

Mediator inter eos cathellanos et fideles nostros: A Korčulan Perspective on the Kingdom of Naples and the Catalans in the 15th Century

Based on a broad array of archival records, this paper adopts a Korčulan perspective on the Kingdom of Naples in the Aragonese period as one of the four major powers in Southeast Europe and the presence of both Catalan merchant, naval and pirate ships in the late medieval Adriatic. First, it explores the island's socio-economic relations with Neapolitan Apulia and with Catalan merchants throughout the 15th century. After observing the island's maritime entangledness with Southern Italy through the lens of trade, the focus shifts back to Korčula's perception of and responses to the Neapolitan and Catalan presence in the Eastern Adriatic that promoted the island's dual role as a relay station for information and as a mediator between Venetian and Catalan, or Neapolitan, subjects. Furthermore, the paper scrutinises the islanders' response to the two immediate 'Catalan' threats posed to Korčula in the course of the War of Ferrara, i.e. the Aragonese invasions in 1483 and 1484.

On Saturday, 23 August 1483, from his viewpoint at St Michael's church of Lopud, a prospering island in the Elaphite archipelago a few miles off Ragusa/Dubrovnik, the Korčulan merchant Michael Pauli de Curzula spotted "an armed, caulked and rigged Catalan fusta" entering the island's harbour.¹ Hurrying back to the harbour, he heard rumours that the captain of the fusta was a Neapolitan vassal and that some of its sailors were Ragusan subjects. Back at his own ship, he witnessed the crew of the fusta, armed as they were, stealing his cargo by force, including, inter alia, iron, textiles and cheese worth several ducats.² Michael and his sailors somehow managed to set sail and escape from the Catalans at Lopud harbour, only, however, to encounter another armed Catalan fusta within sight of the village of Žuljana that finally sought and destroyed his ship. He escaped from capture over some rocks to the coast of the Pelješac peninsula and once the

¹ HR-DAZD-11: 28/53.6, fol. 20v (28. 8. 1483): "cum eius navigio in portu supervenit una fusta catellana armata, palmezata et aptata". A fusta is a light, fast and manoeuvrable ship with little draught, driven by both sail and oarsmen, thus able to navigate in shallow waters and without wind, cf. LANE 1992: 13, 53, 69.

² HR-DAZD-11: 28/53.6, fol. 20v (28. 8. 1483): "vasalus regis [...] pars hominum dicte fuste erant subditi Ragusei [...] per vim armata manu".

Catalan fusta had sailed on, as Michael later claimed before the Venetian count (*comes*) of Korčula, he paid some villagers from Žuljana to bring him back to Korčula on a Ragusan boat.³

This incident constituted but a prelude to the two major Neapolitan attacks against Korčula in the 15th century, carried out with Catalan support in 1483 and 1484. Although the repercussions of the attacks can be traced in various accounts by late medieval pilgrims, little is known about the attacks in particular and generally also about the island's relationship with the Kingdom of Naples and the Catalans. With that in mind, this contribution aims at adopting a Korčulan perspective on the Kingdom of Naples as one of the four major powers in Southeast Europe and the so-called 'Catalan threat' – i.e. the presence of Catalan naval and pirate ships – in the late medieval Adriatic. First, it explores the island's socio-economic relations with Southern Italy, particularly with Neapolitan Apulia, and with Catalan merchants throughout the 15th century. After studying the island's maritime entangledness⁴ through the lens of trade, the focus shifts back to Korčula's perception of the Neapolitan and Catalan presence in the Eastern Adriatic that promoted the island's role as a relay station for news and information and as a mediator between Venetian and Catalan or Neapolitan subjects. Thirdly, this contribution scrutinises the islanders' response to the immediate 'Catalan' threat to Korčula in the course of the War of Ferrara, i.e. the two devastating Aragonese invasions in 1483 and 1484.

This study mainly draws on the abundant body of archival sources compiled on Korčula under Venetian suzerainty in the 15th century, mostly administrative and juridical records today held in the Croatian State Archive in Zadar (Državni Arhiv u Zadru, DAZD).⁵ The islanders' perspective on Southern Italy is further complemented by source editions from Naples and Apulia, primarily published prior to the tragic destruction of the Neapolitan State Archive in 1943.⁶ While an extensive body of literature on both the Kingdom of Naples and Catalan merchants is available, research on late medieval Korčula, despite its richness in sources, is much less prolific. Vinko Foretić and Serđo Dokoza have studied the island's history and its economic relations with Southern Italy until 1420, while Oliver Jens Schmitt has examined Korčula's maritime entangledness after 1420 and how Venetian domination transformed the island's relationship with maritime trade and

³ Cf. HR-DAZD-11: 28/53.6, fol. 20v (28. 8. 1483).

⁴ On aspects of insularity, communication and maritime entangledness see MARGARITI 2013: 198-211.

⁵ HR-DAZD-11.

⁶ BETTIO 1829; GARZILLI 1845; MALIPIERO 1843; ROGADEO 1931; SALVATI 1968. On the "arson incident" of 1943 and its tragic consequences for historical research see SENATORE 2012: 49.

smuggling.⁷ Most recently, a comprehensive study scrutinised the sociocultural, judicial, administrative and economic lifeworlds of the island's rural communities and thereby also assessed agriculture and animal husbandry as pillars of its commercial entangledness in the 15th-century Adriatic.⁸ This essay, therefore, is intended as a first exploration of Korčula's socio-economic and political ties with the Kingdom of Naples, predominantly under Aragonese rule, and its relationship with the Catalans both as trading partners and as a threat, which will hopefully inspire further, more comprehensive studies on this vast subject.

1. Korčula's trade relations with the Kingdom of Naples and Catalan merchants

The town of Korčula, the island's administrative, economic and social centre, sat on a tiny peninsula on the island's north-eastern tip, while four villages and several hamlets spread across its countryside, where the majority of the population and also some of the patrician elite lived.⁹ In this setting, the town's adjacent harbour served as the island's port of trade, exporting agricultural and herding products, such as wine, figs, almonds, cheese, animal skins, wool, salted fish, wood, marble and pitch, and as its nodal point of communication with the extra-insular world both within and beyond the Venetian realm.¹⁰

Korčula's trade relations with the Italian peninsula in the long second half of the 14th century (from the beginning of Angevine supremacy over the island following the Treaty of Zadar in 1358 until its return to Venetian suzerainty in 1420) have been comprehensively examined by Vinko Foretić. Until 1420, Southern Italian merchants most frequently set sail to Korčula from Messina, Manfredonia, Salerno, Barletta, Trani (where the Most Serene Republic was represented by a Venetian consul), and Bari, predominantly in order to export marble, animal skins, wool, cheese and wine. In order to import enough of the ever-scarce grain, moreover, merchant ships arrived at the port of Korčula not only from Apulia and the Kingdom of Naples, but also from Sicily, Sardinia and Catalonia.¹¹

From the 14th century onwards, Catalan merchants expanded into the Adriatic, increasing their commercial activities throughout the 15th century. In the wake of this increasing economic exchange, Ragusa soon became the mercantile stronghold of Catalans in the Eastern Adriatic, from 1443 onwards also hosting a Catalan

⁷ FORETIĆ 1940; FORETIĆ 1979; DOKOZA 2009; SCHMITT 2008; SCHMITT 2019.

⁸ KÜMMELER [forthcoming].

⁹ KÜMMELER [forthcoming]: 215-318.

¹⁰ On Karl Polanyi's concept of 'ports of trade' see POLANYI 1963: 30-33, 42-45.

¹¹ FORETIĆ 1979: 92-108, particularly 95-96. See also FORETIĆ 1940: 297-303; DOKOZA 2009: 135. On the Venetian Consul in Trani see NICOLINI 1928; JACOVIELLO 1992: 90-94.

consul who served all Catalan “merchants, shipmasters and sailors as much as all other [subjects] from the kingdom, from the lands and islands, and also from the dominion of our aforesaid most serene ruler, the King of Aragon”.¹² By the early 15th century, a considerable number of Catalans from the great trading dynasties of Barcelona and from other merchant families, as well as artisans, particularly carders and weavers, took up residence in Ragusa, soon forming a vivid Catalan community. Aside from slaves (up until around 1420), Catalan merchants traded predominantly in wool, woollen cloth, leather, grain and precious metals from the inner Balkans, but to a lesser extent also in saffron, dried fruits, sugar, coral, glue, tallow, and glass and ceramics from Valencia and Lleida.¹³

Catalan merchant ships entering the Adriatic on their routes to and from Ragusa, Venice and the Marches used to call at other Dalmatian ports, particularly Korčula, in order to stock up on food and water supplies and trade both local and Catalan goods.¹⁴ On Korčula, however, both Catalan and Sicilian merchants had a reputation for trading almost exclusively in slaves.¹⁵ Following the formal abolition of the slave trade on Korčula in 1418, the island’s Grand Council decided that thereafter “each and every Catalan, and also Sicilian, who would have come to this town, particularly in order to acquire slaves, could by no means stay either in the town of *Curzula* or on the island [...] and would immediately be banished to their own shame and grave harm”.¹⁶ According to the statutes, an exception to this law could only be granted to those Catalans and Sicilians who “wanted to

¹² FEJČIĆ 1988: 210: “in dicta civitate Raguxii et eius territorio et districtu in consulem Cathalanorum tam mercatorum et patronorum lignorum, et marinariorum, quam omnium aliorum de regnis, terris et insulis, ac dominatione dicti serenissimi domini nostri regis Aragonum” (2. 3. 1451). Cf. RYDER 1990: 303; COSTA I PARETAS 2000: 207-209.

¹³ See FERRER 2012: 164; FEJČIĆ 1994: 429-433, and on the Catalan wool trade and cloth production in Ragusa *ibid.*: 433-449; SPREMIĆ 1971: 29-181; and rather recently KOVAČEVIĆ-KOJIĆ 2005: 759-766. On the organisation of Catalan trade, and its insurance and chartering contracts for the shipping of goods to distant harbours etc., see DEL TREPPO 1972: 149-521.

¹⁴ Cf. SABATÉ 2016: 14-16, 18.

¹⁵ This reputation of Catalan merchants on Korčula is very likely connected to the decision by the island’s Grand Council on 11 November 1399, when a law was passed conceding the right of slave trade to Catalans and Sicilians only; cf. FORETIĆ 1979: 96; DOKOZA 2009: 132, 135, 140-141; FORETIĆ 1940: 300, 307-308.

¹⁶ HANEL 1877: 105-106: “Item vadit pars si videtur consilio, quod omnes et singuli Catalani et etiam Siciliani, qui venirent ad hanc ciuitatem, specialiter pro facto emendi seruorum, nullatenus possint hic in ciuitate Curzulae et nec insula morari, nisi quod si voluerint emere panem vel vinum, aut aliquid pro ipso victu, possint hic aequaliter, saltem per vnum diem stare ad plus, aliter quod statim expellantur cum ipsorum verecundia et graui damno. Captum per ballotas LXVI; contrarie una.” The abolition of the slave trade on Korčula followed shortly after its abrogation in Ragusa, where the slave trade was already banned in 1416, “which re-oriented the objectives of merchants like the Catalans” although the trade of ‘domestic servants’ nevertheless continued to flourish (SABATÉ 2016: 18), cf. PINELLI 2008: 67-74; SAMARDŽIĆ 1984: ch. 162 (27. 1. 1416).

buy bread and wine, or anything else for their nourishment” – in this case, they were entitled “to stay for at least a day” or longer.¹⁷

After its transition to Venetian suzerainty in 1420, Korčula found itself in a delicate geostrategic position, serving as Venice’s southernmost port in its Dalmatian territories, while being located in the immediate vicinity of the territories of Venice’s long-term rival Ragusa, which maintained close commercial and political relations with both the Kingdom of Naples and Catalan merchants.¹⁸ With Venice’s Levantine trade flourishing, the port of Korčula increasingly served multiple purposes; as a local trade hub between the Balkan hinterland and the opposite Italian coast on the one hand, and as a crucial gateway for long-distance maritime traffic to and from the Adriatic on the other. As such, it regularly attracted foreign merchant ships to stock up on supplies or undertake minor repairs at the local wharf on their way to Venice, the Levant, and both shores of the Adriatic.¹⁹ Moreover, many pilgrim galleys on their way to and from the Holy Land had a stopover in the port of Korčula to stock up on supplies; among them Konrad Grünemberg whose travelogue contains a magnificent depiction of the town and port of Korčula and mentions the Neapolitan attacks preceding his visit in 1486.²⁰

Against this background, in fact Catalan merchants also continued to visit the island’s port and conduct business with its merchants, albeit only occasionally. On 21 June 1433, for example, Ser Johannes Bofii and Ser Leonardus Balazar de Barcelona, two Catalan merchants (*catalani mercatores*), filed a complaint to the count of Korčula about an incident involving two other ships in view of the island’s port in the strait of Korčula.²¹ Moreover, on 23 March 1446, the brothers Colucius and Gasparus, Catalans from Girona (*de Ierano catelani*) who had preferred to stay in Manfredonia, through an authorised *procurator* acting in their name requested the settlement of a debt worth 65 gold ducats from the Korčulan patrician Ser Dobroslavus quondam Obradi.²²

Along with the island’s increasing integration into the Venetian commercial sphere, Korčula’s sailors were also to be found sailing to Corfu, Morea, Crete and Cyprus, and further into the Levant.²³ Although Venice generally tried to concentrate commercial flows in the Adriatic, commercial activities between both shores

¹⁷ HANEL 1877: 105-106: “quod si voluerint emere panem vel vinum, aut aliquid pro ipso victu, possint hic aliquantulum, saltem per vnum diem stare ad plus.”

¹⁸ FEJIĆ 1994; FEJIĆ 1988; SPREMIĆ 1987; SPREMIĆ 1971.

¹⁹ KÜMMELER 2020: 197-201, 209-210; SCHMITT 2019: 12-17, 39, 67-69, 73-83; SCHMITT 2008: 6-9.

²⁰ Cf. DENKE 2011: 326-327; GRACIOTTI 2014: 136-146, 404-405.

²¹ HR-DAZD-11: 7/7.2, fol. 87r-88r (21. 6. 1433).

²² HR-DAZD-11: 9/12.1, fol. 24r (23. 3. 1446).

²³ SCHMITT 2019: 75; LANE 1992: 26-34; ASHTOR 1983: 141, 160.

of the Adriatic continued. Between 1419 and 1422, for example, Francesco Moddei, Spinello Adimari and Odino di Giovanni – partners of the Marcovaldi family of Prato in Tuscany that traded with Ragusa, Korčula, Kotor, the Neretva Delta and further into the Balkans – conducted business from their base in Korčula, trading mainly in salt.²⁴ It can thus be understood that the Republic limited, but did not disrupt trans-Adriatic commercial activities. Instead, as Tomislav Raukar, Josip Kolanović and Oliver Schmitt have underlined, “local authorities did not treat these transports as smuggling, but legalised them”, enabling Venice to “slowly transform them”, particularly by means of taxation.²⁵

Korčula thus faced the challenge of respecting the suzerainty of Venice on the one hand, while maintaining its traditional trade relations with Neapolitan Italy, especially Apulia, on the other. As Korčula suffered from a chronic scarcity of grain, however, Venice’s commercial policy was also met with resistance and increased smuggling activities in those periods when importing grain from non-Venetian territories was prohibited. Despite prohibitions and threats of sanctions, it is not surprising that Korčula’s most influential patrician families maintained their old trans-Adriatic trade networks, controlling both the legal and the illegal trade that flourished with both shores.²⁶ This continuation can be observed on its trade routes both to the ports of Dalmatia and Albania, particularly Drijeva, and Southern Italy, predominantly Apulia.²⁷ Unable to cut through the island’s old trading networks with non-Venetian territories on the eastern and western shores of the Adriatic, in 1443 Doge Francesco Foscari moreover instructed his count on Korčula not to extract any grain from Venetian territories in the event of grain shortages, but to import the island’s grain supply from Apulia.²⁸

The few thin folders of *contralittere* preserved among Korčula’s otherwise extraordinarily rich archival records furthermore suggest a rather modest frequency and volume of trade during the 15th century, particularly compared with com-

²⁴ PINELLI 2006: 26-37, 53, 56-58.

²⁵ SCHMITT 2019: 79-83 (quote *ibid.*: 80); RAUKAR 2000: 49-125; KOLANOVIĆ 1979: 63-150; HOCQUET 1989: 277-316.

²⁶ While forced purchases of grain from transiting ships did not provide enough grain to feed the island in years of famine, “the survival of the island depended on circumventing Venice’s trade legislation, because [...] any ship entering the Adriatic with a cargo of wheat was obliged to offer it on the Venice market”, thus provoking smuggling. Cf. SCHMITT 2019: 81-87 (quote *ibid.*: 83); SCHMITT 2008: 1-5; HÜBNER 1998. On grain shortages on Korčula see KÜMMELER [forthcoming]: 186-192, 395-399; KÜMMELER & HEISS [forthcoming]; FORETIĆ 1979: 95.

²⁷ Cf. SCHMITT 2008: 6-7; DOKOZA 2009: 127-148; FORETIĆ 1940: 297-303; FORETIĆ 1979: 95, 99-100; TOŠIĆ 1987.

²⁸ HANEL 1877: 164: “Ad factum autem possendi extrahere et habere de terris nostris blada, dicimus, quod ipsi communitati in omnibus complacere uellemus, sed propter maximam necessitatem, quam patimur bladorum, nolumus, ut de terris nostris extrahant ipsa frumenta uel blada, sed prouideant de partibus Apuliae habere ut melius poterunt”.

mercial strongholds in Dalmatia such as Split and Šibenik.²⁹ Again incomplete, however, Korčula's *contralittere* offer rather fragmentary insights into the official documentation of shipping traffic to and from the island; and in these extracts, in turn, trading contacts with the Kingdom of Naples have been rather sparsely documented. In 1452, for example, only one of a total of 16 *contralittere* was issued for a ship transiting through the port of Korčula on 7 November 1452 on its way from Monte Sant'Angelo to Venice.³⁰

The king of Naples, Alfonso the Magnanimous, shifted to a strict economic policy towards Venice in April 1454, targeting its economic and commercial interests in Apulia by introducing high customs duties and sometimes even banning certain exports.³¹ Nevertheless, a charter from Alfonso granted to the *universitas* of Barletta on 11 June 1456 in Castelnuovo sheds light upon a series of 77 grain exports from the port of Barletta to various Eastern Adriatic destinations, among them also five transports of grain to Korčula in the winter of 1455/56.³² Similarly, only four of a total of 167 entries in Korčula's port registers from January 1461 to August 1463 concerned trans-Adriatic passages to and from the ports of Manfredonia, Trani and Barletta. Among them, on 19 May 1462, Antonius Glavich moored his ship at the port of Korčula, laden with 150 *sextarios* of grain from Apulia and Albania on behalf of Ser Jacobus quondam Catarini, yet in vain, as "due to enormous abundance of grain [in the island's granary], his cargo was not unloaded".³³ In 1475, the *Sommaria*, Naples' supreme financial authority, listed Gregorio de Gabriele de Corzula as transporting 13 *carri* of grain from the port of Fortore along the Apulian coast to Ostuni and

²⁹ Cf. SCHMITT 2019: 79-81; RAUKAR 2000: 49-125; KOLANOVIĆ 1979: 63-150.

³⁰ HR-DAZD-11: 13/23.7, fol. 4v (7. 11. 1452).

³¹ JACOVIELLO 1992: 102-103.

³² On 24 December 1455, Natalis of Kotor carried nine *carri* of barley and two *carri* of grain to Korčula on his ship, the *Sanctus Nicolaus* and, on 2 January 1456, Nicolaus Petri de Curzula transported 15 *carri* of grain to the island on his ship of the same name. On 4 March 1456, Martinus Madii Zuccarii delivered nine *carri* of grain to Korčula on his barque called *la Caritati*, while on 20 March, Franciscus de Francia stowed merely three *carri* of grain destined for Korčula on Iohannes Nicolai de Corzula's ship and it fell to Leucius de Zardullo to ship to the island nine *carri* of grain on Mercurius Madii Zuccarii's ship on 31 March 1456. See CDB 11: Nr. 221, 353-359, here 356-358.

³³ HR-DAZD-11: 16/31.3, fol. 36r (19. 5. 1462): "propterea ingentem bladorum et frumenti abundantiam quam tunc erat in civitatis, [...] non erat exoneratum". Earlier, on 2 March 1461, the barque of Ser Gulielmo quondam Bartholomei Rosso de Venetiis arrived on the island "ad partes Apulee", laden with animal skin (HR-DAZD-11: 16/31.3, fol. 28r). On 14 July 1462, moreover, Ser Jacobus quondam Catarini presented a licence to ship around 8,000 units of cheese from the Neretva Delta to the ports of Apulia and Abruzzo, while Ser Hectorus quondam Antonii de Liesna received his concession to ship to Barletta and other destinations in Apulia on 9 August 1462 (HR-DAZD-11: 16/31.3, fol. 37v-38r). For the whole port register of 1461-1463, see HR-DAZD-11: 16/31.3, fol. 26r-43v.

Brindisi.³⁴ Furthermore, out of a total of 320 registered ships, the port registries from 1466 to 1477 (nowhere near all months have been preserved), contain but 20 official crossings of the Adriatic Sea towards Apulia, undertaken by merchant vessels during the exhausting war between the Ottoman Empire and Venice and its allies (1463–1479).³⁵

By chance, a minor fragment of only two *folii* survived among Korčula's archival records, containing the *contralittere* issued from 31 January to 13 April 1487, that can directly be compared and complemented with the concessions of grain exports *extra regnum* from the Adriatic ports of Apulia collected by Bernardo de Anghono,³⁶ *magister actorum* at the port authority (*magister portolanus*) of Apulia. De Anghono's collection not only covers basically the same time frame, namely the period from 17 January to 15 May 1487, but it is also "of extraordinary importance because it represents almost the only surviving testimony on customs revenues on Apulian wheat for the entire 15th century".³⁷ Although Venice, in the 1480s, had relaxed its pivotal claim to centralise maritime trade in the Adriatic and officially "allowed building and using vessels [of even more than 60 tons] for Adriatic voyages that did not touch Venice or Ragusa",³⁸ the 21 concessions listed in the Korčula fragment contain no clear proof for any trans-Adriatic trade between Apulia and the island in 1487. Instead, 15 ships headed for Venice, two for Dalmatia and one for Istria, and three concessions do not specify a destination; only one merchant from Apulia (Trani) was documented transporting mixed cargo to Istria on 12 February 1487.³⁹

The records assembled by Bernardo de Anghono, however, provide a more detailed insight into the actual extent and frequency of Korčula's trade relations with Southern Italy. While the grain traffic from Apulia to Ragusa and Venetian Dalmatia represented "one of the main drivers for commercial exchange between Italy and the Balkans during the late Middle Ages", Amedeo Feniello has recently

³⁴ Fortore was a grain trading centre in Northern Apulia located at the old mouth of the Fortore river, cf. SAKELLARIOU 2012: 139-141, 450-451.

³⁵ The figures from 1477 (2 out of 52 *contralittere* concerning licences dated 22 April and 5 May 1477) are taken from HR-DAZD-11: 25/48.10, fol. 1r-5r, while those for the period 1466–1476 are taken from the study by Oliver Schmitt (SCHMITT 2019: 91-93). See also HR-DAZD-11: 20/36.4 (11. 4. 1466-1. 10. 1468); HR-DAZD-11: 21/37.2 (24. 3. 1469-15. 1. 1472).

³⁶ On Bernardo de Anghono see SCHELLER 2013: 152, 227-228. On the office of the *magister portolanus* in Apulia see RYDER 1976: 344-348.

³⁷ FENIELLO 2014: 450. For the edition of Anghono's collection of concessions (hereafter referred to as 'Fonti Aragonesi 1968') see "Copia quaterni Bernardi de Anghono magistri actorum penes magistrum portulanum Apulie [...] (1486–1487)" in Fonti Aragonesi 1968: 3-79. For the Korčulan fragment see HR-DAZD-11: 30/57.7, fol. 1r-2v (31. 1-13. 4. 1487).

³⁸ ARBEL 2013: 233. Cf. LANE 1992: 8-9.

³⁹ HR-DAZD-11: 30/57.7, fol. 1r (12. 2. 1487).

emphasised that this exchange “was driven by Florentine and Tuscan traders more than by local operators”.⁴⁰ In the period from 17 January to 15 May 1487, however, 16 Korčulan ships exported a total of approximately 570 *carri* of grain from Apulian ports: six ships from Manfredonia, five from Barletta (*Barulo*), three from Trani, and two from Bisceglie (*de portu civitatis Vigiliarum*); and, on 31 October 1486, one from Bari.⁴¹ Interestingly, none of the merchants, procurators or captains mentioned in the Apulian records, not even those originating from the island, have been listed in the Korčula fragment.

In this period, although the general trading volume of Korčulan merchants was rather modest compared to the grand Florentine, Neapolitan and Catalan trading companies, Korčulan shipowners were nevertheless firmly integrated into Apulia’s mercantile networks. They conducted business mainly with dominant mercantile companies such as those of Lorenzo de’ Medici, of the Catalan merchant Raymundo Paretas and of the de Russis family of Pistoia in Tuscany, as represented through their intermediary agents in Apulia. Since these companies maintained no merchant fleet of their own but relied on external shipowners, Korčulan *patroni* performed a crucial role as carriers, along with other captains from Dalmatia, Ragusa and the Venetian *Stato da Mar*. The actual trading partners of Korčulan sailors in the ports of Apulia thus were leading agents, such as Benedetto Benincasa, a Neapolitan noble working on behalf of Francesco Nasi (*de Naczo*), the director of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s Neapolitan branch (since 1475), and Gesimundus Catalanus, a merchant and resident of Manfredonia, as well as local merchants from important *neofiti* families of Trani and Manfredonia.⁴² Members of these latter families, descendants of more than 20 Jewish communities predominantly from Apulia and Campania that had collectively converted to Christianity around 1292, were prominent merchants and legal scholars renowned for their close ties with the Eastern Adriatic and, in the case of Trani after 1462, moreover also represented one third of the town’s Grand Council until they were expelled from Trani in 1495.⁴³

⁴⁰ FENIELLO 2014: 466-467.

⁴¹ Fonti Aragonesi 1968. On the units of weight and volumetric measures (1 *carro* = 36 *tomoli* (wheat, equalling 1,900 litres and 1,440 kg)/48 *tomoli* (barley)/50 *tomoli* (oats)) used in medieval Southern Italy, see SAKELLARIOU 2012: 492-493.

⁴² FENIELLO 2014: 488-493; SPREMIĆ 1975: 252. On Francesco Nasi (*Franciscus de Naczo*) and Lorenzo de’ Medici’s Neapolitan branch see FENIELLO 2014: 438-439; on the Catalan merchant Raymundo Paretas see *ibid.*: 455, 458, 489-490, 510; on the de Russis family see *ibid.*: 454, 460, 469, 510. It remains unclear whether Gesimundus Catalanus was of Catalan origin or rather a member of the *neofiti* Catalano family from Trani. On the latter see SCHELLER 2013: 405-410.

⁴³ SCHELLER 2013: 152-154, 227-237; COLAFEMMINA 1990: 269-278, on the close ties of Manfredonia’s *neofiti* with the Eastern Adriatic see *ibid.*: 274, 277-278; Fonti Aragonesi 1968.

A frequent traveller to the port of Trani, for example, was Ioannes Martini de Corzula, for whose ship concessions were issued in Trani on 17 January, 2 April and on 1 and 3 May 1487 and in Barletta, also on 2 April 1487. According to these concessions, Ioannes exported a total of 37 *carri* and 24 *tomoli* of grain in January, 90 *carri* of grain in April and 117 *carri* of grain and three *carri* of chickpeas in May 1487 on behalf of Baldessare de Barisano, Giliberto de Buctunis, Palumbo de Gello and Stango de Zardullo (Zarulo) – all members of key *neofiti* families –, of the Catalan merchant Raymundo Paretas and of the trading company of Lorenzo de' Medici, Francesco Nasi and Benedetto Benincasa.⁴⁴ Moreover, Gevellinus Martini de Corzula regularly moored at the port of Barletta, stevedoring his ship with similar amounts of grain on behalf of Russo de Russis – whose ancestor Paolo de Russi had traded with Korčula already in 1409 – and Lorenzo de' Medici, represented by their agents Benedetto Benincasa and Francesco Nasi and the *neofita* Marino de Riso.⁴⁵

A similar pattern emerges in Manfredonia, where Nicolaus Marci de Corzula berthed his ship in order to stow grain on behalf of local *neofiti* such as Thomasecto de Minadoy (31 *carri*, 5 February 1487), Antonio de Granito (31 *carri*, 21 March 1487) and Vallarano Capuano (33 *carri*, 7 May 1487).⁴⁶ Marinus Luraghii de Corzula, moreover, took on grain on behalf of Dionisio and Scipio of the influential local *neofiti* family de Florio (14 *carri*, 19 January 1487), the company of Lorenzo de' Medici (14 *carri*, 18 *tomoli*, 28 February 1487) and the Catalan merchants Gesimundus and Raymundus (16 *carri*, 15 May 1487).⁴⁷ During the 15th century, as we have seen, Korčulans were engaged both legally and illegally in intense trading with both subjects of the Kingdom of Naples and Catalan merchants, also transporting Apulian grain to other Eastern Adriatic destinations such as Split.⁴⁸ Along with trade, personal mobility and the exchange of knowledge flourished

⁴⁴ Fonti Aragonesi 1968: 36, 51-52, 55, 57. On the trading company of Lorenzo de' Medici, Francesco Nasi and Benedetto Benincasa (*Benedictus Beneincasa*) and its organisation see FENIELLO 2014: 448-455.

⁴⁵ Gevellinus Martini de Corzula transported 68 *carri*, 29 *tomoli* of grain on 6 March; 40 *carri* on 10 April, and 75 *carri* on 14 May 1487. While on 6 March and 14 May, according to the registers, it was his own ship, he was only the captain of the ship of Russo de Russis' representative Benedetto Benincasa on 10 April 1487. Cf. Fonti Aragonesi 1968: 34, 36-37, 39; SCHELLER 2013: 152-154; 227-237, 389, 400-401, 420-421, 456, 476; FENIELLO 2014: 454. On Paolo de Russi see FORETIĆ 1979: 97.

⁴⁶ Fonti Aragonesi 1968: 7, 11, 14. Vallarano Capuano was acting as an intermediary for Lorenzo de' Medici. Cf. COLAFEMMINA 1990: 271-274; FENIELLO 2014: 453.

⁴⁷ Fonti Aragonesi 1968: 6, 9, 16. On the De Florio family in Manfredonia see COLAFEMMINA 1990: 271-274; SPREMIĆ 1975: 243-259, particularly 252 (on their relation to Korčula). On the de Minadoy family see SCHELLER 2013: 437-438.

⁴⁸ ORLANDO 2019: 218-219.

vividly both within and between mercantile, artisan and humanist networks across the Adriatic.⁴⁹



Map: Korčula and the Kingdom of Naples, c. 1475.

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⁴⁹ From 1441 to 1449, for example, the architect Giacomo Correr di Trani worked in Korčula on construction, adding the northern aisle to the island's St Mark's Cathedral together with local stonemasons and Italian artisans. In the 16th century, increasing exports of Korčulan stone further intensified cooperation and exchange between stonemasons, sculptors and builders from both shores of the Adriatic. Cf. FORETIĆ 1979: 101-107; FISKOVIĆ 1976: 19-30. On early Dalmatian humanists, see ŠPOLJARIĆ 2017: 46-56.

*2. Maritime Communication:
Observing the Adriatic from a Korčulan perspective*

In 1442, Alfonso the Magnanimous conquered Naples and consolidated the “Mediterraneanisation of the Crown of Aragon”, whose influence stretched over Aragon, Valencia, Barcelona, the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, Sicily and Naples.⁵⁰ Dominating Southern Italy from the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic not only opened the gates for Alfonso to interfering in the Upper Italian arena, but it also drew his attention, in terms of extending both his political and economic power, to the Orient and the Eastern Adriatic. While there is an ongoing debate about Alfonso’s role within the crusading movement, it is broadly acknowledged that “the king’s priorities lay in protecting Aragonese economic interest in the Levant and furthering his dynastic claims in the Holy Land, Greece and the Balkans”.⁵¹

The already tense relations between Venice and Naples quickly deteriorated, for Alfonso, as King of Naples, was a rival to Venice in many respects; particularly as a promoter of trade, privateering and piracy⁵² in the Mediterranean, as a war party in Northern Italy with a strong interest in the Duchy of Milan, and as an expanding power with clear aspirations in the Balkans.⁵³ There, Alfonso soon established a vassal system of local potentates from Herzegovina, Albania and Epirus that disrupted the region’s existing power structures and was useful for staging himself as an opponent of the Ottomans while severely limiting Venice’s scope for action in the Eastern Adriatic. Among his Balkan vassals, one needs to mention Carlo II Tocco, the Despot of Artá (1437, reconfirmed with his son

⁵⁰ SABATÉ 2017: 13. See also RYDER 1990: 210-251; GALASSO 1992: 585-591 On the question of whether or not Alfonso the Magnanimous pursued a coherent “politica mediterranea” see ABULAFIA 2009: 97-111.

⁵¹ ALOISIO 2016: 64-65. See also RYDER 1990: 290-305; MARINESCU 1994; GALASSO 1992: 587-607; JACOVIELLO 1992: 43-45; ABULAFIA 2009: 110-111; CERONE 1902-1903. On how Alfonso organised his military forces see SÁIZ 2009: 120-132.

⁵² On Alfonso’s maritime policy and privateering activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, see FERRER I MALLOL 2003: 259-307; UNALI 2007: 29-30, 50, 53-55, 66, 70-76, 82-83, 90-91, 177-179; MARINESCU 1992: 155-173; RYDER 1990: 295-298; RYDER 1976: 292, 304-310, 313. On the controversial and ambiguous relation of Venice to piracy in the 14th and 15th centuries see TENENTI 1973: 705-772, particularly 724-726, 732-736, 743-744; KATELE 1988: 865-889.

⁵³ The current state of research on Alfonso’s Balkan policy and the relations between Balkan magnates and the Kingdom of Naples is well represented by the papers in this volume. For further information, see SPREMIĆ 2000: 741-753; MARINESCU 1994: 153-189; RYDER 1990: 210-432, particularly 290-305; SPREMIĆ 1974: 455-469; CERONE 1902-1903: particularly 783-784; ALOISIO 2016: 64-71. On the deterioration of Venetian-Neapolitan relations after 1443 see JACOVIELLO 1992: 43-88, particularly 43-51. On the Catalan bankers, high-ranking notaries and other diplomats involved in creating and using the network, see ZEČEVIĆ 2019: 411-433.

Leonardo III Tocco in 1452),⁵⁴ the Bosnian duke Stjepan Vukčić Kosača (1444),⁵⁵ and George Kastrioti (Skanderbeg, 1451).⁵⁶ While tensions grew stronger in Italy, the fierce competition between Venice and Naples in the Western Balkans, developed into a “proxy war” involving their local strongholds and allies and causing “enormous damage to all those forces in the Balkans which were trying to stem the Ottoman tide”.⁵⁷

Aboard the ships of foreign merchants, pilgrims and local islanders, an increasing flow of news and rumours on the latest political, economic and social developments as well as ship and troop movements poured into Korčula from the Adriatic realm, the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. The “many people from Korčula and many born in foreign lands” at its port turned the island into a relay station for news and information that was gathered by its communal authorities and then reported to Venice by its Venetian count.⁵⁸ Whereas Naples took great advantage of Ragusa, given its favourable strategic location and its widespread mercantile relations, as a hub for information on current developments in the region, Korčula likewise kept a keen eye on the region on behalf of the lion of St Mark.⁵⁹

Between 1448 and 1449, Francesco Lombardo, the Venetian count of Korčula, for instance reported to Venice relevant news as part of his usual correspondence. He recounted local social struggles between Korčula’s patricians and commoners as well as smuggling activities both to and from Ragusa and Apulia. Albeit

⁵⁴ As early as 1437, Alfonso forged an alliance with Carlo II Tocco, the Despot of Arta, confirming his power and rights over Epirus; an alliance that was renewed with Leonardo III Tocco by the reconfirmation act of 1452. Cf. ZEČEVIĆ 2014: 111-136, particularly 116-117 and 126-127; SPREMIĆ 2000: 743; MARINESCU 1994: 100, 103-107, 170-172; RYDER 1990: 303-304; CERONE 1902-1903: 594-595, 601, 783, 831-832.

⁵⁵ In 1444, the Bosnian duke Stjepan Vukčić Kosača became a Neapolitan vassal with all his territories and the associated obligation for military and financial support. Cf. MARINESCU 1994: 108-113; SPREMIĆ 2000: 742-744, 747; COSTA I PARETAS 2000: 209-211; RYDER 1990: 303-304; ĆIRKOVIĆ 1964: 121; SCHMITT 2016: 177-180; PREMOVIĆ 2019: 88-102. See also Neven Isailović’s contribution to this volume.

⁵⁶ In 1451, in the aftermath of the siege of Krujë, George Kastrioti (Skanderbeg), and after him also other Albanian nobles, swore the oath of vassalage to Alfonso, who in turn provided military assistance and installed Ramon d’Ortafa as viceroy in Krujë. Cf. SCHMITT 2009: 187-205; SCHMITT 2016: 174-177; SPREMIĆ 2000: 744-749; MARINESCU 1994: 157-159, 162-164, 173-178, 181-182; MARINESCU 1923: 1-135; CERONE 1902-1903: 171-181, 193, 209-211, 582-585, 774-776; COSTA I PARETAS 2000: 206-207; SABATÉ 2017: 15; RYDER 1990: 303-305.

⁵⁷ SCHMITT 2016: 174. Cf. SPREMIĆ 2000: 749-750; SCHMITT 2016: 174-180; PREMOVIĆ 2019: 94.

⁵⁸ HR-DAZD-11: 16/30.6, fol. 5v (11. 1. 1451): “ibi aderat multitudo populi et personarum tam terrigenarum quam alienigenarum et hoc fuisse dicere sub logia nova ad marina”.

⁵⁹ Cf. SPREMIĆ 1987: 187-197; SCHMITT 2019: 75-76, 79. See also Zdenka Janeković Römer’s contribution to this volume.

from a Korčulan and thus rather peripheral perspective, news was gathered from a much broader area, encompassing the island's immediate surroundings, the Balkan hinterland and both shores of the Adriatic, and periodically even the Eastern Mediterranean. Consequently, Lombardo reported on the Dalmatian town of Šibenik, where social unrest raged; on Albania, where Skanderbeg's League of Lezhë had been fearlessly repelling the Ottomans since 1444; and on Bosnia, where the Ottomans had just raided the fortress of Duvno and taken many captives.⁶⁰ In June 1449, the count moreover provided information on an outbreak of the plague – in his words “maxima epidemia et pestis”⁶¹ – in the Egyptian trading centres of Cairo and Alexandria. The news had been transmitted via a galley coming directly from Alexandria, one of the main ports of destination of Venice's *mude*, its regular convoys of state-owned galleys for the transport of valuable goods like spices, silk and metals.⁶²

In the wake of the war between Naples and Venice, Count Lombardo reported in minute detail on the conflict's repercussions on the Eastern Adriatic coast, where tensions had already been growing for a couple of years. Following the attack by Catalan corsairs on two merchant ships carrying goods destined for Venice and Genoa, Venice directed its fleet against the pirates in 1443, first in the Eastern Mediterranean and from 1444 onwards also in the Black Sea. In summer 1444, in turn, a squad of three Aragonese galleys under the command of Bernat de Vilamari (*Bernardus Villamarinus*), the famous Catalan corsair and commander in chief of Alfonso's galleys, was dispatched to Trani, from where the Aragonese galleys jointly operated together with Catalan privateers against Venetian targets in the Adriatic, causing serious concerns in the Venetian Senate about the integrity of its Gulf.⁶³ Subsequently, the movements of Catalan galleys in the Adriatic were observed with great suspicion: in April 1445, four Catalan galleys had appeared in the Gulf of Venetian Kotor and rumours suggested that another twenty Catalan galleys would follow, spreading fear and terror over Kotor and the rest of Dalmatia.⁶⁴ Around that

⁶⁰ HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 3r-4v (6-7. 9. 1448), 8r-8v (30. 9. 1448), 14v (12. 2. 144[9]), 15v (15. 3. 1449), 18v (27. 3. 1449), 19v (2. 4. 1449). See also HR-DAZD-11: 13/23.1, fol. 8r (28. 12. 1450); SCHMITT 2009: 37-66, 321-339; SCHMITT 2001: 297-314; SPREMIĆ 1994: 305-307; SETTON 1978: 72-74.

⁶¹ HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 25r (26. 6. 1449).

⁶² HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 24v-25r (26. 6. 1449). On the role of Alexandria and Cairo in Venetian trade relations see CHRIST 2012: 38-43, 64-66, 88-90.

⁶³ DEL TREPPO 1972: 490-498, here 491; TENENTI 1973: 747-748, 759-761. On Bernat de Vilamari and his activities in the region, see TORRENT ORRI 1958: 41-44; MARINESCU 1994: 48, 106, 168, 179, 191-247; BASSO 1994: 548-552; DEL TREPPO 1972: 422, 491, 498, 506, 511; RYDER 1976: 297-313; CERONE 1902-1903: 452-456, 611, 838; ZEČEVIĆ 2019: 425.

⁶⁴ LJUBIĆ 1890: 250: “chomo [...] do avril de lano passado vene galie quarto de Cathelani in el colfo de Cataro [...] e fo vose per tuta Dalmazia, che drio quele quarto galie vegniva vinti galie de Catellani, la qual vose messe terror a tuta Dalmazia e specialmente a Cataro” (11. 7. 1446). Cf. SCHMITT 2008: 6; PREMOVIĆ 2019: 91.

time, the patricians of Hvar also reported that “Catalan corsairs (*corsari*) and other malefactors” had surprised them even though they “had not expected any enemies”.⁶⁵

Francesco Lombardo described how the seemingly local conflict over the Albanian fortress of Dagno (close to Shkodër) turned into a proxy war between Naples and Venice. Moreover, he provided updates on the attacks by the Serbian despot George Branković against Zeta, as an ally of Naples, and on Skanderbeg who, then likewise an ally of Naples, turned against the Venetian port town of Antivari/Bar. Throughout spring 1449, Lombardo sent detailed reports to Venice, pouring in from Apulians who had secretly sailed from Manfredonia to Korčula, about news that Alfonso had vigorously armed ten galleys in Naples and sent them to Catalonia in order to fight René of Anjou, while he met with papal delegates for negotiations in Terracina. In March, he moreover notified Venice about plans by George Branković to invade Albania and the sighting of a Catalan *fusta piratarum* with 27 rowing benches at the port of Tarent, getting equipped to set sail again soon.⁶⁶

After Venetian commanders had hanged two renowned pirates protected by Naples in 1448, the signs were definitely set for war. In early summer 1449, Lombardo informed Venice about Ragusan crisis diplomacy between the Ottomans, Hungary, Naples, the Serbian despot and Stjepan Vukčić Kosača. Shortly after the war between Venice and Naples broke out in June 1449, the count reported on a Catalan *fusta* threateningly cruising below the nearby island of Mljet and on the problems of providing enough ammunition to defend Korčula, if necessary. Lombardo also forwarded pledges to Venice from Korčulan merchants, who had lost their landed property and commodities in Aragonese territories and who had hastily fled from capture by Catalan ships guarding Apulian waters due to the war. Moreover, he reported on secret Aragonese activities, witnessed by Korčulan sailors, to arm several great galleys in the port of Naples, as well as on further sightings of at least three Catalan galleys, three *fustas* and several bigger ships approaching from Sicily. Last but not least, Lombardo collected and forwarded these reports about Neapolitan and Catalan ship movements from both shores of the Adriatic and forwarded them to both Venice and to the captain of its gulf fleet.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ LJUBIĆ 1890: 241: “non habiando suspecto de nemixi, chome fina mo havemo habudo de corsari catellani et altri malfactori”. For the use and meaning of the terms ‘pirata seu corsarius’ in the 14th and 15th century, see TENENTI 1973: 710-713.

⁶⁶ HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 8r-8v (30. 9. 1448), 12v (28. 1. 1449), 13v (10. 2. 144[9]), 14v (12. 2. 144[9]), 15v (15. 3. 1449), 18v (27. 3. 1449); GULLINO 1996: 56; SCHMITT 2009: 55-69, 321-339; SCHMITT 2001: 297-309; SPREMIĆ 1994: 305-307, 330-357; COSTA I PARETAS 2000: 205-207.

⁶⁷ The war broke out on 19 June 1449. See HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 23v (17. 6. 1449), 24v-25v (26. 6. 1449, 28. 6. 1449), 26v (6. 7. 1449), 27v (s.d.), 28r-29v (24-25. 7. 1449), 31r (27. 7. 1449), 44r (15. 12. 1449), 45v-46r (19. 2. 14[50]), 54r-54v (13/19. 3. 1450); GULLINO 1996: 47 (Gullino mentions 8 July as the beginning of the war); FUESS 2011: 227-229, 417-419.

While Korčula had long begun to prepare itself and its arsenal for the ‘Catalan threat’ deriving from Naples, on 8 July 1449 the Venetian Senate instructed the counts of Korčula, Šibenik, Trogir, Hvar, Cres and Osor to hold their galleys ready in case of a further escalation of the war with Naples.⁶⁸ Venetian galleys increasingly intruded into Aragonese waters from Southern Italy and Sicily and even up to Catalonia proper, where three galleys and three ships disturbed the launch of a Catalan galley in San Feliu de Guíxols. King Alfonso, in turn, responded by instructing his major-domo in Naples to engage in privateering and to seize, amongst others, Venetian ships and capture their load.⁶⁹ Despite Venice, following the outbreak of the war, having prohibited trade with Aragonese territories in Italy around 15 October 1449, smuggling activities between both shores of the Adriatic increased dramatically during the war, resulting in a multitude of litigations regarding contraband during the autumn of 1449.⁷⁰

In early 1450, however, the focus of the Korčulan authorities shifted back onto the Catalans, as Bernat de Vilamarí and his fleet finally entered Dalmatian waters. Already in January, Count Francesco Lombardo reported to Venice first incidents with the crew of a Catalan fusta that had abducted six people and several animals from Lastovo and stolen another 200 animals from Sušac (*Chazia*).⁷¹ In March, the situation deteriorated rapidly: on 13 March 1450, Lombardo forwarded observations to Venice according to which Bernat de Vilamarí had left Naples with a fleet of ten light galleys (*gallee subtiles*) and two fustas under his command in order to sail to Manfredonia, while further Catalan fustas had already begun to control the ports and waters off Abruzzo. The captain of a Ragusan barque, returning from Manfredonia with grain and two Neapolitan ambassadors on a diplomatic mission to Stjepan Vukčić Kosača in Novi, moreover informed him that Alfonso had ordered two big ships and seven more galleys to be constructed (of which four had already been completed).⁷² Shortly after, in order to confirm

⁶⁸ LJUBIĆ 1890: 308: “ita quod in omnem casum occurrentem bene et utiliter operari possit”; cf. SPREMIĆ 2000: 745. On preparations on Korčula see HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol 26v (6. 7. 1449).

⁶⁹ MARINESCU 1927: 156, 163-164; DEL TREPPO 1972: 491.

⁷⁰ On the trade ban see HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 42r (15. 10. 1449); on the litigation see HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 28r-28v (24. 7. 1449), 34r (25. 9. 1449), 38v-41r (13. 10. 1449-21. 1. 1450), 42v-43r (19/27. 12. 1449); SCHMITT 2008: 9; DEL TREPPO 1972: 491.

⁷¹ HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 44v-45r (25-26. 1. 1450): “fusta cathellanorum fuerat ad ipsam insulam Laguste et exinde acceperat quaedam animalia et homines sex et ad Chaziam similiter acceperat animalia in summa ducenta”.

⁷² HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 53r-53v (13. 3. 1450): “quod Neapolis erant X gallee subtiles et due fuste quarum capitaneus est Villamarinus, qui debeat cum dicta classe venire Manfredoniam [...] quod pro omnia loca apprutii fiebant fuste [...] quod rex Aragonum fieri faciebat galleas VII quarum quatuor erant explete, et altere confestim perficiebantur, et duas naves magnas [...] barciusius ragusiensis ducebat duos ambassiatore Regis Aragonum, qui ibant ad comitem Stefanum [...] ad partes Cathari ad quoddam castrum dicti comitis Stephani vocatum Novi”.

his report, Lombardo forwarded to Venice the testimony of Lodovico Bonacorso, a Venetian captain returning from Apulia who had seen “twelve armed galleys whose captain is Vilamarí” sailing to Trani and Manfredonia, while another four galleys waited in Naples, ready to set sail upon command.⁷³ Around mid-April 1450, after the Venetian gulf fleet had stopped at Korčula to stock up on supplies, Count Francesco Lombardo informed the Serenissima about the latest plans of Lorenzo Loredan, as captain of the Venetian fleet, to counter Aragonese plans by transferring the Venetian Gulf fleet to Kotor.⁷⁴

Ships from Vilamarí’s Catalan fleet nevertheless invaded Dalmatian waters repeatedly in May 1450, as Lombardo stressed in his warnings to Venice. On 5 May, for example, two Catalan ships – a galley and a fusta – jointly attacked the ship of a captain from Shkodër/Scutari off the islet Arkandel/Arcangelo in the waters between Trogir and Sibenik and stole the ship, laden with goods to a value of 1,000 ducats.⁷⁵ On 16 May, east of Mljet, a Catalan pirate fusta (*fusta piratarum*) with 18 rowing benches attacked a ship that miraculously managed to escape from the hands of the Catalans, while the Catalan fusta withdrew to Ston.⁷⁶ Moreover, on 26 May 1450, Lombardo reported that several Catalan fustas had moored at the ports of Barletta, Trani and Manfredonia after having caught, attacked and damaged several Venetian and Dalmatian ships off the islands of Cres and Osor.⁷⁷

In the wake of another Ottoman attack on Skanderberg’s fortress Krujë, the turmoil in Northern Italy and the continuing pirate problem in the Mediterranean, however, the Serenissima and the crown of Aragon restored peace again on 2 July 1450.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, persistent concerns about Catalan attacks in Dalmatia encouraged initiatives to further fortify Dalmatian towns, as was the case in Hvar, whose community had pledged Venice to fortify their town since “the news had arrived that the Catalan armada had entered Dalmatian waters”.⁷⁹ On 28 December

⁷³ HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 54r-55r (13/19. 3. 1450): “a multis locis Appullee [...] vidit galeas XII armatas quarum gubernator est Villamarinus, que gallee venire debebant Trane et Manfredoniam”.

⁷⁴ HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 56v (19. 4. 1450): “Lodovicus Lauredanus, capitaneus vestrae classis generalis”.

⁷⁵ HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 56v (11. 5. 1450): “una gallea et una fusta cathellanorum agresse fuerint eius navigium ad sanctum arcangellum inter Tragurium et Sibenicum et ipsum ceperunt cum mercantiis valoris ducatorum mille”.

⁷⁶ HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 57v (18. 5. 1450): “a manibus cathellanorum”.

⁷⁷ HR-DAZD-11: 12/19.1, fol. 58r (26. 5. 1450): “quarum fustarum gubernator est Pereta, qui cepit et damnificavit certa nauigia vestris subditis nuperime in aquis vestris Chersi et Auseri”.

⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the threat to the Venetian maritime routes by Catalan pirates protected by Naples persisted, cf. FUESS 2011: 30-42, 77-82, 216-217, 227-231, 372, 389-397, 417-422; GULLINO 1996: 42-51; DOUMERC 1996: 154-167; GALASSO 1992: 602-603. See also SPREMIĆ 2000: 745-746.

⁷⁹ LJUBIĆ 1890: 364: “conziosia che per esser venuta la nova, che la armada di Cathellani fossi venuta ne le aque di Dalmatia” (23. 11. 1450).

1450, taking advantage of the island's strategic position and its good commercial contacts with Southern Italy, Doge Francesco Foscari finally called upon Korčula and its count to take on the role of "mediator between those Catalans and our [Venetian] subjects (*mediatorem inter eos cathellanos et fideles nostros*)".⁸⁰

The assignment of the role of mediator to Korčula was well chosen, since sources indicate that the end of the war between Venice and Naples also brought about a rapid normalisation of both Korčula's commercial relations with Neapolitan Apulia and the islanders' contacts with Catalan traders and sailors. In the night from 23 to 24 January 1451, unknown perpetrators stole iron parts from the wreck of a recently damaged Catalan merchant ship, prompting the Venetian count to offer a reward of 25 *libri* for the capture of the thieves and to proclaim that even a thief involved in the crime could count on impunity if he betrayed his accomplices.⁸¹ A few days later, on 1 February 1451, the Catalan merchant Ser Petrus ("mercator cathellanus") and his captain, Ser Franciscus Ribalter documented the loss of their ship – most likely in connection with the same incident – that, fully laden with wool, had sunk off the coast of Korčula.⁸² In the 1450s, as we have seen, relations and trade between Korčula and Apulia flourished again to such an extent that in the wake of the war with the Ottomans in 1463, Ser Johaninus Grupsich, a wealthy Korčulan patrician, reckoned that should the Ottomans advance to Korčula, he would be better off escaping to his inherited properties in Apulia, because the Venetian authorities would be too parsimonious and too reluctant to defend the island ("*avanti chel sia armade le galie, el se perde i luogi*").⁸³

3. Korčula and the 'Catalan Threat' of 1483/84

After the death of Alfonso the Magnanimous on 27 June 1458, his brother John II of Aragon accepted the crowns of Aragon and Sicily whilst his (natural, albeit illegitimate) son Ferrante succeeded him as king of Naples. Triggering a revolt of the barons and external interventions favouring the return of an Angevin king (René of Anjou), Ferrante had to weather some turbulent initial years of his reign until he finally asserted his authority by 1464. Ferrante thus concentrated mainly on political objectives and did not continue his father's latterly harsh economic

⁸⁰ HR-DAZD-11: 13/23.1, fol. 8r (28. 12. 1450): "vobis mandamus quod vos [...] debeatis [...] esse mediatorem inter eos cathellanos et fideles nostros".

⁸¹ Cf. HR-DAZD-11: 13/23.8, fol. 88r (24. 1. 1451): "hac nocte praeterrita furatum fuit unum ferrum navis cathellanorum nuperime fracte ad hanc insulam".

⁸² HR-DAZD-11: 13/24.1, fol. 10r (1. 2. 1451): "Ser Petrus mercator cathellanus et Ser Franciscus ribalter patronus olim navis fracte cum lana".

⁸³ HR-DAZD-11: 16/30.5, fol. 15r (19. 6. 1463): "avanti chel sia armade le galie, el se perde i luogi [...] ma se li vignera qua, io ho tanto de patrimonio in Puglia, io andarò là e starò là". Cf. *ibid.*, fol. 16v.

and commercial policy against Venice, which in turn created a series of conflicts with those Apulian towns that considered their privileges thwarted, pushing the king to revise his economic policy.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, the peace of 25 January 1479 had marked the end of sixteen years of war between the Most Serene Republic and the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁵ In late summer 1479, the Ottoman fleet ravaged the Ionian islands of Lefkada, Zante and Kefalonia before the eyes of the Venetians, causing Leonardo III Tocco to flee to Naples. At the end of July 1480, the Ottomans landed in Apulia and conquered Otranto, sending shockwaves to Naples until they withdrew – or were expelled by Ferrante’s oldest son, Alfonso, the duke of Calabria – from Southern Italy in September 1481. Venice seized the opportunity to occupy Zante in 1482 – much to the annoyance of the Sultan, who recognised Venetian claims to Zante and Kefalonia in the summer of 1484 in exchange for an annual tribute of 500 ducats – but then again aroused suspicions among the other Italian states due to the Republic’s rather neutral attitude towards the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁶

From a Korčulan perspective, however, in the 1480s, the island was hardly threatened by the Ottomans, but rather by Naples, whose interests in Italy and the Adriatic collided with those of Venice in several respects. While Naples had succeeded in reconquering Otranto in September 1481, economic and political disputes between Venice and Duke Ercole I d’Este of Ferrara (a son-in-law of King Ferrante of Naples) over the Venetian salt monopoly and Ferrara’s customs policy on the Po river escalated. The Venetian attack on Ferrarese territory at the beginning of May 1482 turned into a war between Venice and a large-scale alliance of Naples, Florence, Milan and, from 1483 onwards, the Pope. In the Po Valley off Ferrara, a Neapolitan force caused the Venetian river fleet great difficulty; in Lombardy, Milan threatened Brescia and Bergamo. In the south, however, the Venetian Gulf fleet opened a second front against Naples and raided the Calabrian and Apulian coasts. Upon papal demand, Naples enacted the excommunication of Venetian subjects in the cathedral of Naples on 8 June 1483 and transferred a fleet to the Adriatic, where it, fuelled by the restitution claims of Leonardo III Tocco, undertook combat expeditions to Dalmatia during the summer of 1483.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ GALASSO 1992: 618-679; JACOVIELLO 1992: 103-112; RYDER 1990: 424-432.

⁸⁵ Although Venice managed to regain its freedom of trade in the Ottoman Empire and to retain control over Durazzo (Durrës), Dulcigno (Ulcinj) and Antivari (Bar) for an annual tribute, it had to cede large parts of the former Venetian Albania, the Peloponnese and Epirus, to the Ottomans. Cf. ORLANDO 2009: 106-137; GULLINO 1996: 71-79; SCHMITT 2001: 609-628; SETTON 1978: 325-339.

⁸⁶ ZEČEVIĆ 2014: 123-136; ORLANDO 2008: 177-209; ORLANDO 2009: 126-142; GULLINO 1996: 79-82; MARINESCU 1994: 170-172; SETTON 1978: 98, 340-345, 364-387, 406-410, 514-515; ARBEL 2013: 141.

⁸⁷ *Cronica di Napoli* 1845: 150; GALASSO 1992: 679-690; JACOVIELLO 1992: 67-72, 110-113; ZEČEVIĆ 2014: 137-146; GULLINO 1996: 82-84; MALLET 1993: 57-72.

Under the command of Frederick of Naples (Ferrante's second son and king of Naples, 1496-1501), in the second half of August 1483 approximately 35 Neapolitan and papal galleys sailed from Apulia past Vis and Hvar to Korčula, which was just recovering from a severe plague outbreak.⁸⁸ One day before the fleet reached the island, as set out in the introduction, Korčulan sailors had unexpectedly met an armed Catalan fusta at the port of Lopud, whose crew ransacked their ship before they managed to flee, only to then be seized again by another Catalan fusta and lose their ship off Pelješac peninsula.⁸⁹ The day after, on 24 August 1483, the fleet of Neapolitan and papal galleys and Catalan fustas anchored right beneath the town walls of Korčula and besieged the town from the sea.⁹⁰

At the same time, Neapolitan troops had gone ashore with a considerable amount of war equipment, devastating the villages and besieging the town with troops and heavy artillery from the land side too in order to demolish the walls and invade the town. Hitherto, Farlati's brief account of the siege and his reference to the correspondence between Venice and the bishop and the count of Korčula in which the doge praised the islanders' "fidem, virtutem, [et] magnanimitatem" has been consulted as a major source for the events of 1483.⁹¹ Among the island's archival holdings kept in the State Archive in Zadar, however, a copy of Giovanni Mocenigo's ducal letter to Giorgio Viaro, the Venetian count of Korčula, dated 6 September 1483, has been preserved, which contains the doge's congratulations on the victory and further information on the siege.⁹²

Forsaken by the Venetian Gulf fleet stationed in Zadar, the islanders, led by Giorgio Viaro and further encouraged by their bishop Thomas Malumba, proved a "good attitude [... and] manfully fought on the walls and poured liquefied pitch

⁸⁸ According to Ostoich, Frederick's fleet destroyed Vis on their way to Korčula; the archival material from Korčula, however, contains no evidence for this. Cf. OSTOICH 1878: 11; VULETIĆ-VUKASOVIĆ 1884: 111-112; VULETIĆ-VUKASOVIĆ 1888: 44, 54-55; SETTON 1978: 376-377.

⁸⁹ HR-DAZD-11: 28/53.6, fol. 20v (28. 8. 1483): "cum eius navigio in portu supervenit una fusta catellana armata".

⁹⁰ HR-DAZD-11: 28/52.1, fol. 132r (31. 8. 1483): "die domenico XXVIII instantis esset clasis inimico sub muros civitatis".

⁹¹ Farlati erroneously dates the invasion to 1479, cf. FARLATI 1800: 386-387, quote 387. See also OSTOICH 1878: 11-12; BANIČEVIĆ 2003: 93-94.

⁹² This ducal letter is addressed solely to Giorgio (or Zorzi) Viaro (whose coat of arms was to decorate the tower of the land gate for a long time afterwards) as the Venetian count and not to both "comiti et populo Curzolensis" like the one quoted by Farlati and Ostoich. Moreover, the stratagem described in Ostoich of ringing the church bells to greet the alleged arrival of the Venetian Gulf fleet is not mentioned in this ducal missive. Furthermore, according to the other records of the island, the victory against the enemy fleet did not take place on 24 August, but on 25 August at the earliest, see HR-DAZD-11: 27/51.2, fol. 14v-15r (6. 9. 1483); HR-DAZD-11: 28/52.1, fol. 131r (28. 8. 1483); FARLATI 1800: 387; OSTOICH 1878: 11-12.

over the enemy that caused 300 of them to die and many to be wounded”.⁹³ Count Giorgio Viaro rushed to take extensive fortification measures and called upon all Korčulans to defend both the town and the island against the imminent invasion, assigning tasks to the entire population, while fighting together with them on the town walls.⁹⁴ Simultaneously, as the doge confirmed, Viaro dispatched couriers to Venice, reporting “the unexpected appearance of the hostile armada of the King of Apulia and [his] allies to the damage of this our town and island, describing a number of galleys (*triremium*), soldiers in battle array, siege engines, and their extensive preparations for the battle and eventually invasion etc. before the combat and also the precautions you have taken and courageously implemented”.⁹⁵

Acknowledging “how much of your time and forces have been raised for both your defence and the conservation of our honour and status”, the doge praised his faithful Korčulan subjects, “nobles as much as *populares* and clerics just as seculars, who had put forward rather to die than to be overcome, to which they lived up to by restlessly resisting the arrows (*spiculis*), javelins (*telis*), catapults (*tormentis*) and siege engines (*machinis*) and all perils”.⁹⁶ Moreover, Giovanni Mocenigo showed his respect for how Viaro and the islanders, despite their inferior position and the severe damage they had suffered, successfully repelled “with the help of God and Saint Mark, our protector”, the unexpected attack and “confined the enemies, who then fled precipitately after much bloodshed and turpitude, abandoning [...] ladders, fascines (*cratibus*) and other instruments of war”.⁹⁷ In proud words, the doge moreover informed Viaro that “right after God, glory and praise

⁹³ BETTIO 1829: 95: “buon portamento [...], combatterono virilmente tutti sopra le mura, e per pece liquefatta gittata sopra li nemici, ne morirono trecento, e molti rimasero feriti”. Malipiero’s report, on the other hand, mentions a much higher number of 1,500 killed. According to the report, the Neapolitan fleet had “vegnude a combater la terra de Curzola: e per i boni ordeni, virtù e prudenzia de Zorzi Viaro Conte, dapoi lunga battaglia, le è stà ribattude, con morte de 1,500 de i suoi homeni, e con gran numero de feriti; tal che le se ha rimosso da l’impresa, e se ha retira a Lagosta” (MALIPIERO 1843: 284-287, quote 285).

⁹⁴ FARLATI 1800: 386-387: “Comes [...] civitatis, non minus exemplo, quam verbis hortatus, non duces modo, sed etiam socium ac participem laborum et periculorum se præbuit”.

⁹⁵ HR-DAZD-11: 27/51.2, fol. 14v (6. 9. 1483): “repentinum adventum hostilis classis Apulię regis et sociorum ad damnum istius civitatis nostrae et insule describendo numerum triremium ordinem machinas et magnas praeparationes eorum ad proelium et tandem invasionem etc. ante pugnam nec non provisiones per vos conspicientis et magnanime factas”.

⁹⁶ HR-DAZD-11: 27/51.2, fol. 14v (6. 9. 1483): “Quantum tempus et vires vestre faciebantur pro deffensione vestram et conservatione honoris et status nostri [...] istorum nostrorum fidelium tam nobilium quam popularum ac tam ecclesiasticorum quam secularum qui proposuerant potius mori quam superari, quid ipsam demonstrarunt contrepide repugnantes spiculis telis tormentis et machinis a quibuscumque periculis”.

⁹⁷ HR-DAZD-11: 27/51.2, fol. 14v (6. 9. 1483): “et quod tandem auxilio Dei et beati Marci protectoris nostri coegistis hostes [...] scalis et cratibus et quampluribus belicis instrumentis praecipitanter recedatur fugientes cum magne strage et turpitudine”.

is attributed first to your courage endowed with foresight, strength and dexterity, [and] then to the excellent and steadfast strength, integrity and faithfulness of all these our faithful subjects” on Korčula.⁹⁸

Frederick of Naples, however, succeeded neither in breaking the island’s resistance nor in conquering Korčula and thus finally withdrew with his fleet via Lastovo/Lagosta to Brindisi.⁹⁹ Thereafter in Naples, around the end of August 1483, Notar Giacomo, a Neapolitan notary, soberly recorded in his *Cronica di Napoli* that “the illustrious Lord Don Federico was at sea with the armada in the Gulf of Venice and put the said Signoria [of Venice] on a diet” by blocking its supply by sea.¹⁰⁰

From a Korčulan perspective, however, instead of glory and pathos, the aftermath of the invasion was characterised by rather grassroots challenges. On 28 August 1483, three days after the invaders had left the island, Antonio de quondam Ser Simoni and his brothers Jacomo and Marino submitted a supplication to Count Viaro. The three brothers stated that, when “the papal and Neapolitan armada arrived here to fight” on the aforementioned 24 and 25 August 1483, “the said Apulians with the said armada” brought great devastation upon them as they ransacked, amongst others, the village of Lumbarda in the vicinity of the town, burning down houses, abducting livestock, plundering the stocks of fruits and wine and looting further property “of great value [...], and] to our greatest damage and ruin”.¹⁰¹ They complained that they had no time to protect their property since Count Viaro had officially obliged them to “fortify the territory and put it in order, every day preparing to repel the powerful and robust enemy armada, sparing neither life nor property, waiting for and vigorously fighting the said enemies”.¹⁰² According to their initial

⁹⁸ HR-DAZD-11: 27/51.2, fol. 14v (6. 9. 1483): “post deum attribuenda est magna laus primum virtuti prospiciente fortitudini et dexteritati vestre deinde robore constante integritati et fidei omnium istorum nostrorum fidelium”.

⁹⁹ See the letter from Doge Giovanni Mocenigo to Count Giorgio Viaro praising the bravery of the islanders in response to the unexpected attack and the successful defence of the island in HR-DAZD-11: 27/51.2, fol. 14v-15r (6. 9. 1483); BETTIO 1829: 95-96; MALIPIERO 1843: 285-286.

¹⁰⁰ *Cronica di Napoli* 1845: 150: “lo illustre Signore don Federico era inmare conla armata allo golfo de venetia et si faceua stare ad sticcho dicta Signoria”. Cf. DE CAPRIO 2012: 139-173; DE CAPRIO 2005.

¹⁰¹ HR-DAZD-11: 28/52.1, fol. 131r (28. 8. 1483): “ad 24. eali 25. d’agusto messe praesentis vene armata pontificia e Regia aconbatarne qui etc. Eper diti puglesi conla dita armata anuj supraditi fradelli fo fati grandedissimi danni in villa Lombarda, ne fo bruxata una casa, piena de robe e masaricie et dili altre nostre cose, in dita villa arobate del tuto, tolti de multi fruti, robe masaricie e faramenta, tagliate perzulate de gran valuta, e vigne, nostre tagliate, e vendemate, e portato via cum grandedissimo danno nostro e ruina”.

¹⁰² HR-DAZD-11: 28/52.1, fol. 131r (28. 8. 1483): “a tuta sta terra [...] come nuj fradelli sciando continue occupati in officio dato anuy per la Mag[nificenza] V[ostra] in fortificar la terra, e meterla in ordine, cotidie praeparandone ala deffessa de la potente e robusta armata inimica, non sparagnando vita nel haver, attendendo e virilmente combatendo cum li diti inimixi”.

damage assessment, thus all three of them together had suffered losses amounting to “rather 160 than 130 ducats”, urging the Venetian count to take legal action against their perpetrators “in accordance with our laws” by “finding and confiscating the goods of the enemies” whenever possible for Venetian authorities.¹⁰³

On 5 August 1484, only two days before the peace treaty between the Most Serene Republic and the other Italian warring parties was signed in Bagnolo (on 7 August), a Neapolitan armada of about 40 ships, mostly galleys, again entered the waters off Korčula for a retaliation for the Venetian occupation of Gallipoli in May 1484 and a final showdown in the Adriatic. The island’s new count, Bernardo Canal, immediately sent messengers to the villages ordering that “anyone should come to town” and that “nobody dared to leave the town”.¹⁰⁴ However, scattered proceedings against individuals who arrived too late from the countryside to participate in the defence of the town or who fled with their animals into the woods to escape the armada indicate that memories of the last invasion were still alive and fear of the return of the fleet was great.¹⁰⁵ Likewise it happened that urban dwellers who had been charged with guarding the holes shot into the town walls by the Neapolitan artillery (“ad custodiendum foramen bombarde”) inattentively took advantage of them, leaving and re-entering the town while it was encircled by enemies and their fleet.¹⁰⁶ Others excused their absence from defending the town with parental authority, like Marcus of Pupnat, who had seen “many enemies coming ashore from the hostile fleet” and thus intended to go and defend the town, but whose mother had ordered him to stay in the hamlet “because if you go to fight, you will be killed”.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ HR-DAZD-11: 28/52.1, fol. 131r (28. 8. 1483): “secundo la forma de leze nostre [...] e più tosto duc. 160 che duc. 130 che qui e in ogni altro luoco, dove nui adesso e per tiempo podessemo trovar et meter man sula roba deli diti inimixi”.

¹⁰⁴ HR-DAZD-11: 29/55.2, fol. 13r, 15v (9/10. 8. 1484): “quod quilibet deberet venire ad civitatem” (ibid., fol. 15v) and “nemo audeat discedere a civitate Curzule” (ibid., fol. 13r). See also JACOVIELLO 1992: 71-72; GALASSO 1992: 689-690.

¹⁰⁵ HR-DAZD-11: 29/55.2, fol. 13r-16r (9. 8. 1484): “aufugit ex civitate die quinto instantis [mensis Augusti] quando veniebat classis inimica pro canale Curzule [...] timeret de classe ipsa et aufugit propter timorem ad nemore” (ibid., fol. 13r); “et aufugit ad nemora ultra montes cum dictis suis animalibus” (ibid., fol. 15r). For Bernardo Canal’s judgment against these “delinquents”, see HR-DAZD-11: 29/55.5, fol. 10r-10v (12. 8. 1484). For the peace negotiations between Naples and Venice see also *Cronica di Napoli* 1845: 151-153.

¹⁰⁶ HR-DAZD-11: 29/55.2, fol. 14r (9. 8. 1484): “ad custodiendum foramen bombarde” and “hoc mane exivit extra civitatem per foramina bombarde sine licenzia [...] interrogatus quare fuit disobediens et tam praesumptuosus ut praeteriret dito mandata et maxime hac tempore habendo inimicos circum nostrum civitatem [et] classem potentem Regis Ferdinandi respondit quod fecit inatamete non considerando ultra”.

¹⁰⁷ HR-DAZD-11: 29/55.2, fol. 14v (10. 8. 1484): “venerunt non nulli inimici de classe inimica [...] respondit quod cum iret domum et vellet venire ad civitatem eius mater dixit ‘Io non volgio tu vedi per che se tu andaras abatere tu sera amaze’”.

Once again “in the greatest danger for the town and the whole population,” the islanders nevertheless defended Korčula in the name of Venice, at the side of Count Bernardo Canal, until Venetian galleys arrived to bring them relief in mid-August, supported by 800 armed men from Ragusa.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, “the King of Naples [sic! ...] could not conquer Korčula and lost 600 men in his last attack, among them 60 noblemen”, before he “withdrew with approximately 40 galleys without any success”.¹⁰⁹

On 10 October 1484, Frederick of Naples, the same king’s son who had already withdrawn unsuccessfully from the island in the previous year, as Notar Giacomo reported, nevertheless returned “with fourteen galleys and [...] as captain general of the Italian League against the Venetians and entered into Naples with great honours”, from where he went on to Apulia.¹¹⁰ Despite the peace of Bagnolo, however, Venice and Naples continued to struggle over the domination of the Southern Adriatic and the access to the Venetian Gulf via the Strait of Otranto. The Most Serene Republic subsequently extended its influence to the Apulian coast; to Monopoli and Polignano (1495), Trani, Brindisi and Otranto (1496) and the port of Mola (1497), all of which Venice kept under control until 1509.¹¹¹

4. Conclusion

Based on a broad array of archival records from Korčula, this paper elaborated in detail the island’s perspective on the Kingdom of Naples under the Aragonese dynasty as one of the four major powers in late medieval Southeast Europe (next to the Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Venice and the Kingdom of Hungary) and on the presence of Catalan merchant, naval and pirate ships in the late medieval Adriatic. After its transition to Venetian suzerainty in 1420, Korčula faced the challenge of balancing its own, traditional trans-Adriatic trade interests in Apulia (grain), with the commercial policy of Venice (and later also Naples) that

¹⁰⁸ HR-DAZD-11: 29/55.5, fol. 10v (12. 8. 1484): “in maximo periculo huius civitatis et totius populli”.

¹⁰⁹ DENKE 2011: 327: “Und do man zalt 1484 jar, zoch der kung von Nappoltz für Kurssula mit grosser macht. Er mocht sÿ aber nit gewinnen und verlor des letsten sturm sechs hundert man, darunder sechtzig hern, sagt man bÿ ain andren ligen. Darnach zoch er hinweg ungeschafft wol mit fiertzig galleigen”. In another manuscript of Grünemberg’s travelogue, the number of ships is 50 and “knights (*riter*)” are mentioned instead of “noblemen (*hern*)”, see DENKE 2011: 327; BETTIO 1829: 140; MALIPIERO 1843: 291-292; GULLINO 1996: 84, 109; SETTON 1978: 377.

¹¹⁰ *Cronica di Napoli* 1845: 153: “Adi dece de octobre 1484. lo illustre Don federico figlio dela predicta Maesta de re ferrando venne per mare con XIII galee et venne como acapitanio generale dela lega de italia contro venetiani et intro innapoli con grande honore at ando verso puglia”.

¹¹¹ ARBEL 2013: 134; ORLANDO 2014: 176-183; ORLANDO 2008: 177-209; GALASSO 1992: 690-729; JACOVIELLO 1992: 71-88, 112-117.

severely limited, but did not prevent, trans-Adriatic trade by means of tolls and taxation. Although the port of Korčula mainly served as a port of transit with a rather modest frequency and volume of trade compared to the big trading centres in Dalmatia such as Split, its islanders had close trade links with Southern Italy and beyond. Exploring Korčula's trans-Adriatic trade relations, it turned out that it was less the island's merchants than its shipowners who were firmly integrated into Apulia's mercantile networks, including the grand Florentine, Neapolitan and Catalan trading companies. Korčulan *patroni* conducted business with dominant mercantile companies such as those of Lorenzo de' Medici, of the great Catalan merchant Raymundo Paretas and of the de Russis family of Pistoia in Tuscany, as well as with local Apulian *neofiti* families who played an important role, particularly in the ports of trade of Manfredonia and Trani.

After Alfonso's victorious entry into Naples (1442), Korčula's merchants and sailors proved to be precise observers of his policy of vassalage and alliances in the Balkans and of the increasing activities of Catalan naval ships and privateering in the Adriatic. Especially before and during the Venetian-Neapolitan war (1449/50), the Venetian count of Korčula assembled their observations and reported them in minute detail to Venice, paying particular attention to both Catalan ship movements in Dalmatian waters up north to the islands of Cres and Osor. After the war, in December 1450, the Venetian doge took advantage of the island's close ties to Neapolitan Apulia and its well-connected strategic position by appointing Korčula and its count a 'mediator' between Catalan and Venetian subjects. Previously unknown sources moreover revealed new and detailed evidence about the Aragonese attacks on Korčula in 1483 and 1484. It was thus possible to draw a more accurate picture of the political context of these surprise assaults in the framework of the War of Ferrara and of the events themselves – the two sieges of Korčula's harbour town, the invasions of the island and the looting of its rural environment. Furthermore, the detailed account of the successful defences of Korčula underlined that its islanders placed themselves and their island firmly on the Venetian side of the quadrangle of power in the late medieval Eastern Adriatic.

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Mediator inter eos cathellanos et fideles nostros: Korčulanski pogled na Napuljsko Kraljevstvo i Katalonce u 15. stoljeću

Dok je burno 15. stoljeće u Jugoistočnoj Europi donijelo značajne promjene, otok Korčula doživio je samo dvije velike invazije nakon povratka pod mletačko sizerenstvo 1420. godine do početka stoljeća. Uočljivo je da ni postrojbe Osman-skog Carstva ni Ugarsko Kraljevstvo nisu napali mletački otok u južnoj Dalmaciji, već Napuljsko Kraljevstvo, čija je armada oba napada izvršila u ljeto 1483. i 1484. godine sa snažnom katalonskom potporom i 1483. uz papinsko učešće. Iako su napadi imali odjeka u raznim izvješćima kasnosrednjovjekovnih hodočasnika i ranonovovjekovnih historiografa, malo se zna o oba napada, a posebno o njihovom kontekstu – obično je čak i godina netočno navedena – pa čak i o općim odnosima otoka s Napuljskim Kraljevstvom i Kataloncima.

Na temelju širokog spektra arhivske građe rad se bavi Napuljskim Kraljevstvom u aragonskom razdoblju, jednom od četiriju velesila u jugoistočnoj Europi, te djelovanjem katalonskih trgovačkih, pomorskih i gusarskih brodova na kasnom srednjovjekovnom Jadranu. Prvi dio rada istražuje socioekonomske odnose otoka s napuljskom Apulijom i djelatnost katalonskih trgovaca na jadranskom prostoru tijekom 15. stoljeća. Promotivši pomorsko ispreplitanje otoka s južnom Italijom u kontekstu transjadranske trgovine, težište raščlambe prenosi se ponovno na korčulanski pogled i reakcije na napuljsku i katalonsku nazočnost na istočnom Jadranu. To je značajno pridonijelo dvostrukoj ulozi otoka: s jedne strane bila je to posrednička postaja za širenje informacija, s druge strane posrednik između interesa mletačkih i katalonskih, odnosno, napuljskih podanika. Nadalje, rad istražuje reakciju otočkih žitelja na obje neposredne „katalonske“ prijetnje kojima je Korčula bila izložena tijekom rata za Ferraru, odnosno dvije aragonske invazije u ljeto 1483. i 1484. Iako je cjelokupni opseg trgovine korčulanskih trgovaca u južnoj Italiji bio prilično skroman, pokazalo se da su korčulanski brodovlasnici i kapetani ipak čvrsto integrirani u apulske trgovačke mreže. Korčulanski *patroni*

radili su za vodeće trgovačke tvrtke tog doba, uključujući one Lorenza de' Medicija, velikoga katalonskog trgovca Raymunda Paretesa i obitelji de Russis iz Pistoie u Toskani, kao i za vodeće predstavnike Neofitija u Apuliji, koji su, između ostalog, imali važnu ulogu u trgovini Manfredonije i Tranija. Nakon Alfonsovoga pobjedničkog ulaza u Napulj (1442), Korčula se pokazala kao pozorni promatrač njegove politike na Balkanu i sve većih aktivnosti katalonskih galija i gusarskih brodova na Jadranu. Mletački je dužd stoga u prosincu 1450. Korčuli dodijelio ulogu posrednika („mediator“) interesa mletačkih i katalonskih, odnosno, napuljskih podanika, oslanjajući se na veze otoka s napuljskom Apulijom i njezin strateški položaj. Na koncu rad donosi neistraženu izvornu građu o aragonskim prepadima na Korčulu 1483. i 1484. i daje detaljni opis reakcija otočkih žitelja.

Keywords: Late medieval Korčula, Apulia, Catalans, Kingdom of Naples under the Aragonese dynasty, Adriatic Sea, 15th century.

Ključne riječi: kasnosrednjovjekovna Korčula, Apulija, Katalonci, Napuljsko Kraljevstvo pod Aragoncima, Jadransko more, 15. stoljeće.

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