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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 außs äusserst bedrangte, aber: Durch die christliche Waffen der heroischen Republic Venedig außs tapfferst beschützte Candia* [...], Frankfurt, Wilhelm Serlin, 1669.

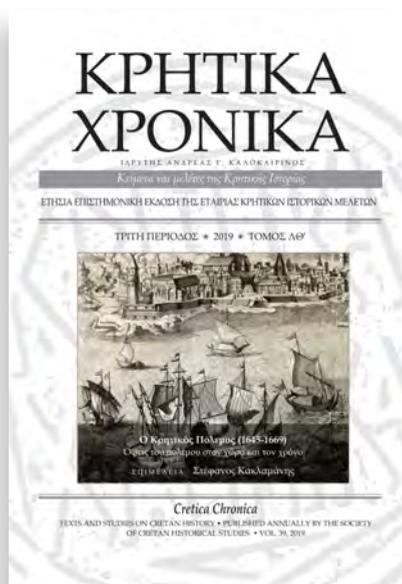


“Oltremarini” (Overseas) Regiments in Venetian service, nicknamed ‘Schiavoni’
(Vinkhujzen Collection, NYPL)

STEFANOS KAKLAMANIS (ED.),

***Ο Κρητικός Πόλεμος (1645–1669).
Όψεις του πολέμου στον χώρο και τον χρόνο /
Aspects of war in space and time
[= Κρητικά Χρονικά / Cretica Chronica, 39 (2019)]***

Heraklion, Crete, Society of Cretan Historical Studies, 2019, pp. 572.



Issue 39 of the scientific journal *Cretica Chronica* is dedicated to the Cretan War, also known as the War of Candia or the Fifth Ottoman–Venetian War, which took place between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire from 1645 to 1669 and culminated in the complete conquest of the island on behalf of the latter. The special issue has been edited by Stefanos Kaklamanis, Professor of Modern Greek Philology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Philology, and is the common effort of significant schol-

ars serving the relevant research in Greece. The editor has studied for a long time the literature and history of Crete under Venetian rule and has also edited another collective volume with the same theme, entitled *Ο Κρητικός Πόλεμος. Από την ιστορία στη λογοτεχνία*¹ (Heraklion, Society of Cretan Historical Studies, 2008, pp. 242).

The novelty of this collective work lies in the fact that it does not focus exclusively on military operations in Crete, the Aegean Sea and the Dalmatian coast. On the contrary, war is approached not only as a theme of traditional military and political history, but also as a significant social and cultural phenomenon. Accordingly, this is not the case of a plain narrative consisting of facts, state designs and preparations, typologies and means of warfare, but an overall outlook of all aspects of life and human activities in relation to war. In this context and on the basis of literary and historiographical texts of the time, as well as archival sources, but also using various interpretive tools, the authors attempt to highlight new aspects of the war in space and time. They mainly investigate the activity of personalities who took part in sea or land operations, managed their consequences and the problems that plagued the local societies or even far from the fronts of the war, took up the role of the “war correspondent”, aspired to animate and comfort the affected population groups, to promote the point of view and the rights of one or the other enemy or even to mobilize and involve in the War of the Christian forces against Islam and the Ottoman Empire the Catholic and Protestant public opinion of Western European countries and, of course, England, France and the Netherlands, which at that time competed for the geopolitical and commercial control of the eastern Mediterranean. In addition, the attitude of the mentioned European forces towards the two warring parties is also investigated, as well as issues relating to the history of emotions and the reception of the Cretan War and the Ottoman–Venetian Wars in general by the Greek national historiography of the 19th century.

Specifically, the special issue includes the following essays.

Basil Gounaris’s essay («Καλοί χριστιανοί αλλά απρόθυμοι σύμμαχοι: η αγγλική πολιτική κατά τον Κρητικό Πόλεμο»², pp. 15-27) is based on an earlier

1 English title: *The Cretan War. From history to literature.*

2 English title: «Good Christians but reluctant allies: English politics during the Cretan War».

monograph he wrote entitled *See how Gods Favour Sacrilege. English Views and Politics on Candia under Siege, 1645–1669* (Athens, National Hellenic Research Foundation / Section of Neohellenic Research, 2012). According to the author, the Cretan War between the Republic of Venice and the Ottoman Empire was much more than a chapter in European war history: it served as an inspiration and challenge for Western Europe. Trapped between their own old wars and the new commercial priorities, Catholics and Protestants alike had to decide anew how to handle Islam: as crusaders or as merchants? Gounaris explores the complex relationship among London, Venice and Istanbul during a critical period not only in Venetian, but also in English history. The *Serenissima* was dragged in the politics of the English Civil War in an ill-destined venture to play puritan piety against the spirit of capitalism. The author follows this story step by step, concluding that in the 1660s the Christian zeal of the restored English monarch, the English public's sympathy for the Venetian cause, and his dislike for the "others", the non-Christian Ottomans, outweighed the need to prioritize English commercial interests, which required maintaining good relations with the latter.

The next essay is on the same wavelength. Konstantinos Theodoridis («Η Ολλανδία και ο Κρητικός Πόλεμος»³, pp. 29-45) examines the attitude of the Netherlands during the War. In this case, too, despite the anti-Ottoman position of Dutch public opinion and the traditional good relations between the Venetians and the Dutch, due to their commercial interests in the Mediterranean, the latter considered it imperative to maintain good relations with the Ottoman Empire. In this context, any official action to provide military and any other kind of material assistance to the *Serenissima* during the War was excluded. Nevertheless, the Dutch government has tacitly and repeatedly facilitated the purchase of ammunition and the recruitment of mercenaries by Venetian envoys. In addition, the role of the Dutch press in disseminating information in Europe about the Cretan War – a popular topic of reading and discussion in the "public sphere" of the Netherlands – and mainly in propagating news from the Venetian point of view on the conflict between Christianity and Islam, is investigated. In the appendix the author quotes in translation some news about the siege of Candia, published in the *Herald of Haarlem* in the summer of 1669.

Vasileios Syros («Οθωμανική πολιτική σκέψη και αρχαία ελληνική ιατρική

3 English title: «The Netherlands and the Cretan War».

την παραμονή και την επαύριο του Κρητικού Πολέμου»⁴, pp. 47-68) approaches the Cretan War in the light of the Ottoman political thought, which was developed from the mid-16th century onwards and recognized the beginning of a decline of the Ottoman Empire after the death of Suleiman I. This perception is reflected in an extensive body of historiographical and political texts of the late 16th and the whole 17th century. The author attempts a thorough examination of the Ottoman views on the economic, political, and military crisis of the Empire, focusing on the adoption, appropriation and application of Galen's medical theory.

Stefanos Kaklamanis («Με τους Οθωμανούς και τους ιησουίτες ante portas: ο Γεράσιμος Βλάχος στα χρόνια του Κρητικού Πολέμου»⁵, pp. 69-162) deals with some treatises of the Cretan philosopher, theologian and philologist Gerasimos Vlachos (Candia 1605/7–Venice 1685), composed in the years of the Cretan War. In particular, he analyzes three of his lesser-known antirrhetic texts: the short treatise (*consulta*) entitled «Σκοτοδίνη των μη ορθώς φρονούντων»⁶, written to refute certain positions of a dogmatic nature of the Jesuit missionaries operating in Santorini in 1647–1648 (see the critical edition of the treatise in annex); the treatise «Κατά Ιουδαίων»⁷, written in 1670, at a time when a messianic movement, that upset the Jewish communities of Europe and the Ottoman Empire, was in full swing; and the treatise «Περί της θρησκείας του Μωάμεθ και κατά των Τούρκων»⁸, written a year after the occupation of Candia by the Ottomans to refute the “errors” of the Muslim religion.

Dimitris Paradoulakis («Απηχήσεις του Κρητικού Πολέμου στο πρώιμο κήρυγμα του Γεράσιμου Βλάχου. Ο κώδικας BAR ms. gr. 889 της Ρουμανικής Ακαδημίας»⁹, pp. 163-215) deals with the same personality: the ecclesiastical scholar Gerasimos Vlachos. Following the study of Ovidiu Olar “The Sons of Lucifer and the Children of Neptune: the Anti-Ottoman and Anti-Islamic

4 English title: «Ottoman political thought and ancient Greek medicine on the eve and in the aftermath of the Cretan War».

5 English title: «With the Ottomans and the Jesuits ante portas: Gerasimos Vlachos in the years of the Cretan War».

6 English title: «Darkness of those who do not believe in the right way».

7 English title: «Against the Jews».

8 English title: «On the Religion of Muhammad and against the Turks».

9 English title: «Echoes of the Cretan War in the early sermons of Gerasimos Vlachos. The codex BAR ms. gr. 889 of the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest».

Polemical Works of Gerasimos Vlachos”, *ARCÆVS: Studies in the History of Religions* XIX–XX (2016), pp. 249–274, and on the basis of the above mentioned code belonging to the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, the author outlines the character of Vlachos as a preacher in Candia of the early war period (1649–1650). According to Paradoulakis, the impact of the War on the thought of the Cretan scholar is obvious and is reflected on the one hand in his concern for the Ottoman invasion and on the other hand in his anxiety for the preservation of the Venetian rule. The concept of sin is promoted by Vlachos as the dominant cause for the suffering caused by war and for the flock’s moral decay. In the appendix the author publishes the manuscript under examination.

Eirini Gergatsouli («Θεοδώρου Μοντσελέζε Ανδραγαθία του Λαζάρου Μοτσενίγου (1657)»¹⁰, pp. 217–356) presents and republishes a historical narrative in verse by the Zantiot writer Theodoros Montselese entitled *Ανδραγαθία του Λαζάρου Μοτσενίγου*¹¹ (inside front cover: *Narration. The destruction of the Turkish Armada*). The work was printed for the first and last time in 1657 in Venice by the printing house of the Giuliani family, specialized in publishing Greek books. The main character is the Venetian *capitano generale da mar* Lazzaro Mocenigo (1624–1657), whose achievements are narrated. Specifically, the text deals with the naval battle of June 26, 1656 in the Strait of Dardanelles, and other historical facts and figures about the naval operations of the Venetian fleet against the Ottoman in the Aegean Sea during the Cretan War covering one year. The narration is embellished with animated descriptions, lyrical passages with very frequent invocations to the divine, laments of cities and other literary motifs.

Elias Kolovos («Στα μετόπισθεν των πολιορκητών του Χάνδακα: η «πολεμική ανταπόκριση» του Εβλιά Τσελεμπή»¹², pp. 357–379) focuses on a well-known personality, Evliya Çelebi, who took part in the last phase of the Cretan War, namely the three-year siege of Candia by the army of the Grand Vizier Kōprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed Pasha (1667–1669). *Çelebi* is known as a “traveller of the world”, as he describes himself in his voluminous travelogue (*Seyahatnâme*), where he

10 English title: «*Lazzaro Mocenigo’s bravery* by Theodoros Montselese (1657)».

11 English title: *Lazzaro Mocenigo’s bravery*.

12 English title: «In the rear of the besiegers of Candia: Evliya Çelebi as a “war correspondent”».

recorded his travels in the Ottoman Empire and its neighboring countries. In this work, he described in a particular way the siege of Candia from the rear where he was. In the narrative of *Çelebi*, which according to Kolovos has parallels with the Greek and Italian narratives, coexists the emergence of the heroism of his fellow-believers, on whose side he moved, with the depiction of the suffering and horror caused by the War: it refers, for example, to a “mine of corpses” under the ramparts of the fortress of Candia. In this way, the text of *Celebi*, who acts as a “war correspondent” of that time, eventually acquires a character of a mixed heroic and anti-heroic narrative from the victors’ of the Cretan War point of view, especially of the soldiers and those who remained in the rear.

Anastasia Stouraiti («Η γυναίκα του Χάνδακα: τερατογονία, φύλο και έντυπες ειδήσεις στον απόηχο του Κρητικού Πολέμου»¹³, pp. 381-407) studies the history of emotions of the Ottoman conquest of Crete from the point of view of the Italian media. In particular, in her analysis uses the strange and the marvel (see, for example, the monster of Candia on p. 402) as heuristic tools to explore the symbolic position of Crete in the imaginary geographies of the Levant and the cultural mediation of the occupation of the island by the Ottomans. According to the author, the strange and unusual stories generally articulate real and complex historical relations, which in the present case concern the relations between rulers and ruled, Venetians and Ottomans, among Catholics, Orthodox and Muslims, as well as between women and men. Accordingly, wonder was a central concept that defined these correlations in the realm of representation, offering the Italian reading public a vehicle for emotional engagement with the distant “others”. The essay also highlights the importance of image and iconographic news as historical sources for the history of emotions of the Cretan War.

On the basis of published and unpublished archival documents, Panajota Tzivara («Σπουδές και πτυχία στα χρόνια του πολέμου και της προσφυγιάς: οι Κρήτες φοιτητές στο Πανεπιστήμιο της Πάδοβας»¹⁴, pp. 409-466) outlines the presence and activity of Cretan students at the University of Padua during the Cretan War and after that until the end of the 17th century. The author shows that

13 English title: «The woman of Candia: teratogenesis, gender and printed news in the wake of the Cretan War».

14 English title: «Studies and degrees in the years of war and refugeeship: Cretan students at the University of Padua».

their attendance was not decreased either during the war or after the final loss of their homeland. During the period under review, the majority of these students were refugees settled on the Ionian Islands and in the Venetian capital. The suffering caused by the War in the lives of the Cretan students was often used as an argument in their applications in order to achieve the privileged treatment provided by the Venetian laws and regulations of the University. Their participation in the administrative bodies of the Greek *nazione*, as well as their involvement in the administration of the University faculties, was also important. Finally, the author discusses issues of memory and identity of the Cretan students.

George Koutzakiotis («Εκκλήση ενός Κρητικού σπουδαστή των μέσων του 17ου αιώνα για την απελευθέρωση της “Ελλάδας”»¹⁵, pp. 467-482) analyzes the publication of a Greek encomium and epigram, published in 1652 in the first volume of the four-volume edition of the German Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, dedicated to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III. The text, entitled «Aliud Elogium», «Επίγραμμα εις τον Σεβασμιότατον Φερδινάνδον»¹⁶, was written by the seventeen-year-old student at the Greek College of St. Athanasius in Rome Georgios Mousalos from Candia. Through this, he addressed, not personally and individually, but on behalf of the Greek scholars (the so-called “wise Greece”), an appeal to the emperor for the liberation of the territories under Ottoman rule inhabited by Greek-speaking Christians. The time of the appeal was extremely critical: Mousalos’s birthplace was under siege (since 1648), a great part of the Venetian *Regno di Candia* had already been conquered by the Ottomans, the Aegean Sea had been turned into a scene of war between Christians and Muslims, and the author saw the danger of not being able to return to his homeland after finishing his studies, as he intended according to a notarial deed pointed out by Koutzakiotis. The organization of a “crusade-like” campaign on the part of Christian states against the Ottomans, indeed, expressed Rome’s expectations, whose forces had been fighting on the side of Venice since the beginning of the war; but the Habsburgs did not want to wage a war against the Ottomans. Therefore, the text of Mousalos is chronologically the last of the hitherto known appeals addressed by Greeks from the 15th century onwards to

15 English title: «Appeal of a Cretan student of the mid 17th century for the liberation of “Greece”».

16 English title: «Epigram to His Majesty Ferdinand».

the German emperor for the liberation of their homeland. Koutzakiotis quotes the text of Mousalos in the annex.

Spyros Karydis («Κρήτες κληρικοί στην Κέρκυρα “μετά την άλωσιν της θλιβεράς Κρήτης”»¹⁷, pp. 483-526) studies the arrivals of Cretan refugees in Corfu after the Cretan War and in particular the group of clergymen. He examines issues of their identity, reception and integration into the local society; and their activity as priests in churches of the city of Corfu and its suburbs, as usufructuaries of public ecclesiastical institutions, as founders of temples and monasteries, as well as teachers. According to the author, the integration of these refugees was rapid, given that the political, social and cultural data of Corfu did not differ substantially from those of Crete: the political administration, the social structure, the ecclesiastical administration, the parish organization, the institution of religious associations and so on, were generally common. Karydis also examines the descendants of the above-mentioned refugees, i.e. the clerics who were born and raised in Corfu at a depth of about eighty years. Finally, based on the study of a large number of archival sources, he points out the need to re-investigate the real dimensions of the influence of the Cretan refugees in Corfu after 1669 and to get to know better the space before and after the settlement of the latter in the island.

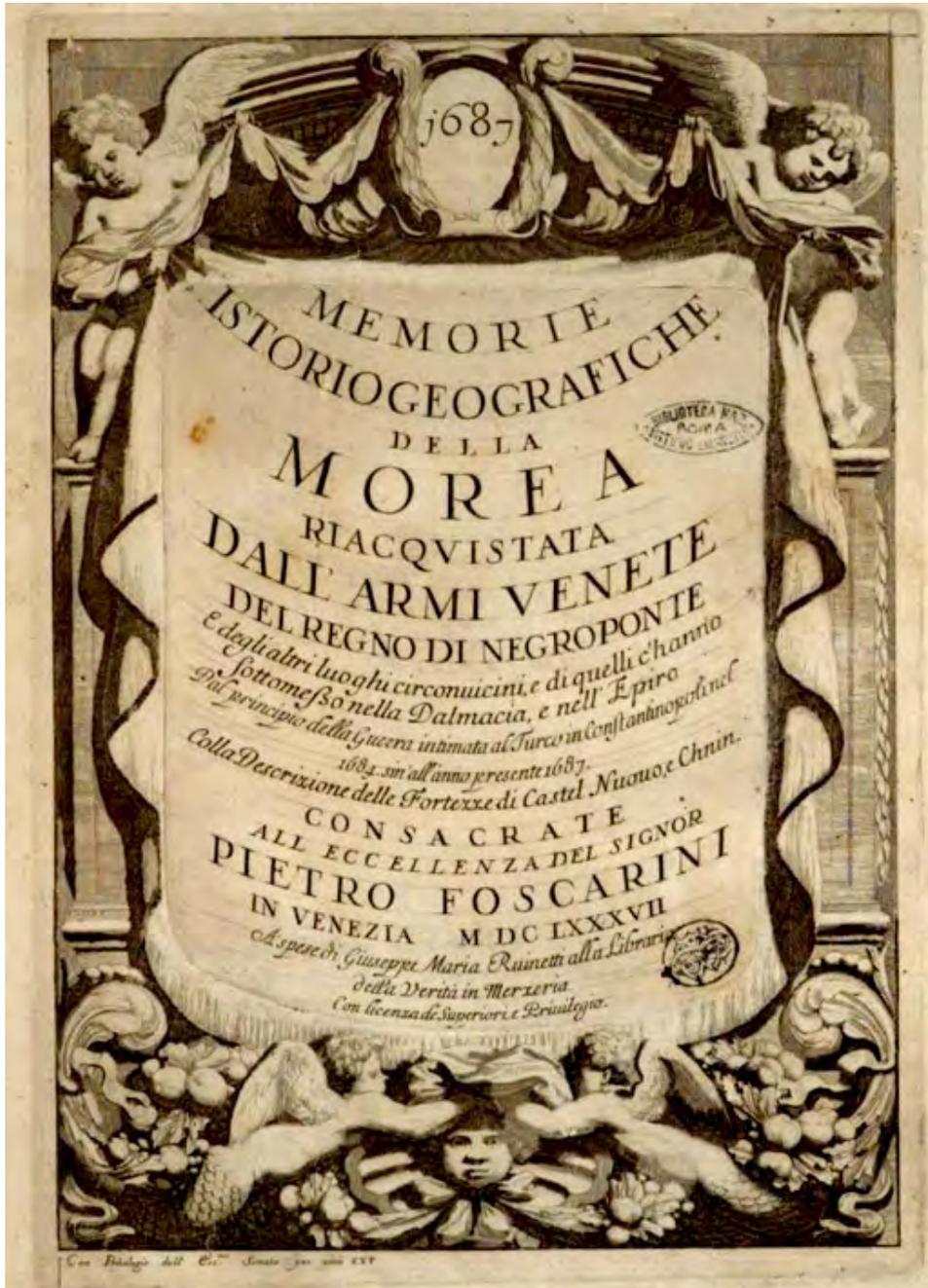
Ioannis Koubourlis («Ιστοριογραφικές προσλήψεις του Κρητικού Πολέμου και γενικά των βενετοτουρκικών συγκρούσεων: από τους φιλέλληνες ιστοριογράφους της δεκαετίας του 1820 στον Κωνσταντίνο Παπαρηγόπουλο»¹⁸, pp. 527-572) examines an issue faced by the Greek national historiography: the treatment of the Venetian–Ottoman wars. Were these wars part of the Greek national history insofar as they took place in seas and territories where “Greek populations” lived and worked? Should the Greek historiographers include them in the field of their research? Were the Naval Battle of Lepanto and the Cretan War, for instance, events that deserved their attention? The author explores the way in which these dilemmas were first handled by scholars who wrote texts of historiographical interest in the context of the philhellenic movement during the years of the Greek Revolution (1821) and immediately after the formation of the Greek state,

17 English title: «Cretan clerics in Corfu “after the fall of miserable Crete”».

18 English title: «Historiographical receptions of the Cretan War and the Venetian-Turkish armed conflicts in general: from the Philhellenes historiographers of the 1820s to Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos».

and subsequently by the main representatives of the Greek historicism Spyridon Zampelios and Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, inspired by the aforementioned foreign scholars. The author concludes that events such as the Naval Battle of Lepanto or the Cretan War may not be “national milestones” for the Greeks, as are, for example, the Naval Battle of Salamis or the Balkan Wars; show us, however, that silences in “national history” can “equally shout” that their study is very important at least for understanding the process of composing the national narrative. In other words, the historiographical evaluation of such events, what “national history” says and does not say about them, works like the construction of a national monument to the fallen unknown soldiers: it reminds the nation that its past includes many antiheroes and even more “unknown heroes” next to the heroes that make up the national pantheon.

In conclusion, the essays comprised in the volume are scientifically sound and contribute to the history of the Greek territories under Venetian and Ottoman rule, and especially of the Venetian–Ottoman wars that took place during the early modern era, with emphasis on the Cretan War (1645–1669). They are either original contributions, based largely on primary sources, or attempts to re-read and re-interpret already known historical processes and phenomena. The volume combines the classical and the modern viewpoint and approaches to historiography. Despite the diversity of the essays and the variety of historiographical viewpoints and trends adopted by the authors, the volume functions as a synthesis and acquires narrative unity. The result of this collaboration is a volume that is invaluable to the specialised researchers of the Cretan War, as it highlights aspects of the related literary and historiographical production, the Ottoman views, the policies of the European forces and the position of the Catholic and Protestant public opinion in the West, the history of emotions, the reception of the Cretan War by the Greek national historiography of the 19th century, as well as its impact on the society of Crete and other Greek territories under Venetian rule.



Frontispiece of Vincenzo Maria CORONELLI, *Memorie Istoriografiche della Morea* [...], Venice, 1687. Source: travelogues.com.



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).

Venetian-Ottoman Wars

Articles

- *Destined to lead nowhere? Venice, the Ottoman Empire and the Geography and Technology of War in the Early Modern Mediterranean, c. 1530–1715*,
by PHILLIP WILLIAMS
- *Typology of the War at Sea in the Ionian Sea (late fifteenth–early nineteenth century)*,
by GERASSIMOS D. PAGRATIS
- *The Greeks and the Secret War among Venice, Spain and the Ottoman Empire: the Plans for the Occupation of Nafplio*,
by KOSTAS G. TSIGNAKIS
- *The Multifaceted Role of the Cypriot Élite in the Defense of Cyprus*

before and during the Venetian–Ottoman War (1570–1571),
by CHRYSOVALANTIS PAPADAMOU

- *Musical Responses to the Lepanto Victory (1571): Sources and Interpretations*,
by VASSILIKI KOUTSOBINA
- *Memorie della guerra di Candia (1645–1657): la cronaca di un testimone oculare*,
di IRENE PAPADAKI
- *Assalto dal mare in Arcipelago: Alessandro del Borro nella guerra di Candia, 1654–1656*,
di GUIDO CANDIANI
- *The Scala di Narenta:*

A Rural Inland Port between the War of Candia (1645–1669) and the Morean War (1684–1699),
by ERICA MEZZOLI

- *Aspects de l'intendance des Vénitiens dans l'Archipel au cours de la guerre de Morée (1684–1699)*,
par GEORGES KOUTZAKIOTIS
- *Personal and fiscal angarie in Peloponnesian fortification works during the Second Venetian Rule (1685–1715)*,
by EIRINI VRETTOU
- *An Overview of Naval Strategy during the 1714–1718 War between the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic*,
by DIONYSIOS HATZOPOULOS

Documents *The Final Report of Lorenzo Bembo, Venetian capitano of Famagusta (November 21, 1567): A Primary Source on the Status and Preparations for Defense in Cyprus before the Outbreak of the Venetian–Ottoman War (1570–1571)*, by STATHIS BIRTACHAS (ED.)

Reviews

- YIANNIS MAVROMATIS, EIRINI LYDAKI AND EIRINI PAPADAKI (EDS.), *The Cretan War (1645–1669): Unknown Aspects*, [PHOTEINE V. PERRA]
- GHERARDO ORTALLI, GIUSEPPE GULLINO ED EGIGIO IVETIC (A CURA DI), *L'inevitabile sogno del dominio. Francesco Morosini*, [DAVIDE VILLA]
- NIKOS E. KARAPIDAKIS AND ALIKI D. NIKIFOROU (EDS.), *The Ottoman Empire and Venice: The Ottoman siege of Corfu in 1716*, [STATHIS BIRTACHAS]
- STEFANOS KAKLAMANIS (ED.), *The Cretan War (1645–1669). Aspects of war in space and time*, [STATHIS BIRTACHAS]

- SPYROS KARYDIS AND PANAJOTA TZIVARA, *Drops of memory in the ocean of the archives. Evidence of Cretan refugees from the Archives of Corfu (1647–1747)*, [STATHIS BIRTACHAS]
- DIMOSTHENIS DONOS, *October 22, 1717: The forgotten beginning of a new era. 300 years since the second Venetian conquest of Preveza*, [STATHIS BIRTACHAS]
- FR. MARKOS FOSKOLOS (ED.), *From Tinos of the Venetian doge to Tinos of the Sublime Porte. 300 years since the surrender of the Castle of Tinos*, [STATHIS BIRTACHAS]

- GILLES GRIVAUD (ED.), WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EVANGELIA SKOUFARI, *Venice and the Defence of the Regno di Cipro. Giulio Savorgnan's Unpublished Cyprus Correspondence (1557–1570)*, including *Ascanio Savorgnan's Descrizione delle cose di Cipro*, [CHRYSOVALANTIS PAPADAMOU]
- KOSTAS G. TSIGNAKIS (ED.), *The impact of the naval Battle of Lepanto on the European world*, [STATHIS BIRTACHAS]
- BASIL C. GOUNARIS, 'See how the Gods Favour Sacrilege'. *English Views and Politics on Candia under Siege (1645–1669)*, [THEOFANIS STOLTIDIS].