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**Venetian-Ottoman Wars**

EDITED BY STATHIS BIRTACHAS



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On the cover: lantern of an Ottoman galley captured at Lepanto.  
Venice, Armory rooms of the Council of Ten at the Doge's Palace.  
Topwar.ru website of Vjačeslav Špakovsky.



Venice and the Ottoman Empire as warriors. Source: [Roger PALMER, Earl of Castlemaine], *Das von den Türcken auff's äusserst bedrangte, aber: Durch die christliche Waffen der heroischen Republic Venedig auff's tapferst beschützte Candia [...]*, Frankfurt, Wilhelm Serlin, 1669.



“Oltremarini” (Overseas) Regiments in Venetian service, nicknamed ‘Schiavoni’  
(Vinkhuijzen Collection, NYPL)

# Typology of the War at Sea in the Ionian Sea

(late fifteenth–early nineteenth century)

by GERASSIMOS D. PAGRATIS\*

**ABSTRACT:** In the geographical and chronological limits defined by the title of this study, which is a first approach to a complex issue, we will attempt to formulate and classify the main types of warfare that took place in the Ionian Sea and affected local communities to a greater or lesser extent. We will also seek an analysis of the means offered by traditional and modern literature for the examination of war, with a clear emphasis on the area under consideration.

**KEYWORDS:** IONIAN ISLANDS, EARLY MODERN PERIOD, VENETIAN–OTTOMAN WARS.

In the Early Modern Period, the Ionian Sea, a border zone in terms of historiography due to its special position at the intersection of local and international roads,<sup>1</sup> was claimed by the great powers of the time: the Spaniards dominated the western part, occupying Southern Italy, and the Venetians (settled on the islands and in coastal places) and Ottomans (positioned for the most part on the mainland side) being forced to coexist in the eastern part of the Ionian region.

Some of the conflicts between these three powers stood out for their intensity and left a strong mark on the collective memory for the pain they caused. Thus, they functioned as points of reference and inspiration for works that exploited the war on a symbolic level. Let us remember here the examples of the Ottoman

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1 Alberto TENENTI, «Le isole ionie: un area di frontiera», in Massimo COSTANTINI (Ed.), *Il Mediterraneo Centro-orientale tra vecchie e nuove egemonie*, Rome, Bulzoni editore, 1998, pp. 11-20; Ilias KOLOVOS, «Εισαγωγή», in IDEM (Ed.), Οθωμανικές πηγές για τη νεώτερη ιστορία της Λευκάδας, Irakleion, Crete University Press, 2013, pp. 11-16.

attack on Otranto in 1480,<sup>2</sup> the seven Venetian-Ottoman wars, which were not all of the same weight nor did they affect the entire Ionian Sea, the Battle of Lepanto, the Ottoman siege of Corfu in 1716 and the siege of French-occupied Corfu in 1799, the latter leading to the expulsion of the French from the islands and the establishment of Russian-Turkish rule, etc.<sup>3</sup>

In the geographical and chronological limits defined by the title of this study, which is a first approach to a complex issue, we will attempt to formulate and classify the main types of warfare that took place in the Ionian Sea and affected local communities to a greater or lesser extent. We will also seek an analysis of the means offered by traditional and modern literature for the examination of the war, with a clear emphasis on the area under consideration.

It is clear that most of the conflicts in the period studied here either took place at sea or utilized the maritime routes with the aim, on the one hand, of attacking the enemy fleet and, on the other hand, of conducting raids against island positions, fortified or otherwise. So the criteria for a categorization of wars could be found in some other fields. A first distinction could be that between conventional and unconventional forms of warfare, which included another distinction, one between wars involving – albeit on the one hand, the Christian – a multitude of forces, which we usually call “international”, and by another to “interstate” wars occurring between two states, which we could also call “bi-imperial”, given the tendency of historians to associate Venice with the status of an empire.

A second distinction concerns the connection of these forms of warfare with their consequences on human societies and the environment, both natural and urban.

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- 2 Cosimo Damiano FONSECA (Ed.), *Otranto 1480. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio promosso in occasione del V centenario della caduta di Otranto ad opera dei Turchi (Otranto, 19–23 maggio 1980)*, 2 vols., Lecce, Galatina Congedo Editore, 1986.
- 3 A brief reference to all these battles is made in Roger Charles ANDERSON, *Naval Wars in the Levant. From the Battle of Lepanto to the Introduction of Steam (1559–1853)*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1952. Cf. Frederic C. LANE, *Βενετία η θαλασσοκράτειρα: Ναυτιλία-Εμπόριο-Οικονομία*, translated by Kostas Kouremenos, edited by Gerassimos D. Pagratis, Athens, Alexandria Publishers, 2007, *passim*; Dionysios HATZOPoulos, *Ο τελευταίος βενετο-οθωμανικός πόλεμος (1714–1718)*, Athens, Papadimas Publishers, 2002; Fotini B. PERRA, *Ο Λέων εναντίον της Ημισελήνου. Ο πρώτος βενετο-οθωμανικός πόλεμος και η κατάληψη του ελλαδικού χώρου (1463–1479)*, Athens, Papazisis Publishers, 2009; Guido CANDIANI, *I vascelli della Serenissima: guerra, politica e costruzioni navali a Venezia in età moderna, 1650–1720*, Venice, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2009.



1 Hayreddin Barbarossa defeats the united Christian fleets of the so-called “Holy Coalition”, led by Admiral Andrea Doria of Genoa, at the Battle of Preveza (1538); by Osman Nuri Pasha and Hovhannes Umed Behzad, 1866. Turkish Naval Museum, Istanbul. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

I. The category of the so-called “international wars” can include three main sets of events: the conflicts related to the conquest of the Peloponnese by Charles V between 1532 and 1534, and the naval battles of Preveza in 1538 and Lepanto in 1571.

I.1. The military campaign of Emperor Charles V in Western Peloponnese, based on his need to reduce the pressure he was under in Central Europe, was made possible thanks to the formation of a coalition led by the Genoese admiral Andrea Doria. The coalition consisted of Genoese, Spanish, Papal and Maltese ships (of the Order of the Knights of St. John) and soldiers of various origins (Italians, Spaniards, Germans, Greeks, and Albanians).

Charles V’s entire effort lasted for two years and included numerous battles at sea and on land, as well as territorial sovereignty. The strengthening of Ottoman armies forced the Emperor to abandon the Morea and pushed several thousand

Peloponnesians, who had supported him, to relocate to Southern Italy.<sup>4</sup> The following year (1535) Suleiman the Magnificent signed the famous “unholy alliance” with the King of France, while in the Ottoman fleet the star of Hayreddin Barbarossa began to rise.<sup>5</sup>

I.2. The naval Battle of Preveza, part of the Third Ottoman–Venetian War, took place on 27 September 1538 (Fig. 1). The Ottoman fleet, under the command of Hayreddin Barbarossa, faced the united Christian fleets of the so-called “Holy Coalition”, led by Admiral Andrea Doria of Genoa. Despite the clear naval superiority of the Christian forces (302 ships against 122 Ottoman ones), the Ottomans achieved a great victory, thanks to the bold offensive moves of Barbarossa, who faced a divided Christian camp headed by the rather timid Andrea Doria. From now on, and for several decades, the European camp would be terrified of what the Ottomans were capable of achieving at sea.<sup>6</sup>

I.3 The naval battle that took place on 7 October 1571, and has come to be known as the Battle of Lepanto (Fig. 2), put a brake on the successes of the Ottomans. As Miguel Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote*, notes: «On that day, the belief that the Turks were invincible at sea was shattered throughout the world». Debunking the “invincible Turk” myth contributed to an increase in the conspiratorial and revolutionary movements among the conquered peoples of the Balkans against the Sublime Porte.<sup>7</sup>

This significant event, regardless of its subsequent utilization, stands out for a number of reasons, to which I will refer briefly. First of all, for the number of

4 Ioannis HASSIOTIS, «Οι Έλληνες, το πρόβλημα της ανεξαρτησίας και τα πολεμικά γεγονότα στον ελληνικό χώρο», in *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Εθνους*, Vol. 10, Athens, Ekdotike Athenon, 1974, pp. 294-297.

5 On Barbarossa see Virginia H. AKSAN and Daniel GOFFMAN (Eds.), *The early modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

6 HASSIOTIS, «Οι Έλληνες, το πρόβλημα της ανεξαρτησίας», cit., pp. 301-302.

7 Androniki DIALETI, «Νοηματοδοτήσεις της “χριστιανικής νίκης” στις αφηγήσεις για τη ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου (1571) στην πρώμη νεότερη Ιταλία», in Gerassimos D. PAGRATIS (Ed.), *Πόλεμος, Κράτος και Κοινωνία στο Ιόνιο Πέλαγος (τέλη 14ου-αρχές 19ου αιώνα)*, Athens, Ionian Society for Historian Studies – Erodotos Publishers, 2018, pp. 291-317. For revolutionary movements in Southeastern Europe, see Kostas G. TSIKNAKIS, «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου και οι επαναστατικές κινήσεις στον ελληνικό χώρο», in IDEM (Ed.), *Η απίγχηση της Ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου στον ευρωπαϊκό χώρο. Πρακτικά της επιστημονικής συνάντησης (Ναύπακτος, 13 Οκτωβρίου 2012)*, Athens and Venice, Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice – Demetrios and Aegli Botsaris Foundation, 2013, pp. 53-89.

powers involved in it (Ottoman Empire, Spain, Venice, Genoa, Savoy, Naples and Sicily, and the Papal States), for the large number of ships and crews that took part, for the changes that this naval battle brought about with regard to naval tactics and shipbuilding techniques (cementing the use of sails as the main means of propulsion at the expense of galleys), and finally for the souls that were lost in the waters of the Gulf of Patras and the Ionian Sea (Fig. 3), which seem to have exceeded 30,000 in a battle that lasted only a few hours.<sup>8</sup>

I.4. About a century and a half after the Battle of Lepanto, the united Christian forces would face the Ottomans again in the Ionian waters during the siege of Corfu, in the summer of 1716, a conflict that is part of the last of the seven main Ottoman-Venetian wars. The Ottomans attempted to occupy Venetian Corfu, driven not only by the expected geopolitical benefits, but also by the fear that not claiming the island would be perceived as a weakness in terms of impressions and psychology. In the forty-eight days that remained on the island (July 5 to August 22) – half of which were war events – they attempted bombardments against the walled area, combined with land and sea battles. About 1,700 men were killed in these operations, not counting civilians (Figs. 8-12).<sup>9</sup>

I.5. In 1799, two years after the overthrow of the Most Serene Republic, the last siege for the period studied here is recorded in the Ionian area. In an alteration of roles, the French who succeeded the Venetians on the islands, initially hailed

8 The literature on the Battle of Lepanto is enormous. See DIALETI, «Νοηματοδοτήσεις της “χριστιανικής νίκης”», cit.; TSIKNAKIS (Ed.), «Η ναυμαχία της Ναυπάκτου», cit., *passim*.

9 CANDIANI, *I vascelli della Serenissima*, cit., pp. 511-554; Ioanna-Varvara LEVENTI, «Οθωμανικές πολιορκίες στην Κέρκυρα την περίοδο της Βενετοκρατίας», in *Πρακτικά Ι' Διεθνούς Πανιονίου Συνεδρίου* (Κέρκυρα, 30 Απριλίου – 4 Μαΐου 2014), Vol. I, Corfu, Society for Corfiot Studies, 2015, pp. 587-594; EADEM, «1716, η Κέρκυρα υπό οθωμανική πολιορκία», in *1716. Η πολιορκία της Κέρκυρας*, Corfu, Friends of the Albert Cohen Memorial Foundation, 2016, pp. 18-27. On the Seventh Venetian-Ottoman War, see HATZOPoulos, *Ο τελευταίος βενετο-οθωμανικός πόλεμος*, cit.; Anastasia STOURAITI, «Η πολιτισμική ιστορία του πολέμου και η Βενετική αυτοκρατορία: η περίπτωση της πολιορκίας της Κέρκυρας (1716)», in PAGRATIS (Ed.), *Πόλεμος, Κράτος και Κοινωνία*, cit., pp. 321-345. See also in various studies of the volumes: Nikos E. KARAPIDAKIS and Aliki D. NIKIFOROU (Eds.), *Αναμνηστικό Τεύχος 1716–2016. 300 χρόνια από την Πολιορκία της Κέρκυρας / Commemorative Volume 1716–2016. 300 Years since the Siege of Corfu*, Corfu, Municipality of Corfu – Regional Union of Municipalities of Ionian Islands, 2016; EIDEM (Ed.), *Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία και Βενετία: Η πολιορκία της Κέρκυρας από τους Οθωμανούς το 1716. Πρακτικά επιστημονικού συνεδρίου*, Κέρκυρα, 21–23 Οκτωβρίου 2016, Corfu, Municipality of Corfu – Regional Union of Municipalities of Ionian Islands, 2019. For the main fortresses and castles of Corfu, see Fig. 7.

by the local population as liberators, found themselves in the position of defender. They faced not only the united Russian-Turkish fleet, in an unusual alliance of the two forces, but also the hostility of a large part of the local population. The fortified city of Corfu was closely besieged for four months by sea and land, until the final surrender of the French in early March 1799.<sup>10</sup>

II. The second category, the so-called “international wars”, involves conflicts between two powers, in this case Venice and the Ottoman Empire. From 1396 to 1718, Venetians and Ottomans found themselves in rival camps 11 times in total.<sup>11</sup>

II.1. Mainly guided by the damage caused by these wars to societies and the urban environment, the eastern Ionian coast suffered the worst during the Ottoman invasion of Corfu in 1537.

In their attempt to occupy the castle of the island, in the 15 days they remained there (August 25 to September 11) the Ottomans caused the almost total destruction of the suburbs. Using mainly siege pieces and naval artillery, they scored direct hits on the Old Fortress (Fig. 6), without coming into direct confrontation with their opponents. According to various testimonies – which show small and/or large differences between them – the death toll from this brief siege is estimated at around 18,000 and the number of prisoners from 15,000 to 22,000.<sup>12</sup> The consequences of the siege include the capture of most of the inhabitants of Paxos.<sup>13</sup>

It took decades for the wounds of this war to heal and for the surviving captives to return from the slave markets. The rhythms of these “repatriations” have left their mark on the archival material, especially notary documents, which record loans with real estate used as collateral, as well as other transactions aimed at raising money to pay for ransoming the prisoners.

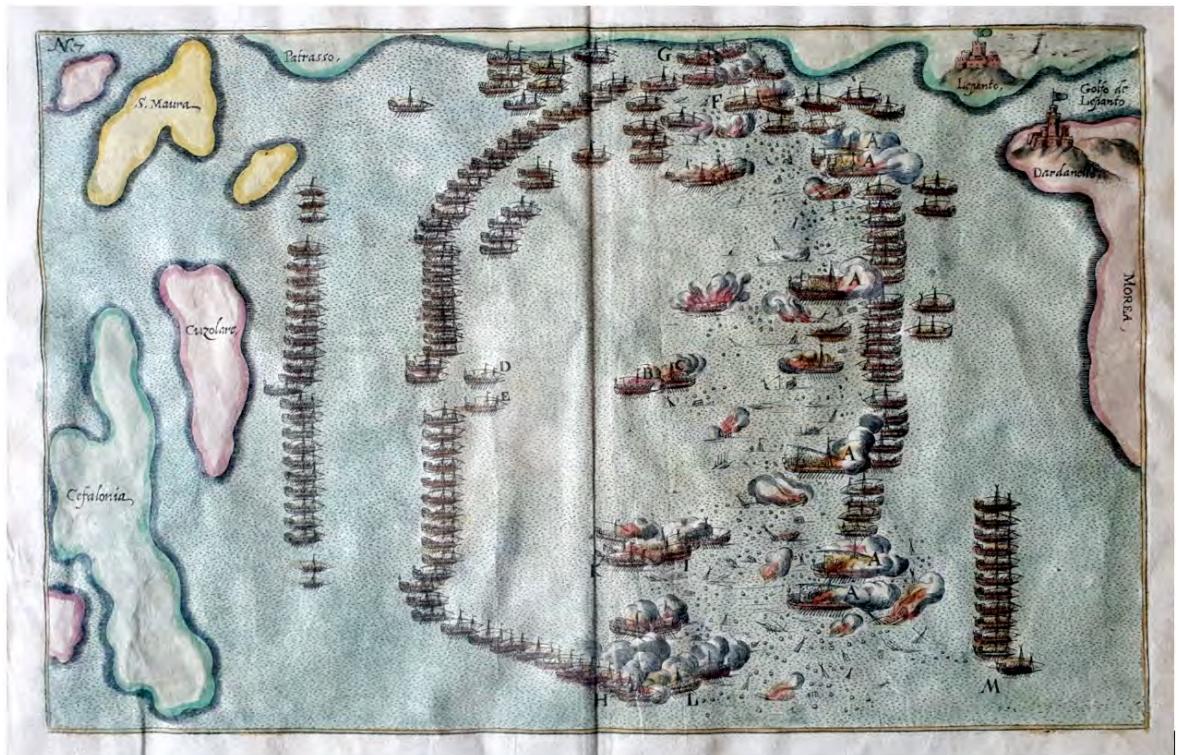
A typical case is that of a father from the south of Corfu who in 1542, five

10 See Theodosis NIKOLAIDIS, «Η λατρεία του αγίου Σπυρίδωνα στην Κέρκυρα», *Historica*, 29, 57 (December 2012), pp. 329 and so on.

11 Benjamin ARBEL, «Venice’s Maritime Empire in the Early Modern Period», in Eric DURSTTELER (Ed.), *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797*, Leiden, Brill, 2013, p. 199.

12 LEVENTI, «Οθωμανικές πολιορκίες στην Κέρκυρα», cit. Small variations in numbers (from 7,000 to 24,000) are given by ARBEL, «Venice’s Maritime Empire», cit., p. 200.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 201.



**2** Engraving of the naval Battle of Lepanto. Johann Christoph Wagner, «Delineation Provinciarum Pannoniae et Imperii Turcici in Oriente Eine Grundrichtige Beschreibund deb ganzen Aufgangs Gedruckt bei Jacob Koppmayer», Augsburg, 1684. Courtesy of the Spyros Gaoutsis Collection, Corfu.

years after the Ottoman siege, dictates his will to the notary, making his children his heirs «if they come from slavery», without ignoring the opposite case «and if no one comes from slavery and my brother's children come, to have them for my soul salvation». <sup>14</sup>

For a long time after the siege, the people of Corfu would protest in Venice for the cruelty shown to the civilians by the local Venetian authorities, who prevented civilians from entering the castle, with the exception of those who, according

14 Georgios E. RODOLAKIS and Lydia PAPARRIGA-ARTEMIADI, «Οι πράξεις του νοταρίου Αγίου Ματθαίου Κερκύρας Πέτρου Βαραγκά (1541–1545)», *Επετηρίδα των Κέντρων Ερεύνης της Ιστορίας του Ελληνικού Δικαίου της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών*, 31 (1996), p. 227.

to Nikandros Noukios, managed to pay their taxes; they also protested against the refusal of the Most Serene Republic to expand the city wall, thus enhancing the protection of the local population.<sup>15</sup> Their appeals finally came to fruition about four decades after the siege, when the Venetians proceeded with an urban redesign, building the New Fortress and extending a wall that included both the fortresses and the settlements that had meanwhile developed in the intermediate space (Fig. 6).<sup>16</sup>

II.2. In 1571, another siege took place on Corfu. In the seven days that they remained on the island (August 30 to September 6), the Ottomans used little or no artillery and clashed directly with the defenders only once. The consequences of this war were also limited: 12 dead, about 70 wounded, and one prisoner.<sup>17</sup>

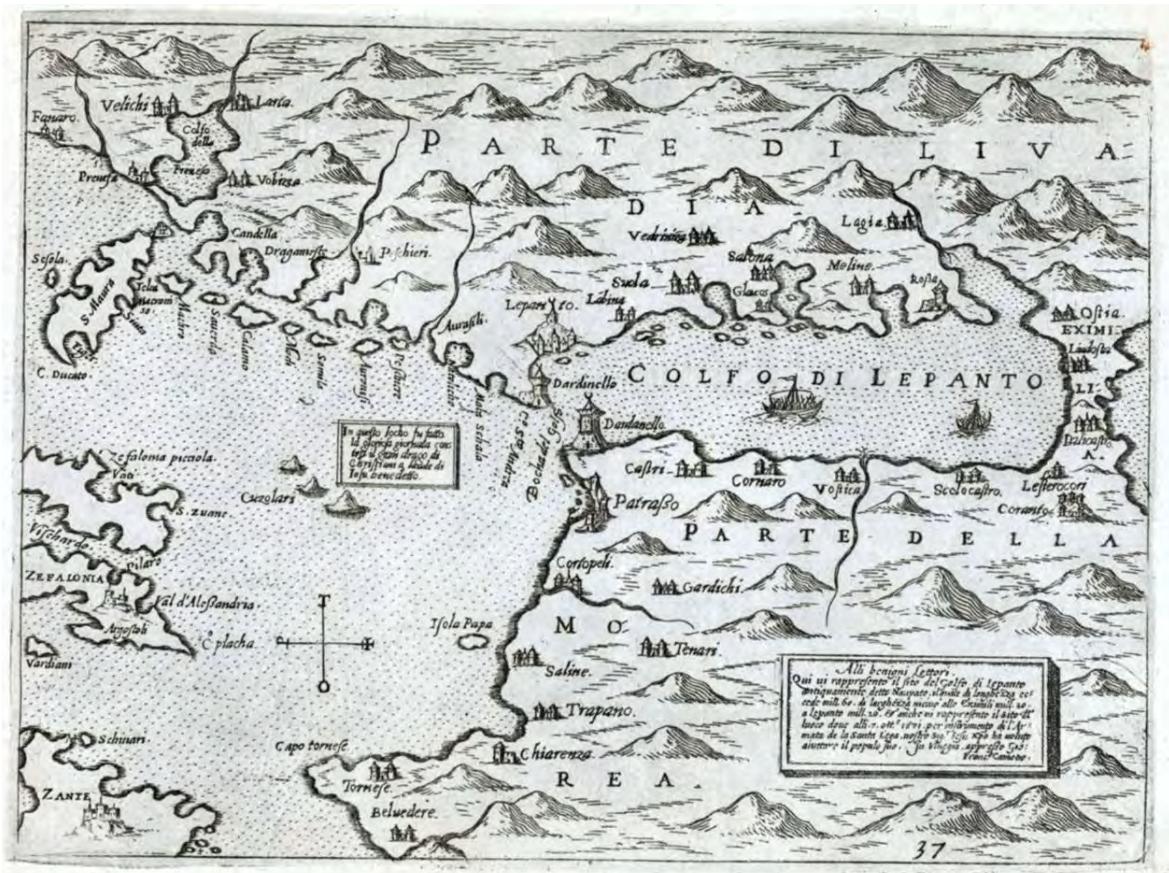
III. From the above-mentioned case study, with the exception of the two-year presence of the forces of Emperor Charles V in the western part of the Peloponnese, some conclusions can be drawn: the wars, conventional or otherwise, that directly impacted the eastern Ionian coasts were brief and combined the traditional with the modern means (firearms and artillery). At the same time, however, there was an extensive war of attrition with raids, the capture of civilians and the looting of buildings in the suburbs and the countryside.

In particular, the first two sieges (of 1537 and 1571) do not seem to have been the product of any particular planning, but emerged as a kind of opportunity for

15 Theodosis NIKOLAIDIS, «Η λατρεία του αγίου Σπυρίδωνα στην Κέρκυρα», *Historica*, 29, 56 (June 2012), pp. 109-111.

16 Afroditi AGOROPOULOU-BIRBILI, *H αρχιτεκτονική της πόλεως της Κέρκυρας κατά την περίοδο της Ενετοκρατίας*, PhD diss., National Technical University of Athens, 1976; Elli YOTOPOULOU-SISSLIANOU, «Οι Τούρκοι στην Κέρκυρα», in Ennio CONCINA and Aliki NIKIFOROU-TESTONE (Eds.), *Κέρκυρα: Ιστορία, Αστική ζωή και Αρχιτεκτονική 14ος-19ος αι.*, Corfu, Cultural Association “Korkyra”, 1994, pp. 49-55; EADEM, «Οχυρωματικά έργα και αστικός πληθυσμός (16ος αι.)», in Aliki NIKIFOROU (Ed.), *Κέρκυρα, μια μεσογειακή σύνθεση: νησιωτισμός, διασυνδέσεις, ανθρώπινα περιβάλλοντα, 16ος-19ος αι.*, Corfu, Cultural Association “Korkyra”, 1998, pp. 229-240; Nikos SKOUTELIS, *Ο πόλεμος χωροτάκτης. Το δίκτυο των πόλεων-οχυρών στο κατά θάλασσαν κράτος της Βενετίας, 16ος-17ος αιώνας*, Athens, Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, 2013, *passim*; IDEM, «Ο σχεδιασμός του χώρου ως θεάτρου πολέμου στις βενετικές κτήσεις (16ος-17ος αι.)», in PAGRATIS (Ed.), *Πόλεμος, Κράτος και Κοινωνία*, cit., pp. 115-142.

17 YOTOPOULOU-SISSLIANOU, «Οι Τούρκοι στην Κέρκυρα», cit.; EADEM, «Οχυρωματικά έργα», cit.

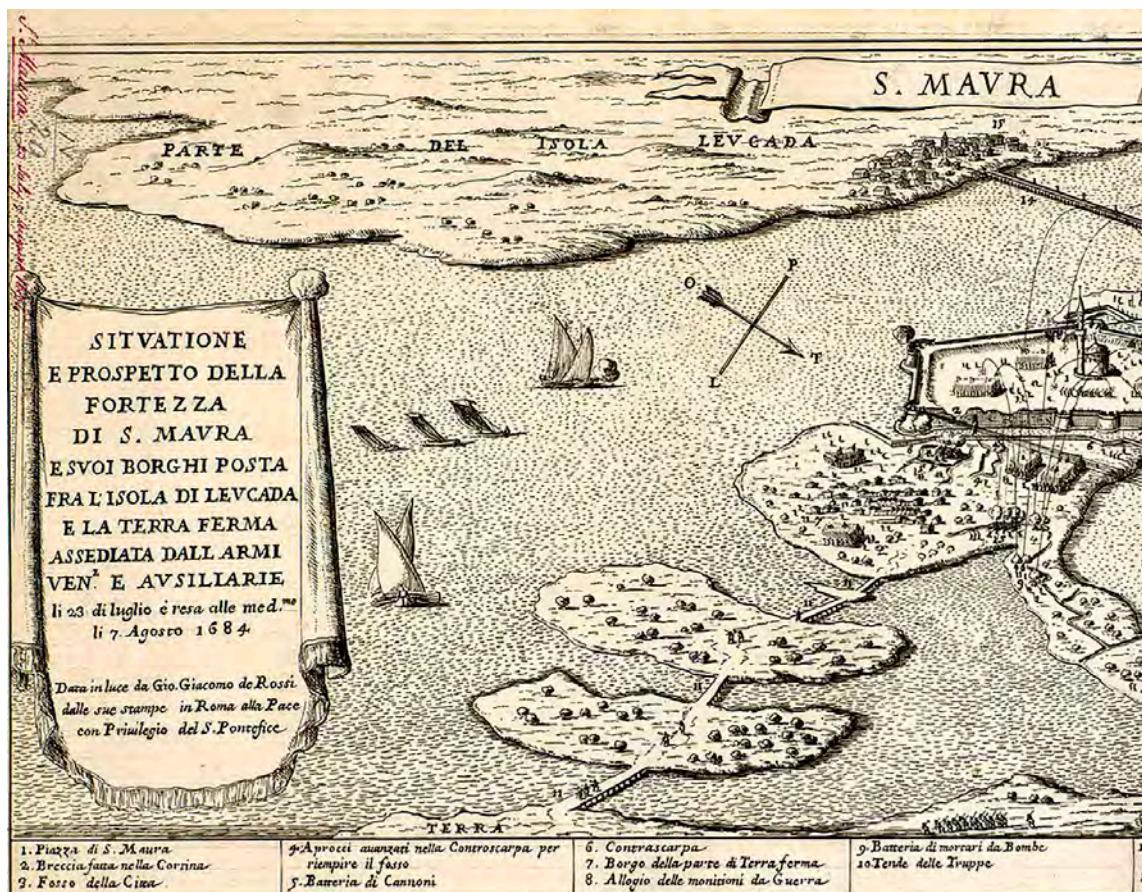


3 Map of the Gulfs of Patras and Corinth (indicated as Gulf of Lepanto). The naval Battle of Lepanto took place on October 7, 1571, near Echinades (Curzolari in Italian), a group of islands in the Ionian Sea, off the coast of Acarnania. Source: Giovanni Francesco CAMOCIO, *Isole famose, porti, fortezze, e terre maritime sottoposte alla Ser.ma Sig.ria di Venetia, ad altri Principi Christiani, et al Sig.or Turco, novamente poste in luce*, Venice, Alla libraria del segno di S. Marco, [c. 1574].

attack, presented during the established movements of the Ottoman fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean. On the contrary, that of 1716, despite the international interest it aroused, seems to have been a choice almost forced upon the Ottomans.<sup>18</sup>

The two most important sieges (1537 and 1716) – that of 1571 was brief and limited in its effects – summarize the most negative images created by the Ionians

18 LEVENTI, «Οθωμανικές πολιορκίες στην Κέρκυρα», cit.

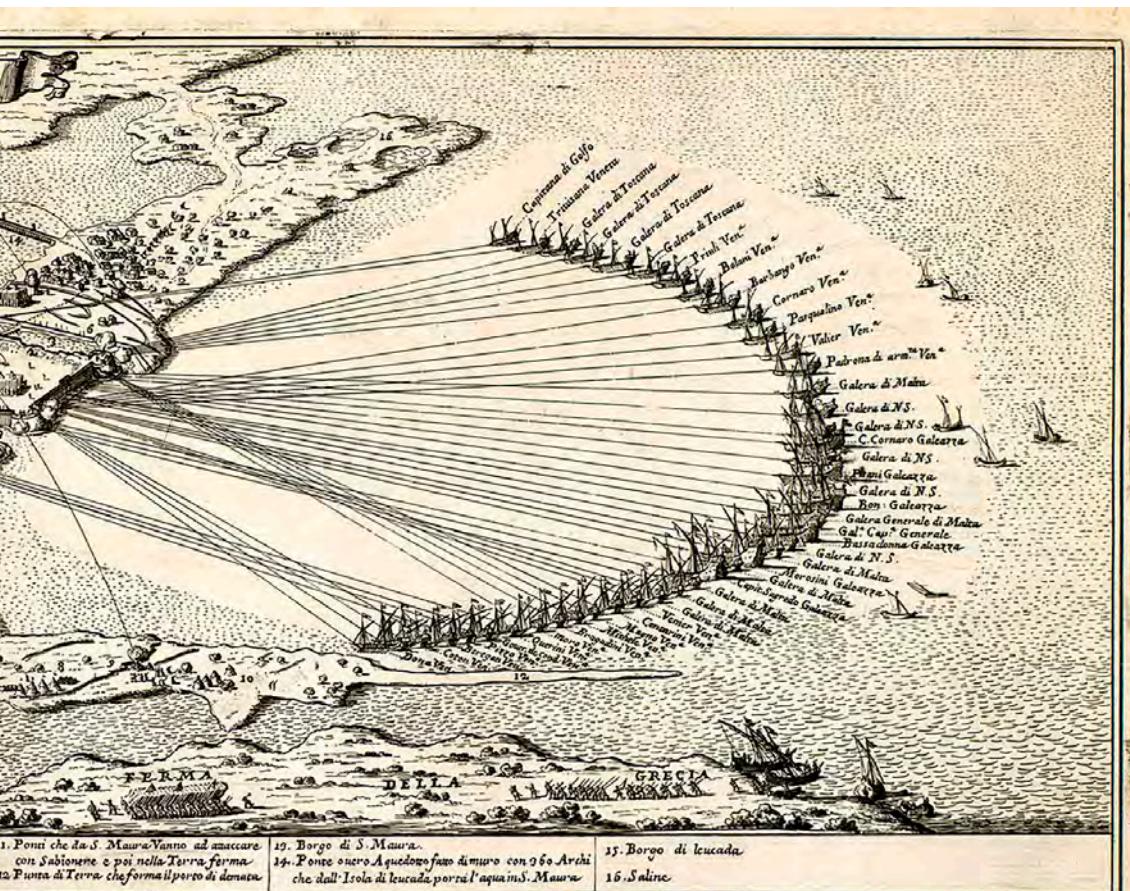


4 View of the Venetian sea-borne Siege of the Ottoman-held Castle of Lefkada (Santa Maura), 23 July–7 August 1684, resulting in a Venetian victory; by Giovanni Giacomo Rossi. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022; free for non-commercial use. Source: <https://militarymaps.rct.uk/ottoman-habsburg-wars-1521-1791/lefkada-and-st-maura-1684-sitvazione-e-prospetto>.

about the wars that struck their islands during the four centuries of Venetian rule.

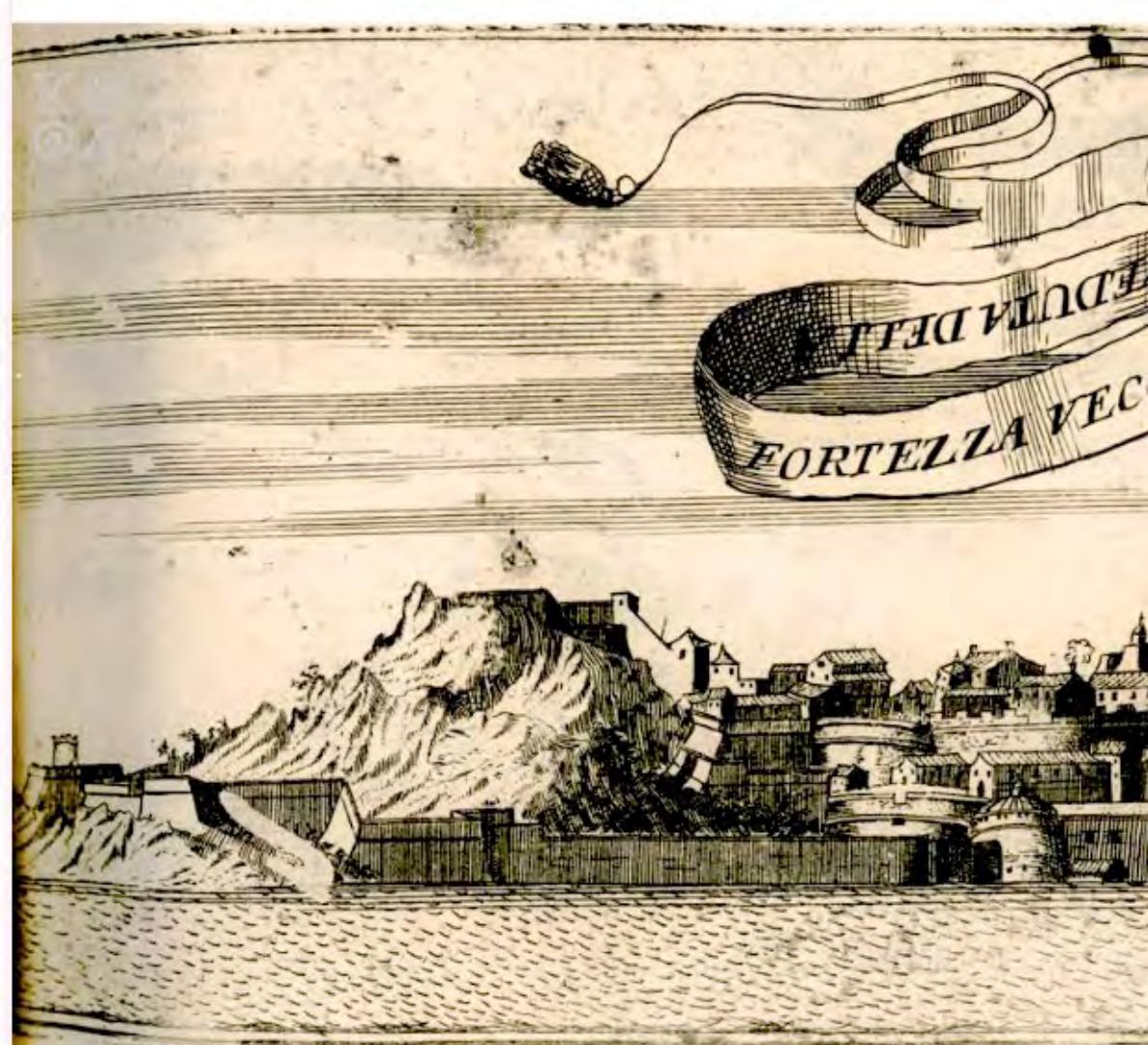
Over the years these events, and especially those of 1537, would increasingly serve as a constant reminder and threat of what the Ottomans could achieve on the battlefield, emotions which reinforced situations that were regularly repeated.

The most well-established of these situations was the annual appearance of the Ottoman fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Adriatic. The fear created by the movements of the Ottoman ships in their passage through the straits



between the Venetian-held Ionian islands and the Ottoman mainland, was maintained by rumors that circulated long before its departure from the Aegean. These referred to the number of ships comprising the Sultan's armada, their firepower, the number of sailors and other warriors they carried etc. However, they were multiplied by the unpredictable, though frequent, attacks that some of these ships made against the island coasts.

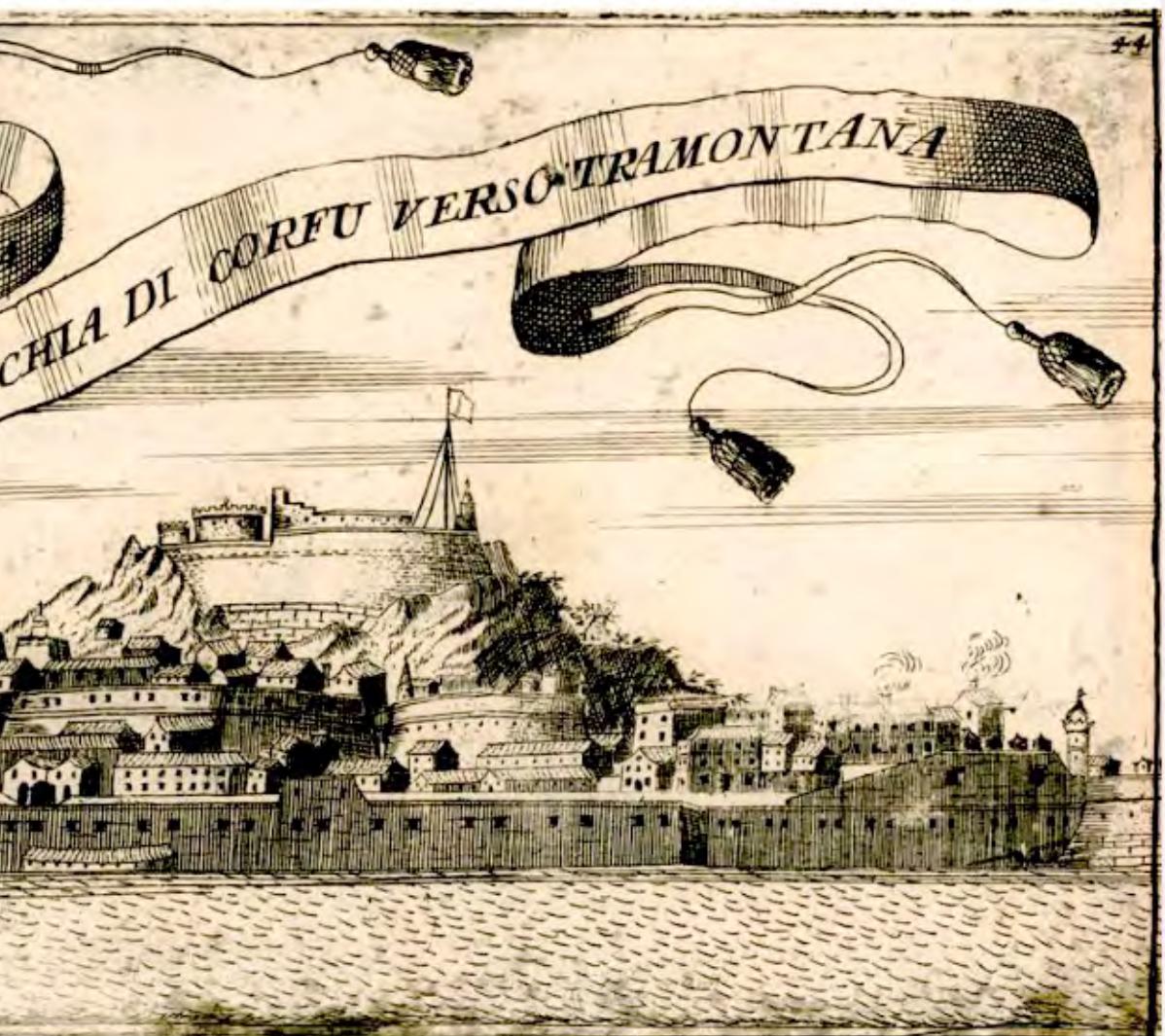
IV. The year 2016 marked the commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the Ottoman–Venetian War of 1716 (Fig. 13), the last of its kind; its central event was, as mentioned above, the siege of Corfu. Due to the Ottoman threat, a large number of Christian forces gathered around the northern Ionian island and once again (as in 1571 and 1669) rushed to defend a place that, in the eyes of part of



5 View of the Old Fortress of Corfu from the north. Source: Vincenzo CORONELLI, *Repubblica di Venezia p. IV. Citta, Fortezze, ed altri Luoghi principali dell'Albania, Epiro e Livadia, e particolarmente i posseduti da Veneti descritti e delineati dal p. Coronelli*, Venice, 1688.

contemporary public opinion, symbolized the last bastion of Christianity, possible predominance over which would increase the pressure on European territories.

Apart from commemorative references to war events, in this case to the siege of 1716, I think there is a lot to be done to study more comprehensively the fac-



tors that shaped the feeling of insecurity in the Ionian societies during the Early Modern Period.

Answers to questions such as the above presuppose the utilization of a series of research “ways”, which deal with the traditional and modern historiography of war. Summarizing them will allow us, on the one hand, to measure the weight given to research in each of these fields and, on the other, to identify untapped sources and research tools that will allow us to extract new data.

The first and foremost of these “ways” is that of classical military history, which focuses on the study of the reality of war in Clausewitzian terms, that is, as an uncertain confrontation of forces, on the basis of which exist violent passions, luck and logical calculations, a reality that, as regards its examination, leads to research into the conditions of the battles on land and sea, to an analysis of tactics and strategy and so on.<sup>19</sup> It is obvious that the main weight of historiography has been given here.

A second “way” focuses on the “great men” of the war, with the aim of compiling biographies of people who exceeded the average in terms of their heroism and/or strategic intelligence. The social history of war is constantly gaining ground, focusing on the effects of different types of war on public finances and family budgets, as well as on societies, at the level of human resources (victims, prisoners), effects which various States took care to mitigate with measures such as the organization of hospital care and the support of those affected by compensation or tax exemptions etc.

A privileged field of the social history of war is the study of the subjects of this activity, with emphasis placed on those groups that were characterized by a so-called “anonymity”, survived the war and at the same time lived and developed relations within the Ionian societies, seeking, among other things, to redeem successes at the front with economic and/or socio-political benefits.

The relatively recent historiography of war points us to another path. This is a trend that has developed in recent decades and has decisively influenced the relevant historiography, which now converses creatively with narrative sources and iconographic testimonies or other works of art, aiming to examine the cultural and social implications of war. The nature of the sources predisposes one for the emphasis placed on themes related to emotions, symbolisms or political uses of war.<sup>20</sup>

19 See Karl Von KLAUSEWITZ, *Περί των Πολέμων*, translated by Natasa Xepoulia, Thessaloniki, Vanias Publishers, 1999, as utilized by Georgios MARGARITIS, *Πόλεμος και Πολιτική*, Athens, Hellenic Academic Libraries Link, 2015, pp. 190-192. Accessed November 10, 2021. <https://repository.kallipos.gr/handle/11419/4305>

20 See DIALETI, «Νοηματοδοτήσεις της “χριστιανικής νίκης”», cit.; STOURAITI, «Η πολιτισμική ιστορία των πολέμων», cit. Cf. EADEM, «Η γυναίκα του Χάνδακα: τερατογονία, φύλο και έντυπες ειδήσεις στον απόρχο του Κρητικού Πολέμου», in Stefanos KAKLAMANIS (Ed.), *O Κρητικός Πόλεμος (1645–1669). Όψεις των πολέμων στον χώρο και τον χρόνο / The Cretan War (1645–1669). Aspects of war in space and time [=Κρητικά Χρονικά / Cre-*



**6** Map of the city of Corfu with the Venetian fortifications (the Old and the New Fortress). Source: Olfert DAPPER, *Naukeurige Beschryving der Eilandten in de Archipel der Middelandtsche Zee [...]*, Amsterdam, Wolfgangh, 1688.

In the discussion about fertile research fields, we need to focus more on the stage of preparation for war through military training, methods of raising armies, their financing, but also the rearrangement of urban space, in order to achieve a more effective defense on the part of the besieged, a process that involves both spatial and technical changes (in their fortifications) and is inevitably linked to general changes in the way war is conducted. There are numerous examples concerning the Ionian Sea. Perhaps the most important of these refers to the urban

reorganization of the Ionian cities from the second half of the sixteenth century, shortly before and shortly after the Battle of Lepanto, with the aim of strengthening the defense of the islands in times of intense Ottoman threat.<sup>21</sup>

In the same direction, but rather “in parallel”, that is without meeting with the “professionals” of war, the large mass of the urban and rural population that suffered the consequences either as an imminent threat or as reality. In the first case, it was the people of the rural areas who paid the annual cost of the risk of imminent threat, through compulsory services to the public, the *angarie* associated with the defense, such as service in the galleys,<sup>22</sup> militia duty and castle repair work. The same population groups and part of the inhabitants of the urban centers were charged, in addition to taxation, with the cost of feeding and/or billeting the soldiers who lived inside and outside the walls for as long as a state of emergency lasted.<sup>23</sup>

There was certainly an honorary service associated with the war: funding by local communities for the construction and manning of galleys. These ships, as well as other, smaller commercial vessels that were relatively easily converted into warships, increased the power of the Venetian fleet. The compensation of the citizens (*cittadini*) for these services to the Most Serene Republic, which proved their loyalty and devotion to it, was remarkable, as they translated into social and economic benefits (tax collection rights, privileges etc.).<sup>24</sup>

Issues concerning the subjects of war have troubled human societies even in

21 SKOUTELIS, *O πόλεμος χωροτάκτης*, cit.

22 On the rowers in the Venetian galleys of Crete during the Fourth Venetian-Ottoman War, see Aristea GRATSEA, «Galeotti και Andiscari στις βενετικές γαλέρες: κοινωνικές και οικονομικές προεκτάσεις στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη», *Historica*, 37, 71 (April–October 2020), pp. 87-112.

23 Elli YOTOPOULOU-SISSLIANOU, *O αντίκτυπος του Δ' Βενετοτουρκικού πολέμου στην Κέρκυρα: από ανέκδοτες πηγές*, Athens, 1982, pp. 81, 238-242. On the personal and the economic *angarie* in Morea during the second venetian dominion, see Eirini VRETTOU, *Ο θεσμός της προσωπικής και οικονομικής αγγαρείας (angarie personali e reali) στις κτήσεις των Βενετών στον ελληνόφωνο χώρο: η περίπτωση της Πελοποννήσου κατά τη Β' Βενετοκρατία (1685-1715)*, PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2021. On the role of the rural social strata in the Cyprus War (1570-1571), see Gilles GRIVAUD, «Un société en guerre: Chypre face à la conquête ottomane», in Angel NICOLAOU-KONNARI (Ed.), *H Γαληνοτάτη και η Ευγενεστάτη: Η Βενετία στην Κύπρο και η Κύπρος στη Βενετία / La Serenissima and La Nobilissima: Venice in Cyprus and Cyprus in Venice*, Nicosia, Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2009, pp. 194-203.

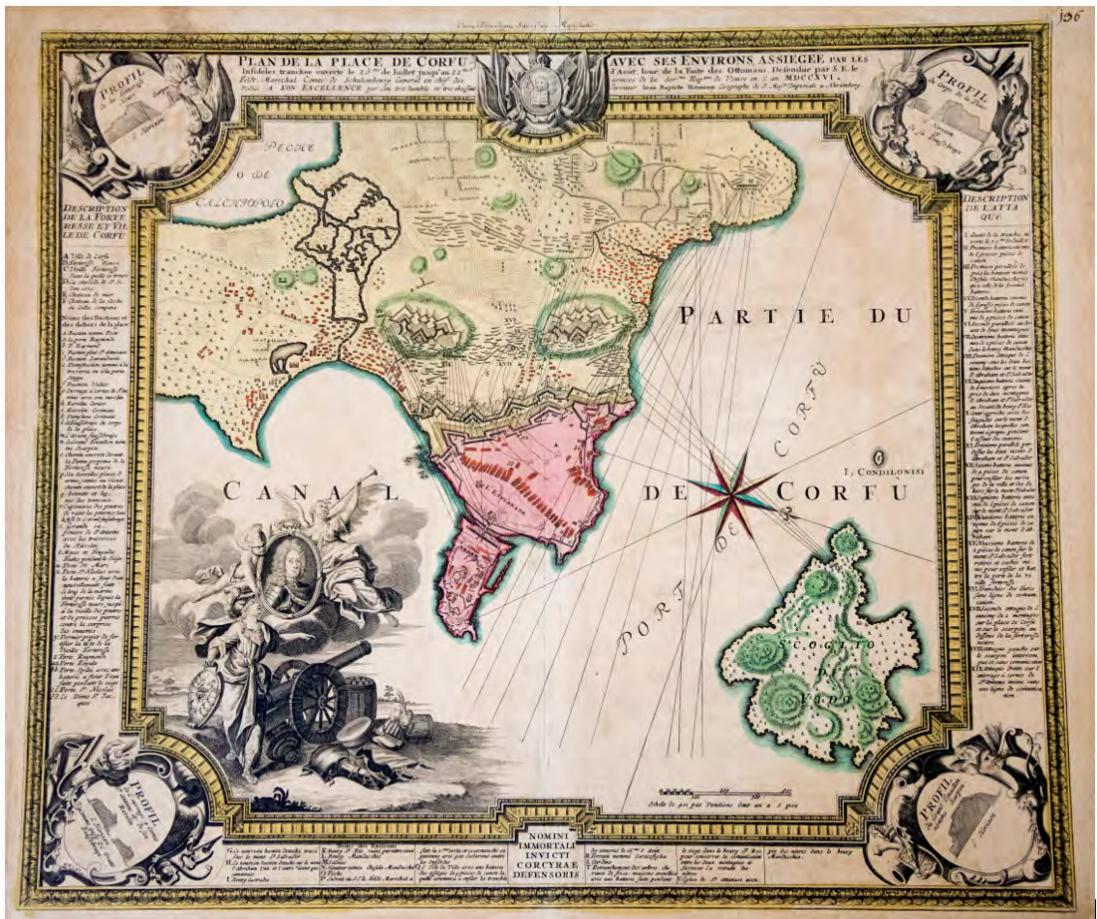
24 YOTOPOULOU-SISSLIANOU, *O αντίκτυπος του Δ' Βενετοτουρκικού πολέμου*, cit., pp. 59-73, 229-232.



7 Map of Corfu framed by views and floor plans of the island's main fortresses and castles. Vincenzo M. Coronelli, «Isola di Corfù posseduta dalla Serenissima Repubblica di Venetia, descritta, e dedicata dal P. Cosmografo Coronelli all'Ill.mo [...],» Venice, 1690. Courtesy of the Spyros Gaoutsis Collection, Corfu.

times of peace. For instance, we know – more as a literary motif (*Periplous*, of D. Romas) and, with exceptions,<sup>25</sup> less as a research result – the meager pay of soldiers and alternative means of livelihood. By providing services such as, e.g., the transfer of water from springs to the homes of the natives, but also the protection of wealthy people, the mercenaries of the Most Serene Republic on the one hand secured additional resources, valuable when their salaries were late in arriving

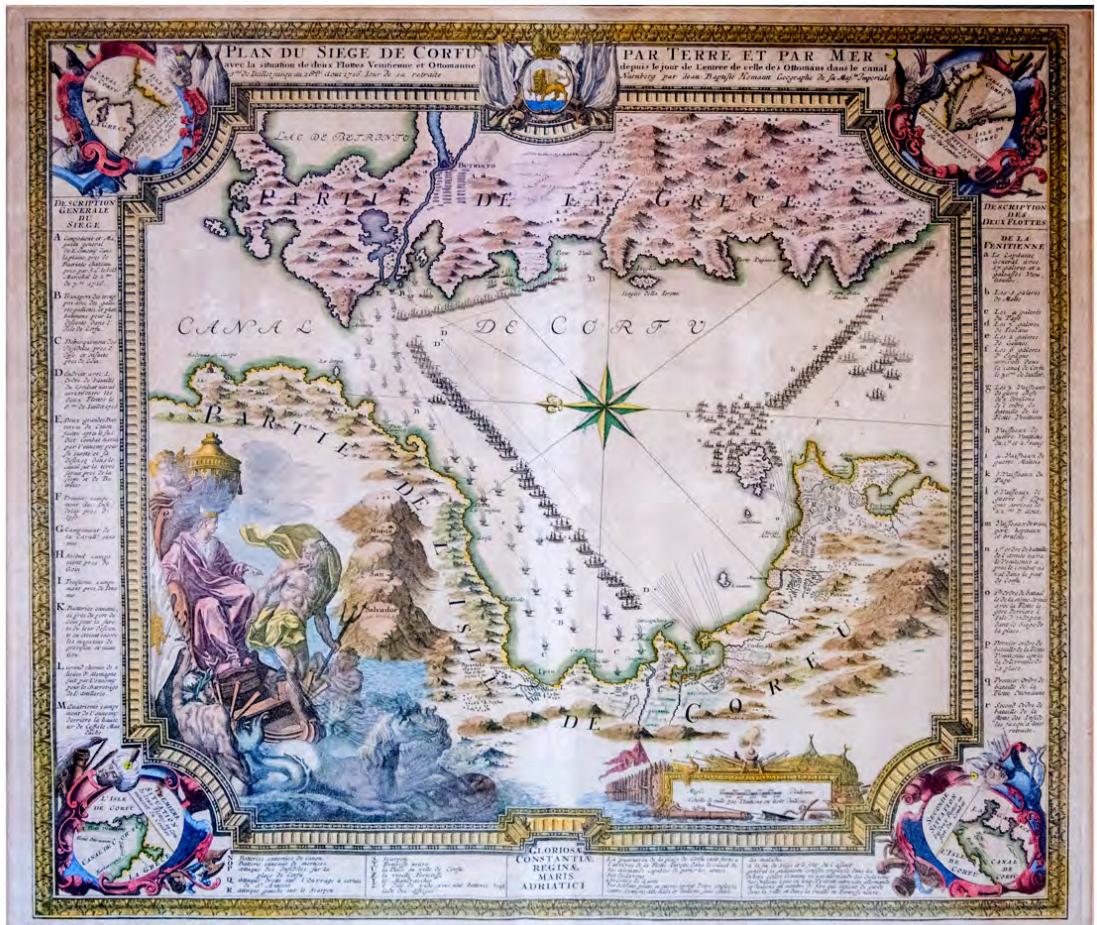
25 Romina TSAKIRI, «Παράνομοι στην υπηρεσία ατόμων και οικογενειών στην Κρήτη (16ος–17ος αι.): περιπτώσεις (αυτο)κατάλυσης του βενετικού κρατικού μηχανισμού. Μια πρώτη προσέγγιση», *Historica*, 31, 60 (June 2014), pp. 23-52.



**8** Floor plan of the fortified city of Corfu during its Siege by the Ottomans (1716). Johann Baptist Homann, «Plan de la place de Corfu avec ses environs, assiégée par les infidèles, tranchée ouverte le 25me de Juillet jusqu' au 22me d'Août [...]», Nuremberg, 1720. Courtesy of the Spyros Gaoutsis Collection, Corfu.

from Venice or the local currencies in which they were paid were devaluated. On the other hand, they were involved in local disputes and conflicts, degrading the nature and role of their work.

Contributing to the creation of conditions of insecurity was a marginal kind of warfare: raiding, another constant that gained special intensity before and during the main events of the war, aiming to cause material and psychological damage to civilians. The participation of the corsairs of Barbary was a special case. In



9 Map of the Ottoman Siege of Corfu by sea and land (1716). Johann Baptist Homann, «Plan du Siege de Corfu par Terre et par Mer avec la situation de deux Flottes Venitienne et Ottomanne depuis le jour de l'entrée de celle des Ottomans dans le canal», Nuremberg, 1720. Courtesy of the Spyros Gaoutsis Collection, Corfu.

theory, they were driven by religious motives and spread terror on the western and eastern shores of the Ionian Sea,<sup>26</sup> from where they grabbed men, women and children for the slave markets of the Mediterranean. In times of great war turmoil, such as the Napoleonic Wars, this reality became even more complicated, with people and ships becoming targets of pirates either expected (serving enemy forc-

26 Peter EARLE, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary*, London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1970.

es) or unexpected (coming from theoretically friendly States).<sup>27</sup>

The consequences of piracy were similar in terms of maintaining fear and insecurity. And this despite the different starting points of the perpetrators and the apparent emphasis on the part of the pirates on robbery in peacetime, a differentiation that is not always confirmed by the relevant case studies. In the Ionian, pirates came from Lefkada, until its incorporation to the Venetian state (1685) [Fig. 4],<sup>28</sup> as well as from Himara,<sup>29</sup> a constant source of danger. Both of these groups were active on almost all of the eastern shores of the Ionian Sea.

Despite the attraction of raiding and piracy in modern societies, their study with regard to how they were conducted in the Ionian area lacks the basic works that will make known the various dimensions of this phenomenon.<sup>30</sup>

27 Salvatore BONO, *I corsari barbareschi*, Turin, ERI-Edizioni RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1964; Louis SICKING, «Islands, pirates, privateers and the Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean», in Dejanirah COUTO, Feza GÜNERGUN and Maria Pia PEDANI (Eds.), *Seapower, Technology and trade. Studies in Turkish Maritime History*, Istanbul, Piri Reis University Publications – Denizler Kitabevi, 2014, pp. 239-252. See also ARBEL, 2013, pp. 202-203; Giorgos KOUTZAKIOTIS, «Κούρσος και επιχειρηματική δραστηριότητα στις Κυκλαδες κατά τον βενετο-οθωμανικό πόλεμο των ετών 1684-1699», in *Νέοι οι ερευνητές: Ιστορικοί (4 Νοεμβρίου 2010). Θεωρητικοί της Ψυχανάλυσης (1 Νοεμβρίου 2012)*, Athens, Moraitis Foundation, 2013, pp. 9-21; Gerassimos D. PAGRATIS, «War at sea and trade routes in the Mediterranean during the Napoleonic period through the reports of Septinsular Republic's diplomatic representatives», *Mediterranean Chronicle*, 8 (2018), pp. 67-81.

28 Marinos SARIYANNIS, «Οθωμανοί κουρσάροι στη Λευκάδα: Με αφορμή ένα χωρίο του Εβλιγά Τσελεμπή», in *Δρόμοι και παράδρομοι της τοπικής ιστορίας, Πρακτικά ΙΕ' Συμποσίου, Πνευματικό Κέντρο Δήμου Λευκάδας, Γιορτές Λόγου και Τέχνης (Λευκάδα 18-20 Αυγούστου 2010)*, Lefkada, Society for Leucadian Studies, 2011, pp. 49-65; Sophia LAIOU, «The Levends of the Sea in the Second Half of the 16th Century: Some Considerations», *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 23 (2005/6), pp. 233-247; KOLOVOS (Ed.), 2013, *passim*.

29 Gerassimos D. PAGRATIS, *Κοινωνία και Οικονομία στο βενετικό Κράτος της Θάλασσας: οι Ναυτιλιακές Επιχειρήσεις στην Κέρκυρα (1496-1538)*, Athens, Pedio Publishers, 2013, p. 362. See also YOTOPOULOU-SISSILIANOU, *Ο αντίκτυπος του Δ' Βενετοτουρκικού πολέμου*, cit., p. 189.

30 Among the exceptions are the studies of Alexandra KRANTONELLI, *Ιστορία της Πειρατείας στους πρώτους χρόνους της Τουρκοκρατίας (1390-1538)*, Athens, Hestia Publishers, 1985; EADEM, *Ιστορία της Πειρατείας στους μέσους χρόνους της Τουρκοκρατίας (1538-1699)*, Athens, Hestia Publishers, 1991; EADEM, *Ελληνική Πειρατεία και κούρσος των 18ο αιώνα και μέχρι την Ελληνική Επανάσταση*, Athens, Hestia Publishers, 1998; EADEM, «Η δράση των πειρατών στο Ιόνιο Πέλαγος», in *To Ιόνιο Πέλαγος. Χαρτογραφία και Ιστορία, 16ος-18ος αιώνας*, Athens, National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation / Cartography Archive, 2002, pp. 217-223. See also in PAGRATIS (Ed.), *Πόλεμος, Κράτος και Κοινωνία*, cit.,



10 Ottoman vessels bombing Corfu during its Siege (1716). German painted engraving (1720). Courtesy of the Spyros Gaoutsis Collection, Corfu.

Even less attention seems to have been paid to another activity related to the war and the preparations around it: the mechanism by which information was gathered on behalf of the most important powers in the region (Venetians, Ottomans, Spaniards) and other interested players (English, Dutch, Russians). Indigenous or passing merchants and the military, consuls, but also ecclesiastics of all ranks, not to mention cases in which the above qualities are combined, have somehow joined the information-gathering networks, contributing to another feature of the islands, that of a place of residence, or temporary residence, for spies.<sup>31</sup>

2018, pp. 67-81.

31 See Ioannis HASSIOTIS, *Σχέσεις Ελλήνων και Ισπανών στα χρόνια της Τουρκοκρατίας*, Athens, 1969; IDEM, *Oι Έλληνες στις παραμονές της ναυμαχίας της Ναυπάκτου*. Εκκλή-

Last, but definitely not least, an observation on the wide period of time covered by the present study and the changes in warfighting methods that occurred during this long period. The outer limits of this period include two historical events with various connotations. On the one hand, the fall of Constantinople, resulting from a long siege during which old and new methods of warfare were tried, assuring it a key place in military history; but it was also a development of global importance, as it dramatically changed the political and economic geography of the Eastern Mediterranean, further frustrating one of the possible choices of the Ionians, the slightest expectation of their ever reconnecting with the Byzantine Empire.

The other end of the period in question is dominated by another milestone in military history: the Napoleonic Wars. In addition to his military intelligence, the historical figure of Bonaparte was associated with a new relationship between war and society. A relationship that was forged on the principles of the French Revolution and the various transitions that it confirmed at the social and political level, but also on the way war was conducted, which now usually concerned conflicts between Nations.<sup>32</sup>

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σεις, επαναστατικές κινήσεις και εξεγέρσεις στην ελληνική χερσόνησο από τις παραμονές ως το τέλος των Κυπριακού πολέμου (1568–1571), Thessaloniki, Society for Macedonian Studies, 1970; IDEM, «Venezia e i domini veneziani tramite di informazioni sui Turchi per gli Spagnoli nel sec. XVI», in Hans-Georg BECK, Manoussos MANOUSSACAS and Agostino PERTUSI (Eds.), *Venezia, centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente (secoli XV–XVI). Aspetti e problemi*, Vol. 1, Florence, L. S. Olschki, 1977, pp. 117-136. For the case of the Venetian state, see Paolo PRETO, «La Guerra segreta: spionaggio, sabotaggi, attentati», in Stefania Maddalena REDOLFI (Ed.), *Venezia e la difesa del Levante. Da Lepanto a Candia 1570–1670*, Varese, Arsenale Editrice, 1986, pp. 79-85; IDEM, *I servizi segreti di Venezia. Spionaggio e controspionaggio ai tempi della Serenissima*, Milan, il Saggiatore, 2010. See also Emrah Safa GÜRKAN, *Espionage in the 16th century Mediterranean: Secret Diplomacy, Mediterranean go-betweens and the Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry*, PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2012; IDEM, «L’Idra del Sultano. Lo spionaggio ottomano nel Cinquecento», *Mediterranea. Ricerche storiche*, 38 (2016), pp. 447-476; Chrysoulantis PAPADAMOU, «A Secret War: Espionage in Venetian Corfu during the Construction of the San Marco Fortress», in George THEOTOKIS and Aysel YILDIZ (Eds.), *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea. Aspects of War and Military Elites*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2018, pp. 347-370; Ioanna IORDANOU, *Venice’s Secret Service. Organizing Intelligence in the Renaissance*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019 [it. translation: *I servizi segreti di Venezia. Organizzazione dei servizi d’informazione nel Rinascimento*, translated by Giorgio Maini, Gorizia, LEG, 2021].

32 MARGARITIS, *Πόλεμος και Πολιτική*, cit., pp. 189-190; Gunther ROTTENBERG, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon*, Indiana U.P., Bloomington Ind., 1980; IDEM, *The Napole-*



11 Allegory of Venice's victory over the Ottomans in Corfu (1716), with the portraits of Doge Giovanni II Corner and Field Marshall Johann Mathias von der Schulenburg, commander of the Venetian armed forces. Engraving, Dillingen 1718.  
Courtesy of the Spyros Gaoutsis Collection, Corfu.

However, the aforementioned time limits also include the discussion of the so-called “military revolution”, the transition from a typically medieval or post-medieval mode of warfare to a set of different methods and practices that included the upgrade of the infantry as the main arm of attack against cavalry, the mass use of gunpowder artillery and musketry, the spatial reform of cities, the fortification updates based on new technological advances etc.<sup>33</sup>

All these developments were already visible to modern observers, such as Niccolò Machiavelli, in his works *The Art of War* (1521) and *The Prince* (1532), despite the criticism he has received for some of his views. In the new tendencies in the conduct of the war and in the relative backwardness of the Italian states, Machiavelli attributed the difficult position of the latter to the French, who had dominated a large part of the Peninsula.

Contrary to Italian history, the literature on the Ionian Sea is characterized by several “silences”, without degrading the key contribution of the main general synthesis. Based on our acquired knowledge, we will try to draw, in lieu of conclusions, some rough lines around the nature and character of the war in the Ionian Sea.<sup>34</sup>

The wars that mainly affected the Ionian societies were defensive in nature and manifested themselves mainly in the form of sieges against the northernmost of the islands, Corfu. During these periods, the civilians were burdened not only with compulsory recruitment, but also with the obligation to billet the soldiers, with all the consequences this entailed.

Equally painful, however, were other situations associated with periods of peace that, in various ways, perpetuated the Ionians’ fears of the Ottomans. These

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onic Wars, New York, Harper Perennial, 2006.

33 See the classic essays of Michael ROBERTS, *The Military Revolution, 1560–1660: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered Before the Queen's University of Belfast*, Belfast, M. Boyd, 1956, and Geoffrey PARKER, «The “Military Revolution”, 1560–1660—a Myth?», *The Journal of Modern History*, 48, 2 (1976), pp. 195–214, reprinted repeatedly; IDEM, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988 [revised edition, 1996]. See more analytically in Ágoston GÁBOR, «Firearms and Military Adaptation: The Ottomans and the European Military Revolution, 1450–1800», *Journal of World History*, 25, 1 (2014), pp. 85–124.

34 This was the starting point behind the composition of the collective work under the supervision of the current author, entitled *Πόλεμος, Κράτος και Κοινωνία στο Ιόνιο Πέλαγος (τέλη 14ου–αρχές 19ου αιώνα)* [PAGRATIS (Ed.), *Πόλεμος, Κράτος και Κοινωνία*, cit.].



**12** The Miracle of Saint Spyridon in the Siege of Corfu (1716). Detail from an icon, mid-18th century, in the Chapel of Aixoni, Glyfada, Athens.

Source: Ioanna ΒΙΤΗΑ, «Παραπτήσεις στους εικονογραφικούς κύκλους του αγίου Σπυρίδωνα», *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, IV, 19 (1996–1997), p. 266.

included the sporadic (but essentially regular) attacks of Ottoman ships against insular and coastal settlements up and down the Ionian Sea, as well as the spring and summer raids of corsairs and pirates, mainly from Barbary, Himara or the Ottoman Empire, which resulted in the capture of slaves, as already mentioned.

Situations such as the above, which are basically short in duration but constantly repetitive, although their description may imply a certain stagnancy, have been able to change the form of States, borders and societies, sometimes slowly, sometimes speedily, but always decisively.



13 Hellenic Post, Commemorative Stamp Set “1716-2016, 300 years since the Siege of Corfu”. Source: <https://enimerosi.com/article/5851/I-poliorkia-tis-Kerkuras-to-1716-se-grammatosimo-ton-ELTA>

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Icon of the naval Battle of Curzolari (Echinades in Greek) islands, by the Cretan painter Georgios Klontzas, last decades of the 16th century; one of the most famous depictions of the naval Battle of Lepanto in post-Byzantine art. Courtesy of the National Historical Museum, Athens (cat. n. 3578).

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