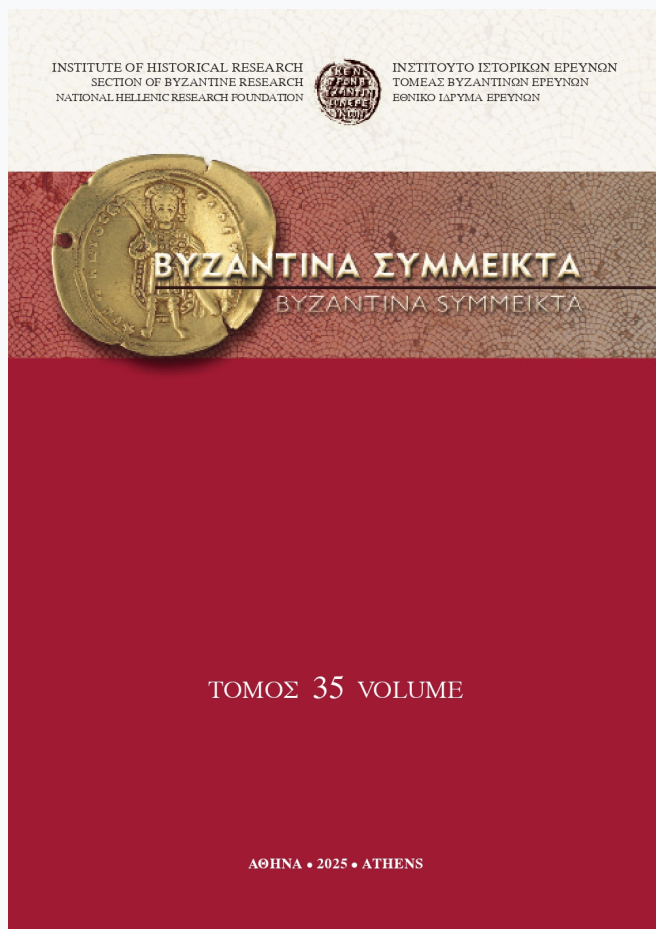


## Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα

Τόμ. 35 (2025)

BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA 35



### Venice against piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean: «Good» and «bad» Venetians (14th–15th c.)

*Charalampos GASPARIS*

doi: [10.12681/byzsym.41447](https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.41447)

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### Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

GASPARIS, C. (2025). Venice against piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean: «Good» and «bad» Venetians (14th–15th c.). *Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα*, 35, 285–325. <https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.41447>

CHARALAMBOS GASPARIS

VENICE AGAINST PIRACY IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN:  
GOOD AND BAD VENETIANS (14TH–15TH C.)

Piracy in the Mediterranean –and particularly in the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean more generally– was a long-standing phenomenon, but it intensified during the 14th century due to the geopolitical circumstances of the time<sup>1</sup>. Although they were not the only ones involved, Turkish pirates

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1. The bibliography on piracy during the Middle Ages and the early modern period has been extensive for decades. For a general overview of late medieval piracy, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean, along with recent relevant bibliography, see: P. F. SIMBULA, *La pirateria e la corsa tra realtà e percezione*, in *Mediterraneo mare aperto* (secc. XII-XV), in: *Atti del LIX convegno storico internazionale (Todi, 9-11 ottobre 2022)*, Spoleto 2023, 267-300; P. F. SIMBULA, *Îles, corsaires et pirates dans la Méditerranée médiévale*, *Médiévales* 47 (2004), 17-30; *Dictionnaire des corsaires et des pirates*, eds G. BUTI – Ph. HRODEJ, Paris 2013; *Histoire des pirates et des corsaires de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, eds G. BUTI – Ph. HRODEJ, Paris 2016; *Merchants, pirates and smugglers. Criminalization, economics and the transformation of the maritime world (1200-1600)*, ed. T. HEEBØLL-HOLM – P. HÖHN – G. ROHMANN, Frankfurt – New York 2019, and particularly the articles: Chr. DARTMANN, *Maritime violence between legitimising discourses, politics and economic interests: Genoa's conquest of Chios and Phocaea*, 247-268; G. CHRIST, *The Venetian coast guards: Staple policy, seaborne law, enforcement and state formation in the 14th century*, 269-296; M. CARR, *Policing the sea: Enforcing the Papal embargo on trade with infidels*, 329-342; N. JASPERS, "Piracy", *connectivity and seaborne power in the Middle Ages*, in: *The sea in history. The Medieval World*, ed. Chr. BUCHET – M. BALARD, Woodbridge (Suffolk) 2017, 45-57. For Venetian policy against piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean during the late medieval centuries –and for further bibliography on the subject– see the classic work by A. TENENTI, *Venezia e la pirateria nel Levante: 1300 c. – 1460 c.*, in: *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, vol. 1, ed. A. PERTUSI, Venice 1973, 705-771. For the role of Venice in the struggle against piracy and its relationship with pirates and corsairs during the second half of the 13th and the 14th centuries, see the doctoral dissertation by I. B. KATELE, *Captains and Corsairs: Venice*

emerged during this period and in this region as the most menacing force. The formation of the Turkish emirates in Asia Minor and their gradual consolidation from the second half of the 13th century onwards, together with the internal difficulties of the Byzantine Empire and its rivalry with Venice and Genoa, provided Turkish pirates with the opportunity to intensify and extend their raids. Operating mainly from bases in the Turkish emirates of Asia Minor, Turkish piracy extended its reach not only across the Aegean but throughout the eastern Mediterranean as a whole, posing the greatest threat to Venetian vessels and colonies during the 14th century and the first half of the 15th century. This threat compelled Venice to take a stand and adopt countermeasures against the widespread phenomenon, particularly from the early 14th century onward. The institutional elevation of the Captain of the Gulf (*capitaneus Culfi*) as a key official responsible for the safety of Venetian ships in the Adriatic and beyond, from 1300 onwards, is regarded as the principal indication not only of the growing intensity of piracy but also of Venice's concerted efforts to avert the danger and reduce the losses suffered particularly by the commercial vessels of its subjects<sup>2</sup>.

From the first decades of the 14th century, Venice undertook diplomatic initiatives against Turkish piracy. Acting through the Duke of Crete, the Serenissima concluded alliances and signed treaties with the Turkish emirates, aimed primarily at securing the economic and commercial activity of Venetians in the region, while also seeking to suppress piracy on both sides<sup>3</sup>. The treaties, which began to be signed between the two parties from

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and *Piracy, 1261-1381*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1986, from which her synthetic article: Piracy and the Venetian State: The Dilemma of Maritime Defense in the Fourteenth Century, *Speculum* 63/4 (1988), 865-889, was derived. See also N. COUREAS and A. G. ORPHANIDES, Piracy in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean during the Later Lusignan and Venetian periods (15th - 16th centuries), *Επετηρίδα του Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών* 33 (2007), 121-162.

2. KATELE, Piracy and the Venetian State, 867-868.

3. For the diplomatic activity of Venice with the Turkish emirates, as well as the text of the treaties see E. A. ZACHARIADOU, *Trade and crusade. Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1300-1415)*, Venice 1983. For the role of Crete in the Venetian diplomatic activity with the same emirates, especially during the 1350s, see Ch. GASPARIS, Crete. 1357-1367: A stronghold for Venetian Diplomacy and Crusading in the Eastern Mediterranean, in: *Crusading, Society, and Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of King Peter I of Cyprus*, ed. A. BEIHAMMER, A. NICOLAOU-KONNARI, Turnhout 2022, 121-134.

1331 onwards and continued into the second decade of the 15th century, stipulated that the emirs were not to provide protection to pirates and that compensation would be granted for occasional pirate attacks against ships or the coasts of Crete. The fact that in almost all of this diplomatic activity, which lasted for about a century, the issue of piracy was always included, demonstrates that the phenomenon had assumed very serious proportions and had become endemic.

At the same time, as its diplomatic efforts produced no substantial results on the issue of piracy, Venice, as a member of the Holy League (*Sancta Unio*), formed in 1342–1343, took part in the so-called Crusade of Smyrna (1344–1347), which aimed at the capture of the city of Smyrna, the weakening of the Turkish emirate of Aydin, and, indirectly, the suppression of piracy<sup>4</sup>. It is characteristic that among the terms of the treaty which the emir of Aydin, Hizir, was compelled to sign with the allies in 1348, was the abstention from piratical raids and the punishment of pirates and corsairs who were being sheltered in the region<sup>5</sup>. The sporadic operations of the allied fleet continued for a few more years, until the final dissolution of the League in 1351. Venice continued its campaign against piracy during the second half of the 14th century, although this effort was interrupted or weakened during the two Venetian–Genoese wars of the period (1351–1355 and 1378–1381).

At the same time as the aforementioned efforts, Venice organized its defensive apparatus against Turkish pirates operating in both the Adriatic Sea and the Aegean. This system involved not only metropolitan officials, such as the Captain of the Gulf and the Captain of Romania (*capitaneus Romanie*), among others, but also local officials in its colonies. The captains of the Venetian war fleet were granted authority to act as they deemed best to avert danger, even if their actions resembled those of corsairs. Although Venice itself employed corsairs –though to a lesser extent than other

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4. For the struggle of the Western powers –and especially of Venice– against the Turks, as well as for the crusading movements during the first half of the 14th century, see M. CARR, *Merchant Crusaders in the Aegean, 1291–1352*, Woodbridge 2015.

5. ZACHARIADOU, *Trade and Crusade*, 207.86–98. In the new treaty signed between the Duke of Crete and the same emir in 1353, a clause was also included according to which the latter would not receive in the ports of his emirate nor assist any Latin or other Christian pirate (*ibidem*, 212 lines 62–67).

Western powers– the difference in their mode of operation compared to the aforementioned officials was minimal<sup>6</sup>. Despite the considerable latitude granted to its captains and other officials, Venice closely monitored their conduct for any signs of negligence in addressing piracy or of possible complicity in this unlawful and hostile activity, which could harm Venetian interests. Under scrutiny were also Venetian subjects who engaged in piracy, particularly against Venetian ships. Offenders and suspects alike were tried and sentenced according to the gravity of their crimes, their social or official standing –that is, whether they were officials or private individuals– and, of course, their specific role in the piratical activity, as will be discussed further below.

Crete was one of the main targets of the Turkish pirates, who inflicted considerable damage on the island through the plundering of goods and people as well as the destruction of the areas they attacked. They most frequently attacked the eastern part of Crete, along its northern, western, and southern coasts. However, it was not uncommon for Turkish raiders to reach the island’s westernmost point, namely the region of Kissamos in Chania, as in the case that will be discussed below<sup>7</sup>.

Thus, during the 14th century, and especially in its second half, the local Venetian authorities organized a systematically structured defensive network, involving not only local officials but also the population in case of danger. A well-organized warning mechanism would activate the system, followed by an immediate response and counteraction against the enemy. Participating in this system were both high-ranking and senior officials –the Duke and Councillors of Crete (*duca Crete, consiliarius Crete*), the Captain

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6. Earlier scholarship generally maintained that, during this period, Venice was primarily a victim of piracy and did not itself engage in acts of piracy or corsairing. In recent decades, however, this view has been largely overturned – not only because Venice itself made use of corsairs, but above all owing to the “corsairing” conduct of some of its own officials. See KATELE, *Captains and Corsairs*, 866–870.

7. In 1345, the feudatories of Candia expressed their concern about a small fleet of six Turkish ships sailing near the island of Santorini. They were convinced that the Turks intended to attack Crete, since, not long before, two other Turkish ships had raided the area of Kissamos with considerable success (*propter magnum lucrum habitum per illa duo ligna Turchorum que ferierunt in contratis Kissami*). See *Duca di Candia. Quaternus Consiliorum (1340–1350)*, ed. P. RATTI-VIDULICH, vol. 1, Venice 1976, no. 53.

of Crete (*capitaneus Crete*), the Rectors (*rector*) of Chania, Rethymno, and Siteia, and the castellans (*castellani*), as well as the ordinary soldiers of the coastal garrisons and the extraordinary officials appointed in times of danger, who organized the local population for its protection.

In cases of severe and destructive attacks by external enemies, both the Venetian authorities in Crete and the local inhabitants sought refuge in fortified or otherwise secure locations –such as castles, fortified villages, towers, or even large monasteries. To confront the intensified Turkish raids of the 14th century, the Cretan authorities did not rely solely on the existing defensive system –namely, the feudal army and the network of fortified castles with their garrisons– but also adopted extraordinary preventive measures whenever reports were received of Turkish ships sailing in the southern Aegean. These measures included the appointment of temporary special officers, known as Captains against the Turks (*capitanei contra Turcos*), who, in cooperation with the local castellans and landlords, were responsible for organizing the defense and safeguarding the departments of Candia and Siteia<sup>8</sup>. Local farmers also took part in this system, but only in specific instances and, more commonly, at night, so that they could continue their regular agricultural work safely during the day<sup>9</sup>.

A decree issued by the Cretan Senate in 1350 provides valuable information about the measures taken to protect the population of eastern Crete from the imminent attacks of the Turkish fleet. The Senate ordered that

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8. A decree issued by the Cretan Senate in 1350 provides that: *...scribatur omnibus capitaneis et castellanis quod quam cicius poterunt ipsi vel cum feudatis suorum districtium et quos ibi contingerit reperire, debeant insimul convenire ad videndum, providendum vel examinandum, ut consulant de omni eo quod eis videbitur posse fieri pro tutela vaitis et conservacione contratarum suarum contra insultus Turchorum...* (*Duca di Candia. Quaternus Consiliorum*, vol. 1, no. 265).

9. In 1352, a decree stipulated that the *capitaneus contra Turcos* must be accompanied at night by a guard of thirty armed men recruited from among the inhabitants of the villages. During the day, these men were allowed to work their land, unless circumstances required their presence for defense even during daylight hours (*... qualibet nocte viros XXX cum armis suis de habitatoribus casalium deputatorum, ita quod dicti viri attendere debeant ad dictum capitaneum a casu solis usque ad ortum solis diei sequentis et reliquis horis diei dicti viri possint ire et facere facta sua, salvo si talis causa et opportunitas occureret quod eciam de die oportere eos attendere ad capitaneum superscriptum...*) (*Duca di Candia. Quaternus Consiliorum (1350–1363)*, ed. P. RATTI-VIDULICH, vol. 2, Venice 2007, no. 54).

all women, children, the elderly, and the infirm be transported overnight to secure locations, such as castles, towers, or other fortified sites. During the day, all residents could return to their homes and occupations<sup>10</sup>. According to the same defense plan, the authorities were concerned not only with the safety of the local inhabitants but also with that of the responsible officers and soldiers, without whom the entire defensive system would collapse. For each captain against the Turks assigned to a particular area, the Senate designated the exact location where he was required to stay with his men. This place provided the necessary security while also being strategically situated so that the captain could effectively coordinate military operations. These sites were generally fortified villages or towers providing adequate protection, and only in exceptional cases were they the castles<sup>11</sup>.

By the early 15th century, Turkish pirate raids on Crete had become a persistent and well-established reality, and the island's defensive system against them had already been tested in earlier times. The traveller Cristoforo Buondelmonti, who visited Crete in 1415, recounts in his work what his local guide told him about Turkish pirate attacks on southeastern Crete: "My guide said to me," Buondelmonti writes, "One day, Turkish pirates moored at this

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10. According to the document: *...omnes mulieres et pueri et etiam senes impotentes contratarum Sithie et Gerapetre qualibet nocte reducantur in castris comunis aut turribus vel fortificiis securis occasione Turchorum et de die dimittantur ire per facta sua* (Duca di Candia. *Quaternus Consiliorum*, vol. 1, no. 270). Similar decisions and instructions were issued throughout the entire decade of the 1350s.

11. A decree issued by the Cretan Senate in 1357 stipulates that the *capitaneus contra Turcos* in the region of Ierapetra was required to reside in Andrea Corner's village, known as Megachorio. From the same decree we also learn that, in case of danger, this *capitaneus* was to gather all elderly and infirm persons, as well as women and children, in three secure locations: *...ad ista tria loca que sunt tuta... videlicet in castro comunis, in turi de Megachorio et in casale Chedri* (*Quaternus Consiliorum*, vol. 2, no. 201). This indicates, first, that even if the village of Megachorio itself was not fortified, it nevertheless contained a defensive tower, and second, that there was at least one other fortified village in the area (namely Chedri), in addition to the castle of Ierapetra. Living conditions could also justify a change in the residence of a *capitaneus*. In 1361, permission was granted to the *capitaneus* who had been residing in the village of Monolea to relocate to the castle of Belvedere, the reason for this transfer being the adverse climatic conditions that had caused illness (*...quia locus de Monolea... est malesanus et quamplures de illis qui fuerint ibi capitanei propter insaniem loci fuerunt infirmi...*) (Duca di Candia. *Quaternus Consiliorum*, vol. 2, no. 412).

beach [that is, in the area of Ierapetra on the southeastern coast of Crete] after a violent storm. They had come from Palatia [in Asia Minor]. They left about ten ships with two banks of oars along the shore and ascended the mountain with bows and arrows to plunder. They attempted to carry their booty –a large number of women and children– back to the ships, but the villagers, who had descended from the mountains, fell upon them, shouting and leaping like wild goats. Almost all the Turks were struck down”<sup>12</sup>.

A year after Buondelmonti’s visit to Crete, Turkish pirates appeared once again, this time along the coasts of western and southwestern Crete. A series of letters from local officials on the island, dated between 17 and 22 March 1416 –most of which are published in the present article– shed light on the warning mechanism and the way it functioned.

On 17 March 1416, around dusk, the Greek Niketas Vlatopoulos, a crew member of a fishing boat operating near Gramvousa in northwestern Crete, reached the castle of Kissamos and informed the local castellan, Luca Mudazzo, of a Turkish pirate vessel spotted approaching the coast earlier that morning. A few hours later, Emmanuel Kontos, another Greek crew member from the same boat, arrived at the castle bearing alarming news: the Turks had attacked their boat, forcing the crew to abandon it. After capturing the boat, the pirates landed on the Gramvousa coast, where they raided a monastery, seizing monks, stealing and destroying the icons from the church. The castellan responded promptly by mobilizing the castle captain and the soldiers of the guard to prevent further attacks in the region. He then dispatched two letters: one to the Castellan of Selino, on the southwestern coast of Crete, warning of a possible pirate attack, and another to the Rector of Chania, informing him of the incident.

On the following day, March 18th, at dawn, the Rector of Chania received the letter and immediately composed his own, informing the Duke of Crete and the General Captain of Crete (*capitaneus generalis Crete*) about the same incident. That same day, the Castellan of Kissamos sent a second letter to the Rector of Chania, detailing the events at Gramvousa. On the third day, March 19th, around dusk, the rector received the castellan’s letter and, the next morning, March 20th, dispatched another letter to the

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12. *Cristoforo Buondelmonti, Descriptio insule Crete et liber insularum, cap. XI: Creta*, ed. M. A. VAN SPITAEI, Herakleion 1981, 167-168.

Duke and the General Captain, conveying the newly acquired information. Finally, the rector wrote to his counterpart in Rethimno, informing him of the same pirate incident.

As expected, the Turkish vessel did not remain in Gramvousa but continued southward, attacking the village of Aghia Roumeli on the southern coast of Crete and then the small bay of Loutro in the region of Sfakia, seizing people and goods and causing considerable damage. On the morning of March 21st, the Castellan of the castle of Aghios Niketas (Castel Franco or Francocastello) on the southwestern coast of Crete, who was responsible for the area, wrote to the Rector of Rethimno to inform him of the new pirate incident in his district. This letter reached Rethimno the same day, along with the letter from the Rector of Chania, as already mentioned.

The rector of Rethimno immediately dispatched letters to all the captains of the coastal watchposts in his district, urging heightened vigilance. Shortly thereafter, he sent another letter to the Duke of Crete regarding the pirate attack in the Sfakia region. Later that same day, the rector received a second letter from the Castellan of Aghios Niketas, providing further details about the raid on the Sfakian coast. As the day was already ending, the rector waited until the next morning, March 22nd, to write a new letter to the Duke of Crete, reporting the latest information.

Meanwhile, late on the previous night, the Castellan of Aghios Niketas –immediately after dispatching his two letters to the Rector of Rethimno– sent a third letter directly to the Duke of Crete. This final letter arrived in Candia on March 23rd, the same day the letter from the Rector of Rethimno was also delivered.

This series of letters concerning the pirate activity of a Turkish vessel along the western and southwestern coasts of Crete (see map below) highlights the efficiency of the island's organized response mechanism to piracy –and, more broadly, to any external threat. This mechanism appears to have functioned particularly effectively against Turkish vessels. Over the span of six days, a total of fifteen letters –along with several others addressed to the coastal watchposts of Rethimno– were exchanged<sup>13</sup>. These

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13. The letters sent to the Duke and the Captain General were copied into the registers of the ducal chancery in Candia, now preserved in: Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereinafter ASVe), *Duca di Candia*, b. 1, q. 6bis, 30r-33r. See below 307-316, document no. 1-8.

communications, rich in detail regarding both the pirate attacks and the responses of the local castellans, attest to the swift activation of Crete's defensive apparatus. At the same time, they provided castellans with an opportunity to underscore the need for appropriate reinforcements to their fortresses.

In this process of gathering and disseminating information –partly oral but primarily written– not only the eyewitnesses who experienced the incidents were involved, but also representatives from all levels of the administrative and military hierarchy: the soldiers of the castle garrisons, the captains of the coastal watches, the commanders and castellans of the fortresses, the Rectors of Chania and Rethimno, and, ultimately, the Duke and the General Captain of Crete. This constituted the land-based mechanism for countering piracy. Parallel to this, the Venetian maritime mechanism against piracy functioned with a similarly hierarchical structure. From bottom to top, it included crew members, *sopracomiti* and captains of local galleys, and, at the apex, the Captain of the Gulf. Small Venetian fleets patrolled the eastern Mediterranean Sea, prepared to defend Venetian merchant vessels. The appearance of one or more pirate vessels anywhere in the Eastern Mediterranean would typically trigger the activation of the entire defensive apparatus, in anticipation of a possible attack.

All the officials mentioned above, entrusted with the task of pursuing and eliminating pirates, were, ostensibly, the good Venetians –defenders of the state and its citizens against the menace of the bad pirates. However, hidden among these seemingly loyal servants of Venice, whether at low, middle, or high levels of the hierarchy, there were always a few bad Venetians. Exploiting their positions of authority, some engaged in piratical behaviour themselves or collaborated with pirates, evidently driven by personal gain rather than duty to the Serenissima.

On 22 March 1403, the Venetian Senate issued an indictment against the noble Bertuccio Diedo, who had served as vice captain (*vice capitaneus*) of the Venetian galleys stationed in Romania (*galee Romanie*), tasked with patrolling the Straits leading to Constantinople. Already imprisoned in the city, Diedo was accused of various irregularities (*enormia*) committed while in office. On the same day, charges were also brought against the nobleman Giovanni Corner, who had served as *sopracomitus* of a Cretan galley under Diedo's command.

The Venetian Senate entrusted the judges (*avogadori di comun*) with the task of interrogating the crew of Diedo's galley regarding Corner's conduct, with further proceedings contingent upon the findings<sup>14</sup>. Two days later, the *avogadori* concluded their inquiry, and a letter from the Doge of Venice was dispatched to the Duke of Crete. The letter, received a month later on 25 April 1403, informed the Duke that Corner had been found guilty. The charges against him included the illegal transportation of Turks and others from the coast of Asia Minor to the Greek coast, as well as acts of robbery, violence, and other abuses. Venetian authorities instructed the Cretan officials to locate, arrest, and extradite Corner to Venice, and to interrogate the crew of his galley for further evidence<sup>15</sup>.

Corner was eventually apprehended in Crete and, in late May, handed over to Captain Marco Bianco, who was tasked with escorting him by ship to Venice and delivering him to the appropriate judicial authorities<sup>16</sup>. However, upon reaching Venice, Bianco violated these orders and released Corner. Despite this, Corner was soon rearrested and imprisoned in Venice, where he was held alongside Diedo.

Approximately three months later, in early September, both men stood trial and were convicted on the original charges: «robbery, violence, and other abuses, including the transportation of Turks and others from the Asian to the Greek coast for profit»<sup>17</sup>. Following deliberations within the councils, the penalties imposed were relatively lenient and limited to financial fines. Diedo was ordered to pay a total of 1.100 ducats. Corner was fined 3.300 Cretan *hyperpyra* and 1.400 *aspra*, to be paid to the Treasury

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14. ASVe, *Senato Misti*, reg. 46, 68v (69v). See below 317-318, document no. 9. Abstract of the document in: H. NOIRET, *Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire de la domination vénitienne en Crète de 1380 à 1485*, Paris 1892, p. 143; F. THIRIET, *Régestes des Délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie*, vol. 2 (1400-1430), Paris 1959, no. 1103.

15. ASVe, *Senato Misti*, reg. 46, 69r-v. See below 318-320, document no. 10. Abstract of the document in: THIRIET, *Régestes des Délibérations du Sénat*, no. 1104. See also the letter by the Doge of Venice to the Duke of Crete in: *Duca di Candia. Ducali e lettere ricevute. (1358-1360; 1401-1405)*, ed. F. THIRIET, Venice 1978, no. 44.

16. ASVe, *Senato Misti*, reg. 46, 85r (86r). See below 320-321, document no. 11. Abstract of the document in: THIRIET, *Régestes des Délibérations du Sénat*, no. 1115.

17. ASVe, *Senato Misti*, reg. 46, 99v. See below 321-323, document no. 12. Abstract of the document in: THIRIET, *Régestes des Délibérations du Sénat*, no. 1127.

of Crete, along with 100 gold ducats to the Treasury of Venice –an amount that corresponded, in total, to roughly 1.100 ducats, thus matching Diedo’s sentence<sup>18</sup>.

Harsher penalties proposed by some council members –including disqualification from holding office for five years– were ultimately rejected. One particularly revealing suggestion, though not approved, came from a ducal councillor who proposed that 100 *hyperpyra* from Corner’s fine be allocated to a woman whom Corner had sold into slavery in Crete. The intention was to enable her to purchase her freedom and return to her homeland –an acknowledgement that underscored the gravity of Corner’s actions and their alignment with pirate behaviour.

Nowhere in the documentation related to the case of Diedo and Corner do the terms “pirate” or “piratical action” explicitly appear. Although the two Venetian officials were not formally labelled as pirates, their conduct was, in essence, piratical: robbery, violence, extortion through coercion or consent, and, most gravely, the abduction and sale of individuals into slavery. Moreover, their actions included providing assistance to the enemy –an offence that transcended ordinary piracy and verged on treason. Bertuccio Diedo had likely been appointed *vice capitaneus* of the Galleys of Romania sometime in 1402, as records confirm his presence in this post by 29 August of that year<sup>19</sup>. In late September, he participated –alongside other Venetian officials– in diplomatic negotiations with the Turks concerning the acquisition of Gallipoli<sup>20</sup>. His alleged facilitation of Turkish interests during these talks renders his behaviour even more suspect and, from Venice’s perspective, more deeply treacherous.

According to the aforementioned documents, the unlawful conduct of the two Venetian officials was deemed to be “against the honour and sovereignty of Venice, and against the laws and humanity.” It is clear that the Venetian authorities were reluctant to brand two of their own –especially nobles who had sworn allegiance to the principles of Venice– as pirates. Although the

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18. A letter from the doge of Venice, Michele Steno, was sent to the Duke of Crete, Tommaso Mozenigo, on 26 September 1403 (received 17 November 1403), informing him of the sentence and the fine imposed on Zanachi. The fine was to be collected from the Corner estate. See *Duca di Candia. Ducali e lettere ricevute*, no. 91.

19. *Duca di Candia. Ducali e lettere ricevute*, nos. 5, 6.

20. NOIRET, *Documents inédits*, 139.

finances imposed were substantial, the penalties were not excessively severe so as to endanger their lives. The decision to impose financial penalties rather than harsher forms of punishment, such as mutilation or even death, reflected a pragmatic approach: the fines were seen as a means of compensating the Venetian state for both the moral and material damages caused by the officials' misconduct. Remarkably, the convictions did not bring an end to the public careers of either man. On 24 March 1404 –precisely one year after his indictment and only seven months after his trial– Giovanni Corner was elected in Venice as one of the two *syndici* entrusted with travelling to the eastern Mediterranean to inform the Captain of the Gulf and other galley commanders of the newly concluded agreement between Venice and Genoa<sup>21</sup>. Years later, in 1417, Bertuccio Diedo was ironically appointed Captain of the Galleys (*capitaneus galearum*) tasked with pursuing pirates in the central Mediterranean<sup>22</sup>.

Despite their proven wrongdoing, both nobles remained within the framework of Venice's defensive apparatus –likely in positions less prestigious than those they had once aspired to, but nonetheless active and visible roles. This continuity underscores a broader Venetian principle: the Serenissima often prioritised administrative competence and experience over a spotless moral record, particularly when the individuals in question had proven skills essential to the functioning of its maritime and military systems<sup>23</sup>.

Another telling example underscores the kinds of illegalities Venetian officials could commit with impunity –or at least with delayed accountability. On 12 February 1424, the *bailus* of Negroponte, Daniele Loredan, addressed a letter to the Duke of Crete detailing a case in which the noble Michele Gradenigo, *sopracomitus* of a Cretan galley, was implicated in a pirate-related incident. According to Loredan, in mid-January, while patrolling near the island of Santorini, Gradenigo encountered a Turkish pirate vessel, attacked it, and successfully captured it. In the course of

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21. C. SATHAS, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Crète au moyen âge*, vol. 1, Athens 1880, 9. In this decree Zanachi Corner is mentioned as *olim supracomitus galearum Crete*.

22. THIRIET, *Régestes des Délibérations du Sénat*, vol. 2, no. 1643. Bertuccio Diedo was commissioned to patrol the waters between the southern Peloponnese and Sicily, and to cooperate with the captain of the Gulf and the castellan of Methone.

23. KATELE, *Piracy and the Venetian State*, 886.

the engagement, his galley sustained serious damage, which he reportedly repaired at his own expense –costs for which he now sought reimbursement. This letter, portraying Gradenigo as a faithful, capable, and unquestionably good Venetian, inexplicably arrived at the ducal chancery in Crete –or was perhaps merely entered into the ducal register– almost a year later, on 3 January 1425<sup>24</sup>.

However, the reputation of Michele Gradenigo was already in question by that time. On 21 December 1424, the Duke of Crete had received another letter, dated 10 December, from Loredan's successor as *bailus* of Negroponte, Donato Arimondo. In stark contrast to Loredan's account, Arimondo accused Gradenigo and the crew of his galley of engaging in what was effectively piratical behaviour. As the galley passed through the area of Oreos, in northern Euboea, Gradenigo had reportedly allowed his crew to disembark and plunder local property, causing serious harm to residents. According to the *bailus*, the crew devastated vineyards, looted homes, and committed numerous other abuses (*maximum damnum intulerunt... devastantes eorum vineas, huius civitatis derobantes domos et multa enormia commitentes*)<sup>25</sup>. The damages were significant enough for Arimondo to demand compensation of 490 *hyperpyra* of Negroponte, representing the estimated value of 499 *metra* of wine that had been lost – without even accounting for the destruction of homes and other properties.

Thus, within the span of a few days, Gradenigo transformed in the eyes of the Duke of Crete from a loyal and efficient Venetian official to one whose conduct blurred the line between defender and predator. As a modern scholar aptly observes, in premodern times “the step from rapacity to respectability –and back again– was easy to make. It was easy in part because piracy was not necessarily a dirty word nor a pirate automatically a criminal... The problem, of course, was to decide who were friends and who were enemies: which was but another side to the distinction between legitimate violence and illegitimate”<sup>26</sup>. Regrettably, the final outcome of the case against Michele Gradenigo remains unknown.

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24. ASVe, *Duca di Candia*, b. 1, q. 12, 26v. See below 323-324, document no. 13.

25. ASVe, *Duca di Candia*, b. 1, q. 12, 12v. See below 324-325, document no. 14.

26. Fr. CHEYETTE, The sovereign and the pirates, 1332, *Speculum* 45 (1970), 40-68, here 46 and 57.

It is well known that piratical behaviour by Venetian captains during their service was neither rare nor entirely condemned by the Venetian authorities. On the contrary, such conduct was often tolerated –or even tacitly accepted– so long as it was exercised in the pursuit of official duties, namely the suppression of pirates and corsairs who threatened Venetian interests in the Mediterranean<sup>27</sup>. Captains were, in practice, permitted significant latitude in their actions, provided their operations served the broader goal of safeguarding Venetian commerce and maritime supremacy.

In the cases discussed here, however, the captains' conduct cannot be excused as part of legitimate anti-piracy operations. They acted not against pirates, but against civilians –and in the case of Michele Gradenigo in Euboea, against Venetian subjects themselves– for their own personal profit<sup>28</sup>. This marks a clear deviation from any official mandate and casts their actions in a different, far more troubling light.

Furthermore, during the early decades of the 15th century –when these incidents occurred– Venetian rivalry with Genoa had diminished, and Genoese pirate attacks on Venetian vessels had significantly declined. The principal threat to Venetian maritime security in the eastern Mediterranean at that time continued to be, by far, the Turkish pirates. In this context, the actions of Giovanni Corner and Bertuccio Diedo appear even more egregious: not only did they engage in pillaging and looting within the very regions they were tasked to patrol, but –most alarmingly– they actively collaborated with an enemy, facilitating Turkish movement across the sea. Such conduct not only betrayed Venice's trust but also undermined the very system of maritime defence they had been appointed to uphold.

The aforementioned cases illustrate Venice's continuous efforts to safeguard both vulnerable coastal populations and maritime commerce from the threat of piracy. In the eastern Mediterranean, a region teeming with maritime activity, numerous ships tied to Venetian commercial interests regularly sailed its waters. Merchants, vessels, and their cargoes –along with

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27. KATELE, Piracy and the Venetian state, 869-870 and *passim*.

28. A similar case occurred in 1395. In April of that year Nicolo Venier, former captain of one of the galleys of Candia, was accused by the Duke of Kefalonia for abducting several villeins along with various animals from his territory. The Duke of Kefalonia now demands the return of the people and animals or appropriate compensation. See R. PREDELLI, *I libri commemoriali della Repubblica di Venezia. Regesti*, vol. 3, Venice 1883, 226 no. 417.

their crews and passengers– represented highly coveted prizes for pirates who roamed the seas with impunity.

The good Venetian citizens involved in maritime trade were vital to the Serenissima's prosperity. They generated the wealth that underpinned Venice's political power and financed its expansive commercial empire. However, as these cases have shown, among the very ranks of those entrusted with protecting or conducting trade were also the bad actors: Venetian citizens who, rather than serving Venice through lawful commerce, engaged in piracy for personal gain. These were not outsiders, but merchants and officials who had crossed the line –men who, under the guise of legitimate maritime activity, turned to piracy and thus betrayed both their fellow citizens and the state they ostensibly served<sup>29</sup>.

In 1347, ten individuals –along with unnamed crew members– were accused of engaging in acts of piracy using two vessels in the sea area between Cyprus and the coast of Syria. The first vessel was a galley owned by Paolo Moro, while the second, a smaller vessel, belonged to Martino Teldi, a Venetian resident in Negroponte. On 21 July 1347, three of the accused –Paolo Moro, Luca Baldoino, and Pietro Duplo– had already been arrested and were being held in the prison of Siteia in Crete. The Venetian Senate ordered the Rector of the town to transfer them to Venice without delay to stand trial for piracy<sup>30</sup>.

In November of the same year, a Senate decree reveals a further development: pursuant to an agreement between Venice and the commune of Pisa, any accused individuals who were subjects of Pisa would be transferred and tried there<sup>31</sup>. The decree does not name these individuals

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29. About shifting identities see K. REYERSON, Identity in the medieval Mediterranean world of merchants and pirates, *Mediterranean Studies* 20/2 (2012), 129-146.

30. According to the Senate decree: *...qui forent seu viderentur culpabiles istius excessus, videlicet de piratica et aliis malis per eos commissis cum quadam galea...* See *Venezia – Senato. Deliberazioni miste. Registro XXIV (1347-1349)*, vol. 11, ed. E. ORLANDO, Venice 2007, no. 260.

31. *Venezia – Senato. Deliberazioni miste. Registro XXIV (1347-1349)*, vol. 11, no. 417. Pisa was one of the Italian comuni that attempted to legislate against piracy, see indicatively M.-L. FAVREAU-LILLIE, Diplomacy and Legislation as Instruments in the War against Piracy in the Italian Maritime Republics (Genoa, Pisa and Venice), in: *Seeraub im Mittelmeerraum. Piraterie, Korsarentum und maritime Gewalt von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit*, ed. N. JASPERS – S. KOLDITZ, Leiden 2013, 281-305.

explicitly. According to the same document, the three prisoners from Crete had already been transported to Venice, but along with the most of their accomplices had escaped and were being actively pursued. Several additional associates remained at large, having never been apprehended.

In May 1348, all Venetian citizens among the accused were tried *in absentia*. All were found guilty and sentenced<sup>32</sup>. Five of the ten individuals –presumably those with leading roles in the piracy– were sentenced to permanent exile from Venice and all Venetian territories, with the stipulation that if they returned, they would be arrested and executed by hanging. One additional individual received a similar sentence of permanent exile, but with life imprisonment rather than execution if found within Venetian domains. Three others, who had also evaded capture, were sentenced to one year of imprisonment. Notably, no sentence is recorded for Luca Balduino, suggesting that he was likely a subject of Pisa and was therefore tried there, possibly alongside other unnamed Pisan crew members involved in the case.

The nine Venetian citizens accused of piracy in 1347 were not treated by the authorities in the same manner as Venetian officials who committed similar or even more serious offences. In the surviving documents, these citizens are unequivocally characterized as *piratae*, and their activity as *piratica*, and they were consequently subjected to more severe punishments. By contrast, although the offending officials had arguably violated the dignity of the Venetian state to a greater degree –or at least in a different and more treacherous manner– their sentences were comparatively lenient. Official transgressions were denounced with strong language (*contra honorem nostrum* or *contra dominationis nostre et contra iuris ordinem et omnem humanitatem* or *in damnum et contra honorem nostri domini*), yet the punishments they incurred were limited to fines or minor exclusions from office.

Civilian offenders, on the other hand, were penalised not only for damaging the Serenissima’s reputation but also because they were classified as public robbers (*publici derobatores*). This term, closely associated with the concept of the “public corsair”, referred to individuals acting in the service of a foreign power to harm another state. The nine Venetian civilians had

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32. Venezia – Senato. *Deliberazioni miste. Registro XXIV (1347–1349)*, vol. 11, nos. 686–695.

practised piracy indiscriminately, targeting any vessel –including those of Venice itself– and thereby directly threatening the Serenissima’s maritime security and commercial interests. From the state’s perspective, their actions were acts of betrayal against the Venetian economic order.

In keeping with the official rhetoric of deterrence, the authorities justified their severe sentences with the familiar formula: “to preserve our good reputation, to offer a good example for future generations, and to instil terror in other would-be pirates” (*pro conservacione fame nostre et bono exemplo in posterum et terrore ceterorum*). This same logic appears in an earlier case from 1340, involving another Venetian subject, Giovanni da Chioggia, who was accused of piratical conduct against a Genoese merchant. Giovanni and his crew attacked the Genoese Giovanni Moio at sea, killed him, and looted his cargo. The Duke of Crete sought guidance from the Venetian Senate on how to proceed. The response was unequivocal: since Giovanni da Chioggia was a resident of Crete, his vessel was registered in Candia, and he had departed from there, the Cretan authorities held jurisdiction and were to ensure his arrest, trial, and punishment. The Senate characterised the act as heinous –*maleficium est turpissimum et dignum pena*– and ordered that it be met with an appropriately severe sentence<sup>33</sup>.

To better understand Venice’s harsh stance toward its own subject who engaged in piracy, it is essential to consider the context of the 1340s discussed above. The Serenissima thus had a vested interest in portraying itself not only as the guardian of commerce but also as a leading force in the wider Christian effort to eradicate maritime lawlessness. In this context, any indication that Venetian citizens themselves were involved in piratical activities posed a serious threat to the state’s moral and diplomatic standing. It became imperative for Venice to adopt a more severe approach toward such individuals, particularly when their actions contradicted the Serenissima’s self-proclaimed role as a bulwark against piracy. By publicly condemning and punishing its own citizens, Venice sought to preserve its reputation, assert its authority over its maritime subjects, and reinforce its commitment to the struggle against mainly the turkish piracy –an effort

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33. Venezia – Senato. *Deliberazioni miste. Registro XIX (1340-1341)*, vol. 6, ed. Fr.-X. LEDUC, Venice 2004, no. 113.

that was both politically strategic and ideologically framed as part of the ongoing crusading mission.

As a maritime trading power and territorial ruler of numerous islands and ports in the eastern Mediterranean, Venice was particularly vulnerable to piratical activity and thus deeply committed to its suppression. Unlike Genoa –which, though officially opposed to piracy, at times relied on corsair forces like other medieval states–<sup>34</sup> Venice maintained direct control over its anti-piracy efforts by establishing a robust and centralised defence mechanism, both on land and at sea. The use of private corsairs in Venetian service was rare and not officially encouraged. This is precisely why references to corsairs are exceedingly scarce in Venetian maritime legislation: the Serenissima was careful not to legitimise, even indirectly, a practice that was widespread and often tolerated elsewhere<sup>35</sup>.

Instead, Venice chose to distance itself from such methods, projecting the image of a disciplined and lawful maritime state. It frequently entered into interstate alliances explicitly prohibiting acts of piracy and the harbouring of pirates, particularly in regions where Venetian commerce was intense. These alliances, as already noted, were primarily concluded with the Turkish emirates of Asia Minor, which were ravaging the Aegean during the 14th century, while attempts were also made to reach similar arrangements with Genoa –an equally active naval power in the region– in order to confront the phenomenon<sup>36</sup>. The Byzantine Empire was no longer a serious player in the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean during the second half of the 14th

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34. For Genoa's relationship with pirates and corsairs, see, among others, St. A. EPSTEIN, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528*, University of North Carolina Press 1996, *passim* and especially 188–270, where the author analyzes Genoa's role during the fourteenth century; S. LOMBARDO, *La Croce dei Mercanti: Genova, Venezia e la Crociata Mediterranea nel tardo Trecento (1348-1402)*, Paderborn 2023, especially 313–336. On Genoese legislation against piracy, see E. S. TAI, Piracy and law in medieval Genoa: The *Consilia* of Bartolomeo Bosco, *Medieval Encounters* 9/2-3 (2003). 256–282.

35. Irene KATELE (Piracy and the Venetian State, 887) argues that “It is probable that the lack of laws relating to corsairs or pirates in Venice stems directly from this public nature of its maritime organization”.

36. For an overview of the troubled relations between Genoa and Venice from the 12th to the 14th century, including mutual acts of piracy and efforts toward a joint struggle against piracy, see A. MUSARRA, *Il Grifo e il Leone. Genova e Venezia in lotta per il Mediterraneo*, Bari 2020. For the Turkish emirates of Asia Minor and Venice, see above 286–290.

century and the first half of the 15th, which explains the absence of similar alliances with it during that period<sup>37</sup>. These diplomatic and legal measures were designed to safeguard Venetian interests and to counter the activities of non-Venetian pirates who posed a threat to its commercial and territorial security.

In cases where Venetian citizens engaged in piracy –whether targeting foreigners or fellow Venetians– Venice responded decisively, defending both its honour and the interests of its subjects. As Alberto Tenenti notes in his seminal article “Venezia e la pirateria nel Levante”, “Venice was probably the only powerful Christian state in which piratical assaults at sea by corsairs were strictly forbidden –and where that prohibition was, in fact, respected”<sup>38</sup>. Of course, not by all, as the cases discussed above demonstrate. While the full extent to which Venetians engaged in piracy during these centuries remains uncertain, the gravity with which the Serenissima treated such actions is clear.

The gravity of the matter is reflected in the fact that most of the aforementioned piracy trials involving Venetian citizens were conducted in Venice itself, irrespective of the defendants’ place of residence or the location where the offences had been committed. Such centralised judicial control reinforced the message that piracy was not merely a criminal offence, but a violation of the very values and legal order of the Serenissima.

Venice consistently proclaimed its pride in the loyalty of its citizens –the good Venetians– who upheld the sovereignty of the state and advanced its commercial interests. Whenever that loyalty was betrayed and the honour or economic interests of the Serenissima were compromised –whether by officials or private individuals– Venice responded with deliberate severity, though not always with the same degree of rigour toward both, as noted above. Whether the offender had violated an official oath, broken the laws of

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37. For examples of piracy in the Aegean, involving the Byzantine Empire, Venice, and Genoa in earlier periods, see M. GEROLYMATOU, *Vivre avec les pirates au XIIe-XIIIe siècles: L'exemple de Patmos*, *Travaux et Mémoires* 21/1 (2017), 257-265; D. PENNA, *Piracy and reprisal in Byzantine waters: resolving a maritime conflict between Byzantines and Genoese at the end of the twelfth century*, *Comparative Legal History* 5/1 (2017), 36-52; D. M. NICOL, *Byzantium and Venice. A study in diplomatic and cultural relations*, Cambridge 1988, 188-212, 228-246, mainly for the 13th century.

38. TENENTI, *Venezia e la pirateria nel Levante*, 714.

the state, or breached treaties with foreign powers, the Serenissima did not hesitate to punish those bad Venetians whose actions undermined the moral and legal foundation of its maritime empire.

Η ΒΕΝΕΤΙΑ ΕΝΑΝΤΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΕΙΡΑΤΕΙΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΑΤΟΛΙΚΗ ΜΕΣΟΓΕΙΟ:  
ΟΙ ΚΑΛΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΚΑΚΟΙ ΒΕΝΕΤΟΙ (140Σ-150Σ ΑΙ.).

Με αφορμή πειρατικά επεισόδια στον χώρο του Αιγαίου και της ανατολικής Μεσογείου κατά το δεύτερο μισό του 14ου αιώνα και τις πρώτες δεκαετίες του 15ου αιώνα, στα οποία εμπλέκονται βενετοί υπήκοοι, εξετάζεται η στάση της Βενετίας απέναντι στο πειρατικό φαινόμενο της εποχής. Ειδικότερα, σχολιάζεται τόσο ο αμυντικός μηχανισμός για την αντιμετώπιση πειρατικών επιθέσεων εναντίον βενετικών κτήσεων, με χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα το μηχανισμό στο νησί της Κρήτης, όσο και το κινήγι βενετών υπηκόων, αξιωματούχων ή απλών ιδιωτών, οι οποίοι ασκούν πειρατεία ή συμπεριφέρονται ως πειρατές και ο τρόπος που αυτοί οδηγούνται στη δικαιοσύνη και καταδικάζονται. Δημοσιεύονται σχετικά ανέκδοτα έγγραφα από το Κρατικό Αρχείο της Βενετίας, τα οποία αναφέρονται στα πειρατικά επεισόδια που περιλαμβάνονται στη μελέτη.



Map: The route of the pirate vessel along the western and southwestern coasts of Crete, as well as the chain of correspondence between the local officials.

## APPENDIX - DOCUMENTS

## A

**Information Mechanism Against Piracy in Crete:  
A Turkish vessel's activity in western and southwestern coasts of Crete**

The letters in chronological order

[The letters marked with an asterisk (\*) are missing and are known to us only through indirect references in the surviving correspondence.]

1. 17/3/1416: The Castellan of Kissamos to the Rector of Chania (document no. 1a)
2. 17/3/1416: The Castellan of Kissamos to the Castellan of Selino\*
3. 18/3/1416: The Rector of Chania to the Duke of Crete and the General Captain of Crete (document no. 1)
4. 18/3/1416: The Castellan of Kissamos to the Rector of Chania (document no. 2a)
5. 19/3/1416: The Rector of Chania to the Rector of Rethimno\*
6. [19-20/3/1416]: The noble man Leonardo Giustinian to Armano de Percuto\*<sup>39</sup>
7. 20/3/1416: The Rector of Chania to the Duke of Crete and the General Captain of Crete (document no. 2)
8. 20/3/1416: The Castellan of Aghios Niketas to the Rector of Rethimno\*
9. 20/3/1416: The Castellan of Aghios Niketas to the Duke of Crete and the General Captain of Crete (document no. 6)

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39. In his letter, the rector of Rethimno notes that he had read a letter written by Leonardo Giustinian to Armano de Percuto concerning the same piratical incident (see doc. no. 3). Neither of these individuals has been identified.

10. 21/3/1416: The Rector of Rethimno to the Duke of Crete (document no. 3)
11. 21/3/1416: The Rector of Rethimno to the captains of the coastal watches of his district\*
12. 21/3/1416: The Castellan of Aghios Niketas to the Duke of Crete and the General Captain of Crete (document no. 4)
13. 21/3/1416: The Rector of Rethimno to the Duke of Crete (document no. 5)
14. 21/3/1416: The Castellan of Aghios Niketas to the Rector of Rethimno\*
15. 21/3/1416: The Castellan of Aghios Niketas to the Duke of Crete and the General Captain of Crete (document no. 8)
16. 22/3/1416: The Rector of Rethimno to the Duke of Crete (document no. 7)

## 1

Letter written by the Rector of Chania, Donato Arimondo, to the Duke of Crete, Pietro Civrano, and the General Captain of Crete, Francesco da Molin, reporting a piratical incident on the western coast of Crete. Attached is a copy of the letter from the Castellan of Kissamos, Luca Mudazzo, addressed to the same rector, providing further details about the incident.

Chania, 18 March 1416

*Egregiis et potentibus viris dominis Petro Civrano honorabili duce Crete et eius consilio ac Francisco de Molino ibidem honorabili capitaneo generali, Donatus Arimondo rector Canee, salutem et sincere dilectionis affectum. Die et hora presentibus habui literas a castelano castris Chissami, per quas michi scribit, quod quoddam lignum, quod dicit fore Teucrorum, est in portu Granbussarum, quas accopari feci et earum copiam pro vestra informatione magnitudini vestre mitto presentibus introclusam. Ego autem dedi ordinem et castellanis et capitaneis huius mei districtus, ut habeant bonam et vigilem custodiam.*

*Data Canee, die XVIII mensis marcii, 1416, hora prima diei.*

*Recepta die XX marcii 1416.*

**1a**

Letter written by the Castellan of Kissamos, Luca Mudazzo, to the Rector of Chania, Donato Arimondo.

Castle of Kissamos, 17 March 1416

*Exemplum unius litere misse domini<sup>40</sup> rectori Canee per castelano<sup>41</sup> castris Chissami.*

*Egregio et potenti domino domino Donato Arimundo honorabili rectori Chanee, Lucas Mudacio castelanus castris Chissami, cum omni reverentia et recomandacione, se ipsum misser notifico ala signoria vestra come ancuo a dì 17 del presente circa ad hora de vespero vene corando Nichita Vlatopulo, le qual gera ale Ganbrusse, e disse como un legno grosso de Turchi aplica alo porto dele Ganbrusse e acostasse in terra e qua cava una nostra barcha, la qual fuo là per pescar, da po dite queste parole, açonse Hemanuel Condo un deli compani dela dita barcha e referma meio el fato como e le risorsse digando como anchoi circa ad hore IIII del dì questi nostri marneri pescava e pescando VII deli diti ave vista del dito legno e vigniva al porto predito dele Ganbrusse a meça vella et intra al porto con tuta la fortuna et acostasse in terra, e li nostri diti marneri vegandosse mal aparadi ela se messe a fuçir e la barcha rimase sola e lo legno se acosta ala barcha e tolsse ço che ela aveva dentro e li diti scampa per tal muodo quelli non se note l'un dal'altro, ma segundo como eli dise el manqua Çani Clareçiano un deli compagni e disse eciamdio como allo parer e li tolsse anche li calogeri dictus Zorçi Andivuti et un'altro calogero dictus Soso, e tolsse anche la nostra barcha. Et holdando queste si fate nuove io subitamente mandi deli serventi per tuta la contrada e dar ad intender quelli se tegna bonamente de far bona e diligente varda in caxon che lo dito legno aplicase in algun luogo non se receva algun dano simel mentre io mandi un servente per ser Zan Daraço capitano del castelo avededer tanta çente quanta el puo regovrar in un pervixon signor se commandi ço che ve par a proveder sovra de zo io ho scritto al castelan de Sselino per esser avisado.*

*Data Chissamo, die 17 março 1416 et recepta die XVIII marçi 1416, hora prima die.//*

[ASVe, Duca di Candia, b. 1, q. 6bis, 30r]

40. Instead of the correct *domino*.

41. Instead of the correct *castelanum*.

## 2

Letter written by the Rector of Chania, Donato Arimondo, to the Duke of Crete, Pietro Civrano, and the General Captain of Crete, Francesco da Molin, reporting the latest developments concerning the piratical activity of the Turkish vessel, based on the attached copy of the letter from the Castellan of Kissamos, Luca Mudazzo.

Chania, 20 March 1416

*Egregiis et potentibus viris dominis Petro Civrano honorabili duce Crete et eius consilio ac Francisco de Molino ibidem honorabili capitaneo generali, Donatus Arimondo rector Caneae, salutem et sincere dilectionis affectum. Heri circa horam vesperarum recepi literas castelani castri Chissami, per quas michi scribit id quod secutum est pro ligno Teucrorum, de quo per alias meas literas magnitudini vestre scripsi declinasse in portu Granbussarum, quarum quidem literarum castelani copiam mitto nobilitati vestre presentibus introclusam pro vestra informatione. Preterea hodie recepi literas nobilitatis vestre, pro quibus me informatis de lignis quatuor Teucrorum, que exierunt de Thologo et Palatia, de quibus remaneo bene informatus, et per totum hunc districtum datus est ordo de optimis custodiis faciendis, nichilominus si quid de novo occurrerit, vobis notari non tardabo.*

*Data Caneae, die XX mensis marcii 1416.*

*Recepta die XXVI marcii 1416.*

## 2a

Letter written by the Castellan of Kissamos, Luca Mudazzo, to the Rector of Chania, Donato Arimondo.

Castle of Kissamos, 18 March 1416

*Exemplum unius litere misse domino rectori per castelanum castri Chissami.*

*Egregio et potenti domino domino Donato Arimondo honorabili rectori Caneae, Lucas Mudaço castelanus castri Chissami, cum omni reverentia et recomandacione se ipsum misser notifico ala signoria vestra como a di 18 del presente a hora I de nocte çionsse ser Zanachi Daraço capitano de questo castelo e diseme como siando con tuta la çente dela contrada ala Grabussa de Bantaya con lo legno de Turchi essi fo amaçado I dei Turchi per Nicoletto Curvo et si fo ferido el dito Nicoletto al cavo et non ha algun*

*mal et si fo feridi molti dei Turchi intro ala galia, ma lo dito Turco che fo amaçado se trova esser in tera avisandove como li diti Turchi trase sopra la nostra çente bonbardi quatro et si fe tolti ali Turchi caldiera una et cavadia II e coche II e vardacla I d'aqua et archi II e per straco dela çiente li lassa in terra, avisando la nostra signoria come eli ha tolto tute le incone di San Ziorçi dele Grabusse, essi li a roto e si ha tolto calogeri III et I zovene di anni XII lo qual fo fio de I cirragha<sup>42</sup>, deli qual calogeri li II fo habitatores de San Zorçi dela Grabussa et l'altro de San Soso, e si amaçado boi IIII et algune cavre et piegore, lo qual legno ssi scaltera si fora dal porto che alguna freça non se poteva açonçer, e da puo commença assonar li taburli, avisando la signoria vestra como alguni de la nostra çente domandava li nostri calogeri et elli respondeva piascumando la nostra fe e deli calogeri, digando che in pochi dì serà in queste contradi galie LXXX de le soe e che nu siamo valenti de defenderli e per tanto priego la signoria vestra che ve piacha di mandarme infina archi XX e frece M e bonbardi II e I bareleto de polvere e, se in caso che la signoria vestra volesse dar de quelle de comun, pregandove de confortar ser Dimitri Saglivani che lo me debia imprestar de le soe per ben e destro di questo castelo in nostra speçialidade, et io sia tegnudo che ogni hora che li bisognasse al dito ser Dimitri io sia tegnudo de mandarle, et se la signoria vestra // vora mandarle io mandare una barcha e si li tora avisandove como lo dito castello è mal fornido de arme et serave bona cossa che nui fossemo ben fornidi de ogno bon respeto, io aveva mandado archi de comun li qual son 18 per mandar de le altre perché quelle non se po adovrar, ma per questa novitade io li tegno cussi infin chio sepa altro, per ogna bona caxon si pregove de mandarmi infina archi XX de comun aprovo io mandaro che li ssignori se commandi.*

*Data Chissami die 18 março 1416.*

[ASVe, *Duca di Candia*, b. 1, q. 6bis, 30v-31r]

### 3

Letter written by the Rector of Rethimno, Marco Salamone, to the Duke of Crete, Pietro Civrano, reporting that, upon receiving the letter from the Rector of Chania, he informed all coastal watch posts in his district about the activity of the Turkish pirate vessel in order to ensure their preparedness.

42. Illegible and obscure word; possibly a name.

Rethimno, 21 March 1416

*Egregio et potenti viro domino Petro Civrano honorabili duce Crete et eius consilio, Marcus Salamono rector Rethemi, salutem et sincere dilectionis affectum. Nudiustertius recepi literas a domino rectore Caneae, quibus scripsit habuisse novum a castelano Chissami de uno grosso ligno Turchorum, quod introiverat in portu Chambrussarum, quod novum vobis similiter per suum nuntium vobis denotavit. Ego quidem hoc percepto illico scripsi omnibus capitaneis postarum maritimarum districtus michi commisi, ut facerent fieri bonam et vigiles<sup>43</sup> custodiam die noctuque sit que superveniente illuc dicto ligno Turchorum non reciperent damnum aliquid vel offensum sed in omnem eventum facerent honorem dominationis nostre. Post hec presente die et hora recepi literas a castelano castris sancti Nichite, per quas scribit unum lignum Turchorum de banchis XXII fuisse ad locum de Santa Rumeli portans erectam insigna Sancti Marci et Teucros existentes in eo ibi descendisse in terram et abstulisse de molendino mensuras trecentas inter frumentum et farinam et cum sagittis percussisse unum de nostris qui similiter percuserunt unum ex dictis Teucris. Quod novum distinctius vobis scribo, quia idem castelanus et vobis per literas suas, quas vobis mitto, stabit diffuse de adventu insultudo ligni Turchorum, si quid ulterius sentiam de eius progressibus vobis curabo indicare.*

*Data Rethemi die XXI marcii 1416.*

*Recepta die XXII marcii 1416.*

*Item vidi per unum punctum unius litere, quam scribit nobilis vir ser Leonardus Iustiniano ad ser Armanum de Percuto, qualiter gentes de cauca processerunt obviam dictis Turchis, qui descenderant in terram in dicto loco Chambrussarum, et Teucris videntes illos venire contra se redierunt se subito in dicto ligno preter unum, qui non valens ita cito currere ad lignum fuit a nostris interceptus, et quamplures de ligno ut creditur sauciati. Quod lignum se removet procul a terra et quo iverit ultra non scribitur. //*

[ASVe, Duca di Candia, b. 1, q. 6bis, 31r]

#### 4

Letter written by the Castellan of Aghios Niketas, Andrea Matono, to the Duke of Crete, Pietro Civrano, and the General Captain of Crete, Francesco

43. Instead of the correct *vigilem*.

da Molin, reporting the piratical activity of the same Turkish vessel along the southwestern coast of Crete.

Castle of Aghios Niketas, 21 March 1416

*Magnifico et potenti domino domino Petro Civrano honorabili duce Crete et eius consilio ac magnifico et potenti domino domino Francisco de Molino honorabili capitaneo çeneral toçius insole Crete, Andrea Matono castelano castri Sancti Nichite, con omni reverentia et recomandacio<sup>44</sup> se ipso notifico ala signoria vestra che ieri circa le do hore del di scrissi una mia letra ala signoria vestra chomo I legno de Turchi declina a Santa Rumeli et a fato dano, como in quella se contien, la qual letra madie a miser lo retor de Rethemo scrivando anche a lu lo caso, e chelo manda la dita mia letra ale magnificentie vestre, et ancora per questa notifico ale magnificentie vestre como heri circa el meço di nu avesemo vista del dito legno de Turchi et ala griparia de Theriano Palduvin de Candia, la qual griparia si gera ad Agocio in la insola granda, e lo dito lenio fo ad Agocio picciolo, e la dita griparia fe vela dala dita insola per andar al porto de Lutro, che sé in questa isola, e lo dito legno ave vista d'esa e si la tolsse indrie, et io veçando che lo dito legno la persegua subitamente montò a chavalo e von ala Sfachia e faço far segni con fumi e cho fogi che la devesse vegnir in lo porto dela Sfachia et e là non vole ma la setira a Lutro, e lo dito legno la persegua e si la salta circa ale do hore de note per tal che li tuti ave la dita griparia el patro talse la so barcha cho 12 persone e schampa, e non savemo ço che se desso e persone 4 romaxe in la dita griparia, dele chal se gita persone 2, e vene ala Sfachia e disse le dite novele, et io de subito lo notifico ale magnificentie vestre e le magnificentie vestre comanda come par e piase avisando le reverentie vestre como lo dito ligno sé ancora là in lo porto de Lutro, et io chesta ora ho recomandado lo dito castelo al comestabele de sto castelo e montò a chavalo e vol proveder, se pora regovrar la dita griparia e far tuto quello ben che se pora, tornado ancora ancho de dormir in lo mio castelo como fe ieri.*

*Dato die 21 março circa I hora del di 1416*

*Recepta die XXII marcii 1416*

[ASVe, Duca di Candia, b. 1, q. 6bis, 31v]

44. Instead of the correct *recomandacione*.

## 5

Letter written by the Rector of Rethimno, Marco Salamone, to the Duke of Crete, Pietro Civrano, reporting the latest information about the activity of the Turkish pirate vessel along the southwestern coast of Crete, based on the letter received from the Castellan of Aghios Niketas.

Rethimno, 21 March 1416

*Egregio et potenti viro domino Petro Civrano honorabili duce Crete et eius consilio, Marcus Salamono rector Rethimi, salutem et sincere dilectionis affectum. Post scriptas alias literas meas paulo stando recepi aliam literam a castelano Sancti Nichite continentem lignum Turchorum, de quo per alias literas scribo, insultasse in portu de Lutrachi gripariam Michaelis Teriano venientem del' Alexandria et ex ea accepisse duos homines, quando patronus cum XII marinariis aufugit ad barcham navigii et alii duo se proiecerunt in mare. Qui quidem castellanus etiam scribit nobis literam quam presentialiter vobis mitto.*

*Datum Rethemi XXI marcii 1416.*

*Recepta die XXII marcii 1416. //*

[ASVe, *Duca di Candia*, b. 1, q. 6bis, 31v]

## 6

Letter written by the Castellan of Aghios Niketas, Andrea Matono, to the Duke of Crete, Pietro Civrano, and the General Captain of Crete, Francesco da Molin, reporting the latest developments regarding the activity of the Turkish pirate vessel in his district.

Castle of Aghios Niketas, 20 March 1416

*Magnifico et potenti domino domino Petro Civrano honorabili duce Crete et eius consilio ac magnifico et potenti domino Francesco de Molino honorabili capitaneo zeneral tocius insole Crete, Andrea Matono castellanus castris Sancti Nichite, cum omni reverentia et recomandacione, se ipsum notifico ale magnificentie vestre como ancho di 20 março perçorçi ligno dela Sfachia me presenta freçe 2 turchesche digandome como a di 19 del presente declina I legno de Turchi a Santa Rumeli e si ha fato gran dano, çoe in formento e farina, per caxon che se trova là barche 2 dela Sfachia cargade de formento per masenar e fo tolto tuto lo cargo d'ese, lo qual formento porave esser circha mesure 300, et eli a tolto manere sege ali*

*homeni che lavorava là, e si ha robado la gesia e rompe l'encone, e ha fato gran dano, e si fo ferido I deli nostri in là così per tal che elo no he de pericolo, et ancho per li nostri fo ferido I deli Turchi, avisando le magnificentie vestre che lo dito legno porta le segna de miser San Marco e lieva quella, digando ali nostri cenio sè christiani e che ama Christo, vada a mançiar e ben con esi e li nostri cognosete de subito e non vol a costar, ma eli comença trar dele freçe sovrali, io domandie dela condicion al dito legno, e si me fo dito come el'è de banchi 22, domandie de la via che fo dessenir, che eli non sa per caso chelo legno stete a Santa Rumeli infina la note, e li nostri scampa di là et andie ala Sfachia per vardar le case soe, avisando la signoria vestra che per defeto dele arme fo segido lo dano che fe li diti Turchi, per cason che le povra çente de qui de comprar archi d'esta terra per cason che li costa iperperi 5 grossi 6 l'un, et eli se porra, e non pò spender tanto, ma se li avesse abudo arme, le persone che se trova là non li averave lassadi meter scala infra, e per tanto me requiri tuti per Ia soa çetola che io debia scriver ale magnificentie vestre che ve piacha de mandarli archi 100 turcheschi, pagando cheli in chelo preso che la signoria vestra vora meter, façando a lor termene infina septeembre proximo, la qual cossa porave in utile de chesta contrada, perche ele a sa valenti homeni in chesta contrada e abiando arme eli farave bona varda, e per tanto io lo notifico ale magnificentie vestre de case sovrascrite, e le magnificentie vestre comanda come ve par e piase.*

*Data die 20 março 1416.*

*Recepta die XXII março 1416.*

[ASVe, Duca di Candia, b. 1, q. 6bis, 32r]

## 7

Letter written by the Rector of Rethimno, Marco Salamone, to the Duke of Crete, Pietro Civrano, reporting the attack of the Turkish pirate vessel on a merchant vessel along the southern coast of Crete, based on the letter received from the Castellan of Aghios Niketas.

Rethimno, 22 March 1416

*Egregio et potenti viro domino Petro Civrano honorabili duche Crete et eius consilio, Marcus Salamono rector Rethimi, salutem et sincere dilectionis affectum. Heri scripsi eminentie vestre per proprium nuntium de insultu facto per illud lignum Turcorum, quod tendit ad piraticam in destreriam*

*patronizatam per Michaellem Theriano de Rethimo dum armichata erat in portu Lutrachi, et quod nobis per eundum nuntium mittebam literam continentem de dicto casu, quam scribebat castelanus Sancti Nichite, sed dictus nuntius pre nimia frequentia recedendi dimisit, inadvertenter dictam literam quam postea curavi vobis destinare per unum bordonarium, qui hinc hac nocte descessit. Nunc vero vobis significo recepisse aliam literam a dicto castelano, qua confirmat invasionem dictorum Teucrorum factam in predicto navigio, de quo omnes marinarii Dei gratiam ad terram incolumes evaserunt, sed ipsi Teucris more piratico depredati // sunt vella, sartias et alias quascumque res et merces invenerunt in ipso navigio. Quod quidem lignum, ut ipse castelanus scribit habuisse ab uno amaloto, qui ab ipso ligno remansit in terram, est de banchis XXIII et remigant unus pro bancho, sunt quoque in totum Turchi CXXX, et vadit voltisando in illis aquis. Que quidem castelanus de hac materia etiam scribit eminentie vestre per literam quam mitto presentibus alligatam, mitto quoque unam literam et scribitur nobili viro ser Georgio Grimani.*

*Marcus Salamono rector Rethemi.*

*Ibi datum die XXII marcii 1416, indicione VIII.*

*Recepta die XXIII marcii 1416.*

[ASVe, *Duca di Candia*, b. 1, q. 6bis, 32r-v]

## 8

Letter written by the Castellan of Aghios Niketas, Andrea Matono, to the Duke of Crete, Pietro Civrano, and the General Captain of Crete, Francesco da Molin, reporting the latest developments concerning the activity of the Turkish pirate vessel in his district.

Castle of Aghios Niketas, 21 March 1416

*Magnifico et potenti domino domino Petro Civrano honorabili duche Crete et eius consilio ac magnifico et potenti domino Francisco de Molino honorabili capitaneogenerali tocius insule Crete, Andreas Matono castelanus castri Sancti Nichite, cum omni debita reverentia et recomandatione, se ipsum notifico ale magnificentie vestre come per Ia mia letra scritta e dada circa I ora de di prexente, de la qual ho notificado ale magnificentie vestre per lo fato delo legno de Turchi, lo qual he declinado in queste parte, che va scarmuniçando et daniçando queste contrade, et ancora per questa replico*

*ale magnificentie vestre como la dita galia si ha preso e roba una nave da Rethimo cioè de Michali Theriano, lo qual è patron, e si ha tolto tute le soe marchadantie, apreso li tolsse chasi tuti li corredi, vele, feri, tortice et arme, çòè balestre XIIIIII furnide con ocochi e mulineli e coraçe III e panceri II, la quale nave fo saltada in lo porto de Lutro per la via e modo como per altra mia letra scrivo ale vestre magnificentie, e per caxon che io ho scritto ale vestre magnificentie delo patron como iera scampado con la barcha e non savessimo ço che fosse desso, da po io lo trovado el dito patron scampado vegnudo ala Sfachia con tuti li soi marineri in tuti nudi a çuparelo ben che per altra mia scrissi. Anco scrivo ale magnificentie vestre como la dita nave fo de Theriano Balduin, a falo de lo messo che me vene a dir che non me disse de chiaro lo nome de patron, avixando le magnificentie vestre come la dita galia se partì de porto predito de Lutro, che roba la dita nave. Anco da matina ela se partì et ela socaça in mar e si fe vela via de ponente ben che io ho sapudo per I omaloto, che la dita galia aveva tolte de l'isole, lo qual omaloto scampa dalo dito porto de Lutro anco quando i Turchi se messe a robar la dita nave, come lo dito legno deli Turchi atendea a dar in la isola de Agoço per lievar le parte che se trovava là, intenda ancora detornar in questa riviera per far dano, ancora ho sapudo dalo dito omaloto come eli avea tolto calogeri III et puto I da distreto de Selino, ancora io lo domandie dela condicion del dito legno, diseme come de banchi XXIII e si è Turchi suso CXXX, dei qual voga remi XLVIII, çioe un per bancho, e l'avanço si è arçieri, lo qual legno è insido dala Palatia, lo qual omaloto io lo mandado da miser lo retor dela Cania soto bona vardia, açio che lo dito miser lo retor faça megior examination in eso, avisando le vestre magnificentie come la dita galia si è Ia pegrissima cossa per dito del dito omaloto, e se ale vestre magnificentie aparesse de proveder in Dio spero che tosto se haverave // per le mar, etiamdio che anche li tempi li è contrari e non lo lassa partir de questa contradha, ancora io ho domandado lo dito omaloto se questa galia è sola over sè le altre de compagnia, dixè come el' è sola, e questo sè de fermo perche ele çircha di XV che fo preso, esi fo messo e vogava remo con li çepi in pie e non vete mai che la dita avesse altra compagnia e sopra de çio le magnificentie vestre comanda quel che ve par e piaxe.*

*Data die XXI mensis marçii circa ele ore X del di 1416.*

*Recepta die XXIII marcii 1416.*

[ASVe, Duca di Candia, b. 1, q. 6bis, 32v-33r]

**B**

**Piratical behavior of state officials**  
**The Case of Bertuccio Diedo and Zanachi Corner**

**9**

Bertuccio Diedo and Zanachi Corner were accused by the Venetian Senate of illegal conduct during their service as Vice Captain and *Sopracomitus*, respectively, of the Galleys of Romania in the area of Constantinople. Their case was assigned to the *Avogadori di Comun*.

Venice, 22 March 1403

*Die XXIIo marcii*

||*Dominus*

||*Consilarii: Ser Petrus Zanchani, Ser Franciscus Valerio, Ser Zacharias Gabriel, Ser Michael Maripetro, Ser Paulus Zane*

||*Capita de XL: Ser Dominicus Duodo, Ser Antonius a Bocholis*  
*Capta*

*Nobilis vir ser Bertucius Diedo, qui tot enormia commisit in partibus Romanie existente ipso vice capitaneo galearum nostrarum ibidem contra Deum et omnem humanitatem et in damnum et contra honorem nostri domini, retineatur in carcere auctoritate huius consilii et omnia sua bona tam in Veneciis quam extra Venecias intromittantur et sequestrentur donec aliud terminabitur per istud consilium, et similiter possint retineri de aliis qui viderentur culpabiles et intromitti omnibus bona sua, ut de dicto ser Bertucio dictum est.*

*Et committatur hoc factum advocatoribus comunis, salvis et reservatis iuribus et utilitate officialium rationum in eo quod eis spectat vigore sui officii.*

*De parte 80*

*De non 21*

*Non sinceri 24*

||*Dominus*

||*Consilarii: Ser Petrus Zanchani, Ser Franciscus Valerio, Ser Michael Maripetro, Ser Paulus Zane*

||*Capita de XL: Ser Dominicus Duodo, Ser Antonius a Bocholis*

*Quia per testes usque nunc examinatos per nostros officiales rationum habetur quod ser Zanachius Cornario, qui fuit supracomitatus unius galee de Creta in Romania cum ser Bertucio Diedo vice capitaneo, tragetavit etiam de illis personis de Turchia in Greciam, scribatur et mandetur regimini Crete, quod caute et diligenter debeat examinare de illis qui fuerunt cum sua galea super solutionibus habitis per ipsum ser Zanachium pro dicto passagio et si aliquam raubarum fecit vel fecit fieri contra honorem et in damnum nostri domini et si invenerint ipsum culpabilem debeant ipsum retinere personaliter et intrmittere ac sequestrari omnia sua bona; et inquisitionem et examinationem quam fecerint contra ipsum et ipsum ser Zanachium personaliter sub fida custodia mittere debeant Veneciis, ut nostri advocatores comunis possint facere et exequi officium suum contra ipsum, prout de dicto ser Bertucio captum est, et similiter observet dictum regimen in aliis quos dictum regimen inveniret culpabiles de dicto facto. Et cetera, nunc etiam advocatores comunis debeant hic inquirere et examinare super dicto facto et facere officium suum prout eis apparebit.*

*¶Ser Fantinus Viaro caput de XL*

*Capta*

*Vult quod examinatio super facto viri nobilis ser Zanachii Cornario, qui fuit supracomitatus unius ex galeis de Creta in Romania, committatur advocatoribus comunis, qui debeant examinare de hominibus qui erant cum galea Dieda et aliis qui eis videbuntur et postea cum examinatione quam fecerint veniatur ad hoc consilium et provideatur super inde prout videbitur huic consilio.*

*De parte domini, consiliariorum et IIorum capitum de XL 34*

*De parte ser Fantini Viaro capitum de XL 77*

*De non 0*

*Non sinceri 11*

[ASVe, *Senato Misti*, Reg. 46, 68v (69v)]

## 10

The *Avogadori di Comun* formally accused Zanachi Corner of illegal conduct and instructed the Duke of Crete to arrest him and send him to Venice for prosecution.

Venice, 24 March 1403

*Die predicto**¶ Advocatores comunis*

*Ut advocatores comunis valeant exequi ea que sibi et officio suo commissa sunt vigore istius consilii contra virum nobilem ser Çanachium Cornario de Candida, qui fuit supracomitus unius galearum de Creta in Romania pro his que dicuntur ipsum commisisse contra honorem dominationis nostre, vadit pars auctoritate huius consilii, quod scribatur et mandetur regimini nostro Crete quod recepto presenti mandato indilate capi et detineri faciat prefatum ser Zanachium Cornario intromittendo et sequestrando et intromitti faciendo omnia et singula bona mobilia et imobilia eiusdem ser Zanachi Cornario. Hoc facto caute, solícite et diligenter debeat per sacramentum cum illa providentia et cauto modo, qui sibi videbitur, examinare comitum, patronum, ballistarios galee dicti ser Zanachi et omnes alios et singulos dicte galee, a quibus videbitur melius informari posse de raubariis, extorsionibus et enormibus actibus factis et commissis per dictum ser Zanachium contra honorem dominationis nostre in traiectando Turchos et alias gentes super Greciam ipso existente cum dicta galea ale Narete et in culpho dela Tria et aliis locis existentibus circa civitatem Constantinopolis de pecuniis et aliis rebus acceptis dictis gentibus tam pro transitu facto ipsis gentibus quam per alium quecumque modum voluntarie ac violenter, notificando dicto regimine quod hic Veneciis est detentus vir nobilis ser Bertucius Diedo occasione predicta, et similiter per advocatores comunis facta est inquisitio et examinatione de raubariis et modis servatis per dictum ser Zanachium, et in casu quo non permetteret se reperiri, ita quod non veniret in // forciam regiminis Crete, tunc mandetur dicto regimini quod faciat ipsum stridari in locis solitis quod infra octo dies debeat personaliter aparire coram dicto regimine, itaquod veniat in forciam suam sine antea procedetur hic Veneciis, prout de iure videbitur, eius absentia non obstante cum examinatione que facta erit contra ipsum, {expleta} expleta namque examinatione predicta in casu quo dictus ser Zanachius daret pleçariam ydoneam die octavo bonam et sufficientiam de ducatis VI<sup>m</sup>, tunc relaxere debeat dictum ser Zanachium de carceribus et sibi mandare quatenus sub pena duorum millium ducatorum debeat venire Veneciis cum primis navigiis Veneciis venientibus et se presentare coram advocatoribus comunis sub pena predicta, remanentibus nichilominus omnibus bonis suis sequestratis et introdictis per modum ut superius; non habente vero dicto ser Zanachio*

*de dando dictam pleçariam de predictis duobus millibus ducatis, dicto regimine teneatur ipsum requirere et mandetur ei quod debeat ipsum mittere sub bona custodia dominio aut advocatoribus comunis presentandum et omnem examinationem quam superinde fecerit quanto velocius poterit mittere teneatur per litteras duplicatas.*

*De parte 30*

*Dominus dux*

*Capta*

*Vult partem suprascriptam per totum salvo quod non vult quod relaxetur post retentionem de carceribus cum pleçaria aliqua, sed mittatur Veneciis per primum navigium recomendando ipsum ser Zanachium patrono dicti navigii, qui presentet eum nostro dominio cum examinatione que facta fuerit de dicto ser Zanachio; et ultra hoc quod in casu quo dictus ser Zanachius non permetteret se reperiri, ita quod regimen Crete non possit eum habere, tunc mandetur dicto regimini quod debeat ipsum citari facere secundum usum Candide, quod personaliter comparere debeat infra octo dies coram dicto regimine, ut valeat ipsum deinde mittere Veneciis; sin autem eo non comparente ad terminum suprascriptum, quod procedetur contra ipsum hic in Veneciis, prout de iure videbitur eius absentia non obstante.*

*De parte 57*

*Non 7*

*Non sinceri 14*

[ASVe, Senato Misti, Reg. 46, 69r-v (70r-v)]

## 11

Zanachi Corner was transported to Venice aboard Marco Bianco's ship and was taken to prison. Bianco was later accused of failing to fulfil his commission, as he released Corner upon arrival in Venice instead of delivering him to the authorities as instructed.

Venice, 31 May 1403

*Die ultimo maii*

*||Advocatores comunis*

*Capta*

*Quod ser Marcus Blanco patronus istius navis que nuperime venit de*

*Candida Veneciis, cui recommissus fuit per regimen Crete vir nobilis ser Zanachius Cornario detentus, ut ipsum presentaret dominio, cum dimiserit ipsum in libertate et non presentaverit eum dominio secundum mandatum sibi factum per regimen Crete, sed dimiserit eum in sua libertate, retineatur et examinetur per advocatores comunis propter dictam inobedientiam, qui pro non fatigari istud consilium habeant libertatem veniendi ad consilium de XL cum eo quod habuerint et fiet sicut videbitur.*

*De parte 59*

*De non 32*

*Non sinceri 21*

[ASVe, Senato Misti, Reg. 46, 85r (86r)]

## 12

Following their trial, Bertuccio Diedo and Zanachi Corner were found guilty and sentenced to pay substantial fines.

Venice, 6 September 1403

*MCCCCIII, die VI septembris*

*¶Advocatores comunis*

*Capta*

*Si videtur vobis pro ea que dicta et lecta sunt, quod procedatur contra virum nobilem ser Bertucium Diedo condam ser Iacobi olim vicecapitaneum in partibus Romanie pro raubariis, extorsionibus et aliis enormibus per ipsum commissis in tragetando Turchos et alias gentes de Turchia in Greciam per pecuniam contra Deum et omnem humanitatem et in damnum et contra honorem dominationis, ut est dictum.*

*De parte 76*

*De non 17*

*Non sinceri 27*

*¶Dominus et ser Dominicus Contareno consiliarius*

*Quod iste ser Bertucius solvat ducatos mille de bonis denariis qui sint libere comunis et ultra hoc solvat ducatos ducentos auri, et de predictis seu aliquot predictorum non possit sibi fieri gratia donec remissio, revocatione, recompensatio aut declaratio aliqua nisi per sex consiliarios, tria capita de XLta, quadraginta de XLta et quatuor partes maioris consilii.*

*[De parte] 29*

*||Ser Bartholomeus Donato, ser Nicolaus Mudatio consilarii*

*Volunt partem domini et ser Dominici Contareno salvo quod volunt quod solvat ducatos noningentos de bonis denariis nostro comuni et ducatos trecentos pro pena cum structuris contentis in parte domini.*

*[De parte] 10*

*||Ser Iacobus Civrano, ser Franciscus Contareno consilarii*

*||Ser Petrus Arimondo caput de XL*

*Capta*

*Volunt quod solvat ducatos noningentos de bonis denariis, qui sunt nostri comunis, et ducatos ducentos pro pena cum structuris contentis in parte domini.*

*[De parte] 69*

*||Advocatores comunis*

*Volunt quod solvat ducatos mille de bonis denariis, qui sint comunis, et ducatos quingentos pro pena et stet sex mensibus in uno carcerorum inferiorum et privetur per quinque annos omnibus supracomitariis galearum comunis cum structuris.*

*[De parte] 10*

*Non sinceri 2*

*Die dicto*

*||Advocatores comunis*

*Capta*

*Si videtur vobis per ea que dicta et lecta sunt, quod procedatur contra virum nobilem ser Zanachium Cornario olim supracomitum unius galearum in Candida et deputate ad custodiam in partibus Romanie pro transitu Turchorum et aliarum gentium pro pecunia de Turchia in Greciam contra Deum et honorem dominationis et contra id quod facere poterat et debebat, ut est dictum.*

*[De parte] 77*

*De non 32*

*Non sinceri 9*

|| *Dominus*

|| *Ser Dominicus Contareno, ser Nicolaus Mudatio, ser Iacobus Civrano consiliarii*

|| *Ser Franciscus Contareno, ser Petrus Arimondo capita XL*

*Capta*

*Iste ser Zanachius solvat yperpera tria millia trecenta de Creta et valorem mille quadringentorum asprorum de bonis denariis solvendis camere Crete et ducatos centum auri pro pena cum structuris contentis in parte ser Bertucii Diedo.*

[*De parte*] 77

|| *Ser Bartholomeus Donato consiliarius*

*Vult partem domini et eorum qui sunt cum eo per totum, salvo quod vult quod de illis yperperis III<sup>m</sup> III<sup>c</sup> centum dentur illi sclave que fuit vendita, si reperietur Candide vel in insula Crete, cum structuris.*

[*De parte*] 27

|| *Advocatores comunis*

*Volunt partem domini et aliorum qui sunt cum eo per totum, ut supra, et pro pena ducatos trecentos auri et per quinque annos quod non sit supracomitus galearum comunis cum structuris captis in parte ser Bertutii Diedo.*

[*De parte*] 2

*Non sinceri* 12

[ASVe, *Senato Misti*, Reg. 46, 99v (100v)]

## C

### **Piratical behavior of state officials: The case of Michele Gradenigo**

#### 13

Letter written by the *Bailo* of Negroponte, Daniele Loredan, to the Duke of Crete, Lorenzo Bragadin, concerning the damages sustained by Michele Gradenigo's galley during a piratical encounter.

Negroponte, 12 February 1424

*Magnifice et potens amice karissime. Dum nobilis vir ser Michael Gradonico supracomitus unius vestre galee de Candida circa medium mensem ianuarii penes Santurini cepisset lignum unum Theucrorum et quia invasit in eum et fregit spironos sue galee et oportuit eam aptari, ex quo idem ser Michael de nostro consensu et voluntate pro eandem aptando exbursavit de sua propria pecunia libras torneselorum XXXI, videlicet libras soldorum torneselorum XXXI, in infrascritis rebus, vestram igitur magnificentiam exoramus, cum idem ser Michael per optime in omnibus que covarnuit honorem vestri domini se gesserit, quatenus placeat eidem fieri facere de dictis libris XXXI integram solutionem, ut est iustum. Parati et cetera.*

*Infrascrite sunt res solute de propriis denariis dicti ser Michaelis Gradonicho et primo:*

*Pro I masculo pro sua galea*

*Pro mutando spironos galee*

*Pro agutis et pironis de fero*

*Pro marangonis qui accesserunt ad nemus et pro laborando et somariis qui conduxerunt lignamina*

*Pro I calafato et expensis oris factis dictis magistris*

*Quas vidimus et calculavimus*

*Sumant libras XXXI*

*De ducali mandato, Daniel Lauredano baiulus et capitaneus Nigropontis, Gasparo Superantio et Zacharias Valaresso consilarii*

*Ubi data mense february MCCCCXXIII, die XII.*

*Recepta die 3 ianuarii 1424.*

[ASVe, *Duca di Candia*, b. 1, q. 12, 26v]

## 14

Letter written by the *Bailo* and Captain of Negroponte, Donato Arimondo, to the Duke of Crete, Francesco Loredan, reporting the damages caused by Michele Gradenigo and the crew of his galley in the area of Oreos, in Euboea.

Negroponte, 10 December 1424

*Spectabiles et generosi amici honorem. Quia homines galee Veneciarum, cuius est supracomitus dominus Michael Gradonico, in insula Nigropontis in pertinentiis Horei maximum damnum intulerunt subditis nostris devastantes eorum vineas, huius civitatis derobantes domos, ut multa enormia committentes, de quo nobis querimonias plurimas efecerunt, nec talia iustum est neque honestum nec hec est intentionis dominacionis vestre precamur generositates vestras quatenus cogere velit et placeat aut prefatum dominum Michaelem supracomitum aut homines eiusdem galee ad reficiendum saltem damna facta in vineis, {que sunt} que sunt extimata in totum minutissime metra CCCCLXXXVIII, quod factum est valoris yperperorum IIII<sup>e</sup>LXXXX computi Nigropontis, dimissis ceteris damnis facientes eisdem retineri de pagis suis pecuniam dictam pro satisfacione dictorum damnorum, quod si non satisfiet, ut dictum est, ne talibus dicti homines assuescant, illustrissime dominacioni notum faciemus, super quibus nos reddere placeat advisatos cum plena responsione. Parati et cetera.*

*Quos denarios retineri faciatis, donec aliud ordinabimus aut per priorem sufficientem nuntium placeat destinare.*

*Donatus Arimondo baiulus et capitaneus Nigropontis cum II consiliariis eius*

*Ubi X decembris 1424*

*Recepta die XXI decembris 1424*

[ASVe, Duca di Candia, b. 1, q. 12, 12v]

