that neither wished to renounce it. Situated along the road that connected the important *scala* of Split to the fortress of Klis, it was a fundamental passage for the safe and unimpeded flow of merchandise arriving in the Adriatic port from and to the inner regions, while the plain, extending to the coast, ensured not only access to the sea but also host a portal hub equal to and able to compete with that of the nearby Split.

4. The advantages of the possession of Salona

Commissioner Nani was therefore convinced that the conquest of Salona be strenuously defended at the cost of threatening the suspension of negotiations.⁵² In fact, its non-concession would have led to the loss of the advantages it offered from many different aspects.

a) The surrounding countryside

Salona stood on a fertile land, rich in wheat and olive groves, whose rare quality that was not lost on contemporaries.⁵³ The *Géographie universelle* describes the area as «a very beautiful plain» extending as far as a small gulf crossed by a brook rich in trout.⁵⁴ And it was precisely the slender stream, in the excellent fish that it offered, that would have been a valuable part of the surrounding area,

47 G. Brusoni 1673, pp. 343-344.

48 On the military events in Dalmatia during the Candia war years see M. Jačov 1991, pp. 9-145; T. Mayhew 2008, pp. 29-48; C. Paoletti 2007; F. Sassi 1937.

49 «[Salona] la qual altre volte fu una bellissima città et famosa et è sito miserabilissimo, cum tute le comodità si da mare come da terra», cf. *Sindici veneti in Dalmazia ed Albania*, Leonardo Venier e Girolamo Querini, nominati alla carica nel 1520, in *Commissiones et Relationes venetae* (Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium, volumen VIII), collegit et digessit Simeon Ljubić, tomus II, annorum 1525-1553, Zagabriae 1877, p. 16. The passages cited by Rita Tolomeo who elaborates on the state of abandonment of the fortress of Klis and its territory. Cf. Tolomeo 2012, pp. 39-45.

50 «La ville de Salone est située sur un rocher dans le fond de la vallée au pied d'une haute montagne du Nord, sur la quelle le Parnasse tend un sommet sur une main et le mont Corax sur l'autre. La Forteresse est sur le haut durocher, et la Ville autour. [...] Je n'y vis rien de remarquable qu'une aigle Romaine fort bien gravée en marbre. Niger et Baudrand prennent ce lieu pour l'ancienne Delphes. ...»: reference is made here to the later and enriched version of the travelogue by Jacob Spon and George Wheeler (Amsterdam, 1679); cf. G. Wheler 1723, vol. II, p. 39.

51 With these words the abbot was recalling how the city of Salona had been «si grande e prima, e dopo d'aver subito il giogo Romano»: «Fa d'uopo, che i due ultimi secoli abbiano distrutto ciò, ch'era sfuggito alla barbarie delle Nazioni settentrionali, che la rovinarono. Io trovo in una pregevole Relazione ms. della Dalmazia, scritta dal Senatore Giambattista Giustiniani intorno alla metà del XVI secolo un cenno di quanto vi sussisteva in quel tempo.

La nobiltà, grandezza, e magnificenza della Città di Salona si comprende dai volti, ed archi del Teatro meraviglioso, che oggi si vedono, dalle grandissime pietre di finissimo marmo, che sono sparse e sepolte per quei campi; dalla bella colonna fatta di tre pezzi di marmo, la quale sta ancor in piedi nel luogo, dove si dice ch'era l'Arsenale verso la marina; e dai molti archi di meravigliosa eccellenza sostenuti da colonne altissime di marmo, la cui altezza è un tirar di mano, sopra li quali v'era un Acquedotto che conduceva da Salona a Spalatro. . . Si vedono d'appresso diverse rovine, e vestigie di gran Palazzi, e in molte bellissime pietre di marmo si leggono Epitafi antichi: ma il terreno ch'è cresciuto ha sepolto le più antiche pietre, e le più belle cose.

Gli abitanti del villaggio, che forse dalle rovine di Salona, traggono pur troppo spesso di sotterra Iscrizioni, ed altri lavori d'antichi scalpelli: ma la costoro ingordigia è così proporzionata alla barbarie, ch'eglino preferiscono il rompere, e guastare ogni cosa al ritrarne un discreto prezzo.» Cf. A. Fortis 1774, vol. II, pp. 43-44.

52 G. Brusoni 1673, p. 344.

53 Cf. G. Wheler 1723, p. 38: «Dèsque nous eûmes passé une montagne de rochers nous entrâmes dans une plaine de bleds et d'oliviers, que je croi qu'on appelle autrefois l'heureuse plaine de Crissa, car elle est au dessous de Crissa que nous laissâmes sur une montagne à main droite à une demie lieue de la mers le mont Parnasse; De là passant par un défilé entre la montagne où est Crissa à main droite, et des rochers à main gauche nous entrâmes dans une autre belle vallée bien plantée, cultivée et arrosée d'une rivière qui passe à travers, que je croi qui se rencontre avec le Pleistis entre Crissa et la mer, et de là dans la Baye de Salone. Cette vallée est fort étroite, étant bornée par le Mont Corax au Sud-Ouest, et par le sommet du Parnasse au Nord-Est, et après s'être étendue en deux ou trois lieux de la mer, elle nous conduisit à Salone sur le midi.»

54 *Géographie* 1778, p. 252.

as Alberto Fortis recalled in the anecdote that the Roman emperor Diocletian, attracted by the small river trout, would even have given up power to retire to private life in neighbouring Split.⁵⁵

The possession of such fertile lands brought with it, among other things, two advantages: first, the exploitation of the fertile plains provided the inhabitants with adequate raw materials necessary for self-sufficiency in food; second, this had considerable implications for the life of the frontier societies and the cohabitation with the neighbour. In fact, they were frequently under the duress of continuous border crossings due to the lack of fertile and cultivable territories. The cases in which the subjects of the Venetian Republic hastily crossed the border and invaded the Ottoman countryside to cultivate it or to graze cattle were not rare.⁵⁶ The possession of the plain dominated by the three strongholds of Split, Salona and Klis would therefore have helped to keep the Venetian subjects within their borders, avoiding disorder and clashes with the neighbours and ultimately defending the fragile diplomatic balance established between the two powers.

On the other hand, since the first border agreements of 1479, the Venetian objective of creating autonomous «districts» with sufficiently large countryside to ensure adequate resources had come up against the wall of Ottoman strategies, which were pressing in the opposite direction to weaken the Venetian presence in the region with the ultimate goal of reaching the Adriatic coast and ensuring that inland territories had a maritime outlet.⁵⁷

In other words, the traditional sea-mountain, coast-inland, maritime-agricultural economic dialectic, which characterized this frontier area, was not perceived by the two neighbouring as something predetermined and therefore fixed, crystallized, incontestable, but rather like a flexible system of geo-political territorial organization, ready to be reformulated in the face of new advantages.⁵⁸

b) The hinterland and land traffic

Alongside the traditional maritime vocation of the Republic was the prospect of land trade. The possession of Salona, directly connecting the Adriatic coast with the fortress of Klis, the «gateway» to Bosnia, allowed the fluid passage of goods arrived from the sea, thus intensifying the exchanges with the peoples of the continental Balkans. In fact, if on the one hand the control over Salona provided the adequate area of a plain to guarantee its autonomy, on the other it broke open the borders of the isolated and insular territories, ensuring a free path of communication between Split and Klis, and promoting a closer dialogue with the Ottoman internal territories. The image of a coastal «Venetian Dalmatia» and a continental «Ottoman Dalmatia» was rich with nuances: the border became a frontier. Keeping this intermediate area porous and dynamic was a priority for the Venetian Republic, which aimed to draw upon the abundant timber from its woods, the wheat and olive groves of the fertile plains, and the salt of the numerous mines. On the other hand, the Venetian demand promoted the opportunity for internal lands to sell their excess products. In fact, a unilateral economic relationship had not been created (Venetian demand – Ottoman offer): on the contrary, a close economic interdependence was established between the two neighbours.⁵⁹ One only has to think, for example, of the success of and the demand for fine Venetian manufactured products (first of all glassware) among the Ottoman subjects.

As a matter of fact, it was really important to Venetians to promote and incentivize trade with «enemies» to the point that, if on one hand the Republic defended the possession of its land and maritime territories, on the other it considered the protection of Ottoman merchants a priority as well.⁶⁰

All of this therefore refers to interrelations, communication, co-operation, and not only in commercial terms,

55 A. Fortis 1774, vol. II, p. 45: «Questo fiumicello, che non corre più di tre miglia, incappandosi tratto tratto in banchi tosaicei, nodrisce nelle sue grotte muscose una squisita spezie di Trote. Di qui prese motivo alcuno Autore, ben più giusto apprezzatore dei bocconi ghiotti che dalle azioni de' grand'Uomini, di lasciarci scritto, che Diocleziano (facendo peggio d'Esau) rinunziò al piacere di comandare a quasi tutta la Terra allora cognita, per mangiarsi tranquillamente di que' pesci a crepancia nel suo magnifico ritiro di Spalatro. Io non so se a Diocleziano piacesse il pesce, come gli piacevano gli erbaggi; ma credo, che anche per un uomo non ghiotto Spalatro dovess'essere un delizioso soggiorno.»

56 Details on the issue are given in G. Minchella 2011, pp. 3-5 and M. P. Pedani 2017, pp. 60-61. The lack of resources, among other things, was one of the main causes of the conversion of Christians to Islam and the passage of individuals or entire groups under the Ottoman rule. Cf. G. Minchella 2011, pp. 9-13; Ead. 2014, pp. 159-169. For a more complete picture of the causes of the phenomenon, see also G. Veinstein 2017, pp. 71-86. There is a wide literature on the problem of apostasy and its profound implications. Here we limit ourselves to mention the study of L. Scaraffia 1993.

57 E. Orlando 2009, pp. 122-123.

58 On the geo-political configuration of the Dalmatian region and on the resulting settlement and social systems, see E. Ivetic 2014, pp. 63-82.

59 Cf. G. Minchella 2011, pp. 6-7; R. Paci 1971, pp. 97-126; M. P. Pedani 2017, pp. 71-74; J. Vrandečić 2009. See also C. Luca 2004; Id. 2014.

60 Cf. S. Faroghi 2017.

since more often it was the sense of economic pragmatism that was the primary reason for breaking the conflict between the two powers, putting into place diplomacy and creating the right conditions for peaceful socio-cultural coexistence.

c) The sea

The absolute priority for the *Signoria* was the control of the «gulf» and maritime trade. After all, the sea had been the fulcrum around which the Venetian power had established itself from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. The central element was the Adriatic: a centripetal force, in which any political and economic strategy implemented in the *Terraferma* and in the *Stato da Mar* possessions departed from it and returned to it. The maritime extremities of the lagoon city therefore lived in perfect symbiosis with the *Signoria* and the Adriatic. Yet the unequal relationship between the *Dominante* and the «overseas colonies»⁶¹ rarely failed, so that, as Alberto Tenenti observed, «Venice was simultaneously the soul, the heart and the brain of the whole body, from which all the other limbs were kept to a lesser extent than the parts of a real organism».⁶²

The port cities of the Dalmatian coast were primary reference points not only in the routes taken by the ships departing from the lagoon and directed to the Levantine markets, but also along those that connected the Balkan hinterland with Rialto and the other ports of the Italian peninsula. However, interpreting the relationships that existed with Dalmatian possessions in a unidirectional sense or strictly related to the interests of the *Signoria* would be labelling them in a way that would not reflect the complex dialectic relationships and the profound symbioses that instead had established themselves between the *Dominante* and *Stato da Mar*.⁶³

It was in fact through the strongholds of the eastern Adriatic shore that the first contacts were established with the Ottoman world. That is, they were in some way intermediaries between the centre and the periphery. A testimony to the interconnectedness and dynamic mobility between the hinterland and the sea can be found in the most lively Adriatic junction: the *scala* of Split, created, it is worth noting, with a bilateral agreement in 1588-1592.⁶⁴

And an enhancement of this would have been in the new acquisition of Salona. In fact, the plain that surrounded the fort extended to the «gulf» upon which the Ottomans had long sought to create their commercial base. Although the conquest of Klis had broken the line of communication between Ottoman Bosnia and the coast, the presence of the sultan's subjects on the small fort would have continued to weigh like a ball and chain on the Venetians. Not only because the *scala* of Split would still be within Ottoman territory, but also because there was the constant concern «that no port, markets, or negotiations could be created in Salona, where the Turks continually attempted and sought to create a seaport and to impose tariffs».⁶⁵ The Ottoman possession of Salona could have in fact compromised the commercial operations of the *Serenissima* not only by interrupting overland traffic, but also at sea, by limiting the activities of the nearby Venetian seaport. This risk was equally serious at the moment when the aim was to intensify the volume of trade at the *scala* to confront the strong competition of the Ragusa-Ancona axis which had reinvigorated during the Candia conflict.⁶⁶

The possession of Salona, therefore, contributed to promoting the seaport of Split which constituted a strategic point where the terrestrial trade routes intersected and integrated with the maritime ones.

In other words, Split represented one of strong points of the *Signoria's* «thalassocracy» in two directions: to the West, since through the *scala* the central role of the Rialto market was consolidated in the handling of the products from the Balkan hinterland,⁶⁷ and to the East, because Split was one of the central portal hubs along the route that led directly from the lagoon to the Levantine markets.

As we can see clearly, the fulcrum remained the *Dominante*. The geographical discontinuity that characterized the overseas possessions found its synthesis and composition in the heart of the whole organism: the lagoon city and its «gulf».

As much as the Republic tried to impose its influence in the inland areas and intercept terrestrial trade routes, it was clear to the Venetians that the strength of their power was the sea. This remained, therefore, the privileged space of the *Signoria*, just as maritime trade was

61 On the «overseas colonies» see B. Arbel 1996.

62 A. Tenenti 1999, p. 337.

63 A brief historiographic review of the theses regarding the relationship between the Western Balkans and the *Dominante* is given in E. Ivetic 2009, pp. 239-243.

64 On the *scala* of Split see R. Paci 1971.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

66 On the competition between the Split – Venetian and Ragusa – Ancona axes, see R. Paci 1971, pp. 71-96; *Id.* 1977; *Id.* 1990.

67 Cf. M. Aymard 1966, p. 148; V. Costantini 2009, p. 367.

confirmed as the most profitable economic activity.⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, the policy implemented by the *Serenissima* in the continental territories was mostly defensive and compensatory: defensive, when the goal was to create bulwarks to defend its supposed maritime supremacy; compensatory, when the territorial acquisitions had above all the purpose of counterbalancing the losses in the Levant and in the eastern Mediterranean.

This is what happened, in fact, in Dalmatia during the years of the War of Candia. This specific case analysed is symbolic of the strategy adopted by the *Serenissima* both on a military and on diplomatic level. The expenditure of military forces used for the acquisition of new possessions and, above all, the diplomatic efforts made to define the borders were aimed to defend the exclusive Venetian domination of the «gulf» and at the same time counterbalance the serious defeat suffered in the Aegean that had deprived the Republic of a base strategically placed at the centre of the Levantine maritime routes. Salona as well as the fort of Klis represented the cornerstone of this strategy.

d) Living with the «Other»

The possession of Salona also had wide implications on a socio-cultural level. In fact, defending the conquest of the fort meant freeing the Venetian subjects from the uncomfortable, close proximity of the «Turks». The Ottoman settlements on the Salona plain would have, in fact, determined an intersection of the borders so that the inhabitants of the Venetian domains would still have found themselves living in the full Ottoman territory and in close contact with the sultan's subjects.

As mentioned several times, living with «others» was by no means simple.⁶⁹ Although suppressed for the sake of the more pragmatic and pleasant condition of truce, the sense of conflict was always ready to re-emerge, compromising, not only on a small scale, the serene

coexistence between the neighbours, but also at a higher level, the fragile diplomatic balance between the *Serenissima* and the Ottoman Empire.

The communities of the region therefore were co-participants in a very particular lifestyle that was deeply imbued with the ambiguous relationship of both antagonism and understanding towards «alterity».⁷⁰ Borders and frontiers continually involved dynamic and changing symbiotic relationships: the border marked limits, divided spaces, created stability, imposed order, recognized the presence of the «other», but also constrained its pressure; the frontier was an area of osmosis, contact, interpenetration, interdependence, tolerance and diplomacy.⁷¹

These were, after all, «frontier societies», that is, societies that lived in an intermediate dimension between two worlds theoretically opposed but nevertheless in continual contact with those whose political, social, economic, cultural and religious norms expressed substantial differences.⁷² Thus, while on the one hand this symbolically represents the overcoming of Venetian – «Turk», Christian – Muslim, Western – Eastern dichotomies, on the other it does not conceal the concrete daily difficulties that such people had to face. In reality, there were raids, skirmishes, sacking, looting, local feuds, small clashes that often hindered the natural unfolding of everyday life and activities and reflected the deeply felt sense of «difference» towards the «other».⁷³

In fact, the particular geo-political conformation of the Ottoman-Venetian possessions led to a profound socio-cultural interpenetration between the two «civilizations». The Venetian communities were totally immersed in the Ottoman «world». While these European «islands» within the domains of the sultan on the one hand benefited from such relations with their neighbours, especially economic ones, on the other they felt too exposed and too close to the «enemy». It is enough to look at the architectural landscape of fifteenth to seventeenth centuries Dalmatia to catch a sense in the fortifications high up on

68 A. Tenenti 1999, pp. 338-340.

69 It should be noted that from the Venetian point of view, the «other» were not only the «Turks», that is to say the subjects of the sultan (not necessarily Muslim) who occupied the Balkan hinterland, especially the Bosnian area. There were other groups recognized as «different»: the so-called Morlachs, Catholic and above all Orthodox, living in the inner mountainous areas closest to the Venetian suburbs; the Jews and the Orthodox, who mainly occupied the coastal strip and who constituted a category identified mostly on the basis of religion. Cf. E. Ivetic – D. Roksandić 2007, pp. 272-281. For the Ottoman view of ethnic and religious diversity in the Balkans of the early modern ages, see instead R. Gradeva 2005.

70 For a definition of different varieties of «feelings of antagonism» more generally spread across Christian Europe, see G. Poumarède 2011; G. Ricci 2011; G. Veinstein 2009.

71 On the tolerance towards the «Turk» on the Balkan frontier see K.-E. Barzman 2017; E. Ivetic 2007; Id. 2009; Id. 2013; A. Olivieri 2007.

72 For the definition of «frontier societies» see Y. A. Cohen 1969; H. Donnan – T. M. Wilson 2001; T. M. Wilson – H. Donnan 1998. For the «frontier societies» in the Balkanic region see E. Ivetic – D. Roksandić 2007; D. Roksandić 1998; Id. 2000.

73 The perception of «difference» of the «Turk» on the Dalmatian frontier was a reflection of anxiety and fear which was shared, from the Medieval period and above all throughout the early modern period, among the occidental Christian countries towards the «dangerous» Ottomans. The literature on the relationship between Europe and Islam is vast. A limited selection are: L. D'Ascia 2001; J. Delumeau 1979, particularly pp. 404-421; G. Poumarède 2011; G. Ricci 2002; Id. 2008.

the cliffs the anxiety to feel safe, and protected, and to defend oneself from one's neighbour.⁷⁴

The «fear» of the «other», therefore, was a constant determination of everyday life. An episode narrated by George Wheler symbolically expresses the deep-rooted feelings of distrust towards the «Turks». The author tells the story of how while approaching a church in Salona with his travelling companion, Jacob Spon, that upon seeing them dressed «alla turca», the prior, fearing molestation, immediately fled to hide in a cave in the neighbouring mountain.⁷⁵

However, the above account does not imply that it was only the subjects of the *Signoria* whose daily life was disturbed. It suffices to recall that the controversial and tortuous affair of diplomatic operations for the delimitation of borders found a decisive point of agreement that was convenient for both of them distance the «enemy» from their territories. Salona, strenuously coveted by the Ottomans with their ultimate aim of injuring the adversary's commercial interests, was finally ceded to the Republic before any awareness of the difficulties that the sultan's subjects would have to face occupying a territory located between the Venetian fortress of Sasso, and above all those of Split and Klis.

On the topic of tolerance, it is opportune to evaluate these events by moving away from the more common «Eurocentric» attitude of the Venetians, who described the Ottoman world as despotic, barbarous and uncivilized.⁷⁶ The feeling of anxiety in relation to the neighbour was mutual, that is, it was also a sentiment that was shared amongst the «Turkish» communities of the region. Indeed, on closer inspection, one cannot fail to recognize that the Ottomans adopted a much more open and flexible attitude towards the «others» than that which was generally adopted by Christians, so much so as to be considered a positive model in the Enlightenment period that sits in stark contrast to the European intolerance.⁷⁷

Conclusions

«Venise naît dans l'eau, Venise naît de l'eau. Et cette ville, aujourd'hui commehier, triomphe de l'eau. Dumoins est-ce, selon l'interprétation même de l'histoire vénétienne, le destin qui lui fut assigné.»⁷⁸ With these words

Élizabeth Crouzet-Pavan opened the first chapter of her book *Venise triomphante*. The history of the St Mark's Republic was indeed tightly bound to the sea. Its «gulf» and the possessions of the *Stato da Mar* were the «land» on which the power of the *Serenissima* were founded. Although reconciled with an economic perspective that was continental, its vocation remained predominantly maritime. Therefore, it was on a maritime frontier more than a continental one in which the actors of the Republic – from diplomatic to commercial agents, to missionaries, pilgrims and travellers – established contacts, relationships and exchanges which went beyond any political, ideological, cultural or religious barriers. Mobility and communication characterized the Mediterranean world where seemingly irreconcilable cultures and «civilizations» found points of contact, opportunities for cooperation, places of coexistence, and fascination. The protagonists of this contact, such as the dragomans, therefore, became the «interpreters» of a solution to the traditional clash between Christianity and Islam.

The diplomatic case of Salona demonstrates well how attitudes of both tolerance and antagonism towards the «other» continually intertwined within a mutable dialectic directed by the sense of pragmatism and a good proportion of political and economic opportunism. It is the same dialectic, moreover, that fostered the entire history of the relations between the St Mark's Republic and the Empire of the Crescent: relativism was at its base. Consequently, this leads to abandoning the radical *topos* of struggle and rivalry. The duty to the «crusade», on the one hand, and to the *jihad*, on the other, failed in the name of interests that overcame ideological convictions and religious «distances».

Thus, the Christian Republic sought and consented to both peace agreements and commercial contacts with the *infidels*, as likewise did the Ottomans, who on their part were also prepared to reformulate their traditional world view based on the contrast between the *dār al-Islam* and the *dār al-ḥarb*. The Dalmatian frontier, a space that belonged to «no one», was an exemplary testimony of the fluctuating and unfixed duality of such engagement and confrontation.

74 For a view of military architecture in the Balkan region see the essays collected in F. P. Fiore 2014.

75 G. Wheler 1723, vol. II, p. 39.

76 See in particular E. Dürsteler 2011 and L. Valensi 2005. On the image of the «Turk» in Italy see also M. Formica 2008; Ead. 2012; M. Soykut 2001.

77 On the Ottoman tolerance towards the «others» in the Dalmatian frontier see R. Gradeva 2005; M. P. Pedani 2007, pp. 210-214. For a wider view of the Ottoman religious and ethnic toleration see B. Braude – B. Lewis 1982; S. Faroqi 2000, pp. 80-100; D. Gaunt 2007; F. Gorgeon – P. Dumont 1997; G. Veinstein 2017, pp. 57-69. For the Ottoman perception of the others from an interesting terminological point of view see Y. Lev 2017.

78 É. Crouzet-Pavan 2004, p. 17.

List of abbreviations

Archival sources

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|-------|--|
| BaC | = Bailo a Costantinopoli |
| SDA | = Senato, Dispacci, Ambasciatori e residenti |
| SD | = Senato, Deliberazioni |
| Cost. | = Costantinopoli |

Others

| | |
|----------|----------------------------|
| b./bb. | = <i>busta/buste</i> |
| c./cc. | = <i>carta/carte</i> |
| doc. | = document |
| f./ff. | = <i>filza/filze</i> |
| fasc. | = <i>fascicolo</i> |
| l. | = letter |
| no./nos. | = number/numbers |
| n. s. | = new series |
| p./pp. | = page/pages |
| r./rr. | = <i>registro/registri</i> |
| t. | = tome |
| vol. | = volume |

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Sažetak

Angela De Maria

Stvaranje granica

Dalmatinska »linea Nani« i obrana solinske utvrde

Ključne riječi: solinska utvrda, Klis, otomansko-venecijanska granica, »linea Nani«, kapitulacija, diplomacija, prevođenje, smicalice, kopneni promet, pomorski promet

Iako su na kraju Kandijskoga rata glavni diplomatski napori i Osmanlija i Venecijanaca bili usmjereni prema egejskim otocima, i Dalmacija je bila u žarištu pozornosti objiju sukobljenih strana. Venecijanci su pokušavali svoje ogromne gubitke na Sredozemlju nadoknaditi osvajanjem većih dijelova teritorija u Dalmaciji.

Kontrola solinske i drugih dalmatinskih utvrda, između ostaloga, omogućavala je brodovima Republike sv. Marka slobodan pristup i kretanje po sigurnom »venecijanskom« moru, koje je *Serenissima* tradicionalno smatrala svojim legitimnim i isključivim posjedom. Štoviše, imala je i određeni »kopneni« interes potičući promet s osmanskim podanicima.

U kontekstu tako delikatne situacije, rad dragomana Venecijanske Republike (posebno Tomassa Tarsije i Ambrogia Grilla) pokazao se bitnim u manevriranju i nošenju s osmanskim varkama. Zapravo, veliki vezir i njegov veliki dragoman Panaiotis Nikousios pokušavali su manipulirati tijekom pregovora o određivanju granica kako bi smanjili mletačke akvizicije i, iznad svega, učinili beskorisnim osvajanje Klisa, »vrata« u Bosnu. Posegnuvši za grubom smicalicom, prvi ministar Divana pokušao je oduzeti Republici solinsku utvrdu koja je, smještena strateški između splitske *scale* i Klisa, omogućavala neometan prolaz robi iz splitske luke u balkansko zaleđe i obrnuto.

Preveo Radovan Kečkemet

